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State of Connecticut
Department of Higher Education

April 8, 2009

Dear Award Nominee,

On behalf of the Department of Higher Education and the Connecticut Commission on National and Community Service, I would like to congratulate you on your nomination and outstanding achievements in community service. The difference that you make for the people and communities that you serve is truly commendable.

It is an honor for us to highlight and celebrate the community service work on Connecticut's college and university campuses. It is important that we work together to build a legacy of service in our communities. Together, we can continue to build stronger, healthier, smarter and safer communities for all of us.

I commend you and thank you for the service that you continue in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Meotti".

Michael P. Meotti
Commissioner



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS 2009

Since 1993, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education has served as the state's leading agency to coordinate Connecticut's response to the federal National and Community Service initiative. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service also was borne by this initiative and is appointed by the Governor. The Department provides the staff support for the Commission, whose mission of "fostering a vibrant culture of service through volunteerism" is well-served by college and university students across the State.

The Connecticut Higher Education Community Service Awards were established in 1993 by the Department of Higher Education to build statewide recognition of community service activities. The awards process is guided each year by the Connecticut Commission on Community Service working in partnership with an Awards Committee. This committee is composed of community representatives from private and public organizations throughout Connecticut. The Department of Higher Education takes this opportunity to acknowledge the continued support and leadership from our State legislature on the importance of community service. The legislature has been years ahead of its time with its recognition support for which the entire state is indebted.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AWARD NOMINEES

The 2009 Individual Student Award will be presented to two students who have served as models for leadership in community service.

Nominees must have demonstrated leadership in the development and implementation of community service within the campus community and must have demonstrated initiative and creativity in community service participation.

Nominees must have engaged in community service that resulted in a positive impact on their campus and the community.

Khadijah Abdullah, President of the Muslim Student Association at Southern Connecticut State University, lead the way for numerous student organizations to create a shared vision for enlightening our campus community on the dangers and reality of AIDS/HIV. Khadijah inspired our students and administrative offices to collaboratively develop an AIDS Awareness Week December 1-4, 2008. In an effort to build strong relationships and involve as many students as possible, Khadijah wrote letters of appeal to every student group on campus asking for support and participation. Through this campaign, Khadijah brought more than ten organizations and departments, diverse in both their missions and memberships, together. Several fraternities and sororities, political action and advocacy groups such as Southern's local chapter of the NAACP and Black Student Union, Wellness Office, and Health Center worked together on this cross-campus initiative.

She organized weekly meetings and kept the groups motivated through several months of planning. During this time, Khadijah also developed and strengthened our ties to the greater New Haven Community, reaching out to organizations like Aids Project New Haven and the Hill Health Center of New Haven who were instrumental in the success of the initiative. The week consisted of daily information tables, movies, discussion groups and roundtables, a poetry night, prayer vigil, free HIV testing, and a formal "Aids Awareness Ball," which was filled to capacity. The ball included a full course dinner, Power Point presentations and a guest speaker afflicted with HIV from the New Haven Community who spoke candidly about shocking local and national statistics, prevention, and his own personal struggle with the virus.

Hundreds of students participated in activities throughout the week, creating a major positive impact on our campus. With college students often engaging in risky sexual behavior, the impact of this service initiative is enormous. The feedback from our students was very positive as many expressed the importance of keeping this dialogue going and never breaking the silence. Through education and awareness about this increasing global epidemic, Khadijah believes that we can save ourselves as well as the next generation and ultimately create a healthier society. Her work through this initiative helped create leadership opportunities for other student leaders to share their voices and follow the example Khadijah sets for her peers.

Khadijah Abdullah is an outstanding student leader who is destined to inspire others to keep serving their communities and our society as a whole.

Joe Antelmi has served homeless Connecticut citizens as a shelter volunteer, activist, and not-for-profit board member, but the bulk of his activities in 2008 were as the co-coordinator of UConn PIRG's hunger and homeless campaign. Under Joe's leadership, PIRG students: contributed almost 400 hours of direct service at local homeless shelters; coordinated public education activities such as a sleep-out which was televised statewide on Fox 61; fundraised over \$25,000 for local non-profits, and organizing a state-wide conference. Joe was involved in some capacity in planning every aspect of the conference - Hungry for Change: CT Symposium on Hunger and Homelessness, in April 2008. He arranged 14 workshops around the topics of food, housing, advocacy, and fair trade. The conference included high profile events such as a homelessness role-play and a panel of local and national homeless speakers. The conference had an impressive attendance of 150 people. He accounted for about half the attendance, after convincing 40 honors students to participate; these students were inspired to invite 30 more high school students from disadvantaged Hartford neighborhoods to the conference. Joe took his passion state-wide during the summer of 2008 as an intern with the Connecticut Association for Human Services where he organized multiple community meetings and conferences with the government officials, media members, business leaders, and citizens. He continued his macro work when he became a board member of End Hunger CT! during the fall 2008 semester.

In Fall 2008, Joe also began work as a Teaching Assistant for Professor Velazquez to create a new service-learning course on immigration in Connecticut. "Honors Core Course: Migrant Workers Seminar," enrolled 12 students for a classroom and community service experience to learn about immigration. Joe was paid for the position, but went above and beyond the call of the course as the primary person responsible for the service component of the course. He networked with 7 different organizations in Hartford, Willimantic and Storrs to create experiences for the students. He coordinated all of the logistics including site placement, transportation, and guided tours of places where many immigrants work, complete with translated interviews with immigrant workers. Joe also arranged for campus presentations from a wide range of disciplines including a former INS employee, lawyers, city council members, and professors. These activities will place students at the front lines of the issue allowing them to meet a growing community need as well as further their own development in the areas of academics (history), cultural competency, and civic engagement. After months of preparation during the fall of 2008, the class began in January 2009, and he is currently a paid teaching assistant for the course.

Joe has taken a multilateral approach which focus on personal change through his own direct service, activism, and reflective learning; campus change through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for students; and systemic change through educating the general public on the issues.

Myung Jin Baldini, University of Bridgeport

Myung Jin is a sophomore who is dedicated to community services. He was an integral part of the the MLK Day committee held on January 19, 2009. MLK day is a community project that speaks to the heart of Dr. King's philosophy in the concept of Service. He was responsible for organizing 20 different community projects for over 300 people to attend for the surrounding area. The projects include:

- Knit one, Save one – knitting caps for infants in Africa,
- Books of Hope – creating books to be used in developing countries,
- Habitat for Humanity,
- Working with residents at Bridgeport Manor and Heath care center, Bridgeport Beautification projects, and
- local food banks.

He also spear headed the 40 days of Peace program for the University of Bridgeport. It is a 40 day pledge to be a model of ethical behavior, integrity, and good citizenship. He marketed this around campus, through posters, wrist bands, handing our flyers that said peace in 40 languages. Myung Jin is also the President of the Service for Peace chapter at University of Bridgeport.

He leads 30 students and in various community service projects. They assist the Connecticut Food Bank twice a month; they help at the Montano Assistive Technology Center for children with autism; Global for Peace Festival, and working at Marina Village, to name a few.

Clara Baur, Norwalk Community College

Clara Baur is a mother of three and holds a Master Degree; and is currently enrolled at Norwalk Community College. She has been taking Spanish classes for personal enrichment and through this class she was given the opportunity to participate the Service-Learning program. Throughout her involvement with this program, she has become a very important part of the life of the seniors at Norwalk Senior Center South.

Norwalk Community College started a Service Learning Project and as part of this program students were given credit for participating in this project. The College started collaboration with the Norwalk Senior Center South, a center who serves a large number of Hispanic Seniors. Students were to spend time with the seniors, practice their Spanish and write short biographical essays of the seniors' experience as immigrants in the U.S and about their life changes from their native country to the United States.

Clara (Lou) accepted the Service Learning portion of the class and starting working on this project in the Fall of 2008. During that time, she developed a relationship with all the Hispanic Seniors. Not only did she do what was required for the class (20 hours per semester), she went above and beyond. She went to the Senior Center everyday to help with activities that the seniors were involved in. Clara also used her vacation time to assist more at the center. Since her involvement in the class, she has continued to her work at the center and has begun to teach the seniors English as a second language. She also provides transportation for the seniors to take them to different activities and has spent time helping them with medical forms and more. She has become an invaluable asset for the seniors and the center.

She is doing an extraordinary work at the center and her dedication is without precedence. The seniors look forward everyday to her visit and her English as a second language classes.

Krystyna Blakeslee launched the Uconn Law School's Volunteer Domestic Assistance Information Program in the Hartford Family Court. She is an extraordinarily impressive young woman and one who is constantly engaged in public service work while also achieving a grade point average that places her among the top ten students in her class. Mrs. Blakeslee has worked hard in a variety of capacities to improve the Law School community and to provide greater access to legal services for underserved populations. For example, in addition to the work described below, in fall 2008, as a vice-president of the Women's Law Student Association, she worked with a committee to plan and host a Domestic Violence Awareness Panel which was open to the public and the law school community.

Mrs. Blakeslee's commitment to public service was evident before she came to law school, as she served as a sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed in a combat zone in Iraq. When she came to law school, she immediately began working for our student-run Connecticut Unemployment Action Center ("CUAC"), which assists individuals of limited means who need help obtaining their unemployment benefits. Her volunteer efforts on behalf of CUAC clients were so extraordinary that she was nominated president of the organization. Mrs. Blakeslee was looking for ways to expand participation in CUAC and to improve its service to the community. She expanded student involvement in CUAC, increased community awareness of the program and developed a training program for volunteers. She was also implemented a summer program for CUAC, so that its representation of claimants could continue throughout the year.

Later in the fall, she began to create a program to assist persons of limited means who might need information to fill out forms for a temporary restraining order or an uncontested divorce. She worked with a faculty mentor to start the program in Hartford Family Court. The program, which was launched in February 2008 with 17 law student volunteers, would not exist if it were not for her efforts. She attended meetings with the Presiding Judge of the Family Court, met with individuals from Greater Hartford Legal Aid and Interval House (a shelter for abused women), recruited students to work on the project, arranged for them to be trained by lawyers from the Hartford County Bar, organized the students' clearance with Court Services, advertised the program to the public, and performed countless other tasks to launch the program and insure its success. In April 2008 she received the Pro Bono Service Award from the Women Law Students' Association.

The Family Court project continued through the Summer 2008 with law student volunteers and the Presiding Judge of the Family Court has asked that it continue. There was some initial resistance to the project and it is a testament to Mrs. Blakeslee's skills in court relations, recruiting and "quality control" that the program has operated so well that it will continue to have a presence in the courthouse.

Michael Comerford, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Michael Comerford, a first-class (senior) cadet at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, has contributed to his community by volunteering his free time as a docent at the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration in Mystic, Connecticut.

Michael is a Marine and Environmental Science major at the Academy, and his enthusiasm for all things aquatic inspired him to volunteer at the Aquarium. He initially volunteered to help care for the sea creatures and equipment, but the Aquarium quickly realized he had a talent for communicating with visitors and asked him to become a docent. He completed a training course and quickly found a home on the exhibit floor of the Aquarium, interpreting the exhibits for visitors young and old. It is his work that allows visitors to not only admire the beauty of the marine animals, but to learn about them and gain a better understanding of the environment that many people do not interact with directly.

