



MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

# ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008

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**It is the goal of this publication to spread awareness of Allegheny's strong commitment to civic engagement, environmental responsibility, and promoting a sense of personal and social responsibility in our living-learning community.**

### ALLEGHENY CONTINUES TO EXAMINE ITS CORE COMMITMENTS

In early 2007, Allegheny was one of a select group of schools to be invited to join the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Core Commitments Consortium, a program designed to investigate the success of teaching personal and social responsibility in higher education and to promote positive, active citizenship in the classroom. The Core Commitments (CC) initiative aims to do this by focusing on five dimensions of personal and social responsibility: striving for excellence, cultivating personal and academic integrity, contributing to a larger community, taking seriously the perspectives of others, and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning.

The CC program at Allegheny began in summer 2007, when a group of faculty and staff, including CEED director Amara Geffen and Associate Dean for Wellness Jacquelyn Kondrot, attended the AAC&U summer institute in Burlington, Vermont. There, the primary emphases of the Allegheny CC program were established; these included building a greater connectivity between the various civic engagement projects on campus and tying together Allegheny's curricular and co-curricular efforts to enhance personal and social responsibility.

In September 2007, the CC program was introduced on campus through a launch meeting of Allegheny employees, students, and community partners. All parties were asked to propose topics for future dialogues and give suggestions for how to best improve college-community relations. Key topics included environmental stewardship, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and conduct and civility.

Following the launch meeting, two dialogues were held based upon these community recommendations: "Community Improvements: Best Possibilities on the Individual, Neighborhood

and Regional Levels" and "College-Community Collaborations for Enhancing Environmental Responsibility." These talks led to Allegheny's aiding the Meadville Redevelopment Authority in developing a proposal for an Elm Street program through Pennsylvania's Downtown Center, and the formation of a group charged with developing environmental guiding principles for the Northwest Pennsylvania region.

Through the CC program, Allegheny's various civic engagement programs continued to organize into the Civic Engagement Council, which now have offices on the second floor of Pelletier Library. The Council includes the Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED); Community Service and Service-Learning (CSSL); Values, Ethics and Social Action (VESA); Community-Based Research (CBR); Engagement through Writing (EW); and the Center for Political Participation (CPP).

*Continued on page 6*



ALLEGHENY HOSTS NATIONAL  
BONNER CONFERENCE

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# STUDENTS “DEBATE FOR DEMOCRACY”

## D4D on the Road

Want to develop your activist skills? Join us for a series of workshops at Chatham College on November 22, 2008. The event, led by Christopher Kush, author of *The One Hour Activist*, will focus on issues of energy in the environment, race, and international affairs.

For details:

[teatmon@allegheny.edu](mailto:teatmon@allegheny.edu)  
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On April 3 and 4 of this year, two teams of Allegheny students traveled to New York City to partake in Project Pericles’ “Debating for Democracy” (D4D) conference. This event encouraged students to research, advocate and defend their stances on current political issues and methods of positive change for those issues.

The students attending the conference included Christy McShea ’09, Samuel Rigotti ’10,

Didem Uca ’10, and Eric Winter ’10. In speaking of the event, Rigotti says that “it was an amazing experience; we heard from some powerful speakers and had the chance to meet former U.S. Senators.” These former senators included Nancy Kassebaum Baker, Harris Wofford, and New York State Senator Bill Perkins. Fomer Senator Bob Kerrey moderated the event.

Rigotti and Uca were both members of Allegheny’s official D4D team. This team prepared not only for the D4D conference itself, but also planned several events to raise awareness of political activism throughout the academic year. One such effort was the “Teach-In for Nonviolent Eco-Activism” at the end of March. This event was meant to give attendees the capability to become effective eco-activists in their communities. It covered three days and included numerous activities, such as a discussion on “Climate Change, Peak Oil, and Food Sustainability,” and an environmental movie festival.

McShea and Winter were members of the other Allegheny team, who were chosen as finalists for their proposal on federal climate and energy legislation, entitled “Auctioning for a Better Future” (found at <http://projectpericles.org/?q=conferenceapril2008>). Other students on this team included Jenna Gathmann, Kryss Castillo, Scott Gast, and Arielle Conti. In their Environmental Science 490 class, concerning global environmental health, they worked under visiting professor of environmental science Thomas Eatmon, who calls the intricacy of their proposal “remarkable.” Other schools chosen as finalists include Berea College, Hampshire College, Hendrix College, Macalester College, and New England College.

This team’s proposal was chosen from a pool of 40 entries from 21 schools, and was selected by a panel of experts based on originality, substance, and public need and relevance. The teams were each given 20 minutes to present their proposals to legislators: 5 minutes for a short presentation and 15 minutes for discussion. To prepare for this occasion, Rigotti claims that the teams worked “very hard doing research, editing, and compromising to fit within the time limit.”

The conference also hosted workshops and discussions on active citizenship and social entrepreneurship, with Michael McPherson, President of the Spencer Foundation (designed to improve education around the world) providing the keynote speech on civic engagement in higher education.

The second day of the conference, titled “Our Democracy After 2008: A D4D Forum on Three Key Policy Areas,” consisted of panel discussions and presentations on three key areas of modern politics: energy and the environment; privacy and free speech; and race, income, and access. In speaking of the event, Rigotti happily states that “it was definitely worthwhile and we feel that we came away with a great deal of new knowledge, not only of the legislative policy process, but about educating others with regard to our proposals as well.”

