The Joint Educational Project

JEPU’s One-Million Dollar Challenge

The Good Neighbors Campaign partners with JEP to boost the percentage of the College’s staff & faculty donations

By Tammara Anderson, Executive Director

This year, JEP celebrated its 36th anniversary. Over the years we have placed more than 60,000 USC students in community assignments that allow them to contribute to the well being of the neighborhood while they learn more about real life issues of poverty, immigration, educational inequalities and other contemporary concerns.

It has been customary through the years for me to hear students’ stories about what their JEP experience meant to them.

“I can honestly say that teaching, or maybe I should say learning, at Manual Arts was one of my most fulfilling experiences.” (class of ‘82)

“One huge thing that I really learned about myself was that I really would want to consider a job working with children and adolescents. I would love to be a school psychologist.” (class of ‘07)

However, I could only dream that one of these students would be so positively touched by their JEP experience, that years later they would offer the possibility of a ONE MILLION DOLLAR GIFT! My dream has come true!

An anonymous alumnus has challenged the faculty and staff of the USC College of Letters, Arts & Sciences to raise its participation rate in the Good Neighbors Campaign (GNC) to 50% – up from 26% last year. If the College meets the challenge, the alumnus will donate $1 million to the Joint Educational Project’s (JEP) endowment.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
The JEP staff is so excited about the challenge grant. Not only does it show confidence in JEP and all the good work that we do at USC and in the community, but in these difficult economic times, it is an especially precious gift. The increased income generated from the endowment will help JEP continue supporting current programs and will help us develop new areas of interest to our faculty and community partners, such as community-based research.

USC College Dean Howard Gillman explained, “This challenge is an extraordinary opportunity for us, both because of its impact on the Good Neighbors Campaign and because it will help us dramatically expand one of the crown jewels of USC and the College - the Joint Educational Project. The stakes are higher this year than they’ve ever been. GNC and JEP are both central to USC’s long-standing partnership with our community, and this year I am confident that the faculty and staff of USC College will help lead the way to the next level of commitment to both of these programs, to the great benefit of USC and our wonderful neighbors.”

The College hosted a picnic on October 28th celebrating JEP, the Good Neighbors Campaign, and the faculty and staff who support them by their donations. Afterwards, attendees left energized and ready to cultivate new donors. The College’s rate of participation jumped to 30%. Pictures from this event are reproduced throughout the newsletter.

We hope that you will help JEP in this most important Challenge. The Good Neighbors Campaign runs through December 31 of this year. College faculty and staff can donate online at http://college.usc.edu/gnc, or mail your pledge/donation to Civic and Community Relations, MC 2542. Contribution forms are available online at http://www.usc.edu/gnc
Virtual Learning in JEP

*JEP goes ‘high-tech’ with the use of the programs Blackboard and GradeMark*

**By Susan C. Harris, Associate Director, research & Academic Affairs**

Since the Fall 2007 semester, JEP has used the Blackboard classroom management system as a tool to facilitate our work with students. Since our students come from courses from such varied disciplines, and since participation in JEP for a course is usually voluntary, we are challenged to find ways to connect students who share similar educational experiences in the community. Furthermore, since we do not meet regularly with our students in a classroom setting, we have struggled to find the best ways to provide feedback on our students’ weekly reflective essays in a timely manner.

Blackboard has proven to be an invaluable resource for addressing both of these concerns. Each semester, JEP students participate in an online, moderated conversation using Blackboard’s discussion feature. Topics vary, ranging from exploring some of the core theoretical issues in the service-learning field to brainstorming about how to be a more effective mentor to children. In addition, this semester, with the assistance of ITS’s Center for Scholarly Technology, we are piloting a program called GradeMark, which allows for online submission and editing of students’ journals through Blackboard’s Turnitin feature. This “fabulous” tool — to quote our Program Assistants — has made it far easier for us to ensure that JEP students get feedback on their work before they turn in the next week’s assignment.

Working through Blackboard provides other benefits as well. For example, since we have electronic access to students’ journals, it becomes more feasible to conduct research to help us better understand student learning outcomes. In the last year alone, we have explored the significance of gender in service-learning, the learning outcomes related to diversity, and the experiences of international students enrolled in JEP, and we have plans for future research projects as well.

