We “Fight On” at 40!

BY TAMMARA ANDERSON, Executive Director

In the “age conscious” society we live in, turning 40 often conjures up notions of being old, tired, or worn out. 40 at JEP symbolizes the opposite for our staff. It reminds us of Barbara Seaver Gardner, our visionary founder, who despite being told by foundations that JEP would never last, told us “JEP will be fine, just outlive the naysayers.” It makes us think of Dick Cone, former Executive Director and a leader in the service-learning field, who took JEP from being seen as a “charity program” to one that is integrated into the mission of this university.

Turning 40 brings to mind past staff members (both students and professionals) whose tenacity, creativity, and absolute dedication to our program has made it an international model program drawing in visitors from around the globe to see us in action and gain ideas for their programs. It gets us reminiscing about >>> continued on page 2
our rich collaborations with community partners, some for 40 years, which have resulted in exciting educational, oftentimes transformational experiences for SC students, who not only learned something new related to their classes, but learned more about their beliefs, talents, or career path.

40 at JEP means no resting on our laurels. Instead, we “Serve On” creating new programs that further our mission of putting theory into practice, building strong university-community partnerships, and recognizing the difference each of us can make in our society. Consider the following programs we have initiated in just the past year:

• Digital Badges – As part of the Digital Media Learning competition, we proposed a digital badge system that incentivizes and rewards the development of “lifelong learning” skills such as critical thinking and teamwork, or knowledge acquired outside of traditional academic contexts, such as in our service-learning assignments, on the job or in the community. We’ll be piloting the project Spring 2013.

• Multi-cultural mini-courses – With the support of the university’s American Language Institute and the Office of International Students, JEP developed a four-week mini-course that gives international students the opportunity to share culture and traditions from their home countries with kids living in our neighborhood. This program recognizes the great cultural richness at USC and takes advantage of the wealth of experiences and perspectives held by our diverse student body.

• WonderKids – This after-school program aimed at first through third grade students is run by JEP’s USC ReadersPlus staff. WonderKids introduces young children to careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) through engaging hands-on activities and guest speakers to spark their curiosity and enthusiasm for the ever-changing world of science.

• Little Yoginis – To complement the academic enrichment and homework help that USC ReadersPlus provides students during our after school programs, Little Yoginis was created. This new curriculum introduces children to the many benefits of yoga: exercise, relaxation, and living life through positive actions.

Yes, we are 40 years old and while the JEP House did recently have a major facelift, we are still the program where some 2000 USC students circulate each year to learn through a combination of community service, academic inquiry and discovery. We are still the place where it is typical to see groups of students engaged in spirited discussions about inequality (in education or health care), race, class, gender and poverty based on their experiences in the community. JEP is still seen as a loyal USC partner by over 50 community sites, and as the “best job in the world” by JEP staff who have worked to further its mission for nearly four decades!

I sincerely want to recognize past and current Dornsife deans (who have given JEP its academic home), members of the USC faculty, engaged students, our community partners, and every donor (who has trusted us to be good stewards of their funds). Your contributions have made JEP the successful program it is today.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season & a happy new year!

JEP’s PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Nadine Afari - Coordinator of JEP’s Young Scientist Program
Tammara Anderson - Executive Director
Alex Fairman - IT Coordinator/Curriculum Innovation
Susan Harris - Associate Director, Research & Academic Affairs
Tina Koneazny - Associate Director, Administration & Educational Outreach
Brenda Pesante - Director of Community Partnerships
Jake Peters - Assistant Director, Research & Academic Affairs
Emma Rendón - Office Manager
Jacqueline Whitley - Director of Non-Profit Partnerships
Is Service-Learning the Hidden Gem of Education Reform?

**A JEP Program Assistant shares her thoughts on service-learning and how it can influence education policy**

**BY MEGAN RILKOFF, JEP Program Assistant**

This November, seven U.S. states are tackling education reform with ballot initiatives for increased funding for buildings, more resources, and stricter teacher evaluations. While it is exciting to see an emphasis on these issues—which greatly impact students—what if we gave students the opportunity to actively take part in their own education?

Enter service-learning. The approach is not just learning, but learning and doing. Take this example: Students in an environmental studies course go out and remove trash from a polluted stream in the neighborhood, test and study the causes of the pollution, and then write an article to inform citizens. Students are reinforcing classroom concepts while learning how to be engaged agents in their community, effectively gaining life and academic skills.

