THE UNCOMMON THREAD

Gifted by grace, Concordians are transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.
There is something quite different about Concordia University. Of course, we are proud of our academic excellence, outstanding faculty, impressive array of co-curricular experiences, and our accomplished alumni who make meaningful contributions to the world. But other institutions do those things similarly well. In fact, to the casual observer, what we do seems fairly common in the field of higher education. What sets us apart, what makes us uncommon, is that our ordinary university is attached to the Word of God and connected to His promises. Common that is uncommon. This is a theme the Church well understands.

While everyday onlookers may observe the gifts of Word and Sacrament and be very little impressed, to those who by faith believe, these means of grace convey something remarkable. For it is "by grace you have been saved through faith," and the gift of God has been given to us in Christ Jesus. When the Promise, the Incarnate Word of God is attached, the common becomes uncommon. So, too, our good Father gives to us His grace through ordinary, down-to-earth means with transcendent and divine effect. Regular tap water splashed atop a forehead, a taste of common bread and a sip of common wine consumed in the usual way; there is nothing uncommon about those things. Yet when the Word is attached to these ordinary elements, the gift of grace given becomes, in a word, uncommon.

It is the promise of God in Jesus Christ, Himself the Word made flesh, that transforms each day into something special. What is true for us collectively at CUW is true for each student who walks through our doors. We are "gifted by grace and prepared for a purpose." The promise of God’s grace in our lives brings hope for the ever after and meaning to the everyday. It is what makes Concordia University uncommon. Concordia University. Live Uncommon.

REV. PATRICK T. FERRY, PhD
President
**Homegrown servant**

**Blessed by his own CUW experience, Doug Bender is now mentoring other Concordians**

Doug Bender ('10) maintained a fairly packed schedule of campus ministry involvement and other extracurricular activities. However, as CUW’s new associate campus pastor, he’s now gladly taking a back seat to a new generation of CUW student leaders—and so far, he’s thoroughly enjoying the ride.

“It has been amazing to see the capacity for leadership that our students have,” says Bender. “Concordia blessed me so much as a student, and I’m excited now to be the person who affords that same opportunity to others.” Bender officially began his role on Oct. 30, 2017 and was installed just a few weeks later. In his new position, he oversees the efforts of Concordia’s praise band, The Haven; plays an integral role in B.U.L.L. D., a ministry for men at Concordia; and participates in planning and organizing CUW’s annual student mission trips. He also regularly preaches at the various worship opportunities Concordia offers students and mentors students as they stretch their leadership muscles.

Prior to Bender, Deaconess Kim Bueltmann served as an integral part of the campus ministry staff at CUW. She accepted a call last summer as an LCMS career missionary.

In November, Concordia exceeded its percentage (108–11) in conference play. Even though the title eluded them from 2014 to 2016, they tied for season champions last year. In 2017, they became the first men’s tennis team to standouts like Brad Guendel, named to All-NACC singles and doubles teams, as undeclared players in the 2017–18 season. On May 6, the women will play for their third straight championship at the NACC Tournament. According to men’s and women’s head coach Steve Anschutz ('10), the tournament is a piece of a larger picture.

"The success of the tennis program over the past few years is because of the culture we have established," Anschutz says. "We have the right student-athletes with the right attitudes and character that have allowed us, as coaches, to push our players and the program as a whole past all personal, school, and conference expectations."
Over the course of six weeks, the two visited nine Lutheran schools in the Milwaukee area, and they continue to fill their schedules with in-person visits. “People today are questioning the value of a college education, particularly a faith-based one,” Uden says. “We are committed to ensure that Concordia not only survives, but thrives, and the high schools within our Lutheran system are the places we start.” Concordia has demonstrated its commitment to Lutheran education in various ways over the years. The university continues to offer its Lutheran Promise initiative, an institutionally funded guarantee that provides an annual scholarship that could equal the amount they paid for their dual-credit classes. Learn more about Concordia’s admissions efforts at cuw.edu/admissions.

Additionally, through its Concordia Promise initiative, the university partners with more than 15 Lutheran high schools nationwide to offer reduced-rate, dual-credit courses. Students who decide to enroll at CUW or CUAA are then eligible to receive an additional scholarship that could equal the amount they paid for their dual-credit classes.

Someone to call upon
New lab on CUW campus contributes to rural health care via telepharmacy

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs

Concordia University Wisconsin’s School of Pharmacy is helping students gain valuable experience in the rapidly advancing practice of telehealth—telephyarmacy, in particular—in partnership with Marshfield Clinic Health System.

At the start of the semester, Concordia began its first telepharmacy rotation in a newly designated lab space on campus called the Concordia University School of Pharmacy and Marshfield Clinic Health System Center for Population Health. Fourth-year pharmacy students who select and match with the six-week rotation connect with MCHS patients via phone to collect patient health information. A CUW faculty member then works with the student to review and send physicians or providers recommendations on medication adjustments before the patient’s next appointment. Students also contribute to Marshfield’s drug information service by helping to research questions from prescribers and medical support staff in an effort to help serve patient care needs and promote population health.

