MLK Challenge
CPCC students make it a day on, not a day off, at service-learning community partners including Habitat for Humanity
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Martin Luther King Jr. Challenge 2017
Contributor: Dr. Jenn Marts, Director of Service-Learning

For the 13th year, Service-Learning hosted the MLK Challenge on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. On January 16, more than 90 CPCC students, faculty and staff celebrated the holiday by providing approximately 1,000 hours of service at 10 community agencies. Teams completed service projects at Hospitality House of Charlotte, Trips for Kids, Angels and Sparrows Soup Kitchen, Habitat for Humanity, Carolina Raptor Center, Beds for Kids, Matthews HELP Center, Supportive Housing Communities and Behaillu Academy, while CPCC hosted Project Linus and Sole Hope in an Overcash classroom.

Tracy Moore gave a moving presentation of Dr. King’s life and legacy before leading a discussion about civil rights, social justice, poverty and civic engagement. Afterward, 10 groups of students were formed and presented with their challenges and $100 to be used to complete their projects. Those challenges included making blankets for children in trauma, providing lunch for out-of-town families with loved ones in nearby hospitals and preparing 600 bicycles for shipment to Africa. When the projects were completed, the groups gathered back at CPCC where they participated in reflection about the day while enjoying pizza.

The 10 team leaders were Demika Wallace, Tracy Moore, Justin Knoll, Lauren Estes, Lisa McAlister, Jesse Bennett, Alvan Makoundi-Tchibinda, Sara Dir, Dr. Mary-Margaret Kantor, Dr. Hugh Dussek and Shaneka Rickenbacker. We are thankful for the spirit and guidance given by these wonderful, dedicated people!

As always, the event would not have been possible without the support from Student Life staff. The Service-Learning staff appreciates all the help we received and looks forward to next year!
Harris and Levine Campuses hosted sandwich-making service events that benefited Service-Learning community partners.

Harris Campus celebrated Valentine’s Day by “spreading the love.” More than 20 students, faculty and staff came together on February 14 to make more than 60 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Service-Learning community partner, Urban Ministry Center.

The Urban Ministry Center opened its doors in December 1994 to address the needs of the poor and homeless in the Charlotte community with compassion and tangible help.

Throughout the morning, participants were able to drop in to make a sandwich to support the cause. Each student who made a sandwich also received a Valentine’s Day cookie made by the Harris Campus Baking & Pastry Arts students.

The Levine Campus coordinated Operation Sandwich which also provided the opportunity for CPCC students to drop in and make sandwiches. On Thursday, March 30, more than 15 CPCC students assembled 200 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

These sandwiches were later delivered to the Union County Community Shelter. The Union County Community Shelter’s mission is to provide food and shelter to the hungry and homeless population of Union County.

These were both successful events, and they will continue in future semesters.
Emergency Food Pantry Opens at CPCC Central Campus
Contributor: Dr. Jenn Marts, Director of Service-Learning

The Service-Learning Center, in partnership with Loaves & Fishes, opened the first Emergency Food Pantry at CPCC’s Central Campus in spring 2017. The Service-Learning Center has many partnerships with local non-profits and is aware of the food insecurities that some of our campus community face on a daily basis. In an effort to relieve some of this need for these individuals, and after much research and program development, the Emergency Food Pantry was born.

CPCC is the first college campus in North Carolina to partner with Loaves & Fishes to open an emergency food pantry, and this pantry serves as 1 of the 5 emergency pantries Loaves & Fishes operates in the Charlotte community.

The Emergency Food Pantry is able to provide individuals and households within the CPCC community with a two day supply of non-perishable food per visit. The amount of food received depends on how many people live in the household. Eligible recipients can visit the food pantry two times each month. Before the second visit, students receiving assistance must complete a benefits screening through the Single Stop Office, which helps them learn about more services available in the community. If recipients still need more assistance with food insecurities, the Single Stop Office is able to refer them to a larger Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry that is closest to their home and provides more long-term assistance.

