“BURST YOUR BUBBLE!”

Summer in Service
BY LIZ FONSECA ‘13
with Jon Flint ‘13

I’m ashamed to admit that when I left campus my freshman year, it was only to go to the mall, the movies or out to dinner at some close by chain restaurant. My experience this summer as the Development Intern at Civic Theatre of Allentown, only a few blocks away from campus on 19th Street, helped grow my appreciation for the thriving arts organizations and people who make Allentown an incredible place to live. Walking from Muhlenberg to 19th Street everyday opened my eyes to the many cool local businesses close to campus (Syb’s West End Deli, the Hava Java coffee shop and Blink Optical Boutique) that I hadn’t noticed my freshman year. I am thrilled to share my experience—imagine what you could discover in Summer Service Fellows?! Cont. on page 3

Women in Partnerships: Learning and Service

Community Spotlight
BY DR. LINDA BIPS

In more than 15 years of teaching Psychology of Women, I have found that one of the most rewarding and difficult assignments for students has been to interview a female non-family member over the age of sixty. Building relationships with senior women presents students with many challenges. Besides faculty and staff, where does one find a woman over sixty on a college campus? How does one turn a stranger to a friend, cultivate a meaningful relationship and interview a woman three times one’s age about their life goals, accomplishments and regrets? How can a twenty-something college student step outside his/her world and understand the reality of aging? With collaboration from The Office of Community Engagement, Psychology of Women students began a partnership with Pheobe Terrace residents in 2005, and the adventure began. Cont. on page 6

What’s New?!

Director’s Message
BY BETH HALPERN

The Office of Community Engagement located within the Student Life Suite moved into its new digs in May of 2010 as the students were leaving for the summer. The new space, located directly underneath the new Campus Restaurant, houses the Offices of Greek Life & Leadership, Student Activities, Student Government, MAC, a clubs and organizations resource room and both student and staff offices for Community Engagement. With the added bonuses of a lounge and conference room, there is much to boast about with regard to the new space. Any students involved in community engagement efforts have access to the student office, and our work-study students have a great space in which to work. Cont. on page 3
Sharing a Day of Comradery

United Way’s Day of Caring

BY BONNEY KURTZ

Editor’s Note: Eight Muhlenberg College staff participated in United Way’s Day of Caring on September 15 at Sixth Street Shelter in Allentown. The event marked a historic moment in community engagement, as it was the first time a Muhlenberg staff team partnered with Sixth Street Shelter.

My relationship with Sixth Street Shelter began when I volunteered with some of my fellow church members to cook and serve monthly meals for about 60 people. Before long, we were happily cooking meals three or four times a month. I was often amazed to see some familiar faces of people that had fallen on hard times and just needed a warm nourishing meal. When I heard that Muhlenberg was looking for a team of volunteers to go to Sixth Street Shelter for United Way’s Day of Caring, I signed up to help.

Volunteering with the Muhlenberg team was a different experience. I had the pleasure of working with my co-workers and associates that I didn’t know very well. Before, we would exchange a passing smile and a friendly hello; now, we know a little bit more about each other. The volunteers that went to Sixth Street Shelter hold different positions in the Muhlenberg College Campus Community. But that day we were on the same level, with the same goal. We wanted to give others a small piece of ourselves and do whatever we could to help.

Cont. on page 6

Developing Identities Through Service

Academic Corner

BY DR. STEFANIE SINNO

Don’t laugh at a youth for his affectations; he is only trying on one face after another to find a face of his own. ~Logan Pearsall Smith

