Office of Civic & Community Engagement

REFLECTIONS

Creating opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to embody community and civic engagement in their personal, professional, and academic lives.

Issue IV, December 2013

Upcoming CE Events

Spirit of La Verne Crosses Borders

As a new member of the La Verne community I am continually impressed by the variety of ways members of the university give of their time, effort, and resources to causes that speak to them. A recent expression of that spirit of La Verne took place under the leadership of Dr. Issam Gahzawwi and his Enactus group. On November 22-24, 2013 a group of Enactus students and a few university staff members, including Daniel Loera from Multicultural Student Affairs, Nora Navarrete-Dominguez, ROC regional director from Kern County campus- Bakersfield, Richard Zaragoza, curriculum lab supervisor Kern County Bakersfield, and myself participated in a service trip at City of Children Orphanage in Ensenada, Mexico.

During this service trip we not only learned about the work that is taking place at the City of Children Orphanage, a mission of the Church of Christ, but also participated in a service project where we constructed a water tank to collect rain water (with a 3000-gallon capacity) to fuel garden beds in a sustainable vegetable garden that we planted. The garden will help provide a variety of healthy vegetables and other plants to the children of the orphanage. In addition, University of La Verne students provided healthy nutrition workshops in Spanish to the children. What a wonderful opportunity to show that our spirit crosses borders.

Leopards Reflect

Working with the Bahai Community as part of the summer service program has taught me about this two-fold moral purpose where not only do we have to serve ourselves, but also our community. This type of service is selfless service; service that comes from the heart.

– Junior Criminology Major, Stephany

Pg. 1
The Center for the Advancement of Faculty has formed a strong partnership with the Office of Civic and Community Engagement

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities VALUE Rubric, civic engagement is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference.

To be successful, efforts to promote such positive changes must be organized, thoughtful, and deeply integrated throughout students’ experiences. The Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) has formed a strong partnership with the Office of Civic and Community Engagement to support the university’s goals of achieving this level of service.

This partnership will manifest in several ways including co-sponsored workshops and events, sharing of expertise during problem solving, and promoting a university wide dialogue about effective civic engagement practices. This partnership will also be a key element in meeting the university’s strategic vision.

Academic excellence and visibility are two of the strategic initiatives, which will be addressed, at least in part, by the joint efforts of this collaboration. With Brethren roots, the university has always demonstrated the value of service, and it has shown this most recently by forming an office dedicated to fulfilling this portion of its mission.

The CAFÉ emphasizes continuous improvement in curriculum design and implementation, teaching strategies, and measurement of learning and student growth.

One such strategy is service learning. This is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Service learning can be thought of as what happens after a student completes a course or graduates. It is the application of knowledge and skills for the benefit of others. This is what helps create a civic identity and engagement with civic life.

**Sammy Elzarka, PhD**
Director, Center of Advancement of Teaching and Learning
University of La Verne

Giving as part of the Good Life

On December 5th FLEX 7, whose course was “Markets and the Good Life” taught by Richard Rose and Kevin Marshall and connected to Cathy Irwin’s and Claire Angelici’s writing courses, organized a holiday gift-giving event with Prototypes in Pomona as part of their FLEX’s community engagement project. Prototypes is a behavioral healthcare service provider that serves women, children and communities impacted by substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence. The class of 32 freshmen raised over $1,000 and gave over 60 gifts to children at Prototypes. The children shared their Christmas wish list and the University of La Verne students worked with Prototypes staff to organize the event. The course organized the event utilizing a project management perspective and reflected on the philosophical underpinning of community engagement. As an added bonus Professor Kevin Marshall served as Santa and Professor Cathy Irwin as an elf.
From the classroom to the real world, Miriam Perez, a special education major at the University of La Verne, applies the community engagement values learned through ULV to her work at Duarte Unified School District.

Perez took the time to fundraise so a few students at a Duarte Unified School District high school could attend Dr. Temple Grandin’s latest conference in Glendale.

Dr. Temple Grandin is an animal scientist, best-selling author, and an inspiration to many with autism around the world.

According to autismspeaks.org, autism is “associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention and physical health issues” and is one of the fastest growing serious developmental disability in the United States.

Perez learned about Grandin from one of her special education classes with Dr. Patricia Taylor, chairperson of special education programs.

“The reciprocal, academically integrated, reflective nature of the Community Engagement in the special education credential program was beautifully actualized by Miriam,” said Taylor. “She engaged with her school and students, got other professionals involved, supported learners with significant disabilities to see that people like themselves can become accomplished (such as Temple Grandin) and developed confidence in her ability to contribute to the community.”

Perez works for Duarte Unified School District as a substitute high school teacher and the classes consist of a Community Based Program and a Special Day Class Program.

After asking the teacher for permission, Perez decided to teach the students about autism and Temple Grandin.

She started with the book called “Sahara Special” by Esme Raji Codell, which is about a fifth-grader not letting a special education define who she is. Then Perez had the students write about how he or she is similar or different from Sahara.

“The third day, I started to talk about Temple and how she was also special,” Perez said. “I explained that Temple had autism and that she had found creative ways to advocate for herself.”

When the positive feedback from the students flooded in, Perez wanted to further the students’ experience.

Perez contacted one of Grandin’s team members about going to meet Temple Grandin at the conference in Glendale.

Perez was able to get a discounted price for both the students and teachers, but she still needed to fundraise the rest of the funds.

“I then started contacting businesses on the phone and through email,” Perez said. “From everyone I contacted, I only received one call back from a company where I worked before becoming a substitute teacher.”

The company, known as Sparkelettes, donated 10 cases of water to sell.

Perez was able to sell all the cases of water, received a donation from her husband’s company, and even put a bit of her own money in to reach her fundraising goal.

With the money raised, five students from the Community Based Program were able to attend Temple Grandin’s conference.

“At the conference they were engaged in the presentation, they were able to sit in a lecture room for the entire conference which made me and the teacher very proud because we weren’t sure they would be able to do it,” Perez said.

After the conference, Grandin took the time to take pictures with the students.

“Overall, all the work that it took to make the field trip happen, all the letters and phone calls were worth it,” Perez said.

During the conference, Grandin stating “problems aren’t problems if we find solutions or a way to overcome the problems” inspired Perez.

Since the conference in November, Perez has continued applying her community engagement values and started the process to begin a non-profit organization.

The non-profit “will raise funds to help special education programs in schools go on educational field trips that will expose them to further knowledge in arts, music, science, and literature.”

Cassandra Egan
University of La Verne
cassandra.egan@laverne.edu
The Office of Civic and Community Engagement organized the Pomona and University of La Verne Partnership meeting on health on November 8 at the Tri-City Mental Health Wellness Center. Representatives from the University of La Verne, Pomona Unified School District, Tri-City Mental Health, faith-based organizations, and non-profit community organizations met to discuss ideas and projects that could be developed to address the community health issues. The purpose of the meeting was to find ways to connect curriculum with co-curricular, which meets the University of La Verne’s mission of public good. The meeting focused on three avenues of engagement: academic, co-curricular, and institutional engagement. Some ideas discussed in the meeting were internships for high school and college students, community based research, emergency and disaster preparedness, peer health educators, policy development, coordinated series of “splash projects” and community related projects. From these ideas, the main themes of from the community partnership meeting on health were social marketing, research, and mentoring and internships.

“The discussions were informative,” Marisol Morales, director of civic and community engagement said, “and I believe set a good platform to begin developing a strong and mutually beneficial relationship between the university and our community partners based on our shared interest.”