The telepharmacy patient care services tend to focus on individuals in rural communities, says James Løkkien, PharmD, MS, MEd, assistant professor of pharmacy practice at CUW.

“It’s an important population to support because there’s often limited access to the type of health care that will keep them safe and out of the hospital,” Løkkien says. “I think that any time you have the opportunity to address a health disparity like that, it’s an incredibly worthwhile venture.”

For five years after its launch and with three cohorts of graduates successfully in the field, the physician assistant (PA) program at Concordia University Wisconsin is hitting its stride. From fresh leadership and a new learning space to record-breaking test scores and an ever-broadening reach, the past couple of years have had their share of celebratory moments for Concordia’s graduate-level program.

Last year the students who completed CUW’s 24-month Master of Science in Physician Assistant program achieved a 100-percent pass rate on the national certifying exam required for all PAs to practice in the field. The accomplishment was a first in CUW history and a significant achievement for a relatively new program.

The 2017 graduating class also continued Concordia’s 100-percent placement record, with graduates earning jobs at major medical organizations, including Aurora Health Care, Mayo Clinic, and Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin.

Just years into their positions, CUW graduates are excelling in their professions and receiving placements in specialized fields at well-known hospitals; like Greg Schallal (‘15), who landed a residency in the ICU at internationally renowned The Johns Hopkins Hospital, or Elliot Cain (‘16), who was among a team of medical professionals at Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center to successfully complete the hospital’s 500th heart transplant last November. “We have incredible alumni who are doing extraordinary work all over the country, and I’m continually amazed at their commitment to service despite their busy schedules,” says Jacqueline Kazik, MA, PA-C, who stepped into the role of program director last summer.

With each passing year, the department seeks to expand its reach and reputation more and more. CUW PA—including cohorts through this year’s program—will have completed rotations in 30 states throughout the nation, among them Oregon and Alaska, and in multiple countries abroad. In 2017 alone, more than 800 applicants throughout the U.S. applied for admission into the program capped at 30 students. Current students in the program were among the first to reap the benefits of a newly renovated lab space on campus. Located in the Health Professions wing, the new lab boasts 15 patient exam tables and resembles a small clinical environment. Concordia’s physical therapy and occupational therapy programs share the lab.

“The future of the PA program at CUW is very bright,” Kazik says. “We’re continuing to meet the needs of our learners so that we can continue to build on our reputation as a nationally sought-after program that is fulfilling the need for compassionate, patient-centered care.”
Difference maker

A Concordia professor gains recognition for his service and career accomplishments

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs
Photography by Jeffrey Plaut

Dr. Kenneth Harris, Jr. will be the first to admit that a career in law enforcement isn’t for everyone.

In fact, Harris, who retired in May 2017 as lieutenant with the Milwaukee Police Department after 24 years on the force, resisted the profession for years, even though some of his most formative mentors growing up were law enforcement officers. Initially, the work never sparked his interest, says Harris.

Instead, he started out with a career in communications, working as an employee or freelancer for prominent media stations, including WGN Radio Chicago, Black Entertainment Television (BET), and Fox Sports, for more than 20 years before he felt the Lord’s call to step into law enforcement.

Decades later, he’s now chair of the justice and public policy department at Concordia, bringing a breadth of real-world experience to the classroom.

Harris will tell his students stories about the grit that’s required to make it in the law enforcement field—how he once responded to three infant deaths in one night, and how he’s witnessed in person or seen the aftermath of countless other violent and cruel acts.

“I tell my students, ‘You’re going to see the negative side of people every day,’” Harris says. “It doesn’t matter if they’re close to normal as possible. To do that, you have to suck up a lot of stuff.”

Harris has “sucked up” plenty in his life, but what makes him ready and willing to continue to face the daily battles is the understanding of the ripple effect one person can have on the lives of others.

“There are little things along the way that show you that no matter where you go and what you do God still has you in his care and gives you what you need,” Harris says. “Many times we mistakenly think we have to move an entire city or an entire population; but if 300,000 people in Milwaukee picked one person, next year, there would be a million successful people. That’s been my driver.”

He learned this mindset at a young age from the law enforcement officers who took him under their wing through the Boy Scouts of America, and Harris, in turn, has sought to pay their generosity forward.

Today, Harris is widely known and respected in Milwaukee-area circles for his volunteerism, which includes mentoring young men and serving in leadership capacities with the Three Harbors Council—Boy Scouts of America. In October, Today’s TMJ4 honored him with the Community Hero award for his commitment to community service and for shaping young lives. The award was part of the inaugural Positively Milwaukee Awards, which honors everyday people who are making a difference in the Greater Milwaukee area.

Additionally, last November, Harris was chosen as a finalist for the interim Milwaukee Sheriff position—an acknowledgment many might consider a pinnacle career moment.

