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ALUM REFLECTION
CSIP Beyond Smith by Neema Khatri, ’05

When I joined the Community Service Internship Program (CSIP) as a senior at Smith, I did not realize how much I would take away from the seminar. I figured that the seminar, which complements a hands-on internship in the community, would be a moral support group where we would sit around and talk about our feelings. I soon discovered that CSIP was so much more. I learned skills that have helped me be a better volunteer, friend and relative—skills that continue to enrich my existence beyond Smith.

A second generation Nepali-American with a deep commitment to public service, I had always dreamed of contributing my time and energy to promote social justice in South Asia. I was alarmed to discover that the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 10,000 women and girls are trafficked from Nepal to brothels in India annually. Thus, upon graduation, I traveled to Nepal to volunteer with an organization that fights trafficking. Maiti Nepal rescues and rehabilitates survivors of trafficking, raises awareness in the most affected regions, and organizes prevention programs to target vulnerable groups. During my time at Maiti Nepal, I worked both in the rehabilitation center, teaching young children, and on prevention programs.

The skills I learned in the CSIP program were invaluable to my experience in Nepal. CSIP taught me not only how to handle uncomfortable situations with clients, but how to enhance my relationships through the communication skills emphasized in the CSIP seminar. For example, according to one of CSIP’s guidelines, one should never approach a client of social work in public unless she or he is the one to initiate conversation. This is to protect the privacy of the client. Maiti Nepal runs a trafficking prevention project with women who work in Kathmandu’s restaurant industry. There is a stigma against this type of work in Nepal, so much so that many of these women hide their profession from family and friends. One day, while shopping in the bustling bazaars of the city, I noticed a young restaurant worker with whom I had spent many days in a Life Skills and Leadership Training organized by Maiti Nepal. She flashed me a glance of recognition and quickly turned away.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
SOS has been involved in two new and important projects this year. First, we are working closely with Dean of Religious Life, Jennifer Walters and other members of the Gulf Coast Relief Committee to organize service trips to Mississippi and Louisiana, raise funds for relief efforts, and support a family who relocated to the Pioneer Valley.

Second, we’ve teamed up with the Department of Residence Life to administer President Christ’s House Community Service Sustainability Project engaging Smith houses in community service.

FUND DRIVE
Our topic this year is local foster children, specifically providing supplies for kids and funds for extracurricular and enrichment activities. We are planning a Community Education Luncheon, a lecture and a benefit concert. We look forward to your support for a successful drive.

- Elizabeth Wolfson ’08
  and Katy Means ’06

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
This has been a busy semester. Every month we invited local community service organizations to Smith to talk about volunteer opportunities that are available in the Northampton community and surrounding areas. In addition, we also invite Smith student volunteers to get up and talk about their enriching experiences.

In September, the topic was long-term volunteer opportunities in the medical field where we heard from representatives from Baystate Medical Center, Northampton V.A. Medical Center and Tapestry Health Systems. In October, the luncheon was jam-packed with speakers from Children’s Aid & Family Services, Springfield School Volunteers, Friends of Children, and Girl Scouts of America; we also heard from a student volunteer about her experience tutoring at Gerena Community School in Springfield. In November, we had a special luncheon where we heard from a representative from Friends of the Homeless along with several Smith volunteers who give their evenings to help at the Interfaith Shelter. On December 13th, a representative from AIDS CARE/Hampshire county will be coming in to speak about volunteer opportunities helping those affected by HIV/AIDS. Next semester, I have several interesting luncheons in the works, including helping the elderly, women’s issues, and a special luncheon in conjunction with the SOS Fund Drive to help enrich the lives of local foster children and what we as Smith students can do to help.

—Julie Esterline

HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES
The house reps have had a tremendously successful Fall semester, which was kicked off with the Community Service Fair. Next was the Fall Blood Drive, for which the house reps diligently recruited donors and volunteers. My personal favorite project as a House Rep is Winter Gifts. I’m proud to say that this year Smith houses, departments, and individuals sponsored over 80 children by raising enough money to provide presents for kids who would otherwise not be receiving any this holiday season. Thanks also to all who demonstrated true kindness and generosity by donating to this important cause.

