

DEEP Service

SIENA COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NEWS | SUMMER 2012



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Academic Community Engagement News

Summer 2012

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ON THE COVER

Siena Bonner student Lindsey Knowlden '13 pictured with Mala, a child that Lindsey met during her recent global Bonner Service Leader trip to India.



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Message from the Editor

ACE Banquet celebration, Certificate in Community Engagement now available for Siena Bonner Service Leaders and non-Bonner Siena students, ACE AmeriCorps Week, and global service trips to Bangalore, India and Bolivia. These are just a few of the activities and accomplishments covered in this issue of *DEEP Service*.

As the academic school year came to a close, Siena Bonner Service Leaders, AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows, community partners, and Siena faculty and staff, gathered at the St. John's/St. Ann's Outreach Center on April 29 and celebrated another year of community engagement success. Key speakers were asked to reflect on the year and awards and certificates of appreciation were given to participants in our ACE programs. We are so proud of the contributions of all those who were a part of the Academic Community Engagement DEEP Service mission to build long-term, sustainable campus-community partnerships this year. We look forward to future years of collaboration in service.

This summer we are going to be as busy as ever, leading the Civic Engagement Camp for high school students, the Summer Service Scholars 10-week program, saying goodbye to our 2011-2012 cohort of Siena VISTA Fellows, and welcoming a brand new team of 32. In our next issue of *DEEP Service* we will highlight our summer programs and activities so be sure to pick up a copy. In the meantime, enjoy reading our latest edition of *DEEP Service*.

- Jennifer Simek

Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Leader and Coordinator for ACE Public Relations

Students at Siena Can Now Earn a Certificate in Community Engagement

By Jennifer Simek

This spring ACE announced that students from any major at Siena College can now apply for a Certificate in Community Engagement, which will be notated on their official college transcripts. The requirements for students to gain the certificate provide them a variety of experiences that will prepare them for becoming a life-long citizen.

Traditionally, the Siena ACE Bonner Service Leaders program offered students the opportunity to combine their academics with service, but the Certificate now makes it possible for non-Bonner Siena students to have a similarly enriched, hands-on academic pathway.

Both Siena Bonner and non-Bonner students are required to take coursework that allows them the opportunity to gain the Certificate. By the time they are finished, they will have experienced doing service at the urban, rural, and global level. Some of the required coursework includes an entry level course that systematically examines poverty, a rural/international course, a community development methods course, and a capstone research paper. Students also do a 300 hour internship and a five-week global internship with nonprofits in Bolivia and India. ACE is truly providing students cutting edge opportunities in community engaged work.



Academic Community Engagement Welcomes April Risley '12 to the ACE Administrative Team this Spring

By Jennifer Simek



Academic Community Engagement recently welcomed April Risley '12, a 2012 Magna Cum Laude graduate of Siena College, to the ACE administrative team as the Coordinator for Quality Assurance and Youth Programs. She now joins six other ACE

administrators, highly qualified faculty partners, and student staff dedicated to ACE programs and projects.

In her role, she will be tracking all AmeriCorps members enrolled at Siena College and coordinating Siena ACE student led youth initiatives. Some of those

initiatives include Girl Scouts, Trailblazers, and the Civic Engagement Camp.

Before joining the ACE administrative team, April was a member of the founding freshman class of Siena Bonner Service Leaders and had the opportunity to experience all four years of college as a Bonner Service Leader. She developed strategies for maintaining sustainable youth programs and guided her fellow Bonners through many trainings to hone their leadership skills. The last two years she was a Bonner Senior Intern, which gained her a variety of skills that helped her obtain the administrative position she is in today.

In addition to being a Bonner Service Leader, April was also involved as the President of the Siena College Mentoring Program and interned at the Albany County Family Court.

April is excited to join the ACE team and looks forward to working with ACE program participants as she journeys forward in her new role. Welcome to the team April!

The Annual ACE Banquet Celebration Was a Huge Success!

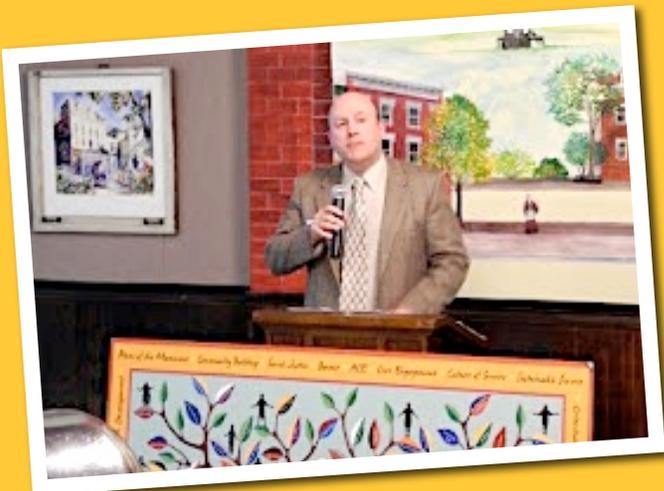
By Courtney Cozy '11

This past April, Academic Community Engagement celebrated the success of their AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows, Bonner, and ASL connections with local community partners and associates at the annual ACE Banquet. The event was held at St. John's/St. Ann's Outreach Center in Albany on April 30.

The banquet has become part of the ACE tradition. It brings our communities together to discuss, reflect, and celebrate the sustainable changes we have implemented throughout the academic year. Those in attendance included Siena VISTA Fellows, Bonner Service Leaders, Academic Service Learning (ASL) students, AmeriCorps students, faculty mentors, work study students, and community partners.

The evening began with attendees arriving to a beautifully decorated room that reflected a "Seeds of Change" theme. Flowers were scattered throughout the room and a nature scene painted on large paper was pinned to the wall. It symbolized the changes created by the different branches of ACE. Upon arrival, guests enjoyed a lovely mix and mingle complete with light appetizers and a chocolate fountain.

