

2007-2008

ANNUAL
REPORT

Lehigh University
Community Service Office

Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily.

—Sally Koch

THE COM

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide students with readily accessible courses, rewards and benefits.

ABOUT US

The Lehigh University Center for Community Service was established in the fall of 1996 to provide a central location for faculty, and staff to coordinate and support community service activities in the Lehigh Valley area. Currently the Center focuses on providing opportunities that are always available and work with these agencies to meet the needs of the community.

Interested in making a difference? Contact us at inserve@lehigh.edu or visit our website: www.lehigh.edu/~inserve/

THE COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide students, faculty, and staff of Lehigh University a readily accessible doorway through which they can explore the rewards and benefits of providing service to the community.

ABOUT US

The Lehigh University Community Service Office was established in the fall of 1996 to provide a coordinated effort for students, faculty, and staff to engage in service to the greater Lehigh Valley area. Currently the office has contact with over 100 local agencies that are always looking for volunteers. In addition to our work with these agencies, we have our own major programs that aim to meet the needs of the South Bethlehem community.

Interested in making a difference in your community? Email us at inserve@lehigh.edu, call us at 610-758-4583, stop by the office, which is located upstairs in Ulrich Student Center, or check out our website: www.lehigh.edu/service

COMMUNITY SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Community voice is essential if we are to build bridges, make positive social change, and solve problems. Any initiative should make sure that the voice and the needs of the community are included and in the forefront.

This is the mantra of the passionate staff and dedicated volunteers that make the Community Service Office so successful.

For nearly seven years, I have had the honor of working in the CSO, inspired on a daily basis by the selfless efforts of our amazing student staff and volunteers. Even more touching and uplifting are the people we serve, people whose struggles in turn humble and move us into action.

I wish I could tell each and every one's story. The Community Service Office and its programs touch the lives of countless people in South Bethlehem and beyond. So as you read this year's Annual Report, just imagine the stories.

Please take a few minutes to be inspired by the difference being made. Then consider how much more there is to do and your role in getting it done. The community voice is speaking to all of us loud and clear - join us in action.

Yours in Service,
Carolina Hernandez

Those who bring sunshine
into the lives of others
cannot keep it from
themselves.

—James M. Barrie

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE PROGRAMS

SPOOKTACULAR

This fall the Community Service Office hosted over 300 children and their families for the sixth annual Spooktacular at the University Center. Spooktacular is a Halloween-themed event which includes many fun activities, decorations, and goodies. This year, activities included trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, a magic show, two haunted houses, multiple crafts, and a warm meal. The purpose of this program is to welcome South Bethlehem children and families onto campus in hopes that they will develop a connection to Lehigh University. Another goal is to provide a day of fun, safe, and free entertainment to the members of the community. This year was our biggest Spooktacular yet!

- 300 South Side children and their families attended
- 20 student groups and organizations helped run the days' events
- 100's of hours went into planning and preparation

WONDERFUL WORLD OF WOLF

Wonderful World of Wolf
The program is for elementary school children from South Bethlehem and Lehigh Valley. It is a celebration of warm weather and the fall season. Students who participated in sports and activities at Mountain Hawk. Let's give them a chance for local children to have fun in the snow.

LIVIN' LA VIDA LEHIGH

This year the Community Service Office brought local kids to campus to Lehigh, checked in with them throughout the day, and they went to Lower College Gym with members of the community who helped youth already in the program see that college is a possibility.

WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORTS

Wonderful World of Sports recently had its second year at Lehigh. The program is for elementary and middle school aged children in South Bethlehem and neighboring schools. The program was a celebration of warm weather after the long winter. Children participated in sports such as soccer, flag football, and kickball. Students were also able to take pictures with the Lehigh mascot, the Mountain Hawk. Lehigh's Wonderful World of Sports is another chance for local children to get onto campus with college students and have fun in the sun.

LIVIN' LA VIDA LEHIGH

This year the Community Service Office held the third annual Livin' La Vida Lehigh, a program for middle school children. This program brings local kids to campus in order to experience a day in the life of a Lehigh student. On the day of the event, middle school students came to Lehigh, checked in, and got their "books" from the bookstore. Throughout the day, they attended classes, ate at Rathbone Dining Hall, went to Lower Centennials residence hall, and visited Taylor Gym with members of the C.O.A.C.H. program. We hope this program helped youth already connected to Lehigh through our other programs see that college is a feasible option for their future.

