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## OVCS Newsletter October 2013

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# COMMUNITY LEARNING

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

OVCS NEWSLETTER

October 2013

## 1st Year Student Orientation Community Learning



Left: Students shovel wood chips at Ocean Beach Park with the New London Beautification Committee  
Right: Students dig up weeds at the Thames River Apartments basketball courts with the Kiwanis Club

Working throughout the summer of 2013, the OVCS team worked with New London community partner organizations to implement the community learning component of 2013 Orientation. Together we organized twelve projects that could accommodate over 500 students. We agreed that in addition to getting specific work done we would include the following learning goals: Supporting the mission of Connecticut College to educate students to put the liberal arts into action in a global society, the activities would provide opportunities for community members and college members to build relationships and acquire an initial understanding of the City of New London and some of the resources, an understanding of the organization and the work it does in the community,

an understanding that as Connecticut College students they are also residents of New London, and an understanding that civic engagement and community partnering are essential components of the liberal arts education. Thirty-one staff and faculty participated as Site Team Leaders and site team members. The student members of the Orientation Committee did a stellar job of organizing and inspiring the first year students. Everyone was eager and enthusiastic. They engaged deeply in the projects and took initiative to build relationships and get work done well. A front page article in *The Day Sunday* edition with photo and an article in *New London Patch* highlighted the projects and many community partners put up pictures on their website and facebook. The Mayor of

New London, Daryl Finizio, welcomed the students in Palmer Auditorium and said he hoped this would be the start of an enduring partnership between the Class of 2017 and the City.

The students helped clean up Ocean Beach and Riverside Park. They spruced up community gardens and volunteered at the Homeless Hospitality Center, Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center and local schools. At the garden for FRESH, a nonprofit group dedicated to building a local food system, students painted picnic tables, cleaned and planted seeds. “This immerses you in the New London community right away when you get on campus,” said Jared Parlin, a freshman from Allentown, Pa. “And it creates a better bond between the college and the community.”

# International Coastal Cleanup Day

by Sarah Schnitman '14

Connecticut College Oceana joined volunteers from local non-profit organizations, Save the Sound, Save Ocean Beach, and other volunteers from all over the state of Connecticut for the annual International Coastal Cleanup Day. The event, which occurred on Saturday, September 21, 2013 focused on cleaning up Ocean Beach Park as part of an effort made at beaches all over the world. This year the cleanup coincided with the unaffiliated Walk for Alzheimers. Psychology Professor Joe Schroeder leads a Connecticut College effort to participate in this community event and between the Coastal work and the Walk, there

were dozens of CC Camels in New London making a difference. Louise Fabrykiewicz, the beach captain for the coastal event, presented Oceana and the other volunteers with an introduction to the history of the clean up event, mapped out routes to clean along, and provided interesting statistics on the decomposition rates of some of the objects we were finding. For instance, an aluminum can take between 80 and 200 years to decompose while plastic beverage bottles can take 450 years according to the Ocean Conservancy's statistics. The dedicated students from Connecticut College who attended

the clean up helped to collect 651 cigarette butts, 268 food wrappers, 148 plastic pieces, 59 foam pieces, 41 plastic beverage bottles, and 23 glass beverage bottles among a wide range of items. Some of the most interesting items found were a rusted hammer and 9 fireworks. Transportation to this event was made possible by OVCS, the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy, and Oceana. Thank you to all of those who participated and look out for future cleanups sponsored by Oceana!



## Extended Learning Time (ELT) at Jennings

by Jennifer Cunningham '13

“College begins in Kindergarten” is the poster I saw when I first walked into Jennings Elementary school as a community partner. That quote is fast becoming a reality due to the concerted efforts of Principal Texador as well as dedicated teachers and community partners. September 16th marked the beginning of Connecticut College’s

involvement in the Extended Learning Time (ELT) program. The purpose of this program is to increase academic performance and engage students in enrichment activities and workshops. OVCS has partnered with Jennings Elementary School to recruit committed student mentors and team leaders to facilitate

enrichment programs. Successful workshops and curriculum have been developed to ensure that students at Jennings are improving oral language skills, reading comprehension and writing skills. Stay tuned for next month’s edition of OVCS’s newsletter to read about updates from Jennings Elementary School!

