

Feinstein Center For Service Learning Spring 2006 Report

The Feinstein Center for Service Learning continues to help develop students by providing them with meaningful service opportunities within Rhode Island. Students gain leadership skills, a knowledge of the world in which we live, and an understanding of their role in helping to shape our communities.

The following report details the Feinstein Center for Service Learning's activities for the Spring 2006 semester.

FEINSTEIN ENRICHING AMERICA PROGRAM URI 101: TRADITIONS & TRANSFORMATIONS

Spring is primarily a planning time for the Feinstein Enriching America Program in the fall semester and for the Spring of 2006, there were no URI 101 classes. We have been working hard to develop our new community partnerships for the fall which include:

- Apeiron Institute for Environmental Living
- Audubon Environmental Education Center
- Child & Family Services of Newport County
- Lucy's Hearth
- Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Slater Mill Historic Site
- Turning Pointe Therapeutic Riding

THE FEINSTEIN LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

The Feinstein Center for Service Learning is excited about implementing programming to coincide with the new Feinstein Leadership Scholarship. Student recipients will be required to undertake one community service project each year as a condition for the continuation of their scholarship. Through their community service projects, the recipients will be required to promote the mission of the Feinstein Foundation to out-of-state people or organizations and submit a written report of this activity to URI. URI will share these reports annually with Alan Shawn Feinstein and the Feinstein Foundation prior to the continuation of each recipient's scholarship. We are currently beginning the planning process for this exciting new program.

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Clearinghouse for Volunteers continues to serve as an essential resource on the University of Rhode Island campus by offering a variety of volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of our diverse students, staff, faculty, and the surrounding community. We are constantly evolving in order to meet those needs through outreach initiatives, service learning programs, and acting as an intermediary between the community organizations and URI. These vital tasks are performed to help educate students about

and expose students to the importance of their service and civic engagement in their communities throughout their lives. We are constantly updating the volunteer agency database in order to best serve the URI community as well as those community organizations that rely on us to assist them in finding volunteers for their projects. The agency database is easily accessible to all students from any computer and it is very user friendly. Our website remains a good way for people to learn more about the Clearinghouse and the entire Feinstein Center for Service Learning. Our office is a lively center of activity always occupied with students interested in participating in volunteer opportunities.

Spring 2006 Clearinghouse Projects included:

URI Community Blood Drives

The Clearinghouse for Volunteers held two blood-drives this semester to help the RI Blood Center recruit donors to replenish the blood supply. The volunteers helped out at the drive by manning the refreshment area, doing crowd control, and posting posters and flyers. The blood drives for this semester were a tremendous success, goals established were surpassed and over 500 pints of blood were collected.

Shadow Day and IFC Shadow Day

The Clearinghouse, collaborated with Jumpstart URI to organize and hold a Shadow Day event in February. URI students were recruited and paired with middle school students from the RI Children's Crusade for Higher Education. The students spent the day at the URI campus engaged in mentoring activities, attending college classes and learning about the URI college experience. URI students were trained and encouraged to get to know and build relationships with their younger students; to discuss their experiences in middle school, their plans and/or dreams for the future and how a college education fits within those plans and dreams. This was an extremely successful event. Both the URI and middle school students had very positive experiences.

By the end of the day, the students had really bonded and it was clear that great connections and discussions had taken place. Shadow Day was such a great success that we received a request to do it again. During April school vacation, a different group of middle school students came to campus and had the opportunity to pair up and explore the URI campus with a college student campus. This time the college student was a member of one of our many fraternity and sorority chapters. This shadow day was equally successful and well-received by all involved. Both the middle school and URI students reported learning from and about each other. Each expressed the desire to be involved in this type of event in the future.

Kayla McCormack was awarded with this year's Volunteer of the Year award. Kayla is an active and outstanding member of the URI student body. Kayla's accomplishments include serving over 350 hours of service as a Jumpstart Americorps member, helping to raise more than \$500 hosting a pancake breakfast for URI's Katrina Fund, helping to raise more than \$1000 for Relay for Life after inspiring her Jumpstart Team to participate and incorporating bake sales and other fundraising strategies to increase their fundraising. During the Fall Semester Kayla also served as a URI 101 Service Learning Mentor and facilitated a service project for over 100 fraternity and sorority students during their philanthropy week.