SPRING FLING

This year was Lehigh's seventh annual Spring Fling, a student-run event for the families and children of South Bethlehem. This year, we were excited to present activities for all ages, and we encouraged children to attend with their parents and siblings. The purpose of Spring Fling is to provide a positive atmosphere in which local Bethlehem families can positively interact with the Lehigh community. Our aim is to have fun with, and inspire local children, many of whom have never considered attending college. During Spring Fling, children were able to participate in an egg hunt or scavenger hunt, make crafts, play games, walk through a live story board, and enjoy a hot lunch while their parents enjoyed a raffle and a cooking class. All of these activities were offered free of charge.

**No one is useless in this world who lightens
the burden of it for someone else.**

—Benjamin Franklin

AMERICA READS/AMERICA COUNTS

In our tenth year of helping South Bethlehem children through this national incentive, Lehigh tutors have thus far served over 6,765 hours of math, reading, and homework help in local schools and after school homework clubs.

- 95 Lehigh tutors volunteered on a weekly basis
- 200 children were served at 4 homework clubs and 4 local schools
- Members from 6 Greek houses volunteered weekly
- 600 dinners were cooked and served to students by Reformed University Fellowship
- 5 Incentive Program trips were offered to students, including a trip to Chuck E. Cheese, apple picking, and to a Harlem Globe-trotters game

VITA TAX PROGRAM

The VITA Tax program is an opportunity for Lehigh students to help low-income families of the Lehigh Valley save much-needed money by having their tax returns completed free of charge. This year, 55 Lehigh student volunteers were officially certified by the IRS to complete tax returns – a growth of almost 400% from last year. By actively helping these families, volunteers see the effects of their service right away - in the relieved face of a less-burdened taxpayer.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Experience is an optional three day pre-orientation program for incoming first-year students. Participants jumped right into service at Lehigh by participating in one of our exciting service trips which ranged from working with children at CitySpace, to removing invasive plant species at Jacobsburg State Park, to building and remodeling houses with Habitat for Humanity. Two to three outstanding upperclassmen served as group leaders for each trip of about twelve first-year students, helping to ease their transition to college life. Last August, 46 first-year students made new friends, moved into their dorms, and made a meaningful impact on the community before the rest of their peers had even arrived.

FEEL GOOD FRIDAYS

Almost every week, the Community Service Office holds Feel Good Fridays, which are two-hour long service opportunities to kick off the weekend. The service projects vary depending on the community's needs. Past events have included volunteering at the SBNC holiday store, prepping for upcoming CSO events, and serving at local agencies such as Volunteers of America, CitySpace, and senior centers.

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Parents' Night Out, a give their parents a night where they were paired up with high school students, each month's prize were Super Hero Slurpees and a movie. Other activities included hall games to match their parents' interests. This year, participation was widely fluctuated this year for their first Parents' Night Out volunteer.

BLOOD DRIVES

This year, the Community Service Office sponsored several organizations. We sponsored blood drives, which allowed students to donate blood in one day. We also sponsored the Lafayette Spirit Week vs. Lafayette Spirit Week. The Athletics Department is proud by donating, making brown and white? If you are interested in Lehigh blood drives!

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Parents' Night Out, a monthly program to bring kids onto campus and give their parents a night off, continued to grow this year! Each child was paired up with his/her own Lehigh buddy for the night. This year, each month's program was planned around a theme. The themes were Super Hero Slumber Party, Island Dreams, Mardi Gras, and Rewind. Other activities included food crafts, scavenger hunts and hall games to match the theme of the night. The number of children widely fluctuated this year from 28-57! Many volunteers who signed up for their first Parents' Night Out returned every month to volunteer.

BLOOD DRIVES

This year, the Community Service Office hosted four blood drives, which were sponsored by a variety of student clubs and campus organizations. We were thrilled with the great donor turn out at the drives, which allowed us to finally reach our goal of more than 100 donations in one day. This was also the inaugural year of the Lehigh vs. Lafayette Spirit Week Blood drive, which was co-sponsored by the Athletics Department. Students were encouraged to show their Lehigh pride by donating, motivated by the catchphrase "Do you BLEED brown and white?" It was an exciting year of growth and progress for Lehigh blood drives!

