

Spring 2012



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International Service-Learning

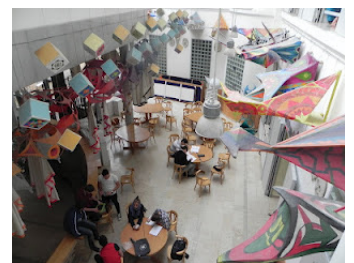
Ben Stark
Student Research Assistant

Last semester I studied in Budapest, Hungary, with 17 other Calvin students under the leadership of Dr. Jeff Bouman, professor and director of the Service-Learning Center. In Budapest, Jeff implemented service-learning as part of our off-campus semester, placing us in a variety of settings including schools, a coffee shop ministry for youth, and a position as church choir director. Another Calvin student and I were assigned to a high school on the north end of Buda.

Initially, I struggled with my placement. While I expected to serve clients with significant need, my first class visit revealed a student population of significant affluence. I struggled with reservations about how I could serve an affluent group of young people and be engaged in the work of building the God's kingdom. Sometime in the middle of the semester, however, it occurred to me that perhaps I had the wrong framework. I realized that I had indeed been serving my

students. Perhaps many of them, never before introduced to the good work of service-learning, would go on to engage service-learning themselves. I trust that I have been a role model to students who could also participate in service-learning placements in school systems around Budapest. Because service-learning was a new idea to the students, maybe our presence planted a seed.

I am very thankful that I made the decision to participate in service-learning at the high school in Budapest. I really enjoyed the semester there, even if my role was often times unclear, and even though I was tossed into situations I didn't feel prepared for. Through it all, I think I learned quite a bit about an alternative approach to education while I gleaned much from my consistent interaction with Hungarians. I hope my presence helped further positive social change in the context of the larger educational system.



Interested in more reflections from our student staff?
Check out servicehyphenlearning.blogspot.com for weekly conversations on issues of justice, community, and service. Comment and engage with us as we work towards the goals of living well and seeking shalom.



New Partnerships...

Oakdale Neighbors Partners with a Residence Hall

Tom Bulten

Director of Oakdale Neighbors

Oakdale Neighbors' mission is to mobilize resources. Most importantly we develop the resources of neighbors and the neighborhood. Sometimes these are physical resources like neighborhood houses, streets, alleys, or the neighborhood park. More often, however, these resources are the dreams and skills of neighbors in the Oakdale neighborhood. For example, Timebank Grand Rapids, hosted by Oakdale Neighbors, is a way for neighbors to share services with one another. Victor helps Ron move to a new house and he earns

several time dollars. He can spend those time dollars by asking Joyce to mend some shirts or by asking Sam to repair his computer. Anyone in the greater Grand Rapids area (including Calvin students!) can join Timebank Grand Rapids and become part of this social network.

Oakdale Neighbors uses other projects to connect neighbors to one another. Our Boston Square Community Bikes program is a way for neighbors to learn how to repair bikes and help others repair bikes. This program, too, is open to anyone. Every Thursday it becomes a social

space for neighbors, students, bicycle commuters, recreational riders, kids, and retired volunteers to connect around a shared interest in moving around by two wheels.

Sometimes, useful skills and talents flow into the neighborhood from the outside. These investments in the community build on the assets that are already here. For example, Calvin students have helped Oakdale Neighbors prepare tax returns for several years. This assistance enables hard-working neighbors to access the tax credits they use to pay educational

expenses, gas bills, rent, and more.

Oakdale Neighbors' relationship with Noordewier-VanderWerp has provided tutoring for middle school youth that are learning to become college students, teachers, doctors, or engineers. We appreciate the Calvin students that spend time in the neighborhood, learn about the neighborhood, interact with neighbors and contribute skills and ideas. We look forward to deepening these relationships between Calvin students and neighbors of the Oakdale neighborhood. <http://www.oakdaleneighbors.org>

What are Residence Hall Partnerships?

Each of Calvin's seven residence halls maintains an on-going partnership with a unique not-for-profit organization in the city of Grand Rapids. Our partners welcome resident students to participate in specific programs to serve their communities in meaningful ways. The partnership is coordinated by one or more volunteer student Community Partnership Coordinators (CPCs) from each hall, who facilitate recruitment, communication, transportation, and reflection for participants. CPCs are guided through their year by a student staff member who leads biweekly meetings to cover logistical details and facilitate conversation about local social justice issues. CPCs also serve as members of their residence hall's Community Life Council alongside student leaders representing various departments in the Student Life Division.



Goodbye, Jerry!

Jerry Fondse has been sitting in as Interim Director of the Service-Learning Center this year while Jeff Bouman was on sabbatical. We are grateful for his encouragement, vision, and servant leadership this year. Now we welcome back Jeff Bouman for the 2012-2013 school year.

