



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
Community UConnections

Reflect on the Year with Community Outreach!

The 2006-07 Academic Year was a tremendous one for Community Outreach. Although the “numbers” are not all tallied yet, our students have contributed a tremendous amount of time, effort, energy, and passion. More specifically, approximately 1,000 students contributed 20,000 hours in organizing and managing service programs through CO serving over 35 different communities.

There is much to be proud of in all aspects of initiatives, but I thought I would highlight a few items that represent the innovation of our students, staff, community partners, and faculty:

- In partnership with Dining Services, **Save Our Surplus (SOS) Food** has completed a pilot project, rescuing edible food from a number of dining facilities. The food was scheduled to be disposed of, but instead was delivered to local soup kitchens.
- Building a strong direct service experience with two local homelessness support programs, the **UConn Homeless Project** has also focused on educating the UConn community on the challenges that homeless people face and how we can all take action to end homelessness.
- With an expanding relationship with **Special Olympics**, CO – in partnership with UConn’s Club Sports and Greek Life program – organized the first annual **Husky Soccer Classic**, a soccer tournament for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Nationally CO continued its efforts to support the rebuilding of the gulf coast region through two hurricane relief alternative breaks. This trip represents why UConn was honored as a **Katrina Compassion Award Winner** as part of the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for 2006.

Call For Action, a weekly email bulletin, provides information on new service opportunities and related events occurring in the greater Storrs community. To subscribe, please visit our website at: www.volunteer.uconn.edu

- CO is going international! Through a partnership with Study Abroad and Sociology, CO is helping to lead a credit bearing service-learning immersion experience to the **Dominican Republic** in May 2007.

These projects and programs do not encompass all of the work that our students do in the community, but they do represent the growth and change of CO. I hope we can help make these initiatives traditions for CO and UConn and build upon them to make even more significant contributions to the health and vitality of our communities and the preparation of our students to be socially responsible global citizens.

Have a wonderful summer!

Matt Farley

Assistant Director for Community Outreach

Windham Launches Plan to End Homelessness by 2017

By Kate Dixon
CLAS '08

January 19, 2007 was a typical January day with a brisk wind and a snow covered ground. On this Friday one could be happy to have a roof over their head and warm clothes to wear. What many people in Windham county did not realize were the number of people who were not fortunate enough to have these things. Many residents of Windham County are unaware of the countless number of people in the county they reside in are homeless.

On this day community members gathered at J. Eugene Smith Library at Eastern Connecticut State University to launch the effort to bring these people homes. This Friday marked the start of the formation of the Greater Windham Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. By 2017 each individual in Windham County would have a place to sleep for the night.

Continued on page 3

Another Success: Bowl for Kids Sake

By Elizabeth Laverty

CLAS '07

Big Brothers Big Sisters is an international mentoring program extremely important to children throughout the world. At UConn, students have the opportunity to become a mentor or "Big" to a "Little" or student in a Willimantic elementary or middle school. The pair meets once a week during both the fall and spring semesters.

Children are recommended to the program for numerous reasons. These children may have poor school performance, or special behavior and family circumstances. After developing a relationship with their Big, a Little shows marked improvement in school work, behavior and self-esteem.

Every year Big Brothers Big Sisters holds a fundraiser called Bowl for Kids Sake (BFKS). Money raised from the event supports Big Brothers Big Sisters programs and helps to create new matches of Bigs and

Littles. Every Big and Little pair is invited to participate in the event. The Big is required to raise at least \$40 while the Little attends for free. Every one who attends receives free pizza and t-shirts. This year, BFKS took place on Saturday March 24th 2007 at Willi-bowl in Willimantic. Over 50 UConn Bigs attended and many of the Bigs recruited their friends to join them in the fundraiser. There were just as many Littles as Bigs in attendance.

Programming efforts went in to making sure both Littles and Bigs had transportation to and from the event. BFKS is the only time during the year a Little gets to spend time with their Big outside of the school. Having this opportunity adds a touch of extra excitement to the event and is an important bonding event for the match. The occasion gives the Littles something to look forward to since it is a special time for the match to spend quality time together. *(Continued on p.3)*

Congratulations to Community Outreach's Executive Board Seniors

Chris Krize

Executive Board Position:

Coordinator of Transportation

Major: Accounting, Minor in Economics

Chris has been involved with Community Outreach through both his work in, coordinating transportation and two alternative break trips to Mississippi. The funniest times Chris has experienced with CO have been during driver training when the drivers do not know their lefts from their rights. Chris says the most important thing he will take away from his time with CO is "listening to other's ideas and giving them substantial thought before coming to a decision". After graduation Chris will be taking on the position of staff auditor at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Stamford, Connecticut. Ten years from now Chris sees himself continuing to work in the business world or entering politics in town or city management.



