



# The Service-Learning SENTINEL



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## WCU Named to President's Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction

By Bessie Dietrich Goggins  
WCU News Services

**T**he Corporation for National and Community Service has named Western Carolina University to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction for "exemplary commitment to service and civic engagement" on WCU's campus and beyond.

"Service learning offers our students real-world experience that enhances the quality of their education while benefiting the communities of our region," said WCU Provost Kyle Carter. "To be named to the national Honor Roll – with Distinction – shows that our faculty members are making significant progress in linking their students' educational experience with the community."

Founded in 2006, the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition higher education institutions can achieve for commitment to service learning and civic engagement.

WCU was one of only 83 institutions

nationally recognized with Distinction. Honorees are chosen based on factors such as scope and innovativeness of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the institution offers academic service-learning courses.



During the 12-month period ending June 30, 2008 – the service period considered for this year's award – 5,000 WCU students engaged in voluntary or co-curricular community service, and 2,630 students participated in service-learning activities, said Glenn Bowen, Director of Service Learning. Together, 7,630 students completed 58,300

hours of service, both academic and co-curricular, in the areas of education, community development, environmental conservation, health care, poverty, hunger, and other social issues, Dr. Bowen said.

As part of Make a Difference Day, 55 WCU students, faculty, and staff members participated at six sites in three counties, including Haywood County Habitat for Humanity; REACH of Jackson and Macon

counties, organizations that address domestic violence and sexual assault; and Project FIRE, a heating assistance project organized by Jackson County's Department on Aging. The University's Jacob Medford Service-Learning Scholars served as site leaders and coordinated activities for the day.

Also during the 12-month period, students provided 16,600 hours of community service as part of WCU's Homecoming celebration, and approximately 625 campus and local community members participated in the 24th annual Tuckaseegee River Cleanup, contributing 3,125 hours of service. In addition, more than 30 teams with 250 individuals participated in Relay for Life, which raised more than \$20,000 for the American Cancer Society, and 14 students provided more than 4,200 hours of community service through the NC- ACTS! AmeriCorps Program, which rewards engaged students who complete specific criteria with a monetary educational award.

"Our service-learning program has come a long way in a short time, and we can be justly proud of our achievements," said Dr. Bowen. "As our institutional commitment to service learning has increased, so has faculty and student engagement with the community."

## Honor Roll Recognition: "A big deal" – Chancellor

**T**he recognition that Western Carolina University has received by being named to the President's Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction is "a big deal," declared Chancellor John Bardo.

Speaking at a reception for Faculty Scholarship Celebration Week, Chancellor Bardo noted that WCU was one of 83 institutions nationally to be recognized as a top-tier institution for community service this year. The reception was held in the Hunter Library on February 18.

"This is a major national recognition of what we are doing, and it shows that

Western is "a special place," Dr. Bardo said.

The Corporation for National and Community Service named 635 institutions to the Honor Roll for 2008.

In a statement, Carol Burton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies, said the Honor Roll recognition underscores the University's increasing commitment to community service and service learning.

Dr. Burton said: "External honors do much to validate our internal efforts and expectations and I am thrilled with our recent inclusion in the President's Community Service Honor Roll. I am

particularly pleased that our recognition was elevated to the 'with distinction' category this year because it underscores our increasing commitment to the importance of community service and service learning at WCU. It is a pleasure to recognize the faculty, students, and staff who are engaged in community service – a cornerstone of WCU's mission and key element in WCU's vision for our future."



Bardo

## Faculty and Staff Present and Publish

Western Carolina University faculty and staff members have been making presentations at conferences and publishing articles on service learning and related topics. Faculty Fellows Paul Jacques and Jeanne Dulworth are among faculty members who made presentations at a recent state conference while former Fellow Debra Burke is on the list of journal article co-authors.

Here is a list of some recent presentations:

**Aydlett, L., & Waters, B.** (2008,

September). Project Panama: A model for engagement. Presentation at WCU's Faculty Enrichment and Educational Day. Cullowhee, NC.

**Bowen, G.** (2008, October).

Institutionalizing service learning in higher education: A strategic self-assessment at a regional comprehensive university. Presentation at the 8th International Research Conference on Service-Learning and Community Engagement. New Orleans, LA.

**Bowen, G.** (2008, September). Service learning: An integral component of Western Carolina University's Quality Enhancement Plan. Poster presentation at the WCU Faculty Enrichment and Education Day.

**Bowen, G., & Kiser, P.** (2008, February).

An agenda for service-learning faculty development and persistence. Presentation at North Carolina Campus Compact's 10th Annual Service-Learning Conference. Elon, NC. [Pam Kiser is the Service-Learning Faculty Development Fellow at Elon University.]

**Connolly, P., & Burton, C.** (2008, September). Making its mark: Recreation therapy pilots the QEP. Presentation at WCU's Faculty Enrichment and Educational Day. Cullowhee, NC.

**Dulworth, J.,** (2009, February). Let the excitement begin: Service learning 101. Presentation at North Carolina Campus Compact's PACE Conference. Elon, NC.

**Dulworth, J., & Huff, M. T.** (2008, March). Integrating service learning in the social work curriculum. Presentation at

Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors Annual Conference and 25th Annual Baccalaureate Social Work Education Conference. Destin, FL.

**Jacques, P., & Vracheva, V.** (2009, February). An assessment of dual leadership of instructor and client on participant perceptions of service-learning to both satisfaction and course relevancy. Presentation at NC Campus Compact's 11th Annual Pathways to Achieving Civic Engagement (PACE) Conference. Elon, NC. [Paper by Jacques, P., Garger, J., & Vracheva, V.]

**McFadden, A., Bowen, G., Burton, C., Cooper, C., & Reich, C.** (2008, October). Guided by voices: What student perceptions of learning tell us. Presentation at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

**Zanglein, J., White, B., Nichols, J., Johnson, C., Ponder, H., Hubler, J., & Stuckey, R.** (2008, September). Using service learning to develop professionalism in students. Presentation at WCU's Faculty Enrichment and Educational Day. Cullowhee, NC. [Ponder, Hubler, and Stuckey are Business Law majors.]

The following publications are on the list compiled by the Center for Service Learning:

**Anderson, R. L., Ford, G., & Yanik, P.** (2009). Service learning in the Kimmel School at Western Carolina University. *Proceedings of International Conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering*. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

**Anderson, R. L., Sanger, P., & Smith, M.** (2008). Using student engagement projects in an engineering technology program to stimulate regional economic development. *Proceedings of 2008 American Society for Engineering Education, Southeast*. Memphis, TN.

**Bowen, G. A.** (2008). Service-learning in higher education: Giving life and depth to teaching and learning. In Shalini S, *Service learning: Perspectives and applications* (pp. 13-30). Punjagutta, India: Icfai University Press.

**Bowen, G. A., & Kiser, P. M.** (2009). Promoting innovative pedagogy and engagement through service-learning faculty fellows programs. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 13(1), 27-43. [Pam Kiser is the Service-Learning Faculty Development Fellow at Elon University.]

**Bowen, G. A., Burke, D. D., Little, B. L., & Jacques, P. H.** (in press). A comparison of service learning and employee volunteering programs. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*.

**Bowen, G. A., & Hackett, P. B.** (in press). Developing cultural understanding through Spanish-language learning: A service-learning approach. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*.

**Tapley, E.** (n.d.). Rural murals as public service. *Community Works*. Available at <http://www.communityworksonline.org/>



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## Student Receives Community Impact Award from NC Campus Compact

**W**estern Carolina University student Ramona Dowdell received the 2008 North Carolina Campus Compact Community Impact Student Award during the organization's Annual Student Conference at High Point University on November 8.

Twenty-seven college students across the state received the award for making significant, innovative contributions to their institutions' efforts to address local community needs.

State Senator Vernon Malone of Wake County and the Compact's Executive Director, Dr. Lisa Keyne, presented the award to Dowdell before an audience of more than 250 college students and guests representing 33 higher education institutions. President of High Point University, Dr. Nido Qubein, initiated the ceremony, emphasizing the conference theme, "The Power is Yours."

Ms. Dowdell, a senior majoring in Social Work with a minor in Spanish, is a former Medford Service-Learning Scholar. She has volunteered with various organizations, including the Girl Scouts of Western NC, Habitat for Humanity, and R.E.A.C.H. of Macon



*Ramona Dowdell receives the award from State Senator Vernon Malone and NC Campus Compact Executive Director Lisa Keyne.*

County. She helped to organize WCU's first Alternative Fall Break trip in 2007, marking an expansion of the Alternative Break Program in which she has participated since its inception in 2005.

In 2007-08, she was an organizer of Make A Difference Day projects and served on the Planning Committee for the MLK Day of Service. She

promoted ethnic/cultural diversity primarily through slam poetry and her coordinating role in Western's B.E.S.T. (Black Educational Support Team).

North Carolina Campus Compact is a statewide coalition of higher education presidents and chancellors, established to encourage and support campus engagement in the community.

## WCU Students Present at NC Campus Compact Conference

**F**our students representing Western Carolina University delivered presentations at the 15th annual North Carolina Campus Compact Student Conference in High Point on November 8.

"The Power is Yours" was the theme of annual conference, which was hosted by High Point University. The conference brought students together from across the region to network, share, and learn about best practices and unique innovative ideas in civic engagement.

WCU will host the conference on November 6-7, 2009.

Bessie Goggins, graduate student, and Alan Goggins, junior, presented "WCU's 2008 Alternative Spring Break in Chicago: Life-Changing Experiences

from Service-Learning Sites." They shared their experiences about helping others in an urban environment in Chicago during an Alternative Spring Break trip.

"Alphabet Programming" was presented by Casey Lowe, sophomore. Her presentation offered a wide variety of ideas for implementing new campus and community programs.

Ellen Rowe, sophomore, and Katie Graunke, WCU alumna and Program Coordinator for WCU's Center for Service Learning, presented "Invisible Children Campaign." The presenters discussed how they organized a campus campaign based on the film *Invisible Children: Rough Cut*, and the impact the film had on students. The film documents the harsh realities of

Northern Uganda's night commuters and child soldiers.

The three presentations were sponsored by WCU's Center for Service Learning.

N.C. Campus Compact is a coalition of colleges and universities collaborating to increase campus-wide participation in community and public service. Institutions collaborate to become "engaged campuses" that enhance students' sense of responsibility, citizenship, leadership, and community, while reinvigorating higher education's concern for improving the quality of life in North Carolina.

Twenty WCU students and two staff members attended the conference.

## OUT-OF-CLASS LEARNING EXPERIENCES CAPTURE STUDENT INTEREST



By Chesney Reich

The Committee on Student Learning at Western recently completed a qualitative research project in which undergraduates were invited to describe their learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Thirty-three students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, participated in six focus group discussions. Among the positive learning experiences that students discussed were those that involved some form of active or experiential learning – particularly

service learning – which instilled in them a strong sense of community.

Several students praised learning experiences that allowed them to apply concepts that had previously only been presented theoretically in their classes. One participant declared that “experiential learning rather than the theoretical learning is really cool.”

