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### Upcoming Events!

**2.12: Talking Teaching: Community Learning, Hood Dining Room, 12pm.**

**2.15: Common Hour Event - Teaching in America: a Report Card from the Field, Charles Chu Reading Room, 12pm**

**2.16: PICA Banquet, Crozier Williams College Center, 5pm.**



### WORKING TO PROTECT IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

As someone who grew up in New Haven, Heather Munro recognized at an early age the challenges immigrants face when coming to America. At Connecticut College and through PICA, Heather has found creative ways to tackle these issues head on, while at the same time contributing to her home community. This past summer Heather interned at New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLAA), an organization that not only provides legal aid to those who cannot afford it, but also works in the community providing legal education and lobbies in Hartford to change public policy. Many of the clients at NHLAA are immigrants who are applying to naturalize their status under the VAWA. VAWA stands for "violence against women act," and protects illegal immigrants who entered into good faith marriages which became physically or emotionally abusive. Heather became especially interested in protecting the

rights of these clients and decided to base her senior integrative project on the stories of the individuals she worked closely with at NHLAA. Heather worked with people of various ethnic groups who were refugees or seeking asylum, but who all had the common bond of domestic violence. Getting acquainted with these individuals inspired Heather to document their life stories of how they came to America. In particular, Heather focused on issues of transnational gender and cultural change, as she compared these women's stories. The process of documenting these stories has enriched Heather's experiences academically as well. As an anthropology major, she connected classroom theories to the personal experiences of these women. Growing up in New Haven and working at NHLAA, Heather learned well the importance of immigrants knowing their rights, especially educational rights. Immigrant families who are new to America do not always understand how the school system works and consequently cannot access the

services their children need to succeed academically. Heather has addressed this issue by initiating a brochure program which aims to provide information to families on the American school system. The brochures will cover topics such as registering your child for school, Head Start programs, permission slips, literacy, and advocating for your child when English is your second language. They will be translated into over ten different languages and will be distributed throughout New Haven. Heather's work will result in improved educational outcomes for members of the immigrant community. After graduation, Heather will be participating in Teach for America and strengthening the educational system in Connecticut. Heather is still looking for people to help translate brochures. If you are able to help, contact [hmunro@conncoll.edu](mailto:hmunro@conncoll.edu).



### TEACHING IN AMERICA: A REPORT CARD FROM THE FIELD

Created in 2004, Exhibiting Activism is an annual event that showcases the community-based activism of Program in Community Action (PICA) alumni through a library exhibit and Common Hour discussion. This year, Teach for America (TFA) will be featured along with activism of two current corps members, Adrienne Capaldi '06 TFA New York and Katie Williams '07 TFA Chicago. Established in 1990, Teach for America works to "eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort." To do this, Teach for America places recent college graduates in schools for two years where they teach and mentor students. Currently there are over 5,000 teachers in 26 urban and rural communities placed by Teach for America.

During the Common Hour panel discussion on February 15 at noon, they will talk about the achievement gap, their teaching experiences, and the role of innovative school and community partnerships. They will answer questions from the audience and invite everyone to view the exhibit located on the first floor of the Shain Library. The exhibit will run from February 15 to March 15 and features the work of students, information about Teach for America, and photographs. For more information about Teach for America, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org).

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HOUSE BUILD

This past winter break eight Connecticut College students traveled to the Dominican Republic and successfully built houses for families with the non-profit organization Cambiandos Vidas. The trip was organized by PICA senior, Sarah Lindsay, who worked diligently with several other students to raise over \$13,000 dollars, well over their initial fundraising goals. The extra money will go to next year's build—scheduled for January 2009. On February 8th the students who participated in the trip will present the Common Hour in Blaustein 210 to talk about their experiences in the Dominican Republic and their plans to make this an annual, sustainable trip. If you have questions or are interested in getting involved, come to the common hour or contact Sarah Lindsay at [sblin2@conncoll.edu](mailto:sblin2@conncoll.edu).



