Summer Fellows Ask Questions, Find Answers, in the Community

For the 2006 class of CCE fellows, the summer months were a time to engage full-time with the community and seek greater understanding of some of our most pressing social issues.

Research
Over the course of ten weeks, three student-faculty teams embarked on collaborative research projects addressing provocative economic, social, and psychological questions. Using data from the Census and other federal and state sources, Dr. Erik Craft along with students Bofelo Kotsane and Tricia Maas investigated the socio-economic factors that contribute to single-parent households in different locales in Virginia. Dr. Kevin Kuswa and student Liz Lauzon analyzed and mapped the rhetoric of mandatory national service in our public life. Finally, Dr. Scott Allison and student Kate Devine explored the implications of social psychology insights into the “underdog effect,” in order to strengthen public support for society’s marginalized persons. Each team’s findings will be presented at the CCE’s Research Symposium on Sept. 13.

Building a Long-Term Collaborative Effort in Richmond’s Northside

Now entering its second year in Highland Park and other Northside Richmond neighborhoods, Build It, the University’s largest community engagement initiative, continues to improve and expand support for local agencies while providing educational experiences for students.

New partnerships with Richmond’s John Marshall High School and the nonprofit Boaz & Ruth will enhance the program of Build It activities in the coming year. Plans for collaboration with Habitat for Humanity and the William Byrd Community House youth program in Highland Park are also underway.

Internships
Five David D. Burhans Civic Fellows took on full-time positions in nonprofit agencies serving communities from Richmond to Salt Lake City. While completing their internships, each fellow also did readings in their major with the guidance of a faculty mentor.

At Home Again’s Espigh Family Shelter downtown, John Farmer worked with homeless children and their mothers to support each family’s efforts to regain independence. John and his mentor, Dr. Dean Simpson, framed the experience with a study of conceptions of justice in classical Greek texts such as Plato’s Republic.

On the Southside, Margaux LeSourd interned with Fresh Start Job Development and Training, where she created a series of music programs for children with at least one incarcerated parent. With the support of faculty mentor Dr. Ruth Longobardi, Margaux will continue to connect theory and practice as she writes her senior honors thesis on ethnomusicology and the implementation of her program series.

Rorie Norton completed his fellowship in the housing department of Utah Legal Services, completed his fellowship in the housing department of Utah Legal Services.

“Justice is definitely something we have to fight for.”
- Burhans Civic Fellow Kristen Tilley

(Continued on page 2)
Meet Tara Sulzen, 2006-07 Build It Co-Chair

As the 2006-07 Build It co-chair, senior Tara Sulzen works closely with fellow co-chair and CCE program and service coordinator, Betsy Kelly, to lead the University’s largest community engagement initiative.

Tara has a passion for civic issues and a long record of community involvement. Now a senior majoring in Leadership Studies and Urban Practice & Policy, this Natick, Massachusetts native has worked as a Student Coordinator since the CCE opened in 2004. Her efforts have encouraged many students to pursue service experiences in the Richmond area and to look more carefully at the root causes of a variety of social issues.

Tara’s involvement in the Build It initiative began in 2004, when she took on the task of leading publicity efforts for the project. After a semester abroad in Italy in the fall of 2005, she returned to Build It as a tutor at Overby-Sheppard Elementary, where she worked with a 5th grade social studies class. She also helped with event planning in the spring of 2006.

In addition to her work with Build It, Tara serves as the vice president of academic affairs for the Jepson Student Government Association. A recent recipient of a David D. Burhans Civic Fellowship, she spent her summer living in Boston, working on fundraising and marketing strategies with a community development corporation and, of course, rooting for the Red Sox.

If you would like more information about how you can join Build It, please contact Tara at tara.sulzen@richmond.edu.

The project will continue to connect students, staff, faculty, and alumni with ongoing volunteer opportunities at Overby-Sheppard Elementary, Chandler Middle, the Hotchkiss Community Center, and Reach Out and Read.

For more information about the Build It initiative, please contact the Center for Civic Engagement at 484-1600.

STUDENTS!!

Find out about civic issues, community events, and volunteer opportunities on the CCE Listserv. To have this weekly digest delivered directly to your inbox, email engage@richmond.edu.

Dr. Amy L. Howard Assumes CCE Acting Director Role

Hicks on Sabbatical in 2006-07

Dr. Amy L. Howard, associate director of the Center for Civic Engagement, took on acting director responsibilities July 1, in conjunction with director Dr. Douglas A. Hicks’s one-year sabbatical.

On staff at the CCE since its inception, Howard holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in American Studies from the College of William & Mary. Her dissertation, “More Than Shelter: Community, Identity, and Spatial Politics in San Francisco Public Housing, 1938-2000,” won the school’s Distinguished Dissertation in the Humanities Award and received honorable mention for the American Studies Association’s Ralph Henry Gabriel dissertation prize in 2005. In addition to her work with the CCE, Howard teaches courses in History and American Studies and serves as advisor to the new Civic Engagement House. She is actively involved in the life of the University and in the greater Richmond community.

Hicks will spend a portion of his sabbatical year teaching a graduate course on ‘Christianity and the Market’ at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond. He will also conduct research in the political science department at the University of Granada, in Spain, on his next book project on leadership, religious diversity and civil society.
FEATURE PROJECT

Community Stream Project a Model of Collaboration and Civic Engagement

Great projects can begin with a simple idea – or a single phone call.

In the fall of 2005, Richmond resident Dan Bartges contacted the Center for Civic Engagement to talk about his idea for a conservation project in the neighborhoods adjacent to the University of Richmond. Bartges – husband of law school professor Kelley Bartges – wanted to do something about the erosion of stream banks along the Little Westham Creek and the chemical-laden runoff traveling through the creek to Westhampton Lake, the James River, and beyond. Would the CCE want to help?