Another benefit of Blackboard that we have not yet taken full advantage of is the ability to connect professors more directly to their students’ experiences in JEP. Most students participate in our program as a complement to their coursework; instructors often have little understanding of what their students are learning through their work in the community. However, enrolling professors in the JEP/Blackboard courses, allows them access to their students’ journals and online discussions, thereby developing a clearer picture of the connection between JEP and their courses. This facilitates the ability for professors to participate in their students’ development as service-learning students.

Beginning next semester, we will regularly ask professors if they would like to be enrolled in the Blackboard account(s) set up for their JEP students (which are distinct from the Blackboard accounts set up for each USC course). We hope that faculty will take advantage of this opportunity to know more about what their students are learning in JEP — and to help shape this unique educational experience.
Achieving Diversity Through Service-Learning

Results and recommendations based on a qualitative analysis of JEP students’ essays

BY CAROL BROWN, JEP RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Service-learning focuses on diversity as one important outcome of the pedagogy. Well designed service-learning can reduce stereotyping and increase tolerance. Despite a consensus about the importance of diversity, a review of the service-learning literature revealed that the idea was not well conceptualized, measured, or evaluated. Previous attempts in service-learning to measure diversity often relied on spontaneous responses that were pulled from class evaluations and provided by just a few students.

My current research (with JEP’s Susan Harris) was prompted by the awareness that our students’ experiences in community service-learning assignments often led them to develop more complex and informed notions of social class, race and ethnicity. Students consistently reported in their program evaluations that they “learned more about how to work with people different from [themselves] in terms of race, class, culture, gender, age, etc.” Yet when we sought to design curricula with diversity-related outcomes in mind, and particularly when we attempted to assess these outcomes, we found few models for effectively doing so in the service-learning field. Diversity was implicit in service-learning and assumed to be an inherent characteristic of pedagogy; yet rarely was it clear what exactly service-learning taught students about diversity, or how instructors actually measured these desired learning outcomes.

Drawing from a qualitative analysis of student essays and their online discussions about race, class, gender, and other core issues, we reached some conclusions. Common characteristics found in students’ writings at the beginning of the service-learning experience included: stereotyping; the “N of 1” problem, where students over-generalized based on interacting with a single person; blaming the victim; mind-reading; and the “white knight syndrome,” where students believed their purpose was to single-handedly uplift community residents.

These early comments provided support for the findings of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff, whose 1994 study analyzed JEP students’ essays and found evidence of prejudice and the “white knight syndrome.” Yet our current study also provides support for the developmental process outlined by Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000). They proposed that students in service-learning courses were typically faced with a new experience resulting in an initial phase described as “shock.” During this early stage, students’ comments were often emotion laden and focused on the vast, perceived differences between themselves and those with whom they were working. Feelings of shock evolved into “normalization,” where students’ began to see more similarities between themselves and those with whom they were working. Students also began to exhibit more empathy and to question stereotypes. The final development stage that students went through was “engagement.” In this final stage, students began to raise causal questions and sought answers to earlier questions. Students also related course material to the lives of the individuals with whom they were working. In the beginning of the semester, the JEP students’ essays were rife with the problems noted above. But in later essays, after they had had more opportunities to reflect on issues of diversity—and been prompted by their JEP Program Assistants to do so—their essays were more thoughtful and critical.

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I joined the JEP full-time staff in July of 2008 as the Administrative Assistant. In this role, I am the friendly voice that greets you on the phone and the smiling face that welcomes you when you visit the JEP House. My co-workers fondly refer to me as the ‘air traffic controller’ of the house. I am constantly directing phone calls and guests that stop by, as well as inputting and monitoring student files and assisting the office manager with budgeting and projects.

Upon graduating from high school I pursued a career in real estate and mortgage lending where I attained my real estate and notary licenses. After years of working, my career goals have changed. I am currently taking classes for a Bachelors degree in Sociology. I live in Whittier with my husband Gilberto and my 3-year-old son Gilberto Rudy whom I affectionately call “My lil’ guy.”
A Successful JEP/Departmental Collaboration

Highlighting the strong partnership between JEP and the College’s Earth Sciences department.