Other students appreciated faculty members who found creative ways to incorporate course concepts into out-of-class experiences. A student enrolled in a Food Protection and Sanitation class mentioned a class trip to a local grocery store where they practiced making inspections: “I would agree that going off campus, or at least out of the classroom once or twice, can really help. ... Creativity is what’s gonna draw kids in, so if you can come up with a reason to leave [the classroom], then you should.” Another student echoed this sentiment in terms of Western’s unique capacity for cultivating these types of experiences: “[W]e have a chance here to do more hands-on ... out of the classroom stuff because of the small class size. ... [I]f it works here, then we should really go for it.”

Many students expressed a belief in the importance of community both within and outside the university. For example, one student shared her experience at the Community Table in Sylva: “I’ve never done something like that before, and it was pretty interesting. It was fun to meet people in the community. ... It just seems like that’s a good way to learn: keep students interested.” Another recalled participating in an Alternative Spring Break trip during which students provided relief to Hurricane Katrina survivors in Mississippi: “[I]t was amazing. ... I didn’t know people; we all went for different reasons. Some people were required to go for community service hours; some people went because their friends were going; others went because it was the good Christian thing to do. ... I met a lot of cool people.”

Ultimately, the message is clear: Learning experiences that involve out-of-class, hands-on participation are key to capturing and maintaining student interest. When students are given the opportunity to bond with their classmates over a shared learning experience, particularly when it is an experience that allows them to contribute to the good of the larger community, then that experience becomes a significant moment in their education.

*Chesney Reich is Director of the Catamount Academic Tutoring Center and the Office of Professional Examinations. She is a member of the WCU Committee for Student Learning.*

## what they're saying ...

• I have had a lifetime of experience with children and youth in children’s homes. My parents started working at a children’s home in South Carolina when I was four years old. I have spent the past twenty-two years of my life participating, volunteering, teaching and working with these youth in some way. I guess that what I am saying is that I do not have certain assumptions or prejudgments about this client population. I know that each child is in need of acceptance and love just like anybody else. Except, these youth may need more. I still try to watch others as much as possible to learn new and better ways to help these youth with issues and struggles in their lives. No one can ever know too much!

– **Crystal Campbell**, NC-ACTS member

• I am definitely learning about both the agency and the people I am serving. This learning differs from what I have seen in class because it is real life – I am involved in the workings of the agency; so I see why it works the way it does and I see that things are never as cut and dry as a textbook would describe.

– **Elizabeth Adams**, NC-ACTS member

• My personal values easily transpose to social work values – service being one of them. Because I value human relationships and the dignity of all people, service is a natural outpouring of my life.

– **Carolyn Brown**, NC-ACTS member

• I just wanted to let you know about my experience with REACH and babysitting little children. This has been one of the most humbling experiences in my life and I appreciate you requiring your class to volunteer; it has made me a better person! Thank you so much for this learning venture.

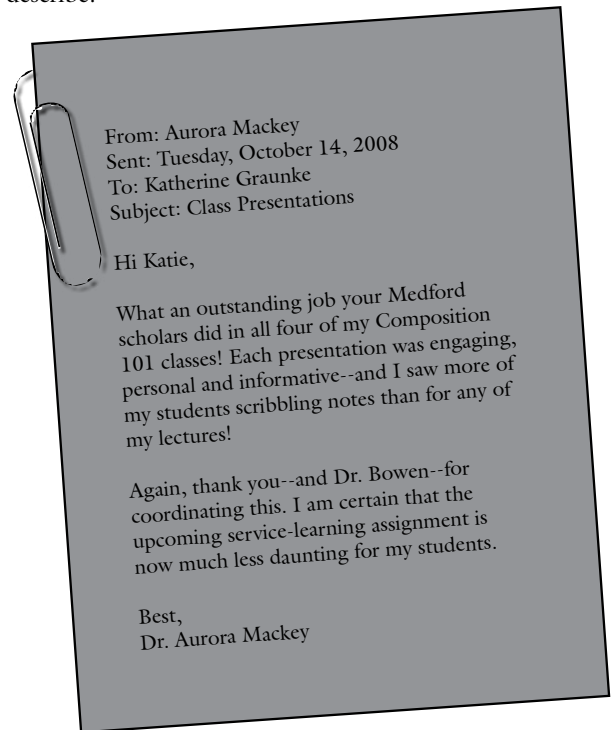
– **Chelsea Akers**, a PSY 363: Behavioral Interventions student, in an e-mail to her professor, **Dr. Mickey Randolph**.

• This experience was an extremely valid one, even though I had my doubts at first. I wasn’t sure what service learning would offer and had looked on it as just more work to add to my schedule. But I believe that having this experience and being able to use my skills in a comprehensive manner, and learning more about a different field than my own was very rewarding.

– **Brandy Kiger**, a graduate student in **Dr. Scott Philyaw’s** HIST 571

• What an outstanding publication. *The Service-Learning Sentinel* is a publication that is informative and depicts so well the passion this institution is building for SL. Well done!

– **Linda Seestedt-Stanford, Ph.D.**, Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences, in an e-mail to the Director of Service Learning





By *Jeanne  
Dulworth*

## Perspective

Looking back over my years as a student at Western, one of my fondest memories is of the volunteer work that I did. At the time, it made me “feel good” to help others. I enjoyed volunteering with hospice clients, working one-on-one with a fourth grader, and accomplished many other service-related goals.

As a faculty member in the Department of Social Work, I know the importance of students gaining experience through volunteerism. However, I recently began to look at volunteering through a different lens: service learning. Now, I not only encourage students to volunteer at community agencies but we take the time to process the experience, learn from mistakes, and improve on successes. While service learning is a perfect marriage for our department, I believe there are multiple disciplines that would be strengthened by incorporating service learning into their curricula. I think that other faculty members will discover, as I have, that service learning is an effective method of teaching and learning.

I had really wonderful experiences as a student here. I don't think there would have been a better school in the world for me. I come from a family where helping others is not only an important value but a lifestyle. My parents have helped countless children and adolescents through the years to become successful, confident, and caring individuals. They kept foster children (during my entire childhood) and both retired from teaching in the public school system. I have always known that I would end up in one of the helping professions; and, like my parents, I think I learned best by serving.

When I started at WCU, I quickly gravitated toward social work. I learned theories behind helping others and effective ways of dealing with conflict and crises. My first social work class mandated that we volunteer at least 15 hours to the community. My first thought was: how am I going to fit this into my schedule? What a joke! I ended up working with a fourth-grade girl every week for three hours. I picked her up at school and spent time discussing homework, boys, her parents, and life in general. I continued to spend time with her for the next year and a half. She taught me several lessons that I still value: to laugh, to expect the unexpected, that great things come in small packages, and that really listening to people is the

# Service Learning: Effective Method of Teaching and Learning

only way to have genuine empathy. I will always appreciate the time I spent with her. She is one of my “Sheroes.” I learned more by helping her than I did from any textbook.

During my junior and senior years at WCU, I volunteered with hospice services. When I started, I wanted everyone to experience a “beautiful death.” I remember in my interview realizing how naive I really was about death. My supervisor let me know that I couldn't push my values on my clients. She said “not every death is beautiful” and encouraged me to think long and hard before deciding to volunteer with her agency. Thankfully, she let me into the training program. It finally became apparent to me that I would be watching people die. That scared me to death (no pun intended). My first client taught me so much about grace, dignity, and appreciation of small things. My two years of volunteer work in hospice care made me a better person. Each client I worked with taught me something different about life and about myself. I have no doubt that I took more from the experiences than I

about a student knowing every stage (in order) of Erickson's stages of development. I want them to understand how they apply to actual clients. They will learn what mistrust “looks like” in an infant client, and they will make important observations in my class. Without a doubt, service learning is a great platform for my teaching philosophy.

It is essential to me that students have experiences with “clients” before they enter field practicum. I encourage students in several classes that I teach to volunteer their time. Sitting across from a person who didn't have a place to sleep the night before is very different than learning about poverty from a book or lecture. I had students in my Social Work with the Elderly class volunteer two hours a week at a local retirement home. The social worker at the retirement home paired a student with a resident (based on a brief essay students wrote about themselves). We discussed the activity each week and students were required to keep a journal tracking what happened in the meeting, what they noticed in bio/psycho/social/

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*‘When I read the journal entries, I was truly touched by the insights students gained regarding personal growth, applying course content to working with clients, and changes in their thinking about the elderly population.’*

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gave. This was another excellent example of learning by serving.

Both experiences (and several other day-long volunteer experiences) helped to mold me into a competent social worker. While these experiences were some of the most powerful of my life, they were lacking something. I never really had the time to process the events. There were times when I would have greatly benefited from hearing what others thought and felt. I now know that this is how service learning is different from volunteering time.

Service learning is not only the process of donating one's time but also learning from the experience. A goal of good service learning is to have the volunteering experience and then to learn about civic responsibility through processing the events. The second part is what I missed as a student. Now, as a faculty member, I spend hours helping students learn from their volunteer work. This is the value of service learning.

I am certainly a firm believer in learning by doing. This is the foundation of my teaching philosophy. Social work is grounded with theories, important concepts, and philosophies. I care little

cultural/spiritual development, and most importantly how the experience impacted them. I know this was one of the best classes I've ever taught at WCU. Many of the students continued to visit their “friend” until they left WCU. When I read the journal entries, I was truly touched by the insights students gained regarding personal growth, applying course content to working with clients, and changes in their thinking about the elderly population. This was one of the exciting service-learning projects at Western.

As a Faculty Fellow for Service Learning, I have had the privilege to learn how, through service-learning components in courses, students, faculty, and the community become one. It is my goal for the year to continue to assist faculty members with devising creative ways to use service learning effectively in their courses. Service learning is, indeed, a valuable tool for both teachers and students.

*Jeanne Goins Dulworth is an Assistant Professor of Social Work and the Service-Learning Faculty Fellow for the College of Health and Human Sciences at WCU.*

# Introducing the Service-Learning Faculty Fellows



Anderson



Anderson-Ruff



Cochran



Dulworth



Jacques

The Center for Service Learning has appointed three new Faculty Fellows for the 2008-2009 academic year. They are **Dr. Robert Anderson**, Assistant Professor, for the Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology; **Jamel Anderson-Ruff**, Curriculum Specialist/Visiting Instructor, for the College of Education and Allied Professions; and **Marie Cochran**, Assistant Professor, for the College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Dr. Anderson is an Assistant Professor and Engineering Technology Program Director in the Kimmel School. He has been a faculty member at Western since 2005. His degrees include B.S. and M.S. from Clemson University and Ed.D. from North Carolina State. His professional experience includes eight years as a high school teacher, 13 years as an engineering design supervisor, and 12 years as Dean of Engineering and Applied Technology at A-B Tech in Asheville, NC.

"I am looking forward to exploring opportunities in the service learning program at Western," said Dr. Anderson. "Service learning supports the Engineering Technology Program's mission of commitment to the community and being responsive to economic growth in the region."

