

# News From the Center

*A publication of the Service Learning Center at Glendale Community College*

## Highlighted Articles

- Service Days provide opportunity to give and to learn...see page 4 for the October event.
- Partner Agency Orientations return to GCC...see page 3 for dates and times and to sign up.
- Almansor Center site visit highlights the agency's incredible programs

News From the Center is published 3 times per year in the Fall, Spring, and Summer and special issues covering specific topics in service learning, volunteerism, and community service. If any faculty, student, or community partners wish to write an article for the newsletter, please contact Hoover Zariani at the Service Learning Center.

## Students Helping Students

By Hoover Zariani

The Students Helping Students (SHS) is a new partnership mentoring program with Hoover High School that began as a grant proposal written for Youth Service America. Although originally crafted as a grant proposal, the ideas contained within the proposal gained the interest of Hoover High's staff and administration and plans are being made to proceed with the program at a smaller scale regardless of grant funding.

SHS is modeled after the Students Talk About Race (STAR) program. Teams of GCC students will be placed in high school classrooms for 10 weeks to deliver activities designed to strengthen leadership skills, develop interpersonal skills, model citizenship skills, and to encourage students' pursuit of higher education. The project also includes a one day college visit similar to our current Shadow Day activities.

Since the proposal was designed as a youth-oriented grant, it will involve youth in every step of the process. For grant purposes, youth are defined as 17-20 year old students here at GCC.

Approximately 10 currently enrolled GCC students are being recruited to make sure their voice is heard. These 10 students will serve as Commissioners who will oversee the creation of the program activities over the spring 2009 semester.

Once Commissioner input has been completed, the program will be implemented in the fall 2009 semester at Hoover High School. The time commitment for these positions is between 3 to 5 hours per month.

GCC will be notified of the grant funding in early January. The SLC is excited about this partnership and looks forward to working with the Commissioners and Hoover High staff to make the project a reality.

**Students interested in serving as Commissioners should contact Hoover Zariani, Director of the Service Learning Center, by phone at 818.240.1000, ext. 5789, by email at [hzariani@glendale.edu](mailto:hzariani@glendale.edu) or simply drop by SM 267.**

## Dedicated to Giving

By Matthew Verstraete

Jorge Acevedo is a man with an incredible story. In 1999, Jorge was a student and an aspiring police officer. His life was going great and his career on track. However, late on Christmas night he was car jacked, shot, and left for dead. He was taken to the hospital and put on life support because he was in a coma.

Jorge eventually awoke from his coma; however, the incident had cost him the full use of his legs. After four months of rehabilitation Jorge went back to school. Before his incident he was enrolled at CSUN but he returned to school at GCC. Upon his return, Jorge created the club Delta Sigma Omicron as a place for persons with disabilities to come together and feel secure.

Jorge has also formed a soccer team for persons in wheelchairs called the Roughriders. The Roughriders had their first game on November 4. Excited about how the game went, Jorge is now trying to establish the team into a league. To this he adds, "I believe in showing my best ability and not letting my disability be a crutch."

In addition to his volunteer work on campus, Jorge also volunteers at the Glendale Police Department and averages about 27 hours a week. Jorge is a criminal justice major and says he "loves every aspect of criminal justice system."

He has donated so much of his time to volunteering and helping others that the mayor of Los Angeles has appointed him to the Disabled Access Commission. The Commission deals with legal issues pertaining to persons with disabilities in regards to transportation and accessibility. Jorge is still interested in a career in criminal justice and is not letting his disability stop him.

He also believes that public service is one of the most important aspects of social life. He stresses that "everyone should give time in their lives to volunteering and know that it feels good to give back – especially when it is something that you love!"

*Matthew Verstraete is in his second year at GCC and is looking to transfer to UCLA or USC for the fall semester of 2009.*

## From IMF to GCC – Professor Eddy Chi By Quitos Ruiz

How can students hope to make a difference in the Political System?

Professor Eddy Chi teaches Social Science 132 - American Government, and is among 40 teachers each year that incorporate service learning into their classroom curriculum. Service Learning is the difference between students who can make change and students who can't.

Professor Chi's experience in social science has included research in the field during college and becoming part of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after college. While working at the IMF, Chi worked with economists and faced social issues head on. Through his work he learned how social science can be an important tool as well as a fun subject to teach.

Social science is important to students because "it is a study of how people interact" says Chi. Learning social science can teach students to do a better job of interacting with social issues. Social issues and interaction are

a major part of volunteer work and service learning. Through learning in the classroom and service learning, students excel in both academic and social situations.

When it comes to service learning in college, Professor Chi did not know about it during his college career, but says "If I knew about it, I would have [participated in service learning]."

Service learning exposes students to new concepts outside of the classroom and helps show students what they are really interested in. If a student is unsure of what they want to do in life, volunteering can be a great experience to help students sort out their career and education goals.

Originally students in professor Chi's classes had a curious and lukewarm reception to service learning. Those who followed through and started their service learning project found that the more they became involved the better they felt about their work.