—Lindsey Sears ’07

FALL BLOOD DRIVE
After much planning, the Fall 2005 Blood Drive had a few too many donors for the number of staff, so the wait was at times long. We are working with Red Cross on increased staffing to shorten the waiting time. However, we managed to collect blood from 138 students, staff, faculty, and local residents, making it possible to help approximately 414 people! The drive was also supported by a large number of diligent student volunteers. Thanks again to everyone for all of your hard work and patience.

—Claire Bolton ’08

...Continued on page 5...
Blood Drive Chair
Claire Bolton '08
I wanted to be the Blood Drive Chair because there aren’t many things more straightforward and worthwhile than collecting a ton of blood from volunteers and giving it to people who really need it. Aside from being on the Board, I am an Economics major and a Japanese minor; I run a small organization called Knitting Needs, with my friend Jessica Ryan, making knitted hats for community members in need; and I make pithy attempts to be a member of Habitat for Humanity. I also strongly believe in the value of free time!

Recruitment / Agency Intern
Rachel Finklestein '08
I live in Cushing House and majoring in Spanish. I enjoy the social sciences and studio art. I love to travel and am planning on going to Ecuador next fall and taking the following spring semester off to do some sort of internship abroad—don’t ask me what I’m doing, though, as my plans seem to change everyday. I enjoy the outdoors, warm and sunny days, arts and crafts, taking naps, going to the gym, and vacations. Finally, community service has been a defining part of my life, and I hope to continue with my involvement in both local and international communities in the years to come.

Community Projects Co-Chair
Samin Green '08
I am a French and Government major from Newark, Delaware. Last year I was a SOS representative for Emerson house. I loved SOS so much I decided to join the board. When I’m not in the basement of the Chapel, I enjoy knitting, doing yoga, listening to music, watching French movies and trying to stay afloat in the academic tidal wave of Smith College.

Community Projects Co-Chair
Yuliya Yermolina '07
I am majoring in Neuroscience and a proud resident of Haven house. I got started with SOS during First Link pre-orientation program, and have been involved with various short term projects since then.

SOS Board Chair
Stacy Braverman '06
I began the school year as a First Link pre-orientation leader, and helped organize SOS board training. Now I run weekly board meetings and support board members in the projects they plan. I'm a senior, originally from Long Island and now living in Hopkins House. In addition to SOS, I am a research fellow at the Kahn Institute, the senior class historian, and an intern at a Springfield law firm that represents low-income clients. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, hiking, crossword puzzles, cuddling, and cooking large quantities of vegetarian food.

Head of House Reps
Lindsey Sears '07
I’m super excited to be back for a second year on the board. I’m a Classics major and live in Hubbard House. My favorite food is peanut butter and I’m totally obsessed with anything written by John Irving. I love Maine in the wintertime (my home state!) and my favorite movie is Erin Brockovich.

Fund Drive Co-Chair
Katy Means ’06
I’m from Atlanta, GA, living in Capen house, Majoring in Astronomy and Minorin in Computer Science. I’m really excited to be a part of the board this year. Community service has always been an important part of my life, and SOS allowed me to stay involved. I hope to go into fundraising and development when I graduate, so leading this year’s fund drive is very exciting for me.

...Continued on page 5 ...
SMITH COLLEGE
COMMUNITY SERVICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
A Program of Action, Reflection, and Learning
CSIP combines action, reflection, & learning to provide students with an intensive, community-based internship at a local non-profit partner agencies for 5-6 hrs per wk. Students learn new techniques based on social work models such as active listening, they participate in a weekly seminar, & write weekly process recordings. CSIP is a collaboration between SOS & Smith School for Social Work.
For further information or to apply, go to: www.smith.edu

SPOTLIGHT ON CURRENT CSIP PARTICIPANTS

María Rendón '08J
Looking for a job, I found out about CSIP, a paid service learning internship that would place me as a volunteer in one of six sites in the Pioneer Valley area. CSIP was, for me, the perfect opportunity to learn & apply some of the techniques that counseling social workers use on a day-to-day basis with their clients. Having just gone through a similar experience back in Miami, FL, I found that CSIP went beyond my expectations in terms of what I would learn every week, both at Gerena School, my placement at Springfield, and at the weekly seminars where we share & discuss each of our particular internship experiences & receive relevant guidance & encouragement from Bonnie Atkins & Tiertza-leah Schwartz, our CSIP mentors & co-directors.

