

Gina Vaira (master's program, biology) won second place at the 40th annual meeting of the **American Society of Primatologists**. Her thesis research was conducted with the support of the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium and the Erie Zoo.

#### Giving Back to Our Community

The Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability (SEEDS) Club of IUP hosted its fourth annual **Community Seed Swap**. The event is part of a larger project to add to the Northern Appalachian Seed Bank.

Michelle Lengel, a double major in international studies and political science and history, and a cancer survivor, organized **Mini-THON** on November 4 to raise funds for Four Diamonds, a charity for childhood cancer patients and their families. In the last two years, the event has raised \$6,470.

Members of the IUP football team granted the wish of three-year old Shayne Iverson during the game Sept. 23 against Edinboro. Players signed a team ball that was presented to Shayne and posed for photos with him. It was part of the annual **Make-A-Wish Day** the team holds, honoring one child with a life-threatening condition. Shayne, who was accidentally shot in the head by a stray bullet from a hunter when he was just days old, passed away November 1.

The IUP Libraries organized a special **book drive** for needy children through the Indiana County Angels Wings program. A total of 150 children were served by the project. The IUP community also donated more than 100 gifts to the Indiana County Angels Wings program for needy families. The project was organized by IUP's Office of Service Learning, housed in the Career and Professional Development Center.



A member of the IUP police department, Kristin Squires, organized **"Operation Homeless Hero,"** a toiletries drive for 477 homeless veterans, distributed through the Veterans Leadership Program of western Pennsylvania. IUP employees, students from Rho Tau Chi military service fraternity, the IUP Military Philanthropy Organization, Team Red White Blue and families from Indiana's Seeds of Faith School assembled the stockings.



Members of Kappa Sigma fraternity collected hundreds of nonperishable food items, personal hygiene items, and monetary donations for the **Indiana County Chevy Chase Community Center**.

Students from the **Department of Interior Design and Fashion Merchandising** designed holiday windows for 13 downtown businesses for the It's a Wonderful Life celebration. Community members can vote for their favorite windows, with all funds donated to the It's a Wonderful Life program.

More than 200 students participated in the annual **Into the Streets day** of community service to benefit seven community agencies.



# Indiana University of Pennsylvania Points of Pride



#### Fall Successes

More than 700 students are expected to participate in **commencement ceremonies** on December 16. Of the 525 students qualifying for undergraduate degrees, 192 are graduating with Latin honors (3.25 grade-point average) and 11 are graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA. A total of 163 students earned master's degrees and 38 earned doctoral degrees. Distinguished University Professor Dr. Teresa Shellenbarger (nursing) will serve as the keynote speaker for both the undergraduate and graduate ceremonies.

In the **fall sports season**, the IUP golf team won its 28th PSAC championship, and the football team won the league title and the regional crown and attained its first No. 1 ranking in a national poll since 1996. The women's volleyball team advanced to the NCAA tournament, as did the men's cross country team.



Work by the **Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Persistence** (TOUR) is well underway. Its subcommittees have identified national best practices for retention and persistence and current IUP retention and persistence initiatives. The task force will continue to gather information to make recommendations to meet the goal of increasing undergraduate retention and persistence rates to 80 percent by 2022.

Nearly \$10,000 was raised in support of IUP scholarships and programs during the first **Giving Tuesday** event. One of the best outcomes of the day: 60 IUP students rallied behind the Grant Street Park project by making gifts, resulting in a great start for the project (running through April 2018).

Milton Hershey School and IUP signed a **Memorandum of Understanding**, formalizing a partnership to provide more focused and sustained support to students from MHS.



More than 700 alumni and friends took part in the Homecoming **Crimson Huddle** as part of annual celebration. The Homecoming parade, 75 units strong, drew thousands to downtown Indiana.

Six graduates were honored with **Young Alumni Awards**. The graduates returned to campus for networking opportunities with current students and classroom visits. The recipients were: Clement (Luke) Bowen '05, co-owner, Evil Genius Beer Company (College of Education and Communications); Jennifer Boyer '05 M'06, faculty, Clarion University of Pennsylvania (College of Health and Human Services); Richard Lansberry '09, Associate National Bank Examiner, Office of the Comptroller



of the Currency (Eberly College of Business and Information Technology); Dr. Amber Stephenson, PhD '13, faculty, Clarkson University (College of Humanities and Social Sciences); Joshua Waibel '09, vice president and penetration group manager, PNC Financial Services Group, (College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics); and Ashley (Tait) Weller '08, faculty, Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts (College of Fine Arts).



The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development awarded the Allegheny Arboretum \$220,000 to start the work of creating a conceptual master plan for **Confluence Park**, a 33-acre multi-use park on the south end of campus to complement the Allegheny Arboretum. The grant proposal was developed by university, Research Institute, and Allegheny Arboretum representatives.

IUP Trustee Chair Samuel H. Smith has been confirmed as a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education **Board of Governors**.

IUP is one of 18 Pennsylvania colleges that are part of the inaugural class of the **Pittsburgh Promise Scholars Preferred College Partner program**. As a partner, IUP will provide grants for on-campus living and academic support services, including transition support services. Historically, Pittsburgh Promise Scholars achieve higher retention rates than non-promise scholars. IUP has enrolled 331 Pittsburgh Promise Scholars since 2008, with graduation rates as high as 66 percent.