Two students from professor Chi's class are applying for the prestigious

president's award (100 hours of community service). To get the 100 hours required, the students have done their service at the International Rescue Committee in Glendale where they assisted the staff with cultural orientations. Their volunteer work at the International Rescue Committee included translating and helping rescued individuals to understand the new culture in the United States. Their service learning example is one of many of which students can take part in.

Professor Chi selected a list of community sites from over 175 sites for his students to volunteer at. His sites were places where students would get involved in legal needs of the community, politics, and economics. Learning from real world experience students can make a difference in the political system.

*Quitos Ruiz is a Political Science major and is looking to transfer to Cal State Channel Islands. He hopes to become a public interest advocate.*

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## Helping Children of all Ages: A Day at the Almansor Center by Alex Heiman

Almansor Center Mission Statement: *To empower at-risk individuals to take charge of their own learning and be competent, caring members of society; and to provide training opportunities for families and professionals to support those efforts.*

To all those looking to do volunteer work with children, adolescents, or youth, let me suggest a wonderful place to think about: the Almansor Center in South Pasadena. This holds especially true for students interested in or currently taking child development or psychology courses.

As we learned during our site visit experience, the Almansor Center works directly with youth ranging from infants/toddlers to high school students. For infants/toddlers, the center works as an "intervention" program for children who show (or are diagnosed with) delayed developmental issues. Infants here are typically placed in classrooms with a high teacher-to-student ratio and are highly socialized. In fact, many lesson plans such as a banana taste test, seemed geared around helping students verbalize how something makes them feel and what they are thinking. Although our visit lasted a little over an hour, it was evident that this combination of socialization and individualized attention was doing wonders for the children's cognitive development.

Teenagers from the Almansor Center, to some extent, also have their own developmental needs; however, there seems to be an equally strong emphasis on disciplinary issues.

Although, as was told to us by Dr. Al Hernandez, the Director of the Day School Program at the Almansor Center, the two issues of developmental needs and discipline seem to go hand in hand. That is, those who exhibit developmental issues as young children tend to show more disciplinary issues as teenagers and adults.

It quickly becomes clear that the Almansor Center does its best to improve the lives of all of those who come through its doors. The staff gives a lot of individualized attention to these troubled teens in order to really get to know them on a personal level and to try to correct these issues in a more friendly but disciplined environment. I wholeheartedly recommend the Almansor Center to any students who wish to get out there and make a difference in the lives of children and youth in the community.

Furthermore, if this sounds like a worthwhile experience for GCC students, then I encourage and invite you to come to the Service Learning Center located in the Sierra Madre Building, Room 267, to sign up.

*Alex Heiman is a student ambassador at the SLC and hopes to transfer to UC Berkeley or UCLA in fall 2009.*

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## Spreading Holiday Cheer by Nazanin Hajaty

"Every child deserves a Christmas, despite the financial situation of their families." So Saba Bekele, a GCC student, decided to take action.

With the help of several friends and the SLC, Saba organized the toy drive by making presentations in her classes and asking faculty to announce the drive. Flyers were placed in faculty mailboxes and posted around campus as well. In addition, bins were placed in strategic locations to collect toys. Several faculty and staff members have also made cash donations to the drive which will be used to buy necessary toys.

The Fred Jordan Mission is one of the oldest missions in the Los Angeles area. It has been serving underprivileged and homeless men, women, children, and families for over 100 years and sponsors toy drives at various businesses and locations in the community.

Even though contributions at GCC have been low, there is still time left before donations are delivered to the mission. Saba added another component to her strategy and is now planning on-campus fundraisers that will add to raising awareness, direct contributions, and student involvement.

"If the toy drive is successful, I would like to continue it annually or as long as I am a GCC student" says Saba.

Contributions (cash or toys) can be made to the Fred Jordan Toy Drive until December 1. Any donations should be taken to the SLC located in Sierra Madre 267. Envelopes for direct cash contributions are also available at the SLC.

*Nazanin is an architecture major and is planning to transfer to Cal Poly Pomona in the fall 2009 semester.*

## Volunteer Faire by Emin V. Hartonian

The Volunteer Faire took place on September 30, 2008 at GCC. This event was organized by Karla Mercado who is an intern from CSLA working at our Service Learning Center (SLC). She decided to organize the faire at GCC because she is a former SLC student Ambassador for three years and was responsible for the Volunteer Faire as part of her responsibilities. She enjoyed it very much and asked Hoover Zariani if she could continue to arrange it after leaving GCC.

Unfortunately, when she transferred to CSLA, Glendale College was under large construction so the SLC stopped hosting the faire due to a lack of parking. Now that the parking situation is fixed, "I thought it would be the perfect time to bring back the event," she says enthusiastically.

Close to thirty non-profit organizations attended the faire. The SLC, GCC students, and the agencies all benefited from this event. Karla mentions that "The SLC was able to inform students about programs in addition to our students learning about the different types of agencies and their programs.