My work at Gerena has become more of a pleasant activity than the stressful endeavors that I associate with my idea of a “job.” In the morning, my role as a teacher assistant allows me to tutor and encourage kids, particularly five of my teacher’s group who do not speak English, and need to catch up fast with the system requirements. In the afternoon, I am a tutor for a sharp fifth grader, who is doing very well in school. This experience has exposed me to a demanding school setting, but only for eight hours of my time every week. The seminar guides me through the process and points out what I can do to improve my relationship with the students and the placement coordinators. Moreover, it has strengthened my aspiration to become a counselor in the future. CSIP has been a wonderful experience in the two months that have already passed. I look forward to this coming semester, hopefully to witness more positive changes among the children that are benefited by this program.

Chelsea Marshall '06
I worked as an America Reads Tutor at the Jackson Street School in Northampton and Gerena Elementary School in Springfield, Massachusetts during my first and second years at Smith, and I feel that community service placements in this area have become an integral part of my college experience. I applied for a CSIP internship because I was interested in continuing a relationship with children in the community, and the internship encourages consistent, intentional work with non-profit organizations in the area. As I had hoped, my position as Assistant Director of the Buddies Club of Big Brothers/Big Sisters has kept me connected to community children who truly need consistent and positive role models in their lives.

Although I knew little about the weekly seminar that the CSIP interns participate in when I applied, these sessions have come to be as much of a learning experience as my work with the Buddies Club. With a social work focus, these seminars are geared towards training the interns to learn the nuances of listening to and engaging with those we work with in our placements. As a Government major, my coursework does not often center on the importance and effectiveness of listening to those with whom we converse, but I have found that this seminar has challenged me to reframe discussions in all areas of my life. The skills and experiences I am gaining from this internship will be useful far beyond their applicability to my placement with the Buddies Club this year.

Heather Ford '06
Through the CSIP program, I am working with Decisional Training/Thresholds in Greenfield, MA. Thresholds is a program that teaches decision making skills to inmates at the Franklin County Jail. I meet weekly with an inmate one on one to teach these skills. I think that the combination of Thresholds and the CSIP seminar is very useful, as the CSIP seminar has improved my counseling skills and enables me to discuss problems I may have using these skills in my placement. I became interested in CSIP because I intend to enroll in an MSW program after Smith, and I want to have some human services experience. CSIP has allowed me to have training and skill development that I have not gotten anywhere else at Smith.
...Board Updates continued

Both she and I were with other people and it was clear that she did not wish to expose the nature of our relationship. In this case, CSIP’s guidelines helped me protect the privacy of my client.

The art of communication is another useful CSIP skill. The seminar taught me to ask open-ended questions, rather than specific ones, in order to let the other person guide the conversation. This came in handy during my conversations with survivors of trafficking. To prevent myself from asking questions that were too personal and brought back painful memories, I just asked open-ended questions. This let the survivor guide the conversation by raising issues that were comfortable and important for her to talk about. Not limited to survivors of trafficking, this tool helped me to be a better listener in all my daily interactions.

I am grateful to CSIP for all that I have learned and I encourage everyone to apply for this incredible opportunity. For more information on Maiti Nepal, please see www.maitinepal.org. Also, if you are interested in volunteering in Nepal, I would love to be of assistance. Please contact me at neema.khatri@gmail.com.

For more info go to www.smith.edu

...Community Projects

We have the dual job of reaching out to the Smith community and to communities in need, and hopefully finding a match between the two where volunteers can take the opportunity to help an agency. We help groups such as houses, departments, organizations, and sports teams on campus participate in various short term projects. It’s a great way to help out in the community and bond as a group. So far, we have been able to get several houses involved in projects they have all enjoyed and encourage everyone to think about leaving the Smith bubble and giving time to something other than classes.

