**7th Annual Legacy of Lowell is a Huge Success**

Honoring a man who devoted his life to community service and outreach, the Bennion Center hosted the 7th Annual Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day on Saturday, September 18, 2010.

"Legacy of Lowell is held every year to keep in mind the work that Lowell L. Bennion did for the University of Utah and Salt Lake communities," said Bryce Williams, the center’s student external outreach coordinator. "It is a great opportunity to bring together members of the community from different walks of life to engage in service."

More than 1,200 volunteers gathered at Parkview Elementary to provide 3,000 total hours of service. Students, parents, professors, alumni staff, and community members arrived at 8am for registration and were transported to various locations to serve.

Volunteer sites included Bend-in-the-River, Globus Relief, Parkview Elementary, Utah Food Bank, Mountain View Elementary, Habitat for Humanity, Horizonte, Neighborhood House, and Bad Dog Rediscoverers America. Volunteers performed services that included land restoration, hygiene kit assembly, quilting, knitting, food sorting, gardening, home improvement projects, literacy tutoring, and more.

The event’s success is demonstrated through remarkable numbers: more than five million dollars’ worth of medical supplies sorted for overseas distribution; 20 quilts tied for refugee families; 42 hats knit for newborns; 700 books given to children; 3,019 pounds of food sorted for locals; 1 ton of compost spread; 30 homes renovated; 36 adults tutored in English; and 100 educational packets assembled.

Although the outcomes are immense, for many volunteers the work is about the relationships and services fostered. “As soon as you get involved and see what is out in the community, you can’t help but get emotionally connected to the people you are helping,” said Ryan Price, a Bennion Service House resident and student programs co-chair. "As soon as that happens you are always connected and desire to be a part of service."

**Bennion Service House Residents Serve and Learn**

Living together in the Bennion Service House are 12 diverse, fun and creative individuals who promote service across the valley and foster a sense of community on the U’s Officers Circle. These eleven girls and one guy defined their individual service goals in August to help guide them in organizing projects throughout the year.

This year’s residents have coordinated several service-related events. Among these are on-going, monthly Service House Dialogues, where community partners address local issues with students interested in discussion. Residents also took part in the Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day, helping improve the home of an elderly resident in the Rose Park neighborhood. Further, they helped organize Officers Hollow, an event that brings children who are disabled or otherwise disadvantaged, the leadership team with registration for and participated in the Newbies program. The event was a huge success!

By Marcia Homer, Public Relations Intern

![A volunteer helps a refugee with her English skills at Horizonte.](image)

**Scholars Leadership Team Gets Students Involved in Service**

The Service-Learning Scholars Leadership Team consists of four students dedicated to incorporating service into their coursework and passionate about getting other students involved in the program. Seniors Katie Hobbs (exercise physiology), Morgan Marietti (health education and promotion), and Lupe Ochoa (marketing) will be graduating in spring ’11, and junior Alexi Nichols (exercise physiology) will be graduating in spring ’12.

The team visited 26 classes, recruiting 16 scholars this semester and five more for January. They also coordinated a retreat for all scholars, helped with registration for and participated in the Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day, and helped organize the Bennion Center’s October Saturday Service Project, Officers Hollow.

At this last event, which involved fun and safe Halloween activities for 500 participants disabled or otherwise disadvantaged, the leadership team hosted a kind of carnival. Teams of college students and youngsters decorated 330 pumpkins (half were decorated with students interested in discussion. Residents also took part in the Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day, helping improve the home of an elderly resident in the Rose Park neighborhood. Further, they helped organize Officers Hollow, an event that brings children who are disabled or otherwise disadvantaged, the leadership team with registration for and participated in the Newbies program. The event was a huge success!

By Morgan Marietti, Scholars Leadership Team Member

![A volunteer decorates pumpkins with a Best Buddies participant.](image)
Alternative Fall Break Provides Opportunities to Serve

The Bennion Center organized two Alternative Fall Break (AFB) experiences during Fall Break 10. These opportunities, like those of past Alternative Spring Breaks (ASB), provide participants with alcohol- and drug-free, action-focused experiences over school breaks. For many participants, they are a gateway to committed community engagement.

