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OVCS Literary Magazine Volume 2 2008

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CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
Office of Volunteers for Community Service

Think Globally, Act locally
Community Learning
Civic Engagement
Activism



Literary Magazine

Volume 2 Spring 2008

Photo taken by Louise W. Fabrykiewicz
New London Community Activist

“Scholar Activists”

*Scholar activists engage in their communities,
they build houses, curriculum and relationships.
Scholar activists examine the existing realities,
and question the inequities and injustices.
Scholar activists build coalitions and develop allies,
and assign new ways of doing and being.
They struggle towards change and justice,
and celebrate with joy the creations and triumphs.
Thank you Connecticut College Scholar Activists.*

*- Tracee Reiser,
Associate Dean for Community Learning
Director, Office of Volunteers for Community Service
Associate Director, Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy*

The OVCS Literary Magazine

Vol. II Spring 2008

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Contributors:

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Joey Backer '08

Sally Pendergast '08

Elizabeth Durante '10

Sandro Aguilar '08

Melissa Sanchez '10

Heather Munro '08

Adrian Stover '08

Jesse Meadow '08

Year in Photos

COMMUNITY LEARNING

O.V.C.S. Staff 2007 - 2008

The Office of Volunteers for Community Service (OVCS) trains and places student volunteers and interns in the New London area and beyond. Further, OVCS fosters the educational dimensions that make up community learning. So... what's the difference between community learning and volunteering? While both terms encompass the idea of involvement in the local community, community learning focuses on community partnerships and reciprocal relationships between local organizations and student participants. Additionally, the term community learning connects OVCS to the educational mission of Connecticut College, connecting to faculty and courses with learning components outside the classroom and providing training and placements that increase students'

citizenship skills.

People may wonder why it is important to make the distinction between volunteering and community learning. Community learning gives due credit to the organizations we collaborate with who work hard to provide meaningful learning experiences to Connecticut College students. When students participate at community organizations, they are developing reciprocal relationships between Connecticut College and the New London community. Students bring their knowledge and skills into the New London community, and the community provides opportunities to learn about challenges, a variety of professions, and forums to develop working skills. For example, students who participate in after-school programs downtown

increase the capacity to deliver services and bring new ideas into the organizations, but also learn a great deal about child development and the issues local youth are facing. New London is a fascinating, diverse, and culturally rich community that provides a wide variety of learning opportunities.

For those of you who have not had the opportunity to acquaint yourselves with OVCS, we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities during your academic career. OVCS provides a wide variety of opportunities for students, from placements in hospitals to participation in organizations working for the economic revitalization of downtown New London. What's your area of interest?

Students' learning experiences are deeper and richer when education involves strong community learning components

By Connecticut College President Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

Almost every high school student volunteers in some capacity today. Community service is a real, positive trend – not simply a way to pad resumes and college applications. But some college students increasingly have an opportunity to move one step further, to be involved in “service learning” or “community learning” as an important component of their higher education. These students emerge from their college experience with a broader view of the world and a confidence in their own capacities to contribute to it.

How does community learning complement traditional community

service? Students learn in the classroom, apply their knowledge outside the classroom through structured community service, and then return to the classroom for reflection, analysis and synthesis. The execution is more complex than the model may seem, and that complexity adds to the value of the learning experience.

The learning process, more than the subject, provides the intellectual faculties that easily transfer to new careers and new life challenges. It is the same with community learning, and that's why an increasing number of colleges and universities are

incorporating community learning into their curriculum.

Jesse Meadow '08 is a psychology major who is keenly interested in environmental psychology. As a scholar of the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy, Ms. Meadow has focused on the relationship between Connecticut College and New London, particularly how students perceive the local community and the ways in which the college and community interact.

(Continued on next page)

Students' learning experiences are deeper and richer when education involves strong community learning components

(Continued from previous page)

Ms. Meadow established LINCC (Linking New London and Connecticut College Communities), a committee of faculty, staff, students and local New London community members who work together to enhance and strengthen the relationship between the College and New London. Ms. Meadow structured LINCC as a permanent sub-committee of the Student Government Association (SGA) so that its effectiveness would long outlast her own college years. This experience—taking positive action as an agent of change and effective community builder—will serve Ms. Meadow well as she pursues her life and career after college.

