



CWL News and Events

DPT students explore the world locally and abroad

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article as a core faculty member in the DPT curriculum who has the joy and privilege of creating service opportunities for our students. The majority of students in the DPT program have completed their pre-requisite degrees in institutions other than St. Kate's. As a faculty member who teaches Global Search for Justice (GSJ) I have always felt that the graduate students, for a variety of reasons, do not have structured experiences such as the bookend

courses, The Reflective Woman and GSJ, that are powerful learning experiences that confers a "St. Kate's" identity, if you will.

The community service experience in the DPT curriculum, as I envision, is an ideal vehicle to realize the College's mission and commitment to the traditions of Catholic Social Teaching and social justice.

Students in their third year have the option of doing community work locally or participating in a global experience. Thirteen students opted for a local experience at People Serving People (PSP) in Minneapolis, while 17 went down to Venezuela for their global experience.

My relationship with (PSP) started in

2001, and since then I have worked with the agency on multiple projects. Susan Klappa, Assistant Professor in the DPT Program, is co-coordinator of service-learning experiences and took the initiative of seeking out our community

I write this

partner in Venezuela through the Archdiocese of St. Paul. The site that we have chosen to focus our partnership-building efforts is the *MISIONEROS SAN PABLO* run by Fr. Greg Schaffer in San Felix. This area has a depressed economy with unemployment rates of 80% or more and its residents are some of the poorest in Venezuela.

The service-learning experience is designed to enable students to develop skills and knowledge and explore values related to working with diverse communities. The learning is centered around the



St. Kate's DPT students playing with the neighborhood children during their service-learning trip to Venezuela.

multidimensional impact of poverty on families, in particular, the consequences of poverty on the social, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of the family. The experiences are designed to use a holistic

approach to understanding people in the context of culture and society. Students have the opportunities to provide direct services to marginalized and underserved populations and in the process, learn to identify root causes for social inequalities and evaluate their social responsibilities as professionals and as citizens.

For many students the service-learning experiences take them out of their comfort zone, are eye-opening, and challenge some of their deeply-held

beliefs and stereotypes. My experiences in community work have taught me that preparation and mentoring are instrumental to ensuring that the intended learning actually occurs. To this end, students are introduced to various models of health and well-being, various perspectives of justice, Catholic Social Teaching, and books that deal with the

issue of poverty or the context of their service-learning site. The Social Analysis Model (also known as the Circle of Praxis) is a framework that students use and become aware of unjust social

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DPT students service-learning experiences (continued)

institutions and policies that marginalize certain members of society. Prior to their actual experience, I provide opportunities for applying the Social Analysis Model to different scenarios, such as sweatshops or experiences of refugees.

During their service-learning experiences, they witness and hear life stories of individuals who live in poverty, and through reflective journaling and faculty mentoring, identify the root causes for social injustices, their civic responsibilities as citizens in a democracy and actions they can engage in that lead to social change.

Students collaborated with the PSP staff to identify areas that they could be involved in to alleviate the staff caseload. All students had an opportunity to participate in almost all activities. They did intake interviews during which they educated the residents on available services and resources, provided child care so the mothers were free to participate in women's groups and stress management groups; tutored school-age children, managed the store that provides personal hygiene items to resi-

"According to Catholic Social Teaching, concern for the poorest members of society should be a major concern of our nation. They say every person has a fundamental right to life and the necessities of life. If that is true, why are we seeing a homeless shelter full of people being shut out of these "rights?" It seems these rights are being treated more like privileges that have been taken away and not being allowed to be earned back. This makes it a social justice problem."

dents, and served meals.

The Venezuela group engaged in similar activities such as working in the soup kitchen and providing child care at a center for working single-mothers. They had limited opportunities to provide "clinical" care at a local clinic and an AIDS Hospice mission run by Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity. They also visited a government hospital and a nursing program where they interacted with nursing students. The community had organized two parties for the students which were opportunities for cultural exchange.

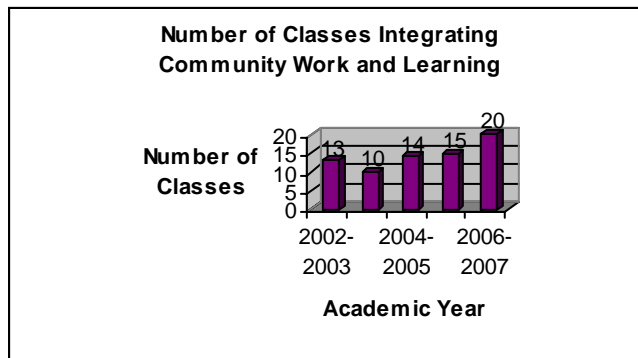
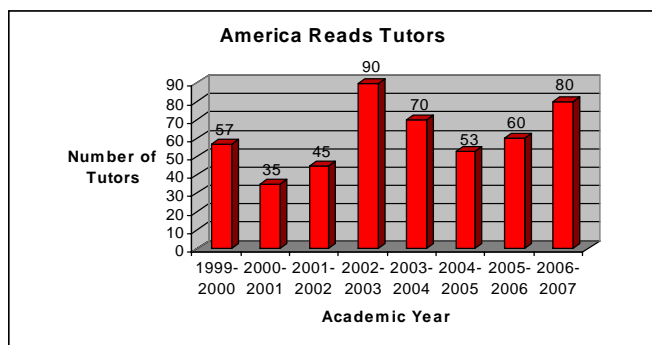
During this process students interacted with residents, got to hear their life stories, and established relationships that seem to have left a lasting impression on them. The students entered an unfamiliar world at the shelter or the barrios of San Felix, and for a majority, this was the first time they had an opportunity to work so closely with people who are quite different from them.