Not content with merely naming all the fish for passing visitors, Michael has become an active educator on the topic of the impact of marine pollution and other anthropogenic effects on the marine ecosystem. These are topics that Michael has studied as part of his academic major, which focuses on biological and chemical oceanography. Michael is driven by a desire to help protect the marine environment by educating people about it. He takes every opportunity to work with groups of school children when they visit on field trips. As a younger member of the Aquarium staff, he is particularly adept at explaining the sometimes complex scientific issues to the younger students. Michael's mission is to provide the visitors, especially the young ones, with not only factual information about the marine environment, but help them build an emotional bond in order to raise public interest in conservation of the marine environment.

In his time at the Aquarium, Michael has educated dozens of school groups about the dangers of pollution in the marine environment. There is no telling how many of these young students he has inspired to learn more about the marine environment and science in general. In doing so, Michael has contributed towards the conservation of the marine environment for generations to come.

You can tell that Jen DeBrincat is an accounting major by how organized, thorough and steady she is. Perhaps not typical of accounting majors, though, is Ms. DeBrincat's passion for service. Besides being an exceptionally active member on the executive board for Hunger Cleanup (HCU) for two years, she is also the founder of the Fairfield Volunteer Corps (FVC). FVC is a new community service group offered out of the Office of Campus Ministry which focuses its efforts on assisting a range of non-profits with odd jobs of a pressing nature.

Ms. DeBrincat had an idea for a new community service program aimed at helping non-profit organizations that need volunteers to assist presently with various odd jobs; what we've come to call "one-time efforts". She had gotten the idea when, as Chair of HCU's Worksites Committee, a large number of organizations wanted assistance, but needed it right away to complete their projects. Before school started this fall, she had already designed an intake form, mailed it to the organizations with whom she already had a working relationship as well as other non-profits, recruited volunteers and by late September, she had organized the FVC's first event. She convinced her volunteers to donate the profits from what they would have been paid to "work the event" and was able to raise \$900 to donate much needed supplies to the St. Charles Food Pantry in Bridgeport. By the end of last semester, FVC had coordinated 15 volunteer events utilizing approximately 100 volunteers. Knowing she would be graduating this spring, very early on last semester Ms. DeBrincat recruited two freshman to take over next year. They have been working by her side on the events since early November to learn the ropes and she has set the bar high for these two students. FVC will grow thanks to her planning and execution!

Without her creativity, planning and passion to help others, FVC would not exist. Many non-profits in the Greater Bridgeport area are in a better place thanks to Jen DeBrincat. She is proud of building the FVC from the ground up and pleased to leave her legacy in able hands.

Christopher DeLauretis, Central Connecticut State University

Mr. Christopher DeLauretis is one of our outstanding student leaders. He has been involved in the Best Buddies student organization over the past four years, a group that works to improve the life and experiences of persons with special needs.

Chris is also involved with the Literacy Outreach Program in the New Britain Elementary Schools where he reads to students and student groups and provides workshops to parents. Over the past eight years Chris has volunteered at Relay for Life, a program designed to raise awareness and funding for cancer research.

On the campus of Central Connecticut State University, Chris is a member of several student organizations, serves as a Resident Assistant, and recently was named as Chair of the Student Ethics Board, a new student organization that provides guidance to student groups in ensuring that their activities follow ethical standards.

Chris is a student leader who has made a difference in the lives of students.

Women Activists & Allies Vocalizing Equality (WAVE) is student organization that Christina Giani co-founded with a fellow peer and past Quinnipiac University graduate. In 07-08 Christina served as Vice President and in 08-09 as President. She assisted in fostering the group through its formative process and cultivating a small number of committed members.

WAVE is a feminist organization that focuses on equal rights for all, women's health issues, rape and sexual assault, violence against women and education on these and many other issues. Christina either planned or assisted in the coordination of these WAVE events:

The Clothesline Project (April 2008) - An event that raises awareness of sexual assault and rape on campus. Students wrote their story on a t-shirt and all submitted t-shirts were hung in the cafe to educate students to advocate against sexual violence towards women.

Take Back the Night (April 2008) - Organized a follow-up event to The Clothesline Project, the first Take Back the Night at Quinnipiac, which gave students the opportunity to share their story and "take back the night" from sexual assault or rape. All students are invited to come and participate in this emotional night. Many students were thankful for the opportunity to share their story, as it serves as a type of therapy.

Love 146 Sex Trafficking Awareness event (November 2008) - Educational benefit dinner to raise funds for local sex trafficking organization in New Haven, Love 146. WAVE raised about \$300 to donate to this cause.

In the Spring of 2008, WAVE was recognized as the Best New Student Organization at Quinnipiac.

Maria Gomez, Norwalk Community College

Maria Gomez has been extremely active in community service throughout her entire life and is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of others. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and was the founder of the Norwalk Community College Music Club. Growing up like many teenagers, she was not familiar with the term "community service". Maria's own words explaining community service:

"Community service is not just another box to check on a college application. That thought is very sad, for I have been touched by community service in a very real and tactile way. I see the world with different eyes. I understand what it means to be compassionate and I understand that sympathy is not always the correct response. I have learned that most times action is. Feeling sorry for the young teenage mother or the Panamanian orphan isn't going to impact her/his situation. However, if you take the time to listen and help her out with her grocery bills or play with the child or bring him food and toys, that is doing something, that is changing someone(s) life. I have learned that community service is probably one of the most healthy actions in the world. The fundamental lesson I have learned is when you engage in the assistance of lifting up another human being, you will always "get back" more and be raised up further than you have ever imagined. It is this feeling I am addicted to: knowing that I am somehow having an influence over this broken world. For as a very wise woman once said, "You are in the world to change it."

Maria's most recent community service contributions within the year 2008, have been volunteering every Friday night for Younglife; Saturday night's she spends volunteering her time at the Bridgeport Mission soup kitchen and every Sunday she volunteers her time to do leadership training with young girls through the New Canaan High School. Once a month she volunteers her time to the Bowery Mission in an effort to feed the hungry. She assists with the distribution of donated items and the mobile soup kitchen that is designed to take the food banks to those that are immobile. Wyldlife is an organization that is dedicated to working with middle school aged at risk youth. Within this program, she facilitates after school programs and spent the month of July 2008 at Lake Champion volunteering her time. At the YMCA, she donates her time to work with special needs children and often chaperones middle school dances. Maria also volunteered for Younglives which is an organization dedicated to assisting teenage mothers. Through her involvement, she did free babysitting for the mothers and provided mediation between the mothers and their families, assisted with tutoring and helping these young mothers apply for federal assistance. Lastly, she volunteered administrative support for the International Humanity Foundation.

Sarah M. Hemingway, Western Connecticut State University

Sarah Hemingway, a WestConn BS Elementary Education-Psychology, will be graduating from WestConn in May 2009 to pursue a career as an elementary education teacher.

Sarah is an exceptional academic student with a cumulative GPA 3.97, a member of WestConn's Honor's Program, and is an inducted member of five national honor societies, (e.g., Psi Chi, Phi Lamda Theta, Phi Delta Kappa). Ms. Hemingway provides exemplary service and leadership to her community of Newtown Connecticut and her university.

At 20 years old, Sarah was elected as the Vice Chair of the Newtown Democratic Town Committee. In her role, she fundraises, coordinates community service projects, and leads the Town Committee on various issues and campaigns. Sarah volunteers her time at a local food pantry and senior living facility, provides religious education at Saint Rose Church in Newton, had served as campaign manager for Friends of Luddy '08, and organized and moderated a Community Conversation for Newtown on January 31, 2009 focusing on bullying and aggressive student behavior with over 100 Newtown residents in attendance.

In addition to the above, Sarah has served as a WestConn Peer-to-Peer Mentor, and as President of WestConn's Education Club for the past two years, which provides numerous literacy, mathematic after school tutoring, and other educational outreach activities to the P-12 students in the Danbury Public Schools.

In all these service activities, Sarah is a true leader who leads by example. She is not afraid to dialogue about difficult issues. She does not hesitate to find solutions to complex problems. She has a gift of building consensus and coalition, when necessary, and she has the special ability to empower and inspire others within the communities of Newtown and WestConn.

Sarah is a young adult with a vision and courage, a leader who uses her time and talents to better her community. As State Representative Christopher B. Luddy in his letter of January 28, 2009 to WestConn's President, Dr. James Schmotter, states "We, in Newtown, are grateful for Sarah's involvement and are looking forward to her continued growth as she continues to emerge as a young leader in our community and across the state."

Paloma Kunze, Three Rivers Community College

Paloma Kunze is a second year student at Three Rivers Community College and one of our most active student organization members. As a member of the Student Nurses Association, Paloma helped arrange and participate in many community outreach programs, always an active member in their endeavors. Through the Student Nurses, Paloma participated in the annual campus blood drive and a Habitat for Humanity build; additionally the group hosted several CPR classes open campus-wide in an effort to offer free health-conscious education to Three Rivers students and staff.

Paloma was a driving force behind re-instituting the Three Rivers organization GIVE (Get Involved in Volunteer Efforts). Under her leadership, the group hosted a Valentine's Day candy sale with the proceeds donated to American Heart Association and a Guitar Hero/Rock Band Rock-Off with proceeds being donated to Vh1's Save the Music foundation.

As our campus consolidated and the entire college community strove to become a united campus, Paloma organized a community quilt project, giving fabric squares and paints to faculty, staff and students to decorate. The squares were made into a quilt and will be donated to the school to hang in the student lounge.

She also played a key role in many of the food and toiletry drives in which Three Rivers participated, representing the Student Nurses Association and GIVE. Acting for GIVE, Paloma coordinated the neighborhood outreach, contacting community members for donations.

During the College's annual Read Across America celebration, Paloma represented both GIVE and the Student Nurses Association, helping run multiple booths. As President of GIVE, she organized face painting for the birthday party attendees; she also donated a portion of her time at the Student Nurses' booth, demonstrating blood pressure cuffs and thermometers and teaching children the importance of healthy living.

Keilan McHugh is the current president of the Habitat for Humanity Club at Southern Connecticut State University and was an active member of the club for the two years prior. Keilan is an incredible leader and an outstanding person.

Keilan has done an outstanding job as over the last year the Habitat for Humanity President under some very difficult circumstances. Keilan has successfully raised thousands of dollars for the club through various activities such as bake sales and having club members work at a concession stand during Yale football games.

Ms. McHugh has organized several "builds" during the semester. A "build" is a term used when students volunteer their time on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday to help build or re-build a house for a needy family. Under Keilan's leadership, there have been more builds this semester than any other time in my tenure as advisor for the group, which has been seven years. Keilan has also continued the tradition of making the campus community more aware of the problem of poverty housing during Act, Speak, Build Week, by posting signs and putting mannequins of homeless people with information at select locations on campus. In addition, she led a large collaborative effort in planning and implementing a large event titled, "Sleep Out for the Homeless" where several clubs and organizations worked together to sleep out in our Residence Hall quad on a cold October evening to demonstrate the number of homeless people needing shelter.

Lastly, Keilan has successfully planned an alternative Spring Break trip for the club to Exmore, Virginia. During this trip, the club members and two advisors will work for a week building a home for a needy family. On past trips, members have done tasks from digging foundations and setting rebar to painting trim and drywall.

Ms. McHugh has excelled under some very trying circumstances. First she has had to do much of the planning, organizing, and delegating responsibility on her own. Because of Keilan's excellent organizational skills, dedication to the club, and ability to motivate other members, the club has never been in better shape. Membership is high, but more importantly participation and activity has never been better. In addition, the current economic climate has seriously hindered fundraising. Although money is tight, the club has raised enough money to fund its trip to Virginia as well as supplies for Act, Speak, Build Week and a dinner at the end of the year to celebrate the club's accomplishments.

