Service Learning Symposium Set for June 14

“From Making Connections to Making Commitments: Improving Pedagogy, Engaging Students, and Building Communities” will be the theme of the Third Annual Service Learning Symposium at Western Carolina University on Thursday, June 14.

Dr. Richard (Rick) Battistoni, a nationally recognized service-learning scholar and author, will be the lead presenter. Representatives from Western, Elon University, N.C. State University, Young Harris College, and the University of Kentucky will make presentations on various service-learning topics.

Dr. Battistoni is Professor of Political Science and Public Service at Providence College, and is author of *Civic Engagement across the Curriculum: A Resource Book for Faculty in All Disciplines*. He served from 1994 through 2000 as Founding Director of the Feinstein Institute for Public Service at Providence, the first U.S. degree-granting program combining community service with the curriculum. He also developed and directed service-learning programs at Rutgers and Baylor universities.

Dr. Battistoni will cover four topics: “From Community Service to Civic Engagement,” “Defining and Measuring Civic Learning Outcomes for Students,” “Service as ‘Text’: The Pedagogy of Reflective Practice,” and “Best Practices for Building and Sustaining Community Partnerships.”

The daylong symposium in the A.K. Hinds University Center will begin at 9 a.m. Western’s Provost, Dr. Kyle Carter, and Jane Adams-Dunford, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, will welcome participants.

WCU Makes Mark on Youth Service Day
A total of 622 volunteers participated in the Annual Tuckaseigee River Clean-Up on April 21. The event served as WCU’s contribution to National & Global Youth Service Day, which was “a rousing success,” according to a report from North Carolina Campus Compact.

WCU was one of six NC colleges/universities participating in National & Global Youth Service Day this year.

“We tripled our original goal of mobilizing 500 volunteers for activities on April 20-22 and had a total of 1,623 reported volunteers involved in service around the state,” NC Campus Compact reported. WCU had the largest number of participants.

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Thank You, Dr. Caruso!

When Vice Chancellor Robert Caruso retires this summer, after nine years at Western Carolina University, he will leave a void that will be hard to fill. Sure, his successor will be able to “hit the ground running,” because the Division of Student Affairs is in great shape. But the Division, and the University as a whole, will miss our leader and role model.

As the chief student affairs officer, Dr. Caruso built a solid foundation and a strong structure for his staff and all WCU students to succeed. His work has been enormous – and enormously successful.

In him, the Service Learning Department found a constant, enduring source of support, encouragement, and inspiration. It was he who initiated the university-wide Task Force on Service Learning that led to the creation of the Service Learning Department in 2003. Besides charting a course for the Department as a major unit in the Student Affairs Division, Dr. Caruso provided a veritable cornerstone for the expansion of the Department’s programs and services to the campus (students, faculty, and staff) and the wider community.

You will find his fingerprints on the policy, procedure, and program documents that have guided the work of the Service Learning Department over the years. He was the architect of such initiatives as the Faculty Fellows Program, the Service Learning Symposium, and WCU’s participation in Campus Compact. Furthermore, he created the Committee on Student Learning (with a co-leadership role for the Director of Service Learning) as the fulcrum of a new mechanism for promoting and supporting student affairs-academic affairs collaboration, and he primed the pump with the annual Integration of Learning Award.

As Dr. Caruso retires from this institution, we know he will leave with fond memories and a strong sense of a job well done in the areas of service learning, student leadership, and civic engagement.

For being a consummate leader, mentor, colleague, and friend … for being an inimitable drum major who has touched so many lives, directly and indirectly, through your involvement in the work of the Service Learning Department, we say: Thank you, Dr. Caruso!

– Glenn Bowen

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**What they’re saying…**

- Participating as an interpreter at the Good Samaritan Clinic and at the Bilingual Health Fair was a very rewarding experience, although I felt a little overwhelmed by the responsibility. It made me realize the increasing need for more information and assistance for Spanish speaking people. It also made me realize the need for interpreters and specifically the need for [me] and other individuals to continue studying and learning Spanish. Our community is growing and changing daily. More and more Hispanics are discovering Western North Carolina and North Carolina is discovering the Hispanic community. The Hispanic influence is sprouting up and blossoming anywhere. This is very exciting. What a wonderful addition to our culture. We are experiencing new foods, new music, new friends and, I hope, a new sense of community.

