When Kendra Neugebauer was an audiology graduate student in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, she and her classmates traveled across the state to provide hearing screenings to the many athletes competing in the South Dakota Special Olympics Summer Games in Spearfish. Neugebauer, who now practices in Yankton, was so impressed with the sportsmanship and courage of the competitors that she has continued to volunteer at the Special Olympics even after she graduated from the program with a Doctor of Audiology degree in 2013.

“Getting to know the athletes and sharing the experience with them was the most enjoyable part,” she said. “Athletes participating in Special Olympics have an extraordinary sense of courage to overcome their various personal challenges to perform and compete with other fellow athletes.”

Neugebauer’s enthusiasm for the project is shared by other student participants, said Marni Johnson Martin, associate professor and clinic director for the South Dakota Special Olympics Healthy Hearing program. “Once our students experience the Special Olympics for the first time, it’s something they want to keep doing,” said Johnson Martin. “They are getting as much out of it as the athletes.”

Since 2012, Johnson Martin has supervised groups of approximately 10 audiology graduate students from the College of Arts & Sciences who administer the hearing screening to athletes at the Summer Games. These screenings are part of a larger national program called Healthy Athletes, which educates athletes on healthy lifestyle choices and identifies health problems that require additional follow-up.

“The goal is to pick up those individuals that may be at risk for a hearing loss,” Johnson Martin said of the Healthy Hearing program. “And we know that this population is at risk for hearing problems.” The screening occurs at different stations that include a visual examination of the ear with an otoscope and an otoacoustic emission screening, which is an objective way to measure the function of the inner ear and is frequently used to screen the hearing of newborn babies. Tests of middle ear function and pure-tone screenings are also done as needed. All athletes are then provided education on the importance of protecting their ears and hearing, especially when listening to music or when exposed to other noise.

To help the athletes understand the process and decrease anxiety, Johnson Martin and her students developed a visual schedule for each athlete with pictures and text to communicate what happens at each station and how to transition to the next area. She has shared the schedule with the national and international Special Olympics organizations and hopes it can become part of the Healthy Hearing protocol worldwide.

Johnson Martin not only works with Special Olympics, but also recently traveled to Tanzania to offer her professional services pro bono. Volunteering and outreach are a central part of her approach as a teacher. “The students are very receptive,” she said. “They get to apply what they are learning and also serve others.”
From the Dean’s Desk…

In our fall newsletter, we often tell you about collective successes in the College of Arts & Sciences, like our faculty teaching evaluations beating national benchmarks or our fundraising goals to support students and faculty being exceeded.

In our spring newsletter, we focus more on individual success stories, giving you a flavor of what truly happens in this square mile of Vermillion—a place where ideas are considered, thoughts exchanged, and horizons broadened.

March 2017 will be the 135th anniversary of the residents of Clay County, South Dakota, voting by a margin of 811 to 419 (66 percent) to pass a bond issue for $10,000 to build a university. What a remarkable legacy those settlers left behind, with more than 22,000 Arts & Sciences alumni now living all around the world. We are so proud of your collective accomplishments.

Rest assured that many dedicated people will continue working to ensure this place will always remain the state’s center of learning and discovery.

Also in March, I’ll be stepping down after 15 years as dean of the College of Arts & Sciences/Lohre Distinguished Professor, with deep gratitude to President Abbott for giving me this opportunity; John and Mary Lohre of Denver, Colorado, for generously sponsoring a named professorship; and, to so many of you—dedicated and caring alumni—who have helped in ways both seen and unseen. Your support has been remarkable.

I’ll be moving to Pennsylvania to become president of the Gettysburg Foundation. Please look me up if you come that way. Over the years, this deanship has taken me to 28 states, logging thousands of miles and meeting literally hundreds of A&S alumni. It has been a high point in my life. Thanks so much for your kindness and generosity.

Please continue to support the liberal arts and sciences. As I’ve repeatedly said to the faculty over the years—in what has become my mantra—we need to teach our students how to learn what it is they will eventually need to know.

Thanks for a great ride.

Matthew C. Moen, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Lohre Distinguished Professor

Arts & Sciences Outreach Activities Span the Disciplines

While we only have space to profile a few projects in this newsletter, all departments in the College of Arts & Sciences engage with the community through various outreach and service undertakings. Here is a listing of some other activities in the college.

Anthropology/Sociology: Through the Archaeology Laboratory, faculty and students research the human prehistory of the Great Plains region and present informative programs to area school children and civic groups.

Biology: Numerous department faculty work with the Sustainability Program and Vermillion groups to create a more “green” community.

Biomedical Engineering: Graduate students have hosted the Edison Middle School Science Club in a visit to their Sioux Falls facility, where the budding scientists participated in some hands-on experiments.

Chemistry: Professor Ranjit Koodali discusses the latest science news on a monthly South Dakota Public Radio segment. The Chemistry Club student organization regularly visits local elementary classes. (A recent trip involved helping kindergarteners make magnetic polymer “goo.”)

Communication Sciences & Disorders: The department runs clinics in Sioux Falls and Vermillion and also travels to western South Dakota to provide assistance to children with cochlear implants. In this issue, read about the department’s work with the South Dakota Special Olympics.

Communication Studies: Chair and Professor Jill Tyler uses her communication skills as a spokesperson for South Dakota AARP.

Computer Science: High school students test their ability to navigate a small robot through a maze at the department’s semi-annual robotic programming contests in Vermillion and Rapid City.

Earth Sciences: Associate Professor Brennan Jordan is associate director of the South Dakota Space Grant Consortium, which fosters opportunities to South Dakotans in the fields of aeronautics and Earth science.