One AFB focused on disaster preparedness. Hopefully, when the next fire, earthquake or tornado strikes, you are standing near one of the individuals who attended the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training that took place October 11-13. Twenty-one staff members and students underwent this training that helps citizens respond effectively during emergencies.

Also during fall break, 22 AFB participants traveled to the Rio Mesa Center, nestled in the heart of the desert, for an adventure to remember! The group worked hard, had a lot of fun, and learned about themselves, each other, and the desert.

The Bennion Center collaborated with the university’s inter-disciplinary research station (the Rio Mesa Center) and the Office of Sustainability to create this second annual AFB destination. Rio Mesa, situated on the Dolores River outside of Moab, has over 350 acres of unspoiled space, including three accessible and gorgeous canyons.

Led by the two Rio Mesa counselors, the group framed the structure for three solar showers, built and painted a picnic table, renovated a fence and gates around an orchard and chicken house, planted, irrigated, and named 16 fruit trees; designed and laid stone foot path; planted cottonwood trees; provided technical support for an on-site computer lab; and learned new life skills.

In addition to accomplishing projects, participants slept under the stars, took in the beautiful scenery of the red rock, learned about the plant ecology of the desert, ate smores by the campfire, went swimming in the river, and made friends for a lifetime! It was a group with diverse interests, backgrounds, and skill sets. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each other and the special qualities each offered the team effort.

Alternative Spring Break 2010 will take 122 volunteers to 10 cities across the western United States, providing close to 5,000 hours of service. Applications are now available and trips are filling fast. Visit www.asb.utah.edu for more information.

By Janessa Gaver, Taylor Thompson, and Gina Ruiz, AFB – Rio Mesa Participants

Challenging Times Breed Gratitude

We at the Bennion Center deeply appreciate the donations we have received so far this year. Whether you bought a ticket to the Jon Scholz, Benefit Concert that launched our Campus Giving campaign (a great evening with more than 500 friends and music lovers!), respond to a grant we filed, picked up your phone and responded positively to a Phone-Thon request, or sent in a check when you received our annual appeal letter…we thank you.

Times are challenging for everyone. As individuals, families, businesses, philanthropists and community organizations, we all creatively work to stretch the resources we have in new ways. We know that when we invest a dollar in the center, you do it thoughtfully, trusting that we will take that investment and use it as fuel for our amazing engine of student volunteerism. You trust that our students will work on projects in established community agencies and institutions that, through good times and bad, “keep on keeping ‘on’” while performing their respective civic and community missions.

Your confidence in us means as much as your gift, and we aim to keep it that way. Thank you for supporting our work.

By Mary Draper, Development Director

Volunteer Needed

America Reads Gets a New Look for the New Year

America Reads began its 14th year in the Bennion Center by launching a new look. As an identifying symbol, the new logo clearly states what the America Reads program is all about: University of Utah students teaching reading in the community.

America Reads also revamped its mission statement to reflect more accurately the work it does: “The mission of the America Reads program at the University of Utah is to provide effective, quality tutoring in literacy and mathematics to the elementary-aged students of our community partners. To do so, the America Reads program seeks to provide comprehensive tutor training, develop the skills of faculty and service-learning students, and foster mutually beneficial community partnerships.”

The America Reads program grows larger every year. A record number of university students—more than 200—applied to participate this year. We hope the program’s new look will recruit even more students and help our community understand better what the program is accomplishing.

By Eliza O’Connor, America Reads Coordinator

Bennion Center Recognizes Outstanding Student Leaders

Throughout the academic year, student leaders are nominated for their exceptional commitment to service. Each of the students recognized has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and made distinct contributions to the center’s progress.

Fall 2010 Student Leaders of the Month

Mikyla Gail, VA Hospital program director, service-learning scholar, and Bennion Service House resident, dedicated her talents to helping the veterans who come to the VA Hospital. She works tirelessly to create an unforgettable experience for patients and families and was named Student Leader of the Month.

Megan Berdy, Bennett Service House resident, dedicated her talents to helping her community. She is a very active volunteer and was named Student Leader of the Month. Megan volunteers her time for the St. John’s Free Clinic, the Red Cross and Volunteering Services of America.

Dr. Beth Krensky, professor in the Department of Art & Art History and the U’s Public Service Professor in 2009-2010, was lunch keynote speaker. Her presentation centered around her project, an after-school arts program for children living in South Salt Lake.

