

Compass

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development



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Note from the Director

The American Democracy Project (ADP) is a multi-campus initiative that seeks to create intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement among undergraduates. It fosters commitment on the part of students to engage in meaningful action as citizens in a democracy. This goes beyond volunteerism, hoping to make civic engagement part of someone's life choices. In fact, civic engagement is now one of five values on which Illinois State University has built its strategic plan, *Educating Illinois, 2008-2014*.

The Stevenson Center is involved with ADP, and this is a natural fit; Stevenson Center students serve as examples of civic engagement and public service on campus. To that end, Stevenson Center students recently held a professional panel discussion on Peace Corps service. Over 60 students were present. Center students also serve as teaching assistants in classes where undergraduates can get to know our programs and gain knowledge of how to begin a career in public service. I am involved with the creation of a minor that will formalize the ADP into the University's curriculum. There is clearly more to come.

In the pages that follow you will see example after example of how the Stevenson Center affirms Illinois State University's values and the ideals of the American Democracy Project. Many of you are doing the same in your lives - please send us your news and ideas!

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Compass*,
Frank

Rich Feffer Named 2008 Outstanding Sociology Alumni

The Stevenson Center is pleased to announce that an ACED alum, Rich Feffer (MS August 2008 Sociology, with the ACED Sequence), has been named the 2008 Outstanding Sociology Alum by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. As part of the Stevenson Center, Rich served his professional practice at Mikva Challenge, a non-partisan organization that promotes civic participation among urban high school students. He has since been hired full-time at Mikva Challenge, where he directs their Elections in Action program. We would like to congratulate Rich on all of his accomplishments!



Student Spotlight

Janelle Jones, an Economics Peace Corps Master's International student, was born in North Dakota and raised in the small city of Lorain, near Cleveland, Ohio. In 2006, she received her bachelor's degree from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, with a major in math and a minor in Economics. She chose to further her education in Economics because it allows her the opportunity to apply her background in math to various development projects and situations. Throughout her undergrad years, Janelle was involved in various honors programs, tutored for three years, and was President of the Math Club. She was honored to receive the NASA Scholarship for Women in Science and Engineering. During her winter and summer breaks she would work at NASA while being provided a tuition scholarship and a living stipend for all four years. The NASA Program was a very rewarding experience for Janelle.

Prior to attending Illinois State University, Janelle served with AmeriCorps VISTA in Sacramento, California, from August of 2007 to August of 2008. She was involved in community and economic development for a small not-for-profit that focused on improving healthcare systems and low income housing. Working in the area of community development is what drew Janelle to apply for the Peace Corps. Janelle is patiently awaiting her Peace Corps placement for this summer. Her favorite classes are in her field of study, Economics. Janelle's ideal future job would be to work for an NGO doing economic development. She hopes to spend most of her time overseas, although she tries to avoid planning for the future because she feels that the Peace Corps will greatly affect her lifelong and personal goals.

Current Internships

Joseph Alustiza,
East Central IL Area Agency on Aging

Rebecca Bliss,
Hispanic Families Work Group, IL

Adrienne Martin,
Kankakee Community College, IL
Jessica Murphy, Alliance to End Home-
lessness in Suburban Cook County, IL

Students and Alumni Serving with Peace Corps

Brandon Curtis, South Africa

Kara Harvey, Togo

Brian Hillery, Cameroon

Rebecca Hodel, Ethiopia

Michael Hotard, Kazakhstan

Nicole Kurtain, Ethiopia

Andrew Maxwell, Ukraine

Sean Moore, Mauritania

Rachel Smith, Macedonia

Kevin Souza, Niger

Ms. Saloni Singh Visits Stevenson Center



Assistant Director Beverly Beyer, Ms. Saloni Singh, Director Frank Beck, Bishal Kasu, and Dr. Ali Riaz

Saloni Singh of Nepal recently presented on her research and NGO experiences addressing women's issues during wartime to the UN Security Council and (separately) to Stevenson Center students, faculty, and staff. We are honored that such a scholar and activist would take time out of her travel schedule to speak with us. Ms. Singh is the sister-in-law of ACED Fellow-Sociology, Bishal Kasu. Bishal is also from Nepal.

Alumni Spotlight



Peace Corps Fellow alum Matt McCleary, M.S. 2004, Political Science with Applied Community Development sequence, is currently an Associate of the Resource Systems Group Inc. (RSG) located in Santa Ana, California. He works mainly with government entities, counties, and schools on various projects relating to real-estate, affordable housing, redevelopment of existing sites, and new construction sites in communities. Three counties in which he provides on-going services to are Santa Clarita, La Cintas, and 29 Palms. He also works with a few private clients hoping to develop various projects.

