



Stony Brook Serves

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AmeriCorps Spotlight: Jason Gandhi

by Kamalveer Grewal

Giving back to the community is essential to improving local conditions and enhancing global awareness. As Jason Gandhi puts it, “AmeriCorps’s best feature was that it allowed me to refine the ways in which I administered my service by reflecting on the thoughts of others.” While serving in AmeriCorps, Jason was the vice president of Oxfam America and the medical coordinator of Global Medical Brigades. His duties as a leader in these groups included services in public health and human rights education. Rather than distinguishing each club separately, Gandhi was able to intertwine the ideals of each to provide a more unified effort in aiding the community.

Oxfam America is a global nonprofit organization that engages the community by increasing global awareness of poverty, human rights, international trade, and preventable diseases. The educational aspects are tied together with emotion-provoking workshops, such as the annual Hunger Banquet. During this event, students take part by assuming the roles of low- or high-class citizens. The engaging nature of the activity helps to enlighten the participants, who must practice the eating and living habits of their selected role.

Oxfam America also helps to harvest rooftop gardens at the Stony Brook Medical Center. Jason Gandhi reaches out to students at a personal level by raising questions and answering concerns about sustainability.

Global Medical Brigades works with the Stony Brook community by helping students take an active role in addressing global health and poverty. The group organizes annual trips to Honduras, Panama, and Ghana to help set up schools and encourage donations. As medical coordinator, Gandhi helped organize activities for elementary school children. The children were taught important facts about their bodies, such as reading vital signs. The process of organizing the events, picking the students, and participating in relief efforts on the other side of the globe are just some of the contributions Gandhi has made through his efforts in the Global Medical Brigades.

Gandhi has helped organize numerous events and actively encourages the Stony Brook community to take part in the available efforts. *(Continued on Next Page)*



Photo courtesy of Jason Gandhi.

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Nonprofit Spotlight: Long Island Head Start

by Lisa Crimando



Long Island Head Start (LIHS) is a vital asset to our community. As a private, not-for-profit organization, they provide facilities for families to break the cycle of poverty through high quality, comprehensive child development and family support services. LIHS achieves this goal through the involvement of parents, community, and staff. They provide services to over 1,500 children and their families with a qualified and trained staff of 300, plus the help of outside volunteers.

LIHS realizes the needs of the impoverished and reaches out to the community with educational services. They work closely with the community's local education agencies and maintain ongoing collaborations in the area of child development. These services benefit children and families by tracking the special education process in local school districts.

Photo courtesy of www.liheadstart.org.

LIHS recognizes psychological needs and understands the importance of their members' mental health. They educate parents and staff about interventions for emotional, behavioral, or social concerns and offer the provision of on-site consultation. LIHS offers assistance through such methods as: social/behavioral assessments and individual/group sessions for children.

LIHS firmly believes in the relationship between good health and success. They provide community health services and encourage the development of positive health behaviors and preventative safety measures. Long Island Head Start instills life-long healthy habits in Head Start children, pregnant mothers, family and staff. They provide the following health services: pregnant mother/child ongoing medical care, health screenings and medical/dental/nutritional/mental health treatment.

LIHS emphasizes community involvement and understands the need for self-reliance because it empowers families. The organization reaches this goal through Head Start Family independence. Through the implementation of self-sufficiency services such as a needs assessment, families reach the goals of independence and self awareness.

Parental involvement is critical at LIHS because parents lead to the effectiveness of the program's activities. Parents work together and decide what kinds of learning experiences they want their children to have in Head Start/Early Head Start. Parental and staff investment lead to a beneficial program.

The Stony Brook University Career Center is hosting an Information Session for students who would like to spend a few hours per week volunteering at one of LIHS's 22 locations in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The Information Session will take place on Monday, October 29 from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM in the Career Center Workshop Room. For more information on Long Island Head Start, visit www.liheadstart.org.

AmeriCorps Spotlight: Jason Gandhi, Cont'd

by Kamalveer Grewal

"Being a part of an organization allows you to unify your cause and constantly build upon what you have already constructed," says Gandhi. He continues, "The key is consistency and openness, while being able to cater to the students' needs and wishes."

