



Service-Learning Center

2017 NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM
RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION
Abby Kroon & Anna Selles

In February, a group of students and staff from the Service-Learning Center (S-LC) were able to escape the cold and head to Tallahassee, FL for the Dalton Institute on College Student Values held at Florida State University. We were there to learn, to accept the Institute's Best Practice Award for our Residence Hall Community Partnerships (RHCP) program, including a presentation about the program, and to present research conducted this past summer about partnerships.

The Dalton Institute happens annually for professionals in higher education with the focus on character, leadership, and service. We were honored to receive the Best Practice Award for our Residence Hall Community Partnerships (RHCP) program.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION
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to a community partner. This allows us to offer our partners a steady pool of college students year after year. The program has many levels of leadership and character development: the Associate Director oversees the RCHP Student Coordinator, who works with the Community Partnerships Coordinators (CPCs), who are the students who live in the residence halls and bring residents to the partnerships. Throughout the year students learn about the neighborhoods their partners are in, social issues, and how to be an engaged community member.

At the conference we were able to present about this program, with the hope that other colleges or universities might be able to take our program and implement it in their own settings. Sue Garza from the Cook Library Center joined us in Tallahassee to give a partner perspective of the program. Abby Kroon, the RHCP Coordinator, gave the student perspective, Andrew Haggerty gave an overview of the program, and recent

alumnus Johnson Cochran talked about the assessment portion of the program.

Jeff Bouman and Anna Selles presented a session entitled "Solving Wicked Problems: Campus-Community Partnerships as Opportunities for Student Engagement." Drawing from summer McGregor research, they addressed the rationale for developing and nurturing reciprocal campus-community partnerships that allow students to learn more deeply and enable the college to participate in the life of the community. The session highlighted programs including Plaster Creek Stewards, the Cook Library Residence Hall Partnership and the Calvin Nursing department's community engagement as examples of successful reciprocal partnerships. Jeff and Anna acknowledged the complexity of developing and maintaining partnerships as well as the rewards of strong partnerships, which contribute to the

issues associated with tasting chlorine in water? This is a multi-year effort. Results of the work are expected to improve access to safe water in rural Ecuador while providing a transferrable framework for similar challenges faced throughout the world.

Students and faculty from history (archeology) and engineering are working with partners in Umm al-Jimal, Jordan to preserve and repurpose an ancient water catchment and delivery system for use by a densely populated community that surrounds the archeological site. Much of the work is focused on establishing a complete understanding of the water catchment area and the existing conveyance/storage system (engineered and constructed over a millenia ago during a Roman era) that is activated bi-annually during rainy seasons. To fully understand the entire system, hydrologic and hydraulic computer models will be developed. Ultimately, the goal of this engineering

students leave lectures with the same

addresses of their representatives, and a list of policies and issues that they could write to their representatives about. Additionally, the S-LC provided Beyoncé inspired postcards with statements such as, “Hold Up” “Here’s What I think...” and “Ok, Hear Me Out.” as well as “No Human is Illegal.”

The Lemonade theme was inspired by Beyoncé, a favorite artist in our office who is often listened to and discussed at great lengths. We chose to watch Lemonade, the visual album because our office often discusses the role of art in advocacy, and the S-LC wants to showcase the power of art in addressing injustice. Beyoncé’s album puts black womanhood at the forefront and addresses the intersections of race and gender.

All in all, the event was a success as approximately 50 students showed up to take action on issues they cared about. Additionally, other offices have made letter writing an accessible action step. Student Senate hosted a week-long campaign in which students could stop by at any time to collect supplies to write to their representatives. While we know this is not the only way students can stay politically active, Lemonade, Lemonade & Letter Writing provided a stepping stone for those who were tired of feeling hopeless and desired to speak up. ♡

**S-LC, EDUCATION 202, AND SCHOOL PLACEMENTS:
EACH CHILD HAS A STORY TO TELL
PROFESSOR DEBRA BUURSMA**

Seventy-five. That’s the number of matches Beth, the Service-Learning Center (S-LC) Coordinator for EDUC 202, made this spring between Calvin students

and local school classrooms. Every semester, the EDUC 202 Coordinator strategizes through a complex network of schedules, preferences, and transportation variables until every student can be placed for a least 13 hours in a P-12 classroom. If you have ever tried to schedule meetings with another Calvin student, you can appreciate the difficulty of this task. So, why do it? Critical learning happens through EDUC 202 placements. Stories of people emerge from classrooms, helping us think deeply about difference, justice, and the potential for transformation. While Calvin students support teachers by working with individuals or small groups of students, the learning far exceeds the service; their own stories change as they (1) expand their experience of diverse schools, classrooms, and students; (2) think critically by working closely with at least one “at-risk” learner; (3) find a safe place to observe and analyze conceptual complexity in teaching-learning activity; and (4) bridge theoretical, conceptual, and empirical ideas about difference and development to the professional practice of teaching diverse learners.

Diversity

In EDUC 202, The Learner: Development and Diversity, Calvin students discover that school classrooms vary significantly. They begin to explore how their experiences - or lack of experiences - may affect educational justice. For example, one student, Levi, writes, “this school experience...is very different than any school experience I have had growing up. As Levi reflected on his story, the stories of the racially diverse students he was encountering, and course readings about disparities in educational programs such as overrepresentation of students of color in special education, questions and considerations emerged: “We need

to recognize that each child has a story to tell; if we are willing to listen, we may have a better understanding.... How are we as future educators going to make sure that we not only properly diagnose a disability, but also include these students in our classroom environment?"

