



3-21-2014

Fearless: Emily Zeller

Emily I. Zeller
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge>

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Religion Commons](#), and the [Sociology of Culture Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Zeller, Emily I., "Fearless: Emily Zeller" (2014). *SURGE*. 16.
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/16>

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/16>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

Fearless: Emily Zeller

Abstract

Finding unique, powerful, and innovative ways to combine her love of music, her passion for social justice, and her Jewish faith on and off campus, Emily Zeller '14 fearlessly serves members of the community through the passions that most deeply motivate her.

Emily serves as the president of the Hillel group on campus and is excited about the new opportunities that Hillel has had this year, such as bringing in a student rabbi to lead services (this year was the first time that a rabbi had been brought in specifically to hold services for students on campus during the High Holidays) and getting more involved with community members, especially through CPS. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Hillel, Jewish

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement | Religion | Sociology of Culture

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://cupola.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS: EMILY ZELLER

March 21, 2014

Finding unique, powerful, and innovative ways to combine her love of music, her passion for social justice, and her Jewish faith on and off campus, Emily Zeller '14 fearlessly serves members of the community through the passions that most deeply motivate her.

Emily serves as the president of the Hillel group on campus and is excited about the new opportunities that Hillel has had this year, such as bringing in a student rabbi to lead services (this year was the first time that a rabbi had been brought in specifically to hold services for students on campus during the High Holidays) and getting more involved with community members, especially through CPS.

"I really love being able to be at the helm of Jewish leadership on campus," says Emily. "Being in an area with such a small population of Jewish students, it's been great to be so involved in the group here on campus. It has really helped me figure out my own Jewish identity and what's important to me. It's also fun to be president and help provide those opportunities and experiences to other students on campus, too, who might not have a fully-realized understanding of their Jewish identities yet. It's really all about taking ownership of our faith traditions and finding out what we believe in the new context of being away from our families at school."

Even before coming to Gettysburg and getting involved in Hillel, Emily was a head counselor at a summer camp that was part of a greater Jewish youth movement that she had been involved in since 2000. Between high school and college, Emily took a gap year and traveled with the movement to Israel where she started incorporating the things she was learning into many different aspects of her life. "It's where I developed my Jewish identity," says Emily. "It's the place where I learned how to combine my faith with social justice and the ideals we believe in,





using the shared Jewish community as a way to make a difference in the world and tackle the issues that are most important to us.”

One of the ways in which Emily has been able to infuse her love of music with Judaism while at Gettysburg has been through getting the College Choir to perform Hebrew worship music at her own synagogue. “Normally the choir performs a lot of Christian sacred music,” says Emily, “and the College Choir takes a fall retreat to someone’s church every year to perform. This year was the first time that we changed the repertoire to include Hebrew music, which allowed us to hold a concert at my family’s synagogue

during the fall retreat. It was so amazing to be able to share that experience with the choir and bring those friends into my world. It was really so inspiring for me to be able to share that part of myself with the choir.”

Emily was also able to incorporate music by Jewish composers and pieces written with Hebrew text into her Senior Recital for the music department. “People don’t tend to theme their recitals,” says Emily, “but I was excited to put this common thread through all the songs I sang. It was a great way to both perform and share Judaism with my family and friends who came to see me.”

In addition to being involved in the music community, Emily also seeks out opportunities to get involved in social justice issues. On campus, Emily is involved with Autism Speaks, a group that raises awareness about autism and fundraises for related initiatives and projects. Emily started getting involved in high school when she volunteered with special education students, and has found that serving with this group on campus has really led her to know more about what she wants to do with her future.

“Everything I’ve done at Gettysburg—whether with music or Judaism or social justice—flows in and out of each other,” says Emily. “I’m a music major with two minors, one in Women and Gender Studies, the other in Peace and Justice Studies, and I’m able to see now how everything I learn in one area relates to things in the other. That’s why, for the future, I probably going to work towards getting a degree in music therapy so that I can use music while also serving the community, which combines my studies and my faith perfectly. Music has been a passion of mine since I was eight years old, and music therapy seems to be the perfect combination of my passions.”

Emily is an important leader at Gettysburg College because of how she fearlessly combines her passions, making changes, starting new norms, and getting students more involved in different social justice initiatives. Whether singing in Hebrew with the College Choir, or fundraising for Autism Speaks, or helping other Jewish students solidify and understand their faiths, Emily’s leadership sets an example for the rest of the college community as to how we can serve those around us, all the while finding out more about ourselves, what we believe, and how we can use our passions and skills to create real change and influence. She is fierce, she is confident, she is an influential and humble leader, and is an absolutely invaluable part of the campus community.

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/03/21/fearless-emily-zeller/>