

THE FRONT PORCH

Do you recall the last time you enjoyed a visit on a front porch? Perhaps you chatted with a neighbor about how to solve a problem on Main Street, or maybe a friend came over to brainstorm about how to launch a new business. It seems to me that a whole lot of good thinking and old fashioned community building takes place on front porches – it's a nice place to spend some time and sort out next steps.

The front porch is a metaphor we often like to use for the [Center for Community Partnerships](#) (CCP) at the [University of Wisconsin – Parkside](#). We strive to be a front porch for the University as community members come for a visit and decide whether to spend a bit of time with students, faculty and staff. Community members may choose to step from our porch into the door of a classroom or conference, or experience some other opportunity our campus has to offer. There are also many instances when our faculty, staff and students step off the porch and venture into the community. A campus community member might engage in a service-learning or research project, provide expertise for a local business or organization, or participate in a collaborative effort to address a regional need like workforce development or educational attainment.

At the CCP, our primary focus areas are nonprofit development, community-based scholarship, continuing education for teachers and other professionals, and community development and diversity issues. In this column, my colleague [Debra Karp](#) and I will not only let you know about some innovative programs and opportunities that you can explore at the university and in the community, but also about various resources that are at your fingertips.

The Front Porch will inevitably celebrate significant UW-Parkside grant awards like the \$1,000,000 we recently received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to foster nonprofit capacity building, or the \$497,691 awarded by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to expand mentoring in middle schools, or the \$300,000 from the National Science Foundation to support science teaching efforts, particularly in grades 3 – 8 in urban schools. But more importantly, we will explain what we're doing with the resources we garner and how you can benefit from and collaborate in the work that takes place.

To be clear, community engagement does not only happen at the CCP. As our new Chancellor [Deborah Ford](#) is quick to point out, community engagement is a hallmark at UW-Parkside that permeates throughout the University. In fact, our university wide community engagement efforts have been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation that chose us as the first public post-secondary learning institution in the state to be honored for service-learning and community partnership efforts.

Since community engagement is a university wide priority, this column will also highlight community engagement efforts across campus. You will learn about star-studded teaching and outreach efforts like when our Theatre Arts Department recently earned the first University of

Wisconsin Regents Teaching Excellence Award ever bestowed upon an arts department. We might also share news about some nifty global partnerships like when Professor and Fulbright Scholar [Jonathan Olsen](#) connects with colleagues in Germany to co-author a book, or when he creates an international learning opportunity for students. Have a chat with Prof. Olsen and he will likely urge you to “Die Welt erleben,” or “Experience the World.”

Yes, there may be some boasting on our front porch just like grandpa used to do, but more importantly, we hope to stimulate thinking and prompt opportunities to meet community needs and spark new partnerships. We won’t just pontificate about building social and economic capital – we’ll do it right here in this column by helping you make connections and provide pieces of information that are relevant and meaningful.

Each column will end with three “Front Porch Rockers” that provide opportunities for you to engage with the University and/or the community. Here are today’s rockers:

Front Porch Rockers

- 1) **Are You “Fair” Skinned?**—Saturday, March 6th, 10:00 am to 4:00pm—HOPES Center/Just Trade, 505 6th Street, Racine, WI. In honor of International Women’s Day, participants will have a chance to try a large variety of Fair Trade skin care products. For more information, contact AmericaCorps*VISTA member Pam Touhey at the Center for Community Partnerships, at 262-595-2140 or touhey@uwp.edu.
- 2) **Cheer on UW-Parkside Rangers Women’s Basketball:** After an impressive 50-36 win against Northern Kentucky last weekend, the UW-P Women’s Basketball team advances to the GLSV Semifinals against Indianapolis this Saturday, March 6th at Noon. Game is at the TRAC on the Illinois-Springfield campus. For more information, visit: <http://www.parksiderangers.com/index.aspx?path=wball>
- 3) **Explore Nonprofit Fundraising and Earned Income:** “Fundraising and Earned Income” —Monday, March 8, 2010, 3:30pm to 6:00pm--UW-Parkside, Tallent Hall Room 201. Fee is \$40 and includes a light snack. To register, contact Felicia Stallworth at 262-595-2312 or ccpinfo@uwp.edu. For more information, see [flyer](#).

So please pull up a chair, spend some time on your university’s front porch, and let’s see together what problems we can solve, partnerships we can create, and learning and laughter we can enjoy.

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