



# Service-Learning Connections

Spring 2006

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## Don't Wait a Single Moment!

By: Mark Helms

"How wonderful it is that no one need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." -- Anne Frank

Pick up the newspaper, turn on the TV or radio, or go online to your favorite news website, and you will be inundated with bad news. War, violent crime, political and corporate corruption, environmental degradation, soaring oil prices, epidemics - these are just a few of the topics that can instill fear in our minds and strike hopelessness into our hearts. Sure, the news reports occasionally carry more uplifting stories about human achievement and charity, but the bad news of the world far outweighs the good. At least that's the way it appears.

So, what do we do with all this bad news? One choice is to tune out and do nothing, keeping ourselves occupied with all the busy-ness of our lives. Another choice is to tune in obsessively, like looking at a car wreck on the highway, wishing we were able to look away, but seeing enough to leave nightmare images imprinted on our brains. Absorbing all the despair and doing nothing, we become hopeless and cynical about our lives and the future of the world.

Anne Frank didn't read the bad news in the paper, nor did she see it on TV. Anne Frank lived the bad news, trapped in the horror of WWII. She and her family hid from the Nazis for over two years, unable to leave the small room above her father's office in Amsterdam. Yet, even with the dreadful fear of being discovered, arrested,

and imprisoned in a concentration camp, young Anne Frank remained full of hopes and dreams about what her life could be, and about how she could make the world a better place.

So perhaps, a better choice of what to do with all the bad news is to stand up and do something about it. Do something to be part of the solution today! Right now. Choose to overcome the cynicism and apathy that can paralyze you and leave you accepting that which is unacceptable.

What can you do? First, identify a topic or an issue that you feel passionate about. Do you want to help make the lives of children in our community better? Are you troubled by the growing number of hungry and homeless people in our region? Do you want to see our senior citizens treated with more dignity and respect? Are you angry that we breathe dirty air and drink tainted water, or that our public lands are at risk of being sold to the highest bidder? Are you concerned about the lives of immigrants? All of these issues are important to our community, our country, our planet, and our future.

When you commit yourself to an issue, and learn some of the basic facts, there are many ways you can help the cause. Emails, letters, or phone calls take only a few minutes. Volunteering to help a community organization that works for your cause can take a little more time, but the rewards you get in return are substantial. You can get a great sense of accomplishment in tutoring a child,



*Armah Shiancoe paints during ASB: Charleston*

befriending a person in a retirement home, helping feed a hungry person, or speaking out at a public meeting. You can also learn much about yourself, and your own potential to help make the world better.

The Service-Learning Center can help you find a way to make a difference in your community. This newsletter will tell you about some of the great projects that CPCC students are involved in. Come join over 1000 people from CPCC who do are involved in service to our community each year. We look forward to working with you. Don't wait a single moment!

# Applied Technologies: Enhancing Experiences

CPCC's mission statement commits the college to "strengthening the economic, social, and cultural life of its diverse community." Over the past three years, many CPCC faculty and students have participated in service-learning. However, were you aware that instructors at Harper campus have engaged in service-learning even longer than that?



Photo: Nam Vu

Recently, Brett Fansler, Division Director for Applied Technologies, shared his impressions on integrating service into course content. Using one's skills to help others is a principle of the division and a part of their identity as educators. Despite the additional work to integrate service into their classes, twelve instructors at Harper campus are engaged in service projects. Instructors who lead their students in service projects do so for their students' education as much as they do for the good of the community. At Harper campus, they know that the learning process is enhanced in the field.

Service's integration into course content has occurred through previous relationships between instructors and community agencies and new partnerships as community agencies approach instructors with requests for assistance. Throughout project development, faculty seek the best learning experience for their students. Often, appropriate learning experiences exist in the Charlotte metro area and students have the added incentive to make a difference in their own community.

Students have embraced the opportunity to put their skills to use to benefit the community as they apply classroom instruction at their work site. The chance to make a visible and necessary

Students from Kenn Compton's class worked with The Geek Fest 2006

difference in one's community is a huge motivation for students. The service projects are not exclusively tied to particular classes. However, projects themselves may dictate which classes will have an applicable learning experience. Faculty and staff at Harper campus are excited about their trailer project, which has incorporated many different trades on a single project.

CPCC has received national recognition for the Applied Technology program. The capital intensive nature of trades programs means that few schools are capable of administering a comparable program. However, the commitment of instructors, students, and staff at CPCC has led Mr. Fansler to say that he was not aware of any other program taking service to the same level.

Mr. Fansler expressed how proud he is of the students and instructors in the Applied Technologies division and their willingness to do more than required in order to enhance their learning experience while improving our community. Individuals who make such a commitment should be proud to know they did something great with their skills and time. We, in the Service-Learning Center, congratulate the Applied Technologies division on their outstanding commitment to service and learning.

## Service: It's What We Do!

Once again, our CPCC students and faculty have responded to the needs of our community through service-learning. This is our sixth semester of using this innovative teaching method since it was introduced here in fall 2003.

