

DECEMBER 2007

## Kidsfest Offers Halloween Fun, Food, and Fright

More than 200 student volunteers and 150 Washington residents attended Kidsfest, a family Halloween festival for the D.C. community. Kidsfest, advertised as an event for “kids 2-92,” began eight years ago and has grown each year since.

“In our urban setting, Kidsfest is an annual festival that offers children both a fun and safe way to experience Halloween,” explained Kidsfest’s organizer **Hayley Haldeman**, secretary of the GW Residence Hall Association. “The students volunteered their Saturday afternoon as a way of giving back to the area, in addition to having a great time working with kids.”

This year’s event allowed children and families to engage in dozens of fun activities. The approximately 50 booths included “Make Your Own Harry Potter Wand” sponsored by the Mitchell Residence Advisory Council; “Make Your Own Chia Pet” sponsored by Mount Vernon Campus Life; cupcake decorating sponsored by Balance: The GW Ballet Group; gymnastics and tumbling sponsored by the GW Gymnastics Team; and face painting sponsored by the National Residence Hall Honorary.

The event also included safe trick-or-treating to 200 student rooms in five

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## GW Fact

The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It has more than 1,500 alumni, with nearly 1,000 residing in the greater Washington region.

## Fifth Annual Block Party Attracts Thousands



*GW Executive Director of Student Activities Tim Miller (middle) and his band, The Miller Band, performs for the community. Pictured from left to right are Andy Halatei, Miller, and Adam Barker.*

For five years, the Foggy Bottom/West End Neighborhood Block Party has brought together a diverse collection of area restaurants, businesses, social organizations, and student groups. More than 3,000 Foggy Bottom/West End community members enjoyed this year’s event, held Oct. 14, which showcased more than 115 local vendors, including 15 area restaurants.

The block party is organized annually by FRIENDS, a group dedicated to improving communication, cooperation, and collaboration between GW and residents in the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods. An organization of more than 400 members, FRIENDS meets monthly to discuss

neighborhood issues. A planning group consisting of FRIENDS members and GW staff and students worked together for months leading up to the event to ensure its success.

**GW President Steven Knapp** visited nearly every table, speaking individually with hundreds of block party participants and attendees. President Knapp will be the first president to live on GW’s Foggy Bottom Campus when he moves into the historic F Street Club at 1925 F Street, NW, after renovations are completed.

“The key is to have a continuing dialogue with the community so that we’re getting constant feedback and developing things in partnership,” said Knapp. “We can make sure our plans are responsive to community concerns so that everyone feels that they are part of the process; this is the way I am used to working in community relations. You need to constantly evolve the dialogue and really work on matters of mutual concern, and [the block party] is a celebration of that.”

Block party attendees also were addressed by **Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans**, who has attended the event each year since its inception in 2003. Evans stressed the importance of GW as a community institution in Washington.

**Don Lincoln**, Foggy Bottom resident and member of FRIENDS, said, “I think the block party is absolutely great, and I think the establishment of the FRIENDS group did a lot to get the community and the University on the same page. It’s been a great opportunity.”

“FRIENDS started as a way to build bridges with the neighbors,” explained **Michael Akin**, GW director of community relations. “The block party grew out of that shared community concept.” **Neil Conway**, owner of District Hardware and The Bike Shop, said, “I think the block party is great. We’ve talked to a lot of people, and it’s been a lot of fun. We’d like to do it again next year.”

(Kidsfest continued)

GW residence halls. In addition, student groups provided music and theater entertainment, and neighborhood restaurants and cafés donated lunch and refreshments.

“One of my favorite parts of Kidsfest planning is how multilateral the event has become,” says Haldeman. “Incorporating student organizations,

GW employees and administration, student entertainment groups, and residents of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood and the District offered a memorable afternoon of cooperation and community enthusiasm.”

## GW Hosts Fifth Annual Oxfam Hunger Banquet



*GW Assistant Professor of Health Care Sciences Howard Straker discusses global hunger at the fifth annual Oxfam Hunger Banquet, Nov. 13, 2007.*

Some eat a three-course meal, while others eat a small serving of rice. Some are seated at round tables, while others are sitting on the floor. Some are served their food, while others have to wait in line. These are conditions of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, an educational simulation used to demonstrate global disparities in wealth and the realities of hunger. Upon entering, each participant is assigned an identity and provided a short summary of his or her story. Participants are given a meal consistent with what might be part of that person’s daily consumption.

This year’s fifth annual event was held on Nov. 13, 2007, in GW’s Marvin Center and hosted more than 250 students, faculty, staff, and community members, including staff and residents of the

Emery Homeless Shelter in **Ward 5**. GW Assistant Professor of Health Care Sciences **Howard Straker** facilitated the program, highlighting the need for greater understanding of the global problem of hunger. Using an interactive demonstration, Straker emphasized that 16 people die each minute globally from hunger. **Kim Perry**, vice chair of **Mayor Adrian Fenty’s** Commission on Food and Nutrition, offered the keynote address and focused on specific ways for our community to take action.

The Hunger Banquet was part of the “GW: In and Of Washington” theme day during the week of activities and events celebrating the University’s presidential inauguration of **Steven Knapp**, who also attended the banquet. GW’s Office of Community Service and the Interdisciplinary Student Community-Oriented Prevention Enhancement Service (ISCOPES) coordinated the banquet, which was part of a series of GW events to raise awareness for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Participants were requested to bring two cans of non-perishable food for donation.

“The participation at all levels of the community is what made the Hunger Banquet a particularly powerful event,” explained **Jacey Bennis**, a student in the GW School of Public Health and Health Services and ISCOPE Healthcare for the Homeless team representative. “We had undergraduate and graduate students from all majors and fields, as well as University administrators and officials, who took time out of a particularly busy week to be present. Additionally, we invited some of our partners from the Emery Shelter, an ISCOPE partner site, as well as several Street Sense vendors, who provided valuable perspectives throughout the evening. It was a great opportunity to strengthen our relationships with these members of our community and to foster a continued environment of reciprocal learning.”

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