BY TINA KONEAZNY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION & EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

JEP has been placing mini-course teams in our neighborhood schools since the late 1970s. These teams of three to five students from the same university course teach concepts they learn in that class to students in our local schools. Through applying what they know and presenting it to younger learners, our USC students gain a greater understanding of their class material over their eight-week assignment.

Over the past several years, our JEP mini-teams have improved. Greater attention is being placed on preparing meaningful and relevant lessons, and we are always considering how best to guide and support our mini-team students. Truly, our most successful teams are those who receive specialized guidance from their departments and their professors who are offering the JEP option.

Brooke Holmes, a student who was part of a mini-team for Geology 108 (Crisis of a Planet) spoke of her experiences: “I loved geology as a JEP participant. I thought it was the best subject because there are so many hands-on experiments you can do. We had our students act out convergent and divergent plate movement, made model volcanoes, brought in rock kits, did pressurized experiments outside, and wrote a letter to President Bush explaining the effects of deforestation. My participation in JEP definitely prompted me to spend more time with my course material and to be passionate about what I was learning and why it was important.”

All of our College departments lend themselves to rich opportunities for sharing artifacts and materials for classroom students to touch and explore. Our Earth Sciences department has made a great wealth of relevant resources available to our students. The Instructional Laboratories’ staff also has made office hours available to assist our teams as they brainstorm lesson plan ideas, and has created a binder that serves as a JEP Earth Science “Toolkit” showing images of all available materials as well as activity ideas.

Over the years, eight different Earth Sciences courses have had students going out into schools doing mini-team lessons. One of the most challenging was introduced last fall through Geology 130 (Nature of Scientific Inquiry). Professors Steve Lund and Scott Paterson brainstormed with JEP staff about best approaches to making a mini-team experience for this course material meaningful for USC students and relevant to local classroom students. Over email exchanges and face-to-face meetings, these professors offered ideas such as a “geologic treasure hunt” – a presentation designed by Professor Paterson in which K-8 students are introduced to maps and given maps marked with treasure “sites.” Students must then search the treasures, which include minerals, fossils, and natural resources (such as a can of oil). Upon discovery, students are given a lesson about what geologists do as they learn about each treasure and its geological relevance.

Ultimately, Earth Sciences faculty and staff offer students invaluable experiences. Our students stretch themselves to think in new ways in order to teach science to community students.

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Sometimes, our students are surprised by the extra study required to fully satisfy the curious minds of community students. As Steven Zhu, a Fall '08 JEP participant through GEOL 240, stated, “To my surprise, they knew a lot about earthquakes and some of them even knew about Pangea. They asked challenging questions that perhaps took us, the leaders, a while to come up with the answers.”

Our Student Staff: The Backbone of JEP

JEP's undergraduate staff excels in many areas, as illustrated by the high number of USC scholars

By Elina Khodorkovsky, JEP Placement Coordinator

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is constantly praised for the benefit it provides to not just the community but also to the USC students who participate in the service-learning programs that the department administers. The focus tends to remain on these two categories, without much contemplation given to the people behind the scenes that keep the program going. JEP could not function without the select group of USC undergraduate student employees who help keep the program running smoothly. Roughly two-dozen dedicated and hard-working student leaders devote their time and energy to this program, which they see as vital to the school and to the community.

While JEP as an organization gets much of the credit, its employees are quite impressive in their own right. JEP employs the best and brightest students among the university, as proven by their accomplishments in the classroom and beyond. Out of the twenty-eight undergraduate students employed with JEP, about half are attending the university with prestigious honors and scholarships.

JEP amazingly employs six Trustee Scholarship Recipients (a USC scholarship providing 100 students per year with full tuition scholarship), two Presidential Scholarship Recipients (half-tuition USC scholarship given to 300 students per year) and two National Merit Scholars. Other employees have also received high honors, such as the Gates Millennium Scholarship and the Trojan Scholarship. While all of these students have at least two very obvious things in common (prestigious scholarships and employment with JEP), their extra-curricular involvement prior to becoming Trojans is as diverse as the community JEP serves.

Activities ranged from honors societies to athletics to student government. While all student employees participated in very different activities in high school, they shared one very clear commonality, a passion for community service. Almost all of the JEP undergraduate staff that shared information for this article participated in many community service tasks while in high school, and still continue to do so here at USC.

