



Stony Brook Serves

a Career Center publication

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Habitat for Humanity Generates Community Involvement

by Patrice Lopez



On a small farm in Americus, Georgia, Linda and Millard Fuller conceptualized an organization dedicated to building homes for the poor and, in 1976, realized their vision with Habitat for Humanity. Established to help alleviate the global housing crisis affecting more than 1.6 billion people, Habitat for Humanity has reached many milestones in its 33-year history. Since its inception, the internationally-recognized organization has drawn the support of a myriad of prominent figures, including President Obama, who, along with his wife Michelle, recently used the organization as a platform to promote the September 11 Day of National

In 2000, with a vision parallel to that of Habitat for Humanity's founders, Dr. Frederick Preston, former vice president of student affairs, added the Stony Brook name to the organization's legacy by founding the Habitat for Humanity, Stony Brook Chapter. Dr. Preston, for whom the Frederick R. Preston Award for Leadership and Service was named, brought the organization to Stony Brook as one of his many community service endeavors on campus. In his commitment to Habitat for Humanity, he served as a member of its Board of Directors and remained a crucial figure in the Stony Brook organization up until his retirement in 2005.

Despite the retirement of its dedicated founder, the Habitat for Humanity, Stony Brook Chapter continues its efforts, working in conjunction with a Suffolk County Habitat for Humanity affiliate to help build seven of the affiliate's 128 homes throughout Suffolk County. The most recent home the organization built was dedicated in the spring 2009 in Shirley. The Stony Brook community provided the estimated \$75,000 in funding for the building materials used for the project in 2008.

While funding the house-building initiative is a significant component of the process, it is the physical house-building experience that is more gratifying, says Stony Brook Chapter's Program Facilitator, Catherine Horgan. She explains, "It's an extremely rewarding thing to do more so than just writing a check because you actually see the house come together, it's tangible." Each semester, about 75 to 100 Stony Brook students volunteer their efforts to build homes alongside regular Habitat for Humanity employees and the families for which the homes are built.

The process of building a Habitat for Humanity home begins with a tedious and demanding housing application that can take years before it receives approval. Upon selection, the applicant must take classes to learn about the upkeep of the home, and must log nearly 1,000 hours of "sweat equity" in which they contribute to the building efforts of their own home, as well as the homes of other Habitat for Humanity homeowners. Contrary to popular belief, *(Continued on Page Four)*

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Non-Profit Organizations

Options
for Community Living, Inc.



Community Housing Innovations, Inc.

Island Harvest
Fighting Hunger. Touching Lives.

The Mental Health Association
in Suffolk County, Inc.

Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Long Island

... and more!



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STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY INVITES YOU TO
Stony Brook Community Outreach Day



WEDNESDAY, October 21, 2009
5:00pm - 8:00pm
Student Activities Center Ballroom A

- ★ *Network with local non-profit organizations*
- ★ *Bring donations to those in need*
- ★ *Sign up to volunteer with a worthy cause*
- ★ *See the accomplishments of those already involved in community service*

If you need a disability-related accommodation, please call (631) 632-6810.

For more information, follow this link: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/communityservice/>

Spotlight: Ruksana Rangwala, Setting the Standard for Service

by Cody Campbell

Ruksana Rangwala, a senior at Stony Brook, exemplifies and, indeed, sets the standard for student community service. “Growing up in Queens, New York, I had always looked for opportunities to get involved in community service, which is a passion that I have continued to foster as a college student,” Rangwala said. Majoring in biology and anthropology, she eventually wants to establish a career in medicine.

A member of the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Program, Rangwala strives to provide support for young women in a field that is typically dominated by men. She does so by organizing social and academic events in order to offer women new and diverse perspectives on their fields of interest. “These activities are geared towards providing young women with the opportunity to build organizational, communicational, and networking skills,” Rangwala said.

As the vice president of the Alpha Epsilon Delta National Health Pre-Professional Honor Society chapter on campus, Rangwala works with “organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the Make a Wish Foundation, and Better World Books to participate in projects that impact communities both locally and globally,” she said. “Being part of AED allows me to encourage others to get involved in community

service and to participate in a number of different projects that benefit a diverse population. By establishing a team of volunteers, we are able to work on a larger scale and have a greater impact.”