SENIOR CENTER VISITS

The CSO has visited numerous local senior centers: Cedarbrook Nursing Home, Westminster Village, YWCA Bethlehem Adult Day Center, and the Senior Centers of Bethlehem. This year, Lehigh volunteers participated in bingo, card and board games, birthday parties, nail painting, luncheons, and a dog show at senior centers. The CSO regularly visited Westminster Village, a wonderful agency that provides independent and assisted living to seniors. We hope these visits created memories and a bond between students and the residents. [Memory: During karaoke one day, a lady asked why the cookie she ate was so hard. It turns out she had taken a dog biscuit from her neighbor's purse and well, you can figure out the rest! Everyone, especially the owner of the biscuit had a great laugh that day.]

SOUP KITCHENS

Once a week, the Community Service Office provided the opportunity for students to volunteer locally by preparing dinner for members of the local community. We alternated serving dinner at a men's homeless shelter, and a nearby Boys and Girls Club. After dinner, volunteers especially enjoyed the chance to play games with the kids. These trips allowed groups of students to help the community in a meaningful way and provided a much-needed service in the area.

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Up to his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.
~Emily Dickinson

springSERVE

Each spring Lehigh students have the opportunity to participate in a memorable and unique experience by providing service to communities in need throughout the nation in a week-long SERVE trip. springSERVE provided Alternative Spring Break options to students who wished to dedicate their time doing service while being educated on prevalent social issues. This Spring Break volunteers traveled to four locations across the country. The first went to Cincinnati, Ohio to work with the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless and learned about homelessness local and national poverty issues by helping local soup kitchens and housing agencies. The second went to LaFollette, Tennessee and worked with the Cumberland Trail Conference to help preserve and expand the Cumberland trail in the Smokey Mountains area. The third flew to Orlando, Florida and worked at the Give Kids the World village; they helped to provide a fun experience for the children and families staying there as a wish granted by the Make-a-Wish Foundation. The last trip teamed with the Multicultural Affairs Office to travel to Atlanta, Georgia on a civil rights themed trip aimed at revitalizing the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr. They worked with local agencies providing any means of service to those who needed it. Each participant volunteered about 40 hours.

ADDITIONAL SERVE

What began as an annual quarterly service opportunity is now proud to offer DC SERVE to springSERVE!

-**summerSERVE:** Last year, a member ventured half-way across the country to the Lakota tribe in Dakota. They ran a BINGO night for the Lakota Achievers meeting and donated many educational supplies to the children through the program. They also made their own mini-documentary.

-**DC SERVE:** During the past year, members traveled to the metro area to assist with the shelters, soup kitchen, and other needs during the holiday season. Students donated supplies and time.

-**winterSERVE:** This past year, a member made the long drive to assist with the efforts to help the residents rebuild after the storm. They assisted with needs ranging from

ADDITIONAL SERVE TRIPS

What began as an annual Spring Break service trip has expanded into quarterly service opportunities. The Community Service Office was proud to offer DCServe, winterSERVE, and summerSERVE in addition to springSERVE!

-**summerSERVE:** Last May, nine Lehigh students and one faculty advisor ventured half-way across the country to work with members of the Lakota tribe in Dupree, South Dakota for a week. Volunteers led a Lakota Achievers meeting, sorted for a rummage sale, built horseshoe pits, ran a BINGO night for the elders on the reservation, and had many educational experiences themselves. Volunteers also led children through the movie-making process and helped them to make their own mini-documentaries.

-**DC SERVE:** During Pacing Break, a group of five Lehigh students traveled to the metropolitan DC area to volunteer at local homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and community agencies. Over the four-day period, students donated more than 100 hours of service.

-**winterSERVE:** This past winter a group of seven students and one staff member made the long and windy drive to Waveland, Mississippi to assist with the efforts of Katrina Relief, an agency dedicated to helping residents rebuild after the hurricane. Students met a variety of needs ranging from demolition to construction.