Keilan is a leader of the best kind, leading by example and with the ability to motivate others.

Nora Mullanaphy, Saint Joseph College

Nora is currently a senior at Saint Joseph College and during her tenure on campus has dedicated an enormous amount of time participating in volunteer activities.

Saint Joseph College has an existing partnership with the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry in Hartford. That partnership is the Wellness Center on Church Street which offers health education, assessment and referrals to the under served population living in Hartford. One of the programs offered at the Wellness Center is the sandwich ministry where individuals come daily to receive nourishment. Two times monthly the Wellness Center invites the Sandwich Ministry to partner with the Urban center. That collaborative effort provides food and the student nurses at Saint Joseph College provide health assessments such as blood pressure screening, glucose screening etc.

Nora has been instrumental in advancing this partnership. She has engaged other students in this project and reflects the values of the Mercy mission in her daily interactions. She has been involved in this partnership for the past two years. Nora is scheduled to graduate this year and has encouraged four other students to carry on this service endeavor when she departs.

While at Saint Joseph College service has been instrumental in Nora's time at the college. She is a warm, giving individual with a passion for service. It has been said, "Whenever there is a need that is where you will find Nora." Whether it be baking cookies for women who are currently in a transitional program or delivering food to local AIDS residences.

Lastly, Nora will be spending the next week volunteering with a group of her peers in Guyana. While she is there she will be volunteering at the local hospital and orphanage. She will share her knowledge and experiences with the caretakers and nurses she will work side by side with, but most importantly I know she will leave a lasting impression with everyone who she ministers to and comes in contact with.

Nora is a student who embodies the essence of volunteerism and social justice. She is a student who will continue to volunteer once she graduates and will certainly change the lives of many and maybe even a little part of our world.

Since October 2007, Christina Owczarek has been involved with the American Cancer Society within the Quinnipiac community. She assumed the role of co-chair for the Relay for Life of Quinnipiac University a new event for the QU community. Relay for Life is a 24-hour walking event that joins together teams of community members, raising funds and honoring the lives of those who have been affected by the disease. As co-chair she was responsible for the 11-15 subcommittees that organized the event for the spring of 08.

The Relay for Life of Quinnipiac University held in April 2008 generated \$114,000 in donations for the American Cancer Society and joined together 1,052 students and faculty in the overnight celebration. Due to the success of the first Relay for Life of Quinnipiac it received three awards from the American Cancer Society: Nationwide Rookie of the Year, Nationwide Top 5 Youth Events and #1 New Relay of New England. Christina was the recipient of the award for Volunteer of Special Events of 2008 in December 2008 from the American Cancer Society. Christina continued her work in organizing the second, now annual, Relay for Life of Quinnipiac in the Fall of 2008 as one of three co-chairs for the event.

Eastern's 'People Helping People' (PHP) is student organization that focuses on a variety of social, political and environmental issues through service programs. PHP's Environmental Committee, in conjunction with Eastern's Akus Gallery, initiated a campus and community latex paint collection and learned how to recycle the paint. The group collected and recycled nearly 300 gallons of discarded latex paint. Students sorted the collected latex paint by color, and then strained it using cheesecloth strainers attached to clean paint cans. The paint was mixed and then poured into quart cans that were donated to the community through Habitat for Humanity as well as to the Performing Arts Department at Eastern. The old cans were rinsed and recycled properly. The project was so successful that it will be repeated in April, 2009 with the paint being donated to Willimantic's "Town Pride, Town Wide" Community Clean-up Day. Community members and Non-profit organizations will be able to use the paint to spruce up rooms at no charge while using paint that otherwise would have been discarded.

Shahista is an international student from Durban, South Africa who embodies the African Philosophy of Ubuntu which means "I am because of others." This philosophy guides her beliefs, career path, and outreach work and has led her to focus on human rights, social justice and structural inequalities. Although she has been active with service since grade school, Shahista's work in 2008 was especially significant. She is the coordinator and project manager of a campus fundraising and awareness initiative started in 2006 as a social activism project for a women's studies class. This project has continued and expanded over the past few years. Currently it focuses on raising awareness on the impact of HIV/Aids in South Africa and raising funds for two organizations that deals with HIV/Aids in South Africa: Hillcrest Aids Trust and the Kwazulu-Natal Network on Violence Against Women.

With the support of the Hillcrest Aids Trust, HIV positive women make beaded products to sell and support their families. Shahista's project at UConn purchases these products, sells them in Connecticut, and then donates all proceeds back to the organizations. These funds support the organizations' women's rights, counseling, health care, and advocacy activities. Shahista has expanded her work from a one person passion to engaging others through a partnership with the UCONN chapter of the national honors fraternity, Phi Sigma Pi. In 2008, Shahista invested approximately 200 hours in the project, and with the additional support of 30 volunteers from Phi Sigma Pi, the project raised approximately \$1,500 that has gone directly to building a respite care facility in summer of 2008.

Shahista does not just talk about the issues from afar, she actively engages in them. Each summer she returns to South Africa and volunteers for the Trust working with women who are supported by the organization. Additionally, Shahista volunteered with the Netcare Umhlanga hospital in South Africa in 2007 & 2008. Her experience with the hospital and her studies in Allied Health are allowing her to understand the successful management of facilities so that health care providers that can effectively treat and support people with HIV/AIDS.

Back in Connecticut, Shahista serves her cause through multiple public education and advocacy activities that reach hundreds of people. She has conducted multiple on-campus lectures and trainings, introduced Ela Ghandi during Asian American Heritage week, and trained UConn and Michigan State students who are going to be studying abroad in South Africa. All of these activities seek to increase people's understanding of the South African people, culture, and how HIV/AIDS is destroying their communities.

Shahista's passion is to address the critical issues and undertake advocacy work in relevant areas that hamper democracy in South Africa and globally. She serves in multiple capacities which provide individual, organizational, and community support for those suffering from HIV/AIDS in South Africa and is an exemplary of UConn's commitment to active global citizenship.

Monica Rochon has had an interest in photography for many years. She took that interest and developed a project called "Capture It" that collected donated cameras for disadvantaged youth. Monica feels that many kids from urban areas think that athletics are their only way out. Monica felt strongly that it was important to show kids that there are many other ways to express themselves and to develop leadership skills. Urban or street photography is her favorite because it visually portrays a person's life and community from their own point of view. This type of photography shows others the urban environment and provides an outlet for feelings, experiences and cultures.

Photography can also be a link to other arts such as poetry, movement and music. Monica's initiative teaches photography to children in a way that allows them to explore their personal visions and reveal their inner thoughts through artistic self-expression.

In the fall of 2009, Monica collected 25 donated digital and film cameras. She and the other students then volunteered at a local after-school program and worked with the children to make their own "vision boards." The students took photographs, cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers and decorated poster board to make their life story out of photos. The students would then write on their boards their goals for the future. The students then had the option to share their vision boards with the group. The students were able to take the vision boards home and were asked to make a commitment to remind themselves of their goals every day.

The Disaster Accountability Project (DAP) is a comprehensive, continuous oversight system created by Benjamin Smilowitz. Throughout the nation's history, oversight of disaster management—preparedness, response, relief, and recovery—has been uneven and public scrutiny is generally limited to the immediate aftermath of a disaster, followed by long periods of neglect. Deprived of information needed to demand better disaster services, citizens have had little input in the government's top-down planning process. Following the response to Hurricane Katrina, the non-partisan Disaster Accountability Project was created to improve the nation's disaster management systems through public accountability, citizen oversight and empowerment, whistle-blower engagement, and policy research. DAP's approach to disaster accountability is two-pronged:

- 1) Short-Term/Immediate Accountability: A toll-free hotline and national network of "Disaster Accountability Monitors" helps ensure that critical gaps in disaster response/relief services are realized and addressed by those responsible for delivery. After Katrina, gaps in disaster response/relief services caused unnecessary suffering and there was no widely available mechanism for gaps in services to be reported.
- 2) Long-term Accountability: DAP maintains a unique online database of hundreds of post-Katrina government and nonprofit recommendations to improve the disaster prevention, response, relief, and recovery systems. A website allows the public, policy makers, and disaster management professionals to locate recommendations and track implementation progress. A national network of concerned citizen "Disaster Accountability Monitors" is encouraged to participate in whistle-blower and government accountability trainings, inquire about the availability and adequacy of local and state disaster/evacuation plans, participate in regional disaster preparedness/response training exercises, and distribute the toll-free hotline to others.

DAP uses a user-friendly website, news releases, and public comments to review and monitor disaster plans and operations, report service gaps, formulate recommendations for improvements, monitor activities of government agencies and nonprofit organizations, and offer independent, informed feedback to those entities that manage aspects of the disaster system.

Whistle-blowers, disaster workers, volunteers, survivors and others may anonymously report problems, unmet needs, and offer suggestions via DAP's toll-free hotline: 866.9.TIP.DAP and website: <http://www.disasteraccountability.com/>. The first-year budget was about \$7000 and Ben paid most of those expenses out-of-pocket. Ben is a part-time law student and volunteers for 30 to 70 hours per week for DAP. With the exception of a \$1500 work-study grant for fall 2008 that provided pay for 15 hours per week, the work was not compensated. DAP has received well over 5000 volunteer hours from 250 volunteers.

William Stoller, Three Rivers Community College

William Stoller is one of the most active students at Three Rivers Community College, with membership in four organizations. As a member of Phi Theta Kappa, a two-year academic honors fraternity, Bill participated in Three Rivers' Read Across America celebration, hosting a booth with instruments from around the world and giving the children an opportunity to make music together. He also helped faculty advisor Will Hare coordinate a fundraiser for Heifer International; Professor Hare rowed to raise money with Bill helping coordinate the fundraising effort.

As a member of the Student Nurses Association, Bill helped arrange and participate in many community outreach programs, always an active member in their endeavors. Through the Student Nurses, Bill participated in the annual campus blood drive and a Habitat for Humanity build; additionally the group hosted several CPR classes open campus-wide in an effort to offer free health-conscious education to Three Rivers students and staff.

Bill was also a key player in the newly formed Veteran's Organization on campus, a group dedicated to assisting and supporting fellow veterans in their transition into the educational environment through the promotion of veterans' resources and opportunities. As a member of the Veteran's Organization, Bill coordinated a cell phone drive on campus, collecting used cell phones donated to a larger nationwide Veterans effort.

Through his participation in all of these organizations, Bill was the most active individual in the various Three Rivers food and toiletry drives. For the Thanksgiving 2008 food drive, Bill's individual effort collected over 600 pounds of food for the Nursing Class of 2009. He is also one of our most active student leaders.

Kristin Villanueva is on the executive board of the Students for Social Justice group. She has helped foster its growth to be a well-known and well-respected group on campus. Kristin spearheaded the effort to have Fairfield University sell and provide only Fair Trade Coffee all across campus. She has worked on most departments in the University to purchase only Fair Trade Coffee. She has successfully negotiated with Sodexo, the food service provider at the University, to serve only Fair Trade Coffee. Kristin is both a natural leader and a team player. Kristin has a passion for justice and for good stewardship that few possess.

Kristin is the student leader of JUHAN (Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network) which is a group of students and professors working at Jesuit Universities to teach and respond to Humanitarian Crises around the globe. She is the most involved student on the JUHAN leadership team.

