

2011


Spirit of Engagement 2011

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A PUBLICATION CELEBRATING THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Spirit of Engagement

2011



A Leading American University With International Reach



WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



Greetings:

As Western Kentucky University expands its commitment to university-community engagement, we continue to see the benefits to our students of addressing societal challenges in collaboration with our local and global communities. The fourth annual *Spirit of Engagement* magazine is intended to highlight some of the exemplary ways in which WKU students take what they learn in their classrooms and labs, and on our websites, and make lasting contributions in real-world settings. The articles also demonstrate the personal and professional commitment to engaged student learning that is made by the faculty and staff at WKU—who continue to challenge our students in new and innovative ways, while preparing them to be effective, engaged leaders in their future personal and professional roles.

The opening article explains the importance of providing engaged scholarship opportunities as well as introduces WKU's hub for university-community engagement—the ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships. Take time to connect with the ALIVE Center to find out more about the many ways in which the Center can be utilized to support your own philanthropic interests and service endeavors.

Consistent with our bold vision to be a leading American University with International Reach, our students have found that people across the globe are within the reach of our spirit of engagement and service.

The article on page 14 highlights one of our most significant student-led efforts in the university's history to impact the world from right here on campus. Find out how a small group of devoted students worked tirelessly to secure Western Kentucky University's place as the fourth national university to become a certified Fair Trade University, benefiting developing communities all over the world.

It is with great pleasure that I share this edition of the *WKU Spirit of Engagement*. I hope that you will be inspired to connect with us and serve as co-educators and co-creators of a world we know is possible.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Ransdell
President

SPIRIT OF ENGAGEMENT CONTENT

The *Spirit of Engagment* is published by Western Kentucky University's ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships in the fall of each year. The publication aims to highlight engagement activities at WKU involving service-learning, community outreach, community-based research, and volunteerism.

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Student Learning Through

As once stated by W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental." Western Kentucky University has long been an institution of higher education that understands its vital role in educating the future leaders of our society. Yet there is something particularly distinctive about Western Kentucky University - often referred to as *the Spirit of WKU*. It is more than just school spirit; it is a tangible feeling that students notice upon their first visit to WKU. For many students, this *Spirit* is a defining factor in choosing WKU for their university home. It was Henry Hardin Cherry, WKU's founding president, who coined the term "The Spirit Makes the Master."

It is this deep passion and pride known as *the Spirit of WKU* that drives our commitment to student learning. Engaged learning, as reflected in WKU's mission, prepares our students to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen leaders of a global society. Through teaching, research, and service, WKU faculty, staff, and students demonstrate their commitment to public problem-solving across all academic colleges and through many student-led initiatives and campus organizations. Through engaged scholarship at WKU, students are learning to change the world by applying their education in practical ways.

While there are different ways to talk about engaged scholarship (e.g. public scholarship, scholarship of engagement, community-engaged scholarship), in essence, it is defined by the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the educational institution - knowledgeable professionals and everyday citizens (local, regional/state, national, and global) - for the mutually beneficial exchange of information and resources. In short, it is about partnership, respect, and recognition of what everyone brings to the table in order to solve our most pressing problems. Engaged

scholarship results in a more active and engaged student body by bringing communities into problem-solving work in ways that advance the public good. This process not only benefits communities, but allows students to understand the responsibility they have to build a sustainable, democratic society.

The ways in which students benefit from engaged scholarship reaches beyond academic knowledge, applied learning, and social responsibility. According to a 2007 report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) titled "Learning for the New Global Century," researchers asked Fortune 500 companies what skills, attitudes, and attributes they look for when considering a recent college graduate for hire. The findings concluded that employers seek graduates who can integrate learning, have knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, possess intellectual and practical skills, and understand and take action based on personal and social responsibility.

Employers want graduates capable of navigating our 21st century global economy through creative problem-solving and working with diverse populations. Engaged scholarship provides the opportunity to acquire the skills, attitudes and attributes most valued by future employers. While engaged scholarship is not a new approach to teaching, research, or service at WKU, it has evolved to become a model for university/community engagement, as is evident by the multitude of quality engaged learning activities occurring on our campus and community. Engaged scholarship at WKU encompasses all of the experiential learning opportunities that serve not only to teach students but also to improve quality of life in our communities. Opportunities such as internships, practicums, Study Abroad and Study Away programs, curricular and co-curricular service-learning, and community-based research projects have been proven to equip our students with the competencies and



Students at WKU actively engage in learning opportunities for issues such as poverty, homelessness, and mountain top removal.

Community Engagement

By Leah Ashwill



Student learning through community engagement takes the classroom into the community. The photos on the left page include youth participating in an activity on poverty as well as students learning the fundamentals of service-learning. In the photo above, youth learn how to work together to address community issues. Above photo by Alix Mattingly.

skills necessary to serve as effective leaders in their communities and careers. Data from 22,334 college students show that engaged learning positively affected grades, writing, and critical thinking skills (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Another study of 3,450 students at 42 institutions indicated that engaged learning substantially enhances academic development, life skill development, and a sense of civic responsibility (Astin & Sax, 1998).

Western Kentucky University expanded its commitment to engaged scholarship in 2007 by institutionalizing the WKU ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships (ALIVE CCP), a regional hub for university-community engagement. The ALIVE CCP supports engaged scholarship at WKU by facilitating service-learning and community-based research opportunities with campus and community partners locally and abroad. The Center offers quality programs and resources to support the effective delivery of engaged learning experiences, namely service-learning and community-based research. The Center is a catalyst for university-community partnerships by serving as a connector for potential partners and providing monetary

awards for projects that address community needs. The ALIVE Center seeks to recognize and celebrate the many impressive university-community engagement initiatives underway at WKU. We hope that as you read through the fourth annual *Spirit of Engagement*, you are inspired by the stories of a creative, deeply committed group of faculty, staff, and students at WKU who educate to create a more civil and sustainable world.

