

Impact

Community
Action
Learning
Partnership

December 2000

Volume II, Issue #1

A NEWSLETTER OF THE HOLLERAN CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND PUBLIC POLICY

A Message from Professor Jefferson Singer Director of the Holleran Center

As I write these words, our government still has not determined who the next President of the United States will be, and it is nearly a month since we cast our ballots on that first Tuesday in November. Perhaps when you read these words, a winner will have been declared, but I doubt that there are many people who are pleased with the process of political in-fighting we have all witnessed. On the other hand, something very special has happened in these last weeks and even in the months prior to the election, something that I have not witnessed in at least the last two decades of political elections. Leaving aside the media sensationalism and scandal-mongering, I have heard people talking again about the power of the vote, the role of politics in our lives and the fact that the participation of every single person in our democracy matters. Although some have chosen this recent election and its aftermath as further fuel for their world-weary cynicism, I have seen quite the opposite at the College and in New London. In fact, in my 13 years at Connecticut College, I have never seen a period more filled with idealism and activism on the part of students, faculty, staff and New London citizens. I cannot possibly relay all of the examples of community engagement that I recently witnessed, but let me try to share a few.

Aided by the tireless efforts of Holleran Center and OVCS (Office of Volunteers for Community Service) staff and students, over 300 students registered in New London to vote in the recent election. Leaving aside students who were registered in their home states, this represents a doubling of the number of Conn students who voted in New London in the last presidential election.

*Before you know it,
you will be part of
the wave as well –
part of a community
of change-makers.*

Over 30 students have decided to join our Program in Community Action (PICA) and participate in a rigorous three-year academic program on community activism, leadership and public policy. Last year our first PICA class graduated with 14 certificate recipients. The participation of students has doubled in three years! The new group has over 15 different majors. They have proposed inspiring projects for their PICA work ranging

from the study of federal poverty programs to AIDS in Africa to environmental policy to urban ministry to Native American health to the study of philanthropy and non-profits.

Student political and activist organizations are thriving on campus. There were student groups supporting Bush, Gore and Nader. There are ongoing groups involved in Amnesty International, environmental activism, protection of animal rights, the defense of neighborhoods undergoing urban renewal in New London, and many other issues. When we brought a community organizer, Juliette Beck, who was involved in the Seattle protests, to campus, her organizing workshop was overflowing with students. It is hard to walk through our social center without passing a group of students at a table who are passing out leaflets or asking for your signature on a petition. To me, all of this activity is a sign of minds that are alive and engaging with the political questions of our time. This bodes well for the roles our students will take on as society's next wave of citizens and leaders.

The activism I have witnessed extends beyond our students to our faculty and staff. In the last two years, over 12 faculty and staff members have received small grants from the Holleran Center to build community learning opportunities into their classes. Faculty members in American studies, English, Dance, Geology, Human Development, Mathematics, American studies, Music and Education have all placed students in community settings and worked with community members as partners in the learning process. *(Continued page 2)*

Inside . . .

Lucent partnership	2
Senior reflect on PICA experience	3
PICA Internships	4
Our newest PICA students	5
Common Ground/Common Hour	6

Tracee Reiser, our Associate Director for Community, and Katherine McKeon, Associate Director for Academics and Chair of the Mathematics Department, received a \$91,000 grant from the Lucent Foundation to connect New London middle school math and science faculty with math and science faculty at Connecticut College. This project has already involved over 30 faculty members from our two schools and more are asking to become involved.

