



# Middlesex Community College

## Center for Community Engagement

### CHOOSE TO SERVE

# BE THE CHANGE

## MCC DAY OF SERVICE

As part of MCC's first collegewide Day of Service on Oct. 17, almost 900 Middlesex students, faculty and staff volunteered to work on service projects at 55 nonprofit-organization sites in 16 local cities and towns. A planning committee composed of MCC staff, faculty and administrators worked together to organize a day built around the college's mission of meeting community needs in the areas of homelessness, hunger, the environment, literacy, senior citizens, clean up, restoration and health care.

CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk worked with Jonathan Crockett, MCC's Coordinator of Fitness, Recreation and Student Activities, to select Day of Service (DOS) sites. While visiting prospective sites, DOS planning committee members noted the many ways

Middlesex is connected to so many segments of the community.

On our DOS site visits, committee members often met individuals who were graduates, parents, grandparents and other family members of current and former Middlesex students. It was gratifying to learn the many ways our students have been transformed by their MCC experiences. Special thanks to MCC alums Kim Zunino, from the Lowell Historical Board, and Edna Gustafson, from House of Hope, who served as Day of Service site supervisors.

MCC's 2008 Day of Service illustrates what people can accomplish when they work together. Congratulations and thanks to our community partners, students and the large number of staff and faculty members who participated in Day of Service.



Working with Lowell National Historical Park and Community Gardens, DOS participants planted, mulched and beautified the waterway.



At Lowell's Alcott Street Cemetery preservation project, Day of Service participants cleared brush around newly uncovered headstones.



Senior citizens at the Concord Council on Aging learned to play the Wii video-game system, thanks to the expertise and energy of MCC students.



The Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Milly's Place and the House of Hope family shelters hosted enthusiastic groups of MCC volunteers who organized and cleaned shelter areas.

### CHOOSE TO SERVE

# BE THE CHANGE

## MCC DAY OF SERVICE

To view more photos from our **Day of Service**, visit: [community.middlesex.mass.edu/photos/dayofservice/](http://community.middlesex.mass.edu/photos/dayofservice/)

## ➤ IN THIS ISSUE

- DAY OF SERVICE
- SENIORS COUNT
- MCC ELECTION NEWS
- LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS
- ENGAGED SCHOLARS
- AMERICORPS STUDENTS SCHOLARS IN SERVICE

## Comments from Day of Service Community Partners

- Thank you to all the MCC students who came to House of Hope. Our garage now looks amazing. Your work will help us serve people exiting shelter and setting up their new home.
- The students were a great help organizing supplies and donations for our Friends Helping Seniors fair. In addition, they designed and set up a senior-resource information area in the front lobby. We were fortunate to also have an energetic group of senior volunteers help out, and the two groups worked side by side. It was a great experience for all of us!
- Your students were marvelous, flexible and enthusiastic! We divided them into teams that did yard work for Concord senior citizens, and taught the Wii (video-game) system to seniors.
- Day of Service participants made a significant impact and also gained insights about the homeless population living outdoors.
- Life Links appreciated having one of our community center rooms painted. The freshly painted room pleased our employees and the individuals who attend our programs.
- This was a wonderful experience for First Church of Christ Congregational Church. Susan, Megan, Rebecca, Lucy and Jessica were not only knowledgeable gardeners and hard workers, but also very pleasant people

with whom to work. They were a credit to your program and to Middlesex Community College.

- The group that came to the Woburn Library was terrific! Believe me, ours was not a glamorous job, but those volunteers worked very hard assisting library staff. Although we are grateful for every carton, tote, basket and handful of books that was carried up and down from balcony to main floor, what brightened our day tremendously was the smile on the faces of your workers. We, literally, could not and would not have done it without them.
- Here at the Bedford Council on Aging, we were impressed with the level at which the students engaged our senior citizens. They were sincere, genuine and enthusiastic throughout the day. It was a wonderful experience for all of us.
- Lowell National Historical Park appreciated the opportunity to participate in MCC's Day of Service. It was a timely project: Ten days later, the park hosted a national commission looking at the future of national parks. The clean-up and beautification activities centered near the hotel, which was the home base for the commission.



At Girls, Inc. in Lowell, Middlesex students helped set up for the upcoming Girls With Goals conference.

