



**The Stephen D.
London Center for
Community
Engagement and
Social Justice**

**Annual
Report**

Simmons UNIVERSITY

The Stephen D. London Center for
Community Engagement and Social Justice

London Center Team

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Courtney Kramer: Assistant Director

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Program Director

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Hannah Bini: Community-Based Programs and
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Jasmeen Kaur: Service and Volunteering
Program Assistant

Alisa Luchitskaya: Communications Program
Assistant

Calla Savelson: Jumpstart Community
Engagement Leader

Alexis Worthen: Social Justice Program Assistant

The London Center

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The 2023 - 2024 academic year was a busy one for the Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice. This was our first full year as “the London Center,” in which we continued to strengthen and grow our Community Engagement programming, while also adding and elevating Social Justice programming. Highlights from this year include:

- **Student Programming:** We welcomed our second cohort of Bonner Community Leaders to campus this semester and continued to build out this intensive leadership program. We also completed our 29th year of our Jumpstart AmeriCorps program on campus!
- **Leadership in Social Justice Series:** We launched this series with a focus on homelessness and housing, providing many opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumnae/i to come together to learn and strategize for change.
- **Opportunities for Engagement:** We continued to work with a variety of community organizations to provide opportunities for learning, engagement, and action, including hosting the 26th annual Boston Area International Women’s Day Breakfast and “Art from Inside” from the Prison Book Program in our Social Justice Art Gallery.

With all of this work and much more you will read about in these pages, we are proud to honor both the legacy of our new namesake, Professor Emeritus Stephen D. London, and the continued passion for social justice in the Simmons community. We look forward to continuing this work with you next year and in the years to come!

In Solidarity,

Meghan V. Doran, PhD
Director for Community Engagement and Social Justice



Want to support our work?



[Visit our website to learn how to get involved](#)



[Looking to donate?](#)
[Include "London Center" in designation:](#)



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Our Mission

The Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice facilitates and promotes community-based learning and develops strategic partnerships to advance learning, promote civic engagement, and enhance community involvement in order to create a more just society.

Our Goals

- 1** Promote and support community engagement and pedagogically sound community-based learning, grounded in inclusive and equitable practices.
- 2** Develop reflective and socially responsible leaders with a readiness for civic action.
- 3** Form strategic partnerships with organizations that: advance women's and girls' leadership and/or are in our local community of the Fenway/ Mission Hill/ Jamaica Plain
- 4** Advance social justice on issues that meet community needs and speak to Simmons student, faculty, and staff interests and strengths.

Our Impact

388

Undergraduate and graduate students formally engaged in our programs

45

Organizations partnered with in the greater Boston area

16,820

Hours served during the 2023-2024 academic year

\$146,681

Federal Community Work Study Dollars paid to students

Bonner Community Leaders Program

Launched at Simmons in 2022, the Bonner Program is a four-year, nationally acclaimed service-based experiential learning and leadership program where students partner with community-based organizations and simultaneously engage in leadership development and growth opportunities provided by their college or university.

In addition to receiving the opportunity to participate in an intensive, developmental community engagement experience, Bonner Leaders receive four years of financial aid support, allowing low-income students and diverse, and often historically underrepresented students, including students of color and first generation students, the opportunity to receive financial support for their work in community engagement.

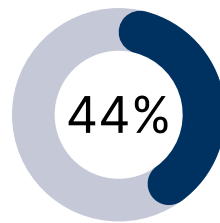


2024 - 2025 Highlights

- **16** Bonner Community Leaders served up to **10** hours per week for the course of the academic year
- Bonner Leaders worked alongside **10** Community Partners
- Together, Bonners served a total of **3,192** hours over the course of the year

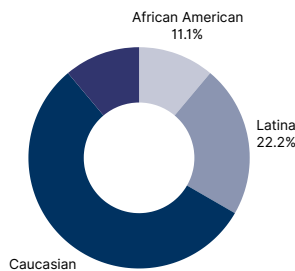
Simmons University is the **first institution** of higher education in Massachusetts and only **the third in New England** to be accepted into the Bonner network.

The Bonner Program model has proven to be a successful model for the enrollment, retention, and graduation of low-income, first generation, and diverse students.



First-Generation

Of the 10 First Year Bonner students, 44% are the first in their families to go to college.



Program Demographics

First Year Students in the Bonner Program self-identify as: African American (11%); Latina (22%); Two or More Races (11%); and as Caucasian (55%).