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Students Help Youth Address Community Issues

By Lindsey Ardrey



Western Kentucky University students serve as coaches in the Public Achievement program, working with third and tenth graders at T.C. Cherry Elementary and Bowling Green High School. During the spring 2011 semester, the coaches met with the youth regularly to help them address a community issue. Photos by Alix Mattingly.

Power. Do you have access to it? Is it something you can have? This spring, third and tenth graders in Bowling Green addressed those very questions. Representing T.C. Cherry Elementary School and Bowling Green High School, students involved in Kentucky's Public Achievement pilot program grabbed the reins of power to address issues within their own communities. Developing "civic co-creators," Public Achievement drives youth to actualize their own power to affect change within their community. Using public problem-solving techniques, two groups at T.C. Cherry Elementary School and one group at Bowling Green High School met weekly to tackle self-identified community challenges. Realizing that power manifests itself as the ability to get things done and is not something one person possesses and others lack, students learn to become active producers rather than consumers of their worlds.

"They have redefined our notions of community and empowered our students to reach potentials of new heights."

~Kyle Norris

Students in the self-titled "Bowling Green Elementary School Kids" (BGESK) third grade group mastered valuable note-taking, writing, research, and meeting agenda development skills. While working together to focus on animal rights/cruelty and responsible pet ownership, BGESK invited local veterinarian Dr. Debby Shoulders to speak with their group. Prepared and equipped with questions, the students assembled information for a responsible pet ownership brochure. After meeting with the group, Shoulders commented on how well-prepared, informed, and well-spoken the group was—inadvertently displaying the true nature of Public Achievement. Their "A Better Way to Love Your Pet" brochure is a representation of the transformational processes shaping their civic, professional, and personal interactions. The group spent their last weeks of school sharing their work with schoolmates and the greater community.

Through Public Achievement Program

As site coordinator for T.C. Cherry, teacher Kyle Norris knows first-hand the influence Public Achievement yields. "The principles of Public Achievement asserted themselves into the lives of those involved," Norris said. "They have redefined our notions of community and empowered our students to reach potentials of new heights." And it is to new heights that the "2 Kool to Litter" group soared this past semester. Refining the art of public-speaking and script-writing, this group of third grade students informed schoolmates about the significance of taking pride in their community. Appearing on T.C. Cherry's student-led WTCC newscast and speaking with homeroom classes, "2 Kool to Litter" challenged their peers to a school-wide trash pick-up—awarding the classroom with the most plastic shopping bags full of trash to an ice cream party and *Wall-E* movie showing.

Using power mapping techniques, students, led by coaches Noelle Johnson, interdisciplinary studies major, and Terry Shoemaker, Program Coordinator for the Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility, reached out to the city of Bowling Green's Office of City Manager. Laura Harris with the City Manager Office's anti-litter program spoke candidly with the group about the effects of litter, inspiring students to mobilize the school in a community-oriented trash pick-up.

Aiding youth in navigating through the public domain, WKU students act in a coaching role. But even as a coach, university students discover that learning is not a one-way street. Elementary education major Kayla Jones realized how crucial forming weekly meeting agendas were to her group's success. Leaving time for evaluation at the end of every meeting allowed for reflective thinking and progressive planning for future meetings. Jones and her co-coach, Tracy Jo Ingram, an English major and Honors College student, guided group

members in evaluating what went well, what they could improve upon, and what their course of action would be for the following meeting. When asked about the most challenging aspect of this work, political science major Ryan Rodgers expressed his struggle to lead the group of tenth grade students in assuming accountability for their project. After initial brainstorming meetings, it was clear the students wanted to focus on a service-oriented project geared toward the systemic issue of poverty. At the end of each meeting, Rodgers and fellow high school coach Aimee Craft, political science and Spanish major, assigned the group tasks such as recording images of poverty they viewed during their daily lives. But after having only one student complete the assignments, it was clear to the coaches that their students still had not taken ownership of the group. Rodgers and Craft charged the group of six students to develop a mission statement, a group name, and an agenda for the next week's meeting.

In the following weeks, productivity dramatically increased and "PurpCorps" students were no longer being led—they were leading their group and creating their own change. The group learned how to arrange a meeting with their principal, develop and organize a professional meeting, effectively communicate with administrators in other schools, and successfully implement their own program. Over 15 weeks, "PurpCorps" provided the foundation, supplying themselves as mentors, for a mentoring program with Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School and cultivated relationships with six fifth grade students. In the final weeks of the school year, the students worked diligently to maintain the continuity and perpetuity of their mentoring program.

Public Achievement in Kentucky facilitates opportunities for civic growth and responsibility, affording students the chance to realize that they are not citizens in deferral, but that they are political actors influencing change right now.



WKU CAMP FOR LEARNING TOGETHER



While nearly 20 children and their counselors molded wire hangers into the shapes of everything they could imagine, their mothers sat in a room nearby talking about their lives and making beads to remind them to reach for their dreams. The bead-making workshop is one of many workshops that takes place during the Women and Kids Learning Together (WKLT) camp every June, which focuses on the interwoven threads of the arts, practical living, and emotional and physical wellness.