No matter the job position, Harris continually finds ways to shape the future leaders of the Church and world.

“Somebody gave me a chance when I was young, and so I think it’s incumbent upon me to give somebody else that same opportunity,” Harris says. “Usually we think about a movement as moving a whole group of people. I want to be able to have created a movement within an individual.”

Interested in enrolling in Concordia’s justice and public policy program? Visit cucw.edu/jpp for more information.

To watch TMJ4’s coverage of Harris, and C3K’s YouTube channel (ConcordiaJustice),
When Shitanshu Saini and Manisha Dhillon left their home in northern India to pursue an MBA degree in strategic marketing from Concordia University Wisconsin, friends told them they were crazy and urged them to change their major. A degree in computer science would be much more conducive to landing a job in America their friends said. In a sense, their friends were right. Computer-related jobs consistently account for a large share of the work visa petitions that employers file on behalf of non-citizens each year.

But Saini and Dhillon decided to stick with what they knew and loved best, even if it ended up costing them their chance to live and work in the land of the free.

Two and a half years later, the pair’s gamble paid off when Saini and Dhillon were chosen to receive their H-1Bs, the visas issued to foreign workers in specialty occupations. Each year, 85,000 H-1B visas are issued to foreign workers, and hundreds of thousands of people annually apply for them. The odds of one person being chosen were unlikely enough, but for both—it was an American Dream come true.

Soon, with Saini and Dhillon’s help, Rehan will look to expand again. The entrepreneurs are scouting locations for a third restaurant, which they hope to open in 2018.

Saini and Dhillon say they couldn’t have done it without their Concordia education. “Practical knowledge is really important. Our professors were really good at providing that,” Saini says. “We were very attentive in all of our classes, and that helped us figure it all out.”

The pair says support from Rehan also was crucial (he hired the attorneys who helped them through the visa application process), as was the support they received from one other. The two were friends for several years before they started their Concordia education and had started casually dating just before they left for the States. Now they’re engaged to be married and have the promise of business ownership ahead of them.

“We’re really grateful for the support we’ve received along the way, and for this opportunity to study in America and do what we love,” Dhillon says. “I call this home now. We love it here.”

restaurants have doubled their profits. “Shitanshu and Manisha have been a tremendous help to me,” Rehan says. “They came in wanting to work hard and quickly proved themselves. I’m excited to know that my business is in good hands with them.”

It’s not as if Rehan was failing without the two CUW grads, though. In fact, it was quite the opposite. In 2011, Rehan opened his first restaurant, Café India. The fast-food-style eatery, located near downtown Milwaukee, was met with much acclaim and success, which allowed him to expand to a second location. In 2014, he opened Café India Bar & Grill, a sit-down iteration of his original restaurant, located in Bay View.

With Saini and Dhillon on board, more commendations are rolling in. Facebook users have rated Café India’s curry No. 1 among Milwaukee-area restaurants. Rehan’s eatery also had won the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Top Choice Awards Best of Greater Milwaukee for “Best Curry Restaurant” in 2017. In 2016, OnMilwaukee readers voted it “Best of Milwaukee Dining,” and in 2017 OnMilwaukee’s editor named it “Best of Dining.”

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## An American Dream come true

Two young international alumni are spicing up the Milwaukee dining scene

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs
Photography by Rachel Ferguson

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Two and a half years later, the pair’s gamble paid off when Saini and Dhillon were chosen to receive their H-1Bs, the visas issued to foreign workers in specialty occupations. Each year, 85,000 H-1B visas are issued to foreign workers, and hundreds of thousands of people annually apply for them. The odds of one person being chosen were unlikely enough, but for both—it was an American Dream come true. While the H-1B recipients are selected by lottery, the ticket to the U.S. wasn’t without its fair share of effort and determination on the young Indian couple’s part.

Prompted by a class requirement, Saini and Dhillon reached out to Milwaukee-area Indian cuisine restaurant owner Rakesh Rehan to request internships the year before they were scheduled to graduate from CUW. Once on board, they put their Concordia education to work, targeting their advertising to attract more foot traffic, experimenting with changes in service style, and adding fusion cuisine to modernize the buffet. Within weeks after the pair started, Rehan said he noticed the difference and was ready to keep the promising young workers on for the long haul.

And how could he not be impressed? Since Saini and Dhillon started in May 2016, Rehan’s restaurants have doubled their profits. “Shitanshu and Manisha have been a tremendous help to me,” Rehan says. “They came in wanting to work hard and quickly proved themselves. I’m excited to know that my business is in good hands with them.”

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Top left: Manisha Dhillon (left) and Shitanshu Saini have earned their place at Café India. Restaurant owner Rakesh Rehan says he plans to have the 2017 CUW graduates on board for the long haul.

Top right: Manisha Dhillon discusses the Café India business with fiancé Shitanshu Saini.