Dr. Mathew Johnson '93, Director for ACE, kicked off the festivities with a welcoming introduction that detailed the many accomplishments of the various departments within ACE. Key speakers of the evening included Siena Bonner Timothy Golden '13, Siena VISTA John DeCirce '11, and former ASL student now current Siena VISTA Anna Bradway '11. The ceremony also recognized Bill Corbett of Sponsor-A-Scholar, community partner Boys and Girls Clubs of Albany, and Siena ASL Professor Sudarat Musikawong. Faculty mentors, work study students, VISTA Fellows who served multiple years of service, and the Bonner's first graduating Senior Class were also recognized. The evening concluded with a raffle which included contributions from Price Chopper, Starbucks, The Cookie Factory, and other local stores. Overall, the banquet proved to be an enjoyable evening for all in attendance.



Siena College AmeriCorps Week



By Ryan Rose '10

Every year the commitment of AmeriCorps members and alumni across the United States is recognized during AmeriCorps Week. This year, the Siena VISTA Fellows AmeriCorps Week Committee organized our events from March 3 to 9.

Siena VISTA Fellows visited local schools such as Doane Stuart, Green Tech High (GTH), Troy High, Troy High Alternative, Brighter Choice Middle School, and Siena College's Foundations courses. They facilitated discussions on the roots of poverty, what community means, and what AmeriCorps does. An interesting observation was the lack of interest in the subject of poverty as we moved to higher levels of education. Alarming, some college level students had trouble defining community. Once students opened up, profound views on the issues were discovered. Each class room visit, from elementary to college, had its share of engaged and unengaged minds.

We connected with the community by holding a panel discussion on how to redefine poverty in the Capital District. The venue was the welcoming and cozy Hudson River Coffee House (HRCH) in Albany. Panelists included Professor John Harden of Siena, VISTA Fellow Courtney Cozzy '11, Amanda Lester of WMHT, AmeriCorps Alumna Amy LaForte of Trinity Alliance, and GTH VISTA Amanda Wilson as moderator. Panelists offered a variety of expert opinions on poverty in our community.

The discussion started on how poverty has changed in our area over the past decades compared to now. Halfway into the talk, audience members began

entering the discussion. Individuals from various age groups and backgrounds put out their assessments on the problems while proposing unique solutions. Patrons of HRCH simply stopping to grab coffee were engaging in the talks and relating issues to current events like Occupy Albany. Others took a broader view, questioning civilization altogether. The event's holistic vibe left the panelists and the audience with more questions, more solutions, and more comrades in the fight against poverty.

Nationally, we connected with over 360 AmeriCorps members and alumni via a tried and true form of networking; pen pals! Suggested by Maria Grillo, employee at Homeless & Travelers Aid Society, it was an effective way to connect hundreds across the nation. Coordinated by VISTA Leaders across the country, participants were paired up, given each other's contact information, and each sent a letter or small care package. It was a huge success and some pen pals still keep in touch.

Highlighting the extraordinary efforts AmeriCorps members put forth each day was a rewarding challenge. This year we connected with the national network of AmeriCorps members and alumni and communicated the impact we are having on our community's dynamic, interrelated challenges. It goes to show what an AmeriCorps member or any community member can accomplish pursuing his or her passion.



AmeriCorps Goes to School

By Kiera Denoyer and Megan Lynch

This year, in celebration of AmeriCorps Week, the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows reached out to local schools to promote AmeriCorps and inform students of the benefits of service. The Siena VISTA Fellows AmeriCorps Week Committee reached out to elementary, middle and high schools in the Capital District and spoke to thirteen classes throughout the week. To start off the festivities, VISTA Fellows facilitated a presentation and discussion in an 8th grade Religious Studies class at The Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer, New York.

The facilitators - Kiera Denoyer, and Megan Lynch, a 2007 graduate - came prepared with stickers and handouts; but most importantly information about AmeriCorps programs. Megan and Kiera told the students about the different programs within AmeriCorps including NCCC, VISTA, and State/National. In order to illustrate the difference between direct and indirect service, Megan used the example of Habitat for Humanity. The students saw that the individual who recruited the volunteers was engaged in indirect service, while the people building the house with hammers and nails were completing direct service. Subsequent to this example, students were curious about how to fit other service projects into those categories.

To keep the kids engaged, Kiera and Megan spoke about their service background, and rewarded students with prizes if they could answer the most pressing

questions, such as “How many states did Kiera live in during NCCC?”, “What is the difference between direct and indirect service?”, and most importantly “What are your facilitators names, and where do they work?”. Students then were given the opportunity to discuss what service they had already completed in their community, and brainstorm other ways to get involved. Multiple students had volunteered at soup kitchens in the area, while others had helped at a local animal shelter. Overall, Megan and Kiera were impressed with the current level of student involvement and their eagerness to do more.

As a final wrap-up exercise, the students were split into three different groups to design a service project of their own. The only stipulation was that prior examples were off limits. Each group began discussing possible projects answering whether their project was direct or indirect service, who they should contact to get started, and finally what other details they would need to account for (i.e. age minimum, transportation, availability, etc.). One person from each group was delegated to present their project to the class. Kiera and Megan assessed each response and determined that everybody was a winner!

A big thanks to the 8th graders at Doane Stuart for their active participation and eagerness to learn all about AmeriCorps. The enthusiasm expressed by the class was inspiring and provided a great kick-off to a fantastic week of classroom visits and community events. As Megan and Kiera left, they wondered who would be in the 2020-2021 Siena VISTA Fellows Cohort.



