

A high-angle, nighttime photograph of a city street. On the left, a large, multi-story brick building with many windows is illuminated from within. The street below is dark, but the sidewalks and building facades are lit up. In the distance, other city buildings are visible, some with lights on. The street is filled with light trails from cars, with a prominent red light trail in the foreground. The overall scene is a vibrant, urban night view.

Community Based Learning Report

Illuminating the Road to Knowledge

MARY ANN SHAW CENTER FOR
PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
2006-2008

Intersecting Paths

From the Directors' Desk

The photo by Paul Belton '10 (LCS) that appears on the front cover of this report symbolizes the intersecting paths that afford opportunities for students, faculty, and community partners to work together on Community Based service learning and research. The Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service (CPCS) helps construct routes along these paths through learning and sharing to reach the desired outcomes for our Community Based experiences.

Through its Community Based Service Learning Program, CPCS provides guidance and support for Syracuse University faculty as they develop their service learning curriculum. While developing projects, courses, and student placements, CPCS works with our community partners to help meet their needs. We provide orientation materials for students and faculty, as well as help transport students to their community sites to the extent resources allow. CPCS also partners with the Risk Management Department to advise faculty and community

partners on risk management/liability policies and procedures. Gathering assessment/evaluation data to help improve experiences and plan future courses/projects is an essential part of our partnership work.

We hope you will enjoy reading about some of the Community Based service learning and research experiences our students have had over the past two years as they make their way along the road to engaged citizenship.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kirwin Heintz *Elizabeth Occhino*

Pamela Kirwin Heintz
Director

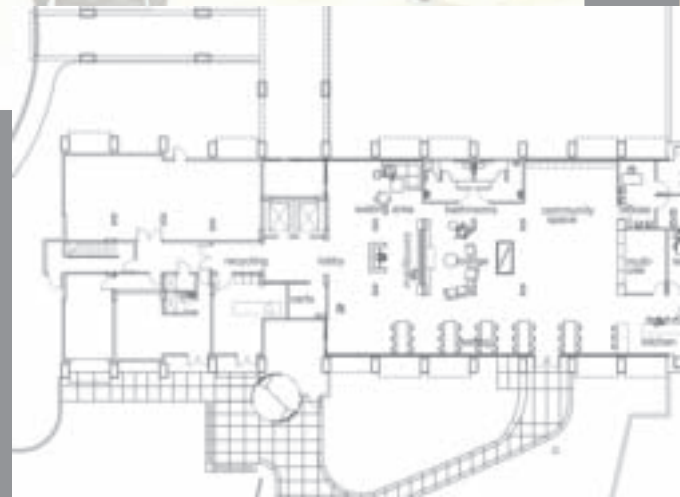
Elizabeth Occhino
Assistant Director of
Service Learning

*Cover and background photos used with permission from Paul Belton '10 (LCS)
Connective Corridor at Harrison Street facing S. Warren Street*

Designing with Residents – Vinette Towers Project

Lori Brown, assistant professor in the School of Architecture, recognizes that reciprocal relationships are crucial for student learning. During the fall 2007 semester she developed a Community Based service learning project in partnership with the Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA). Four architecture students and one geography graduate student worked with SHA residents to "begin the process of redesigning Vinette Towers' first floor, a space that has not seen major renovation since its inception in 1973." (Lori Brown)

Owned and operated by the Syracuse Housing Authority, Vinette Towers is a residential high-rise building located on the north side of Syracuse. Residents who live in the towers had an active voice in the planning and redesign. The process included meetings with building staff, an anonymous seven-page survey distributed to each tenant, two follow-up focus group meetings, and resident-taken photographs documenting the way in which they and their neighbors use the first-floor space. According to Professor Brown, with tower residents' input on how best they would like to utilize the new space, the project "took pains to construct a solution *with*, not just *for*, the residents." She is confident that the project was a successful learning experience for her students and the residents. "The recognition that many of Vinette Towers' residents spend upwards of an hour per day on the first floor helps to reframe the space as a critical point for maintaining the building and its community," she says. "The major goal of our project was to determine a physical layout that could better correspond with the social reality of the space. We believe we have designed it."



Student/Faculty Voice

Rewarding Experience

For someone like me, who had never tutored anyone, let alone a refugee from Somalia, my service learning experience was 100 percent unique and equally rewarding. I worked at the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) Refugee Resettlement Center in Syracuse, tutoring kids between the ages of 11 and 17 in subjects from math to English to history. The first day of volunteering, I entered the center not knowing what to expect. Would the kids be open and willing to learn? Would they resent a privileged college kid coming to their neck of the woods and acting like he knew it all? I soon found out that kids are kids no matter where they are from; none of them like doing homework (who does?), but if you apply yourself to teaching them and make it interesting, they will usually return your enthusiasm with equal or even more zeal.

