

Opportunity Knocks

Reporting on Community Service Learning and Opportunities in the Delaware Community
Stephanie Bologes, Editor In Chief

“A Ten-Hour Flight I’d Take Again”: Reflections on Ghana

The experience before, during, and after our journey to Ghana, West Africa, was far beyond my expectations. The journey was mentally, physically, and spiritually challenging. We started out with twelve members on the team, and we faced letting three of those members go and adding one member onto the team. We fundraised over \$30,000 to make this mission possible. We did everything from selling gumbo at Ohio Wesleyan’s Black and Latino Student Leadership Conference to selling carnations for Valentine’s Day and raffling off beautiful baskets full of African artifacts – and everything in between! All of the hard work was worth it, and in a profound sense, it prepared us for the journey that we were about to embark upon. Those countless hours spent fundraising gave us a little taste of what it would be like on that 10-hour plane ride to Accra (with a 22 hour lay over in New York): we were all restless! Fundraising also assisted in building team dynamics. We found out what our team’s strengths and weaknesses were, and we worked diligently to get through them.

Once we arrived in Ghana, what struck me most was the effect that Black women had on me – blatantly and indirectly. One aspect of the experience was reclaiming my Black female physical identity and immersing myself in the cultural feminine pride. I gained a greater admiration for varying body types; and at the same time, I was able to question Western standards of beauty. While walking down the street, eyeing the gorgeous continuum of skin tones that ranged from sweet beiges to deep mahoganies, I was able to break down the misconception that beauty is reserved for only one extreme range of a continuum; that was obviously supposed to be coupled with blue eyes and blonde hair. I stopped looking at myself so critically and stopped expecting people to look at me critically; and for the first time in a [very] long time, I could be “Christy...the person” not “Christy...the Black woman that must speak for all Black women because she is the only Black woman in this environment” – and was it empowering to be both appreciated and to appreciate myself!

This trip effectively changed and redefined what is traditionally seen as “mission.” This was not the conventional mission trip: We did not spend the entire experience volunteering in the orphanage in which we visited; we did not go out to every neighborhood we could reach and preach the Gospel (and although I’m sure some people do that, the reality was that we could see God’s divine presence in the people, the slave castles, the monuments, the natural beauty of the landscape, and many other things.) Instead, our “mission” was to seek out God’s divine presence in the rich heritage and culture that the Spirit has given us. Externally, we learned so much about *our* culture from visiting the slave castles in Cape Coast and Elmina, speaking with members of the Asante (Ashanti) Royal Family, and listening to languages spoken. Internally however, we re-claimed and connected our experiences back to the very blood that has run through our veins since birth. In short, the experience was life-changing.

This experience could not have been possible without the support and blessings of all of our financial and spiritual donors. We truly believe that those who helped us are a part of the very fabric of this experience. That said, our “mission” is also to take back what we learned on the Continent, and create a legacy of knowledge and cultural understanding for the Ohio Wesleyan community. ~ Christy Sicher ‘07



Senior Christy Sicher bonding with one of the children from the orphanage

The Ghana Mission Team looks forward to sharing their experiences with the Ohio Wesleyan and surrounding community on Tuesday, February 27, 2007 at 7:30pm in Benes Rooms B&C. — more pictures on page 8

Circle K District Service Project a Huge Success!

Ever wonder what would happen if 100 service-oriented people got together? Well...on January 27th, 101 of them did!



Circle K'ers from 8 schools, including Ohio Wesleyan, Capital, Ohio Northern, Otterbein, University of Dayton, Baldwin-Wallace and the University of Indianapolis came to volunteer at the Common Ground Free Store.

This year, Ohio Wesleyan hosted Circle K's District Service Project (DSP), where Circle K'ers from college and university clubs all around the area got together to complete an entire day of service. DSP is one of the three Circle K events held each year and is the one completely focused on service.

Sophomore Hersey Liu partnered up with Director of Service Learning Sue Pasters to arrange various service projects to complete. The day started out with clubs making over 50 emergency overnight toiletry bags for residents at the Turning Point women's domestic violence shelter. The club made use of donations both by Ohio Wesleyan students and Kiwanis International.