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Gerard Fondse, Jr.
Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Adult Education classes at Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids consistently offer a wide variety of topics with which to engage the audience, and the topic on Sunday, November 13, 2011 did not disappoint.

A group of twelve music students from Dr. David Fuentes’ music class at Calvin College led the class in an experiment that had been conducted both on campus and off campus for more than six years; the project, named “Do You Hear What I Hear?” is part of the Music Department’s vision of understanding music as a bridge-builder across boundaries of age,

gender, race, and ethnicity. The connection between Dr. Fuentes’ students and Neland Church was facilitated by the Service-Learning Center’s Academically-Based Service-Learning Coordinator Angela Svaan.

The group began by introducing themselves to the Neland class and followed this with an introduction of the song “Every Teardrop is a Waterfall” by the alternative-rock group Coldplay. The students did a remarkable job introducing the nuances of the song, both its sound and its lyrics. The lyrics were distributed and the song was played for the listening audience. Immediately following

this entrance into the music, the class was divided into discussion groups. In these groups, sufficient safe space was provided so that audience members could respond to a variety of prompts. The results were fascinating. Explication of lyrical content intersected with responses to the blending of the various instruments and voices. Some discussion group members were perceptive in their sense of the spiritual dimension of the music, noting that, although the song could be a lament, it also expressed reasons for hope. All agreed that the engagement of all music is very personal and is seated in past experiences

and present situations. The session ended with a whole-group engagement of the song one more time followed by some closing observations.

In her reflection later, one student wrote, “...it’s pretty interesting to engage with other Christians through the medium of popular culture...The mutual engagement of this piece brought the group closer together.” Clearly, the students in Dr. Fuentes’ class served the adults at Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church well while also learning about the complex challenge and benefit of engaging music in an intentional way.

...and Old Traditions



Snapshot from the Archives

Participants in Transition

Part of our history involves a moving service that connected Calvin students with families in Grand Rapids who needed help moving their furniture. We stopped offering moving services years ago, but we’re still connecting students with people in transition. Recently Calvin’s rugby team helped move a resident at the Breton Village Green Subsidized Apartment Complex and learned the story of someone in our city.

Do you have a story about something we used to do or are doing now? Let us know on facebook! See the next page for more information.



Love Stories in Creston

Abby Koning



Members of the Creston Church Community tell stories and write Loves Lists.



Ever since I was a little girl, I have been captivated by stories, spending my evenings in a tent built from blankets and reading fairytales by flashlight. Yet it wasn't until my college years that I began to appreciate stories that do not reside in books, stories that are the living, breathing entities I encounter each day. The woman waiting for the bus, the old man who lives across the street, the child who sells me lemonade on summer afternoons--all are wonderful, magical stories that are anything but ordinary.

A few weekends ago,

I discovered, yet again, the kaleidoscope of stories spinning around me. I live in the Nizhoni Project Neighborhood house in the Creston neighborhood, a part of the city far removed from the so-called Calvin bubble. Some of my housemates helped plan a potluck for our church. After good food and even better conversation, we were given multicolored paper and markers and told to make our Loves Lists. The inspiration for Loves Lists traces back to St. Augustine, who writes, "When there is a question as to whether a man is good, one does not ask what he believes or what he hopes, but

what he loves." The Loves List is a list of those aspects of life that, as Gideon Strauss writes, allow us "to know, most deeply, who we are and who we can become."

As we made our lists, unexpected stories bubbled up all around me. I met a woman who has lived in Switzerland and Africa and has studied 12 languages. I heard the laughter of children as they stole each other's loves (pythons were especially popular). And I discovered, yet again, that wonderful, entertaining, and heartbreaking stories are all around us, just waiting for us to listen.

What we're talking about on Facebook:

opportunities at our partner agencies

Calvin College Service-Learning Center shared a link via The Rapidian. February 6

Ever wonder how a love of stories could translate into service-learning? Check out student @Abby Koning's work with The Rapidian and the Creston Neighborhood Association!

A new beginning: Creston News Bureau | The Rapidian
therapidian.org

Creston Neighborhood Association introduces youth to the world of professional journalism

Like · Comment · Share

scholarship opportunities

Calvin College Service-Learning Center February 22

Hey post-college friends, we want to know: What cool organizations are in your neighborhood?

Like · Comment · Share

Activity Recently

Calvin College Service-Learning Center created the event Special Olympical March 28

links to our blog posts

Calvin College Service-Learning Center March 20

The Baltimore Spring Break Trip enjoyed having morning coffee at Gerry's Goods and learning about how Christian Community Development helped get the business started in the Sandtown neighborhood.

