

8th Annual Aid to South Africa This Weekend

By Samantha Stalford, HC XV

As students return from spring break shaking off the lingering flakes of the long, yet unwelcomed winter, they are met with a jam-packed calendar of activities, events, and deadlines. Despite the initial spam of commitments, there is no better way to kick off these last weeks of school than with the long awaited Aid to South Africa (ASA).

On Sunday, April 6th, from noon to 4 pm in Hollinger Field House, Lawrence Parking Lot, and the Purple Gym, this family friendly community fair hosted by HSA will be booming with life. A soccer tournament, raffles, jousting, and a dunk tank are only a few activities among various other carnival games and performance groups that make this event one worth attending.

In addition to a provided a fun-filled day, ASA raises awareness and funds for four outstanding beneficiaries in South Africa. Sparrow Village, H.E.L.P. Ministries, Nkosi's Haven, and Mosaic SA will be supported by ASA's fundraising and the community's generosity.

To gain more insight about these four beneficiaries, Zach Wooten, the event's executive director, provided further detail in a personal correspondence. As an AIDS orphanage, Sparrow Village reaches out to many of the 1.9 million children who lost parents due to HIV/AIDS by providing them food, shelter, and medication. H.E.L.P. Ministries is a soup kitchen run by Cecil Begbie, who prepares up to 6,000 bowls of soup each day to be delivered to primary schools in his area. Though he manages his soup kitchen out of his own garage, the organization is able to provide warm meals for children. Nkosi's Haven provides refuge to HIV positive mothers and children. With a big emphasis on holistic care for the family as one entity, Nkosi's Haven delivers a rare service in South Africa. The fourth beneficiary, Mosaic SA, is, as Zach describes, is "a sustainable orphan-care model." This organization builds homes for families that adopt at least two orphans, also providing job training for parents and after-school tutoring for the children.



Aid to South Africa 2013 leadership

Thank you to **The Baptist Church of West Chester** for contributions as an ASA Silver Sponsor (\$250)!

Volunteer or bring your friends, family, and just about anyone else you know to the event. Don't miss out, help out!

Students Gravitate Towards Grad School Fair

By Rebecca Bannan and Chris Whittall, HC XIV

Students flocked to the Sykes Student Union Ballrooms on Wednesday, March 26th in hopes of building connections with representatives from over forty graduate and professional school programs. Sponsored by the Honors Student Association and Office of Graduate Studies, among others, the Graduate School Fair has grown over the past few years of existence. Ansu Bensen headed the initiative this year as the Graduate School Fair Director for the Honors Student Association. With the help of committee members and hordes of Honors Students acting as volunteers, the event was extremely well received and overall a great opportunity for students.

The Graduate School Fair ran from 11-2pm and welcomed students from across campus. The ballroom filled quickly with representatives from over forty programs at schools including Temple University, Villanova



University, University of Delaware, Rutgers University, and many graduate programs here at West Chester. Students had the opportunity to engage with individuals representing graduate educational programs, medical schools, communication programs, graduate business opportunities, and even theater programs. With such a wide array of continued educational studies, students from all fields of academia were likely to find beneficial information and make invaluable connections to further their education. The plethora of representatives from the schools proved to be fantastic assets to the students in attendance. For instance, sophomore, Katie Rincavage, interested in becoming a Physician's Assistant, told us, "The representatives were helpful to the students, and provided

insight about programs in my academic focus." In general, attendees found the information they sought and opportunities beyond their expectations.

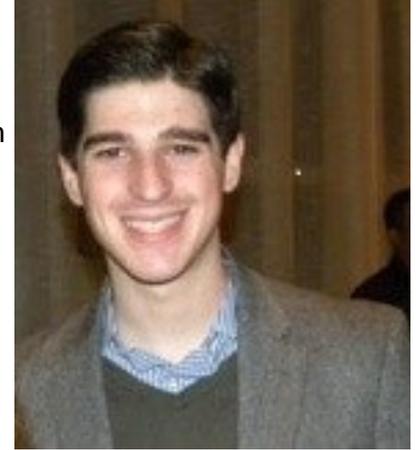
This year's Graduate School Fair proved a great success. Attendance was higher than previous years, and returning program representatives noted the improvements and increased attendance. Without a doubt, Ansu Bensen and her committee provided an outstanding program for students. In discussing the event, however, she was quick to thank the numerous volunteers who gave their time to help in advertising, setting up the ballrooms, welcoming representatives, staffing the Fair, and staying around afterwards to clean up. Ansu reflected, "the Honors students who helped make this event possible were amazing. We could not have hoped for a better group of volunteers."

With the recent success of this event, excitement for next spring has already begun. Ansu continues to be thankful for the support provided by students and faculty, and we in the Honors Student Association are greatly thankful for her efforts in planning such a successful Graduate School Fair.

Alumni Spotlight: Matthew Whittall

By Marissa Giovinazzo, HC XIV

Matthew (Matt) Whittall graduated from West Chester University as a member of the Honors College in 2012 as an accounting and finance dual major. In addition to excelling in both areas of study, Matt immersed himself in a wide variety of activities and organizations throughout campus. Entering the Honors College at West Chester University in the Fall Semester of 2008, he became widely involved within the Honors Student Association. At the close of his freshman year, Matt served as the Honors Representative in the Student Government Association.



