



THE CENTER FOR COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Building a Better Politics on Campus and Beyond By Dr. Ben Peterson



If there's one takeaway from the 2024 election, it's that our nation struggles to find common ground and engage in productive dialogue across divides. Since 2023, Alma College has been developing programs aimed at establishing our campus as a center for civil discourse and constructive politics. Programs like the Doing Democracy Summer Seminar and Common Sense Solutions have equipped college and high school students with the skills to engage beyond partisan boundaries. During this election season, our Campus Conversations and Scot Speaker Series have focused on approaches to bridging divides within our democracy.

From these initiatives, we've learned that people have a real desire to overcome division and rebuild community. As we move forward, we hope to be a resources for the broader community. If you're interested in collaborating to foster kinder, more productive politics that brings communities together, I'd love to connect! Please reach out to me at petersonbl@alma.edu.

Upcoming Events:

Native American Heritage Month to be Celebrated in November

Thursday, November 21 from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM in the Remick Heritage Center for Performing Arts

For the second consecutive year, the college is partnering with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe on a Drum and Dance Presentation, open to the public and free to attend. At the Drum and Dance Presentation, dancers and tribal leaders offer not only examples of various styles of dance, but also explanations for how and when those dances are performed. For more information, email Glenn at glennjb@alma.edu

Festival of Carols

Saturday, November 23 from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM AND Sunday, November 24 from 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM in the Remick Heritage Center, Presbyterian Hall

Join us for traditional beginning of the Christmas season for the Alma College campus and community. This annual tradition at Alma College combines all the Alma Choirs and the Chamber Orchestra to present a concert full of holiday favorites that celebrates the sense of community, joy and love that the holidays can bring. Tickets: \$15 adults; \$7 seniors 62+; Alma College staff, students and youth 18 and under are free; seating is reserved. For reservations go to <https://alma.universitytickets.com/>

Come Home to Alma for the Holidays

Friday, December 13th located in Downtown Alma. from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Save the date and plan on celebrating with us in beautiful Downtown Alma! There will be events for all ages and interests throughout the night as we come together as a community and celebrate the holidays. Many businesses will also be participating in special sales and activities. Stay tuned for updates of events as the event gets closer.

Come Home to Alma for the Holidays - Jingle Bell 5K and 10K - Begins at Wright Park Saturday, December 14

**10k Run - 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM - \$35
5k Run/Walk - 10:00 AM to 12:30 AM - \$30
Kid's Reindeer Trot - 9:40 AM to 10:00 AM - \$15**

For information about this event visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MI/Alma/ComeHomeToAlmafortheHolidaysJingleBell5K>

Alma community Trunk or Treat

By Joanna M. Scorziello

Nine Alma College Athletic teams and Fraternity & Sorority Life participated in the Alma community Trunk or Treat on October 17th including, women's and men's wrestling, women's bowling, men's and women's lacrosse, dance, softball, women's golf, and men's and women's tennis. Many of the teams brought activities related to their sports for the trick-or-treaters to participate in such as a lacrosse net to shoot into, tennis rackets to balance tennis balls in, a mini golf game, and more. The families who joined this event seemed to have fun participating in the games while receiving candy. Additionally, many athletes thought it was a great experience to become more involved with the Alma community and volunteer with their teams.



Meet Our AmeriCorps VISTA Team

The Center for College and Community Engagement hosts three AmeriCorps VISTAs, each completing a year of service doing capacity building work with nonprofit organizations that address poverty in Gratiot County. Could your organization use assistance?



Meet Zoe Palmer from Gaylord Michigan and enjoys listening to music and walking her dog: Alma College staff were so welcoming last year, so I wanted to continue my journey here; community engagement is important to me because it goes beyond the classroom. My four years of AmeriCorps service in communities throughout the United States have taught me skills that textbooks couldn't. I was able to understand the population I was serving and see that there is so much need, even just in your local community. I have family in Alma, and this is where my dad was born, so I feel a sense of home here. Being able to spend two years serving people in this town has had such a profound personal impact on me because of how it hits so close to home.



Meet Ingrid Gustafson from Apple Valley, Minnesota, a suburb of the Twin Cities: I love creating, from writing and drawing to making little videos of my travels. Having recently graduated from Luther College, I knew the environment would be similar, but was intrigued to see the differences while transitioning out of college and into this new career phase of my life. As someone concerned about many of these huge issues we are facing today, community involvement is a great way to start to understand and address these issues in real tangible ways that create ripples of change whether we see them or not.



Meet Maria Kolb, a recent graduate of Alma College and a member of the Alma community. I joined the Alma College VISTA program because of my background as a precinct delegate and my interest in community engagement. This year I'm working as a grant writer, fundraiser, and volunteer recruiter focused on addressing the needs and harnessing the potential of our community. With a strong focus on healthy futures and environmental stewardship, I aim to secure funding for local organizations. Beyond meeting present needs, I am also committed to building long-term capacity by providing direction and tutorials, empowering organizations to keep growing and making a difference on their own.

HAVE A PROJECT IDEA & NEED VISTA ASSISTANCE?



THEY CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Program development and event planning
- Social media and website engagement/development
- Grant writing and fundraising
- Volunteer recruitment



Fall Break Service Projects

By Carla Jensen



During fall recess October 5-8, Alma College students engaged with the community through a number of service projects. Students and staff participating in Alternative Fall Breaks completed projects with Forest Hill Nature Area, the Children's Discovery Academy, and Karma Kat Cafe. The football team also completed an afternoon of service, connecting with Habitat for Humanity, Isabella County Restoration House, Forest Hill Nature Area, City of Alma, and the Friends of the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail. Thanks to all our community partners for a great experience!