

STONY BROOK SERVES

A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
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Global Medical Brigades in Nicaragua

Julianne Broderick & Olivia Basileo

Global Medical Brigades (GMB) has about 80 members, and this year, after graduation, 45 students will be visiting both Nicaragua and Honduras for 10-day service trips.

“When you see all the people that line up for the clinic and try to interact with them with your mixture of broken Spanish and hand gestures it becomes such a heartwarming experience that attests to the goodness of humanity.”

The purpose of these trips, according to Koeun Choi, president of SBU’s Global Medical Brigades, is “three-fold”: to raise money, collect donations, and recruit health professionals to go to underdeveloped countries (like Nicaragua and Honduras) to set up a free health clinic—which GMB keeps up and running for 3-4

days. Once they arrive at the compound and sort through all the medication they bring along, members package them to be given out at the health clinic. The setup of a free health clinic is quite the humbling experience, as it is set up in a very rural village, with little or no access to healthcare of any kind. Yet, much of Global Medical Brigades’ mission is to educate members of the community in basic first aid techniques. Attending these free educational workshops are a requirement to be able to obtain a prescription. Koeun says that the “basics” taught in these workshops, though they are obvious to us, are not always apparent to locals: “it varies from country to country, but we go over the importance of cleaning your teeth with the children [and] boiling water before use with the adults.” In an effort to teach preventative measures, last year in Ghana, GMB members educated community members on reproduc-

tive health as well as taught how to practice safe sex. This, Koeun says, all works towards the ultimate goal of instilling sustainable change when Global Medical

Brigades’ clinics are no longer there. For example, GMB aims to build a water infrastructure stemming from the mountains of Nicaragua down to the smaller villages so that they have access to clean water. GMB also devotes three days of their trip to working with individual households for public health projects such

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Ghana 2014, Packing Medication. David Chen, Rebecca Klein and Pejmahn Eftekharzadeh.

as building cement floors, stoves, and latrines to help improve quality of life. Sustainability comes into play because the members of the village would be taught to maintain the pipes providing the water or at least have the resources for repairs if necessary. The improved water system would cause drastic reduction of cholera and other digestive problems; all this is in line with Global Medical Brigades' goal "to get the community members standing on their own two feet."

In keeping with their effort to promote sustainable change, GMB offers many types of projects which include not only medical projects, but ones concerning architecture, water, microfinancing, and human rights brigades. To

really get a feel for the projects the community members need and actually want, staff is sent to speak with them; this really emphasizes the true partnership formed

Nicaragua 2014, Building public latrines.



between Global Medical Brigades and the villages they work with. Koeun calls it "very much a give and take relationship." So, to wholly identify what projects are needed and which ones are making a real impact, GMB documents every patient that enters their clinic.

Koeun says her favorite part of Global Medical Brigades is going on the trips. "When you see all the people that line up for the clinic and try to interact with them with your mixture of broken Spanglish and hand gestures it becomes such a heartwarming experience that attests to the goodness of humanity." It's also a great way to bond with other Stony Brook students who share the same interests and passion. While the first and last days of the trip are mostly allotting time for travel, the last day of



Ghana 2014, Soccer match. Pejman Eftekhazadeh and Katherine Reyes.

the trip gives members a time to explore the country and see some of the natural beauty that Nicaragua offers. After sightseeing, when it's time to go home, the students who go on the trips have inevitably gotten very close very quickly, making lasting friendships through service!

Global Medical Brigades spends each school year fundraising for their medicine. Last semester, they held a chicken and rice sale as well as teamed up with the Craft Center for a holiday ornament-making event with a

suggested donation.

This semester, GMB worked with UNICEF to host an event called Café Corazon—a night of food, fun, and auctions. The event's theme was "What do you love?" Guests were served coffee and cookies while gift cards and gift baskets were auctioned off. O Sole Mio, Curry Club, SAC Market Place, and Studio Art Café all donated food for the event. GMB raised \$200 for medications to bring along on their next trip.