I've always heard that the gift of knowledge is the greatest thing you can give someone, but I never really understood just how true that statement was until I was able to give that gift myself. On one day of tutoring, I was working on a fill-in-the-blank exercise with a 16-year-old named David. There was a word bank of verbs to choose from, and he had to pick the one that fit correctly in the sentence. At first, he struggled with the definitions of the verbs, and although he understood many of them, he just couldn't grasp others. Noticing this, I decided to put the homework on hold for a minute and try and make up a story that he could relate to about each of the verbs. "To settle," for example, was a verb that I related to his coming to America from Africa. He instantly picked it up. After going through all of the verbs in similar fashion, we went back to the homework, and he did the last half of the homework completely right with no help from me. That, I can honestly say, was one of the best feelings I've ever had in my life. I realized then that knowledge really is the best gift you can give someone because it never gets old or worn, you use it every day, and—the best part—you can re-gift it. I left the center that day on top of the world, and I get the same feeling every time I go back.

Reflecting on this process, I think I may have learned more in one two-hour session from these kids than they learned from me in all the hours spent together. How to rationalize the denominator or the function of the cell nucleus is one thing, but the facts about life I learned from these kids don't even compare. Every single one of them is 10 times more selfless than the average American. When asked about what they want to do with their lives, their responses are always things like, "Get an education" or "Help my family." I've even heard "Fix Africa." These are incredible dreams for people who have been shunned, persecuted, and disadvantaged for most of their lives. It gives you an amazing sense of hope for humanity and might even inspire you to go out and fix something yourself.

—Marty Gottlieb-Hollis '11, A&S



Did your community service experience help you to understand your course materials?

"Our course materials are very helpful and relevant, but it's difficult to become a successful teacher without actually teaching. This experience provided that opportunity."

—LIN 422 - College of Arts and Sciences '08

"It helped me to more fully understand the give-and-take relationship from both parties that is vital to service learning."

—WRT 205 - College of Arts and Sciences '10

"In the service learning class, we analyze several social issues, such as illiteracy, minimum wage, and poverty, that we are exposed to at the site where we are placed."

—WRT 205 - Whitman School of Management '10



WRT 205

Participation Data

Community Based Service Learning Data

Breakdown by Affiliation

	2006-2007	2007-2008
First-Year Students	22%	21%
Sophomores	20%	31%
Juniors	19%	24%
Seniors	39%	20%
Other-Graduate Students	0.4%	4%

Food for Thought

Tanya Horacek, associate professor in the College of Human Ecology Nutrition and Hospitality Management Program, coordinates community engagement initiatives for students enrolled in the nutrition program. Students assist in the development of menus; write grants to improve fruit and vegetable intake at the farmers’ market; work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Family Cooking Program; conduct nutrition screening at the Living Room; assist with meal preparation at Meals on Wheels, and the Samaritan Center; and provide nutrition advocacy and awareness at senior centers and Community Based organizations throughout the city.

Service Learning Participants by School/College

Primary College	2006-2007	2007-2008
College of Arts and Sciences	22%	13%
College of Human Ecology	11%	29%
College of Visual and Performing Arts	6%	8%
L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science	2%	2%
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications	7%	3%
School of Architecture	1%	1%
School of Education	2%	4%
School of Information Studies	3%	1%
Whitman School of Management	28%	26%
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry	17%	13%

* These numbers reflect faculty, courses, programs, and projects working directly with CPCS.

