

Aiding Philly

By Emily Polefka and Marissa Caldwell
HC XIII

The beginning of October started out strong in the service department for the West Chester Honors College. With two major service projects happening in Philadelphia on October 16th and 22nd, students from HSA were able to give back to the community by getting involved. October 16th was AIDS Walk Philly, an eight-mile walk to bring awareness of HIV and AIDS. When the event was founded in 1987, there was minimal diversity in the group of people supporting the cause, but this year there were a variety of cultural and generational groups being represented. It was a beautiful day to walk for a worthy cause, and there was much goodwill towards every person who came out to support AIDS awareness. Over twenty HSA members came out to show their support and concern for those affected by HIV and AIDS.

There were many groups at the event calling attention to people lost because of or infected by the disease, proudly carrying banners and sporting team shirts depicting lost loved ones. Elise Lerario noted that there was a “huge sense of community and camaraderie among those walking for awareness...it seemed as if everyone readily accepted one another because we were all focused on a common goal: raising awareness about HIV-AIDS.” October 22nd was Philadelphia Cares Day, a morning spent making improvements to William Cramp Elementary School in northern Philadelphia. Volunteers spent their time doing various tasks. Participants picked up trash to provide a clean play area for the students, painted weathered fencing surrounding the school, and planted a new garden to brighten up the entrance of the school. One of the most heartwarming moments of the day was seeing the young first grade students and their parents who came out to help the volunteers improve the school. Many people from the area stopped by to show their gratitude for the work being done to their local elementary school. By the end of the day, many big tasks were accomplished. West Chester volunteers left the school with a much cleaner and safer playground along with a more inviting entrance to the building.



Photo courtesy of Amy Millar

Dance For a Chance

By Jennifer Kruzynski Guest Contributor

On the first weekend of December, six couples showed both their passion for charity and their most suave dance moves at the West Chester University's first ever Dance for a Chance. Dance for a Chance is a 16 hour dance-a-thon that serves to inspire the passions of West Chester University students! The all night dance marathon allowed students to represent the platform of their choice, and to give back to their community.

Alexis Stinson, the creator and executive director of Dance for a Chance shared that she chose this fundraiser in order to inspire WCU students to make a difference, and to stand up for a platform they believe in.

She states, “I truly believe that every single person has a talent and a means of using that talent to make a positive change in the life of another person. It is important to me that I aid other students to discover their passions, and find what they believe in to make that positive change.

A Trip To Washington, DC

By **Brittany Baumeister**

HC XIII

October 8th-11th came quickly this autumn, and it was a time of rejoicing: the long-awaited fall break. WCU students quickly rushed home Friday evening, excited for an extended weekend full of sleep, friends, and no schoolwork.

However, some students came back from break a day early for something surprisingly educational. What could have possibly lured a crowd of almost forty students back so soon? Why, the HSA trip to Washington, D.C., of course! The trip, leaving at 8 AM and returning past midnight, was organized by sophomore and HSA treasurer Daniel VanHassent.

The day began with a visit to the United States Institute of Peace. Here, the group was given a small tour and demonstration by David Smith, the Institute's national educational outreach coordinator. He began his formal presentation by discussing the Institute's purpose and its goals, which are to: "prevent and resolve violent international conflicts," "promote post-conflict stability and development," and "increase conflict management capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide" (www.usip.org). He then engaged the students in a series of activities that got them to think about the peacemakers they know, from Nelson Mandela to their dorm's resident assistants.

Following Mr. Smith's presentation and lunch, the honorable bunch was given an amount of time to explore the National Mall and Smithsonian Institution. Popular destination choices for the afternoon were the powerful Holocaust Memorial Museum, extensive Natural History Museum (particularly popular after the release of the fine film, *Night at the Museum 2*), and the site of the recently earthquake-stricken Washington Monument.

After the afternoon of exploration, the group had dinner at the historic Old Post Office Pavilion. Although the Kevin Dean-endorsed cookie kiosk had upsettingly closed early for the evening, the meal remained time well spent with others.

