

# Commraderie



## Alum Combines Communication and Christian Ministry

Emily Carter

Charity Kauffman ('07), daughter of Christian bookstore owners, spent her childhood surrounded by Christian publishing, media, and ministry.

“As a student at Messiah, I was interested in pursuing similar fields outside of the retail industry. Studying communication offered opportunities to develop writing and interpersonal skills relevant to a variety of professional and ministry settings,” she says.

After graduating from Messiah with a degree in communication (public relations concentration), Charity worked in community relations at a Christian school in Central Pennsylvania before taking a job as the children’s ministry coordinator at her church. She then found herself at Bethel Seminary, where she graduated summa cum laude with a master’s degree in children and family ministry.

“My first year of seminary opened doors for me to move to Colorado Springs, where I worked on a Children’s Ministries staff at a mega church. While there, I had the privilege of writing and directing our VBS curriculum,” Kauffman shares. She also led family events, created Children’s Ministries promotional materials, provided administrative support for the Children’s Ministries Department, and enjoyed speaking at several Christian elementary school chapels in the area.

In March 2014, Charity accepted a position as the Director of Children’s

Ministry job at Hunt Valley Church and made the move to the Baltimore area, where she currently resides.

She explains, “Any given day might involve volunteer recruitment, training and communication, curriculum writing, connecting with parents, vision casting, running programs that align with our mission and vision, updating websites, connecting with kids and parents through social media, reading articles about ministry to children and families, collaborating with staff members, and creating fun environments for kids to learn about Jesus.”

Kauffman enjoys teaching both large and small groups, as well as researching and writing lessons that communicate God’s story of redemption. “I love hanging out with and learning from my little brothers and sisters in Christ,” she says.

She adds, “My work influences in children’s spiritual formation. Their experience at church affects their view



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of God and His people. Additionally, I want to make sure that kids enjoy a safe and secure environment when at church.” As a result, she spends a lot of time developing, maintaining, and communicating safety policies and crisis plans.

While at Messiah, Kauffman participated in concert choir, women’s ensemble, and the Public Relations Campaign. She also studied abroad in Russia and at the Contemporary Music Center in Nashville. Her favorite college memories include SAB concerts and singing at the National Cathedral with concert choir.

She notes, “Good leadership hinges on good communication. Whether I’m writing an email, explaining a policy, leading a volunteer workshop, or advocating for children in a church congregation, I use skills developed in communication classes at Messiah. Additionally, Bible and theology classes whet my mind’s appetite to deeply dive into Scripture. Basic exegetical skills and hermeneutic guidance helped to prepare me to approach the Bible as a learner and a teacher.”

Kauffman advises current communication students, “Avoid passive verbs when writing for Nance McCown. Be open to professors’ guidance and learn from their expertise. Take advantage of resume building opportunities while in college. Never lose your sense of childlike wonder when it comes to life and faith.”

A contributor to the Cory Center for Children’s Ministry website, Kauffman has also published work in Children’s Ministry Magazine. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to music and cheering for the Pittsburgh Pirates. 



Charity Kauffman ('07, center) leads Vacation Bible School worship.

## Comm Alumni Join Department Faculty

Emily Carter

*As the Communication Department continues to expand its Grantham-based programs, two new faculty members join the COMMunity this fall.*

### David Dixon, Associate Professor of Journalism, Broadcasting, and New Media Production

David Dixon ('88) grew up as a missionary kid from Kenya before moving to the United States to attend Messiah College, where he graduated with a B.A. in communication.

“After college I worked in publishing, and I found that working with writers was a lot like teaching. I also especially appreciated the idea of Christian colleges as places where faith and intellect could be brought together, so I eventually headed back to graduate school with the goal of teaching at a Christian college,” says Dixon.

After receiving a master’s degree in communication from Wheaton College and a Ph.D. in mass communication from Indiana University, he achieved his goal, teaching at Regent University, Azusa Pacific University and Malone University. He currently serves as president of Advisers of Christian College Media (ACCM). At Messiah, he will teach a variety of journalism and communication design courses, as well as Fundamentals of Oral Communication.