Project Pericles, the sponsor of the event, is a non-profit organization created by Eugene M. Lang in 1999, and which fosters the integration of social responsibility and active citizenship in higher education. It promotes classroom as well as campus and community-wide efforts to advance these goals.

In reference to the D4D conference, Lang states that “by creating a forum where Periclean students can actively participate in the democratic process, we hope to encourage students to become active citizens in their community and country.” ♦



Sam Rigotti and Didem Uca with Senator Kerrey

## STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS “EXAMINE WHITENESS”

In April of this year, Allegheny hosted a conference on racism and white privilege, entitled “Examining Whiteness: An Academic Conference on White Privilege and Racism in America.” The event consisted of an undergraduate conference and four plenary presentations. Keynote speakers were leading philosophers of race, and included Linda Martin Alcoff of Syracuse University, Charles Mills of Northwestern University, Lucius Outlaw of Vanderbilt University, and Shannon Sullivan of Pennsylvania State University.

The conference was originally conceived during a series of faculty reading groups at Allegheny College that met throughout the summer of 2007 to discuss how to integrate the idea of white privilege and racism into their courses. With this background in mind, the conference was planned and coordinated by Allegheny assistant professor of philosophy and religious studies Eric Boynton and philosophy professor Bill Bywater. These professors have worked to integrate the conference’s themes into campus efforts and curricula over the past year.

The conference began with a welcome by Allegheny’s President Richard Cook, followed by four plenary keynote presentations. Dinner was served with a film produced by Philip Reynolds concerning white privilege in modern society.

Saturday was dedicated to a series of presentations by undergraduate students from the schools attending the conference, with each session being mediated by an Allegheny professor. These activities consisted of essay sessions, akin to interactive lectures, and panel discussions.

During the event, various methods of presentation were used to teach about modern racism in terms of privilege. Professor of dance Eleanor Weisman, for example, used the opportunity to lead students in a dance entitled “It’s Elemental: She Doesn’t Know What Grits Are.” This work was meant to make the audience view white privilege through the abstract lens of contemporary dance and in connection to human group process. In addition to this, the Allegheny College Choirs performed concerts of African American spiritual hymns, and the Playshop Theatre’s production “Venus” explored race and oppression in Victorian England.

Concerning the event, Professor Boynton said that it brought “together scholars and students from a number of area colleges and universities concerned with investigating the hidden yet ubiquitous attitudes and points of ignorance that constitute white privilege.”

The conference ended with a roundtable discussion, in which participants shared their reflections from the event. ♦



As part of the Examining Whiteness conference, students use contemporary dance to analyze group process

## FAHRNER FUND TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Allegheny alumna Gail Howe Fahrner has spent over 40 years in service to a private Philadelphia-area foundation that supports innovative projects in the fields of human services, arts and culture, education, and health. Holding to the ideals that guide the organization, the retired chairman of the foundation took an innovative approach to showing his gratitude for Fahrner’s faithful assistance: last fall he made a gift of \$1 million to establish the Gail Howe Fahrner Fund in support of the Civic Engagement Council at Allegheny College.

“As an institution, Allegheny College is deeply rooted in the regional community and is committed to being an active community partner,” Dean of the College Linda DeMeritt said. “The Gail Howe Fahrner Fund will provide financial support for a variety of educational programs that connect learning with service to the benefit of both students and the community.”

Fahrner, who majored in French, with a minor in secretarial studies, graduated from Allegheny in 1956. She recalls the years she spent in Meadville with fondness, and when she returned to campus in 2006 to celebrate her 50th class reunion she became concerned about the area and wondered what could be done to strengthen the relationship between the college and the local community. Through the endowment established in her name, these connections will grow in perpetuity.

“I wanted to create a program that would support practical approaches to improving student education which, at the same time, would have a positive impact on the Meadville community and lasting effects on helping students develop into responsible citizens,” Fahrner said. ♦

## MEADVILLE, PA: NOT YOUR RUN OF THE MILL COMMUNITY

Work will continue this year on Meadville, PA: Not Your Run of the Mill Community, a college-community collaboration meant to develop a sustainable Meadville. Begun nearly three years ago, this project aims to revitalize Meadville through sustainable community development. Organized by Allegheny College's Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED) in partnership with the Crawford Conservation District, Chamber of Commerce, Meadville Redevelopment Authority, French Creek Project, and the city of Meadville, this project embraces Mill Run as a tool for building community, revitalizing neighborhoods, renovating homes along the stream corridor to decrease environmental impact, and bringing renewed economic vitality to the city.

The effort centers on Mill Run, an historic stream that runs through and under Meadville. In the city's early frontier years, Mill Run was essential to Meadville's growth, but in the early twentieth century it was largely built over and nearly forgotten. CEED Director Amara Geffen states that the Meadville Project aims to "revitalize and restore Mill Run, placing it at the heart of our community to demonstrate that environmental restoration can stimulate economic and community development. The stream becomes a focal point to bring the community together."

The project will also help to unify local businesses and diverse neighborhoods along the stream, which passes through a majority of the city. Such unification can be done in part through highlighting the stream's path and developing recreational areas around the above-ground parts of the stream.

