



I set out to change
the world and
instead, the world
changed me.

H₂O connects Lakewood youth with volunteer opportunities to develop a strong desire to SERVE the community. Nurtured by a culture of kindness, they LEARN valuable skills while helping others. They GROW into more engaged citizens empowered to make an impact in the world.

Dear H₂O Supporters,

2014 was a year of change, growth, and incredible excitement.

We welcomed new faces, embarked on new service projects, and continued to be amazed at the enthusiasm of our volunteers and counselors.

This year, H₂O's high school students contributed an amazing 2480.5 hours of service to the community. And, they found plenty of creative ways to make their mark. In April, they hosted H₂O's inaugural Kick-It game, where they raised \$2,583.00 for children's cancer research. Later in the year, they helped make Christmas better for many local families by selling hand-made gifts at Light Up Lakewood.

Summer Service Campers got a sneak preview of Drink Local, Drink Tap's film, "Making Waves," which details the hardships of Ugandans trying to access clean water. They were so moved by the stories they saw, they made a commitment to help them. Through the penny war fundraiser and Lakewood Arts Festival proceeds, they raised an impressive \$2,242.96 for this worthwhile organization.

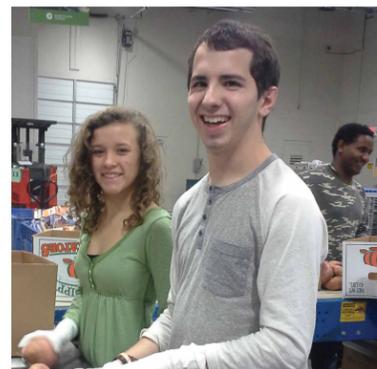
Toward the end of summer, we all celebrated the great contributions of Vanessa Lange, who decided to embark on a new career path. We also welcomed Amy Chodzin, a long-time volunteer and parent of H₂O participants, who took over the responsibilities of the Assistant Coordinator. Amy's first task – to help us move to our current location inside Lakewood High School. Our new school office is more accessible and visible to students, and we're happy to report that the transition was a complete success.

This year, like all others, we have been incredibly fortunate to have the support of the City of Lakewood, Lakewood City Schools, and the H₂O Advisory Council in finding the best possible spaces for our events while Lakewood High is under construction. With their help, we have been able to seamlessly plan our activities, starting with Summer Service Camp 2015, which will be based at Garfield Middle School.

As always, the kindness that was shown to the H₂O program and its youth volunteers in 2014 has been overwhelming. Together, we are helping our children understand what it means to be a valued part of a community.

With such committed volunteers, partners, and parents, I can only imagine what 2015 will bring!

Emmie Hutchison
H₂O Coordinator





My love for service came
from my experience in H₂O.

— ANNALISA PEREZ

Annalisa Perez | Former counselor, future social worker

This past year, Ohio State junior Annalisa Perez took it upon herself to organize the university's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service – an event that attracted more than 1,000 people and involved more than 60 service initiatives across Central Ohio. Quite a feat for a student who is juggling a full class load and working on her Honors thesis.

While Annalisa spent most of the winter coordinating the MLK Service event, her preparation for it actually started many years ago.

“My love for service came from my experience in H₂O,” she explains. “It’s because of the opportunities I had as a student and as a counselor that I gained the skills and the confidence to take on a project of this magnitude.”

As an H₂O student, Annalisa participated in a wide range of service projects. “My favorite activity was working at the Ronald McDonald House,” she remembers. “I really enjoyed spending time with the families, cooking them meals, playing with the kids and getting to know them.”

As Annalisa grew in age and experience, she was given the opportunity to take on additional leadership roles. “The great thing about H₂O is that they really encourage the students to take an active part in organizing events. They want the kids to feel real ownership in the good they are doing.”

Through H₂O, Annalisa served as a board member of the Lakewood Charitable Assistance Corporation and was actively involved in the annual clothing drive. But she really honed her leadership skills as an H₂O counselor. “My three years as a summer counselor were my most meaningful experience at H₂O. It was so great seeing the kids getting excited about service and understanding how important it is to help people,” she says. “And, by doing good work, the children learn that they have great value in this world.”