Right: Shitanshu Saini serves a customer at Café India Bar & Grill.
Gifted by His Grace, the students, alumni, and faculty of Concordia University approach each day with a sense of purpose. They don’t seek recognition for what they do, but, rather, are confident in who they are and who they were created to be. With hope in the ever-after, Concordians go outside of their comfort zones, and use their gifts and talents in service to others. They find meaning in the everyday and transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. It isn’t the easiest or the flashiest way, but at Concordia it’s the only way.

By Lisa Liljegren, University Affairs
Photography by Nick Calabria BVK

“When the ordinary is attached to the Word of God and connected to His promises, the common becomes uncommon.”

Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD / President
The road to “Live Uncommon”

Authenticity at every point of contact is the goal of successful, comprehensive brand work. Organizations can only fully achieve their missions when they are able to say and share exactly who they are and why they exist.

The following statements have been crafted and distilled from 18 months of research, conversations, focus groups, and testing to help our entire Concordia community clearly understand and articulate the Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor story.

Mission

Concordia University is a Lutheran higher education community committed to helping students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world.

Brand promise

We are a learning community at the junction of knowledge and Christian faith, where students are developed to lead uncommon lives of higher professional purpose for the betterment of self and community.

Value proposition

We provide distinctive Christian higher education that develops the whole student, intentionally nurturing alignment of mind, body, and spirit in a vibrant, caring community. As a result our graduates are empowered to achieve their highest potentials: to think, communicate, lead, and serve with integrity and compassion, wherever their careers, vocations, and lives lead.

Position statement

For values-oriented, relationally driven students, Concordia University delivers a distinctive Christian higher education, where faith and knowledge intertwine, linking disciplinary content and liberal arts learning to faith and values in a supportive, friendly community that develops students holistically to achieve their God-given potentials.
The Uncommon Educator

Motivating Students to Rise to Their Potential

By Rachel Ferry, University Affairs
Photography by Rachel Ferguson

It takes true understanding and high expectations to be a teacher in urban education. At least that’s the way Alexia Jones ’16 approaches her career. Research shows the odds of educational success are stacked against diverse learners, so accountability is key. To Alexia, becoming an urban education teacher is not just a job, it’s a daily opportunity to remind her students that she believes they can accomplish great things. “I love being in the classroom,” says Alexia. “It’s my happy place. I want that for my students, too.”

Those who teach will tell you that being a teacher is not a comfortable career. In fact, it can be quite uncomfortable, but those who have stepped into the role as educators, mentors, and motivators know that each day serves a higher purpose. That’s part of Concordia’s goal: to graduate teachers—like Alexia—who possess a unique grace and a desire to make an uncommon impact on students, sparking them to step out of their comfort zones, try new things, learn new ideas, and use their gifts and talents in the service of others.

It was a human relations class her sophomore year at CUW that inspired Alexia to be an urban education teacher. The class visited a school and experienced firsthand the impact that classroom management and strategy has on carrying out a curriculum in an urban setting.

“Her quiet energy keeps the classroom calm. Alexia gives detailed instructions so that there’s no wiggle room, and keeps the vibe positive by praising or helping students for doing things well rather than focusing the room’s attention on misbehavior,” says one of her teachers. “I thrive off of relationships. They’re so important to me,” Alexia says. “Sometimes I might be the only stable relationship in a student’s life, and I get to tell them every day that I believe in them. That’s pretty powerful.”

The Uncommon Big Brother

Grasping Hold of Second Chances

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs
Photography by Ashley Kilgas

Tony McHale-McFarlin’s 5-foot-1, 145-pound lacrosse-playing younger brother may seem intimidating at first glance, but he’s known by his opponents as being deceptively scrappy. “Tony is no slouch either. A freshman player on Concordia’s football team, the 5-foot-9 Tony weighs in at 219 pounds. Prior to his time at CUW, he garnered multiple accolades as a standout player on his high school’s football and lacrosse teams. He and his brother have a good-natured rivalry to see who will earn the most newspaper write-ups during their athletic careers. Maybe it’s habitual, maybe it’s instinctual, or maybe it’s just how Tony knows to show his love, but even though his brother no longer needs it Tony is fierce about standing up for him. He aims to do the same one day as a social worker for youth who need it most.”

“‘I’m very protective of people I really care about,’” Tony says. “‘Ever since I was little, I had to protect my brother and take care of him and be that role model to him.’”

Unfortunately, Tony had to come to his brother’s defense far too often during their time growing up. The two spent their formative years in Hyattsville, Maryland, a place Tony describes as “one of the worst parts of America” for its prolific gang activity.

When Tony wasn’t avoiding street violence, he was contending with abuse at home. Despite it all, Tony beat the odds to become the first member of his family to attend college.