-Yuliya Yermolina ’07

Short Term Projects Update

I have had a great time so far planning a series of fun and contributive community based projects. In the last several months volunteers have enjoyed numerous projects with the Food Bank Farm, Halloween events at the Enchanted Forest, and indulging in chocolate at a Silent Auction for AIDS Care. S.O.S. has provided me with a wonderful resources to plan projects, a great Co-Chair (Esi Cleland), and a wonderful board to work with. With that said, I look forward to planning a lot more fun and exciting short term projects for the Smith Community to enjoy.

-Lauren Pitts ’07

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Fund Drive Co-Chair
Elizabeth Wolfsen ’08
I am a sophomore from Wayland, Massachusetts and I live in Albright House. I am an education and liberal studies double major, and I am also unofficially minoring in Spanish. My brother Sam is a high school senior, and we have a yellow lab named Maggie. I love to bake desserts and to read.

Community Education Chair
Julie Esterline ’07
As well as serving on the SOS Board, I’m also House President of 150 Elm, living with the most wonderful Adas on campus! In my spare time I enjoy volunteering. I told myself that this year I would try to have more time for myself and my studies, but so far, most every week, I’ve found myself volunteering somewhere, whether it has been for the Gerena Community School in Springfield, Bridge Street School in Northampton, The Prison Book Project, AIDS CARE/Hampshire County, The Enchanted Forest at the Hitchcock Center, Family Day at the Smith Art Museum, the Interfaith Shelter through Friends of the Homeless, or Nueva Esperanz in Holyoke (just to name a few). All my friends keep asking me how I can find time to do this. Before entering Smith last year as an Ada, I truly never had time to do community service, between working full-time during the day and going to my community college at night. Now I can't imagine a life not giving back!

...CSIP Beyond Smith continued

We regret to inform the community of the death of Rita L.D. Wilkins, former Director of SOS, who died in her home after a lengthy illness on August 28, 2005, at the age of 89. Born in 1915, she spent most of her early years in Harlem, until 1942, when she married Rev. Herbert L.B. Wilkins.

Mrs. Wilkins had a lifelong commitment to community service. As the first long-term Director of SOS, a position she would hold for the next fifteen years, she left a lasting legacy and was critical in establishing a strong foundation for SOS today. Many of the structures and procedures that she worked into its core mission are still key parts of the program. She enabled hundreds of students to volunteer in the community, by establishing partnerships with local non-profit organizations that still exist. Mrs. Wilkins had a deep understanding of the community’s needs, and approached her work with enthusiasm, creativity, and compassion. Engaging students on a personal level addressed their individual interests. Mrs. Wilkins became almost a mother figure to some students, as she developed lifelong friendships with them.

SOS honors the legacy of Mrs. Rita Wilkins and sends its condolences to her family: her son Herbert Wilkins, her daughter Laress Wilkins and her two grandchildren, Bryan and Syreeta Wilkins.

HONORING RITA WILKINS

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Education Luncheon Reflections
-Esti Milam &
Chathu Gammampila '08

Thanksgiving is an opportunity to be consciously aware and grateful for all that we have. Therefore, when homelessness was chosen as the theme of discussion at the SOS Community Education November 21st, it felt most timely and appropriate. People are homeless for a number of reasons such as lack of housing, low wages, substance abuse, mental illness, job and income loss. The agency highlighted was Friends of the Homeless, an emergency shelter for individuals in Northampton, MA.

Friends of the Homeless started out as emergency shelters located in seven different basements of local worship sites. As the need for a permanent location became more obvious, the current location was sought. It offers a first step for people to get back on their feet and access resources to improve their living situation. The length of time someone can stay at a shelter is one month. However, if they have been making steps toward a better situation, then they are granted a longer stay. A homeless person may stay by signing up the day before, however space is limited. Maximum occupancy is generally 20 people, and currently they are at full capacity.