Rangwala also volunteers at Stony Brook Child Care Services, providing much-needed assistance by supplying the children with quality care and a safe environment to ensure proper growth and development. “I love interacting with children,” she said. “It makes me feel like I am contributing to the development of a brighter and healthier future.”

Illustrating her ability to adapt and utilize her skill set in diverse and challenging scenarios, Rangwala volunteered at Snehalaya, an orphanage in Gwalior, India. “I helped the teachers in the classrooms by providing mental stimulation in accordance to the needs and learning capabilities of each child. I assisted with physiotherapy for children with cerebral palsy, provided basic sensory stimulation to those with severe learning, hearing and visual difficulties, as well as vocational training for the older children.”

Rangwala’s passion and excitement for community service demonstrates the two-fold impact volunteering has. In her own words, “Helping these children live a more fulfilling life has made me feel like I have truly achieved something. My contributions to Snehalaya have been the proudest moments of my life—they have made me stronger, helped me grow as a person and further rooted my dedication to pursue medicine.”



Photo courtesy of Ruksana Rangwala.



For more information, please contact Urszula Zalewski at uzalewski@notes.cc.sunysb.edu.

Oxfam America, Stony Brook Chapter

by Melanie Tam



*Photo courtesy of the Oxfam America,
Stony Brook chapter..*

What started as a leadership and service course taught by Professor Manuel London about fighting hunger and poverty has blossomed into something called Oxfam America, Stony Brook chapter. The organization is a subdivision of Oxfam International. Oxfam International is a group of 13 subdivisions that come together to try to solve poverty and injustice. Sonia Kazmarzyk, the president of the Stony Brook chapter, works with her members, as well as the Stony Brook community, to promote awareness about issues ranging from climate change to fair trade in coffee.

Though Oxfam America at Stony Brook is a relatively new name, its members have been successful on getting the word out on a variety of important issues. With their Fair Trade Coffee Fundraiser, sponsored by the Faculty Student Association, five cents of every Fair Trade cup of coffee that was sold on campus during a two-week period was donated to self-employed coffee farmers in Ethiopia.

The group also held a Hunger Banquet where more than 100 students attended and learned about the poverty and hunger that exists in other countries. To contribute further to the cause, the members of the Stony Brook chapter tabled at each dining hall for students to donate their meal points. Those donated points went toward a meal for a less fortunate family.

In 2007, Kazmarzyk was fortunate enough to be chosen to attend the CHANGE Initiative, a one-week program held in Boston that trains college leaders to become “skilled and knowledgeable agents of change” (<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatyoucando/take-action/student-action/change>). This program allowed 50 college students to learn about many aspects of Oxfam’s mission. It was a week that challenged them “physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally,” said Kazmarzyk. “It was a truly life-changing experience which motivated us to return to our colleges and universities with a new outlook, a plan, and a goal to initiate Oxfam on our campuses and spread the immense knowledge we had learned during our time in Boston.”

Kazmarzyk wants students to get more involved with Oxfam by attending club meetings, where they can obtain more information. As for the upcoming semester, some chapter goals include recruiting more members and working with other clubs and organizations to promote Oxfam’s ideals, like Catholic Campus Ministry and the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

At the time this article went to print, general body meetings had not been established. Please be sure to contact Sonia Kaczmarzyk, president of Oxfam America’s SB chapter, at ooglezoogle88@aol.com for more information about upcoming meetings.

Habitat for Humanity Article, Continued from Cover Page

homes are not given away, but rather paid for in mortgages by the recipients who are low-wage workers, but gainfully employed.

Stony Brook Chapter is currently awaiting approbation from new Stony Brook University president, Dr. Samuel Stanley Jr., before it can embark on future projects. Once it receives his support, it will continue its efforts with fundraisers and other organized events. As it awaits approval, Horgan continues to speak highly of the organization’s positive effects, stating, “There is nothing so rewarding as...seeing the faces of the families on dedication day; you realize that you were part of making a major change in their lives.”