Ms. Anderson-Ruff is the Curriculum Specialist for Diversity and an Instructor for Middle Grades Education in the College of Education and Allied Professions. She has been at Western since the Fall of 2007. Ms. Anderson-Ruff previously worked in disability determination services and as a middle school teacher, community college instructor, and

after-school program coordinator.

Ms. Cochran is an Assistant Professor in the School of Art and Design. She is a mixed-media artist who enjoys working on community-based public art projects. In addition, she is an exhibition curator, arts advocate, and interdisciplinary project consultant. Ms. Cochran has an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and a B.F.A. from the University of Georgia, Athens. Her research interests include art and society, visual literacy, vernacular cultural studies, and oral history.

**Jeanne Dulworth**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work, will complete her third year as the Faculty Fellow for the College of Health and Human Sciences (formerly Applied Sciences). At the same time, **Dr. Paul Jacques**, Assistant Professor of Management, will complete his second year for the College of Business.

## Liaisons

Three Service-Learning Liaisons have been named for the 2008-2009 academic year. They are Associate Dean **Steve Carlisle**, Honors College; Student Services Specialist **Jessica Shirley**, School of Nursing (Enka Campus); and Assistant Athletics Director / Senior Woman Administrator **Dr. Jennifer Brown**, Athletics.

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## New Advisory Board Appointed

A new 17-member Advisory Board has been appointed for the Center for Service Learning. **Dr. Anna McFadden**, Director of the Coulter Faculty Center and Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations, remains Chair of the Board.

Board members include **Mardy Ashe**, Director of Career Services and Cooperative Education, WCU; **Aaron D. Camp**, Student (Undergraduate), WCU; **Bessie Dietrich Goggins**,

Graduate Student, WCU; **Heather Gordon**, Extension Agent, Jackson County 4-H; **Amy Grimes McClure**, Executive Director, The Community Table; **Glenda Hensley**, Assistant Professor – Department of Stage and Screen, WCU; **Karrie Joseph**, Wellness Coordinator (Medical and Health Program Consultant), WCU; **Lynn Mathis**, Coordinator of Resident Student Success – Department of Residential Living, WCU; **Ashley Merrill**, Student/Medford Scholar,

WCU; **Dr. Mickey Randolph**, Professor, Psychology, WCU; **Dr. William (Bill) Richmond**, Associate Professor – Computer Information Systems, WCU; **Walter Turner**, Director of Student Community Ethics, WCU; and **Josh Whitmore**, Outdoor Program Director, Base Camp Cullowhee, WCU.

**Dr. Glenn Bowen**, Director of the Center for Service Learning, is Secretary of the Board.

# Jennifer Cooper Named Assistant Director of Service Learning

The Center for Service Learning welcomed Jennifer Cooper as the new Assistant Director on December 3. She will coordinate various student programs and serve as the primary liaison between the Center and its community partners.

Apart from coordinating service-learning community partnerships, Ms. Cooper will supervise the Medford Scholars and oversee Civic Place, the living-learning community; coordinate the Days of Service that occur throughout the academic year; and organize the annual Community Service-Learning Fair.

Ms. Cooper has experience working with university faculty, staff,



students, and local community members. She previously worked at WCU as a Visiting Instructor in the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, and as a Research Associate and Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. In addition, she served as an Academic Advisor at the University of Tennessee and an Instructor at Emory University.

Ms. Cooper received a B.A. and M.A. in political science from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and completed graduate course work in political science at Emory.

“I’m very excited to be at Western,” she said, “and I look forward to helping foster strong connections between our students and the community.”

## New Service-Learning Coordinators ...

Katherine (Katie) Graunke, a former Medford Scholar, has joined the Center for Service Learning staff as Program Coordinator. Participating in the North Carolina Campus Compact AmeriCorps\*VISTA program, Ms. Graunke has succeeded Charli Lehman, who completed her one-year assignment in July 2008 and is now in graduate school at Indiana University.

A 2006 finalist for the Howard R. Swearer national Humanitarian Award, Ms. Graunke, is co-supervising the Alternative Break Program, serving as Liaison with the Center for Leadership, and as the Service-Learning Center’s Primary Contact for student clubs/organizations. She tracks and assesses student involvement in community service and handles student conduct-related community service placements.

Ms. Graunke graduated from WCU last year with a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work.

Graduate student **Kirsten Barger** has been assigned the role of Special Projects Coordinator. As part of her assistantship, she is helping to document student participation in various projects and handling research assignments. In addition, she is serving as a graduate student resource to the American Democracy Project (ADP) Steering Committee under the Office for Undergraduate Studies.

Ms. Barger holds a B.A. (Writing and Literature) from Goddard College, VT.

**Margo Raff**, a Counselor at De Anza College in Cupertino, CA, spent the Fall 2008 semester at Western in the capacity of Service-Learning Coordinator. Ms. Raff assisted with several projects, including a Homecoming Service Day Food Drive and an assessment of service-learning institutionalization at WCU.



*Graunke*



*Barger*

## ... and Support Staff

**Susannah Patty** has joined the staff of the Center for Service Learning as Administrative Support Associate. She has a Bachelor’s degree from Middlebury College, VT. Ms. Patty’s responsibilities include assisting with budget management and with planning special events, and maintaining the Center’s Web site and database.

Student Affairs staff member **Mary-Lynn Starkey** previously provided administrative support to the Center for Service Learning.



*Patty*

**Whitley Barber**, an undergraduate majoring in Cultural Anthropology with a minor in Business Law, is the Student Assistant and **Ellen Rowe** (Parks and Recreation Management) a Service-Learning Intern for the academic year. In addition, **Zach Martin-Darnell** (undeclared) was a Student Assistant for the Fall semester, and Social Work graduate student **Joseph (Joe) Kieffer** is a Student Assistant for the Spring.

## Meet the Medford Scholars



Cummins



Richards



Owens



Merrill



Scott

*PEER MENTORS: Undergraduates who have been awarded the Jacob Spencer Medford Service-Learning Scholarship for 2008-2009 are pictured here. They are (l-r) Kathleen Cummins, senior, majoring in Biology; Mollie Richards, junior, Athletic Training; Wil Owens, senior, Construction Management and Business; Ashley Merrill, junior, Parks and Recreation Management; and Samuel "Colin" Scott, freshman, Construction Management. Ms. Cummins graduated in December. Dr. H. Gibbs Knotts, Associate Professor, Political Science and Public Affairs, chaired the Medford Scholars Selection Committee. Other committee members were Debra Connelly, Assistant Professor, Communication; Dr. Mimi Fenton, Professor, English; Christina Smith, former Medford Scholar; and Dr. Glenn Bowen, Director of Service Learning.*

## NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

### First Book Awards Gift Cards to Promote Literacy

**F**irst Book has awarded \$2,500 in Borders Books gift cards to a Jackson County school and an after-school program in Haywood County as part of a literacy promotion program.

Fairview Elementary School in Sylva was awarded \$1,000 while Kids in Action, an after-school program in Canton, received a gift card valued at \$1,500.

Jennie Hugo, Chair of Western Carolina University's First Book Advisory Board, made the announcement last March.

First Book is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. The organization provides an ongoing supply of new books to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring, and family literacy programs, said Nicole Thompson, Campus Advisory Board Manager at First Book. Further, the organization has distributed more than 50 million books to children in over 1,300 communities throughout the United States, Ms. Thompson said.

First Book at WCU is currently composed of members of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority, supported by the Center for Service Learning. Alpha Xi Delta is a national organization whose philanthropic mission is to improve the lives of children. In December 2007, the WCU sorority sent five members to a First Book training session in Atlanta, where they learned "best practices" for managing a campus First Book program.

First Book at WCU is expected to award \$1,300 in book grants and distribute 3,000 books this year to low-income

groups in Western North Carolina, said Glenn Bowen, WCU Director of Service Learning.

"The partnership between First Book and WCU will bolster long-standing efforts to improve literacy in our community," Dr. Bowen predicted. "It will open up a whole new world for many children."

### WCU Ceramics Students Donate to "Empty Bowl" Charity Event

**C**hristina Smith, volunteer event organizer for the Community Table, has been involved with the organization since she graduated from WCU in 2005. Smith, a former Medford Scholar, has asked the ceramics students to donate their talents and their time all three years the "Empty Bowl" event has been held.

"The students are very excited about the bowls they are donating and the time they have committed to volunteering during the event," she said. In addition to the 80 bowls donated by students, 15 area potters also are donating to the cause, bringing the total number of bowls available for purchase to about 500.

The most recent fundraising event was held at the Community Table on Bartlett Street in Sylva. Patrons purchased unique, handcrafted bowls made by ceramics students from WCU or other local potters, as well as a helping of chili or soup, bread, dessert, and a drink.

WCU students and faculty members who contributed handcrafted bowls to the event included Sarah Beth Coley, Jessica Capps, Ashlyn Bristle, Megan Brockington, Simone Bolka, Daniel Nowak, and Amanda Carter and Professors Joan Bryd and George Rector.

# CARNEGIE RECOGNIZES WESTERN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*By Bessie Dietrich Goggins  
WCU News Services*

**The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recognized Western Carolina University's emphasis on community engagement and its link to engaged teaching, research, and service by selecting the university for its "community engagement" classification.**

Announcement of WCU's new status came Thursday, December 18, from the Carnegie Foundation as part of an extensive restructuring of its classification of institutions of higher education.

The university was selected in the categories of "curricular engagement" and "outreach and partnerships," which recognize the university for substantial commitments in three key areas – teaching, learning, and scholarship; application and provision of institutional resources for community use; and collaboration with community.

The new classification endorses WCU's recent institutional focus on engaged learning – the integration of

activities in and out of the classroom by students who are actively involved in and responsible for their own learning, and guided by professors and support staff who serve as facilitators or coaches for learning.

Engaged learning is a critical part of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan (or QEP), a major component of the process of obtaining reaccreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It also is an ingredient of WCU's service-learning program, which enhances students' academic development while fostering social and civic responsibility.

"This is a greatly prized external recognition for our university by a highly respected leader in higher education," said WCU Provost Kyle Carter. "The designation demonstrates to the nation that WCU's students and faculty have taken their educational experience beyond the campus to promote a greater good in the community and region in which WCU resides."

Although Carnegie researchers

said that few institutions nationally are addressing the issue of faculty reward for their roles in community engagement activities, that is not the case at WCU, said Carol Burton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies.

Western Carolina last fall adopted a new policy for tenure, promotion and reappointment that makes it possible for the university to reward faculty members who apply their scholarly activities to help solve problems beyond the boundaries of campus.

"Receiving the Carnegie classification as a community-engaged university provides independent, outside validation of what we value internally. This is evidence that we practice what we preach," Burton said. "We are pleased that the foundation recognized our efforts in all three areas of curricular engagement, outreach and partnerships. We also are proud that we are at the forefront of a movement to reward faculty members for their role in helping the larger community."

## Health Sciences Students Contribute Food to Community Table

**H**ealth Sciences students at Western Carolina University recently contributed more than 800 nonperishable food items to the Community Table in Sylva. The donations came through the Fourth Annual Health Sciences Food Drive, organized by the Western Athletic Training Association (WATA), a student-run organization for athletic training

majors at WCU.