Homelessness in Northampton has a variety of causes. One being that the state hospital for people with mental illness closed in 1993. Though resources are available for severely mentally ill patients, resources for moderate mentally ill patients are scarce. Friends of the Homeless provides funds for boots and supplements prescription costs when clients don’t have insurance.

We as a community, often fail to recognize that many people who are homeless work very hard to rise from their situation. As Emily Tyner '06, who is a current volunteer at the shelter, said she was "surprised at how many (of the homeless) have jobs and are working a lot of hours everyday." A representative from the shelter, Yvonne Frecerro, commented that "the saddest thing is how many people feel personally guilty and blame their situation on something they did or didn’t do, when in reality it is often the economy, lack of jobs, and limited access to health care that are the causes of the problem, and that we should all feel guilty.”

If you are interested in volunteering at ‘Friends of the Homeless,’ there are many ways to get involved. They have a cleaning party once a month that you may volunteer for or you can play cards and share stories and offer your companionship. Karen Kristof, former Chair of SOS Board and currently Associate Director at the Admissions office at Smith, shared, “I’ve really enjoyed my work at the shelter. I’ve been enriched by meeting the guests and learning about their lives. I hope other Smith staff will become involved.” Similarly, Sidnie Davis ’08, who volunteered with her house at the monthly clean up said, that working at the Friends of Homeless Shelter was especially gratifying because it is relevant and important to Northampton and that helping locally made her feel like part of the community, and Northampton more like home.

Friends of The Homeless
Volunteer Perspective
- Andrea Marie Loftus, AC '05

Working with the homeless is an amazing experience, and some of the most rewarding work I have ever done. Volunteering some of your time to a homeless shelter, or another organization that assists the growing homeless population, will also put your own stereotypes about the condition of homelessness into perspective.

Many people walk past a homeless person with the misconception that they are just lazy and choose to live this way, but I promise that if you spent time talking to some homeless people, you would be hard pressed to find someone who loves being homeless. Homelessness has many faces. In my experience working with the homeless I have seen many people from many walks of life. I’ve encountered people afflicted with mental illness who are incapable of managing their own money and thus, cannot maintain an apartment and all the expenses that go along with that; I’ve encountered people who hold college degrees—even post-graduate degrees who find themselves in situations where they just can not make ends meet and suddenly find themselves homeless; I’ve encountered women who have left abusive relationships; I’ve encountered children running from abusive siblings and/or parents; the list goes on and on.

The fact of the matter is that we are all one paycheck away from being homeless—many families nowadays live paycheck to paycheck—and in a society where funding for social service programs is dwindling, it is more and more difficult for those who provide services to reach those who most need it. It's difficult enough for a family with a dual income to survive in today’s world, let alone an individual on minimum wage with the expense of renting an apartment. Just as you might be thinking, “not me, I’d never end up on the streets,” so too were many of the people who find themselves in this situation today.
Community-Based Learning is a teaching methodology and philosophy of reciprocal learning designed to put theory into practice by combining the elements of academic study with interactive community placements or research. Recently community-based learning has been offered as an option in a number of classes here at Smith.

Reflections from Martha Woerner, ’08
This semester, for my “Major Themes in Literature: East-West Perspectives” class with Sabina Knight, I decided on the option of doing a community-based learning project instead of a term paper for my final project. I therefore became involved with Girls, Inc. which provides tutoring, mentoring, and other activities for middle school and high school girls in Holyoke. For the past few months, I have been heading over to Lynch Middle School every Wednesday afternoon to meet with about eight girls for activities and games. I am always thrilled to spend time with them; I love their energy and enthusiasm as well as the opportunity to escape from the “Smith bubble.” By interacting with these girls, I have learned far more than I could have hunched over scholarly articles and books in Neilson.

