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Arise for Social Justice: a Personal Experience
By Lydia Deere-MacLeod '05

"Arise for Social Justice is a low-income rights, anti-oppression membership organization in western Massachusetts. Arise was started in 1985 by four women on Welfare who met around a kitchen table and decided to organize and advocate for their rights. Arise has grown over the years. Currently we have an Economic Justice Committee, an Electoral Committee, a Peace Committee, "The VOICE", a Community Newspaper, and the W.I.S.E. Committee (Women In Support of Each Other)." - http://www.angelfire.com/ma4/arise/

Arise is an organization that helps everyone. The phone never stops ringing. People are there 24 hours a day. One week a family of nine was staying on the couches because they cannot find beds in a local shelter. Arise finds them space in a Boston shelter. Another night there is a crisis at the woman’s apartment they run; they send help over immediately. A Springfield teacher reports police brutality and Arise helps to stage a protest outside of the police station. Arise created Sanctuary City, an area for people who are homeless to set up tents

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From Jamie Wilcox, Blood Drive Chair:
A tremendous thank you to all those who donated and volunteered at the recent blood drive. 180 pints of blood were drawn, saving potentially 540 lives. Cheers to everyone for making it a larger success than we’ve had in years!

Decisional Training
By Emily Knaphus '05

My sophomore year, I had the privilege of being part of the SOS Community Service Internship Program (CSIP). Through this program, I was able to receive a stipend for participating in a long-term community service project – giving me the time that would normally be spent doing work-study to focus on something more valuable to the community.

I chose to devote my energy to the Decisional Training/Thresholds program at the Franklin County Jail in Greenfield. Decisional Training is a class taught at both the Franklin County jail and the Hampshire County Jail in Northampton. It teaches a 5-step decision-making process aimed at helping inmates take more control over their lives.

I went to the jail twice a week, once for a one-on-one session with a specific inmate, and once to help teach the group session along with
**Message from the Chair**

Believe it or not, the semester is coming to a close. Over the last four months, students have shown their dedication to community work in countless ways. Three times a week, vans full of Smithies head to Springfield schools to mentor and tutor young children. CSIP volunteers dedicate themselves to six to eight hours a week of service to various community groups. Smith students are Big Sis-
ters, animal shelter volunteers, and Buddies for people living with HIV/AIDS. Other students, with less time to commit, helped served chocolate at AIDS Care’s annual chocolate buffet fundraiser, or peeled garlic at the Food Bank Farm.

Maybe you haven’t been able to be a long-term volunteer this semester. Perhaps you are missing the balance in your life that community work provides. Now is the time to start planning for next semester! Not sure what to do? Check out this newsletter for plenty of ideas, or head to the SOS website (www.smith.edu/sos/). As always, SOS board members and office staff are happy to talk to you about opportunities.  
- Anna Graseck ‘05

**Fund Drive Co-Chairs**

This year’s fund drive co-chairs, Camaren and Deborah, are pleased to announce that the theme for next semester’s fund raising efforts will be Women and Cancer. The fund drive won’t officially begin until next semester, but we are looking forward to gathering together as a community to raise money and educate on this important issue that particularly affects the surrounding area. If you have questions or comments feel free to email Deborah at drogal@email.smith.edu. For information on the allocation of last year’s fund drive awards, please see the article on the next page.

**Community Education Chair**

Hi, I’m Angela and I’m this year’s Community Education Luncheon Chair. Generally, I publicize any organizations within Northampton and the Pioneer Valley area whose agenda may be of interest to any Smithies. Our first luncheon this year had speakers from different chapters of Habitat for Humanity. The next luncheon will involve a presentation about the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County. Neema Khatri ‘05 will be speaking about her experience as a Big Sister.

**Community Co-Chairs**

If you want to get your house, sports team club or group of friends involved in community service then Chandler Patton and Jordyn Rozensky are the people to contact. They will be setting up work dates with Habitat for Humanity, MANNA, Friends of the Homeless, Greenfield Animal Shelter and All out Adventures (an outdoor recreation program for people with disabilities) so that organized groups from Smith can go! Working on these projects will help you build house community, team camaraderie, and club unity, but most importantly it will be helping out the community we live in! mpatton@email.smith.edu, jrozensk@email.smith.edu.