Now Tony wants to make a career out of helping others overcome what they were born into. He’s majoring in social work and minoring in entrepreneurship at Concordia, and he has aspirations to open a homeless shelter someday. “God has a plan for me to do something for others,” Tony says. “I want to go into adoption and foster care, and work with little kids. A lot of kids think that once they’re away from their birth parents everything falls apart, but it can be like a second chance.”

As for his little brother, now in his junior year in high school, Tony says he’ll continue to look out for his sibling until they’re both old and grey. And soon, Tony will add some foster care kids to his charge.

“I don’t want kids to go through that stage of thinking they have a hopeless life,” Tony says. “I can’t really cover up what I went through, but I can tell them that with hard work and dedication you can do what you want to. Don’t let second chances go to waste.”

The Uncommon Classmates

Overcoming Diagnoses Side by Side

By Rachell Ferguson, University Affairs
Photography by Ashley Kilgas

Sitting beside them, with the smell of coffee claiming its own presence in the room, one might suspect that the two beautiful students nearly finishing each other’s sentences have a connection. In truth, the two have been through so much together in the past 15 months that they might as well read each other’s thoughts.

“I am a breast cancer survivor,” says Megan. “Megan comments, “but it was so helpful to have the friendships she made along the way. Just a few weeks later, Megan was reeling from her own devastating diagnosis. Doctors discovered she had an acoustic neuroma, a benign brain tumor that was pushed against the nerves of her brainstem. It needed to be removed, but the required surgery could result in deafness or paralysis of part of her face.

“Connected by a professor, the two girls became a support to one another. The following months of treatments, procedures, and the resulting fear of the uncertain future were softened by the relentless encouragement the girls lent to each other. “You wouldn’t wish a bad thing on anyone,” Megan comments, “but it was so helpful to know that someone else was going through the same thing.”

Megan and Leah eventually returned to school, with the support of an entire Concordia community. Megan’s surgery was a success; the tumor was completely removed, and she came back with a stronger faith.

Leah, who’s in remission, looks over at her friend as she shares what they both know is true. “I’ve learned that the cancer doesn’t define me. It’s part of my journey, but it doesn’t define me.” After a short pause, her words echo. “I am not just the girl with cancer.” Both smile at that.
S
ixteen-year-old Zoe McDowell has a bright future ahead of him. The Milwaukee-area native maintains a respectable GPA, is a standout track and football athlete on his high school teams, and plays an active role in mentoring young black students, like himself, through a club he helped start at his school.

Now in his junior year, McDowell has his sights set on some of the top collegiate-level mechanical engineering programs in the nation. He also has aspirations to play football at the collegiate level. Either way, he’s college-bound. There’s never been a doubt in his mind about it.

Unfortunately, the same can’t be said for many teenagers in McDowell’s demographic. For decades, reports have surfaced about the abysmal achievement gap that exists between black and white students in Wisconsin schools. Today, multiple news sources will confirm that Wisconsin ranks worst in the nation when it comes to the difference between how well black and white students perform on national benchmark tests, and the difference between black and white student graduation rates.

“It’s definitely an issue, and it’s one that’s not easy to fix,” says Dr. Elliott Moeser, associate professor of education at Concordia. “It’s going to require continual cooperation among school districts, parents, legislators, and the like, and it’s going to require us to potentially fail. But if we don’t begin to take an honest look at the concern, we’re going to be doomed to continue to live with it.”

For the past several years, Moeser has played an integral role in fostering collaboration among Wisconsin schools in an effort to bring about change. He serves as executive director of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC), which aims to embrace and change school practices, instruction, and methodologies that perpetuate achievement gaps.

In 2012, when the consortium began, the CAGC had just four school district members. Today, the consortium has expanded to 26 public, private, parochial, voucher, and choice schools and school systems throughout Wisconsin. Concordia is its only higher education partner.

The group works to address Wisconsin’s achievement gap issue in a number of ways. It annually hosts a career fair to attract high-quality teachers to schools where achievement gaps are most prominent. It also offers Equity Institutes over the summer for CAGC members. Last year’s Equity Institutes alone had more than 300 Milwaukee-area educators poring over school data and wrestling with tough questions in order to put research-driven strategies into practice within their schools.

The CAGC is also responsible for hosting the annual African American Male Initiative (AAMI), a summertime initiative that encourages young African American men to succeed with the intent of pursuing higher education. During the four-day event, students stay overnight in CUW dorms, network with dozens of other black teens and young adult mentors, hear addresses from prominent and successful black men in the community, and participate in a variety of goal-setting and personal development exercises.

In its inaugural year three summers ago, AAMI drew a modest 37 students, including Zoe McDowell. Last year, more than 150 youth attended.

“I actually met some of my long-term friends at that camp,” McDowell says. “To be successful, you have to have a good circle, and you have to have people who are going to empower you, and that’s what I feel I gained through the AAMI.”

This summer, CAGC will host its first African American Female Initiative. The event is made possible by a gift from the Waukesha County Community Foundation, who learned of the success of AAMI last summer and wanted to replicate it with young women.