Gerry's Goods
Coffee shop and convenience store located in West Baltimore, MD
Page: 176 like this

Like · Comment · Share

Find us and like us!
We'd love to like you back!

Calvin College Service-Learning Center shared a link. November 26, 2011

Check out our very own Kyle Schaap talking about his off-campus experiential learning in the Grand Rapids Press:

West Michigan colleges among top institutions nationally with most students studying abroad
www.mlive.com

Open Doors report shows 10,277 more U.S. students are now traveling abroad.

Like · Comment · Share

news articles about our students

Calvin College Service-Learning Center added 80 photos to the album Spring Break 2012. March 29

pictures of service-learning

Calvin College Service-Learning Center shared GR Walk's status. January 20

We're excited to be forging a new partnership with GR Walks to develop tools for orientation and reflection!

Met with some awesome Calvin students who are going to be doing some writing and research for the app! Very excited to keep the ball rolling on the project.

Like · Comment · Share

new opportunities for students and agencies



Transitions 2012

Transitions is our mid-year orientation program for transfer students. Just like fall StreetFest, Transitions StreetFest is an introduction to service-learning and a chance to learn about some of the organizations with which we partner.

This January, our Transitions students experienced a driving tour of Grand Rapids and service-learned at House of Prayer and Alternative Pathways.





Spring Break Trips 2012

For one week this March, 140 Calvin students travelled across the country to see, engage, reflect, and share with organizations involved in restoring justice and right relationships.

2012 set a new record with 13 Spring Break Trip destinations!



Thank you to all the organizations that hosted us!



Planting Blessings

Geneva Langeland

There's something oddly rewarding about planting seeds whose fruits we will never see. Most of the time, we put seeds in the ground because we want some eventual return for our labors: a watermelon, a lush bouquet of dahlias, an oak tree to shade our backyard. But sometimes we make an investment with the certainty that someone else will reap the yield. When we filled pots at Koinonia Farm, we knew that we'd never taste the peppers, eggplants, or corn that would grow from the seeds we planted. But we planted even still, because we knew that someone, somewhere down the road, would be blessed by our work.

Over Spring Break this year, I traveled with a group of Calvin women to Ameri-

cus, Georgia, the home of Koinonia Farm. Koinonia has a rich history stretching back to its creation in the 1940s by Clarence Jordan, a young scholar not content to let his then-revolutionary ideas about racial equality remain in academia. Though the town resented the trouble he stirred up by trying to coexist peacefully with people of color, Jordan refused to back down on his beliefs. He worked tirelessly to keep the farm alive and to shape it into a place of peace and welcome.



Some of the seeds that Clarence Jordan planted bloomed within his lifetime; his vernacular interpretation of the New Testament, known as *The Cotton Patch Gospel*, became known nationwide, and his partnership with Millard Fuller birthed the charitable building initiative Habitat for Humanity.

Even now, long after Jordan's death in 1969, some of the seeds he sowed are still bursting to life. The farm is now a small community that lives with its arms and hearts wide open. During our time at Koinonia, we reaped the benefits not only of the literal seeds Jordan planted—such as the verdant pecan grove—but of the spiritual ones, as well. We stepped into a rich tradition of daily devotion and worship, accompanied

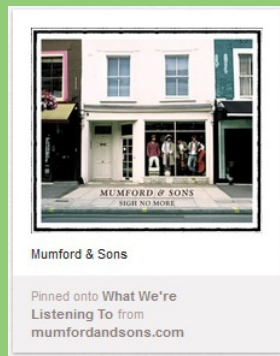
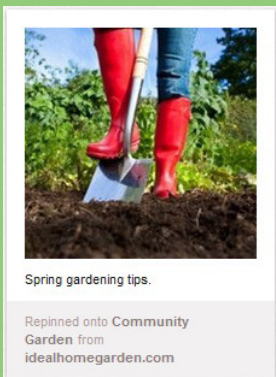


by a dedication to the hard work of maintaining a deep-rooted land and a deep-rooted faith.

Clarence Jordan never lived to see the full fruition of all that he began at Koinonia. We, too, will never sample the fruits of our labors in the farm's field, garden, and greenhouse. Neither can we know what kind of spiritual seeds we plant in the people around us every day. But we can rest in the knowledge that we are planting blessings, blessings that the Lord will tend until they are ready to burst forth in joy.

Curious about the things that interest us?

Check out our Pinterest page! Go to <http://pinterest.com/servicelearner/>.





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Meet Anna Casto, the 2012 StreetFest Coordinator.

We have begun planning StreetFest 2012, which will take place on August 30! We look forward to partnering with you!