"I have two crystal heart beads on my necklace to show that I have heart, and heart leads to motivation. With motivation you can do anything," Jessica Rogers said as she described her beads. Rogers' beads start with her daughter's initials and end with her initials while also including a cross for faith, a dove for peace, and the word "believe."

Rogers participated in the Reach Higher Program at the Housing Authority of Bowling Green for three months before taking part in the WKLT camp. The mission of the Reach Higher Program is to "create opportunities for its participants to enhance personal abilities, assist with overcoming barriers to self-sufficiency, move successfully into the work-force, and retain employment, ultimately

removing the participants from welfare." Through Reach Higher, women and men participate in six months of job skills training while working 32 hours a week in the community.

Since 2006, Western Kentucky University's Women's Studies Program has partnered with the Housing Authority's Reach Higher Program to involve 250 women and children in the camp. "I am blessed to be in their presence," said T.J. Shockley-Hunt, Reach Higher Program Director. "It is an honor to be up here with some of the most phenomenal women in the whole world."

"[Our concept behind the camp] is sort of a more holistic idea of lifelong learning and the idea of self in relationship to the community," said Dr. Jane Olmsted, Director of WKU's Gender and Women's Studies Program and WKLT Camp Coordinator.

IMPACTS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

By Aurelia Spaulding

Olmsted said the coordinators really wanted the camp to be a learning experience for the women and children. Instructors in various departments throughout WKU present sessions each day for the women, and the kids' counselors lead programs that coincide with what the women are learning.

The week includes practical living workshops in goal-setting, continued education, and interview skills. Emotional and physical wellness activities involve journaling, abuse awareness, and a trip to Camp Loucon, where the women

focus on team and trust-building. The types of art included in the week are visual arts, photo workshops, tie-dyeing, and poetry. Many of the sessions encourage discussion and interaction between the women and the workshop leaders. "It is through the arts that people can best reflect on who they are, what they want to be, what their dreams are, how they express their dreams and hopes, and how they can even recognize it in themselves

in a way that allows them to act on their dreams," Olmsted said.

Samantha Burnett coordinated the kids' programming for the 2011 camp. As a junior social work major, Burnett worked with the nine student counselors who planned the youth programs.

Over the past few years, the youth programs have consisted of photography, drama, journal decoration, clay pottery, beading, masks, and communication.

Burnett planned art projects including tie-die, ceramics, improv comedy, dance, and obstacle courses. "My main focus in social work

has always been kids," Burnett said. "There is definitely a need for [this camp] in the community." Working with the WKLT camp provided a great opportunity for Burnett to utilize her academic interests while working with youth.

"It feels good to hear the kids say they don't want it to be over," Burnett said. "We aren't just babysitting them. We are helping them become better versions of themselves."

"OUR CONCEPT BEHIND THE CAMP IS SORT OF A MORE HOLISTIC IDEA OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE IDEA OF SELF IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY,"

~JANE OLMSTED



For the last six years, the Gender and Women's Studies Program at Western Kentucky University has coordinated a unique learning environment for women and children. The Women & Kids Learning Together Camp provides opportunities for women and their children to build upon what already lies within them. Photos provided by the Women & Kids Learning Together Camp.



Solve the national deficit
(using a New York Times activity).

List the most pressing national & global issues today.

Wii™

The People
WKU Bowling League

Students Use Game to Discuss Civic Renewal

By Terry Shoemaker

Robert Putnam concludes his famous work *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by detailing several challenges to American communities that foster civic renewal. One of those challenges reads:

Let us find ways to ensure that by 2010 Americans will spend less leisure time sitting passively alone in front of glowing screens and more time in active connection with our fellow citizens. Let us foster new forms of electronic entertainment and communication that reinforce community engagement rather than forestalling it.

The Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility (ICSR) created a new program during the spring semester to meet this Putnam challenge. In March, the ICSR started the first Wii™ the People Bowling League. Ten diverse teams participated in the league, including Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM), Student Identity Outreach, Student Veteran Alliance, and Sigma Kappa sorority. Using the Nintendo Wii™ bowling game, teams came together to foster civil discourse, find common ground with others, and have fun. Teams were randomly divided into two leagues, and each team played the other teams in their league.

Each week, teams were given a topic to discuss while they bowled. Instead of focusing on the differences that the teams might have, the teams cooperated to find things upon which they agreed. During week one, competing teams worked together to identify the top five global and national issues that need to be addressed immediately. The top three issues identified by all the groups were the environment, the economy, and education. By identifying these issues, students devised the topics that they would tackle throughout the remaining weeks of the league.

During the second week of play, students compiled a list of actions that every citizen could do to help curtail the current environmental crisis. Students also created a campaign to organize communities around this issue.

In week three, teams were assigned what was considered to be the most difficult task: to complete balancing the national deficit. Students discovered the difficulties that our legislators encounter when they attempt to balance state and federal budgets. Most teams were successful in making cuts in military spending and entitlement programs and eliminating some tax cuts, but two of the teams were unable to complete the task due to their differences. For the final task, students examined

Create a program for the fall semester to build unity on campus and the local community.

Putnam's other challenges and developed a program to meet one of them. Multiple ideas were generated including "creation sessions" and cultural sharing opportunities for students.

The students learned about each of the issues, but more importantly, they discovered the need to discuss the issues and their differences effectively. "The games provided this fun context in which the students could talk about some pretty serious issues...I think in a lot of other contexts they wouldn't have started the conversation. So I think starting the conversation was the best thing," said Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo, Department head of Philosophy & Religion and co-director of ICSR.