Devon Martin

Executive Board Position: Coordinator of Youth Development and Education – Children

Major: Elementary Education, Minor in History

Devon has been involved with Community Outreach first as a volunteer with Natchaug School Tutoring and Campus Big Buddies her freshman year and the next two years as the Program Director for Natchaug School Tutoring. She became the coordinator of Youth Development and Education - Children her senior year. Devon's favorite CO memory was during Peer Fest when the whole CO staff performed the song they wrote "CO lovin'" with popped collars. During her time working with CO, Devon has learned that "life will be busy, but I always want to be active as a volunteer." After graduation Devon will be completing her master's degree in Education at UConn. In ten years Devon cannot see herself anywhere but teaching in an elementary school.



(Bowl For Kids Sake, Continued from page 2)

When all is said and done, BFKS is one of my favorite things about the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. I enjoy being able to look across the bowling alley and see 100 happy faces. Everyone is trying to master the art of bowling and rooting each other on knowing someone will eventually achieve a strike. There are silly dances and high fives even when only one pin is knocked over. Bigs leave the bowling alley proud to know they are making a difference in a child's life. Every one leaves excited to participate in BFKS again next year.

***Congratulations Elizabeth for being awarded the
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Volunteer of the Year Award Receipt***

(Kate Dixon, continued from page 1)

Building a plan with such a great goal takes much time and effort from the community members, government officials, business leaders, non-profit leaders and consumers. All of these people have been called to assist in the planning efforts by joining one of the three planning committees.

The three committees advising the plan are Housing, Safety Net, and Employment & Income committees. Within the Housing committee, members assess the needs and development of subsidy housing. They also address the standards that need to be set for operating housing programs. Safety Net focuses on supportive service needs and prevention and outreach efforts. Employment services and other programs to help homeless individuals make an income to live independently are among the main concerns of the Employment and Income committee. With three committees working together to address the many aspects of homelessness, one can expect by 2017 there will be an incredibly small number of homeless individuals each year throughout Windham county.

Efforts to plan, write, and implement the Ten Year plan are being coordinated by the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. For more information or to become involved in assisting in the planning process please visit the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness website at www.cceh.org.

Community Outreach End of Year Award Winners:

Student Driver of the Year Award:
Claudia Quintas

Student Leader of the Year Award:
Ryan Notti

Program of the Year Award:
UConn Homelessness Project

Outstanding Initiative of the Year Award:
Chris Krize for Transportation

*Congratulations to
Community Outreach
March/April
Honorees of the Month*

Windham Hospital
Kelly Knickelbein

Windham Heights
Diego Duque
Christine Rogan

Conversation Partners
Juliane Shindo

Natchaug
Barbara Siuda

Horace Porter
Danielle Buchanan

Mansfield After School Program
Daphne Vlahopoulos

Southeast After School
Audra Halpin

MYS Big Friends
Brian Marhefki

Mansfield Middle School Tutoring
Michele Armento



March Community Outreach Honorees

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY
OUTREACH

Department of Student Activities
2110 Hillside Road, U-3008 Storrs,
Phone: 860-486-1165

Upcoming Service Opportunities

Volunteers Needed for University of Connecticut American English Language Institute

The University of Connecticut American English Language Institute (UCAELI) is seeking volunteers from April 30th to May 18th to act as conversation partners for their High School Intensive English Program. As a Conversation Partner, volunteers serve an important role in the UCAELI students' learning process. The students are Turkish boys ages 13-15 who are here studying English for the academic year. Volunteers are needed Monday - Friday from 9:15 - 10:30 a.m. Being able to speak informally with English speakers is a rewarding experience for both student and volunteer!

Contact: Neena Kapoor - neena.kapoor@uconn.edu or (860) 486-2127

CPTV's Leisure Travel Auction

Volunteers are needed for this fundraising auction. The auction will be held at CPTV's studio in Hartford on **Saturday, May 5th from 5:30pm to midnight** and on **Sunday, May 6th from 3:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** Volunteer positions include Bid Taker, Bid Runner and Auction Assistance, among other roles. **Contact:** Jennifer Gawitt Pratt - (860) 275-7280 or jpratt@cptv.org

F.L.A.M.E. (Finding Leaders Among Minorities Everywhere)

This is a four-day educational program taught by Olympic Athletes, coaches and community leaders. The program is hosted at the U.S. Olympic Complex in Colorado Springs, Colorado and FREE round trip airfare is provided. Participants learn to enhance their leadership skills, build group dynamics, establish a discipline of self discovery and preparation, improve communication strategies, participate in sports demonstrations, attend motivational seminars, learn corporate etiquette, attend social events and much more. Application Criteria: Must be an ethnic minority or the descendant of non-European based country and entering their sophomore or junior year of college in Fall 2007, be between ages 18-21 and have a minimal athletic background among other criteria. Applications must be postmarked by May 18th.

For more information: www.usolympicteam.com/flame