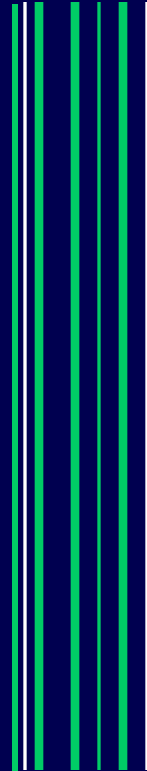


2008-2009

ANNUAL
REPORT



Lehigh University
Community Service Office

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not.”

~ Dr. Seuss

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 610-758-6674, stop by the office, which is located in Ulrich Student Center, or check out our website: www.lehigh.edu/service

COMMUNITY SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reflection is a crucial part of community service, which allows volunteers to look back on, think critically about, and learn from their service experience.

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

Without thoughtful reflection, meaningful service is incomplete. Since learning happens through a mix of theory and practice, thought and action, observation and interaction—we have included in this year's annual report reflections from students.

It is through their own words that one learns the impact of service in their lives. Each moment spent volunteering, was a moment spent learning and growing.

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

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE PROGRAMS

SPOOKTACULAR

Spooktacular is a Halloween themed program that welcomes South Bethlehem children and families onto campus for a day of fun. The events include pumpkin carving, face painting, trick-or-treating around the residence halls, a haunted house, crafts, and so much more. Our hope is that these younger children will remember the fun experiences they had at Lehigh and think of a college education as a possibility in their future.

"I will never forget at this year's Spooktacular seeing a little baby dressed up as Yoda from Star Wars. He was the cutest thing as he was awestruck watching the magician perform various card tricks. At the end of the day, as he was about to leave, his parents came over to me to thank me for making the day possible, and I realized what the day was all about, the kids and their families."

- Marc Palmer, Class of 2010

EDUCATIONAL SIMULATIONS

Educational simulations are designed to provide participants with the opportunity to understand the housing and demographic situations in the Lehigh Valley and beyond. There are three different simulations run by the Community Service Office. The first, "Eyes Wide Open" places students in the shoes of South Bethlehem residents, as they try to secure long term housing while combating real life complications. The second, "Perception vs. Reality" helps to dispel misconceptions about the local population, income levels, and the percent of people living at or below the poverty line. "On the Flip Side" allows participants to define poverty and its effects, and also clarifies the hidden rules among economic classes. All three simulations conclude with a reflection and discussion and have proven to be meaningful and impacting.

FOOD DRIVE

Upon visiting the food bank at the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center and noticing its empty shelves and freezers, the Community Service Office mobilized and organized one of the largest canned food drives on campus to date. Working in collaboration with the Junior Interfraternity Council, Sodexo, Athletics and Junior Panhellenic a donation of over 3 tons of food filled not just the pantry, but the basement of Center!

LIVIN' LA VIDA LEHIGH

Living La Vida Lehigh is a great opportunity for local middle school students to spend a day at Lehigh and experience a day in the life of a Lehigh student. Participants experience going to the Book Store to get textbooks, going to classes, eating at Rathbone, and a tour of Taylor Gym. The program hopes to introduce middle-schoolers to a college campus and let them know that college is a viable option.

"After the program ended, some of the girls stayed longer so I could finish decorating the Lehigh t-shirts they designed. One of the girls told me how hard she was working in school to get good grades so she could go to college. It turns out that she is in high school, but because she had such a great time at the program before, she came back. I was really happy to know that this program made a difference."

-Stephanie Lin, Class of 2012

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY

This year, February 18th was designated Random Acts of Kindness Day. Cookies, lollipops and cards were distributed widely across campus with the hope of inspiring people to practice kindness and to "pass it on" to others. You never know when holding a door, calling a friend, or giving someone a ride up the hill can really bring a smile to his/her face.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Experience is an optional three day pre-orientation program for incoming first year students. Participants start their college careers by joining one of four service trips, while getting to know Lehigh's campus and the Bethlehem community. These service trips range from City Space and Volunteers of America where students interact with younger children, to South Side Serve where students volunteer in a different service opportunity each day, to Jacobsburg where participants work outdoors at the state park. Through this program, 43 first year students made new friends, moved into their residence halls, and made a meaningful impact on the community before the academic year even began.

VICTORY HOUSE

Each week, the Community Service Office leads a group of volunteers to Victory House, a men's shelter in South Bethlehem. Students plan a menu and prepare dinner for approximately 30 homeless men. In our current economic situation, this program enables a group of students to help the community in a meaningful way by providing resources and support when both are in short supply.

