A Season of Service

At UCLA we have come upon what I call a “Season of Service.” By this, I mean that UCLA as a campus has seemed to enter a time where there is much focus on community service. This includes everything from the commencement speaker selection of Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams to the launch of the first ever USAC Community Service Scholarship. UCLA is celebrating Peace Corps Week this spring, stemming from its rich history as one of the first training grounds for the Peace Corps. The motivational speaker at the “True Bruin Welcome” shared the story of Shel Silverstein’s “The Giving Tree” and encouraged the incoming class of UCLA students to give back. This year, UCLA made a huge statement by making “service” the fifth “True Bruin” value.

I am proud to be a student at a college with such celebration for service. I recognize how fortunate CSC and other community service entities are to be on a campus that is so dedicated to community service and one that celebrates the volunteers who commit themselves to volunteer work. We have so much momentum to work with from the support of UCLA, and that feels amazing. This year, CSC itself implemented a newly designed Volunteer of the Quarter system for our projects to recognize outstanding volunteers.

Yet with all the celebration amidst us, it is important not to lose sight of what our service is ultimately all about: our service recipients and uplifting the communities around us. The issues that community service revolves around are not so glamorous: hunger and homelessness, the educational gap, poverty, youth incarceration, child abuse, to name a few. The volunteers and student leaders I have been privileged to meet, always have these issues in their sight. They do not do service because of the accolades— it is their relationships with their service recipients, their passion for the issues, and the relationships and understanding they have made with their communities that drives them.

So in a twist of irony, I am ending this note with a “Thank You”— a thank you to the volunteers who don’t seek this “Thank You,” but rather seek results, as well as change they can bring to individuals’ lives and ultimately to the communities at large.

Jamie Yao
Community Service Commissioner

Just starting out, we have a circulation of over 2000— but, we would love to share our stories with more people! If you think any of your friends might enjoy it, please refer them to www.communityservicecommission.org, where they can easily sign up to be on the e-newsletter mailing list!
R. Sargent Shriver died after years of battling Alzheimer’s. He left behind a legacy promoting peace and community service. He served as the first director of the Peace Corps when it was launched in 1961, a program that has sent over 200,000 young Americans abroad to work on issues ranging from health education to environmental protection. He also worked on President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty and the Special Olympics. As a statement released by his family read, Shriver “lived to make the world a more joyful, faithful, and compassionate place.”

As Australia deals with massive flooding, volunteers have stepped up to help victims caught in its path. Eight volunteers are credited with saving 50 people during the disaster, traveling by boat and transferring them to evacuation centers and hospitals.

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Allstate sponsored a Give Back Day, partnering with nonprofits in 14 communities. Over 2,000 participants worked on projects from repairing homes for low income residents to reading books at children’s hospitals.

Leaving college and entering a job market with little openings and lots of competition is extremely daunting and can seem hopeless. However, there are those that enter this job market with the ambition to find employment in an area that is characterized for its long, odd hours and modest pay: the nonprofit sector. Although not everyone enters the nonprofit sector for the same reasons, many enter it because they have a passion for service, a passion that drives them to contribute their education and skills to the communities that fight against injustices. If this seems like the passion that is driving your ambitions, then Community Service Commission’s Nonprofit Networking Night can provide you with the opportunity to meet professionals that share similar aspirations. Nonprofit Networking Night aims to present UCLA students interested in entering the nonprofit industry, or even just curious about it, with an intimate dinner setting in which they can get more information about the nonprofit industry by having conversations with professionals and those experienced in this sector. Each dinner table will seat a professional that has worked in the non-profit industry and a special guest, like a professor. The professionals will come from different parts of the nonprofit sector and will be able to provide a vast array of experiences. The nonprofits that will be in attendance will represent both national and local organizations like Teach for America, Habitat for Humanity, and Red Cross. The dinner will not only provide the opportunity to learn but will also provide graduation juniors and seniors with exciting networking opportunities because the organizations have been asked if they can provide internships or career opportunities for post-grad college students. Not only will students be able to network with these professionals, they will be able to network with one another and gain insight into what issues other students are passionate about and combating here on campus. Community Service Commission, in collaboration with ORL and Volunteer Center, invite you to join us for this dinner, which will not only satisfy your appetite but will also help satisfy your passion for service.

