Greetings!

We are excited to share with you our last issue of the Service-Learning Newsletter for the 2009-2010 academic school year. We have had an exciting spring so far, as our students have been going to their Service Learning sites and getting started on their hours. Many have already posted their experiences and have made outstanding connections with their supervisors and those they are working with. As the school year draws to a close, community partners can watch for an email with a link for the student evaluations and the evaluation for Service-Learning. We love to hear what students, faculty, and community partners think of Service-Learning, so we are able to enhance our program each year.

We would like to send out a huge thank you to everyone who has made this year a success for us here at Service-Learning. Thanks again to all of the community partners, faculty, and the students who work hard to implement service throughout the community and in the classrooms.

As always, feel free to stop by our office at any time for more information on Service-Learning, and ways for you to get involved!

Galen Himrich
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator

Upcoming Events!

- Make sure to mark your calendar for the 10th Annual Scholarship & Creativity Day which will be an all day event held on Wednesday, April 28th.
- Empty Bowls at the Paramount Theatre in St. Cloud on Sunday, March 21st, 10am-6pm
Empty Bowls

Empty Bowls is an international, annual fundraiser that promotes awareness and education on the issue of hunger. For the past several years, St. Cloud Crisis Nursery and Place of Hope Ministries have hosted this fundraiser at the Paramount Theatre in downtown St. Cloud. This all-day event includes entertainment by members of our local community, a silent auction of items created by Sam Johnson, Gave Glen, Melissa Gohman and Ken Omundson, and a delicious soup and bread lunch.

Each person who attends is able to choose a unique bowl from a gallery of ceramic bowls donated by local artists, school children, service-learning students (18 CSB/SJU service-learning students from Sam Johnson’s Ceramics class are each creating several bowls to donate to this event) and community members as a keepsake and a reminder that someone’s bowl is always empty. This community-supported event is a great way to get the whole community involved!

Lindsey Cermak
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator

Faculty Spotlight: Professor Anna Mercedes

The Service-Learning program is excited to highlight one of our faculty partners for the Spring 2010 semester, Anna Mercedes.

Mercedes is teaching Theology 328, a Hispanic Theology course and is partnered with Casa Guadalupe, Paz y Esperanza Church, St. Joseph’s Church, St. Mary’s Church in Melrose and St. Mary’s Long Prairie Church. Her students work primarily as English Language Learners tutors and youth mentors but are also involved in home prayer, music ministry, and leading a women’s health day.

Mercedes hope is that the students’ experiences at their sites will help “make the reading come alive” and that her students will build “committed, interested relationships” with whom they are working.

She believes that this course fits well with service-learning because “theology arises from a community” and because theology is “a living area of study.” According to Mercedes, “Some people see theology as a book but CSB/SJU sees it as a living area of study.”

This is Mercedes first time teaching this particular course, and she has found service-learning to be a valuable resource. “I’m more confident because of service-learning,” she says, “because the community members are helping, I feel like my students have more experts to learn from.”

Mercedes enthusiasm and commitment to this project has made her a valuable service-learning partner.

We are thrilled to be working with her class and look forward to seeing the impact they make in the community!

Adia Zeman
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator
“The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs.”

-Vernon Wall

Myth #1
Social Justice is a “vague” concept with no real scholarly basis.

Myth #2
Social Justice is just “diversity” and “multiculturalism” renamed

Myth #3
Talking about social justice moves us away from conversations on racism, sexism, classism, etc

Myth #4
Student affairs professionals are “good people” and thereby the concepts of social justice are in their nature

Myth #5
Social Justice does not welcome “conservative” voices and views.

Myth #6
The concepts of spirituality and social justice are not compatible.

Myth #7
Social Justice focuses on “action” rather than “personal work”

Myth #8
Students who have studied abroad are more aware of social justice issues.

Myth #9
Students aren’t interested in social justice issues.

Myth #10
Social Justice is a “liberal” cause for idealists
A New Partnership

Service-Learning is excited to be partnering with St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church for the first time!

St. Mary’s is located in Long Prairie, MN and has a parish of 800 Anglo families and 200 Hispanic families. The Hispanic Ministry is a very important part of its ministry as a church. S. Donna Zetah, OSF, says, “Our efforts are directed at making the immigrants ‘at home’ in our parish. Our effort is to help them maintain and grow in the faith, respecting their culture and traditions.”

Three CSB students are completing their service-learning projects at St. Mary’s as a part of their class, Hispanic Theology in the U.S., taught by Anna Mercedes. St. Mary’s was in the middle of revamping its Quinceañera preparation process when Anna Mercedes and Service-Learning approached this parish.

St. Mary’s was seeking to emphasize to the young women of the parish the foundation of faith that is rooted in this important celebration. Compañeras a las Quinceañeras (companions to the young women making their Quinceañera) was the perfect fit. Talk about serendipity!

The purpose of the course is to get acquainted with the life, culture and traditions of the Hispanic population.

The CSB students meet with the six young women one Sunday every month. They attend Hispanic mass, facilitate small group reflections on the importance of the Quinceañera celebration and tour local, Hispanic businesses with the young women.

“The relationship between these young Hispanic women and the students of St. Benedict’s College will help these young people to grow in their faith life and in their commitment to family and church,” says Zetah.

Through this service-learning partnership, Zetah says, “We hope to build friendship, appreciation of the Hispanic culture and traditions, and personal growth for each person.”

Lindsey Cermak
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator

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