Community Scholars Program
By Sarah Consoli, Agency Outreach Intern and Scene Editor

S.O.S. has expanded the SASS after-school program at Jackson Street School into a new, exciting, and innovative tutorial and academic enrichment program called the Community Scholars Program (CSP).

CSP was established through a partnership with Smith College, S.O.S., the Northampton and Springfield Public Schools, and the Hampshire Community Action Commission.

In a nutshell, CSP is dedicated to providing academic mentoring to local youth facing academic challenges. Thirty-Four CSP Academic Mentors (AMs) are working in Northampton with third to fifth graders from Jackson Street School and Florence Heights as well as in Springfield at the Gerena German Community School. Fifty-five students will be served at the Gerena Community School alone!

Through CSP, Smith AMs will be making an impact on the lives of the young scholars by encouraging youth to grow academically and enhancing their confidence in learning. Students will benefit from a dual relationship with their AMs who serve as positive role models while at the same time providing one-on-one homework support!

Anna Lugo, a CSP AM said, “Tutoring has taught me more about people skills and basic human emotions than I ever knew and for that I am grateful.”

(Continued on page 2)
Community Scholars Program
Continued

(Continued from page 1)

A highlight of CSP is a field trip that the tutees will take with their Academic Mentors to Smith College. During this trip, the tutees will learn about the prospect of college, and how to begin planning for it, and will be able to realize that college could be within their reach.

Denise Cogman, coordinator for Springfield school volunteers spoke out about the prospects of CSP at Gerena Community School when she said, “We are very excited to have this partnership with Smith. The kids will really benefit.”

Principal Gwen Agna at Jackson Street School stated, “CSP is one of the best programs we have here for sure!”

CSP is a wonderful opportunity for Smith students to get involved in the community in a very special and important way. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have made the Community Scholars Program possible for Smith students as well as for the children who benefit. A special thank you is in order to Dean Mahoney, Jennifer Walters, and S.O.S. for their willingness and efforts to support CSP both financially and publicly. Also, an important thanks goes out to Sam Intrator for continued support with volunteers from his course “Education in the City,” the education department of Smith and to Melissa Medvin, CSP coordinator.

To learn more about CSP, visit www.smith.edu/sos/scholars.htm or to learn more about other satisfying ways to enhance the community, call the S.O.S. office at x4595.

Q: What’s the shortest volunteer project you can do that affects people’s lives forever?
By Anna Graseck, Blood Drive Chair

A: Donate Blood!

Each semester, SOS sponsors a blood drive through the American Red Cross, and this semester’s blood drive is fast approaching. The drive will take place on Tuesday, October 29 and Wednesday, October 30, from 11 AM—5 PM, in Davis Ballroom. As always, blood is in short supply, so every donation matters! We are also in need of volunteers to help during the course of the drive. To sign up, call the SOS office at ext. 2759 or email sosstu@email.smith.edu, listing when you are available. There are many misconceptions about who is eligible to donate blood. For example, taking a prescription medication does not usually affect eligibility. Many Smithies also wonder about recent tattoos or body piercings. While you must wait one year after a tattoo to donate blood, recipients of sterile body piercings can give blood at any time.

Unfortunately for those returning from JYA, new restrictions exist, limiting those who can give blood after living in certain European countries for 3 months or more. You may also have to wait a year to donate after traveling to areas of the world that harbor malaria. If you think travel restrictions may apply to you, find out for sure by calling the Red Cross at 1-800-GIVELIFE or going to www.givelife.org and clicking on “Eligible.” Whatever you do, don’t assume you cannot donate—ask!

Just one pint of your blood can be used to save three people’s lives. Sign
New SOS Website!
By Eliza Brink, S.O.S. Board Chairwoman

Finding out information about SOS and SOS-related activities just got even easier! The revised SOS site is up on the web at www.smith.edu/sos. It is easy to navigate and very helpful for people who are interested in becoming involved with SOS, as well as people who are already SOS participants but want to find out more.

