



CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT



December: A Season of Joy and Reflection

The final month of the year, December brings a blend of cherished traditions, festive holidays, and moments of reflection. With winter in full swing, families gather to celebrate Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah, emphasizing themes of charity, togetherness, and peace. Amidst the warmth of shared meals and the joy of gift-giving, December also offers playful moments like Ugly Sweater Day and Answer the Phone Like Buddy the Elf Day, adding a touch of whimsy to the season.

December's name originates from the Latin word *decem*, meaning ten, as it was the tenth month of the Roman calendar before January and February were added. The winter solstice, marking the year's shortest day and the official start of winter, occurs this month. Afterward, days gradually grow longer, offering a glimmer of hope as Earth tilts back toward the sun.

December brims with traditions, from baking cookies and celebrating 29 food-themed holidays to enjoying winter sports like hockey and skiing. Its birthstones—Tanzanite, Blue Zircon, and Turquoise—shine with icy beauty, while the Narcissus flower symbolizes hope and renewal. As the year ends, December offers both festive joy and quiet reflection.

At Fort Hays State University, December marks a time of celebration, learning, and community. From final projects to festive campus events, the month brings opportunities to reflect on the year's achievements and embrace the joy of the season. Wishing our Tiger family a warm, peaceful, and successful December!





Swipe Out Hunger Event Successfully Combats Food Insecurity on FHSU Campus and in the Community

Civic Learning and Engagement hosted its annual SWIPE Out Hunger event on Saturday, November 16, 2024, bringing together volunteers from the campus and local community to combat food insecurity. The event, held in the Black and Gold Room of the Memorial Union, was organized by the Civic Learning and Engagement office in partnership with Leadership Programs, Student Engagement, Forsyth Library, and Global Affairs.

The day began with event preparations at 10:00 a.m., followed by a large-scale meal-packing session starting at noon. Volunteers worked diligently to assemble 723 Pantry Packs, each containing seven nutrient-dense meals: Oatmeal and Cinnamon, Macaroni and Cheese, and Tomato Basil Pasta. Designed in collaboration with Iowa State University's Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, these meals provide six servings each, amounting to 42 servings per pack. The initiative resulted in a total of 30,366 servings of food, offering a critical resource to those facing food insecurity.



Of the total packs, 150 were donated to the Tiger Pantry at FHSU to support food-insecure members of the campus community. The remaining 573 packs were delivered to St. Michael's Episcopal Church, where they will be distributed through Pastor Ben Houchen's Feeding Hays Initiative to children and families in need across the community.

The success of the event was made possible by the collaborative efforts of co-partners Numana, Inc., and St. Michael's Episcopal Church, alongside the contributions of FHSU's students, staff, and community members. Together, these organizations demonstrated the impact of collective action in addressing local food insecurity.

For additional information or to learn about future opportunities to participate in similar initiatives, please contact Donnette Noble at djnoble@fhsu.edu.





Friendsgiving 2024 Unites FHSU and Hays Community in Celebration of Connection and Collaboration

On Monday, November 11, 2024, the Rose Garden Banquet Hall was a vibrant hub of togetherness as Civic Learning and Engagement hosted its annual Friendsgiving celebration. Under the banner of the Co-Creating Community initiative, the event brought together 242 attendees, including FHSU faculty, staff, students, and members of the Hays community, fostering meaningful connections and positive social engagement.

The evening began with a traditional holiday meal served at 5:30 p.m., where the spirit of gratitude and togetherness was palpable. Following the meal, attendees enjoyed an array of enriching experiences, including giveaways from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., a captivating performance by FHSU student musicians and a cultural dance exhibition led by Dr. Nicole English that showcased diversity and artistic expression. Guests also participated in interactive activities such as crafts, children's games, and a collaborative community art project.



This event would not have been what it was without the invaluable contributions of Liv Arnold, Devan Christensen, Kaytie Snovelle, and Mariana Mendoza -- LDRS 310: *Field Work in Leadership Studies* students -- and the dedication of Tara Rollins, a Recovery Court alumnus, along with the Co-Creating Community partners, the Ellis County Attorney's Office and Northwest KS Community Corrections. Together they ensured the event was inclusive, welcoming, and memorable for all who attended.



The Co-Creating Community initiative, is dedicated to fostering positive social role modeling and creating opportunities for networking and connection. The initiative underscores the importance of building lasting bridges between the university and the broader Hays community and emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and shared experiences.



FHSU's "Let Your Voice Be Heard" Poster Competition: An Inside Look with Professor Karrie Simpson Voth

Fort Hays State University celebrated the creative ingenuity and civic engagement of its students with this year's "Let Your Voice Be Heard" poster competition. With record-breaking voter turnout and \$2,900 in scholarships awarded, this event showcased the remarkable talents of FHSU's graphic design students.

The Director of Civic Learning and Engagement contributed \$2,000 in scholarships, along with \$900 provided by the Department of Art and Design. This collaboration highlights the university's commitment to fostering student creativity and civic responsibility.