The CPCC Emergency Food Pantry is located at CPCC Central Campus in Pease, Room 066. This space was formally a storage closet that was renovated by Bank of America employees as a service project, with the help of CPCC Facilities staff. A team of Bank of America employees came together on a Saturday to reassign the entire space, making it friendly and inviting for future clients. The pantry is operated by CPCC student and staff volunteers and will be open year-round, Mondays and Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m.

This long-time goal of the Service-Learning Center was realized with the help of many individuals along the way. Service-Learning would like to extend our gratitude to the following individuals who helped make the Emergency Food Pantry a reality: CPCC’s president, Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer; Dr. Marcia Conston, vice president for enrollment and student services at CPCC; Tina Postel, executive director of Loaves & Fishes; Arlene Blair, service delivery consultant from Bank of America; and Kevin McCarthy, vice president of institutional advancement at CPCC. We appreciate your support, guidance, encouragement and trust throughout the entire process of creating this amazing service for the campus community.

If you have any questions about the pantry or you would like to volunteer to help during hours of operation, please contact Dena Shonts, associate dean of student engagement, at 704.330.6558, or Dr. Jenn Marts, director of service-learning, at 704.330.6824.
Service in Action
Contributor: Savannah Greer, Service-Learning Coordinator

Service-Learning Service in Action events are individual service opportunities that span the spring and fall semesters. Fourteen to sixteen service projects ranging between 2 and 8 hours in length are organized by the Service-Learning Department.

The Service in Action calendar of events is released during the first week of classes in the spring and fall semesters, and students can pre-register for these service experiences directly through the Service-Learning website.

Students enjoy the diversity of options the Service in Action calendar of events provides, and they also appreciate the ability to pre-register for the events through the Service-Learning Department rather than contacting community partners to schedule their own activities.

Service in Action service opportunities for spring 2017 included serving lunch at the Angels and Sparrows Soup Kitchen, assisting as ushers during a production of Step Africa at the Children’s Theater of Charlotte, socializing stray animals at CMPD Animal Care and Control, maintaining trails at the Carolina Raptor Center, creating cards and bookmarks with uplifting messages for survivors of breast cancer with Carolina Breast Friends, and serving in multiple capacities at the CPCC Skyline Run, among others.

The Service-Learning staff is appreciative for the Service in Action opportunities afforded to CPCC students each semester from community partners in the Charlotte area.
The Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trip to Chattanooga, Tenn., was an experience that showed me the importance of togetherness between people and their communities. Many residents in Chattanooga face hunger and poverty because of the lack of opportunities that are afforded to them to excel in their way of living. The various service-learning activities we did throughout the week solidified my beliefs that change can happen through our own efforts in wanting to create a difference.

On Monday, we gathered at CPCC to meet our ASB trip advisors, Lindsey and Becky. We then set out on a five-hour drive, during which many of us slept for the majority of the ride. We got to know each other when we ate our first lunch, and from that moment on everyone was talking and joking around like a family. On our first service-learning activity, Lindsey and Becky brought us to a historical site called Ross Landing. They gave us some information about Ross Landing and how it was created to honor the Native Americans who were forced to travel out of their homes after European settlers took over their land. As we continued walking, we were able to see a staircase with a wall to the right that showed different medallions symbolizing different parts of Native American culture. The fountain at the top of the staircase symbolized the tears that thousands of Native Americans shed as they left their homes behind. What I was able to take away from this experience was how important it is to know the true history of our country that people rarely want to discuss. It made me come to the realization that it is necessary to educate ourselves.
on the events that are going on now and connect them to events that have already happened in our nation’s past.

On Tuesday morning, we went to a national park called Moccasin Bend because at one point it looks like a moccasin shoe. Here we were met by a park guide named Will. Will told us the history behind the park trail we would work on. He discussed how hundreds of Native Americans had passed through this trail as they were forced to leave their homes. This trail was an original route segment of the Trail of Tears. We worked together to put down mulch on the trail to prevent further water flooding and create an easier path for visitors to walk through. It was particularly windy and cold this day, so it gave me a different form of perspective of how much harsher conditions were for the thousands of Native Americans who traveled with their families with little to no resources or supplies.