Ashley Zwerin Starts C.O.S.T. for Tanzania

by Steven Giugliano

Stony Brook University junior Ashley Zwerin spent this past summer taking an anthropology course in Tanzania, East Africa. She learned a lot more about human beings than she had expected. While immersed in the culture for four weeks, Zwerin met children with HIV and malaria, children who do not eat, teens who have dropped out of school, and people who live in huts made out of cow dung where they sleep with insects nesting on their bodies. Zwerin realized that even while living in these conditions, the people still went on with their lives. “The most amazing part of it all,” Zwerin said, “was that all of the children I met had a smile on their face, a glow in their heart and a positive attitude for a productive, successful future.”

Upon arriving back home, Zwerin knew she had finally found a cause she wanted to support. In an effort to spread awareness and raise money to support the struggling people of Tanzania, Zwerin founded Clinics, Orphanages, Schools in Tanzania (C.O.S.T.). Her goal is to raise \$5,000 by the summer of 2010 with the help of Stony Brook University and some of its professors. She will then return to Tanzania and use the money to purchase school supplies, mattresses, and mosquito nets. Zwerin is not just keeping her effort contained to Stony Brook University. She is reaching out to all of Long Island, and was recently interviewed by News Channel 12.



Photo courtesy of <http://supportcost.webs.com/>



Photo courtesy of <http://supportcost.webs.com/>

Johanni, a 12-year-old Tanzanian child, particularly touched Zwerin’s heart and influenced her to start this program. He approached Zwerin as she was souvenir shopping and asked her to buy a necklace for him. She did not have enough money, but spent time speaking with the child, who was not in school because he needed to spend money on medicine when he got sick. He was an insulin-dependent diabetic and had a restricted diet. As an aspiring physician’s assistant, Zwerin was appalled to see so many scars on a child. She said how it was sad to see such an intelligent young man not be able to further his education that he once loved so much.

Zwerin plans to go to elementary, middle, and high schools to hold assemblies about her experience and what they can do to help. She also plans on having fundraising events at restaurants and a benefit concert at the beginning of next year. In the past two months, Zwerin has accumulated almost \$3,000 as a result of her fundraising efforts. “It feels like a million bucks!” she described. “I just want to make a difference. Even if just one person reads about what we’re doing, and it changes their life in some big or small way, I will die a happy woman. I will be happy to know that I can make a difference in a child’s educational background or in their choices. I think, little by little, a little becomes a lot and that is one of the biggest things I have learned through these last few weeks.”

The Peace Corps Comes to Stony Brook

by Cody Campbell

Peace Corps representatives will be at Stony Brook on October 14 to provide an information session for students who may be interested in volunteering and donating their skills in countries around the world. The Peace Corps is a government-run development organization that places Americans in underdeveloped or developing nations. In doing so, the volunteer has the ability to share the knowledge gained through his or her academic and professional careers.



With volunteers on almost every continent, the Peace Corps offers a tantalizing opportunity not only for those in under-developed countries but also for volunteers. Besides the good feeling that comes along with helping others, volunteers will come home with a whole new range of possibilities. The Peace Corps works with more than 40 universities that offer financial assistance to returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who pursue graduate studies in a variety of subject areas. Moreover, the knowledge and experience gained working in a diverse and challenging environment provides RPVCs with an unparalleled advantage in the job market.

To learn more, join us in the Wang Center, room 301, on October 14th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. You can also

The Muslim Students Association

by Melanie Tam



One word to describe the Stony Brook campus is diverse, and the Muslim Students Association definitely encompasses this theme. The club is dedicated to serving the needs and concerns of Muslim students and faculty members, while spreading awareness to the campus community about the principles of Islam.

The Muslim Students Association is very involved at Stony Brook and in the local community. Annually, they hold a food drive on campus with the Muslims Against Hunger Project to collect food to send to orphanages and homeless shelters. One of their major projects was called "Pennies for Peace," in which they collected money to help build an elementary school in a war-torn region of Afghanistan. To raise awareness about Muslim

culture, the MSA holds a "Scarves for Solidarity" event to dispel Muslim stereotypes. They sell headscarves and the profits go toward the Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

MSA's major event is their annual Fast-A-Thon. They encourage people on campus from all walks of life to sign up to fast for a day. For each faster they get, their sponsors will donate money to a charity. Some charities included in the past were UNICEF and Oxfam International.

The Muslim Students Association meets Wednesdays during Campus Lifetime in the Interfaith Room (Student Union room 249).