  – Donna Ferrara, a WCU undergraduate in Prof. Patricia Hackett’s Spanish 301 course in Fall semester 2006.

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**“You truly make a difference”**

A 19-member student/staff team participated in a weeklong series of service projects with several social service agencies in Philadelphia during Spring Break, March 5-9. The team consisted of 16 students, two members of the Service Learning staff, and two members of the Service Learning Advisory Committee. One of the service sites was HELP Philadelphia, a West Philadelphia-based nonprofit agency devoted to building “self-sufficiency among homeless and low-income families through the acquisition and/or enhancement of key skills necessary for independent living, such as personal self-esteem, parenting, employment, education, and health care.”

The Volunteer Coordinator expressed the agency’s thanks in a letter to members of WCU’s ASB team:

> The administration, staff and resident families of HELP Philadelphia/PHMC sincerely appreciate the time you, the students of Western Carolina University, spent with us on March 6 and March 9, 2007. It was a joy having each of you.

> Most impressive was your expertise and flexibility in working with our toddlers. They enjoyed the “cuddling” and individualized attention to their needs. You moved around Philadelphia with dexterity, demonstrated in the speed you connected with us from the Sheppard School in the Northeast to keep your appointment with us at 1:00 pm allowing our program to proceed as scheduled. Hopefully your goals were met in terms of having a new, meaningful experience in an urban area with pre-school children.

> Thank you for the privilege of working with you.

  – Naomi Byrd, Volunteer Coordinator, HELP Philadelphia/Philadelphia Health Management Corporation

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- I enjoyed working and knowing I was helping my community. I hope to do more volunteer work in the future.

  – Student in Prof. James Holbrook’s English 102 course, whose service-learning project was with REACH of Jackson County.

- I learned that I can take a stronger role in my community and have fun while helping other people.

- The service experience was fun, and seeing the kids enjoy the event made it worthwhile.

  – Students in Prof. Rey Treviño’s Sport Management 435 course, whose service-learning project was at Fairview Elementary School.

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The Sentinel is published quarterly by the Service Learning Department, Division of Student Affairs, Western Carolina University.

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A Strong Sense of Satisfaction

By Rachel All

Working with children has always been a passion of mine. I love watching them grow and create their own characters after I teach a new theatre technique.

By utilizing what I know about set design from one of my classes and implementing it as part of an ESL (English as a Second Language) children’s play, I was provided with a truly great opportunity for applied learning in a community setting.

My service-learning experience involved what was basically three projects rolled up into one. I was counting this for not only my Theatre course but for my Spanish and Psychology courses as well. I was intimately involved in all aspects of the play, and I found it very rewarding. Not only did I get to communicate with little Hispanic children, but I also got to teach them games to make them more in tune with their characters, and I found it very rewarding. Not only did I get to communicate with little Hispanic children, but I also got to teach them games to make them more in tune with their characters, and I found it very rewarding. Not only did I get to communicate with little Hispanic children, but I also got to teach them games to make them more in tune with their characters, and I found it very rewarding.

I really enjoyed working on the set for the play because I learned about teamwork and I implemented what I had learned thus far in the Theatre course. By working in a group, each of us learned how to collaborate to make sure that the play was successful. I found communication to be key to the success of the project. Also, by going to the script as a guide on how to make the set and figuring out exactly what was needed, the group could create the world that the script set up. The script gave us many liberties to be as creative as we wanted since the play was based on a fairy tale.

After reading the script, the group came together and came up with ideas on how to approach the set. For example, some of us wanted it to be as simple as possible, giving an enchanted forest feel, whereas others wanted to make it more Mexican-like since the story originated in Mexico. After debating, we decided that the enchanted forest seemed to be the best setting. After determining exactly what we needed, each of us accepted specific duties so that no one was more overburdened than the other. We all accomplished our designated tasks.

