

COMMUNITY LEARNING

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

OVCS NEWSLETTER

November 2013

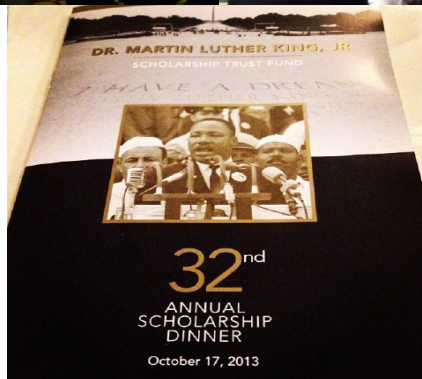
32nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Scholarship Dinner

By Jobari Adams '15



Attending the Dr. Martin Luther King Scholarship Awards Dinner was a very motivating and uplifting experience. The event was two in one; it gave me a look at my past and my future. There were people in the room that reminded me of where I come from right along side people that show me where I want to be. Holding the program and reading the different names of scholars, donors, and board members once again showed me the importance of networking and the opportunities that Connecticut College provides to do that.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Scholarship Trust Fund awards five high school seniors from New London County who have portrayed leadership skills, have excelled academically, and who have high hopes and ambitions of graduating college, with \$20,000 scholarships that will be distributed over four years. Seeing an enormous hall of people cheering on these



students from underrepresented communities as they receive a chance at a better future was refreshing. It also made me proud to know that my school was participating in such an event. Honoring five well deserving local high school students with scholarships that will help them achieve their goals of a

higher education is a great way to honor Dr. Martin Luther King and I feel it is important to continue to honor his legacy with initiatives like this.

I was glad that I was selected to attend and now I'm glad that I accepted the honor to be a part of such an inspiring occasion. I wasn't shocked though, because most events that I have been a part of through OVCS have made an impact on my life. Its great to see these recipients influencing others and I hope that what I am doing at Connecticut College is inspiring the youth in my community of Chicago along with the youth here in the New London community.

Extended Learning Time- ELT

by David Cruz

The students at Jennings Elementary School in New London have seen plenty of Connecticut College faces throughout the past nine weeks. Connecticut College OVCS and the Jennings Elementary School collaborated to implement the first session of Extended Learning Time (ELT). Faculty, staff and college students designed and implemented creative educational learning activities for the kindergartners, first and second graders. Nearly 70 college students worked in the program as mentors and Professor Anderson from the Education Dept. and OVCS professional staff also led the hands on teaching and learning initiatives.

This is the second semester in a row that Connecticut College OVCS collaborated with the New London Public Schools to provide extended learning for the students of the New London community. During the spring of 2013, the ENRICH program brought students from Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School to the Connecticut College campus four days a week. College students taught various workshops including dancing, Arabic language and culture, Spanish language and culture, civics, and creative arts. The middle school students loved coming to the College campus

and the experience sparked their interest and motivation to attend college. The participants in the program also demonstrated increased achievement on reading evaluations.



This semester we bring the college mentors to the elementary school Monday through Friday. Around 2:30pm, the college mentors begin coming into OVCS to sign in and then board the vans to travel to Jennings School and arrive just in time to begin classes at 2:50pm. The elementary school students

have a quick snack and then the interactive creative lessons begin. Topics include the plant cycle, culture of music, and identity reflections. Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold, A Bad Case of the

Stripes by David Shannon, and A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni are three of the very popular books used in the curriculum. The children loved connecting their reading to expressions of dance, art and music. On the beautiful days the children and the college student mentors enjoyed spending the last minutes of the day playing together outdoors. Boundless energy! The nine week session ended November 15 with a culminating celebration where each of the Jennings School students received a certificate of achievement, a vocabulary word bank, and a Connecticut College lanyard. Some of the parents joined the children and the College teams at the festivities and all enjoyed fruit and the College's famous camel cookies. Amidst all the hugging,

participants said they look forward to the next Connecticut College ELT session beginning February 3, 2014. College students who would like to participate in this exciting partnership can contact Kim Sanchez in OVCS, Room 216 in Cro or e-mail ovcs@conncoll.edu.

Habitat for Humanity

By. Melanie Argueta '15



Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit, international organization that builds affordable houses in partnership with those who lack adequate shelter. Connecticut College students have formed a student chapter and work with both local and global Habitat projects.

I joined Habitat last year as a sophomore and had the amazing opportunity to travel to Monroe, North Carolina for one week during spring break. Having no initial construction background, we all were able to help build the

roof of a small, one-story house, with a single mother with two children. Throughout that week, we not only learned the essential skills of construction, but we formed strong bonds with each other. We were able to interact with the local community, work at the Restore, and had a delicious dinner at a nearby church. Most importantly we were able to meet the family who is working on the house and will move into it when its completed. Meeting that family reinforced my desire to participate in this project knowing that together we can accomplish a lot.

This year we are fundraising to go to Florida for spring break 2014. After my experience last year in North Carolina, I am even more determined and passionate about going on this next build. Currently we have students volunteering at the Restore in Waterford and go to local habitat builds around the New London community. We also collaborate with professors who assist us on different local projects. Habitat for Humanity is a great organization that advances affordable housing.



Explore Weekend: A Day in the Park

by Jennifer Cunningham '13 AmeriCorps VISTA

On October 19th and November 9th prospective students visited Connecticut College as part of Explore and embarked on community learning initiatives at Riverside Park in New London. While planning around other events that went on throughout both weekends, OVCS organized two community learning days similar to the one observed during first year orientation. OVCS organized a project at Riverside Park with the City of New London to expose the students to some of the core values that Connecticut College espouses. This community event was also an opportunity for prospective students to connect to New London.

This was the second year that Explore weekend had a community learning component. During the first weekend prospective students met Ronna Stuller, who gave us a brief history of the park and then we were given our assignments. The students broke up into three groups and began to work on the grounds. During our time at Riverside Park we harvested potatoes, tomatoes and corn. The second weekend we partnered with the City of New London to prep for the playground build at Riverside Park in honor of Emily Parker, one of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary school tragedy. Before we left

for Riverside Park we informed the students of the importance of this particular community learning project. Knowing the significance of this project motivated the students even more because they realized that they would soon play a small



role in honoring the memory of one of the Sandy Hook victims. As I got to know the visiting students better I realized how much of myself I saw in them. Not too long ago I was an Explore student and I remember feeling overwhelmed and incredibly excited the entire weekend. The prospective students that I met

were ready and willing to get out of their comfort zone. I think that having students engage in the community reinforces the value that Connecticut College is strongly invested in New London. This campus strives to build and cultivate relationships with people and organizations throughout the community.

I believe that during both Explore weekends prospective students got a crash course into what classes are like as well as community learning opportunities which only serve to enrich their experience at Connecticut College. I doubt that other colleges and universities that students visited offered the unique opportunity to see a different side of the community. At Connecticut College, students not only engage in education in the classroom but they are going out and learning so much in a community settings as well. Speaking with the prospective students, they told me they had a great time. Instilling the importance of community learning in prospective students is a great way to attract civically engaged individuals to enrich our campus.

We Are Thankful Dinner

Nov. 27, 2013- 3:00pm
Hood Dining Room

RSVP - ovcs@conncoll.edu

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