WONDERFUL WORLD OF SPORTS

This year marked Lehigh's third annual Wonderful World of Sports - a program which invites Bethlehem children to campus to play sports, meet student athlete role models, and hang out with Clutch the Mountain Hawk.

"It had come to the moment where the college athletes took on the children in a fierce battle of tug of war. While there were over fifty children, the Community Service Office managed to recruit over 25 student athletes in addition to their own staff. We lined up and the kids won the first game. As we went back into the huddle, the college athletes said 'OK lets *actually* try to pull on this one...we already let them win first so now we can actually pull.' I watched over 30 athletes and CSO staff members pull as hard as they could and still lose. And the look on their faces was sheer amazement. We are holding tug of war tryouts for our volunteers this year!"

- Ashley Pritchard, Class of 2009

SPRING FLING

Spring Fling is the Community Service Office's annual carnival that brings Lehigh students in contact with Bethlehem families to promote integration and provide South Side families with cost-free food, crafts, and entertainment for the day.

Elephants were chosen as this year's theme because they represent individuality. The theme was carried throughout the program in a variety of activities including elephant masks and puppets and the storyboard of David McKee's "Elmer."

Some of our favorite memories from this year include: watching the kids rush through the pink tape and start grabbing Easter eggs in a colorful, frenzied mess after they thought President Gast had said "Go!," watching volunteers sneak hot dogs by shoving the entire thing in their mouths, and the memories of the staff creating the storyboard and the enjoyment the kids got out of it.

"The office taught me how to evaluate the needs of the community and the best way to address those needs."

~ John Lalomio '10

AMERICA READS/AMERICA COUNTS

In our eleventh year of helping South Bethlehem children through this national initiative, Lehigh tutors have shown their love and dedication to these students. These tutors provide hours of math, reading, and homework help in local schools and after school homework clubs.

- 85 Lehigh tutors volunteered on a weekly basis
- 200 children were served at 4 homework clubs and 2 local schools
- Members from 6 Greek houses volunteered weekly
- 600 dinners were cooked and served to students by Reformed University Fellowship

“After a student stroked her hand through a tutor's hair, she remarks very matter-of-factly ‘Your hair is very competitive.’ The tutor wasn't sure how to react to that one, so she asks the student if she knows what the word ‘competitive’ means. The student smiles and blushes ‘No...’. After the tutor explained to the student what ‘competitive’ meant, the student started laughing at herself, realizing how ridiculous it was to use a word she didn't understand.”

- Eleanor Duffy, Class of 2009

VITA TAX PROGRAM

The VITA Tax Program is a collaborative effort between Lehigh and the community to provide low-income taxpayers with free tax return preparation. This service, especially in our current dire economic situation, brings continued value and support to those who need it most.

“At my first VITA volunteer experience, I was fortunate enough to look across the table at a taxpayer, and tell her that she would be receiving a substantial refund this year. She responded, ‘Thank you so much. Now I can afford to turn my heat back on.’ I knew right then and there that this program was the real deal.”

- Marty Gennusa, Class of 2009

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Parents' Night Out (PNO) is a monthly themed event that brings children from our four Homework Clubs to campus for an evening of food, games, and fun, complete with their very own Lehigh buddy.

“I get my own pizza?” –By providing hot, nutritious meals for the children who attend PNO, we are able to reduce strain on family's tight grocery budgets.

“Miss! What's the theme next month?!” –Many children come to PNO each month and enjoy themes such as “A Day at the Zoo,” “Fiesta Friday,” and “Summer Block Party.”

“I have learned that service is not something that you just do, it is a feeling and a way of life.

During my time in the office, I learned to become much more aware of the specifics necessary in each different community. It is not enough to give your time and money.

There needs to be a purpose and need behind these actions.

It is easy to misunderstand what true service is because it is not always easy and it doesn't always make you ‘feel like a good person.’ It is hard and frustrating and demanding and the harder it is the more worthwhile the outcome.”

~ Alexandra Mulrow '09

SENIOR CENTER VISITS

Last year, groups of three to five Lehigh students made monthly visits to Westminster Village, a local nursing home, to play games and spend time with the residents.

"Guess how old I am," she asked. "70," I said. Her response: "95!"