Global Medical Brigades meets every other Wednesday in Union

236. During their club meetings, they hold workshops to prepare themselves for their trips. Applications to go on the trips open every fall, so keep an eye out at the beginning of next year! Students can also still get involved in the club this spring; the Career Center offers internship credits to students who want to help Global Medical Brigades raise money and awareness. Join your fellow Stony Brook students and become a brigader!

Stony Brook University's Week of Service



Give A Day & Make A Difference

Impact a variety of causes & communities

APRIL 2015

SUN. 4-12

Community-Based Projects Off-Campus

MON. 4-13

BYOB: Bring Your Own Book (Campus Wide Book Drive)

TUES. 4-14

College Day: Open Doors to Education

WED. 4-15

Walk In Their Shoes: Say NO to Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
AND Service Panel: SAC 303 - Meet recruiters from PEACE Corps, Teach for America, AmeriCorps, LI Volunteer Center & more!

THUR. 4-16

Take A Chance for Charity: Stand Up To Hunger & Homelessness

FRI. 4-17

Brighten the Brook: Campus Beautification Project

SAT. 4-18

Community-Based Projects Off-Campus

► For Project Details & To Sign Up Visit: go.stonybrook.edu/sbuweekofservice
or stop by the Career Center



Stony Brook
University



Career Center

WWW.STONYBROOK.EDU/CAREER . 631-632-6810 . MEET US @ THE FOOT OF THE ZEBRAPATH

WISE Promotes Education through Hope Children's Fund

Julianne Broderick & Olivia Basileo

Stony Brook's WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) Program offers a very special opportunity to all 250 of its members to get involved in Hope Children's Fund. HCF is an orphanage for AIDS-affected children living in Meru, Kenya. Director of WISE Carrie-Ann Miller's personal experience has both driven the HCF initiative at Stony Brook and has inspired students to help her in her mission to support the orphanage.

"The children were so grateful for everything," Carrie-Ann says, "There was no arguing, they were just one big family."

Hope Children's Fund was started in 2005 by Joseph Kirima, the dedicated director of Hope Children's Home, and is strongly supported by SBU alum Larry Hohler. The Hope Children's Home houses about seventy-nine children ranging from ages 4 to college-aged. All of the children are affected by AIDS in some way: they either have the disease themselves, or their parents suffered from it. Hope Children's Home strives to give them the best home and educational support possible.

Carrie-Ann heard about the home through Larry Hohler and



A boy at Hope Children's Home wearing a Seawolf T-Shirt.

Kevin Mann as part of the Service Learning Network. At the time, Carrie-Ann was part of the Community Service Learning Center. Larry and Kevin introduced her to Joseph and HCF, and she became determined to help.

Ten years later, Carrie-Ann is the director of the WISE Program and is still helping HCF. Her passion is showing students how poverty and health are connected, and supporting women's education. She and her students hold craft

fairs to raise funds for the orphanage. The crafts are purchased by HCF from the Meru Women's Cooperative, and all the proceeds made here are sent back to the orphanage. The craft fairs support both the working women of Meru and the children at the home. Their last fair raised enough money to send one child to school for a year.

Recently, Carrie-Ann made her first visit to the Hope Children's Home. Upon arriving in Meru, she was welcomed by a young boy wearing a Stony Brook Seawolf T-Shirt and immediately felt the connection. The kids were so excited to meet her and show her their home. Also welcomed by community leaders, another emblem of connectedness was seen on the grounds in the form of Peace Poles that read "May peace prevail on Earth" in both Swahili and English.

Reshma Ravindran, Jacquelyn Gatta, Carrie-Ann Miller, Dainer Reeder and Olivia Hu Selling crafts to support the orphanage.



