



Service-Learning Center

Calvin College

Fall 2010

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Living-Learning Communities' Program Coordinator Implements Service-Learning Component

By Scott Hofman, Academically-Based Service-Learning Coordinator for Natural Sciences and Math

First-year students of Calvin College begin the year with a wide array of plans and intentions for their college careers. Their personal visions of the future direct them through both the big decisions of deciding their majors and the small decisions, like choosing between a basketball game and homework on a free Saturday afternoon.

Students' intentions will shape their actions. Therefore Calvin College has invested in the Service-Learning Center to guide the intentions of students into acts of love and service for their surrounding community.

Calvin hosts living-learning communities in the Kalsbeek-Huizenga-van Reken (KHvR) residence hall under the direction of program coordinator Chris Klein. Each floor of van Reken engages difficult issues relevant to its respective theme: Creation Care (environmental stewardship/sustainability), Grass-roots (exploring race and identity in North America), and Honors. Service-learning is not only encouraged to facilitate residents' intentional learning, it is required.

Recently I interviewed Chris Klein about how service-learning functions as a

philosophy and a practice within the living-learning communities. Service-learning, according to Klein, functions both pragmatically and theoretically on the floors of van Reken.

Pragmatically, service-learning is a part of a set of requirements to which students must agree. This ensures that they experience the community, often requiring them to engage with people and places that are unfamiliar to them. Interaction with an unfamiliar environment allows service-learning to shape the dialogues on the floor and the intentions of the students.

Eventually, the theoretical function manifests itself. To Klein, service-learning has a multi-layered theoretical value. First it provides students a shared experience outside their usual context, which gives them opportunities to reflect differently on the nature and purposes of the proximate relationships they have with their peers. Second, dissonant cross-cultural experiences can serve relationships with peers. When students' eyes have been affected by dissonant cross-cultural relationship, students take values and lessons from cross-cultural



Creation Care students plant dune grass at Holland State Park

relationships and allow them to impact peer relationships. Third, service-learning softens students' views of people but hardens their resolve to stand up against wrong in the world. Klein hopes these theoretical values of service-learning will be present in conversations the living-learning communities share. In these ways, service-learning can guide the intentions of students towards a life of service and learning.

The living-learning communities have started their service-learning projects at organizations throughout Grand Rapids, including Burton Middle School, Martin Luther King Leadership Academy, Programs Assisting Refugee Acculturation, Supper House, and Michigan Organizing Project. Chris Klein and the staff members at the Service-Learning Center are excited to see what comes of the students' intentional living and learning.

Hearts And Minds In Service

By Megan Kruis, Associate Director of the Service-Learning Center



Situated in the Student Development Unit of the Student Life Division at Calvin College, the professional and student staff members of the Service-Learning Center utilize

service-learning experiences as pedagogical instruments; service-learning is practical work that has the capacity to mark the hearts and minds of students. The pages of this Service-Learning Center newsletter attest to the impact of these

experiences on our students as well as on college programs and community partners.

This year, we're deepening our understanding of service-learning and student development through research on how service-learning in the college context might cultivate students' commitment to lifelong service-learning in the context of a church community. Students encounter service-learning first through StreetFest; they might intensify their practice through an academically-based service-learning experience; they might choose to immerse themselves in service-learning for a week by earning their Cross-Cultural Engagement credit on a spring break trip. We hope that

students' pursuit of God's shalom does not end with formal service-learning in their college years but that through the practice of service-learning in the academic setting, students will look for opportunities to serve and learn in communities of faith after they graduate.

Our best efforts might not always succeed, but we are grateful for your partnerships, whether you are a faculty partner, community partner, alumnus/a or a friend of the Service-Learning Center. We appreciate your participation in the work of opening our students' hearts and minds to the ways in which they might use their gifts and skills to serve in God's world.

Nursing Department Ensures Service With Learning

By Gail Zandee, Assistant Professor of Nursing



The vision and mission of Calvin College is to not only serve the internal community, but to also serve the external community, promoting social justice and reconciliation (*Expanded Statement of*

Mission, Calvin College, 2002).

