



CPCC nursing program graduate continues her service for nonprofit Birthday Blessings

By: Amy Cervantes, Volunteer Executive & Founder-Birthday Blessings

What began as a Service-Learning project more than a year ago for CPCC graduate CJ Samonds, has blossomed into an ongoing commitment to help make sure homeless children and women have very happy birthdays.

Even months after her studies and Service-Learning requirements were fulfilled, CJ, a spring 2009 graduate of CPCC's nursing program, continues to serve as a volunteer party coordinator for Birthday Blessings, a local nonprofit bringing joy and support to homeless children

and families across the Charlotte region.

When I first met CJ, she was full of enthusiasm for Birthday Blessings and its programs; she had genuine compassion for the homeless children and families that we serve. Her positive attitude and dedication to service, especially as a working mother of three young children who was already juggling a full schedule of school, work and family commitments, was inspiring. I knew right away that she was going to be a great fit for our organization.

As a volunteer party coordinator for Birthday Blessings, CJ plans and hosts monthly birthday celebrations at a Union County shelter for women & children of domestic violence. She coordinates volunteer and sponsor groups, plans the party themes and activities, organizes the supplies, wraps the gifts, and fills the goody

bags for the families at the shelter. Most of all, her service and dedication continue to brighten the lives of needy women and children every month. Birthday Blessings is truly blessed to have CJ as a member of our volunteer team.

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Above: A young girl anticipates blowing out the candles on her cake at a Birthday Blessings celebration



Above: CJ Samonds, Birthday Blessings Founder Amy Cervantes, and McDonald's franchise owners Elena & Anthony Ramos get ready for a Birthday Party for a local child.

**Service in Action!
Fall 2009**

109 participants

677.25 hours

*Service in Action is a series of one-day service events throughout the semesters.

Students 'Sweep Big' along Little Sugar Creek Greenway

By Andrea Chiz, Asst. Service-Learning Coordinator/ Americorps VISTA



Above: Service Club student Hillary Belk and other students pose together after spending their Saturday morning collecting garbage

On October 3rd, North Carolinians from across the state came together to participate in the annual creek and waterway cleanup hosted by NC Big Sweep Inc. All the counties in North Carolina participated in this endeavor to rid the watershed in NC of waste and pollution. Not only was this a state project, but more than 90 countries worldwide held similar projects. Central Piedmont Community College joined the efforts in cleaning debris and waste from Little Sugar Creek and the surrounding area.

Due to construction around Little Sugar Creek the waterway had not been cleaned in over two years creating a big job for our CPCC Students who came out Saturday morning. After a brief orientation of the history of Little Sugar Creek and the main causes of pollution contributing its poor health, students grabbed waders, black trash bags and gloves and were on their way

down to the creek. After a few hours of pulling debris from the creek and picking up wrappers from the shoreline, students gathered back together to see what was collected and noticed the immediate impact those few hours had made on the environment.

This experience was eye opening to the students who participated. One student commented, "You do not realize the impact of throwing out one small wrapper until you see how it begins to pile up...one wrapper leads to another and then another until you have a full trash bag of waste."

From a staff point of view, it was amazing to also step back and see the impact this project made on the students that participated and the environmental awareness that was gained!

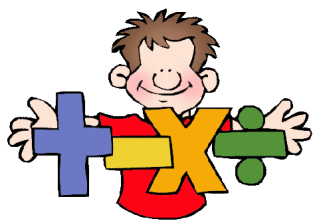
Look what we collected!

- Shopping Cart
- Bicycles
- Crutches
- Tires (7)
- Snack bags/wrappers
- Sports equipment
- Hubcaps
- Aluminum cans

TOTAL= 1200 lbs of trash!

Service-Learning in Learning Communities

By Elvira Johnson, Learning Communities Coordinator



This semester, the Learning Communities program at CPCC is working with Citizen

School and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools on a service project for Eastway Middle School. As part of their service-learning project, the CPCC students (who are taking both MAT 070 and ACA 118) tutored the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Eastway and prepared for a Math Bowl competition. In addition to learning how to work math problems, middle schoolers learned the '21st Century Skills' of oral communication and teamwork.

The Math Bowl was held at CPCC on

Thursday, December 3rd, where the Eastway Middle School students competed against each other for prizes. The learning community students worked hard at gathering all the materials needed and developing the rules and regulations of the math bowl. Instructors Rudy Johnson and I also helped with the preparation of the event, including the event planning, transportation, and development of questions. The result of this partnership was a two-way learning experience for both the middle school students and our college students. Our students have learned the ways to plan and execute an event while using all the 'soft skills' such as communication, diversity, and critical thinking. Our student tutors passed along not only the math skills that they have learned in class, but the organizational and

time management skills as well. Student tutor April Chavis commented, "These are some really good students. They are working hard!"

At CPCC, a learning community is a group of students who take two or more courses together. The goal of this learning community is to create an appreciation and interest in math among all Charlotte-Mecklenburg middle school students. To this end, the students have created the P.A.L.M. Club (Partners At Learning Math), where they collaborate with the Eastway Middle School students to share their math challenges. This is an on-going service project and the newest P.A.L.M. Club students have already registered for the spring 2010 learning community.

