



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT  
**Community UConn**Connections

*University of Connecticut Makes the Grade*

By Jennifer Swaysland  
CLAS '07

During the 2006 Fall Semester, The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll recognized UConn's Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Community Outreach was recognized for its hard work and dedication to the relief efforts along with student groups and multiple Alternative Break trips.

The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll serves to applaud, as well as make visible, national colleges' and universities' exceptional efforts in improving their communities through service. The University of Connecticut was one of many schools to receive various distinctions for their Hurricane Katrina efforts. Merits were given by the Honor Roll in cooperation with Campus Compact, an alliance of more than 1,000 American college and university presidents acting to promote service learning within higher education communities and their surrounding areas. To elaborate on UConn's efforts, the UConn-Storrs campus was honored with Distinction for General Community Service as well as receiving a Katrina Compassion Award for Excellence in Hurricane Relief Service. Community Outreach's relief efforts specifically included three primary means of service. These means of service are Hurricane Katrina Relief Student Organization, Community Outreach's Alternative Spring Break program and the UConn Relief Corps. UConn also supported the efforts by supporting students displaced by the hurricane.

The Hurricane Katrina Relief Student Organization is a coalition of students representing a diverse range of student organizations at UConn. Community Outreach staff supported and advised students in fundraising efforts, which included the collection of donations from UConn fans, change drop locations and a meal donation program.



*Community Outreach Volunteers aid in rebuilding Mississippi over Winter Break*

Secondly, Community Outreach's Alternative Spring Break program, which incorporates service, reflection and education into week or weekend-long service projects, included two trips to the Gulf Coast in 2006. During the winter Alternative Break to Mississippi, students worked to remove debris from damaged homes within five communities. The spring Alternative Break trip traveled to New Orleans, and was a joint effort with the UConn Human Rights Institute. This trip saved homeowners approximately \$52,000, as students and other volunteers gutted 13 local homes.

The third contribution was made by the UConn Relief Corps which is a group of students who had previously been on a trip to Mississippi, and Community Outreach's Alternative Spring Break program. This group coordinated a trip to New Orleans during Spring Break as well as a subsequent trip in May of 2006; the trips encompassed 93 students and 3,700 hours of service.

It is evident in the list of honorees of the Community Service Honor Roll that schools across the country, UConn included, made invaluable contributions to the relief and rebuilding of the Gulf Coast.

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**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](http://www.volunteer.uconn.edu)

# Stafford Teen Night: Where a College Kid can be a Kid

By Kelly Pielech  
CLAS '08

The Stafford Teen Night program is dedicated to creating a safe, substance-free environment for teens in the Stafford area by providing them with fun group activities and support systems in the years they need it the most. The UConn volunteers come to the teen center every week and serve as mentors, role models, and most importantly friends to the teens. They participate in activities such as playing pool, making arts and crafts projects, dancing, and participating in video game tour-

naments.

The Stafford teens view the teen center as a place where they can go to have fun and forget about difficult things that may be occurring in their lives. The teen center is located in Stafford Springs, a small community located twenty minutes away from the University of Connecticut.

A typical night at the teen center includes about twelve UCONN volunteers dedicating their Friday nights to spending time with the teens. We arrive at the center

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## Congratulations to Community Outreach Executive Board Seniors

Throughout this semester, Community Outreach will be featuring the graduating seniors on Community Outreach's Executive Board. Community Outreach congratulates the seniors on their outstanding accomplishments and wishes them success in their future endeavors .

### Ross Moran

Coordinator of Youth Development and Education—Adolescents

Major: Human Development and Family Studies



Ross began his time in Community Outreach as a tutor in the Horace Porter Tutoring program before becoming the Program Director. Since then, Ross has become the coordinator for the Youth Development and Education programs in Community Outreach. The funniest thing Ross experienced in Community Outreach was during Peerfest when his team spent a long time developing a song about CO to the tune of a classical song. In the end the song sounded hilarious because they were all tone-deaf! Ross's best memories come from working with students as a tutor at the Horace Porter Plus Program. The students have inspired Ross to seek a career in youth development and education. Ultimately Ross's goal is to "become an advocate and be involved in policy making to help raise the standards in underserved educational communities".

### Jen Swaysland

Coordinator of Public Relations

Major: Communications, Minor in Psychology



Jen became involved with Community Outreach during her Sophomore year as a tutor in the Windham Heights After school Program. As well as continuing to tutor, Jen has taken on the job of Coordinator of Public Relations in her Senior year. During her time in Community Outreach Jen has become known as "the girl who sends Call for Action Emails" by friends and strangers alike. Her most memorable memory from CO is how excited the tutorees are on the first day of tutoring and "really bringing to life how much we've touched these kids' lives." Currently Jen is searching for a full-time position in the Public Relations or Marketing field where she can exercise skills she has gained from her academic and internship experiences.