Sarah Lindsay '08 is also a scholar of the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy, and she has taken her passions overseas to help build sustainable communities in the Dominican Republic. As an intern with Cambiando Vidas (Changing Lives), Ms. Lindsay worked to establish a pre-school program and build homes in a remote village during the summer prior to her senior year.

She was so moved by her experiences in the Dominican Republic, and by seeing the positive impact these homes had on families, she returned to campus eager to find more ways to advance this work. Through the fall semester, she organized a fundraising drive and by

Winter Break, she had raised enough money to lead a group of Connecticut College students on a service trip to the Dominican Republic during winter break to build another home.

Ms. Lindsay is taking her experiences one step further by working to establish a sustainable partnership between Connecticut College and Cambiando Vidas. She is currently raising funds for a January 2009 trip. Additionally, she is drafting a constitution to use in her petition to create a campus club that would organize annual trips for students to build homes in the Dominican Republic.

These women and their successes are characteristic of the extraordinary students who attend Connecticut College. Their community learning experiences, coupled with their broad-based liberal arts education, will prepare them to undertake significant life goals.

Community learning can be a transformative experience, as with Ms. Meadow and Ms. Lindsay. At the same time, it is a two-way street that builds a mutually beneficial relationship in which everybody wins. Students gain real-life experience and a keen understanding that goes far beyond classroom content and communities gain valued work that benefits, in many cases, its underserved populations, including children, the elderly, the poor and disenfranchised.

Campuses with this type of culture of engagement are listed in the book *Colleges with a Conscience*, 81 Great Schools with Outstanding Community Involvement. This resource includes a number of schools in the immediate Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island area, as well as colleges and universities throughout the country.

Many of today's high school students are looking to continue their educations at the college level, and they want community learning to be a part of their experience. At Connecticut College, our Admissions staff and fellows speak often about the kinds of students involved in community learning and how the experience impacts their futures. Coupled with the College's strong academic program and its vibrant co-curricular life, the availability of positive service learning opportunities makes a strong and compelling argument for a Connecticut College education.

With the variety of activities available today, adding service learning or community volunteerism to your schedule may seem next to impossible. I can assure you that service to your community can enrich your education and help you pursue a meaningful life as an active engaged citizen. Just ask Jesse Meadow and Sarah Lindsay.

This piece was originally written by President Lee Higdon for publication in *The Providence Journal*. He has updated and revised the piece for publication in the Connecticut College OVCS Literary Magazine.

Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy Program in Community Action (PICA) Banquet Remarks on the Class of 2008

By Sarah Barr

Good evening. My name is Sarah Barr and I am one of the Associate Directors of the Holleran Center. I want to start off by telling you that I am not an optimistic person. For those of you who know me this may come as a surprise. But why should I be? Optimism is the belief that everything is going to be ok. But we are a country facing many challenges that we seem to be unprepared to address. If anything, I should be pessimistic expecting things to get worse.

However, there is a third option – hope. Hope does not dismiss the reality of the tragedy that exists around us. It gives us space to acknowledge what goes on in the world around us and reminds us that there is something more. It spurs us to action.

There are many reasons why I am hopeful and I would love to tell you about them but instead tonight you will have the opportunity to hear from 20 of the reasons I have hope, the seniors in the PICA Class of 2008.

When I met them as sophomores a little over two years ago, they had really wild ideas about changing

the world because they had seen or experienced injustice. They all seemed a bit idealistic at first but, through PICA, they went to work taking classes, studying abroad, completing internships, doing research and learning from their peers, teachers, co-workers, friends and family members.

I know we live in a world that seems dark at times but I also know that the twenty scholars and activists who will reflect on their experiences tonight are making a real difference on our campus and in the broader community. James Baldwin once said that not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced. It is because I have watched these young women and men face injustice and work hard to make a difference in the world that I have hope. So without further ado, I would like to invite three PICA scholars from the class of 2008 to share with you their reflections on PICA and the role it has played in shaping their educational, personal and professional development. I'm sure they'll give you hope too.