During dinner, the students introduced themselves to her along with their class identification. Only the older children speak English, since the younger ones are learning, so Carrie-Ann and her husband taught the kids how to play Rock-Paper-Scissors, which helped bridge the communication gap. The children greatly value education, but whether they go to school depends on their finances. The children all go to different schools depending on their grade level, exam scores, and interests. The older kids in secondary school are usually in boarding schools, but their beds are kept for them so they have a home to return to during breaks.

The most memorable moment of the trip, says Carrie-Ann, was when the director, Joseph, began passing out the clothing she had brought for the kids. He held up each article of clothing, and the

kids decided together who would get each item. They took into account each other's personalities and styles. There was no fighting or jealousy; only generosity. "The children were so grateful for everything," Carrie-Ann says, "There was no arguing, they were just one big family." Most touching was when the children remembered, with no prompting, that one of their peers was in the hospital. They set aside clothing for them as well.

Not only does Carrie-Ann help support the orphanage; she is sponsoring one of the orphans, providing funds for her education and exchanging letters with her that grew more personal over time in a mentor-mentee relationship. Carrie-Ann's mentee is 16-year old Christine Mwendwa, who is now in Form 1 (ninth grade) at Yururu Girl's Secondary School—one of the most prestigious schools in Kenya—where she aspires to be a teacher. Carrie-Ann has been sponsoring Christine for about three years. Christine came to the Hope Children's Home when it first opened in 2005. Her parents had both died of AIDS and she was living with her grandmother, but her grandmother was too elderly to properly care for her, so Joseph, who keeps an ear to the ground for children in need in the area, brought her into the orphanage.

Yururu Girl's School is a boarding school, so Carrie-Ann visited her separately. It was her first time meeting her, even though they had communicated through letters for three years. Carrie-Ann even gave Christine special gifts upon their meeting. The two of

them only had a little time together, but they talked mainly about family and education. Carrie-Ann had also visited Christine's grandmother before coming to the school, so she was able to send her her grandmother's love as well.

Recently, one of the home's first students, Betty Gakii, graduated from Chuka University, got married, and became a teacher in Meru. She is among the first children to come out of the home as a successful, self-sufficient, educated adult. With the care and compassion Hope Children's Home is providing them, the rest of the children will hopefully follow in Betty's footsteps. The home currently has seven students attending university and one in music technician school. Carrie-Ann, Joseph, and Larry look forward to seeing them grow to their full potential.

Says Larry Hohler, "What makes our effort worthwhile is the reality that more young people like Betty, who began her life in abject poverty, will soon become productive members of their society." This experience has incited a passion in Carrie-Ann to inspire and motivate students at Stony Brook to reach out to those in need: "You hear the phrase 'somebody has nothing' a lot, but you don't actually understand what it means until you see it yourself." Carrie-Ann hopes that these efforts will not only be directed towards HCF, but towards the rest of the world as well.

Carrie-Ann invites anyone in the Stony Brook community to join her in supporting Hope Children's Fund. She is always collecting

donations of school supplies, medical supplies, clothes, and other items in her office (Engineering 220).

WISE will be hosting a craft fair on April 15 from 9:30 – 3:30 in the SAC lobby. All proceeds will go to Hope Children's Fund.

Please contact Carrie-Ann for more information on how to get involved: carrie-ann.miller@stonybrook.edu

Marching for Comfort with Pre-Med Society

Olivia Basileo

Sometimes, the best way to help someone is to provide just a little bit of love

and comfort.

Pre-Med Society has recently begun participating in March of the Blanketeers, an event that involves crocheting and knitting scarves, hats, blankets, and teddy bears for children who are sick in hospitals all over the United States. These objects—handmade by members—provide a little extra warmth and care to children who may feel scared, isolated, or homesick during their hospital stays.

Pre-Med Society first got involved with the March of the Blanketeers organization last semester. Since crocheting and

knitting is a lot of work for busy college students, members create their items over the course of the semester. It is very much an ongoing event, allowing members to improve their crocheting and knitting skills and truly make each item unique. At the end of the semester, members hand in the hats, scarves, blankets, and teddy bears they've made, and the items are given to the March of the Blanketeers organization. The organization then distributes the items around the country to babies, children, and teenagers up to age 19 who are sick in hospitals.