WATA was assisted in collecting food supplies this year by the student clubs for Environmental Health and Health Information Administration majors. Together, the three organizations collected 826 food items during the last month of the Fall 2008 semester. Collections were donated to the

Community Table during Western's final exam week.

This food drive was organized by junior Athletic Training student Dan Brown and sophomore Athletic Training student Jeremiah Nichols. The students said they were motivated to organize the event to give back to the community and to help those less fortunate.

## WCU Volunteers Participate in Make A Difference Day Projects

**W**estern Carolina University volunteers and community members combined their efforts on Saturday, October 25, for Make A Difference Day. They participated in five projects in Jackson and Macon counties.

Community partner agencies were REACH of Macon County, United Christian Ministries of Jackson County (UCM), Jackson County Family Resource Center, Streets of Franklin, and Jackson County Recreation and Parks Department.

At REACH, volunteers worked at the domestic violence shelter, doing painting and general maintenance. In collaboration

with UCM, volunteers helped to unload a frozen food delivery truck and then unpacked boxes at the First Presbyterian Church, Sylva. At the Family Resource Center in Webster, volunteers assisted with supervising the children, playing games, and working on art and craft projects. Other volunteers lent a hand at Streets of Franklin's "Pumpkin Fest," assisting with supervising various events. Finally, volunteers helped with arrangements at the Recreation and Parks Department's Halloween Festival.

Participants included Colin Scott, Susannah Patty, Jenny Gallop, Ashley Reber, Emily Abernathy, Lindsey Bonsall,

Lydia Crystal, Helena Franco, Hannah Platt, Marti Slade, Mollie Richards, Wade Johnston, Ramona Dowdell, Hannah Yarborough, Brook Smith, Brandon Hardee, Shakita Holloway, Jaleesa Johnson, My Song, Whitley Barber, Stephen Harris, Mike Doherty, Katie Enright, Kirsten Barger, Beth Thiemann, Anna Latanyshyn, Leslie Helms, Lauren Hill, Rachel Griffin, Kathleen Cummins, Sam Venable, Tristan Blankley, Zach Martin, Erin Reynolds, La Grand Andrews, Kelly Nicewonger, Justin Bennett, and Max Grant.

## Homecoming Service Day Features Food Drive, Garden Expansion

**W**estern Carolina University students, faculty, staff, and alumni donated 805 canned food items and 94 pet food items as part of a food drive on Homecoming 2008 Community Service Day – Wednesday, October 1. In addition, student volunteers participated in the Campus Kitchen Garden expansion project to combat hunger and food insecurity.

Canned and packaged food was collected on the lawn of A.K. Hinds University Center and donated to the Salvation Army of Western North Carolina, which serves clients in seven counties. Dog and cat food was collected and given to “Operation AniMeals,” a project of the Sylva-based Department on Aging.

Meanwhile across campus, Homecoming volunteers erected a fence and storage shed, and restored soil quality at the Campus Kitchen Garden near Hennon Stadium. Lowe’s Home Improvement Store donated the storage shed.

Last year, the Center for Service Learning developed, with support from volunteers and the Facilities Management Department, a garden that would provide an opportunity for students to help meet the nutritional needs of people in the community.

The Center sent a group of WCU staff members and students to workshops and hands-on classes related to organic and sustainable agriculture at the 15th annual Organic Growers Spring Conference held in Asheville in March.

Last spring, a core group of 10 student volunteers spent time each week working in the garden creating rows, planting seeds, adding mulch, and watering the plot. Students in an Academic Success Program class continued those efforts during the summer. The garden yielded mustard greens, kale, potatoes, onions, corn, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, peas, squash, and tomatoes. Vegetables were donated to the Community Table, a Jackson County nonprofit organization that provides meals to residents of the community who need assistance.

MANNA FoodBank, a community partner with the WCU Center for Service Learning, reports that in Western North Carolina, about 68,000 people a year seek food assistance, with 20,000 seeking assistance each week.

## Commitment to Service Learning

“Your commitment to service learning led the Corporation for National and Community Service to name us to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll,” Chancellor John Bardo told WCU employees in his end-of-year (December 2008) message.

Noting that “we accomplished much in 2008,” Dr. Bardo said also that faculty, staff, and students “brought engaged learning to life.”

Highlighting one particular service-learning project, Chancellor Bardo added: “Not every Chancellor gets to tell the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, which met on our campus this year for the first time in nearly a decade, about recreational therapy students working hands-on with Alzheimer’s patients ... Thank you for developing innovative activities that meaningfully engage our students and apply your scholarship with the world beyond our campus.”

## Giving Back to the Community

**D**uring the last work week of February 2008, volunteers from Western Carolina University took a short break from the daily grind to work in the community.

But the volunteers weren’t WCU students. They were staff members from the Student Affairs Division. Some 35 of them, at various times during the week, spent time in community settings, supporting programs and projects that allowed them to “give back” to the community.

The Student Affairs Staff Development Committee, co-chaired by Shauna Sage and Patty Harley, sponsored Community Service Week.

Staff members volunteered at WCU’s Kneedler Child Development Center, REACH of Jackson County, Jackson County Habitat for Humanity, the Community Table, Harris Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store, and Skyland Care Center, contributing 100 hours of community service. Student Affairs staff members celebrated their achievements at a reception on February 28.

Charli Lehman, Service-Learning Program Coordinator, gave a brief presentation, thanking participants and encouraging them to continue their efforts to improve the local community.

## Bike Rodeo Held on Campus

**T**he Center for Service Learning was one of the sponsors of a Bicycle Safety Rodeo on April 12. Other sponsors were the WCU Bike Club and Campus Police together with Jackson County 4-H, Public Schools, and NC Department of Transportation. The event was designed to teach bicyclists the skills they need in order to be better cyclists.

“This was a great opportunity for children to learn some cycling skills and much needed awareness of safety,” said Todd Murdock, Director of WCU Educational Talent Search and event coordinator.

## Engaging Students in the Community beyond the Campus

**G**eorge L. Mehaffy, Vice President for Academic Leadership and Change at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, identified service-learning projects as one of the best ways to “engage students in the community beyond the campus.” He mentioned internships and clinical experiences, as well.

Dr. Mehaffy delivered a public keynote address about the changing role of higher education in the 21st century, on March 27, 2008, at Western Carolina University.

Answering the question “What do students want in service-learning courses?” Dr. Mehaffy listed: (1) Focus on political and policy issues; (2) Link academic theories to community practice; (3) Engage faculty in community part of the course; (4) Provide opportunities for reflection; (5) Measure outcomes; and (6) Provide public audiences for student work.



Mehaffy

# Two Days of Service Highlight MLK Celebration

This year, for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Week in January, the MLK Planning Committee decided to really “step up” in service and offered two Days of Service to students, faculty, staff, and community members. This increase in service projects was made possible by a 2008 MLK Challenge mini-grant from NC Campus Compact. The \$300 grant required that Western Carolina University recruit at least 75 volunteers, partner with five community agencies, and incorporate at least 15 percent minority participation in MLK Day events. WCU exceeded these expectations by recruiting 93 volunteers to serve at eight agencies.

To help raise awareness and enthusiasm for the MLK, Jr. Holiday and Celebration Week in January, the Committee organized a School Supply and Book Drive on WCU’s campus and in the local community, from November 24, 2008 to January 24, 2009. Over



500 items were collected and donated to Fairview Elementary School and Jackson County Friends of the Library.

On January 19, the Brothers of the Nu Zeta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha helped to jumpstart the first Day of Service and kick off the MLK Celebration Week by welcoming the volunteers, sharing a prayer, providing information about the role of Alpha Phi Alpha in Martin Luther King Jr.’s life, and recognizing Dr. King’s contributions and service to our nation. Fifty-seven volunteers then headed out to serve at the Mountain Trace Nursing Center in Webster, Project FIRE of Jackson County, Pigeon Community Development Center in Waynesville, REACH of Macon County Thrift Store, and Hawthorn Heights Children’s Home in Bryson City.

On January 24 – the second Day of Service – 36 volunteers served at Creative Communications Youth and Family Services in Hendersonville, MANNA Food Bank in Asheville, and the Jackson County Habitat for Humanity Re-Sale Store in Sylva.



*FOOD DRIVE CONTEST: WCU students, from left, Brandon Wykle, Mindy Toler, Erika Holub, Blake Cain and Brittany Padgett (front) celebrate success in a competitive food drive with Appalachian State University that yielded nearly 3,000 items to benefit Western North Carolina food pantries. April Tallant, WCU Assistant Professor of Health Sciences, said students in her first-year Personal Nutrition seminar chose a food drive as their service-learning project after studying food insecurity, and she extended a food drive challenge in October to students in Nutrition and Health classes at ASU, Western Carolina’s Southern Conference rival. The challenge – to see which university could collect the most food items per student in participating classes – was accepted. “Our students were creative in how they collected food,” said Prof. Tallant. And they won the contest.*

## WCU Faculty and Staff Volunteer at Food Bank

A group of Western Carolina University faculty, staff and students did volunteer work at MANNA FoodBank in Asheville on December 3, 2008, packing 1,800 lbs of food items in just over an hour. The food items will contribute to 1,283 meals.

The 11-member group included service-learning faculty fellows, Medford Service-Learning Scholars and Center for Service Learning staff.

After touring the operations, the volunteers worked in the warehouse processing area, which represents the heart of MANNA FoodBank’s operations. They checked, sorted and packed salvage food for distribution to a network of community-based nonprofit partner agencies that serve individuals and families in need throughout the 16-county Western North Carolina region.

MANNA FoodBank’s mission is to involve, educate and unite people in the work of ending hunger in WNC. The agency’s contributions support 13,500 meals a day throughout the year. According to Lisa Cantrell of MANNA FoodBank, the agency distributed 6.5 million lbs of food last year.

Volunteers included Faculty Fellows Paul Jacques (College of Business), Robert Anderson (Kimmel School) and Marie Cochran (Fine and Performing Arts); Glenn Bowen, Director; Jennifer Cooper, Assistant Director; Katie Graunke, Program Coordinator; Margo Raff, Project Coordinator; Susannah Patty, Administrative Support Associate, and Whitley Barber, Student Assistant, Center for Service Learning; and Medford Scholars Ashley Merrill and Wil Owens.

# Sentinel Snapshots



*Photos: Courtesy of Base Camp Cullowhee  
Design: Clint Hardin, WCU Printing Department*



... Alternative Spring Break '08: Costa Rica

## *Students Support Environmental Preservation in Costa Rica*

**S**ix Western Carolina University students and a staff member spent Spring Break 2008 in Costa Rica, where they contributed to environmental protection and preservation.

The student participants were Elizabeth Ingianni (senior, Biology); Bryan Mangum (junior, Parks and Recreation Management); Keith Maust (junior, Applied Criminology); Ashley Merrill (sophomore, Parks and Recreation Management); Jeremy R. Williams (junior, Communication); and Melody Updyke (junior, Interior Design).