The project will be undertaken in three stages, some happening concurrently, and beginning with an environmental assessment of the Mill Run Watershed. A comprehensive master plan will be developed to recommend opportunities for design and aesthetic improvements, aid business and economic development, assess ecological needs, and ultimately lead to an improved quality of life for Meadville citizens. The Shadybrook Park Project, planned in conjunction with Alle-

gheny students, will enhance the open space around Mill Run and purify the stormwater released into the stream at Shadybrook Park. This portion of the project will be funded through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by a \$67,500 award from the Crawford County Planning Commission as a county-prioritized Growing Greener initiative.

The environmental assessment undertaken as the first step of the Meadville Project will be funded by a \$25,000 Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection grant from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Allegheny and community partners will work together to prepare the assessment of the Mill Run Watershed and explore the possibility of a walking and biking trail along Mill Run.

Seven primary areas of the city are possible development sites for the master plan, including Shadybrook Park, Mickey's Restaurant to the Public Library, Market Alley, the Arch Street Gateway and the City Building, Pocket Park, and the confluence of Mill Run and French Creek. Findings from the environmental assessment may lead to site modifications and will provide the DEP with data necessary to develop Total Maximum Daily Levels (TMDL) for Mill Run, data required to open up sufficient funding for future projects.

Already, the Mill Run project has made significant progress in its goals. Conceptual drawings of revitalized community areas centered around the stream are currently under discussion in the Planning and Zoning Com-

mission's Business District Action Plan (BDAP). Murals depicting Mill Run have been erected on the Arch Street Gateway parking garage, and several other artistic improvements are also planned. The Market Alley, across from Meadville's historic Market House, has seen revision plans in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). City Council has also begun exploring how to bring sustainable, 21st century economic strategies into Meadville for the coming years.

In all of these efforts, Geffen notes that community involvement is critical. "Residents and community stakeholders will be engaged consistently at each stage of the environmental assessment and master plan processes."

For a complete outline of the Meadville Project, visit the CEED Sustainable Communities website at [ceed.allegheny.edu/sc](http://ceed.allegheny.edu/sc). ♦



**A conceptual drawing of Brewer's Alley. Vibrant colors and a consistent theme link it to the surrounding areas. Image courtesy of CEED and artist Chris Brown.**

## ALLEGHENY HOSTS BONNER CONFERENCE AND POLITICAL SUMMIT

Students may have gone home for the summer, but from June 4 to 7, 2008, Allegheny's residence halls were again filled as the college hosted the Summit on Political Engagement: Connecting Service to Politics and Politics to Service, an event held in conjunction with the Bonner Foundation's Summer Leadership Institute 2008. Over four hundred students, faculty, and administrators from across the United States were in attendance. The Bonner Foundation described it as an opportunity to "intentionally explore the interconnections of...community service work with civic and political engagement."

The Bonner Foundation was established by Corella and Bertram F. Bonner in 1990 through the Bonner Scholars Program. They hoped to allow young adults access to higher education and an opportunity to serve the community around them. Since its creation, the Foundation has given more than \$12 million in scholarships to more than 2,500 students across the country and has provided over \$9.5 million in grants to hunger relief programs throughout the nation.

At the conference, national organizations came together to "explore the



Allegheny Professor of Political Science Dan Shea recently

published a new book, *Living Democracy*, which speaks of changing the apathetic and ignorant viewpoint that many young Americans have toward modern politics.

themes of political and civic engagement," as described by the Bonner Foundation. Such groups included Mobilize.org, the New Organizing Institute, the US Public Service Academy, CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), Project Pericles, the Roosevelt Institution, and Teach for America. These and other organizations worked alongside Allegheny's own CPP (Center for Political Participation), ACCEL (Allegheny College Center for Experiential Learning), and CEC (Civic Engagement Council).

Politics and service were connected through advocacy and activism, community-based research, public policy research, voter education, electoral participation, and others. In a series of forums and workshops held over several days, the conference allowed for a blending of ideas and practices that have led to successful, positive change in the past and explained how to use those ideas for further change in the future. Dialogues focused on five pathways for change: elections, litigations and the courts, grassroots mobilizing, lobbying, and cultural change.

Allegheny was well represented at the conference, with numerous faculty and staff members giving presentations and overseeing discussions. President Richard Cook and Director of Community Service and Service Learning Dave Roncolato began the event with a welcoming ceremony. Professor of Political Science and director of Allegheny's Center for Political Participation (CPP) Dan Shea, with Associate Professor of Psychology Deborah Dickey, served on a panel exploring the five approaches to political action emphasized at the conference. Assistant Professor of English Ann Bomberger led a discussion on communicating effectively among people with diverse backgrounds and expe-



Ben Swanekamp, '08, at the Soapbox Alliance Press Conference

riences, while Amara Geffen, CEED director, provided a session on using the arts as a tool for community-based engagement. Dean of Students Joe DiChristina facilitated a discussion on social justice, and Eleanor Weisman, Director of Dance and Movement Studies, gave an experiential workshop exploring group process and political decision making.

Other Allegheny participants included Barb Steadman, Director of Public Affairs; Abby Juhasz, an Allegheny Project Coordinator for the Children and Youth AmeriCorps VISTA program; Jim Fitch, the Associate Director of Career Services in ACCEL; and Allegheny student Erin Sweeney.

Following the politics and service summit, the Bonner Summer Leadership Institute took place. Here, Bonner students from around the country came together for networking, educational work, and discussions about college-community partnerships and campus civic engagement.