Service-learning programs are set up at colleges and universities across the country. At the University of Southern California, where I go to school, the Joint Educational Project (JEP) aims to bridge the gap between classroom learning and community engagement, believing that “service is more informed by theoretical and conceptual understanding and learning is more informed by the realities of the world” [see JEP website: www.dornsife.usc.edu/jep]. While receiving extra credit in their class, some 2,000 USC students a year teach what they’re learning in class to students at local schools in South Central Los Angeles. For many students, it is their first time outside of the “USC bubble” and their first time as teachers and mentors. As a program assistant and volunteer at JEP for the past three years, I’ve seen the challenges and outcomes of service-learning projects.

I’ll never forget my own first JEP experience. I was a Los Angeles transplant from Massachusetts—a freshman living in a city for the first time. While adjusting to SC life, I also found myself adjusting to the community around USC and grew to realize the intertwined and important relationship between the school and the neighborhood. Going to teach kindergartners French each week at a nearby elementary school renewed a passion in me for the language and helped LA feel a bit more like home. Each semester, I watch a similar cycle occur with the students I work with: apprehension about teaching, excitement in achieving new goals, and ultimately an understanding and self-confidence that only comes through firsthand experience.

Some students think that giving extra credit at JEP is manipulative because “grades are used merely as leveraging points for philanthropy.” In fact, many people interpret service-learning simply as a form of volunteerism because of the interaction with the community. However, this misconception ignores its true educational nature: it is not a one-time philanthropic project but a recurring, continual cycle of learning, adapting, and discovering. And in that light, it too can be evaluated like any regular coursework. The true telltale sign of the success of JEP is the fact that hundreds of students choose to participate again, reinforcing that each experience offers a new opportunity for growth.

Similar to how internships are seen as an essential way to gain “real life” experience in a future career field, service-learning can be used to enrich students’ education through real-world interaction and collaboration. Two years ago, GOOD interviewed Dr. Jim Kielsmeier, the president and CEO of the National Youth Leadership Council and the creator of a service-learning curriculum, the Generator School Network. By empowering students and engaging them in their personal interests, Kielsmeier believes that service-learning can have a very impactful role in reducing the dropout rate and solving other educational issues that our schools face. But first, people need to know about this hidden gem. 🧵

**This article was originally published on the website www.GOOD.is, and has been slightly modified.**
JEP’s Newest Full-Time Staff Members

Introducing Alex Fairman and Jake Peters

Our newest employee, Alex Fairman, serves as the coordinator for IT and Curriculum Innovation. Alex is focusing on creating new JEP curricula and programs that utilize digital technologies and pedagogies.

Alex, a USC alum, graduated in 2009 with a major in International Relations: Global Business. After graduation, Alex discovered his passion for innovation in education, and helped lead JEP to the finals of the Digital Media and Learning Competition in February 2012. During the competition, the JEP team created proposals for the creation of a digital badge system, a system of micro-credentials that assesses and rewards JEP participants for specific skills and qualities demonstrated during their JEP assignments. This idea has given inspiration to a new series of pilot programs that test these concepts in practice.

Outside of JEP, Alex has a passion for making music, producing electronic, hip-hop, and epic sweeping scores under the name Morningstar. He also is involved in mentorship and development programs for young men in Los Angeles.

He can be reached at afairman@usc.edu.

Jake Peters joined the full-time staff in August 2012 as the Assistant Director of Research & Academic Affairs. In this new position, Jake will assume most of the day-to-day oversight of JEP’s academic affairs—working with graduate students to develop curricula for JEP’s service-learning courses, and training and supervising our undergraduate Program Assistant staff. He will also serve as a resource for faculty interested in integrating JEP and service-learning into their curriculum and classrooms.

Jake started with JEP in 2009 as a Service-Learning Liaison while working to complete his Ph.D. in geography. He is interested in infrastructure of all kinds and has a multidisciplinary concern with curriculum that creates the space for thinking about the stakes of education.

Jake grew up in northern Minnesota. His primary mode of transportation is bicycling and his love of LA grew from exploring the city on two wheels.

He can be reached at jjpeters@usc.edu or 213-740-1831.

DO YOU KNOW ANY STUDENTS WHO DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE?

The Extraordinary Community Service Award
A $1,000 award is provided to a graduating senior who offers outstanding service to the community.

The Grace Ford Salvatori Community Service Award
This $5,000 scholarship is given to sophomores or juniors with majors in Dornsife College. It is based upon community service, academic performance, need, and civic leadership.

The Desiree Benson Award
Two $750 scholarships are given to work-study students who have done outstanding community service.