While there is more work to be done on the achievement gap front, Moeser says he’s thrilled with the progress that’s being made, and he’s taking advantage of opportunities to champion the group’s efforts. Most recently, he was invited to present at the 2018 American Association of School Administrators in Nashville, Tennessee, which drew approximately 5,000 educators.

“We determined that we could do more work together than apart as far as closing the achievement gap,” Moeser says. “We are a group of action. This is an example of doing something that is positive, something that will change the lives of students.”

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs Photography by Jeffrey Phelps
When Anaisa Nagy and Elida White graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin in 2016 with their degrees in nursing, their professional licensure completed, and job offers from Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center, they did the unexpected: They put their careers on pause; packed their bags; and flew to Ensenada, Mexico—again.

It may seem surprising that with a good job opportunity under their belts they would choose to forego it for a short-term service endeavor. But for these passionate caretakers, they couldn’t imagine doing anything else. “Elida and I talked, and we decided that we may never get this chance again,” Nagy says. “Our mindset was: Let’s do this—let’s go and give back.”

The classmates’ desire to give back had started many months earlier when they signed up for a global education course at CUW. Although they initially joined the class so that they could travel, the two nursing students were surprised to leave with much more. The class changed their perspective on holistic nursing care, gave them friendships that extended beyond their time at Concordia, and helped them grow in their faith. The experience was so moving that Nagy and White couldn’t stay away.

“I loved seeing the way God was working there,” Nagy recalls. “You benefit from the trip in ways you never thought you would. When people say I must have impacted them, I tell them it’s the opposite. They’ve impacted me.”

Concordia began offering the global trip to nursing students nearly two decades ago, working with Agua Viva Ministries in Ensenada, Mexico. In recent years, the trip has been run by nursing professors and CUW alumnae Jill Krell (’94, ’10, ’14) and Giannina Vernon (’07, ’10, ’14). For a week each year, the duo takes undergraduate and graduate students to Mexico to set up free clinics. Once there, students provide wellness checkups; take vital signs; provide diagnoses; and hand out donations of hygiene items, clothing, and childcare items. Students then connect patients to a local physician for follow-up care. For Krell, the trip is about much more than nursing education. “I hope that the students not only gain knowledge about nursing and working with a different culture, but also realize the impact that others have on them,” states Krell.

Countless students have experienced exactly that while on Krell’s trip. Some, like Brett Rasmussen (’17), have even gone back to Mexico—though it isn’t always the case that someone would sacrifice time and effort to do so after graduation. Yet, that’s precisely what Nagy and White did.

After returning from the global education course, it didn’t take long for them to know they wanted to go back to Mexico. After obtaining permission from St. Luke’s, where they would begin positions at the end of the summer, they accepted a six-week internship with Agua Viva Ministries. Once there, they worked with church groups to begin construction projects, open clinics, lead vacation Bible school, and provide much-needed supplies and services to the local community. “It’s crazy how the Lord worked out things for Anaisa and me,” White recalls. “He wanted us in Mexico, and now I know why. The whole experience helped me to more easily proclaim my faith, and I feel like I brought a little of that back with me.”

Not only did time in Mexico help strengthen their faith, it also introduced them to lifelong friendships. More than a year after they completed their internship there, Nagy and White returned to Ensenada—this time, to reconnect with the workers of Agua Viva Ministries and the people in the community with whom they had forged relationships.

Nagy’s and White’s experience is exactly what their professor had hoped for when she began leading the trip five years ago. “It doesn’t always happen that students return to Ensenada after graduation, but I’m not surprised,” Krell comments. “The trip impacted them in so many ways, and I’ve seen them grow from it. It’s why I love leading this trip, and why I can’t help but go back every year.”

Elida White and Anaisa Nagy accepted a six-week internship in Mexico shortly after graduation.
Hard work and help along the way
Class assignment leads to dream career

By Lisa Liljegren, University Affairs
Photography courtesy of Dave Beyer

Dave Beyer ('01) transferred to Concordia to study communications and play baseball during his sophomore year. A class assignment led Beyer to land a coveted internship with the Milwaukee Bucks. Nearly 30 years, several promotions, and many connections later, Beyer is now the director of basketball operations with the Miami Heat and the assistant general manager for the Sioux Falls Skyforce.

Beyer, his wife, Sebrina, and their three sons (Brady, Jordan, and Bryce) live in South Miami. When they’re not participating in school sports, the family cheers on the Miami Heat and the Miami Hurricanes, where Sebrina works as executive assistant to the head football coach.

Beyer reflects on his career in sports, the people who helped him get there, and his time at CUW.

How did you get into professional sports? I was always involved in sports and knew when I was done playing baseball at CUW that I wanted to continue to be around sports in some capacity. In one of my early communications classes, we were assigned to interview a professional in a field that we were interested in, and then write a paper about that person and their career.

