In the past two years, Reedy Creek Nature Preserve has teamed up with four CPCC departments--Welding, Graphic Design, Flexography, and Horticulture Technology--for the Natural Enhancement Service-Learning Partnership for one of the largest CPCC Service-Learning curricular projects. This partnership was developed to provide innovative solutions for improving service delivery, increasing volunteerism, and expanding the mission of Mecklenburg County’s Division of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources without increasing costs. To do this, CPCC and Parks and Rec teamed up to exchange work for work experience for a very successful partnership.

Services targeted for support included program marketing and advertising, nature preserve and trail improvements, and amenity and facility enhancements—services to be filled by the students in exchange for work experience. According to Staci Clark and Bridgette Strong from Meck County Parks and Rec, the “students at CPCC were specifically selected for this partnership because they possessed the specialized skills needed to improve these services.” Over the past two years, almost $35,000 worth of work has been done. Below is a breakdown of the departmental Service-Learning projects:

**Advertising + Graphic Design**
Starting in 2007, Mecklenburg County staff teamed up with CPCC Advertising and Graphic Design Chair Kenn Compton and instructor Somai Muslimani to provide students with real-world learning experiences during class time. Since that time, three co-op students have interned on site at Reedy Creek. The service work has included the redesign of the principle trail map for the nature preserve, updating wall murals, designing signage and promotional materials for a hummingbird event, and providing day-to-day support for the park’s external communication efforts (see photo A) for work totaling 325.25 hours. Normally a graphic designer is paid anywhere from $60 - $100/hour for their work, so using $60/hour as a baseline, the work done has been valued at $19,515 for custom logos, banner designs, maps, flyers, save-the-date handouts, brochures, and natural connection layouts!

**Welding Technology** In 2008, CPCC Welding instructors Steve Gore and John McPherson had their students work on cleaning-up Evergreen Nature Preserve Park by using welding tools to cut away an old pedestrian bridge, a 30-year old leaf bin, a large fence, and other old metal dumped in the park (see photo B, page 5). At Reedy Creek, the students also worked on removing an old refrigerator. In addition to the clean-up, students not only recycled the metal, but took scrap pieces from the Evergreen site and made a large red-tailed hawk out of the recycled material (see photo C, page 5).

*Story continued on Page 5...*
On January 23rd, ten students came to Uptown Shelter to trade in their books for ladles and mixing bowls, preparing and serving lunch to the shelter residents. On the menu for the 200 men was spaghetti, salad, bread, and brownies—all donated by CPCC.

Upon arrival, the students did not know much about Uptown Shelter except that it was a facility for homeless men. Therefore, I took the students on my traditional tour of the facility so they could understand who the men are that we care for. The students asked many intelligent questions and were inspired and noticeably touched by the details they learned about the Uptown Shelter and the residents. They learned it is a residential facility for 238 homeless men while they receive treatment and counseling in order to rebuild their lives with the hopes of moving on into the community to an appropriate residence and to never be homeless again.

After the tour, the students were eager to prepare lunch, rolling up their sleeves and digging right in with smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts. After serving to the 200 men, the students sat down with the residents at the shelter and shared a meal with plenty of interaction, fellowship and laughter. Afterwards, the students were inspired that they truly made a difference to the men.

As the Volunteer Coordinator at the Uptown Shelter, I see many volunteers a year. In the brief couple of hours I had with the CPCC students, they proved to be a step above in character and compassion. Sometimes a smile from someone is all the inspiration anyone needs and these particular students made a difference in the lives of the men they met that January day.

America Reads Tutors Make a Difference

By Dena Shonts, Director of Service-Learning

America Reads is a CPCC work-study position that varies slightly from other work-study positions; instead of working on-campus, students are placed in the community at places where they are able to tutor children and work on literacy. This year, the Service-Learning Center has been fortunate enough to hire ten America Reads tutors that are serving at three schools: First Ward Elementary, Elizabeth Traditional and Seigel Ave Preschool. So far this year our students have spent an incredible 3,889 hours tutoring children! These students are truly making a difference in the lives of the children and we couldn’t be more proud of them.

Next year, Service-Learning plans to add one more site, new community partner Greater Enrichment Program (GEP). GEP is an afterschool program, providing a caring environment beyond school hours where children have the opportunity to do their homework, improve academic skills and socialize with peers. GEP provides stimulating and fun activities, which help children to develop into healthy, well-rounded youth. America Reads tutors are sure to have a positive impact on the GEP children and we look forward to working with them next year!

