Vermillion United Way Campaign Celebrates 60 Years

The United Way of Vermillion has been supporting its community through a focus on education, income and health for 60 years. The organization celebrated its 60th Anniversary this fall with a 50s themed reception at the Coyote Twin Theater in hopes to give this year’s campaign a strong start.

The United Way campaign was first created to provide funding for the American Red Cross, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts groups in the Vermillion community. In 1956, the United Way was founded by community leaders like USD President I.D. Weeks to provide a way for citizens to give to Vermillion organizations.

Throughout the past 60 years, funding for those three organizations turned into funding for dozens of different programs with nearly $2.5 million raised. University of South Dakota employees have played an integral part from the beginning, and now give more than any other workplace. People in the USD community have served on the board, helping raise money for various organizations.

“The people who began this organization have left an amazing legacy for our community and that’s what we’re celebrating,” said Kelsey Collier-Wise, executive director of the United Way of Vermillion. “Hopefully, we’ll engage the people of Vermillion to leave a legacy for the folks who are here 60 years after us.”

This year’s United Way of Vermillion fundraising goal is $160,000. USD employees have the options of making a one-time donation or having the donations deducted from their paycheck each month. Simply download the pledge form found at www.unitedwayofvermillion.org by clicking “Donate” at the top. Donations can be in cash, check or credit card form.
Staffer Places at Toastmasters International Contest

University of South Dakota staff member Lindsay Hayes placed second in the Table Topics competition for District 78 at a recent Toastmasters International speech contest.

Hayes, coordinator of student and institutional assessment at USD, was awarded Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year for the Vermillion club this summer. She competed at the speech contest Oct. 22 in Sioux Falls. Table Topics is an impromptu speaking contest, where the contestants are assigned the same topic and give a one to two minute response.

“In order to compete at the District level, I had also placed first in the area competition in Yankton, and placed first in the division competition in Sioux Falls,” said Hayes. “It was a phenomenal and exhilarating experience.”

USD joined other colleges and universities nationwide last year and started a Toastmasters International Club for all faculty, staff, students and Vermillion residents who want to improve their communication skills. Besides public speaking skills, Toastmasters helps people find the right words during interviews, facilitate meetings and make presentations.

USD Delivers Criminal Justice Major Online

The University of South Dakota is now offering a popular minor in criminal justice online. The South Dakota Board of Regents approved the new delivery option at its October meeting.

USD officials made the request in response to growing demand for criminal justice courses, especially from students living off campus. USD already offers this minor on its Vermillion campus, at Black Hills State University-Rapid City and at University Center-Sioux Falls.

Over a four-year period, the number of students enrolled in USD’s criminal justice courses increased from 187 to 270 students. As of 2015, a quarter of those students were taking the course off campus.

Roripaugh, State’s Poet Laureate, to Give Lecture

Lee Ann Roripaugh, professor of English and South Dakota’s Poet Laureate, will present “Conversations in Contemporary Poetry and Poetics” at the English Colloquium Series on Monday, Nov. 14, at 4 p.m. in Old Main, Room 106.

Sponsored by the USD Department of English, the series presents weekly, non-specialist lectures by department faculty and guests on topics related to literary history. The talks are free and open to the public.

Roripaugh was named the state’s Poet Laureate in 2015. She is the author of four volumes of poetry and is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Review, USD’s quarterly literary journal.
Two University of South Dakota students were selected as the American Advertising Federation’s 2017 Most Promising Multicultural Students class. Ellie Murray, from Lafayette, Colorado, and Adriana Moreno, from Sioux City, Iowa, are two of the 50 most outstanding multicultural students in the field of advertising.

Students are selected from the 200 college chapters of the American Advertising Federation. They submit applications that include essays, letters of recommendation, resume and specific academic requirements. This year’s national winners have an average GPA of 3.6. They represent 34 schools in 20 states.

“The Most Promising Multicultural Students Program has become a very reliable source to find top-tier talent. These aspiring students of diverse backgrounds represent the future of marketing and advertising. We look forward to them forging their way, finding their voice and making a mark on our industry,” says Danielle Austen, Managing Partner & CEO, fluent360 and the AAF Mosaic Center Chair.