JEP attracts over 1,000 participants every semester to volunteer throughout the community; it touches thousands more throughout the local schools, shelters and non-profit organizations where USC students are placed. Only a few dozen of those volunteers end up being chosen through a highly selective process to work for JEP and help run the program. As evidenced by the caliber of employees, JEP is lucky to attract some of the finest leaders on campus.
JEP Site Spotlight: The Optometric Center

An eye-care clinic serving the community for more than one hundred years

By Brenda Pesante, Director of Community Partnerships

“Hola, buenos dias. ¿Tiene una cita con nostros? Sigame, por favor.”

These are the types of greetings our USC/JEP students practice with patients at their service-learning assignments at the Optometric Center of Los Angeles. Through their JEP experiences, these students receive partial course credit for their Spanish 220 class, while also gaining real world experience applying their language skills.

The Optometric Center (OCLA) is the clinical teaching facility of the Southern California College of Optometry. This particular facility has offered excellent comprehensive eye care for the community since 1904. JEP has partnered with OCLA and Dr. Tony Carnevali, O.D., Clinic Director/Associate Professor, for approximately 15 years. Dr. Carnevali has been at the clinic since 1994, and he has served in the role of clinic director and associate professor since 1995. Presently, approximately 70% of OCLA patients are Latino; this provides for rich learning opportunities for JEP’s Spanish 220 students who are placed there.

The Optometric Center’s mission is to deliver quality eye and vision care to the people of South Central Los Angeles and the surrounding communities; to provide guided clinical experiences in efficient, effective, competent patient care to their students in order to produce superior doctors of optometry.

The JEP students placed with OCLA help enhance this mission through the services that they offer while at the clinic. They provide translations for patients coming into the clinic and make numerous calls to patients confirming appointments or reminding them that their glasses are ready for pick up.

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To ensure that the JEP students get to practice the Spanish language, OCLA staff specifically selects Spanish-speaking patients with whom the JEP students can interact. Optometric Center staff also supports our students by providing them each with a medical terminology guide in Spanish that applies to the medical terms one may need in the optometry profession.

JEP students gain valuable learning experiences during the time they spend assisting patients at the OCLA. Sophomore Biological Science major, Erin Lee states, “My JEP experience at OCLA has been a great opportunity that helps me practice my Spanish and allows me to hone my people skills. The workers and optometry students are all very helpful and kind, as well as the patients. I feel like my Spanish has improved a lot.”

The JEP students are not the only ones who benefit from this partnership. The clinic also gains from the additional help provided by our students. “Students are extremely beneficial to us at OCLA. They assist us with different tasks, therefore helping alleviate the front office staff from performing these duties so we may concentrate on other tasks,” said Ana Garcia, Office Manager at OCLA and JEP’s site coordinator.

The Optometric Center of Los Angeles has been a long-term partner of JEP and has aided many undergraduate students in gaining a further grasp of their Spanish language skills. We thank the clinic staff for the work they have put into maintaining this partnership and look forward to many more years of mutual benefits.

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR PROFESSORS**

JEP’s Planning with Professors process for the Spring 2009 semester is underway. Please contact JEP as soon as possible to begin planning for next semester.

JEP Program Assistants will deliver student evaluations during the last week of class and the first week of finals. Please let us know if you need your evaluations by a certain date.

If you would like to see samples of your students’ journals or lesson plans, please inform your JEP Program Assistant (if you are unsure of your Program Assistant’s name, please see page 10).

**RECYCLE USED INK & TONER CARTRIDGES**

USC PURCHASING SERVICES, MAILING & MATERIALS MANAGEMENT SERVICES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY HAVE PARTNERED WITH WE CARE, INC. TO OFFER A CONVENIENT WAY FOR RECYCLING USED INK & TONER CARTRIDGES.