The lasting impact that H₂O had on Annalisa goes well beyond the leadership skills she acquired. “They gave me the passion for service,” she says. “It’s 100% because of H₂O, that I have chosen to major in social work at OSU and have decided to pursue a career in service.”

When Annalisa graduates next year, the former Virginia M. Fairchild “Super Camper” Award recipient wants to work as an administrator for a children’s program. “I want to work for social justice and try to address the issues around race and socio-economic status.”

With her H₂O background, she certainly has the experience to make a difference in the world around her.

As Annalisa looks toward a career of service, she looks back on her time at H₂O, and offers this advice to students who are entering the program. “Be a team player. Keep an open mind. Make the most of your experience.”

Annalisa certainly did.

highlights | 2014

505 amazing volunteers
6,135.5 hours of service

high school

241 volunteers
2,480.5 hours of service

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
Youth leaders organized 53 volunteers into service and provided reflection activities that gave meaning to their morning’s work.

Kick-It
Members raised \$2,583.00, while raising the passions of students to help beat childhood cancer through research.

Light Up Lakewood
Talented volunteers sold handmade crafts, raising \$315.00 for local families at Christmas.

Bikes and Bands
The second Bikes and Bands event raised enough money to repair 40 bicycles to donate to kids, along with helmets and locks.

middle school

102 impassioned volunteers
344.5 hours of selfless service
to others

Participants learned and practiced sign language.

Volunteers created an inspirational video that expressed their discoveries about peace and understanding.

Students were inspired by speakers from the Cleveland Sight Center who shared their experiences with blindness.

summer service camp

197 youth volunteers
3,310 hours devoted to others

Campers assisted Lakewood Community Services Center in their summer lunch program by engaging in games, crafts and fitness activities.

Children raised \$2,242.96 for the "Drink Local, Drink Tap" program, which promotes water sustainability and provides clean drinking water for the people of Uganda.

Students decorated rain barrels and sold them, raising \$970.76 for the H2O program.

Lakewood High School Junior Claire Black earned her Girl Scouts Gold Award for a composting program that she created and presented to campers.

Johnny Rowell | From student to teacher,
always a man of service.

In the fall of 2015, Johnny Rowell will enter St. Ignatius High School as a first year math teacher. But for this St. Louis University graduate, the position is more than a job, it's an opportunity to continue a life of service.

"I'm very passionate about teaching because it will allow me to make a positive impact on people every single day," Johnny explains.

Of course, Johnny has been making a positive impact most of his life. "It all started when I joined the H₂O program in sixth grade," he recalls. "That year, we mostly did arts and crafts. We made cards for the elderly to show them that we were thinking about them and that we cared."

When Johnny entered the summer program the following year, his passion for service was truly ignited. "It was life-changing for me," he says. "I was able to make a difference in a very personal way. I read books to children at a day care center, I helped out in a food bank, and I volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House, too."

One of his favorite experiences was doing yard work at a senior center. "For us, it wasn't about pulling weeds, it was about developing relationships with the residents. Every time we visited, they would come out and talk with us, make us lunch and treat us like family. It was so nice to make those personal connections."