Cultural Hybridity & Assumptions

Spending time in a classroom free from teacher or student responsibilities student offers a unique, rare window for close observation and listening. These real-life learning slices support deeper understanding of abstract concepts. Another student, Britt, applied the concept of cultural hybridity and the danger of assumptions to her placement experience.

"Hybridity is important to understand as a teacher (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This concept states that... you cannot just assume you know who students "are" based on looks. The chapter recognizes the danger ... in overgeneralizing a culture. A teacher cannot assume that everyone in one culture will respond to things a certain

way. ...This [course] material connects very directly to the situation in Miss J's classroom... two students...speak Arabic and Kinyarwanda.It is important not to make assumptions...because they have a hard time communicating with her in English. [A teacher] should get to know learners to find out how they learn and can help by making adjustments...in the classroom. The hybridity in her classroom is a very real experience for these students as they travel between dominant and non-dominant cultural experiences."

The Complexity of Care

Service-learning placements designed within courses offer exciting places for shared goals and outcomes. For example, EDUC 202 and the S-LC are both interested in supporting students' developing sophistication for an ethic of care. "People and places matter, and the work of the S-LC is to foster a disposition of care and responsibility rooted in faith, knowledge, relationships, and experience" (Jeff Bouman, SLC newsletter 2016). Likewise, EDUC 202 considers care as a necessary component when teaching diverse learners. Calvin students grapple with the real complexities teachers face designing a caring teacher practice as demonstrated by one student, Justine.

"Noddings' theory of care (Nieto & Bode, 2013, pp 255-257) suggests that whether and how teachers and schools care for students can make an immense difference in how students experience schooling. When teachers show that they care for



STUDENTS FROM GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL TAKING A BREAK FROM STUDYING

students through high expectations, great support, and rigorous demands, students perform better academically..... Classroom management is a bit of a problem in this classroom. I wonder if [the teacher] could apply some of the suggested ways of showing care and if this would improve the obedience level in the classroom? She...greet the students in the morning, but maybe the classroom environment could be adjusted.... Do the students know that she cares about them?

people before so this [placement] was a new experience for me. I quickly learned... differences between their culture and the culture I had grown up in.... As a teacher, I hope to discover the passions, values, and interests of my students. 'Cultural Responsiveness'... refers to the integration of the experiences and perspectives of diverse students in instruction and assessment of students. Instead of conforming to one way of learning, I will strive to integrate the cultural experiences of my learners...and create an environment where we can all celebrate one another's diversity."

Each semester, the EDUC 202 Coordinator communicates with EDUC 202 instructors, Calvin students, and local school administrators and teachers through a staggering number of email and personal touch points exceeded only by the breadth and depth of learning that results. Through the S-LC, the course, and community partnerships, student stories reveal and transform knowledge and doing.



The event was timely, as that day President Trump had reinstated the travel ban on Muslim majority countries, a wave of bomb threats to synagogues and Jewish schools around the country occurred, and, the weekend before, a Sikh man had been shot in the arm as a victim of a hate crime in Washington State.

We gathered around to denounce discriminatory acts and to show our solidarity with the human rights of people from different religious communities. To provide groundwork and context, Religion Professor Matt Lundberg spoke about how to show solidarity with other religious communities while still maintaining Calvin's theological convictions. Pictures of local religious communities played on a slideshow as we wrote letters.

Over sixty people showed up at the

S-LC COVENANT: HURT.SILENCE.HOPE

We held an atlas in our lap
Ran our fingers across the whole world
And whispered
Where does it hurt?
It answered

everywhere everywhere everywhere

//silence & meditation //

But hope is a thing
that burrows in our chest.

Therefore, together:

Where there is fear,
May we sow love;

Where there is loneliness,
May we sow companionship;

Where there is hostility,
May we sow hospitality;

Where there is distress,
May we sow peace;

Where there is weariness,
May we sow play;

Where there is longing,
May we sow fulfillment;

Where there is displacement,
May we sow belonging.



Amen.

In the beginning of each year, the SLC student staff create a covenant that becomes a guiding vision for the year. This year's covenant reflects our mourning for the great hurt and brokenness in our community and the world we live in. It also reflects the great hope that we hold for ourselves and others. As you read this, mourn, reflect, and hope along with us.

Young Kuk Kim
First Baptist Church, Grand Isle, LA



This photo was taken during our reflection time. Our group had just come back from the shrimp boat and I decided to have our group discussion time inside the parachute that they had at the church. This brought back so much nostalgia from our elementary Bgit c0ecrklem

Timothy Dykhuis
Koinonia Farms, Americus, GA

At Koinonia Farms in Americus, Georgia, our group learned about farming and hospitality in an intentional community. While there, we ate different things grown on the farm, like greens from their garden or some of their grass-raised beef. Along with this form of hospitality, we were also invited in to join the simple, daily rhythms of life on a farm. I enjoyed learning about how a straightforward commitment to intentional community was used so powerfully during the Civil Rights Movement, a reminder that the way we do our daily work can matter immensely.