These are our latest Service-Learning statistics for Fall Semester 2005:

- 4,570 student hours of service
- 199 student service-learners
- 12 work-study students served in two elementary schools

- 96 community partner agencies offered our students service opportunities
- 26 instructors had one or more service-learner
- 40 sections of 21 courses in 18 disciplines had one or more service-learner

Along with this curricular service, we are aware that we have students, faculty, and staff who have also been performing hundreds of hours of co-curricular service to our community. Some of these activities have received media coverage, but others have received no

documentation. Central Piedmont Community College has clubs and departments that have been providing assistance for so long that they no longer think of their actions as service. It's just what they do. We would like to shine a light on all of those good deeds. If you know of a project that has been done under the CPCC banner this year, we would like to include it in the Service Inventory. For more details, please contact Terry McMicking at 704/330-6445 or stop by the Service-Learning Center in the Academic and Performing Arts Center, room 257.

# Spring Break and Service Come Together

Spring Break is always eagerly awaited each year. While some students take a well-deserved vacation and lounge on the beach for the entire week, others are busy with work and/or family. Still others decide to make service a part of their plans.

CPCC Service-Learning supported three Alternative Spring Break (ASB) options this year. For those who wanted to commit their entire Spring Break, ASB: Charleston was designed for them. ASB: Charlotte consisted of three one-day projects. This option was ideal for students who wanted or needed to stay in Charlotte during Spring Break, but still wanted to do a service project with some of their time off from school. (You can read more about ASB: Florida on page 4)

ASB: Charleston had an environmental focus this year. Students and staff worked with Charleston County Parks and Recreation doing a variety of tasks. For example, the group cleared trails one day. ASB: Charleston generated 144 hours of service!

ASB: Charlotte worked with two organizations. The first day consisted of a project with Seigle Avenue Partners. CPCC Horticulture instructor, John Holmes, helped students as they spread mulch and prepared a

flowerbed for the “Out-of-School Time Program.” Twenty-one students participated with this project.

On days two and three, the Service-Learning Center teamed up with the Davidson Housing Coalition. Students scraped and painted a long-neglected low-income home. The students worked diligently and completed all the work planned for them quickly. The students were so impressed with their results that they immediately asked for an opportunity to finish the remaining walls!

Many colleges have developed an Alternative Spring Break option for their students. While “Spring Break” may retain previous connotations for a long time, we have seen that our students have embraced the chance to bring service and Spring Break together.



Group Photo, ASB: Charleston

## Learning Carpentry, Repairing Homes

By: Rod Foley

Since CPCC initiated a Carpentry Training Program in the Fall of 1991, a major learning component of the curriculum has been field-based. The reasoning is that students of any trade develop their vocational skills best when applying what they have learned in class to work-related activities on a real jobsite under supervision. Over the years, CPCC’s Carpentry program has constructed many projects and worked with many individuals and public groups to provide “live site training to practice and develop trade skills and trade experiences.”

Last Fall semester, the College began promoting Service-Learning as a method of enhancing classroom instruction. It was soon afterward that Brett Fansler, Director of Applied Technologies, passed an inquiry and request to me from Benny Allen of the Davidson Housing Coalition (DHC).

## Introducing “Service in Action!”

Service in Action!, a new program from the Service-Learning Center, had a successful first semester this Spring. The program was developed as a series of one-day service events for students and faculty. Students worked in a wide range of issue areas, from addressing invasive plant species with Catawba Lands Conservancy to assisting with Guardian ad Litem’s “Walk for Children” event.

Service in Action! has been picking up momentum as students and instructors learn more about these great opportunities to serve our community while also getting the chance to explore new interests, meet new people and develop new skills. During this first semester of the program, nearly 75 students have given a day to assist a local non-profit agency. Service in Action! will be returning with a new roster of one-day service events for Fall

2006. If you are interested in learning more about Service in Action, log on to: [www.cpcc.edu/service-learning/Documents/Service-in-Action.doc](http://www.cpcc.edu/service-learning/Documents/Service-in-Action.doc). You may also contact Brandon Lewis via email, phone 704/330-6445, or stop by the Service-Learning Center in the Academic and Performing Arts Center room 257.



Students sort donations at Crisis Assistance Ministries

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# Spring Break in Florida Rocks

By: Louise McLaughlin

The American Welding Society student chapter at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC spent 5 days on an educational/service-learning trip in southern Florida during Spring Break 2006. Nearly forty students and faculty caravanned in six vehicles 530 miles to stay at a youth hostel in Kissimmee, FL.

The Florida Solar Energy Center at the University of Florida was our first educational stop. They research new methods for capturing energy from the sun. They are also a national testing facility for solar panel life expectancy.



Instructor Steve Gore at the Space Walk of Fame Park

## Learning is in the Process

By: Denise Strange

The American Welding Society (AWS) Student Chapter from the CPCC Harper campus along with advisors and a few other students, a total of 36 people, went to Titusville, Florida for their spring break. They went to participate in a service-learning project at the US Space Walk of Fame museum. The museum is run by retired NASA employees and one paid staff person.