**CSIP Report**

Molly Browning ‘05

As a member of this year’s CSIP group, I was placed at the Gerena Community School in Springfield, Massachusetts as a tutor for their after-school program. I had worked with children in the past through babysitting and camp counseling, but had zero experience tutoring. I knew I was good at playing with kids, but I was nervous about successfully encouraging them to do work, especially after a long day at school. I was fortunate enough to be placed with the same student every week. Now, two months into my placement I have learned a great deal about her strength’s and weaknesses, and in general have gained a solid sense of her likes and dislikes. While it is sometimes difficult for both of us to focus, we have been able to balance hanging out and chatting time with actual working time. Through getting to know my tutee, I have been able to find methods of learning that work best for her.

CSIP has taught me how to be a better listener, and I find the skills that I learn from the seminar to be very helpful when talking with my student. She is a very sensitive and perceptive student, and CSIP has taught me how to conduct our conversations so that she feels heard, something that is often hard to accomplish in a large school setting. While I know she has learned new math and writing skills from the after-school program, ultimately I think the connection made with someone outside of her school and family has been the most important. Next semester I will continue working in the after-school program and will have a second placement within a classroom during the school day.
In conjunction with the celebration of World AIDS Day on December 1st the SOS office is announcing the award of two grants to local organizations that are working with people with HIV/AIDS.

Hamden County has the 11th highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the nation. In response to this critical local need, SOS, the Smith College Community Service Program, focused their 2004 annual Fund Drive on people in our community who are “Living with HIV/AIDS.” $4,500.00 was fundraised and will be granted to two local non-profit organizations: Between Family and Friends, located at 1655 Main St, in Springfield and Tapestry Health Systems, with offices throughout Hamden County.

Each year Smith College students involved with SOS identify a critical local need and develop a campaign to raise money that is granted to local agencies. SOS House Representatives solicit their housemates for donations, there are concerts showcasing Smith singing groups, lectures and other educational forums are organized. The year-long event is coordinated by two student Fund Drive chairs who are members of the SOS Executive Board. The ’04 fund drive chairs Jessica Clarke ’06 and Christina Knowles ’04 decided to focus on living with AIDS because of critical local needs.

Tiertza-leah Schwartz, the Director of Community Services at Smith College, stated that “the fund drive is important because it not only teaches students the fundamentals of designing a direct-solicitation fund raising campaign and how to analyze and award grants, but also because it educates the larger Smith community about local needs and issues.”

The grants will help Between Families and Friends and Tapestry Health Systems meet critical needs in the face of large funding. Recently Between Family and Friends lost a major funding source for their congregate meal program. Through the SOS grant, Between Family and Friends will receive $4,000 to continue the congregate meal program for a year. The funds will pay for the salary of a cook and the cost of supplies for the meals. David McKinney, Program Coordinator at Between Family and Friends, stated that over 40% of the individuals who utilize the services provided by Between Family and Friends are homeless and that the program is unique because the agency provides support to individuals both infected as well as family and friends who are affected by HIV/AIDS. The congregate meals provide an important support system and helps the people who attend stay healthy by eating nutritionally prepared meals. The program provides people with HIV/AIDS a safe welcoming haven. Nicole Rosendale, a Smith student who has volunteered at Between Family and Friends Center has changed my life. For so many, the HIV pandemic is sequestered in a purely academic setting. I was of the same mindset, until working at the Center showed me how truly dangerous that mentality is. HIV is a manifestation of poverty, structural racism, sexism and many of the social problems we as white, middle-class citizens choose to disregard. Working at the Center has shown me that we can afford to ignores HIV and its many implications no longer. The effects of the Center extend past the academic into the personal, however. The people I meet there are amazing. They continually inspire me with their hope and their strength not only in my activism, but in every aspect of my life. Volunteering for the Center has truly opened my eyes and transformed me to the core.”