Siena AmeriCorps Week Activities

- School informative presentations (elementary through college)
- Coffee House Community Conversation at Hudson River Coffee House
- AmeriCorps Week Pen Pal Project organized by Ryan M. Rose '10
- AmeriCorps Dedication to Service Honorary Ceremony
- Local AmeriCorps members met and networked over lunch throughout the week



From Left to Right: Amanda Wilson '12, John DeCirce '11, Carolyn Holthausen, Briavel Schultz, Ryan Rose '10, Sarah Lutz, and Natasha Grant

Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows Host VISTA Video Showcase

By Carolyn Holthausen

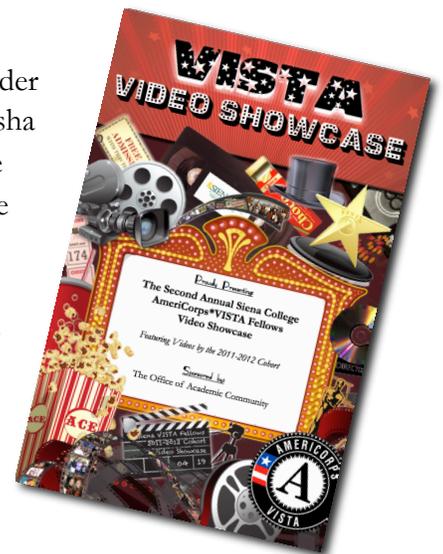
Lights? Check. Popcorn? Check. Volunteers in Service to America (VISTAs)? Check! On April 19 the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows Summer Cohort held its 2nd Annual VISTA Video Showcase in the Sarazen Student Union on Siena's campus.

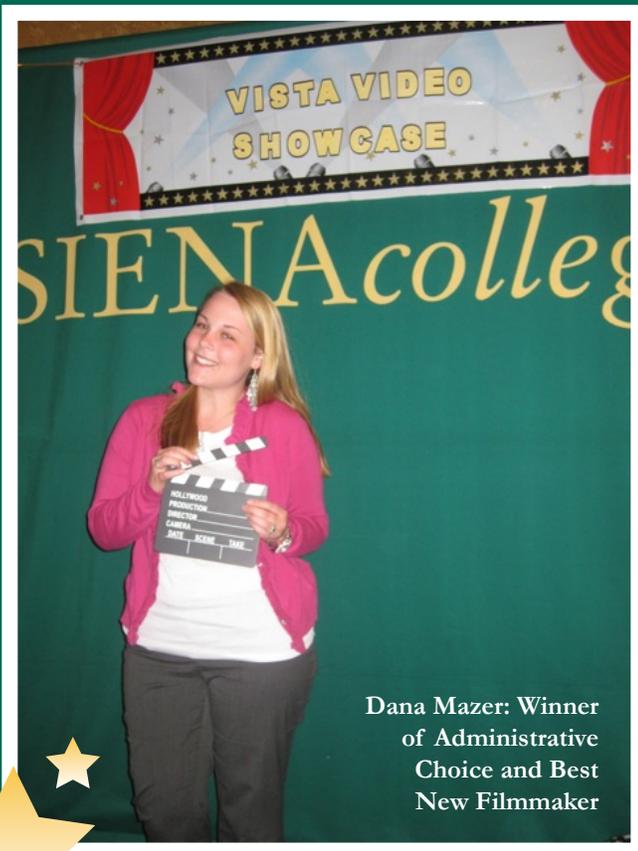
AmeriCorps VISTA is a program dedicated to fighting poverty in American communities. The 2011-2012 summer cohort of VISTA Fellows either teamed up or worked independently to create a short film about their service site, an issue affecting their community, or about AmeriCorps VISTA in general. Videos ranged from a serious tone by Brian Costello '11 and Clare Kelly '11 titled, "Break the Silence", a public service announcement about dating abuse among high school teens, to a more stylized view of the world of VISTA in "VISTAs to the Rescue!" by Briavel Schultz and Carolyn Holthausen. The scope of the work that the VISTA Fellows were able to capture in five-minute videos was astonishing, especially since at the time of the video showcase, most of the cohort

was about seven months into the twelfth month of their service year.

The showcase featured a voting and awards segment. Audience members voted for their favorite categories and awards were given to: Briavel Schultz and Carolyn Holthausen (People's Choice), Megan Lynch (Best Soundtrack), Dana Mazer '11 (Best New Filmmaker and Administrator's Choice), Clare Kelly '11 and Brian Costello '11 (Best Message), and Beatrice Jean (Best Cinematography).

Since November 2011 a committee of Siena VISTA Fellows worked together to offer trainings to VISTAs that might not have had prior video shooting or editing skills. The committee members included VISTA Leader Ryan Rose '10, Natasha Grant, John DeCirce '11, Sarah Lutz, Clare Kelly '11, Carolyn Holthausen and Briavel Schultz. The committee worked hard, and it paid off.





Dana Mazer: Winner
of Administrative
Choice and Best
New Filmmaker



Check out the Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Videos highlighted at this year's showcase on our YouTube Channel. Just click on the social media icon on siena.edu/ace.

Spring VISTA Professional Development Trainings

As part of the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows Program, Siena VISTA Fellows partake in monthly professional development trainings that enhance their skills, especially those that can help them achieve success at their VISTA service site.

Mock Interviews

The Siena VISTA Fellows Program partnered with the Siena Career Center for an engaging mock interview day. Twenty-seven VISTA Fellows interviewed with over ten representatives from nonprofit organizations, agencies, and local colleges. Each interview was approximately fifteen minutes long. At the end of each session, the interviewer gave the VISTA Fellow positive and constructive feedback on their interview and also the resumé they provided. The VISTA

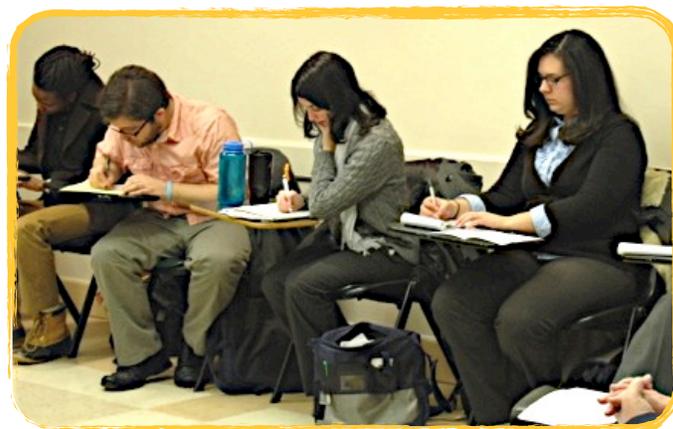
Fellows reported that the experience was worthwhile and taught them something new about the process despite having some prior knowledge about it.