Through this play, I saw how by using what we know about design and what we have learned thus far in the class, we were able to be of service to a program in the community that needed our help. I believe this was an incredible service-learning project that pertained directly to what we were learning and incorporated fundamental ideas that impact theatre: teamwork and hard work.

Service Learning

Service learning involves many aspects of education. It stretches beyond the classroom setting, giving not only a hands-on experience, but also a powerful tool for learning about others.

This alternate learning method gives a broader spectrum for students to learn from, by not only reinforcing what was learned in this classroom but also by providing an avenue to deal with the stresses of a situation. Learning to handle mishaps and accidents only brings out stronger character where it is needed the most. This is one thing that many future employers look for: how well you can handle stress. Not only does the student garner an enhanced outlook on the material presented in a class, but the people who are working with the student benefit as well. These people who connect with students give a deeper understanding, culturally and emotionally.

As students, we learn from different perspectives and find out most about ourselves, thanks to mixing with different people than perhaps we are used to. Also, if cultures are crossing, we can feel a stronger sense of diversity amongst ourselves and people in the community and appreciate the differences in this world.

To me, the idea of service learning is fantastic because I am able to combine my normal routine with a challenging assignment and give back to the community. I feel a strong sense of satisfaction whenever I complete a project where I make others smile and help people make self-discoveries.

At the same time, while I am helping others, I am learning more about my craft and applying my knowledge to a real-world situation, which is very hard to do while you are sitting in a classroom.

Rachel All is an undergraduate majoring in Spanish at Western Carolina University.
Residents of the Mountain Trace Nursing Center took a trip down memory lane on March 16, when students from Western Carolina University’s Recreational Therapy Association staged a “senior prom” as part of a service-learning project.

The students, who were providing recreational therapy interventions to residents of the Alzheimer’s unit at Mountain Trace as part of their course work, coordinated an evening of dining, dancing, and socializing patterned after the traditional high school senior prom night, reported Peg Connolly, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Recreational Therapy degree program at WCU.

“Based on their positive experiences through service learning and their commitment to do more for the residents, last spring the students began discussing a social event that would reach all residents,” Prof. Connolly said. “Under the direction of adviser Paula Demonet, they collected donations throughout the area, and the response from the residents and staff at Mountain Trace was overwhelmingly supportive.”

About 50 residents took part in the prom, voting for “king” and “queen,” dressing in their best clothes, and clapping to music provided by a bluegrass band that volunteered its time for the event. “We have the highest participation we have ever had from a social event here tonight,” noted Claudia King, Activities Director at Mountain Trace.

Becky Halioua, a senior Recreational Therapy major and president of the WCU Recreational Therapy Association, crowned Cliff Woffler as king and Janet Jones as queen.

– News Services, Office of Public Relations, WCU
(Photos by Mark Haskett)
“Out of the Whee, and into Philly”: Alternative Spring Break 2007

A MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE

By James Contratto

Fifteen students sacrificed the sand and surf of a traditional spring break for service, hard work, and making a difference in someone’s life.

For the third year in a row, Last Minute Productions (LMP), WCU’s student programming board, partnered with the Department of Service Learning to co-sponsor Alternative Spring Break (ASB).

The purpose of ASB is to provide a substance-free spring break experience by incorporating service and volunteer opportunities which are enjoyable, hands-on, and address current issues facing society. The student-led planning committee was composed of sophomores Jason Lineberger and Andie Robins and junior Katie Graunke. This committee planned, budgeted, and supervised the entire spring break trip.

After two years of hurricane clean-up service projects, the committee wanted to provide WCU students with a different ASB experience. The committee, after considerable research, selected Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as the destination. Philadelphia was selected because there was a variety of service needs and a lot of fun (and educational) experiences to be had in that urban area.

