Hundreds of Sixth Graders Visit the U with Project Youth

Project Youth, held on April 26th, was a great success. Celebrating its 25th year, this program continues to be a wonderful University tradition. Ten Title 1 schools – about 700 kids – participated with 200 University of Utah student volunteers from all over campus, including the fraternity system, the Student Alumni Board, the Social and Behavioral Science Ambassadors and the Bennion Center. The opening pep rally at Libby Gardner Hall promoted higher education with inspiring talks by a football player and coach and teachers. Swoop and the cheerleaders were also there to rally for the Utes. Students then visited academic departments such as architecture, physics and the Hinckley Institute of Politics. They ate their lunch on the Union’s west patio overlooking a campus that welcomed them on a gorgeous spring day.

By Megan Folsom
Project Youth Program Director

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

On January 14 the Bennion Center partnered with the Black Student Union on campus and the LDS Democrats from the community to host a day of service as part of the U’s week-long celebration. One partner from each organization formed a team that planned the volunteer projects to provide a variety of projects from which volunteers can choose. Nearly 200 volunteers spent Saturday morning at one of our four community partners – the Utah AIDS Foundation, First Step House, the YWCA and Maliheh Free Clinic. Thanks to Einstein Bagels, the morning started with food for the volunteers who gathered at the Union to learn about the missions of the community partners and the volunteer projects we would work on. Carpools took volunteers across the city to serve from nine to noon. Tremendous thanks to all of the partners and volunteers who made this day a rousing success. We look forward to making MLK Day 2013 even bigger!

By Nancy Winemiller-Basinger
Faculty Engagement Director

In this issue

Community Engagement Luncheon 2
Graduating Students 2
Service-Learning Scholars 3
Spring Celebration 3
Bend-In-The-River 4
Farewell from Elsa 4
Alumni Reflection 4
Alternative Spring Break 5
Student Board 5
Message from Director 6
Many Individuals Honored at Community Engagement Luncheon

On March 29 the Bennion Center hosted the Annual Community Engagement Recognition Luncheon. Over 70 faculty, students and community partners were present to celebrate the University's community engagement. This year Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Martha Bradley provided the welcoming remarks, highlighting the work and life of our colleague and friend Matt Bradley, who passed away only a week before the luncheon. Ann Darling, senior associate dean of Undergraduate Studies, presented the Distinguished Faculty Service Award to Dr. Ronald Smelser. Dr. Smelser, a professor in the history department, was honored for his 30 years of service to the campus and the community. He established the Days of Remembrance event honoring victims of the Holocaust, serves on several local boards and works with the homeless through Calvary Baptist Church. Dr. Smelser's award of a $1000 donation went to the student scholarship fund at Calvary Baptist Church.

Dr. Darling presented the Public Service Professorship to Drs. Trinh Mai (social work) and Yda Smith (occupational therapy). Their project will support refugees from the Karen people who have lived for nearly a generation in the camps. As Dr. Darling notes, people who have lived for more than 20 years in refugee camps have histories of the Karen people.

The center honored the recipients of the Utah Campus Compact, University of Utah Civicly Engaged Awards. This year’s Civicly Engaged Scholar is Dr. Geoff Silcox (chemical engineering), whose students work with the Department of Air Quality to measure particulate matter and analyze results during winter inversions. The Civicly Engaged Student is Carly Chapple, an environmental science graduate who co-founded the Arts for Youth program, which provides art opportunities for after-school programs. The Commited Community Partner is Jacob Brace, the executive director at Neighborhood House, who has made a long-term commitment to the University’s service-learning students. The Civicly Engaged Academy Program is the Honors College Think Tank, which has engaged students in active community problem-solving for the past five years.

Kathryn Lindquist received the Chelsea Hale Creative Community Service Award. She has been a creative advocate for community building as she has given back through tireless service on boards, committees and causes. This year’s recipient of the Dan Wendelboe Continuous Community Service Award, Rick Van De Graff, has been involved in the Bennion Center as both a student leader and a community relations liaison. 20 years ago Rick served with Dan Wendelboe as liaison for project Projimo, when Dan passed away. Thus, it seems fitting he received this award this year. By Nancy Winemiller-Basinger Faculty Engagement Director

Graduating Student Leaders Join the Ranks of the Bennion Center Alumni

Each year the Bennion Center welcomes new student leaders and bids farewell to those who have spent countless hours serving through the Bennion Center. However, their commitment to service does not end at graduation. These students continue to be involved in the community as they begin the next phase of their lives as Bennion Center alumni. Some of their next projects include graduate school, medical school, pharmacy school, Teach for America, scientific research, travel, internships and AmeriCorps.

Congratulations to these graduates!