In a welcome message to participants, President Richard Cook noted that Allegheny was "especially pleased to host this important event because we value our relationship with the Bonner Foundation and with our fellow 'Bonner Schools' so much." ♦

## CORE COMMITMENTS CONTINUES

*Continued from page 1...*

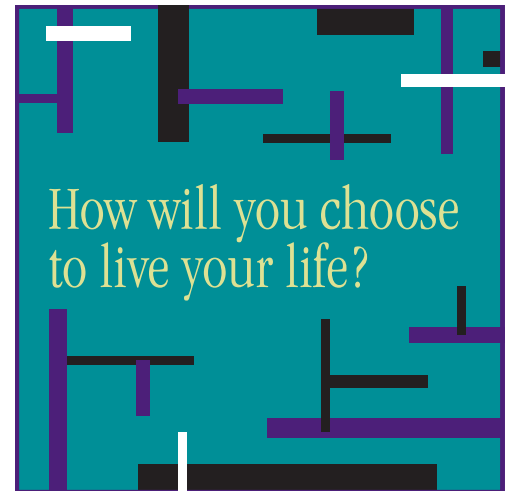
The CC program has also revealed the need to strengthen Allegheny's own community through discussions about the kind of campus we aspire to and the behaviors needed to become such a community. With this in mind, a team of student interns joined the CC team in December 2007 in researching conduct policies at Allegheny's comparison schools to determine how we can best integrate the five dimensions of personal and social responsibility into our own culture.

Over the past year, these efforts led to a revision of the introduction to the school's Conduct Code, which is published in the current edition of the Compass. The new introduction better prefaces the values of the college's living-learning community while also promoting the self-accountability that is required for integrating personal and social responsibility into college life.

These attempts to improve the Allegheny culture were aided through a survey, the Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRII), created by AAC&U and modified and distributed by the CC team. This study was meant to reveal the prevalence of the five dimensions of the CC program at Allegheny. While the original study was designed for students, faculty, and staff, Allegheny also developed a survey for alumni and community partners. The results of the study will be used to aid in the formation of new dialogues and programs in the coming year.

In July of this year, the CC team presented the data from the PSRII along with the activities of Allegheny's CC program at the AAC&U Core Commitments Summer Institute in Portland, Oregon. The team representing Allegheny, including visiting professor of Environmental Science Thomas Eatmon, Director of Institutional Research Marian Sherwood, Professor of Art and CEED director Amara Geffen, and student Dave Valentine, gathered with 164 representatives from approximately 24 other institutions to advance their understanding of the CC mission and how it can be brought back to campus for the coming academic year.

In this coming year, Allegheny's CC team plans to focus their work on further integrating the curricular and co-curricular initiatives for civic engagement and personal and social responsibility. This work will encompass, among others, further development of an Honor Code of Conduct linked to the current Academic Honor Code, the "Meadville, PA: Not Your Run of the Mill Community" project (a community development project for Meadville), support for Year of Health programming, continued development of our civic engagement programs, and the holding of three campus dialogues over the course this academic year. ♦



## RELAY RAISES \$40,000

Allegheny's Relay for Life this year raised almost \$40,000 for the battle against cancer, \$6,000 more than last year. If you missed the event but would still like to donate, please visit [www.acrfl.org](http://www.acrfl.org) to make an online donation.

The original relay began in Tacoma, Washington, with Dr. Gordy Klatt, who wanted to raise money for his local American Cancer Society office and decided to run marathons to do so. Eventually, with the help of "the Mother of Relay," Pat Flynn, the Relay grew into the event we know today. Since this time, the Relay has raised millions of dollars in the fight against cancer. The American Cancer Society notes that the Relay for Life is a way to ensure "that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated." ♦

## ALLEGHENY POLLED IN CBS STUDY

Allegheny College, along with several other Project Pericles schools, including Chatham University and Ursinus College, was recently polled by CBS news on the level of political interest of its students. According to a study released in April 2008 by CBS News and UWIRE, almost 90% of students who are registered to vote at four year colleges and universities are excited about and pay attention to the current presidential campaign. Of this number, 42% claimed to be paying a great deal of attention. Such data contrasts with other studies that show young adults being generally apathetic to politics due to time constraints or their believing politics do not affect them personally. The recent election, however, has seen a surge in young adult and college-age political activity and interest. ♦



## ALLEGHENY'S YEAR OF HEALTH BEGINS

For the coming academic year, Allegheny students and employees will be examining their health, but cholesterol and cardiovascular information aren't the only topics up for discussion. Allegheny's "Year of Health" is an interdisciplinary, curricular, and co-curricular initiative that hopes to instill in students and employees a sense of the importance of all kinds of health: physical, mental, economic, environmental, social, and more. In addition, health on all levels will be explored, on the individual, campus, community, and global scale.

In the coming year, numerous classes covering a wide array of academic fields will have direct correlations with the health initiative. Outside of the classroom, guest speakers will present on the importance of economic, social, and environmental health. Robert Kennedy, Jr. will act as the keynote speaker for the year.

As part of the Year of Health, in July of summer 2008, Allegheny professors Caryl Waggett of the environmental science department and Ron Cole of the geology department attended a national institute on public health in

Crystal City, Virginia. The event, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), took place from July 14-15, and was meant to integrate public health concerns more cohesively into courses in higher education.

"AAC&U's 2008 summer institutes are designed to address a spectrum of important issues facing colleges and universities today," said AAC&U president Carol Geary. "These campus teams worked with administrative, faculty and assessment consultants to advance their educational priorities as they sought to become more intentional, inclusive and integrative in the way they organize their student learning."