Kristin has helped with Stag Share 08, which is a project at the end of the year to take donations from students who are moving out to bring to the community. Last year, Fairfield University gave a whole gym full of items to the larger community. Kristin assisted with this wonderful project!

As co-leader for the St. Charles Food Pantry, once a month she runs a food drive on campus for students to donate food items and clothing to a local needy pantry in Bridgeport. She is responsible for this large task with the help of only one other student per month. Kristin offers invaluable assistance to the pantry.

Kristin always keeps her priorities straight, and keeps in mind the importance of the work and the purpose of our task. Kristin was a leader last fall on a trip to the Ignatian Family Teach-in and Rally in Georgia.

This past June, Fairfield University put on a conference about Humanitarian Action at Fordham University. After the conference was finished, Kristin was chosen out of the over 100 students in attendance to gather the data collected from the students at the conference and assess the conference. Kristin was recognized out of all the students for her leadership abilities, eagerness to learn and to analyze, and her talents to assist the experts and scholars who ran the conference with their assessment work.

Luke Zitzman, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Luke Zitzman, a first-class (senior) cadet at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, has contributed to his community both through his own volunteer efforts and through the coordination and leadership of other cadet's service.

Luke's personal volunteer efforts have focused on partnering with Benny Dover Jackson Middle School in New London. He has worked with the students in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, acting as an academic coach. Luke worked with these students to develop their learning and critical thinking skills to prepare them for high school and ultimately college. Luke has motivated these students to strive to finish high school and pursue a college degree. Additionally, Luke works one on one with a 7th grade student two days each week. With Luke's mentoring, this student is overcoming social and emotional disorders to achieve academic success. Luke has made a huge difference in the lives of the young students he has worked with, and is regarded as one of the most valuable volunteers at Benny Dover Jackson Middle School. In addition to his partnership in education work, Luke volunteers his time on weekends at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Salem, Connecticut. Through his work at ReStore, Luke has helped Habitat for Humanity generate the funding it needs to accomplish its mission of building homes for local families.

Beyond his personal volunteer efforts, Luke's biggest contribution has been in his coordination and leadership of other cadets' work. During the Fall 2008 semester, Luke was the leader of a team of seven of his classmates that promoted community service to all cadets at the academy. Luke's team initiated conversations with local schools, New London's soup kitchen and homeless shelter, retirement homes, and other groups to determine what their service needs were. Luke then advertised these opportunities to all other cadets using a web page system he created. He also invited the local organizations to send representatives to a Community Service Fair he planned on campus, helping connect other cadets with service opportunities. Luke organized transportation to help cadets get out into the community, as only senior cadets have access to their own automobiles. The Coast Guard Academy encourages all cadets to volunteer in the community, and Luke Zitzman was the person who significantly created opportunities for the Cadet Corps to do so. During the Fall semester of 2008, Luke's efforts resulted in the completion of over 4000 hours of community service by over 900 cadets of the Academy, supporting programs such as tutoring at New London High School, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Boy Scouts, and dozens of others.

Luke Zitzman is a model cadet and student who has epitomized the Coast Guard's value of service to others. Through the example he has set volunteering his own time, and through his leadership enabling others to do the same, he has made a tremendous impact on the New London community.

STUDENT GROUP AWARD NOMINEES

The 2009 Student Group Award will be presented to two groups who have served as models of leadership in community service.

Nominees must have demonstrated leadership in the development and implementation of community service within the campus community and must have demonstrated initiative and creativity in community service participation.

Nominees must have engaged in community service that resulted in a positive impact on campus and within the community.

The Behavioral Science Club's Family Halloween Festival, a community service project that actively involves students, has two main objectives. The project primarily aims to support the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center by requiring a canned food item to gain admission to the festival. This past year, our donation to the food bank following the festival exceeded 250 pounds of nonperishable items and a monetary donation of \$120. In addition to the support of the local food bank, the Family Halloween Festival aims to provide a safe and fun environment where local families can begin their Halloween celebrations. To this end, the Behavioral Science Club advertised the Halloween Festival to elementary and intermediate schools in New London, Groton, Waterford, East Lyme, Old Lyme, Montville and Ledyard. This past year, the festival, which began at 10:00 am and ended at 4:00 pm, experienced an impressive attendance with more than 450 individuals gaining admission to the festivities. Children, youth and families enjoyed games, dancing, storytelling, face painting, skits, and other craft activities. In addition, families were able to gain valuable safety information and tools from local civic leaders of the New London Police Department and New London Fire Department.

While the main objectives of the Family Halloween Festival are to benefit the local food bank and local families, the impact of the festival and preparation for the festival on students is noteworthy. This past year, over 150 students participated in the day long event and many others contributed time, talents and energy in preparations. The preparations for the Family Halloween Festival begin in September. Each year the students strive to outdo their efforts from the previous year. Consequently, a variety of students are united with the common goal of creating the best possible Family Halloween Festival that they can. The executive board of the Behavioral Science club is instrumental in recruiting students who have unique talents to contribute to the planning and executing of the festival. The students learn the value of organization, creativity, and hard work while spending late nights painting signs, building games, and filling plastic pumpkins with cement to construct engaging activities for children, youth and families.

In conclusion, the Family Halloween Festival is an annual event that has clear benefits to the local community and Mitchell College students. The festival directly supports the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center by requiring a donation of a canned food item to gain admission to the festival. The festival also directly benefits local families by providing a community building activity that is enjoyed by many. Lastly, the festival is instrumental in substantially increasing student participation in community service, and providing tangible lessons regarding the value of civic engagement.

Career-Advancement Pathways Program, Goodwin College

Allen Bass and Mark Vassel volunteered during a 7-month period (May through November) to work on a newly developed service-learning project. Each student had expressed an interest in working with a community group and the opportunity came when a small Connecticut Compact grant-funded project was developed by the institution for the Greater Hartford area that is heavily populated with West Indian (CARICOM) immigrants. The project which was developed in collaboration with St. Martin's Episcopal Church Outreach Center on Woodland Street, targeted Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) who are interested in furthering their careers in the health care field.

Among the activities engaged in by Allen and Mark, were: 1. Planning and program design. This included (a) assisting with determining the supportive structure needed for program development; (b) selecting a geographic area; creating flyers, forms, brochures for distribution; creating ways to reduce expenses on a limited budget. 2. Program implementation - (a) driving to businesses and churches to advertise project and distribute materials; (b) preparing the classroom space on Woodland Street; (c) researching and preparing materials for building and developing foundational math, English and critical thinking skills; (d) helping with the selection of study-skills and introduction to science texts; (e) conducting weekly small-group tutoring sessions. 3. Program evaluation - (a) holding weekly meetings with other volunteers to assess progress; (b) providing feedback to project developers (c) evaluating responses provided by participants.

The students received no compensation for their services and despite the difference in age between them and the majority of the program participants, the combination of their volunteer effort, demeanor, supportive skills and mutual respect, were all very well received by the participants as well as the members of the St. Martin's Church organization.

Each week, Allen and Mark encouraged at least one other student from one of the health care programs offered by Goodwin College, and they supervised the activities as they all involved themselves in tutoring.

While other students across the state were relaxing during their spring break, four Northwestern Connecticut Community College students were helping to combat homelessness by participating in Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge. The Collegiate Challenge program provides opportunities for students to spend a week building a house in partnership with a Habitat for Humanity affiliate. The students, Nick Heath, Nate Ormsby, Clive Richardson and Mark Salverson, traveled to Maine to work with the Portland Chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

While in Maine, the students worked on two houses. One house outside Portland was being renovated to shelter habitat volunteers; the other was an abandoned house in Freeport donated to HFH by LL Bean. The team stayed in the Portland location where they spackled ceilings and painted interior walls. The house in Freeport sat on LL Bean property that was due for construction. The terms of the donation of this house to HFH were that it had to be moved in 2 weeks to a property a block away, also being donated by LL Bean. This Freeport house was designated as a "green build." This meant that everything would be sorted and redistributed or recycled. The NCCC Team began by emptying closets and storage space and sorting all the items. This included usable clothing, books, household items, etc. that would be moved to donation centers and other sites in the community. Trim molding had already been removed and labeled. Other fixtures would either be moved and replaced in the house or sent to the HFH rehab store where the proceeds would be returned to HFH. The NCCC Team sorted and moved the trim work. They cleared the basement area, as well, which also included the safe handling of possibly hazardous materials. Items and materials were sorted into glass, plastic, metal, paper, and fabric for delivery to the appropriate recycling centers. Remarkably little was going to be disposed in a dump.

A project that began as very tedious work with very little time, eventually developed from an experience of mild frustration to an appreciation for the importance of the "green" commitment to this project. As the piles of recyclable debris grew, so did the realization of the damage done to the environment with the vast volume of unnecessary waste, some toxic, that we too often put into landfills rather than take the time to recycle. Not only does the environment benefit from this approach, but so did the donation recipients, local builders and HFH through the rehab store – not to mention the family that will call this house home.

The students worked diligently from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for five days on these homes. Upon returning to college, Nick, Nate, Clive and Mark gave a luncheon presentation highlighting their trip and the Habitat mission. The presentation was well attended by faculty, staff and students. All four students described how this experience impacted not only those who would benefit from the homes that they worked on but their own lives as well.

The Collegiate Health Service Corps (CHSC) at UConn is a joint project between students affiliated with the Office of Community Outreach and the Eastern Area Health Education Center. The project delivers preventive health education and screenings to disadvantaged populations in Willimantic and the surrounding area. Groups of three to four volunteers visit a designated site once a week, with at least one group scheduled every day of the week except Sunday. Sites include the Covenant Soup Kitchen, two apartment complexes for low-income citizens, and multiple farms from the surrounding area where migrant workers are employed.

CHSC's secondary mission is to prepare future health care professionals for practitioner work by introducing them to the nature of health disparities in our society. This is done through extensive training and reflection components to the program. Understanding disparity is not enough. CHSC exposes volunteers to career possibilities that will allow them to take action against these disparities. While some of volunteers are pre-med, many are looking at other health related careers such as nursing, public health, pharmacy, etc., and all are learning the importance of using interdisciplinary teams in health care.

CHSC volunteers first go through a comprehensive "Core Training". These training sessions introduces them to key concepts including health disparities, cultural competency, privacy and confidentiality, and how to complete various health screenings (e.g. blood pressure). During their weekly service, volunteers deliver screenings and education relevant to that week's topic. Additional examples of topics include heart disease, mental health, and emergency preparedness. Volunteers are exposed to a population of adults who come from different socioeconomic, cultural, and racial backgrounds, and they learn to improve their interpersonal skills as they form trusting relationships with clients. Participants also form a bond with each other as they actively reflect on their experiences, celebrate their contributions, evaluate their activities, and learn from speakers or other instructional aides such as documentaries.

Over the past three semesters, the CHSC has developed into a burgeoning group that is one of the most popular experiences for pre-health undergraduates on campus. During 2008, the group grew to over 30 current members and is planning on expanding next semester. Volunteers invested over 1,200 hours in the planning and delivering of CHSC activities. During this time, the CHSC improved its retention level from 19% (Spring 2008) to over 70% (Fall 2008). Student participants overwhelmingly express that they learn much about disadvantaged populations during their service time, and many state that they want to focus on primary and preventive care as they enter into health professions.

Although locally focused, the program has national aspirations. AHEC's recently revised training curriculum for CHSC students is now being spread to form CHSC groups at other state universities in Connecticut, and will serve as a model for the development of outreach programs similar to the CHSC across the country.

