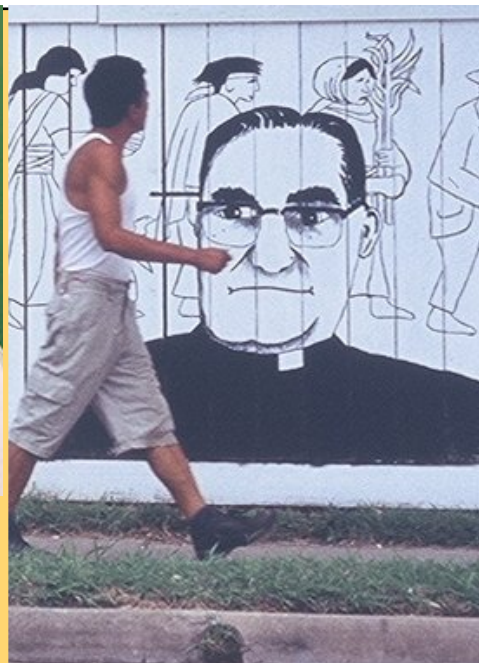
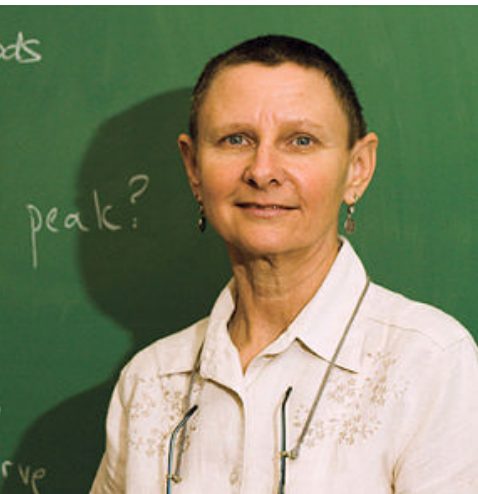




HYDRA

Civic Engagement at Southwestern University



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Available online at <http://southwestern.edu/academic/exp/hydra.html>

What's In A Name?



History:

Since its inception in September 2004, Southwestern University's Office of Civic Engagement has played an integral role in helping this institution deepen its commitment to community-based learning and civic engagement. The office facilitates community-based learning projects within academic courses and connects students to civic engagement opportunities on a continual basis.



Since the Office of Volunteer Resources & Community-based Learning is now the Office of Civic Engagement, it seems only fitting that the monthly publication from this Office re-envision a new name and identity for itself as well.

Much like the mythical creature for which it is named, the Hydra* seeks to represent myriad, diverse voices speaking, crying, shouting, singing from multiple constituencies – students, faculty, staff, and members of the greater community – and, at the same time, to be mindful that we are all part of the same “body”. The image of one body, many heads, visually ties to my personal interpretation to society: many voices, ideas, needs, interests, articulated in multiple iterations, all representing something or someone different, but ultimately, forced to operate within the system to which they are attached, to the thing that keeps them alive.

To me, individual civic engagement is like being one, noisy head of the hydra. I, as citizen, as member of a larger, living system, have no choice but to express my pleasure, my discontent, with what goes on around me through my words and actions. These words and actions will invariably conflict with those of others, those other heads of the hydra, but this conflict, these challenges, must

happen in order to move the body forward.

Through this medium, we invite you to engage in discussion, to disagree, to acquiesce, to look for or recommend courses of action. We need your voices. We need you to contribute to the noise.

Suzy Pukys
Office of Civic Engagement

*Special thanks to Alex Rutledge for suggesting the new name for this publication, and to Ansa Copeland, who is entirely responsible for its vision.



Introducing CEG Hall: Southwestern's Green Hall Takes On New Face(s)

Perhaps a few juniors and seniors will remember the Green Hall of the past. Possibly even a handful of sophomores but it is unlikely. Even fewer will remember what Green Hall was all about. I remember living there two years ago and hearing other residents mention they did not understand why it was called "green hall" when it was the same color as every other hall in the building.