Professor Waggett states that the institute "takes on particular importance to our campus and local community because it will help inform plans for the college's interdisciplinary focus on health during the 2008-09 academic year." ♦

## CREEK CONNECTIONS EXPANDS

Creek Connections (CC) is an environmental education program that allows Allegheny College students to teach the young public about the ecological importance of stream health. The program, begun by Associate Professor of Environmental Science Jim Palmer, was formerly part of Allegheny's Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED). It has been successful for 13 years and now spans watersheds in Southwestern New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Costa Rica.

There are 45 teachers in New York and Pennsylvania alone that incorporate Creek Connections into their classes, with over 6,000 students involved at multiple levels of the program every year. CC is also growing nation-wide, as Allegheny College CC alumni are developing programs in Colorado, Seattle, Anchorage, and Southern Florida. In addition, the Dean of the University of Texas has asked Allegheny to develop a proposal for starting CC in Austin, Texas.

Allegheny alumna Lara Tool is currently working in Colorado Springs, writing a grant to support the purchase of materials necessary for teachers to incorporate the program into their curriculum. Allegheny College has sent Tool four \$800 starter kits with the hope to set a model of success that can be further replicated around the country.



Creek Connections students explore local waterways as part of hands-on, experiential education



Costa Rica Creek Connections students engage with team leaders in activities

Four Colorado teachers are already using CC throughout the school year, and Tool plans to lead two workshops for over forty teachers in the area. Plans for a CC symposium in Colorado are also being discussed. Sally Ride, the first American woman to orbit the earth, will likely be the keynote speaker.

Internationally, CC has sparked interest at the Green Valley Private School in Atenas, Costa Rica. Last November Professor Palmer met with the six directors of the school this year, as he hopes that the students there can set an international model for the program.

There is also interest as far as Germany, as well as Mongolia, where nonprofit organizations are working to combat the harmful effects of strip mining, and several international students and teachers are planning to attend summer Creek Connection camps and training sessions.

The success of the CC program recently led to its being awarded the Outstanding Environmental Education Program award by the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators. Palmer says the award "celebrates and acknowledges the many teachers in western Pennsylvania and New York who use our Creek Connections model to cultivate ethics of environmental stewardship in future leaders."

Palmer is pleased with the growth and widespread adoption of the CC program, and insists that the professors and students that adopt it around the globe continue to develop it with the same high level of quality that is apparent in our local region. For more information on the CC program, visit [creekconnections.alleghey.edu](http://creekconnections.alleghey.edu). ♦



“Focus the Nation” invited students to learn about global climate change and think about feasible solutions



Students attend a presentation in Ford Chapel as part of January’s “Focus the Nation”

## ALLEGHENY DECIDES TO “FOCUS THE NATION”

In January, Allegheny joined 1,100 other colleges and universities across the country in “Focus the Nation,” a nationwide teach-in on global warming and climate change solutions. The event was the largest teach-in in history, spanning three days and encompassing numerous activities and dialogues.

Focus the Nation attempts to solve climate change through the “three pillars” of education, leadership, and civic engagement. “It was a great opportunity for students and community members from all disciplines and levels of understanding to become involved in the national dialogue on climate change,” says Visiting Professor of Environmental Science Thomas Eatmon. “The path to U.S. cooperation with the international community begins at the state and local level. There are not many times in life that we all have an opportunity to make such an impact on the future of the world.”

The event began on Wednesday, January 30 with the film *2% Solution*, produced by the National Wildlife Federation, and a panel discussion that included Steve Schneider, a climate scientist at Stanford University; Hunter Lovins, CEO of Natural Capitalism; and Van Jones, executive director of the Ella Baker Center in Oakland, California.

The following day saw the keynote address by President Richard Cook, in which he recognized that “thanks to the vision and commitment of many, environmental responsibility is one of Allegheny’s core enduring values.” He urged young people to become informed voters and take real political action, making environmental responsibility a “will of the people.” He also spoke to how business and industry must change as a result of the desire of consumers and government for more environmentally responsible business practices. The

highlight of his speech addressed perhaps the greatest obstacle to stopping global warming: the consumption-focused mindset of the American people. He stated that we must have a change in mindset and end our over-consumption in order to create a “quality of life that ensures the passing on of an earth that will sustain future generations.”

A poster presentation session allowed Allegheny professors from 10 departments to show how climate change education was integrated into their curricula. Booths with food from local farmers and vendors were set up, and Brooks Dining Hall served a local foods lunch.

A performance by the local band Gypsy Dave and the Stumpjumpers was followed by a session in which participants were invited to use carbon offsets to compensate for the carbon impact of the day’s events. In the evening, Brian Hill, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), and Nancy Cole of the Union of Concerned Scientists presented Pennsylvania’s Roadmap for Climate Change.

On Friday, Hill also facilitated a dialogue on enhancing environmental responsibility on campus and fostering college-community collaborations, a discussion that was also part of the College’s Core Commitments program. The event ended with the “Choose Your Future” program in which students, employees, and community partners voted on five solutions for climate change; those national results are now posted on [www.focusthenation.org](http://www.focusthenation.org).