Community Based Student Placement Sites

AIDS Community Resources	Chadwick Residence	Iroquois Nursing Home	Ronald McDonald House
Alzheimer’s Association of CNY	CNY Children’s Miracle Network	L’Arche Syracuse	Rosamond Gifford Zoo
American Cancer Society	CNY Developmental Services Office	Levy Middle School	Rosewood Heights Health Center
American Diabetes Association	Community General Hospital	The Nottingham – Loretto	Sarah House Inc.
Atlantic States Legal Foundation Inc.	Community Learning and Information Center	Meals on Wheels	Sedgwick Heights
American Red Cross	Crouse Hospital	Menorah Park – Jewish Home of CNY	Shea Middle School
ARC of Onondaga – Parkside Children’s Center	Dorothy Day House	Mental Health Association	Southside Charter Academy
Assisi Center	Dunbar Association	Mercy Works Inc.	St. Francis Adult Day Program
Atonement Child Care Center	Dunbar at Hughes Elementary	Museum of Science and Technology	SUNY Upstate Child Care Center
Beaver Lake Nature Center	Eastwood Senior Center – Peace Inc.	Northeast Community Center	SUNY Upstate Medical University
Bellevue Middle School Academy	Enable	Northside CYO	SCSD Refugee Resettlement Program
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Everson Museum of Art	Nurturing World Child Care Center	Syracuse Jewish Family Services
Bishop Foery Foundation	Faith Hope Community Center	Onondaga Community Living	Syracuse Parks, Recreation and Youth Programs
Boys & Girls Club – Central Village	F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse Inc.	Onondaga County Library Branches	The Determination Center
Boys & Girls Club – East Fayette Street	Food Bank of Central New York	Onondaga County Sheriff’s Office	The Living Room
Boys & Girls Club – Hamilton Street	Francis House	Partners in Arts Education	The New Environment Institute
Brady Faith Center	Franklin Magnet School for the Arts	Partners in Learning Inc. (WSLC & MANOS)	The Salvation Army
CAFÉ Plus	Girls Inc. of Central New York	Head Start Program – Peace Inc.	United Way of Central New York
Camp Fire USA CNY Council	Habitat for Humanity	Planned Parenthood	University Hospital
Cathedral Academy of Pompei	Habitat for Humanity (SU/ESF)	Project Connection – Peace Inc.	VA Hospital
Centers for Nature Education Inc.	Home Headquarters Inc.	R.E.A.C.H. Tutorial Program	Van Duyn Home & Hospital
Central Technical Vocational Center	Housing Visions	Rescue Mission	Vincent House
	Ida Benderson Center		Westcott Community Center
	Interreligious Food Consortium		Wilson Park Community Center

Community Voice

Enable Participants Work with SU Writing Students to Create Display at Bird Library

Writing with the Community is a service learning class that focuses on disability studies. For this project, students reassigned meaning to “disability” through communication, experience, and the development of a co-authored life story for each participant in Enable’s day hab program. Throughout the project, students had an opportunity to interact with participants at Enable and on the campus. “This experience gave each of us insight into the daily life of somebody who is disabled and also gave each of them a chance to tell their own story,” commented one student. “We then took their story that they voiced to us and collaboratively wrote a piece with them that accurately portrayed their life.”

As part of the project, day hab participants were given complete access to the costume department of the Syracuse University theater program. Each individual selected costumes that would transform them into the idol, role model, etc., of their choosing. **Inner Selves** includes photographs of the participants in character followed by the text that the students and participants penned. This joint venture leaves the semantics of inclusion in the textbooks and offers a truly realistic view of adults helping one another to achieve a meaningful and innovative outcome.

Jimmy Curtin, coordinator of the day hab program, feels that **Inner Selves** has proven to be an exciting and productive opportunity for participants to learn in the most inclusive forum of them all—the community. “The collaboration or, better still, the friendships that have developed between the participants of our program and the SU students are unparalleled in the rhetoric of inclusion,” he said. “The combination of Syracuse University and Enable is inspiring as these two intrinsically different populations prove that relationships are built upon passion, not ability.”



One of the most exciting CPCS Community Based learning collaborations during the spring 2008 semester was the partnership with Jimmy Curtin, coordinator of Enable’s Day Habilitation Program, and Zosha Stuckey, instructor for WRT 205: Writing with the Community. This service learning class project resulted in **Inner Selves**, “a display that articulates the thoughts and emotions of the Enable participants.” (Jimmy Curtin) The photographs and the text related to each photo were on display at the Biblio Gallery in Bird Library through July 11.

Used with permission from Jimmy Curtin

Community Partners’ Meeting

The Community Partners’ Meeting, hosted annually by CPCS, gives faculty, staff, and community partners the chance to get together to share information, suggest programmatic changes, and network. It also provides CPCS the opportunity to thank community organizations that have been our partners throughout the years. The 2007 meeting was held at the Warehouse, giving our partners a chance to learn more about the community space and possibilities of this wonderful site. The program included presentations about the Connective Corridor and First Book National. Writing Program faculty members Steve Parks and Jason Luther facilitated a discussion about a possible community writing space. The 2008 meeting, held at the Goldstein Student Center, had nearly 80 community members and faculty in attendance. Eileen Schell, chair and director of the Writing

Program, updated our partners about the community writing space discussed last year and also talked about the 10-year collaboration between the Writing Program and CPCS. Jimmy Curtin, program coordinator with Enable who connected with CPCS at last year’s Community Partners’ Meeting, spoke about his experience with the spring semester-long **Inner Selves** writing and art project completed by students in WRT 205. Additionally, Angela Tucciarone shared stories about her experiences with WRT students who helped develop marketing materials for the American Red Cross.

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