

MARCH 2008

Students Open the Door for Sustainability

GW's first eco-friendly townhouse opened its doors to visitors on Jan. 31. The four residents of the townhouse at 524 22nd Street, NW, aptly named the Green GW House, set up the event to raise awareness of issues of environmental and social sustainability on campus.

By putting sustainable ideas into practice, the students who live in the Green GW House hope to create a model to inspire others. They installed low-flow showerheads and purchased organic towels and sheets. The residents use handmade fair trade products such as bags and clothing. The students also use drying racks to save energy and water, and clean with organic products.

The Green GW House is one of many Scholars' Village Townhouses on GW's Foggy Bottom Campus. Each houses a Living and Learning Cohort, allowing students with similar interests to create programming and academic initiatives to complement classroom study.

Senior **Maggie Desmond**, resident of the Green GW House and founder of the Green GW student organization, says, "GW plays an important role in improving sustainability in Washington. Students are the engine driving the green movement to prominence. We are working hard to raise awareness and spur action in the community."

GW Fact

Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans recently underwent a prostate cancer screening at The George Washington University Cancer Institute. Free screenings are available on Fridays as part of the institute's campaign to reduce cancer rates in D.C. To schedule a free screening, call (202) 741-3106.

Hundreds Volunteer on MLK Day of Service



Patrick Walsh

From back, freshman Emily Blanco, junior Siobhan Hartigan, and junior Stella Kim helped to clean facilities at the Center for Creative Non-Violence during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Jan. 21.

More than 200 GW students participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Jan. 21. Often referred to as "a day on, not a day off," the event brought students to the Center for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) located in **Ward 6**, represented by **Councilmember Tommy Wells**. More than a volunteer event, the Day of Service allowed students to hear from speakers, interact with residents at CCNV, learn about issues affecting D.C.'s homeless population, and reflect on their experience.

The Day of Service began with a call to action from **Mike Tapscott**, director of GW's Multi-cultural Student Services Center, and **Timothy Kane**, director of GW's Office of Community Service. At CCNV, students were greeted by **James Burton**, director of maintenance, who coordinated a wide array of service projects for the GW volunteers. Students painted, cleaned, disinfected, and organized CCNV's facilities over the course of the day.

Founded by **Father Edward Guinan** and a group of GW students in the early 1970s, CCNV is the largest and most comprehensive homeless shelter in the United States. At any given time, the facility can accommodate up to 1,350 men, women, and children. CCNV's mission is to ensure that the rights of the homeless and poor are not infringed upon and that every person has access to life's essentials: food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Advocacy on behalf of the homeless and life skills training are also primary focus areas for CCNV.

During reflection, Tapscott discussed the significance of servant leadership with students. "Honoring the Dr. King holiday by committing to serve on his birthday reflects an awareness of the power, the importance, and the legacy of America's greatest civil rights leader and our responsibility to honor them," said Tapscott. "It also reflects the moral responsibility that everyone who has owes to everyone who has not."

GW coordinated its efforts with Serve D.C., the community service branch of **Mayor Adrian Fenty's** office. Serve D.C. brought nearly 500 volunteers to CCNV in the morning, while GW students arrived in the afternoon.

Daoyen Lei, a freshman in GW's Elliott School of International Affairs, appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Day of Service. "The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service was so inspiring. We at GW were able to honor the legacy of Dr. King, and to give back to the community we live in," Lei says. "As easy as it is to get caught up in college life, I think the Day of Service really reminded us of what is important."

ISCOPEs: Walk in My Shoes

On Jan. 26, 50 students from GW's Interdisciplinary Student Community-Oriented Prevention Enhancement Service (ISCOPEs), a service-learning program composed of graduate health professional students, received a new identity—that of a marginalized community member who needed to navigate the U.S. health care system. Working with community partner organizations, the H.E.A.L.ing Clinic, and the Minority Association of Pre-medical Students, the Walk in My Shoes health care simulation experience gave each student a unique identity such as “African American man, age 79” or “Ethiopian woman, age 20.” Then, with their new identities and information on their health situation, the students had an hour to get the care they needed.

The purpose of the Walk in My Shoes simulation was to provide future health care providers with a learning experience to develop cultural sensitivity. The event aimed to raise awareness of health care access issues for low-income and underserved individuals, to increase knowledge about local and federal programs, and to develop sensitivity toward others. The program was developed by Boston-based Community Catalyst, a national consumer health advocacy organization.

“Your mission is to get the health care you and your family need,” charged **Deborah Katz**, a health policy analyst with Community Catalyst. To do so, students visited various stations that offered help, such as emergency care services, a work station, pediatric clinics, examination rooms, government offices, and a household. The stations were staffed by volunteers from a variety of ISCOPEs community partners, including Community of Hope, Mary's Center, Unity Healthcare System, La Clinica del Pueblo, IONA Senior Services, The World Bank, and many of GW's own departments.

As in real life, the students had difficulty getting the care they needed. **Michelle Yun**, a second-year medical student, says, “Actually experiencing the stress and intensity of trying to access services and the frustration of going through bureaucratic red tape and having unexpected emergencies



Walk in My Shoes volunteer Claire Rosché (seated), a family practice physician assistant at Unity Health Care Upper Cardozo Clinic, speaks to medical students (from left) Larry Busse, Reshma Pachikara, and Amy Tarte. Lilian Meza (second from right) from La Clinica del Pueblo is acting as an interpreter in the simulation. On her left is undergraduate student Jason Qian.

was eye-opening.” **Ashley Bell**, a first-year medical student, adds, “It was a really great experience that echoed real life the best way possible. It was a very thought-provoking exercise.”

Students and volunteers engaged in a dialogue for more than an hour after the simulation to identify ways to improve access and provide more culturally sensitive care. Participants agreed that all members of the health care community must take steps collectively to transform the quality of future health.

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