Kayla is an excellent role model for her peers. Her commitment and dedication to service is evident in the many contributions she has made to the URI community and the community at large. We are confident that with her skills her future as a leader in service will continue to thrive. Next Semester, she will serve as Team Leader for the URI 101 Service Mentors. We celebrate Kayla's accomplishments and wish her the best in all her future endeavors.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Throughout the semester, the Clearinghouse collected applications for our fourth annual Volunteer of the Year award. It is open to students who exhibit outstanding commitment to service learning activities that benefit the community. Nominations could be made by the student or group themselves, or by a faculty member or community member. The student was selected based on the scope of the activity, their initiative, dedication, commitment, dependability, enthusiasm and compassion for the cause, and the impact of those served. The winner received a \$150 gift certificate to the URI Bookstore. An awards ceremony was conducted during the University College Advisor's Meeting on May 2nd.

URI Katrina Habitat for Humanity House Fund

In response to the devastation in the Gulf area as result of Hurricane Katrina, the Clearinghouse coordinated and initiated a fundraising campaign for the URI community to sponsor a home through Habitat for Humanity. The Clearinghouse recruited students, faculty, staff, and groups to volunteer in coordinating, managing, and taking part in campus fundraisers to build up enough funds to build a house. The response to this effort was amazing. The URI community pulled together and held 16 separate fundraising events throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. In addition, our local community also responded with fundraisers of their own. Many individuals and local businesses also sent in private donations. All together, our fund was able to raise close over \$35,000!

We are happy to report that plans are underway to build the house this fall. The URI fund has joined efforts with another local fund out of Providence to participate in the House-

in-a-Box project. By doing so we will be able to bring this fundraising project full circle and make this home a reality for a family in need.

RAISE YOUR VOICE: STUDENT ACTION FOR CHANGE

With the fourth year of the Raise Your Voice Campaign coming to an end, we look forward to the following year with great expectations. This spring we kicked off the campaign during Raise Your Voice month in March. Students worked with the RI Office of the Secretary of State's to organize a voter registration drive. They provided students with a voting guide with information about the candidates for local office and their views on issues that pertain to students and with an opportunity to try out voting equipment. According to the RI Office of the Secretary of State, an exceptional number of students registered to vote; more than any other institution of higher education that they had been to this year.

Additionally, a URI undergraduate, Danielle Towne, was one of three students from RI and MA to win the Real Change Essay Contest for her essay, *Hearing the Silence: the Need for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Safety Awareness on the College Campus*. She was awarded \$500 to implement her vision for campus dialogue. She was able to inspire many students to participate in a Day of Silence to raise awareness about the issue.

ACADEMIC ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

For the first time, URI hosted an Academic Alternative Spring Break. Throughout the spring semester, students took a course exploring poverty issues. In March, the class traveled to Albany, Georgia to work with other college students from around the country on a Habitat for Humanity House. They then returned to the classroom for the rest of the semester for structured reflection and learning. The Feinstein Center for Service Learning assisted with the development of the academic components of the course. This program was a success and plans are underway for next year.

As a biology student, I do not get much time to pursue other areas of learning. Although I had always been interested, or at least said I was interested in service, I have had very little experience. The idea of integrating academic learning, meaningful service and continued civic engagement as what I had been looking for.
Suzanne, class of 2007

JUMPSTART URI

Jumpstart is a national non-profit organization that engages young people in service to work toward the day every child in America enters school prepared to succeed. URI was among 13 institutions selected to become a Jumpstart site in the fall of 2003, chosen from more than 100 institutions expressing interest. Jumpstart recruits, trains, and supports college students to serve as part-time AmeriCorps members, working directly with and supporting young children in Head Start and other early childhood education programs. Jumpstart focuses on building school success for young children by developing their early language, literacy, and social skills; encouraging strong family involvement to help families support children's learning; and training college students to be future teachers and leaders in early childhood education. Jumpstart URI team members can receive federal work-study funds or academic credit for their participation. Additionally, upon

successful completion of the year, team members receive a \$1,000 AmeriCorps education award. Forty-two URI students participated in and completed the 2005-06 academic year.

CHALLENGES

Funding continues to be our major challenge. As the number of students and agencies we serve grows, our funding does not. We have applied for several grants and hope that we will receive some additional funds to enhance our partnerships and our commitment to service.

IN SUMMARY

The Feinstein Center for Service Learning continues to help develop students by providing them with meaningful service opportunities within Rhode Island. Our motto – *shaping students, the community, the future* - was developed to illustrate the work of the Feinstein Center and most importantly its role in shaping the world in which we live.

Our agenda has been clear from the inception of this program...to make students leaders of the future with a clear sense of commitment to service. We accomplish this through our teaching (integrating service into the curriculum and providing meaningful experiences through service learning), our research (evaluating and assessing the meaning of service for students' development) and through our service (faculty, students and staff providing significant hours of committed service to our broader community). This report has touched upon our efforts in each of these regards, and we look forward to constant improvement and growth in each endeavor.