Diverse Sites

With the help of Greater Philadelphia Cares, the committee chose five diverse sites within Philly for the group to address issues related to the environment, persons with disabilities, elementary education, hunger, and homelessness.

On the first work day, the ASB team, which included four staff members from the Division of Student Affairs, worked with the Fairmount Park Commission to help clean up a small portion of the 9,100-acre park. The team pulled weeds, cut invasive vines, disassembled fences, created a trail, and picked up trash to help improve the park’s environment. The rest of the week, ASB participants individually selected the service sites that appealed to them the most.

At Philabundance, a food bank working to end hunger and malnutrition in the Greater Philadelphia region, the team helped sort, repack, and stack food items for distribution to shelters, schools, and non-profit agencies. Philabundance relies heavily on the volunteers to help fulfill its mission.

At Isaac Sheppard Elementary School, located in one of the poorest areas of Philadelphia, the WCU team helped tutor struggling third and fourth graders who were preparing for state-mandated standardized testing. Some WCU students got an opportunity to practice conversational Spanish.

At Carousel House, a recreational facility for persons with disabilities, the team engaged in cleaning the gym and updating a mailing list, as well as assisting with a craft project.

Finally, at HELP Philadelphia (a transitional housing program), the WCU team supported initiatives benefiting young mothers who were receiving help to stabilize their lives.

Overall, each ASB team member completed approximately 25 service hours and impacted many lives.

But it wasn’t all work! The team spent time in historic Philadelphia – visiting the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Reading Terminal Market, and Edgar Allen Poe’s house. They also visited the Philadelphia Art Museum, the bustling South Street, and the Franklin Institute. In small groups, participants also took advantage of what the big city had to offer recreationally, such as going to an NHL hockey game, seeing a play, going to a spoken word performance, and sampling multiple rock shows.

The ASB trip opened many of the students’ eyes to different issues facing society. For most, it changed their life. Most importantly, they felt empowered and satisfied that they made a big impact on those they helped. Some are still so excited about their experience in Philadelphia that they are already anticipating ASB 2008.

“I had a blast in Philadelphia and I look forward to joining my peers on another ASB trip next year,” said Chad York. In his reflection, Wil Owens said ASB gave him “a real appreciation for the things that my mom sacrificed for me and my family [as we were] growing up. Similarly, Lisa Cameron spoke about her appreciation of “the things that really matter.” And for Anthony Ballard, the experience provided an impetus to do more volunteer work especially with children.

ASB was a meaningful experience for everyone who sacrificed their time, energy, and their spring break to lend a hand to people in need.

James Contratto is Assistant Director for University Center Programs.

“A Holistic Understanding of Myself and My Place in the World”

Excerpts from My Journal

March 9: We went to Sheppard Elementary School today in one of the absolute poorest parts of the city. So much poverty, some of the worst crime rates in the city, drugs ... yet these kids still come to school. And looking at their faces, you forget all the other stuff. They are funny, cute, charming, and sweet! I hope they retain some of these traits that will truly make them who they are as they grow older.

The scenery, the sculptures, the murals, everything about walking in the city is an “experience.” It feels so good to be in another city, another place.

May 10: Not a day has gone by that I haven’t thought about the people and places visited on the Alternative Spring Break trip in March. I feel grateful, fulfilled, connected, and aware. Grateful for what I have, for my ability to give, for my ability to receive. Grateful for all the good that goes on daily. Fulfilled, for upon my return, I felt as if there was no more room to be filled or to receive, but only room to give, to support, and to encourage and share with others. Connected, to the world and her people, and to the students on the trip. Aware of all that needs to be done, aware of my privilege, of my abilities, and of my struggles and next steps. It is amazing how something as simple as tutoring elementary school kids, packing boxes full of food, tearing down a fence, and babysitting children while their mothers attend an anger management class can bring about a holistic understanding of myself and my place in the world. I can think of only a handful of other experiences in my life that have impacted me as much as the seven days spent in Philadelphia.