Finally, we have been inspired by the activities of New London residents. This past summer the city staged OpSail, a tall ship parade that served as the Connecticut Millennium event. Government officials, corporations, non-profit organizations and thousands of volunteers combined to make this event a successful showcase for our community and a true catalyst for civic pride. More recently, and no less important, a smaller group of people, but large in heart and determination, stood up to the city's Board of Education and backed the efforts of the school superintendent, a man who has reached out to engage the great diversity of the city's families. Our own Holleran Center and OVCS have partnered with the Edgerton School in successful efforts to promote literacy and mastery of computer skills, not only in children, but in all family members. We have also found willing partners to develop neighborhood organizations and community activities in the two city-owned housing complexes in New London. One of the most inspiring moments of this fall occurred when two of the leaders of this residents' organization attended one of our Common Ground colloquium talks by Mayor Joseph Riley from Charleston, South Carolina. It is true *common ground* when we can make our campus available to all residents of the city, just as they have opened their homes and communities to our students, faculty and staff.

So to conclude, our presidential leaders better figure out to get on with things or they will surely be left behind. There is an energy in this country, coming from both young and old, a hunger to get involved, to make things better, to rejoin and refashion our communities. It is indeed a privilege to be involved with the people and activities that make up the Center, the College and New London. And finally, if my words have at all piqued your interest in community action, don't sit there! Call us, e-

mail us, drop by. Before you know it, you will be part of the wave as well – part of a community of change-makers.

Lucent Partnership Encourages Community Learning

Connecticut College, the Holleran Center, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London, and CPEP (Discovering the Powers of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering) are working together on a special project designed to sustain math and science excellence in the public schools.

The Teach and Learn Partnership for Math and Science Excellence is the result of a \$91,000 grant from the Lucent Technologies Foundation. The partnership includes faculty seminars, resource sharing, after school and Saturday workshops for students, science fairs and field trips. Ten Connecticut College faculty are working with approximately thirty teachers from Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School.

Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Department Kathy McKeon, Associate Director of the Holleran Center Tracee Reiser, BDJ Middle School Principal Richard Foye, CPEP Director Glenn Cassis, CPEP Site Coordinator John Mangini and Lucent Project Coordinator Talia Bloch are the project leaders.

This new program creates a dynamic and innovative community of students and teachers, and integrates the resources of the New London Public Schools, Connecticut College, and the larger educational community to create and sustain math and science excellence.

Participants in the Lucent Partnership have already had three seminars this semester. During the last seminar, which took place on December 4, plans were made for spring events. These include several science and math activities for BDJ students at Connecticut College, visits of Connecticut College faculty and students to BDJ classrooms, as well as future semester seminars for BDJ faculty focusing on professional development.

Impact

Published by the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy at Connecticut College.

Jefferson Singer – Director

Kathy McKeon – Associate Director for Academic Advising

Tracee Reiser – Associate Director for Community Service

Sarah Barr – Assistant Director

Special thanks to Talia Bloch, Darlene Kornegay, Elizabeth Hall, Abby Small, and Kristen Sutley.

Senior Reflects on PICA Experience

Name: *Elizabeth Hall*

Class Year: *2001*

Major: *American Studies*

PICA Internship: *Community Boating Inc. Boston, MA*

Sports: *Sailing and Ice Hockey*

Liz Hall spent her summer at Community Boating, Inc. in Boston where almost 2000 kids joined the summer program for \$1 per child. Teaching children to sail is a great way to challenge them both physically and mentally. Liz has been sailing all her life and this PICA internship allowed her to integrate her passion for sailing with her experiences as a PICA student. Liz successfully balances her time between school and the two sports she plays for Connecticut College: sailing and ice hockey. The sailing team is currently number one in the nation.

What drew you to the PICA program?

When I was in high school, I spent some time doing community service and I really enjoyed it. PICA seemed like a great way to continue working with the community. I was also very interested in doing an internship that focused on community work.

What skills have you learned through PICA that you think you will use after graduation?

I learned better research skills while taking the PICA Gateway course and planning the Vista walkway. I also discovered the value of community involvement and how important it is to show others your excitement about the causes you believe in.

PICA has many requirements that need to be fulfilled. What was your favorite required aspect of the program?

My favorite part of PICA was the Gateway class. At first I was unsure what to expect, especially when the professors started talking about a walkway. Once we were in groups and working on the project, we learned a lot about community. The success of the class is defiantly a credit to our professors and the class.