The **national accolades** continue as IUP is ranked, for the 24th consecutive year, as one of the "Best National Universities" in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*; selected as one of "America's Top Colleges" by *Forbes* magazine; and highlighted in the "Best Colleges for Your Money 2017-2018" by *Money* magazine.

IUP hosted the second annual **IUP Veterans Resource Fair** in November. It included a vendor fair and opportunities for networking and was co-sponsored by the IUP Military and Veterans Resource Center and the Indiana County Veterans Service Providers Group.

### **A Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

Elise Glenn joined the Office of Social Equity as interim **Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Specialist**.

The **President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion** has developed the proposed Diversity Action Plan. Next steps include gathering opinions and suggestions from members of the community.

The **Racial Justice Coalition for Change** continued its stand against racism, hate and islamophobia through the fall semester.

More than 50 persons participated in the US Citizen **Naturalization Ceremony** at IUP, held as part of IUP's International Education Week. Dr. Shundong Bi (biology) took the oath of citizenship at this year's ceremony and also served as a speaker for the event.



More than 150 students, faculty and staff attended the **Office of Social Equity's** cross-curricular discussion on "Racism in the United States: The Aftermath of Charlottesville."

### **Setting a Standard for Excellence**

IUP received a **grant of \$212,000** from the National Security Agency to enhance cybersecurity education in western Pennsylvania. Faculty developing the program are Dr. Waleed Farag (computer science and director of the IUP Institute for Cybersecurity); Distinguished University Professor Dr. Ben Rafoth (English, director of the IUP Kathleen Jones White Writing Center); Dr. Crystal Machado (professional studies in education) and Dr. Mac Fiddner (political science).

Distinguished University Professor Dr. Eileen Glisan (foreign languages) co-presented a full-day pre-conference workshop at the annual convention of the **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**.

Dr. Kristy Chunta (nursing) recently presented a national webinar for the **American Nurses Association** on *Managing a Successful Transition to a New Role: Key Strategies for Nurses*. The national organization has more than 130,000 members.

Biology students Tashi Bharathan and Shannon Tepe, along with Professor Emeritus Dr. Jan Humphreys, were recognized for their research and scholarship in the field of vector biology at the **Pennsylvania Vector Control Association** annual conference.

Distinguished University Professor Dr. Ben Rafoth (English, director of Kathleen Jones White Writing Center, composition and TESOL doctoral program) and Dr. Dana Driscoll (English, composition and TESOL doctoral program) recently presented at the **International Writing Center Association** conference in Chicago. The focus of their panel was to explore ways to expand writing center services and envision new roles for writing center work.

IUP's resident faculty piano trio, the Litton Trio, presented a performance for instrumental music students at the **Pittsburgh Creative Arts and Performing Arts School**.



Students in IUP's Wood Center collaboratively designed and crafted the award objects for the 2017 **Governor's Awards for the Arts**. This is the first time that students have both developed and created the design for the awards.

Three faculty from the Department of Counseling presented at the national conference of the **Association for Counselor Education and Supervision**: Dr. Brittany Pollard, Dr. Michelle Bruno, and Dr. Holly Branthoover, who served as the conference coordinator.

The **IUP Center for Creativity and Change** was named as the recipient of the Professional Service Award of the Association for Creativity in Counseling. The award reflects promotion of creativity in the practice of counseling.

IUP faculty presented a free **cybersecurity skill improvement workshop** for teachers in the community. The project is part of the Gen-Cyber program, sponsored by IUP and National Security Agency.

As part of the JFK Centennial Celebration recognizing Freedom, Courage, Justice, Service, and Gratitude, the IUP Department of Theater and Dance's 2016-17 production of ***We are Proud to Present...*** was recognized "For insisting that theatrical production is central to the urgent community, national, and international conversations on the campuses of higher education nationwide."

Dr. Laura Helmrich-Rhodes (safety sciences) is the 2017 recipient of the **Indiana County Athena Award**. This award was created to inspire women of all ages to reach their full potential and create a balance in leadership. The award salutes those who enrich the lives of others through volunteerism.

### **Student Stars**

Dillon Hagy (entrepreneurship) and Tony Juhasz (economics) won the first prize of \$5,000 at the inaugural **Business of Humanity New Venture Competition**. Their business is the American Philanthropic Apparel company, which produces American-made apparel that promotes patriotism, unity, and pride. The proceeds from their sales benefit veterans in need.

Melissa Checo-Hichez (psychology) received the **Outstanding Student Award** presented at the 31st annual Robert D. Lynch Student Leadership Development Institute. The award is presented to students who demonstrate outstanding leadership skills.

Three students from the Department of Biology received grants from the **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania University Biologists** for their research projects: Wafaa Aljagthmi, Deven Korte, and Gina Vaira.

Autumn Dietrich (sociology), head community assistant for Wallwork Hall, was one of 16 students selected to be a part of the Mid-Atlantic Association of College and University Housing Officer's Lisa Pierce **Volunteer Incentive Program**.

Meagan White, (nursing PhD program) has been named a **Jonas Scholar** by the National League for Nursing. As one of the seven nationally selected scholars, she will receive financial support for her doctoral study, engage in structured mentoring activities, and conduct research to advance the science of nursing education.