Well, 'green' was meant to reference the commitment that residents had to the "Green" Movement; that is, we were supposed to be ecologically and environmentally minded. But since its initiation, it has lost much of its meaning.

Originally, Green Hall was home to a group of dedicated students, many of whom were environmental activists in one form or another. The three R's (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) were their mantra, and once upon a time, they had been a real presence on campus. They

spearheaded SEAK and the SU Garden Club. However, it did not last long. While there was always a handful of residents who knew what it was all about, Green Hall lost its 'pizzazz' as students who were less enthusiastic about environmental issues took the majority. Thanks to the recent power surge of last year's signing of the Talloires Declaration, however, more students than ever are throwing their weight behind the push for a more sustainable university.

In the process Green Hall has been revitalized and reborn as the Civic Engagement/ Green Hall (CEGH). By teaming up with the Office of Civic Engagement, the new hall is now home to environmentally and socially-minded students. And CEG Hall's face lift involves more than just new faces; instead of being housed in Moody Shearn, it has been relocated to the new apartments.

But why the Office of Civic Engagement?

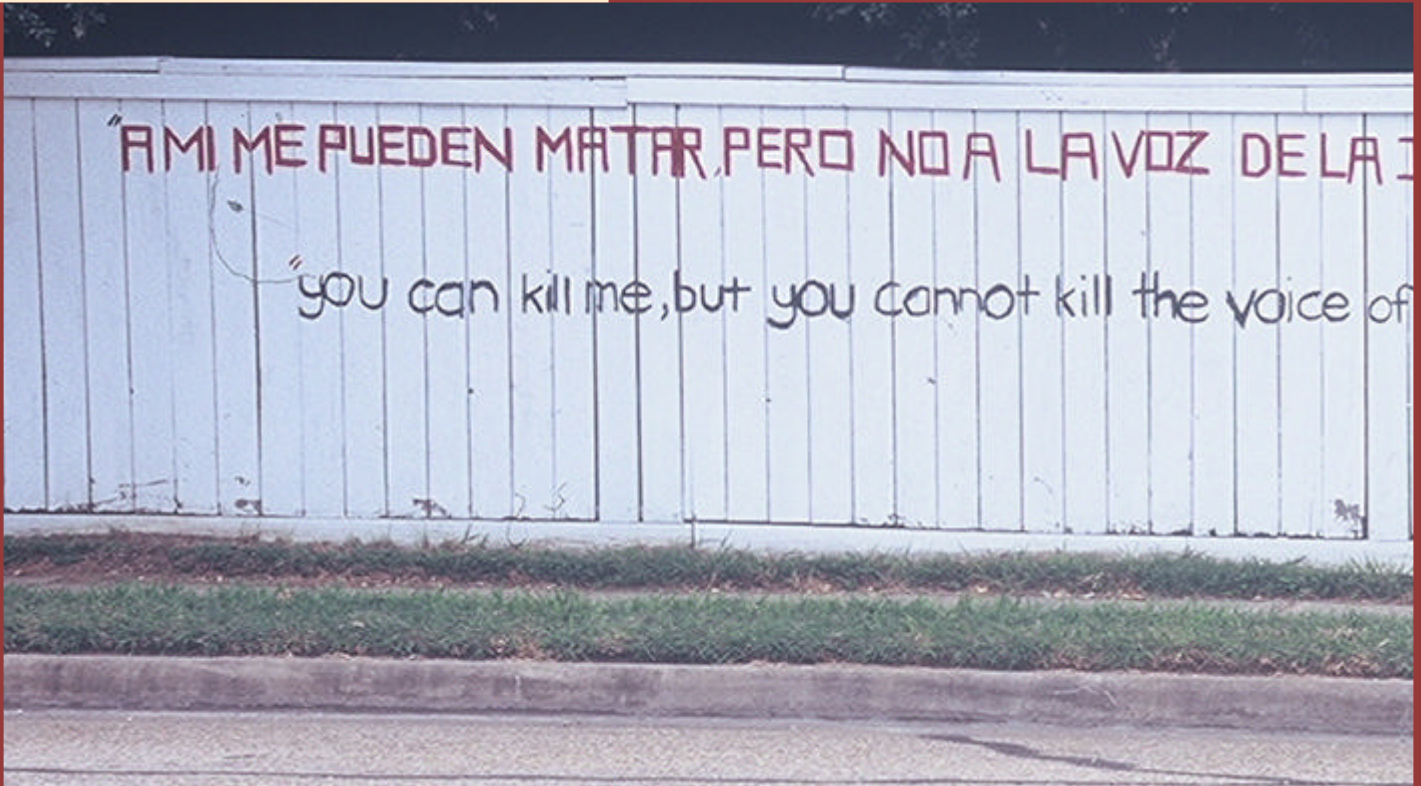
To some it may seem to be an odd pairing, but, according to Suzy Pukys (Coordinator of Civic Engagement), environmental activism falls under the umbrella of civic engagement. The beauty of this relationship will be evident in many of the projects this year's CEG Hall residents plan to undertake. Such projects include a bike collective (based on Austin's Bike Collective), a community garden, a food co-op, and peace activism.

