The Service-Learning program is approaching the end of another outstanding year. Through the efforts of our students, faculty, and staff, CPCC has once again shown the depth of our commitment to strengthen our community. And we are all winners through these efforts.

Since last August, nearly 1000 of our students have dedicated over 15,000 hours of service to support the efforts of over 200 non-profit programs and agencies. Our students have been working to fight hunger and homelessness, improve education, protect the environment, promote cultural awareness, increase awareness about health and wellness issues, improve the lives of people with disabilities, and strengthen democracy in America. Over 20 of CPCC's best and brightest instructors went the extra mile to fold service experiences into their courses, offering their students opportunities to learn more while serving those in need. Both students and instructors attest to the fact that learning is increased, deepened, and more lasting through these experiences.

Hundreds of students have served our community through student organization service projects and other projects developed by the Service-Learning program. Last Fall, driven by new student organization ACT, Project VOTE led to over 400 students and staff registering to vote in the November elections. In January, the Martin Luther King Challenge brought 60 people to campus to learn about the legacy of Dr. King, and to commit a day of service to seven different agencies. Phi Theta Kappa raised over $5000 this year to support the American Cancer Society in their fight against cancer and they braved the wind and rain as participants in Relay for Life. Students involved with Alternative Spring Break addressed environmental, poverty, hunger, and homelessness issues. Little Sugar Creek clean-up projects helped improve a polluted creek in our own neighborhood. Students and staff helped provide emergency shelter to our homeless neighbors through Room In The Inn. We helped build a Habitat for Humanity Home, sponsored blood drives, and supported free vision exams. And we helped high-risk elementary school children learn to read and prepare for their end-of-year testing.

Our efforts this year have been recognized by the Community College National Center for Civic Engagement, and we have been awarded the prestigious Collaboration Award for our work in the CMS Schools. In late May, a group of service-learning instructors and staff members will travel to Phoenix, AZ to accept the honor. As we are applauded by faculty and staff from some of the best colleges in the country, we will know that the real honorees are our students, who have dedicated so much of their time and energy to serve our community, and who have represented our College so well.

In closing, I would like to say a special thank you to Service-Learning staff member (and newsletter editor) Aimee Brunton. Aimee was with us this year as a VISTA member, made available to CPCC through North Carolina Campus Compact. We are grateful to Aimee for volunteering her time to help us grow the Service-Learning program, and we wish her all the best as she moves forward in her career. Thank you Aimee! Have a great summer, and we look forward to continuing to grow the Service-Learning program in the fall.
The Service-Learning Center Looks to Build Sustainable Community Partnerships

By: Dan Herrin

Since the inception of the Service-Learning program in the fall of 2003, CPCC students have volunteered at over 200 organizations in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area and have completed a whopping 10,000-plus hours of service. These agencies deal with a broad range of issues including poverty, the environment, education, animals, seniors, children and healthcare. A majority of these organizations are not-for-profit, but a few, mainly healthcare related, are for-profit agencies. Some have paid, full-time staff persons and some are run completely by volunteers. Out of these 200 organizations with a direct connection to CPCC, the Service-Learning Center has designated 28 to be Community Partners. While the list of Community Partners and the process of determining specific criteria these organizations must meet to become Community Partners is ever-changing, the term Partner conveys important dynamics in the relationship between the College and these community organizations.

As CPCC students regularly volunteer with a particular agency they help that agency accomplish their intended mission. In this sense, the College and agency work as partners to address the community issues the agency confronts. CPCC serves the individuals and/or the cause the agency serves. The agency provides the educational service opportunity and the college provides the students who bring a broad range of skills and resources.

The organization helps the College achieve its teaching and learning mission by directly participating in the educational process. Through Service-Learning classes, a student’s service experience is tied back into their classroom work, thus enhancing the connections the student makes. The students can also gain from indirect vocational guidance, increased awareness of the issue the agency addresses and learning more about themselves. The service site thus becomes a place of learning, an extension of the classroom, and is a vital part of the overall learning process.

The Charlotte community benefits from this partnership by having critical needs further addressed and by being the recipient of bright, concerned, engaged student/citizens.