“Such a terrific program to provide well-rounded nonprofit experience to students and to provide nonprofits with a 4-year intern -- we are thrilled to participate in the program!”

-Bonner Community Partner



Jumpstart AmeriCorps

During the academic year, students serve 300 hours by providing language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities. In addition to the 60+ hours of early childhood and social justice training, students work in teams to intentionally plan their classroom engagement to help the young children in Boston enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. Jumpstart Simmons is an affiliate program of Jumpstart for Young Children Inc.; learn more by visiting jstart.org.

“

I love the community that Jumpstart has offered! Working with the children as well as the Corps is so wonderful and has brightened my time at Simmons. I love learning about the greater Boston community and being active in meeting the needs of those who live here.

-AY23-24 Member

”

Funding & Awards

- \$24,067.38 awarded to students in the Segal Education Award scholarship
- \$98,201 sub-granted to Simmons to staff and operate Jumpstart on campus
- \$27,000 secured in stipends from Jumpstart for non-federal work study students



2023-2024

By the Numbers



6259

Hours served



351

Family activity kits distributed



229

Children impacted



22

AmeriCorps members enrolled



13

Classrooms impacted



107

Video lessons created

“Jumpstart has also taught me the significance of intentionality in my actions and words, which has proven to be a valuable skill across various aspects of my life. However, it's not just about self-improvement. Jumpstart is a platform for building meaningful social connections. I've had the privilege of meeting people from diverse backgrounds, and together, we engage in mutual learning. This network has opened doors to various opportunities, from work prospects around Fenway to exciting internships and recommendations for great restaurants and shops. The sense of community that Jumpstart fosters is truly special.”

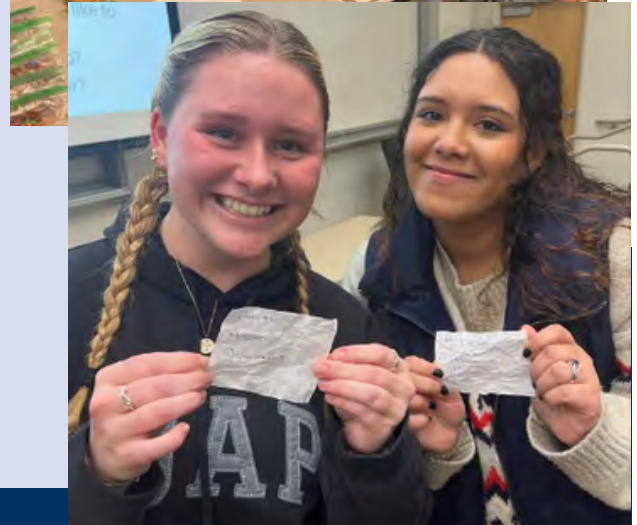
- AY23-24 Member

Strong Women, Strong Girls

39 Simmons students served as Strong Women, Strong Girls mentors working in 4 local elementary schools for a collective 3,173 service hours.

Through SWSG, mentors utilize a research-based curriculum that incorporates the study of contemporary and historic female role models, skill-building activities, and strong relationships with mentors and peers to work with 3rd through 5th grade girls and nonbinary youth. This year, students hosted a Field Trip event where 26 mentees gathered at Simmons University to participate in activities showcasing the importance of self-expression in fostering creativity, connection, and personal growth.

- 📍 Mission Grammar School
- 📍 John Winthrop School
- 📍 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School K-8
- 📍 Rafael Hernandez Dual Language K-8 School



America Learns

America Learns is an in-school volunteer program that provides fundamental support to teachers and educators at the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School in Roxbury.

Every Orchard Gardens student participates in a minimum of four hours per week of art, including visual arts, dance, theater, and music. This year, **eighteen** Simmons Students volunteered in the visual arts classrooms, the strings class, eighth-grade ESL, kindergarten, third grade, and the school library!

“

I don't know what we'd be doing in the library without your Simmons students. I absolutely love seeing the students in the school. One mentor was there in the hallway cheering on the K2 kids in their ABC parade on Friday, and it was just so lovely to see her!!

-Orchard Gardens K-8 School Teacher

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Alternative Spring Break

Alternative Spring Break ("ASB") is a reflection-based, student-led program where teams engage in a social justice curriculum that prepares them to learn and serve in another community during a one-week trip over spring break.