I reached out to Jim Paschke, the Milwaukee Bucks’ TV play-by-play announcer and asked him for a meeting. Not only did he agree to meet with me, he helped me land an internship with the Milwaukee Bucks. At first I worked directly for Paschke and eventually made my way to the Bucks’ video department, where I was a part of a team that recorded and broke down the game film for the coaches.

From there, I obtained a video room internship with the Miami Heat under the guidance of Erik Spoelstra. Coach Spoelstra was an assistant coach at the time, and he took me under his wing. I would not be in my current position without Coach Spoelstra’s training and teaching me the game of basketball at the highest level.

I have been very blessed to be with the Heat organization and to be able to learn from a Hall-of-Famer in Pat Riley.

Describe your experience at CUW. I transferred to CUW after attending a public university. I remember when I went to visit CUW with my parents, and it just felt right from the start. I was a commuter student, so I could have been considered a real outsider, but it wasn’t like that. Everyone was very welcoming, and that made the school feel like home. Of course, it helped that I played on the baseball team, so there was a built-in community for me.

I developed many strong relationships through CUW; many that are still strong today. How did Concordia prepare you for success in your field? As a student athlete, I had to learn time management and discipline because I was constantly juggling class work with improving my performance on the field.

Also, I appreciated that my professors, particularly Dr. Randy Ferguson, challenged me to step outside of my comfort zone and to learn how to effectively communicate in a variety of situations. I’m grateful to my coaches and professors at Concordia for supporting me and helping me become more confident in my faith, which remains an important part of my life today.

Describe your journey from intern to your role now in a sports franchise. On my first day, Paschke gave me advice that has stuck with me to this day: “You have two ears and one mouth for a reason, to listen more than you talk.” He also taught me to say yes if someone asks me to do something and then assured me that if at first I didn’t know how to do something I’d eventually figure it out.

As a video intern for the Miami Heat, I was considered a part of the coaching staff, and was responsible for anticipating and capturing the action on the court and then breaking down the footage for coaches that night or the next day. Through this opportunity, I learned valuable technical skills used in the sports industry and gained intense insight into the game of basketball because it was my job to recognize what coaches and scouts needed to do their job effectively.

Stay connected with Concordia

In order for you to stay connected and be informed of your alumni benefits and news, please take a moment to update your preferred email address, current address, and phone numbers at cuw.edu/alumniprompts. By doing so, you will receive our alumni e-newsletter that is brimming with opportunities for you to connect with other alumni, mentor students, network, be a classroom presenter, volunteer to help others, and live out the Concordia mission.

In addition, if you do not have an active profile on CUWConnect.com, now is the time to create one. This platform was designed especially for you—with your alma mater and make sure to include an email address you regularly check to keep your connections timely.

Many thanks, and blessings to you and your family.

—CUW Alumni Relations

“The quote is true for anything that states, ‘Hard work doesn’t guarantee you anything, but without it you don’t stand a chance.’ This quote is true for anything that you may do in life. You have to visualize where you want to go in your career, and then be willing to put in the hours and do the things you may not want to do to get there. If you find a career you’re passionate about, that becomes a little easier.”

—Dave Beyer

Dave Beyer poses with the National Basketball Association championship trophy from 2013.

Top: Dave Beyer and Alonzo Mourning, NBA hall-of-famer and vice president, player programs, with the Miami Heat. Bottom: Beyer’s personal NBA championship ring collection.

“It’s my dream job because so many professors, mentors, and coaches invested themselves in my growth and development. They truly modeled what strong, present leadership could look like. The best part of my job is when I’m able to follow their examples and mentor younger team members as they make their way on their own career paths.”

IN THE WORLD

IN THE WORLD
2000s

Achievements

Ashley Jensen ('17) is raising funds for a mission position where she will be serving youth in Milwaukee by creating a mentoring program. Support her at https://go.conc.edu/1DyDzP.

Erik Kittel ('19) signed to play professional basketball with the EJ Sligo All-Stars in Ireland.

Colin Berreuter ('16) was named assistant general manager for the inaugural season of the Saginaw Sugar Beets baseball club, the newest member of the Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League.

Justin Dopirala ('04, '07) co-founded DOMO Capital Management, LLC. DOMO has an annualized net return of 18.94% from inception in 2006 to 2017. CUW is a client of DOMO.

Louis Clark III ('16) married Nate Reiskytl on Sept. 23, 2017, and Success. Steve is currently married to the couple resides in Thiensville, Wisconsin.

2010s

Achievements

Kevin Koch ('06) and his wife, Kathlin Koch, welcomed a baby girl, Madeleine Jean Koch, on Nov. 20, 2017.

2000s

Achievements

James Lokken ('14) married Samantha (Stancato) Lokken ('14) on Sept. 23, 2017. Samantha is a pharmacist with Aurora Health Care and James is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice at CUW. Several of the couple’s classmates and CUW professors attended their wedding.

