



# Stony Brook Serves

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## AmeriCorps Spotlight: Emmanuella Duroska

by Lisa Crimauodo

Emmanuella Duroska cares for those who need help. Through the AmeriCorps program, she has learned the benefits of reaching out to others. Duroska has helped students achieve greatness through her community service efforts. She has taught and learned from her fellow AmeriCorps members as well as her students. As a current student in the Master of Social Welfare program, she exemplifies the goals of community service through aiding those in need.



Photo courtesy of Emmanuella Duroska.

While growing up, she displayed compassion and aided friends whenever possible. Although she entertained the notion of social work as an undergraduate, the stigmas of becoming overworked and underpaid discouraged her. After close consideration, however, Duroska decided to become a social worker because she enjoyed her experiences in the field. Her experiences ultimately led to her decision to turn her passion into a career.

Duroska believes that education is a vital aspect of college development. As her goal is to provide academic and personal support to first generation college students, Duroksa recognizes the importance of working with individuals to identify their specific needs. Duroska states that engaging in this type of work is the “essence of living” because she can empower others to overcome difficult challenges and be successful.

As an AmeriCorps member, Duroska was placed in an inner city school system, where she worked with students who had low attendance and graduation rates. She gained insight into their needs, and through the AmeriCorps program, she gave them support. She did not realize the impact she had made in their lives until “my year was coming to a close and they were not only sad to see me leave, but provided my supervisor with countless suggestions to extend my tenure”.

Duroska recalls her most memorable experience as an AmeriCorps member – watching the students she worked with all year walk across the stage at high school graduation. Duroska knew that she had played a major role in their success, as most were first generation high school graduates who did not believe that they would graduate.

In addition to AmeriCorps, Duroska mentors three undergraduate students as part of the Turner/AIM Mentoring Program (TAMP) with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at SBU. She also tutors high school students in Regents-level English at Achievement First Charter School in Brooklyn. No matter what she is doing, Duroska is utilizing her passion for the community to bring joy to those who need it most.

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## The U.S. Peace Corps Comes to Stony Brook!

by Yael Saint-Armond



Photo courtesy of [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).

The Peace Corps, a humanitarian organization dedicated to international service, came to Stony Brook University from September 24-26! President John F. Kennedy, who wanted to promote world peace and friendship, established the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. The Peace Corps strives to train men and women all over the world in humanitarian relief, and help promote cross-cultural acceptance and understanding between American citizens and the international community. Peace Corps volunteers serve in 139 countries all over the world in a number of regions, from Africa to the Pacific Islands. The organization focuses on a number of areas: education, health and HIV/AIDS, business and ICT (Information Communication Technology), environment, youth development, and agriculture. Volunteers work with local governments, communities, schools, and small businesses to address changing and complex needs in these areas.

During their stay of service, volunteers receive a living allowance that covers food, housing, and incidentals, facilitating communal integration. Volunteers also receive health insurance, medical, and dental care. Upon completion of service, Peace Corps volunteers may be eligible for loan deferment or partial loan forgiveness. They can also take advantage of the Peace Corps' job placement support, giving returning volunteers advantages in the federal employment sector.

Volunteers can also earn academic credit for their Peace Corps service and are eligible for scholarships, internships, and reduced tuition through participating schools and programs. The Peace Corps offers two educational programs: the Master's International Program and the Fellows/USA Program. The former allows volunteers to incorporate service as credit in a master's degree program in a variety of fields. The latter combines graduate level study with substantive, degree-related internships that help address the needs of underserved communities in the United States.



Photo courtesy of [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).

The Peace Corps is a wonderful opportunity for those who want to aid and serve beyond our borders and leave a lasting impact in a community abroad. Current Director Aaron S. Williams, who volunteered in the Dominican Republic states, "When I decided to serve with the Peace Corps, it was the biggest risk I'd ever taken in life. I was the first person to graduate from college in my family and their concern was that I take that tremendous achievement and settle down and have a normal career. My mother, however, thought Peace Corps was an excellent idea and she supported me. The Peace Corps is a marvelous way for a young person to develop leadership skills at a very early age that will hold you in good stead for the rest of your life."

Volunteers come from all walks of life, with an age range of 20-84 and represent all 50 states. There are more than 210,000 volunteers to date, with 9,095 currently serving. The length of service is 27 months, three of which are spent in the host country training, with the remaining 24 months spent in volunteer service. The application process can take up to one year, with applications being accepted on an ongoing basis. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old, and must be U.S. citizens. For more information about the Peace Corps and its mission, go to <http://www.peacecorps.gov>.

