



VOICE

A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SINCE 1907 | SPRING 2015

GRADUATING STUDENTS LOOK BACK

An unprecedented 20 students of Pres House's family graduated this spring. Here are two students' look back.



Helen Chao: During my freshman year, I came to Frunch (Freshmen Lunch) with two of my high school friends, not knowing that it was this really awesome event. I just heard there would be free quesadillas, and who would turn down free quesadillas? I had my freshman advising session immediately after and that's when I learned my first lesson in college: lines for free food are really, really long! I had to hurry to the Middleton building and had no idea where it was and I was starting to panic. A nice guy in a Pres House shirt came to my rescue. He didn't know where it was either, but he went out of his way to look it up and gave me the directions. I got my quesadilla and I was on my way. I didn't even stay to eat it! I actually don't think I even knew the name of this place when I left. But I do know that you can lull any college kid to an event with free food because my roommate and I heard about a free dinner on Sunday and came hiking from Lakeshore not knowing there was service before the meal. We came extremely late and barely caught the last of the sermon. Everyone was so friendly and kind though and I just stuck around and kept coming back. Boy, am I glad I did.

Pres House has been with me through a lot of ups and downs, highs and lows, and roses

and prickles. I'll always be eternally grateful for all of the people I've gotten to know and for the second home that Pres House has become for me. Knowing that my time is coming to an end here is daunting and scary.

Last spring, when I found out I could graduate a year early, I jumped right onto the bandwagon. I was having a really hard time and it had been a really bad year. I didn't know who I was or where I was going and I sort of lost myself. I was fed up with everything and I was done. I was done with school, done with Madison, I was ready to leave and to start over somewhere new. I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do afterward, but I was just ready to get out. Little by little, I came to understand that struggle and angst was God's way of changing me and showing me a new path. Instead of running away from my problems, I'm now running toward a new future in being God's tool in helping to shape the lives of others. Like Isaiah 40 states, I just had to wait for God to renew my strength so I could run and not be weary. Never in a million years would I have thought that I would graduate early and dedicate the upcoming year to service work with Young Adult Volunteers.

Pres House has radically changed my faith journey and I'm so glad for it. I've had such an incredible experience within and outside of these walls. I hope that in the days to come, Pres House will be some other freshman's new home where they'll feel so welcomed, loved, and treasured. I hope that they find God among these walls and that they be radically transformed by God here, magical place where God is ever present and at work changing lives.

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“HEARING AND RESPONDING TO GOD’S CALL”

AN EVENING WITH SHANE CLAIBORNE

On a cold winter night in February, people began filling the chapel in anticipation of hearing Christian activist, author, and speaker Shane Claiborne. Co-sponsored by Pres House and four other campus ministries at UW-Madison (St. Francis House, His House, the Crossing, and Badger Catholic), this event brought more than 150 people together who were inspired by Claiborne’s stories and call to join in God’s work in their communities.



Prior to the evening lecture, students from the sponsoring ministries gathered with Claiborne for a private dinner catered by UW Slow Food at Pres House. Sharing conversation and a locally sourced meal, students asked and received questions as they discussed what it looked like to follow Jesus on campus. It was a great “appetizer” to the public lecture which followed.

During the evening talk, Claiborne brought biblical stories into play with the lives of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in their communities on issues of poverty, racism, violence, and more. Conversations continued after his talk as people enjoyed refreshments and coffee from A Just Brew, a student organization that serves gourmet coffee in return for donations that are all given to International Justice Mission. It was a wonderful event which brought many Christians from the campus and community together for an evening of encouragement and exhortation. ✝

“DOC” LOWER HALL IS HERE!

INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY OF ALUMNI, BOARD MEMBERS, STUDENTS, AND FRIENDS OF PRES HOUSE LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

We are thrilled to announce that the new basement space at Pres House will be called the Cecil “Doc” Lower Hall (Lower is pronounced “lauer”).

Beloved pastor Rev. Cecil “Doc” Lower led the Pres House congregation from 1939 to 1951. During his tenure the membership at Pres House flourished. There were two worship services every Sunday and two choirs. Along with growing the community, Doc Lower provided a strong foundation of leadership and pastoral care that left life-long imprints on many of the students from that time. He married students, baptized their children, and continued to be a source of spiritual strength long after his time within Pres House walls. For these reasons, and many others, the Pres House Student Leadership Council and Board of Directors has chosen to name the new basement space in his honor.

In addition to honoring Doc Lower and a generation of Pres House students who were touched by him, the name contains a fun double meaning. In common usage the basement will be read as the “Lower Hall” which of course is also a nod to the location of the space - in the lower level of Pres House. A special thanks to faithful volunteer John Heaton for suggesting this unique name!

We received more than 75 name submissions. The Pres House Student



Leadership Council looked at all of them and selected their top three choices. Then the Pres House Board of Directors selected the final name from among the the top three. A big thank you to everyone who put forward names—there were many excellent options to choose from.

One of the special places within Lower Hall has also been given a special name. The new basement space includes a beautiful wood-paneled room that can be opened up as part of the full hall or closed to become a private meeting room. This space was named the Conger Meeting Room in honor of Lester, Ruth, Katinka, Sarah, and Harriet Conger, siblings who were all very involved at Pres House from 1943 to 1958. Katinka Stout (Conger) made a very generous contribution to the “Bring Back the Basement Campaign” and we are pleased to honor her gift and her family by naming this special new space the Conger Meeting Room. ✚

Save the Date

“Doc” Lower Hall and Conger Meeting Room Dedication

Come join us in celebration Sunday, September 27, 2015 4:00 p.m.