In 2002, the Calvin College Nursing Program initiated a new community-based nursing curriculum designed to flow from this mission. There is a temptation in nursing curriculums to focus solely on student learning, which puts the external community at risk of being used by students and faculty as a learning laboratory. To counter this temptation and be mission consistent, the nursing department created service-learning partnerships with three urban, underserved neighborhoods in Grand Rapids. All nursing

students invest in one of the three neighborhoods and return to that neighborhood across the curriculum. By emphasizing service and learning equally, nursing students receive a rich learning experience while impacting the health of the Grand Rapids community in a positive way.

Throughout the last 8 years, students and faculty have used community based participatory research methods to listen to the voice of each neighborhood. Some of the top neighborhood concerns identified by residents are access to health care, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, depression, unintended pregnancies and lead poisoning. Action plans, written in collaboration with residents and neighborhood providers, connect the neighborhood to the nursing program by matching specific strengths and needs identified by each neighborhood with strengths and learning needs of nursing students.

Through the service-learning partnerships, not only do students learn about the role of the community health nurse,

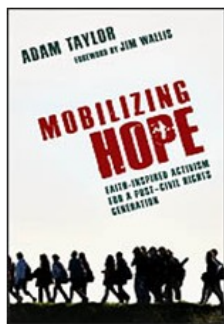
but students wrestle with deeper issues such as injustice and disparities in health. Students see the value of long term commitment to a community and feel a sense of pride that their educational experience is not solely for their benefit alone. They graduate knowing that they have made an impact on the health of some of the most vulnerable in the city.

Service-learning partnerships have also made an impact on faculty scholarship. Faculty have pursued grants, conducted research and disseminated results both locally and nationally in an effort to address concerns identified by each neighborhood and promote social change.

There is tremendous potential when a whole department is supportive and united in their approach to community engagement and service-learning. It can deepen student learning, increase faculty scholarship opportunities, open doors for collaboration within and outside of the college, and significantly impact the community.

Book Review: *Mobilizing Hope: Faith-Inspired Activism For A Post-Civil Rights Generation*

By Jeff Bouman, Director of the Service-Learning Center



Adam Taylor hopes to foster, challenge and encourage a new generation of “creatively transformed nonconformists.” Readers familiar with Sojourner’s magazine will recognize Taylor as Sojourners’ Director of Campaigns and Organizing. A poster child for a new activism, Taylor leans heavily in the text on Scripture and Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy as he makes a case for young people of faith to get involved in the fight for justice in today’s world. He is particularly indebted to a 1963 sermon given by Dr. King entitled, “The Transformed Nonconformist,” which takes as its text Romans 12:2, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Speaking to his time, King argued forcefully for a brave and unflinching band of fearless lovers of justice: “This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed

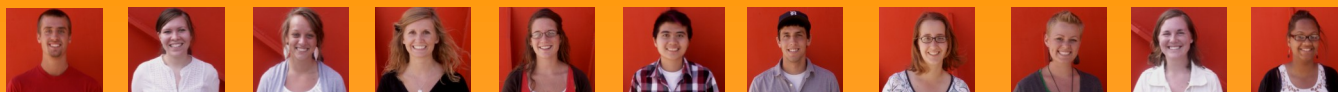
nonconformists. Our planet teeters on the brink of atomic annihilation; dangerous passions of pride, hatred, and selfishness are enthroned in our lives; truth lies prostrate on the rugged hills of nameless cavalries; and men do reverence before the false gods of nationalism and materialism.” Drawing from his own experience, and from interviews with a dozen young leaders he identified as “transformed nonconformists,” Taylor addresses issues across the spectrum for faith-based activists to consider.

Taylor’s book is a personal challenge to people who, nearly a half century after King’s sermon, still struggle to overcome the power of false gods in our contemporary society that lead us to a severely unjust world. He begins by telling his own story. Born in the mid-1970s, he credits his parents with setting an example for him in their decision in the late 1960s to enter into a mixed race marriage - his mother is African American and his father is white. He describes a burning bush moment he experienced in South Africa, and details choices he made along the contours of his life, choices to identify with the marginalized in society rather than seeking to exploit his privilege, and choices to expand his intellectual and experiential learning. Through opportunities too numerous to detail,

from undergraduate study at Emory University, graduate school at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, internships and study abroad opportunities throughout Africa, and most recently a White House internship, Taylor has, in the words of Congressman John Lewis, “in the spirit of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee... made conscious decisions to get in the way of injustice.”

