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News from the Engaged University August 2007

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Recent Press
(click link to read article)

["William Wirt Students Free Their Minds." *The Gazette*, 8/9/07](#)

Related Links

[EdChange](#)

[National Association for Multicultural Education](#)

[Teaching for Change](#)

[25 Web Sites for Educational Equity](#)

[Prince George's County Master Gardeners](#)

[Community Service-Learning, University of Maryland, College Park](#)

Upcoming Events

**Riverdale
Farmers Market**
Thursdays, 3:00-7:00pm
6220 Rhode Island Avenue
Riverdale, MD

**Hyattsville
Farmers Market**
Tuesdays, 2:00-6:00pm

→ Multicultural Education Is Good Education

By [Sonia Keiner Flynn, Community Education Coordinator](#)

Ask most people about multicultural education and you might hear talk about the importance of tolerating other peoples and cultures. However, multicultural education is far more comprehensive and substantial: it is an educational model that seeks to transform individuals, schools, and society-at-large using the tools of educational equity and social justice.



This summer, the Engaged University worked with William Wirt Middle School and the Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers to offer the Free Minds Collective Summer Enrichment Program (FMC). From the beginning, we knew that engaging the program's staff in activities and dialogue about multicultural education would be an important part of the training process.

One of the main goals of multicultural education is to create a learning environment in which every student has the opportunity to fulfill his or her full potential. A key first step is for educators to think critically about how their own personal biases and assumptions affect the outcomes for students, schools and communities.

During the Educators Institute that preceded the beginning of the program, the staff of the Free Minds Collective participated in a series of activities and exercises that stimulated honest discussion about the complexities of human identity. We explored our ideas about gender, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities, family structure, religion, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. These frank conversations brought the educators closer together and created a shared vision for the learning environment we were building together with students.

Queens Chapel & Hamilton
(in rear parking lot)
Hyattsville, MD

2nd Annual Metropolitan Jazz Festival

Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2007
Concert Performances
@ Show Place Arena
Upper Marlboro, MD

[Click here for
more info](#)

College Park City Council Work Session

Sept. 4, 2007 - 8:00pm
Council Chambers
4500 Knox Road
College Park, MD

Good Morning Commuters!

Sept. 5, 2007
TerpZone
(Basement,
Stamp Student Union)
University of Maryland,
College Park

Hyattsville City Council Special Meeting

Sept. 10, 2007 - 8:00pm
4310 Gallatin Street
3rd Fl., Council Chambers
Hyattsville, MD

Bladensburg Town Council Meeting

Sept. 10, 2007 - 7:00pm
4229 Edmonston Road
Bladensburg, MD

Riverdale Community Association Meeting

Sept. 12, 2007 - 7:30pm

Another key element of multicultural education is asking key questions about how power and privilege shape society. Who decides what, where and how people learn and what get emphasized in the curriculum? How is money allocated to schools? Why isn't there more funding for arts education? With a clearer understanding of how these decisions get made, educators and students together can creatively engage decision-makers and begin to transform communities and schools into more equitable and inclusive environments.

The steps we took at the Free Minds Collective were just a start. The practice of multicultural education is far more wide-ranging and includes re-visioning curricula, re-thinking school funding mechanisms, reshaping local and national policy, crafting new teacher education programs, assessing accountability structures, and redressing patterns of (re)segregation and wealth distribution.

Multicultural education is not about "taco night." It's not about improving how we get along with each other or being "colorblind." It's about analyzing, appreciating and supporting difference and making an ongoing commitment to self-examination and policy reform, so that justice and equity are systematically secured in every school and every community.



Community Profile: Esther Mitchell

President & Volunteer Coordinator,
Prince George's County Master Gardeners, Maryland Cooperative
Extension

Interview by: Kristen Spoales, FSNE Gardening
Educator/Graduate Assistant

Q. Tell me a little bit about yourself.



A. I was born, raised and schooled in Washington, DC. When I bought my house, I didn't know how to create or maintain a nice garden so I took a course at the USDA Graduate School. After taking more classes, I received my horticulture certificate from the graduate school. Eventually, I took the Master Gardener class, which has given me well-rounded knowledge in gardening. In 2004 I became the Prince Georges County Master Gardeners' Secretary, and now I am President and Volunteer Coordinator.

Q. Can you talk about the work that Master Gardeners do in Prince George's County?

A. The mission of the Master Gardeners is "to educate Maryland residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities." Master Gardeners volunteer many hours in gardens - such as the Master Peace Garden in Riverdale - and collaborate with Maryland Parks and Planning to work in places like Patuxent River Park.