Developmental psychologists continue to be intrigued by the complex and dynamic nature of identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1993). Identity development entails exploration and commitment to both a personal and social self, which can encompass gender, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, academic, occupational, and religious identity (Anderson & Collins, 2007). The primary focus of the Adolescent Development course offered at Muhlenberg is to delve into the concept of identity from theoretical, empirical and application perspectives. Like many courses on campus, my students and I read material from a textbook and discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of key theoretical models. We think critically about primary source empirical investigations, particularly in this course, of the biopsychosocial nature of identity. Additionally though, this course is largely dedicated to service-learning as the students have a unique opportunity to see identity formation in action, both by interacting with adolescents in the Allentown communities and by then reflecting on how these experiences have informed their own identity development. The service-learning component empowers students to bring theory to life and to use lived experiences to critically analyze theory. Cont. on page 7

South Mountain M.S. Service-Learning

Student’s Speak

BY JOHANNA BLOCK ’11

My relationship with SMMS Service-Learning Club began in my Adolescent Psychology class. Initially, given my unpleasant middle school experience, I was unsure how I could connect with the teens and how they could relate to a college student. In retrospect, I realize I was focused on how the students were different from me. My perspective shifted when Dr. Sinno explained we were there to build on commonalities and learn from the students. My new perspective made the service-learning experience all the more meaningful. I saw not only how class material related to SMMS students, but developed relationships with many of the SMMS Service-Learning Club students.

The Service-Learning Club is so unique because the program is not a traditionally-structured after-school program. The last thing kids want to do after a day at school is sit with another older person and do homework. So we just chill. Literally. Some days we rent out a few basketballs, dodge balls, cards, etc. Other days we have discussions about a range of topics and the conversations often leave me surprised at the kid’s maturity, honesty and openness. As one of the students told me, “If you are real with me, then I’ll be real with you.”

Johanna is a weekly program co-coordinator and is grateful to Alexandra Beni for her help starting SMMS S-L Club.

Photo by Eveily Freeman

Day of Caring Volunteers (back-front): Roberto Rivera, Jane Schubert, Migdalia Colon, Deb Long, Angelica Colon, Bonney Kurtz, Michele Elchert, Dolores Nash
Burst Your Bubble  
Cont. from page 1

I was initially drawn to the fellowship by the opportunity to stay in Allentown for the summer and learn more about my home for the next three years. Civic Theatre was the perfect match because I am very passionate about the arts and would like to work in arts administration. The theatre provides Lehigh Valley residents with quality theatrical productions and also shows art, independent, and foreign films. In addition, Civic offers community children and teens the chance to learn about acting skills and the performing arts from professionals through the Civic Theatre School.

During eleven weeks as the Development Intern, I drafted a multitude of grants, attended networking events almost every week, helped sustain the membership database, and even drafted a proposal for a new membership system! One of the outreach programs I helped with was “Reading with Cat and the Hat,” a literacy promotion program in which a performer goes to local schools and youth organizations to bring the works of Dr. Seuss to life. I worked during one session as a photographer and helped the young kids do all the activities. The experience was hugely rewarding because I knew that Civic made a difference in the lives of community members, but I hadn’t seen it firsthand until that day! It was especially amazing to see Civic working with community members who may not otherwise be exposed to the performing arts.

Participating in the Summer Service Fellows Program is one of the best decisions I’ve made as a Muhlenberg student. Through my fellowship experience, I was able to discover and build many of the skills needed to run a community theatre. I learned how to interact with both professional staff members and with patrons. I found out that Allentown is truly an awesome place to live—and I know the other Summer Service Fellows would agree! I can’t wait to continue to be involved with community organizations that make such positive contributions to my home away from home. I encourage all Muhlenberg students to engage with the Allentown communities and make a difference!

Social Justice and Leadership Retreat Report

BY ANDALISA LOPEZ ’12, JUSTINA DUBINSKY ’13 AND JON FLINT

Thirteen students and two staff leaders from the Community Engagement Office and Multicultural Center embarked on a leadership retreat September 11 and 12 to Camp Kirchenwald in Lebanon, PA. The goal of the retreat was to discuss ways to improve communication and collaboration between these organizations, serving in different areas of college life, but with similar engagement and social justice objectives. The retreat began with a low ropes course that fostered a sense of trust and team work which would carry into the discussions later in the weekend. A key discussion came out of the low ropes course—what does it mean to serve a community or be a leader versus a follower?

