

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND SERVICE LEARNING

Community Service Learning opportunities have been available to students since 1990 at the Community College of Rhode Island through the Division of Student Services. Dean Becky Yount coordinates Service-Learning programs through the four Student Governments and 90+ clubs and organizations. Participation in Service Learning projects is a requirement for all clubs and organizations. Through the federal work-study program, students representing each of the Community College's four campuses have become employed as Community Service Student Coordinators. In the fall of 1997, the Community College's Lincoln campus was a host site for a CCRI/Community Partnership AmeriCorps member.

During the past several years, Volunteer Fairs have been held on the campuses to encourage students and staff to get involved in serving their community. Over 90 non-profit agencies have recruited members of the college community into service projects. CCRI has sent a team to support City Year Rhode Island's Serve-A-Thon.

Many students have made outstanding contributions to their communities through service projects. Recognition of these efforts has been made through the establishment of Community Service Merit Awards presented annually. Student leadership development is fostered through involvement in **COOL** (Campus Outreach Opportunity League), **SCALE** (Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education), and **BreakAway**.

Eighteen **BreakAway** projects have been developed and implemented. The first was to Petersburg, West Virginia in May of 1994 targeting the service work sites at the Grant County Parks and Recreation, Potomac Highlands Support Services, and the Grant County Senior Center. In March of 1995 and 1996, a CCRI group traveled to Cuernavaca Mexico focusing their efforts on a project with the organization **Habitat for Humanity**. Another group worked with children on a literacy project in a school system in Washington, DC during the spring semester of 1995. The fifth **BreakAway** was a collaborative project involving student leaders representing all three campuses of the Community College of Rhode Island, Service Learning students, staff, faculty and Campus Ministry, as well as, Community Partnership (**AmeriCorps**). This time, the community service work sites targeted two local cities in Rhode Island, Central Falls, and Pawtucket.

The Providence Campus of CCRI has been the site for numerous **BreakAway** projects during the spring semester. The 2000-Day of Service focused on cleaning up the Providence Campus grounds and planting flowers. Over 50 students and staff came to lend a hand. A recent **BreakAway** project focused on student leaders traveling to New York City providing needed services to **POTS** (Part of the Solution), a soup kitchen in the Bronx. At **POTS** there were many tasks to perform including serving meals, cleaning the site, and distributing food. CCRI students developed a greater understanding of social justice issues through this experience.

The Rhode Island Campus Compact focused on a statewide literacy program involving all the member campuses working collaboratively. Learn and Serve mini grants were made available and several mentoring programs were established at South Providence Neighborhood Ministries, a community based agency in the inner city near the Community College's urban campus. Additionally, a Rhode Island Campus Compact BreakAway Project included 12 students focusing on a service project in New York City hosted by CCRI.

In January of 1995, CCRI's Service Learning effort developed a task force that attended the New England Regional Conference, "Integrating Service with Academic Study." Dean Becky Yount, Student Affairs; Dean Jack Sbrega, Academic Affairs; along with three faculty members, Alice Lyon, English; Dr. Bill Cheney, Psychology; and Norman Norris, English-ESL attended.

The task force of the Dean and the three faculty members has proven to be a very significant vehicle for the proliferation of interest in service learning at CCRI. The task force has had regular meetings to plan strategies for the promotion of service learning throughout the institutions' three campuses. Furthermore, the three faculty members have been the first faculty to actually implement service learning in their classes. To date, over fifty faculty members have become involved in integrating a service component into the curriculum of their course offerings.

**"Service Learning"** was the topic of the 1996 Community College's faculty convocation. Dr. Keith Morton of the Feinstein Institute, Providence College; and Dr. Wm. Lynn Mckinney, former Director of the Rhode Island Campus Compact, gave an overview of the service movement in this country and discussed the benefits of an integrated service learning program for students, faculty and the community. Four CCRI faculty members made presentations about service learning at this convocation.

During the past years, Service Learning at CCRI received several federal grants awarded through the RI Commission for National and Community Service, the RI Campus Compact, the American Association for Community Colleges and the Corporation for National & Community Service. Through the effort of Dean Becky Yount and Professor Jim Glasson, the \$100,000 AmeriCorps Program was launched. This project focuses on selecting CCRI students per campus. These students serve as part-time AmeriCorps members to perform 300 hours of service. Their focus is *Tutoring, Mentoring, Landscaping, and Food Distribution* for children, youth, adolescents, senior citizens and families. At the conclusion of the program, CCRI AmeriCorps members receive an educational award of \$1000.00 to repay student loans or put towards future educational goals.

The community sites selected was the West Bay Community Action Program in Warwick, Ralph J. Holden/Channel One Community Center in Central Falls, RI Community Food Bank in Providence, and the East Bay Community Action (Head Start) Program in Newport County. Four faculty mentors worked with corps members and built relationships with their community agencies.