The Sentinel, April – June 2007
PARTICIPANTS AND ACHIEVERS RECOGNIZED AT STELLAR EVENT

Western Carolina University’s Service Learning Department presented awards for community service, academic achievements, teaching, research, and partnerships on April 26. Students Rachel All, Julie Mann, Lori Saddler, Lauren Kaufmann, Lacy Ensley, Chris Whisenhunt, Donna Ferrara, Tyler “Tate” Apodaca, Shea Megia-Croft, Kimberly Nesbit, Garrett Fisher, and Patricia Graham were honored for outstanding academic achievements.

Faculty members Debra Connelly, Bill Richmond, and Barbara Jo White received awards for teaching while Debra Burke was recognized for research. The Department of Communication, Theatre, and Dance received the Leading Light Award, emblem of outstanding achievement in integrating service learning into the curriculum. Faculty work by Susan Brown-Strauss, Michael Caudill, Debra Connelly, Donald Connelly, Claire Eye, Glenda Hensley, Luther Jones, and Linda Nicodemus contributed to the department’s award-winning achievement.

Partnership awards went to three individuals as well as a local hospital, a business development center, and a municipality. (Details on page 7).

The awards were presented by Dr. Mickey Randolph, a Service Learning Fellow; Mardy Ashe, Director of Career Services; Dr. Ronda Bryant, Director of Enrollment Support; Dr. Gibbs Knotts, Chairman of the Medford Service Learning Scholars Selection Committee; Dr. Anna McFadden, Director of the Coulter Faculty Center; Dr. Richard Beam, Chair of the WCU Faculty; and Jane Adams-Dunford, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Service Learning Fellows Jeanne Dulworth, Glenda Hensley, Mickey Randolph, and William (Bill) Richmond were also recognized during the Service Learning Awards Banquet in the University Center Grand Room. So, too, were the Medford Scholars, as well as members of Civic Place, the living-learning community.

Keynote speaker Lisa Keyne, Executive Director of North Carolina Campus Compact, pointed to the work being done by WCU students, staff, and faculty in promoting and supporting civic engagement. She noted that Chancellor Bardo had signed the Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, signaling the University’s commitment to civic engagement.

“You are making a difference,” Dr. Keyne told the University community. She urged students in particular to continue serving the community and helping to make people’s lives better. Dr. Keyne quoted Gandhi: “What you can do in response to the ocean of suffering may seem insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.”

Dr. Keyne continued: “What more can we do – you and I – to make a difference where we are? Not for our glory, but for the benefit of humankind. It’s an awesome vision and responsibility – to work towards creating a true Shangri-la – but we are called to take part. We start by being the change we wish for the world. … Remember why you are doing what you are doing. You are making a difference. Don’t let your light go out, don’t weary in doing good.”

Service Learning Fellow Bill Richmond formally introduced the keynote speaker.

Sylva’s Mayor, Brenda Oliver, thanked the University for supporting the community through the service-learning program. Mayor Oliver mentioned Jackson County’s “Bridges to Community,” the Sylva Recycling Project, and the Community Table as examples of community initiatives supported by the University.

Dr. Beth Tyson Lofquist, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (who represented the Provost), also spoke at the banquet.

Student Patrick Detloff (baritone), accompanied by faculty member Brad Martin on the piano, gave a rendition of “This Nearly was Mine,” from South Pacific, and “Everyone says Don’t,” from Anyone Can Whistle.

Dr. Robert Caruso, retiring Student Affairs Vice Chancellor, received a standing ovation – and a special gift from the Service Learning Department – after Director Glenn Bowen paid tribute to him as “an inimitable drum major who has touched so many lives” here at WCU.

The Third Annual Service Learning Awards was a stellar event featuring an exhibition of student and faculty work; a slide show highlighting the programs of the Service Learning Department; musical renditions; a delicious dinner; the presentation of certificates, pins, and plaques; and congratulatory speeches. From the welcome by Jane Adams-Dunford to Medford Scholar Ramona Dowdell’s expression of appreciation, the two-hour event was a memorable celebration of learning and service to the community.
SIX COMMUNITY AGENCIES WIN PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Western Carolina University recently presented six Western North Carolina community agencies with Service Learning Partnership Awards in recognition of exemplary collaboration with University students and faculty working on community service projects that are linked to the academic curriculum.