Mobilizing Hope offers a creative and thoughtful attempt to weave together a Biblical discipleship with a set of contemporary strategies for civic engagement. Taylor addresses the gap between the growing wave of community service and the much-lower levels of voting and deeper engagement in civic issues. He suggests that a sense of calling, or vocation, is necessary to take us to the heart of both service and activism. This suggestion, along with Taylor’s insistence that the notion of rest and spiritual refreshment is essential to sustainable engagement, helps to connect his book to the work of the Service-Learning Center at Calvin. Following Jesus, not any political figure, will lead students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners toward a holistic and balanced activism.

Giving to the Service-Learning Center through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation



Since 2003, the Service-Learning Center at Calvin College has been building an endowment of its own at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation. Begun with generous support from the State of Michigan, this fund enables donors who would like another way to support Calvin College while at the same time taking advantage of the Michigan 50% tax credit for gifts to community foundations (up to \$400 for couples, \$200 for individuals). This tax credit is in addition to the similar tax credit that accompanies gifts to institutions of higher education.

What does this mean for you and for the Service-Learning Center? After you make your regular gift to Calvin College, you can also make a gift to the Service-Learning Center through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation. In this way you qualify for two State of Michigan tax credits. All you need to do is identify the Calvin College Service-Learning Center on the memo line of your check to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

This fund now hovers around \$40,000. It will begin to pay out usable interest when it reaches \$50,000. These dollars will enable programs like StreetFest and Residence Hall Community Partnerships, as well as a wide variety of academically-based service-learning projects to grow and flourish.

If you are interested in giving to the S-LC please use the enclosed envelope or donate on-line at www.grfoundation.org, and help us reach our \$50,000 goal.

Streetfest 2010: Beautiful Feet

By Christina Crider, StreetFest Coordinator

Editors Note: *Every year incoming students begin their StreetFest experience with a chapel service. This year Christina Crider, StreetFest Coordinator greeted the class and challenged them to develop beautiful feet. The following is an abridged version of her speech.*

The theme for StreetFest 2010 is "Beautiful Feet" which is derived from the verse Isaiah 52:7. The passage's key points of bringing good news, proclaiming peace, bringing good tidings and proclaiming salvation drew from me a passion to acknowledge the community partners who have taken the call to do these things in various

ways. Proclaiming salvation didn't have to look one way but could be done in the way you choose to live your life. When I began to think about the Grand Rapids community agencies and how they've had beautiful feet, I find that it is displayed in their ability to envision as hopeful what we may see as hopeless.

These people are walking in the mud of a community garden, the cement slabs of a city block or the overgrown grasses of abandoned homes. But instead of seeing these places just as they are, people with Beautiful Feet see the potential of neighbors gathering in the community garden to plant fruits and vegetables, see

the cement slabs of city blocks as canvases for local artists and children to draw on; and they see the community pulling its resources together to revitalize overgrown yards of abandoned homes.

Truly, what it means to have beautiful feet is to have a willing heart, a humble spirit and a desire to take action in serving your community. We hope that during your StreetFest experience you will catch a glimpse of people with Beautiful Feet and see the beauty of Grand Rapids communities, so that you maybe inspired to recognize your place in this community and develop beautiful feet of your own.



2010 StreetFest logo, designed by Rebecca Garofano (Calvin 2010)

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion "Your God reigns" -Isaiah 52:7



Glimpses of Beautiful Feet

From our community partners

“I think of feet that are willing to walk in somebody else’s shoes. I think one of the things that motivates me as a pastor as a person of faith is that that’s what God did, what Jesus did, God came and walked a mile and more in our shoes in spite of their brokenness. So the most beautiful feet are the feet that are willing to walk alongside me in whatever my journey is.”

- Andre Daly, Pastor of Mosaic Life Church

“Walking with integrity. I try hard to speak less and listen more and when I do speak, it’s with integrity. And working with integrity means doing what you say and saying what you do. Kids know that sometimes words mean nothing but if you talk the talk and walk the walk, it means more than anything. So I really try to walk my walk more than I talk my talk.”