Throughout the season, two teams stood out among the competition. A team known simply as Team 10 finished



4-0 and BCM finished 3-1. These teams finished at the top of their leagues and played in the Wii the People championship game on April 12th. The scores were close throughout the game, but BCM came out victorious as the first ever Wii™ the People champion.

The championship game was celebratory in nature and had students making plans to work together during the fall semester. "I was involved in two different teams on the Wii™ Bowling League, Sigma Kappa and Student Veterans Alliance," said Danielle Adams, a political science major. "Even though the teams were very different, they both really enjoyed the combination of discussing important social issues and playing the Wii™. The activity gave us the opportunity to get to know people outside our immediate social circles and to have meaningful discussion. I have been asked to get involved in other campus groups with similar interests that I met because of my participation."

The league provided a framework for students to intentionally engage in civic dialogue. The informal setting of the bowling league provided each participant an opportunity to comfortably share their own opinion, listen to different perspectives, and realize that common ground is achievable with compromise. At the ICSR, students are discovering the wonderful advantages of not "bowling alone."



Teams of Western Kentucky University students participated in the Wii™ the People Bowling League during the spring of 2011. While half of the team bowled, the other half discussed civic issues. Photos by Rebecca Katz & Ivan Shelburne.

Make a list of environmentally friendly actions that citizens can do today.

Local Nonprofit

The student-run advertising and public relations agency, ImageWest, started a campaign in October 2010 to gain Facebook "likes" with the hope of helping a local nonprofit organization; however, gaining 700 "likes" on the page turned into a mutually beneficial relationship for all those involved.

The idea behind the social media campaign on Facebook was to gain "likes" for ImageWest and then donate supplies to a local nonprofit for each of those "likes." When a user "likes" a Facebook page, they begin to receive updates and messages from the organization, and the student interns wanted to create an interesting way of getting followers while benefiting a good cause. Public relations major KaiLee Viehland said the interns at ImageWest proposed a number of organizations to serve, but they found a true need with the Barren River Animal Welfare Association (BRAWA). The student group donated countless items in November 2010 to the organization because of the campaign but then decided there was more they could do to help meet the needs of BRAWA.

When Margie Patton, Director of BRAWA, received a phone call from Heather Garcia, ImageWest Agency Manager, she had never heard of the student-run agency, but she definitely had a need for their services. Patton and her staff had discussed updating their website and Facebook page, along with other marketing ideas, but they did not know how to start and did not have the staff to implement their ideas. After donating the items to BRAWA, Garcia decided the organization would be an ideal partner for ImageWest's first 24-Hour Project, where students would complete a public relations and advertising makeover within 24 hours. "This was an opportunity of a lifetime," Patton said. To better serve



the animal shelter, the students spent the day at BRAWA with the animals and talked to the staff about some of their needs. "They said that they knew a lot about animals and how to get them adopted but not a lot about marketing. So that is where they really needed help," Garcia explained. On January 23rd, Viehland and 20 other students started the complete makeover of BRAWA's advertising and public relations campaign. Viehland led a team of students in creating a communications plan. "I broke it down and assigned different parts for [the communications team] to do," Viehland said. "We did an executive summary and a situation analysis and an overview of the client and their needs. Then, we did target market analysis, [analyzed] competition, public relations, direct mail pieces, and suggested events that they could have."

There was a total of five teams working on this project: communications, public relations, printed marketing materials, digital interactivity, and video production. The communications team created a 60-page plan which included how to use the materials (a brochure, newsletter templates, and billboard designs) that the other teams created. A majority of the students participating in this project were advertising, public relations, or graphic design students that interned at ImageWest in the fall of 2010 or the spring of 2011. This project was the first time these students worked together. "It was good to see what you really do know," said Caitlin Pike, a junior public relations major and Honors College student. Pike was new to the ImageWest team, and the 24-Hour Project was her first assignment of the spring semester. "We really believed in what we were doing. And at the very end, seeing the client's reaction and [how they were] getting all emotional about all the things that we did-- it really hit home for everyone." Garcia said. "It made it all the more worthwhile." Viehland added, "It made you feel really good that you helped someone. They were so appreciative." Garcia said that the overall goal was to meet all of the advertising and public relations needs of the organization and encourage people to adopt animals. Since project completion, BRAWA has implemented some of the materials, and Patton said the organization has definitely noticed a difference – they recorded a public service announcement on the radio, and their website has seen increased activity. BRAWA also hopes to use the design for the billboard on some of their materials in the future.





During the 2010-2011 academic year, student members of Americans for an Informed Democracy participated in countless activities to make Western Kentucky University the fourth university in the country to be named a Fair Trade University. Photos provided by Matthew Vaughan.

Student Group Makes WKU A Fair Trade University

By Terry Shoemaker

Western Kentucky University recently became the fourth university in the United States to adopt a Fair Trade Resolution. The Resolution declares, among other things, the commitment to making Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea, chocolate, and additional items available in its dining facilities and convenience stores. Although the Fair Trade Resolution was announced March 20th, 2011, a small group of WKU students have been working diligently for years to make the Resolution a reality.

Matt Vaughan, a political science major and Honors College student, and Charlie Harris, a nonprofit administration major and Honors College student, started working together their freshman year after learning about national and global poverty issues in their courses. Vaughan and Harris, along with other students, founded WKU's chapter of Americans for an Informed Democracy (AID) during their freshman year. "One of the goals of WKU AID is to try to transform the culture of this campus into one where sustainability and social justice are core values," said Vaughan. The group was instrumental in organizing and winning the 2008 One Campus Challenge, a nationwide advocacy and awareness campaign mobilizing students around issues of extreme poverty

and preventable diseases. After organizing this campaign, Vaughan and Harris decided to create something sustainable and tangible to help end global poverty.