Program in Community Action (PICA) Banquet Time Well Spent

Joey Backer '08

If we leave campus with only one thing after commencement in May, it should be gratitude for the opportunities of the last four years. When we arrived at Connecticut College in August of 2004, we were part of a three-quarters majority of Americans with at least a high school diploma. But when we shake hands with our deans and step off the stage this spring, our ranks will have thinned considerably, because only about one fourth of people in this country have a college degree. Education can be the key to many things in our society: financial security, political empowerment and personal growth. But just as a degree will help us achieve our dreams, there are many Americans whose lack of a college education will dim the prospects of their realities.

We all worked extremely hard to get to this point, and we should be proud of it. We should also be aware of the millions of people who will never get to see the inside of a college classroom or spend time in an

environment where nothing is more important than the broadening of our perspectives and the strengthening of our voices. So when we get out into the world, we should use those voices. We should take what we learned here and dedicate a part of our life to a corner of the world that needs fixing.

For every person here with a college education, there are three other people in the United States – maybe even born on the same day as you – that did not have the same incredible opportunity that you did. We don't need to overburden ourselves with guilt, or shoulder the responsibility for what could have been. But if we try to live our lives in a way that honors them, and try to create a world where their children may join ours at college, then we can say that we did not let our special abilities go unused, and that the privilege of the last four years was time well spent.

1. <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/cps2004/tab01a-01.pdf>
2. Ibid.

Lessons on the Ground: Expanding Learning Outside the Classroom

By Sally Pendergast '08

“You are the most helpful person to come into this room all day”, she said to me simply. The comment caught me off guard. Of all the surgeons, doctors, nurses and social workers to come into her hospital room that day, with countless Masters Degrees and PhDs among them, I was the most helpful? How could that be? Looking back at this mother of 5 with one more on the way, struggling with a cocaine addiction, it seemed there was very little that I could do for her. But then I realized, what I could do was listen. So I did.

I listened to her describe endless internal battles: between the drugs and her children; between paying for the heat and paying for food; between obtaining childcare and leaving the kids home alone. As we talked, doctors and nurses rushed in and out of the room, talking about her as if she was invisible. They rolled their eyes when she asked for help in finding a detox program. After our conversation, I went back to the office and gathered as much information as I could on mother-friendly detox programs, public housing opportunities, early head start enrollment, and food stamp eligibility.

She was incredibly grateful for the information and guidance, and promised to answer my follow-up phone calls in the coming weeks. As I got up to leave, she stopped me, and insisted again that I was the only person to provide her with any sort of constructive help that day. At the time I knew she was

thankful for the phone numbers and applications, but looking back now, I think she was just as thankful for the non-judgmental support. It was a huge lesson. This one patient alone taught me that no matter our qualifications, education or position, we always have the ability to listen. In many ways, this is the foundation on which my internship program, Project HEALTH, was built. With an understanding that our current medical system cannot adequately address the psychosocial challenges of everyday life, Project HEALTH harnesses the energy and drive of undergraduate volunteers to tackle the link between poverty and poor health. Working in a variety of community and hospital settings, side by side with mothers and families, these young people are actively finding solutions to the immense challenge of healthcare in America.

However, I don't want to oversimplify. This huge moment in the hospital room did not just appear and transform my life; I was prepared for it. Objectively listening to and understanding another person requires education. It requires deep mental engagement with the functions of poverty, prejudice and privilege, and the ways in which they breed structural inequalities. It requires a comprehensive understanding of why health care programs and policies are almost always well-intentioned on paper, yet excessively inefficient and neglectful in the real world.

I had that education through

the Holleran Center's Program in Community Action (PICA), and it enabled me to hear rather than assume, respond rather than judge, and problem solve rather than let yet another mother in need slip through the cracks. Through my PICA education, and crystallized in that one transformative moment, I learned the power of community learning. It is this kind of learning, occurring on the ground and in the community, which gives life and use to our classroom learning.