The Criminal Justice Association has held community service as a primary focus of the organization since its inception ten years ago. Each year this organization identifies an individual, family or other group in need, from the local community. In the spring of 2008 the Criminal Justice Association became aware of a local six year old boy who had been struggling through treatments for stage-four lymphoma. In addition to the worry for their son, the family struggled with soaring medical expenses.

The Association students decided to host a miniature golf tournament to help rally community support to help this family. A local business owner donated his facility for the tournament. Students canvassed businesses in Winsted and Torrington for sponsor donations, raffle prizes and teams to participate in the tournament. The students worked with the Director of Marketing at the College and contacted local newspapers, radio and television stations to promote the tournament. Faculty, staff and students joined the participating businesses for a total of 68 teams. Young Cameron attended the tournament as the guest of honor along with his family. He played a few games of golf himself with all the energy and sense of fun of a healthy child, and it was contagious.

The event produced \$3380 for Cameron's family and many other unexpected samples of generosity. Also, and perhaps more importantly, it produced an opportunity for caring neighbors, many who did not even know Cameron and his family, to come together in the best spirit of community.

(Side note: Cameron's cancer is currently in remission.)

In the fall of 2008, the Criminal Justice Association worked with the Salvation Army's Adopt-a-Family Program to identify a local family in need. The students raised \$550 selling holiday breads. With these funds they purchased and gift wrapped clothing, toys and other items for the children. The remaining funds were used to purchased gift cards for groceries.

In each case above, the service project was student-driven and entirely voluntary by a group of about 16 students. The majority of these students were balancing a full course load and outside employment, and many also had family obligations. This group sets an excellent example of generosity in time, skills and spirit for all of us.

Diversity Council, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy Diversity Council is a cadet organization that promotes diversity and cultural awareness among the Corps of Cadets as well as the local community. The Council, consisting of the Genesis Club, Compañeros Club, International Club, and the Asian & Pacific American Club, have made partnership in education in local schools one of its primary missions.

Over twenty cadet volunteers have participated in a tutoring program at C. B. Jennings Elementary School in New London. The cadets have tutored the predominantly minority students in all academic subjects, with an emphasis on science and math. The Coast Guard Academy, with an academic curriculum heavily focused on science, technology, engineering and math, has adopted a partnership in education mission to help local students achieve in these same areas. The efforts of Diversity Council have helped hundreds of elementary school students gain confidence in these subjects. Furthermore, the Diversity Council's academic tutoring work has a secondary goal of inspiring the students to strive for a college degree. By focusing on the more difficult science and math subjects, the Diversity Council works to remove any self doubt the younger students may have about their ability to continue their education all the way through college.

In addition to academic work, the Diversity Council has continued to mentor the students in their social development. In one program, students are paired with cadet athletes. Using the bond of athletics, cadets have been able to spend quality time with the students on weekends. Often, the athletic mentors are the exact same cadets who are academic mentors during the week; these cadets have set a clear example to the elementary school students that academics and athletics are both equally important, and have also helped break any stereotypes the young students may have about being able to excel both in class and on the athletic field!

The Diversity Council has not limited itself to working with the younger members of the community. Members of the Council also volunteer at the Norwich Veteran's Center, spending time with older members of the military community. The veterans appreciate sharing their stories with the cadets, who as very new members of the military benefit just as much from the experience! The cadets of the Diversity Council understand that age is one aspect of diversity, and dedicate their time to having a conversation with those that have come before them in military service.

The Diversity Council has a mission to highlight diversity and cultural awareness at the Coast Guard Academy. Through their volunteer work outside the gates of the Academy, however, they have spread their message to the local community as well. The Council has had a positive impact on citizens young and old.

Do It Day, Trinity College

Do It Day, which began in the fall of 1999, is an annual day of service designed to immediately engage a large portion of the Trinity campus in the Hartford community. Because the event is held the first weekend of the academic year, it helps set the tone on campus that dedication and commitment to community are an essential part of the Trinity College experience.

Since its first year in 1999, Do It Day has grown from 150 participants working with 11 community organizations, to its most recent and record year of 2008 in which it involved over 600 volunteers working with over 45 community organizations throughout the Hartford area. Among the projects completed at the 2008 event were the following:

- Mulching and weeding in Hartford's Pope Park
- Running health education games and activities for an outreach event with the Central Area Health Education Council.
- Assisting a local theater company—the HartBeat Ensemble—with its move to a new building.
- Restoring durable medical equipment (wheelchairs, scooters, etc.) for Oak Hill's New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Marketplace.

The list of course continues, but the point remains that Do It Day allows the Trinity College community to contribute something substantive and needed to its fellow residents of Hartford. The success of the event can, in many ways, be attributed to the fact that equal attention is paid to providing volunteers with a quality experience and fulfilling the service needs of the community organizations. And although there are always some challenges, the feedback received from community organizations has been overwhelmingly positive.

Moreover, it is not often when an event takes place that involves students from all walks of life. Though a great number of the participants sign up as individuals or small groups, Do It Day has become more and more attractive to student organizations as a way to build group cohesion, meet new people, connect with the Hartford community, and start the year off on a positive note. This being the case, Do It Day has become a *de rigueur* event for many athletic teams (e.g., men's and women's crew, men's and women's swimming, men's and women's lacrosse, men's squash), multicultural organizations (La Voz Latina, Imani, Trinity College Black Women's Organization, Imani, Asian American Student Association, Men of Color Alliance), fraternities and sororities (Kappa Kappa Gamma, Alpha Delta Phi, Psi Upsilon, Sigma Nu, Pi Kappa Alpha, Zeta Omega Eta), and numerous residential floors and buildings. Thus, in addition to setting a tone on campus about the importance of Trinity's involvement with Hartford, Do It Day also serves as a unifying event for Trinity community. Over the past nine years, Do It Day has become one of the most important events to kick off Trinity's academic year. Year after year the event sets a tone for the Trinity community about the importance of acting as responsible and engaged community members of both Trinity and Hartford.

Early Childhood Education Club, Mitchell College

The Early Childhood Education Club members consist of both full-time and part-time students from many majors who share an interest in service to children and families. The Club holds two events which promote early literacy: The Cat in the Hat Ball and Read Across New London.

The Club involves students, faculty, and staff, many of our community's leaders, our local English and Spanish language radio stations, and the local public schools. The goal of these two events is to encourage children to read, and to encourage parents to read to their children, by emphasizing the fun of reading and providing adult role models who enjoy reading as an activity. As a local adaptation of the Read Across America project of the National Education Association, these projects utilize the strengths of our campus and local urban community. These combined activities reach both the children whose families can bring them to the Cat in the Hat Ball and the children in public school classrooms whose families may not have the resources or time to attend the Ball.

The goal of the Cat in the Hat Ball is to promote literacy in our urban community by encouraging children and their families to experience the fun of reading together. Activities at the Cat in the Hat Ball are centered on the fun of reading, and include various crafts, a Cat in the Hat trivia game, bean bag toss, and story areas. Readers perform in English or Spanish. Local English and Spanish radio stations provide music while costumed characters such as the Cat in the Hat and the Grinch interact with the children and their families. The mayor of New London has been among the celebrity readers. Students coordinate all the activities, run the games, serve refreshments, interact with children, and clean up. Families bring a new children's book as their admission, or they may donate \$5.00. The Monday after the Ball, these donated books are read by student volunteers in public school classrooms during Read Across New London and then donated to the classrooms.

Read Across is designed to bring the fun of reading to our public school children's classrooms. A college student wearing a funny hat and reading Green Eggs and Ham to a class of first graders presents a powerful role model for young children who are learning to read. Research on emergent literacy indicates that young children who observe adults reading develop positive attitudes towards reading. Community support for this project reflects the local commitment to education. The Club is committed to promoting literacy for children and their families in our urban community through this two-event project emphasizing the fun of reading.

The project is funded partially by the student government association, and partially by receipts from the Ball. By participating, students enrolled in ED222 Methods & Techniques in Early Childhood Education partially fulfill course requirements for credit; however the majority of students involved in these two events are volunteering their time.

Environmental Futurists Organic Garden, Southern Connecticut State University

As an environmental advocacy club of about 30 to 40 members, the Southern Connecticut State University Environmental Futurists have been very active both around campus and in the community. This organization recruits students who express an interest in green initiatives and global environmental issues. In meeting the mission of the organization, the club has lobbied for green practices around campus, held conferences and workshops, planted gardens, and built partnerships in the community. As part of their lobbying, the Environmental Futurists have worked with campus administration to increase recycling around campus. The group has had a hand in publicizing and promoting recycling as well as adding more recycling bins around campus.

While the group has provided a number of services both around campus and in the surrounding community, perhaps their greatest achievement has been the organic garden that they started on campus in 2007. While this garden started off as a small patch, in the Spring of 2008 it blossomed into a garden of 2,400 square feet of vegetables and herbs. This garden is known to produce vegetables such as squash, eggplant, tomatoes, pumpkins, peppers, and cauliflower. As part of their desire to grow organic foods, the Futurists do not use pesticides in their garden. Instead, they use marigolds which have been known to repel insects.

The garden was created in collaboration with Common Ground High School, a charter school run by the nonprofit New Haven Ecology Project. While Common Ground donated greenhouse parts and garden space, the Environmental Futurists built the greenhouse themselves and volunteer their time each year to keep the garden healthy and growing. All supplies to build and maintain the garden were donated to the club. All of the food that is grown is donated to the less fortunate in the New Haven community including shelters, soup kitchens, and local agencies. In fact, several families in need have developed a relationship with the organization and have benefited from the garden.

The goal of the garden stretches further than donating food, it also serves to advocate buying food locally to help cut down on the amount of carbon dioxide that is produced when food is shipped. Finally, the Environmental Futurists hope to use the garden as a means to encourage faculty, staff, and students to grow their own gardens and/or to purchase locally grown products in an effort to continue to help their community and their environment.

Field Hockey- Play 4 The Cure, Southern Connecticut State University

The Play 4 The Cure initiative runs in conjunction with the Susan G. Komen Foundation, Longstreth and NCAA and high school field hockey programs in an effort to raise awareness and funding for breast cancer research.

The Southern Connecticut State University field hockey team participated in this event for the first time in 2008. The Owls designated their Oct. 4 game against St. Anselm as their Play 4 The Cure event. Southern Connecticut was one of only two Division II programs to take part in this initiative in 2008. However, the Owls were the only program to wear pink uniforms. SCSU coaches wore pink polos, while players wore pink socks and pink hair ribbons.

In order to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer research, the field hockey program, in conjunction with the Athletic Communications office, put together a comprehensive series of events. An extensive outreach effort was made to all members of the campus community, as well as to all high school field hockey programs in the state of Connecticut.

From a financial standpoint, SCSU fans had the opportunity to make a one-time donation or donate a flat rate based on each shot on goal taken by the two teams in the game. In addition, all student-athletes and coaches colored their hair pink following the game. The Owls partnered up with a local hair salon for this initiative. Fans were asked to make a contribution if they wished to have a member of the team color their hair. Pink-themed promotional items were distributed to all fans. An informational table was also set up for all fans entering the facility.

Lastly, fans were asked to bring pink Yoplait yogurt lids as part of that company's 'Save Lids to Save Lives' program. Ten cents was donated back to the Komen Foundation from each lid collected on gameday.

Thanks to this initiative, more than \$700 was raised for the Susan G. Komen Foundation - \$300 more than the other Division II program that participated. However, it was the comprehensive nature of this initiative - covering everything from the fan experience, to philanthropic options, to the wearing of pink apparel and accents - that truly separated it from its peers.

