Loretta Vereen ‘12 says jokingly as she sits down with me at Unity House. It’s her first week back from spring break and she’s already incredibly busy with rehearsals and final details. Her play, Social Drugs, “is about the complexities of gender, sexuality and religion, but more specifically Christianity” says Vereen. She was first inspired by Lamar Ok ‘12 and Matty Burns ‘13 performance in The Trans* Show last semester and the stories shared by her peers during the Posse Plus retreat. Once she started writing, she says it became a collaboration of her life experiences, growing up with Christian values, and the experiences of the actors in her play.

An experienced writer, Vereen has been acting and writing for years. She’s put on a play almost every year at Conn since her freshmen year, and is active in the theater community in Connecticut. “I want people to understand that we are not post-racism, post-homophobia, or inequalities in general.” And with less than two months from graduation, she stays committed to this goal with her final performance as an undergraduate at Conn.

Just like her previous plays, Bad and Privileged, she aims to educate and inspire through her work. This time she writes to give hope to the LGBTQ community. “I think my play is really hopeful and inspirational for the LGBTQ members to not give up their faith. To have faith for yourself and no one else.”
The play will take place on Saturday, April 14th at 8pm in Evans Hall, free of charge. It stars a dozen Conn students, all who have been essential in the development of Loretta’s play. “I kept their first names because they built this.” She mentioned how important the conversations with her actors, peers, and family members have been in order to write the script and fully understand the characters that are being portrayed. The communal approach she’s taken in the development of the play is not coincidental but just another intentional message. “It’s really important to have community, a supportive one, a positive one that shows you love.”

And love is exactly what we, at Unity House, are sending her way. We encourage all to go see Social Drugs. It will be a performance to relate, reflect and always remember.

CC’S FINEST: LAMAR OK ’12

Lamar Ok is a senior from Providence, RI, majoring in Human Development with a secondary education certification. He has been extremely active in his four years, serving as a Diversity Peer Educator, an ALANA Coordinator, the President of Versum Trans* Group, and a student teacher in his last year at Conn.

A familiar face to Unity House, Lamar became involved his freshman year in ALANA as a Lil Sib, a Big Sib his sophomore and junior years, and an ALANA Coordinator in his senior year. “I wouldn’t be where I am now if it wasn’t for the ALANA program and Unity House.” A social justice activist, recently admitted to the UMass Amherst Social Justice graduate program, and an aspiring teacher, Lamar is currently finishing his education certification in the Integrated Day Charter School as the third and fourth grade student teacher and has served as a teacher’s assistant in six other schools.

At the Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Convocation, Lamar shared why he has been so successful. “Dreaming is why I am here today. Dreaming is how I am able to get through trials and tribulation. Dreaming is a form of empowerment; it is a form of liberation... My advice to you all is to dream, not only of yourself but the people around you. The more you dream of others, the more others will dream of you. In order to be the change you want to see in the world, you have to dream the change you want to see.”

CC POETRY: DREAM BIG BY BENJAMIN RAMOS

I wonder what it’s like when you fall asleep
How different it is to what you really seek
Cause most people live with shattered dreams in their hearts
Never made it through school; never awesome or cool, from the start
To the end people probably protect themselves from being pushed
But never push themselves to the limit
Limited by their minds with nothing in it
Listen! This is for you...
This is for couples now divorced
This is for all of those who are forced; to live lies
This is for all the girls and all the guys
This is for Santiago who sold his sheep
This is for doctor Seuss and little bo peep
This is for you AND for me
Do me a favor and please dream BIG
Dream like your life depended on it, because it does
Dream like the seams of your life are structural pillars to your soul
Dream like you have all the time in the world; in your hands
Dream like cupid just shot you with his arrows; and the sands
Of time have stopped for that very moment; your life has changed
Dream like you’ll never wake up; and everything is possible
Dream like your life was the dream and it made it to the big screen
And the lights are shining on you as you debut your beam, called life
Cause someone out there loves you enough to give you that air you breathe
So dream like the universe was your drawing notebook and you are only limited by your imagination and the amount of ink in your PEN
Dream like you just told her how you feel and she said “me too”
Never dream for others but dream for you
Dream that you can fly high like the eagle and run like a cheetah
Dream like you’re at AGAPE and there’s unlimited hummus and pita
Dream like your life is bursting at the seams and reality is what you make it
So please, please I beg you..... Dream BIG
Dream as big as can be and then step it up a notch
Dream every possible choice; trust me that’s a LOT
Dream like you KNOW that your dream’ll come true
Dream like the only thing standing in your way is you
Dream as big as the ocean and then even bigger
Dig deep in your soul and quickly you’ll find
That your heart, soul, and mind must be combined
To truly achieve dreams of the preposterous kind
Dream like your life is filled with happiness and joy
Dream like you did when you were a little boy
Dream like Doctor King was never shot
And this is the last shot so give it all you got
Dream like wars never existed and loved ones never died
Dream as if you always won and you’ve never tried
Dream like you’ve been holding your breath and the tunnel is ending
Dream like your dreams are never pending on the themes that society has to give
Dream like you wake up and realize all you have to do is live
Dream like everything is possible, because it is.
IN THE MONTH OF APRIL WE GET READY TO SAY GOODBYE TO ONE GROUP OF BIG SIBS AND WELCOME THE OTHER!