To recycle, simply send cartridges via intra-campus mail to Mailing & Material Management Services using pre-configured address labels which can be found at: www.usc.edu/purchasing/recycling
STUDENT STAFF

READERS PLUS

SITE COORDINATORS
Angela Vimuttinan - Vermont
Brooke Beverage - Foshay Assistant
Chelsea Snyder - Norwood Assistant
Diana Coleman - Vermont Assistant
Eric Bruins - 32nd Street
Erica Edwards - 32nd Street Assistant
Julia Payson - Weemes
Karloyn Sanchez - Weemes Assistant
Lauren Middleton - Foshay
Randi Thompson - Norwood

AT READERS HOME OFFICE (JEP HOUSE)
Caitlin Fitzgerald - Office Assistant
Nicole Sharma - Central Coordinator
Vanessa Kuroda - Web Manager

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Kimberly Clayton - Literacy Director
Lauren Chianese - Math & Science Director

JEP

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS
Brenda Nuyen - Health for Life
Brooke Holmes - GEOL
Clare Velasquez - ANTH
Denver Guess - BISC & EXSC
Emily Sherman - FREN, PAS, & EASC
Jonathan Ou - GEOL
Joshua Real - Youth & Family Agencies
Julie Feurhelm - SWMS & SOCI 150
Karika Jain - SOCI 150
Kelley Lowe - MATH
Kelsey Larsen - Peace Games
Lindsay Palmer - Youth & Family Agencies
Lorna Alkana - ENGL & POSC
Marisol Siegel - SPAN
Marissa Monteiro - SPAN
Monika Langarica - SOCI & GEOG
Nicole Moody - Research Assistant & PSYC
Rebecca Ferdman - SOCI
Robert Lee - PHIL & LING
Sabrina Fung - Volunteers & All Stars Tutors
Stefanie Gopaul - CLAS & HIST
Thomas Chow - Peace Games

OTHER STUDENT STAFF
Aakriti Garg - Trojan Health Volunteers Director
David Anderson - Transportation Coordinator
Elina Khodorkovsky - Placement Coordinator
Janet Lin - Trojan Health Volunteers Assistant Director
Kelsey Kopro - Program Assistant Coordinator

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Alice Villaseñor - Service-Learning Liaison
Carol Brown - Research Assistant
Marc De Jong - Service - Learning Liaison

Faculty, Staff & Alumni
Call to Action!!

Read with a neighborhood child!
Everyone has time to take a break for lunch – Why not devote one lunch hour a week to reading with a local elementary student in need of a positive mentor and reading coach?

Just one hour a week is all it takes to make a real difference in a child’s life.

If you have a few hours to spare and would like to volunteer with the LITERACY PROJECT, please contact Nicole Sharma at sharmani@usc.edu or 213-740-1834
Achieving Diversity - continued from page 4

Recommendations for practitioners who are designing service-learning curricula with diversity-related goals include taking into account the backgrounds and perspectives of students and preparing them for the service-learning experience. This can include a baseline assessment in which attitudes and knowledge about the community and course goals are ascertained (which can be compared to end-of-course evaluations to identify changes). Additionally, it is important to purposefully design assignments that engage difference and diversity and allow students to reflect about their experiences. Reflective questions should be recurrent throughout the semester, take into account the developmental model described above, and align reflection with other course-related goals.

Finally, constructive criticism, encouragement, feedback, and evaluation should be provided throughout the semester, this will assist students in drawing connections between course material and their community experiences. Well-designed service-learning curricula should result in positive diversity-related outcomes, where students change their attitudes, and also increase their conceptual understanding of the course material.

References:

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the United States. JEP is based in USC’s College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and works with faculty across the university. The program is designed to connect academic courses with schools and community-based organizations in order to provide students with out-of-classroom experiences that complement and enrich what they are learning in the classroom while simultaneously providing a valued service to the community. Each year, JEP partners with approximately 50 schools and agencies to place nearly 2,500 students in the neighborhood as mentors, “mini-course” instructors, translators, research assistants, teaching assistants, and aides to other helping professionals.

For more information about the services available through JEP, please contact our staff or visit our website at www.usc.edu/jep

HELP JEP TO RECEIVE A ONE MILLION DOLLAR ENDOWMENT
PLEASE DONATE!!

THE JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
801 WEST 34TH STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90089 - 0471
MAIL CODE: 0471
E-MAIL: JEPHOUSE@USC.EDU
PHONE: 213.740.1837
FAX: 213.740.1825