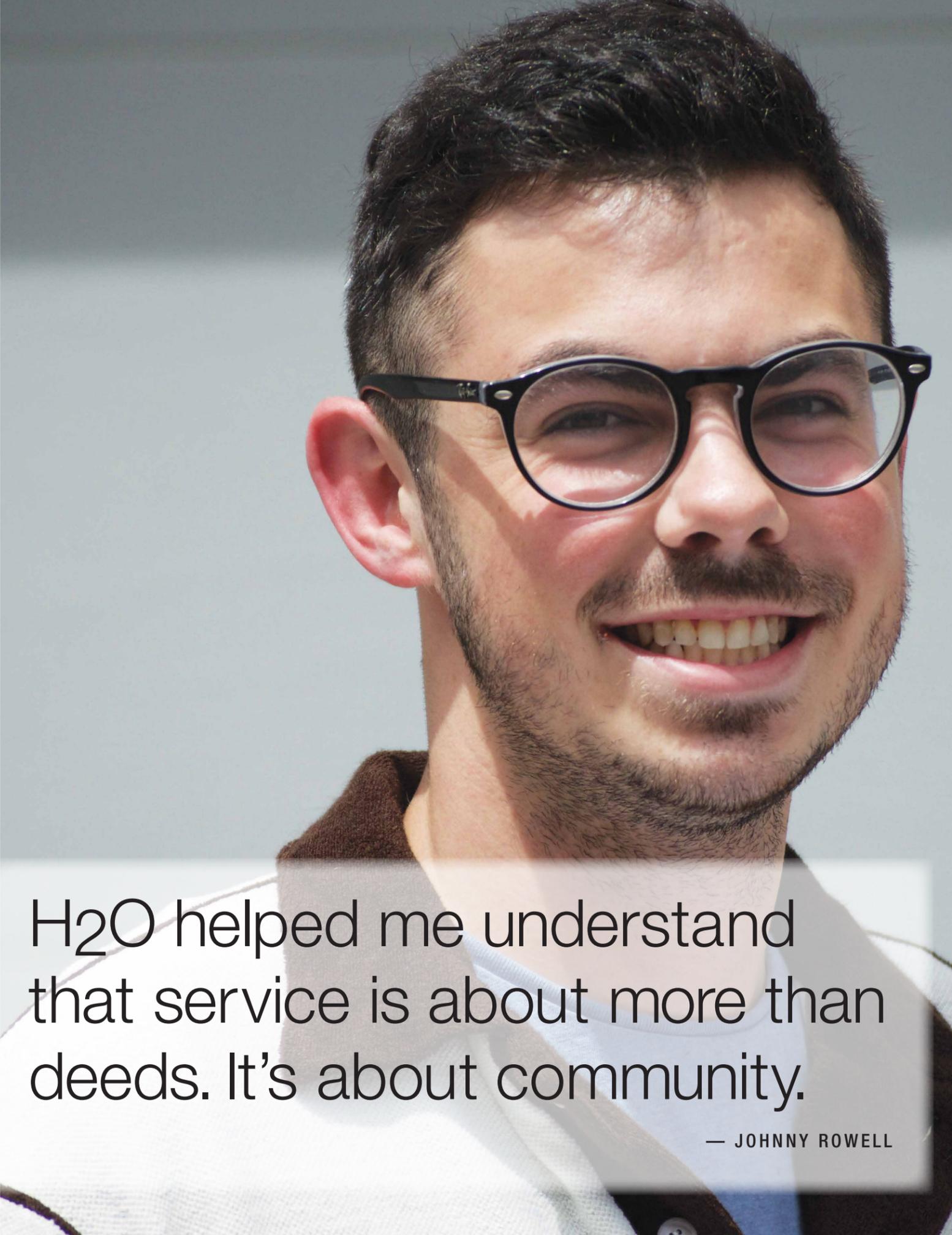
It was because of these relationships that Johnny began to understand the bigger effect his service was having. "Getting to know the people, that's where the real service is and where the good can come," he explains. "You start to understand the causes and the impact of social injustice. You start to examine why people are struggling, and you begin to solve these problems in much bigger and more impactful ways."

Johnny credits H₂O for his growth as a community servant. "Without a doubt, H₂O has led me through the different levels of change," he says. "H₂O helped me understand that service is about more than deeds. It's about community. It's about fostering relationships. It's about people."

Over his nine-year tenure at H₂O, Johnny impacted countless lives in the community. But it was his work as an H₂O counselor that made the biggest impact on him. "I really enjoyed working with students," he recalls. "It was this experience that sparked my interest in becoming a teacher."

Today, as Johnny prepares to embark on his career as an educator, he recalls his H₂O experience fondly. "H₂O molded me into the man I am today. It ignited my love for service. It set me on a career path that I know is meaningful."

For those just beginning their journey with H₂O, he has these words of wisdom: "Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Put yourself out there, and this program will have a profound impact on you. I promise."



H₂O helped me understand
that service is about more than
deeds. It's about community.

— JOHNNY ROWELL

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