- Sue Garza, Director of Cook Library Center

“I’ve been able to have feet washing experience, both when my feet were washed or where I washed someone else’s feet. It’s a touching and humbling experience on both sides.”

- Pam Bland, Program Director of Campfire USA, West Michigan Council



Special thanks to all who made StreetFest 2010 successful. The Calvin College Service-Learning Center staff is grateful for the participation of 943 first-year students, 49 student orientation leaders, 48 student StreetFest leaders, 35 faculty or staff mentors, and 67 organizations.

S-LC Staff At Huss School In Three Rivers, MI

By Rachel Young, Academically-Based Service-Learning Coordinator for Arts and Languages



Every year, before fall semester begins the staff of the Service-Learning Center venture out of the office to take a 24 hour retreat. Retreat activities vary: we travel to different locations with different people, bearing in mind different backgrounds and learning goals. In

the fall of 2010, the Service-Learning Center retreat consisted of a visit to the Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, a n overnight at the Hermitage community in Three Rivers, MI and a day of service at Huss School, also in Three Rivers.

*Culture is not optional (cino), a nonprofit that seeks "to equip

Christians to be faithful servants by uniting the community of believers and learning together how to actively participate in the redemption of all of culture," purchased Huss School in June 2009. The school is a 22,000 square foot building on four acres of land which *cino dreams will be a place that embodies God's work in the world and nurtures Kingdom— vision in communities.

Upon arriving at Three Rivers, students and staff from the Service-Learning Center were welcomed by Rob and Kirstin Vander Giesen-Reitsma, co-directors of *cino. After a tour of the building, students and staff took up shovels and wheel barrels, gloves and hammers, to share in the vision of Huss School's future. We took measurements for future projects,

stripped carpet, weeded flower beds, mowed the lawn. By the end of the day we were sweaty and dirty and everyone was smiling or asleep as we drove back to Calvin College.

The satisfaction we felt came from the process of working hard together toward a shared vision, rather than from what we had individually accomplished with our separate assigned tasks. Our service-learning was as a day of practicing what it means to be in community, living for Christ and the vision He gave us for the Kingdom of God. What stands out clearly in my mind about our day of service at the Huss School is evidence of God's work in our community in the Service-Learning Center and the peace that can come from serving one another.



Our September blood drive sponsored by Michigan Blood was very successful! The blood drive raised 195 pints of blood from 251 donors, including 75 first time donors.

Thanks to all those who contributed!



2011 Service-Learning Spring Break Trips

Spring Break trips are a great way for students to delve into a community for one week. This year students will be traveling to eleven different locations to serve and learn.

This year's trips are:

- **Houma, LA - [Houma Native America Community](#)** - Disaster relief for survivors of hurricane Katrina
- **Knoxville, TN - [Florence Crittenton Agency](#)** - Ministry to at-risk women
- **Boston, MA - [The Boston Project](#)** - Ministry to urban youth in downtown Boston
- **Kermit, WV - [Big Laurel Learning Center](#)** - Working against and learning about Mountain Top Removal and its effects on the environment
- **Three Rivers, MI - [*culture is not optional](#)** - Exploring service, the arts and intentional faith communities in small town America
- **Mobile, AL - [L'Arche USA](#)** - Serving and learning from adults with disabilities in mutually enriching intentional Christian community
- **Americus, GA - [Koinonia Farm](#)** - Thinking critically about food and farming
- **St. Louis, MO - [City Lights Ministries](#)** - Urban Revitalization
- **Biloxi, MS - [Christian Reformed World Relief Committee](#)** - Reconstructing and assisting in disaster relief following a continental US natural disaster
- **SE Tennessee/NW North Carolina - [Great Smokey Mountain National Park](#)** - Wilderness, Hiking, and Trail Maintenance
- **Location TBA (tentatively NM or CA) - [College Positive Volunteerism](#)** - Organizing conference for under-represented high school students to encourage and empower them to go on to higher education

Improving Access to Higher Education: A College Positive Volunteer Framework

By Karen Van Dyke , Pre-College Program Liaison



Access to higher education isn't equal for all. Low income, first generation and minority students are all underrepresented in colleges and universities. Understaffed schools lack school counselors with time to pass this information on to students, and tasks like deciding where to apply to college, meeting application deadlines, and writing entrance essays might seem like insurmountable hurdles.