## Stony Brook C-CERT: Safety and Service First!

by Priyanka Vashisht



Photo courtesy of Stony Brook C-CERT.

Stony Brook C-CERT is an on campus organization that educates students about what to do in accidental and emergency situations. C-CERT also assists groups like the University Police Department (UPD) and Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SBVAC) in order to ensure safe and efficient responses during emergency situations. The organization strives to promote campus safety and improve the welfare of all students and faculty alike through their service. Established in 2008, C-CERT includes a Command Board (Eric Kunz, Jason Casale, Jeehyun Karen You), which deals with administrative procedure and planning, and an Executive Board (Jennifer Hanrahan, George Lederer, Mint Suttiprinyanon, Susan

Ching, Ashley Moreno), which deals with public relations and management of funds.

Being a member of C-CERT requires a great level of personal responsibility, compassion, and knowledge of safety measures and protocol. A number of members are certified EMTs and firefighters. As Ashley Moreno, the organization's Communications Coordinator, put it, "We chose to be proactive and take some ownership of our safety. We train and prepare for any possible incident. Provided first responders are overwhelmed, we would be there to alleviate stress and tend to the needs of a victim. We are the bridge between the police and the students." C-CERT members can easily be recognized by their trademark garb of dark green shirts, black pants and radios in hand – they are a fixture at fall football games, Opening Weekend Move-in Day, and various campus events. Recently, C-CERT was present at Freshman First Night Out and assisted Fire Marshalls in Live Burns across campus.

C-CERT's dedication to service and safety has led to increased awareness among students and improved the welfare of their peers. The organization has a knack for inspiring leadership and an active commitment to accident prevention.

C-CERT recently hosted an event on Monday, September 24 called "Emergency Response In Your Future", where a number of professionals in various fields spoke on how their experience as emergency first responders contributed to their success. For more information about C-CERT or to join, please email [sbccert@gmail.com](mailto:sbccert@gmail.com).

## From Those Who Serve: What Does Service Mean To You?

by Kristina Kuznetsov

"Service is one's dedication and outreach to help or provide for someone or something. Service can be measured in one's dedication to a particular cause. I will be helping middle school and high school girls with bullying and body image issues this semester. In my experience, service motivates me allowing me to feel accomplished and helpful."

**-Melanie Sinesi, Class of 2013**

"Service is putting the needs of other people above your own, and not expecting anything in return. Consider the brush fires back in May; firefighters were risking their lives to serve and protect the people of Long Island. As an EMT, we were asked to stand by in the case that any firefighters needed medical attention. We waited in the cold for hours, with no food or bathrooms. Questioning I did not matter how we felt, all we cared about was making sure those firefighters stayed safe, and all they cared about was making sure everyone else stayed safe. 'Me' is not a word in the vocabulary of anything to do with service."

**-Heather Bingham, Class of 2013**

## Nonprofit Spotlight: Youth Enrichment Services (YES)

by Victoria Vollaro

For many students coming from low-income families or at-risk schools, “cannot” and “no” are words often filling their vocabularies. They say that they cannot do their homework or get to school on time. They sometimes say no when it comes to changing their bad attitudes and improving their own lives. Luckily for these students, an organization has been turning cannot into can and no into Y.E.S. Youth Enrichment Services has been improving the lives of Bay Shore, Brentwood, West Islip, and Central Islip’s youth for the past two and a half decades. They are a non-profit organization whose main goal is to enrich the lives of children and their families.

There is an array of amazing programs that Y.E.S. offers extending from youth development to mentoring and after school tutoring to Saturday enrichment programs. All of these enlightening programs are geared towards specific age groups, ranging from kindergarten through high school and up to 21 years of age. The programs are all unique and specific to the respective ages but all work effectively to educate the participants and open up the door to bigger, brighter, and better opportunities. In some instances, students are court referred to Youth Enrichment Services and given a second chance to become a more productive member of the community and create a new future for themselves. Each and every program is all-inclusive and open to anyone and everyone, no exclusions. There are no criteria that must be met or preferences that are exhibited when selecting the people who can participate and be helped with these programs. Because these towns are filled with a culturally diverse mixed of people, all of the Y.E.S. programs are available in other languages, predominantly Spanish, and run by a bilingual staff.

Since this is a non-profit organization Youth Enrichment Services depends solely on donations, sponsorships, and the help of their wonderful and dedicated volunteers. Y.E.S. is always looking for new volunteers that have the drive to make a difference. Carolyn Bacz, a Y.E.S. associate, described the perfect volunteer as “someone who is motivated to change the lives of these children.” Carolyn also added that the organization asks for volunteers to use what inspires them, as individuals to contribute to the programs. As far as donations, the programs will gratefully accept any supplies, as well as monetary donations at any time. The success of this organization lies within the generosity and thoughtfulness of those willing to lend a helping hand.

