

Center for Community-Based Learning and Action

EVERGREEN

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

2009 Spring Newsletter



Students and Staff assembling Shish Kabobs at the Camp Quixote BBQ

Photos by, Hilary Hacker

*Seminar II E 2125, Olympia Campus; 2700 Evergreen Parkway NW; Olympia, WA 98505;
(360) 867-6137; ccbla@evergreen.edu*

CCBLA is Evergreen's Service Learning Center, Engaging Students in Meaningful Community Work as Part of Their Higher Education.

Celebrating 5 years of Community-Based Learning and Action A Talk by Alice Nelson, Faculty

PROGRAMS

- **Gateways for Incarcerated Youth** - Since 1996, Gateways has served to educate, empower and support young people with innovative cultural diversity and learning programs that build self-esteem, confidence and the ability to pursue dreams.
- **Students in Service** - Tuition awards for community work, an AmeriCorps program for students. (WA Campus Compact).
- **Student Community Action Work-study** positions at community organizations to build capacity and student learning. (HECB funded).
- **High Demand Math and Science Work Study** classroom support positions at local high schools. (HECB funded).
- **Tutor Project** - Tutors for high poverty elementary schools in Olympia (Youth in Service).
- **Sustainability House / Action Days** - Providing community engagement opportunities for campus residents.
- **Project Planning** - Supporting students and faculty looking for community connections.

Last fall, I anchored my teaching in the CCBLA as I taught two programs, SOS: Community-Based Learning, and Community Connections, a freshman transition-to-college program. In Community Connections, we worked with the idea of concentric circles embodied in this cedar medallion, which we made for every student in the program. The inner circle represented the program members; the next circle, the wider campus community; and the successive outer rings, local Olympia to the many global communities of which we are part. We tried to develop mindful connections across these circles, and the CCBLA fostered and supported that work, building on longstanding relationships with many organizations.

In Community Connections, we focused on hunger and homelessness in the community and so students volunteered at local organizations like the Kiwanis Garden and the Food Bank, and we prepared and shared a meal with residents of Camp Quixote. In the classroom, we tried to draw on some of the knowledge that has been generated in Evergreen programs, so we viewed a video about homeless youth in Olympia, among other materials. It made a huge difference that CCBLA was here and helping us organize, for example, the Camp Quixote dinner, so that students had a sense we weren't merely talking about hunger and homelessness, but rather trying to show venues where students could take action, as Ellen said, to combat some of the injustices in our community.

At the end of Community Connections, many students said that at first they had no idea how they could get involved, but now they had so many ideas they weren't sure where to begin. Fortunately, they have at least four years to explore some of the possibilities!

Meanwhile, I was also sponsoring internships and contracts in the SOS

program, which really makes explicit the connections between theory and practice. Students were working in a bunch of organizations, Safeplace, Bread and Roses, Left Foot Organics...; others were doing contracts, like Zach, who was working on a documentary about CCBLA's relationships with community groups. We tried to build a curriculum drawing on the resources here, so Ellen Shortt-Sanchez and Carol Minugh talked about Popular Education and put that into practice so that students came up with issues they wanted to know about, which we incorporated into the curriculum.

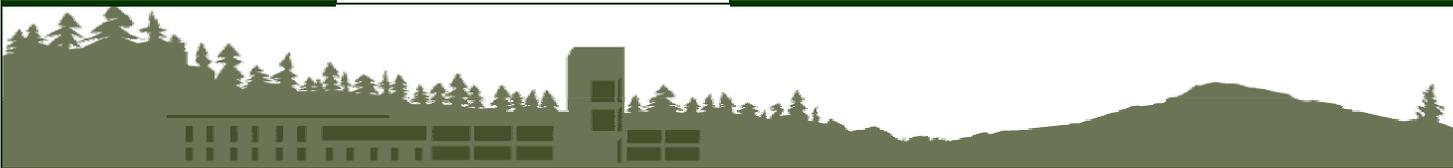
Also, in terms of the concentric circles, it was really much more powerful to be an Evergreen faculty member going out with Ellen into the community to do site visits, where it's not about this one student and her quarter, but rather about how the institution can sustain a relationship in the community and work to move together into the future. Then we're asking questions about support that are much broader, much more institutionally based, with a collective



Alice Nelson at CCBLA's 5th Birthday Celebration

CCBLA and Gateways Staff

Director: Ellen Shortt Sanchez
Learn and Serve/High Demand Coordinator: Jacob Berkey
VISTA Community Partnership Catalyst: Hilary Hacker
CYS AmeriCorps Tutor Coordinator: Adriana Puzkiewicz
Community Action Work-Study Coordinator: Finn Cottom
Special Projects Coordinator: Emily Pieper
SIS Coordinators: Alex Dreyer, Heidi Stygar
Gateways Program Manager: Jose S. Gutierrez Jr.
Retention Project Gateways Challenge Program: Samantha Franks



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A Talk by Alice Nelson continued...

behind them. Relationships like the one we have with POWER, for example, have grown because CCBLA has been a place for faculty/students and the community alike to come home to. Similarly, CCBLA's conversations with Campus Compact helped me to feel part of a broader dialogue and to draw on the wisdom and experiences from other campuses in the region. The conversation just gets richer and is sustained in a larger way because CCBLA exists. I'm really grateful that CCBLA made it 5 years and hopefully will be around 5,000 more, and I just wanted to say, "happy birthday!"