In addition, $500 is being awarded to Tapestry Health Services for transportation to appointments with nutritionists and for nutritional food supplements. Lucy Hartry the Director of Administrative Services at Tapestry Health Systems stated that “over the past several years state funding for services for people with HIV/AIDS has been decreased by 40% making it very difficult to provide services that can both prevent the disease from spreading and to help people already infected. The funding will help fill critical gaps in health related services to help people stay healthy longer.”

AIDS Care Chocolate Buffet and Silent Auction

The 11th Annual Chocolate Buffet and Silent Auction sponsored by AIDS Care/Hampshire County was a huge success! Approximately five hundred people were in attendance and over two hundred items were auctioned off. The event raised over $29,000, which will be used to help serve those who are living with HIV/AIDS in Hampshire County. The event could not have been a success without the help of the many Smith and community volunteers. Thank you for your time and commitment!

Board member, Deborah Rogal volunteering at the AIDS Care benefit
The Black Educators of Tomorrow
By: Meng Li ‘05

The Black Educators of Tomorrow is a new community service program at Smith college dedicated to improving the educational accomplishments of black youth through the development and deployment of instructional and motivational methods that increase inspiration and overall achievement. The organization was founded in 2002 by Shadae Thomas, a senior education major. Although it is a Smith-based program, the organization includes students from the other 5-college schools.

Shadae created the organization because she felt there was a need for more mentoring programs reaching out to black and Latino students in the surrounding area, and especially in Springfield. Springfield is a city with many educational issues, for it has one of the lowest MCAS scores in the state. She found the Black Educators of Tomorrow as a way of addressing the educational needs in the Pioneer Valley area, as well as developing community outreach, 5-college strength and overall unity.

The goal of the program is to provide high-school age students with positive role models who can provide them with support in academics as well as their personal life. In partnership with the New Leadership Charter School in Springfield, the Black Educators of Tomorrow mentor 19 ninth graders, male and female. The mentoring program covers a variety of topics from college prep, time and stress management to health issues. Mentors are there to help students engage in group discussions about the themes as well as talk about their feelings on the issues that are being brought up.

The Black Educators of Tomorrow is in its first year of mentoring. Shadae has seen benefits for mentees as well as mentors. She said, “I have gotten feedback from the mentees and they said the mentoring program has been tremendously helpful. They have someone who is close in age who they can talk and relate to. The mentors know what the students are going through and can give them helpful tips on things that are going at school and in life. Through the mentoring experience, the mentors themselves have learned a lot about themselves, it’s really a rewarding experience to play a large part in the life of a young person.”

If you are interested in supporting the Black Educators of Tomorrow, the organization is welcoming donations of any sort in its efforts raise money to further fund the program. Contact Shadae Thomas at sthomas@smith.edu.

S.T.E.P. is sponsoring The 21st Century Connections Program; a district-wide initiative to provide after school academic enrichment programming to Holyoke middle and high school students. The Connections Program will serve the Holyoke high school, the Kelly Middle School, Donahue Middle School, and Sullivan Middle School. Tutors would provide one-on-one and small group tutoring, as well as assisting club advisors with activity implementation. Contact Joan at 413-552-2250 or jgiouvannini@hcc.mass.edu

Winter Gifts

Thank you to all the houses, staff members, and individual students who sponsored a child or children in the Hilltown Church’s Pantry Winter Gifts Project. We had a great turn out and were able to provide 70 children with holiday presents. This project greatly benefits the local community because many of the children might not have received gifts otherwise.
during the summer months.

I joined Arise at the beginning of this semester (Fall 2004). As part of a domestic violence project I became part of the newly formed Domestic Justice subcommittee, part of the Women In Support of Each Other Committee. We meet once a week at the Arise office. Some weeks no one shows up. Other weeks we have eight people in our circle. When I decided to work with Arise in September, I had this picture of “doing” social justice the right way. I imagined it to be difficult, but fun and rewarding. I tried to be humble and respectful. There is nothing fun about seeing and dealing with issues of violence, poverty, addiction, prison, rape, hunger, and abuse. Regardless of how much respect I brought to the table, I always drove back to Smith after the meeting. I ate a big supper, took a hot shower, and crawled into a warm bed. No matter how much I accomplished in that one evening a week the realities of the people I met were never as privileged as mine.