As you enter the new Lower Hall you will see a wall full of names. Names of current students stand alongside names of alumni from the last ten years as well as alumni from decades past. Names of community members, board members, staff members are interspersed with the names of parents, churches, and other organizations. It is because of all names on this donor wall that the basement of Pres House is back in service for students to grow in faith and community. 173 donors have given \$696,026 for this project towards a goal of \$700,000. Thank you! Your generosity is remarkable!

But the donor wall has a little more space on it. And we have just under \$4000 left to raise to reach the full goal. If you have not yet given to this project and would like to join the effort, please pledge or donation today. You can give or pledge online at <http://preshouse.org/basement/> or using the enclosed envelope. Please just note that your gift is for the “Bring Back the Basement” project. We would like to add your name to the cloud of faithful supporters who have made this vision a reality.



THE BASEMENT IS BACK!



On Sunday, April 26, Pres House hosted the first Sunday night dinner in the basement of Pres House in many, many years. After about eighteen months of planning, nine months of fundraising, and two months of construction, the basement is now officially back. Since that first dinner we have been actively using the beautiful new space for open mic nights, United Way meetings, PH Apartment resident meals, Board meetings, finals study lounge, and of course Sunday night suppers. On behalf

of the students and community members using the space now, and the generations who will enjoy it in the future, we extended a heartfelt "Thank you!" to the 173 donors who gave almost \$700,000 to make this project possible and "Bring Back the Basement" at Pres House. To see color photos of the construction process and new space visit: <http://preshouse.org/portfolio/lowerhall/> ✦





GEARING UP AND WINDING DOWN AT PRES HOUSE APARTMENTS

Students are gearing up for finals, just as the spring semester and the leasing year starts to wind down. It has been a busy and productive year: making new friends, learning about other cultures, unwinding in the Rec Room and keeping up with classes.

As we approach the end of this year we can look back and celebrate the things that make PH Apartments not just another place to rest your head or keep your stuff. UW student residents benefit from a living environment that values their academic success, provides opportunities to explore spirituality, and encourages each resident to balance personal responsibility with making community connections.

The Coffee Buddies program paired one American student with an international student and encouraged them to get better acquainted one cup of coffee at a time; the coffee was on us! Our monthly drop-in Community Dinner gave residents a home-cooked meal and a chance to meet and talk to their neighbors in a friendly setting. The final community dinner of the year will be hosted in the newly remodeled Lower Hall, giving residents their first peek at this beautiful community space.

Spring semester kicked off with a free and fun-filled a-Capella performance by UW's Fundamentally Sound. Residents laughed, clapped, and sang along with this talented group of young men.



The PH Apartment Scholars were busy all year, meeting each month for a variety of activities and programs from community service projects to a QiGong movement meditation workshop. The year culminated in our final dinner and a conversation with Vice President and Dean of Students Lori Berquam about "Making the Most of your Wisconsin Education." Dean Berquam asked what had brought each Scholar to UW-Madison and what transformative experiences they'd had. She shared some of her own experiences as Dean as well as issuing a challenge to the Scholars to use their "Head, Heart, Hands, and Health" to make a difference in the communities where they live and work in years to come.

The LEAP (Leaders for Environmental Awareness and Protection) Micro-community members aren't waiting to make a difference where they live. They used spring semester to sponsor a PH Apartment can drive (We CAN!) and donated proceeds from recycling aluminum cans to a local agency.

Residents who participated in the Vocational Internship Program shared their internship experiences and vocational reflections from the year at the final Family Dinner/VIP Sharing in Lower Hall.

Whether taking a study break to pet and play with the Dogs at Pres House, enjoying Wednesday Afternoon Tea and Conversation, or watching a late night movie with friends, residents know there is more going on at PH Apartments than a place to rest your head or store your stuff; we foster academic success, spiritual exploration, personal responsibility, and community, one program at a time. ✚

Support Pres House

Throughout this newsletter you have read about the exciting activities happening at Pres House. Ministry at Pres House is possible only through generous donations from alumni, friends, and churches.

Please give today by using the enclosed envelope or send your contributions to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, WI 53703. You can also give online at www.preshouse.org/donate.



THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

It is with deep gratitude that we would like to thank all of the church volunteers who have so graciously provided meals for our community this year. Your time and effort have made our community stronger and more connected by breaking bread together each Sunday over delicious meals provided by you! ✝



“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart.”

– Elizabeth Andrew

- ❖ First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee
- ❖ Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison
- ❖ Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison
- ❖ Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe
- ❖ Dale Heights Presbyterian Church, Madison
- ❖ Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church
- ❖ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison
- ❖ First Presbyterian Church, Oregon
- ❖ First Presbyterian Church, Lodi
- ❖ Sun Valley Presbyterian Church, Beloit
- ❖ First Presbyterian Church, Cambria
- ❖ Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Cottage Grove
- ❖ Presbywheelians: Madison Area Bike for Boys and Girls Club Team

Pres House seeks to be a spiritual home at the heart of the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus. In keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition of hospitality, Pres House is dedicated to providing a religious center and high quality student housing to promote the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual growth of residents and members of the campus community. Pres House is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and welcomes individuals of every perspective and background.



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WOOF-WOOF

Dogs On Call came to visit Pres House this spring. Residents in the Scholars program requested a dog visit during finals for stress management. Students from both the apartment and worshipping community have enjoyed hanging out with the pooches. ✝