**Receive Training in Crisis Intervention!
Turn to Page Eight for more details.**

Island Harvest

by Christina Positano

Can you imagine going to bed each night hungry? Or not being able to have a snack whenever you want? For many Long Islanders, hunger is a reality of daily life. Island Harvest, the largest hunger-relief organization on Long Island, is ensuring that food goes to those in need. Since its inception in 1992, the organization has given more than 56 million pounds of food to local communities. The volunteer-based group delivers food, which most likely would have gone to waste, to more than 570 food pantries, soup kitchens and feeding service organizations. Island Harvest also conducts outreach to educate the community and raise awareness about hunger on Long Island.



Photo courtesy of Island Harvest.

This past summer, I got involved with Island Harvest's Summer Food Blitz, which distributes food to feeding organizations during the months of July and August when many children do not have the benefit of school breakfast and lunch. I enjoyed helping out, and it was nice to see so many volunteers contribute to such a great cause. Island Harvest is always looking for dedicated volunteers and will have many more opportunities this fall, like the ones listed below:

Turkey & Trimmings Collection Campaign – November through December 2009

Position: Volunteers will be assisting with supermarket-based events, promotional events and food drives in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Islander Game Food Drive – Nassau Coliseum, Wednesday, November 25th 5:00-7:30pm

Position: Volunteers will be collecting food at six locations at the Coliseum. Approximately 15 volunteers needed.

Rexcorp Tree Lighting – December, 2009

Position: Volunteers will help with "Light Up Someone's Life Campaign" at Reckson Plaza. Those who attend tree lighting are asked to give a dollar and sponsor a light bulb on the Christmas tree.

And the giving doesn't stop here! Be sure to check out www.islandharvest.org for more opportunities. For additional information about any of the listed events, please e-mail Joan Flynn at joan@islandharvest.org.

From Those Who Serve... Community Service Testimonials

"I spent a lot of the beginning of summer not doing much of anything, but I really did want to make a difference somewhere. I emailed Taryn Kutujian, a career center advisor, about volunteer opportunities in my area after looking on the SB website and the rest was history. This summer I participated in three different volunteer jobs; I volunteered at a soup kitchen called Project Hospitality, a daycare center called KidSmart, and a retirement home called Seaview Hospital Rehabilitation Center. Honestly, it was one of the most worthwhile things I have done." **Michael Deyro, student volunteer**

I participated in Vacation Bible School working as an art teacher. My reason for participating is that it's fun and I've been doing it for a while. I went to vacation bible school from preschool and once I graduated from it in the 6th grade, I became an assistant art teacher, and have been doing it annually ever since. Now I'm the only one left volunteering every summer and I have my own assistants. I enjoy partaking in VBS because the kids are fun and they always take the basic craft I present and make it into something funny or clever. **Jessica Yangis, Bible School Volunteer**



Hotline (631) 751-7500
Office (631) 751-7620
Fax (631) 751-7420
www.ResponseHotline.org
P.O. Box 300
Stony Brook, NY 11790

Listen Carefully... You Can Make A Difference

RESPONSE of Suffolk County's Fall Training Program Dates Are Set!

Part one of our FREE Volunteer Training Program will take place on

October 17th, 18th, 24th and 25th

(All sessions must be attended)

Stony Brook University's Wang Center

(<http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/wang/directions.shtml>)

Training is scheduled from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm each day, and includes lectures and skills development. No experience is necessary, only a sincere willingness to learn and grow, and the ability to make a six-month commitment of four hours a week is required. *College credit may be available!*

Volunteer crisis counselors take calls about everything - loneliness, grief, substance abuse, mental illness, family conflict, suicidal thoughts, etc. There are many struggles that people don't like to discuss with even the best of friends – and that's when a stranger can make the best listener. We also make telephone "visits" to people who are isolated due to a physical disability or mental illness on our Support Line. As a telephone crisis counselor, volunteers learn to engage callers, explore options, handle emergency situations and make referrals to community resources.

Join us and see for yourself how rewarding an experience it can be! Volunteer as a telephone crisis counselor with Response of Suffolk County and become the caring voice on the other end of the phone! Please respond to let us know if we can expect you!