G.I. Guardians, Quinebaug Valley Community College

On our campus, the G.I. Guardians is a recognized student organization comprised of veterans of all ages, and students interested in helping veterans and their families.

The G.I. Guardians have been very active within the Northeast Connecticut community, assisting veterans and active duty, deployed military personnel. Their efforts are not directed towards any particular project, but rather a series of projects throughout the academic year.

In January 2008 (Spring semester) they purchased several hundred dollars in gift cards from a local supermarket for distribution to disadvantaged military families. Also during the Spring semester of 2008, the G. I. Guardians held their second annual Easter Egg Hunt, which was open to the community-at-large but held in honor of serving veterans' families. In order to fund this event, they sold Krispy Kreme donuts on campus for a week.

In November of 2008 (Fall semester) they sponsored a food drive for the local food pantries. On an on-going basis, the G. I. Guardians solicit items from local merchants and have put together several hundred "care packages" to send to deployed veterans for holiday distribution.

In December 2008 they held a toy drive for children of deployed service men and women, raising over \$1,000 for toys. The toys were delivered at a party held at a local National Guard Armory.

Hispanic Student Union Club, Naugatuck Valley Community College

NVCC Students opened the St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen on Sundays to feed the needy and poor. During the fall 2008 semester, the Hispanic Student Union, in conjunction with the Student Government Association of Naugatuck Valley Community College performed a multitude of community service projects.

In the course of their service, a very specific need in the community became evident due to the increasing decline of the economy. It was discovered that feeding the poor and needy was something that was not provided on Sundays at St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen & Shelter in Waterbury, CT. The Naugatuck Valley Community College students developed a unique and original approach as a community service project. The students decided to make it their mission to do something and made a commitment to be totally responsible for the operation of the St Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen every Sunday. In doing so, they opened the kitchen, prepared hot meals, served them to the clients of the soup kitchen, and cleaned the kitchen along with preparing trays of food to be delivered to the clients staying at the 128 bed shelter for the evening.

In becoming totally responsible for the opening of the soup kitchen on Sundays, students had to accomplish a few tasks before committing to this community service project. First they needed to secure funding for the food to be served on Sundays. The staff at NVCC helped them secure the funding through Webster Bank in Waterbury. After securing the funding for the food, the Hispanic Student Union Club had to coordinate volunteers for every Sunday. Volunteer lists were coordinated through the Student Activities Department at Naugatuck Valley Community College. The response was overwhelming; Student Clubs, Faculty and Staff including the Deans and President of Naugatuck Valley Community College volunteered their time for this wonderful community service project.

Since its November 2008 inception, the volunteer response has been phenomenal. The number of recipients at the St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen & Shelter has increased weekly. Besides providing meals to the clients, the volunteers realized a need for several items for the soup kitchen. With the support of the Student Government Association and their many clubs they organized different events on campus to secure donations to purchase these items. Some of the items to date they helped the soup kitchen obtain include a commercial food processor, professional aprons, cleaning supplies and professional cleaning of commercial equipment.

Although the project is run on a Sunday, which is typically a day of rest and time with family, our outstanding "NVCC Community" of students, staff and faculty has elected to "Give Back" to the community. A theme echoed by Naugatuck Valley Community College's Student Government Association this past semester. To date, NVCC is still committed to helping open the soup kitchen on Sundays and it continues to thrive today in helping the needy and poor of our community.

The mission of Husky Outreach for Leadership Development, Understanding, and Pride! (HOLDUP!) is to bring the importance and application of leadership to high school youth deemed "at-risk". This program seeks to empower struggling students to recognize their own leadership potential in order to enhance their personal, academic, and civic development. During 2007, HOLDUP! worked exclusively with 20 East Hartford high school youth. The program presented once or twice a semester depending on the school's schedule and only contributed 108 contact hours. During 2008, the program expanded to serve two more schools (Bolton and Stafford Springs), involved 210 youth, and increased contact time to almost 1,100 hours. Additionally the program has expanded to weekly presentations and mentoring of the targeted students.

To meet the growing demands of the program, HOLDUP! membership has increased their size by 50% to over 20 students. Each HOLDUP! member goes through a competitive application process which includes a paper application and interview. Students are selected if they demonstrate proper knowledge of leadership, excellent commitment to service, outstanding interpersonal skills, and willingness to work with and learn from the youth who are targeted by the program. Often these youth come from different socio-economic backgrounds as the HOLDUP! members which creates opportunities for reciprocal learning.

To help keep the program organized and effective, students have created a Content Development Committee which plans each of the training workshops. Undergraduate students create, present, and organize workshops around the critical concepts of leadership which include, but are not limited to, academic/study skills, conflict resolution, communication, diversity, ethics, group dynamics, and life after high school. Each youth involved the program takes an individualized personality profile which identifies their strengths and work habits. This information is used to tailor each the workshops by the youth involved. Students actively work to make the experiences interactive in order to entice the youth to learn on their own with minimal lecturing. The use of games, activities, and active reflection in each of the seminars has created great responses among the youth who participate.

HOLDUP! teaches students lessons that are not found in text books. The combination of interactive workshops and mentoring from college students is providing these youth with experiences that are unique and not available to their peers. The program has been so successful that school officials have invited HOLDUP! members to school to help with other functions such as college awareness events.

Hunger and Homelessness Action Project, Yale University

The Yale Hunger and Homelessness Action Project (YHHAP) engages over 100 regular volunteers across 10 projects that range from volunteer work in local homeless shelters and soup kitchens to prison tutoring for incarcerated men. YHHAP consistently targets daunting societal challenges with innovative programming. During the summer of 2008, state and municipal budget cuts forced New Haven officials to announce that the City could not operate the emergency overflow shelter for homeless men as it had done for 20 years. This shelter housed upward of 75 men in the coldest months of the year. The City restored some funding, but a daunting gap of \$100,000 remained.

YHHAP – Shelter Now mobilized the New Haven community and institutional partners such as United Way of Greater New Haven, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Yale University, and Interfaith Cooperative Ministries to ensure that the Overflow Shelter will remain open through April 2009. Students raised \$30,000 in November 2008 and engaged the broader community in raising over \$100,000 in new funds to achieve this outcome.

YHHAP's success in this campaign was largely rooted in its active service with the homeless population in the period of 2008 prior to the emergence of this crisis. The group has provided over 6,000 hours of direct service and its educational awareness events positioned students to understand and responsibly react to a pressing urban challenge.

The Shelter Now campaign culminated in two weeks of targeted events that included:

- a display of solidarity with 30 tents pitched across campus to educate the general public about homelessness in the greater New Haven region;
- the production and screening of a documentary about the overflow shelter as well as its dissemination via YouTube;
- a policy panel on root causes and long-term solutions for homelessness in Connecticut, featuring directors from CT Coalition to End Homelessness, Partnership for Strong Communities, Capitol Region Council of Governments, and the City of New Haven; and
- participation in a campus-wide fast, whereby 1,887 students (1/3 of campus) forfeited their meal plans to net more than \$13,500 for the Overflow.

Shelter Now also resulted in increased student volunteerism in agencies that work with the homeless, strengthening YHHAP's volunteer base. There are now over 120 regular volunteers who average 2.5 hours of service each week.

YHHAP has developed innovative strategies for building awareness, demonstrated a remarkable ability to galvanize the campus and New Haven community to respond to an urban crisis, and consistently served the area's homeless population.

The Saint Joseph College "Jays Against Cancer" student group has strongly dedicated itself to educating our community about the various types of cancer as well as hosted events and raised money which has been donated to a variety of nonprofit groups dedicated to fighting cancer.

Unlike many groups, "Jays Against Cancer" has made it their mission not only to raise money, but more importantly to educate their fellow peers and our college community about the various types of cancer and prevention strategies. This group has distributed information campus-wide concerning breast cancer, lung cancer, ovarian cancer and cervical cancer. They have used a variety of forums to get their message across such as poster campaigns, speakers, articles in the Student Newspaper and fun events all which focus on the prevention and treatment of cancer. Jay's Against Cancer has also been a participant in the Making Strides Walk for Breast Cancer. Not only did they participate in the walk in October in Bushnell Park, they raised over \$200.00.

Jay's Against Cancer's biggest endeavor to date is to work with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in planning and implementing their Cycle of Life event. This event will be held on the Saint Joseph College campus and Jay's Against Cancer is the designated Saint Joseph College host. The Cycle of Life event is a special celebration for children who have survived or who are currently undergoing treatment for cancer and their families. The event features a variety of interactive games and activities (many hosted by Saint Joseph College students), as well as food and prizes. All of the proceeds raised from the event will benefit the REACH for the STARS Survivorship Program at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. In addition to being a critical component in the actual event, Jays Against Cancer has pledged to raise \$1,000 which will be donated to the REACH for the STARS Survivorship Program. All in all, this is a very big and worthwhile endeavor for a student organization to undertake. It is for these reasons that Saint Joseph College nominates the Jays Against Cancer for the Connecticut Higher Education Community Service group award. They are a dedicated group of women who have not only committed themselves to a cause, but also serve as wonderful role models for other student organizations on campus.

Natural Helpers at CCSU, Central Connecticut State University

The Natural Helpers are a volunteer student group who are selected through a peer nomination process, and are recognized as people with naturally good listening skills. They participate in a four day training program each August, just prior to the start of the fall semester. The Natural Helpers are available to the CCSU community for outreach and referral.

This year this talented and dedicated group of students has worked on providing programming on topics of alcohol education and prevention, stress reduction, depression screening, and smoking cessation. Through structured programming the group strives to educate the campus community and assist in creating a safe and healthy campus environment.

Some of the Natural Helpers have become involved with the Town and Gown Taskforce, a group comprising CCSU staff, New Britain citizens, and business persons. This taskforce meets several times a year to discuss community concerns regarding underage drinking and house parties, and the challenges of college students renting property in the surrounding neighborhood. Having students on this taskforce has brought tremendous value in terms of breaking down communication barriers and facilitating creative ways to solve problems and improve student responsibility. This year the Natural Helpers provided welcome packages for neighbors to share with student tenants, and this also created opportunities for improved communication and understanding.

The Natural Helpers have also been instrumental in the success of a related program called Devil's Den @ 10 P.M., which offers CCSU students healthy alternatives for Thursday night activities. Devil's Den @ 10 P.M. is held every Thursday night that classes are in session, and this program offers students food, a fun activity, and a chance for students to socialize with one another. Each Thursday night several hundred students attend this program, and this represents a healthy choice of their leisure time. The Natural Helpers have been available at every program, meeting with students, serving as role models, and talking about upcoming events and services.

The Natural Helpers are making a difference in the health and safety of our students.

Nicaragua Alternative Spring Break Trip, Quinnipiac University

Christina Giani, Alissa Pacheco, Kelsey Ives, Andrew Fanelli, Farrell Denby, and Matt Andrews served as student leaders for the Nicaragua Alternative Spring Break Trip offered by the Albert Schweitzer Institute. The student leaders are past participants of the trip and dedicate countless hours to preparing for the future trip. Over the course of a semester they coordinate an extensive application and selection process and then train the selected group for participation in the trip. Student Leaders are also responsible for working with the communities in Nicaragua on determining the volunteer projects to be worked upon during the trip, overall planning and preparation for group travel, establishing host-family locations where student participants will live for the week, in addition to managing the needs and concerns of student participants. In the Spring of '08 the delegation that traveled to Nicaragua built a classroom for a school in a small community outside of Leon, painted rooms in a high school, installed wire screening and refinished a mural.