Next month, Youth Enrichment Services is celebrating their 25th anniversary at Captain Bill’s Restaurant and Catering in Bayshore. The anniversary gala will take place on Tuesday, October 30 from 5:30- 9:30 pm. This affair will commemorate and honor the mentoring that has been taking place in the program and throughout the community. Y.E.S. is looking for volunteers, sponsorship, and guests to share in the celebration with them. If you would like to participate in this upcoming event, donate to this amazing cause, volunteer your time, or just learn more about the Y.E.S. organization, please visit their website at <http://www.yesnews.org>.

## Student Club Spotlight: National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH)

by Olivia Basileo

Service, Scholastics, Leadership, and Recognition: these are the four pillars that encompass the spirit of the National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH), an organization of active and elite students who reside in residence halls across the country. The NRHH chapter at Stony Brook, also known as the Gina M. Vanacore chapter, exemplifies these qualities with the utmost diligence and determination. Members are encouraged to nurture in themselves strong leadership skills, stay active in the campus community, perform and even create community service events, and spread the values of their organization’s four pillars across campus.

Composed of about sixty members—the top one percent of Stony Brook’s residential student leaders—the Gina M. Vanacore chapter engages in a variety of community service activities. Says NRHH president Sam Rosner, “I love the almost limitless potential of our organization. Because we are an organization that is not dedicated to just one principle or discipline... the opportunities for us to get involved [are] extremely vast and varied.” *(Article Continued on Next Page)*

## Student Club Spotlight: NRHH (Cont'd)

by Olivia Basileo



*Photo courtesy of NRHH.*

Members of NRHH have ran at Relay for Life, made visits to the Long Island State Veterans Home, participated in the Graduate Mentor Program, and organized the annual Bus Driver Appreciation Day, among many other activities.

Of NRHH's impressive wealth of events, Sam Rosner's favorite is Sunrise Shaves, an event he created and personally headed. With the support of his organization, he was able to put his idea into action on campus and raise \$6,500 for the Sunrise Fund, as well as find fourteen Stony Brook students willing to shave their heads to raise money for the cause; Sam says: "[A] great aspect of NRHH is the support that our members receive if

they come to us with an idea that they are truly passionate about," and he describes his experience with Sunrise Shaves as one of his most proud accomplishments in his college career. "This one experience only fueled my desire to continue this service driven leadership," Sam says, "and I am now in the midst of planning for a Bone Marrow Registry on campus which should be the largest such drive ever to come to Stony Brook."

Early this September, six members of NRHH visited Bethel Hobbs Community Farm and reaped the benefits of hard labor. Together with students from other organizations, the volunteers worked together to clear weeds from this Long Island organic farm. Members gained a new respect for the difficulty of farm work and the importance of organic crops, as well as the satisfaction of helping a local community farm in its daily labor. Sam Rosner says, "Our visit to Bethel Hobbs Farm was a great opportunity for our members to volunteer their time in a way that was physically engaging and worthwhile to the community." The volunteers managed to clear out an entire section of weeds by the end of the event—a rewarding accomplishment. Toiling away on a local farm gave the members new insight into the impact of small farms and locally grown crops on the larger Long Island area. Their service to Hobbs Community Farm was a valuable and educational experience for the student leaders, one which will likely be repeated in the future.

President Sam Rosner has learned through his experiences with NRHH that doing community service can carry very personal rewards. He recalls a speech given by a leukemia survivor, a young boy, at the Relay for Life event. Sam says, "Hearing his story, and knowing that I was able to help out at a fundraiser which would raise over \$47,000 to help people just like him was such an amazing experience. After he spoke, I was able to go up to him and personally thank him for telling his story to all the volunteers at the event..." Sam's successes through NRHH and his experiences performing service have made him a stronger and more confident leader, and have given him the satisfaction of knowing that he made a difference in his community. As a wish for the chapter's members, he says, "I think NRHH hopefully helps our members receive the confidence that they can be the leaders of tomorrow, no matter what fields of profession they choose to enter."

The Gina M. Vanacore chapter is hosting and participating in many events coming up this year, including the Stony Brook Bone Marrow Drive, the Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk, the Finals Wellness Program, Workday Welcome, and very notably, for the first time, the annual 'Tis the Season campus residences fundraiser, among numerous other events.

"Community service is a huge part of our organization and probably the pillar which is most developed and established," Sam Rosner says. "I think it a great opportunity for members, including myself, to truly feel like they are making a positive impact on the campus, in the community, or in the world."