



## May 2012 Newsletter

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## Service-Learning Summary: 2011-2012

873 student service-learners (*graduate & undergraduate*)

56 academic courses in 6 colleges • 88 community-based partners

27 faculty members & instructors • 53 S-L teaching assistant positions

26,190 hours of service completed by students • 5,400 hours of service completed by S-LTAs

*\*does not include upcoming summer sessions*

**“[My experience] has helped me to challenge my original notions of what being a teacher is. It has made me realize that a teacher is more than just a lecturer, they have to get to know their students on a personal level. It, also, taught me that each student has their own background history, and I should not judge I should get to know them better.”**

*Education in the Community student serving with Sociedad Latina*



*Northeastern Students Rally for Foster Kids*

*Advanced Spanish Faculty, Community Partners, & S-L Teaching Assistants*



*Photo by Kristie Gillooly*

**“[Students] have prepared a grant proposal that we will attempt to get funded and implemented. The topic of the grant meets our need to address disparities in health outcomes (diabetes) for Latinos in our community, and outlines groundbreaking research to address stress, a key underlying symptom which affects clients' abilities to adhere to treatment, and experience positive health outcomes.”**

*Community Partner Demie Stathoplos, Pathways to Wellness*

# A Growing Partnership with Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures

Contributed by Community Partner Cathy Wirth, Project Manager  
Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures

Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures (HKHF) was founded in 2009 as an inter-institutional, community-based initiative aimed at preventing early childhood obesity by supporting health promoting environments in the places where young children live, learn, and play. HKHF is currently supported by Northeastern University and Children's Hospital Boston, and partners with the Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) and Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Head Start to provide programming, education and training at four Head Start centers and one recreation center in the neighborhoods of Fenway, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, and Lower Roxbury.

One of the cornerstone programs of HKHF is Open Gym, a free weekly play program for Boston families with young children. The primary goal of Open Gym is to create an environment that encourages young children and their families to be active together and to promote open, non-fee based recreational use of Boston's community centers. Open Gym was developed in response to the need for

**"Partnering with Open Gym has provided physical therapy students a rich opportunity to learn more about the residents of their local community and the diversity it offers."**

**-Ann Golub-Victor,  
Associate Clinical Professor  
Department of Physical Therapy**

safe, accessible play space in neighborhoods where such opportunities are limited and the cost for existing programs poses a financial barrier. Open Gym is held on Saturday mornings from 10:00am-11:30am at BCYF's Recreation Center at Madison Park, located in Roxbury. On a given Saturday, the gym is packed with over fifty caregivers and children shooting baskets, jumping rope, doing Zumba, playing parachute games, running through obstacle courses, and generally having a great time being active!

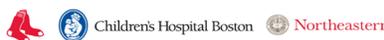
HKHF's partnership with the Service-Learning program at Northeastern University has been a key part of what makes Open Gym possible. Staffing for Open Gym is provided by the students that are matched with HKHF through Service-Learning. Year-round, during the spring, summer, and fall semesters, these students are present on Saturday mornings to greet families, orient them to the gym, lead

games and activities, and provide an engaging and welcoming environment for families.

Since the first Open Gym took place in 2009, over 95 Northeastern students have worked with the Open Gym program, contributing over 2,500 hours of their time. These students have run 80 Open Gym sessions, reaching over 800 caregivers and children from throughout Boston. HKHF is incredibly grateful to all of the Service-Learning students that have devoted their time and energy to Open Gym. Open Gym wouldn't happen without you!

**"The most important quality I have been able to develop and improve upon through [Open Gym] is my level of self-confidence. Through this service-learning experience, I have learned to have more faith in my abilities and in learning to communicate and motivate people to participate in a program, I have become more comfortable with meeting new people and sharing what I know and have learned with them. At [Open Gym], the caregivers were very interested in our lives outside of the program and loved that we were students giving back to the immediate community by sharing our knowledge and time with them."**

**-Student Evaluation**



# Northeastern Students4Giving: A New Take on Service-Learning

Contributed by Program Director Rebecca Riccio



A new approach to service-learning is giving Northeastern students the opportunity to explore how social change happens from both sides of the ledger. Northeastern Students4Giving (NS4G) is an experiential philanthropy program in which students are given responsibility for making real-dollar grants to nonprofit organizations in the communities of Mission Hill, Fenway, Roxbury, and the South End. This year's grants, totaling \$20,000, were awarded to Brookview House and the Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project to support programming addressing intimate partner violence and to Smart from the Start to support capacity building in the area of family financial literacy.

