

# Service-Learning

COLLEGE OF

Saint Benedict  Saint John's

UNIVERSITY

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Issue 1

## Week of Action: Salvation Army

United Way's "Week of Action" called community members to join together and volunteer. The CSB/SJU Bonner Leaders did their part by serving dinner at Salvation Army for the week.

Each night, a group of Bonners planned, cooked, and served the meal for the residents. John Godfrey, a senior Bonner Leader, said "It was a wonderful experience in direct service, where the authentic face of poverty was honestly apparent."

When some people think of a homeless person, they think of the old man on the corner covered in dirt and holding a sign surrounded by his few belongings. The Bonners were able to see how incorrect this stereotype really is. The shelter is a temporary home to young families, typical middle aged men and women, and several veterans.

Meghan Helmbrecht, a junior Bonner Leader, said her favorite part was talking with the residents because, "It certainly made the experience much more personal than just making the food for them. Getting to talk with some of the residents for a few minutes reiterated how grateful they were for us to be there." Even though the "Week of Action" is over, the Bonner Leader Program encourages you to get involved and spend a few hours volunteering too!

**Molly Kalina**  
Academic Coordinator



## Service-Learning Students Make a Difference

The Service-Learning office often hears from students about their experiences at their Service-Learning sites. Another interesting perspective comes from someone who works at one of the sites, to see how much students make an impact at their chosen location. Mary Erickson, is a junior who has been employed as a Youth Guidance Worker at Kennedy Kidstop since her first year of college. Her job is to plan activity rotations for the children, and then overseeing the rotations to make sure everyone is behaving and having a good time. When I asked Mary how Service-Learning students are making an impact at Kennedy, she stated,

*"The students are extremely helpful to both the kids and the staff at Kennedy. It is so nice to have people outside of the staff here to play with the kids, as the staff are the ones who have to discipline, and it is great to have other adults here that can just play and have fun with the kids."*

Mary says that her favorite thing about the volunteers is the evolution that she sees in them throughout the semester. "At the beginning, the volunteers are not always sure of what they should be doing, but by the end of the semester they begin to look forward to coming to play with the kids, and really step up in their responsibility. The kids really become more and more engaged with the volunteers as the semester goes on, and it is so great to watch that relationship grow."

**Galen Himrich**  
Academic Coordinator



## Mentorship: Big B, Little b

This year has been a kick start to the concept of mentorship. Mentorship refers to a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced person helps a less experienced person. It's been spreading like wildfire at this campus through different clubs and programs. Now, the Bonner Leadership Program is taking mentorship and turning it into strong teamwork that can help change our community. There was an addition of 7 new Bonner Leaders this year, making our program grow to 28 students. Many students who had been a part of Bonner before are volunteering to help the new Bonner students learn about the program and be there as a mentor for the program, volunteering and in life. We call this partnership the "Big B, Little b" system.

The little b's have specific sites that they serve at just like the Big B's. The Big B's serve as someone to help out the little b's whenever they need help and are there as a friend and a mentor. We look forward to these partnerships making our service in the community that much stronger and the relationships among the student volunteers even stronger.

**Alicia Renstrom**  
Academic Coordinator

## Bonners Abroad: Kayla Becker

Kayla Becker is taking her love for service "Down Under."

Becker, a Junior Peace Studies major and Bonner Leader is spending her semester abroad in Fremantle, Australia. While there, she has decided to continue her love of service and volunteer at a non-profit organization called "Riding for the Disabled."

"[People with disabilities] ride horses for various therapeutic reasons; it's been shown that horse therapy helps strengthen muscles in Cerebral Palsy riders; it can enhance sensory stimulation, and does a great job raising the patient's morale. The sessions are fun for the riders as they are given various challenges during their time," says Becker.

Becker's decision to study abroad in Australia was greatly influenced by her desire to do service. As a part of her work for the Bonner Program, Becker works at Anna Marie's, a shelter for battered women and children. This work inspired her to continue her service even while she was abroad.

"I want the community that is hosting me to know that I appreciate what they have done for me. Everything from helping me with directions to asking me about where I come from, I want them to know that it means a lot to me and I want to give back. I felt that doing service in my host country is a valuable way for me to learn about the culture," says Becker.

The experience is also opening up doors for Kayla when she returns to the United States. "I hadn't really explored working with special needs individuals, but after this experience I've found that I enjoy interacting with [people with disabilities] and feel like I have a lot to offer. This experience has made me more passionate about the benefits of volunteering, so I will bring back that strong desire to get out there and do something for the good of the community."

**Adia Zeman**  
Academic Coordinator



## Service-Learning Fair

On September 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, students, faculty, and community partners came together for the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Service-Learning Fair. The Service-Learning Program transitioned to fair model because it allows for students to have an interactive initial experience with community partners, while also creating a meaningful time for community partners to engage with students and faculty.

Over 300 students participated in the Service-Learning fair. Katie Richie, a St. Ben's senior who is completing her Service-Learning project for the course PSYCH 343: Health Psychology stated "I'm glad that we have the option of going to the fair so that we can actually talk to the people about what we will be volunteering for."

Community partners from St. Cloud and surrounding area expressed excitement about the sheer number of students choosing to participate in Service-Learning and actively working to become meaningful members of their communities. Kevin LaNave, director of the Center for Service-Learning and social change stated "It's been exciting to see the energy in the room, to get students' questions, to reconnect with people I've met before, and to get a sense to see how much this value matters to the campus."

The Service-Learning Program is excited for students to strengthen their communities by integrating their academic theory and praxis into it, as well as fostering active citizenship.

**Jackie Carlson**  
Academic Coordinator

## Jackson Fellows

You are invited to join the 2011 Jackson Fellows in a celebration of their summer of service!

On October, 25<sup>th</sup>, the 10 student fellows will host a poster session to highlight their summer of work in the community. The event will take place from 4-6 p.m. in the lounge of the Gorecki Dining and Conference Center. All are welcome to stop by to learn about the Jackson Fellows program and to hear about the experiences of the student participants.

Students participating in the Jackson Fellows program spend 10 weeks working full-time for the social justice institution of their choice. Every other week, the group meets every other week over the course of the summer to work on leadership development.

More information on the program can be found at <http://csbsiu.edu/Service-Learning/Jackson-Fellows-Program.htm>.

**Adia Zeman**  
Academic Coordinator



## Academic Coordinator: Galen Himrich

**What is your year and major?**

I am a junior Psychology major.

**When did you become an Academic Service-Learning Coordinator?**

I became an Academic Coordinator during the second semester of my first-year.

**What is your favorite part of being one of the Service-Learning staff?**

My favorite part of being a Service-Learning staff is working with all of the great employees, and getting to know the professors better.

**How about a random fact that not many people know about you?**

A random fact about me is I would love to move to South America so I can own a pet penguin.

**Sergio Aguilera**  
Academic Coordinator