Tommy Lopez shares students' experiences in Service-Learning

By: Tommy Lopez, Human Service Technology Instructor

The Human Services Technology Program has been committed to the vision of Service-Learning from its inception here at CPCC. As one of the instructors of the program, I decided to make participation in service-learning a required component to our interviewing and counseling class, HSE 123, because it gives our students an opportunity to not only provide service to the community but to also practice their skills in interviewing.

As the instructor, it has been a pleasure of mine to see students grow and make connections from service to the classroom. One such example is with student Darrin Harris who decided to spend his 25 hours at the Men's Shelter of Charlotte.

Below: student Darrin Harris

Top Right: Tommy Lopez and his HSE 123 class



Darrin got the opportunity to volunteer in the computer lab, assisting the guys with resumes, applications, and getting email accounts up and running. As the Shelter pointed out, one of the key mechanisms used for job search is the internet, but unfortunately many of the homeless men don't have access or don't know how to navigate the World Wide Web. After helping the men in the lab, Darrin started to notice how the guys were coming together and were helping one another on the computers. Darren consequently was really moved by the selfless acts in the tiny lab.

Another thing Darrin really gleaned from the experience was the diversity of residents the Men's Shelter reaches out to, contrary to popular stereotypes. "There were blacks, whites, young, old, and in between all helping each other out," he exclaimed.

By the time the Service-Learning experience was completed, Darrin told me a lot of the homeless men who didn't know each other at first now came together as a team.

Another HSE student Amanda Bingham conducted her service at Joshua's Farm which is a non-profit organization providing a 22-acre, fully accessible working farm designed for individuals with special needs and disabilities in a rural setting.

On one such day, Amanda was involved in



an incident that changed the way she saw the children who were patients of the farm. Amanda actually helped save a young boy's life by catching him after one of the horses got spooked and started bucking. Although the young child was not injured by the incident, Amanda says that "it only caused him to smile really big, and ask if he could get back on."

"Darrin started to notice how the guys were coming together and were helping one another...[he] was really moved by the selfless acts."

As a service-learning instructor, I feel it is the dedication of our students that provide such a rich growing environment for these special needs children, homeless men, or whichever needy population the Human Services Students are serving.



New Member to the CPCC Family!

The Service-Learning Center would like to congratulate Dena & Christian Shonts on having baby girl Olivia Shonts on May 23rd. Olivia joins big sister Katie in the family.

Samanta Wharton receives Community Impact Award for CPCC



Above: NC Campus Compact Executive Director Dr. Lisa Keyne (right) and Sylva Councilwoman Stacey Knotts (left) present Samanta with her award. Samy also received recognition from Gov. Beverly Perdue.

On November 7th, CPCC student Samanta Wharton was selected as a recipient of the 4th annual NC Campus Compact *Community Impact Student Award*. This award was presented at the 17th Annual NC Campus Compact Student Conference which was hosted at Western Carolina University. One student was selected from each of the member institutions who makes significant, innovative contributions to campus-based efforts to address community needs. Governor Beverly Perdue also acknowledged the work of these gifted students by providing each with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Samanta Wharton is a sophomore student at CPCC and in her third year as a Service Club Member and has served as the club's secretary for the past year. During her time at CPCC, Samy has evolved into one of the most active members of service club, attending Alternative Spring Break for the past two years, and participating in every club fundraising event since the Fall of 2007. So far, Samy has completed over 130 hours of direct service with such agencies as Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, Men's Shelter of Charlotte, as well as her favorite cause, Habitat for Humanity. In 2009, Samy was named "Volunteer of the Semester" for the spring term.

Karisha Perkins Butcher, having a heart for the poor

By: Julie Potts, Love INC

Imagine yourself elderly, homeless and sick. This is what Denis was facing. At the age of 82 years old, Denis had been living out of his Jeep for two years, parking in the lots of shopping centers at night, using restrooms at fast food restaurants to care for his personal hygiene, and getting a bite to eat when he was hungry. Although his health was not good, Denis refused to give up. That's when his friendship with a young CNA began. Concerned about Denis, the young man called on Love INC, a ministry in Mecklenburg County that assists the poor, elderly, and disabled in the county. Denis needed help. He needed medical care and a warm, safe place to live. He needed someone to advocate for him and care.

After becoming ill, Denis was taken to the hospital and later to a medical rehabilitation facility. Karisha Perkins Butcher was volunteering with Love INC's Programs for Older or

Disabled Adults as a service-learning volunteer with CPCC's Human Services Technology program. She is very outgoing and has a heart for older adults. Karisha and I went to see Denis and assess his needs. A veteran herself, Karisha later discovered Denis was in WWII and had never applied for or received veteran's benefits. She knew the importance of these benefits, so she



Above: Karisha Perkins with former Central Campus Dean Cindy Johnston

instinctively went into action.

Karisha and Love INC staff obtained permission to advocate on his behalf and contact the US Department for Veteran's Affairs. She was able to get a copy of Denis' discharge papers and complete the benefits application process. After advocating for Denis and working with the Veteran's

Administration, Karisha was able to help Denis receive benefits to pay for medication, medical treatments, and personal care in a nice assisted living facility. Denis was homeless no more.