Jennifer Wright, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator (Base Camp Cullowhee), accompanied the students.

“Costa Rica was an eye-opening experience for me,” declared Ashley Merrill, a Medford Service-Learning Scholar at WCU. “I got to participate in an ecological service project,



*Six students and a staff member spent Spring Break in Costa Rica.*

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***‘This trip opened my eyes to how easily our world is drastically affected the actions of people’ – Medford Scholar***

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experience a new culture, eat different foods, and interacted with people I had just met.”

The Center for Service Learning and Base Camp Cullowhee organized the eight-day international service-learning/Alternative Spring Break trip to the Central American country in collaboration with Ecology Project International (EPI). EPI is a Montana-based, independent non-profit organization that promotes science education and conservation through field-based student-scientist partnerships.

In Costa Rica, the group worked on ecological projects – sea turtle preservation, beach restoration for sea turtle nesting areas, and rain forest preservation.

The group spent one morning at the north end of the beach at the mouth of the Pacuare River cleaning human-created debris such as cut wood, clothing, soda bottles, and medical waste.

“The trash which is disposed of in the rivers washes down the river and gathers on the beach creating a huge obstacle for turtles who are trying to nest on the beach as they can’t come up far enough,” explained Ms. Wright.

Students attended sessions during the day to learn about the leatherback turtles and how to collect data about their nesting habits. Together with other students and biologists,

the WCU group monitored a population of critically endangered leatherback sea turtles on Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast.

“During evening patrols, students spilt into two groups and walked approximately five miles over four hours looking for the tracks of turtles coming onto the beach

to nest. Once the groups found turtles, they recorded data such as the size of the turtle, depth of the nest, number of eggs laid, and if the turtle had been previously tagged,” Ms. Wright reported. “We were

all stunned by the size and presence of the turtles.”

Ms. Merrill, the Medford Scholar, reflected on the experience: “I have participated in many other service trips, but this experience was different from any other. I never thought that wandering down a beach in the middle of the night looking for turtle tracks would play such an important part in the survival of the endangered leatherback sea turtle. I never thought that the trash we throw out every day could have such a devastating impact on the ecosystem. And I never imagined that by simply scraping the spines off a walking palm, I would be helping to preserve a rainforest.

“I have always worked one-on-one with individuals or groups of people and I have been able to see the results of my efforts and how they affect those immediately. By participating in this ecological experience, I knew that my actions and efforts would benefit others, but the future impact of these efforts is not immediately seen. This trip opened my eyes to how easily our world is drastically affected the actions of people.”

“Canyoneering and rafting on the Pacuare gave people on the trip a chance to experience the adventurous side of Costa Rica,” Ms. Wright noted. “Although the water was low, the Pacuare boasts some of the best scenery that I have ever seen on a river, which is only enhanced by the steep canyon walls and emerald colored water.”

Fifteen WCU students and four faculty members were part of a 33-member group participating in Project Panama last academic year.

Others in the group were members of the Cullowhee and Sylva Rotary Clubs, Smoky Mountain Interact Club, and St. David's Episcopal Church in Cullowhee.

The group traveled to Panama during WCU's Spring Break, February 29–March 10, 2008. They delivered school and medical supplies; donated water sterilization kits to the Ngobe Bugle, the indigenous people of the region; worked on school renovation projects; provided medical care; and assisted with a literacy project.

WCU undergraduates received academic credit for participation in Project Panama.

Dr. Lydia Aydlett of the Psychology Department was the project coordinator and principal instructor. "The emphasis for this trip was learning and serving," she said.

Before going on the trip, students researched Panama's history,

## WCU Group Participates in Project Panama

geography, culture, and political and economic systems. Also, they practiced conversational Spanish under the guidance of Dr. Mark Couture, former Head of the Modern Foreign Languages Department.



*The Sylva Rotary Club provided a donation toward Project Panama.*

Team-building exercises were part of the preparations for the trip.

"The students range from graduate students in Psychology to high school students who were dually enrolled at WCU and Smoky Mountain High School," reported Dr. Aydlett. "These young students were introduced to the university experience in this exciting, challenging, and growth-producing context."

In addition to being an Alternative Spring Break trip, Project Panama was an international outreach event for the local Rotary Clubs and the Interact Club of Smoky Mountain High School in Sylva.

Sandy Frazier, a former member of the WCU Service-Learning Advisory Board, proposed Project Panama in 2005.

Nine WCU students and five faculty members (two retired), as part of a 25-member group, participated in Project Panama during the Spring Break of 2006. They repaired four schools and conducted health screenings in the Boquete area of the Central American country.

## Students Spend Fall Break Volunteering with Atlanta Agencies

Rather than spending Fall Break 2008 relaxing at home or traveling leisurely, students and staff gave up their vacation for the second year in a row to participate in meaningful service through an "Alternative Break" focused on helping communities and individuals.

Western's Center for Service Learning sponsored 10 students and one staff member to travel to Atlanta, GA for four days to help children and homeless individuals through volunteering with local community-service agencies.

Each participant on the trip performed service and learned about problems faced by members of communities with whom they typically would have little or no direct contact.

"In today's culture, the younger generation is not always aware of the

seriousness of issues surrounding poverty and hunger of inner-city youth," said Katie Graunke, Center for Service Learning Program Coordinator. "Though our trip to Atlanta, we were able to show them what it is like to spend a day as a child struggling to survive and overcome such hardships."

Students who participated in the Alternative Fall Break volunteered at several different sites, including:

- The Samaritan House of Atlanta, which has several programs that help the homeless gain self-sufficiency. The WCU group served food in a restaurant-style setting and helped with professional development activities as part of an employment-readiness program.
- Hands On Atlanta's Rainbow Village, which provides a healing environment where families in crisis rebuild their lives through a community-based transitional housing

program. The WCU volunteers supervised and played with children while their parents had a "Friday Night Out."

• Wilderness Works, which provides community events and a wilderness experience for inner-city Atlanta children. The WCU group worked in a children's weekend camp, preparing and serving breakfast, as well as leading activities with children and accompanying them to the Martin Luther King Memorial.

The participants on the trip were Elizabeth VanMetre, Megan Noble, Claire Karriker, Coral Wiggins, Sankar Balasubramanian, Ellen Rowe, Frieda Saylor, Coleen Christian, Jannasha "Angel" Faison, and Daniel Oates. Ms. Graunke was the trip organizer and leader.

– WCU News Services

## A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

At 4 A.M. on a cold, dark March morning, my husband, Alan, and I began to question our excitement about traveling to Chicago. All our friends, other students from Western Carolina University, remained bundled in their beds and blankets, snoozing through the beginning hours of Spring Break. We, however, were traipsing down the steep hill from Robertson Residence Hall in our sweats and pajamas, each slipped step pulling our loaded suitcases a bit closer to A. K. Hinds



*ASB-ers assist with children's activities in Chicago.*

University Center, where we would meet unfamiliar faces.

Signing up for Alternative Spring Break, we knew only each other; so we arrived at the designated meeting point as sleepy strangers. Little did we know that when we arrived at this spot again at the end of our trip, we would say goodbyes to 30 new friends with common service-learning interests.

The caravan of large white vans rolled out of Cullowhee around 4:45 a.m., and no signs of sunrise ventured past the dark, looming mountains. Driving the second van in a line of four, I carefully watched the road and the tail lights in front of me as passengers snored softly from their seats. We were off, beginning an adventure that would change many of our perspectives on life and society.

Finding our route through Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana, we pulled into Chicago, Illinois, Saturday evening. Everyone tumbled out of the vans, yawning and stretching in the parking garage before ambling toward Hostel International, where we would get our room assignments. A brief meeting, conducted by Center for Service Learning Program Coordinator Charli

Lehman, concluded the night, and we all crawled into our beds.

Morning crept through the hostel's curtains, tenderly touching my face with fingers of golden light. I stretched, waking before the others in my room, and prepared myself for the day. It was Sunday, and our group of Western Carolina students was dividing into two shifts that would work in Uptown Chicago at Inspiration Café, which provides meals, case management, life-skills training, financial assistance, and other services to the homeless in a therapeutic community.

Alan and I participated in the first shift, and our assigned group hopped a bus to the north side of Chicago, "ooohing" and "aahing" at the buildings, shops, and sites that passed by all our windows. I had briefly traveled to Chicago once before, and many others had never been; so we all did the "tourist thing," taking in the essence of Chicago's skyscrapers from our seats before getting off at our stop.

As I entering the front door of Inspiration Café, a large mural caught my eye. Sweeps of color and smiling faces flowed through the visual artwork, and

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***Since our trip, I often reflect on Jane Addams' accomplishments, and it encourages me to make a difference in my community, in my state, and in my society.***

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I stood before it with a mixed sense of intrigue and awe. Who were these people portrayed, in all their glory, on this wall? The answer came shortly from the man



*ASB Chicago leader Charli Lehman helps a little girl make a secret-message name tag at the Children's Museum.*

who would supervise us for the day: Each person illustrated in the mural is a regular at Inspiration Café, coming in from the bitter Chicago winters and sweltering Chicago summers to sip coffee and seek refuge, to feel normal.

Seven of us ducked into the basement of the shelter with a mission in mind. We organized donated clothing into men's and



*Stacie Beal works with a little girl make a personalized kazoo-saphone for Pulaski Day.*

women's garments, categorized them by size and function, into plastic crates that stacked from floor to ceiling. Throughout the endeavor, we talked, we laughed, and we helped others. From that service-learning experience alone, I decided this trip would be a trip of a lifetime for everyone involved.

When both groups finished their rounds at Inspiration Café, we all met at the Jane Addams Hull House. To be truthful, I had my doubts about the visit; I didn't know what a "hull house" was, and I had never heard of Jane Addams. A female revolutionary of the late 1800s and the early 1900s, she created a sanctuary for those in need of assistance, providing

kindergarten and daycare facilities for the children of working mothers; an employment bureau; an art gallery; libraries; English and citizenship classes; and theater, music, and art classes. And, in my opinion, her establishment also created one of the most brilliant and impressive civilian think tanks, including Ellen Gates Starr, Florence Kelley, Alice Hamilton, Julia Lathrop, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Grace and Edith Abbott.

Since our trip, I often reflect on Jane Addams' accomplishments, and it

encourages me to make a difference in my community, in my state, and in my society. Positive change can happen anywhere; Addams made it happen in a densely populated urban area, and in the memorable words of our museum tour guide, “Jane Addams ran one hull-uva house.”

On Sunday evening, portions of our group floated from the hostel to the outside world, experiencing the sights and sounds of Chicago. That night, we all ecstatically



*Almost blown away, during the scavenger hunt! They don't call it the Windy City for nothing!*

realized that we were actually staying in the hustle and bustle of downtown Chicago. Groups walked to Millennium Park, admiring the bean sculpture; traveled to the Navy Pier, ducking into shops; and roamed the city's sidewalks, orienting themselves to the heart of Chicago.