NS4G's grant making process spans the fall and spring semesters and provides multiple avenues for student participation. These include two courses, a student club, a lecture series, an annual conference for students, faculty, and practitioners in the social change arena, and co-op positions that have been developed through NS4G's relationships with local nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. To the fullest extent possible, students are given responsibility for managing this "philanthropy ecosystem" in order to maximize their learning and professional development opportunities.

The process begins in *Human Services Professions*, an undergraduate course taught by Dr. Lori Gardinier in which students familiarize themselves with the target neighborhoods and the social and economic challenges they are facing. These students present their findings to students in the fall semester of *Strategic Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management*, an undergraduate course taught by NS4G Program Director Rebecca Riccio. Her students are charged with selecting a funding priority and developing a request for proposals. Their successors in the spring semester review the proposals, conduct site visits, and make the grant determinations – all with the goal of maximizing the impact of their decisions in the

community. "This is inevitably a painful experience for the students," according to Riccio. "They take the responsibility of making these grants very seriously and the proposals expose them to far more needs and deserving applicants than they can possibly fund. Their rigorous standards and consensus-based approach give them confidence in the process, but they don't make it easy."

When students celebrated their grant making and this year's grantees at a luncheon ceremony on April 19, Dory Blair, a student from Riccio's spring course, explained the mix of personal commitment and strategic thinking that characterize the students' grant making. "NS4G," she said, "provides us with the training to put into action what we have in our hearts."

The service-learning component of *Strategic Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management* engages students not just in grant making, but in program management as well. When NS4G was recognized as a university program this year, Riccio decided to give her students responsibility for building its capacity as a grant making entity. Service-Learning teams of three to five students were assigned critical tasks such as building the NS4G web site and social media platform, developing fundraising and donor cultivation materials, establishing an NS4G alumni network, evaluating NS4G's impact on students' learning and past grantees, conducting focus groups with applicants, researching online grant making options, and creating a business plan. According to Riccio, "These projects give them a deeper understanding of what it takes to build a successful organization, making them more conscientious stewards of NS4G's funding and more empathetic grant makers."

Funding for NS4G's 2012 grants was provided by the Learning by Giving Foundation and a Northeastern family. The program received additional support this year from the Arthur K. Watson Charitable Trust, Johnson & Johnson, and the Charlotte Foundation.

# Northeastern Students Rally for Foster Kids

Contributed by Student Service-Learner Christina Davis

Foster Care is a forgotten issue. In Massachusetts, approximately 700 foster children “age out” out of the system every year. After that 54% become unemployed, 37% experience homelessness, and 30% become victims of violent crimes. Even before aging out, foster kids are much more likely than other kids to be coerced into prostitution or to drop out. Even though foster kids in many states have the right to go to state colleges for free, only 3% do and only 1% graduate. In 2008, the United States Congress passed The Fostering Connections Act. This bipartisan legislation encourages states to improve their foster care systems and aging out services. But Northeastern University students recognized that there was much more work to be done.

Through a Service-Learning course titled *Advocacy Workshop*, taught by Communication Studies professor Greg Goodale, students began collaborating with The Home for Little Wanderers to promote and achieve foster care reform in Massachusetts. Students enrolled in this course have lobbied elected officials, helping to pass a bill that guarantees the federal government will provide \$5 million each year for foster youth who age out of the system.

This spring, three more courses got involved including Human Services Professor Lori Gardinier's Service-Learning course, *Social Policy, Advocacy & Activism*, Northeastern students focused on promoting five bills. These would create stability in the lives of foster children through reforms to the judicial and education systems, provide information to foster kids who have many rights but rarely know what these are, and would provide emergency housing and services for homeless youth who have no family and often don't even know about the foster care system.

Professors Gardinier and Goodale took advocacy beyond meetings with elected officials. Students in their courses organized a rally to raise awareness and pressure legislators into passing the five bills. Joined in their efforts by Communication Studies Professor David Cisneros' two *Social Movement Communication* courses, students researched the feasibility of a rally, developed messages for the rally, and developed materials like flyers, posters and banners. Logistics groups organized the protest. Media outreach groups contacted print media, broadcast news stations and the campus media outlets. Other student groups were in charge of promotion and social media.