I felt Wednesday was our strongest day of service. We volunteered at a local food bank. Here we were able to help other employees and volunteers package macaroni or sort food in shopping carts that are given to the families in need. I was shocked to hear that families have to wait 90 days before they can return and obtain another month’s worth of food. I felt this experience was more personal because we were able to see how these carts helped many people in need. It was an experience that showed how important volunteers are to these places, because these people keep a tight schedule and are able to organize boxes for families.

After the food bank, we went to a taco place called Taconooga. After lunch, we went to our fourth service-learning activity at the YMCA. We packed nutritious after-school lunches for local after-school programs. This was another moment that I enjoyed because it was a hands-on volunteer experience in which we saw the difference we were able to make even if just for that day.

On Thursday, we were given $100 to buy home essentials for a mother and son who were moving into an apartment after living in a local shelter. This was a heart-warming activity because many other students used their own money to buy essentials that weren’t covered by the $100.

After each and every one of these activities we discussed how we felt about them. Our ASB coordinators Lindsey and Becky would lead thought-provoking discussions as to how we can apply what we learned from these activities into our lives and our communities. Overall, I learned that our voices and involvement can make a difference, we just have to put it upon ourselves to take the first step into making that change.
The International Alternative Spring Break (IASB) to Panajachel, Guatemala from March 10 – 18, 2017, was such an enriching experience. For several years, I have been involved in my local communities, but my dream has been to spread my wings to serve abroad. When I heard about the IASB trip to Panajachel, Guatemala, coordinated by Service-Learning with the Woodlands Charity, I was excited about the opportunity for my dream to come true. I immediately applied and was fortunate to get accepted to be one of the six students to go on the trip. This was my first service trip abroad and first time traveling to Central America. I was ecstatic about the trip and I went with an open mind, heart and willingness to accept every challenge I would encounter.

The trip consisted of six CPCC students, including myself, and three staff members. When we arrived in Guatemala City we got a warm welcome from Jorge Coromac and Sonia Calabay, our hosts, and our driver and tour guide, Luis. The weather was beautiful, 75 degrees and clear skies. The hosts immediately made us feel at home by taking us to the famous Pollo Campero restaurant. After dinner, we rode two hours on a bus to Panajachel where we stayed for the week. When we got to our hotel in Panajachel, we got the keys to the room and we were free for the night to explore the area. Panajachel is a beautiful little city in Guatemala located near a lake called “El Lago Atitlan.”

Sunday was our first day of service in an elementary school called E.O.R.M Aldea Patanatic. We met one of the instructors at the school and she asked us to decorate her classroom for the children. We repainted the classroom and my peers, who were great artists, drew incredible pictures of animals and other items children love on the walls of the classroom. At the end of the day, the
instructor let us print our hands on the wall with paint so the children can see the hands of the people who designed their classroom for them.

On Monday, we went back to the same elementary school where we got to meet the children we decorated the classroom for and they were happy and thankful for what we did for them. On this day, we split up in two groups; one group did the deworming pills for the children and the other group gave a demonstration to the children on washing their hands and keeping them clean. We went through the entire school giving out the pills and assisting the children with washing their hands. The nurse at the school told us that we needed to wear gloves and give each kid water to take the taste away of the chewable pill. As we went around the school, we were able to interact with the children which was a highlight of the trip for me. During the lunch break, the principal closed the school because one student got in a car accident the day before and died at the scene. This was incredibly shocking news for us. He also told us that the funeral was happening that day and we could attend. As a group, we walked to where the funeral was being held.

The funeral was sad, and the mother of the child was in despair and clearly heart broken. One thing that stood out to me was that the family and neighbors were close, and everyone was helping each other. After the funeral, the family thanked us for coming and showing respect. They also invited us to stay for lunch and we happily stayed. After the lunch, we walked to a high school and did the same thing we did in the morning at the previous school. Once we finished and we were waiting for our bus to pick us up, we played basketball with the children which was awesome!