However, the night went a bit different for Alan and me. During the day, as we worked at Inspiration Café, we met a few interesting people. In fact, I found out that Stacie, one of our clothes-folding comrades,

attended the same high school as Alan and I. From our first brief conversation, our group hit it off. Sunday evening, we all sat in the hostel's lobby, stretching out in blue chairs and loafing on the floor, and talked about anything and everything. Within 48 hours of the trip, we had already found a wonderful group of friends, including our fearless leader, Charli, and we all shared common interests, values, and mindsets. I believe that part of this connection occurred because we all shared similar drives to help others in need, and we may have never met our service-learning peers if we had passed up the opportunity to attend Alternative

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*Poverty and struggle, when met in real life, differs from the movies; it's real, and it's heartbreaking.*

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Spring Break.

Although we chatted through the hours, joking and telling stories until 1 a.m., I had no problems hopping out of my bunk bed on Monday morning. Brushing my hair and tying my sneakers, I darted around our room in excitement. Alan and I, along with a handful of other Western Carolina students, would be working with children at the Children's Museum at Chicago's famous Navy Pier. I didn't know what I would be doing, but I hoped I would have the opportunity to interact with children.

Hopping onto the bus, I smiled as I assessed our group. Many of our teammates had been part of our lobby-room discussion the night before, but I also was excited that some of them weren't. Charli did a fantastic job mixing our task groups up every day, and I met each and every individual from the trip. I never realized the importance of intermingling with all my fellow participants until I went through the experience; it was another element that made the trip that much more memorable and fulfilling.



*At a theater show in a 1920s setting, Bessie Dietrich Goggins (second from left) was among the women wearing a feathery boa.*

## Pulaski Day

Arriving at the museum, we were instantly bombarded with bright colors, laughter, and games. Although none of those qualities seemed odd for a museum, I did wonder why so many children were milling about the establishment since



Dear Western Carolina University Volunteers,

Thank you very much for contributing to CCM's Pulaski-palooza! It was great to see you working so well with the children [during your Alternative Spring Break event]. You all were enthusiastic, patient, generous and were willing to get up and dance. We hope you had a positive experience volunteering for CCM. Please come back and visit us anytime!

Thank you.

Sarah Williams  
Volunteer Coordinator  
and Staff of Chicago Children's  
Museum

Monday is generally a school day. I found out the reason during our brief orientation. Apparently, the entire state of Illinois celebrates Pulaski Day. We all raised our eyebrows. What in the world is a Pulaski? We established, amongst our huddle, that it must refer to a person, and a museum employee informed us that this person fought in the Revolutionary War. She then told us that we would be involved in a Pulaski Day Parade for the children; but of course, what is a parade without music? Before the indoor parade of marching and confetti, we would be working with the children, building kazoo-zaphones. It sounded a little intimidating, but approaching our designated tables, I felt my eyes light up. Glitter, crepe paper, glue, stickers, and markers filled my vision. These were the children's decorating supplies, which would cover kazoo-zaphones taped to toilet paper rolls.

Within minutes of settling into our positions, children flooded our table, their faces full of intrigue. I think we built a record number of kazoo-zaphones, although I also have a sneaking suspicion that we had just built the world's first. Either way, we all had a blast helping the children

*(Continued on page 18)*

build their instruments. An informal poll after the experience told me that everyone felt themselves temporarily morphing into children, becoming light-hearted and animated about each new, colorful, musical invention. In fact, each of us even designed our own kazoo-zaphones for the parade; mine resembled a bumble bee. As we prepared for the singing and dancing and clapping, we, along with the children, perfected our kazoo skills. On first attempts, everyone made the mistake of blowing into the toy. We turned red in the face as no noise would erupt from the plastic's end. However, humming into it produced much better results: a sound of nasal qualities would erupt with little effort. This discovery led me to an innovative, if short-lived, idea. I thought about creating my own kazoo-zaphone orchestra, taking it on the road. It did not fly with the others, though, and I quickly abandoned it. We turned our attention to the parade, dancing, singing, and kazoo-ing with the children. Through song lyrics, we learned about Casimir Pulaski, a Polish officer who trained Revolutionary War soldiers and cavalry.

With tales to tell and kazoo-zaphones to show off, we trooped back to the hostel, learning about others' service-learning

and women who are homeless in Chicago. We packaged boxes with hygiene kits for the charity's clients, and folded and sorted donated clothes.

Hostel International mentioned that Tuesday evenings at the Museum of Contemporary Art were free, and many from our Western Carolina group took the opportunity. We studied thought-provoking pieces on three artwork-filled floors, realizing our hunger as the museum's doors locked behind us. A group of eight, we made a game plan for the night. First, we ate authentic Thai food, and then we checked out a local hookah club. Both experiences were fantastic, and we all chattered about our majors, our dreams, our futures. My friendship connections continued to grow.

### Life-altering day

For me, though, Wednesday was the most life-altering day of the trip. My chosen group went to Will Feed, an after-school program for children of Englewood, a community on Chicago's Southside. In all honesty, because of the neighborhood's appearances with littered yards and darkened houses, I was apprehensive about our venture. However, after meeting the two phenomenal women who run the program,

discussing the neighborhood's issues, and meeting the children, I felt sheepish for my concerns. These children were just that – children. Like those at the Children's Museum, they wanted to play and learn. I jump-roped, danced, and sang with the children, ages six to 12, and my heart went out to their struggles. Many of their parents are drug addicts, and for many of the children, the hot meal they receive at Will Feed will be

their only hot meal for that day. For this day, for this experience, I had the deepest reflection of my visit. Poverty and struggle, when met in real life, differs from the movies; it's real, and it's heartbreaking.

Deep in thought, we went back to the hostel for our reflection time, and I scribbled in my journal with intensity. I jotted down every detail I could remember about my day in Englewood. I wanted to remember the children's names, the way I felt, and the inspiration with which I was blessed. Perhaps, with all these notes on paper, I could brainstorm ways to continue helping Will Feed, even after we left the

Windy City.

Thursday, our last day in Chicago, was designated as our free day. We all rolled out of bed early in the morning, and Charli surprised us with an ingenious activity. Handing six-person groups a disposable camera and a list of odds and ends, she told us to take pictures of each listed item within a two-hour time period. We took off right away, taking priceless snapshots of the city. We had to find a cow, a bear, Chicago-related sports memorabilia, and a street vendor, among many other things. However, my group's most memorable photo from the scavenger hunt had these instructions: Show evidence of Chicago as the Windy City. Not satisfied with a flag rippling in the gusts, we found a light pole. Alan held onto the pole with both hands, as Pat and Galen, two other students from our group, picked up his feet. With them standing out of the photo, it looked as if Alan was blowing away, and his only hope of remaining stationary rested in his grip on the pole.

Mission accomplished and tasks completed, we then had the rest of the day to navigate our way through the city. Alan and I, along with Pat and Stacie, another couple on Alternative Spring Break, went up the Sears Tower, taking numerous photos, and into the Field Museum, wandering through exhibits about the ancient Americas, animal biology, and the arctic seafloor. Perhaps, though, the best part of our day occurred that evening. Six of us went to Tommy Gun's Garage, a dinner and theater show about a 1920s speakeasy. Gangsters and flappers served us lasagna and steak before dancing and singing their way across the stage. With my feathery boa, I felt as if I was a part of Chicago's Roaring Twenties, until the spell was broken and the night was over.

The next morning, Friday morning, our group yawned and stretched their ways through packing their luggage and trudging back to the vans. Although we had been in Chicago for an entire week, our trip – packed with service learning and sightseeing – seemed like it had just started. We reminisced over our activities during the 14-hour drive back to Cullowhee, and I learned that other people had their own fascinating stories about the trip. For example, people attended a screening the Jerry Springer Show and toured the Shedd Aquarium, the Lincoln Park Zoo, and the Art Institute of Chicago. We all had wonderful experiences, if a little different from one another's, but many of us agreed that we couldn't wait for next year's Alternative Spring Break trip, whatever its destination.

*Bessie Dietrich Goggins is a WCU graduate student. Thirty-three students and one staff member participated in ASB Chicago.*



*WCU student volunteers in Chicago.*

experiences and discussing our own. After reflecting on our day's activities, though, our night was our own, and we were free to rove the city. A small group of us went to The Second City, an improvisational sketch comedy venue that had launched the talent of John Belushi, Mike Myers, and Bill Murray, among many others. Echoing with laughter, we had a phenomenal experience and returned to the hostel with new jokes.

Tuesday placed my group-of-the-day at REST, a non-profit organization that works collaboratively to provide safe, quality, permanent and emergency housing options, and supportive social services to adult men

# Faculty, Staff, and Students Honored at Service-Learning Awards

**S**ocial Work faculty member Jeanne Dulworth's Outstanding achievements in service learning during the 2007-2008 academic year earned her awards for teaching and research. Prof. Dulworth also helped the Social Work Department capture the Leading Light Award, emblem of exemplary integration of service learning into the curriculum.



The 4th Annual Service-Learning Awards Banquet was held in the Liston B. Ramsey Regional Activity Center. Awards in the form of plaques, pins, certificates, and book vouchers were presented.

Other major award winners included School of Nursing faculty members, Dr. Barbara St. John and Dr. Sharon

Elizabeth Metcalfe, for teaching, and Janet James for service. Dr. Margaret "Peg" Connolly (School of Health Sciences) and Dr. Cynthia Deale (Hospitality and Tourism Program) received awards for teaching, as well.

In all, 28 major awards in 10 categories were presented during the ceremony.



*Service-Learning Fellow Jamie Holbrook was one of five Fellows recognized for their outstanding work. Prof. Holbrook (in t-shirt at center) and his students volunteered at REACH of Jackson County.*

Dr. Erin Tapley (Art Education), Dr. William Richmond (College of Business), and Dr. Lydia Aydlett (Psychology) won outstanding achievement awards in the service category.

Students Diane Smith, Brianna Ward, Diane Erickson Fox, and Robin Stevens were recognized for their outstanding achievement in service learning while Marie Nemerov and Kathleen Cummins received awards for community service. Psi Chi/Psychology Club (represented by President Jennifer Sherrill), Sigma Chi Fraternity (Community Service

Chairman Oscar Holcombe and President BJ Green), and the Sport Management Association (President Austin Childs and Vice President Zee Dean) also received recognition for community service.

For outstanding contributions to peer education and demonstrated commitment to promoting service learning among WCU students, Cassidy Shane Price and Ashley Merrill took home the coveted Shining Star award.

## Tributes

**D**irector Glenn Bowen paid tribute to Assistant Vice Chancellor Jane Adams-Dunford for her supervision of Service Learning prior to its transfer to Academic Affairs last July. "Specific initiatives, such as the Medford Scholarships, Faculty Fellowships, and Days of Service received her endorsement and her blessings," he noted. "She also advocated Western Carolina University's participation in Campus Compact and our bringing a member of VISTA – Volunteers in Service to America – to WCU."

Dr. Bowen also was effusive in his praise of Service-Learning Program Coordinator Charli Lehman, who assisted with establishing new projects throughout the year. "Ms. Charli Lehman has lit a candle of inspiration, which will illuminate the path for future VISTA members in the Center for Service Learning," the Director declared.

