Martin Luther King Center Tutors, Take a Bow
By Hannah Sager. Community Intern and Scene Editor

The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center located in the Mason Square area of Springfield, is committed to providing comprehensive, high quality community-based services to youth, families and adults.

This year SOS continues the partnership with MLK by sending eight volunteer after-school tutors to the Center three days a week.

New this year, S.O.S. is providing additional support through the expertise of our after-school service director, Melissa Medvin. She visits the Center once a week to offer advice and assistance to tutors. Both Melissa and the Smith students work alongside MLK staff tutoring over 50 children and helping kids build solid academic foundations in Math and Reading. Tutoring not only broadens their horizons in the areas of teaching and community service, but through their work and dedication, they touch the lives of many children and teens.

The following interviews with Smith tutors, Ellen Smith, Fareen Ramji, and My Yen Le give us a small window into their experiences.

Ellen Smith is volunteering as part of the coursework in Prof. Sam Intraders class Adolescents and Education.

Q. How does working with the MLK Center help you gain insight into course work or tie into your future career plans?
A. Eventually, I would like to be a teacher. Working and tutoring at MLK helps prepare me for teaching. Tutoring kids not only allows me to practice teaching, but MLK allows me to work with a lot of children at once. It gives me the feeling of a classroom.

Fareen Ramji was a CSIP Intern placed at MLK two years ago in the SPICE program. She is delighted to return as an MLK volunteer tutor to gain additional experience working with inner city adolescents.

Q. How would you compare your work at the MLK Center today with the work you did as a CSIP Intern two years ago?
A. The after-school program at the MLK Center is structured in a much different way than the

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Wednesday, March 28

CSIP intern Jenny Pierce, one of eight Smith tutors at MLK Ctr

Hannah Sager and Melissa Benevides, Editors

March 2002

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April Upcoming Events:

• 3rd and 10th - Board Meeting (Bodman) 5–6 pm
• 11th - Com. Ed. Lunch (Wright) 12-1 pm
• 11th - House Rep Meeting (Bodman) 5 - 6 pm
• 16th - Volunteer Recognition Dinner (TBA) 5 - 7:30 pm
• 17th and 24th - Board Meeting (Bodman) 5 - 6 pm
• 25th - House Rep Meeting (Bodman) 5 –6 pm

Friday, May 3rd
Last Day of Classes!

Helen Hills Hills Chapel ◆ Smith College ◆ (413) 585 2756
Community Service Fair
By Desiree Dieste, Long - term Chair

Interested in caring for animals at the Greenfield Animal Shelter or building a house with Habitat for Humanity?

On February 12th, more than 30 local agencies came to the S.O.S. Community Service Fair to inform Smith students about volunteer opportunities available in the community. The fair had a great turnout of students and we are very pleased with the interest that was shown.

Representatives from agencies from around the area shared information about their individual organizations and advertised the various volunteer opportunities they have available. The scope of these opportunities provide students with varied ways to get involved.

If you are interested in a regular weekly placement for this semester, many are still available. For questions or further info, contact the SOS office (x2756) or Desiree Dieste, Long-term Chair at (x7257).

Martin Luther King Center
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S.P.I.C.E. program with which I worked in '99-'00. The after-school program works with younger students, and focuses less on social and personal development and more on positive support and experiences, with a balance of physical and mental exercise. Although I miss the weekly CSIP meetings and supervision, I still draw on the tools and feedback I gained from the experience to teach and learn from the students on a day-to-day basis.

My Yen Thi Le, a CSIP Intern, works with MLK two days a week.

Q. Has working at the MLK center taught you anything about yourself or affected your life in ways you didn’t expect?

A. Assisting students to develop their academic and social skills at the MLK Community Center teaches me how to work under pressure, work outside of my comfort zone, and practice my assertive skills.

From interacting with the students and staff, I am able to discover my weaknesses, such as my hesitation to approach an authority figure, and strengths, such as being patient with the kids. By realizing these weaknesses and strengths, I am able to develop ongoing techniques and strategies to apply to other areas of my life.

2nd Annual Blood Drive
By Kim Porter, Blood Drive Chair

Thank you to everyone involved in the spring blood drive! The annual spring drive, held this February 27th and 28th in Davis Ballroom was a success. A total of 136 pints was collected over the two days.

The marvelous SOS house reps scheduled many appointments and the volunteers who helped staff the drive made sure everything ran smoothly.

In the future, the focus of the drive may take a turn towards educating Smith students about the importance of donating blood, donor guidelines, and letting people know how important it is to eat enough iron!