We went to five different schools; every school we went to was different, but it was heartbreaking for me to observe the conditions of the schools. One of the schools we went to did not have toilets or a sink for the children to wash their hands. The students use a 30-foot hole as their bathroom. Another school did not have water for the children to drink and another school didn’t have computers, it was tough!

The Rotary Club, together with Woodlands Charity, is working on giving each child’s family a water filter and stove. On one day of the trip, we went to houses to check the condition of their water filter and if it was missing something, we noted it for someone to come and change it. The living conditions were challenging as most of the houses did not have flooring, just dirt. In addition, they didn’t have doors, just a blanket to cover their entrance.

These children come from poor family backgrounds, some are the first in their family to finish elementary school, and some children had to drop out of school to go to work to help their families. The nurse who works for the program told me since they started the deworming program six years ago, 2017 is the first year that all of the students made it through the sixth grade without getting sick and dying. The children do not have doctors or medicine to take when they get sick. The clinics in the town depend on people like us who come volunteer and bring donated materials.

The entire trip was truly a dream come true for me. It wasn’t easy, but it was challenging and life changing for me. This trip was an eye opener, and I left a piece of my heart in Guatemala. I’m humble and thankful for the opportunity I got to work with the children. This opportunity changed my perspective on life and made me appreciate every little thing the Lord has blessed me with. I know life is not easy for these children, but I never heard any of them complain about life. They don’t have Internet, Ipad or Iphones but they appreciate life more and enjoy every second of it. They don’t have much, but their biggest gift is a grateful heart.

I look forward to serving in other parts of the world and continuing to make a difference in the lives of young children.
CPCC held its sixth annual year of bone marrow drives, in partnership with Project Life, a campus-based bone marrow advocate, and DKMS, a nation-wide bone marrow drive supplier. The Project Life Movement is dedicated to saving lives and curing cancer and other diseases by identifying and registering volunteers for marrow and tissue donation.

The goal of this drive is simple: to connect volunteer donors with patients whose only chance for a cure is a bone marrow transplant. For more than 30 years, one of the best kept secrets in providing cures for cancers like leukemia and lymphoma and for diseases such as sickle cell anemia has been bone marrow donation and transplantation. Normally, a potential donor would have to pay roughly $60 to be added to the bone marrow registry, but Project Life covers these costs for all those who register at a Central Piedmont Community College bone marrow registration drive.

The Project Life Bone Marrow drives took place at all of CPCC’s campus locations throughout the fall and spring semesters. All campuses did amazing work recruiting CPCC students, faculty, staff and community members to sign up as potential donors. This year, more pop-up mini-drives were added to the schedule, including drives in conjunction with the Vision Screening Van, during Lunch & Learn events focused on health and wellness, and during service projects. With the continued and new efforts to increase numbers year after year, CPCC was able to add 636 new potential donors to the National Bone Marrow Registry in 2016-2017. Since Project Life and CPCC Service-Learning’s partnership began, CPCC has registered more than 3,670 individuals who could be a potential donor to help save a life.

The 2017 Drive Thru Swabbing Event continued to be a huge success in supporting the Project Life Drives this spring. This was CPCC’s third time inviting the public to get swabbed to help save a life, and the Drive Thru Swabbing Event provided an easy way for the community to stop by and quickly complete their registration. One hundred and thirty individuals were registered as potential donors at this event alone, with the Fall and Spring Fests at Central Campus bringing in 170 new registrants.

Throughout the years, many CPCC registrants have been contacted as a match for someone with a diagnosed blood cancer. Since a match is only reported to the registrant, we are only able to account for those that share this information with the Service-Learning Department. In six years of drives, we have been notified that more than 10 matches have been made, and at least three students have undergone the bone marrow donation process to help save another person’s life. These students have literally given others the gift of life through this experience, and hopefully in the future, Project Life will be able to unite the donor with the person who they saved.

Local businesses also provided support through product donations of gift cards and materials which encouraged more people to register. The companies that supported this event through donations included: Chipotle, McAllister’s Deli, Jason’s Deli, Nothing but Noodles, CPCC Performing Arts and many more businesses.