Recipients of 2007 Service Learning Partnership Awards:

- **Jimmi Buell**, Health Educator, Jackson County Department of Public Health. In the Spring semester, Ms. Buell collaborated with Dr. Paul Jacques, WCU Assistant Professor of Management, on a service-learning project for one of his Management classes. Students conducted a “walkability” assessment in Sylva to determine what areas need improvement to facilitate a walking-for-exercise program.

- **Dr. Alberto Bernal Millán**, a Mexican physician. Dr. Bernal dedicated four weeks to helping WCU Spanish students improve their Spanish language proficiency, focusing on real-life clinical scenarios so that students would be ready to serve as interpreters during their service time at the Good Samaritan Clinic of Jackson County, as well as at the first bilingual health fair, “Cuida tu salud – Take Care of Your Health,” last October. Fr. Ray Williams accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Bernal.

- **Dr. Paul Strop**, English as a Second Language Program Coordinator with Jackson County Public Schools. Dr. Strop’s collaboration with WCU’s Modern Foreign Languages Department resulted in a successful ESL program through which WCU Spanish students fulfilled a course requirement. He shared his expertise in second language acquisition and Latin American culture with students in upper-level Spanish courses to prepare them for tutoring at Cullowheee Valley School.

- **Pardee Hospital** of Henderson County. Through their partnership, Pardee and Western bring educational opportunities at the graduate level in the field of gerontology to working professionals through a combination of distance and continuing education activities. In cooperation with the Henderson County medical and allied health community, Pardee and Western have organized and presented the “Great Life Series” of healthy aging education programming at Pardee Clinic of Jackson County, as well as at the first bilingual health fair, “Cuida tu salud – Take Care of Your Health,” last October. Dr. Paul Strop accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

- **The Small Business and Technology Development Center**. A business development service of the University of North Carolina system, the Western regional office of the SBTDC serves the 14 westernmost counties of North Carolina from offices in Cullowhee and Asheville. The center assisted in organizing 15 service-learning projects in 10 courses and independent studies, supporting more than 100 students. It provided similar support in the past with its sponsored student projects providing nearly 5,000 hours of service in 2006. Tom Fleckenstein, an SBTDC counselor, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

- **The Town of Sylva**. Municipal officials led by Jay Denton, Town Manager, and Stacy Knotts, Town Board member, collaborated this Spring with WCU faculty, staff, and students on a major recycling program. WCU communication students participated in a public relations and educational campaign to promote the recycling program. Fr. Ray Williams accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

Certificate Recipients

**For Community Service:** (Individual) Students Ramona Dowdell, Maurice Guillatte, Antonio Griggs, Wil Owens, Lisa Cameron, Cory Braun, Patrick Garrett, Chad York, Summer Williams, Alan Seary, John Green, Katie Graunke, Andie Robbins, Jason Lineberger, Jessica Elliott, and Anthony Ballard; staff members Sara Stoltenburg and James Contratto; (Organization) Women’s Rugby Club

**For Partnership as Peer Educators:** Ramona Dowdell, Joshua Fisher, Katie Graunke, Ashley Merrill, and Amber Poling

**For Academic Achievement:** Justin Ahmed, Meredith Gray, Neal Piwowski, Edward Ruschmann, Joseph Schook, Gregory Bozdog, Ashley Britt, William Faulkner, Megan Hazelrigg, John Mullen, David Ramirez, John Szoka, and Lina Vaznevcicute

**For Participation in the Faculty Fellows Program:** Jeanne Dulworth, Glenda Hensley, Dr. Mickey Randolph, and Dr. Bill Richmond

**For Teaching:** Prof. Bruce Berger

**For Meritorious Service:** Elizabeth Walden

**For Partnership Contributions:** Jimmi Buell

-- Bill Studenc
Jackson County Habitat Launches Women Build Project

Jackson County Habitat for Humanity launched a Women Build project in celebration of Women's History Month at Western Carolina University on March 21, when a crew of women volunteers built two storage units on the University Center Lawn. The storage units will be used for Habitat families now having houses built on Gem Creek Road, just off Cullowhee Mountain Road.