He expresses, “I’m excited to work with students who are putting their faith and learning into practice even while they’re still in the classroom. It’s fun to see students already using their skills in service.”

Dixon, who has lived in eight states and one African country, enjoys photography, biking, hiking, and camping.



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## Krista Imbesi, Senior Lecturer in Film

Krista Imbesi ('09), a native of Buffalo, N.Y., received a B.A. in communication (film concentration) from Messiah College. After graduation, she went on to obtain her M.F.A. in Media Arts from the University at Buffalo, where she directed her efforts toward documentary film.



While at the University at Buffalo, Imbesi's thesis film and research paper focused on orphan issues in Jinja, Uganda. She received a Mark Diamond Research Grant to assist with travel costs. Her documentary, "Where We Belong" premiered at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center and has been featured at several film festivals both nationally and internationally. The film recently won the Jury Prize at the DIY Film Festival, was screened at the UFVA conference this past August, and won an honorable mention for documentary feature, the second highest award in that category.

"My path to teaching is a little bit different than the norm. My mother, father, brother and sister are all professors. My first instinct growing up was that I did NOT want to do that," says Imbesi.


She explains that with her fondness for the arts, she considered moving to Hollywood after college to pursue a filmmaking career. "It wasn't until about half way through college that I developed a true love of learning. Before that I had a love of achievement and ambition, and a love of creating art," she adds.

During her junior year at Messiah, Imbesi realized that she enjoyed analyzing the storytelling and production techniques in film, learning about film history, and sharing this knowledge with others.

"One of my favorite parts of teaching is the mentoring types of relationships I'm able to build with students. When I think back on my own education, my inspiration, direction, and motivation often came from the people who developed mentoring relationships with me," shares Imbesi.

Imbesi's course load will focus on basic video and editing classes as well as some upper level film production and general education courses.

Along with her husband, alumnus Christian Imbesi ('09), she launched C&K Cinematography, a production company. The pair also owns an LLC production company with alumnus Cody Wanner ('09).

Outside the classroom, Imbesi loves spending time outdoors at her family's cottage on the Rideau Waterway in Ontario, Canada. 

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## Summer is for Internships

Erin Zakin

Summer... the season for relaxation, beach trips, visiting family, and lazing around all day. But for some students, summer means picking up an internship to hone skills while earning school credit. The benefits of summer versus academic year internships? Students can devote more time and engage in more intensive or sustained projects with their host organizations. Several COMMunity students completed a wide range of summer internships. Here's what they had to say about their experiences.

### Setting the Stage in "The Big Apple"

Senior public relations major Katie Johnston worked as a publicity intern for Glenna Freedman Public Relations, a boutique PR firm specializing in Broadway and Off-Broadway productions. Katie's jobs included writing and editing press releases that ran on major Broadway sites, sending out press invitation e-blasts, and running errands around Manhattan. Katie says her favorite part about her internship was working in New York City. "I felt so privileged to work in one of the greatest cities in the world," she notes. "It has always been my dream to work in New York City, but I didn't think that dream would become a reality until I was older and more experienced." She adds, "I gained a lot of life lessons through the internship. I grew in my independence and self-confidence, gained knowledge of directions and public transportation, and learned how to interact successfully with people very different from me."

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*Intern Kayla Caracci (film, '15) interned with the London Screenwriter's Festival in England.*

### **Planning Film Events “Across the Pond”**

Kayla Caracci, a senior film and media arts major, interned for the London Screenwriter's Festival, a part of England's Ealing Studios. Kayla did researching, networking, event planning, and data organizing for the office, including organizing and hosting the world premiere and business premiere for Ealing's collaboration film, *50 Kisses*. She comments, “The night of the event was a mix of working to keep the event running smoothly and celebrating our success, so while I had to physically roll out the red carpet, I then got to walk it as well!” As for the research aspects of her internship, Kayla notes, “While it was an adjustment from the kind of academic research that I am used to, it also helped me to feel more prepared for my future.”