**Details**
- **Date:** Feb. 24, Thursday
- **Time:** 6:30-8:30pm
- **Where:** Covel Grand Horizon - Salon A
- **RSVP (First come, First Serve) at [www.communityservicecommission.org](http://www.communityservicecommission.org)
Alternate your break and participate in the ultimate sleepover experience this spring break.

For some college students spring break means partying it up in Miami, however some students are daring to be different. USAC Community Service Commission is proud to present Alternative Spring Break 2011, between March 20-25th, a program that provides students with opportunities to engage in community-based service learning immersion trips during spring break. The mission of Alternative Spring Break (ASB) is to offer opportunities for students to explore new experiences that will allow participants to become more thoughtful and engaged citizens who will continue to work for social change. This year’s Alternative Spring Break will feature four exciting service-learning trips for UCLA students in California in the cities of Salinas, Death Valley, Los Angeles and San Diego along with a fifth trip in Kanab, Utah.

Learn more about the different sites below and click on the link to go to their websites:

**Dorothy’s Place**
Students will assist the homeless at the Mercy Center in Salinas. Volunteers will be helping the staff prepare and serve food and will have the opportunity to interact with the guests as well.

**New City Parish (NCP)**
Located in Los Angeles, mission is to proclaim a message of hope and advocate for the poor & marginalized, to teach people how to think critically for themselves, and to heal and comfort those who are hungry and suffering in our inner-city communities. Students will participate in visits and service projects with non-profit organizations such as Homeboy Industries, Mercado la Paloma, Hope Street Family Center, Esperanza Community Health Promoters, and the Bresee Youth Project.

**Death Valley**
A vast national park with over three million acres of wilderness and hundreds of miles of back country roads. Students will perform various environmental tasks that directly impact the conservation of Death Valley’s many natural ecosystems while enjoying amazing sunsets.

**Best Friends Animal Society**
Located in Utah, their mission is to bring about a time when there are NO more homeless pets. Students will engage in activities that directly target the caring and well-being of animals through service projects such as spending time with the animals. Students also contribute to the preservation of the animal sanctuary.

**Transformational World Opportunities TWO**
Arranges immersion education trips into Mexico and within the U.S. border for dozens of years in order to better understand the global community in which we live, and explore ways in which we can justly and humbly walk with our neighbors. Students will learn about the various issues surrounding immigration in California by visiting Border Patrol offices and other charities that address the problems faced by individuals crossing the border.

*If you are interested in a service-learning trip during the 2011 spring break, complete an application through our website by February 16th. Contact Amy at cscepdirector@gmail.com for more details.*
Meet CSC Alumnus Anna Emerald, co-founder of ProLit

by Cristina Chang, & Annie Wong, Co-copy Editors

Before it became known as Project Literacy, Project PANCake worked with adults in Watts to develop literacy skills. Anna Emerald, one of the co-founders of Project PANCake, spoke to the Community Service Commission about starting the group, lessons she’s learned on community service, and her current career path.

Quick Facts

Role Model: Manuela Saenz, a revolutionary hero in South America
Undergrad Major/Minor: English with a Specialization in American Literature
Graduate School & Major: Teachers College, Columbia University, Curriculum and Teaching
Childhood Dream Job: Broadcast Journalist

How did you first get involved in community service?
I first began my involvement with CSC volunteering for Project Share, a tutorial program that serviced the Asian American community in the Crenshaw district. I really liked the students that I met and decided to become more involved. The following year, I became a Director and felt I had found my calling.