What’s New?!

Cont. from page 1

In addition to the new space, new programs run by the Office have allowed students to connect in different ways with Allentown communities. The Civic Fellows program, which began in the Fall of 2009, continues to provide students the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues of social justice, build stronger connections with community partners and accomplish a semester-long project with a community organization. Summer Service Fellows made it possible for students to stay on campus during the summer of 2010 to work on a full-time or part-time basis with community partners.

Students in these programs have worked intensively with organizations such as: The Program for Women & Families, Casa Guadalupe, Community Bike Works, The Caring Place Family Health Program, Civic Theatre and the City of Allentown. New weekly programs at South Mountain Middle School and Jefferson Elementary School have kids thinking about community engagement in their own communities and learning about the benefits of exercise. A new focus on communications has allowed us to begin a community engagement blog and a revitalized Facebook page. The Office has also developed some new A-town gear including t-shirts, stickers and bumper stickers expressing our love for the queen city. Come check out all that’s new (and old) in community engagement!
### Special Events Calendar

**December**
- 9 - Pinebrook-Diakon Holiday Party

**January**
- 22 - Community Tutor Training
- TBA - Women & Girls in Sports Day
- 27 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)

**February**
- 3 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)
- 10 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)

**March**
- 31 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)

**April**
- 1-3 - National IMPACT Conference
- 7 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)
- 9-12 - Alt. Spring Break Experience “Spring Break in A-Town”
- 13 - Blood Drive
- 13 - Big for a Day
- 20 - Big For a Day

**May**
- 5 - Jefferson Visit (Golden Stallions)
- 6 - Jefferson Field Day
- 8 - Muhlenberg Seniors Celebration

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### Weekly Program Schedule

**Office of Community Service & Civic Engagement**
**Seegers Union, Student Activities Suite, (484) 664-3657**

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### Join us for....

**Spring Break in A-Town**

Like learning about Allentown? Like working in Allentown communities? Like to eat delicious local food? Stop by The Office for more information!
The Office of Community Service & Civic Engagement oversees 20 to 25 work-study students per semester working in a variety of capacities. Most students select one or two community-based organizations which they work with on a weekly basis. In addition, students lead and organize many of the projects and programs run through The Office of Community Engagement. The Office is a fun and dynamic place to work on campus, providing exciting opportunities for all perspective work study applicant. New office staff are added every fall and students must be eligible to receive work study funds to apply.

Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania is an AmeriCorps Education Award Only program (Ed Award). Students partner with a non-profit organization/agency to gain an intensive understanding of their site’s work. Scholars participate in group trainings and discussions focused on the broader impacts of volunteerism and social justice issues. Participating students enroll as AmeriCorps members on a part-time basis and receive a partial Education Award at the their term-end. Students who apply and are accepted to the Muhlenberg program will enroll as "minimum-time" members making a commitment to complete 300 hours of service in one year from August to August, earning a $1,132 education award upon completion of their hours.

Work Study
Applications Due Fall 2011

The Office of Community Service & Civic Engagement oversees 20 to 25 work-study students per semester working in a variety of capacities. Most students select one or two community-based organizations which they work with on a weekly basis. In addition, students lead and organize many of the projects and programs run through The Office of Community Engagement. The Office is a fun and dynamic place to work on campus, providing exciting opportunities for all perspective work study applicant. New office staff are added every fall and students must be eligible to receive work study funds to apply.

Civic Fellows
Applications Due April 15, 2011

The program is structured to provide students with a community leadership experience that expands upon their current community engagement. Each Civic Fellow chooses a focus area for the semester and works with 1-2 community-based organizations on a weekly basis. Civic Fellows also participate in an 8-10 week non-credit course exploring different methods to work on their selected issue, think critically about community engagement, engage with other student leaders and gain skills needed to work effectively in community. Fellows spend the remaining 4-5 weeks researching their area and planning 1-2 training/event(s) for students.

