

SPACE: Student Perspectives About Civic Engagement

Volume 5 | Issue 1

Article 1

Editorial

Julie Peters

University of Illinois at Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/space>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Peters, Julie () "Editorial," *SPACE: Student Perspectives About Civic Engagement*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/space/vol5/iss1/1>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons@NLU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *SPACE: Student Perspectives About Civic Engagement* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons@NLU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@nl.edu.

Listening. Connecting. Creating safe spaces to work and play. Building community. As we begin to emerge from the ravages of the Pandemic, and as reporting about racial violence and the aftermath of the attack on the Capitol remain front page news, such ideas seem to have slipped from our grasp. A great weariness weighs on us, as we long for a respite from assaults on our physical health, on our emotional well-being, and on our ability to function as members of a civil society. We long to move, to play, to enjoy the company of others, to share our thoughts, and to feel safe and at peace.

Perhaps some respite from this constant state of fatigue and anxiety can be found in three essays published in this year's edition of SPACE. Each offers a glimpse at the possible. Themes emerge that cause the authors' ideas to resonate with each other in a way that seems planned, but which converged organically. Our selected essays address issues surrounding education, which also seems fitting in this time of distance learning. Images of teachers speaking to black squares on computer screens challenge us to ask: what can we do to help students learn while also supporting their physical and emotional well-being? How can such simple acts as listening, connecting, creating safe spaces and building community enhance the way young people learn? As we revisit these elemental ideas, can we grow into new ways of teaching and learning that cause us to look back at these challenges and thank them for the lessons they contain? As we reflect on our collective weariness of violence and incivility, can we begin to find ways to reconstruct positive social interaction—even if the steps toward that ideal might seem too small to make a difference?

Youla Bekiaris and Randall O'Neill, who recently became licensed to teach history and social studies in Illinois, write about their experience doing service-learning at the Youth Services Program at the Center on Halsted. This is a safe space for LGBTQ youth in Chicago, many of whom have experienced violence and homelessness. The authors, who engaged in the simple act of preparing and serving meals at the Center, write about the importance of learning firsthand about the experiences of these young people in order to become better advocates for the LGBTQ students they teach.

Dominique Modory shares her experiences teaching a hip-hop dance class to elementary school children. By incorporating Gloria Ladson-Billings' teachings about culturally relevant pedagogy, Modory explores the natural extension of this approach to the larger issues of social justice and inequity she anticipates encountering in her future career as an elementary school teacher.

Carolyn Crost and Kimberly Maljak share their research findings about how using a Social Ecological Model (SEM) can help educators discover the ways the larger community influences the physical health of school children. Although the authors discovered that the community where they conducted their research provides multiple supports for the well-being of the people who live there, they do suggest ways to use the SEM model in order to identify and provide those supports in communities where they are lacking.

Serving food and listening. Learning from children whose culture is different from our own. Looking at how the larger community sends powerful messages to people who live there. These are the small steps and hopeful moments our writers in this edition of SPACE offer us. We hope their ideas inspire you.