The competition, now in its 17th year, is a cornerstone of the university's commitment to fostering creativity with a purpose. Professor Simpson Voth, who has been at FHSU for 26 years, emphasized the importance of socially responsible graphic

design in her teaching. She explained, "Design is a powerful tool for change. It can make people think differently and open their eyes to issues they might not have considered."

The idea for the competition stems from her desire to broaden the perspectives of students, many of whom have limited exposure to global cultures. "Understanding different viewpoints and cultures makes us better contributors to society," she noted.



This year's competition challenged students to design five posters each, addressing civic engagement, national issues, and solutions to societal problems. Using diverse techniques—from painting to cut-paper methods—students showcased their creativity by blending historical and contemporary design principles, often incorporating real-world elements for greater impact.



The Department of Art and Design at FHSU is renowned for fostering creativity through its thoughtfully designed coursework, which challenges students to explore innovative ideas and develop impactful messages. A remarkable past example of this creativity involved an illustration of a book addressing the issue of school shootings. The student artist collaborated with Professor Simpson Voth to stage a dramatic photoshoot, utilizing symbolic elements to enhance the depth and realism of the project. Reflecting on this powerful piece, Professor Simpson Voth noted, “We do things for real—it’s about creating an authentic experience and impact.” This example highlights the program’s commitment to helping students use their artistic skills to engage with meaningful societal issues.

A key goal of the competition is to spark thoughtful dialogue among participants and viewers. Professor Simpson Voth highlighted the value of quiet, respectful expression through art, particularly in polarizing times. “A poster can’t argue or yell back. But it can make someone pause and think,” she said, emphasizing the importance of encouraging civic participation, especially voting.

She added, “Many students feel hesitant to express opinions that differ from their families or peers. This competition helps them find their voices and learn the value of respectful disagreement.”



For students interested in using art to make their voices heard, Professor Simpson-Voth offered simple yet profound advice: “Go for it. Use your creativity to make people think differently. That’s the way we should be working together as humans.”

The full gallery will be available on the FHSU Schmidt Foundation Center for Art and Design Facebook page.

The award recipients of this year’s “Let Your Voice Be Heard” poster competition have been announced! Please turn to the next page to see the full list of award recipients and their outstanding work.





The award recipients of this year's "Let Your Voice Be Heard" poster competition showcased extraordinary creativity and delivered impactful messages that resonated with both judges and voters. The awards celebrated a variety of perspectives and design approaches, highlighting the depth of talent within the FHSU student community.

Top Awards:

- **1st Place:** Kira Crow, *"Decades of Double Standards"*
- **2nd Place:** Nathan Erbert, *"Are We Still Blind?"*
- **3rd Place:** Jaden Stauffer, *"Our Little Secret"*
- **4th Place:** Ruby Simental, *"Chastity Doll"*

Honorable Mentions:

- **5th Place:** Nathan Erbert, *"Bun in the Oven?"*
- **6th Place:** Jaden Stauffer, *"Broken Family Tree"*

Special Awards:

- **Students' Choice Award (Tie):** Montserrat Diaz, *"Innocence Under Fire"* and Nathan Erbert, *"Bun in the Oven?"*
- **Best Voting Poster:** Hannah Kitzmann, *"Civic Shine"*
- **Best Illustration:** Jaden Stauffer, *"Matthew 5:10"* and *"Broken Family Tree"*
- **The "Do it for Real" Award:** Ruby Simental, *"Wrong Changes"*
- **Phoenix Award:** Drew Hill, *"The Most Dangerous Weapon on the Street"*

These accolades not only celebrate the students' artistic and conceptual talents but also underscore the importance of using art to spark conversations and inspire social change. Professor Karrie Simpson-Voth expressed her pride in the participants, commending their courage and dedication to addressing polarizing issues with creativity and respect.





Congratulations to the Fall 2024 Graduates of Fort Hays State University!



As the Fall 2024 semester comes to a close, we want to extend our heartfelt congratulations to all graduates of Fort Hays State University! Your dedication, hard work, and perseverance have brought you to this significant milestone, and we couldn't be prouder of what you've accomplished.

As you embark on the next chapter, remember that challenges may arise, but your strength and determination will guide you. Continue to follow your passions, pursue lifelong learning, and make a positive impact on the world.

You are now ambassadors of FHSU's legacy of excellence, and we are confident you will achieve great things. Best of luck in all your future endeavors!



Wishing You the Happiest of Holiday Seasons!

As the winter break approaches, we want to wish everyone a joyful holiday season filled with peace and happiness. Best of luck as you wrap up your final weeks of the semester! For those traveling, we wish you safe journeys and hope you return refreshed. Enjoy your well-deserved break, and we look forward to seeing you in the new year! Stay safe, and have a wonderful holiday season!



CONTACT INFORMATION

For any inquiries, information, or assistance, please feel free to reach out to the Civic Learning & Engagement Administrative Team

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