

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT AND BEYOND SOUTHWESTERN

# S.U. Gardeners Address Food Insecurity, Healthy Eating



SU Junior Zoë Martin picks peppers at the SUGarden during a recent work day. Photo by Paige Menking

It's 10 am on the Saturday of fall break. Most of us are fast asleep (or maybe just going to bed). We're definitely not outside getting our hands dirty. But not those SU community gardeners!

This Saturday, and every Saturday this semester, groggy students, staff, professors and Georgetown community members gather to plant, harvest, and weed, to build plots, to clear beds and water plants.

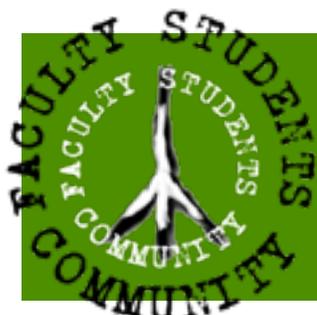
And after all their mornings' work, they'll load up the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor... and give them away.

It's all part of the SU Garden's campaign for the semester: SU Shares 1000. Their goal is to share 1000 bags of fresh, organic produce with the Williamson County Meals on Wheels and Head Start programs.

Providing food for the hungry is a pretty simple concept; we've all given canned foods to pantries. But SU Shares goes beyond spam and canned corn. Their mission is to provide fresh food to the community, with a side of knowledge about nutrition, about healthy eating and about food insecurity in Georgetown/Austin.

"SU Shares goes an extra step by providing equal access to local and ----- *Continued on p. 5*

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1001 E. University Avenue,  
Georgetown, TX 78626  
512.863.1215  
civicengagement@southwestern.edu

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# Civic Engagement as a Career

## Reports from Life After S.U.

*This column is part of a series in which we introduce different ways to translate civic engagement experiences at Southwestern into jobs after graduation. This issue, we feature an article from Cordelia Stough, class of 2009, discussing her year long AmeriCorps VISTA program at Ventanilla de Salud, a program of the Mexican Consulate in Austin.*

After graduating from Southwestern, I served as an AmeriCorps VISTA with Ventanilla de Salud, the health program of the Mexican Consulate in Austin, TX. Ventanilla de Salud provides immigrant and Latino families culturally appropriate health education, free health screenings, and referrals to community health services. All these efforts are made toward their goal of access to health services for all Latino families in Central Texas.

I had such a positive experience working there, learning about healthcare in

Central Texas and the challenges of low health literacy and limited access to care. As a VISTA with a small non-profit I was able to serve many different roles, from providing health information in Spanish at local health fairs, to developing an Educational Health Session program that provides health education and resources to Latinos in the community at worksites, ESL classes and parent meetings at schools. Along with direct services like these, VISTAs also focus their efforts on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of their host organizations. My efforts with Ventanilla de Salud in this vein included recruiting and supervising volunteers, seeking grants, and improving data-tracking to better maintain contact with clients and gauge program impact.

Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA is designed specifically to fight

Along with the pink ribbons adorning everything from banners on the streets to jewelry stores to yogurt lids this month for breast cancer awareness, it's easy to miss the purple ribbons for Domestic Violence Awareness Month that might have gotten lost in the mix.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) began in 1995 as a way to raise awareness and start a dialogue about the real but often underestimated problem of domestic violence in the US

The stats on domestic violence are

overwhelming:

- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime
- According to the FBI, a woman is beaten in this country every 15 seconds.
- Almost one-third of female homicide victims that are reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner.

To get involved in efforts for the month, visit the Texas Council on Family Violence <http://www.tcfv.org/go-purple/how-you-can-help/>



**Cordelia Stough, '09 (right) at the Ventanilla de Salud booth at Bilingual Health Week. Stough worked with Ventanilla as an AmeriCorps Vista after graduation from SU.**

**OCTOBER**  
**domestic**  
**violence**  
**awareness**  
**month**



organic food in the community," SU Garden Club president Vanessa Toro said. "And it does so by bringing people together."

SU Shares 1000 is a community effort. The 10-20 club members can't get there alone. So the Club is hoping to involve other students and groups on campus in the project. Student organizations and individuals are encouraged to volunteer either 8-10 or 10-12 any or every Saturday morning.

More people working means more food donated but more people also means more awareness of the issues at play in the hunger and obesity problems facing our country.

According to the 2010 Hunger in America Report, thirty-four percent of Austin food pantries and fifty-eight percent of kitchens were found to be in need of more fruits and vegetables.

"The more people that go out, the more food we'll be able to donate and that's

great," Toro said. "But people should come out because it's a long term impact they are engaging in. It's a way to contribute to the health of people and of the land."

So why else? What makes gardening on a Saturday morning more appealing than sleeping in?