“She didn't need the aid of a walker and her mind was probably sharper than my own. Another man loves to read poems for the group. There are a couple guys that still try to schmooze the ladies, and women who sit laughing in their little circles. Life at Westminster is a happy one at times, but at other times there are tears for what used to be and no longer is. Every moment spent with our elders is a meaningful one for us, and for them.” -Lisa Kobayashi, Class of 2008

BLOOD DRIVES

Four blood drives are held each school year- two in the fall semester and two in the spring semester. Blood is donated to the Miller-Keystone Blood Center which helps supply local hospitals. This past September, the Miller-Keystone Blood Center went through a blood shortage in which they actually extended the blood center's hours due to a desperate need of blood. After publicizing the shortage to campus, the blood drive hosted by Lehigh the following week, was the most successful of the year, yielding 128 units of blood.

springSERVE

The SERVE program provides an incredible opportunity for students to immerse themselves in different communities outside of Bethlehem for one week to learn about a variety of social issues. Students learn more about themselves, develop leadership skills, meet fellow students who may come from different social networks at Lehigh and also be able to identify the part that they play within their community.

-Habitat for Humanity (Bluffton, SC): Students learned a variety of home construction skills and also about the issue of affordable housing in an area near to the popular vacation site, Hilton Head.

-One Heartland: Students drove 20 hours northwest to Willow River, Minnesota and worked with a nonprofit organization that provides education and summer programs for children impacted by HIV/AIDS. Volunteers learned a great deal about childhood HIV/AIDS and prepared One Heartland for their summer camps.

-Friends of Land Between the Lakes: One trip went to Golden Pond, Kentucky to work with an organization devoted to assisting in education, improvement and conservation of forest services in Kentucky. Students learned about the environment and ways to protect it and in addition, worked hard to help clean up local areas heavily affected by the recent ice storm that hit that location.

-Once Upon a Time in Appalachia: The last trip ventured to Maryville, Tennessee to work with an organization seeking to raise awareness and provide assistance to the local Snowbird Cherokee Native American Community. Students did a variety of service activities including trail maintenance and interacting with senior citizens while learning a great deal about the history and culture of the Cherokee.

Each participant volunteered approximately 40 hours.

ADDITIONAL SERVE TRIPS

What began as an annual Spring Break service trip has expanded into quarterly service opportunities.

-pacingbreakSERVE: During Pacing Break, a group of six Lehigh students traveled to the metropolitan DC area to work with KidPowerDC to interact and learn about children/youth in the DC. They also worked with MetroTeenAIDS to learn about HIV/AIDS in a city whose percent infected is one of the highest in the US. Over the four-day period, students donated more than 100 hours of service.

-winterSERVE: This past winter a group students made a return to the Gulf Coast area to Biloxi, Mississippi working with the local Habitat for Humanity chapter to continue assistance with the efforts of Katrina Relief. Students met a variety of needs ranging from demolition to construction.

HOLIDAY HOPE CHESTS

A Holiday Hope Chest is a shoe box filled and then wrapped with tender loving care for the underprivileged children of our community during the holiday season.

With the struggling economy, donations were more precious than ever last year. We were far from meeting our goal and made a final plea to the students, staff, and faculty of the Lehigh community. One particular response was very touching, thanking us when it was her help we were soliciting. In the end, it took several trips to unload all the presents into the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center to be distributed. Last year over 90 boxes were collected, which meant 90 families were able to have presents for the holidays.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COAT DRIVE

When the cold weather began this year, we noticed children were attending homework clubs without winter coats. The Community Service Office hosted a campus wide winter coat drive for elementary-school aged children. The coats were then donated to Donegan and Fountain Hill Elementary Schools.

“When I was younger I struggled mightily with the question: how can one person make a difference in such a giant world, a world with so many needs? I still struggle with the question from time to time, but what I have come to realize is that one person’s service is an act of infinite possibilities. It’s not about him or her, but about inspiring others to give of themselves. What I have come to realize is that one person’s service is not limited to their physical works; it instead follows the old adage of “paying it forward”, hoping that your act of giving will inspire others to do the same. Through this understanding I have come to realize that one person can, in fact, make a very considerable difference.”

~ Marty Gennusa ‘09

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -Ghandi

Over the culmination of my four years working in the Community Service Office I absolutely lost myself in service: be it girdling trees at Jacobsburg State Park, serving meals to the men at Victory House every week, scooping ice cream for terminally ill children at Give Kids the World, working with the homeless community to raise awareness, or playing tug-of-war with our kids from homework club. And through all of this service, I found myself. I learned about my goals, my aspirations, my ambitions. I learned about my leadership style, my passions and myself. I learned that while I may have "lost" myself in service - I always belonged right where I started and never plan to leave!

~ Ashley Pritchard, '09

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 children and youth programs at 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 \$7,265 last year to benefit the children and youth of South Bethlehem.