Nonprofit Challenges

Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow John DeCirce '11 led the Siena VISTA Fellows in a training about nonprofit challenges he encountered at his service site and opened up the discussion for other VISTA Fellows to discuss challenges at their own sites. Together they brainstormed ways to address these challenges.

Social Media and Email Marketing

Erik Bunaes from Endorphin Business Center led an engaging two-hour workshop on four important aspects of digital marketing including e-mail marketing, social media, blogging, and creating an engaging website.



Siena VISTA Fellows Invite Professionals to Networking Luncheon

By Sarah Lutz

The VISTA Networking Committee planned the Spring Networking Luncheon on May 24. That afternoon Serra West filled with professionals and VISTA Fellows as chatter organically filled the air. While attendees enjoyed lunch, professionals enlightened VISTA Fellows on their area of expertise and contact information was exchanged. The committee worked diligently to place VISTA fellows and professionals at tables based on career goals. As a result, every table was a cohesive unit of individuals with overarching fields of interest. With the help of the Siena College Associate Director of the Career Center, Suzanne O'Connor, the committee reached beyond the Siena Community and successfully invited a diverse array of professionals. Professionals who attended represented career fields such as marketing, community development, and higher education.

As Academic Service Learning Coordinator at Green Tech High Charter School for Boys, VISTA Fellow Amanda Wilson '12 was a perfect fit at the Social Justice table. Wilson was joined by professionals such as Jen Vitkus, Program Director of Community Education at The Albany Addictions Care Center. VISTA Fellow and Coordinator of Community Based Research at the Siena College Research Institute, Pete Cichetti, was placed at the Government and Public Affairs table. Pete was joined by professionals such as the Director of Admissions at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at University at Albany, Kara Pangburn. Learning more about the program was beneficial because after VISTA, Pete is considering this program.

Professionals who attended included the Education Director for Refugee & Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus, Inc., Executive Director of the Upstate New York/Vermont Chapter of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Director of Public Information at NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Attendance amongst the Siena College community included the Dean of Students, Director of the Damietta-Cross Cultural Center, and the Media Relations Specialist. As the event drew to an end, professionals expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to shed light on the work they do. Thanks to meaningful questions and sincere interest, the VISTA Cohort made the event a huge success.

Where Are They Now?



Siena VISTA Alumni Spotlight

By Jennifer Simek

During the 2009-2010 service year, Siena graduate Jacquelyne Ginnan '09 served at Homeless and Travelers Aid Society (HATAS) as the Development Coordinator. She was responsible for putting together newsletters, social media advertising, coordinating events such as Home Sweet Home Gingerbread fundraiser, Birthday Bash, Golf Outing and Diaper Drive as well as volunteers and a variety of other tasks.

After Jacquelyne's service year, she moved to Massachusetts to attend The Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP) for their Masters in Counseling Psychology program. While in the program she interned at Arbour Fuller Hospital and after graduation she began work at South Bay Mental Health as a staff therapist supporting underprivileged in Brockton, MA and surrounding areas.

Reflecting on her Siena VISTA service year, Jacquelyne said that "VISTA helped to enhance my life over the last few years by helping me to understand and empathize with the populations I work with... I will always remember my VISTA experience for the people I was able to meet and the things that I learned not only about nonprofit work, professionalism, and living in poverty, but also about myself."



Students Travel to India to Participate in an ACE Global Service Internship, Learning About the Nonprofit Sector and a New Culture

Two Siena Bonner Service Leaders, one Siena student, and one Carson-Newman College student recently stepped into a culture very different from their own. From May 12 to June 23, they traveled to Bangalore, India leaving behind their culture and personal comfort zones to gain personal, academic, and professional hands on experiences.

For five weeks, they worked full-time in the nonprofit sector. Siena student Michael Gioia '12 worked with the Association for People with Disabilities (APD). At APD, they provide prosthetics, wheelchairs, braces, and other devices to help children and adults with disabilities. Siena Bonner Lindsey Knowlden '13 worked with the Domestic Workers Union, which is an association that educates and protects the rights of female domestic workers and children. Siena Bonner Jonathan Catrona '14 and Carson-Newman College student Sarah Hodge worked with Emmaus Hospital, a treatment center for poor patients, especially those with leprosy.

Upon arrival to India, they noticed right away striking cultural differences and abject poverty. To their comfort, Gretchen Mielke, Assistant Director of Academic Community Engagement and Coordinator of the Bonner Service Leaders Program, was with the Siena Bonners during their initial experiences in India. Having been to India several times before, Gretchen was an important resource for the Siena Bonners to talk about the scenes they had witnessed and the people they encountered during their travels through the city and at their service sites.

On the weekends, the students created their own cultural excursions, visiting places like Mysore and Palmaner, and taking in the new experiences along with hundreds of photos.



Working with the Domestic Workers Movement in Bangalore, India and Meeting Two Inspirational Sisters

By Lindsey Knowlden '13

This summer I was blessed with the opportunity to spend six weeks in Bangalore, India, working with a local nonprofit. I was placed with the Domestic Workers Movement which is an association working to gain rights and organize women and children who are domestic laborers with the hopes of improving their working conditions and their lives. The best times were spent in the organization's home for orphaned or abandoned children.

While I thoroughly enjoyed all of the children that I met, I was really touched by one story about two sisters, named Rajalakshmi and Mala. Rajalakshmi is currently nine years old and Mala is five. They came to the home almost a year ago when they were given up by their mother who could no longer support them. She told the caregivers that Rajalakshmi had been accompanying her to do domestic work (although she was only eight) and that for the most of the first four years of Mala's life, she had been left alone while the two went to work. When I first met Mala she did not speak very often, ate very slowly, and had poor motor skills. This was a result of her being left alone for long periods of time, which did not allow her muscles to develop properly. This story hurt my heart. I was assured that she had made great progress since her arrival but knew she had a long way to go. I worked

with Mala while I was there, asking her to talk as much as possible and helping her to play games to improve her motor skills.

On my last night at the children's home I threw a party where I prepared an American meal for the children.

