

## Service-Learning Program

Volume 3, Issue 2

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Information for the Service-Learning Community!

### A Note from the Academic Coordinators

#### Service-Learning...

- ◆ *Integrates classroom theory with practical experience*
- ◆ *Enhances leadership skills*
- ◆ *Encourages active community commitment*
- ◆ *Increases awareness of social justice issues*

Greetings!

In the Service-Learning Program, we always like to emphasize the importance of the connections among the four entities in a service-learning experience: the student, the community partner, the faculty member, and the Service-Learning Program. In order for service-learning to be a positive and valuable experience, each of these four groups needs to be engaged and in communication with each other.

That said, we have great students, community partners, faculty and service-learning employees all playing their part this semester! Students have been active participants in their service-learning experiences. Check out the write up on CSB/SJU student Todd Alle, and his service experience for his ED 111 course. Hannah Koprek also gave us an update on her international service experience in Chile. We have excellent community partners that have given our students an opportunity to serve others and connect it to their education. One of these partners, St. Benedict's Senior Community, is featured below. Faculty members are supporting service-learning by implementing it in fresh and new ways into a variety courses at CSB/SJU, and the four new academic coordinators in our office this semester are diving in and bringing innovative ideas to the service-learning process.

It is with great pride that we feature these students, community partners, and civic engagement happenings. We hope that you enjoy reading this issue and become as excited as we are to be witness to—and be part of—such great social change through experiential learning.

In the spirit of service,

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### Focus On: Community Partner, St Benedict's Senior Community



Service-Learning offers a variety of locations for students to provide service to the elderly. One of these locations is St. Benedict's Senior Community. While it is a 20-minute drive from the CSB/SJU campus, St. Benedict's Senior Community provides a very nourishing and hands-on experience for Service-Learning students. St. Benedict's Senior Community provides care for up to 750 residents at a time and includes temporary care, senior apartments, and an Alzheimer's floor. Newly remodeled, the entire facility is designed to look and feel just like home. Instead of large, institutionalized dining halls, St. Benedict's Senior Community has several small eating areas on each floor that are all reminiscent of a kitchen similar to the one in their previous home.

## St. Benedict's Senior Community, continued...

*Continued from p. 1*

The entire goal of St. Benedict's Senior Community is to make residents feel more at home and less like they are in a hospital. St. Benedict's Senior Community provides many unique ways for students to serve; visiting with residents, managing the gift shop, teaching computer skills, providing entertainment such as playing and instrument, conversing with residents in other languages, and assisting in activities are all areas that Service-Learning students can contribute to this fantastic facility. With a focus on the Catholic faith as well as the Benedictine values, St. Benedict's Senior Community is an ideal location for students looking to serve at a location with a religious emphasis.

Currently, there are ten CSB/SJU students fulfilling their service-learning project at St. Benedict's Senior Community. Two of those students are Leah Weber and Rachelle Kirchner, two students enrolled in Management 321: Principles of Marketing. For a few months, Leah and Rachelle have been working with JoEllen Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator at St. Benedict's Senior Community,



*SBSC Gift Shop. Photos courtesy of Rachelle Kirchner*



to create, organize, and promote St. Benedict's Senior Community's new gift shop, an extension of "the gift cart" they once had. "With the expansion of the community, the space for the gift shop was added," Rachelle said. Creating posters and flyers were among many of the tasks they encountered, "[we arranged] the products within the store... [created] displays for the window... [and] wrote a simplified manual for the cash register that was given to the volunteers," Leah said.

Working to create the St. Benedict's Senior Community gift shop has given Leah and Rachelle real-life experience. They value their work there because they experience "working with others to achieve a common goal. [and] different aspects of running a business," Leah said. Thanks to the Service-Learning Program and the cooperation of St. Benedict's Senior Community, "we have seen many of the struggles that businesses encounter [and] will take what [we have learned] into the business world" upon graduation.

**Adia Zeman & Brian Long**  
Service-Learning Academic Coordi-

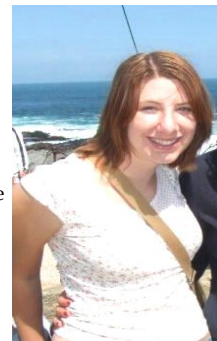
## International Focus: Hannah Koprek, CSB/SJU Junior

In addition to service-learning here in the community, there are several St. Ben's and St. John's students completing projects abroad. One student, Hannah Koprek, is completing a service-learning project in Chile. Hannah is currently working at Hogar Nino Amor, which is a home for children with family problems severe enough to prevent them from living at home. The children at Hogar also come from families with parents who cannot afford childcare. The children range from about eight months to about seven-years-old.

Hannah mentions that there are about twelve children who stay at Hogar on a full-time basis, and about nineteen additional children who come there during the day.

Every student on the Chilean study abroad trip is participating in a service-learning project, but they are all serving at different locations. Hannah has spent a total of twenty-seven hours working at Hogar and enjoys how much they benefit from her service. Hannah says that the organization is very well-run.

One thing that Hannah observes at Hogar is how quickly children can rebound from a psychologically damaging situation, but she realizes that it is necessary to help them build trust by spending time with them. This experience has led Hannah to appreciate things she had previously taken for granted growing up, as many of the children she works with lack stable households.



*Pictured left:  
CSB/SJU  
Junior,  
Hannah  
Koprek*

Lastly, Hannah particularly enjoys how much the children enjoy her presence, and says that one of the most rewarding feelings is to have a group of children come up wanting a hug upon her arrival.