During the rest of the day, from 10am to 3pm, students went to serve at various sites all around Delaware. The event sites included the Stratford Ecological Center, where the students helped move firewood, Preservation Parks where they mulched portions of the trails, the Delaware Literacy Coalition to sort books, the Common Ground Free Store and the Liberty Community Center, where they helped paint.

Service chair for Circle K Sara Nienaber reflected on her experience, saying she could "really see the impact their efforts were having." Her group stuffed envelopes for the Red Cross, made signs about the importance of recycling and hung up posters about Turning Point's shelter in women's restrooms around town to increase awareness. "Not only do you get to make a difference, but you get to meet new people too," she said, "which is always a fun dimension to the event."

Circle K is a college or university self-governing organization, sponsored by Kiwanis International. Its goals are educational service, leadership development, and fellowship organization. They sponsor many events throughout the year including Books for Africa and the Read for Relief read-a-thon. In addition, they respond to service needs in the community, volunteering for places like People In Need, cleaning the Ronald McDonald house and participating in the Scioto River Sweep.



New friends were made as Jess Nieger (Baldwin-Wallace) and Sarah Bonnet (Ohio Wesleyan) worked the check-in desk at the Common Ground Free Store

*To get involved in Circle K, attend their meetings held on **Mondays** in the **Smith Date Study** at **8pm***

Swim for Diabetes! Mark your calendars! The 32nd Annual Central Ohio Diabetes Association Swim and Walk for Diabetes will be taking place in our very own Edwards Gym and Pfeifer Natatorium on Sunday, March 4th from 11 am to 5 pm. Swim as many laps as you can, all for the good of the cause. Registration forms are available on campus from members of Circle K for those who wish to sign up in advance. All proceeds go towards diabetes education, community detection, research, and youth camp programs in Central Ohio. Refreshments will be available, as well as free t-shirts for participants! Questions? Contact Mark Miller at mvmiller@owu.edu.

TEACHFORAMERICA ~ An Alumna's Perspective

Four years ago I sat in my third floor bedroom at the Treehouse looking at my options. One would send me halfway around the world to teach English in Asia with the Peace Corps. The other would send me halfway across the country to teach underserved kids in a rural or urban area with Teach For America. We hear daily news reports about the woes of the world, and I knew the need abroad was great. What drew me to Teach For America, however, was a curiosity and outrage at the fact that so many children in our country, arguably one of the richest on earth, were not receiving an equal education. I decided my efforts were needed at home more than abroad and signed on to TFA.

Looking back, I couldn't be happier. I have no regrets. Both Teach for America and working for my school and with my kids, have been the hardest yet most rewarding undertakings of my life. I have spent the last three and a half years in a small town (and by small, I mean 973 people) in rural northeastern North Carolina. Coming here I was incredibly naïve about everything from teaching itself, to the poverty stricken rural South, to my kids' lives and the challenges they work to overcome everyday. I've found that, while I teach them algebra and expand their brains (I hope) everyday, they teach me more than I could ever have imagined they could.

The typical TFA teacher has been highly successful and driven throughout life. It is that drive that will carry them through the struggles of their first year of teaching. For the first time in my life I found I wasn't naturally good at something, and that challenge was humbling. To see the growth my students made and their passion for learning however, was incredible. Javonte, a student who was uncommunicative for the majority of the year, was on fire during a lesson about Frederick Douglass. Terance, a student in my Algebra class who is four grade levels behind in math, has a smile that will light up the room when he finally masters a concept. Driving Iesha home every night, since her mom works second shift at a local peanut factory, allows me to mentor a 14-year-old girl through the trials and tribulations of middle school. These kids' potential, and that of the hundreds of kids I have taught, is what keeps me going every day.

The reality is, my kids work harder than I do. They ride the bus for up to two hours just to get to school. They work far harder than their wealthier suburban peers to be at the same level, since well over half of them come to us in 5th grade below grade level. They attend school from 8:00am – 5:00pm and still complete hours of homework each night. They talk about college majors and future careers in a community where only 8% of the adult population has even earned a bachelor's degree. They talk about changing the world without realizing they are doing it every day.