Scholars in Service to PA
Applications Due April 19, 2011

Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania is an AmeriCorps Education Award Only program (Ed Award). Students partner with a non-profit organization/agency to gain an intensive understanding of their site’s work. Scholars participate in group trainings and discussions focused on the broader impacts of volunteerism and social justice issues. Participating students enroll as AmeriCorps members on a part-time basis and receive a partial Education Award at the their term-end. Students who apply and are accepted to the Muhlenberg program will enroll as "minimum-time" members making a commitment to complete 300 hours of service in one year from August to August, earning a $1,132 education award upon completion of their hours.

Summer Service Fellows
Community Partner Position Descriptions Due January 26, 2011
Student Applications Due February 23, 2011

The Summer Service Fellows program supports student volunteers working full-time or part-time with not-for-profit organizations in the greater Allentown area over the summer (May-August). The program was established in 2010 to meet the needs of community partners interested in student participation over the summer. Students who apply are matched with positions submitted by community organizations based on skills and interests. The Office has procured funds* to provide a stipend ($2600) and housing for a limited number of students.

*A congressionally-directed grant allows us to offer the program this year. However, this does not necessarily mean that the program is endorsed by the Federal Government.
Women and Partnerships

I still remember the anticipation and anxiety of the twenty-some students gathered in the Phoebe Terrace Lounge to meet and mingle and to choose a partner. Students wrote about their apprehension—especially of a woman who appeared to be less healthy sitting in a wheelchair or a woman taking in oxygen from a tube. Despite the apprehension, which the residents undoubtedly felt too, the room was soon buzzing. As relationships between seniors and students developed, the new connections brought a mix of emotions. One student was excited to show her final paper to her partner, only to receive word that her partner had died in her sleep the previous night. The student’s personal experience took on a broader significance outside the class, as she worked to understand and accept her partner’s death.

Several student-resident relationships developed beyond the classroom. One Phoebe partner was invited to attend her student’s Muhlenberg College graduation and go to dinner with the family. Other students visited their partners long after the required hours had been completed. Students gained a better understanding of the psychological development of women, but the relationships appeared to be most important to them.

Service-learning provides an opportunity for students to apply their classroom learning to providing service in the community. The academic aspects of this partnership were brought to life in our classroom discussions about topics like careers and aging. One woman had been a model at the Hess’ Department Store, where big name designers like Bob Mackie displayed their dresses. Other women spoke of the physical changes of aging. Many women shared their experiences of marriage, raising children, and losing loved ones. The textbook studies and statistics were enhanced by real-life experiences.

Most importantly, each student made a commitment to be there for a senior woman. A natural stage in a young adult’s development is to be self-focused. Service allows students to step from the confines of their needs and wants and consider others. Women at Phoebe Home often find it difficult to establish a consistent connection to the outside world. Many women spoke of estrangement or distance from their families. Even the residents with families close by have a desire to meet new people and share wisdom learned from a lifetime of experiences. Conversations about wars and jobs, families and lovers surprised students who considered the elderly to be “out of touch.” At the end of the semester, students and residents gathered on campus to share what this experience meant to them. Strangers had become family.

“Without the participation in service learning, I probably would have never thought about my perceptions of the elderly population. Service-learning accomplishes a special goal by engaging the student in two types of learning: learning about the world around oneself and learning about one’s own self. As much as June enabled me to gain a meaningful understanding of the elderly population, she has helped me to learn about myself even more. Because of my partnership with her, I have reassessed and challenged all of my pre-existing stereotypes and have gained a better understanding of myself as a member of a biased and unequal society.” Kate Mullin ’11

Sharing a Day of Comraderie

We really had a good time exchanging jokes and getting to know each other on a much closer and friendlier basis. We worked hard getting the new 219 N. Sixth St. apartments ready to go but still had a very pleasant time. We helped prepare the bedrooms, bathrooms, curtains and kitchens. And yes we even did windows. It is amazing, all the work it takes to make a shelter ready for the people who really need it. I gotta hand it to the people who run the shelter, they really are caring and doing such a wonderful job with the resources they are given.