As young adults preparing to enter the real world, we needed to experience for ourselves the chaos and unpredictability of community work, and the power of applying our educations in the most informed and productive ways possible. Now we will take those real-life lessons and translate them into plans for meaningful careers and lives. I am grateful to the PICA program for these transformative community learning moments. They have enriched our learning at Connecticut College far beyond the classroom, and taught us to pursue lives defined not by apathy and pessimism, but by action, engagement, and hope.



Ting Ching Aber

By Elizabeth Durante '10

It is my first official day in Kaberamaido, Uganda, and the team has headed to the orphanage

to meet the children. I am wearing scrubs my father, a vascular surgeon, had “borrowed” from his hospital and my black, steel-toed work boots. There is a stethoscope hanging around my neck. I am reminded of the many times I had donned the same type of outfit in my earlier years, and I still feel

very much like a “pretend” doctor.

We arrive and are welcomed by a hundred or so faces, children lined up according to sex and age, all watching us with fascination laced with uncertainty. We are introduced to the children’s caretakers, formally called “matrons,” and begin introducing ourselves to the children. We stumble a little, awkwardly speaking English to children we know cannot understand us, hoping for the slightest bit of connection and receiving none.

Regardless, we persevere. We take the children outside to play with the soccer balls the team brought. I sing along and am about to return a pass to one of the children when Jacquie, a junior at Vassar College and the leader of the medical team, comes out and requests an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Stef, a fellow

Connecticut College student and EMT, follows Jacquie. I wait a few minutes to give them space, and then follow.

“Liz!” Jacquie declares as I enter a small room that sleeps over 100 boys. “Glad you’re here, you can help Triage.” I nod and grab some gloves. My heart pounds as I feel the eyes of the patients watching me, the “American

Doctor.” Adrenaline courses through my veins. I get a piece of paper and a pen, and team up with Stef. Our translator is waiting for us to tell him what to do. The room is separated into three groups, Priority, Respiratory Distress, and Abdominal Pain. We decide to tackle the group closest to us, which happens to be Abdominal Pain.

I kneel down next to a young girl, and get the basics out of the way. Name, Age, Chief Complaint. I get a quick set of lung sounds. I ask the patient to lie down so I can examine her. I unbutton her shirt and realize there’s no need to palpate. I see a mass in the upper left quadrant of her abdomen, a huge swollen mountain erupting from her small body. I place a hand

gently on it and test for rigidity, which of course is present. “Lit?” I ask, which means “Hurt?” in Kumahm, the local language in Kaberamaido. She nods yes. I tell her to button her shirt and let her sit up. I don’t need to examine her further.

Stef finishes writing up the report and I bring it to Doctor Bill, the Emergency Physician we are traveling with. He stares in disbelief at the size of this young girl’s spleen, and sends her to the Priority group to wait for a van to the hospital with a tentative diagnosis of Malaria.

The trip continues. We triage patients, and write prescriptions for medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) as if they were antibiotics. We re-hydrate sick, feverish kids. We irrigate and dress infected wounds. We teach CPR and basic First Aid. Medicine becomes part of our daily routine, as natural to us as breathing. It pumps



through our veins, alongside the adrenaline. Diseases like Malaria, Tuberculosis, Dysentery, and HIV/AIDs all become commonplace. We forge ahead.

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Ting Ching Aber

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With every patient there are at least 5 more waiting to be seen. With every dose of antibiotic we hand out, there are at least 15 more prescriptions that we don’t have the resources to fill. In the States, EMTs are at the very bottom of the medical hierarchy. In Kaberamaido, we are the “American Doctors.” People walk for miles to see us, and expect us to heal them. We intervene, but we do not cure. We respond, but we do not prevent. That is what medicine is reduced to when the resources are limited.

But somewhere, in the face of all of this chaos, despite all of this human suffering, we manage to find Hope, and Light, and Love. We give a young boy, paralyzed for years from the waist down, the gift of personal freedom by bringing him a wheelchair from the States. We gain a new appreciation for simplicity, and learn to function without electricity, cell phones, or the internet. We sing and dance with the intensity and fury only survivors know. We experience the joy and share in the grief. We sort through the rubble.