This year, a group of eight interdisciplinary students from first years through seniors headed to San Diego, California to better understand housing, homelessness prevention and education, legislation around the criminalization of homelessness, and the intersection of these policies with immigration issues.

The group worked with local organizations including the San Diego Food Bank, Alliance San Diego—a nonpartisan civic engagement group, Community Housing Works, and PATH Connections Housing.

Led by two team leaders, the trip was filled with meaningful experiences, including visiting Chicano Park—an embodiment of the liberation movement to halt the California Highway construction that displaced indigenous residents in the 70s and is now a historical site that pays homage to historic contributions and political express of Mexican-American through murals and street art.



Alongside daily reflection activities, the week culminated with a student-led reflection at Sunset Cliffs Natural Park solidifying students' learning and intention to bring their knowledge back to Boston.

The group worked with local organizations including the San Diego Food Bank, Alliance San Diego—a nonpartisan civic engagement group, Community Housing Works, and PATH Connections Housing.



"ASB provides you with a transformative experience, both socially, politically, and mentally. I learned so much about myself and the world around me and felt so uplifted by my peers the entire time."

-ASB Participant

Community-Engaged Learning Courses

The London Center supports community-engaged learning (CEL) courses across the curriculum at Simmons. In CEL courses, students learn through mutually beneficial partnerships with external communities, both in greater Boston and beyond.

Course Spotlight

This Fall, Students in the Social Action Leaders course in the Complete Degree program collaborated with E&E Tea Co., a woman and black-owned tea company based in Columbus, Ohio, to create a unique herbal tea named "Rosie's Blend", with 20% of sales from this blend generously donated to Rosie's Place in support of Giving Tuesday. Students in the course also started a social media campaign "Students for Shelter" and conducted a survey on students experiencing homelessness at Simmons



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“This kind of learning experience fosters valuable skills, including communication and critical thinking, and it encourages social responsibility, civic engagement, and community-building.”

-Service Learning Student



212 undergraduate students and 59 grad students took CEL courses this year.

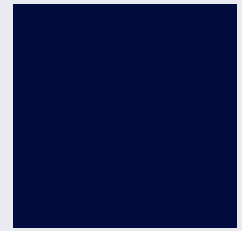


Students engaged with 38 community partners in Boston and across the country.



They contributed to a total of 3,172 hours of service through CEL courses.

Art & Community



Art from Inside

This Fall, the London Center's Art Gallery held an exhibit in partnership with the Prison Book Program that showcased artwork from incarcerated individuals. PBP director Kelly Brotzman discussed how incarceration impacts education and reading at the gallery's opening. Additionally, we held a drive that donated over 450 books to the program.

Reading Douglass Together

With generous funding from the Mass Humanities Council, Simmons joined organizations across the Commonwealth to host a collective reading of Frederick Douglass' speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" The hybrid event welcomed faculty, staff, students, and alumni to participate in the reading. Professors Abel Amado and Gary Bailey introduced and gave context to the speech, then moderated the collective reading and subsequent discussion.

"Brought the community together; honored someone who represents the values of the Simmons community; informed us / gave insight."

-Reading Douglass Together Participant

Reading Douglass Together

A community reading and discussion of "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Explore the continued relevance of Douglass' words today.

Light refreshments will be served.

**Wednesday,
February 28th | 5 pm**
C-220 and on Zoom

Discussion Facilitator | Prof. Abel Amado

Register now!

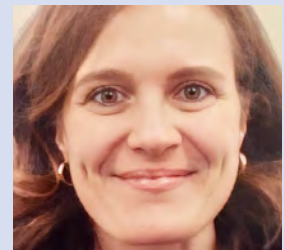
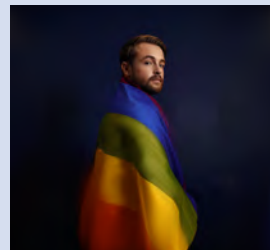
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Leadership in Social Justice: Housing Insecurity and the Housing Crisis in Boston

In the Spring 2024 semester, the London Center launched its first “Leadership in Social Justice Series” to help members of the Simmons community to become more socially informed leaders. The inaugural series focused on the housing crisis and housing insecurity.

Boston Housing Panel

Our kick-off event was a housing panel moderated by Social Work professor Gary Bailey with panelists Connor Schoen, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Breaktime, Kelly Turley, Associate Director at The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, Dr. Jo-Anna Rorie, midwife for the Curbside Care for Moms and Babies mobile unit, and Luc Schuster, Executive Director of Boston Indicators.