Awards were presented by Sylva Mayor, Hon. Brenda Oliver; Dr. Anna McFadden, Advisory Board Chair of the Center for Service Learning; Dr. Richard Beam, Chair of the Faculty; Advisory Board members Walter Turner, Lynn Mathis, Glenda Hensley, and Joyce Russell; North Carolina Campus Compact Special Projects Coordinator Kristen Carter; and Dr. Carol Burton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies.

Selection Committee member Debra Connelly announced the five winners of the Jacob Spencer Medford Scholarships for Service Learning. The 2007-2008 Medford Scholars and the Service-Learning Fellows received special certificates.

Community Leader Norman West, a 19-year volunteer with the American Cancer Society and Board member of several charitable organizations, delivered the keynote address replete with witticisms and anecdotes. Dr. Mickey Randolph, a Faculty Fellow, formally introduced Mr. West. Mayor Oliver brought greetings from the Sylva municipality; Dr. Burton spoke on behalf of Provost Kyle Carter and Ms. Kristen Carter on behalf Dr. Lisa Keyne, the Executive Director of NC Campus Compact.

Musical entertainment was provided by Ms. Holly Taylor and the Axiom Saxophone Quartet – Sheldon Frazier (soprano saxophone), Joseph Basile (alto saxophone), Ian Jeffress (tenor saxophone), and Rachel Drew (baritone saxophone).

Kyle McCurry of Power 90.5 was master of ceremonies. Medford Scholar Ryan Hicks expressed appreciation to all participants.

# Faculty Member Receives Honor for Service-Learning Trip to Honduras

By Randall Holcombe  
WCU News Services

**A** Western Carolina University faculty member who organized a trip to help the impoverished people of rural Honduras has been honored for her efforts by the WCU office that oversees service learning.

Janet James, Assistant Professor in WCU's Graduate Nursing Program and a resident of Sylva, received an award in the "Outstanding Achievement – Service" category at the University's Fourth Annual Service-Learning Banquet held April 24, 2008. "Janet James exemplifies the qualities of a good teacher who supports her students in becoming engaged in projects that improve the quality of life in poor, underserved communities," said Glenn Bowen, WCU's Director of Service Learning.

Last January, James joined fellow Nursing faculty member Judy Mallory and two working nurses who are enrolled in WCU's Family Nurse Practitioner Program, Suzanne Green and Beth Lohse, on a 12-day trip to provide medical care and conduct community and family health assessments in remote villages hundreds of miles from the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa. A particular focus on the trip was assessments for malnutrition in the villages, particularly among children, and treatment for vitamin deficiencies, parasites, and infections.

The WCU faculty members and students traveled to Honduras in affiliation with the nonprofit corporation Shoulder to Shoulder Inc., an Ohio-based organization that began offering health-care assistance to rural Hondurans in 1990.

Before the WCU contingent left for the Central American country, they received some vital assistance in their work from local businesses and residents. The Sylva WalMart donated several boxes of procedure gloves and \$300 for supplies; Eastgate Pharmacy assisted with the coordination of purchased medications, and donated supplies; and individuals in the area made donations up to \$600 to help with the purchase of medications, Ms. James said.

In Honduras, the WCU group joined other volunteers to create a team that included a physician from Johns Hopkins University, four Johns Hopkins medical students, and a faculty member and seven nursing students from the University of Cincinnati. From Tegucigalpa, the team embarked on an eight-hour bus ride on winding mountain roads to establish primary clinics in three "base camp" villages, and from those villages the group traveled by truck to deliver services to other villages in the surrounding areas. At night, team members slept in tents under mosquito nets to protect them from malaria and dengue fever.

## Global Perspective

**T**he medical care was offered in old schools and churches, and some residents had to walk for an hour to arrive at the clinics, Ms. James noted. "Our students did so well," she added. "I just love that they had such a diverse experience and gained a global perspective on health problems by volunteering in another country."



*A Western Carolina University contingent composed of nursing students (from left) Beth Lohse and Suzanne Green and faculty members Janet James and Judy Mallory pose with some of the children they met during a service-learning trip to the Central American country of Honduras. Ms. James has been honored by the university's Service-Learning Center for her role in organizing and leading the trip.*

Ms. James said the health clinics across rural Honduras do not depend solely on the work of volunteers from outside the country. An active community leader in each village leads a committee that promotes the clinic services, and the committee prepares the community for the mobile health clinic that arrives every one to three months. The committee charges a nominal fee for services to help keep the clinics operating, she said.

Ms. Green, a registered nurse who works for Accredo Therapeutics, a specialty pharmacy based in Greensboro, said the trip was "the most rewarding thing I have ever done." Her most vivid memories of those days "are of the beauty of the country contrasted with the poverty of the people, which would be unimaginable to most people in the United States."

"The people were so kind and generous to us, and they really seemed to deeply appreciate everything we did for them," Ms. Green said. "One particular thing that stands out about Janet on the trip is how the children really responded to her. She speaks fluent Spanish, and she was able to communicate very well with them, and they just loved her."

Ms. Lohse, who works as a nurse at Pardee Hospital in Hendersonville, said she was continuously surprised by what she witnessed in Honduras, including the joy she saw in the children's faces despite their chronic malnutrition, and the fact that "with no electricity or modern machinery to alleviate work, everything was done by manpower."

"I heartily recommend a trip like this to anyone in service occupations," said Ms. Lohse, who already holds a bachelor's degree in Nursing from WCU. "So little effort on our part can mean so very much for our fellow human beings in Central America and beyond."

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS RECEIVE RECOGNITION

Western Carolina University presented two Jackson County agencies and two individuals with Service-Learning Partnership Awards recently in recognition of effective collaboration with university students and faculty working on community service projects that are linked to the curriculum.

The Partnership Award recipients were the Jackson Department of Social Services; Jackson County Green Energy Park; Emily Elders, the Town of Dillsboro's Assistant Administrator; and Timara McCollum, Executive Director of the Community Table.

They were honored at the 4th Annual WCU Service-Learning Awards Banquet, billed as "a celebration of learning and service to the community," in the Ramsey Center. Dr. Carol Burton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies, presented Partnership Award plaques and certificates.

The Jackson County Department of Social Services was recognized for facilitating service-learning projects by students primarily in the Business Computer Information Systems Department. Associate Professor William Richmond had noted that the agency helped students understand how organizations use technology to deliver services. Agency Director Robert Cochran and Information Management Director Ruth Thompson accepted the award on behalf of the agency.

The Jackson County Green Energy Park was the service site for Communication students who produced information designed to brand the park and create public awareness of its purpose and activities. Debra Connelly, Assistant Professor of Communication, had praised the organization for giving students opportunities to be creative and professional. Assistant Director Carrie Blaskowski accepted the award on behalf of the organization. The award also recognized the work of Director Timm Muth.

Dillsboro's Emily Elders collaborated with WCU students to design, organize, and conduct the first Appalachian Growers' Fair in support of the Appalachian Women's Museum. For her part, the Community Table's Timara McCollum assisted with the coordination of community service through which students worked on a grant-writing project and assisted in providing nutritional meals for community members. Ms. McCollum was a member of the Advisory Board of the WCU Center for Service Learning.

A special gift was presented to Sandy Frazier, a former Service-Learning Advisory Board member, for his contributions to Project Panama, the Alternative Spring Break project.

## MAJOR AWARDS

### **Community Service (Individual)**

- Marie Nemerov
- Kathleen Cummins

### **Community Service (Organization)**

- Psi Chi/Psychology Club
- Sigma Chi Fraternity
- Sport Management Association

### **Shining Star**

- Cassidy Shane Price
- Ashley Merrill

### **Meritorious Service**

- Jane Adams-Dunford
- Charli Lehman

### **Outstanding Achievement (Students)**

- Diane Smith
- Brianna Ward
- Diane Erickson Fox
- Robin Stevens

### **Outstanding Achievement – Service**

- Dr. Erin Tapley
- Janet James
- Dr. William Richmond
- Dr. Lydia Aydlett

### **Outstanding Achievement – Research**

- Jeanne Dulworth

### **Outstanding Achievement – Teaching**

- Dr. Barbara St. John
- Dr. Sharon Elizabeth Metcalfe
- Dr. Margaret "Peg" Connolly
- Jeanne Dulworth
- Dr. Cynthia Deale

### **Partnership**

- Timara McCollum (Community Table)
- Jackson Department of Social Services
- Jackson County Green Energy Park
- Emily Elders (Town of Dillsboro)

### **Leading Light**

- Department of Social Work (Dr. Marie Huff – Department Head)

## Certificate Recipients

**NC-ACTS AmeriCorps Program:** Ramona Dowdell, Bethany Leonard, Garrett Richardson

**Alternative Breaks:** Whitley Barber, Whitney Blalock, Aaron Camp, Ramona Dowdell, Katherine "Katie" Graunke, Stephen Harris, Leah Holmes, Ashley Merrill, Katherine Monjure, Wil Owens, Mindy Pickens, Tyler Smith, Jeremy Williams, Bryan Mangum

**Community Service (Individual):** Stephen Benson, Brooke Mercier, Jennifer Plummer, Ryan Wagoner

**Medford Service-Learning Scholars:** Ramona Dowdell, Katherine (Katie) Graunke, Ryan Hicks, Ashley Merrill

**Faculty Fellows:** Jeanne Dulworth, James Holbrook, Dr. Paul Jacques, Dr. Mickey Randolph, Dr. Erin Tapley



#### **CIVIC PLACE:**

Since the start of the 2008-2009 academic year, Civic Place members have volunteered over 100 hours of their time at a variety of events on and off campus, including Homecoming, Make a Difference Day, the Resident Student Association's Hall-O-Ween, and the two MLK Days of Service. They have done volunteer work for MANNA Food Bank, the Jackson County Christmas Store, Holler Ministries, and Belk Charity Days. In the Spring 2009 semester, members plan to sponsor a team in Relay for Life, a fundraising event for the American Cancer Society, and support the Invisible Children Tour, which raises awareness about night commuters and child soldiers in northern Uganda. In addition to their service projects, Civic Place members have built a strong sense of community by watching films, attending workshops, and organizing group activities. According to returning member **Whitley Barber**, "working with the other members has been a wonderful experience. The projects we collaborate on and the workshops we participate in really give me a sense of fellowship, purpose, and fulfillment. I am looking forward to returning next year and bringing new members."

**CULLOWHEE REVITALIZATION:** More than 150 students from Western Carolina University's Honors College dedicated hours of service last Fall semester to revitalizing Cullowhee, from painting over graffiti to volunteering at a fundraising concert. Student leaders coordinated efforts to pick up litter along Old Cullowhee Road, remove kudzu, plant marigolds, and pull concrete, rebar, and debris out of the Tuckasegee River. They also designed T-shirts and developed a logo for the nonprofit organization named CuRvE – Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor. In addition, students assisted CuRvE with ticket design, seating assignments, sales and support for a fundraising concert – a reunion performance of a band called Cullowhee. The event raised more than \$2,000 for a proposed entrance sign for the community. "We selected this service project for the Honors College because we wanted to do something where we could see progress from year to year, focus on the environment and strengthen the relationship between the campus and the community," said **Erin Ponder**, a junior Nursing major and President of the Honors College (Student) Board of Directors. "We feel that Cullowhee is our second home." The Center for Service Learning is a supporter of CuRvE.