Consistently, CPCC students have assisted in making these efforts such a huge success. The Cytotechnology Student Association, Medical Assisting students, Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) students, Nursing students, the Student Government Association, Central and Levine Campus Rotaract Clubs, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society have continued partnering with Student Life and Service-Learning to support this initiative. Their commitment to making Project Life a huge success year after year is unwavering, and achieving the registration of potential new donors would be impossible without their assistance. We look forward to partnering with Project Life to save the lives of those affected by a blood cancer diagnosis in the future.
North Carolina Oxfam Hunger Banquet
Contributor: Lindsey Graves, Service-Learning Coordinator

Oxfam International is a non-profit organization with a mission to end global poverty and hunger. It seeks to address the unequal distribution of resources and inequality within the global economy. To reach these goals, Oxfam advocates for international policy changes, providing emergency food and resource support following a catastrophe, and raising funds to feed hungry populations around the world.

At CPCC, Service-Learning partners with Oxfam by hosting Oxfam hunger banquets. The purpose behind this event is to educate students in a variety of classes to understand how unequal distribution of resources creates more hunger and poverty around the world. The banquet uses one meal to serve as a metaphor for the worldwide disparities among resources.

During an Oxfam hunger banquet, students are randomly given a high-income, middle-income, or low-income ticket. The smallest group of participants are given high-income tickets. There they enjoy a catered lunch with a protein, vegetable and starch. They sit together at a table. Middle-income, a slightly larger group, receives premade sandwiches with a fruit and bottle of water. These individuals are usually given chairs and a desk. Finally, the low-income participants are told to sit on the floor and are given supplies to make their own peanut butter sandwiches. The low-income students represent the majority of the population.

This semester, Crystal Moore's American History class at the Levine Campus got to experience a new kind of Oxfam banquet, one that focuses solely on income distribution in North Carolina. The script and personal identity tickets were developed by service-learning coordinators based on statistics from The Pew Research Center, North Carolina Association for Feeding America and the North Carolina Justice Center. Identity cards told students a bit about the individual whose life they are representing. They could be anyone, from a struggling single mother, to a teacher or a doctor with their own medical practice.

There are 1.7 million North Carolinians living in poverty. The NC Oxfam explains that there are still large disparities between high-income and low-income families. Many low-income families face hunger, homelessness and insecurity. The middle-income saw the biggest changes when compared to the World Oxfam. In North Carolina, middle-income represents the vast majority of people. It consists of families making anywhere from $47,000 to $130,000 per year. This means that those in middle-income could be living extremely comfortably while others in their same class are one loss of paycheck away from poverty.

The high-income group remains the smallest class. Many of these individuals were born into wealth. Some students are then asked to stand and move based on common life experiences. For example, a middle-income couple was told to stand and move to the low-income group after their family owned restaurant was damaged in a hurricane, but their insurance payoff was too little to repair the damage. Demonstrating these scenarios brings up the discussion of why is it so difficult to raise to a higher social class, yet is so easy to fall to a lower one.

Students use their remaining time to also explore why poverty exists, how people become poor and what can be done about it. The North Carolina Oxfam and this discussion gives students the opportunity to increase their awareness of poverty and what they can do to help others within their own communities.
All around the Charlotte community you can spot a Little Free Library box. You may find one at your local park, YMCA or even in your neighbor’s yard. The Little Free Library operates on the idea that you leave one book and take another. Community members are able to peruse titles and take one home, free of charge.

As a 2017 Sensoria project, Service-Learning and Student Life coordinators from the Harris and Harper campuses worked together to complete a Little Free Library Box.

At the Harper Campus, students in the LEAD program have spent the last academic year building their leadership and communication skills. The program was created by Student Life Coordinator, Anita McGill and Program Coordinator for Construction Technologies, Jasmine Hines. For the spring 2017 semester, they wanted students to work together to complete a service project.

Utilizing the construction lab available at the Harper Campus, these students, with the help of some great faculty and staff, built the Little Free Library box. The box took two hours to construct using a template found on the Little Library Web page. Students assembled the pieces to create the final product.

