



Center for Community-Based Learning and Action

Spring! 2012 news

Greetings, friends of the CCBLA. We hope spring finds you well. Here at the center we're experiencing all kinds of change as the days get brighter and warmer. We've been co-organizing many exciting spring events. Please mark your calendars!

- The program Reinterpreting Liberation is hosting a ten-week Occupy Symposium Thursdays April 5-June 7 in Lecture Hall one. (6-9PM.)
- Our spring reflection workshop for interns and volunteers will be May 16 from 3-4PM. (register: ccbla@evergreen.edu)
- We'll be hosting alumni for an action day at Garden Raised Bounty to celebrate TESC's 40th anniversary. (May 18.)
- Our next Action Day is with the CIELO Project at Radio Ranch, 1-6PM on May 23rd. Followed by a barbeque!
- Ongoing preparations continue for the Tribal Canoe Journey to Squaxin Island (landing in Olympia on July 29 followed by seven days of potlatch protocol.)

Please friend "Ccbla Tesc" on Facebook for more detailed information about these events and more.

Winter was hopping here at the CCBLA. In January we co-hosted more than 50 visitors from the Wa He Lut Indian School for a day-long experience of college on Martin Luther King Jr day. In February, CCBLA volunteers and service learners from Vancouver's Clark College planted over 1,000 native trees and shrubs with the Nisqually Land Trust—greatly improving wildlife habitat and Nisqually River water quality. We facilitated a reflection workshop in March for 20 interns and volunteers to strategize around persistent questions and challenges in their community-based work.

Sadly, winter quarter also brought the close of the Students in Service program. Reflections on this loss can be found in the coming pages along with news on Left Foot Organics, our ongoing efforts to improve community-based internships, and more. Thank you for reading!



May 14
4-6PM • E2115

Students—
Let us recognize
your hard work

comaraderie!
beverages! food! speakers!



CCBLA volunteer Shon-Lueiss Harris and CCBLA intern Marinda Sanders plant Pacific and Scouler's willow stakes with the Nisqually Land Trust

Evergreen's CCBLA Promotes student learning that responds to community by connecting academic programs, students, and faculty with community organizations

Working Respectfully with Community Ellen Shortt Sanchez, Director

Community based learning values 'Reciprocity'. A mutually beneficial relationship between campus and community comes from deep collaboration and respect. Community Partners are our 'Sister Teachers and our Brother Teachers'. Higher Education relies on them to facilitate student learning through internships, community based service learning, class projects and as volunteers. Students learn real life skills and find transformation when they venture off campus into the hands of a local non profit. For higher education to walk the talk of public service we must examine how we support this process systemically, campus-wide with reciprocity that respects community and student learning. Last spring AmeriCorps VISTA Andrea Robbins and the Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA) began mapping out a process to listen to the challenges and successes of community based learning.

We began our conversations with Academic Advising at a faculty tea brought together by Elizabeth Williamson to talk about internships. Next, Academic Advising and the CCBLA discussed both strong intern experiences and ones with disappointments or challenges. It was clear that we needed to work directly with our community partners to make things better. Over the summer the CCBLA convened long-term community partners for working sessions to identify what works and what needs improvement when students come to their organizations to learn and make a difference. Long term community partners who gathered included POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights), CIELO Latino Empowerment Project, Stonewall Youth, Left Foot Organics, GRuB (Garden Raised Bounty), TCTV (Thurston Co Television), Eco-Build Guild and Kokua, services for Adults with Disabilities. We asked 'how can campuses better prepare students to enter the community to learn and

contribute?' The years of rich experience supporting students included examples of students who came without tools and readiness which added to burden of over worked community organizations. Our community partners challenged Evergreen to better build student skills in Cultural Competency and work ethic to work respectfully with community as preparation from applied learning. Together we planned a series of discussions. The fall faculty symposium provided a forum for the CCBLA and Community Partners to report back from our summer work "What Organizations Think about Internships".

CCBLA Advisory Committee discussions in October brought together stakeholders in these discussions to further probe how we can work together to meet community need and support student learning. We looked at four phases to support the process 1) Finding a Good Fit—recruitment and selection 2) Preparing Students for Community Work—training 3) In Service—field work and Internship hours and 4) Evaluation—reflection on service and learning.

Later in the fall Community Partners designed and presented a training "Working Respectfully with Community Organizations" to prepare students to enter community. The training covered 'work ethic' issues, respectfully entering community and basic anti-oppression frameworks. The four Community Partners shared their work with the Latino community, queer youth, Parents on public assistance and adults with disabilities. A number of students made connections with these organizations that led to winter and spring internships. Over the winter CCBLA staff gathered again with Academic Advising to highlight this work and gather input. In February current AmeriCorps VISTA member Laurel Smith and Students in Service Reflection Coordinator Mimi Alcantar facilitated a hands on training for actively engaged students "Reflecting on Community Based Work". In early April we presented our process at the "Continuums of Service" Service Learning Conference in Seattle. With Stefanie Gottschalk Huerta of CIELO co-presenting, we shared our message that higher education needs to make room for organizations to lead the way – in a truly reciprocal process.