Karla was extremely excited about the faire: "The Faire was definitely successful. Not only did agencies show up and enjoy themselves, but students stopped by (300 of them), asked questions, and learned about the agencies. Each agency had between six to ten students sign up to volunteer. It was a great success for both students and agencies." In the past the Volunteer Faire was hosted once every semester and the tradition is being kept alive by currently planning the event for the spring semester.

*Emin Vagharshak-Hartonian is a pre-med student and is planning to transfer in fall 2009.*

## Partnership Orientations Return! By Karla Mercado

This fall, the Service Learning Center began recruitment of additional community organization partners for our database. Part of including new agencies in the database is making sure that agencies understand their role in the learning process.

To ensure that this happens, the SLC is engaged in a variety of activities for our partner agencies such as Community Partner Orientations.

These orientations are held several times each year, generally before the start of a new semester. Agencies are asked to send a representative (usually the volunteer coordinator) to one of several sessions, which are held on campus.

During the orientation, the process of how students sign up for service learning or volunteering is clearly explained. Additionally, agencies learn about course requirements as well as necessary paperwork that goes along with signing up students.

Each participating agency receives a handbook clearly outlining the

roles and responsibilities of partners, GCC's Service Learning Center, and students. The training also covers the benefits to each constituent and creates a dialogue about how agencies can assist the faculty in instilling a sense of civic responsibility in students.

These orientations are designed for both new volunteer coordinators at the agencies currently in our database as well as for agencies new to the list.

New agencies should contact the SLC before the orientation to obtain the necessary forms for inclusion into our database.

The orientations were suspended for several semesters due to the limited parking situation caused by construction of the new parking structure.

We look forward to seeing our new agencies and new volunteer coordinators at current partner agencies at one of the orientations in January.

*Karla Mercado is a former Service Learning Center Student Ambassador and is currently completing her B.A. in Sociology at CSLA.*

### COMMUNITY PARTNER ORIENTATIONS

Please choose only one session. All sessions are identical.

**Tuesday, January 13, 2009**  
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, January 14, 2009**  
1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

**Thursday, January 15, 2009**  
3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

TO RSVP, email the following information to: [hzariani@glendale.edu](mailto:hzariani@glendale.edu) before January 9:

Partner Agency Name  
Individual(s) Attending Orientation  
Email Address  
Date of Attendance

A confirmation will be emailed to you prior to the event.

Map, parking instructions, and permits will also be emailed one week prior to the event. RSVP Today!

# Healing the Bay: One Piece at a Time

## Heal the Bay Mission Statement

Heal the Bay is a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy and clean.

## Service Learning Center

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The Service Learning Center is located on the main GCC campus in the Sierra Madre Building, Room 267.

Heal the Bay (HTB), is a non-profit organization based in Santa Monica, which started in 1985 when a group of concerned citizens began to question the dumping of untreated sewage into the Santa Monica Bay by the city of Los Angeles. In order to fulfill their mission statement, HTB uses volunteers to keep our beaches clean of debris. On October 17, SLC Student Ambassadors and staff joined the cause to learn more about the mission and activities of HTB.

Melody Meyer educated us about the conditions of our coastline by providing a 20-minute orientation. She stressed individual responsibility as well as bigger picture policy changes that can help us in reducing the amount of waste that ends up on our beaches. One simple example is to use water jugs or containers that are made of metal instead of plastic since they last much longer, are cleaner, and contain no oil byproducts.

Following her presentation, an engineer volunteering for Heal the Bay, Oziris Abdoul, talked briefly with us about a process

called Solar Thermal Concentration, which involves using the sun (solar energy) to create energy that could heat households (thermal energy) and that is environmentally safe and clean. Only air or water is used to transfer the energy to its destination once it has been collected from solar heat.

After these brief presentations, our crew began collecting the debris on the beach. It quickly became very apparent how filthy our beaches really are. In addition to collecting the usual trash, we marked each item we collected on a card in order to help Heal the Bay with information on what type of debris is most common on our shores. This information is then used to develop initiatives to address particularly pressing problems.

Overall, we agreed that our few hours were well worth the time and we learned quite a bit. We invite everyone to check out Heal the Bay at [healthebay.org](http://healthebay.org) or to volunteer in person.

*The Heal the Bay event was organized by Alex Heiman, SLC Student Ambassador.*

Some of the items collected by the SLC at Santa Monica Beach during our day of service:

200+ cigarette butts	5 disposable lighters	82 pieces of plastic
40 plastic bottle caps/rings	29 straws/stirs	34 pieces of Styrofoam
30 plastic wrappers/bags/snack bags	8 plastic Snack Bags	10 balloons and ribbons

### SLC Staff

Hoover Zariani, Director

Nane Kakosian,  
Tutor Coordinator

### Service Learning Student Ambassadors

Nazanin Hajaty  
Emin V. Hartounian  
Alex Heiman  
Romina Khatchaturian  
Quitos Ruiz  
Matt Verstraete

### Independent Study Instructors

Sarkis Ghazarian  
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