Community Work and Learning: Highlights 2006-2007

The 2006-2007 academic year was busy in Community Work and Learning! With an increase in service-learning courses offered, more students working off-campus, and outreach to diverse community partnerships, CWL has seen great successes. Here is just a sampling of those achievements:

- ◆ Students on-campus and off-campus worked over 7,300 hours.
- ◆ 269 students worked a total of 3,007 hours at a service-learning site.

"There is quite a melting pot at Longfellow, and I know I've learned way more about the different cultures in the Twin Cities from these kids than they ever can know. America Reads is a beneficial and fun program for all involved."—America Reads tutor at Longfellow Elementary



"Personally, I am indebted forever for the experience I've had at Commonbond. Learning about new cultures not only helps me grow personally but professionally as well. I entered this course to learn more about immigration and the current issues that surround it in the US today. I was not prepared for the impact it has had in my life and will continue to impact me daily, always in favor of multiculturalism and justice for all, newcomers and natives alike."—Service-learning student in "GSJ: The Immigrant Experience", Spring, 2007

- ◆ All associate degree students in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing and Radiography participated and completed Core Integrated Learning course with a community work and learning component.
- ◆ CWL offered 6 faculty development workshops with 35 attendees.

CSC Alumnae Mee Cheng returns to tell about JET Program

by Mary Delaware On April 26, 2007, in the Centers of Excellence alumnae and former Community Work and Learning employee, Mee Cheng spoke about her experiences in Japan as a member of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, in honor of Asian Pacific Awareness Month.

In the fall of her last year at the College of St. Catherine, Mee was unsure of what she wanted to do after college. After hearing about the JET program, she applied and was accepted. Once she graduated from St. Kate's in the spring of 2005, Mee was placed in a small rural community in southern Japan as an English teacher.

The JET Program was created in 1987. When it first started, there were only 840 participants (employees). Now there are over 6000. The purpose of the program was to increase the communication and understanding of Japan and other countries and it continues to aim for this goal today. Participants are placed in Japanese schools to assist with communication and language tools. "What most of the students do is co-teach English classes with Japanese English teachers," Mee said. By working in public and private schools, the program assists in the establishment of internationalism and multi-culturalism while teaching English.

Although not a native Japanese speaker, Mee did have experience working with different cultures before heading to Japan. Through Community Work and Learning, she worked at Jane Addams School for Democracy. Mee worked with high school students to work on creating communities. The intrapersonal skills she gained as a coordinator of the Hmong circle at Jane Addams transferred to her situation in Japan.

"When I was at Jane Addams, [I saw] groups start from scratch and grow into communities and it didn't matter what all of our respective backgrounds were... It was at JAS that I learned what it takes to build a community. Also, the learning that takes place at JAS, it taught me different methods of working with participants with different learning abilities. My overall JAS experience has helped me build a similar community in Japan and at the senior high schools that I work in. I try to incorporate many JAS philosophies, especially the philosophy that we are all teachers and we are all learners, and my JAS experiences into creating a space for the locals to come together, as well as at school," Mee said.

Now in her third year with the program, Mee tries to stay involved with her students and the community both in and out of the classroom. "I try to stay as connected as I can. It's the only time students can talk to a native teacher [and English speaker.] The other teachers are too busy," she explained, showing pictures of her school and students in a slideshow during

her presentation at St. Kate's. Mee also holds English day camps during the summer and longer school breaks. Although these sessions only last three days, Mee often puts together plays for the campers to perform. Oftentimes, these children are not her students from school. "It's really fun to get kids from the city, I really try to bond with them."

Mee also reflected on the differences between American culture and Japanese culture, especially in the school system. Unlike the United States, the Japanese school year begins in April and ends in March. Yet, the schools have more breaks scattered throughout the calendar. "There are breaks for summer from July-August," Mee recalled. The school where Mee teaches has six class periods a day. Mee teaches during four of them. During her time-off, she likes to visit other classes and see what the kids are learning. Often times, she'll go to gym class and participate or watch the sport of the day, whether it be volleyball or kendo—Japanese fencing. "Even through basic conversation, I still learn a little bit about them, and it's a good chance to ask names," Mee said.