"For me it's two-fold; helping others and myself," garden member Alexis Kropf, said. "I'm growing food and making an impact, but at the same time I'm getting some exercise, some vitamin D, and I'm spending time with my friends and building



Sophomore Liliana Galvez works to clear and weed older beds to make room for winter produce. Photo by Paige Menking

community."

You can get involved and sign up to volunteer by visiting the garden blog: [sucommunitygarden.blogspot.com/2010/10/su-shares-1000.html](http://sucommunitygarden.blogspot.com/2010/10/su-shares-1000.html) or by contacting Toro ([torov@southwestern.edu](mailto:torov@southwestern.edu)). \*

## A Dream Deferred for Undocumented Students

By Cecy Garcia

Tears filled many eyes on September 21 when the Dream Act was deferred. The hopes of many students wanting better opportunities were crushed. While many believe the U.S. is moving towards the acceptance of immigrants arriving with hopes of accomplishing the American Dream, the deferring of the Dream Act serves to confirm the opposite.

The Development, Relief, and

Education for Alien Minors Act, or the Dream Act, was proposed to Congress on March 26, 2009 as a bill to help undocumented students. With the purpose of making young illegal aliens responsible and profitable citizens, the Dream Act allows those students to either continue their education in college or enroll in the military as a route to obtain their permanent residency.

In many cases, families who arrive

illegally in the U.S. come with children who are raised here and see the U.S. as their home. When they are sent back to their country of origin, these children no longer fit in. Trapped in a mess, wondering where home really is, undocumented children who have been raised in the U.S. hoped the Dream Act could help them remain in a place they call home.

The Dream Act presents an opportunity to allow immigrants who would benefit the U.S. to stay legally. The students benefiting from the Dream Act would not require money or help from the U.S., but are students who would develop into useful citizens, willing and able to give back to their country.

The deferral of the Dream Act was just another blow to those hoping for amnesty and immigration reform. Acts like the Arizona Immigration law and the Border Fence Project are giving opponents of more open borders a clear view of their victory. Despite the growing number of illegal immigrants in the U.S., the acts against them seem to be growing as well. \*



SU students hold a silent protest against the deferment of the Dream Act and Don't Ask Don't Tell on Sept. 21. Photo by Milly Arcovedo

# Breaking Down Borders: Building Partnerships through Migrant Tutoring

By Creuza Maciel, GISD Migrant Education Coordinator

I was at Southwestern University searching for volunteers during a volunteer fair in 2007. Tables were set with our program information on them in order to attract the students' attention on their way to/from their classrooms and the cafeteria. Lots of busy students were passing by - some in a hurry that weren't able to stop, and others who stayed around asking questions. Some signed the sign in sheet as volunteer candidates; others were interested in knowing who the "migrant students" in Georgetown were.

My first thought was how wonderful it would be to create a partnership between the district migrant program and SU

students/teachers. (Yes, we have had teachers, too!) The ideal collaboration would be where both sides could give and receive, share experiences, knowledge and dreams; bring migrant students to walk inside the SU campus as an inspirational place to open their vision and dreams.... Bring SU students into to the migrants' houses and culture to learn to appreciate diversity. That's when the home-based tutorial began, giving the opportunity to realize difference, and be able to recognize some things that are not so different, between Southwestern

students and our school district migrant students and their families. In the last four school years we have had 29 excellent volunteers from SU!

The most frequent questions from our migrant students are - How do they get here, are they rich? And from Southwestern students - Who are these migrant students? Where do they live? When and where do they work? How do they qualify as a migratory student?

Our migrant students are the sons and daughters of farm workers who cultivate and harvest the fruits and vegetables we eat every day. Frequently moving from school to school, from state to state, their education suffers from repeated interruptions, immersion in unfamiliar surroundings, and constantly changing curricula. Frequently we hear descriptions like this:

"At the age of 13, the only world I knew was the agricultural community where I was born and where my parents moved to as migrant workers. Growing up in a migrant family was a bit tough. At each move, I had to begin again to make friends and adjust to new schools. During my elementary and middle school years I was timid and was always teased for being an

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“ The ideal collaboration would be where both sides could give and receive, share experiences, knowledge and dreams... ”

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“odd” kid, consequently, I was embarrassed to ask questions and show my abilities”. (By a migrant student). Our volunteers are invited to embrace the challenge to help us in providing these children with the opportunity to succeed in school and overcoming the obstacles inherent in their lifestyle - the educational disruption, cultural and language



SU Mentor Abby Brody and her migrant student mentee Jesus Zapata enjoy the snow day last winter. Photo courtesy of Creuza Maciel.

## funding YOUR BRIGHT idea

### ON-CAMPUS GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

#### KING CREATIVITY

King Creativity Grants, allotted in sums between \$200 and \$2,000, are awarded to SU students with ideas for "innovative and original" projects. The projects can be conducted on or off campus but must demonstrate creative, out-of-the-box thinking.