The Campus Compact National Service awarded a grant developed by Professor Jim Glasson for Community Colleges. This project focuses on a service learning partnership with Brown University known as “2+4 Service on Common Ground.” The thrust of this program is to pair Brown medical students and CCRI nursing students in joint service projects that benefit the community.

“The Faculty Role: From the Margin to the Mainstream” focused on assisting faculty with the development of service learning programs. Professor Glasson has visited more than 20 community colleges in the northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. The program expanded to include Community Colleges in Virginia, Washington, DC, and North Carolina. Professor Tonia Fay served as the program director of this project. The Community College of Rhode Island was awarded a grant from the RI Committee on the Humanities to produce an oral and visual history on Southeast Asian immigrants in Rhode Island. The projects Directors, Dr. Jon Lu and Dr. Ralph Scorpio have incorporated this project into the Colleges Social Science curriculum.

In past years the Corporation for National Service, sponsored three \*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) coordinators have been selected to serve at CCRI. The \*VISTA program places CCRI students in six Chapter-One schools throughout the state. The coordinators have worked to develop the **RI READS** Literacy Program, augment the service-learning program at the Providence Campus and implement the **BreakAway** program. The Corporation for National Service has been awarded a grant that will expand the **RI READS** program. Currently the **RI READS** program has placed approximately 200 volunteers to work in elementary and middle schools and has contributed approximately 15,000 hours of service to the community.

Previously two grants from the American Association for Community Colleges have been awarded to Professor Tom Morrissey of the Art Department. He has served as a faculty mentor in the Broadening Horizons program. As a result of these grants, he has hosted several one-day Service Learning Seminars at the Flanagan Campus and has sponsored the CCRI Service Learning logo contest in his Graphic Arts class.

Over 60 faculty members from various disciplines have integrated Service Learning into course assignments. The Community College has succeeded in creating an enthusiastic culture for Service Learning among faculty, staff, and students, which continue to thrive. This growth is due to the curriculum changes that have occurred and the high degree of institutional support that has been generously given by President Emeritus, Edward J. Liston, Dr. Thomas D. Sepe and currently by Ray M. DiPasquale.

The following pages highlight some of our major BreakAway projects, making an everlasting impression on both the students and the communities.

BreakAway  
September 20 - 22, 2001  
CCRI New York Disaster Relief

The date September 11, 2001 will forever stand out in our minds as the day Americans felt first hand, the wrath of destruction that terrorism can bring. For four CCRI delegates September 20-22, 2001 this became their reality and changed their lives.

When we decided to use this opportunity for disaster relief as our BreakAway project, we had no idea the outpouring of support would be so great. The CCRI community, as well as various outside agencies, was generous beyond words.

Thursday was a day of anticipation and nervousness. The Red Cross assigned us to work at a school in Brooklyn. It was called the NEST school, formerly known as Junior High School #22, where the Red Cross had set up station in the gymnasium. We helped stock items and clean up messes, and because we had such a large van and it was pouring out, we helped transport Red Cross workers to various locations.

Friday was a very emotional day for us. We did not have to report to the Red Cross until noontime so we took the morning to see some of the memorials. We started out at Union Square where the first memorial was started. After we caught our breath, we were truly amazed by the thousands of candles, cards, flowers, and messages left by people. We met a rescue worker from Connecticut who was volunteering his time at Ground Zero. We also met a man from Australia who had flown in to "deliver" a picture his two daughters had drawn for the children of NY, and the amazing part was he was flying back that same day. The most memorable person we met on our trip was Denise. Denise was meeting at Memorial Square so she could go to the family center to see if there was any news about her missing sister Celeste Victoria Torres. Celeste was at a breakfast meeting on the 106<sup>th</sup> floor when the tragedy occurred. She hasn't been heard from since. Our second journey took us to the "site". The police, fire, and military were everywhere and law and order was in high demand. "**Devastation**" is the only word that fit the sights and smells of this area. The murky water filled with soot and the smoldering once fantastic Twin Towers' rubble and the somber faces of the crowd left an indelible mark on our hearts and minds.

We reported to the Javits Center at 34<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. We packed water to be sent to other sites, separated clothes, and stacked mattresses once used by the New Jersey police and firefighters, and cleaned up the once busy palladium. Each night when we returned to the apartment, we reflected on the things we'd seen, cried some, and appreciated what we have at home.

Saturday was our final day in NY. The Red Cross told us that even though our help was appreciated, we could take the day for ourselves before heading home. We took this time to visit "Wall of Prayers" which covered in plastic, held pictures of those still missing from September 11<sup>th</sup>. We also saw the USS Comfort, which housed the FBI and Terrorist Experts. Our final stop was a fire station at 47<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. This station was covered with flowers, cards, and pictures sent from all over from people sending prayers and thoughts. We signed the condolence book and stood watching the firefighters watching the people. You could actually feel their loss. One word: "**sadness**". We returned home Saturday night to our families, houses, pets, and lifestyles, but I don't think any of us will be exactly the same. When asked to describe the BreakAway in one word, the word is "**awakening**". Would we go back? In a heartbeat. This BreakAway was the true meaning of Service Learning.