Another difference between the United States and Japan is the fact that there are no janitors at the schools. The students do the work

themselves during "cleaning time." Duties include weeding outside the school building, sweeping, taking out the trash, and other chores. "[In America] we graffiti our bathrooms. Kids don't do that because they will have to clean it up," she said. In Japan, after high-school

graduation, many students in Japan do not go to university. Yet, they also do not stay in the rural or countryside areas. As Mee mentioned, the majority of jobs are in the city, causing the young adults to move away.

The JET program has also allowed Mee to explore other cultures and countries besides Japan. During her past two years, she has visited Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and China, not to mention all over Japan. Still, she finds the native Japanese people to be very valuable. "The locals are amazing... so warm. If I needed help, they stop and help me, if I ask them to draw a picture to get to a certain place, like the bus, they will take me there."

Even though a JET teacher is allowed to be in the program for five years, Mee has decided to return to the states after the current academic year is over. Still unsure about what her next step is, Mee is thankful for the opportunities she has experienced and the things she has learned while being in Japan.

"In reflection of my time thus far, my favorite part that stands out is the unlimited opportunities to explore. I have the opportunity to explore various regions of Japan, its culture, society, and people. I've been fortunate to have other opportunities to explore outside of Japan and travel to several South East Asian countries; through these adventures comes personal growth," Mee said.



Above: Mee Cheng and other JET participants help with Christmas decorations at Wakaba Orphanage, the largest orphanage in Kagoshima prefecture.



Right: Mee Cheng (far right) with a group of freshmen girls during passing time at school.

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A year of exploration into women's leadership and social change

by Jennifer Haut

For the past year, much of my focus has been on women's leadership and exploration for social change. It seems fitting, after all, considering my role in the St. Joseph Worker Program with a mission to empower women committed to social change and my work placement at the College of St. Catherine dedicated to educating women to lead and influence. However, when I recall the start of this year, I wasn't able to see that connection as easily.

As a senior in college I became attracted to the SJW Program because of the variety of incredible work placements offered in the Twin Cities. One such placement was the Center for Community Work and Learning.

When I interviewed at St. Kate's I was immediately interested in the service-learning and community engagement focus of the center. Still, I had some reservations about working at a college as a recent graduate myself. I wondered, too, what St. Kate's would be like, assuming that many of these students came from privilege. Where was the social justice aspect?

It didn't take long for my excitement and enthusiasm of acceptance into the SJW Program to wash away my initial uncertainties. My ideas and expectations of my volunteer year began to take shape differently as I delved further into the process. The odds seemed to be in my favor as I realized the Sisters of St. Joseph (sponsors of the SJW Program) were the founders of the college and I recognized the diversity of students present. St. Kate's seemed different than what I thought of originally. Now I could see it as a place where those with privilege are taught to lead and influence for the common good.

When I explain to people the work I engage in, sometimes they raise questions about how working at a college relates to social justice, or if I miss the direct service aspect. For the past few years, my simple goal has been to change the world—so it's not really that simple, and a rather lofty goal, but I've always dreamed big. Through the Center for Community Work and Learning I believe I am changing the world in a small way. As I've learned, or perhaps become more realistic, I know I cannot change the world because I am only one person, which also means I can't do everything. However, these realizations are manifested in the power of relationships, and in the power of community. I've had the opportunity to make site visits to organizations that are already doing great things. As I worked to build relationships with these organizations, I looked for ways

St. Kate's students could do their part to become civically engaged through service-learning and give back to the community in mutually beneficial and meaningful ways.

The power of service, combined with reflection, is not a new phenomenon; yet, the practice of service-learning seems to be growing. At St. Kate's, our center offers several service-learning courses each semester as a way for students to be challenged to jump out of their comfort zone, reach out to people different than themselves, and to get tangled up in the messiness and beauty of the real world. It seems just about any course could include a service-learning component, not just the typical majors that already prepare students for a helping profession. In my first semester working at St. Kate's, I witnessed fashion design majors create adaptive clothing for senior citizens and patients at a children's hospital, sociology students tackle urban social problems, and Spanish majors translate letters to orphans.

The work extends beyond this. As I scheduled over 60 students to tutor in local elementary schools I was more concerned with finding a classroom for each of them and making sure they had transportation to the site; I wasn't even thinking of the impact each tutor would have

on a classroom full of children, not just helping them read, but becoming their mentors. But that seems to be the case with my work placement. When I think about the long-term process of social change, I know I may never see the end results, but the important task is to plant seeds that will foster a lifetime of good work. In many ways, seeds are being planted all over the Twin Cities in schools and community organizations, but the real impact is being left on the students who will graduate with a sense of the world they are about to enter and an idea for how to change it.

I can laugh now thinking back to my original qualms about working at a college. I too bought into the idea that working at a college wasn't really social justice work. When I read positive evaluations from service-learning students and community organizations, when tutors tell me how much they love working with children on literacy skills, and when I see the impact community work has on this small part of my world, I'm convinced this is where I was meant to be during my St. Joseph Worker year.



Center for Community Work and Learning staff, 2006-2007.