

Portraits of Service

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The Center for Service Learning Newsletter

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learning

Learning Through Service

Service-learning is experiential education that takes learning into a community context through meaningful service that meets real community need. This fall, Rockhurst faculty are teaching over 20 courses with service-learning and community service components. Here are a few examples of service-learning at Rockhurst:

Students enrolled in Dr. Annie Lee's **General Chemistry** class are practicing their chemistry by teaching it to high school students taking AP Chemistry at Hogan Preparatory Academy.

Amy Mulligan Kennedy's **Administration of Nonprofit Organizations** class worked to increase the number of volunteers and find new sources of volunteers for Junior Achievement.

The students enrolled in Dr. Margaret Wye's **College Composition I** course practiced their own grammar and writing skills while tutoring students at St Monica School in the 5th—8th grades, once a week for one-hour sessions with individual students.

Based on the premise that individuals cannot know about happiness in isolation, Dr. Robert Vigliotti's **Reality and Human Existence** class tutors youth at Blenheim Elementary School's after-school program and connects their community work with course reading by reflecting on the meaning of happiness and how happiness depends on the state of the community.

In Dr. Tom Ward's **History of Women in America** course students select from service-learning opportunities at Rose Brooks, Women's Employment Network, nursing homes, political campaigns and Mattie Rhodes Center that focus on how social, ethnic and economic issues affect women. Dr. Ward developed the service-learning projects in partnership with community organizations to promote diversity and respect and help students begin understanding how they can affect society.

Students taking **Advanced Spanish Conversation and Composition** from Rocio Duncan and Xanath Caraza de Holland have been tutoring and leading workshops for youth and teens at Cristo Rey Kansas City and El Centro, Inc.



Students in Dr. Wye's composition course celebrate with students they tutored at St. Monica School with a gallery walk of student writing and cupcakes.

leadership

Social Justice Issues. I began an elective at Cristo Rey Kansas City called Bridge Builders that focuses on social justice issues. It is a discussion and action based social justice elective that focuses on the students' opinions on contemporary world problems such as racism, poverty, hunger, global warming, and violence. The project allows me to teach tomorrow's leaders about issues around which the main stream does not focus.

- Brian Noland, Spanish Conversation and Composition

Window Between Worlds. I had the opportunity to help at El Centro, Inc. in Kansas City, Kansas, on programs to support domestic violence victims. Working with a counselor and art facilitator, I helped provide the children the safe place and the opportunity to heal through creative art projects, creative writing, and story telling. Our goal is through the process of healing they can build trusting relationships with others as well as develop respectful behaviors and conversations in order to help them open up in sharing their feelings and experiences. It broke my heart to know that children have to see someone in their family get physically abused, shot and killed, or emotionally hurt. Sometimes they are the victims themselves. I have really enjoyed getting to know the children and seeing them smile and laugh especially when they see their mothers again. That is what makes me happy and gives me a sense of relief.

- Martha Gonzalez, Spanish Conversation and Composition

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RU College Bound

Selecting a college and navigating the rough terrain of applications, entrance exams, financial aid and scholarships can be challenging. This semester Rockhurst University began a program in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City and Blue Hills Family Life Center to help area teens find their way to college. RU College Bound is a program designed to help area high school students learn about the college application process and provide tutoring to prepare for the ACT.

Every Tuesday afternoon during the months of October and November, the teens engaged in a number of activities led by the Rockhurst students, ranging from a campus tour to writing exercises using ACT exam words. They also participated in a science demonstration led by Dr. Nancy Donaldson, assistant professor of physics, and learned about the college application process from Mr. Warren Strickland, assistant director of Financial Aid. During the inaugural semester, over 35 teens and 15 Rockhurst students participated. Next semester RU College Bound will focus on ACT skills and strategies.

The Center for Service Learning and the Rockhurst Community Center are co-leading the campus-community partnerships that sustain the program.

President's Award

Rockhurst University is now an official certifying organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award. This program recognizes individuals, families and groups that achieve a certain number of service hours over the course of a 12-month period at bronze (100-174 hours), silver (175-249 hours) and gold (250 or more hours) award levels. Service given to the communities beyond campus between May 1, 2006 and May 30, 2007 will count towards this year's award. Watch for details next semester regarding how to register your service-learning and community service towards this national award.

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College bound teens! Dr. Donaldson and a tutor lead a Hovercraft exercise. Tutors celebrate success of RU College Bound.

service

Tulips on Troost

Appearing along Troost Avenue this spring from downtown to Southtown—tulips. This beautification project for Troost is brilliant and simple — to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape while building camaraderie and encouraging healing across both sides of Troost, the avenue in Kansas City known as a racial dividing line. Durwin Rice, business owner of Durwin Rice Decoupage at 55th and Troost, dreamed up the project and since then many others have become involved.

For several Saturdays in September and November, Rockhurst students tilled

the ground, built flower beds and planted tulip bulbs and mums. During the Finucane Service Project, incoming freshmen participated in the project, and this fall several student groups helped with planting, including Alpha Sigma Alpha, Student Senate and Freshmen in Business Seminar.



RU students build a flower bed

in the Jesuit tradition