The work of the group is part of an on-going relationship with the Leon area. Another trip was coordinated this year, which again involved the leadership of many of the students listed above. The Spring '09 trip was to build another classroom in addition to the construction of retaining walls outside of homes to prevent flooding of homes when it rains.

Eastern's 'People Helping People' (PHP) is a student organization that focuses on a variety of social, political and environmental issues through service programs. PHP's Environmental Committee, in conjunction with Eastern's Akus Gallery, initiated a campus and community latex paint collection and learned how to recycle the paint. The group collected and recycled nearly 300 gallons of discarded latex paint. Students sorted the collected latex paint by color, and then strained it using cheesecloth strainers attached to clean paint cans. The paint was mixed and then poured into quart cans that were donated to the community through Habitat for Humanity as well as to the Performing Arts Department at Eastern. The old cans were rinsed and recycled properly.

The project was so successful that it will be repeated in April, 2009 with the paint being donated to Willimantic's "Town-Wide, Town Pride" Community Clean-up Day. Community members and Non-profit organizations will be able to use the paint to spruce up rooms at no charge while using paint that otherwise would have been discarded.

Refracted Light is a science outreach program supported and run by Wesleyan University that currently serves four elementary schools in Middletown: Snow, Macdonough, Bielfield, and Spencer. The program is run through the YMCA Kids Korner afterschool program at each school and, depending on the school, serves either grades 2-5 or K-5. Each week, Wesleyan Student mentors go to the schools to present hands on science activities. Past activities include a three week forensics unit, building roller coasters, growing beans and sunflowers, experiments with electricity and magnetism, and making slime.

The purpose of the club is to show students that science, and learning in general, is fun and exciting. Many of the students pick up on the scientific principles, and several are concerned with being 'real scientists': taking careful observations, asking why and how. More importantly, however, almost all the students are fulfilling the purpose of the club, which is to embrace science and learning without fear and with excitement.

Due to the program's popularity enrollment has grown from 2 students in the spring of 2007 to approximately 75 students weekly in Fall 2008. A survey taken in the spring of 2008 to gauge student interest in the program showed that nearly all of the students both enjoyed Refracted Light and felt they had learned something about science in the process. In the comments section students wrote things like 'Science was very fun so I think everyone should do it' and 'I really liked everything about science club and I wished I could have done more because I don't come often'.

Weekly feedback from the students continues to support the survey's results. The students are always excited to see the Wesleyan University students enter the cafeterias and quickly swarm with excited inquiries about the activity for the day. During the activity students are completely engaged and rarely does a student express boredom.

In addition to the weekly clubs Refracted Light also run a program called Science Saturday, during which all the students and their parents are invited to campus to do more intensive science activities. Some of the activities include: taking your own EKG, making bouncy balls, and physics demos with fire. The day ends by making liquid nitrogen ice cream.

This club is entirely run by Wesleyan University students. All positions except for the director position are volunteer. There are currently 25 volunteers that run the clubs, plan the activities, and help out with other science outreach programs around campus.

Science Club, Quinebaug Valley Community College

The QVCC Science Club is a proactive group of dedicated students who exemplify the term community-focused. The following summary lists some of their project work, their unique approach to planning and implementing activities which promote student participation in community service.

Kids Academy, a program run by the Community & Professional Learning Division at our College, provides children from the local communities in Northeastern Connecticut with the opportunity to take classes on campus during their winter and spring breaks. Members of the Science Club visited Kids Academy during February and April 2008 to instruct students in the "Harry Potter's Wizardry" class and the Forensic Science class. These interactive programs engaged the children with experiments ranging from standing wave sound generators, rainbow diffraction grating glasses, fluorescent ink and black lights, and fluid mechanics. The children were excited about science and engineering because it was fun. This is a testament to the Science Club's mission... bringing science, engineering, math, and technology (STEM) to the forefront of everyone's awareness.

Another great success that the Science Club experienced via community outreach is in-high school tutoring services. Many of the Science Club students tutor at the QVCC Learning Center. Almost from day one, they observed the need for extra tutoring. Entering students lacked in the requisite math and English necessary for college-level courses. The Science Club decided to outreach to Plainfield High School and offer free tutoring on school grounds. They understood that while the tutoring services at QVCC are helpful and appreciated, the root cause was further down the supply chain. The Plainfield High School administration and teachers have been extraordinarily complementary of the Science Club students.

The last project to describe for this group award has grown in participation and scale since its inception. "Life Straws" project is an ongoing endeavor which began during the Fall 2008 semester. Club members have been holding a variety of fundraising activities in order to purchase life straws (a low cost but effective water filtering system). The club intends to ship them to developing countries around the world where pure water is the biggest challenge costing lives on a daily basis. This humanitarian science initiative is what is drawing more and more students into the cause. They can see first-hand that STEM disciplines don't have to focus around crunching numbers in a cubicle. Instead there are many lifesaving causes that one can focus on. This is a rare group of students balancing school, work, family life and a giant awareness for the betterment of the community around them!

SPIE: International Society of Optics and Photonics, Three Rivers Community College

The Three Rivers Community College chapter of SPIE (International Society of Optics and Photonics) has been active in community service, both within the college and the neighboring community.

At Three Rivers, SPIE has focused much of their efforts in educational outreach and career development. SPIE hosted Laser Camp '08, a three day activity sponsored jointly by the Three Rivers Laser and Fiber Optic Technology Program and EASTCONN, which gives high school students and their teachers an opportunity to learn about careers in optics and photonics. Nine chapter members helped 40 students from three area high schools make and use pinholes cameras, make colorful polarized light art, and complete team building exercises. SPIE also helped coordinate Optics Day last March at EASTCONN's Hampton conference center where chapter members provided demonstrations on phosphorescence and luminescence and helped the young students build telescopes; SPIE was also a presence at Astronomy Day at EASTCONN in December, where members demonstrated light pollution.

SPIE has donated their time and knowledge to various programs around campus. Three Rivers hosts a birthday party for Dr. Seuss to celebrate Read Across America and SPIE created a booth showing children the dangers of unprotected sun exposure with the help of UV lights and UV sensitive beads. They also drew the children's interest with a strobe light display and attendees were taught about the phenomena of strobe lights. Additionally, SPIE has been one of the most active Three Rivers groups when the school hosts food and toiletry drives. Last fall, 20 of the Three Rivers organizations raised 1168 pounds of food to donate to a local food bank; SPIE contributed 400 pounds of that total. Their donations also made up a large portion of the spring toiletry drive that was donated to a local women's shelter.

SPIE has also made a global effort; members participated in the Dark Skies @ EASTCONN program by using "sky quality meters" to records the darkness of the night sky in their own neighborhoods and add to an international database of similar measurements that will be used to study light pollution around the globe.

U.S. Coast Guard Corps of Cadets, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy is the nation's smallest federal service academy, located in New London, CT. The Corps of Cadets, led by the members of the senior class, numbers about 950 students who have volunteered to serve their country in the U.S. Coast Guard. Service is a common theme throughout the entire cadet program, and is highlighted by the cadets' volunteer work throughout the community in Southeastern Connecticut and beyond. Due to the rigors of the academic, military, and physical program at the Academy the cadets' free time is very limited, yet most cadets spend some of their time in community service activities. The Corps of Cadets has an impact that is making a difference throughout many parts of the local community.

This year, the Cadets have focused on partnership in education. Cadets serve as tutors, mentors and role models at C. B. Jennings Elementary School, Benny Dover Jackson Middle School, New London High School, Clark Lane Middle School, Oakdale Elementary School, and Mary Morrison Elementary School. These academic programs include an afternoon homework club, tutoring in math and science, and college preparation courses. Cadets also volunteer with athletics programs at Nathan Hale Elementary School and New London High School. The cadets have impacted thousands of students in these efforts and have made local area schools more effective in their mission to educate southeastern Connecticut's youth.

Coast Guard cadets have served as Big Brothers or Big Sisters for local children, in a tradition that dates back over thirty years. This year over two dozen cadets have volunteered as Big Brothers or Big Sisters. The support and example a cadet provides to a child can have a huge impact, and it is easily observed in the wide eyes of the little ones who come to visit the Academy with their big brothers or sisters. Cadets have a strong relationship with the Boy Scouts of America, participating in scout activities year round, including attending weekly meetings, teaching merit badge classes, and tagging along on trips outdoors. For young Boy Scouts, cadets are older role models who live the values the Scouts teach. Cadets are also volunteers with Habitat for Humanity, assisting with the construction of two homes in the Davis Farm neighborhood of New London. A team of cadets could be found working there every Thursday rain or shine. Other cadets cooked breakfasts at New London's homeless shelter at 6:00 a.m. before returning to attend class, and the Corps even sent a team of volunteers to assist the television program Extreme Makeover: Home Edition build a dream home for a local family.

In total, the Corps of Cadets completed over eight thousand hours of volunteer work during the calendar year 2008. These hours completed by nearly all of the cadets taking their time out to serve others. This pervasive volunteer effort closely matches the Coast Guard's spirit of humanitarian service and benefits the local community as well as the entire nation, as it is developing a generation of leaders with the desire to aid others.

SPECIAL AWARD NOMINEES

The 2008 Special Award category is to honor college and university faculty and staff who are considered leaders in community service by their personal contributions and have made a sustainable impact within the institution and the community.

Peggy Carey Best teaches a course “The Health of Communities” and is the Health Professions Advisor at the Career Resource Center.

“The Health of Communities” is a service-learning course and focuses on understanding the role of social factors (such as income, work environment, social cohesion, food, and transportation systems) in determining the health risks of individuals; learning about the historical antecedents of the contemporary community health center model of care in response to the needs of vulnerable populations; and studying (through participation and observation) the conduct of research designed to document and/or support efforts to improve the health of communities. Students study community health while working as research assistants with staff members at Middletown’s Community Health Center, exploring conceptual frameworks for understanding health, illness, and models of care while linked to relevant experiences.

The students spend approximately 4 hours a week at the Community Health Center. The projects students work on have included investigation and/or assessment of school-based efforts to reduce the risk of obesity in children, the health needs of homeless persons, the transition from paper to electronic medical records, and models for an institutional review board especially suited to a community health center.

While the course is one semester long and taught in the fall, Ms. Carey Best encourages the students to continue for the entire academic year so that it is a more full experience for both the student and the community partner. Ms. Carey Best meets with the students six times during the spring semester to continue to debrief and discuss their experiences. The time spent in the spring is above and beyond the expectation for her course and is not compensated. Nearly all students continue to work with the health center when the course is over due to the influence and mentoring of Ms. Carey Best.

Jocelyn Collen is exemplary in her personal commitment to community service as well as her mentorship of students, helping to foster their commitment to service. Jocelyn has served as Administrative Coordinator of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Fairfield University for just under 2 years. In that time, she has committed herself in service to the community and has supported, created service opportunities for, advised and mentored students in numerous ways – all above and beyond her job responsibilities.

Jocelyn has volunteered as a university staff mentor on two separate student service trips to Jamaica – one in January 2008 and one in January 2009. As a staff mentor, she helped to organize the trip; served as a leader, accompanying students on the trip; and met weekly with the participating students, 12 on each trip, to help prepare them for the experience. She continues to meet with both student groups to organize reflection sessions and local service opportunities.