Over the next three years, WKU AID initiated events to put the Fair Trade movement on the radar of WKU students, faculty, and staff. In spring 2009, Vaughan created a Fair Trade scavenger hunt that had students seeking out Fair Trade products on WKU's campus. As a result of the scavenger hunt, Vaughan compiled an online resource of Fair Trade products available on WKU's campus and in the Bowling Green community. The hunt also provided Fair Trade information for the consumers of local stores and businesses.

In October 2010, WKU AID brought a Fair Trade sugar farmer, Francisco Ferreira, from Paraguay to WKU. This allowed members of WKU AID and the campus community to have a physical connection with the global work they were accomplishing. This event gave WKU AID the confidence they needed to continue toward their goal. During the 2010-2011 academic year, Vaughan and Harris organized a Fair Trade Steering Committee composed of students, faculty, staff, and Aramark and The WKU Store



representatives that sought to formulate the Fair Trade Resolution and acquire commitments on a Fair Trade petition.

The path to adopting the Fair Trade Resolution at WKU was not easy and required many planning meetings and revising strategies. However, convincing the United Students for Fair Trade Convergence to hold their national conference at Western Kentucky University in March 2011 was pivotal to WKU AID's success. Over 100 students from around the nation participated in the United Students for Fair Trade Convergence's three-day conference, which focused on Fair Trade student activism. At the conference, President Gary Ransdell announced WKU's commitment to adopt the Fair Trade Resolution and become the nation's fourth Fair Trade University.

In many ways, the Fair Trade Resolution at Western Kentucky University is the culminating work of two active students who embraced the confidence to make change, accepted their role as community members, and left their legacy at WKU. They both realized that change involves working toward what you can realistically accomplish.

"We're very interested in seeing the end of extreme

poverty. Well, that's something that we can't necessarily organize this year, but a step towards that is Fair Trade in allowing and providing fair wages," Harris said.

Vaughan and Harris are now concentrating their efforts to make sure that WKU AID continues after their graduation. They recently led a retreat to share their experiences with other members of WKU AID and help transition their leadership positions to the next generation of active citizens on WKU's campus. Co-leaders Molly Kaviar, a Spanish and anthropology major, and Abby Rudolph, English and visual arts major, hope to continue the Fair Trade work during their leadership tenure. "We're really proud of what we've accomplished this year with becoming a Fair Trade University. There is still much to be done in the area of Fair Trade, and we plan on continuing that campaign in the coming semester. However, I also hope that we'll start something new that is based on the interests of our members next semester. One of the wonderful things about WKU AID is that it is completely adaptable to the current organizers," Kaviar said.

The work of these students demonstrates the opportunities available at Western Kentucky University for students to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen leaders of a global society.

HOPE ENCOURAGES HISPANIC YOUTH TO PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION

By Nadia De Leon



Photo by Clinton Lewis

"I THINK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF [HISPANIC] STUDENTS THAT ARE WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. THEY COULD BE OUR NEXT PULITZER OR JONAS SALK, OR THE PERSON THAT COMES UP WITH THE CURE FOR CANCER OR ALZHEIMER'S."

~DEAN KAHLER

Some young people in our community dream about attending college with the hope that they can make a better future for themselves. One might say that hope is about making dreams a reality, and this is exactly what a dedicated group of community members believe as they work to promote higher education among the Hispanic population in Bowling Green and surrounding counties. The Hispanic Organization for the Promotion of Education (HOPE) is a grassroots organization made up of educators, students, parents, WKU alumni, and other professionals who are concerned about the future of the local Hispanic population. HOPE members encourage and support Hispanic youth to pursue higher education by providing helpful information and guidance such as visiting students at their schools, hosting open houses, and awarding scholarships so these youth can attend WKU. HOPE works under the premise that education is the most sustainable, long-term solution to both individual and community problems, because it brings about true capacity-building and empowerment.

Dr. Dean Kahler, founding member of HOPE, is convinced that the work HOPE does is beneficial for everyone in

our community. For example, the blossoming of Hispanic businesses is helping revitalize the Enterprise Zone in Bowling Green. "In our society, when the tide rises for all of us, it helps everybody," Kahler said. He points out that we need to support each other, and that unfortunately, the Hispanic population is often ignored. "We just have to do a lot more to help this invisible population become more educated and be more conspicuous in our community," he said. They are here to stay, and they deserve as much support to pursue their American dream as you and I." Sustaining a completely grassroots organization is hard work, and it requires the devotion of a strong core group of community leaders and dedicated individuals. Kahler, who feels personally called to do this work, explains, "I think about the number of [Hispanic] students that are wonderful, beautiful people. They could be our next Pulitzer or Jonas Salk, or the person that comes up with the cure for cancer or Alzheimer's. So how could we ignore that there is such a great, warm population out there that could have wonderful things to give back to our society? That's what drives me." HOPE hosts an annual summer soccer league and a spring

event, A Taste of Latin America, to raise funds for their scholarships. A Taste of Latin America is a formal dinner with authentic Latin cuisine, a dance performance, and a silent auction. More than 100 people attended the 2011 event held on April 30th. It was an absolute success that allowed HOPE to raise more than \$5,000 for scholarships. These scholarships provide students who would otherwise not be able to afford college the opportunity to pursue a degree and better their lives.