Sponsored by Lowe's of Sylva, the Women Build project was organized by the WCU Service Learning Department in collaboration with the Women's Center and Jackson County Habitat. Lowe's of Sylva provided the building materials and transported the storage units to the building site. Nationally, Lowe's is the major sponsor of Habitat's Women Build projects.

The UC Lawn was a beehive of activity as the bang of hammers and the growl of saws filled the air. Students, faculty, and staff worked in hourly shifts and participated in a reflection session at the end of the work day.

Women’s Center Director Sara Stoltenburg noted that the project “gave women students at WCU an opportunity to work together as a team, learn new skills, and provide a valuable community service to the larger community.” She added: “Women from various backgrounds and ages participated in the service project because they believed in making a difference in someone’s life.”

“This was an incredible community partnership and we are thankful for the support given us by so many caring individuals,” stated Joyce Russell, Executive Director of Jackson County Habitat for Humanity. “The Women Build project was a huge success. The spirit of unity and compassion for others filled the air and our hearts as we all worked together to support Habitat families.”

Jackson County Habitat, an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, is a nonprofit Christian organization dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. Habitat for Humanity brings together people with resources and people in need to build simple, decent, affordable houses in Jackson County.

March was declared Women’s History Month nationally in 1987 when Congress approved the expansion of a weeklong celebration that began in 1981. Events throughout the month celebrate the accomplishments of women throughout American history.

Students Participate in Work Day with Cashiers Historical Society during National Volunteer Week

Students from Western Carolina University joined Cashiers Historical Society (CHS) members for a Work Day in April and provided significant improvements to the five-acre Zachary-Tolbert House grounds and woodland.

In response to the National Volunteer Week theme, “Inspire By Example,” these volunteers “truly reflected the power of volunteers in our organization,” a CHS spokesman said.

The new woodland trails now provide a delightful walk along the creek bank and through massive hemlocks and white pines at the historical site. The volunteers cleared the trail of leaves, vines, dead limbs, and debris, and they replaced missing crossties along the edge of the parking lot. They helped to construct three footbridges to improve access to the Zachary and Tolbert Springs and to provide a crossing for a creek on the trail. The volunteers also scrubbed the intricate rock above the Tolbert Spring, revealing the decorative rock artwork that Bubba Tolbert and his father, Mark P. Tolbert, made in 1948.

Civic Place members Emily Abernathy, Julie Primm, and Taylor Walters, worked tirelessly on this day-long project. Kathy Sims, Assistant Director of Service Learning at Western Carolina University, coordinated student participation as part of WCU’s efforts to graduate more students who take classroom theory to real-world practice.

Gillis MacKinnon, Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and other CHS members reported that they “enjoyed working with the engaged students on a delightful work day at the site.”

This year’s National Volunteer Week was April 15-21. National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing an annual celebration of volunteering. Since then, every U.S. President has signed a proclamation promoting National Volunteer Week. The CHS Work Day was Saturday, April 14.
NC Campus Compact Executives Visit WCU

North Carolina Campus Compact Executive Director Lisa Keyne and Assistant Director Leslie Garvin visited Western Carolina University on April 26. The highlight of their visit was Dr. Keyne’s address at the Service Learning Awards Banquet.

Dr. Keyne and Ms. Garvin also participated in a luncheon meeting with administrators, faculty, and students involved in service learning and civic engagement. They later visited WCU’s Mountain Heritage Center, Kneedler Child Development Center, and Civic Place.

Student Affairs Vice Chancellor Robert Caruso and Assistant Vice Chancellor Jane Adams-Dunford attended the luncheon.

