



11-22-2013

Fearless: Melissa Rich

Kathryn E. Bucolo
Gettysburg College

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

 Part of the [Animal Sciences Commons](#), and the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Bucolo, Kathryn E., "Fearless: Melissa Rich" (2013). *SURGE*. 50.
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/50>

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/50>

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: Melissa Rich

Abstract

Consistently striving to take what she learns in the classroom and apply it to her life, whether in terms of her interest in Native American issues or her passion for animals and desire to go to veterinary school, Melissa Rich '14 serves her community humbly, respectfully, and with the intent to educate those around her.

[excerpt]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, injustice, SPCA, animals, advocacy

Disciplines

Animal Sciences | Civic and Community Engagement

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) 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: MELISSA RICH

November 22, 2013

Consistently striving to take what she learns in the classroom and apply it to her life, whether in terms of her interest in Native American issues or her passion for animals and desire to go to veterinary school, Melissa Rich '14 serves her community humbly, respectfully, and with the intent to educate those around her.

Melissa would say that her passions are not typical of a social justice advocate, especially when it comes to her love of animals, but a desire to be a voice for the voiceless is absolutely and to fight injustice is evident in all her activities. Melissa has been involved in the Pre-Vet club on campus for the past three years and now serves as its president, teaching other students about the different sides of animal rights and welfare issues, volunteering at the local SPCA, and organizing different events.

Off campus, Melissa works on a community-supported farm in Westminster, Maryland where she helps to sustainably care for all the animals. "I'm actually rather passionate about sustainable farming as well as CSAs now" says Melissa. "I also became a liaison between the farm and the local food pantry in my town. If there are too many eggs or there are some that are too small to sell, I deliver them to the food pantry."

But Melissa's passions are not only limited to sustainable agriculture and animal welfare. During her time here at Gettysburg, Melissa has developed a new interest in Native American history and cultures after taking two courses with Dr. Sellers. "The things that we read in her classes," says Melissa "were the kinds of things that make you restless—and I started seeing concepts and ideas we had talked about in class everywhere. The injustice of it was constantly nibbling at my mind."





This incessant curiosity about the Native American experience ultimately led her to apply to be a project leader for the [CPS Immersion Project](#) going to Tennessee this March to learn more about the Snowbird Cherokee. “After being selected for the position, I was a little nervous. I mean, I’m certainly no expert on Native American studies; taking two classes in it just barely brushes the surface,” says Melissa. “But in one of the classes I had with Dr. Sellers, she said to us, ‘You’ve gone through my class and read and learned these things, so now you’re an ally of the First Nations People. You have the opportunity to step up and be a voice.’”

And it is that call to act on the knowledge she now possesses that has propelled Melisa to lead an Immersion Project. “I’m not doing this because I’m an expert, I’m doing it because now I can help other students to at least gain a little more knowledge on the subject, and be able to approach our visit to the Snowbird with respect and appreciation.”

“There needs to be more awareness in how to approach Native American communities with respect for their histories and cultures, especially in terms of understanding what actually happens and what actually happened. This past Wednesday, for example, was the anniversary of the Trail of Tears. But did you hear anything about it? No. It received no recognition and passed by silently. It’s in situations like that that people don’t even see the underlying current of ignored racism. And that’s not okay.”

Melissa has fearlessly used her knowledge and passions to be the voice for those who have none, to stand up for what she knows is right whether in terms of sustainable agriculture, animal welfare, or Native American rights. She plans on applying to veterinary school for post-graduation, but not before trying to get a group of students next semester to try and change the mascot of Gettysburg Area High School: a Native American warrior.

Kathryn Bucolo '14
Fearless Friday Coordinator

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2013/11/22/fearless-melissa-rich/>