Finally, to cap off the great, busy day, the group went on an evening bus tour to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean War, and Jefferson Memorials. The monuments were especially brilliant, glowing with grandeur in the night.

Ultimately, the students agreed that the trip was well-worth coming back to school a day early. In fact, some even wished that they had more time to explore the historic city! Overall, the day was a refreshing combination of education and entertainment—what better way to jump into the second half of the fall semester?



Photo courtesy of: Kaitlin Dylnicki

Director's Corner

By: **Dr. Kevin Dean**



One of the classes I am teaching this fall is HON 452 - *Organizational Leadership*. Students who register for this class all hold some level of executive leadership positions within a campus club, program or organization. A recent assignment was for each person to bring in an object that represented leadership to them and then to give a brief explanation as to what message about leadership the object conveyed. One student said, "now you are going to do this too, right Dr. Dean?", and needless to say, that got me thinking.

I was one of those kids in junior high who thought the best leader was the one who was photographed the most in the year book. From my involvement in South Africa, I have come to appreciate that leadership is much more than external validation, it is a matter of internal drive for enhancing community. In 2002, I met a young boy who was wearing the shoe in the picture. He had a wide smile and was so proud to be in school. Wearing shoes with gaping holes handed down from siblings, he walked miles each day for an education. When presented with a new pair of shoes, you would have thought from his reaction that he had won the lottery. I didn't solve poverty that day, but for that one child the day was better. My picture of that day never made it into a year book but it truly didn't matter.

I keep the shoes in a central spot in my office as a daily reminder to be thankful for what I have, be humbled by the lives that others live, and be motivated to continually engage---there are a lot of kids out there with no shoes.

Photo courtesy of: Ellen Howard

A Note From Your Immediate Past President

By Matt Whittall
HC X

Becoming President of the Honors Student Association wasn't exactly my plan. During freshmen year I attended as many HSA as were available: the trip to the Bates Motel, Thanksgiving Dinner, Hanging of the Greens, Holiday Party at the Deans, numerous Adopt-a-Blocks and other service events but I don't remember actually sitting on a committee. Much of my involvement was based on the fact that Junior and Accounting Major Tim Kuhn was at the meetings and I liked to pick his brain about professors to take and professors to avoid. Further, my involvement was due in large part to someone asking me to become involved and providing me with opportunities. At the end of freshmen year, everyone has the opportunity to apply to become a committee chair for the next academic year.

“ I want to the thank the Honors freshmen for lending their time to me.... ”

Due to my own unawareness I did not apply to become a committee chair.

Fast forward to the summer before sophomore year, I'm sitting at home and I receive a phone call from Junior and President of HSA, Stacey Snyder who asks if I'd be willing to be the Student Government committee chair for Honors. As the story goes, I accepted the position and throughout my sophomore year, I attended every SGA meetings and reported back the Honors Student Association. It was during my first semester as an HSA committee chair that I began to understand the importance of becoming involved. As a committee chair of HSA I had the opportunity to help lead an organization that positively influences the outside community while providing leadership and relationship-building experiences for its members. I had caught the HSA bug. I decided that it was time to take a big step and run for President of the Honors Student Association. Within a five month time span I had went from not applying to become a committee chair, to becoming a committee chair, to running for President of a 160-plus student organization. The rest they say 'is history'. At the end of my sophomore year I ran for President of HSA and during my junior year I helped lead HAS to the 2010-2011 *Student Organization of the Year*.

When I look back on my four years at WCU, my most cherished experiences have occurred in HSA. It is where I see my friends and it is where I help make a difference. However, much of my involvement in this organization was not out of my own persistence. I was asked to become involved and I accepted the challenge.

Unfortunately, not everyone has had someone reach out to them and ask them to become involved. Hence, my Capstone project was born.

I want to be the hand that was given to me to become involved and I want to help everyone reach their full potential of involvement. So I started with the community that I feel most apart of: the Honors community. During the 2011-2012 academic year, it has been my mission to meet with each Honors College freshmen a total of four times; twice in the fall and twice in the spring to help them craft a personalized involvement plan. Thus far I have completed my first fall meeting and I want to the thank the Honors freshmen for lending their time to me and I want each to know that I truly enjoyed meeting with them.