If you would like more information on the America Reads work-study program please contact: Dena Shonts at 704.330.6558 or visit us on the web at: http://www.cpcc.edu/service-learning/tutoring.
CPCC students spend spring break doing service in Wilmington

By: Marcy LaBossiere, Americorps*VISTA

While discussing Alternative Spring Break (ASB) with people I normally come across two reactions, the most popular being “Aw it’s really nice that college students are willing to give up their spring break to spend their time volunteering.” Then there is the second ‘oh-so-dreadful’ reaction which goes a little something like “What?! No partying during spring break?! Why would students give that up”? Based on my own experiences with this past ASB trip with CPCC’s Service Club, I’d like to suggest that people react with more enthusiasm. How about: “Wow that sounds like so much fun!” because it truly is and it truly was March 9th - 13th this spring semester.

This past ASB, members of the Service Club, Cassie Moore, and I had nothing but fun and were able to make a difference in the community of Wilmington, North Carolina, in the process. Let me start by explaining the kind of experiences we had during our volunteer projects. The first organization we worked with was Girls Inc. During our projects with this agency, we fearlessly entered the world of excited little girls who wanted to do anything but their homework. Here, we happily experienced some live dance performances, one-on-one tutoring, and language labs hosted by the club including Indonesian, French, Chinese, and Spanish.

We also went to Good Shepherd’s Ministries (GSM), an organization that assists homeless men, women, and families around Wilmington. Here we did some sanitizing, landscaping, and were able to interact with the people this agency serves. We even had the pleasure of getting to know a new friend, Leroy, who once was a homeless member of GSM, but now is a full-time employee! Also, the club spent a day at the food pantry Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, which actually was an ordinary house with its rooms filled to the ceilings with canned and packaged food. At Mother Hubbard’s, we diligently sorted food, handed out rations to clients, and unloaded fifteen pallets of government issued food.

No, these students did not travel to the Bahamas for a week or spend their days lying in the sun, but they did share just as much laughter, fun, and stories volunteering in Wilmington, North Carolina completing over 136 hours in the four days over spring break.

Congratulations & Good Luck Marcy La Bossiere!!

The Service-Learning staff would like to thank Marcy La Bossiere for her successful service year at CPCC as the Americorps*VISTA. Marcy has lead Service in Action! for 2008-2009, and has given life to the Service Speakers Series in Spring 2009. Marcy also worked on Disaster Relief Efforts and volunteer mobilization in the event of a regional natural disaster through NC Campus Compact and CPCC. We congratulate her for her successful service year and wish her continued success as she makes the move back to her native state of Rhode Island. Please join us in thanking Marcy for being a part of the CPCC and Charlotte Communities.

Thanks Marcy!
Every year at CPCC, staff, instructors, and club members perform service-projects in our community. All of them are different and unique, but here is a sampling of some of the projects:

~This past fall, the Culinary Club in partnership with Phi Theta Kappa and the Charlotte Chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF), joined forces to feed over 200 women and children at the Salvation Army. Each month, the ACF coordinates “Chef’s Monday.” On December 8th, CPCC students stepped up to the plate and volunteered over 20 hours.

Members of the Culinary Club prepared a menu that included pasta, three different sauces, salad, garlic bread, roasted vegetables and cookies. PTK not only donated the cost of the food, they also delivered and served the meals at the Spratt Street location. By all accounts the event was a big hit!

~Stephen Marks, founder of the newly formed Guitar Club, and six club members volunteered a total of 30 hours to help beautify Charlotte’s Historic Rosedale Plantation. The group shoveled and moved 500 pounds of mulch to a 150 year old tree. They installed several new picnic tables around the century old tree, which was donated in the 1860’s from the city of Colombia, South America. In a group effort, the guitar students moved logs weighing over a total of one thousand pounds.

~According to Joy Parks, members of the Early Childhood Club collected peanut butter to be donated to Loaves and Fishes. Empty barrels were strategically placed on the six area campuses where they were stuffed with well over 500 jars! Loaves & Fishes said that many children benefited from the donations of the generous students and staff.

Service Club has become a leader in co-circular service in these past two years. Currently, the total service hours for 2008-2009 is 750 hours and still increasing. We do service almost every weekend and several events during the week through a program CPCC offers called Service in Action! Through this program, club members work with a wide variety of agencies, such as the Uptown Shelter, Second Harvest Food Bank, Carolina Raptor Center, and Birthday Blessings just to name a few. Also, members raise money through bake sales, in which we make bake goods and sell them on campus. All the funds we raise are used for Alternative Spring Break (ASB), in which members spend a week away from Charlotte and do community service work in another needy part of our region.