To apply: [www.southwestern.edu/academics/kcf/](http://www.southwestern.edu/academics/kcf/)

#### MCMICHAEL FUND

This fund is set up primarily to encourage students to take part in enriching experiences off campus that will translate into later projects that serve to enhance the SU campus community.

To apply: Derek Timourian, [timourid@southwestern.edu](mailto:timourid@southwestern.edu)

#### SEED GRANTS

Funded by the Kendeda Fund and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, SEED grants are awarded to SU students to implement

environmentally focused projects helping make Southwestern a model for sustainability

To apply: [www.southwestern.edu/departments/environmental/seed.php](http://www.southwestern.edu/departments/environmental/seed.php)

barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems and other factors that inhibit their ability to do well in school; and prepare them to make a successful transition to post-secondary education or employment.

Southwestern student volunteers make a difference in our students and in their own lives, but the best results cannot be measured - tutoring and mentoring our children is an experience that brings lasting benefits for life. ✧

# Coalition Hopes for More Meaning, Thought around Service at SU

By Alexis Kropf

S.O.C. it to me!

Ok, I have a painful penchant for puns, for which I frequently must ask forgiveness. However, in this case, I will not say sorry for invoking the power of puns.

In late September, the Service Organization Coalition (SOC) met for the first time this semester (and the second time ever). Representatives from Latinos Unidos, KDChi, APO, the Community Garden, SEAK, Rotaract, Amnesty International, the Office of Civic Engagement, Student Peace Alliance, and Circle K International met to discuss plans and projects. Given the activity of the organizations, our meeting was quickly filled with the grand plans: documentaries, speakers, fundraisers, service projects, and awareness campaigns.

Though this may seem like an organizational show-and-tell time, I think we are making an essential step toward improving civic engagement at Southwestern.

What needs improving at Southwestern? We are nationally recognized for the amount of service we do. Everyone from fraternity brothers to budding gardeners have been bitten by the service

bug, manifesting their symptoms in various ways (e.g. hosting fundraisers at restaurants and growing food for local nonprofits).

It is all awesome—and overwhelming.

Last year, as Rotaract president, I struggled to mobilize a strong (if tight-knit) member base and to delegate tasks for help. Though we kept busy, I sometimes felt

unsure about the efficacy of our work. We were a small but soulful bunch, with fingers stuffed in all sorts of pies. I felt overextended; many Rotaract members felt overextended. I heard others complain about events and campaigns overlapping. (For example, I often refer to three independent food drives all held in the same month last year.) Something needed to change!

The vehicle for change was partly inspired by Stand with Haiti, last year's endeavor to raise awareness and funds for Haitian earthquake victims. The cumulative effect of bringing organization leaders to the same table and of mobilizing distinct groups

for the same cause had tangible results. From my perspective, I was amazed at the level of participation for and attention garnered by Stand with Haiti. Leaders and participants did not have to dedicate their

whole life to the project, though almost every project had meaningful and educational components. Though by no means a perfect campaign, I learned a great deal from it and hoped we could extend its recipe for success to other projects.

SOC's ingredients and directions are still being refined. However, as time goes on, I hope we begin looking beyond the "what" and "when" of our respective organizations and of SOC.

With time, we can start to incorporate inquiries into the "how" and "why" of service and civic engagement. I hope we will start to think even more analytically, reflectively, and critically about the intent of our campaigns and the meaning of our actions. Through SOC, I hope we can further the development of a community dedicated to thoughtful, meaningful civic engagement at Southwestern. ✱

“The cumulative effect of bringing organization leaders to the same table and of mobilizing distinct groups for the same cause had tangible results.”

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">organizations in the spotlight</p>	Arte Sana	El Buen Samaritano	Latinitas
	<p>Arte Sana (art heals) is a nonprofit agency for Latino/a survivors of gender and racial violence that promotes healing and empowerment through the arts and community education.</p> <p>Experienced translators (primarily English to Spanish) are needed as volunteers to help create culturally competent and linguistically appropriate materials for victim service groups.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> artesanando@yahoo.com</p>	<p>El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission provides health care, emergency food, advocacy, leadership, development, and basic education for working-poor Latino families.</p> <p>Currently, El Buen is recruiting for ESL instructors, Child Learning Center assistants and food pantry volunteers to commit at least one day a week to a shift of 2.5 hours.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> carniella@elbuen.org</p>	<p>Latinitas is dedicated to empowering young Latinas through the use of media and journalism and hope to inspire young Latinas to grow into healthy, confident, and successful women.</p> <p>Latinitas is looking for women to mentor their members as well as volunteers to join committees or write for their magazine.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> volunteer@latinitasmagazine.org</p>