EDUCATIONAL SIMULATIONS

When performing community service, it is essential to truly understand the community being served. The Community Service Office has designed three educational simulations, each focused on a different way to open minds and to develop a greater understanding of the surrounding community. Seventeen trained facilitators led over 100 Lehigh students, faculty, and staff through the simulations. The first, “Eyes Wide Open,” gives participants a chance to take on the identity of a South Side resident and work out a budget based on a typical income. They are then presented with the challenging goal to acquire affordable, long-term housing. The second, “Perception vs. Reality,” presents information about the local districts within Bethlehem in an attempt to bust myths about local population, income level, and percentage of people at or below poverty level. The third simulation is an exercise on perspective from the different levels of socioeconomic status. The first step in “On the Flip Side” is to evaluate stability on many different levels (financial, emotional, health, etc). The second step is to reveal and understand the unspoken social norms correlated to a lifestyle in a given socioeconomic class. All three simulations are concluded with a reflection and discussion and have proven to be meaningful and impacting.

SERVICE ROUNDTABLES

Many groups on Lehigh's campus are excited to serve the community both locally and beyond. With so many resources available, it is important that we are educated to best meet the needs of the community we are serving. In an effort to coordinate these services and assure that we are providing them in the most helpful and effective manner, we developed Service Roundtables last year to provide an open forum for student leaders to collaborate on their community service efforts. This year those efforts continued and we offered five roundtables, each focusing on a different educational component. Attendees shared their own experiences and interests, collaborated on programs and activities with other groups, and learned about and discussed the community's needs. By learning more about the community and being further informed about its needs, we will be able to better serve our South Side neighbors together. In total, thirty-four campus groups and organizations were represented and 125 people attended.

**Without a sense of caring,
there can be no sense of community.
- Anthony D'Angelo**

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK

This year, Random Acts of Kindness Week focused on spreading kindness to several hardworking groups on campus. Homemade delicious cookies were personally delivered to several OneSource offices, all dining hall staff members, and EMS personnel. In addition, lollipops were delivered to various people in South Bethlehem, including the volunteer firefighters and the pediatrics ward of St. Luke's Hospital. These small gestures were meant to show hardworking individuals that their efforts do not go unappreciated, as well as to remind Lehigh's community and the community beyond how important acts of kindness can be.

HOLIDAY HOPE CHESTS

Holiday Hope Chests have been collected at Lehigh for several years. Generous students, faculty, and staff purchase gifts to fill shoe boxes to give to underprivileged children during the holiday season. Holiday Hope Chests are a national project, sponsored locally by the Volunteer Center of Lehigh Valley, Moravian College, and Northampton Community College. The donations that members of the Lehigh community contributed went directly to the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center and Northeast Ministries. This year, we nearly doubled our goal and collected about 150 stuffed shoe boxes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

After the first day of middle school students, their lack of adequate University students, winter coats for middle school students were collected. School and Northeast

firstSERVE

During first-year students, UC front lawn to kick helping pack over backpacks were donated distributed amongst their own. The campus Ministries, a local neighborhood assistance to Bethlehem

You can't live a

MIDDLE SCHOOL COAT DRIVE

After the first day of wintry weather in fall 2007 kept many local middle school students from attending a CSO program because of their lack of adequate winter attire, the CSO implored Lehigh University students, faculty, and staff to donate new or gently used winter coats for middle school students. In just two weeks, over 100 coats were collected, sorted, and distributed to both Broughal Middle School and Northeast Middle School.

firstSERVE

During first-year student orientation, over 100 students came to the UC front lawn to kick off their Lehigh experience on the right foot - helping pack over 700 backpacks and 100 care packages. The backpacks were donated to local elementary school in order to be distributed amongst children who did not have school supplies of their own. The care packages were donated to New Bethany Ministries, a local non-profit agency that provides food and housing assistance to Bethlehem residents.

MOVE OUT COLLECTION DRIVE

As the academic year comes to a close, it can only mean one thing: Move Out Collection Drive is happening once again! While students are packing up and leaving Lehigh for the summer, the Community Service Office encourages students to donate items that would otherwise be thrown away. All of the donations are picked up, sorted and sold at the Great South Side Sale, with proceeds benefiting the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center. Last year, two 24 foot trucks were jam-packed with goods that were sold in the community at minimal prices and over a ton of food was salvaged, filling up our local food banks. The Move Out Collection Drive was able to raise over \$7,000 last year to benefit the children and youth of South Bethlehem. Since its inception, over \$40,000 have been raised through this socially and environmentally minded program.

You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you.

—John Wooden

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

This year marked Lehigh's second annual Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. The aim of the week was to educate the Lehigh community about the harsh realities of life for the hungry and homeless. A number of educational events took place throughout the week, all of which were open to the Lehigh community.