**Andy Kleinendorst**  
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator

## Civic Engagement Forums



On Friday, November 7th, more than 80 people gathered for the First Annual Civic Engagement Forum. The regional forum was sponsored by the College of St. Benedict / St. John's University, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical College and Minnesota Campus Compact. After several months of collaborative planning; community partners, faculty members, students, higher education administrators and local representatives gathered to report on their commitment to civic engagement. Community partners shared the benefits of ongoing partnerships between institutions of higher education and local organizations and schools. Students and faculty members spoke to the value of hands-on learning that occurs when we remove the walls of a classroom. Discussion topics included the call for new and continued support of these endeavors.

## CAMPUS MINISTRY

Service at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University contributes to the overall mission of the Service-Learning Program. SJU Campus Ministry has four service trips planned for this year. Campus Ministry will visit Colorado, Louisiana, Guatemala, and Peru during winter break. While preparing for the Peru trip, Paul Conroy, Volunteer and Service Coordinator at SJU Campus Ministry, has spoke with others about past trips, the country and people of Peru, and held informational meetings. "There has been an outstanding show of interest in this trip... I am sure it will leave a lasting impression on all who serve there," Paul said. The Peru trip is Paul's first experience leading an international service trip. Nickolas Kleespie, the Director of Service, Peace, and Justice at Saint John's Campus Ministry, said he "expects great things when [leading] Service/Immersion trips through Campus Ministry."

Nickolas and Paul have similar expectations and desires for the students that attend the service trip. "My hope [is] that all who go on this trip will come back to America changed... This trip will help students gain a global perspective through travel in a foreign country, develop a passion for the service... [and] grow in their spirituality and relationship



CSB/SJU Junior, David Johnson plays with Guatemalan children during a clean water festival.

with God," Paul said. Nickolas expects the students to grow as individuals by "being immersed into a culture, helping others, learning about the environment, becoming aware of different themes of Catholic Social Teaching, and deepening their faith."

Their faith and relationship with God is the reason Paul Conroy and Nickolas Kleespie serve. Paul is "attracted to the service of others because [he believes] it is one of God's most fundamental requests to his people. While service is, by nature, a selfless and generous act, the

intangible rewards one gets from serving are extremely gratifying."

The Service-Learning Program is a strong advocate for experiential learning and intentional service. It's wonderful to have other programs at CSB/SJU available to students that work to foster individual growth through challenging personal perceptions.

**Brian Long & Lindsey Cermak**  
Service-Learning Academic Coordinators

## Focus On: Todd Alle, CSB/SJU First-Year

Todd Alle, a first-year student at CSB/SJU is currently serving at Southside Boys & Girls Club for his service-learning project. Todd goes to the site once a week and tutors kids wherever needed. He says, "Ironically, every time I've been there so far, the children have needed help in math and science - my two worst subjects. It has been a great experience though, and I feel like I'm gaining valuable skills by tutoring, because it's something I've never really done before. It's just self-confirmation that I *do* want to become a teacher."

Todd admits that service-learning has not always been easy: "I sometimes struggle with helping them on their homework because you almost have to remove yourself from the material to try and convey some of the background *English language* knowledge as well, which has been somewhat difficult...but rewarding at the same time. It puts what we've learned about diversity in *Those Who Can, Teach* [textbook] into perspective. I thought that because I went to a very diverse school, with Caucasian students being the minority, I had an idea of what teach-

ing to a diverse population could be like, but when you're put into the position of helping a student that doesn't really know English very well...it's easier said than done!"

Alle shares, "Service-Learning is different from volunteering, simply by the fact that I am learning just as much from these students, as they are from me. Obviously, there is a volunteering aspect to what I'm doing there, but by tutoring these kids I'm able to be a mentor to them and at the same time, they are mentoring me, giving me firsthand experience with teaching."

Todd has also seen his own perspectives change through this experience: "One way I've always looked at service, is going with an attitude of 'oh I'm going to serve them...they NEED my help,' and...since being in service-learning it has really shown me that it's not just about going and *only* giving to people, it's about learning [and] receiving from them as well. It's a two way street."

Todd strongly recommends others to partici-

*Pictured Right,  
CSB/SJU First-Year,  
Todd Alle*



pate in service-learning if given the chance, "especially if you're planning to become a teacher...It's

a great opportunity to get firsthand experience working with children." He says that focusing on teaching a diverse population has been "the most humbling [and] rewarding experience so far during service-learning." Todd will take every opportunity he can to do service-learning in the future and hopes to stay involved with the Boys & Girls Club.

**Lindsey Cermak**  
Service-Learning Academic Coordinator

## Service-Learning Program

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The Liemandt Family Service-Learning Program is committed to holistic learning by incorporating the classroom and community into the learning experience. It develops intentional and meaningful service experiences based in social justice and academic learning.

### Engage, Reflect, Change.

We encourage, support and appreciate diversity in all of its forms. We strive to meet the specific needs of the community. We encourage students to engage in their community, reflect on their experience, and allow it to change their lives.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB

[WWW.CSBSJU.EDU/SERVICELEARNING](http://WWW.CSBSJU.EDU/SERVICELEARNING)

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### Meet the Service-Learning Staff:

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*Service-Learning Coordinator*



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### ACADEMIC COORDINATORS



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**Inspired Learning. Inspiring Lives.™**