Lessons from Time Spent at the CCBLA

Alex Dreyer, Student and SIS Coordinator



Alex Dreyer at the CCBLA's 2008 Student Recognition Event

Being 22 years old, most of the jobs I have held have carried with them some small element of mind-crushing boredom. My spot in the CCBLA however was conspicuously devoid of such troubles. On the contrary, the position opened my eyes and ears to a vibrant world of rich characters and filled my head with pleasant memories. All this even though I worked a maximum of eight hours a week! How could this be? You ask and the answer I would give you is that I spent much time off the clock volunteering at events I heard about via my coworkers at the CCBLA. I feel at least half-worldly now that I have planted flora at a cancer outpatient facility, mailed books to prisoners and sung songs of freedom with children living in

homeless shelters. Who doesn't do these things? is what I want to know now. What do they do if they don't do these things? Who hasn't seen something that inspired them? Why didn't I volunteer more? All my life I had connected the word volunteer with feelings of drudgery and looking at the clock. But is there anything mightier than a volunteer? Isn't every single hero a volunteer? No superheroes are paid. Certainly not any that are worth their salt. I believe that I will carry this spirit with me for the rest of my life. If I were ever to start to lose it, I hope that the faces and voices of the others working in the CCBLA and the Students in Service that I worked for would visit enough scorn upon my head to make me repent. Working in the CCBLA has made me realize that there is a being inside everyone, not just a person.

"Lights, Camera and ACTION":

Jacob Berkey, Learn & Serve/High Demand Coordinator

CCBLA staff working with students and community partners wowed an audience of their peers at the 12th Annual Western Region Campus Compact Consortium's *Continuums of Service* Conference. CCBLA staff, student and community partners used clips from a student generated film. The presentation raised awareness of higher education resources that can benefit both student work and community need.

It is difficult for many grassroots organizations to dedicate their limited resources to a time consuming project like filmmaking. Filming marginalized communities raises issues around exploitation, among other concerns. The film clips highlighted concerted efforts of CCBLA's longtime

partners, a dedicated student, and the compelling issue of immigration and ICE Detention Centers. By viewing efforts in Olympia, participants at the 'Lights Camera, Action' session learned a lot about the issues and the players involved. Projects like this are just another way that CCBLA adds richness and diversity to the Evergreen experience. This film project incorporates interdisciplinary learning, learning across significant differences, personal engagement, the linking of theory and practice, and reciprocal collaborative learning with the community.

Thank you to our wonderful film makers, student Zach Dolan and Hilary Hacker (VISTA), our fantastic and knowledgeable community partners from CIELO, Mark and Natalia and Director Ellen Shortt-Sanchez.



Jacob & Natalia Palomino of CIELO preparing for the workshop

Jacob Berkey was a presenter.

Coffee Strong: a Soldiers Space for Peace

Bonnie Cramer, Intern with Coffee Strong



People seem to avoid talking about the war even more than most things. Bringing up the subject usually brings nasty looks and it is quickly shut down as a topic of discussion. There is a great place to talk openly about war and all of its affects on our communities. It also has the best smell ever, coffee. This veteran run non-profit is known as Coffee Strong.

Recently opened, it resides just down the street from the Fort Lewis military base in Lakewood, Washington. Opened during the First World War, Fort Lewis employs 25,000 people and deploys many of the troops going to Afghanistan and Iraq. Many have been Stop Lossed due to Obama's continued support of wars in the Middle East. The new president and administration have the chance to make a difference in the war and foreign policy of the United States. The G.I.s are being directly affected by Obama's Stop Loss policy and are getting sent to war again and again. Coffee Strong is helping the soldiers impacted by these illegal wars and new policy changes.

Veterans speaking about the war are essential for public awareness to spread. The soldiers can enhance their own communities by sharing their stories. Coffee Strong is a place of safety for the soldiers of the area and their families to use the internet, relax, and enjoy some freshly donated Stumptown coffee. The shared support of the population and soldiers is very incredible here. The residents, soldiers, and their friends come to support Coffee Strong and enhance the atmosphere with their shared words. Many of the things in the shop were donated by the local businesses and people; like the piano, espresso machine, and of course the beans. The coffee shop likewise supports the local Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) chapter, soldiers getting Stop Lossed, and their family members getting little or no support from the military. The bookshelves are full of books on G.I. resistance and peaceful activism, and the tables are stacked with G.I. rights information, counseling services, and support

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groups all centered around a soldiers and their families. This free library is available to all of the community to inform the citizens the best way they can help those affected by war.