What work are you currently doing now?
I am working on a place-based initiative in Lennox. As the LENZ Program Coordinator and Developer for the Lennox Educational Neighborhood Zone, my job is to bring forth programs and services to the community. I work with the school district, service providers, non-profits and governmental agencies to coordinate and implement new projects that meet the needs of the community in health, social services, and the arts.

How did Project Pancake get off the ground?
I worked with two other UCLA students to establish an adult literacy program in Watts. In 1990 adult literacy was a hot topic and I felt that with all the attention, we could find the support we would need to get it off the ground. I searched for possible project partners and potential sites and found my way to the Watts library where they had a long waiting list. The summer before we started, I researched teaching methods in adult literacy and developed a training program for students. We wrote the proposal and got funding. I also worked on the marketing of the program and did a radio interview with KPFK to let the community know we were ready to help. That fall, we recruited a handful of volunteers and started to teach reading skills to our readers with about 9 volunteers.

What advice would you give for students considering the community service field?
1. Do your homework! Find the topic or issue that interests you and volunteer and/or intern for an organization so you can see if this is something that you want to do as a career. Volunteering will also allow you to get the inside scoop about an organization. This way if a job opportunity comes along, you can make an informed decision about whether or not you want to work for them full time.
2. Network your Bruin buns off! All of my job leads in the non-profit sector have come from former colleagues, friends, or clients. Join professional associations, attend their events, and bring business cards. Then be sure to follow up with the folks you meet by sending an email or conducting an informational interview.

3. Prepare to be poor in some ways and not so much in others. Yes, the field does not pay well to start, but if you stick with it and obtain an advanced degree eventually you can find some positions pay pretty well. Traditionally, jobs in development pay much better than jobs in programs. If you like helping people and are passionate about something, working in the field can be very rewarding and frustrating at the same time!

What do you think is a common misconception people have of the community service sector?
Prepare to meet all sorts of people, personalities, and politics! Don’t assume that just because someone works in the non-profit sector that they are motivated by the same things that motivate you. You may find that some people are working in the sector for reasons that are less than altruistic and like the idea that they are “helping out.” It makes them look good as they use this platform as a stepping stone for something else. You will find that there are plenty of great folks doing amazing work and run across lots of people letting their egos and personal motives stand in the way of making true progress.
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Since 1965, the Community Service Commission (CSC) has focused its efforts towards creating social change, understanding the greater Los Angeles community, and promoting campus-wide service programming. Its two-part mission is to uplift local communities through direct, continual interaction and to engage UCLA into community service.

Currently, CSC represents over twenty student-run community service projects and over 1,500 students each year, making CSC the largest completely student-run, student-initiated community service organization in the nation. Students work together to tutor youths and adults, address the health needs of ethnic communities, combat poverty and homelessness, and reach out to incarcerated youth and neglected children. CSC projects strive to provide communities with the tools to empower themselves and challenge the structures and barriers that keep them from achieving their goals.

The commission also aims to centralize the service efforts of the UCLA campus community through issues awareness, collaboration, the Community Service Record, the Alternative Spring Break program, and large-scale service programming.

CSC would like to give a special THANK YOU to its advisors, supporters, and partners. We have much appreciation for:

Center for Student Programming
Community Programs Office Student Association
Student Government Support Services
Student Government Accounting
Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC)
Volunteer Center

Most of all, we would like to thank our projects for doing the amazing work that they do in the community. They do not ask for recognition, their motivations are rooted in uplifting their respective communities. But CSC can’t help but want to share their stories and experiences.

Submit a piece about your community service experience or about the issues that you’ve seen first-hand in the community! Articles, opinion pieces, poems, pictures, and more are welcome! Send submissions of up to 450 words to cscsubmissions@gmail.com.

We would love to share our stories with more people! If you think any of your friends might enjoy it, please refer them to www.communityservicecommission.org, where they can easily sign up to be on the e-newsletter mailing list!

If you would like to opt out of the e-mailing list, please email cscsubmissions@gmail.com with Subject line: Opt out.

The opinions expressed in Service Speaks are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the USAC Community Service Commission and its affiliates.