I leave Kaberamaido feeling oddly refreshed. I am now wearing jeans and a t-shirt. My stethoscope is safely packed in the luggage below my feet, and has been replaced with an all encompassing sense of Unity and Love. And as the plane leaves the ground, I close my eyes and vow to return one day with anyone who will join me. “Ting ching aber,” as the Ugandans would say. It’s a beautiful day.

TEACHFORAMERICA

By Sandro Aguilar

In eighth grade, I met a teacher, a Teach For America (TFA) alumnus, who completely changed my attitude and perspective on life. He introduced me to an academic world unheard of in my family, and fed me knowledge that was unimaginable in my home. It sounded so perfect, so beautiful, so tempting, but in reality, this teacher was not going to hold my hand on a daily basis. He didn’t know about all the issues occurring in my home, nor would he be there to fight off the immature bullies. However, I took his advice, and disregarded the teasing I knew I would get and joined his after-school program. Reflecting back on this decision makes me realize how important teachers are in students’ lives, especially those who come from a similar background to mine.

During my junior year at Connecticut College, I created an after school program similar to the one I participated in when I was an eighth grader. I met with a group of twelve amazing students from New London, CT every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2:30-5:00 p.m. We read novels like *House on Mango Street*, which were not required reading assignments in their academic classrooms at school. We spent time analyzing the characters through creative writing assignments and different games that brought the stories to life for them. We even discussed the conflicts that arose throughout the stories, but most of all, we had deep meaningful conversations about the value of education.

Through my experience with my

after-school program last year, I gained a fondness for working with students that I could relate to in so many ways. Although I faced many challenges with my group: disruptive behavior, low self-esteem, and lack of fundamental skills, it only made me work harder because I saw their potential (and myself) inside each one of them. I am glad I never gave up on them because this experience gave me the confidence to know that I am capable of being in charge of a classroom, while also helping me realize my passion for making a difference in the lives of students who grow up in disadvantaged communities.

A teacher once helped me understand the importance of education and going to college, and I started an after-school program in hopes of doing the same. Working for TFA will bring me another step closer to my mission and life goals of reaching at risk youth. I want to help the students in need because I was once that student, and I am a living product of what Teach For America can do. I was privileged to have been taught by amazing teachers who were TFA alums at the YES Prep School in Houston, TX. To this day, I am thankful for them because they challenged me academically, nourished my thirst for knowledge, motivated me to succeed, and encouraged me to pursue all my academic dreams. Eight years later, less than a month from my graduation from Connecticut College, I too will become that teacher as a Teach For America corps member.



-Clock-Wise Starting Above-

Yellow House- This house was located right across the street from the VFW where we stayed. The first thing we saw when we walked out of the door each morning was the devastation which remains from the events of Katrina nearly three years ago.

Local High School- Many schools have yet to open in New Orleans. This has become one of the main reasons why many displaced victims have not returned to New Orleans.

“Blow me Katrina”- The sentiment of many of the locals.

Moss Sky High- This image of vegetation on the roof of a house shows the level that the water reached.

Long White House- This house is far beyond repair, but is a lasting reminder of Katrina’s power.

White House- The view from the bus showed numerous houses that looked like this, at times whole neighborhoods looked like ghost towns.

Tent City- Tent city is located in New Orleans proper. It has become “home” to many homeless who, although having jobs, cannot afford rising rent cost or other adequate housing.

I found my roof- Many victims returned to their neighborhoods to find that their homes had been completely torn apart and often times not in the place where they had always stood. This roof was found on the lawn of a neighbor three houses down from its original spot.

Imminent Danger-After Katrina, many houses posed threats to the environment and the surrounding community. This is an attempt to keep their house in hopes of rebuilding.

New Orleans March 2008

By Melissa Sanchez



Chinese Dirt Beneath My Skin

By Heather Munro '08

In late July, 2003, I was sitting next to my friend’s mother, waiting for a play to begin. She had just returned from China; it had been a business trip for her husband, a pleasure trip for her.

“So I hear you’ve been to China, too,” she said.

“Yes,” I agreed. “Where did you go while you were there?”

“Oh, just Beijing and Shanghai,” she answered.

I smiled. “Did you enjoy yourself?”

“Oh, yes. Except for the food. I couldn’t believe what they served us! Chinese food in the U.S. is so much better!”

