



**IDENTIFYING
LOCAL
CHANGEMAKERS**

**Dr. Carrie Hart
UNCSA**



**SPATIAL JUSTICE
STUDIO**

Fellowship Final Report



2020-21

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

UNCSA High School Seniors enrolled in a “Changemakers” themed English course undertook a participatory action research project over the course of the 2020-21 academic year. Students identified a changemaker local to Winston-Salem and/or Forsyth County, conducted independent research about these changemakers and the contexts of the issues they are addressing, and represented their research in a public-facing narrative series on UNCOSA’s website. Over the duration of the project, students familiarized themselves with the context of the problem their changemaker is addressing, interviewed the changemaker about their inspiration and work, and crafted their research into a narrative that presented this changemaker in a fair and accurate way. During the research process, students interrogated the role that spatial politics play in not only changemaking work itself, but also how space impacts access to resources and is implicated in the very problems that changemakers are working to address. This year’s project will function as a pilot program, with the goal being to conduct the project again with different local changemakers in future versions of the course.



Local



Change



Makers



2020-21 PROCESS & TIMELINE

- August / September: Students establish conceptual foundation for understanding spatial and social justice through assigned course texts
- October / November: Dr. Hart conducts research to identify local individuals and groups working to address spatial and social injustice in Winston-Salem
- December / January: Dr. Hart pairs students with local changemakers based on student interest
- February: Students conduct initial interviews and research on the context surrounding the work their chosen changemaker is doing
- March: Students conduct follow-up interviews with chosen change-makers, draft changemaker profiles, and workshop profiles in class
- April: Students brainstorm and create website, revise and complete narratives
- May: Students publish their research to UNCSA's website, present their work publicly during the final exam period

Local Changemaker Project Confirmed Participants

UNCSA Student	Organization	Org Focus	Changemaker
Will Meeks	Artists of Color, UNCSA	Racial Equity; Education	Murphy Applin
Aron Stornaiuolo	Artists of Color, UNCSA	Racial Equity; Education	Trey Gray
Anthony Costello	H.O.P.E. of Winston-Salem	Food Justice for children	Scott Best
Alicia Bivona	Hustle Winston Salem	Racial and gender equity in entrepreneurship	Magalie Yacinthe
Mary Poole	Mental Health Association of Forsyth County	Mental Health	Andy Hagler
Grace Robinson	North Star LGBTQ Community Center	LGBTQ+ rights & community	Sam Levi Sizemore
Isabel Clements	Apple House Pictures	LGBTQ+ stories / filmmaking	Grant & Adam Conversano
Luisa Wilson	Piedmont Environmental Alliance Bellflower Media	Environmental sustainability	Miller Coffey
Sasha Silverman	The Shalom Project	Poverty reduction; food and medical care assistance	Maggie Walker & Katie Hilderbrand
Mei Iguchi	Hispanic League	Hispanic community + rights in W-S	Mari Jo Turner
Lindsey Johnson	Women of Action	Community & Civic Engagement; Voter Education	Christy Robinson

PROJECT PROCESS

As the teacher of the “Changemakers” section of Senior Seminar English and the leader of this project, I located adults within local community organizations who were willing to let my students interview them and profile them for this project (final list above). Once each changemaker confirmed their willingness to participate, I shared their contact information with the student who chose to focus on their particular area of change-making, and I coached my students through the process of establishing contact, scheduling interviews, and writing interview questions. We did a mini-unit on research ethics, which gave my students some things to consider while crafting their initial interviews.

During the spring semester when the largest portion of research was underway, I established two small working groups within my class that met on a regular basis throughout this spring semester to provide accountability and support for this project. By the end of the project, my students each conducted two interviews with their respective changemaker, did supplemental research to explore the context in which their changemaker is working, and wrote and revised two drafts of their changemaker’s profile.

As a class, we also collaborated on our vision of how to present this information on a public-facing website. Based on the class’s suggestions, I conferred with UNCOSA’s website team and established a working plan to house the final changemaker profiles on the UNCOSA website, similarly to this Division of Liberal Arts [Storytelling Through Arts and Reflection](#) project. My students and I co-authored language for the home page that describes the project concept as well as what my students have learned over the course of the project.

RESULTS & STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Learning Goals:

The overall vision of this project has been to help students:

- Gain academic stamina through the process of pursuing a year-long project
- Practice interview and research skills
- Deepen their understanding of spatial and social injustice in a local context
- Empower students to develop thick connections with community members who are proactively pursuing justice

Message from the inaugural class of 2021

Not only have we learned about our changemakers, but they have inspired us to be changemakers in our own ways. It is important for us to not only know about the change, but also to be it. Doing this project gave us a better sense of what our changemakers are trying to do. Working with these changemakers made us more aware of the injustices many people face and also how members of local communities are working to solve them. As students, we're also playing a small, yet crucial part in communicating a bigger message about the importance of educating ourselves and changemaking.

- I've learned that being a changemaker is so much more challenging than it seems. There are so many opportunities in which they could give up but the passion they have keeps them going. Once you get a group that supports you and can be with you on the journey, things get easier. -Alicia B.
- It was inspiring to see someone that is not actually part of a certain oppressed group making a change. Anyone can be a changemaker. -Mei I.
- I have learned that with the passion and drive to help others and fix something, people are often willing to turn their whole lives around. -Anthony C.
- I have experienced the true essence of what it means to be a changemaker from my inspiring individual, Christy Robinson. I have learned with the support and help from a community any change can be made. - Lindsey J.
- I have learned that it truly can come in many forms and from anywhere. It simply takes a will to make the jump and some help along the way. - Isabel C.

Continued reflections from the inaugural class of 2021

- From this project, I have gained firsthand experience on what it's like to undergo an interview process. I've learned that our capability to be open, accepting, and understanding is endless. In our communities, we must work together to help one another and create change. - Grace R.
- This project not only taught me about the work of my individual, Tramaine Grey, but also inspired me to pursue changemaking through my own art. Maybe someday, someone will be interviewing our class on what it's like to be a changemaker! - Aron Stornaiuolo
- I had the opportunity to immerse myself in someone else's life, someone else's passions and experiences, and I was able to use that information to educate myself and others, which I found very inspiring. - Luisa W.
- It has been inspiring to learn about how much work goes into addressing and solving an issue, such as poverty. My changemakers have shown me that passion and teamwork are key ingredients to create change. - Sasha S.
- As a huge advocate for mental health change, I had the opportunity to work with a like-minded individual and learn about ways I too could make change. -Mary Poole
- I have learned that everyone and anyone has the chance to make change in society. I got the opportunity to learn from someone who has more experience of being an African American male in America. -Will Meeks