CHOOSE TO SERVE  
**BE THE CHANGE**  
MCC DAY OF SERVICE

## Day of Service Student Reflections

In response to the question, "How were you the change today?," Middlesex students responded:

- I was able to create a fun haunted house for kids to experience.
- Actually doing something to help Habitat for Humanity instead of just learning about doing something.
- I was the change by helping an elderly woman with yard work. I was changed and enriched by the experience. Thank you for making this day possible MCC!
- It was great to help one of the country's national parks.
- The blankets that we made are being donated to the Wish Project in Lowell. Hope that it will help keep someone warm.
- I helped out at Ironstone Farm where they use horses to assist handicapped children and adults.
- I helped set up for an event that will help girls with their self-esteem.
- We helped winterize an organic farm that contributes food to food pantries.
- I helped elderly community members try something new and connect with younger generations.
- I am proud to have helped give valued plant life a fighting chance against invasive plant life!
- It was nice to spend a peaceful morning with a great bunch of people in a beautiful setting working together to improve our world for ourselves and others.
- Not only did I help an elderly gentleman with back-breaking manual labor, I also brought a smile to his face. And that made all the sweat worthwhile.
- I definitely enjoyed working beside my teacher and peers for a common purpose.



## Lowell Seniors Count

Thirty Middlesex nursing students, under the direction of MCC Nursing Professor Tina Cormio, visited Lowell senior citizens to distribute safety and health-related materials, and secure input from elderly immigrants and socially isolated seniors. The project was part of a Healthy Community Lowell Seniors Count grant, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and

UMass Lowell. "Our students felt good about doing something for their community," said Cormio, who teaches the gerontology component of MCC's Nursing Program.

"The Middlesex students were a great group and very professional," said Andrew J. Hostetler, Lowell Seniors Count project director and an assistant professor of psychology at UMass Lowell.

"This was by far the largest group of students we've ever had at once, and between 30 and 40 interviews were completed. The MCC nursing students stayed downtown, visiting Townhouse of Lowell, Southwick Building, Father John's and Market Mills. Thanks for all your work."

# AACU Core Commitments

Middlesex Community College has been chosen by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) to be one of 18 institutions to participate its Core Commitments Leadership Consortium. MCC is busy implementing the first phase of this national initiative, *Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility*. Focus has been on embedding personal and social responsibility objectives across the institution as key educational outcomes for students. Current strategies to measure the impact of campus efforts to foster such learning are key to the success of the initiative.

“We are honored to be included among the institutions chosen to participate in this key initiative,”

said Middlesex President Carole Cowan. “All of the participating institutions were selected both on the basis of work already accomplished in the spirit of Core Commitments, and on an articulated plan to deepen and extend that work on campus.”

In May, Psychology Professor Donna Duffy, Service-Learning Coordinator Cynthia Lynch and CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk developed a Core Commitments workshop for faculty, titled *Mirrors, Microscopes and Binoculars: How Different Lenses Can Help Students Reflect on Personal and Social Responsibility*. Attendees developed innovative reflection activities to help their students understand themselves, their society and their role in shaping the future.

Results from the workshop included a psychology project focusing on the legal and personal responsibility of mandated reporters, and an interdisciplinary learning community, titled *Power: Who Has It and Who Gets it?*. Another faculty required students to write letters to the editor answering the question, “Should we bother to vote?” Students in a microbiology course wrote advocacy letters to representatives focusing on the need for additional support for preventable and treatable diseases. A business law faculty developed a project focusing on legal and illegal questions asked during a job interview. An academic counselor developed an academic planning contract highlighting personal responsibility.

Middlesex Community College

## Core Commitments

*Choose to...*

- ★ Respect Diversity
- ★ Strive for Excellence
- ★ Contribute to Society
- ★ Develop Strong Ethics
- ★ Act with Integrity

## MCC Election-Year Activities

There were many activities at Middlesex that focused on the November 2008 election. Students in Humanities Professor Jean Trounstine’s Matter of Fact improvisational theater troupe did their part to generate interest in the presidential election. Two 10-foot-tall puppets representing Senators John McCain and Barack Obama engaged in a “debate” on the front steps of the City Building in Lowell. These puppets were also used to promote campus voter registration.

MASSPIRG Campus Organizer Sally Williams, a 2006 graduate of Greenfield Community College, led a campuswide voter registration drive. Assisted by MCC Service-Learning students, 610 Middlesex students were registered to vote, many for the first time. MASSPIRG made 1,300 student contacts, reminding students to get out to the polls on election day. A campuswide mock election was held, with Sen. Barack Obama capturing 78 percent of the 377 votes cast. Students also worked tirelessly on voter registration, a campaign to raise funds for local food banks, and led a winter coats drive for local children. “Speaking on behalf of all of the students involved in the New Voters Project, we are very proud of what we have been able to accomplish and hope that our work will translate into more young people staying engaged in their democracy and their communities,” said Williams.