Faculty Make Presentations at SoTL Faire

Four presentations at this year’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Faire had a service-learning theme. Members of the Enka-based Nursing Program faculty made two of the presentations.

“Service Learning: Students as Part of the Partnership” was the title of a presentation by Dr. Jean Hill, Assistant Professor of Nursing. Dr. Hill explained the WCU School of Nursing’s academic practice partnership in community health. With co-presenter Dr. Barbara St. John, also an Assistant Professor of Nursing, she also described the service-learning component that allows students to enter the partnership, resulting in a triangular model with positive benefits.

“Promoting International Collaborative Solutions to Global Health Care Issues through Collaborative Service-Learning Initiatives” was the title of a presentation by Dr. Sharon Metcalfe, Assistant Professor of Nursing. Dr. Metcalfe, with co-presenter Bonnie Garner, Visiting Assistant Professor of Nursing, introduced attendees to the collaborative process in establishing international partnerships.

Glenda Hensley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre and a Service Learning Faculty Fellow, made a presentation on “Theatre in Education: Connections and Intersections,” which focused on how the arts integrate and inspire service-learning connections and community partnerships.

Service Learning Faculty Fellows Bill Richmond, Mickey Randolph, Glenda Hensley, and Steve Carlisle, with Service Learning Director Glenn Bowen, discussed the goals and achievements of the Service Learning Fellows Program as well as the challenges of instituting such a program. The title of their presentation was “Faculty Fellows Program: Integrating Service Learning into the Curriculum.”

The Coulter Faculty Center organizes the annual SoTL Faire. The theme of this year’s Faire was “Making Connections.”
Students and faculty at Western Carolina University will assist the town of Canton in its ongoing efforts to fully recover from the devastating floods of 2004, thanks to a grant from a national community-based research program.

The grant of $7,500 is one of 11 grants awarded nationally by Learn & Serve America, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service that provides support to schools, community groups, and higher education institutions to foster service-learning projects.

Through the grant, students from Western’s College of Business will take part in service-learning activities to launch a new initiative, “Canton Revitalization: The Aftermath of Disaster,” designed to develop a comprehensive plan to assist the Haywood County town in its flood recovery efforts and to serve as a model for other towns to follow.

“The remnants of Hurricanes Frances and Ivan left downtown Canton under as much as 12 feet of water, destroying many of the businesses and temporarily closing the paper mill that employed 1,500,” said Dr. Frank Lockwood, WCU Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship, one of the faculty members participating in the project. “Although the waters that flooded the physical infrastructure have receded, the water has not yet fully receded from the city’s psyche, and it continues to have a profound impact on much of the community’s interrelated educational, economic, and social infrastructure.”

During the first year of the three-year project, students in entrepreneurship courses at Western will collect information and “best practices” strategies on community revitalization. During the second year, students will use the information to develop a downtown revitalization plan.

During the final year, students will evaluate the project to determine how the plans may have impacted the social, economic, and educational infrastructure of Canton.

“We believe that Canton will benefit tremendously from this long-term investment, as will the students who come to understand the impact of a natural disaster and the complexity of community revitalization,” said Dr. William (Bill) Richmond, Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems at WCU. “The hope is that this project will result in the creation of a model that other colleges and universities can use in addressing the needs of their communities following significant disasters.”

The student activities in Canton will be coordinated by WCU’s Service Learning Department, which promotes experiential education that integrates community service and classroom instruction, and enhances students’ academic development while fostering social and civic responsibility.

The project is linked to WCU’s proposed Quality Enhancement Plan, a comprehensive University strategy designed to improve student learning. It is a requirement for WCU’s reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Western’s QEP, “Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning at WCU,” is expected to enhance undergraduate student learning by linking together diverse elements of the entire University experience, in and out of the classroom.

In winning the innovation grant, written by Dr. Raymond Barclay, WCU’s Director of Institutional Research and Planning, Western joins the National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative, which is being managed by Princeton University’s Community-Based Learning Initiative and the Bonner Foundation with funding support from the Corporation for National and Community Service.