Why should Calvin College students care? Because college access is a justice issue. It's not that underrepresented students can't handle the workload, but because there are barriers on their paths to college beyond their control. Education equals power in America. It opens doors for one's voice to be heard. Helping to increase the presence of underrepresented youth in college is the least college students can do with the privileges we've been given.

College Positive Volunteering is a nationwide movement encouraging college students to promote college as a viable option for any K-12 students with whom they come into contact and act as resources regarding college applications and financial aid.

Having spent my K-12 education in schools where the majority of students come from low income families, I've realized that the lack of awareness about how to fund college is the biggest obstacle to enrollment. Emerging into adult life buried in debt seems an unwise path for a student with no

money or credit. One classmate in particular chose to attend a community college part time and pay as he went as opposed to jumping into a four year university. Had he been more familiar with how student loans and scholarships work, he may have chosen another alternative. As a College Positive Volunteer, college students can help increase awareness about processes such as financial aid. The high school students, then, will at least be aware of their options.

The Service-Learning Center and the Office of Pre-College Programs continue a second year of College Positive Volunteerism with a grant from Michigan Campus Compact. Through these trainings, we hope that Calvin students will become aware of inequalities in college access, humbly acknowledge the privileges they've had along their college journeys and help to combat the injustice present in college access today.

Full Circle On A Parallel Road

By Ashley Pace, Coordinator of Community Partnerships Coordinators

I've developed the unfortunate habit of believing that the world is flat. Maybe you know the feeling. Between your everyday errands, interactions, and investments, you've created a world in which you live. This patch of influence is your reality—it is under your jurisdiction and serves as your base of operations. For the most part, as long as everyone takes care of their own plot of reality, the world keeps turning and everyone stays happy. It's a system that works most of the time, as we all move along in the name of progress, or at least perseverance.

Service-learning is inconvenient in a way, just as I imagine Pythagoras may have annoyed a few people by suggesting that the earth was actually spherical in nature. My first encounter with service-learning happened in my first year at Calvin, through my residence hall's community partnership with the Campfire U.S.A. branch at Camelot Woods. Over the course of one year, and then another, the students and leaders in

that organization made their way into my world as I made my way into theirs. My patch of reality suddenly developed a new dimension as another patch, just as real, began to merge with mine. Moreover, that patch was located just down the road from Calvin. It had been there long before I came along, and would continue after I left, which I did. Eventually I moved out of the residence hall and into new spaces, and apart from the occasional chance interaction, my reality and the Camelot Woods reality parted ways. We moved along, like two paths running in the same general direction, but out of sight of one another.

I would often wonder what was happening in the Camelot Woods patch that was once a part of my world, in the way one might wonder about a story discontinued. But now, beginning my final year at Calvin, I find I've come full circle in a winding sort of way. During a brief, but good conversation, Sherri Dale, the Site Coordinator at Camelot Woods, told



me excitedly that the students have since discovered a passion for drama production, practicing extra hours outside of homework time to memorize lines and rehearse roles. After a challenging year, it seemed the Camelot Woods program had become invigorated with new passion. In the span of a few short minutes, my world re-inflated as a window of realization opened up: *This world is not my own. There are things happening all over the place, of which I am not a part, that make this world—the real, 3D world—a place of unimaginable joy.*

Things are happening outside our patches of reality. We have nothing to do with them, but somehow, they still have something to do with us. May we rejoice in a 3D world!

Fall 2010 S-LC Staff



Front row left to right: Rachel Victor (ABSL Education), Ashley Pace (CPC Coordinator), Karen Van Dyke (Pre-College Programs Liaison), Tu Danh (Communications)

Middle row: Jennie Byker (Transportation and Blood Drive), Rachel Young (ABSL Arts, Languages), Chris Van Zanen (Department Assistant), Maria Post (Research and Database), Christina Crider (Site Development), Melanie Roorda (ABSL Social Sciences)

Back row: Liesje Brouwer (ABSL Administrative Coordinator), Noah Kruis (Associate Director), Megan Kruis (Associate Director), Jeff Bouman (Director), Kyle Schaap (Spring Break Trips), Scott Hofman (ABSL Natural Sciences)



Service-Learning Center
1765 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49545-4404