In addition, MASSPIRG students worked with area businesses to run charity raffles, cultural-food sales, and spare-change drives that netted more than \$600 – which will feed six families of four for a week. The MASSPIRG chapter adopted five MCC students and their families for the holiday season and collected more than \$500 to purchase toys and food for their fellow students.

“Working within the community of students, faculty and staff of Middlesex has been inspirational and rewarding,” said Williams, who majored in liberal arts with a focus on political science at Greenfield. “It is always exciting to see young people getting involved in social and political issues on campus, especially at a nontraditional school where students are taking time between work and family to enrich their educational experience on campus,” she said.

In addition to voter registration, Williams and MCC Service-Learning students participated in the City of Lowell’s hunger/homeless event, Cardboard City. Students from UMass Lowell and MCC camped out overnight on the lawn of the UML campus to highlight the plight of homeless families. Earlier in the day, MCC’s Donna Holaday and a group of Day of Service volunteers designed a cityscape backdrop for the event.



MCC’s Matter of Fact improv troupe’s mock debate.



Voter registration drive at Middlesex.



MCC students made a cityscape backdrop for Lowell’s Cardboard City.

# Local Highlights

## Artists Extraordinaire

Responding to a call from the Salvation Army's Diane James, who was looking for assistance to decorate windows at the Christmas Castle on Appleton Street in Lowell, CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk knew exactly who to call: Kori Preble, Dental Hygiene Clinic manager and Community Service Club advisor. Preble recruited three talented

MCC students, Sovanna Sor, Mein Chhiv and Tora Dolberry who volunteered on a late-November Saturday to design and paint the windows. The results delighted passersby and Salvation Army clients. Many thanks to these volunteers and their dedication to making Lowell a brighter place.



Middlesex students painted holiday windows at the Salvation Army's Christmas Castle.



Lowell middle-schoolers visit the MCC chemistry lab.

## Chemistry for Kids

MCC Chemistry Professor Sally Quast and her Chemistry II students continue their community-based projects by hosting a group of 20 seventh-graders from the Lowell Community Charter School. While visiting MCC's chemistry lab on Middle Street, the teams performed chemistry experiments designed and taught by the Middlesex students. For the first time, children from community organizations will visit the college during spring and fall semesters.

"I was impressed by the seriousness with which my students took this project on," said Quast. "They went to great effort to adapt the lab to the age-

level of the group and the time allotted, to create materials for the experiment, and then guide the students to perform the tasks to accomplish the experiment," she said, adding that the college students' enthusiasm and excitement were palpable in the lab.

"It is difficult to keep this age group of girls really interested and engaged, and your students are doing a great job," said a Girls, Inc. staffer.

Thanks to Service-Learning Coordinator Cynthia Lynch for working to incorporate Girls, Inc. and the Lowell Community Charter School into the curriculum at Middlesex.

## Microbiology in Action

MCC Science Professor Jean Cremins' students continued their work focusing on providing resources to community organizations. Last fall, microbiology students designed health and disease-prevention materials to be distributed to Milly's Place, a family shelter in Lowell. Some of the materials were also prepared in Spanish.

Cremins presented her students' spring 2008 pamphlet project at the MCC-sponsored New England Biology Association of Two Year Colleges (NEBATYC) meeting held at MCC (Bedford) in May 2008.



## Performing Arts

Karen Oster, Chair of Performing Arts at MCC, continues her innovative work with Middlesex students. Last August, in collaboration with the Lowell Summer Music Series, MCC theater students staged a free performance of fables from Paul Sills' *Story Theater*. In April 2008, performing as characters from the MCC Theater Department's musical production, *Urinetown*, Middlesex thespians urged the college community to participate in and attend an interactive collegewide sustainability event.



## More Local Highlights

### Garden Party on Middle Street

In September, Middlesex celebrated the opening of the Culture Garden, the college's newly adopted pocket park near the Lowell campus. Thanks to MCC Art Professor Margaret Rack, Performing Arts Chair Karen Oster, MCC students and Middlesex groundskeepers, the community now has a beautiful outdoor performance space for music, art and reflection. A public-art installation, created by Rack's students, was inspired by stories of food, flowers and family gardening traditions from around the world.

Members of the Lowell community shared their stories with the art students, who created the wall-mounted metal sculpture to reflect the rich diversity of the city.



MCC professors Jan Arabas (left), Margaret Rack, Karen Oster, Carmen Rodrigues-Peralta and Dean of Humanities David Coleman at the Culture Garden dedication celebration.



MCC's Tooch Van (left), Susan Thomson, Sheri Denk and student Vanessa Soynanhang at the book signing.