Our mission entailed several projects. The first project took place at the museum doing data entry, filing, stuffing envelopes, hanging pictures, cleaning, and doing general maintenance and inventory of space history before packing it away. The other project involved memorials to the space missions, such as Apollo, Mercury and Gemini, and also astronauts. The students refurbished plaques with a clear top coat to protect the inlaid gold-leaf wording. This required a steady hand with plenty of

The next stop was our service-learning project at the U. S. Space Walk of Fame Foundation. We learned the history of space exploration from the people who pushed the buttons that launched space shuttles in the 1960s. Half of our team worked on restoring the finish on beautiful granite and bronze plaques at the Space Walk Hall of Fame Park. The rest of the team worked at the museum organizing historical artifacts. Unfortunately, the Museum will be homeless by June. Will people come forward with the funds and means to keep history alive for our youth and generations to come?

Kennedy Space Center was a powerful and emotional experience. We piled onto a bus for a guided tour around the perimeter of areas where spacecrafts are made and launched.

Even though we did a lot of service, the trip wasn't all work as the evenings were a time to have fun. Winding our vans and trucks thru the marshlands of Merritt Island Wild Life Park was an adventure. We saw alligators, armadillos, turtles, wild pigs, and a huge variety of birds, including many bald eagle nests with their young. Some of our other evening activities included fun in the ocean and softball at Cocoa Beach.



Group Photo, ASB: Florida

patience. Everyone worked hard to complete the projects on-time. We also learned about space history and solar energy from the University of Central Florida's Solar Energy Center.

There are many different roads you can take to reach a destination. One thing we learned is that traveling together in a large group can have its ups and downs, but you walk away with new friends and closer relationships with the ones you already knew. It's not always the project itself that teaches you, but instead it's what you have experienced and learned in the process.

Photo: Scott Pope

# Love Inc., Bringing Wheelchair Accessibility Home

By: Ron Shepherd

For the past three years I have been allowed the honor and privilege to serve as a part-time instructor in the Construction Technology Institute at the Harper Campus. During this time, I have encouraged my fellow instructors and students to set aside time to serve within the community on a variety of projects.

One project took place under the guidance/mentorship of National Association of Remodelers (NARI) members Nick Cicali (President/Diamond Builders of America Inc.), and Robert Otto (President of R.E. Otto and Sons Inc.). Replacement windows were installed throughout a structure built in the early 1920's. A total of 24 students and instructors worked together in this effort.

The following semester saw a combined effort of CPCC students and their Charlotte-Mecklenburg counterparts at two

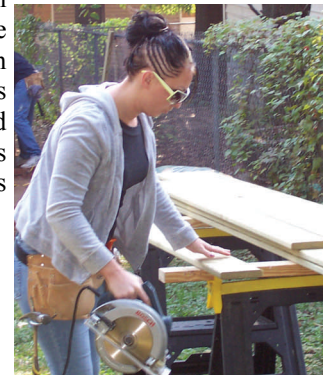
local High Schools. They constructed "playhouses" that were auctioned off at the Southern Ideal Home Show. The proceeds were directed to the Arosa House to pay for additional materials used in the renovation.

Through a cooperative effort with the Love Inc. organization, we were able to identify six recipients for our services in 2005 who received construction of a disability ramp at their home. These citizens were identified as disabled members of the community who lacked the means to pay for materials and labor themselves.

Each semester brings a new group of eager students into the classroom/lab to learn the concepts of safety, hand and power tool use, blueprint reading, construction of floor systems, wall systems, and other related construction curriculum. These empowered men and women are given the

opportunity to share their acquired talents in a charitable scenario that changes the lives of those who receive a ramp, as well as those who build them.

The need in our community for qualified volunteers to build disability ramps is overwhelming, and at last report there were 40 requests on file. It is my hope that our meek effort will make a difference for each person we are able to reach with our service as concerned instructors and students at CPCC.



Liz White at Gause/Walker project

## Learning Carpentry, Repairing Homes

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This request was simple, but it showed how our college's commitment to our community has worked on several one-day repairs. Then, we made it possible to address big projects through our cooperation. DHC needed to make weatherization repairs for elderly homeowners before winter. Although it was too late for fall semester, we met to evaluate the scope of work and see if anything was appropriate for Spring Semester.

Long story short: the scope of work was within the class's curriculum. There was both an excellent opportunity for skills practice and an opportunity to provide a much-needed community service.



Students at Rich Hatchet Road project

the roof and porches. The Carpentry class began 17 days on the Rich Hatchett Road site, which accounted for more than 1,100 hours of reconstruction.

During the reconstruction, it occurred to me that the house could use a new coat of paint to compliment the weatherproofing repairs we were making. The Service-Learning Center answered the call. During Spring Break '06, fourteen students were involved in prepping and painting the house.

I chose 4 houses to address—starting with people in the Huntersville community and a simple fixes and progressing to the last project which required significant rebuilding of both

The end result has provided peace of mind and a waterproof home for four people in the Huntersville community and a great deal of pride in workmanship and ability for my students.

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