-The National Coalition for the Homeless brought in a panel of former homeless individuals who spoke about their experiences. The panelists spoke about how they became homeless, and the difficulties they experienced living on the streets.

-A Sleep-Out was held on the University Center front lawn. This event was meant to provide a tangible experience of what it is like to spend a night in the shoes of a homeless individual. This event involved a discussion about homelessness, a message from a local shelter worker, and concluded with a candlelight vigil.

-The week's final event was a Hunger Banquet, which was intended to illustrate the alarmingly unequal distribution of food in the world. In addition, participants were given an identity of an individual living in poverty, and were instructed to budget their income. This was a struggle for many of the students, who did not foresee how difficult it would be to make ends meet, even working full time.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DAY OF SERVICE

Looking to unite students, faculty, and staff from the College of Education in an initiative to serve the larger community, members from the COE Diversity Committee, along with CSO staff organized a COE Day of Service for both the fall and spring semesters. After taking part in an educational simulation, participants ventured down from Mountaintop into the Lehigh Valley to serve at a local soup kitchen, senior center, children's center, homeless shelter, and human services agency.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

In order to raise students' awareness about the growing AIDS epidemic, the Community Service Office and the Office of Student Activities conducted a simulation using red bracelets to represent the spread of the disease. An "infected" individual was given a red bracelet to wear for the week, along with ten other bracelets to give to others to "infect" them with the virus. Along with the bracelets came a piece of paper listing various facts about AIDS. As the number of "infected" people grew, so did the curiosity about the red bracelets, and people began talking about AIDS, spreading awareness. By the end of the week, the number of students wearing red bracelets reached 1,200. This was a great way to educate the Lehigh community about a global problem.

HABITAT FOR HUM

The Community Service Office Habitat for Humanity volunteers worked with Valley Habitat. Each set out for a construction project. Students enjoyed putting up walls and students really enjoyed that they were able to see their work would have



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The Community Service Office sponsored Saturday build days with Habitat for Humanity every other weekend this year. Student volunteers worked with both Warren County Habitat and Lehigh Valley Habitat. Each Saturday, five students and one student leader set out for a construction site to hammer, dig, paint, saw, etc. The students enjoyed participating in the real work of building a house by putting up walls and hammering roof boards in place. Lehigh students really enjoyed working with Habitat for Humanity because they were able to see the physical changes in the house, and feel like their work would have a lasting impact.

LIVE.LEARN.SERVE

Live.Learn.Serve. is one of the CSO's newest projects. This year, a community of first-year students dedicated themselves to learning about the local community and its' needs. These students lived together in a co-ed hall located in the Lower Centennial dorms. The hall also had a Gryphon who was dedicated to service and was knowledgeable about the greater Bethlehem community. The students spent the fall semester exploring the community and taking part in a number of various service projects; they got to know South Bethlehem and the array of services that are already being provided. The students then spent the spring semester designing their own service project based on the needs of the community. They designed and carried out weekly activities for children at one of the America Reads/ America Counts homework clubs.

He who wishes to secure the good of others
has already secured his own.

—Confucius

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE 2007~2008 SCHOOL YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **60** participants traveled **105,496** miles and volunteered **2,400** hours on **7** different SERVE trips.
- During **22** visits to local soup kitchens **792** meals were served with **\$1,322.29** worth of food.
- **951** South Bethlehem children participated in at least one program offered by the Community Service Office this year, which is a **110% increase over last year**.
- **102** students, trained and certified by the Internal Revenue Service, spent **320** hours assisting South Bethlehem residents file tax returns, saving our community **\$13,560** in accounting fees.
- Lehigh volunteers had the opportunity to reach out to the community through **124** programs offered by the office.
- Through the annual Move Out Collection Drive, students contributed over **one ton** of food, and donated enough items to fill **two 24 foot** trucks.
- **210** students spent an intensive week in March learning about the issues facing the hungry and homeless.
- As a whole, the Lehigh community served more than **50,000** hours throughout the year. This equates to a donation of **\$938,500** worth of service as determined by the Independent Sector.

The Community Service Office would like to thank Lehigh's outstanding volunteers, without whom none of our projects would be possible.

Thank You!

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I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.
—Albert Schweitzer

Community Service Office

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