The day was filled with panel presentations on topics ranging from publishing research outside traditional academic journals to creating innovative community partnerships. Faculty members reported that they found the information valuable and were grateful for the chance to talk with colleagues.

By Nancy Basinger, Service-Learning Manager

America Reads

In August, more than 50 faculty members from the University of Utah, Weber State, Salt Lake Community College and Utah Valley University gathered for a day-long retreat to network and learn more about one another and the program. This gathering brought together faculty members from educational and community agencies and institutions that, through good times and bad, “keep on keeping ‘on’” while performing their respective civic and community missions.

Your confidence in us means as much as your gift, and we aim to keep it that way. Thank you for supporting our work.

By Mary Draper, Development Director

Volunteer Needed

America Reads

America Reads

By Nancy Basinger, Service-Learning Manager

Bennion Center

Bennion Center Helps University Earn Carnegie Community Engagement Designation

In September the Bennion Center submitted the university’s application for the Community Engagement Elective Classification from the Carnegie Foundation. This classification is awarded to universities demonstrating that “the practices of community engagement have been developed to the extent that they are aligned with the institutional identity of the college or university as one whose students and faculty are engaged with the institutions as one whose students and faculty are engaged with the institutions”.

In January, the Carnegie Foundation announced that the University of Utah has been selected for the 2010 Community Engagement Classification. Anthony S. Bryk, president of the foundation, said the university’s application “documented excellent alignment among mission, culture, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement” and that the U “was able to provide descriptions and examples of exemplary institutionalized practices of community engagement.”

Although the designation does not guarantee funding from the Carnegie Foundation, it may be important when applying for future funding. The designation does distinguish the university from other Research I institutions as one whose students and faculty are engaged with the community in meaningful ways. It also provides the university with a means to assess progress against a set of best-practice community engagement indicators.

The Bennion Center thanks Rosey Humes, Sarah Munro, Steve Alder, and Hank Line for their tremendous help with the application process.

By Nancy Basinger, Service-Learning Manager

Alternative Fall Break participants at the Rio Mesa Center
Bennion Center Alumni Highlights: Miriam Kramer

The Bennion Center has hundreds of alumni living all over the world doing incredible things. Based on your nominations, the center will highlight exceptional alumni in each newsletter.

In 2006, Miriam (Pope) Kramer received her BS in International Studies from the U. Miriam was a service-learning scholar, service-learning teaching assistant, and student coordinator over campus relations. Post-graduation, Miriam worked with foster adolescents in San Diego and later served as a Peace Corps municipal development volunteer in rural Guatemala. There she developed a passion for working with indigenous women. “They opened my eyes to the power of women in holistic community development,” she comments.

After returning to Utah in 2009, Miriam married her best friend, Chad Kramer. She is now earning her Master’s in Human Development and Social Policy through the U’s Family and Consumer Studies program. She comments, “My thesis topic, passion, and joy is in understanding and empowering the refugee community here in Salt Lake—especially the women. I know when women are given the opportunity they will lift up themselves, their families, and their communities.”

The Bennion Center has thousands of alumni, including Miriam. Alumni, collect stories, and create an alumni directory. If you’d like to help with these efforts or to nominate an exceptional alum who should be highlighted in the next newsletter, please email alumni@bennioncenter.org.

Bend-in-the-River Educates an Urban Community

The Bend-in-the-River is an Urban Treehouse and Green Space nestled into two inter-city areas along the 40 mile Jordan River Parkway mixed-use trail. Created in 1997 to celebrate the Bennion Center’s 15th anniversary, the Bend brings together community members, local area elementary school students, youth groups, and university student volunteers to maintain and enhance this environmentally restored area and its educational programs. Providing an instant bridge from the urban to the natural, the Bend is a dynamic community of partners caring for and utilizing a natural learning environment in an urban setting.

In 2010, REI awarded a generous grant to fund valuable volunteer opportunities and to further the mission of Bend-in-the-River. Thanks to the grant, a new set of interpretive signs, changed three times per year, will greet visitors and provide an educational opportunity 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The signs allow visitors to learn a little bit more about the site ecology and provide interesting facts about the site and local points of interest.