### Book Signing

Last May, a signing for the recently published book, *Southeast Asian Refugees and Immigrants in the Mill City: Changing Families, Communities and Institutions – Thirty Years Afterward*, was held at the Mogan Cultural Center in Lowell. Susan Thomson, an MCC adjunct faculty member, contributed a chapter, titled *Along the Path to Nibbana: Civic Engagement, Community Partnerships and Lowell's Southeast Asian Buddhist Temples*. Thomson's work focuses on the connection between religious institutions and civic engagement in American democracy. Based on extensive fieldwork within Lowell's Buddhist community and the city as a whole, Thomson suggests that

encouraging engagement within each student's own cultural heritage has an impact on civic engagement.

Included in the book-signing event was a recognition of community leaders and a dance performance by the Angkor Dance Troupe. Award presentations were made by former Gov. Michael Dukakis. Through her research as a cultural anthropologist, Thomson's work highlights MCC's commitment to civic responsibility and service as an outcome of education. She was instrumental to the success of the Lowell Civic Collaborative, a unique and innovative partnership between Middlesex and Lowell National Historical Park.



MCC's Pat Hunt (left), Lowell Mayor Bud Caulfield and CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk.

### Lowell Police Department Recognition

Pat Hunt, an MCC academic advisor, and CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk were recognized by the Lowell Police Department at its annual community recognition event in May 2008.

Hunt was honored for her many years of community activism with the Centralville Neighborhood Association. According to a recent Lowell Sun article, Hunt has lived in Centralville for 34 years and recently was elected president of the Centralville Neighborhood Action Group. "The neighbors are what make this neighborhood special," she told the Sun. Denk was recognized on behalf of the many Middlesex students who continue to support the Lowell Police Department's Citizen Police Academy.



# Alternative Spring Break News

Adam Hansen (left), Jennifer Burns, CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk and Habitat for Humanity's Dawn Frost.

For the second year, MCC volunteers supported Habitat for Humanity by working in Westford during Spring Break 2008. This first-of-a-kind Habitat home at 18 Williams Road was built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Rating System standards. Compared to conventional construction, these building standards increase the energy efficiency of a home by 40 percent and significantly decrease annual energy bills. Middlesex volunteers were delighted to

learn recently that the Westford home they helped build was completed and a family has moved in.

MCC's Alternative Spring Break Habitat project was recognized at the 2007-2008 Student Awards Banquet as the college's Program of the Year. Congratulations to Service-Learning Coordinator Cynthia Lynch for her patience and perseverance in setting up this worthwhile opportunity for students to help make a difference. Along

with Lynch, Melissa Welch, Coordinator of Student Activities, and CCE Coordinator Sheri Denk, the team spent three days in March with a committed and energetic group of students. Lynch is now hard at work setting up Alternative Spring Break 2009 Habitat projects in Lawrence and Bedford.

Members of MCC's 2006 Alternative Spring Break Habitat project were invited to Lawrence for the June 2008 premiere of *Building Houses*,

*Building Hope*, a documentary film produced for the Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity chapter. Middlesex students Adam Hansen and Jennifer Burns were featured community volunteers. To view the video visit: [HTTP://lucas.middlesex.mass.edu/RAMGEN/arbogasts/Movies/habhum.rm](http://lucas.middlesex.mass.edu/RAMGEN/arbogasts/Movies/habhum.rm)

## National Highlights

Diane Hewitt, MCC's Coordinator of Career Services, and Criminal Justice Professor Lynda Pintrich have collaborated for two semesters on a unique career-development project. Titled *Creating Professional Networks and Interviewing for Career Information*, the project enables students to practice networking and conducting informational interviews. Before the interview process, Hewitt led students through an interactive workshop on building networks and informational interviewing. Middlesex student interviews have been published in a resource book for human services and criminal justice students.

Pintrich and Hewitt presented their innovative collaboration in May 2008 at the Community College National Center for Community Engagement conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. More than 25 people attended their presentation and feedback was positive. Also at the conference, MCC Psychology Professor Donna Duffy presented a workshop, titled *Tools for Assessing Community Engagement at the Course, Program and Institutional Levels*.

While in Scottsdale, Duffy, Hewitt and Pintrich met up with Pamela Edington, MCC's former dean of social sciences and human services, who was a keynote speaker at the conference. Edington's keynote, titled *The Joy of Service Learning: An Improved Recipe for Achieving Dreams*, reflected her guiding vision behind the development and growth of MCC's Service-Learning program. Edington is currently Chief Academic Officer at Norwalk Community College in Norwalk, Conn.



Lynda Pintrich and Diane Hewitt with conference participant.



Pamela Edington with Lyvier Conns, Executive Director of the Community College National Center for Community Engagement.