English: Students, faculty and community members experience each other’s creative work through the Vermillion Literary Project (featured in this issue).
Camp Honors Famous Scientist Brothers

What better way to continue the legacy of two renowned scientists and USD alumni than with an annual camp that fosters the curiosity of young students from South Dakota and beyond?

That was the belief of university faculty and administrators, who, in 2001, had just organized a campus symposium celebrating the centennial year of the birth of physicist E.O. Lawrence (1939 Nobel Prize winner and inventor of the cyclotron) and the 75th anniversary of the graduation of his brother John Lawrence, a physician who pioneered the field of nuclear medicine. The brothers, born in Canton, South Dakota, both earned their undergraduate degrees from the College of Arts & Sciences and had gone on to achieve great acclaim in their respective fields.

“We were looking for something that would have a lasting legacy to honor the Lawrence brothers,” said Tina Keller, professor and chair of physics, associate dean of the college and a member of the group that organized the symposium. “A science camp for middle school students seemed like a great thing to do.”

Each year since 2002, the Lawrence Brothers Science camp has welcomed an average of 45 students in seventh through ninth grade to spend a week living in dorms on the USD campus and taking part in hands-on experiments that range from dissecting a sheep’s eye to calculating the “hang time” of someone jumping in the air.

Keller has volunteered to teach at the camp since its inception, as have her fellow College of Arts & Sciences faculty members in physics, math and other science departments. “It’s a way of giving back to the community and sharing our love of science with those who are much younger and encouraging them to think about potential opportunities for them in science,” she said.

The camp rotates through three themes—forensics, sports and vision—so that students who attend throughout middle school will experience something different each year. Campers build a telescope and star gaze one night during the vision-themed session. When the camp focuses on crime and forensics, Keller directs a lesson on buoyancy in which the aspiring scientists investigate a mystery involving a car at the bottom of a lake.

Many campers, like Keller’s son, Alex Larson, who attended the camp twice, go on to study science in college. Larson earned a degree in physics from the University of Chicago and now applies his scientific investigation skills to resolving software problems for a large healthcare software company. “I remember doing DNA sequencing and jumping on a force plate to see how much force you make when you jump,” he recalled. “Mostly, it was fun to get out of the house and stay in the dorms.”

History: Department faculty annually host about 60 AP U.S. History students from Yankton High School for a research day on campus. The students come to USD with project ideas they have been developing with their teacher, and they work with faculty and staff to refine those projects while learning how to use a university library.

Mathematical Sciences: The department annually hosts the Merten Hasse Math Competition for area junior high and high school students.

Media & Journalism: South Dakota’s Girls State attendees produce the daily Sacajawea Scroll newspaper at the annual event on USD’s campus, working closely with Instructor Chuck Baldwin.

Military Science: Throughout the year, cadets volunteer in the community, participating in projects ranging from renovating the non-profit downtown cinema to repainting the USD letters on the golf course bluff.

Modern Languages & Linguistics: Faculty host weekly, free language conversation practice sessions that are open to the public. Spanish language students have also offered tax preparation help to Spanish-speakers in South Sioux City, Nebraska.

Physics: Since 2002, faculty have made science fun for middle schoolers at the Lawrence Brothers Science Camp (read about the camp in this issue).

Political Science/Criminal Justice: Through the W.O. Farber Center for Civic Leadership, USD has hosted the American Legion Auxiliary South Dakota Girls State program for the past 15 years. The weeklong summer residential program teaches high-school students about all aspects of American government. The Criminal Justice Club holds frequent drives to gather donated personal care items for victims of domestic violence.

Psychology: The clinical psychology program’s Building Bridges Conference provides opportunities to make higher education a positive experience for Native American students. Students in the Psi Chi Honor Society read to children during the Vermillion Public Library’s story-time sessions.
An academic and research leader in South Dakota and the region since 1862, USD is the state’s flagship liberal arts institution.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request. For assistance, call Disability Services at USD at 605-677-6389 or email disabilityservices@usd.edu.

The University of South Dakota is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to increasing the diversity of its faculty, staff and students.

Contact the College of Arts & Sciences at as@usd.edu or visit www.usd.edu/as.

Literary Project Pairs Poetry and Pubs

What started in the 1960s as a small social club for students who wanted to share their writing has evolved into a campus and community organization that is a major force in fostering and promoting writers of all ages in Vermillion and the surrounding area.

Now in its sixth decade, the Vermillion Literary Project sponsored a typically busy schedule of activities this past fall. The student-run group held a short-story contest, hosted three “LiTrash” public literary readings at the Varsity Pub in downtown Vermillion, and organized twice-monthly meetings of the Vermillion Community Writers’ Group. Also in the works for 2017 are a literary festival, a writing camp for high school students held in conjunction with the Dakota Writing Project, and a publication that features works from both domestic and international writers.

Marcella Remund, ’91 B.A. ’94 M.A., English instructor and faculty advisor of the group, says the inclusive, welcoming approach of the Vermillion Literary Project is central to its purpose. “Our activities give students and community members a chance to come together and hear each other’s voices,” she said. “I think that’s so important.”

The organization provides numerous opportunities for the two groups to interact. The VLP Vermillion Community Writers’ Group, for example, meets twice each month at the public library in downtown Vermillion and welcomes members of all ages, including a frequent participant in his 80s. At a recent LiTrash open-mic event last November, faculty, students and community members presented works that explored ideas of justice and safety after the contentious national election.

Remund, who was also a member of the group while an undergraduate English/Creative Writing major in the late 1980s, said the Vermillion Literary Project recognizes everyone’s creative potential. “I think whatever you can do to bring the community in and make them feel part of the university life and also whatever you can do to help students see that they are part of a larger community beyond USD is good for both.”