Features of the site include an event calendar – just click on any day this academic year and find out what SOS activities are happening that day. The calendar also includes event locations and times. Site visitors can also see photos and bios for the SOS Director, Board Members, and soon a list of SOS House Reps too. There is also detailed information about short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities; info on CSIP (Community Service Internship Program), CSP (Community Scholars Program), and other community-based internship opportunities; and other helpful resources such as “Important Tips for Volunteers”.

The site also includes important information about reserving an SOS vehicle. And that’s not all! Go to www.smith.edu/sos and see for yourselves!

Linking Community Service with Education
By Susan Chun, Community Outreach Intern

On August 27th, over 63 people participated in First Link, part of the college’s pre-orientation program run through Student Affairs and co-sponsored by the Chapel and S.O.S.

First Link allows First-years to ease into life at Smith by meeting classmates with the same passion for community service, and exploring the local community together. This year, First Link participants and leaders bonded, while living in Talbot house and engaging in local community-service projects.

Some of the projects include refurbished a children’s play therapy room at a local counseling center, harvesting vegetables and weeding the gardens at three local agencies (Food Bank Farm of Western Massachusetts, Nuestras Raices, and Aids Care/Hampshire County). They also built affordable housing with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Springfield and laid stones for a path at the Cambodian Buddhist Temple in Leverett.

The night before heading out to our project sites, there was some discussion time for preparation. Besides preparing materials, questions such as, "what does 'service' mean to you?" helped to prepare our minds and hearts.

First Link leader Xiaohong Sang was one of the leaders that went to the Cambodian Buddhist Temple. Sang said "I had a wonderful time. Everyone [on our project team] was very cooperative and full of spirit even though it was hard work.”

After the projects were completed, everybody reflected on the day. That night and the following morning, there were three sections for reflection: individual art projects, one large mural, and a drum circle. To conclude the reflection session, the project groups performed skits to express and share their experiences of the day. The following morning, students engaged in private journaling and discussion.

Joan O’Connell from River Valley Counseling Center said, “I’d like to convey our deepest gratitude for the renovation of our play therapy room. The young women who performed this service were astonishing in their enthusiasm, motivation, and creativity.”

S.O.S is here to help organize projects for you! Do you want to get involved in the community? Get together with your organization, house, or group of friends and volunteer for a one-day community service project! Some possible projects are:

- Harvesting food for people in need
- Constructing affordable housing for families
- Conserving trails at a wildlife sanctuary
- Visiting or entertaining at a retirement home
- Craft-making with residents at nursing homes

Please contact Susan Chun if you have any questions or to sign up for a project! You can reach her at schun@email.smith.edu or x5575
SOS Spotlight would like to acknowledge the great work done by community and student organizations that go above and beyond.

**Growing Green Thumbs: Short Term at the Food Bank Farm**
By Deborah Rogal

Short-term projects at S.O.S are in full swing. On September 14, we began with a trip to the Food Bank Farm in Hadley. Eighteen Smithies spent the morning working in the winter squash fields, the tomato and basil patches, and the strawberry field. We all got dirty (dirt from the fields was a must and a rotten tomato fight didn’t help matters!) and left tired, but had a great time and got to spend the morning outside in beautiful weather!

The Food Bank Farm (F.B.F.) supplies fresh vegetables to organizations and food pantries throughout Western Mass to help decrease hunger. The F.B.F. staff do a tremendous amount of work with relatively few employees, so our contribution, along with many other local volunteers, is something they count on to distribute over 175,000 pounds of organic vegetables annually.

Thanks to all who participated. You all did wonderful work and we hope to see all of you again on our next project!

The next project: Hitchcock Center for the Environment’s Enchanted Forest — a non-scary Halloween event in Amherst.

On October 25th, volunteers will work with children, guiding them along their exploratory walk, helping with craft activities or wherever else we can be of service.

This project is one of our favorites, and always fills up fast so sign up soon!

For more info, call the S.O.S office at x4595 or email the short-term co-chairs: Deborah (drogal@email.smith.edu) or Xiaohong