In the end, the event was best summed up by President Cook, as he urged participants to “empower [themselves] through the political process...[and] create a sustainable, just, and peaceful world.” ♦

## ALLEGHENY CELEBRITIES GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY

In Fall of 2007, the eight students in Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Jennifer DeHart's Junior Seminar sifted through more than just papers and exam material; they sifted through garbage as well. The students, in collaboration with Professor DeHart, planned, advertised for, and successfully executed Allegheny's first-ever Celebrity Trash Dig. The event, which took place in the main lobby of the Campus Center, was meant to act as a kickoff for this year's "Real Gators Are Green" effort and to show how much recyclable material is thrown away on a daily basis at Allegheny.

The students who planned the event were Allison Patrick, Nathan Phinney, Kristin Ryder, Robyn Snelling, Peter Sotherland, Hannah Stewart, Amy Werner, and Lydia Gearhart. "We learned from the dig, as we were hoping to show, that a lot of things are being thrown away instead of recycled or composted," Gearhart says.

The "celebrities" at the dig included representatives from Student Government, faculty across all disciplines, school administrators and, as the day progressed, other students, faculty, and staff as well.

Around the sorting area were posters describing the many benefits of recycling, citing such facts as: Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to power a computer or television for three hours. Sixty percent of all household waste can be recycled. Recycling creates three times as many jobs as simply throwing items away. Americans empty 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour.

"The dig showed that a valuable lesson in consumption can be learned," Gearhart says. "As college students I sometimes think my peers and I don't see the necessity to hold ourselves accountable for the amount we consume."

Such a large amount of consumption may help explain why, at the end of day, students and employees had filled five 20-gallon bags with recyclable plastic and glass; two bags with recyclable paper; one bag with recyclable aluminum; and an entire composting bin—125 pounds—of compostable food, plates, and napkins. Only five bags of actual garbage remained.

The Celebrity Trash Dig was just one of many environmental initiatives on campus this past year—initiatives that have already begun to bring positive change to Allegheny's campus and surrounding community. "I know sometimes it seems futile to put effort into making better, more environmentally friendly decisions, but ultimately, small actions do add up," Gearhart says. "If we as a generation can begin to understand this, I feel confident that a change is going to come." ♦



Allegheny celebrities Chompers and Professor Terry Bensele of the Environmental Science Department sift through trash with students in the Campus Center Lobby

Have you heard about  
Allegheny's Civic  
Engagement  
Council?

- Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED)
- Community Service and Service-Learning
- Values, Ethics, and Social Action (VESA)
- Center for Political Participation (CPP)
- Engagement Through Writing
- Community-Based Research

All of these programs can be found at [civicengagement.allegheny.edu](http://civicengagement.allegheny.edu)

## STUDENTS GO CRAZY OVER RECYCLEMANIA

From January 27 to April 7, 2008, Allegheny participated in RecycleMania, a national ten-week program that challenges college campuses to reduce, reuse, and recycle. The event was coordinated by the Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED), with advertisement and promotion done by Professor Amara Geffen's FS 102 class, "Climate Change, Art, and Activism."

"Our participation in this national competition for waste minimization served several important purposes, including creating innovative programs to increase awareness about the relationship among consumer practices, waste production and climate change," says Geffen, who also serves as director of CEED, "while also helping the college fulfill its commitments through the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which President Richard Cook signed last year."

The students in the FS 102 class staged various events to advertise RecycleMania, such as films, tabling, and performance art, and hung posters around campus describing the program. Class goals included researching programs to minimize bulk campus mail to save paper and negotiating with Parkhurst Dining about offering half-portions of food to reduce waste.

This year, RecycleMania recovered over 82,000 pounds of recyclable waste on campus and over 41,370,000 pounds nationwide. Across the country, that savings in energy is equivalent to eliminating 12,367 passenger cars, powering 7,335 households, or replacing 6,507,707 gallons of gas.

This year, CEED, the ECO-Reps, and Office of Sustainability will collaborate to bring RecycleMania to campus again. For more information on RecycleMania, contact CEED at [ceed@allegheny.edu](mailto:ceed@allegheny.edu) or (814) 332-2713, or visit the national RecycleMania website at [www.recyclemaniacs.org](http://www.recyclemaniacs.org). ♦

INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH  
RECYCLEMANIA NEXT YEAR?  
CONTACT  
[CEED@ALLEGHENY.EDU](mailto:CEED@ALLEGHENY.EDU)

## SERVICE IS THE SYLLABUS IN "INTRO TO VESA CLASS"

In the Spring 2008 semester, 15 students in the Intro to VESA course fanned out to various sites around Meadville for community-based learning. Each student gave several hours a week at his or her respective service site, and in return gained an insider's perspective of the local community.

Several students worked at the Center for Family Services, an agency that supports families in crisis. Student Amé Rowles assisted the social worker who runs the Parenting Together Program. "The children were great," says Amé, who notes that she truly enjoyed getting to know the families.


At the Crawford County READ program, Erin Gaskill helped with an adult literacy program, providing one-on-one tutoring in areas including reading, writing, spelling, and math. Erin was responsible for making lesson plans and assigning homework, as well as meeting three hours a week for tutoring with her learner. She says that "it was very rewarding to look back and see how much progress they made."

Learning was also the focus of the structured reading and writing groups at Crawford County Mental Health Awareness Program (CHAPS). Here, adult learners read from novels and other selections based on their interests and needs. Each learner then wrote a short reflection paper that CHAPS published at the end of the semester.

Kelly Rogers chose to spend time with kids at the YMCA youth and teen center, socializing and occasionally helping out with homework. "It has been a great experience thus far," she says. "I look forward to going in each week to see them."

