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ERE STUDENT SOCCER PLAYER SCORES BIG WHILE CREATING COMMUNITY

By Leo Kepcke and Savannah Sonia

Claire Bareilles, a fifth year Environmental Resources Engineering (ERE) student and a Cal Poly Humboldt soccer player, has experienced first-hand the necessity of creating community in every part of her college and athletic experience. Not only has Bareilles participated in a number of community projects through the Lumberjacks' women's soccer team at Humboldt, but she has also provided mentorship and worked with local organizations through the ERE program. When asked about the benefit of being involved in this way, Bareilles expressed, "I think it really gives you a sense of belonging... I grew up here and so being able to give back to the community who literally raised me [is] so gratifying and just makes you feel so proud of who you've become as a student and a student-athlete."

Bareilles spoke about working with community partners on engineering projects and the purpose she finds therein. “They’re just an invaluable resource, with a ton of knowledge already, that you can just directly ask about certain things.” Bareilles shared that being able to experience firsthand the benefits community partners gain from working with Humboldt students helped her understand the importance of their work.

A major aspect of the ERE major, according to Bareilles, is getting involved with the community and transferring the knowledge engineering students gain into hands-on learning experiences. One specific project that Bareilles participated in was for her Renewable Energy Power Systems class, where she and her classmates “worked with the City of Eureka Parks Division. We designed photovoltaic systems for several Eureka parks. The Eureka Parks Division just received grant money to update some of their parks and so as part of that project, they wanted to incorporate renewable energy systems.”

Bareilles has also been involved in many on-campus mentoring programs over the past few years, including the [Jeffrey S. Navarro program](#), Major-based Peer Mentoring, and [Pathmakers](#). She explained that the Pathmakers program is, “based on integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with community involvement trying to teach kids and make a curriculum that teaches kids about TEK.”

Along with mentorship, Bareilles has also been able to build relationships between her cohort in the ERE program. She shared that “...being a part of a community that you can rely on when you need help, and you

can also lend help when others are asking for it is just so important and has really helped me get to be where I am today.” She explained that in the ERE program she has never felt like she has been competing with her peers, but rather working as a team to push each other to do their best work.

When asked about what community means to her, Bareilles said, “playing soccer and doing engineering is 100% the hardest thing I have done in my life,” and that, “I could not have done it without so many of my classmates and teammates helping me in that process. So having that community to support you... is the only way that I’ve been able to get to this point.”

In terms of building and supporting the local community through soccer, Bareilles spoke about the



[NCAA award](#) that the Lumberjacks' women's soccer team won for the number of community service hours they completed. She added, "We always have this summer kids camp and after that we tend to see those same kids who came to the camp come to our games and be on the sidelines, and they're always cheering us on... Just connecting with those kids you tend to see that they grow up being Cal Poly Humboldt supporters and feel really connected to the school and Athletics, so it's incredibly rewarding to see that and see these kids look up to you."

Bareilles also spoke about the [Bracelets for Change program](#) that the women's soccer team spearheaded. In support of the Black Lives Matter movement, Bareilles and her teammates made and sold bracelets in Cal Poly Humboldt colors, the profits from which were donated to the [Umoja Center for Pan African Student Excellence](#). "At that time, everyone was locked into their houses," said Bareilles, "and so as a team...we wanted to try to create some amount of change, help the cause, and just be more aware of what was happening within our community, and so that was something that we could all do at home while remaining socially distant."

In addition to creating connections through volunteering, Bareilles also shared how she has been able to build community on campus through playing soccer. "You see other athletic teams coming to your games and you just feel that support within Athletics as well as having just this massive support system behind you; I mean it's the support system alone that is invaluable for your education and your well being during your college career."

Bareilles continued on the importance of building these relationships: "It does make you feel so connected just by being associated with [Cal Poly Humboldt] that you can find the community wherever you are and I think being associated with Athletics within Humboldt you really do feel a sense of pride to be representing your school. That pride just sticks with you, even after you finish your career and...it's really special. It was a lot of work but I'm glad I did it because of that community that you really do feel a part of."

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- Claire Bareilles