CPCC’s current Community Partners are:

- A Child’s Place
- The ABLE Center
- The Academic Learning Center
- Ada Jenkins Center
- The American Red Cross
- Carolina Raptor Center
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Dept. Animal Control
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks & Recreation Dept
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
- Childcare Network
- Crisis Assistance Ministries
- First Ward Elementary School
- Harris YMCA
- The Help Center
- International House
- Joshua’s Farm
- Lake Norman YMCA
- Lake Park Nursing & Rehab Center
- Lifespan
- Loaves & Fishes
- Matthews Elementary School
- Sisky YMCA
- Sunrise Assisted Living
- United Family Services Battered Women’s Shelter
- Uptown Men’s Shelter
- Urban Ministry Center
- Walter G. Byers Elementary School
- Weddington Assisted Living

CPCC Service-Learning Wins National Award

By: Mark Helms

The Service-Learning Center is proud to announce that we have been selected winner of the Collaboration Award presented by the Community College National Center for Community Engagement (CCNCCE). We are being recognized for the partnership we are developing with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. This year, our students have dedicated over 4000 hours of service at 50 CMS schools. Through service-learning components offered in dozens of classes, and through our community service placements of 12 Federal Work Study students at two Equity Plus Schools, First Ward Elementary and Walter G. Byers Elementary, CPCC has made a significant impact on many public school students. We are also involved through CMS with A Child’s Place, a non-profit service that works to enrich the educational experiences of homeless children.

The CCNCCE Collaboration Award will be presented at a national conference on service-learning in community colleges on May 27 in Phoenix, AZ. Our delegation participating in the conference includes Rita Rodabaugh, Terina Roberson, Bobbie Fields, Linda Dunham, Dan Herrin, and Mark Helms.

The Service-Learning staff is grateful to all the outstanding CPCC instructors who have developed service-learning techniques and adopted a service component in their courses. We are especially grateful to Anthropology/Psychology instructor Rita Rodabaugh, who took the lead in nominating our program for this award.
Reflection Inside the Classroom: Encouraging Critical Thinking Among Students

By: Beau Bowers

Reflection is the bridge that connects service to learning. Without reflection, the service and the learning remain separate events, unconnected. In a very real (and very corny) sense, reflection is the hyphen that joins together the two elements in service-learning. Reflection, therefore, is the most important and the most challenging aspect of service-learning. Reflection requires careful attention to the needs of instruction, but also a flexibility that allows students to carry course material into the world. A number of methods are out there, but I can only speak to the ones that I’ve used. Allowing for a couple of semesters’ worth of trial and error and more error, I’ve settled on journals for tying service and learning together.

In particular, I like double-entry journals. With the first entry, I encourage students to write their impressions, relaying as much detail as possible. With the second set of entries, I have students review their impressions and analyze what it is they wrote the first time. At the end of the service and towards the end of class, I then have students look at their journals and develop a reflection piece that finds the central theme of both the service and the class and tie them together. My goal here is to promote the critical thinking model that moves learning from explanation to analysis and finally to evaluation.

To help my students in their work, I’ve found providing detailed questions for the journals gives them a focus in both their impressions and analysis. For their first entries I tell them to focus on what is going on around them. I encourage them to be specific; the more detail they include the more they’ll have to say about it later, which is what the second journal entries are about. As they go back over their initial impressions I give them questions that focus on how things are operating around them.

For their reflection paper, I ask them to figure out why things are the way they are and to evaluate what they’ve learned in light of their service and vice versa. It sounds much more impressive than it actually is (or maybe it doesn’t) but as I tell my panic-stricken students, I’m looking for effort more than brilliance. In keeping with that philosophy, I wish you well in your efforts and if you achieve excellence please let me in on your success so I might experience some brilliance as well.

Students Earn NC-ACTS! Scholarships Through Service

NC-ACTS!, North Carolina-Activating Citizenship Through Service!, is an AmeriCorps program of North Carolina Campus Compact (NCCC). This program began in August 2004 and is committed to fostering civic engagement among students by giving them service experience in their communities. Designed in part to encourage students to become actively engaged citizens, NC-ACTS! allows students to serve as links between the higher education and the community. Students gain important knowledge and skills that will help with their own professional and personal pursuits. Participants must serve in one of the following areas: Education, Human Needs/Services, and Volunteer Recruitment/Capacity Building.

Students must complete a required 300 service hours during the academic school year and will receive a $1000 Educational Award. This award can be used to pay off student loans, or to finance any undergraduate, graduate, or vocational training. CPCC has 10 students currently enrolled in the program. These students are placed at Walter G. Byers Elementary School, First Ward Elementary School, The Salvation Army, Time Out Youth, ECO Inc, and Nova. These students have completed a total of over 2200 hours of service this academic year. Students also participate in online reflection activities designed to provide communication between all 225 North Carolina NC-ACTS! participants.

For more information on this program and how to enroll students for next year please contact Dan Herrin at 704.330.6824.
Students Work Together to Make 1st Annual MLK Challenge a Success

By: Dena Shonts

Service-Learning is proud to announce that our first Martin Luther King Day Challenge was a big success. A large part of that success is due to the forty-eight students and seven team leaders who gave up their day off to make a difference in their community.