### **Programming and Tech on the Air**

Karla DeJesus, a senior broadcasting major, and Jeremy Ross, a junior communication major, both interned at WPFQFM 91.3 Cumberland Valley Christian Radio over the summer. Although many of their responsibilities overlapped, they also had separate duties. Jeremy worked as an IT intern, and much of his work included physically recording and editing programs, keeping track of announcements aired on the station, and updating files. Jeremy says the challenges came in the hands-on technical experience: “My biggest areas of growth were in the knowledge I gained about sound and radio equipment. I took a sound design class in J-term, but actually working at the station gave me a chance to really learn more about soundboards, mics, and recording

software. I loved it. Ironically, at first, the tech was the hardest part to master. When actually recording something, you have a certain amount of creative freedom, but to get to that point, there were quite a few technical things I had to learn first.”

Karla's responsibilities included recording and editing interviews and programs for broadcasting. She also wrote scripts, prepared programs for web transfers, downloaded digital programs and CDs, and learned the digital Station Playlist program to prepare weekly rotations for on-air broadcasting. “I have applied the inverted pyramid, succinct writing principles and every broadcasting production course taken with Dr. Arke and Temple professors. Interpersonal dynamics and communicating to the masses is applied every day I am at the station,” notes Karla, who is continuing her internship during the fall semester. “The classroom and internship are a complementary blend that I can honestly say are aiding me in feeling confident about entering the working world in my field.”

### **Taking PR “a Little Bit Country”**

Senior public relations major Hayley Cowoski spent her summer in Nashville working for PLA Media, a PR and marketing firm known for its award-winning clientele, which includes various country music artists, authors, and museums based on legends such as Johnny Cash and Tina Turner. Working as a publicist assistant, Hayley's responsibilities included writing press releases, creating tour press kits for artists, calling media outlets, and researching databases.




*Hayley Cowoski (PR, '15) with other interns at PLA Media in Nashville, Tenn.*

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Hayley feels she grew in many aspects of her career. “This was my first office job and there is a different level of professionalism in the office,” she says. “We constantly had clients and other people from the music industry in and out of our building, so it was important to maintain a professional atmosphere at all times. I also grew in my writing skills because I was writing every day. When you’re writing for an audience of hundreds or even thousands of people, it forces you to evaluate your writing and make it better the next time.”

### Seeing “Nouveau” Fashion through PR

Rachel Grim, a senior public relations major, interned at The Nouveau Image, a Philadelphia-based public relations agency that specializes in events, lifestyle, celebrity, beauty, and fashion. As an intern, Rachel contacted the local press on behalf of the agency, attended charity events, prepared blog posts, and selected organic fashion and beauty products. Rachel comments, “The client base of The Nouveau Image was very diverse. Even though we discuss our target audiences frequently in class, having such a diverse range of clients helped me to better understand, in a real situation, how differing types of advertising influence—or do not influence—groups of people.” 

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## “Social Tagging” Transforms Online Fundraising

Erin Zakin

This summer, ALS Ice Bucket Challenge videos clogged Facebook, Twitter, and other social media newsfeeds. People challenged their closest friends and family to create videos of their own to raise awareness and research funds for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease). Many assumed this trend would be short-lived, but the challenge continued on for several months. Although initially scoffed at, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, turned into a revolutionary social media movement that left other nonprofits jealous and many companies stunned.

According to the [International Business Times](#), as of September 29, the Challenge has raised more than \$100 million for the ALS Association (ALSA), a staggering increase compared to the \$2.7 million raised during the same time period last year. Although ALSA did not originally create the challenge, it has nonetheless become the non-profit’s biggest success. But why? Three reasons stand out.

### #1 The challenge was not created by the company itself

Peter Frates was diagnosed with ALS in 2012. Determined to make a difference rather than settle for his diagnosis, Frates designed a campaign to bring awareness to ALS. He used his sports contacts to get well-known athletes to participate in the challenge he created specifically for ALS. In fact, the Ice Bucket Challenge was not originally Frate’s idea: various nonprofits previously used the challenge to promote awareness and get people involved. After Frates created his video—friends tagged and hashtags included—the challenge took off. Carrie Munk, ALS Association spokesperson, tells [Huffington Post](#), “I’m pretty sure that if any company or any nonprofit had all of the public relations dollars in the world to come up with a campaign, we never would’ve see this kind of success.”



