As one mentee says, “The first time I met with my mentor, we were both extraordinarily new and eagerly sharing our post-graduate interests. Even though we met just a few times, he was an invaluable resource in terms of giving advice regarding networking, requesting letters of recommendation, and getting a job. I know that we will keep in touch even after the mentoring program is over!”

Christian Derr
University Printing Assistant Director of Operations

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Liz Burland (back row, center) pictured with her UD buildOn members during a visit from buildOn founder Johnathan Zitner.

Elizabeth Burland (AS ’15) was undecided when she arrived at UD from her home state of Connecticut, but one Intro to Public Policy class changed everything. “I’ve always been interested in poverty and public service,” Liz, now a Public Policy major, explains. “I quickly realized I have the skill set to work on policy and that’s a way I can really make a difference.” Liz’s enthusiasm for service and education policy led her to a job in Summer 2013 with buildOn, a non-profit that works to break cycles of poverty and illiteracy through educational after-school programs. Liz notes that buildOn creates service-learning curricular to engage students at home and bring them abroad to build schools in developing countries. She founded UD’s buildOn chapter in September and, over the course of just one year, was able to raise $50,000 to travel to Nicaragua and build a school there this summer.

The experience from buildOn, along with graduate coursework in public policy and acceptance into the Legislative Fellows program, contributed to Liz being selected as a 2014 Truman Scholarship finalist.

Next year, Liz and the rest of the buildOn chapter hope to engage even more UD students in education-related service in the Newark area while also fundraising to build a school in Africa. “I know that everyone’s not going to be equal in society but everyone deserves a chance,” she states. “Education is the best way to ensure that happens.”

When he first arrived in Washington D.C. in January 2013, Mark Rucci (AS ’15) admits that he was in awe. Mark, a Public Policy major in the 4+1 Program, spent that Winter Session evaluating Race to the Top grants and assisting with the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program. “I had pictured everyone in those buildings filled with passion, but it was actually very bureaucratic,” Mark says. “It solidified for me that if you want to have passion for helping kids, you need to be as close to them as possible.”

As a recipient of a 2014 Plastino Scholarship, Mark has developed a program for schools in developing countries. “The School Nutritional Awareness Consortium (SNAC), a group of faculty, staff, students, and parents that will create policy initiatives to offer public school students better, healthier meal options. He will spend his summer travelling to schools across the U.S. to study the National School Lunch Program and its negative effects on low-income and minority students. Mark’s research will be used to adjust the existing school nutrition program in the Wildwood School District in his home state of New Jersey. Mark notes that public education worked for him, but that disparities still exist between neighboring districts. His goal is for schools to adopt SNAC and provide free breakfast and lunch for their students.

Patti Cordes McClain & Rick McClain

Rick (AS ’04) and Patti (AS & BE, ’04) met at the beginning of their freshman year, when they both lived on the second floor of Russell A.

Throughout their years at UD, we went on several trips sponsored by the Honors Program and made great memories,” Patti says. “Ten years after graduation we’re still in close contact with many friends from the UD Honors Program.”

Alum Feature

After attending an admitted students weekend, Alaina Brown (AS ’14) knew that she was more than just a number to the Honors Program. “I was a student that they really want to come to UD,” she says. Under the guidance of exceptional Honors professors like Dr. Munson and Dr. Groh, Brown developed a love for chemistry and engaged in undergraduate research.

Brown’s interest in medicine became a calling during her sophomore year at UD when she served as counselor at Camp Fantastic, a camp for children with cancer in Virginia. The children at Camp Fantastic taught Brown a great deal about adolescent residency and she found herself truly inspired by “the fighting spirit of children with terminal illnesses.”

Brown has made an effort to meet the needs of the disadvantaged in her community. During her first year at UVA, she became involved with the Charlottesville Free Clinic; a center that provides medical care for uninsured adults who are unable to qualify for low-income healthcare. “Many of the patients that are served by the Free Clinic have no other options for health care,” Brown explains, “but I have never met more thankful people. I plan to continue to use my skills to help those who are underserved.”

Classroom Sneak Peek

In Victor Perez’s Introduction to Sociology class, students visit IKEA to explore the complex relationship between the individual and society. “Students get immersed in critical sociological theory by revising the IKEA model and its predictability and control,” says Perez. “and simultaneously counter the dehumanization that its rational, mass consumption model imposes on the customer.”