Alexandrea Nichols Service-Learning Scholar, Scholars Leadership Team
Alice Ma America Reads Tutor, Education and Advocacy Coordinator, Student Board Co-Chair
Aline Porath Davis Service-Learning Scholar
Anna Kafka Service-Learning Scholar
Ashutos Upadhyay Alternative Spring Break Site Leader
Ben Herbert America Reads Tutor
Blake Perez Ingles Para Latinas Program Director
Carly Chapple Arts for Youth Program Director
Chase Rigby Salt Lake Peer Court Program Director
Christiana Tawzer Service-Learning Scholar
Doug Chan Alternative Spring Break Site Leader
Dylan Gregersen Environmental Stewardship Coordinator
Eliza Valerio America Reads Tutor
Jaimie Riding Service-Learning Scholar, Health Access Project Program Director
Jon Liu Alternative Spring Break Coordinator

By Nancy Winemiller-Basinger Faculty Engagement Director
Congratulations to the 2012 Service-Learning Scholars!

This year 15 scholars graduated from the Service-Learning Scholars program. Three earned the certificate by completing 400 hours of service and 10 credit hours of service-learning coursework. Twelve received the full designation for completing an Integrated Service Project (ISP) in addition to volunteer hours and classes. All together graduates completed over 6,000 hours of service. Congratulations, graduates!

*Alexandra Yost majored in psychology and volunteered with several art therapy programs. She is passionate about helping people suffering from mental illness express themselves through art.

Alexandra Nichols participated in three Alternative Spring Break trips focusing on various issues. For her ISP she created a physical fitness and nutrition program: “Health and Lifestyles: The power of choice” for the Girl Scouts of Utah.

Alicia Porath Davis planned and organized a 5k for Rocky Mountain Care Foundation, a nonprofit home care and hospice organization, raising more than $2,000. Following her recommendations, the 5k will continue to raise needed funds for the foundation.

Anna Kafka volunteered as a tutor and mentor through various agencies. For her ISP she created a website for the Chemistry Department’s Community Outreach program, which functions to optimize educational instruction for non-traditional students.

Brittany McDowell created a procedure and instruction notebook for the University of Utah Special Olympics Team. It addresses athlete records, volunteer coordination, transportation and fundraising recommendations.

Christiana Tawzer created a sexual assault and dating violence prevention program for adolescents in partnership with UCASA and Tyson Kay, a fellow scholar. She has volunteered as a counselor at Camp Hobe and worked with events for Utah MS.

*Corey Biesinger volunteered at the Juvenile Detention Center, helping detainees realize that they are able to change their lives and succeed at attaining a college education. Corey also helped fix computers for people who didn’t have the time, money or resources.

Jamie Ridings has volunteered as a coach, teacher, tutor, mentor, gardener, laborer, case manager and friend to many people through service at the Bennion Center. For her ISP Jamie worked with Rise, Inc. to create a curriculum to educate and motivate youth with special needs on fitness for life.

*Kim Oanh Cao was a program director for Franklin Elementary School, where she recruited volunteers to help tutor 4th graders. She participated in an Alternative Spring Break trip to Los Angeles where she learned more about how HIV/AIDS affects people.

Michael Chen volunteered in several areas in the Bennion Center. He also helped construct parade floats with the Chinese Society of Utah. His ISP was the creation of Fitness Hour with Seniors.

Parker Chapple has helped with family mentoring, ESL and health issues for refugees. For his ISP, he worked with Wasatch Community Gardens researching, designing and constructing a passive solar power system which was applied to an existing greenhouse.

Patom Lerslerphant created and presented oral hygiene information to students at Mountain View Elementary. The presentations teach students about the importance of oral health for a person’s physical well-being. She created English and Spanish versions of a brochure for students to take home.

Tina Huynh has volunteered with Knitting for Newbies, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the State of Utah Office of Refugee Services. Tina’s ISP entailed creating a kindergarten-to-second-grade biology curriculum for Title I elementary schools.

Tony Valdez volunteered at Intermountain Healthcare and performed medical interpretation at the Mal tfree Clinic. For his ISP he worked with the Pingree School for Children With Autism, translating all medical and personal information documents from English to Spanish.

Tyson Kay served the community by volunteering in the Emergency Department of the Salt Lake Regional Medical Center assisting patients and staff. For his ISP, in partnership with Christiana Tawzer, he wrote a curriculum on sexual assault and dating violence for Utah teens that will be used by the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

*Designates Certificate recipient.

By JaNae Lilly
Community Engaged Learning Coordinator

Celebrating Another Successful Year

Before they began the arduous process of completing exams and other academic requirements, student leaders gathered at Camp Tracy up Millcreek Canyon with alumni, board members, community partners and staff to celebrate another successful year at the Bennion Center. Students and staff exchanged stories and honored colleagues as everyone got better acquainted over dinner. Videos taken at service events played through the evening and are available to view online at www.youtube.com/bennioncenter.