I cringed. “Does your husband have friends there? Did you meet any people?”

“Not really. My husband’s partner spent some time with us, but we didn’t really speak with the Chinese. I couldn’t understand their accents.”

The maestro cued the orchestra, and the play began.

In 2002, I spent a month in China with the Experiment in International Living. With the exception of a few side trips to tourist destinations, I spent most of the month living with families in Yunnan Province and doing community service.

On my first service project, in the city of Kunming, I was assigned a primary school class of four- and five-year-olds. It was quite a challenge, as my partner and I were supposed to teach them English.

We had decided to start with nursery rhymes and children’s songs.

“Old McDonald had a farm....”

The kids went crazy.

“We know that one,” a boy shouted at me in Chinese. They sang, “Wo shi yi ge chou xiao ya....”

I am a little ugly duck. That’s what they were singing. I am a little ugly duck, yi-ai-yi-ai-you.

We sang in English, and pantomimed the animals. Soon the students were running around the

room, pointing at pictures of animals and shouting, “Dog! Cat! Cheee-kan!”

One little girl surprised me and climbed up onto my back. She grabbed my hair.

“Yellow hair,” she yelled in Mandarin, and began to tug, hard.

“Yeow!” I exclaimed.

She looked at me in confusion.

The teacher came over. “She wants some of your hair! She wants to show her mother!”

“It doesn’t come out,” I tried in English, my Chinese not being that advanced yet. “It’s like yours.”

In the end, she was very content to bring home a picture of me and my family to her parents. Of course, that was only after her teacher had pried the scissors from her hands.

From Kunming, we traveled into one of the most remote regions of China. Our second homestay and service project were in a tiny village of ethnic minorities in the Himalayas, near Tibet.

I learned so much from my time in the mountains. There are 90 different ethnic groups in China, including such familiar groups as Tibetans and Mongolians, among others. I stayed with a Bai family, near the Tibetan border.

The family I lived with spoke only in dialect, but we discovered how easy it can be to communicate without the spoken word. They were relatively well-off compared to others in the village: their house had two floors, and it was made of modern concrete. They were very lucky because they had a single tap for cold water in the middle of their family compound, which meant they did not have to walk half a mile to the village tap. The communal water source was full of sewage, and more likely to carry disease, such as cholera and typhoid.

My service project in the mountains was much different from teaching 4-year-olds, and I was more than a little nervous about it. We

were working on a re-forestation project on the mountainsides, which had been clear-cut during the Great Leap Forward in the 1950’s, and again deforested during the Cultural Revolution. Erosion had been taking its toll on the area, and the mountainside was a hazard both environmentally, and for the people living in the valley below.

A bookish, late-teen, barely reaching five feet, I was not much for physical activities. When I was handed the shovel and baby trees that first day, my stomach nearly dropped out beneath me.

As I searched for a place to plant, my panic subsided as my training took over. One site was too sandy, which meant the trees wouldn’t get enough nutrients. The next was all clay, so the roots wouldn’t be able to breathe.

I planted all day. I sweated, got blisters on my hands, and dirt in every cranny of my being. My muscles screamed at me by dinner, and my eyelids couldn’t stay open past eight. I felt wonderful. By the end of the first day, our group had planted over 50 trees in an area of about seven acres. We had made a big contribution to saving the area from erosion, and started a project that would self-multiply forever if left undisturbed. And I had planted just as many trees as everyone else.

What was different about my journey from that of the middle-aged woman who sat next to me at the play was that I had made some sort of an impact on the country I visited. I had touched people, and they in turn had touched me. I can now speak their language, I know about their culture and their lives, and I have formed long-lasting friendships with people on the other side of the world. But more than that, I can say I understand them, and they understand me. I know what it feels like to be Chinese, and that has changed me forever.