However, his greatest contributions to the Honors Student Association (HSA) undoubtedly took place throughout his third year, in which he served the executive board as President. During his presidency, Matt led the organization, and instilled new initiatives upholding the Honors College motto *"To Be Honorable is To Serve."* Both Carney Cash, administered to committee members for exceptional service and leadership, and the Donna Carney Service Award, earned by community members for six semesters of at least thirty service hours or three semesters of 200 hours, stemmed from his presidency. To enhance the overall experience for Honors College members, Matt's capstone project created the concept whereby the HSA immediate past president conducts meetings with first year students each year, aiming to act as a resource for them during their transition into college.

Throughout his multitude of experiences within the HSA, Matt summed it up into one overarching life lesson: "The importance of being present. When a great challenge is overcome, historians tend to focus on the results or the actions that lead to the results. The more important aspect is the beginning. Tara Lipinski couldn't have won the gold medal for US women's skating if she never made the choice to show up for her first day of skating lessons. Kevin Dean would have never earned his PhD without going to elementary school. And HSA would have never won organization of the year if no members showed up to the meetings. When you are present, good things happen." In addition to involvement within HSA, Matt offered his presence to branch out to other organizations, including the Accounting Society and serving as a Peer Tutor Coordinator for the Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) on campus.

Graduating from West Chester summa cum laude, Matt entered the workforce as an auditor for KPMG, one of the Big Four accounting firms. His achievements only grew after leaving West Chester as he successfully completed the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination the summer following his graduation, scoring within the top ten in the state of Pennsylvania. In January of 2014, Matt officially earned his CPA license.

His second year as an HSA alumni, Matt still donates his time and engages as a member of the recently formed HSA alumni council.

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Partaking in community service events, such as Hanging of the Greens, the Circle K Volley Ball Tournament, and Aid to South Africa, he continues to uphold the Honors Student Association Mission. In addition, Matt takes stock in the future of the Honors College, and acts as an interview facilitator on Recruitment days throughout the winter and spring months.

On the current impact the Honors College experience has on his life, Matt reflected, "After graduation honors has never ended. While I no longer attend H-prefixed courses or walk the halls of Allegheny (shout-out to 713F), honors has dug its roots deep into the soil of my being. Whether it's taking the CPA exam, leading a team during a multi-million dollar audit, or speaking in front of an audience, the skills I developed as a member of the Honors College community are the skills I most covet. While I haven't written a grant, acted in a play, or climbed a ropes course post-graduation, the fact is, I can. And that is pretty cool."

Appreciating Our Campus Community

By Matthew Nolt, HC XV

The Honor Student Association provides ample opportunities to reach out to the broader Campus; Honors is not a self-contained organization. These programs make a real difference both to West Chester University and the surrounding community. From assisting in research to fundraising for Aid to South Africa, Honors certainly proves itself capable of making an impact. A recent example of outreach to the university is the **Outstanding Faculty Reception**, April 23rd from 3-5 pm.

Amanda Gilbert organized the reception this year. She collected all of the student recommendations, compiled them, and ultimately helped to organize the celebration reception. Without her hard work and motivation this event would not have been possible. The reception itself will host dozens of faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences, Business and Public Affairs, Education, Health Sciences, and of the Visual and Performing Arts.

Outreach events such as the Outstanding Faculty Reception are essentially to express our gratitude for our educators. Education is sometimes taken for granted in our society but there will always be a pressing need for quality educators. Being a teacher is certainly not easy, but it is a job that most educators find extremely rewarding.

Think about the great professors you've had here at WCU or will have in the future. Don't they deserve to be recognized and praised for all their hard work? We can never thank our quality faculty members enough for their services, and this reception is just one of the venues where we have that opportunity.

Other Upcoming Dates

April 12, 9-11 am: *Goose Creek Cleanup*

April 17, 8 pm: *HSA elections*

April 26, 9 am-12 pm: *Friends of Everhart Park Cleanup*

Honors Student Association

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Daniel VanHassent

1st Vice President

Brianna Plaxe

Treasurer

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2nd Vice President

Samantha McGinty

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Rebecca Bannan

Community Service
Alex Sheriff

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Dana Fillman

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Sports & Recreation
Katie Rincavage

Technology
Lisa McMahon

TAG
Emily Polefka

Web Master
Joseph Cosentino

Thank you to **Matthew Nolt, Allison Velez, Marissa Giovinazzo, Samantha Stalford, Rebecca Bannan, and Christopher Whittall** for taking staff positions on the *HSA Happenings* committee this semester. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

Staff positions will be opening up in May for 2014-2015. Please consider taking a position for the semester or year and contributing articles. More information will be provided in the upcoming weeks!

~ Marissa Caldwell, Editor

Capstone Corner: S.E.E.D.S. Project Blog

By Allison Velez, HC XIV

This month **senior Olivia Kenney** will be completing her capstone project: the **S.E.E.D.S. Project Blog!** The Students Engaged in Environmental Discourse & Sustainability Project, or S.E.E.D.S. Project, is a digital curation project for West Chester University students, staff, and faculty that is dedicated to raising awareness about environmental sustainability by use of a blog that displays inspired art and ideas. The idea was born as Olivia tried to come up with a project that would combine her love of the arts and the value she sees in human connection and expression. Her plan entails compiling images and information regarding resources and experiences that members of the community have had on campus. This means that submissions can range from articles, photographs, and artwork to personal reflections, videos, and creative writing. The final culmination of these submissions will be in the form of a photo-journal that will be displayed at the annual West Chester University Earth Fair on April 25th. After the event, the book will be donated to the Francis Harvey Green Library. It is Olivia's hope that upon the completion of her capstone project, she will have created a book that successfully represents the story of sustainability on campus as told by the people who are living it.

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

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