The group will participate in a four-day program in New York City that includes professional development workshops, agency visits and a recruiter’s expo. Leading advertising agencies and companies find the Most Promising program is a good recruitment tool for their job openings.

USD’s Center for Diversity and Community hosted its annual Diwali celebration Nov. 3 at the Muenster University Center.

The University of South Dakota Center for Diversity and Community celebrated the four days of Diwali, which is the Hindu festival of lights.

The overall theme was the celebration of life, its enjoyment and goodness. USD introduced its own Diwali celebration last year and its success has led to an annual event.

“Diwali is a very important celebration in India and everybody looks forward to it. All the houses are lit up with lamps and families get together to light fireworks, eat good food and enjoy each other’s company,” said Meera Venkatachalam, Ph.D., associate director of the honors program at USD. “When you are far away from your family and you miss them, celebrations are a great way of getting together as a community. Celebrating at USD is very special because now we are sharing a festival we enjoy and helping create new connections. If we all celebrate these wonderful cultural celebrations together, it increases the understanding of each other’s cultures and we care more for each other.”
Ranjit Koodali has been working at the University of South Dakota since August 2005, and was recently named dean of the Graduate School.

Before taking the dean position, Koodali was a professor in the Department of Chemistry and also served as the Graduate Program director. Koodali said he was “intrigued by the possibility as the dean of the Graduate School.”

Koodali was born in Tamil Nadu, India, and grew up in Madras, India, now called Chennai. Koodali received a B.S. degree in chemistry from Loyola College in Chennai and both his Ph.D. in physical chemistry and his M.S. in chemistry from the India Institute of Technology, Madras.

After completing his postdoctoral studies, Koodali was searching to continue his career as a professor and was looking at institutions that were relatively small in size and had a liberal arts emphasis. USD had an opening for a chemist with expertise in the area of photodynamics, which Koodali was familiar with through his doctoral work.

The position was a “good fit” for Koodali not only due to his doctoral work, but also because he appreciated the liberal arts education.

“The main advantages of USD or an institute like USD that is based on liberal arts is the diversity of disciplines we have,” Koodali said.

“We have doctoral programs ranging from humanities such as English to natural sciences such as physics and chemistry. The amount of disciplines that we have, both at the undergraduate and particularly at the graduate program, is remarkable.”

As the dean of the Graduate school, he has the task of administering and supporting all graduate programs at USD, all except the M.D. and J.D. programs. He also ensures that USD has rigor and quality in all the graduate programs and identifies areas for potential growth. Koodali also is tasked with identifying new graduate programs that can be developed and implemented at USD.

What Koodali enjoys most about his job is how the Graduate School can to assist many parts of USD’s campus.

“The most interesting thing is the graduate school is considered as a support center,” Koodali said. “Our staff and myself work rigorously on a day-to-day basis with students, with administrative staff across other units on campuses and with deans and with chairs, and this role of helping the students and helping these programs grow and solve problems and issues is what excites us the most.”

Koodali said in the long run, the Graduate School is looking to implement new programs. Also, the graduate school is planning on rolling out new ideas that will benefit students to become more well-rounded, such as creating career workshops.

“I’m just excited to serve USD as the dean of the Graduate School and as a support center,” Koodali said. “We are always helping a student, faculty, chair or a dean, and nothing can be greater than being a servant leader.”

Koodali has many publications and has conducted many presentations during his career. He has won many awards and honors, including the 2010 and 2013 President’s Research Excellence Award from USD. Koodali is married and has an 8 year sold son. He is an “avid follower” of cricket and professional sports and enjoys reading fiction and nonfiction books.
The University of South Dakota joins eight other institutions sharing a $20 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to further medical research in four central states.

“This project has a very worthy goal: to develop and guide clinical and translational research across the northern Great Plains,” said Dr. Mary Nettleman, dean of the USD Sanford School of Medicine. “Simply put, this will help turn scientific discoveries into actions that directly benefit people of the region.”

Funding is provided through the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program and the NIH’s National Institute of General Medical Studies. The grant will create the Great Plains IDeA-CTR Network, a collaboration involving nine institutions in four states – Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Kansas.