Four other students ran an after-school mentoring program for fifth and sixth graders at Second District School that focused on team building, leadership, and cooperation. "It's been amazing to see the trust and bond our group of kids have formed together. I am constantly impressed with the imagination and innovation they use," says student mentor Ashley Teal. "Even though our service was about teaching and helping the kids learn, I found myself walking away with something new every day." ♦


**Why recycle?**



**Because Gators are *sexy!***


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**RECYCLEMANIA!**

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Campus Center **THURSDAY, MARCH 6.**



\* Or check this out! \*

[www.recyclemaniacs.org](http://www.recyclemaniacs.org)



Poster designed by Sarah Wurzbacher, '11

## STUDENTS EXPLORE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AS PART OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WEEK

February of this year saw Allegheny immersed not only in snow and ice, but an exploration of race and community, as the campus celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. week. Cherjanét D. Lenzy, Director of Diversity Affairs, said that the week was meant to empower students to "take Dr. King's vision and become activists."

The basis for the week as a whole was derived from King's idea of the "Beloved Community," which emphasizes service for others. Daily focus words helped to reinforce this idea, tying the discussion and activities together.

The week-long celebration began on Saturday with the focus word "empowerment." Special guest Shihan, a spoken word poet specializing in melding the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. with Jewish and Christian scriptures, revealed to students the importance of self-expression. On Sunday, the theme "recognizing" was discussed in a service at Ford Chapel. Shihan challenged attendees to consider the communities King took part in as a minister. Students were then asked to contemplate the various communities which they took part in, both the larger world community subsets thereof. On Monday, Shihan performed again, helping to shift the focus of the day to "community."

Tuesday focused on "awareness," and keynote speaker Jeff Johnson of Black Entertainment Television (BET) gave a presentation entitled "Un-

claimed Legacy: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Barack Obama." He inspired youth to carry on the passion and legacy of these men, and to create legacies of their own.

Johnson was joined on Wednesday by Allegheny professors in a panel called "Hip Hop and Civil Rights: Youth Leadership and the Next Social Movement," which expanded on his points from the earlier speech. The theme of the day was "growth", and the panelists, Professor of Political Science Dan Shea, Assistant Professor of Psychology Calion Lockridge, Associate Professor of Environmental Science Eric Palmer, and Assistant Professor of History Frank Forts, helped students see how growing into the legacy left for them might be possible.

Thursday's theme of "transcendence" was demonstrated through a documentary on the life of Bayard Rustin, King's unsung and openly gay advisor. The film, *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, showed Rustin's struggles as he transcended the barriers put before him as a homosexual in a harshly homophobic era.

Friday's focus on "servant leadership" tied the week together with Allegheny's second annual "Stuff the Bus" project. On Friday, a school bus was filled with items needed by local nonprofit organizations. It was a fitting ending to the week, since, as Lenzy pointed out, "a beloved community is about serving all people." ♦



The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined non-conformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS YEAR'S MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WEEK, CONTACT CHERJANÉT LENZY AT THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AFFAIRS:

(814) 332-3332

## CPP HOSTS CONFERENCE ON PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION REFORM

In the midst of “Super Tuesday” hype and primary fever earlier this year, Allegheny College students demonstrated true democracy to the nation. On February 13, 2008, Allegheny College and the New York Times Knowledge Network joined together to present the inaugural event of a two-year dialogue on presidential nomination reform. The conference coincided with a four-week online course (Jan. 30-Feb. 20) that encouraged students to explore past, present, and future changes in the presidential nomination process.

Students from 17 colleges participated in the conference, where they were challenged to present a plan for nomination reform. Teams from Allegheny College, Cleveland State University, University of Akron, and two teams from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania were then invited to give a presentation explaining their plans in more detail.

That evening, a panel discussion entitled “What is possible? What is likely?” was held, with panel members commenting on students’ ideas, fielding questions from both a live and an internet audience, and providing their own views on the necessity for nomination reform. The panelists were Bay



Participants network and study research and proposals in the Campus Center during the Conference

Buchanan, political strategist and author; Pedro Cortés, Pennsylvania Secretary of State; and Jane Eisner, vice president of national programs and initiatives for the National Constitution Center. Eisner later presided over a similar event at the National Constitution Center but gave Allegheny credit for opening the dialogue.

Panel mediator Daniel M. Shea, professor of political science and director of the college’s Center for Political Participation, opened the discussion. “The nomination process has led to cynicism, distrust, and alienation,” Shea said. “In recent years, many have speculated that the system is broken. At the very least, adjustments are in order.” Shea then predicted that the current system of

presidential nomination would not last through the 2012 election.

Shea also stressed the importance of student involvement. Though the country’s youth has been paying attention to the upcoming election, he still called disengagement a “serious issue,” which is why he said that “it makes sense to start the conversation about nomination reform at a college.”

There was no disengagement at the conference, however. Barb Steadman, director of public affairs at Allegheny College, said it was wonderful to see students making a compelling case for their solutions to such a serious problem. Students will have more time to become active in nomination reform as the initiative enters its second year. ♦



HAVE AN ARTICLE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE NEXT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER?

EMAIL US AT [CEED@ALLEGHENY.EDU](mailto:CEED@ALLEGHENY.EDU)

# CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATES

## LOCAL FOODS INITIATIVE

The Local Foods Network has seen a busy summer. Student interns Lydia Gearhart and Meira Goodman, along with Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Jennifer DeHart and recent Allegheny graduate Sarah Goetz, spent the summer working on three projects that promote the buying of foods from local farmers.