*Heather Quirk doing the ice bucket challenge.*

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## #2 It demonstrates the power individuals have


One video wouldn't have been enough to make the Ice Bucket Challenge successful. The idea of challenging friends and interacting with the organization brings the whole idea to life. "Social tagging," or adding tags to social media posts and photos, joins posts together and creates a giant map of connected networks. It simply took one person to initiate the challenge; soon it spread virally to literally millions of participants. Whether the donation was worth \$10 or \$200, the challenge encouraged everyone to become a part of this charity simply because their friends invited them.

## #3 The challenge effectively uses social media

Many charities fail to use social media effectively. The Ice Bucket Challenge harnessed social media's advantages to spread, allowing videos, news stories, pictures, and other posts to go viral in a matter of minutes through effective social tagging. It didn't take long for ALS Challenge videos to start filling up newsfeeds, but the most viral videos—those posted by celebrities or other famous individuals—prompted the greatest number of "shares," inspiring more attention, and, ultimately, increased donations.


Despite its many positives, the Ice Bucket Challenge received some negative feedback. Specifically, it created some "slacktivism," which refers to individuals "sharing" information about a cause rather than actually donating or directly helping it. Others criticized the Challenge for encouraging self-promotion.

Jeff Shuck, CEO of Plenty Consulting (a firm specializing in peer-to-peer fundraising), addresses companies striving to duplicate the Challenge's success in a [Forbes](#) interview by saying, "It's not about the ice bucket. You could sit in a room for a year and come up with a thousand ideas that seem like a breakthrough success, and then most of them wouldn't work." He suggests charities start by examining the Challenge's core values and mission.

In the end, people either hate the Ice Bucket Challenge or they love it. But no one can argue about raising \$100 million—or the increased awareness that comes with it. 

## On Location: Prof's Film Aims to Raise Awareness in Uganda

Emily Carter

Professor Krista Imbesi ('09) traveled to Uganda for three weeks in June to begin work on "Our Feet Are Rooted," a documentary she is producing in collaboration with her husband, Christian ('09), and the non-profit, Solidarity Uganda. While there, Imbesi conducted interviews with local residents who are being terrorized into abandoning their land. Messiah alum Phil Wilmot and his wife Suzan, founders of Solidarity Uganda, work to instruct communities in Northern Uganda about non-violent ways to respond to the government attempting to seize their land and sell it to corporations. Imbesi explains, "Since this is happening in a somewhat remote area, even people in other parts of the country don't realize what is happening in Amuru District. We're hoping that the film will raise awareness in both the U.S. and Uganda." She hopes to release the documentary next summer. 





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## Congratulations Lambda Pi Eta Inductees!



*Our COMMunity extends congratulations to our new and newly recognized Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Honor Society inductees. Back: Katelyn Hart, Joel Hoover, Michael Momose, Jeremy Jensen, David Wingert. Front: Emily Carter, Amanda Bieler, MacKenzie Alexander, Karla DeJesus, and Kayla Caracci. Not pictured: Sarah Goldy-Brown, Susannah Goodman, Noelle LeVee, Joseph Saufley, Susan Smith, Rosalie Talbot, Anthony Watkins.*

## Studio Renovations Nearly Complete!

Extensive renovations in the lower level of Hostetter Chapel will create much-needed space for the Department of Communication's expanding programs. Housing film and television production studios complete with a semi-permanent news desk and endless floor, corner-positioned green screen; a news control room; a foley sound studio; and a green room, this new location will triple the size of existing studio space. It also will greatly expand storage capacity, allowing for more efficient and effective equipment lending.

Renovations should finish in the next few weeks with moving from current space slated before Thanksgiving. For more photos charting the project's progress, visit the [COMMunity Facebook page album](#).