The hope is that CEG Hall will be a hub of energy for all interested and not just those actually living there. Residents are asked to allocate a certain amount of time to environmental and/or social justice. For many, this is nothing new, but living in a community with others as invested as themselves will hopefully help to streamline projects and enhance networking. Stop in for a visit of catch a CEGH resident and ask them what's going on.

Ansa Copeland
(VISTA in the Office of Civic Engagement)



OSCAR ROMERO

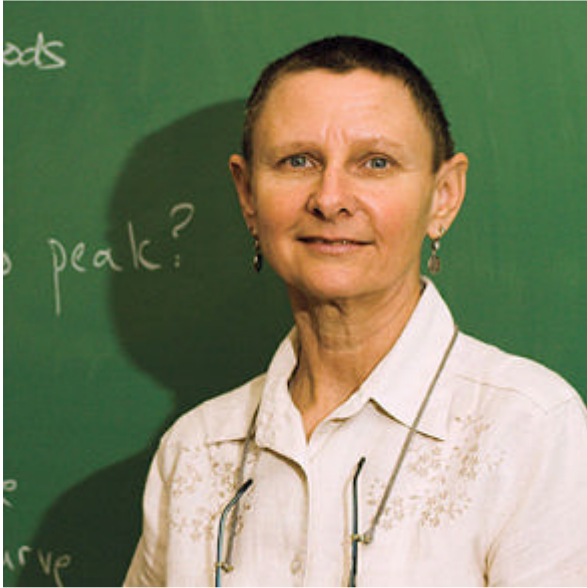


Fence and passerby on Dunvale Street, Houston, TX 78626
by Alexander Rutledge, June 2007

En este foto hay un retrato de Oscar Romero, un Jesuita muy critica por la violencia cometido por el gobierno Salvadoreño que fue apoyado por los Estados Unidos durante la Guerra Civil. Romero escribió la siguiente en una carta al presidente Estado Unidense en aquel tiempo, Jimmy Carter: "Dice usted que es Cristiano. Por favor, si es Cristiano, para los mandamientos militares al ejercito aca por que se lo usa sólo para matar mi gente."



The large face in the mural is Óscar Romero, who was an outspoken Jesuit priest to the atrocities committed by the government in El Salvador. Romero wrote a letter to Jimmy Carter, which reads "You say that you are Christian. If you are really Christian, please stop sending military aid to the military here, because they use it only to kill my people." Romero embraced a non-violent form of liberation theology as his vision for bringing peace and harmony home. Romero was a firm believer that hell was brought to El Salvador, yet he believed that heaven was attainable on earth, and whether he would live to see it or not did not matter because it is this spirit that seems to reappear in the face of domination and oppression, and dead or alive, he would experience it. Romero was shot after a homily, and later canonized into sainthood. The shot that killed him was heard round the world, even on Dunvale Street in Houston, Texas.



Dr. Emily Northrop: Conversation About Anti-Death Penalty Activism

On occasion, a message shows up in email boxes all around Southwestern that begins something like this:

Opposition to execution of (a person)

(this person) is scheduled to be executed today by the People of Texas.