For additional information please contact JEP at 213.740.1837
USC students bring the Penny Harvest fundraiser to several Los Angeles elementary schools

By Shakira Keller, Penny Harvest Student

USC students, faculty, and staff are pulling together to recreate in Los Angeles the Penny Harvest, a revolutionary school program founded in New York designed to inspire and empower youth philanthropy through collecting your spare change.

Since the program’s inception in 1991, the Penny Harvest has developed civic and philanthropic skills among school children ages 4 to 14. These Penny Harvesters have raised over $8.1 million in grants in the last twenty years. Countless community and philanthropic organizations, including homeless shelters, animal rescue organizations, community gardens, senior centers, the American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross, have benefitted from the program’s penny collection.

Under the direction of political science professor Ann Crigler, USC’s Civic Engagement and Leadership class has taken the lead on bringing the Penny Harvest to elementary schools in Los Angeles. “It is exciting to see the USC students take responsibility and initiative for all aspects of this big project,” Crigler said. “I am so fortunate to be able to work with these students who have created so much from the ground up.” The Civic students, consisting of ten undergraduates and two program assistants, have already begun instruction in Sacred Heart Elementary School, one of several schools around the USC Health Science Campus area that are participating in the pilot year.

These Trojan students are in the process of cultivating discussions among the elementary school children on what community means, as well as what it means to be civically engaged within one’s community. Throughout the remainder of the program, the youth will be given the task of collecting pennies from neighbors, friends and family, with the ultimate goal of granting the collection to a local charity or cause previously chosen by the children.

Crigler’s class is divided into four strategic committees – Communication, Partnership, Funding and Evaluation – which have been working all semester to pull together an action plan for Los Angeles’ first Penny Harvest. The communication team focuses on written and spoken delivery and messaging, as well as promotion within USC and the surrounding community. The partnership team actively seeks out community businesses and networks that could assist in the development of the Penny Harvest. The funding committee researches other funding opportunities, and the evaluation committee seeks to track the progress and effectiveness of the program at many levels in the participating communities and schools.

The Funding team is also working with URSC to enact a Mini-Penny Harvest within the residential buildings on campus from November 26 to December 2. The Mini-Harvest is a modified version of the program, and its purpose is to give fellow Trojans an opportunity to better understand the program’s benefits. For two weeks, the building leaders will rally their residential community to harvest pennies and other such small change for the fundraiser, creating the opportunity for community building and civic awareness the program is meant for. Funds from the Mini-Harvest will be contributed to the school children’s efforts in their own Harvest.

The USC Penny Harvest is a collaborative effort involving several USC academic units, University Relations (specifically USC Civic Engagement), local area schools, and non-profit partner Common Cents are involved in the project. Specifically, there are faculty members and staff from JEP, the Provost’s office, Annenberg School of Communication, Price School for Public Policy, the Unruh Institute of Politics, the Department of Political Science, the Division of Engineering and Education, Rossier, and the Dornsife Dean’s Office that have formed a broad working team to implement the project.

The program was started by Teddy Gross and his daughter, Nora. It currently operates successfully in the states of New York, Colorado, Florida, Ohio and Washington.
Retirees Share Their Stories to Educate Local Kids

The Young At Heart volunteers open students’ eyes to the changes that have occurred in their lifetimes

BY LINDA BRODER, Volunteer Coordinator & Student Services Assistant at the Davis School of Gerontology

Volunteers from the USC Davis School of Gerontology known to the children in the USC Readers Plus after-school program as the ‘Young At Heart’ volunteers have enjoyed visiting the schools and sharing their stories with the children. Young At Heart volunteer Pamela Jaye exclaimed after spending an hour with students at John Mack “We had so much fun!” And Fran Dudley related of her time at Foshay that “the children were so curious.”

Young At Heart Volunteers, Fran Dudley (standing) and Phoebe Heywoo

The purpose of this outreach is to make the children aware of how things have changed over time. When talking about money, the children and the tutors were astonished to learn that volunteer Freddye McDowell bought a brand new car for $600 some 60 years ago. The Young At Heart volunteers explained to the children that they grew up without television and many of the appliances that we all take for granted today. When they were children they did not have a microwave oven nor did anyone have a cellular phone. The Young At Heart volunteers enjoy seeing the surprise and looks of amazement on the children’s faces when they tell them that they were able to buy a movie ticket, candy bar, popcorn and a drink for about 50 cents when they were their age.

The children are full of questions: “What did you do with no TV?” Volunteers explained that they would listen to the radio in much the same way as we watch television today, and that they would play board games such as Monopoly. Sometimes these games would go on for days!