The day of the rally, three former foster children spoke about their experiences and were joined by Representatives Gloria Fox and Carlos Henriquez and by City Councilor Tito Jackson. Approximately 100 students listened to speeches and marched silently with banners and placards, distributing flyers to passerby. Five local television stations shot footage of the event and held interviews with foster children, elected officials and organizers (though sadly, few stories were actually broadcast). Even so, the event cast Northeastern University and its Service-Learning program in a positive light, helping to remind powerful elected officials that Northeastern students are engaged in making Massachusetts a better place. "It was impressive to see Northeastern students taking the initiative to advocate at the State House in support of legislation that will benefit young people in Massachusetts," said Tim Leshan, Northeastern University Vice President of Government Relations. "Clearly our state and local elected officials were very pleased with the students efforts."



Students came together and made a difference as citizens. They learned that it is possible to organize a rally and silent march in the *real* world, beyond their desks and chairs. Professors Cisneros, Gardinier and Goodale taught advocacy and activism by taking students to the streets of Boston. As students marched, they *felt* the issue, the *felt* awareness, and most importantly, they *felt* change. Marching side by side with faculty and elected officials stripped us of our status as mere students, and united us as people who care. All that were present will remember that day because their efforts are destined to help repair the lives of foster children.

# Showcasing & Recognizing Spring 2012 Service-Learning Partnerships

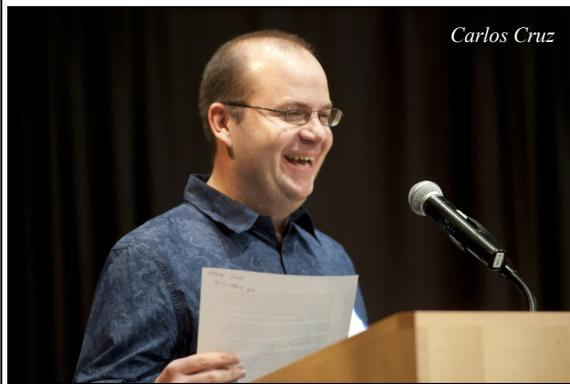
The Service-Learning Program hosted its semi-annual *Showcasing & Recognizing Service-Learning Partnerships* event on Thursday, April 19, 2012, bringing together community partners, faculty members, service-learning teaching assistants, student service-learners and campus supporters. For the first time, students, faculty members, and service-learning teaching assistances from 6 courses also displayed some of the work they completed for and with their community partners. Additionally, we were fortunate to have 5 speakers share their experiences and how service-learning has impacted them or their organization:

- ◆ **John Tobin**, Vice President for City & Community Affairs
- ◆ **John Sirisuth**, Student Service-Learner from *Connections & Decisions*
- ◆ **Carolina Prieto**, Service-Learning Teaching Assistant for *Introduction to Nutrition*
- ◆ **Carlos Cruz**, Lecturer, Spanish, World Languages Center
- ◆ **Cathy Wirth**, Project Manager, *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures*



All photos by Kristie Gillooly

Read more about the event through the [news@Northeastern](mailto:news@Northeastern) article [here!](#)



Carlos Cruz



Cathy Wirth



John Tobin

## Spring 2012 Service-Learning Courses, Faculty & Teaching Assistants:

**Advanced Chinese I**  
Mushi Li  
& S-LTA Mitzi Madrid Diaz

**Advanced Chinese II**  
Jinhui (Jane) Zhen  
& S-LTA Victoria Wang

**Advanced Chinese III**  
Jinhui (Jane) Zhen  
& S-LTA Nathaniel Hahn

**Advanced Proficiency Spanish I BSIB**  
Marcial Flores  
& S-LTA Alexa Arena

**Advanced Spanish I BSIB**  
(2 sections)  
Carlos Cruz  
& S-LTA Nicole Canning

**Advanced Spanish II**  
(2 sections)  
Maria Brucato  
& S-LTA Erin King

**Advocacy Workshop**  
Greg Goodale  
& S-LTA Allison Flood

**Child Intervention & Treatment**  
Emily Mann  
& S-LTA Rachel Altman

**Connections & Decisions**  
Kim Irmiter & S-LTA Eileen Rice

**Consultation Skills**  
Elise Dallimore  
& S-LTA Stephanie Squillace

**Education in the Community**  
Polly Atwood  
& S-LTA Elizabeth Jones

**Gender and Philosophy**  
Serena Parekh  
& S-LTA Lauren Scanlon

**Human Services Professions**  
Lori Gardinier  
& S-LTA Andrea Rodriguez

**Industrial Engineering Capstone II**  
Susan Freeman

**Introduction to Nutrition**  
Judy Richman  
& S-LTA Carolina Prieto

**Psychosocial Aspects of Healthcare Seminar**  
Ann Golub-Victor  
& S-LTA Gillian Shea

**Public Health Nutrition**  
Carmen Sceppa  
& S-LTA Giselle Bonzi

**Race, Ethnicity, & Health in the US**  
Hortensia Amaro  
& TA Mary Sharon Kaminski

**Social Policy, Advocacy, and Activism**  
Lori Gardinier  
& S-LTA Bart Flaherty

**Strategic Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management**  
(2 sections)  
Rebecca Riccio  
& S-LTA Allyson Goldhagen