Jocelyn serves as the staff advisor to the World Youth Alliance, a student-led service group at Fairfield University. All student groups at Fairfield University need to have a staff or faculty advisor. The World Youth Alliance students were aware of Jocelyn's commitment to service and approached her a little over a year ago to serve as their advisor. She agreed without hesitancy and has been meeting with them every other week for over a year to assist them in planning their service programming.

Jocelyn is an alumnus of Fairfield University. After graduation, she participated in a year of service with Francis corps in Syracuse, NY. Since arriving back at Fairfield, she has served, unofficially, as an advisor to students considering post-graduate service. She meets with students considering post-graduate service on a weekly basis, helping them to identify programs that are a good fit for them, writing recommendations, and so on.

Jocelyn herself engages in several direct service activities through Fairfield. Twice a month, she volunteers at Black Rock School in Bridgeport, reading to a 6th grade class. She is a lead organizer for Fairfield's monthly food drive, Stags in the Pantry, which supports the Saint Charles Food Pantry in Bridgeport, Connecticut. She organizes the monthly drive and recruits students to volunteer to deliver food to the pantry. Lastly, Jocelyn serves in the capacity of "Support Person" for the Bridgeport, Connecticut Jesuit Volunteer Community, a group of young men and women who commit to a year of community living and service in underserved communities. In this capacity, she helps to orient the volunteers to the local community, assists them in working through challenges, and serves as a mentor to them. The Support Person is essential to the vitality of the community and helping them to fulfill their service commitment.

Commitment to service and social justice are an integral part of Jocelyn's identity, and her personal commitment has been vital in supporting and fostering students' life-long commitment to service.

Angeles Dam, Norwalk Community College

As a professor, Angeles Dam has been actively involved in the Service-Learning program at Norwalk Community College. Starting in the Fall of 2007, she offered Service-Learning as an option to two of her Spanish classes. Three students decided to participate in this option.

Service-Learning is a form of experimental education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Service-Learning includes the key concepts of reflection and reciprocity.

Service-Learning is a process that links academic learning and community participation. The goals of Service-learning are generally to:

- facilitate the development of effective community participants;
- teach academic content in an applied, experiential and reflective manner, and
- contribute to the community in ways that build on community identified assets and strengths and address community needs.

A wonderful connection was made between Angeles' students and the Norwalk Senior Center South.

The Norwalk Senior Center South is a primarily Spanish speaking community center. The NSC South features a full range of social, recreational and educational programs for members. Daily exercise class, arts, crafts, bingo, cards and lunch provide an opportunity to meet friends and socialize in a warm, friendly environment. Most programs are offered in both English and Spanish.

Norwalk Community College students attended the Senior Center on a regular basis (approx. 2 hours per week for 10 weeks). While lending a hand with their daily activities the students were able to practice and apply their Spanish language.

With the success of this program, Angeles has not only continued it but increased the amount of classes where this is given as an option. In the spring 2008, she offered this option to four of her classes and the amount of the participants has increased. Additionally, her students (both service-learning and non) now participate in the Center's holiday celebration where they mingle, dance, and sing carols with the seniors. Everyone has a wonderful time!

Montez Johnson, Central Connecticut State University

Montez Johnson is the kind of administrator vice presidents for student affairs dream of: always willing to go the extra mile to make a difference in the life of our students. For 16 years Mr. Johnson has been an academic advisor at Central Connecticut State University, where he meets with students to discuss their academic major, course selections, or their plans for their future. He believes that giving back to his alma mater is important, and this goes beyond what he offers through his paid position. Montez is often found at student events in the evening and weekends, volunteering his time as a DJ, a Master of Ceremonies, or as a mentor.

Whether it is on campus or off, he is often present at student events. It is during these programs that he meets with students and provides mentoring to countless individuals. During the past year he has given the impression of being everywhere at once. When the CCSU Women's Soccer team held an event to raise funds to travel to Europe, Montez volunteered his services as a disc jockey. He has supported various student groups with their fund raising efforts and recruitment of new members. Recently he volunteered his time during Greek Week when CCSU hosted fraternities and sororities from the New England area.

He is a frequent volunteer at recreational events, and understands the importance of offering healthy alternative programming for students. Montez is someone who takes a broad view of his job responsibilities and understands that interacting with students in creative ways will bring significant results, and this includes helping students realize their dream of a college education.

Montez has done much to bring meaning to the lives of our students. Currently he serves as a mentor for a new program on campus entitled "Are You Man Enough?" This program is aimed at helping men better understand themselves as they confront the pressures and challenges of life.

He is a dedicated academic advisor during the day, and is a frequent presence at student organizational meetings in the evening where he provides guidance and support. Mr. Johnson is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of students.

Connecticut hosts 7,000 to 20,000 migrant farm workers annually. This population is among the most economically disadvantaged in the United States with the highest rate of occupational injury and illness with little or no access to health care. Migrant Farm Workers provide an invaluable service to Connecticut's economy, yet these workers often have no health coverage, Medicaid and Social Security benefits.

To address this issue, the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Medicine and Connecticut Area Health Education Program (CT AHEC) developed the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic which provides free primary health care, health education, and increased access to quality, community-based, primary health care services. The UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic was started in 1998 and has run continuously for 11 years. The UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinics are held three nights a week during June – October annually. The clinics are coordinated by medical students and staffed by more than 450 student and clinical volunteers, annually. All care is overseen by licensed volunteer physicians. On average, 375 workers are seen annually at these mobile clinics. For many students interested in health care and public health, the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic is a valuable resource to learn about primary care, culturally appropriate care, and access to care issues. Student participants include high school, college and professional students. Student participants are enrolled in CT AHEC enrichment programs, UConn School of Medicine and Dental Medicine, Quinnipiac PA Program, and affiliated colleges and schools with College Health Service Corps chapters. The total number of volunteer hours supporting the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic exceeds 3,000 annually.

“Volunteering at the migrant farm worker clinic throughout the summer has truly been a wonderful experience. Every time I attended the clinics I learned something new...I had the opportunity to interact with other college students and meet different healthcare professionals. It was amazing to see how we all worked together to make these clinics happen.”
Melissa Morales, UConn, Physical Therapy, Class of 2010.

“Attending one of the Migrant Worker Clinics is an experience beyond words. At any given moment one might see a high school student stumbling through medical Spanish, a first year medical student conferencing with an attending doctor...the atmosphere of learning and compassion is truly remarkable, as is the impact that these clinics have on the migrant worker community.” Emily Goldman, Kingswood-Oxford High School, Class of 2009.

Funding for the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic comes from CT AHEC, UConn's School of Medicine, the Hartford County Medical Association, and the Physician Assistant Foundation. Partners include the Hispanic Health Council, Connecticutosh, the Department of Labor and collaborating community health centers. Follow up services are funded by the Connecticut River Valley Farm Worker Health Program.

Justification for monetary payment – only the 3 UConn Migrant Farm Worker coordinating students received academic credit and a modest stipend (\$2,500).

The Community Service Cup was instituted within the Southern Connecticut State University Athletic Department in September of 2008. Since taking over in July, 2007, Michael Kobylanski has spearheaded the department's community service efforts and has encouraged student-athletes, coaches and staff to share in an array of projects. The concept of the Community Service Cup was proposed by Michael in the summer of 2008 and implemented at the start of the Fall 2008 semester.

Specifically, the Community Service Cup provides a competitive format that allows student-athletes to gain an enriched experience through engagement with the on-campus and local communities by supporting ventures of traditional citizens, campus community members and peer students and student-athletes.

Michael has actively sought out community service and community engagement opportunities. Southern Connecticut State University student-athletes have participated in a wide spectrum of events, including work with the American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, Susan G. Komen Foundation and the United Way. On the local level, the Community Service Cup has resulted in new relationships with several New Haven elementary schools, the Connecticut Food Bank, Columbus House in New Haven and Hamden Youth Services. Area cleanups benefiting the New Haven community have also been a part of the department's community service efforts. In addition, food and clothing drives by the SCSU athletic department also benefited the Springfield (Mass.) Rescue Mission.

Thanks to the creation of the Community Service Cup, SCSU student-athletes, coaches and staff have greatly exceeded their previous efforts. As a department, SCSU totaled 700 hours of community service in the 2007-08 academic year. During the Fall 2008 semester alone, the department totaled approximately 1,000 hours of community service.

The creation and implementation of the Community Service Cup has provided significant assistance to a wide variety of constituents and covers all of the criteria noted for this award. Student-athlete, coach and staff participation in community service efforts is at an all-time high thanks to the formation of the Community Service Cup.

Dr. Herb Nieburg, Associate Professor of Law & Justice Policy Studies at Mitchell College, is dedicated to volunteer work to the community of southeastern Connecticut.

Dr. Nieburg moved to Westerly, Rhode Island in 2003 from Westchester County, New York. He set up a new counseling practice that targeted adolescents, young adults, and cancer patients. He was the founder (along with Dr. Eric Enquist) of a support group for men who were survivors of prostate cancer. He was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society-Southeast Connecticut Division. He was named as consulting psychologist to the Stonington Police Department. He joined the Westerly Ambulance Corps as an Emergency Medical Technician and Fire Police Officer. He has recently been appointed as a hearing officer of the Westerly, Rhode Island Youth Court. These are all volunteer positions.

Dr. Nieburg, who holds a Master's Degree in Counseling and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, was accepted last year as a volunteer member of the Ethics Committee at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital in New London. In this capacity he assists with ethics related consultations and attends regular meetings of the Ethics Committee. The Committee addresses ethical problems that arise with hospitalized patients and serves as a consulting body to the medical and nursing staff. He is a regular contributor to the Chaplaincy Program at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital where he participates in the educational program on medical ethics. He is a regular lecturer in the Northeast on ethical issues in medicine, psychiatry, hospice, and law. Dr. Nieburg has postdoctoral training and expertise in health psychology and medical ethics as well as forensic psychology.

Dr. Nieburg is dedicated to the community through his health related activities that are volunteer in nature. Many individuals have benefitted immensely from his contributions.

Kimberly Silcox is the University Judicial Officer at Eastern Connecticut State University. She strongly believes in the value of service and has demonstrated her commitment to developing Eastern students as responsible and committed members of the community.

Ms. Silcox began her efforts to engage students in the community by providing community service opportunities for students who had violated the Student Code of Conduct. By reaching out to those students who have made poor choices, she has been able to help students learn responsibility, commitment, time management skills, leadership skills and how to enhance their personal interests in service. As a result, students have developed a university service club, and have gone on to careers in non-profits.

Despite having a very time consuming position as the Judicial Officer, Ms. Silcox has provided leadership for the current community service activities at Eastern, through mentoring of students and VISTA volunteers, development of a vision for service at Eastern, and support for student-initiated service programs. Additionally, Silcox facilitates the Windham/Eastern Community Action Network (W/E CAN), a committee of local residents, students, University faculty and staff that addresses issues of concern to both the town and the University.

Ms. Silcox' effort to enhance service opportunities for students has culminated in the development of a new Center for Community Engagement at Eastern. Kim was a driving force behind the development of the Center, which will provide greatly enhanced service learning opportunities for students and will develop stronger relationships with members of the local community.

Ms. Silcox volunteers personally with the Make a Wish Foundation, the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA, the Windham Mill and Textile Museum, the Windham No-Freezer Shelter, the Windham Before and After School Task Force, and Eastern Connecticut Area Health Education Centers. Her personal volunteer efforts demonstrate her commitment to "walk the talk" and helps students to see the value of service.