Mala surprised me by saying "Thank you for dinner, Auntie Lindsey." This was one of the first full sentences I ever heard her speak and I was thrilled! When I went to leave that evening and was saying my final, tearful goodbyes, Mala began to get visibly distressed and ended up sitting on my foot so I could not walk out the door. She literally had to be pulled from my ankles so that I could leave. I would like to think I made an impression on her life. I miss her dearly.

Many of the children I met have stories like Mala's. They have seen horrible things, worked hard both in labor and in school, they have very few possessions, and their families experience many hardships. Yet, what is most amazing to me is that the children remain positive, happy and grateful. This was a huge inspiration to me and I feel blessed to have spent time with them, even if it was only for a short while.



Mala and Lindsey Knowlden '13



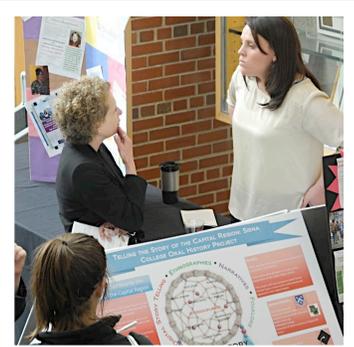
Indian students wearing their school uniforms

Academic Celebration



Left to right: Meghan O'Mara '12, Sophia Pierre-Charles '12, Melanie Iannacone '12, April Risley '12, Meghan Timmins '12

Every year the accomplishments of Siena students are put on display at the annual Celebration of Academic Excellence in the Sarazen Student Union at Siena College. Students present research in various fields ranging from business and science to liberal arts. The Senior Siena College Bonners Service Leaders: Meghan O'Mara '12, Sophia Pierre-Charles '12, Melanie Iannacone '12, April Risley '12, and Meghan Timmins '12, Hannah McCarthy '12 and Stephanie Belmont '12, presented their Bonner capstone research on a variety of topics. Meghan Timmins '12 presented "Highlighting Effective Communication Skills Among Teenage Girls in the Capital Region" and Hannah McCarthy '12 presented "How the Cookie Crumbles for Underrepresented Youth in Girl Scouts." Each Senior Bonner had an interesting and engaging research topic.



Seven Bonner Service Leaders Graduate from Siena and Go On to Exciting New Adventures: What Are Their Next Steps?

Stephanie Belmont '12

Attending the College of St. Rose Speech Pathology Graduate Program, which is ranked the #1 Speech Pathology school in the country.

Hannah McCarthy '12

Attending the University of Rochester Accelerated Nursing bachelors degree program.

April Risley '12

Hired as the Coordinator of Quality Assurance and Youth Programs with Siena College Academic Community Engagement.

Sophia Pierre-Charles '12

Attending Sage College for Forensic Mental Health.

Meghan Timmins '12

Participating in a New York City Teaching Fellows Program.

Melanie Iannacone '12

Doing a full-time year of national service with AmeriCorps VISTA in the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows Program.

Meghan O'Mara '12

Received her Bachelor of Arts in History and worked as the Community Engagement Pedagogy and Program Assistant with ACE. She is currently employed in New York state.





"Life is More Than Siena College!"

By Dr. Ruth Kassel

This became the slogan of Dr Johnson's travel course - *Rural Sustainability in Latin America* - which traveled to various regions of Bolivia in late May. During the semester, students examined theories of development and the specific challenges faced by rural communities in developing nations. All of the theories and articles read in class, however, could not compare to the experience of traveling to study these issues in person. This is exactly what these 8 students discovered.

"In this trip I definitely learned a lot. I learned about Bolivia, my classmates and myself... Although we are used to every day luxuries, a lot of them, like hot water, are unnecessary and people live in different conditions all around the world."

In their visit to Unidad Académica Campesina (UAC), a satellite university of the Franciscan Catholic University of Bolivia, these students learned to go beyond the idea that they were there to help a poor and helpless group of people. In reality, it was us that had the honor of learning about all of the innovative things that UAC students and administrators are already doing such as testing out the properties of native plants to make organic pesticides and developing trash, composting, and recycling efforts in an area where there is no trash collection.

"I was truly impressed with everything they are doing at Carmen Pampa! In many aspects they are far ahead of us [Siena College] as a green and sustainable college."

ACE is already organizing the next trip to Bolivia for the summer of 2013. Next year a select group of students will go as summer interns and will have the chance to work with the UAC thesis students on specific projects of interest.

"This trip opened my eyes to many things and was a great experience. I really hope to return to Bolivia."

Community Engaged Courses Lead to New Experiences

We recently caught up with Siena student Jack Mulvaney '13 who took two community engaged courses this spring, one of which entailed a trip to Carmen Pampa, Bolivia. Read about his learning experiences working with the community as he answers our questions.



Q: Can you tell us a little bit about each class and the project you worked on for each class?

A: The global cities course was an extremely immersive, hands-on course that focused on the process of creating a community center in the South End of Albany. The community center is being built to combat systematic poverty latent in the South End. We met with community members, developers, and providers who hoped to be involved in the building process of the community center. While the community center is well-intentioned, we learned first-hand about the hurdles and obstacles that hinder the process of development.

A: *Rural Sustainability in Latin America* was a course in which we participated in unison with a class in Cochabamba, Bolivia. We learned about the process of encouraging sustainable growth in the developing world. Our goal was to apply our knowledge in Bolivia. We visited a college in rural Bolivia where we learned about the difficulties that the developing world faces in regard to being environmentally sustainable.

Q: How did the learning you did in these classes differ from other classes?

A: Both of these classes challenge the arbitrary power structure where the rich and formally educated are thought to know everything and the poor and unformally educated know nothing. These classes developed a solidarity that transcended the traditional social stratification both locally and globally. They also garnered the use of praxis - where knowledge moves beyond the classroom to the community. These classes left me with knowledge that can be used outside of the classroom.

Q: Can you give me a moment or two from each class that impacted you and helped you learn the material better?