How do you balance the serious time commitments to school, hockey and sailing?

I just focus on getting my work done. Sometimes it's tough to stay motivated after a long day of school and practice but I know that I can't procrastinate.

You had an internship last summer with Community Boating Inc. in Boston. Did your experience meet your expectations?

Yes! This internship was wonderful. It was a great way to see kids excited about sailing. The kids really wanted to be there and would sail, rain or shine. I had so much fun working with children from diverse backgrounds.

What are your plans for after graduation?

After I graduate I might go back to Community Boating Inc. but the future is really wide open.

Did your internship have any impact on your decision about the type of work you plan to seek after graduation?

Yes, I know I can't be a sailing instructor for the rest of my life. I enjoyed the community work but I realize that I can't always teach sailing. I would love to work for an organization like CBI on an administrative basis though.

PICA emphasizes the importance of becoming an informed citizen in a democratic society. How do you plan to continue your involvement in the community after you graduate?

Even if I don't have a job doing community work, I will always be involved with community as a volunteer.

What advice would you give to the new class of PICA students?

All the extra work in the Gateway class is valuable. You will see it most when you go to your internship. Also, make sure you pick an internship that you'll enjoy. It will be much more rewarding.

PICA summer internships

One of the most enjoyable and challenging aspects of the PICA program is the summer internship traditionally done between the junior and senior year. This summer the PICA students interned at sites from New London to Kenya and worked on a wide range of projects, from assisting with drug addiction to historic preservation. Their internships truly reflect the diverse interests of this class.

Pavel Blagov - Dr. Patricia Webbink & Associates, PA

Pavel's internship was conducted with Dr. Patricia Webbink Adult, Adolescent and Child Counseling Association. Working directly with Dr. Webbink, Pavel observed therapy sessions, assisted in marketing the association and learned about issues concerning insurance reimbursement.

Deirdre Coakley - The Lantham School, Brewster, MA

Dee worked at a residential rehabilitation home for emotionally disturbed and moderately mentally retarded girls 10-22 years of age. Her responsibilities included supervision, teaching dance, therapeutic counseling and restraint, as well as, building relationships with the girls. "I've always been conscious of how much I wanted to help others, and through doing it I came to see how I want to make this a life endeavor. I am so lucky for what I have, and this is my way of 'returning the favor.'"

Marissa Cotsonas - Summerbridge, Cambridge, MA

Marissa's responsibilities involved designing, implementing and evaluating a geometry curriculum. She also co-taught a future Summerbridge teacher course and supervised service learning work at a local day-care center. A GO! – Girls Only – elective class was designed and led by Marissa during her internship. "The most important lesson was about diversity. Summerbridge is very diverse and for me this past summer was a mini-cultural lesson."

John Dumay - October 22nd Coalition, New York, NY

Jamie Lynn Freedman - Boston 2 – 6 After-School Initiative, Boston, MA

At her internship, Jaime had several tasks, such as, data management, attending meetings regarding funding, calling after-school programmers, and helping out with a summer program similar to that of an after-school program. One of the lessons that Jaime left with was that, "Quality of the program, outcomes and funding are what you need to make an out-reach program a success."

Elizabeth Hall - Community Boating, Boston, MA

At Community Boating, Liz taught three sailing classes each week, and supervised the kids to make sure they were safe on the water. She was put in charge of organizing "Kids Sail the Stars," an event that brought 20 great sailors to sail with the kids. "When I organized Kids Sail the Stars it was incredible to see how much it was appreciated by the kids. I had never seen so many diverse numbers of kids devoted to learning how to sail."

Jason Hamilton - Office of the Attorney General of the State of Connecticut, CT

Interning at the Office of the Attorney General's Health Care and Public Health Unit in Hartford Connecticut, Jason was responsible for establishing relationships with state residents in need. He also represented the state in dealings with HMOs and insurance

companies, attended legislative hearings and was responsible for the drafting of various state documents. As he learned many things over the course of the summer, the internship "re-assured me that I want to (and should) pursue a career in public interest law."