**SPRING BREAK IN CUBA**

Karina Hernandez ’14 speaks to us about her recent trip to Cuba!

Karina made sure to keep an open mind. “I didn’t want to base my knowledge on Cuba on what I learned in the U.S. because I know in order to really know a country, like Cuba, you have to go and see it yourself. It was a lifetime opportunity.”

“It wasn’t a vacation. It was going to school at all hours. There was always something to learn.” says Karina, a double major in History and English at Conn.

“My concentration was race relations in Cuba and being from the Caribbean, it was especially interesting to me.”

“I encourage everyone to go to SATA Cuba. There is something for everyone. You’ll learn about government, health care, education, history and more.”
Spring 2012 Pictures!

MLK Commemoration

Black History Month Convocation

M.O.C.A

S.H.E. Program

Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month Convocation
Trip Down Memory Lane

It’s Not Goodbye, it’s see you later! Congrats Seniors!

We’ve watched you grow and now we reminisce of your first day at Conn. Check yourselves out!

End of the Year Events!

ALANA Event
Thursday, April 19th at 5pm in the 1941 Room, Crozier-Williams Center
The 2011-2012 ALANA Big Sibs and Lil Sibs are invited to the last event of the year.

Recognition Dinner
Friday, April 20th at 6pm in the 1941 Room, Crozier-Williams Center
Students will be recognized for their work with Unity House and seniors will receive their stoles.

Honors and Awards Celebration
Tuesday, May 1st at 7pm in the 1962 Room, Crozier-Williams Center
Invited students are awarded with honors and awards for their work at Conn in 2011-2012.

SHE and MOCA Event
Thursday, May 3rd at 5pm in the Hood Dinning Room, Blaustein
SHE and M.O.C.A. participants are invited to the last event of the year.

Unity House BBQ
Tuesday, May 8th at 4pm at Unity House
All are invited to the Unity House BBQ!

Check your email and mailboxes for your invitations!

Remember to RSVP!
MOVIE NIGHT WITH BUBBLE TEA
Sunday, April 1st @ 7:00pm
Cro's Nest, Crozier-Williams Center
CCASA will be hosting a movie night, showing Mao’s Last Dancer, with servings of delicious bubble tea.

ASIAN-AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH CONVOCATION
Monday, April 2nd @ 7:00pm
Crozier-Williams, 1941 Room
This year’s Convocation speakers are Alumnus, Elli Nagai-Rothe ’03, Senior, Lamar Ok ’12, and First Year, Jimmy Dang ’15.

HOMONATIONALISM GONE VIRAL: THE AFFECTIVE POLITICS OF DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL
Thursday, April 12th @ 4:30pm
Chu Room, Shain Library
Dr. Jasbir Puar, professor at Rutgers University and author of “Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times,” will talk about Homonationalism in Palestine.

SUSHI - A HISTORY IN THE MAKING
Monday, April 2nd @ 5pm
Smith Common Room
Prof. Takeshi Watanabe from EALC and the Smith House Fellow present an evening all about sushi.

RACE, SEXUALITY, AND JUSTICE IN AMERICA
Tuesday, April 10th at 4:30pm
Chu Room, Shain Library
Prof. Jen Manion, SOAR and the LGBTQ resource Center will be hosting a community discussion about recent events involving hate crimes.

PATSY MINK - AGAINST THE MAJORITY
Wednesday, April 18th @ 7pm
Cro Nest, Crozier-Williams Center
Unity House Interns and GWS present a documentary of the life Patsy Mink, the first Asian American woman and woman of color in the U.S. Congress.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNITY HOUSE
Please visit www.conncoll.edu or facebook.com/pages/Unity-House/135451797211

Call us at 860-439-2628
Email us at unityhouse@conncoll.edu