Faculty member Tom Derthick played a significant role in helping students assemble the box. He taught participants how to use a variety of tools needed to complete the project. Christopher Wiggins and Reggie Wilson, both staff members at Harper, also stopped by to lend a helping hand.

The final product then traveled to the Harris Campus where it was painted by a student from the Early Childhood Education Program.

On April 3, the Little Free Library was officially dedicated at Harris Campus. Students, faculty and staff attended to listen to a book reading by Early Childhood Education Faculty Member, Kristen Montieth.

The Little Free Library will be managed by the Early Childhood Education Program and the Harris Campus Library.

It is registered at LittleFreeLibrary.com. Go check it out!
Community Partner Workshops
Contributor: Kay Printy, Service-Learning Coordinator

Each semester the Service-Learning Center hosts three, free workshops. The invitation to these workshops is extended to all Service-Learning community partners and is one of the ways we try to thank them for their commitment to our students and to the Service-Learning program. Each of the topics are selected based on feedback and requests from Service-Learning community partners.

The topics for the spring 2017 workshops were team building, marketing and grant writing. We were lucky enough to welcome staff and faculty from CPCC to share their expertise. Jenn Conway and Omar Crenshaw from Student Life facilitated the session on team building, engaging partners in hands-on activities they could bring back to their organizations.

JB Gammon from the CPCC Marketing Department facilitated a workshop on basic marketing techniques. Heather Parusel and Rhonda Dean from the Grants Office at CPCC walked participants through the process of selecting and submitting grant proposals.

Stay tuned for our lineup of workshops for fall 2017!
Community Partnerships: Friendship Trays
Contributor: Lani Lawrence, Friendship Trays Volunteer Coordinator

Friendship Trays (FT) is celebrating 40 years of preparing and delivering meals to those in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area who are not able to prepare meals for themselves. Thousands and thousands of meals are prepared, packed and delivered every Monday through Friday. Thousands and thousands of hands help cook, chop, dice, pack and deliver these meals. Our partnership with CPCC Service-Learning has made an enormous impact over the past eight years by providing students who bring their talents, knowledge and enthusiasm to Friendship Trays to help us accomplish our mission.

The heart of Friendship Trays is the busy kitchen which is run by a small but talented staff and a calm and determined chef. Over the years, a few of the CPCC Service-Learning students have found their comfort zone in this kitchen and have benefited from Chef Lamount’s patience and guidance. The students usually come to Friendship Trays with absolutely no culinary skills or experience in an industrial kitchen. They work side by side with the staff and become proficient in many of the culinary skills needed to get employment in the food and beverage industry.

The students also work closely with the many volunteers who help in the kitchen. Because the students have become experienced over their time with Friendship Trays, they are able to guide the volunteers with many of the culinary tasks they have learned. Even though the kitchen seems to be hectic, the environment is one of organized chaos. The students learn how to make decisions quickly and how important it is to have critical thinking and the ability to solve problems. One of the students from CPCC said that after his time with Friendship Trays he felt like one of the staff himself.

Friendship Trays receives no government funding and relies heavily on donations and gifts to operate. Two years ago, we created Friendship Kitchen Catering which is the revenue generating arm of FT. Catering Chef Carmen also operates in a busy and hectic environment with deadlines and critical time restraints. This year, she has benefited greatly from the presence and the work of CPCC Service-Learning students who have learned all the details involved in catering receptions, corporate lunches and weddings. The students have learned more specific culinary skills and the fine details involved in presentation and hospitality. From our very own Friendship Farm and Gardens, they have learned how to incorporate fresh, local produce directly into the catered food, creating mouthwatering delights!

Friendship Trays offers students the opportunity to work and learn in a fast-paced culinary environment as well as a business environment where administrative skills are needed and learned. Each student brings to us their gifts of organization, determination and technology. We both benefit from each other as the year passes. Friendship Trays cannot accomplish its mission without the help of volunteers and the presence of experienced students like those from CPCC, and the life skills and professional experience they learn will benefit these students in the future.
"Each student brings to us their gifts of organization, determination and technology."

-Lani Lawrence, Friendship Trays Volunteer Coordinator
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