These students and team leaders all agreed to participate in this challenge although they had no idea what the day would entail. Upon their arrival at 7:30 am students and leaders were greeted with breakfast and a presentation given by North Campus ESS Director Tracy Moore on Dr. Martin Luther King. We felt it was very important that students remember what Dr. King stood for and why we celebrate his birthday. After the presentations students were put into random groups where they received their challenge, basic instruction, and $100 in seed money to help stock this center in order to get this new center off to the right start. Another example of a prearranged challenge was the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Animal Control where students cared for the shelter’s homeless lobby kenneled cats, kittens and puppies through kennel cleaning, animal feeding and animal interaction. Notes on the animals’ personalities were also posted within the shelter to help market them to the visiting adopting public.

Around 4:30 pm students started returning back to campus full of smiles and laughter. When asked how their day was, the responses all seemed to gravitate in the same direction; amazing, challenging, purposeful and rewarding. As the students ate pizza and listened to each group’s reflections, it was understood that this challenge had helped the students to problem solve, work together, organize, realize their capabilities, overcome fears, and accomplish a major goal. Most importantly this challenge made students realize that they can truly make a difference in their community.

Seeing this change in students was a truly remarkable experience and one that the Service-Learning Center can look forward to every year. For more information about the MLK Challenge contact Dena Shonts at 704.330.6558.

CPCC Students Participate in Week-Long Service Trips

Last year, the Service-Learning Center organized one successful service trip to Atlanta for 13 students searching for an alternative to the typical college spring break. The students participated in hunger and homelessness service projects in an urban setting. Reflection that encouraged students to discuss their service experience followed each project. With the great success of this initial trip, the Service-Learning Center expanded the program and offered three different Alternative Spring Break Experiences this semester. The three trips include ASB Atlanta, ASB Charleston, and ASB Charlotte.

Dan Herrin, Service-Learning Coordinator, returned to Atlanta with six students to complete service focused on homelessness and hunger. This group served at various local agencies including Blood and Fire Homeless Shelter, Taskforce for the Homeless, and the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Students also participated in Hunger 101, an interactive educational program designed to increase awareness of hunger related issues. This trip also included a visit to the King Center, built to honor the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Another group of 8 students traveled to Charleston, SC with Student Life and Service-Learning Program Coordinator Dena Shonts to participate in environmental service projects. This group of students worked closely with the Charleston Park and Recreation Department on twelve refurbishment projects at the Tiedeman Nature Center and Park. These projects included painting interior and exterior of buildings, constructing a nature-related water feature, mural paintings, and repairing fences. The group also took a guided ecological tour of Sullivan’s Island sponsored by the city of Charleston, SC.

The third ASB service group stayed in Charleston and spent a day at Crisis Assistance Ministries sorting clothes for the needy. Twelve students gave up a day of their spring break to serve at this organization.

The two groups that traveled outside of Charlotte completed service activities during the day and had structured reflection time in the evening. The goal of each trip is to foster unique relationships between students and the recipients of their service work. The Service-Learning Center is looking forward to continuing this great program next year.
For the past 7 years, CPCC students, staff, faculty and community members have spent one Saturday each semester working with Mecklenburg County Water Quality to clean up trash, pick weeds, and planting trees at the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. During this time, approximately 750 volunteers have participated to collect over one ton of trash from Little Sugar Creek. The Service-Learning Center is looking to expand the creek cleanup program to include area campuses and creeks in those areas. Levine Campus recently took this step when 18 volunteers participated in a half day cleanup on April 9th at Four Mile Creek in Matthews located near the campus. Participants collected over 300 lbs of trash from in and around the creek. During the Little Sugar Creek cleanup at Central Campus the same day, 70 volunteers collected over 500 lbs of trash.

Special thanks to CPCC Science Instructors Scott Diegmann, Holly Kupfer, and Alisa Hylton for their ongoing support of Adopt-A-Stream.

To learn how to bring this volunteer project to your campus contact the Service-Learning Center at 704.330.6824.

On February 26, nine CPCC students and one staff member spent the day building a house with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit Christian organization that works with people from all backgrounds to build affordable homes. The students finished hanging drywall inside the house and then in the afternoon put up siding on the house and shed. With little combined construction experience, the students stepped up and within minutes learned the basics of home construction. Working alongside the future homeowner and her family allowed the students to understand the importance of lending a hand to those in need. These students helped one family realize their dream of owning a home.

For more information about how you can get involved in service activities like this contact the Service-Learning Center at 704.330.6824.