Jason Gandhi has received his Bachelors of Science in biology and is currently a first-year master's student in physiology and biophysics, pursuing a career in medicine. For interested students, Oxfam America meets at 7:30 PM on Wednesdays in SAC 303. Global Medical Brigades meets during campus lifetime on Wednesdays in SAC 302. For further details on the AmeriCorps Program, please visit: <http://www.career.sunysb.edu/content/vcs/ameri-corps>.

Catholic Campus Ministry: Faith and Service Entwined

by Olivia Basileo



Photo courtesy of Catholic Campus Ministry.

Stony Brook's Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) is a club of dedicated, diverse students who organize masses on campus and hold prayer and fellowship meetings. They advocate respect for other religions and strive to create a sense of community among members. The members practice their Catholic values while performing community service; and as service is a part of their faith, they do not fail to serve! According to Community Service Coordinator Jessica Joseph, "Our faith in God, dedication to service and community are the unifying factors which bring us together. After all, the word 'Catholic' means universal!"

CCM has helped clear out fields at Bethel Hobbs Community Farm, as well as visit the sick and needy at hospitals, Little Flower Orphanage, and at St. James Soup Kitchen. Members seek to perform service that falls within the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy, which emphasizes service to the body, such as clothing and feeding the poor. During the Midnight Run this past month in New York City, CCM members drove around the city and hand-delivered clothes and food to over 50 homeless individuals. Joseph describes, "Speaking to those who have fallen on hard times and hearing their life stories was humbling and reminded us of how important service is to individuals in the community." Working directly with the homeless became an eye-opening experience for CCM members, and stereotypes were pushed aside as the two groups interacted. Joseph continues, "All of them were kind hearted... one person declined a sandwich that was offered to him because he said, 'You already gave me one, thank you, but this guy hasn't gotten one yet'." She describes the event as encouraging, educational, and rewarding. Members got to see the effects of their service on the spot, in the faces of the people they met.

Joseph's favorite thing about the club is its sense of community. Everyone is inspired by faith, to serve the community and expand on their knowledge. The club brings together all ages and backgrounds and is overseen by a devoted staff of ministers. Joseph says, "Talking to the Campus Ministers and acting as Community Service Coordinator helped me realize that I wanted to dedicate at least part of my life to service, so I'm looking to dedicate at least two years to the Peace Corps or Teach for America after graduation." The students in CCM have a strong connection to service. They help come up with ideas and implement projects, on and off campus. They are currently having a food drive for Island Harvest, collecting canned goods at meetings and masses.



Photo courtesy of Catholic Campus Ministry.

"Serving others is for many people, a tangible way to put their faith into action," Joseph says.

Catholic Campus Ministry will be making trips to St. James Soup Kitchen, participating in more Midnight Runs, having a toy and book drive in December, and will be visiting hospitals around the holidays. All of their activities stem from their deep-rooted faith and willingness to help people personally. As always, they are continuously collecting clothes for those in need! Masses are held every Sunday at 5:00 PM in the Union Ballroom, and fellowship meetings are on Mondays at 7:00 PM in Union Room 265. Anyone interested in Catholicism is welcomed to attend. You can find them on Facebook under "Catholic Campus Ministry at Stony Brook," and the ministers' hours are located on the CCM office door, Union Room 265.

Saving Lives, One Drop at a Time

by Yael Saint-Armond

The value of a human life is immeasurable, and saving one is no easy feat. At times, it may seem borderline impossible. Yet, many, driven to make a difference, are determined to find a way to mitigate the gap between reality and impossibility. The Stony Brook University Blood Drive Committee is no stranger to this battle. Many individuals may overlook the importance of a blood donation. Throughout the year, there is a pressing need for these donations, as they may save an individual's life. Among these people are trauma victims, surgery patients, those living with sickle cell anemia, and even premature babies. The committee does its best to aid these individuals by hosting and assisting in many of the blood drives that happen right here on our campus.

The Stony Brook University Blood Drive Committee's volunteers are responsible for several duties when it comes to assembling a drive. They include setting up a registration and information desk. This is done in order to hand out donor forms, provide donors with instructions on how to fill out the forms, and answer the questions of any returning donors or potential donors. There is also an escort service provided by the volunteers. They assist donors to and from their donation station to the canteen area. The volunteers also watch the donors for any signs of weakness. It is not uncommon for donors to faint due to blood loss. At the canteen area, there is a bountiful stock of food, water, and juices to provide recent donors with something to eat and drink. The whole process at a blood drive – from the time you arrive until the time you leave – typically takes no more than an hour and a half. The donation itself takes only about ten minutes. After it is given, your blood donation is brought back to The American Red Cross where it is tested and separated into components. A single donation can help as many as three people, and can be at a hospital, ready for a critically ill patient, in as little as forty-eight hours.