Sarah Hansen - Greater Portland Landmarks, Portland, ME

Sarah spent the first month of her internship working on the opening of the Portland Observatory, the last remaining wooden maritime signal tower in the United States. Once the Portland Observatory opened, Sarah gave tours, manned the cash register and dealt with many of the challenges associated with running a new museum. Sarah also organized the slide library, made press kits, attended meeting with other historical organizations and helped visitors.

Melissa Hegggers - The Enrichment Centers, Bethesda, MD

At The Enrichment Centers, Melissa's responsibilities included organizing creative activities, monitoring the behavior of the children and mediating relationships. "Working with children requires a great deal of patience and energy, but can be very rewarding."

Beth Mauer - Kid's Bridge, Providence, RI

Beth was the site supervisor for the Kid's Bridge program, which included developing the curriculum and teaching pre-kindergarten skills. "I learned that preparation is key to working with children. In addition, flexibility is necessary, because very rarely do things go exactly as planned."

Yari Nunez - Bethel Recovery Center, Inc., Bridgeport, CT

At the Bethel Recovery Center, Yari worked closely with the clients in the drug recovery program. She performed intakes and agency referrals, oriented new clients, maintained a log of daily activities, supervised clients and assisted clients with various requests. At her internship, Yari learned that organization is important and that she has something to learn from everyone.

Jennifer Platt - Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations (UNPO), Washington, DC

Jen interned at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations in Washington, DC. She conducted research and wrote articles for UNPO News, and attended and wrote reports on Congressional, U.S. State Department and NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) hearings, briefings and meetings. Jen learned to be respectful, understanding and patient with each community she worked with.

Christof Putzel - Nyumbani Orphanage, Nairobi, Kenya

Alicia Rinaldi - Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut, New London, CT

Alison Roth - Starlight Children's Foundation, Boston, MA
During her internship at Starlight Children's Foundation, Ali assisted in several tasks including the organization of the Wish Alumni Picnic. She also generated a list of ideas for the foundation to consider in the future and assisted and attended a trip to a Metallica concert at which the children were able to meet the band members. "A lot of things will never make sense to me. I will never understand 'seriously ill' and 'child' so close together," says Ali.

Beth Rudenko - Minute Man Early Intervention Program, Concord, MA

As part of her internship at the Minute Man Early Intervention Program, Beth was able to observe and assist the staff when working with delayed children. Through her time there she came to know several of the children and participated in their therapy sessions.

Abigail Small - Somersworth Group Home, Somersworth, NH

The Somersworth Group Home is an intermediate level group home for adolescent boys who have been placed there by the state. Many of the boys have severe behavioral problems. As part of her internship, Abby assisted the staff by being a friend, mentor and parent to the boys. She came to understand the boys' frustrations with the juvenile justice system, but most of all she learned that each of the kids at the group home has a dream, something that is often overlooked by society.

Katherine Stokes - Ballard House: A Birth Center for Community Wellness, ME

At Ballard House, Katherine did intakes, disseminated information, obtained Medicaid reimbursement, and worked on a bill that would facilitate the licensure of birthing centers in Maine. Katherine discovered many of the key ingredients to running a successful and happy community center from the amazing women she worked with.

Kristen Sutley - McLean-Franciscan Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program, Boston, MA

At the McLean-Franciscan Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program, Kristen worked in a locked, psychiatric inpatient setting with severely mentally ill children and adolescents reviewing patient cases as well as determining treatment plans and options. She created a resource list of hospitals and out-patient treatment centers in the state of Massachusetts for the staff and a resource guide for the families of patients which included details on mental health, names of support groups, and general, easy to read information regarding mental illnesses and treatment options.