A: In Bolivia our tour guide said "Life is bigger than Siena College." I began to realize all the possibilities that are at my disposal and how far I can go after Siena College. After playing soccer with some of the students in Bolivia I built a camaraderie. I began to realize that the power structure of the world where we divide ourselves by race, gender, class, or nationality is preposterous. People, no matter their race, gender, class, or nationality can unite themselves based on similarities rather than differences.

In the South End we went to a AVillage meeting run by community members and social activists. I realized how difficult it is to involve diverse stakeholders in urban planning. It once again made me question arbitrary class differences in America.

Q: Would you recommend a community engaged class to other students? Why or why not?

A: I would absolutely recommend the community engaged courses insofar that not everything can be learned in a classroom. It is one thing to talk about social justice and social inequality, but it is another thing to show social justice and social inequality.

Q: What advice do you have for someone taking a community engaged course?

The most important advice I have is to think globally and act locally. We need to help end social inequalities that exist in our own backyards, while acknowledging the breadth of our actions are not confined to our local communities. For every local action there is a global reaction. Before we can cure world-wide social ills we must reverse local social detriments and empower others to do so as well.

Introducing ACE Faculty Fellows & Mentors

2012-2013 ACE Faculty Fellows & Mentors:

Siena Academic Community Engagement would like to announce the 2012-2013 Faculty Fellow Cohort. The fellows participated in the Community Engaged Teaching and Learning Institute this past spring semester and are using the summer to finalize their courses for the Fall 2012 or Spring 2013 semesters. Stay tuned for more on these faculty-community partnerships.



Lisette Balabarca

Class: SPAN370 Advanced Spanish Conversation and Composition
Possible Partners: The Worker Justice Center of New York or Boys & Girls Clubs Universal Pre-K Program



Tim Cooper

Class: HIST401 Oral Histories of Vietnam
Possible Partners: Ten Broeck Mansion and The Albany Department of Veteran Affairs



Vera Eccarius-Kelley

Class: POSC360 Refugee and Migrant Studies: Migrant & Farm Worker's Rights
Possible Partners: The Worker Justice Center of New York



Michelle Liptak

Class: FYS100/101 Crossing Borders in Literature and Film
Possible Partners: North Albany Academy



Jenny McErlean

Class: PHIL240 Philosophy of Art
Possible Partners: Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany



Elizabeth Redkey

Class: FYS100/101 First Year Seminar on Leadership
Possible Partners: The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley



Andrea Smith-Hunter and Sudarat Musikawong

Class: SOCI385 Urban Sociology: Poverty and the City
Possible Partners: Trinity Alliance, Albany Center for Economic Success

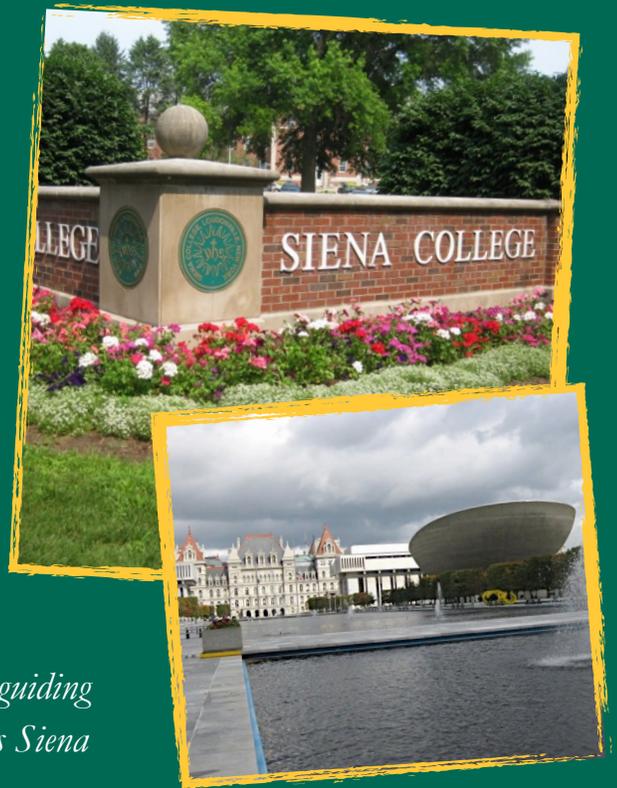


Paul Thurston

Class: MGMT425 Leading Organizational Change
Possible Partners: Siena College High Impact Community Engaged Practices Team and its community stakeholders.

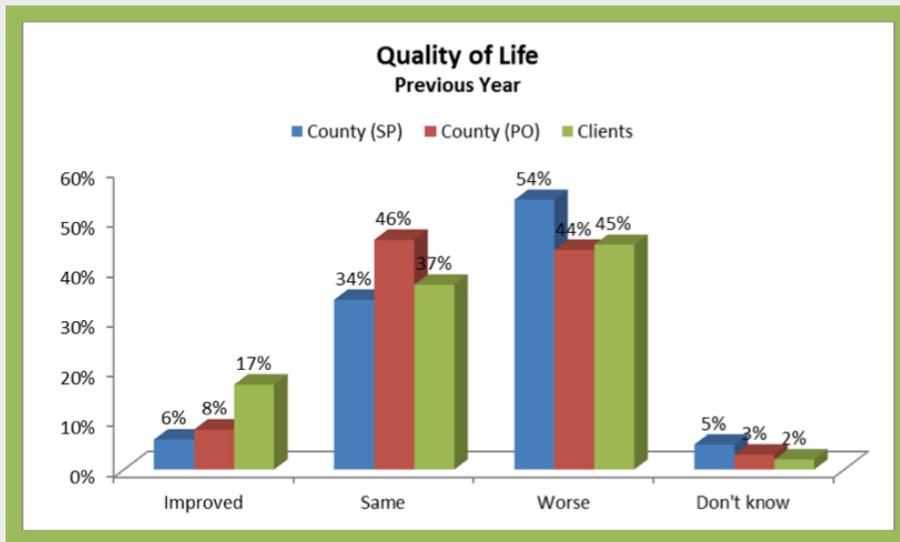
Siena as a Steward of Place: Are We There Yet?