From our meetings, I realize that the future of the Honors College and the HSA is bright and I am excited to continue the involvement plan process with each of them. My journey through HSA has been my greatest experience while at WCU and it has been one of luck. I want everyone to know that their journey doesn't have to be one of luck and I'm here help.

Congratulations ODK Inductees!

Jessica Barr

Justin Caiazzo

Cassandra Callmann

Michael DePrince

Lindsay Ent

Jonathan Heintz

Daniel Hinderliter

Michael Jendzurski

Lauren Matter

Cierra Mautone

Lauren Montemuro

Jessica Richard

Dance For A Chance

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Dance for a Chance is a fun way to accomplish that goal!"

Couples entered on behalf of a specific philanthropy, and therefore represented that specific charity.

First Place and Voted the Fan Favorites, winning \$600 for the Coalition of Children in Need Association (and a big trophy) -Emily Polefka and Sam Sallade

Second Place and selected Best Dressed, winning \$200 for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia- Tyler Mertens and Alissa Conway

Third Place and selected Most Spirited, winning \$100 for the Four Diamonds Fund- Anthony Blubello and Erin Prendercrast.

A special thanks to everyone who stopped by to join us in supporting Alexis, HSA, Dance for a Chance, and their passion!



Dance for a Chance Photos
courtesy of Jonathan
Heinz and Alexis Stinson



Attention All Creative Minds:

**A Message From Your Editor,
Ashley Murphy**
HC XII



It's no secret: the talent of the students in the West Chester Honors College is multifaceted. Each of us has our niche. For example, some of us paint or draw cartoons, some of us take pictures, others write poetry or short stories and still others draw cartoons. Yet, while we have this large pallet of talents, many of us do not have an outlet to share them with others.

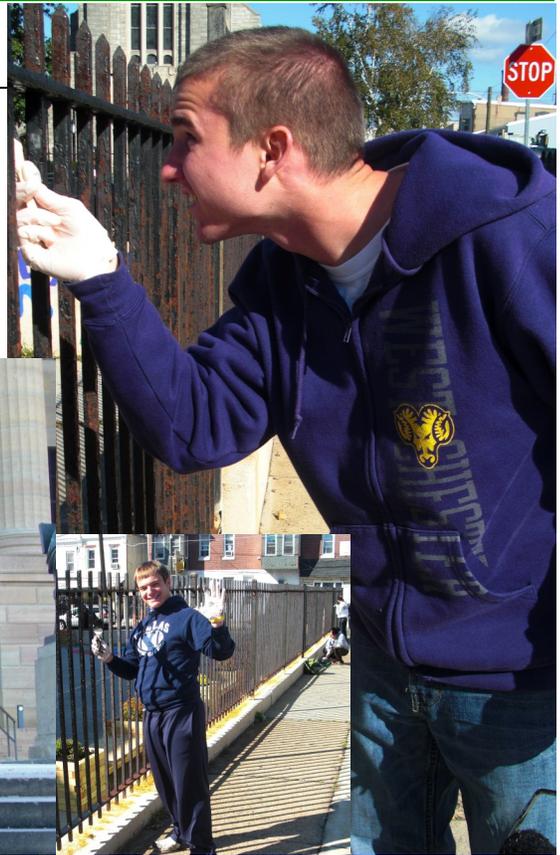
To this end, I will be producing an *Arts Edition* of the Honors Newsletter. Set to come out sometime in the spring, this issue will feature poetry, short prose, paintings, cartoons and much more. In order for this to be a success, however, I need your creative works. This opportunity is open to any member of the honors college. We will be accepting submissions starting December 15th through March 30th.

If you have any questions, please contact me at am738358@wcupa.edu! I look forward to seeing your talent at work!