### Phoebe Gould

Coordinator of Health and Human Services

Major: Human Development and Family Studies



During the time that Phoebe has been involved with Community Outreach she has participated in the Generations Connect program. Phoebe is also the coordinator for Health and Human Service Programs. Her favorite thing about Community Outreach are has been the people she has had the opportunity to meet. Phoebe says that the most valuable thing she has learned in her time with Community Outreach has been to look at the bigger picture. After graduating, Phoebe plans to "get a full time job working in the non-profit sector for a few years before returning to graduate school to earn a Masters in Social Work". Ten years from now Phoebe sees herself as being "obviously older, and hopefully happier and wiser."

(Stafford Teen Night Continued from page 2)

around six o'clock in the evening. The volunteers participate in various activities with the teens. Usually some of the men go over to the pool tables and start up some intense tournaments against the fourteen year olds, while the women make their way over to the dance floor and practice their moves with some of the girls.

Each week, the volunteers create activities for the teens to participate in as a change to their regular routine at the center. Last week, the volunteers and teens used their creative energy to make Valentine cards for their friends and family. On many occasions Guitar Hero, a well-liked video game, is set-up on one of the volunteer's Playstation 2, which always makes for a good time! Laura, the director of the center always has a plethora of junk food and water for everyone and occasionally participates in a round of "Cotton Eyed Joe" on the dance floor! Both the teens and volunteers eat dinner at the teen center. Usually pizza, Subway subs, or burgers on the grill are served. In the springtime, the volunteers play games outside with the teens. Knock Out on the basketball court and touch football in the backyard are popular outdoor games. The volunteers stay until the teen center closes for the night around ten o'clock.

I think the volunteers would agree that the best part of the Stafford Teen Night program is the relationships that they form with the teens. The enthusiasm and excitement displayed by the Stafford teens is enough to keep our volunteer numbers high, and our attitudes positive no matter what kind of week we have had at UConn. New volunteers are always welcome, and we encourage anyone who is interested to get involved in Stafford Teen Night!

Congratulations to  
Community Outreach  
January  
Honorees of the Month

**Kaitlyn Lloyd**  
Uconn Homelessness Project

**Christie Roche**  
Campus Connections

**Samantha Sherwood**  
Mansfield Youth Services Big Friends

**Stephanie Wallace**  
Mansfield Middle School Tutoring



## Community Outreach Featured Volunteer

Samantha Sherwood

Human Development and Family Studies '08

Samantha has been a Mansfield Youth Services Big Friends volunteer since the Spring of 2006. Her most memorable Community Outreach experience is spending a Friday night with the kids at the Community Center. There they played games and had pizza and ice cream with the students. "The next week we heard from the parents the kids had an amazing time."



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
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### *Upcoming Service Opportunities*

#### **Bowl For Kids Sake 2007**

Support a child who needs a friend and mentor by taking part in one of these bowling events on **March 24<sup>th</sup>** or **March 31<sup>st</sup>** at several locations in Connecticut. To participate, make a team of 4 to 5 people, spread the word, raise money, and get others involved! When you sign up online, you can create your own web page and email your friends for donations. Each registered bowler plays two games and will receive a t-shirt, shoes rental, pizza and soda.

**For more information:** [www.nutmegbigbrothersbigsisters.org](http://www.nutmegbigbrothersbigsisters.org)

#### **Dressed to the Nines**

On **March 31, 2007** the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dressed to the Nines charity event will again be held at The Learning Corridor in Hartford. This community service event was created to help provide prom dresses to Hartford area teens that may not otherwise be able to afford a dress on their own. We invite you to help make this year's event a success by **donating any gently-worn or new formal wear** that would help to make a young woman's prom night special. Hartford area teens will have the opportunity to purchase the dresses for \$10 each with proceeds benefiting Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Several drop off locations are available.

**Contact:** Erin Healer, Event Chair and Logistics Coordinator - (860) 232-7625 or [esheals@aol.com](mailto:esheals@aol.com)

#### **Walk with Me**

You can help Easter Seals make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Walkers young and old are partnered with an honorary ambassador for this 5k walk. Walk participants will stroll through the exhibits of Mystic Aquarium, sight see along Olde Mistick Village shops and enjoy live entertainment at the finish line! The walk will take place **Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am** and registration from 8:00 am – 9:00 am at Mystic Aquarium.

**For more information:** [http://www.easterseals.com/site/TR?pg=entry&fr\\_id=1772](http://www.easterseals.com/site/TR?pg=entry&fr_id=1772)