I would imagine many of you are in my position, with many choices opening up to you and hazy visions of your future plans always on the brain. Teaching is an incredibly varied job, with no day turning out like the previous one. However, the one common thread every day is that I am truly changing the lives of my children and the face of my community. In 2009, when my former 8th graders head off to college, they will double the number of college bound seniors in our county. To have this kind of impact is unbelievable. Teach For America provided me this amazing opportunity, and every day confirms I've made the right decision.

~Alison Drake, OWU '03

Teach for America is a national corps for recent college graduates who commit to teach in urban and public school districts for two years. These teachers become leaders in the movement to eliminate educational inequality and expand opportunities, ultimately working from inside education to effect the changes needed to ensure all children have a free and equal public education. Teach for America is looking for college graduates of any major, background or career interest who have proven to be good leaders, demonstrate the ability to influence and motivate others and persevere through difficult challenges. To apply for a position, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

Be the change you seek...

Before going on to graduate school or beginning a career, become the positive social change that you wish to see in this world, start by getting involved with City Year.



City Year's mission is to **build democracy** through **citizen service, civic leadership, and social entrepreneurship.**

City Year is an international non-profit civic leadership and community service network -- a proud member of **AmeriCorps**. We seek individuals from all majors interested in serving in a paid volunteer role providing literacy tutoring and mentorship to Columbus Public School students. Individuals who take part in City Year Columbus projects are distinguished by their commitment to empowering youth and their desire to demonstrate that a small group can initiate powerful, lasting change.

To find out more about available Corps Members Positions and service opportunities, attend the information session February 22 from 6:30 to 7:30 at the City Year Columbus Headquarters on 35 N 4th St. --Lower Level in Columbus. The session will provide a chance to learn more about City Year firsthand and hear from corps members currently in service how to create opportunities for yourself, cultivate professional and leadership experience, and earn money for your education.

To register for the session or learn more about the program and application process, contact the 2007—2008 service term at (614) 586-1439 or at columbusrecruitment@cityyear.org.



The Delaware Senior Nutrition Program and the Council for Older Adults need help!

The Nutrition program is a partnership with Grady Memorial Hospital that provides hot meals daily to older adults in their homes. The program delivers about 160,000 meals this year throughout the country on 25 different routes. As the Nutrition Program grows, more and more volunteers are needed, and **YOU CAN BE ONE OF THEM!** Volunteer drivers are needed from 11-1pm either short or long term any day Monday through Friday. Volunteers will receive training, mileage reimbursement and a free hot meal on the day they volunteer.

Don't have a car but still want to help? Local congregate meal site assistants are also needed to help with the nutrition program. The Council for Older Adults is also always in need of snow shovelers.

To get more information contact Amy Brown at amyb@growingolder.org or call 740-363-6677.

Habitat For Humanity presents...

Soups For Shelter!

February 22, 2007

4:30-7:00pm

St. Mary's Catholic Church: 82 E Williams St.

\$10 for a ceramic bowl and all you can eat soup!





"OWU Bowl For Kids' Sake"

~ ~ 2007 ~ ~



What is it?

- A fund-raiser to benefit the Delaware County Chapter of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*.

When and Where is it?

- The 9th Annual "All Ohio Wesleyan Night" will be held on Friday, March 30th – 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the Delaware Lanes Bowling Center which is located on Route 36/37 E. (Check-in and lane assignments begin at 9:00 p.m. Bowling begins at 9:30.)

How do we participate?

- ⇒ Teams of five should register by filling out a Team Registration Sheet, available from the community service office, HWCC-407. (One team per organization/department, please!)
- ⇒ Don't Delay! There are only 16 lanes and several have already been reserved by last year's teams! (One lane per organization/department.)
- ⇒ Once the Registration Sheet is turned in, the Team Captain is given pledge sheets.
- ⇒ Each team member should make it their goal to raise a minimum of \$25 in pledges, but hopefully, each Organization/Department will help their team raise (much) more!

What's in it for us?

- Individuals who raise \$50 or more get a free BFKS T-shirt!
- Individuals who raise \$100 or more get a free BB/BS Sweatshirt!
- The OWU Team that raises the most money gets a Bowling Trophy engraved with the name of their organization/department to keep for one year.
- Lots of fun, games and amazing prizes, like the famous jug 'o' cheese balls!
- *But, most importantly: Everybody gets to have a Good Time for a Great Cause!*

Questions?