What does it mean to be a ‘Steward of Place?’ It means going from small and isolated efforts to engage a community to the re-imagining of our own identity to place Siena in the middle of the community. As a steward of place, Siena college needs to recognize that the success of its surrounding communities is vital to the success of the institution and the success of its students. Our students know now, more than ever, that in order for them to succeed in their communities after college, they must be prepared to engage in those same communities during college. It is now time to look at what structural changes need to happen to encourage this sort of engagement. Below are a set of guiding questions as outlined by Meekins and O’Meara (2011). How is Siena College doing?



1. Are we preparing local leaders, leaders who stay local?
2. Are we committed to the underserved both in our institution and in the community?
3. Are we preparing our students to work in priority fields as determined by local and state governments?
4. How much of our budget is allocated to partnership investments and neighborhood development?
5. Are we a sustainable/green campus? Do we use our resources to create more sustainability in the region?
6. What is our role in the cultural development of the region?
7. How are we supporting the creation and success of local businesses?
8. Is Siena a place where important democratic and political discussions are happening?
9. In what ways does the community help shape Siena’s use of resources, teaching and research?
10. How do we keep our tuition accessible to a diverse body of students?
11. How many long-term (5+ years) partnerships does Siena have and how are they fostered?
12. Are we committed to serving a New York state student body?
13. To what extent is there public access to the knowledge and technological innovations created at Siena?

Meekins and O’Meara. 2011. Ranking Contributions to Place: Developing an Alternative Model for Competition in Higher Education. *Public Purpose*. Washington, D.C.: AASCU.



This bar graph compares the public's opinion of the overall quality of life in Albany County to that of service providers and their clients regarding whether life has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the past year.

Graph provided by the Siena Research Institute

The Power and Scope of Research

By Pete Cichetti

Have you ever wondered if drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs are truly effective? Or if the Girl Scouts do more than wear uniforms and sell cookies? Have you ever thought about the greatest areas of need for low-income residents in your own town? What about whether students volunteer in high school just because it looks good on a college application or because they actually care about giving back?

As a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) at the Siena Research Institute (SRI), these are just some of the community-based research questions that I help investigate all the time. We cover a huge range of social and cultural topics. These include our Community Needs Assessment Study, which measures an area's level of social need and availability of programs for low-income residents; our research venture with Father Peter Young Housing, Industries, and Treatment, where we are investigating the correlation between treatment length and treatment outcomes; our National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE), which measures the degree of service and community engagement among college students; and lastly our research endeavor with the Girl Scouts, in which we spent a

whole day qualitatively observing how a diverse group of young women responded to a series of organized activities. Truly, there is something for every curious mind.

Though the common perception is that doing research is boring and mundane, I can assure you it is anything but. Yes, staring at the computer screen for hours on end doing a "lit. review" can certainly be tedious, but once you take that research and utilize it to inform your own research project it expands upon so much of what you have already read. It also teaches you something completely new. You begin to see the everyday importance of what we do and you really start to appreciate the power of knowledge!

We now live in a society where more and more policymakers are utilizing evidence-based solutions to solve important social issues. Working at the Siena Research Institute and collaborating with community organizations and local residents to utilize SRI's unique resources to collect and disseminate vital information that will help solve these pressing issues is not only personally gratifying, but extremely necessary if we are truly serious about overcoming poverty.

Have you ever wondered how much of an impact AmeriCorps programs like VISTA and Bonner have had on our community as a whole? Perhaps we should study it!

Trailblazers: A Two-Way Service Street

By Dana Mazer '11

This year I was privileged to work with a team of twelve Siena students who acted as mentors and tutors for about 35 middle school students at North Albany Academy, a pre K-8 public school. To say that my students exceeded my expectations is putting it mildly. Unlike many of the service sites that Siena students typically volunteer with, the Trailblazers program is only in its second year at Siena and is still developing. I was worried that the lack of a solid program history and general “program know-how” would be a huge challenge for students. It was a challenge, but a challenge that my team of super heroes gracefully rose to meet.

The Siena Trailblazers Cohort from 2011-2012 consisted of twelve students from all class years, and included five Bonner Leaders. I was nervous to take on so many first year students this year (nearly half of the team were first years), but I was impressed with their interviews and took a gamble. Needless to say, I have not stopped being impressed - with the first years and the upperclassmen alike. From interacting with the sixth and seventh graders to organizing and facilitating

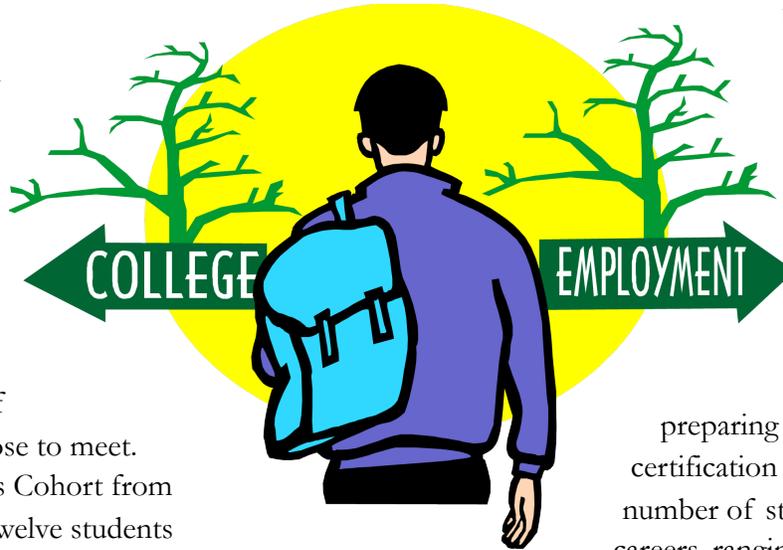
entire days focused on leadership activities - they have done it all.

The Siena students who are involved with Trailblazers are doing much more than one-way direct service. They are creating lesson plans based on a set of goals; they are learning how to manage a diverse group of students; they are reflecting on their efforts and improving their skills in management, teaching, organizing, and being flexible. If they fail to

communicate with one another or to work as a cohesive group, then they see the immediate result. It is group work in the classroom coming alive in the real world.