Below are the volunteer hours student leaders reported:

Health and Ability 6,459
Environmental 3,035
Education and Advocacy 2,581
International Service 2,702
Alternative Breaks 4,840
Service House 1,275
Service-Learning Scholars 5,500

Find more detailed statistics, information and reflections in our upcoming annual report.

By Lacey Holmes
Public Relations Coordinator

Thank You

Without the support of our many donors, we would not be able to continue the programs we do. Thank you to all of you.

Below are some organizations we would like to thank particularly for their in-kind donations to our students and volunteer programs.

Chase Bank
Dolcetti Gelato
Red Moose Café
REI
Sugar House Coffee
University Bookstore
University of Utah Licensing
University Union
Zen Living Yoga Center
Farewell

Farewell from Elsa

I had just graduated high school and moved to Utah when I first walked through the doors of the Bennion Center for an interview to be an America Reads tutor. Little did I know that nine years later I would be walking through that door again and again, continually striving to share the joy of reading and community service with others. Through the many years I have experienced many joys, frustrations, successes and challenges. I have enjoyed working with this great community of students, staff and community partners. Getting to watch our students grow and learn and see how they have changed the lives of others, has been the best part of my job over the years.

It is with mixed emotions that I depart the Bennion Center. I am sad to leave this great community, yet excited for a new adventure. Starting this fall semester, I will be shifting my dedication from social to environmental justice. I have accepted an offer for graduate study at Oregon State University’s Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society. Before I go back to school, this summer I will also be serving as a Utah Conservation Corps’ AmeriCorps Crew Member.

By Elsa Gustavson
America Reads Coordinator

Alumni Reflection

My greatest memory from the Bennion Center was my involvement with the Service-Learning Scholars program. It was one of the defining components of my time at the university. I learned a lot during the course of the Service-Learning Scholars program. I learned that there is an extraordinary number of service opportunities on campus and in the community which provide real, meaningful service for those in need. I learned that the Bennion Center was at the forefront of a lot of the service-learning work that was then starting to emerge on campuses across the country. We had (and still have) some wonderful leaders at the Bennion Center. But I think the most important things from my time at the Bennion Center were the relationships that I formed – relationships with classmates, leaders, professors and community leaders. Those relationships are treasured memories as I look back on my Bennion Center experience.

After graduating, I moved to New York for law school and then to Phoenix, Arizona for work. I recently relocated back to Salt Lake City to practice with a small law firm and am so happy to be back! The biggest impact the Bennion Center has made on my life now is teaching me how to become engaged in the community. I am heavily involved in my church and children’s school. I am also involved in a number of volunteer organizations in the community, all of which I can trace back to my training at the Bennion Center.

By Shane Gosdis
Bennion Center Alum

Shane Gosdis served as the Legal Aid program director and graduated as a service-learning scholar.

Environmental Efforts at Bend-in-the-River

Busy Bend-in-the-River hosted three volunteer events on the site’s stunning natural space this spring. The REI Spring Clean-Up took place March 31 with a large turnout of 140 people. Community volunteers eagerly got to work clearing our dead foliage and top-priority invasive species as well as repairing rock walls and board walks. This event was a great kick-off to the volunteer season. Thanks to everyone who came out to celebrate!

For the Earth Day event, held on April 21, the Bend partnered with REI and Chase Bank to engage the community at the Social Justice Gardens at Jackson Elementary and the Bend. Two hundred fifty volunteers enjoyed the beautiful weather while lending a hand in painting, weeding and building a new community garden.

The Bennion Center looks forward to partnering another year with Salt Lake Parks and Public Lands in stewardship of the green space. We believe Bend-in-the-River can serve as a catalyst for community building and outdoor classroom learning; it reminds everyone of our personal connection to the environment. Bennion Center student leader Dylan Gregersen summed it up best: “Urban green spaces are vital to connecting us to nature. The Bend is one of those places which is an escape from the everyday. This space deserves attention and respect from our community so that we and future generations will have natural places to feel alive in.”

Join us for fall events at the Bend. For more information please visit the Bend-in-the-River website at http://bennioncenter.org/bend.

By Kris Penn
Student Programs Coordinator
Every year, more than a hundred students pile into vans and travel to various cities across the western United States and Canada to participate in volunteer service as part of the Alternative Spring Break program. Through a week of service in their respective communities, these students gain a unique understanding of social issues and volunteer service. Included here is a collection of student reflections and photos from the Spring 2012 trips.