The children were also curious about the fact that the volunteers remember when Disneyland was built. We hope the children will think about the changes these seniors have seen and wonder about the changes that will happen in their own lives. This has been a fun experience for the volunteers and we hope for the children and their tutors as well.

USC’s New Policy for Protecting Minors

BY TAMMARA ANDERSON, Executive Director

USC is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children visiting our campuses or participating in university-sponsored programs. To that end, USC has issued several new or updated university-wide policies as well as specific guidelines for programs involving minors.

JEP, as one of the largest programs on campus to work with minors, has for years been required to provide TB testing for all USC students placed in our local partner elementary and secondary school sites. In addition, background checks are required for students with mentoring/tutoring assignments as several community-based organizations, such as the Children Youth and Family Collaborative, A Place Called Home, the Good Shepard Shelter for domestic violence victims, and School on Wheels, a program from homeless children. In light of the new policies, in the future JEP will do additional background checks for USC ReadersPLUS students who tutor children one-on-one during the school day and provide after school tutorial help and enrichment after school hours.

With the university’s guidance, in particular, Jody Shipper, Executive Director of Equity and Diversity, we have incorporated a discussion of these policies and procedures, as well as informational videos into pre-service training sessions for students participating in JEP.

A special “thank you” to Pattie Fitzgerald, founder of Safely Ever After, Inc. who provided an excellent training session for our staff this fall and generously shared information we can place on our website.

More information is available at the Office of Equity and Diversity website at http://www.usc.edu/dept/hr/equity_diversity/index.html.
JEP’s Newest Program: Little Yoginis

JEP’s Associate Director combines her passion for reading and yoga into an innovative new program

**By Tina Koneazny, Associate Director**

It’s not as easy being a kid as you might think. Once children blow out their five birthday candles and ready themselves for kindergarten, life gets a lot busier and a lot more challenging. Most kids are dropped off at school by 7:30 in the morning and don’t leave school until after five o’clock when their parents are able to pick them up after their own long days at work. Do the math, and basically, kids are “working” better than an eight-hour day!

While at school, children have a full day of lessons. They may become frustrated learning new concepts, might be dealing with arguments or disagreements with their friends on the yard, or they may be just plain tired and unfocused. Once at home, children may have unfinished homework or be asked to help with household chores. For many kids it’s a struggle to simply find some peace and quiet at the end of their long day. What’s a kid to do?

USC Readers Plus has added a little reprieve to all the madness in a kid’s day. A new curriculum has been added to our after school academic enrichment programs. Twice a week, first through third graders become “Little Yoginis”. That’s right, they get to do yoga!

I am a competitive runner and discovered yoga myself fourteen years ago when I was forced to take a break from running in my fourth month of pregnancy. Being unable to run drove me crazy. I missed working my body and the positive feeling it gave me. Then I found yoga. Over the years, I’ve enjoyed the many benefits of yoga, especially the sense of peace and grounding it provides me, so I decided to design the “Little Yoginis” Curriculum which is now being taught 1 – 2 days each week at our USC Readers Plus schools.

Each yoga practice is linked to a piece of children’s literature. For example, one of our USC Readers reads aloud *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss, bringing special attention to Horton’s qualities of faithfulness and determination to create the theme for the children’s yoga poses introduced in the session. Practice begins with “Elephant Breath” (deep cleansing breaths as arms are clasped and swung back and forth link an elephant’s trunk) and puts children in poses such as “Tree” (in honor of Horton’s many months of sitting in a tree), “Warrior” (to practice determination), and both “Crow” and “Eagle,” that tend to be a little more challenging, but become playful as the children fall in and out of the poses as they work to master them.

Through yoga practice children build confidence as they realize what they can do with their bodies; enhance their concentration as they focus on the poses and breathing through them; improve their flexibility and balance with each practice; and learn how to find a sense of calm as they learn various breathing and relaxation techniques. “Little Yoginis” was created to bring these positive benefits to the children in our neighborhood because, after all, life is hard even for a kid. But one of the best things about bringing yoga to kids is that they are having fun and learning something new! Isn’t that what being a kid is all about?
ABOUT THE JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

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 Dornsife 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 on JEP’s programs, please contact our staff or visit www.usc.edu/jep

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 16
USC’s Community Service Banquet at USC’s Town and Gown

April 21 & 22
L.A. Times Festival of Books
USC’s University Park Campus

April 24-26
Campus Compact’s 16th Annual Continuums of Service Conference
Portland, OR