In the fall of 2007, two dedicated Connecticut College students developed an after-school mentoring and tutoring program for children residing at the Covenant Shelter of New London. The Covenant Shelter provides temporary and long-term shelter for the homeless. Stefanie Hinman ’10 and Elizabeth Durante ’10 spent much time mentoring one of the most vulnerable populations in New London: homeless children. The Covenant Shelter deeply appreciated the work that Elizabeth and Stefanie did for its residents. In April, the shelter dedicated the Children’s Room in loving memory of Elizabeth Durante, who died tragically in a car accident on route to a service trip in Uganda. Both Elizabeth and Stefanie left a legacy for our new and returning Covenant Shelter service learners. To continue the efforts started by Stephanie... 

Women in Government

Margaret “Peg” Curtin knows how important it is to support women’s involvement in government. She served many years on the New London City Council and also as Mayor of New London. In her honor, friends established the Women in Government scholarship at the Community Foundation of Southeastern CT for women pursuing careers in civic life through elected office or government service. The friends organized a Women In Government event to raise funds for the scholarship and Connecticut College OVCS brought Connecticut College students who are interested in government to the event. State Senator Andrea Stillman, State Representative Diana Urban, New London Chief of Police Margaret Ackley, and Peg Curtin inspired the audience with stories and strategies about how to be an effective leader in government. Future legislators, mayors and presidents were in the audience, including the Connecticut College students.
A t the beginning of the academic year each dormitory elects a Community Service Representative (CSR). These volunteers meet regularly to discuss and address requests from the community. The CSRs take charge of projects and act as liaisons between the New London organizations, Connecticut College offices and clubs, and the students in their dormitories. They report opportunities for community involvement and service to their dorm while working closely with members of the House Council.

In October, the Community Service Representatives responded to a request from the Connecticut College Women’s Center for toiletries to donate to the Women’s Center of Southeastern Connecticut. The Community Service Representatives, spearheaded by senior Jillian Cunningham and junior Lalita Russ, organized a drive to collect these items from students, staff, and faculty over a two week period. The drive was a great success. After amassing hundreds of items, the CSRs, with transportation provided by OVCS, delivered the supplies to the Women’s Center of Southeastern Connecticut. Much thanks to everyone who contributed.

Women’s Center of SECT Toiletry Drive
by Lalita Russ ’11

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Covenant Shelter After School Program (cont’d)

and Elizabeth, OVCS recruited a strong team of students who could further develop the after school program. At the beginning of this semester, the OVCS staff met with hundreds of students and guided service learning placements. Christine Dombkowski, OVCS Community Learning Coordinator, recruited 17 students who demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment, and passion to the children at the shelter. After two and a half years coordinating the program, Stefanie knew that strong qualities were necessary to work well with the children. She also understood the importance of training and orientation for new volunteers. She wrote a letter in which she welcomes new volunteers and explains that “running the Covenant Shelter after-school program can be really challenging, but I think you’ll also find that it’s incredibly rewarding and a lot of fun!” Most of the current service learners at the Covenant Shelter would agree with Stefanie. Penney Jade Beaubrun ’11, the current Covenant Shelter Coordinator, adds to Stefanie’s comment by stating “the program has come a long way with the help of our volunteers and it is a very successful experience for both the volunteers and the kids.” Connecticut College students read, play, and do homework with the children each weekday from 3:00-5:00 PM. In addition to providing academic assistance and entertainment, the program provides opportunities for the participants to build positive interpersonal relationships. The children often say “we love our friends from Connecticut College” and the college students say “we love the children at the center.”
S.I.S.T.E.R. Mentor Program Welcomes Professor Shani Collins

Dance Department Professor Shani Collins taught a special movement workshop for the Connecticut College students and the New London Bennie Dover Jackson middle school students who participate in the OVCS S.I.S.T.E.R. Mentor Program. (Students Implementing Support Through Education and Recreation) S.I.S.T.E.R. mentees come up to Connecticut College twice a week throughout the academic year. They engage with their college mentors and program activities include academic homework and tutoring and a curriculum focusing on empowerment, healthy lifestyle choices, arts, sports and civic development.

Professor Collins specializes in West African Dance, dance theory and composition, and dance history. She began the S.I.S.T.E.R class with a warm up and then moved to across the floor exercises. Professor Collins displayed with passion and grace a set of movements characteristic to West African Dance and the mentees and mentors followed her instructions. After working on a few different sets of movements, the participants combined the movements and created individual dances. Professor Collins taught the participants how the West African dance movements influenced today’s contemporary dance movements. The participants made the connections, integrated both styles and created their own unique dances. The girls also took some time to teach the college students how to dougie, a popular dance involving casual shoulder leans and elbow twists.

Professor Collins said “It was a lot of fun working together with the college students and the middle school students. Middle school students have a distinctive energy and dance can be a critical element in channeling that energy towards healthy lifestyle choices.” The S.I.S.T.E.R. Mentor Program participants agreed the day’s activities were the best.

“I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Acceptance Speech, Nobel Peace Prize, 1964
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Dinner

Connecticut College students joined hundreds of other community members at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 29th annual Scholarship Dinner at the Mystic Marriott. Local high school seniors apply for the prestigious scholarships and eight were honored at the event. The recipients inspired the audience members by reciting selections from their essays and describing how they will honor and sustain Dr. King’s legacy of social justice and peace. Connecticut College Vice President for Administration Ulysses Hammond is the chair of the Dr. Martin Luther King Scholarship Trust Fund and one of the scholarships was awarded in his honor.

Taking Steps towards a Greener Campus: Bikes for Kids Donates 47 Bicycles to Connecticut College

It took a village to make it happen, but the donated bikes from Bikes for Kids in Old Saybrook are now on the Connecticut College campus. Spokespeople, the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment, the Holleran Center, OVCS, and Physical Plant worked together to connect with Bikes for Kids. Connecticut College Physical Plant staff traveled out to Old Saybrook with trucks and joined students and staff to pick up the forty-seven bikes and bring them back to campus. Bikes for Kids provides refurbished bikes and helmets to children throughout the year. They had collected adult size bikes and were glad to partner with Connecticut College to contribute to our greener campus efforts.

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