The signatories below share a number of overlapping concerns about the death penalty. Some of the reasons for opposing the penalty follow. All of us find at least one of these reasons compelling, though not all of us endorse all the arguments listed.

It is an unjust system in that the penalty is not fairly applied...

Then a list of reasons, followed by a list of signatories that is currently about 260 strong. This email has been circulating for about 7 years now, and grows steadily. Almost every time she sends it out with a new person and date, Dr. Emily Northrop, Associate Professor of Economics, receives a request to be added to the list.

It is a quiet protest, and a gentle reminder for me on the occasions I find it in my inbox. After having seen it for so many years, my curiosity was piqued. I asked Dr. Northrop to sit down with me for a few minutes to discuss what compelled this simple act and her activism against capital punishment.

She told me that she first got involved with this issue through letter writing with Amnesty International when she lived in New Hampshire. "It's just so awful to strap someone down and kill them." She says that, as for human rights, the USA and China are among the last countries to practice capital punishment.

When she was presented with the prospect of moving to Texas, she was aware that she would be moving to the state renowned for the large number of people executed each year.

Her eventual response was to approach some colleagues with the idea of the email protests, so from the beginning there were multiple signatures along with the invitation for others to sign on. It is internal only and, as far as she knows, it has never been circulated among non-Southwestern community members.

As the email indicates, there are many reasons people oppose the practice of capital punishment. When I asked about her personal motives, she primarily spoke about the complexity of larger social issues connected with what could initially appear to be such a straightforward proposition. When people kill other people, it is logical (for some) to kill them. But when other factors such as race, mental health, situational complications, and the potential for faulty evidence are introduced, this seemingly simple issue is muddied, inevitably resulting in...

(Continued on last page)



CONNECTIONS

a guide to some local volunteer opportunities and activism.
To add your organization, contact Ansa Copeland at 512-818-2237 or copelana@southwestern.edu.

AUSTIN TENANTS' COUNCIL
LOOKING FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED
IN VOLUNTEERING WITH THE FAIR
HOUSING PROGRAM. FOR MORE INFO:
[HTTP://WWW.FAIRHOUSING-
RIGHTS.ORG/FAIRHOUSING.HTML](http://www.fairhousing-
rights.org/fairhousing.html)
CONTACT MORGAN MORRISON:
FAIR HOUSING TESTING
COORDINATOR
AUSTIN TENANTS' COUNCIL
1640-B EAST 2ND STREET, SUITE
150
AUSTIN, TX 78702
512-474-7007 EXT. 104

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
DIOCESE OF AUSTIN
INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING? IF SO,
WE HAVE LOTS OF GREAT
OPPORTUNITIES. IF INTERESTED IN
VOLUNTEERING, CALL MARTHA JASSE
AT 651-6126 OR EMAIL AT
MARTHA-JASSE@AUSTINDIOCESE.ORG

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NOW INVITES
APPLICATIONS FOR CULTURAL
GRANTS PROGRAM

Deadline: September 24,
2007 SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NOW
WILL PROVIDE APPROXIMATELY SIX TO
SEVEN GRANTS OF UP TO \$10,000
EACH FOR GRASSROOTS SOCIAL
CHANGE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE
INVOLVED IN CULTURAL WORK. FOR
MORE INFO:
[HTTP://SOCIALJUSTICEFUND.ORG/](http://socialjusticefund.org/)

FILL THE BUS SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

THE GEORGETOWN AREA JUNIOR FORUM IS COLLECTING NEW SCHOOL
SUPPLIES FOR THE CHILDREN IN NEED THAT ATTEND SCHOOL IN
GEORGETOWN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT. YOUR SUPPORT IS
NEEDED AS THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR APPROACHES. FOR MORE
INFORMATION VISIT WWW.GAJF.ORG OR CONTACT CHRISTY HALL, FILL
THE BUS CHAIR GAJF_FUNDRAISING@YAHOO.COM.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING? IF SO, WE
HAVE LOTS OF GREAT OPPORTUNITIES. IF
INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING, CALL MARTHA
JASSE AT 651-6126 OR EMAIL AT MARTHA-
JASSE@AUSTINDIOCESE.ORG



Current volunteer opportunities:

Administrative Support: Telephone work (bi-lingual preferred), data entry, filing, copying, computer projects, preparing mailings, make phone calls or track volunteer hours.