Kareem Tatum - The Friendly House, Worcester, MA

When Kareem was young, he attended the summer camp at Friendly House, so when the time came for him to select an internship site, he decided to go back to his summer camp. Each day he supervised between 12 and 19 children aged 11 and 12. Kareem also planned daily activities that included games, arts and crafts, and drug awareness. At his internship Kareem learned a lot about children including "just how impressionable children are at this age, how eager they are to learn new things from you if you are able to relate to them, how intelligent and honest these children are, and just how much these children look up to college students."

Aaron Taylor - LEAP, New London, CT

As part of the LEAP Program, Aaron observed and evaluated Junior Counselors, participated in the administrative aspects and was a counselor to LEAP children. "Being able to participate as a counselor and be part of the administration, I learned how hard and complicated it is to efficiently run an organization, particularly only that is non-profit."

Ashley Williams - Children's Museum of Manhattan, New York, NY

At the Children's Museum of Manhattan, Ashley coordinated workshops for children to help them understand and learn about the museum exhibits. The workshops included ones on the biological systems in the human body, Dr. Seuss storytellers and a word play program. Through the internship, Ashley learned how to better communicate with children of all ages and how to peak children's interests.

The Holleran Center welcomes the largest PICA class

The Holleran Center accepted 30 new PICA students this fall. The new class represents over fifteen different majors and comes to Connecticut College from around the world. Congratulations!

Class of 2003

Noelle Bannister
Sara Bayer
Andrew Creedon
Kendra Dickinson
Lesley Gerberding
Julia Hayden
Chris Hensman
Elizabeth Huber
Margo Jones
Kathryn Kranz
Courtney Marshall
Alex Mroszczyk-McDonald
Michael Pappano
Kristin Perry
Katie Piotrowski

Rebecca Reardon
Christine Salmon
Samantha Scala
Emma Sellers
Catherine Servant
Mridula Swamy
Kate Tunney
Melissa Wender
Sarah Willcox
Kim Wolske
Class of 2002
Omolara Alao
Emily Brownell
Katrina Chapman
Katherine Froelicher
Stuart Katzenberg

Common Ground, Common Hour Colloquium Series Focuses on “The City”

Common Ground, Common Hour, a colloquium series sponsored by the Holleran Center, features dialogues about active citizenship and democracy with leading experts from across the country. The speakers this fall focused on the College’s academic year theme of “The City” and addressed activism, community revitalization, democracy and community partnerships.

Juliette Beck, the Economic Rights Coordinator for Global Exchange, kicked off the semester with her workshop on “The City as Part of Our Global Village.” Later that day she also presented a Leadership Cluster Workshop on activism for the PICA students. Ms. Beck was followed by Susan Bysiewicz, Connecticut Secretary of State, who spoke on “The Future of Our Democracy.” Ms. Bysiewicz also discussed the upcoming election and answered many questions about the democratic process. Mayor Daniel Malloy of Stamford described the changes happening in his own city and how other cities can become successful.

Professor Judy Primavera from Fairfield University presented information about a very successful literacy program she designed. Common Ground, Common Hour concluded this fall with a talk and slide presentation on how Charleston was revitalized by the Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, Joseph Riley.

Common Ground, Common Hour Spring 2000

February 9 – Lawrence Blum
March 2 – Ted Conover
More dates and speakers
to be announced

Common Ground, Common Hour began in 1998 and has featured speakers such as Yale Professor and Constitutional law expert, Akhil Amar, and noted psychologist and child welfare advocate, Dr. James Garbarino. In the Spring, Common Ground, Common Hour will feature Ted Conover, author of *NEWJACK: Guarding Sing Sing*, and Laurence

Blum, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts. All talks are held in the Ernst Common Room in the Blaustein Humanities Center and take place during the Common Hour, Fridays from 12:30 to 1:30.



*The Holleran Center for
Community Action and Public Policy
Box 5277 Connecticut College
270 Mohegan Avenue
New London, Connecticut 06320*