We also hold library seminars, plant clinics, and open houses to inform local residents about healthy gardens. When it comes to

Center for Educational
Partnership/UMD
6200 Sheridan Street
Community Room
Riverdale, MD

**Hispanic Heritage Month
Kick-off**

Sept. 14, 2007
University of Maryland
For more info,
send an email to
hnajera@umd.edu

**Hyattsville City
Council Meeting**

Sept. 17, 2007 - 8:00pm
4310 Gallatin Street
3rd Fl., Council Chambers
Hyattsville, MD

First Look Fair

Sept. 19-20, 2007
10:00am-3:00pm
McKeldin Mall
University of Maryland
[Click here for
more info](#)

**Hyattsville International
Street Festival**

FREE
Sept. 22, 2007 4:00-until dusk
Queens Chapel
Town Center
31st Avenue and
Hamilton St.
Hyattsville, MD

plants, pests and diseases in the garden, we work to help the public separate fact from fiction. At the Clinton Cooperative Extension office, the Master Gardeners maintain salad tables, butterfly, herb, and vegetable gardens that demonstrate effective gardening practices

Q. What are some current programs Master Gardeners are working on and how can people get involved?

A. We are working closely with the Maryland Department of Agriculture to train Emerald Ash Borer First Detectors. This is a group of people that collects seeds of ash trees to be preserved and reintroduced once the Emerald Ash Borer problem is alleviated.

Master Gardeners also work with 4-H [Youth Development, part of Maryland Cooperative Extension] in schools in Prince George's County, teaching students how to plan, prepare for, plant and maintain gardens.

Anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener can enroll in our training classes. They begin in September and March and are open to everyone 18 and up. There are over 1,000 Master Gardeners in Maryland and roughly 80 in Prince Georges County and we are always looking for more! For information call 301-868-8780.



Campus Profile: Kristan Cilente

Program Coordinator, Community Service-Learning, University of Maryland, College Park
[Interview by Genevieve Villamora,](#)
[Assistant Director](#)



Q. Tell me a little bit about yourself:

A. For most of my life, I lived in New Jersey, about 40 miles from New York City. I left to go to college and haven't moved back since. My undergraduate degree is in sociology and history from The College of William and Mary and my Masters degree is in Higher Education Administration from the University of Arizona.

Q. Can you explain what "community service-learning" [the concept] is?

A. We define community service-learning as students engaging thoughtfully and intentionally with the community to create social change. Our approach to this work links students' experiential learning with their academic studies.

Q. What does the office of Community Service-Learning (CSL) do?

A. Our primary function is to connect the campus to the community. We do this through student-centered initiatives like Alternative Spring Break (ASB) and TerpCorps. [*For more on Alternative Spring Break, see below.*]

TerpCorps is a student organization that coordinates much of CSL's one-time programming, encourages collaboration between student service groups, and organizes Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and Saturday of Service.

Q. How does CSL connect University of Maryland, College Park students to the community, either locally or nationally?

A. This year, Alternative Spring Break will send approximately 150 students to 12 locations across the U.S. and 1 international site. Through the program, students explore specific themes in partnership with local organizations. Some of the sites and issues in the 2007-08 program include healthcare issues in Los Angeles, rural poverty in Appalachia, and racism and poverty in New Orleans, among many others. Through these transformative experiences, ASB contributes to a culture of students on campus who want to make positive change in the world.

We also connect students to the community through our [website](#), which features a variety of resources, including our newsletter, an online calendar, and a searchable database of local community organizations.

Q. What do you love most about your job?

A. The people - the students, colleagues and community members. They make me feel hopeful and inspired. I am especially privileged to interact with students in the way that I do. I love being able to see the best of them. It makes me want to be the best that I can be all the time.



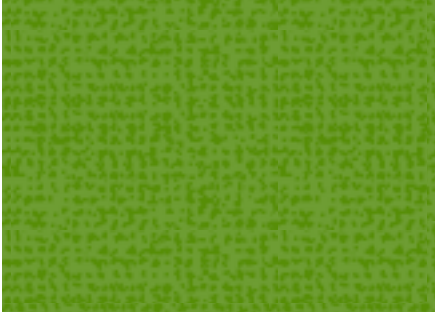
Alternative Spring Break: In Search of a Few Good Staff Advisors

By Genevieve Villamora, Assistant Director

Last March, ten years after graduation from college, I found myself on Spring Break again. But instead of basking in the sun on a crowded beach, I was shivering in Chicago with 11 extraordinary undergraduates from the University of Maryland, College Park. We were on Alternative Spring Break.

Alternative Spring Break (ASB) is run by the University's Community Service-Learning office and consists of a variety of week-long community service-learning trips to over a dozen different sites.

University graduate students, faculty and staff are eligible to serve as Staff Advisors on ASB trips. Each team has a Staff Advisor, who supports the team's Trip Leaders through the planning process and the trip itself. I had an unforgettable



experience as a Staff Advisor last year and deeply enjoyed the chance to learn alongside students in such a collaborative and engaging context.

Apply now to be an ASB Staff Advisor! Applications are available online and are due September 24, 2007. Click [here](#) for application information.

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