Ryan Richmond ('14) and Sarah Gatterling ('15) met on the first day of college in English class at Concordia. They married on Aug. 11, 2017 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Kirsten (Schueler) Fritsche ('14) married Christopher Fritsche on July 1, 2017. They both teach at Trinity Lutheran School in San Antonio, Texas.


Welcome

Julie (Normann) Carbon ('99) and her husband, Jason Carbon, celebrate the birth of their son, Finn Fox Carbon. Finn was born on May 8, 2017.

Samantha Stark ('99, '10) and Cory Stark ('10) welcomed their son, Greyson Edward Stark, on Nov. 16, 2017.

Jordan (Hansen) Moore ('10) and her husband, Trevor Moore, welcomed their second child, Alice Jordan, on Dec. 11, 2016.

Katie Rabe ('08) and Micah Rabe ('08) welcomed their son, Ezekiel Rabe, on Dec. 20, 2017.

1990s

Achievements

Ryan Rosene ('97) was named the next Greendale Police Chief. Rosene is a nearly 20-year police veteran and second in command of the department of 59. Most recently he spent time as the detective lieutenant in charge of the detective bureau.

1970s

Achievements

John Oberdeck ('78) took a call to serve as a short-term vacancy pastor for Trinity Lutheran Church in Frankfurt, Germany. Oberdeck, accompanied by his wife, Ginny ('79), served from February to the end of March 2018.

1960s

Achievements

Bruce Linderman ('68, '70) and his wife, Lois, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary by visiting Hawaii in 2016. They have four children and 12 grandchildren, and reside in Bozeman, Montana.

1950s

Achievements

David Young ('56) was presented with the Certificate of 50 Years in the Ministry in his home congregation First Trinity Lutheran Church, Tonawanda, New York.

Herbert Schiefelboin ('48) recently celebrated his 95th birthday. After graduating from CUW, Herbert continued on to graduate from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He has taken calls to serve in Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, and Montana.

Athletic Hall of Fame

The William C. Ackerman Memorial Athletic Hall of Fame 2017 inductees were honored Saturday, January 27. David Benke ('94), all-around athlete; Brett Corner, former wrestling coach; Krista (Mayou) Parker ('90), basketball; Nicki (Wiedel) Brazgel ('98), soccer; Gary Griffin ('92, '96), football, men’s basketball team (2010-11).

In memoriam

Rev. Dr. John W. Saleska, director emeritus of the Concordia Bible Institute, passed away Sept. 12, 2017. The Rev. Dr. John W. Saleska Scholarship Endowment has been established in his honor to provide financial assistance for pre-seminary students at CUW.

To contribute to the endowment or “immediate pre-seminary aid,” mark the “other” box on the gift giving envelope, select “other,” and write “Albano Memorial” on the line.
An uncommon and dangerous hope

"Let brotherly love continue ... remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them ... "
(Hebrews 13:1, 3a)

One of my favorite movies is "The Shawshank Redemption." More than 20 years old now, this well-known movie tells the story of two prisoners who befriend each other in the Shawshank Prison in Maine in the 1940s to the 1960s. Red, played by Morgan Freeman, has reconciled himself to a life in prison and, like many other prisoners, has given up hope. Andy, however, still holds out hope of being freed from prison—that there can be a Shawshank redemption.

He speaks of this hope to Red, and Red responds, "Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside."

That "dangerous" hope is something that’s central to our campus ministry prison ministry. Several dozen Concordia students are "pen pals" with inmates in prison. Prison ministry gives students a chance to share faith and hope with those who may have little hope. There’s a long story and history to how this was started years back (too long for this little article), but it has its roots in a connection between a now sainted CUW staff member and a former high school student who found himself in prison.

In our ministry, we have safeguards of anonymity and pseudonyms as the students write. Within that framework, students have the chance to share faith and encouragement with those who so much need it.

It’s pretty uncommon. First of all, writing letters the old-fashioned way. Then writing to someone, perhaps their own young age, whose life is very different from their own. Someone who’s made some terrible decisions and is paying a great price. But it’s a chance to share the love of the Savior who paid the ultimate price for all of our sins—the innocent who died for all of the guilty. They write of forgiveness and eternal life and freedom from the prison of sin which holds us all. It’s just another opportunity for our students to live uncommon.

REV. STEVE SMITH
Campus Pastor
Join Concordia for a fun-filled night of baseball. Catch the Northwoods League Lakeshore Chinooks on their home field of Kapco Park, located on CUW’s campus. Special alumni ticketing is offered on the following dates:

June 26  –  School of Arts and Sciences
July 12  –  Batterman School of Business
July 18  –  School of Education
July 21  –  Hall of Fame and all CUW Alumni
Aug. 3   –  ’90s CUW Reunion
Aug. 11  –  Health Care Professionals

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS
cuw.edu/alumnichinooks

VIEW THE SEASON SCHEDULE
northwoodsleague.com/lakeshore-chinooks