**Arcata, California**
*Environmental Stewardship*
“I loved it. Everyone was so great, and I learned so much about the world of sustainability, going green and natural vs. invasive species.”
— Alicia Platt

**San Juan, Utah**
*Environmental Stewardship*
“Learning so much about the desert and river, surrounded by great company, was better than expected. I was nervous beforehand, but had a great time.”
— Taylor Thompson

**Portland, Oregon**
*Urban Planning*
“The trip catalyzed my life. The experiences were life-changing and the people were (and undoubtedly still are) amazing. I was able to develop some of my freshly forming perspectives on my future, on society, on others’ roles within a society, the meaning of friendship, the value of life, and the impact of a human civilization on the environment. Sounds lofty, but it was so worth it.”
— Nicholas Shifrar

**Pt. Reyes, California**
*Environmental Stewardship*
“The part that had the most impact was probably the people. Everyone was so nice and fun and I feel like we all became super close. I won’t forget it. Even just doing a little bit of work (i.e. one patch of ice-plant) has a big impact in the long run. We rocked at getting that plant out.”
— Sadie Barker

**San Diego, California**
*HIV/AIDS*
“Getting out of Utah and seeing real diversity had an honest impact on my perspective. I’ll just keep the people I met in mind and remember all the great people I encountered and how prejudice is such an issue and can be so easily overcome.”
— Nisha Kavalam

**Las Vegas, Nevada**
*Youth and Addiction*
“Originally I didn’t realize how much the service, as well as the contact with peers who are unlike myself, would help me self-reflect. I thought it would be a basic week of service that I would perform and then return to normal life. Instead I received an experience that was enlightening on many levels and has changed my outlook and attitude forever.”
— Diana Nelson

**Seattle, Washington**
*Hunger and Homelessness*
“The impact of different views on the homeless, hungry and poor helped me to form my views on how I am going to approach these problems and offer solutions. The ASB experience was much more than I thought it would be. This was an absolutely amazing experience”
— Derek Woodruff

**San Francisco, California**
*HIV/AIDS and Poverty*
“I was nervous I wouldn’t be as open as I thought I would be, but I felt safe and never uncomfortable.”
— Emilee Cooke

**Vancouver, British Columbia**
*Healthcare*
“[ASB] opened my eyes to the necessity of preventative measures to decrease healthcare costs in both nations.”
— Alyssa Lolofle

---

**Student Board**

Much of what we do at the Bennion Center is directed and organized by our student board. Thank you to the 2011-2012 student board.

*From left to right: Taylor Thompson, Rachel Barnes, Alexi Nicholes, Alice Ma, Tyler Quist, Jon Liu, Miche Lee, Parker Chapple, Dylan Greggersen.*

*Not Pictured: Sammantha Stens.*
Director’s Message

How has another academic year flown by so quickly? This year has seen so many accomplishments, it is hard to spotlight only a few. However, I must say that increased participation from alumni has been outstanding.

It is noteworthy that for the first time an alum has served as Bennion Center Advisory Board chair. Kim Paulding, a 1998 graduate of the center and the U, has led a banner year with our board, including the formation of a new alumni committee. Under Kim’s leadership the alumni committee is undertaking several new projects: planning the center’s 25th anniversary celebration, organizing an alumni service trip to Costa Rica at the end of June (with staff member Gina Russo guiding), coordinating home improvement projects for the 9th annual Legacy of Lowell Service Day on September 8th, and enhancing President Pershing’s inauguration week with a community engagement day on campus and in the community.

In December I reported that University administration had committed to increase the center’s state funding by $50,000 per year over a four-year period. This additional revenue has started to come in and will cover roughly one-half of the annual budget, significantly reducing pressure on private donors and endowment performance. This, plus the Culture of Giving campaign in an interest-bearing account, will help all of us who love the Bennion Center rest assured it will be here for our children and grandchildren. We know we have improved the center’s financial footing and could survive another era of economic difficulty.

You students, faculty, community partners and donors are so strongly committed to service. You are among those across the nation who believe that the time to be actively engaged in the community is right now, regardless of your stage and station in life. We are honored to be among your friends. Please know how much we appreciate your support.

By Linda Dunn
Director

Upcoming Bennion Center Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legacy of Lowell Day of Service</td>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benion Center Open House</td>
<td>9/17-21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service House Dialogue</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennion Hinckley Forum</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Fall</td>
<td>Oct. 6-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service House Dialogue</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennion Hinckley Forum</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Service Project</td>
<td>10/18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Pershing’s Inauguration Community Engaged Day</td>
<td>10/23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Service Project: Fall Leaf Haul</td>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service House Dialogue</td>
<td>11/13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennion Hinckley Forum</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beanion Center 25th Anniversary Celebration</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Hunger Banquet</td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service House Dialogue</td>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennion Hinckley Forum</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Service Project: MLK Day of Service</td>
<td>1/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please visit our website for specific times and locations. www.BennionCenter.org

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please send your contact information to info@bennioncenter.org