Denis later suffered a stroke in September 2009 and passed away. Thanks to the work of an intern who cared, he was able to spend the last year of his life in a warm, safe place receiving the medical and personal care he so greatly needed. Karisha graduated in May 2009 and has set her sights on a Bachelor of Science in social work. Her work at Love INC blessed both the staff and our clients.

Service Spotlight

By: Terry McMicking

A look at what clubs, campuses, and department are doing in the community

Every semester, our students, faculty, and staff look for ways to enrich our local and global neighborhoods and help those who are less fortunate. The following is just a sampling of work that has been done during the fall semester.

~The **Surgical Technology** classes collected money to donate to Presbyterian Hospital's "Caring Beyond our Walls" program. The money raised was given to agencies throughout the city that help others in need.

~Students at the **North Campus** have an ongoing project of recycling aluminum cans to give to the Huntersville Fire Department. The proceeds are used to benefit the Children's Burn Center in Chapel Hill.

~The **Cytotechnology Student Association** participated in the MileStones Walk, which is organized to conquer childhood cancer. The students

assisted with set-up and registration the morning of the walk.

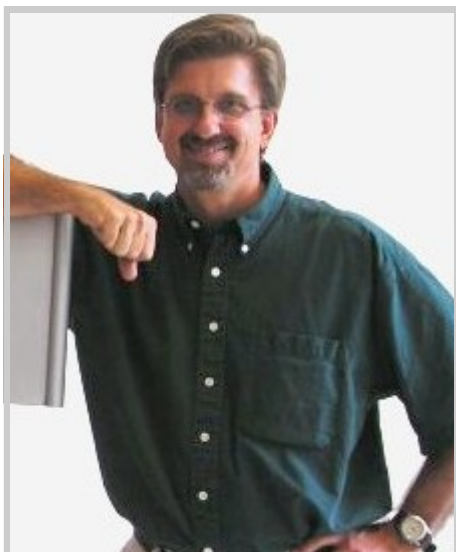
~The **American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)** participated in a stone wall restoration project for Providence Presbyterian Church. The AIAS members benefited through learning the ancient art of dry stone wall construction and the church and city of Charlotte benefitted by having the original wall, which is part of the city's history, restored.

~**Horticulture & Turfgrass Management Technologies** department has had two Co-op students working at the Historic Rosedale Plantation. The current Co-op student will have done in excess of 160 hours of service by the end of the semester.

~The **TRiO Club** conducted a food drive to benefit Catholic Social Services refugee resettlement.

~ **Welding** students and the **Black and Tans** are always involved in numerous projects. Some of the projects this semester included making pooper scoopers for the Humane Society of Charlotte, repairing a turfgrass spreader for our Horticulture Department, building an aviary railing at the Carolinas Raptor Center, and restoration work on a fence that holds a marker that was erected in 1927 by the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to honor men who were trained at Camp Green.

To all of our civically engaged CPCC family - Thank you and keep up the good work!!



Congratulations to Mark Helms on winning Peace Prize for Service-Learning

The Charlotte Area Peace Corps Association (CAPCA) has selected Mark Helms as the 2009 Peace Prize Award recipient in honor of his positive impact locally and globally. Noting his past environmental service on the Mecklenburg County Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Stakeholders Committee, and his current work with the Service-Learning Center at CPCC, CAPCA recognized Mark for providing leadership that has led to positive, peaceful contributions to the Charlotte community. We would like to congratulate Mark on this outstanding recognition and achievement.

Congrats Mark!

Central Piedmont Community College

Service-Learning Center

Overcash 257

PO BOX 35009

Phone: 704.330.6445

Fax: 704.330.6442

Service.learning@cpcc.edu

Check us out on the web!

www.cpcc.edu/service-learning

Growing in Service~Grounded in Learning



Mark your calendars!

MLK Challenge..... ... Jan 18th

Blood Drive..... Jan 27th

Volunteer Fair..... Feb 4th

SiA! Kicks off..... Feb 6th

Alt. Spring Break..... Mar 8-12th

Service-Learning Staff

Mark Helms

Dean of Student Life and
Service-Learning

Dena Shonts

Director of Service-Learning

Cassie Moore

Service-Learning Coordinator

Terry McMicking

Executive Secretary

Andrea Chiz

Assistant Service-Learning Coordinator,
NC Campus Compact VISTA

Things happening around us...

- Continually growing, we are always adding **new community partners** for our students. Since May, we have welcomed Community School for Girls, Girls on the Run-Charlotte, River Oaks Academy, LEAD Afterschool Program, Goodwill Industries, & Humane Society of Charlotte.
- The Service-Learning staff will be welcoming a temporary **new addition from Clemson University**. Stephanie Welter Murphy will join CPCC for 100 hours of practicum experience in pursuance of her Master's Degree in Student Affairs.
- Service-Learning has doubled the amount of **work-study students** from 10 to 22 this year, and also has almost doubled the NC-ACTS Educational Award slots from 11 to 21.