## NEW PICA SCHOLARS BEGIN COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The new class of PICA scholars have embarked on their first adventure in the program. This semester the scholars are participating in the Holleran Center's gateway class: Public Policy and Social Inequality which is taught by Professor Jennifer Manion and the Community Learning Seminar with instructors Sarah Barr and Rebecca McCue of the Holleran Center and OVCS. The Community Learning Seminar is designed to complement the Gateway course. Together, the two courses provide students with mutually reinforcing classroom and community action experiences. The course provides practical opportunities to engage in community-based public policy and social ethics work. Students learn how community-based or-

ganizations work, acquire active citizenship skills, and contribute to advancing the New London community.

This semester students had the choice to participate in one of two exciting community projects. Half of the class is working with the Drop in Learning Center to organize the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Teen Life Conference. The students meet weekly with middle school youth to plan and implement all aspects of the conference including workshop planning, identifying facilitators and trainers, creating conference brochures and materials and planning the menu. The Teen Life Conference will take place at Connecticut College on April 24, 2008. All eighth graders from the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London will travel to Connecticut College in the morning and participate in workshops and interactive, skill building activities that promote healthy life choices. The day will culminate with a BBQ lunch in Cro Pit with live

entertainment and special guests.

The second half of the class is working with the Homeless Hospitality Center in New London to plan the first ever Homeless Walk in New London. Students are planning a three mile walk that follows the path of many of the homeless in New London. The route will pass by the Homeless Hospitality day center on Jay Street, the night shelter at the St. James Church on Huntington Avenue and the New London Community Meals Center on Montauk Avenue. These are some of the sites where homeless members of our community can receive meals and services. Students are spending time volunteering at these sites to gain a better understanding of the daily issues facing the homeless. The goal of the walk is to raise money for the Center and raise awareness about homelessness. The walk has been scheduled for April 26, 2008.

## NEW INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The City of New London just created a new professional position – Downtown Development Coordinator. Joseph Celli took on that position and is focusing on enhancing and coordinating activities of the government with downtown non-profits, the merchants, and the arts. He is committed to working with Connecticut College's LINCC committee and is now a committee member working with Holleran Center PICA scholar Jesse Meadows. Meadows created that new Student Government Association initiative last semester.

Mr. Celli contacted the Holleran Center and OVCS and created internship opportunities for students. Mr. Celli said some of his best work in other Connecticut cities included college students from Yale University. Mr. Celli understands the concepts of community learning and supports students to deepen their educational pathways in community settings while also providing them opportunities to engage in community development work that advances communities. Community Development, Fundraising & Grantwriting, and Marketing & Public Relations are the three positions available this semester and for the summer 2008. Interested students can contact Joseph Celli at 860-447-5260 or email resume and cover letter to [JCelli@ci.new-london.ct.us](mailto:JCelli@ci.new-london.ct.us).

### Holleran Center Staff

Audrey Zakriski, Director  
Tracee Reiser  
Sarah Barr  
Jen Manion  
Kiesha Henry  
Anna Hartley

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS ANNOUNCED

In December, Connecticut College was awarded a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation to support Postdoctoral Fellowships at each of the College's 5 academic centers. Fellows will be recent PhDs who will team teach center-based courses, offer new courses open to all students, engage in student research mentoring, and offer program support to the Centers. The Holleran Center will be hiring a fellow with expertise in health policy; with a focus on race, class, and/or gender inequities in healthcare access and health care outcomes. Research and/or teaching experience in global health issues are of particular interest. Applicants from all disciplines will be considered. The fellow's expertise in health policy will add an important dimension to ongoing campus investigations of health issues facing historically disadvantaged groups, and to our community interventions designed to respond to these health challenges. A complete description of the Fellowship Program and individual fellowship descriptions is available at [www.conncoll.edu](http://www.conncoll.edu) under "Employment." Please help us spread the word about these exciting positions to help us attract the best possible candidates.

## MLK SERVICE AWARDS

Connecticut College presented its new Dr. Martin Luther King Service awards at the Commemoration ceremony in Evans Hall on January 25. The awards were given to a faculty, staff and student for upholding the legacy of King's work with a commitment to social justice and service to underrepresented communities. The first awardees are all members of the Holleran Center: Faculty Steering Committee member Dr. Michelle Dunlap; Associate Director Tracee Reiser, and PICA Scholar Nicole Porter, Class of 2008.