Young Adult Mentors: Work with young single parents as they go through our Young Parents Succeeded program. Provide emotional support and help clients establish and realize their goals for the future.

Naturalization Workshop on October 6th: Assist families applying for citizenship. This includes setting up for the workshop, helping the clients fill out residency history for the last 5 years, directing traffic, taking passport photos and going over the actual application. Training will be provided.

Child Care Volunteers for our Young Parents Succeeded Program

Food Donations facilitator: Looking for someone to call local businesses to get donations for the food pantry as well as discounts on products purchased for the pantry. This person would work in conjunction with the food pantry coordinator.

Life Skills Instructor: Catholic Charities is looking for instructors who can teach various life skills classes to our clients.

Access for Central Texans - Providing Application Assistance for State and Federal Benefits:

Assist with administrative tasks including addressing postcards mailed to clients. Some volunteers may train to assist clients with completing federal benefits applications.

Volunteer health Fair Events:

Help out at Catholic Charities table events that are held at various health clinics in the Austin area. Duties include: greeting people, handing out flyers on state benefits that are available and answering basic questions.

Research and Planning Intern:

gather census, demographic and best practice data for reports, grants and program planning.

For more information, contact Suzy Pukys in the Office of Civic Engagement
1001 East University Ave, Georgetown, Tx 78626
512.863.1987 pukyss@southwestern.edu

Dr. Emily Northrop: Conversation About Anti-Death Penalty Activism (Continued from pg7)

the occasional execution of people who are later exonerated.

"Across the US, as people become aware of the complex realities of our system of capital punishment, their support for the practice falters."

I was curious about her classes; is capital punishment ever discussed with her economics students in class? Not under her orchestration, she says. "It is such a complex, emotionally charged issue it is better to leave it out of a class setting where it is not immediately relevant." For example, she doesn't see macroeconomics as the appropriate place for such a discussion.

Dr Northrop's activism has also included the annual march held in Austin and hosting 'Journey of Hope' at Southwestern University, an event that includes family members of murder victims speaking against the death penalty out of their personal experiences. To get involved, you could add your name to her list or contact Southwestern's chapter of Amnesty International.

Ansa Copeland

VISTA in the Office of Civic Engagement



Texas | Campus Compact

**2007 Community Service
and Service-Learning
Professional Development
Retreat September 27-28
Holiday Inn Town Lake,
Austin**

Join other college and university faculty, staff, students, and AmeriCorps*VISTAs as they discuss the role of higher education in society. This will be a 2-day retreat to learn more about incorporating Service-Learning and civic engagement on your campus. Come to network, learn, and exchange new ideas!

Special Guest: Nadinne Cruz

Who should attend?

Community Service Directors
Directors of Service-Learning
AmeriCorps*VISTAs
Faculty
Students

Community Partners

Anyone interested in learning more about Service-Learning and civic engagement!

Registration Fees:

\$75 – TXCC Members

\$125 – Nonmembers

WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH THE FALL FESTIVAL ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2007. THE FESTIVAL IS HELD AT WILLIAMS FROM 11AM UNTIL 4PM. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: SALLY FURNIER

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR - WILLIAMS PTA

WILLIAMSPTA@GEORGETOWNISD.ORG

PHONE: 830-385-6850

Hydra is assembled and published by the Office of Civic Engagement. The views and opinions expressed here are not necessarily held by this office.

To voice concerns, contact Suzy Pukys at pukyss@southwestern.edu or at x1987

To submit articles, photos, art, volunteer opportunities or other relevant material, contact Ansa Copeland at copelana@southwestern.edu or x1215. All are welcome!

Be well, until next month.

For more information, contact Suzy Pukys in the Office of Civic Engagement

1001 East University Ave, Georgetown, Tx 78626

512.863.1987 pukyss@southwestern.edu