The Siena Trailblazers are prepared to tackle anything in nearly any field. While we do have a few students preparing to enter the Education certification program, we also have a number of students interested in other careers, ranging from Psychiatry to Public Relations. The skills that they learn are transferable across different career paths.

Thus to be fair, even though the middle school students are gaining leadership skills and a beneficial support system, the Siena students are also profiting from this experience. This two-way street is a sign of a great partnership, and one that I hope will continue for many years to come.



Are You a Change Maker?

Be a guest on our radio show! We invite local, regional, national, and global community members who are making a difference in their communities. Come in person or call in the studio for an interview with our lovely co-hosts, Assistant Director of ACE Yalitza Negrón '08 and Siena Student and Bonner Service Leader Millie Condon '15. Contact our new Change Makers Manager and Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, Beatrice Jean, at bjean@siena.edu to be a guest on the show!



Habitat for Humanity and Sponsor-A-Scholar Partner to Give Access to Home and a College Education

By Beatrice Jean

All around the country, there are various nonprofit organizations serving the same communities. Ultimately they all have similar goals - to help the community and make a difference. But how can the community be helped if individuals are being pulled in many directions by nonprofit leaders advising the public on what they believe is best for their livelihood? One solution is through AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps members engage and interact with the community to get to the source of their real necessities. Locally, one branch of this program is making waves: the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows. Through this program, two organizations took a leap of faith and partnered to put together two fundamentals that families need to thrive - shelter and better education. The presence of their Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows members - Beatrice Jean at Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar and Melissa Moore at Capital District Habitat for Humanity - led the leaders of the organizations to connect and put in place a plan for collaborating. President of Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, Bill Corbett, and Executive Director of Capital District Habitat for Humanity, Mike Jacobson, are leading their organizations in providing qualified families with the chance to own a home and their students with the chance to go to college.

Through the Sponsor-A-Scholar program students will receive weekly homework sessions, one-on-one tutoring, AP classes, summer enrichment programs, a mentor, a stipend in college, and many tools to help lead them to high school and college graduation. The Habitat for Humanity program builds simple, decent, affordable houses for first time homebuyers, who meet the requirements, including completing 350 sweat equity hours with their family and friends. Now when students enter the Sponsor-A-Scholar program at Albany High School, their families have an opportunity to receive a Habitat for Humanity home!

DEEP Service 22

New ACE Partners

Academic Community Engagement continues to develop new partnerships as our programs and projects expand. In all of our partnerships, our goal is to develop DEEP (Developing Engaging Educational Partnerships) relationships in order to foster sustainable, integrated, multifaceted, and developmental partnerships that make a meaningful impact on key issues in our communities. We are excited to work with a growing list of new partners! In the 2012-2013 Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Service Year, we will have VISTA Fellows placed at the following organizations:

Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility

Albany Community Action Partnership

William S. Hackett Middle School

St. John's/St. Ann's Outreach Center

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls

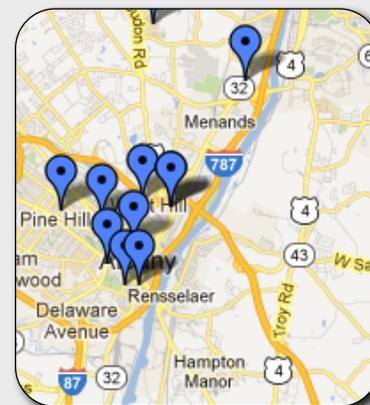
Brighter Choice Foundation

Mediation Matters

Commission on Economic Opportunity

Affordable Housing Partnership

15 Love



Map It!

ACE has over 30 DEEP partnerships in the Capital Region. Find a list of our partnerships and their locations on our website siena.edu/ace.

Hope 7 Community Center Develops Campus-Community Connections with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Russell Sage, and Siena College

By John DeCirce '11

At Hope 7 Community Center we recently partnered with both Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and Russell Sage College to bring in student interns and volunteers to help lead more engaging activities for the children in our after school programs. We offer homework assistance and various clubs but are usually limited by either time or staff numbers. Since outreaching to local area colleges, college students have stepped forward to volunteer with our organization. We welcomed an intern from Russell Sage and a huge group of students via a Fraternity and Sorority to help us out. We had the intern start and run our art club and then join the other student volunteers to come in Monday through Wednesday to help out children with homework and those with more specific needs like tutoring in reading and writing.

On top of that we had students from Siena College, as part of a Foundations course with Holly Cheverton, come in and bring our children on



monthly field trips. We have never seen such a great turnout and the children really appreciated being able to bond with college students. The same students from Siena also helped the children put on the play "Shrek." They learned key aspects of theater, like learning lines, setting up the set design, and creating costumes.

As you can see, having these great college and university level connections effectively adds to our functioning staff numbers and makes it so that we can offer more to the children in our programming. That is so helpful even more so to smaller organizations like us that depend heavily on person to person work and need a large team to function.



Upcoming ACE Summer Program Happenings

August 2012

2012-2013 Summer Cohort of Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows start their service term

August 6 - 16

Rising Sophomore Bonner Service Leaders travel to Maine for their 1st Year Service Trip

August 12

Siena Summer Service Scholars finish their 10-week term

September 4

Siena College classes begin

In the Next Issue

Academic Community Engagement Summer Program Highlights

Civic Engagement Camp

The Summer Civic Engagement Camp invites high school students to become engaged citizens while embarking on a week long learning adventure, increasing their knowledge about leadership and social justice while doing hands-on service projects in the community.

Summer Service Scholars

The Siena Service Scholars Program is an academic internship where participants take one class, ADTV499 “Internship in Sustainable Community Change” which combines the study of the root causes of poverty and best practices in community development with hands-on and behind the scenes nonprofit immersion.

New Siena AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows

Meet our new Siena VISTA Fellows serving at a diverse group of nonprofit organizations, agencies, and schools in the Capital Region. Our Siena VISTA Cohort grows to 32 Fellows!