“USD researchers will have the opportunity to participate in the two major programs that the grant will support, the pilot projects and the scholars program,” said Robin Miskimins, associate dean for research of SSOM. “The pilot projects will focus on ways to take basic research findings and develop medical treatment and practice. The scholars program will allow us to add and train more researchers.”

In addition to USD, the funding includes the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Boys Town National Research Hospital, University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and the University of Kansas Medical Center.

The grant will focus on learning the best ways to approach diseases of aging and brain health, said Dr. Matthew Rizzo, principal investigator and chair of neurological sciences at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Medicine.

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A University of South Dakota School of Law professor has received a Fulbright specialist grant in law to conduct research and lecture at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam, Germany.

Myanna Dellinger will lecture on American climate change policy under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement and the post-election federal administration. She will also research improved methods of public participation in the development of climate change law and policy, given technological change and the changing preferences of new generations.

At the University of South Dakota, Dellinger teaches public and private international law as well as human rights law, among other topics. She has a Master of Arts in international communications from the the Aarhus University in Denmark and a law degree from the University of Oregon School of Law, where she graduated at the top of her class earning her the title Order of the Coif.

Professor Dellinger was also just announced an expert peer reviewer by the National Science Foundation in its Law and Social Sciences Program. She has visited 36 nations for business and pleasure and is fluent in English, Danish and German.
Before I developed my physique into the finely tuned athletic machine it now is, I was occasionally clumsy. When I was a kid I fell off curbs that everybody else stepped down, I tripped over things that were clearly marked, I cut myself on sharp edges that nobody else ever touched. I was constantly bruised, and usually had a cast, a Band-Aid or visible stitches somewhere on my body. My mother was so happy that I decided to go to college, because that way maybe I would end up in a safe office job, and perhaps live long enough to support her in her old age.

Well, I do work in an office now, but I still manage to get hurt sometimes. Offices offer plenty of opportunity for minor catastrophes, and I have availed myself of most of them. Let me run through my list of misadventures as a cautionary tale for all of you, so that we can all avoid trips to the emergency room.

- Don’t stand on a chair. Just don’t. I promise it will move on you, and you will fall down. Probably into a garbage can. (Twisted ankle and bruised wrist.)
- Close filing cabinet drawers before you walk away.
- Report loose or torn carpeting. (Just my pride, that time.)
- Adjust your workstation so that it is comfortable and ergonomically correct for you. Call me if you want some assistance in evaluating your work area. (No carpal tunnel syndrome so far. Knock on wood.)
- Don’t pick up heavy cardboard boxes incorrectly.
- Keep your extension cords in good order, so that you don’t trip on them.
- Don’t run with scissors. (Ha, got ya there. My mom must have told me that a million times, and now I don’t do it any more.)
- Don’t read or text while you walk.

It’s true that office work is safer than some jobs, but let’s not get so complacent that we ignore the basics. Keep your office neat and clean. Lift properly. Submit work orders for repairs, instead of doing them yourself. Evaluate your work area for comfort and safety. Use the handrails when going up or down stairs. And remember, don’t run with those scissors!

Future topic suggestions or health and safety concerns can be directed to Kevin O’Kelley at 677-6265 or Kevin.Okelley@usd.edu.

The Center for Academic & Global Engagement is highlighting global education. From Nov. 14-18, the university and community members are invited to celebrate cultures from around the world by participating in various events on campus.

During the week, there will be a cultural fair with flags, clothing and other special items from around the world; a passport workshop to prepare and apply for a passport; a study abroad alumni panel and tea time; and revealing of the International Education Photo Contest winners.

“Attending the expositions, workshops, and panels we offer during International Education Week will not only help students witness the richness of diversity we have on our campus, but will also provide helpful information on various study abroad opportunities,” said Virginija Marija, coordinator for academic engagement and one of the International Education Week planners.

International Education Week is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, as well as worldwide communities. The event creates connections across diverse global environments, offering attendees an enjoyable and educational experience like no other.

For a full schedule of USD event times and locations, visit the Global Learning website: www.usd.edu/cage/global-learning/international-education-week.