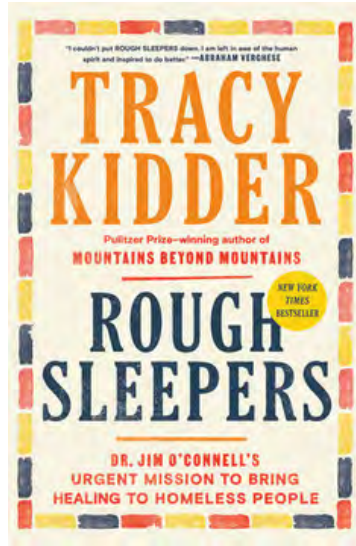
Hand to Hand

Students in the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program worked with Boston Healthcare for the Homeless with the Hand to Hand program and gave over 100 hand massages to people experiencing homelessness in the Boston Community.

Winter Drive

During the month of February, The London Center held a supply drive for Boston Healthcare for the Homeless. We collected donations both on campus and through an Amazon Wishlist. We donated a total of 123 items. Our most donated items were adult socks and underwear.

Housing Crisis in Boston Book Club

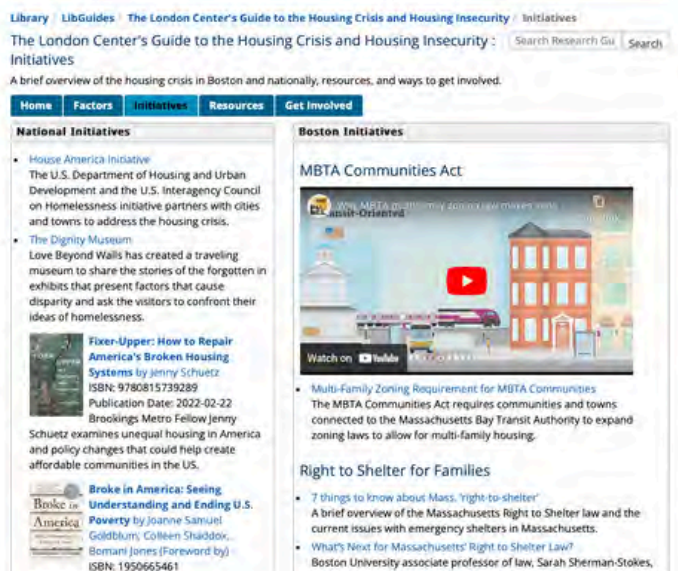


Simmons faculty, staff, undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni came together to discuss Rough Sleepers by Tracy Kidder and Poverty, by America by Matthew Desmond. Over 30 members of the Simmons community shared their thoughts on the books, problems facing the unhoused, and initiatives and steps to take to get involved.

“[Rough Sleepers] was a great book choice and the Zoom felt like a safe space to express opinions. I really learned a lot and valued everyone there.”

-Book Club Participant

Community LibGuide



To support the community and help give an overview of the housing crisis, the London Center built a community LibGuide. The guide offers an overview of the housing crisis in Boston and housing insecurity in a national context. Topics include some of the factors leading to this crisis, initiatives to alleviate housing insecurity, resources for those experiencing housing insecurity in our community, and ways to get involved.

By the Numbers



123
Items
donated



120
Hand
messages
given



212
Event
sign-ups



37
Book club
attendees

Advancing Gender Equity



Simmons has the privilege of working with and supporting a variety of organizations across the city that work to advance gender equity. This year we hosted about 200 area leaders for the 26th Annual Boston International Women's Day Breakfast with a theme of "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges." We were also excited to host the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women's Girls Empowerment Leadership Initiative Summit, as well as holding space for Girls LEAP and Get Girls Going.

In Boston and beyond, women are inspiring, organizing, leading, and accomplishing major change that will bring positive impacts to our communities for decades to come"

-Mayor Michelle Wu at International Women's Day Breakfast

Fenway High School Partnership

We continued our partnership with Fenway High School, whose mission is to "create a socially committed and morally responsible community of learners that values its students as individuals. Fenway's goal is to encourage academic excellence and to develop intellectual habits of mind, self-esteem, and leadership skills among all students." This year Simmons faculty, students, and staff supplied pre-participation physicals, volunteered as science fair judges, and helped with mock interviews at Career Day. We also hosted 75 Fenway juniors for their college admissions workshops in June.