"To me, HOPE is one of the most important things that has happened in my life," said Julia Rivas, former HOPE president and scholarship recipient. "The fact that HOPE is not only financially helping students but also educating our Latino community is amazing. Even though it is a small organization, I believe that HOPE will grow and will make a difference in this town by providing Latino students like me the chance to become a professional and to have a better life. I have always dreamed of becoming an educator; however, I was not able to because of not having the right immigration status. Luckily, HOPE has given me the opportunity to keep believing and to keep [pursuing] my dream."

SYNERGY AT WORK: OTHER GRASSROOTS HISPANIC INITIATIVES

Recently, various grassroots initiatives have developed to address the unique circumstances of our Latino neighbors. They are collaborations for meaningful community development in which the whole is larger than the sum of its parts. By working together, individuals and organizations alike have been able to accomplish so much more than if they had been working alone. As HOPE reaches out to encourage and assist Hispanic community members in pursuing higher education, Dr. Sonia Lenk, Assistant Professor in the WKU Modern Languages Department, reaches out to local middle and high schools to survey Hispanic students and learn more about the barriers that are keeping them from attending WKU. From the ALIVE Center's Campus and Community Network spring 2011 meeting arose another group of determined community partners interested in improving the quality of life for local Hispanic residents. The Amigos Resource Network formed with the goal of bridging the existing community resources and the needs of the Hispanic community. The awareness of an information gap that keeps the Hispanic community unaware of local community services was also the ignition for a collaborative effort that reached hundreds of local Hispanic residents. The Safer B.G. Door-to-Door Campaign distributed copious amounts of helpful information, including a survey to better understand who the members of the Hispanic community in Bowling Green are, as well as what specific challenges they face. None of these recent and ongoing efforts would have been possible without the forging of community partnerships in which organizations and individuals unite forces for the greater good of the community.

HOPE coordinates and participates in a number of activities throughout the community. During their Taste of Latin America event, St. Joseph Catholic Church's Mexican folk dance group performed. Photos by Dean Kahler. In addition, HOPE participated in Hope Harbor's Safer B.G. Door-to-Door Campaign along with the WKU Spanish Club. Photos by Leyda Becker. Left page, Western Kentucky University students participate in the Basic Electricity lab. Photo by Clinton Lewis.



Service-Learning Touches



Above, a WKU student stands in the first building the cooperative built with their investment from the sale of baskets. Bottom left, WKU staff and students provide dental health care to Gales Point's residents. Photo by Daniel Carter. Bottom Right, WKU students and faculty and teachers and students of an Afro-Ecuadorian community rest in front of a school in the Chota Valley. Photo by Sonia Lenk. Right page, children gather in Sanka Village, Ghana. Photo by Sandra Ardrey.

International Communities

By Nadia De Leon

Over the past few years, WKU has witnessed the development of service-learning in numerous study abroad programs that truly extend our international reach by serving communities around the world and providing our students with meaningful learning experiences. Perhaps the oldest of these is the program that was developed by Dr. David Coffey, retired professor of agriculture, who has been conducting agriculture, health, service-learning, and cross-cultural activities in Ecuador for more than 20 years. The following stories refer to four programs emerging at WKU that aim to follow a sustainable model by collaborating with communities abroad and building long-term relationships. Even though the following programs take place in different parts of the world, there are common threads that bind them, such as interdisciplinary approaches, continuity, and partnership.

Santa Ana, Ecuador

Dr. Sonia Lenk, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, believes that study abroad programs must be about more than just visiting countries and studying books. She wants her program to be truly hands-on, and she chooses service-learning as a tool to provide students with a meaningful experience. "This program makes them interact with different people, pushes them out of their comfort zone, and makes them utilize their analytical and cultural skills to solve problems," she said. "Something that is essential to me is for students to feel they have as much to learn from [the people of Ecuador] as they have to give; that there is a relationship of reciprocity. That opens a whole world up for them because of how much they realize there is to learn, even from the most impoverished peoples...that material things often have very little to do with self-satisfaction and personal happiness."

Lenk continues, "For example, last year the students had a chance to appreciate what harvesting rice is like. They came back absolutely exhausted, saying they had never worked so hard. After that, when they sat in front of a rice plate, they had a completely different

appreciation for what each grain of rice means to the rainforest indigenous peoples." She points out that this type of experience adds another dimension to students' education, which cannot be given in the classroom. Then she concludes, "that and the difference you get to make in the community, and being able to establish relationships among different cultures – building universal brotherhood. I think that's what's important."

Because she feels they are the invisible minority in Ecuador, Lenk chooses to work with the Afro-Ecuadorian community of Santa Ana, located in Chota Valley. Through a partnership between Lenk and her students, a Kentucky dentist, a Rotary Club in Ecuador, and a community leader in Santa Anna, an oral health education program for youth and dental clinics are now established throughout the region.



Kasigau, Kenya

Since 2004, Dr. Michael Stokes, Professor of Biology, has taken students to Kasigau, Kenya multiple times a year. The program is interdisciplinary in nature where biology, sociology, and psychology students conduct research projects. For instance, one of the recent projects focused on assessing the variables that impact the vulnerability of sustenance farming to wildlife. All the projects have a service aspect, whether benefiting

the people in these communities directly or focusing on the environment and wildlife. This program is an excellent example of two valuable forms of engaged scholarship: environmental service-learning and research-based service-learning.