English From The Other Side

By Adrian Stover '08

Learning a language that is different from your own is never easy. While many language-learning guides may sell you the idea that it is jejune, it would be unwise to listen to their advice. Anyone who has taken a course in a foreign tongue can tell you how the process of mastering it requires a conscious, disciplined effort. If you choose to live in another country where this language is spoken, it makes the learning of it take on a slightly different meaning. Sitting in a classroom in your home country and practicing it is one kind of experience, but to do the same in a strange, new place is another. If you have little or no experience with the language prior to being there, the feeling of desperation will enter your mind as soon as you realize that no one around you can understand the words that are coming out of your mouth. Studying it almost becomes a kind of survival technique to carry on in this environment. The people around you seem so erudite, and you sometimes feel like a fool for even trying to speak as they do. Yet great joy can also be found in the simple pleasure of little accomplishments. A word used correctly there or a phrase used well here is sometimes the stuff of victory. To know that you have used learned movements of the lips and tongue to form sounds that another person comprehends

is cause for a small degree of celebration. Native speakers often forget how hard it is for someone to learn a language that they speak flawlessly, and it is necessary to remember how onerous the process can be in order to understand and be sympathetic to those who are going through it. Throughout my volunteer experience this semester, I have had to constantly remind myself of this fact. In retrospect, however, it has helped me adopt an attitude that has let me understand and communicate better with those who are seeking to learn or improve their English.

Currently, I am regularly assisting an ESL (English as a Second Language) class at the New London Adult and Continuing Education Center as preparation for a future assignment of English instruction in the Peace Corps. The experience has proven to be invaluable, for I have learned far more from the students in the class than what I have helped them to learn. The students who come to the center are working adults, many of whom are from many different countries around the world. **I am continually surprised during conversations with them about how much I learn about the outside world by simply going to downtown New London.** There is also a certain kind of reaction that I cannot help but feel when we are sitting in the classroom

during a lesson. As I look at the students around me taking notes and responding to the instructor, I think, "There before the grace of God go I." From my experience of a semester abroad in France and a summer internship in Morocco, I can understand and sympathize with everything that the students in the class feel. I can see the desire to learn and to understand the culture around them, but I can also see the frustration in not being able to communicate well with others at their jobs or in daily life. Some even have university degrees from their home countries in areas as complex as business management, but they can only find minimum wage jobs because they cannot speak English at an advanced level. One can only hope that what the students learn at New London Adult Education will be useful to them in the long-term, and that by taking these classes they will understand more of the culture around them.

I would recommend this opportunity to anyone who is interested in any kind of ESL work, or even anyone who wants to simply engage with a variety of different people who come from all corners of the globe. I am positive that this experience will aid me in future assignments, and I am glad that I have had the opportunity to have something like this during my college career.

Linking New London and Connecticut College Communities

By Jesse Meadow '08

Life is defined by links. Our connections between people, communities, and experiences, no matter how small, shape who we are and how we live. Consider the butterfly effect, the idea that one small action, such as the flapping of a butterfly's wings, could dramatically change the world. Each one of us has the power at any given time to alter another's life and, ultimately, the course of history.

My experience with the Holleran Center's Program in Community Action and Public Policy (PICA) has helped me understand the impact that I can have in the world by creating links. PICA has taught me how to establish and strengthen the links between different academic fields of study, links between coursework and real life application, links between practical application and life goals and experiences, and links between people.