# International Highlights

In November 2008, Clea Andreadis, MCC Dean of Social Science and Human Services, and Kent Mitchell, Dean of International Arts, spent two weeks working with community organizers, teachers and recreation workers in Soweto, South Africa, as part of a U.S. State Department grant-funded project. Middlesex was awarded the grant to collaborate with professionals in Soweto on the development of projects that enhance services for children in the township. The work focused on the interrelated problems of HIV infection rates and family violence that adversely impact the lives of South Africa's children and families. Dean Andreadis also provided information and support to community organizers interested in developing community-engagement and citizenship projects in Soweto. During their time in Soweto, the grant team visited AIDS hospices, met with home health-care assistants, talked to grandmothers raising grandchildren orphaned by the epidemic. They also conducted workshops, on topics such as HIV/AIDS and family violence, for a diverse cross section of the community including teachers, community organizers, women's sewing groups and teen theater troupes.

Teams of colleagues from Soweto will be visiting MCC in March and June as part of this exciting collaboration.



MCC's Kent Mitchell (back row, far right) visited a community center in Soweto, South Africa.

## Engaged Scholars

We are proud to announce the second group of MCC Engaged Scholars. This designation recognizes students who, as part of their academic courses, have made a considerable community commitment and contribution. In honoring these students, MCC recognizes that they have applied their skills, knowledge and research to real-life issues, and worked with local agencies and area organizations in addressing the critical problems and needs faced by our communities. Representing MCC at 16 different community-based organizations, MCC's 2008 Engaged Scholars contributed more than 345 hours of service in public elementary schools, early childhood centers, nursing homes, after-school programs and agencies that provide educational and therapeutic services to disabled children and their families.



### ▶ ENGAGED SCHOLARS

- JENA HALPERN
- PRISCILLA MONIZ
- JENNIFER MOURA
- ERIN REDDICK

# AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service

Congratulations to Sandor Cabrera and Elizabeth Baldwin for completion of their year-long commitment as AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service. Both of these outstanding students completed more than 300 hours of service and have received an educational award of \$1,000. We are proud of these two students and thank Massachusetts Campus Compact for its support.

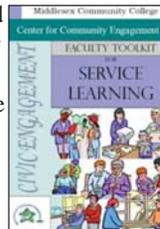
Cabrera graduated and is now studying at Salem State College. Baldwin hopes to graduate in spring 2009 and pursue a law degree.



MCC Paralegal Studies student Elizabeth Baldwin volunteering on the Lowell campus during Consumer Protection Week.

## UPCOMING NEWS

- During the summer and fall of 2008, Cynthia Lynch and Sheri Denk created a Faculty Toolkit for course-based service experiences. Developed as a way to expand faculty resources to create educational experiences that connect the classroom with the community, the toolkit is a response to the rising tide of interest in service on college campuses. The toolkit explores theoretical questions and offers practical suggestions for implementation on course development, reflection, assessment, creating rubrics, achieving the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes through service-learning, examples of service-learning in a variety of disciplines, electronic resources, and answers frequently asked questions. Current service-learning faculty will receive the toolkit this spring and summer. The toolkit will be a valuable resource for new faculty who express interest in integrating community-based service experiences into their curriculum.
- Denk and Lynch will join Massachusetts Campus Compact service-learning colleagues for a series of "Civic Reflection" sessions to reflect on short readings and engage in dialogue around values, choices and developing imaginative strategies to meet needs in communities. The series will address questions such as: *What obligations do we have to others in our community? Why join one association and not another? To whom should we give? What do we really expect of those whom we serve?* Well documented benefits of Civic Reflection include returning to civic activities with a renewed sense of purpose and community.



### ► FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

SHERI DENK  
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
33 KEARNEY SQUARE  
LOWELL, MA 01852  
978-656-3159 FAX 978-656-3150  
DENKS@MIDDLESEX.MASS.EDU

CYNTHIA LYNCH  
SERVICE-LEARNING  
COORDINATOR  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
591 SPRINGS ROAD  
BEDFORD, MA 01730  
781-280-3556 FAX 781-275-7126  
LYNCHC@MIDDLESEX.MASS.EDU



[WWW.MIDDLESEX.MASS.EDU/SERVICELEARNING/](http://WWW.MIDDLESEX.MASS.EDU/SERVICELEARNING/)



## OUR MISSION

The mission of MCC's Center for Community Engagement is to enrich our students' educational experiences, meet community needs, and foster civic responsibility throughout the college by integrating service into the academic curriculum. Through participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences, students extend what they learn beyond the classroom. The college constantly seeks new ways to foster a life-long commitment to community service by actively engaging students and faculty in meeting identified community needs.