Coffee brings people together to take a moment and share the time we have together. It is about friends and sharing recourses. It is also a stimulant, and is enjoyed by those who seek to accomplish an uneasy task. Coffee Strong has the delicate place in the community of linking soldiers resisting military oppression, and the people who want to help stop war and suffering. The Coffee Strong slogan "the revolution will be caffeinated" is the support for warriors and ones on the edge of the fight. There are some moments in time that require more action then others. This activity is the responsibility of those who have a voice to speak, and those with stories to share. In the most trying of times we will remember how it ended and the ways we were affected.



find myself both exhausted and exhilarated at the end of the day. This experience is and has been a truly remarkable endeavor resulting in many lessons and meaningful connections both for myself and the classes with which I have been a part of. At this point, I must say it feels great to be out in the community, working with real students and real classrooms, and hopefully lending a hand in building a stronger more cohesive understanding of the world around us. Thanks to all the great people at the CCBLA on TESC campus I have been able to get out into the community, play a part, be present, and feel good about it.

Evergreen Students at CHOICE

**Velma Ragsdale, Volunteer Coordinator
CHOICE Regional Health Network**

Beginning the first week in March, CHOICE Regional Health Network partnered with interns from the Foundations of Health Science program to solve common barriers that prevent people from procuring the services and resources they need to be healthier. The results were amazing.



CHOICE Regional Health Network (CHOICE) is a nonprofit community collaborative organization that has worked for fifteen years to improve the health of people who live in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties.

Approximately 700,000 people living in Washington State do not have health insurance and therefore receive little or no health care. CHOICE plays a vital role in eradicating this problem by working one-on-one to aid people in accessing medical, food, and social services. CHOICE also collaborates with hospitals, medical clinics, and physicians on initiatives and programs that improve the health care delivery system for low-income people.

As the economic crisis worsened CHOICE noticed an increase in "no shows" for scheduled appointments and clients who came to appointments without the documentation needed in order to apply for services. CHOICE soon learned that that demographics of the clients who were requesting our services shifted from primarily low-income, rural, and uninsured or underinsured people to working class and middle class people who had recently been laid off. This new group of clients was accessing social services for the first time and therefore needed help navigating through the system. The loss of economic stability caused them to experience barriers ranging from emotional shock to insufficient funds to cover the cost transportation to and from their appointments that prevented them from receiving services.

Evergreen interns worked with CHOICE staff to develop a resolution to this problem. Their idea was to use motivational interviewing to aid clients in finding solutions to barriers that could prevent them from attending their appointments. Through their work they were able to coach people on how to interact with social workers to produce desired results, help people secure free or low-cost transportation, and educate people about local resources. They were also able to provide CHOICE with feedback that we used to improve our client services division. The interns helped CHOICE staff develop a training manual for future interns, so that the program could continue with viable stability.

High Demand Science Timberline High

Jacob Patchen, Work-Study Student



As I walk down the hallways of Timberline High School in Lacey, WA, I feel a sense of belonging. I recognize faces, exchange greetings with students and faculty. Since October, I have been assisting teachers and helping students in ninth-grade Integrated Science classes. This has given me, a pre-service science teacher, the fortunate opportunity to work closely with local students in real classrooms, and gain great insight and knowledge from practicing teachers. By far the most rewarding aspect of this experience has been the opportunity to work

with students and help them negotiate the transition between their previous life experiences and the new scientific concepts and inquiries.

I must admit, there have been many challenges and follies along the way. One day, as I assisted one of the teachers with a few chemistry experiment demos, I singlehandedly fouled the final experiment, the grand finale. It involved filling a balloon with Hydrogen gas and then lighting it with a match, leading to a magnificent explosion, sure to excite any ninth grader. With two minutes left of the class period, I pulled the Hydrogen-filled balloon off the bottle simultaneously letting all the gas out. One student yelled, "Ah, you ruined it Mr. P!" I admitted my mistake and apologized for ruining the big show. Although I was certain that I would now be admonished from the class, it turned out that next week the students had forgotten about the mishap, but remembered my admittance and apology. They seemed much more friendly and trusting of me. I noticed many more students were willing to ask me questions and discuss the science lessons. Whether its science concepts or the importance and acceptance of making mistakes, I am confident that lessons are being learned, relationships are being built, and the community circle is widening.