WKU SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) is involved in the Kasigau Community, as well. In 2005, Stokes and his colleagues purchased some of the baskets made by the women of a Kasigau community, sold them upon their return to the U.S., and sent the money back. "It was going really well, but I am not a basket salesman," Stokes explains, "and it seemed like something that would be ideal for SIFE, given their mission of creating economic

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In Kenya, a child offers WKU student Lauren Torger one of the baskets made by the women of the village. Photo by Cheryl Kirby-Stokes

(continued from page 19)

empowerment around the world." So, four years ago, a representative of the WKU SIFE team sat down with the elders of six villages in Kasigau to discuss the potential of working together to help grow their basket ventures. Since that time, the WKU SIFE team has taken on the task of promoting and selling these Kenyan baskets. From quality control to inventory management, the WKU SIFE team plays a vital role in the development of the Kenyan Basket Cooperative. The sales go back to the Cooperative, and the funds allow the villages to purchase everyday necessities such as farming supplies, children's school books, and uniforms. Funds are also used to improve the accessibility of electricity to the area's more developed villages and provide support for women and children whose lives have been affected by AIDS.

The economic, environmental, research, and service aspects of the Kenya program are a true example of how international engagement can have a positive impact

around the world, foster engaged scholarship, and change the lives of WKU students.

Gales Point, Belize

Dr. Bernie Strenecky, Scholar-in-Residence at WKU, has been traveling to Belize for 13 years. During their first visit, Strenecky and his colleagues met with the Prime Minister who asked them, "[There] are three communities that we are having extreme difficulty in, would you consider adopting one?" They chose the village of Gales Point and started problem-solving by asking the community, "What can we do to enhance your quality of life?"

Some of the community needs have been addressed utilizing The \$100 Solution™ program, and many students and faculty have conducted their own \$100

Solution projects. One of these projects is to provide medical care for the community through a partnership with the WKU Nursing department, the Institute for Rural Health, and local doctors and nurses who volunteer their time. They set up a clinic for three days every January, where they provide health education and services to the villagers. This team is truly interdisciplinary, with students and faculty not only from nursing but many other departments as well. Because of this project, the village residents now have regular medical care. This year, Dr. Molly Kerby, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies, and three other faculty members used The \$100 Solution™ to purchase crafts from 17 crafters to be sold in the U.S. to support the Gales Point school lunch program. Kerby will also take social science students to Gales Point every January to map the community, lead qualitative studies, and continue her research on food production, food economy, and food politics. In January of 2011, she joined other faculty members to map the entire village. With the help of the Gales Point Justice of Peace, they photographed every house in the village, estimating the number of people living in each household. This information will be used for future research and service at Gales Point, Belize.

Strencky explains that the program's greatest accomplishment is "the number of students who have been introduced to the concept of international service-learning. We talk about international reach. This is what it is."

Sanka, Ghana

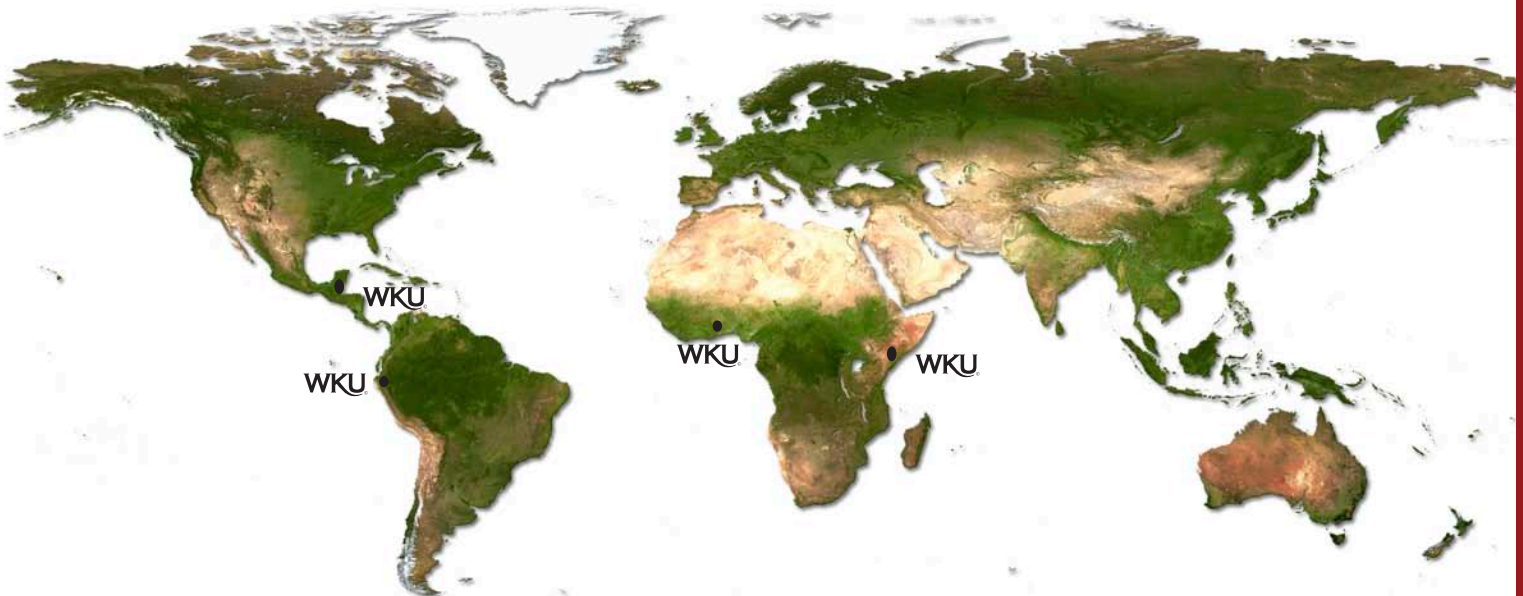
Six years ago, Dr. Saundra Ardrey, Department Head of Political Science and co-director of the Institute for Citizenship for Social Responsibility, attended a conference in Ghana. While she was there, she visited the village of Sanka, made connections with the village chief and elders, and immediately started working on what she could do to help them. In 2008, she invited Dr. Craig Cobane, Director of the Honors College, and Dr. Cecile Garmon, Director of the Center for Leadership Excellence,

to come with her. In time they would all send students from their respective programs.