Goetz worked with Professor of Psychology Elizabeth Ozorak to educate regional farmers on obtaining access cards—better known as food stamps—for customers. Such cards allow underrepresented populations in the area to more easily shop at local farmers markets, such as the Market House, and give them access to fresh, local foods.

Gearhart and Goodman helped plan a training session on the preservation of fresh food, focusing on proper canning techniques. Two pilot programs for this effort have already been completed with the assistance of Rebecca Vines, of the local food supplier Fresh from the Vines. The overall program aims to educate the populace about food preservation and increase the number of shoppers willing to buy fresh, local foods. Current plans include assembling a book of recipes and canning information, such as proper temperature and pressure, and promoting intergenerational canning classes. One such session is in the works for this fall.

In addition to these projects, Gearhart, Goodman, and Goetz worked with the ARC of Crawford County, Gill Village, CHAPS, and Active Aging to create coupons for one dollar off a five-dollar purchase at the Market House. This effort, which was discussed and approved by local farmers, will include weekly fliers detailing what is in season and available for purchase. In the future, DeHart hopes to include Wesbury Retirement Community by regularly bringing residents down to the Market House and providing them with a small financial incentive.

DeHart, Gearhart, and Goodman also worked this summer on continuing the Friends of the Markethouse Newsletter, a biannual publication that includes information on food in season and the recent growth of farmers markets around the country, as well as research articles pertaining to regional farming.

For more information on the Local Foods effort, please visit <http://ceed.allegheny.edu/lfn>. ♦

## ART AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The "Read Between the Signs" project, which has graced the streets of Meadville since 2002, was extended by 75 feet over the past year. Oil derricks, a train, a baseball diamond, and a rhododendron bush were all added to the sign-art mural. The future looks bright for the project, since the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is also working with A&EI to implement an eco-art stormwater management project along Interstate 79.

A&EI project director Amara Geffen also hopes to begin a book to document the project, outline community involvement, and demonstrate how "Read Between the Signs" became integrated into the Allegheny College art department through community-project-based learning.

The signs have recently been the featured cover art of a new book by Robb Frederick called "You Haven't Lived Here If You Haven't...". Frederick chronicles unique locations in northwestern Pennsylvania, and Meadville's "Read Between the Signs" project was featured in the book. This unique project was also seen this summer on WQED's "Strange PA: On the Road with Dave and Dave," which aired on September 25.

In related news, the Market Alley Mural was installed mid-August on the corner of Park Avenue and Chestnut Street, and the dedication was held on October 4. Concerning the mural, CEED Director Amara Geffen states that "At the core of what we're working to accomplish through the Market Alley Mural project...is a conviction that innovation and creativity are indispensable components of successful, environmentally sustainable economic development." ♦



The Market Alley Mural on Park and Chestnut

## FORESTRY CURRICULUM INITIATIVE

Begun in 1998, the Northwest Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Project (NPSFP) strives to improve local private forest management and promote the economic contribution of the wood products industry in the local area. In recent months, much of this work has focused on educating area youth about such practices. "There is a pressing need to reach out to the younger generation, who are poised to become the next forest managers and stewards," said former Allegheny president Richard Cook in stressing the importance of this education.

Working with Professors Terry Bensele and Richard Bowden, Allegheny student Ali Trunzo spent this past summer preparing a series of modules for area high schools that focus on forest measurement and growth, products, and possible threats to forest health. As part of her Senior Project, Paula Corey tested such modules in a number of local schools the previous year, and they were well received by both teachers and students.

Trunzo prepared a website for the program to allow a wider audience easy access to information about sustainable forests and the project in general. She also prepared kits to be used in the modules, which will be officially launched and integrated into area curricula in spring 2009.

For more information on the NPSFP, visit <http://nwpwa.allegheny.edu/>. ♦



Second District kids with mentors Khyla Forde (back left) and Brendan O'Leary (back right). Photo by mentor Katelyn Kelly

## HEALTHY HOMES, HEALTHY CHILDREN CONTINUES

The Environmental Health Initiative (EHI) program Healthy Homes, Healthy Children project (HHHC) is a community-based effort to provide hands-on education to Meadville residents on the effects of household lead levels on early childhood development. To advance this focus, HHHC has developed an in-home program to help residents make cost-effective and healthy changes to their home environments.

Allegheny College students working with EHI Director Caryl Wagget are currently writing a grant for future funding, which will be used to relieve participant improvement costs, as well as encourage more residents to enroll via incentives such as free hypoallergenic mattress pads and home test kits.

Efforts are also underway to provide in-home visits from registered nurses 6 and 12 months following initiation into the HHHC program. These visits are intended to monitor progress and suggest areas of improvement through nutrition and other lifestyle changes that may increase the health of small children. In addition to this, Allegheny students and Professor Wagget are in the process of creating a home-

testing protocol that will prioritize testing for mold, radon, lead, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds.

Outreach programs are also being explored with hopes of incorporating HHHC into local school curriculums and science classes in order to reach a broader and younger audience. Educational displays will also be implemented at public events such as the annual Crawford County Fair and similar venues. The Healthy Homes, Healthy Children program strongly encourages constructive interaction between Allegheny College students and the Meadville community, with hopes of strengthening college-community collaborations and fostering healthier local families. ♦

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