Youth in Service: Supporting the College Transition

The CCBLA's mentor-tutor coordinator role (currently filled by Ian Campbell) is sponsored by AmeriCorps' Youth in Service program. The position supports the transition to college for high school students who are aspiring to go to college *and* for new college students just starting out at Evergreen. YIS AmeriCorps members have served as Peer Mentors in the Community Connections academic program in years past. Mentee Emily Monahan reflects on the program in this way:

"As a freshman starting out my first quarter at Evergreen I enrolled in the class Community Connections. Having not known anyone in Olympia this class provided a sense of community for me in a new environment. During the first week we took part in United Way's Day of Caring, and my group visited GRuB, a local organic farm for youth. This initial event was an excellent way to start off the quarter, focusing on both the local community and creating atmosphere of service for our group. In the class I had the opportunity to ask any and all questions I had, as well as learn about student events and resources on campus. Perhaps the most valuable component was the information I gleaned from my peer mentor. Having an experienced Evergreen student of whom I could ask questions, prepared me for success in many ways. I felt more comfortable with my understanding of the unconventional practices at Evergreen, as well as more prepared to seminar, write, and read for my program. Community Connections also served as a reminder of what I wanted to do at Evergreen, and through weekly reflection assignments, ensured that I encouraged myself to achieve these goals. As I get closer and closer to finishing up my first year here, I grateful for many things I learned in this class. My understanding of transcripts and evaluations is much higher than many of my peer's, especially before having ever written an evaluation. This confidence set me off on the right foot, which I'm sure is all Community Connections was really trying to accomplish."

Feeling the Loss: Part Time AmeriCorps Program for Students Closes

The model of Community Based Learning asserts the importance of integrating student learning and community impact. If it is an educational model that supports college access it must also articulate the importance of financial support for students to attend higher education as tuition prices soar. The national Students in Service program through Washington Campus Compact heralded the motto "Learn, Serve and Earn".

Since the CCBLA opened its doors in 2004 this has been a program offered to Evergreen students to support their community engagement by tracking hours of service to the community toward part time AmeriCorps tuition awards. It is estimated that Evergreen students earned close to \$60,000 in tuition awards annually. Most of this tuition support was used at Evergreen.

Alvina Wong, Retention AmeriCorps and Evergreen Alumni, writes "(SIS) kept me accountable to my community commitments, kept me grounded at Evergreen, Olympia and the South Sound in general, and motivated me to work harder in school. It showed me that as a college student I have a responsibility to use my degree and knowledge, not just for personal growth and development, but for my community....Through community service students put into perspective what they discuss in class.

They utilize different academic and social disciplines to sustain the work needed in the community. The best thing about this experience was that students who volunteer were not only giving to their community, but also gaining from it."

Save the Date! Our next Action Day is with the CIELO Project at Radio Ranch

**May 23rd • 1-6PM.
(Followed by a barbeque!)**

The program closure is an incredible loss to students and community sites that have hosted them. Students were asked to end their service by February 29, 2012. Active participants were able to complete their hours, earn a partial award or had to be excited without an award. Countless students at both Olympia and Tacoma campuses were on the waitlist at that time.



Learning that responds to our communities' critical needs through community organizations.

Community Partner Spotlight: Left Foot Organics



Left Foot Organics: An Intentional, Supportive Community

Since 2002, Left Foot Organics has offered adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to grow organic produce while strengthening their social skills and self-reliance. Like all of us, people with intellectual disabilities need opportunities to become involved in their communities and earn a living. Yet the supports that make it possible for them to participate fully in work and community are limited. Rural at-risk youth face similar challenges, with few opportunities for meaningful work and community engagement. Our purpose is to provide employment and life skills training to people with disabilities and at-risk rural youth and to educate the public about the need to integrate them into all aspects of community life.

Left Foot uses organic gardening activities to achieve significant results for people with special needs. We currently lease five

To apply for an Internship with Left Foot or to volunteer, call the farm at 360-754-1849 or email the Volunteer Program coordinator: volunteer@leftfootorganics.org

acres just south of the Olympia airport, employing 11 adults with intellectual disabilities, known as “Growers” and over the spring and summer months employ up to 5 at-risk rural youth known as “Growing Partners.” We have a staff of two full-time and five part-time people. Work study employees, Student Interns, AmeriCorps workers, and community volunteers work side by side on crews with employees to provide critical farm assistance throughout the growing season.

Crew members learn to work as a team, accepting, appreciating and accommodating each other’s differences. Employees learn marketing and promotional skills by representing the farm at various community events, speaking engagements, and through their presence at local farmers markets. Through the production of some very tangible products: good certified organic vegetables, herbs, eggs, and flowers, we demonstrate the contributions that people with disabilities and rural youth can make to their community.

Our volunteer and internship program brings people from the surrounding community into direct contact with employees of the farm offering opportunities for education and the appreciation of cultural and intellectual differences. We offer Farm Assistant internships for local college students to learn skill in organic farming practices while working to fulfill Left Foot’s mission to provide an intentional community supporting people with special needs.



CCBLA and Gateways for Incarcerated Youth Staff

CCBLA Director: Ellen Shortt Sanchez

CCBLA Reflection Coordinator: Mimi Alcantar

CCBLA Tutor-Mentor Coordinator: Ian Campbell

CCBLA Students in Service Coordinator: Adriana Herrera

CCBLA Community Partnership Catalyst: Laurel Collier Smith

Gateways Academic Mentoring Program Coordinator: Naomi Tajchman-Kaplan

Gateways Cultural Identity Mentoring Program Coordinator: Oscar Overlund-Petros

Trusty Newsletter Copy Editor: Elizabeth Williamson

Alvina Wong recently moved to Oakland to become the new Chinese Community Organizer for the Asian Pacific Environmental Network. Way to go, Alvina! We’re pleased to welcome former Gateways intern Naomi Tajchman-Kaplan into the AMP role.