- Call Sue Pasters at x3084; visit the Community Service Office in HWCC-407; or e-mail: <mpaster@owu.edu> Thank You!

*Big Brothers Big Sisters is a non-profit organization which matches children with caring adults. Their goal is to make sure that every Delaware County child who needs a Big Brother or Big Sister gets one. OWU is proud to be a partner in the Willis Big Brothers & Big Sisters Program. To volunteer, or to learn more about this special program, call 369-2447, or x3084. BBBS is a United Way Agency.

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP!

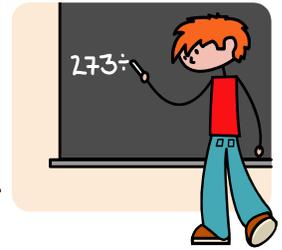
The People in Need agency wishes to thank one and all for your involvement with Holiday Clearing House. We had another record year of Holiday assistance. With your help we served 434 families with food, new toys, new clothing & gifts. And 171 seniors were served with food and gifts delivered directly to their homes. Words cannot express how grateful we are for your participation. We appreciate everything done to make another's holiday experience a pleasant one and hope to work with you in the future.

People in Need, Inc.—274 N. Sandusky Street—Delaware OH (740) 363-6284

Get Involved!

21st Century After School Tutoring Program

- ◆ Tutors are needed to work with Woodward Elementary children in an after school setting any day M-F from 3:45 to 5:15 pm. Woodward is located within 3 blocks of campus at 200 S. Washington Street.
- ◆ Applications are available through the Community Service Learning Office, (HWCC-407), or by contacting Kathy McWatters at (740) 548-7880, ext. 3464, or via e-mail: kathy_mcwatters@duesc.org



Tutor/Mentors Are Needed for "(WS) 2" Program

(WS) 2 is a collaboration between William Street United Methodist Church and Willis Intermediate School and is facilitated by The Literacy Coalition of Delaware County. Volunteer Tutor/Mentors are needed Mondays and/or Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:00 pm to work with 5th and 6th grade in the after school program held at the church. Responsibilities include supervising students through snacks, games, homework and clean up...as well as developing lasting friendships.

Interested parties should contact Bruce Denton at (740) 816-3514.

Turning Point www.turningpoint6.com

Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence



Volunteers (both organizations and individuals) are needed to tutor children who are victims of domestic violence as well as drivers who can help provide transportation. Please help reach out to those needing assistance in dealing with domestic violence by being an advocate for Turning Point and posting information in public areas of Delaware as well.

Contact Joyce Johnston at 1-740-382-8988, or email jjohnston@turningpoint6.com.

American Sign Language Interpreter Needed

Asbury United Methodist Church is looking for someone to provide ASL interpreting services for a child in the elementary Sunday School program. They would also like to have that person sit with him during church if they had the time. Sunday school begins at 9:30 and ends around 10:30 a.m. The worship service begins at 10:45 and ends before noon. Asbury Church is located at 55 W. Lincoln Avenue, across from Chi Phi Fraternity. To learn more, please contact Sue Pastors, (x3084).



- ◆ **The Common Ground Free Store** is a non-profit organization in Delaware and needs volunteers to work in the store. The store is located at 193 E. Central Ave. and works, through donations, to provide clothing, linens, small appliances and other household items to individuals and families free of charge, no questions asked. They also serve soup to shoppers each day the store is open. To donate, or to help, call 740-369-FREE.

Service Opportunities

Alum Creek Polar Plunge Re-Scheduled!

Due to the recent extreme weather, the February 17th Alum Creek Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics OHIO has been rescheduled for Saturday, March 3rd. Registration/Pledge Forms are available on the 4th floor of Ham-Will outside the Community Service Learning Office. Interested parties can also access information online at <http://www.soooh.org/> or by contacting Paige Ludwig of Special Olympics Ohio, (614) 239-7050, or via e-mail at palsooh@aol.com.



STRIVE PROGRAM NEEDS TUTORS!

If you would like to work with high school aged students, this is the opportunity for you! We're looking for tutors to help students on Monday nights from 5:00 to 7:00 at the Delaware Area Career Center, which is located at 4565 Columbus Pike, (Route 23 South, across from Camp Lazarus). Students are mainly in need of help with math, reading and writing. Excellent opportunity for anyone interested in Secondary Education, or who just wants to help young people succeed. To learn more, contact Heather Allen at (740) 548-6665, or via e-mail at ALLENH@odjfs.state.oh.us.