**CANTON CONNECTIONS:** Western Carolina University and Canton town leaders hosted the second Canton Connection Faire last April. The first was held on December 10, 2007, to identify ways WCU can collaborate with the town. Canton was damaged in 2004 when remnants of Hurricanes Frances and Ivan caused flooding that destroyed businesses and temporarily closed the paper mill. In 2007, WCU landed a grant from a national community-based research program for a three-year project to help Canton with flood recovery efforts. In one of the related projects, WCU entrepreneurship students have worked individually

with Canton-area businesses that sought assistance through the Small Business and Technology Development Center at Western, coordinator **Bill Richmond** reported.

The summer company of Western's Theatre in Education program performed "Dogwood's Search," an original play for young audiences based on a Cherokee legend, on July 20, at the Colonial Theatre in Canton. Al Matthews, interim Town Manager of Canton, said bringing the WCU production to Canton was the result of a growing partnership between the University and the Town. Western's faculty, staff, and students are involved with service-learning and community-based research projects designed to benefit Canton. "We're trying to expand performing arts opportunities for citizens of all ages, and this play brings to our Town a high-quality production geared toward the young and young at heart," Mr. Matthews said.

**VOTE INITIATIVE GRANT:** WCU students may have played a small part in Western North Carolina's record-breaking voter turnout for this year's elections, with help from a 2008 North Carolina Campus Compact Vote Initiative grant that the university received. "There were a lot of initiatives to remind people to vote, but many of these did not include basic information about how to vote, when to vote, and where to vote," said **Chris Cooper**, Director of WCU's Public Policy Institute (PPI) and Associate Professor of Political Science/Public Affairs. The \$500 grant enabled students to create and supplement a range of voter initiatives, including collaborating with local election boards, first-year orientation classes, faculty, staff, and other students. Only 11 North Carolina campuses received the grant. The Center for Service Learning supported the PPI application for the grant.

**SUCCESS THROUGH SERVICE:** Last summer, students participating in the Academic Success Program contributed over 700 hours of service to community organizations, including the Bartram Trail Society, Community Table, Full Spectrum Farms, Habitat for Humanity of Haywood County, Jackson County Habitat for Humanity, Project C.A.R.E., Pathways for the Future, and the WCU Campus Kitchen Garden. "The Academic Success Program allows students to begin their college experience early, preparing them to succeed in college and in life," Coordinator **Janina DeHart** noted.

**TALENT SEARCH:** Twenty-one middle and high school students participated in the 2008 WCU Educational Talent Search Service-Learning Summer Program, coordinator **Russ Harris** reported. Their service sites were Kneedler Child Development Center, REACH of Jackson County, Tuckasegee River (cleanup project), WCU Anthropology (cleaning artifacts), and Purchase Knob (assisting with species inventory and salamander study). **Glenn Bowen**, Director of Service Learning, discussed service-learning goals with the students. Talent Search Director **Todd Murdock** also spoke during the service-learning session.

**SOMETHING SPECIAL:** Social Work faculty member **Jeanne Dulworth** was so impressed with her students' hard work, dedication, and outstanding performance in their Leadership and Service Learning class in the Spring 2008

semester that she gave each of them something special to take home – a miniature trophy with an Aladdin’s lamp. Students **Amanda Cafaro, Amanda Cox, Ramona Dowdell, Chelsea Early, Kim George, Amanda Hostetter, Cindy Hoyle, Brooke Humphries, Gina Jones, Amy Lawson, Becky McKnight, Stacey Moore, and Anna Porter** wore broad smiles as they took a group picture on a May morning outside their McKee classroom.

**EARTH DAY:** In observance of Earth Day last year, WCU student organizations sponsored a Day of Information and Celebration.” EcoCATS organized an information fair featuring the Center for Service Learning, EcoCATS, Canary Coalition, Wellness Center, Green Energy Park, Duck Unlimited, and Phi Sigma Pi honors fraternity.

**FOCUS THE NATION:** The Center for Service Learning participated in Focus the Nation, an all-day event focusing on global warming solutions and sustainability, in the Spring 2008 semester, in the University Center. Focus the Nation was an unprecedented educational initiative on global warming solutions for America, which occurred at more than 1,000 universities and colleges in all 50 states that day. The Center for Service Learning shared service-learning project examples and ideas and provided a list of community partners whose programs and services have a sustainability focus. Coordinators **Jane Nichols** and **Lauren Bishop** reported that the event, which drew support from about 1,000 students, faculty, and staff, was “a huge success.”

**FOCUS GROUPS:** Hunter Library’s Futures Group got busy, gathering feedback from people at Western to gauge perceptions of library space as well as suggestions for improvement. “Student focus groups were facilitated by a team of business students from Professor **Paul Jacques’** Leadership class as part of a service-learning project,” according to a report in *Hunter’s Clarion* (Spring 2008). Library faculty and staff members participated in the discussions.

**LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE:** Center for Service Learning Program Coordinator **Charli Lehman** and three other staff members accompanied 22 students to the 12th Annual NCCPA (North Carolina College Personnel Association) LEAD Conference for Student Leaders, held at Mount Olive College in Mount Olive, NC, in February 2008. LEAD brings together leaders from campuses across the state for one-day conference that allows students to network and to learn how other leadership teams and programs function.

## Invisible Children Documentary Reveals “Heartrending Realities”

A team of representatives from Invisible Children, Inc. visited Western Carolina University on October 29, 2008 to show the “Invisible Children” documentary and share information on the organization’s campaign. More than 100 students, faculty, staff, and community members attended the event and over \$1,000 worth of merchandise was sold to help raise funds for schools in Uganda.

Invisible Children, Inc. was formed after three filmmakers created a documentary, *Invisible Children: Rough Cut* in 2003. The film reveals the heartrending realities of northern



**WOMEN INSPIRING HOPE:** Service Learning’s **Charli Lehman** was among a group of WCU faculty, staff, and students saluted as “Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility” on March 18 as part of the Women’s History Month 2008 celebration. The theme of the event, organized by the Women’s Center, was “Celebrating Vision with Action.”

**ORGANIC GROWERS:** A four-member WCU group attended the 15th Annual Organic Growers Spring Conference on March 8, 2008 in Asheville. Staff member **Karrie Joseph** and students **Marti Slade, Alfred Appiah, and Parker Miller** attended the conference, featuring workshops and hands-on classes for people interested in organic and sustainable agriculture – from the beginning backyard gardener to the advanced commercial grower. Workshops focused on such topics as Soils, Pest Management, Herbs, Cooking, Urban Growing, and Forestry. This experience allowed the WCU group, all participants in the new WCU Campus Kitchen Garden Project, to network with people in the regional agriculture community and collect ideas for the coming growing season.

**POSITIVE EXPERIENCE:** **The Mountain Heritage Center** had “a positive experience” with a group of Western student volunteers during last September’s Mountain Heritage Day. **The Women’s Rugby Team** “did a good job ... particularly in the Children’s Heritage Area,” reported **Peter Koch**, Education Associate. “These students were engaging and enthusiastic with the children and made the area a fun and busy place to be. The members approached us before the event and offered their services as a club. Through their efforts, the team garnered a combined total of 32 hours of service.”

**ROTARY FUNDRAISER:** Several WCU volunteers assisted at the Cullowhee Rotary Club’s fund-raising Pancake Breakfast recently at the Cullowhee Presbyterian Center. Volunteers included **Paige Lindsay**, daughter of WCU’s **Becky Lindsay**. Paige is President of the Interact Club at Smoky Mountain High School. The local Rotary Club raised funds to help disadvantaged students at Cullowhee Valley School participate in an 8th-grade trip. Volunteers helped to serve the meal and did clean-up tasks.

Uganda’s night commuters and child soldiers.

“Through this advocacy project, we hope to help raise awareness about the plight of children in a war-torn country,” said service-learning intern **Ellen Rowe**, who is coordinating the campaign at WCU. “We as students need to demonstrate a better appreciation for what we have and help bring significant change to countries like Uganda.”

The Invisible Children organizers was scheduled to return to WCU on April 13, 2009 to show their newest film, *Go*.

## “Remarkable Increase” in Service-Learning Courses Highlights Year

**A** 152 percent increase in the number of courses with service-learning components is highlighted in the 2008 annual report of the Center for Service Learning. The number of courses increased from 57 in the 2006-2007 academic year to 144 by the end of the 2007-2008 year.

Some 75 faculty members in 21 departments taught those courses, which involved 2,227 students.

“The increase is, in a word, remarkable,” Director Glenn Bowen commented. “Much of the credit goes to the Faculty Fellows, who were diligent in collaborating with their colleagues to make service learning an integral part of a variety of courses in every college of the university.”

The annual report also includes these highlights: the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll; approval of the “SLC” (service-learning component) designation by the Faculty Senate; launch of the Campus Kitchen Garden Project; expansion of the Alternative Break program; the 4th annual Symposium on Service Learning & Civic Engagement and the 3rd annual Community Service-Learning Fair; registering of 12 new community partners; and facilitation of community service projects for Homecoming 2007, with volunteers logging 16,600 hours of service.

The Center for Service Learning prepared and submitted WCU’s successful application for recognition on the President’s Honor Roll. Institutions listed on the Roll have made significant achievements in community service and service learning.

The Symposium on Service Learning & Civic Engagement attracted participants from 20 colleges and three community agencies in seven states. The lead presenter was University of Minnesota’s Dr. Robert Shumer, Vice Chairman of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement and the founder of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

Service Learning was transferred from the Student Affairs Division to the Office for Undergraduate Studies in the Academic Affairs Division at the start of the administrative year, on July 1, 2007.

### *Social Work Department is “Leading Light”*



*The Social Work Department is the latest recipient of the Leading Light Award from the Center for Service Learning. Symbolizing the highest achievement among Western’s academic departments in integrating service learning into the curriculum, the award was presented recently to Marie Huff, then Social Work Department Head. Social Work faculty taught 13 courses and, in addition, made several conference presentations last year. (Photo: Mark Haskett)*

### Successful Service-Learning Fair

**M**ore than 30 organizations participated in Western’s 4th Annual Community Service-Learning Fair on January 27, 2009. The event provided an opportunity for representatives of community agencies to recruit volunteers, promote their projects, and network; and for students and faculty to learn about service opportunities.

“The participating groups were quite diverse,” said Jennifer Cooper, Assistant Director of Service Learning. “They represented such issues as children and youth, animal care, the environment, housing and hunger, elder care, disability, education, and recreation.”

The Fair also received support from local businesses, including Annie’s Naturally Bakery, Bogart’s, City Lights Bookstore, Food Lion, In Your Ear Music Emporium, Motion Makers Bike Shop, and Shot in the Dark Coffee Shop.