**Topics in Experiential Education: Writing Boston**  
Chris Gallagher  
& S-LTA Jessica Pauszek

# Showcasing & Recognizing Spring 2012 Service-Learning Partnerships

- ◆ 826 Boston
- ◆ ABCD SNAP
- ◆ Balfour Academy at Northeastern University
- ◆ Boston Public Health Commission
- ◆ Boston Public Schools, World Languages Program at 5 affiliated K-12 schools
- ◆ Boston Rescue Mission
- ◆ Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston & Yawkey Club of Roxbury
- ◆ Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston - El Centro del Cardenal, Labouré Center & Teen Center at St. Peter's
- ◆ Center for STEM Education at Northeastern University
- ◆ COMPASS, Inc.
- ◆ Curley K-8 School
- ◆ Ellis Memorial
- ◆ Ethos
- ◆ Every Person Has A Story (EPHAS)
- ◆ Fenway Community Development Corporation
- ◆ Fit Kids at Madison Park
- ◆ General Studies Program at Northeastern University
- ◆ Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center - Hong Lok House & Quincy Towers
- ◆ Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures
- ◆ HEARTH at Bishop Street & Ruggles Assisted Living
- ◆ Hennigan School
- ◆ Horizons for Homeless Children
- ◆ Hyde Square Task Force
- ◆ Jumpstart at Northeastern University
- ◆ Kwong Kow Chinese School
- ◆ La Alianza Hispana
- ◆ LIFT-Boston
- ◆ Mason Place and Stearns Housing Developments
- ◆ MathPOWER/Math\*STARS Afterschool Program
- ◆ NAACP Boston Branch Health Committee
- ◆ NUTELLS (Northeastern University Teaches English Language and Literacy Skills)
- ◆ ¿Oíste?
- ◆ Pathways to Wellness
- ◆ Peace Through Play
- ◆ Renewal House
- ◆ School of Nursing at Northeastern University
- ◆ Sociedad Latina
- ◆ Symphony Plaza East & West
- ◆ The Home for Little Wanderers
- ◆ United South End Settlements
- ◆ Wang YMCA of Chinatown
- ◆ William Carter School
- ◆ YMCA of Greater Boston
- ◆ YDIP (*Youth Development Initiative Project*)

*Thank you!*

*Thank you to all of the students, faculty members, campus and community partners who made this semester the success that it was.*

*Allyson Goldhagen & Rebecca Riccio*



*John Sirisuth*



*Carolina Prieto & Kristen Simonelli Doggett*



*Service-Learning Teaching Assistants*



# Reflections: Service-Learning at the Mason Afterschool Program

Contributed by Community Partner Raylyn Cheek, Director Mason Afterschool Program  
YMCA of Greater Boston – Huntington Avenue Branch

Since fall of 2010, the Northeastern University's Service-Learning Partnership has provided the Samuel Mason Pilot Elementary School in Roxbury, MA with outstanding and dedicated volunteers. Service-Learning students have come to assist with 1:1 tutoring/homework help, small group literacy sessions and specifically, in the fall of 2010, four volunteers taught a self-created nutrition curriculum to our K2, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. This spring 2012, we were fortunate enough to have Anne Marie and Michelle [from Emily Mann's *Child Intervention & Treatment* course] who were some of the most committed and endearing service-learning volunteers to date. Students instantly gravitated to their warm dispositions and were always anticipating the next arrival of the volunteers.

One of the most memorable moments for me as the director of the after-school program, was to witness a final presentation on self-image facilitated by the fall 2010 volunteers. The Mason students were shown a Dove ad campaign video which initially depicted a "beautiful" woman. Slowly the video began to unveil the "natural" physical state of the woman by rewinding through behind-the-scenes computerized airbrush techniques, hair extensions, make-up artists, wardrobe and hair stylists, and lighting effects. While most would still consider this woman visually beautiful, the point of the ad was to disclose the unfair and unrealistic standard society sets for the average person who looks differently than the person with an entourage of stylists and on-hand special effects in tow. "I remember clearly the comments our young people made about the woman looking ugly by the end of the video clip", states one staff member. And by young people, we are speaking of kindergarten and first graders, namely. After the shockingly honest comments were shared, a healthy discussion was had about what true beauty is and how it looks different in everyone's eyes. It was a very powerful and eye opening experience for the NEU volunteers, Mason staff and Mason students.