Stratford Ecological Center Has Events / Needs Volunteers!

Stratford Ecological Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to the education of children and adults in understanding the relationship between living things and their environment, hoping to foster an appreciation of the land and the life that depends on it. Stratford's goal is to **act locally** and **think globally**.

On March 10, the Center will be hosting a **Maple Sugar Festival** from 9am-1pm. An organically grown, all-you-can-eat breakfast will be served, followed by a scenic hike along the creek and a ride out to the sugar shack. Once there, you can collect sap, tap a tree and learn about how to make maple syrup. Cost is \$8/adult and \$6/children.

The Center is always in need of volunteers to work at its organic farm and education center, teaching children about ecology on its 236 acres of nature preserve. **Educational Guide Training** will take place in March, in 2 parts: Part I: Thursday, March 1st or Friday, March 2nd and Part II: Thursday, March 8th or Friday, March 9th. Volunteer Guides will lead children on tours on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

Volunteers are also needed to plant trees, since they lost over 9,000 last year.

To volunteer contact Jane Walsh at 362-2548 or email secenter@aol.com.



Do you love the outdoors but feel trapped by the cold weather ?

Preservation Parks has volunteer opportunities for you! Preservation parks exists to preserve open nature spaces, provide environmental education, and make parks open and available to residents of Delaware County. Volunteers are needed to work in the nature center, which offers opportunities to study and relax as well as help in the center. Contact Sandra Sklar at saundras@preservationparks.com to learn more.

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 22nd ~ 4:30-7pm
Habitat Soups for Shelter

March 3rd
Alum Creek Polar Plunge

March 4th
OWU Swim for Diabetes

March 7th ~ noon to 1pm
Community Service
RoundTable - Benes "A"

March 10-18
OWU Spring Break

March 30th
Spring Break Mission Week
Celebration ~ Benes Room 7pm

ΔΓ Anchor Splash ~ 7-9pm

OWU Bowl For Kid's Sake
9pm to Midnight
Delaware Lanes

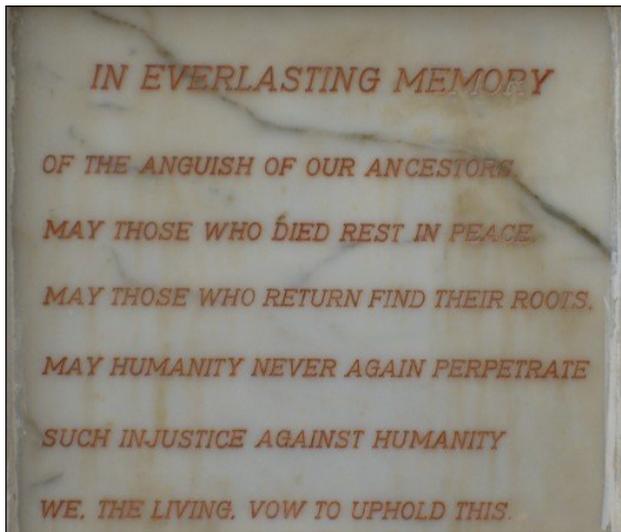
ORCHESIS

...experiencing Service Learning through DANCE!



Orchesis 2007 ~ Artistic director Tim Veach and a host of talented students invite you to their annual dance concert. Choreography will feature use of various community service experiences such as *Turning Point*, *STAND*, and *Habitat for Humanity* as inspiration.

February 23rd and 24th @ 8pm
Chappellear Drama Center
\$7/general admission - \$5/students



Ashanti chiefs placed plaques identical to this one at every remaining slave castle in Ghana. During the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, an unbelievable number of people were herded to these European built castles that litter the West African coast. If the captured survived the tortuous journey to the castle, they then had to withstand the horrendous living conditions at the castle before boarding the ships. The chiefs made a promise to the world that they would never forget.

~Ben Goodrum '09
Ghana Mission Team



Sophomore, Delmar Flournoy with a new friend.
Ghana Mission Team—December, 2006