When we were done, the shelter looked beautiful and well stocked. We were given the opportunity to give each suite a name. We had some really good ideas. One room that had a lot of animals in it we called Noah’s Place. Another room we called either Angels Garden or Guardian Angels. These two names were my favorite. All the apartments were now ready for occupation and they felt very warm and homey. All in all, it was a very Good Day.
Developing Identities
Continued from page 2

In the past year, I along with my students have had the privilege of partnering with South Mountain Middle School. South Mountain has been designated a community school within the Allentown School District, meaning that they have been provided funding and support from the United Way to become a “hub” of community life. Nicole Nugent, the Community School Director, has been wonderful at creating an environment perfect for the reciprocal nature of service-learning courses and allowing Muhlenberg students more autonomy in their interactions. The partnership has presented a unique chance for students to take more ownership of the conversations and interactions that they have with their early adolescent partners. Last semester, Muhlenberg students would weekly join South Mountain Middle School students who belonged to a service-learning club with the goal of working together on issues affecting the Allentown community. Students from both schools worked together to prepare for Family Fun Night, an evening highlighting South Mountain as the center of the community. They worked on a project, chosen by the middle school students, researching, educating their peers about, and fundraising for Autism.

Amidst these larger projects, Muhlenberg students served as a resource to these eager early adolescents at the beginning of their identity exploration, wanting to know more about college and the possible paths for their occupational aspirations. South Mountain students served as a resource to these late adolescents hoping to commit to their chosen identity as social scientist, clinician, or educator. One of the most rewarding moments for me as an educator and researcher was having both cohorts of students in a classroom on campus and facilitating a discussion on body image in adolescents. Muhlenberg students offered their knowledge of theory and research in the conversation while South Mountain students reflected on their lived experience as a way to both enhance and critique developmental theory. Both early and late adolescents explored how identity impacted issues of body image, taking into account the critical importance of racial, ethnic, gender and community identity. It was, in so many ways, evidence of the mutual partnership that can develop in a successful service-learning experience. I saw before my eyes, developing identities.

References

Social Justice & Leadership Cont. from page 5

Continuing the theme of collaboration, we enjoyed the fruits of collective labor at dinner time with homemade pizza and s’mores by a warm campfire at nightfall. The evening discussion centered on identity; how do we identify ourselves, and how do we assign identities to others? As the weekend progressed, students began to emerge from their comfort zones and new friendships were formed. The group took on the name “Working 4 Justice” to create a forum to relay information about upcoming events and club meetings. We talked about appointing liaisons to attend student government meetings and different club meetings to promote collaboration and conversation between groups and clubs.
Mission Statement

The Office of Community Service & Civic Engagement fosters mutually beneficial collaborations between the College, Allentown communities and beyond to catalyze personal, institutional and community change. The Office strives to prepare students, in particular, for their roles as citizens and leaders through community-based educational and volunteer experiences.

Editor's Note:

The second issue of Community Times seeks to build upon ongoing interactive discussions between Muhlenberg students, staff and faculty and Allentown communities that examine how we engage with each other. We seek to fairly and accurately represent our community partners while asking columnists to reflect on their personal beliefs. Please direct your questions and comments about articles to their authors.

The Community Engagement Office invites you to critically reflect on the themes that emerge from our Fall 2010 edition of the Community Times. Consider how service-learning or a fellowship experience could shape your education at Muhlenberg or improve your organization’s services in Allentown. Remember that the smallest efforts can create the largest ripples.

Thank you for your continued support of The Office of Community Engagement. If you or your organization would like to contribute to the Spring 2011 issue, please contact me at jonathan.flint@muhlenberg.edu.

Jonathan Flint ’13, Editor of Community Times