I believe we must realize that the luxuries we have in our lives are the direct result of our neighbor’s oppression. I wanted to end the violence. I wanted people to be free from abuse; to do this I must understand the violence I inflict in my daily actions. As an American citizen I support a system that has fostered violence and inequality from its core. The system that brings us bargains by the bagful and Caribbean cruises builds prisons in Greenfield to incarcerate the most disenfranchised, keeps the roots of violence well fed, and sends the economically poor to war to fight our oil driven battles. Smith is fifteen miles from Springfield and a world apart from clean needle exchange, the decriminalization of prostitution, and welfare reform. This is the life of our community. Why do we make it invisible?

It takes a strong person to admit their negligence and betrayal. It takes a much stronger person to survive under the negligence and betrayal of another. Look beyond the five ivory towers and question the reality that the rest of our community faces. Do your work, get good grades, work on Wall Street, make your parents proud, but know that every day that you go to bed content a thousand others suffer. If we accept our contentment, we remain the reason that they suffer.

If you are interested in volunteering at Arise, Inc. in the areas of anti-poverty and housing, criminal justice, sex worker outreach, free schools, or office work please contact Michael Ann Bewsee at (413) 734-4948 or michaelannb@hotmail.com

Another CSIP student and the director of the Franklin County program, Sherrill Ashton.

Choosing to go to the jail was an easy decision for me, as I have been very interested in the criminal justice system and life inside prisons for a long time. However, actually stepping inside the jail for the first time was not quite as easy. I had no idea what to expect - I didn’t know how it would feel to be locked inside, what kind of people I was going to be working with, or how they would act towards me as a 19-year-old woman entering into a space full of ‘tough guys’. I was initially very nervous, but eventually I grew comfortable with the surroundings. Although some men took the course more seriously than others, in general I felt as though they appreciated the time spent by the volunteers working with them. If nothing else, the inmates all enjoyed having the chance to talk with someone outside the jail. I developed close relationships with two inmates (one first semester, and one second semester) – and I can only hope that the time they spent talking with me helped them to see their life in a different way once they got out. Even if it didn’t, at least I provided them with a break from the monotony of prison life.

If you are interested in working with incarcerated men at the Hampshire County or Franklin County House of Correction, please contact Janet Dahlberg at 586-1640 or Sherrill Ashton at 549-1745. A training session will be held February 12th and 13th for the February 20th-May 5th cycle.
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Hampshire County is looking for dedicated volunteers who are willing to commit at least a year to helping a young person. "Being a Big Sister is the perfect opportunity to escape the stress of college life while making a difference in the community." -Neema Khatri, ’05.
For more information, contact Donna Cavagnac: (413) 253-2591, bbbshc@chd.org or visit www.bbbshampshirecounty.org.

The Housing Discrimination Project is an organization that works to defend human and civil rights by investigating housing discrimination complaints, providing support and free legal service to those whose rights have been infringed, and educate the community about fair housing laws and practices, in order to end housing discrimination in Central and Western Massachusetts. They are looking for volunteers to work with experienced legal staff on complaints of illegal housing discrimination and to conduct outreach on behalf of the fair housing program. There is an especially high demand for bi-lingual volunteers.
For more information, please contact Jamie Williamson: (413) 539-9796 X108, jwmson86@aol.com

Tapestry Health Systems provides family planning services, STI screening and treatment, needle exchange, HIV/AIDS services, LGBTQ services, and WIC nutritional services. Tapestry is looking for volunteers in the clinic and administrative areas of its office. For more information please visit www.tapestryhealth.org or contact John at jlutz@tapestryhealth.org or 413-586-2016 X110.

HCAC (Hampshire Community Action Comission) addresses both the causes and the effects of poverty by building relationships with low and moderate-income people to support their efforts to become more economically self-sufficient. HCAC is looking for volunteers to act as Information and Referral Specialists and Information and Resource Staff Assistants. For more information, please contact Karen Hakala at (413) 582-4200 X178 or khakala@hcac.org. You can also visit HCAC on the web at www.hcac.org.