

Salisbury University's Re-envisioning Ethics Access and Community Humanities (REACH) Initiative: Integrating Community and Curricular Ethics is grant-funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Humanities Connections Program. REACH, led by Co-Directors Michèle Schlehofer, Timothy Stock and Jennifer Nyland, focuses on ethics, ethics literacy and ethics agency through new curricular and co-curricular resources, and connecting with the community.

White Paper on Apology Banks Now Available

Over the summer, the REACH team had the pleasure of working on a project for the Delaware-based nonprofit Victims' Voices Heard (VVH), which seeks to uplift the voices of people who are survivors of violent crime using a restorative justice framework. VVH has been struggling with implementation of an Apology Letter Bank program and asked the REACH team to conduct an ethical analysis and provide guidance. The REACH team brought an interdisciplinary approach to the topic, merging philosophical work on the ethics of forgiveness and apology with research in the fields of criminal justice, sociology and psychology.

The Ethics White Paper produced by the REACH team, **Apology Letter Banks and the Ethics of Victim Involvement in Restorative Justice Practices**, is available to read on our website. The White Paper lays out the moral positionings for apology banks within a broader restorative justice framework, includes components of apology letters that make them more effective, summarizes the relevant normative factors, and provides best-practices for creating and managing apology letter banks that prioritize ethical treatment of victims and respect for their rights.

In response to the report, VVH Executive Director Kim Book shared: "We are honored and grateful to feature the work of the REACH team on our organizational website. For many years, we have been reviewing and revising our Apology Letter Bank program, which operates in the ethically challenging space of restorative justice between victims and perpetrators of serious crimes. The Ethics White Paper produced by the REACH team on this topic has provided a new foundation for our work and will allow us to build the programming we have always wanted to build."

If you or your organization or group would benefit from an ethics analysis, or to schedule a brief (free) ethics consultation, please contact us at REACH@salisbury.edu.



Looking to Bring on an Intern?

Is your organization looking to bring on an undergraduate student intern? REACH is developing an internship program, launching in the spring semester. Students eligible for REACH internships are juniors or seniors with strong GPAs who are majoring in a variety of fields of study. Student interns work 10 hours a week in your organization and are supervised by a member of the REACH team. If you are interested in working with an intern, please contact us at REACH@salisbury.edu.



REACH Co-Director Receives Professorship

REACH Co-Director Dr. Michèle Schlehofer, a professor in the Psychology Department, has been selected as one of four recipients of the University System of Maryland (USM) Wilson H. Elkins Professorship. The professorship comes with a \$50,000 award, which will help create the Center for Ethical Responsibility and Transformation (CERT). CERT will focus on expanding the efforts of REACH; planned activities include an internship program, opportunities for community members to connect with faculty expertise, and training for faculty and students on community-engaged research and practice. The financial benefit of the Elkins Professorship will allow a closer connection between the community and CERT. The Elkins Professorship honors the late Wilson H. Elkins, who led the University of Maryland flagship campus to new levels of distinction as its president from 1954 to 1978. The Wilson H. Elkins Endowment Fund supports the professorship awards in combination with institutional and system resources. Please see the [press release for additional details](#).

Navigating Ethical Dilemmas: Asking the Right Questions

Oscar Wilde once said, “The answers are all out there, we just need to ask the right questions.” When working through an ethical problem, it is common to seek input from others. However, when seeking input, it is important to ask the right questions. Asking the right questions can lead to clarity on the problem and can help individuals and organizations develop ethical solutions. However, the right questions are not always the obvious ones.

How do we know what the right questions are? We believe that the right questions to ask are ones that expand and challenge your perspective and understanding of the scope of a problem and lead you to identify different ways of addressing it.

For instance, imagine a small nonprofit organization that provides after-school educational support to children in our community is concerned about equitable distribution of services and identifying and reducing disparities in the impact of the organization’s programs.

Using our framework of asking questions that expand one’s perspective on a problem, some examples of the right questions to ask would be:

■ **Questions that identify barriers to access:** Questions such as “Are there specific demographics or neighborhoods that are underrepresented in our

programs?” and “What are some of the reasons children are not participating in (or regularly attending) our program?” enable the organization to uncover potential barriers to equitable access. This could include barriers such as transportation issues, time at which the program is offered, language barriers, lack of cultural fit or lack of community awareness.

■ **Questions to help understand community needs and readiness:** Questions like “What needs does the community prioritize?,” “What does success look like for this community?” and “What change would the community like to see?” can guide the organization to better understand the diverse needs of the community. This helps ensure that programs are designed to address the specific challenges faced by communities.

■ **Questions to evaluate program impact:** Asking questions about the effectiveness of programs for different demographic groups, such as “Is our program having consistent impact among all children served? If not, which children benefit most/least from our program?,” “What type of impact matters most to community members?” and “Do we have mechanisms in place to receive honest feedback from the children, families

and communities we serve?” can reveal whether certain groups are benefiting less than others. This information can help the organization refine services to meet family and community needs.

■ **Questions about stakeholder engagement:** Questions like “Who are the existing leaders in this community (or who has the potential to become a community leader)?” and “What community representatives have not yet provided input on our programs?” encourage the organization to involve key stakeholders in all stages of decision-making and can suggest new organizational partnerships. This collaborative approach ensures that the organization is responsive to the community’s needs and concerns, fostering a sense of community ownership, empowerment and shared responsibility.

By posing these and similar questions, decision-makers are compelled to explore alternative avenues for serving the community and consider the impact of their choices. The process of questioning encourages a thorough exploration of the ethical landscape, enabling individuals and organizations to make informed decisions that align with their values, help ensure that organizational values align with the values of the community and contribute to the greater good.

ETHICS PROFILE: Kevin Lindsay

Director of Strategy and Alignment, YMCA of the Chesapeake

Tell us about your organization and what you do.

My name is Kevin Lindsay, and I am the director of strategy and alignment for the YMCA of the Chesapeake. My role within the YMCA is to lead efforts and support staff and volunteers to develop strategies that strengthen connections with diverse populations and align the regional YMCA to better reflect the communities it serves across the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Prior to joining the YMCA, I was the neighborhood relations manager with the City of Salisbury, MD; a case manager with Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake; and I also worked for Maryland Department of Juvenile Services as a case



manager and a residential adviser. I have over 15 years’ experience working with emotionally disturbed children. I have a strong passion for helping youth to be productive young citizens.

What drew you to being a part of the Community Ethics Network?

The work I have done in the community and connections made with community members drew me to be a part of the Community Ethics Network.

How does ethics improve the work that you do?

Ethics helps me with decision making when dealing with all different people and cultures with the YMCA of the Chesapeake. The YMCA wants to be inclusive to everyone and sometimes we have to make appropriate decisions using ethical practices to make sure we can accomplish our mission.

Want To Be Featured in Our Newsletter?

We welcome contributions for our Ethics Profile. Anyone within our Community Ethics Network is invited to be featured in our newsletter. Please contact us at REACH@salisbury.edu to be featured in an upcoming newsletter.

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