Overall, this partnership has afforded our program the ability to run more effectively and much more meaningfully because we have had wonderful volunteers who take a sincere interest in the advancement of our students on a holistic level. We are extremely appreciative of the support that has been provided and look forward to many years of collaboration with NEU's service-learning volunteers and staff!



## Accepting Fall 2012 Service-Learning Teaching Assistant Applications for Advanced Chinese & Spanish Courses

The Service-Learning Teaching Assistant (S-LTA) Program provides opportunities for students to take on a leadership position supporting a course utilizing Service-Learning (S-L). The S-LTA program is designed around 4 goals:

1. to train and support student S-LTAs in developing their leadership skills to support the S-L process
2. to provide assistance to a faculty member in implementing and maintaining the best practices of S-L in their course
3. to provide assistance to community partners so that learning and service goals are met
4. to aid student service-learners in meeting their academic and service requirements and commitments

### Students – How to apply:

- **Positions are filled on a rolling basis, so submit your application ASAP!**
- To access the full program description and application please go to: <http://www.northeastern.edu/servicelearning/students/teachassist.html>
  - Compensation options include: work-study, stipend (limited availability), directed/independent study, practicum, internship, unpaid co-op, and/or AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service Education Award.
  - Undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to apply.
  - Students must be highly proficient or fluent in *Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin)* to apply to serve as an S-LTA for an advanced language course.

**"I developed a great connection with the Chinese language program at Northeastern."** ~S-LTA

**"I think I benefited from the program [academically, personally, and professionally]. I learned so much more from the course even though I had previously taken it as a student, I was able to really take responsibility for my work."** ~S-LTA

# Making Connections & Decisions

Contributed by Student Service-Learner Karim Duval



I think my experience at LIFT-Boston was very enriching, as it required me to balance social interaction and my actual work. LIFT's mission is to eradicate poverty and promote financial and social empowerment. My job was to work with clients in need of housing, employment, better income, child-care etc., and actually develop a solution to meet their needs. I was required to maintain a certain boundary with my clients, as the interaction, although sometimes personal for the sake of the client's mental health, was based on professional grounds.

My first day at LIFT was stressful. It was my first client meeting, I did not know what to expect and I felt unprepared despite all my training. Since many clients were absent, it gave me more time to prepare for my next client meeting. At first, I had bad feeling about the meeting because my client was speaking loudly and impulsively. Yet he had this great ability to control the social interaction, leaving me no choice but to listen and execute his requests. I think having clients week after week gave me the insight into the fact that one-day service is much less complex and stressful than a long-term service. When you volunteer for one day you give everything you have and are not worried about the future. Long-term service requires a commitment to be more involved, write papers, and show consistency. You also have to keep track of the progress you've made and find time for self-evaluation.

By volunteering at LIFT, I learned another side of America that I hadn't seen before coming in as an international student; citizens who are trying to solve poverty both rationally and humanly. It made me realize that society can be changed by the collective will of individuals and not by the political motives or ideologies of governments. Working in such an environment, I was expecting the staff to be more laidback about the policy regarding client interaction. Instead they showed me that they care about the mission of this organization and are thinking long-term about the possible damages of unprincipled client interaction. To work at LIFT demands listening to what your client has to say and having a practical approach to solving problems. Being a great listener is very important in almost everything in life, from careers to relationships. And I can say that this experience has definitely made a difference in my approach to social interaction. Now I feel that I can communicate with many different people because of the number one skill that I emphasized in my own work ethic, learning how to listen; something I never did as intensely as I do now.

My work at LIFT was linked to my *Connections & Decisions* class in two ways: first, the importance of finding solutions to any problem such as academics, volunteering work, etc., and second, the invaluable nature of connections. I can say that, in my experience this semester, I have learned that the amount of experience and knowledge acquired, along with the resources which you empower yourself to seek out; those are the keys to success in decision making, a lesson transferrable to work and life.

*Karim is a January-start international student from Haiti who chose to enroll in the First-Year Seminar course Connections & Decisions with instructor Kim Irmiter.*

## Service-Learning Program Staff & Contact Information

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