The students that participate in the program either take an African-American studies course or complete a directed studies course which is created to fit their major. For example, she once had an agriculture student who focused on water. Ardrey made sure that she put this student in contact with individuals working on local lake water programs. Another example is when they were in Ghana during the World Cup. There was a recreation major on this trip, and Ardrey connected this student with the opportunity to interview some of the soccer players, and talk to local children about their love for the sport. "The program is flexible enough so that we can incorporate different sites and stops along the way," Ardrey explains. This way, some students conduct research projects and some conduct service projects.

The service-learning project contained two parts: individual \$100 Solution projects and a larger group project. For The \$100 Solution™ projects, the students raise their own funding to take with them. Once they arrive in the village of Sanka, they make connections with an elder, a child, or some community member to do their \$100 Solution project. Recently, a student bought enough rice, beans, and tomato sauce with her \$100 to feed the village children for an entire year. For the larger project, Ardrey works with the village chief and elders on a project of their choice. One year, the local school was the focus, so the WKU students painted, fixed desks, purchased school supplies and soccer balls, and had uniforms made. This summer, they will be focusing on medical issues since the community members often suffer from hypertension and diabetes. Ardrey's husband, a physician, will run a clinic in the village, since the nearest clinic is a day's travel away.

Ardrey continues to go year after year because of "the looks on the kids' faces. It's amazing the connections and the bonds that you make with these kids, and you know that you are making an investment in their future."



Community Partnerships: Building,

The ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships (ALIVE CCP) is committed to bringing campus and community together for the enrichment of both higher education and public life. The Center's staff facilitate collaborative efforts that address local, regional, and global needs while enhancing the level of student learning and educational experience. We are dedicated to providing WKU students with opportunities that cultivate personal growth, ethical values, and public action for the common good. The ALIVE CCP supports engaged scholarship through service-learning and community-based research as part of the WKU curriculum. The Center also provide numerous opportunities for volunteerism and ongoing community service.



ALIVE CCP Programs & Services

Volunteerism and Service is a core function of the ALIVE Center, which began as "A Local Information & Volunteer Exchange" in 2003 because of a federal appropriation secured by Senator Mitch McConnell. The Center promotes more than 175 volunteer opportunities, searchable by category, on the ALIVE Center's website. Campus and community members can also develop their own service project ideas utilizing the Center's Partnership Toolkit. Center staff are available to help determine the best fit for individuals and organizations interested in service endeavors.

Information on Community Resources such as support groups, nonprofit services, employment, food and clothing assistance is managed by Center staff and made available to individuals across the region by calling the Center or visiting our website. A campus & community

Speaker's Bureau and a Language Resource List of volunteer translators and interpreters is also available, along with information on community events, workshops, and trainings.

Campus & Community Network brings together members of the campus and community who are interested in tackling some of the most pressing issues and unmet needs in our community and region. As needs are identified, work groups who meet regularly are formed to address them. Some of the current work groups include Amigos Resource Network, the English as Second Language Cooperative, the Community Partnership for Immigrant and Refugee Issues, as well as transitional housing, youth development, and economic improvement groups.

Learning, Serving

The \$100 Solution™ utilizes course learning objectives combined with five key principles of service-learning to answer a central question for students: with this \$100 bill, what can I do to enhance quality of life for others? It teaches students to ask what they can do rather than self-determining needs of others, and it demonstrates that many social problems exist that can be solved with small amounts of money, or rather, by even thinking beyond monetary solutions to make a difference in their community. For more information on how you can sponsor \$100 Solution projects locally or abroad, contact nadia.deleon@wku.edu or call (270)782-0966.

Community Partnership Incentive Awards (CPIA) is a funding program that provides the opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and members of the community to implement campus and community partnership projects that address social issues locally and abroad. CPIAs support public problem-solving through service-learning, community development, or community-based research. For more information on how you can support projects, according to your interest or apply for funding, contact nadia.deleon@wku.edu or call (270)782-0966.

WKU Hill House is a campus-neighborhood collaboration where four WKU graduate students live and work together to conduct applied research and develop community projects that address relevant social issues. Hill House students make a positive impact in the neighborhood and surrounding communities while gaining hands-on experience in their academic disciplines. Students also learn life skills that will strengthen their academic training and have an impact on their personal and professional lives, and in turn, on their future communities. For more information about how you can support applied research or community development efforts through the Hill House program, contact nadia.deleon@wku.edu or call (270)782-0966.



Thank You for Your Support of ALIVE Center Programs

We hope you have enjoyed the fourth annual WKU *Spirit of Engagement* magazine. Western Kentucky University's ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships has many opportunities for you to get involved. From supporting applied student-learning to connecting with people, programs and services, there are a variety of ways you can build community through campus and community partnerships.

Please use the enclosed envelope to indicate your areas of interest and send it to the ALIVE Center. A staff member will contact you to discuss opportunities to get involved in any of our programs.

You may also use the envelope if you would like to make a contribution. We appreciate WKU and community members' support in making our programs a success.





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