Bend-in-the-River is always looking for new volunteers to assist from March through October. If you would like to become involved, please email Nick Rothacher at nrothacher@sa.utah.edu.

By Nick Rothacher, Service-Learning Program Coordinator

Saturday Service Projects Provide Monthly Service Opportunities

The Bennion Center’s Saturday Service Projects give volunteers an opportunity to participate in monthly service initiatives throughout the community. During fall semester, students commemorated Lowell L. Bennion at the annual Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day, hosted Halloween festivities for children at Officers Hollow, raked leaves in the Liberty Park neighborhood, and sorted medical supplies at Global Relief.

More information about this year’s Legacy of Lowell Community Service Day and the Bennion Center’s October Saturday Service Project can be found on the front page.

On November 18, 75 Bennion Center volunteers participated in the annual Fall Leaf Haul. Hundreds of bags’ worth of leaves were raked in the Liberty Park neighborhood, many of which were used in Salt Lake City’s new composting program. Enterprise Rent-a-Car and the U of U’s Career Services department compensated with free coffee, doughnuts, and food, in addition to bringing volunteers.

On December 4, the Bennion Center coordinated with Global Relief and the International Rescue Committee. At the Bennion Center, 75 volunteers gathered to collect items to distribute to those in need around the world.

By Marcia Homer & Jill Lewis, Public Relations Interns
Director’s Message

Fall 2010 has been full of productive activity at the Bennion Center. Dynamic student leaders Drew Thompson, Ryan Price, and the entire student board have us all pursuing significant service opportunities. New staff members, Nancy Basinger, Nick Rothacher, and Noel Applebaum, bring solid experience and fresh ideas to move us forward. We are now working as a collaborative team with our various constituent groups to create a strategic plan that clearly defines the center’s goals and objectives.

Several recent achievements indicate everyone’s commitment to continuing Lowell L. Bennion’s legacy. Our first benefit concert successfully launched our Culture of Giving campaign with its $200,000 goal; it enabled us to pass the first $100,000 milestone. This year’s Legacy of Lowell involved more than 1,200 service-minded volunteers. And more students than ever have enrolled in the Service-Learning Scholars program and are involved in curricular and co-curricular community engagement activities.

A fall highlight was for the center to receive the 2010 Envision Utah’s prestigious Common Good Award. More than 500 local leaders acknowledged the center’s accomplishments at the recognition luncheon. Alan Matheson, executive director, conveyed that the Bennion Center was selected because of its long-term commitment to developing community-minded student leaders while improving the community in multiple ways. This is indeed our honor and obligation.

As you read the articles contained in this issue, please know how deeply we appreciate you who are involved directly or indirectly with the center and the good that you generate.

By Linda Dunn, Director

Jan. 17 **MLK Day of Service** Bennion Center • 9am-12pm
18 **Service House Dialogue** Bennion Service House • 7-8pm
19 **Bennion Hinckley Forum** Hinckley Caucus Room • 12-1pm

Feb. 3 **Community Partner Forum** Bennion Center • 3-5pm
9 **Advisory Board Meeting** Union Bldg. • 3:30-5:00pm
9 **Thank-A-Thon** Bennion Center • 6-8pm
11-12 **UCC Conference on Civic Engagement** TBA
15 **Service House Dialogue** Bennion Service House • 7-8pm
16 **Bennion Hinckley Forum** Hinckley Caucus Room • 12-1pm
19 **Saturday Service Project** Horizonte • 9am-12pm

Mar. 15 **Service House Dialogue** Bennion Service House • 7-8pm
16 **Bennion Hinckley Forum** Hinckley Caucus Room • 12-1pm
19 **Saturday Service Project** Horizonte • 9am-12pm
19-26 **Alternative Spring Break**
19-27 **International Service Trip to Costa Rica**
29 **Service-Learning Awards Lunch** Pano East • 11:30am-1pm

Apr. 1 **Spring Celebration** Camp Tracy • 6-8pm
6 **Advisory Board Meeting** Service House • 3:30-5:00pm
16 **Earth Day Planting & Celebration** Bend-in-the-River • 9am-noon
28 **Project Youth** Bennion Center • 9am-1pm

May. 19 **Community Partner Forum** Bennion Center • 3-5pm