Going to Lynch has allowed me to see many of my course’s themes brought into action. In the course, we have talked about how class and socio-economic status affect one’s ability to make decisions about one’s life, and how a person might be able to have more control over her life. The motto of Girls, Inc. is “inspiring all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold,” and they heavily emphasize the value of education and the ways in which education can provide opportunities. This past week, I was amazed to see these twelve year olds volunteer to give up one Friday a month to attend a seminar/workshop on what steps they need to be taking if they want to go to college. I was so impressed that they were thinking so far ahead and were taking such active steps to control their futures that I was inspired to look at my own life to see where I could exercise more agency. It has been so amazing and enlightening to be working with Girls, Inc. this semester, and I am looking forward to next semester and working more with my mentee.

For a list of Community-Based/Community Service Learning Courses at the Five Colleges for Spring 2006, email sos@email.smith.edu

ARISE for Social Justice is a low-income rights, anti-oppression membership organization that was started in 1985 by four women on welfare who met around a kitchen table and decided to organize and advocate for their rights. They’ve grown over the years and currently have an Economic Justice Committee, an Electoral Committee, a Peace Committee, a Community Newspaper called "The VOICE," and W.I.S.E. (Women In Support of Each Other).

Reflections from Rosaleah Brown ’06
ARISE For Social Justice is a not-for-profit grassroots organization based in Springfield MA. This organization offers many opportunities for students to get involved in the Springfield community. One can chose from needle exchange, working to stop the Chicopee Jail construction, contacting local representatives, or working on the Free Schools project. For most of my years at Smith I have worked at ARISE on the needle exchange project. Northampton has a state approved needle exchange program, Springfield doesn’t even though there is a great need. ARISE has been fighting for years for the city of Springfield to legalize needle exchange. Not only does this reduce the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS; it also creates an awareness that there are addictions in this society that people can overcome, and jail is not the answer for these substance abusers; alternatives to incarceration, rehab, and other programs are needed.

At ARISE you realize everything is intertwined. While you may be focused on needle exchange, you realize funds and approval are going to an all women’s jail that is not needed, and you can’t help but want to be involved with another committee. At ARISE I found myself doing a little bit of everything and I loved it. The sense of community and the people you work with are brilliant; I have never seen so much pride, devotion and enthusiasm in one place.

I will admit many people go to ARISE and never come back, but that is because they fear the challenge and they fear what they do not understand and what is new to them. So my advice is don’t be afraid, don’t let your inhibitions hold you back from working, networking and being a part of a tremendous foundation. Embrace your fears and immerse yourself in them, and I am telling you, you will come back.

If you’re interested in working with ARISE, please email arise@riseup.net or visit their website at http://www.angelfire.com/ma4/arise
**CLASSIFIEDS**

**Berkshire Hills Music Academy** share your skills with students with developmental disabilities. No musical abilities required. Email mhudgik@berkshirehills.org

**Cooley Dickinson Hospital** is seeking warm, welcoming, active volunteers to help direct and escort patients, 3-4 day time hrs/week, M-F. Contact Robin Kline Dir. Of Volunteer Services at 582-2251.

**Mass. Audubon Society** work on the grounds or travel to schools and lead nature walks. 584-3009 x12

**Nonotuck Community School** assist in the classrooms at a local, private preschool. Contact Margery Heyl at Nonotuck Community School for more information: 586-5996

**Prison Book Project** help send books to incarcerated people. Contact prisonbookproject@riseup.net

**International Language Institute of MA** Meet and mentor others from around the world. Become an English Tutor! Assist individuals with their English language skills while learning about various cultures. Contact Rosa Mendez at 586-7569 x 100

**Smith College Alternative Spring Break** Spend the week doing community service throughout the Pioneer Valley with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Northrop Senior Home, Friends of the Homeless, plus much, much more! E-mail Julie Esterline at jesterli@smith.edu for more information.

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**NOTICES**

**SOS Community Service Fair:** Tuesday, February 7th, 7-8:30pm Campus Center, Carroll Room. Agency representatives will be available for questions about volunteer opportunities...consider lending a hand....

**Five College Workshop** on "Community Involvement" will be held in the Friedmann Room at Amherst College on Tuesday, February 21 from 6:00 until 8:45. Contact: Ashley Brown at abrown@comcol.umass.edu

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Never look down on anybody, unless you are going to help them up.

~ Rev. Jesse Jackson