## Intercambio Italiano

By Jared Barbaresi '16

One fateful Thursday afternoon about a year ago, I was making the walk from South Campus to the library to do some studying when I came across a tour group. Now, high school students come through our campus frequently this time of year, and I honestly didn’t pay any special attention to them. As I walked past the group however, I noticed these students were all speaking Italian, a language I’ve been studying for the past few years. I was so overjoyed I walked into the center of the group to stand and listen for a while before making my presence known and introducing myself to them. It turns out the Science & Technology Magnet High School (STMHS) in New London had initiated an exchange program with a science orientated Italian high school in a small town near the outskirts of Florence.

STMHS invited Connecticut College OVCS to support the exchange program. The Italian students come to New London and stay with the local families for a few weeks during which they go to classes at STMHS as well as travel around this area. On one of the

last days of their stay, Connecticut College OVCS brings them to campus to get an experience at a US college. After the Italian students left, the Science & Technology High School students in New London had to begin preparing for their trip to Italy.

Last spring, STMHS, OVCS and Professor Frida Morelli arranged a language and cultural class to prepare the students for their



Jared talks with Italian students in the Blue Camel Cafe

exchange trip to Italy. I and two other Connecticut College students taught the project. We went to the STMHS in New London and taught Italian lessons to the High School students every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to familiarize them not only with the basics of the Italian

language but also with the culture. We discussed the numerous cities they would be visiting. The STMHS students and their teacher spent two weeks in Italy last spring and had a wonderful voyage throughout Italy’s breathtakingly beautiful Tuscan countryside. Throughout last spring I had the opportunity of sharing my passion for the Italian language through teaching with these high school students. Quite an experience for my freshman year I might add!

This fall the second group of Italian high school students came to New London and the group came to the Connecticut College campus on September 11. They loved the campus and New London Hall, the spectacular science building. They enjoyed eating in Harris with Connecticut College students as well. This group of Italian students now look forward to hosting New London students in Italy in the spring of 2014. I better get my lesson plans together!

# The Jordan Summer Program

by Kaityln Garbe '15

From refugee camps, to the constant hearing of bombs going off in the distance, to walking the streets of Irbid, to the weekend trips in 5 star resorts - everything came together to create a powerful learning experience in Jordan. By the end of the trip, we ten students all became great friends. You can't spend six weeks in the Middle East with nine others and not come back with a bond. One learns a lot about oneself and others when in such an environment.



Kaitlyn with friends holding the Conn College flag

Life is slower in Jordan and overall is appreciated. Jordan is also just so strikingly different. An example of this is the souq, an outdoor market that spans several city blocks and is a combination of a mall of sorts, restaurants, and a farmer's market. Everything you need is in one, outdoor place. We were welcomed at every restaurant we ate at and every shop we entered.

On our travels around the country, we saw several historic sites like Ajloun, a castle from the times of the Crusades; and Jerash, an ancient city built during King Alexander's reign. We visited the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth and the Red Sea, made famous by Moses. In all honesty, it was one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. It was truly paradise – the weather was warm, there was no rain, barely a cloud in the sky. We also visited Wadi Rum, a desert where we were able to see the sunset from atop a small peak after driving on the back of a pick up truck, up and down the sand dunes.



This trip solidified my desire to continue learning about the Middle East. I feel I have chosen the right region to study and more importantly the right language. Arabic is hard, but it becomes worth it more and more every day. I gained so much knowledge about the language in the short span of six weeks. And at the end of the day, I was able to acknowledge how blessed I am to have had this opportunity to go to Jordan.



Kaitlyn and her fellow Camles in a market in Irbid

The Jordan Summer Program was an exceptional experience and I am forever thankful I was able to participate in it and that this opportunity exists at Connecticut College.

**Register to vote in OVCS!  
Elections are  
November 15!**

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