Aiding Philly

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Dr. Adrienne Carpenter, principal of Cramp Elementary not only expressed thanks for work done that day, but also took an active role in the cleanup. Dana Fillman, freshman HSA participant in both events, summed up the experience best by saying, "it was an amazing experience to see all the support that there was for AIDS awareness and to have a hands-on experience in helping students have a better learning environment."



Above photos courtesy of Amy Millar

What We've Learned:

HC XIII's Evaluation of the First Semester

By: Tony LaFratte
HCIII

Over five months ago, a group of nearly fifty freshly enrolled college freshmen feverishly skipped across an open floor encircled by chairs. In the friendly albeit competitive icebreaker *Where the Wind Blows*, everyone in HC XIII was forced to hatch from their shells of anxiety and become acquainted with their peers. A thick layer of discomfort and awkwardness lingered in the air as many students found it difficult to grasp the notion that they were meeting other people who were soon going to define their college experience. Fast-forward nearly half a year, and the tension has seemingly diffused completely. Zach Wooten, an intensely involved member of HC XIII, clearly indicates how his assimilation into the Honors College has paid off. "I found a lot of people who are like minded and similar to me. I also feel like I'm welcome and safe. I really like the environment."

Many of the newly recruited honors students have undergone personal transformations since the kickoff of the semester. "It caused me to take a look at how my actions impact the community," remarked Emily Polefka. "I feel as though I am a more organized and productive person."

Do you like to write?
Take pictures?

HSA Happenings
is for you!

Write one article per
month and get a
bullet point for your
resume!

Contact
am738358@wcupa.edu
for more info.

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ASSOCIATION**

**WEST CHESTER
UNIVERSITY**

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Grad School Fair Hannah Velez Sports & Recreation Vinnie D'Agostino

Historian Cierra Mautone Technology Joseph Lauman

Housing Kaitlin Dylnicki TAG Lauren Matter

Important Dates

January 22nd
Residence Halls Reopen

January 23rd
Classes begin

January 26th
*1st HSA
General Assembly
of the Semester*

January 28th
First Interview Session

Our sincerest
Thank You to
Kevin and Kendra Dean
for hosting
such a
splendid holiday
party!

What We've Learned
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The freshmen Honors academic agenda pulls students through two rigorous but rewarding leadership courses. HON 352, which encompasses a study of leadership with lessons from South Africa tied in, poses students with a demanding workload that truly defines their role as leaders. "It has definitely taught me to keep up with the workload since it is continuous," asserts Elise Lerario, "It really stresses the importance of doing work in a timely manner." Additionally, students are very fond of HON 100 and how it incorporates elements outside of the classroom setting. "I really liked how we got to know each other through interactive activities," stated Jen Allen. Brooke Hillman's view was very comparable. "Instead of sitting in philosophy (class) I'd rather be climbing ropes.

The Honors College also provided students with a social-friendly atmosphere where they were able to form relationships with ease during this past semester. When asked to elaborate on how they felt about the social environment, Melissa Christie and Sam McGinty agreed that it defined their content with West Chester. Melissa commented, "I wouldn't like West Chester without the Honors Program. The people make the experience so much better." Sam followed up with, "The seventh floor is like a big house. I would seriously consider transferring if I was not part of the Honors College." Clearly, the warm and benevolent sense that the Honors program emits is responsible for the satisfaction held in common by many its first-year students. When taking into consideration the overall experiences freshman have developed during this inaugural semester, many of the students seem to be glowing with approval when reflecting on the past few months.

"Overall, it provided me with a lot of opportunities I wouldn't have otherwise," mentioned Wooten, "I don't think I would have enjoyed college if I weren't in Honors." With the new semester shortly approaching, all forty-six members of the HC XIII can be assured that the it awaits with an array of challenges while fostering a friendly environment, assurance that seemed to be lacking in late August. For whatever the future of the Honors program entails, everyone can be affirmed that HC XIII is an embassy of endless talents and treasures comprised of members whose leadership capacities are ready to be engaged by the challenges ahead.

HSA Happenings is a student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association Public Relations Committee. Its purpose is to supplement West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.