Between waking way before dawn, and realizing that there are many scientific concepts in which I am rusty, or altogether unfamiliar, I always

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Students in Community— Rebuilding Lives

Jackie Ferrado and Cindy Meyer,
Interns with the St Bernard Project



Students working on a house in
St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana

We all share a memory of August 29, 2005. We recall the devastation that Hurricane Katrina lashed upon the New Orleans area as levees failed and chaos ensued. Locally, we remember the flooding of Lewis County in December 2007, and again in 2008 and early 2009. Although the floods were different in their magnitude and scope, the ongoing struggles within each community to rebuild homes and lives are amazingly similar.

What many of us may not know, however, is that there are students among us who are adjusting their lives to assist in mending these communities. Over the past year, four TESC students (Cindy Meyer, Betsy Hagen, Jackie Ferrado and Caitlin Meyer) have carried out individual learning contracts with a non-profit organization, St. Bernard Project (SBP), to raise awareness, develop fundraising opportunities, and recruit volunteers to help families affected by Hurricane Katrina get back into their homes. To date, they have raised over \$12,000 for SBP, chaperoned a high school group as they helped rebuild a home in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, and have spoken with hundreds of local residents about the continued need for assistance. These students believe community involvement is the central component to rebuilding lives and homes no matter where the community is located. In fact, they are preparing for another volunteer work trip to Louisiana over Memorial Day weekend.

As part of their learning contracts, they sought the assistance from the Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA) to organize a forum called **Rebuilding Communities**. This event was attended by students in the 'Gateways for Incarcerated Youth' program on March 6. The forum allowed the TESC community to gather and learn more about community responsibilities after a natural disaster. TESC was honored to have Liz McCartney (Co-Founder of SBP and 2008 CNN Hero of the Year), Suzi Duran (Lewis County Long Term Recovery Organization), and Lynn and Oscar Sanchez (residents of Lewis County) take the stage to discuss the successes, challenges, struggles and strategies encountered during their efforts to help families rebuild their lives.

Although St. Bernard Project and Lewis County Long Term Recovery Organization use different rebuilding models, what became clear during the forum was that two communities devastated by flooding, although thousands of miles apart, both needed help far beyond what local, state, and federal government had to offer. As volunteers and small non-profit organizations sprang into action following the floods, they brought the hope and the resources needed to get families back home. As an integral organizer of this event, CCBLA once again allowed us to remember that community learning and action plays an integral role in healing lives and communities after disasters.



Save the Date !

Community to Community Day of Caring
September 25th, 2009 from 9:30am–1:30pm

Brought to you by:

The CCBLA, United Way of Thurston County &
The Volunteer Center of Thurston, Lewis and Mason Counties

Homeless Family Services

Christophe Ritenour,
Community Action Work-Study Student

At the corner of State street and Capitol Parkway in Olympia, Washington, stands the old downtown firehouse-- a two-story complex painted white, housing a host of social service agencies. For over a decade, the Family Support Center has sought to strengthen families with a variety of programs, such as the Homeless Family Services division, of which I joined the staff through work-study last fall.

Our client base consists mostly of single women that are either now homeless or facing an eviction. We also help homeless women with children, sometimes with their husband or partner, and on rare occasions, a single father. Over the past six months, I've observed the traditional nuclear family model to be more the exception than the rule.

Our busy office sits on the top floor of the east wing of the building and provides a comfortable place for women to enjoy a break from the harsh reality of street existence. We provide coffee and snacks, reading material, internet access, a phone line, and a play area for children. A client can receive hygiene supplies, caps and gloves in cold weather, shower vouchers for the YMCA, and a free voicemail account to receive and access messages for housing and job opportunities. Two case managers help clients on an individual basis to explore and pursue Thurston county resources for those of low or no income, including medical care, counseling, subsidized housing, emergency shelter, and education.

The Emergency Overflow Shelter is the service we facilitate that attracts much of the client traffic in the office and over the phone. The shelter is off-site, hosted by a rotation of community churches, for which each temporary shelter set-up lasts two weeks. An agency called Interfaith Works makes arrangements with each church, coordinating supplies and bus passes for transportation of the guests; each night, the church provides two volunteer staff from their own congregation. Homeless Family Services (our office) runs the shelter hotline, which is available 24 hours a day.

On a personal level, my position working with homeless women and families of Olympia has brought me face-to-face with a population I previously saw only peripherally. I have come to recognize the faces, and with them learned their names. Having heard some of their stories, I've shared a sense of their struggle and suffering.

Here at the Homeless Family Services, we are trying to make a difference in improving the situation of our clients, while working with limited resources. At times, the best we can offer is to be attentive and listen to each client with an open heart, reserving judgment. Sometimes, this is all it takes to restore the confidence and courage of another human in need, for them to continue their daily struggle to survive.



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