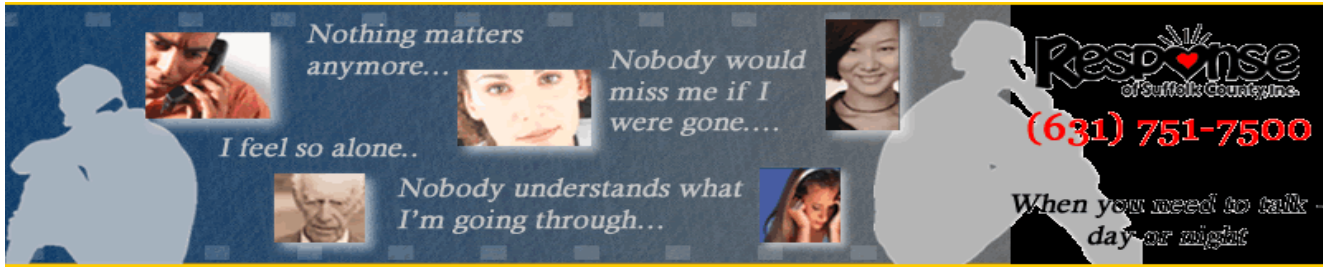
Lisa Zeller
Training Coordinator
Lzeller@ResponseHotline.org

"Good listeners help people hear themselves."

Response of Suffolk County is a nationally accredited community based agency that provides crisis intervention/suicide prevention services through its hotline and online programs. The agency's mission is to prevent self-destructive behavior by helping people feel understood and supported.

Response of Suffolk County, Inc.

by Steven Giugliano



Freshman orientation. Transfer student workshops. Bulletin Boards. SBU television. These are all places where students can see and hear about Stony Brook's Response Hotline, a phone number where people can call day or night to seek help that will hopefully lower their anxiety about an issue and raise their ability to cope with an issue. Volunteers and workers at the hotline are there to help callers with prevention of self-destructive behaviors or suicide. The hotline also offers referrals, information programs, and resources that are available in the community.

The Response Hotline also seeks help from Stony Brook students as volunteers. Ruchi (whose real name is being withheld since volunteers are kept anonymous) is a senior studying biology and psychology at Stony Brook. She has been a volunteer telephone and online crisis counselor at Response of Suffolk County since September 2008. Ruchi, who loves to help people, says she is being proactive. "I don't want to go through college so I can get a career in which I help people," she said. "I want to do it now. I feel that the job I do at Response is meaningful and reaches people everywhere. I'm speaking to the middle school student and I'm speaking to the retired grandmother, and I'm listening to them where no one else will."

Ruchi believes her job at Response is the least she can do to help people and sees herself doing such helping/healing work as a profession. She says the most rewarding part of her job is "the gratification in a caller's voice when you say the 'right' thing -- the thing that makes them feel understood and supported."

In 2008, the hotline's telephone counselors responded to over 16,000 calls. "In over 1,800 calls, money/work issues were a struggle, and almost as many people called the hotline seeking referral information. Over 750 calls related to suicide, and nearly 300 were about the suicidal thoughts of a loved one or colleague. This is in addition to the hundreds of calls about domestic violence, relationship issues, and from those seeking additional counseling." (responsehotline.org)

Response is always reaching out and looking for new student volunteers. The first part of their crisis counselor training will be held on October 17, 18, 24 and 25, and consists of approximately 25 hours of skills training, including presentations by area professionals as well as role-playing opportunities. Training sessions will be held from 9:30 am – 4:00 pm on each of those days at the Wang Center (Room 101) at Stony Brook University. Attendance is required on all four days. Although no prior experience is necessary, the response hotline does ask for a commitment of four hours a week for six months. Those interested can visit www.ResponseHotline.org for more information and to submit an online volunteer application.

If people feel the need for crisis intervention and/or a suicide prevention hotline they are urged to call Response of Suffolk County at their 24-hour Crisis Hotline (631) 751-7500 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK.

Submit Your Articles!

The AmeriCorps VISTA Program encourages students, faculty, and staff to get involved with community service activities. Our publication is the place to share your stories with the Stony Brook community! Submit articles and photos, share information about projects, and list upcoming events. Please send all submissions to **Taryn Kutujian, VISTA Coordinator, Career Center**, at stonybrookserves@gmail.com. Be sure to include your name, phone number, and email address.