By springtime, Bartges’s idea had evolved into the Community Stream Project, a collaboration among several major local groups: the Henrico County Department of Public Works, the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, VA Cooperative Extension-Master Gardeners, the Westham Neighborhood Association, the University Heights Neighborhood Association, the Rolling Woods Neighborhood Association and the University of Richmond. Together, the groups would ultimately be responsible for more than 13,000 plantings, placed along one-and-a-half miles of Little Westham Creek stream bank over four Saturdays in the spring.

The Stream Project illustrates what can happen when persons of varied expertise are brought together. First, Bartges worked with the neighborhood associations to gauge local interest in the project. Next, Henrico County and the Master Gardeners determined what types of native trees, shrubs, and groundcover would create a natural buffer between residential properties and the creek. Once residents were surveyed and their plant preferences noted, $20,000 worth of plants were purchased by Henrico County and planting diagrams were prepared by county staff. Volunteers from the University of Richmond – including members of the Sierra Club, the Outdoor House and the Environmental Studies Program – and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation planted the seedlings, frequently assisted by the residents themselves.

Students who participated in the planting days received mini-lessons about the science behind the project from Robin Wilder and John Newton, both of Henrico County Public Works. One of the topics discussed was stream bank erosion, which generates massive quantities of silt. According to Henrico County, 120,000 cubic yards of material – or approximately 10,000 dump truck loads – have been removed from Westhampton Lake over the past seven years!

One student, environmental studies major Paige Barlow, incorporated what she learned into a senior seminar project examining how the campus watershed affects the Chesapeake Bay and what individuals can do to reduce pollution.

Bartges said he expected the project to continue to produce results in the years to come – as the plantings mature and stabilize the soil around the creek. “The bottom line lessons, for me at least, are that people do care a great deal about helping Mother Nature and that environmental projects, even those that plow straight through an established residential neighborhood, can be both effective and attractive,” Bartges said.

For more information about the Community Stream Project, please view the slide presentation on the Henrico County Public Works web site: http://www.co.henrico.va.us/works/

CCE Welcomes New Steering Committee and Advisory Board Members

The CCE could not succeed without its Steering Committee and Advisory Board. This year, the CCE welcomes several new members (for a complete committee list, please visit http://engage.richmond.edu):

Ms. Jennifer Becker, Law ’07
Ms. Stephanie K. Li, Westhampton College ’08
Mr. Balu Chandrasekaran, Richmond College ’07
Dr. Lewis A. “Andy” Litteral, Associate Professor, Management
Mr. Dan Tatar, Asst. VP & Community Affairs Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
Dr. Malcom S. Hill, Associate Professor, Biology
Ms. Martha Rollins, President and CEO, Boaz & Ruth
Dr. Glyn Hughes, Director, Common Ground
Dr. John V. Moeser, Professor Emeritus, Urban Studies and Planning,
Dr. Lewis A. “Andy” Litteral, Associate Professor, Management
Ms. Andrea Willis, Westhampton College ’08
VCU; and Visiting Fellow, Center for Civic Engagement
brown bag discussions

9/8 Tip of the Iceberg: African American Settlement and Political Involvement in a Richmond Suburb
   Dr. Tom Shields, Jepson School of Leadership Studies and Director, Center for Leadership in Education

9/22 An Oasis in a Desert of Collapse: Pushkin 10 Continues the Struggle for Free Expression
   Evgeny Orlov, Director, the Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg, and Dr. Joseph Troncale, Modern Literatures & Cultures. Includes informal tour of the exhibition. Please note alternate location in the Emily Gardner Art History Classroom in the Modlin Fine Arts Building

9/29 The Paradox of Fair Trade
   Ben Blevins, Executive Director, Highland Support Project
   Co-sponsored by the University Chaplaincy

10/6 Finding Riches in a Nonprofit Career
   Dr. Jeffrey Spence, President, NCCJ Virginia; Jason Young, Executive Director, Community Futures Foundation; Kim Dean, former Director of Programs, Partnership for the Future

10/20 Class Matters: One Book, One Campus Discussion
   Moderated by Dr. Mavis Brown, Education

10/27 The State of the U.S. Health Care System
   Dr. Rick Mayes, Political Science

11/10 U.S. Border Politics in the 1950's: The Same As Now Only Backwards
   Dr. Cindy Hahamovitch, the College of William & Mary

11/17 What Matters to Me and Why
   Steve Bisese, Vice President for Student Development
   Co-sponsored by the University Chaplaincy

All discussions are held from 12:30 — 1:25 p.m. in the Think Tank

campus programs

9/11 Reflections: 5 Years Since 9/11—A Town Hall discussion
   7 p.m., the Moot Court Room, Law School
   Co-sponsored by A More Perfect Union, the University Chaplaincy, International Education, and the Law School

9/13 CCE and CCE-Quest Research Fellows Symposium
   7 p.m., the Think Tank

9/15 CCE Open House
   11 a.m.—2 p.m., the Think Tank

9/20 David D. Burhans Civic Fellows Symposium
   7 p.m., the Think Tank

10/5 From the Nightclub to the Kitchen: Life Choices and Social Change
   Robert Egger, President and Founder of the DC Central Kitchen
   7 p.m., the Alice Haynes Room
   Co-sponsored by the Richmond Quest, the Career Development Center, and the Jepson School of Leadership Studies

9/26 Poverty Simulation
   5:30—8:30 p.m., the Alice Haynes Room
   Co-sponsored by the Richmond Quest, the University Chaplaincy, and the Jepson School of Leadership Studies
   SIGNUP REQUIRED—please contact Jennifer Landis-Santos at jlandiss@richmond.edu to register