Many would-be donors had to be turned away due to Red Cross provisions and minor illnesses. We hope to work to regain our previous donor status!
Language, Culture, and Healthcare: The 2002 Fund Drive
By Emily Gerstein and Mary Weening, Fund Drive Chairs

What would you do if you went into the doctor’s office but couldn’t speak or read the language? That is the question this year’s S.O.S. Fund Drive asked students. The goal of the annual S.O.S. drive is to raise money that directly aids local causes, as well as to educate Smith students on issues that impact the Pioneer Valley and, inevitably, their own lives.

This year’s Fund Drive entitled Language, Culture and Healthcare: Communicating Across the Barriers educated students on the local need for translation services, health and preventative materials, and culturally sensitive healthcare.

Within the Pioneer Valley, there are large immigrant populations, including Chinese, Cambodian, Latino, Russian and Vietnamese communities.

House reps collected donations and fund-raising events were held from February 15th to March 14th. Donations will be formed into a grant that local community organizations can then apply for. This year, all funds will go directly into services that address language and culturally related barriers.

Last year, the Fund Drive centered on children affected by domestic abuse. It was a great success, raising $4,500 for the cause.

This year’s drive has yet to be tallied but we hope it will be as successful as the last!

S.O.S. Community Ed. Luncheons
By Ami Dave, Community Ed. Chair

The first community education luncheon of the semester was held on the 14th of February. Mary Jo Stanley from Children’s Aid and Family Services came to talk about the different volunteering opportunities available in the organization. She was accompanied by Stephanie Keep, an ADA Comstock scholar and longtime volunteer with CAFS.

According to Stanley, students who are willing to commit to a semester-long placement with CAFS can work as a children’s group assistant or with parents who are suffering from isolation and stress as a parent aid.

Stephanie Keep began her work with CAFS as a CSIP intern and continues now as a volunteer. She has worked with three families and honed her parent aid skills. Her invaluable experience with CAFS will help her immeasurably in her chosen career as social worker.

Our second S.O.S. luncheon of the semester was held on the 7th of March in conjunction with our annual Fund Drive (see article, Language, Culture, and Healthcare). Dalila Balfour of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health discussed a medical interpretative support services program provided by Casa Latina, a local non-profit agency. She also discussed a proposed MA state bill to provide consistent medical interpretative support services at hospitals state-wide.

The bill would guarantee funding for mono-lingual non-English speaking patients to receive interpretative/translation services for their medical needs.

Ms. Balfour also stressed the importance for medical practitioners to learn about the history, cultural beliefs and practices of the groups they work with. For example, medical professionals should not assume that all Spanish speaking individuals are in the same economic or cultural group.

Community Ed Luncheons are an excellent way to stay informed and get involved. At S.O.S., we appreciate your continued attendance and support. Our next luncheon is coming up April 11th in Wright Common Room, 12-1 pm. Lunch will be served. See you then!

Volunteer Opportunity with Teen Parents

Healthy Families is a statewide home visiting program for first-time mothers and fathers under 21, funded by the Massachusetts Children’s Trust Fund.

We are looking for volunteers to provide childcare and/or transportation for young parents and their child to groups. All groups happen in the early evening, and generally on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

This program is a part of Children’s Aide and Family Service of Hampshire County. Please call Dana at 584-5690 x110 for more information.
SOS Spotlight would like to acknowledge the great work done by community and student individuals and organizations that go above and beyond.

**A Knitting Bee for Service** by Adrienne Leavitt

Talbot House recently participated in Project Square, an ongoing S.O.S. tradition. Every year reuniting Alumnae knit colorful squares for Project Square and current Smithies knit or crochet together enough squares to finish a pastel-colored quilt. It makes a great house project as Elizabeth Bohuski, the HR of Talbot, can attest. She came up with the idea of doing a knitting project after remembering a similar project put together by her HR during her first-year at Smith.

“We had a Tea-time knitting workshop on February 1st. It was still fairly cold out in the beginning of February and people were not busy with classes yet,” said Elizabeth.

Elizabeth’s initiative turned into a house effort to crochet together the existing squares into quilts for babies, individuals, or families at local shelters.

Project Square is a great community building activity for the residents of Smith Houses in many ways.

Elizabeth explained the social aspect of Project Square, “I think knitting is, in itself, a social activity. It’s productive and fun. I think residents who complete squares feel good about contributing to a cause.”

Blankets are donated to local shelters, nursing homes and families that could not otherwise afford a pretty piece of art to enliven their homes and hearts. Sharing these bright afghans with a community that badly needs hope and love is the main purpose behind the project and the goal of the students and alumnae who work on it.