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BreakAway  
May 30 – June 2, 2002  
New York, NY

The goal of this year's **BreakAway** as in years past was to help the less fortunate. We decided that we were most needed at **POTS** ( Part Of The Solution ), a soup kitchen in the Bronx.

There were six Service Learning / Student Government participants. We volunteered at **POTS** on Saturday and Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2002. We didn't know what to expect when we arrived, but we quickly learned there was much to be done before the soup kitchen opened at noontime.

We were all assigned various tasks to get the soup kitchen ready and prepared for lunchtime. There was bread to be cut, juice to be mixed, tables to be set and food to be prepared. We worked for an hour and a half getting things ready for the clients to arrive. It is like a small restaurant type atmosphere at **POTS**. Only 24 people can be seated and served at a time. The lines were out the door on both Saturday and Sunday.

Many of the "regulars" asked us where we were from and why we were there. That was a good question, why were we there? Before arriving the obvious reason had been to help those less fortunate than us, however, once there we got a better sense of our mission. Not only were we serving those in need of a hot meal, we were also adding something to their days. New, friendly faces to talk to, new stories to listen to. We talked to them about school, jobs, and our lives as well as theirs. Some of the people seemed content just to have someone listen to them.

We received a lot of thanks and encouragement from the clients as well as the director of **POTS**. The majority of the people we served, thanked us and made us realize how important our tasks were. We take a hot meal every day for granted; while to others it is not something that is guaranteed.

Our two days at **POTS** had a great impact on the group. On the way back from New York we reflected on how fortunate we all are with what we have and how important it is to help those who are not as blessed.



BreakAway  
May 16 - 18, 2003  
New York, NY

This year BreakAway was somewhat different from those of years past. We still did our service at P.O.T.S. for two days, but on our first day we had the opportunity to meet with students and staff from Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). It was interesting to see a community college that was so much larger than our college is. BMCC was so large and it had escalators (much quicker than waiting for elevators in Warwick). There were ten of them and six of us. We discussed the similarities and differences in our colleges, the programs offered, and the general way things are done. Another big topic was dealing with grief.

Their campus is located within blocks of Ground Zero and we had recently dealt with the Station fire. We talked to them about things we did on both occasions here at CCRI and they told us to hold some classes in trailers. As the time we were there, the building was still under repair. Before we parted our ways, we all went out to dinner and just talked about ourselves. Everyone had someone that they engaged with. Overall, it was a great experience!

Saturday was off to P.O.T.S. So much has changed there. They got a grant and remodeled the whole kitchen. It looked great! Tina was still there and so was Mary, other than that, everyone was different. It was a fun crew. When you're having fun, the work doesn't seem as hard as it is. Josh and Vi worked the juice station. Deana and Ron waited tables. Joanne and Lynne made the plates. We worked like a well-oiled machine.

Sunday was basically the same routine, but we all did different stations so we weren't doing the same thing for both days. The bus ride back was a pretty quiet one. We did some reflecting for about the first 45 minutes and after that we all either read or slept for the rest of the ride.

BreakAway  
October 17 - 19, 2003  
Providence, RI

BMCCRI  
( Borough of Manhattan Community College of Rhode Island )

This was an exceptional year for BreakAway. Building upon our trip in May to New York, Borough of Manhattan Community College made their way to Rhode Island for a collaborative community service learning project. They first arrived in Rhode Island around four o'clock in the evening at the Marriott Hotel located on Orms Street in Providence. We greeted our guests in the main lobby and departed for the Newport Dinner Train for a bonding experience between the two community colleges.

During the experience on the dinner train, Maurva, Borough of Manhattan's Dean of Students, and Becky, Community College of RI's Dean of Students spoke about how glad they were that this collaborative project was taking place. Maurva expressed that her college was never afforded an opportunity to participate in an alternative break. The evening was filled with conversation between students and faculty from both community colleges. After the train ride CCRI escorted BMCC back to the hotel to get ready for Saturday's community service project.

Saturday was an early start; it was around seven in the morning when CCRI student governments arrived at the Marriott Hotel. Around seven thirty in the morning both groups headed over to the Amos House located on Friendship Street in Providence. They reorganized the kitchen area, served breakfast and lunch, and helped clean-up after lunch. The group then left the Amos House and toured the Liston and Knight Campuses. After touring the Knight campus, the group headed over to Warwick Mall for a volunteer fair. The evening ended with a reflection dinner at Barney's, located in the downtown area of Providence, and Water Fire.