To be able to volunteer at the blood drives, you will need to be a member of the Blood Drive Committee. All you have to do is sign up for the committee and come to their meetings, which are only held the week before a blood drive. The meetings are usually held to set up a drive. The Stony Brook University Blood Drive Committee is having its next meeting Thursday, October 25, 2012 in SAC 303 from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM. The next blood drive is Monday, October 29, 2012 in SAC Ballroom A from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Come and make a difference!

Essence of Praise: Daily Inspiration

by Kristina Kuznetsova

The organization that has perhaps been the most effective in unifying the Stony Brook Community is Essence of Praise. Its members, including seniors Danielle Diakanwa, Stephanie D'Haiti, Stephen Jiang, Ista Egbeto, Danielle Moxey, and sophomore Jamie Ward, use dance as a medium through which cultural bridges can be built, and universal messages of faith, hope, and love can be spread. Essence of Praise has collaborated with the Multicultural Affairs Department many times to spread the message of cultural unity. The group has performed at several events held during Black History Month. Last month, Essence of Praise ran a table to collect prayers for those affected by September 11. This month, the organization's "restoration night" will be held, during which students can discuss different topics and issues affecting all age groups. A speaker will be invited to the event, and will deliver a speech on a specific topic. Attendees will participate in various activities and refreshments will be served.

To the members of this organization, the drive to contribute to the campus community stems from their goal to enhance student life and increase student involvement in extracurricular activities. They believe that both the existence of cultural organizations and the ability to connect cross-culturally are extremely important and vital components of campus life at Stony Brook University.

Essence of Praise is an organization that places a strong emphasis on faith in God, though it accepts and recognizes members of all faiths. Members focus on their connection through the human experience and are inspired by each other's experiences. Also serving as an inspiration is the belief that they are stronger as a group than they are as individuals. This, without a doubt, is a message worth supporting and a group worth joining.

What Does Beauty Mean to You? - A Celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness

by Victoria Vollaro



Photo courtesy of http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2010/10/breast_cancer_awareness_month.html

October is **National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. To honor and support this amazing cause, and in honor of our *Walk for Beauty* event, the participating students and faculty have been asked to answer one question:

“What is your idea of beauty?”

“The philosophers say the Beauty in the abstract is equal to Truth, Light, Love, Unity, and for people of faith, God. But for me, beauty in the concrete has always been the manifestation of the peak experiences in my life that have made it joyful in its various stages. When I recollect those peak experiences, I get the feeling that the course of my life has been exactly what it should have been. What is more beautiful than that?”

-Bill “**Captain Willy**” **Schiavo**, Instructor of Methods of Literature

“I personally think the most ‘beautiful’ people, regardless of gender, are those with a confident demeanor who carry themselves well. They have charisma. Superficially speaking though, I’d say it’s really all related to symmetry and people with more exotic and unusual facial features, but not unusual in a creepy way, just different than the average person you come across.”

-**Gillian Wall**, Senior, Sociology Major

“I believe that beauty is inherent in all people and things—and is something we *experience* instinctually when we make a felt connection between our inner selves and the outer world. This alignment of inner and outer involves a relinquishment of analysis and control in favor of recognizing an inherent union between the self and the world. Or, as Emily Dickinson always puts it best, ‘The definition of beauty is/That definition is none—/Of Heaven, easing analysis,/Since Heaven and He are one.’”

-**Jessica Curran**, Instructor of English

“My idea of beauty is a lot more than what is on the outside but what is also on the inside of another individual. Although this is a very typical answer, it has remained true in all of my relationships. Someone with beauty is someone with a lovable personality.”

-**Devin Feeny**, Senior, Engineering Science Major

Submit Your Articles!

The Career Center encourages students, faculty, and staff to get involved with community service activities. Our publication is the place to share your stories with the Stony Brook community! Submit articles and photos, share information about projects, and list upcoming events. Please send all submissions to **Taryn Kutujian, Internship Consultant, Career Center**, at taryn.kutujian@stonybrook.edu. Be sure to include your name, phone number, and email address.