An interesting fact about our club is the members aren’t just local students from the United States but many are actually international students from around the world from countries such as Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe. Even though everyone is different regarding our cultures, ethnicities, and languages, the club is very close-knit and cares for one another much like a family. There are things that unite us as one, such as our motivation, compassion, and the excitement for helping others. We are always learning about the environment, poverty, or social issues, and we also build upon our teamwork and leadership skills, which only enhances our self-confidence. Our advisor told us “Everybody is a leader, because each member has different ways of thinking, different experiences, and different abilities,” and we truly believe that.

Throughout my two years as a member, Service Club has grown and become an exemplary student organization as well as a pivotal part of the CPCC community. As for the members, we grow into better individuals, leaders, and team players, ready to help others. Just like the Service-Learning motto Growing In Service, Grounded In Learning, so is Service Club.

Top: Stephen Marks may be able to pick up the guitar, but not a 150 year old tree!

Above: Service Club members Tarma Fontaine and Mariam Ouseph work on the Nevins Park NASCAR playground build in October 2008.
‘Natural Enhancements’ Continued from page 1...

For such work, a professional welder would be paid $20/hour, and assistants paid at a rate of $13/hour. For five days of work with an average of 11.2 students per service day, the student-assistants put in 268 hours of work to clean up the dump sites. Therefore, total market value of services is $3,984 for a five day dump site clean-up, not including cost for equipment and transportation!

**Horticulture Technology**- Also in 2008, CPCC instructors John Holmes and Randy Sigg and their students added their support to the Natural Enhancement Partnership by working on garden renovations, walkway grading, bed planting, trail building and repair, natural play area support, and landscape redesign for the front entrance.

To pay a Horticulturist with 20+ years experience for the same service, Reedy Creek would be looking at $17.00/hour, on top of $10/hour for the assistants. John and the students worked a total of 300 hours (see photo D), so at the aforementioned rates, Reedy Creek would have been looking at a cost of $3,175! As for the design, to pay a landscape architect with 20+ years of experience, Reedy Creek would be looking at $115/hour and his assistants at a rate of $60/hour. To Pay Randy Sigg and his team of four for all new landscape design, the bill would total $8,875 for 125 hours of work! (see photo E for design)

**Screen Printing and Flexography**- CPCC instructor Zach Blackburn and his students started working with Reedy Creek last year in January 2008. While they didn’t go onsite, Zach’s Screen Printing II class printed all the shirts for Reedy Creek’s summer camps, which included 324 T-shirts consisting of four different designs. Last spring and fall 2008, about 25 total students worked on this project.

**Big Impact, Big Savings**- With its growth, CPCC students have provided over 1,018 service-learning hours and enhancements for the Natural Enhancements in Service-Learning Partnership. Total estimated cost of services and/or savings to the county as a result of the partnerships has been $35,549, using the totals from three of the four departments above and not including in-class time or other service not yet reported. If you don’t want to use market cost and prefer volunteer value you are looking at 1018.25 hours at $19.51/hour for a total $17,797.99—still an extraordinary amount!

What we have here is a win-win situation for Parks and Rec and CPCC students alike; this program gives students total control over all their projects, and they are exposed to interview and job skills as well, further enhancing their marketability in the workforce. By giving future business leaders (CPCC students) an opportunity to engage personally with local parks, Service-Learning is helping students build a natural love for the parks and recreation system and also establishing a life-long sense of civic engagement to their communities.
Mark your calendars!

Graduation ............. May 14th
Blood Drive ......... July 22nd
New VISTA starts .... July 20th
Fall 2009 begins .... Aug 17th
Volunteer Fair ........ Sept 3rd

Check us out on the web!
www1.cpcc.edu/service-learning

Growing in Service ~ Grounded in Learning

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Service-Learning Coordinator

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Marcy LaBossiere
Assistant Service-Learning Coordinator, NC Campus Compact VISTA

Things happening around us...

- Continually growing, we are always adding new community partners for our students. This semester, we welcomed Greater Enrichment Program (GEP), Companion Parrots Re-Homed (CPR), Nation Sustainable, and Jacob’s Ladder Job Center.

- As many of you may know, our very own Dena Shonts and her husband Christian are expecting a bouncing baby girl on May 26th! This is the Shonts’ second girl. Dena will be on maternity leave from May 14th– August 10th.

- As apart of NC Campus Compact, CPCC has hired a new AmeriCorps *VISTA as the Assistant Service-Learning Coordinator. Andrea Chiz, a Political Science major from Pfeiffer University, will start her service year on July 20th.