Sunday was the highlight of the community service project, the annual Breast Cancer 5K walk. The CCRI group met at the Marriott Hotel and escorted the BMCC group to Roger Williams Park for the walk. The entire group finished the walk in about two hours. CCRI then gave BMCC a tour of Sprague Mansion located on Cranston Street in Cranston, RI. After that history lesson, the entire group went for a reflection lunch and farewell.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND  
PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION  
"COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY"  
TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2007**

On Tuesday, March 20, 2007, over 200 faculty, staff and students came together to celebrate CCRI's fourth President, Ray M. Di Pasquale's Inauguration by committing to a day of service in areas of non-profits.

The Lincoln Campus reached out to the **Ralph J. Holden/Channel One Community Center**, CCRI's "Scholarships for Service" partner site, located in Central Falls, RI. The project consisted of six themes, *JOY, RESPECT, COMMUNITY, LEADERSHIP, DIVERSITY, and HOPE*. Participants chose a theme and were organized into six groups. Each group came together to brainstorm, sketch a draft, and then transfer onto canvas a painted picture of what they thought their themes should look like. By the end of the day, the results were "*phenomenal*". Channel 10 was present for footage, and an article was posted in the *Pawtucket Times Newspaper*.

The Warwick Campus reached out to the **West Bay Community Action**, another one of CCRI's "Scholarships for Service" partner sites, located on Buttonwoods Avenue, Warwick, RI. Participants stocked shelves and did other various projects in **West Bay's Food Market Place**. At the **West Bay Community Farm**, they helped maintain the land for summer crops by laying down mulch and other outdoor tasks.

The Providence Campus reached out to the **RI Community Food Bank**, located on Niantic Avenue, Providence, RI. Participants gathered together in the warehouse and transferred boxes of apples into bags for distribution. During lunch, a reflection session was held by Perri Levis, Executive Director of the RI Campus Compact. An article was posted in the *Providence Journal*.

The Newport County Campus reached out to the **East Bay Community Action/Head Start Program**, CCRI's "Scholarships for Service" partner site, located on Chafee Blvd. in Newport, RI, and the **Martin Luther King Jr. Center** located on Gerard Avenue in Newport, RI. Participants at the **East Bay Community Action/Head Start Program** joined by CCRI President, Ray Di Pasquale spent their time reading to pre-school students. Some faculty prepared activities for the students which incorporated reading and dancing. Outside work consisted of preparing the planters for spring and summer flowers. At the **Martin Luther King Jr. Center**, numerous tasks were accomplished. In the food pantry, grocery orders were put together for pick up. Items in the toy closet were organized. General cleaning in the meeting rooms and food pantry included sweeping and mopping. They also engaged in outdoor cleanup on such a beautiful day.

In conclusion, the tremendous turnout of volunteers impacted the Community College of RI to plan and coordinate one big service day project each year. Faculty, staff and students will come together to make a difference not only for the college, but also the community.

*CCRI*  
*ALL COLLEGE WEEK*

*~A Celebration of Innovation, Excellence, and Community~*



**“COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY”**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2008**

On Tuesday, March 18, 2008, nearly 200 students, staff and faculty members committed to a “Day of Service” by giving their time to support the hungry, the homeless, the developmentally disabled, grieving children and other worthy causes in areas of non-profits. The sites were as follows:

**Friends Way**, located in Warwick, is the only agency in the state that helps children with bereavement issues. CCRI volunteers had the distinct honor in supporting this agency by painting rooms and completing yard work.

**West Bay Community Action**, also located in Warwick, helps residents maintain self-sufficiency. CCRI volunteers worked on the agency’s farm on Centerville Road by cleaning up the fields to prepare for summer cropping.

**Operation Stand Down Rhode Island**, located in Johnston, is an agency that assists homeless veterans and their families. CCRI Volunteers bagged four years’ worth of leaves, washed windows, and vacuumed inside residents’ homes.

**Rhode Island Community Food Bank**, located in Providence, is an agency that distributes about 8 million pounds of food annually. CCRI volunteers sorted and repackaged bags of potatoes and various foods for distribution.

**The Homestead Group**, located in Woonsocket, is an agency that provides support and services for people with developmental disabilities. CCRI volunteers painted interior walls, catalogued donations and worked with clients.

**The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center**, located in Newport, is an agency that provides educational, social and recreational activities for residents. CCRI volunteers cleaned and organized the center and packaged groceries for pickup.

**East Bay Community Action (Head Start) Program**, also located in Newport, is an agency which prepares low-income, at-risk children for kindergarten. CCRI Volunteers, joined by President Ray DiPasquale, read to and participated in activities with the children. Volunteers also spread mulch in front of the center to prepare for summer gardening.

**The impact CCRI had on those community agencies was indescribable. We hope to make it an even bigger success next year with the addition of new agencies.**