Pre-Med Society kicks off March of the Blanketeers with a meeting explaining its purpose and teaching members how to knit and crochet. About 10 to 15 members have participated each semester. So far, the club has created five items and is expecting more.

"When they go on to become MD's, DO's, nurses, or physician assistants, they will need to have that caring heart, and a heart for the community and the people who live in those communities."

According to Esohe Aibangbee, Pre-Med Society's Outreach Committee Coordinator, the most memorable part of the event is seeing the finished products. She says, "I can tell that people really put a lot of time and effort into [making them], even those people who only first learned how to crochet from the meeting we held last semester." Members have really taken the time and initiative

to learn something new that will benefit other people. Esohe was also happy to learn that crocheting and knitting the items has acted as a stress relief outlet for members. For all parties involved, it's a comfort-bringing experience!

March of the Blanketeers teaches Pre-Med Society members a lesson that is extremely important in their desired career field: the importance of helping their communities and reaching out to those in need. Esohe says, "When they go on to become MD's, DO's, nurses, or physician assistants, they will need to have that caring heart, and a heart for the community and the people who live in those communities."

March of the Blanketeers is only one of many outreach events that Pre-Med Society participates in, but it establishes an important link between the students and children in hospitals—potentially, their future patients. By using the skills they can learn and practice now to bring those children comfort, Pre-Med Society members are already learning what it means to care for those in need and to make each patient feel special during their hospital stay.

Pre-Med Society will also be hosting their annual Scavenger Hunt and CPR Training at SBU Hospital Heart Institute this semester. Anyone interested in joining can attend general body meetings Tuesday nights at 7:00pm in SAC 302 or email sbpremedsociety@gmail.com for more information.



C-CERT practice drill.

C-CERT Helping Seawolves

Julianne Broderick & Olivia Basileo

Have you ever seen students with green and yellow jackets watching the crowd carefully during campus events? Or maybe you've seen them in the quads during a winter storm or building evacuation? On the scene of almost every campus emergency, C-CERT members are a key element in keeping our campus and its students safe. The service these students provide requires astounding dedication and training and puts them in a position of great responsibility, but the rewards, they'd tell you, are worth it.

C-CERT is a volunteer student organization that assists emergency management agencies and first responders in keeping our

university safe during events and hazardous circumstances. Volunteers help the University Police Department, fire marshals, and emergency management officials direct students and maintain order during crises.

C-CERT is currently composed of about 78 people, including members-in-training, and is entirely student-run. The organization consists of an executive board and committee heads, who help run the internal operations, and Command Chiefs and Captains, who take charge in the field. Then there are the general members, who are fully trained in basic aid, and probationary members, who are still in training. Members are trained in basic medical disaster first aid, which focuses on facilitating medical stabilization until an ambulance arrives; basic fire suppression, which includes lessons on how to educate others about fire safety; and crowd safety, which is useful in maintaining

security during planned events.

Christina Tran, President of C-CERT, got involved in the organization because she was interested in the wide range of skills members develop. She says, “I wanted to learn my personal limitations and what I could accomplish—participating in emergency response management was a great way to explore those things.” Since joining C-CERT, Christina has learned first aid, fire suppression, chemical incident management, search and rescue, and decontamination, as well as gained valuable people skills and experience in the field.

C-CERT stands at the ready during all different circumstances. In snow storms much like the ones we’ve seen this past winter, teams of C-CERT members were stationed around campus in each quad with their radios, ready to respond if needed. They also helped clear roads to make the campus accessible to emergency vehicles during the storm, and they gave first aid to students in the residential buildings.