Simmons faculty and staff volunteered as judges for the Fenway High School science fair at the Boston Museum of Science.

Drives and Volunteer Opportunities

Service, volunteering, and philanthropy are activities which help participants in the Simmons community learn about and understand social injustices and ongoing efforts to make real and lasting social change. This year, the London Center provided several opportunities to invite the Simmons community to engage and support our local communities as well as learn in and with those communities.



Muddy River Clean Up

- September 9, 2023
- October 11, 2023 (with Sunrise Simmons)
- April 21, 2024 (with Sunrise Simmons and Emmanuel College)

Share the Warmth Drive

- \$496 gift funds purchased
- 157 items donated to Nurtury Learning Lab including
 - 72 Pairs of Gloves
 - 25 Blankets
 - 23 Coats
 - ...And More!

THANK YOU!

...to all Simmons community members who participated in our Share the Warmth drive! Thanks to your help, we were able to collect:



MLK Jr. Day Volunteering

Students decorated glove/mitten clips and wrote stay warm notes to accompany the items donated for the Share the Warmth Drive.

Annual Awards

Jennifer McKee Distinguished Students

This award recognizes a student whose work with London Center for Community Engagement & Social Justice has made a unique and lasting contribution to the college's commitment to engagement:

Amanda Michel, DPT 2025

Madeline Alphonese, 2024

Emerging Leaders

This award recognizes a student who has made significant contributions to the community and lead by example early in their time at Simmons:

Maggie Fisher, 2025

Rachel Davis, 2026

Judith Botelho Commitment to Service Award

This award recognizes a student who exemplifies the commitment to community service that Judith Botelho demonstrated as a student and AmeriCorps*VISTA during her six years at Simmons.

Calla Savelson, 2024

Jasmeen Kaur, 2024

Leadership in Community-Based Learning Award

This award recognizes a group of students for their dedication and leadership in a community-based leadership component of a course:

Kayleigh Houle, Leah Ruddy, Mischa Elmoznino, Jennah Harvey

Stephan London Faculty/ Staff Community Service

This award recognizes a faculty or staff member who has shown commitment and passion to engage our students with the communities of Boston.

Matoka Kipp, Director of the REEF Center

Outstanding Community Partner

This award recognizes a community partner for sustained partnership with Simmons University in a spirit of collaboration and mutual benefit as evidenced by:

Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program, accepted by Dan Maloney

The London Center's Partners 2023-2024

Bonner Community Leaders

- 📍 Girls LEAP
- Massachusetts National Organization for Women (NOW)
- Fenway Health
- Massachusetts Peace Action
- Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW)
- Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School
- Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights
- Fenway Community Center
- PFLAG
- Our Bodies Ourselves Community Servings
- Muddy Water Initiative

America Learns

- 📍 Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School

Strong Women, Strong Girls

- 📍 Strong Women, Strong Girls
- Mission Grammar School
- John Winthrop School
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School K-8
- Rafael Hernandez Dual Language K-8 School

Volunteer Events

- 📍 Muddy Water Initiative

Jumpstart AmeriCorps

- 📍 ABCD Jamaica Plain Head Start
- Nurtury Learning Lab
- Jumpstart for Young Children

Summer Programs

- 📍 Sociedad Latina
- Mission Safe
- Girls Get Going

Service-Learning Courses

- 📍 Boston Healthcare for the Homeless
- Mount Pleasant Home
- Rogerson House
- Operation PEACE/Peterborough Senior Center
- The Base
- Boys and Girls Club of Boston
- Fenway High School
- Girls LEAP
- Simmons University Physical Therapy Association
- Sociedad Latina
- Spaulding Runners in Training
- Right Care Alliance
- MA Breast Cancer Coalition
- Bright Horizons Beacon Hill
- Hanover Nursery School
- Boston School Committee
- The Longwood Medical Area Child Care Center
- Ellis Early Learning - Jamaica Plain
- My Brother's Table
- EDEN Boston
- John Winthrop Elementary School
- Eastern Service Workers Association
- Rosie's Place
- Beth Israel Hospital
- Goddard House Assisted Living
- Hebrew SeniorLife
- Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
- Action for Boston Community Development
- MassNow



Our Community

During the 2023-2024 academic year, Simmons students engaged with 45 organizations across the Greater Boston area through the London Center.