"One of the kids from the neighborhood came up to me with a huge smile and said 'Miss, I have 5 whole dollars. I'm going to buy everyone in my family something.' I was a little nervous as I saw him enter the massive tent, filled with hundreds of people. A little while later, he came back and said 'I think I got it!' And he did. With five dollars, he was able to buy a gift for his mom, abuela, sister and even himself! This is what the program is about, providing affordable goods to the community."

-Brittany Powers, Class of 2009

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

A week in November was dedicated to Hunger and Homelessness Awareness. In its third year there were numerous ways in which the campus community was engaged: a FACES panel which brought homeless individuals to campus to share their experiences, a Sleep Out at which over thirty students slept outside on the Front Lawn, and a Hunger Banquet which displayed the inequality of food distribution globally. Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week was awarded Lehigh's first Outstanding Educational Programming Award and continues to provide educational opportunities around campus.

FEEL GOOD FRIDAYS

Feel Good Friday is an event that happens almost every Friday in which students go to local agencies or work on projects in the community. It is a fabulous way to end the week while doing something good for the community.

"After a long week of work and school, who doesn't want to take some time out to go play with children in a local daycare center or go to the local nursing home?"

- Stephen Kuschman, Class of 2012

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DAY OF SERVICE

Looking to unite students, faculty, and staff from the College of Education (COE) 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. Participants ventured down from Mountaintop into the Lehigh Valley to serve at Volunteers of America in Allentown, New Bethany Ministries, and the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The Community Service Office sponsored Saturday build days with the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate this year. With a new building development in progress, Lehigh students were able to assist with various projects during each trip.

"Working with Habitat is definitely a rewarding experience, because each time you go you are able to add a part to a home that a needy family will eventually live in. Sometimes volunteers are lucky enough to work alongside the owners of the house, and are able to talk to them about their experiences. The owners are always appreciative and it is a great feeling to help them out."

- John Lalomio, Class of 2010

LIVE.LEARN.SERVE

Live.Learn.Serve. is one of the CSO's expanding projects. This year, a group of over twenty first-year students dedicated themselves to learning about the local community and its' needs. These students lived together in a co-ed floor located in the Lower Centennial hall. A Gryphon who was dedicated to service and was knowledgeable about the greater Bethlehem community facilitated this experience for the group. Students spent the fall semester exploring the community and taking part in a number of various service projects, then spent the spring semester designing their own service projects based in four areas: environmental, Habitat for Humanity, youth issues, and senior citizens.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SERVICE WEEK

For three days during the week of MLK Jr. Day, Lehigh students visited the children at homework clubs throughout South Bethlehem to reflect on the impact that Martin Luther King Jr. had on this nation. They were then given the opportunity to express their own dreams, which were compiled into a quilt.

I have a dream...

“that there is no more war.”

“to be a police officer.”

“to rule the world.

“that my family will have money.”

“for a better playground.”

“In the course of four years, I've learned a lot about what service isn't. It's not about you.
It's not easy. It's not something you do in your spare time.

Instead, service is about every single person except yourself. It must be learned and pursued with
an unrelenting hunger. Service is a way of life that manifests itself
in every thought, word, and action.”

~ Lisa Regan '09

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR AT A GLANCE

- **52** participants traveled **88,668** miles and volunteered **2,000** hours on **6** different SERVE trips.
- **43** first year students volunteered over **1,247** hours at **4** different agencies in the Lehigh Valley before the start of the academic year.
- **1,040** South Bethlehem children participated in at least one program offered by the Community Service Office this year.
- During **16** visits to local soup kitchens **480** meals were served with **\$640**.
- Lehigh volunteers had the opportunity to reach out to the community through **107** programs offered by the office.
- Over **5** tons of food donations were coordinated by the Community Service Office.
- **2,000** plastic eggs were stuffed in preparation for Spring Fling.
- Lehigh students spent **6,134** hours tutoring South Bethlehem children through the America Reads / America Counts program in **26** classrooms and **4** homework clubs.

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

Thank You!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carolina A. Hernandez
Director of Community Service

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Graduate Assistant

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Administrative Coordinator

“There is something much deeper behind the difficulties of this world than what appears at first glance. It is not one person’s fault, nor should it be one person’s problem. Life can be harsh and sometimes no matter how hard you push forward, a strong wind pushes back even harder. But when a community is interwoven, they can form a foundation to withstand that storm. Service is not a heroic action by a “server,” since, as a community all volunteer work is reciprocated with experience, friendship, and love, a gift that is worth much more than a couple hours of labor. Solutions for life’s difficulties will flow naturally and needs can be met most effectively when one understands and develops friendships with the people around them.”

~Lisa Kobayashi ‘08

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