Christina describes her most memorable experience in C-CERT as working during Hurricane Sandy. She and another member were called upon to help students evacuate from Chapin Apartments, which had suffered roof damage during the storm and was considered unsafe. She searched every room in the building and helped students get to shelter. Helping students directly during such an emergency was fulfilling and gratifying.

Shannon Sunny, a veteran General Member within the



C-Cert on duty at a planned event.

Recruitment Committee, says her most memorable moment in C-CERT was working on the executive board under former president Karen You. Shannon’s job was to update the C-CERT webpage; she says, “It was an

honor to compile all the information, updated pictures and even reach out to original members. It was quite the experience to work so closely with my executive board members to make substantial change within the organization.”

Frank Fazio, a Captain of C-CERT, says, "As a captain who has participated in blizzard standbys for Nemo and Juno, and the response effort for the Physics Fire last semester, I can proudly say that this is where C-CERT shines. During these emergencies, my fellow C-CERT members and I have the opportunity to demonstrate our unique set of emergency response skills, and do so for the greater good of the campus community." He remembers conducting a search and rescue of the Physics Building and Math Tower last semester during an unexpected emergency. His favorite part about serving during emergencies is that whether he and his comrades are setting up a perimeter together or sweeping an area, there is a strong sense that they're all working together, like one big family. "I know that I'm serving with a dedicated and enthusiastic group of individuals who are not only here to help our campus community, but are here to help each other." Frank's time in C-CERT has been greatly defined by the experiences he's shared with like-minded individuals.

C-CERT might not be the first organization you think of when you think "community service," but their contribution to the campus community is strong and special. Christina says, "It feels amazing. It's a unique way of giving back because we're not directly improving the campus by doing clean-ups or the like, but we're doing our best to keep people safe." College campuses have a lot of potential hazards, and Stony Brook in particular, with its large chemical

projects and large number of students, can be dangerous without the proper precautions. C-CERT is prepared to protect the campus at all times.

Shannon says the experience is humbling. "It's indescribable to come out of your typical routine, and to focus on the greater community—something that not everyone can say they've done. Also, the fact that I can give back to my community alongside a wonderful team of students who are just as passionate, is even more rewarding." Shannon remembers her favorite activation, a "Hands-Free CPR" event at the university hospital, as being a great unifying moment: "Being intertwined with the greater Stony Brook community members actually made things seem feel smaller—the moment substantiated the concept of being a 'global citizen'."

Frank says being a part of C-CERT has made him feel more involved in the community. "As an emergency responder, I can definitely say that we have a direct impact on this campus and everyone associated with it." While the school is constantly being improved by donations, building projects, and event organization, Frank feels C-CERT members are given the incredible opportunity to serve the community first-hand and actively improve the state of the campus. "It is rewarding to have our hard work and dedication recognized and appreciated," he says, "but it is more rewarding to know that because of our efforts, Stony Brook is a safer place."

C-CERT is an invaluable organization to our campus com-

munity; their diligence and dedication truly make our university a safe place for students. Their volunteering has a permeating positive impact on our campus, and the pride C-CERT members take in their work only proves how true that is.

Students interested in joining C-CERT should visit <http://sbccert.org/> for information about recruitment. Recruitment periods are at the beginning of each semester.

Share Your Stories

We want to share your stories with the Stony Brook University community! SB Serves is a Career Center publication dedicated to highlighting the community service activities that the students, faculty, and staff of Stony Brook University take part in! To find out more about how to be featured in an upcoming issue please email Megan Smedley, Internship Consultant at Megan.Smedley@stonybrook.edu. Please include your name, phone number, and email address along with a brief description of your involvement experience. Upon submission a SB Serves writer can contact you for additional details.

Features can range from one page articles to smaller snapshots. Pictures help bring to life the experience for readers and are great additions to issues! If you have any upcoming events you would like to share with the community we can include these as well. Maybe you have not been involved yourself but know someone that is and you would like to nominate them for an upcoming feature, let us know! We are always looking for new individuals and groups to feature please share with us your thoughts and experiences!