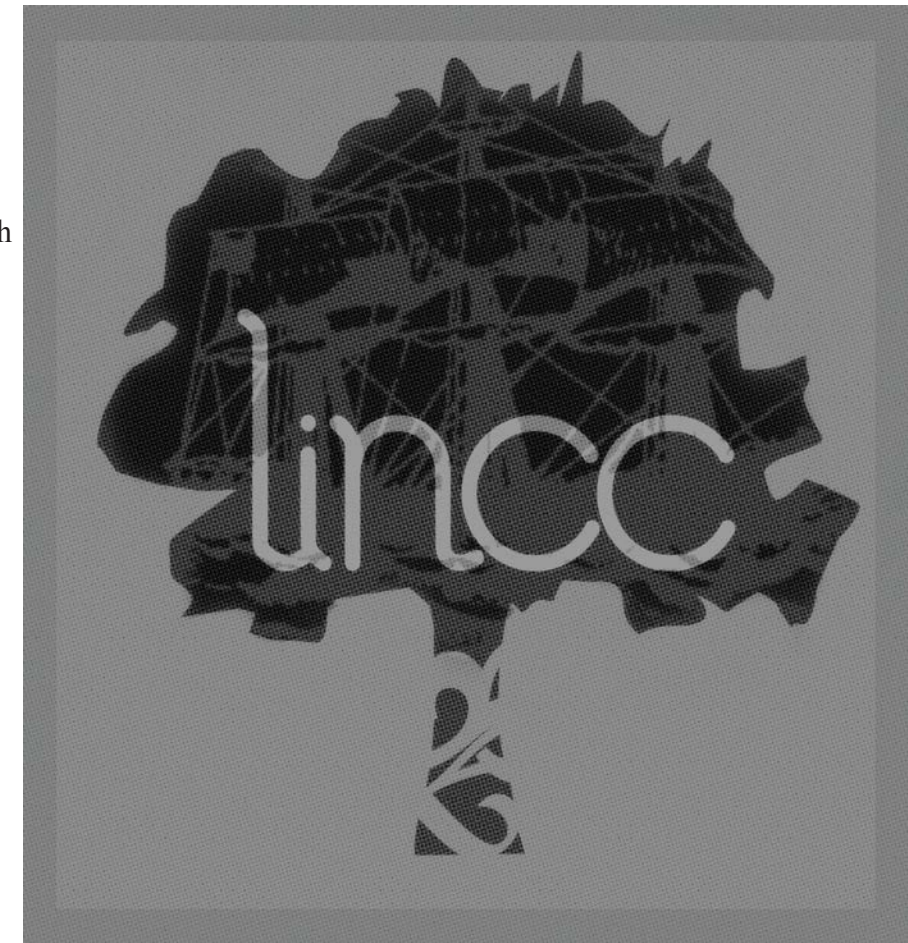
While constructing my senior project for PICA, I began to analyze the links in my life. I realized that I did not fully appreciate connections in my very own community. The residents of New London are the ones who advocated and raised money for the construction of Connecticut College. At one point, a little girl from New London sent ten cents to an administrator to help fund the construction of the college's gymnasium. Once word spread about this little girl's act of kindness, many other little girls

began to send money as well, and eventually a fund was created for the gym in this little girl's honor.

Connecticut College's motto, *Tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum*. "Like a tree planted by rivers of waters (that bringeth forth its fruit in its season)", implies that the college community, like the tree, thrives from those who nourish, support, and sustain it, like the river does for the tree. New London, the city in which Connecticut College is located, is one of the "rivers of waters" that

has nourished the College to blossom. It's best when the College values the City that gave it life and appreciates its culture, history, and inhabitants.

For my senior PICA project, I decided to create the Linking New London and Connecticut College Communities (LINCC) Committee. The LINCC Committee is now a permanent force on campus run through the Student Government Association. It works to strengthen partnerships and relationships between



the college and New London.

Over the course of the last four years, I have learned to truly appreciate the people and communities around me. I have seen the validity of the butterfly effect through my work with the LINCC Committee. I can say with certainty that my connections with others have changed not only my outlook on life, but the lives of others as well.

2007 - 2008 Year In Photos

Throughout the year, the OVCS has organized and implemented numerous programs and collaborated on a wide range of projects and events on campus and within the broader community. From Art, Mentor, Tutoring, and Athletic Programs to forums on Multiculturalism, Educational Equity, Community Challenges, and Justice Issues, OVCS and it's partners are Community Learning!



Left to Right, Top to Bottom:

Walk to End Homelessness, *Dream* by Misha Johnson, New London Through a Camel's Eye, Walk to End Homelessness, SISTER Filmmaking Project, Save Ocean Beach, Earth Tubs Project, New London Department of Higher Education Awards Ceremony.



From Left to Right, Top to Bottom:

Glenn Singleton: Beyond Diversity, Arbo Tour, Latino Heritage Month Convocation (Taken By Gabrielle Kaminsky), Black History Month (Taken by Aracelis Vazquez), Connecticut College Camel at OVCS Volunteer Fair, Boy Scout Merit Badge, Project Kids Books and Athletics, Clark Lane Middle School Tour, View of Connecticut College and New London (Courtesy of Vickers and Bleachler Photography)



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