Matt served in the Peace Corps from 1998 to 2000 in

Ukraine where he worked with a Business Development Program. He finds the skills and knowledge he learned in the Peace Corps to be helpful in his work today in many different ways. For example, community involvement is the basis of his work within RSG Inc., and most of his projects in California involve working with lower income communities. He has found that serving in communities overseas that relate to those here in the United States is very helpful.

Being involved with the Stevenson Center was a very rewarding experience for Matt. His favorite memories include being in class with students from many different backgrounds and with a variety of perspectives on life. After graduating from Illinois State University, Matt worked in Chicago where he met his wife, who is also a returned Peace Corps Volunteer. She volunteered in Uzbekistan from 1999 to 2001. Although they served in different countries, they found their observations and experiences to be very similar. Matt values being available as a resource to current students. He encourages any students who are interested in his work in California or just learning more about his experiences and Peace Corps service to contact him with any questions they may have. Messages for Matt sent to StevensonCenter@ilstu.edu will be forwarded to him.

ACED Students' Panel Discussion with Local Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

On October 27, the ACED students held a panel discussion with local returned Peace Corps Volunteers, entitled Peace Corps Through the Generations, at Illinois State. The event was sponsored by the ACED Student's Association, the American Democracy Project, and the Stevenson Center. The purpose of the event was to better inform the Illinois State University community about opportunities that Peace Corps provides through a panel discussion comprised of a diverse group of former Peace Corps Volunteers. Five panelists, Anne Wortham (RPCV Tanzania), Mark O'Rourke (RPCV Nepal), Louise Bellas (RPCV Fiji Islands), Ralph Bellas (RPCV Fiji Islands), and Christine Holmes (RPCV Niger), were asked questions about their experiences in the Peace Corps in order to allow the audience to gain a better understanding of what Peace Corps has to offer. The panelists were chosen based on their wide range of experiences, service locations, and age in order to offer a dynamic glimpse into the uniqueness of Peace Corps experiences. The discussion was led by Shane Peterson, a Peace Corps Master's International student in Sociology, and Amy Deal, a Peace Corps Fellows/USA student in Sociology (RPCV Mongolia). They both did an excellent job keeping everyone on track and on time! The event began with Beverly Beyer, Assistant Director of the Stevenson Center, making opening comments. The panelists were then introduced and questions were asked regarding each individual and their unique experience. The event lasted about an hour and a half and then open questions from the audience were received. There have been 195,000 Peace Corps Volunteers in 139 different countries over the last 47 years since Peace Corps was established. About 60 people attended the event and enjoyed ethnic finger foods including hummus, baklava, and pita bread. Display boards were set up for prospective students and audience members to learn more about the Peace Corps and the Stevenson Center. The event concluded with Shane Peterson making closing remarks, thanking everyone for coming out and showing interest in the Peace Corps.

Graduates

Announcing the 2008 applied community and economic development professionals with Illinois State University master's degrees. The diverse capstone and thesis titles include:

Brandon Curtis, Capstone - Study of U.S. States Pro-Poor Growth from 1977-2005

Rich Feffer, Thesis - Mainstream vs Alternative Newspaper Coverage: A Media Frame Analysis of the 1999 Seattle WTO Protests

Rebecca Hodel, Capstone - Financial Liberalization and Money Demand in Mauritius

Kate Jones-Smith, Capstone - The Impact of HIV on Economic Development

Erin Olson, Thesis - Building a School from the Bottom Up: Community Development and School Construction in Rural Mali

Lindsay Rosenquist Burns, Capstone - Go Beyond the Call of Duty: The Legal and Ethical Responsibilities of Nonprofits

Rachel Smith, Capstone - An Analysis of the Application of Club Good Models to Determine Carrying Capacity of National Parks

Kevin Souza, Capstone - Minimum Wage as a Poverty Reducing Measure

Ken Springer, Capstone - Barriers to the Usage of Performance Indicator Systems in Economic Development

Kelly Uphoff, Capstone - An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Biodiesel Production in Illinois

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Ali Riaz has been the Chair of the Politics and Government Department at Illinois State University for the past two years. He is originally from Bangladesh and earned his PhD from the University of Hawaii. Before becoming a professor here at ISU, Dr. Riaz taught at universities in England, South Carolina, and Bangladesh. His three areas of interest include politics, communication, and community development. He feels that all three subjects are interconnected. "People can do things on their own; they have everything they need. It is my job to empower them to believe they can: it is about asset building," says Dr. Riaz.

His work has changed dramatically since being promoted to Department Chair. He feels he has the responsibility of providing each student with the resources needed to achieve their maximum level of education and potential. He is very humbled by this honor and hopes to live up to expectations. Although his research has slowed a little, he has still made time to publish five books between 2002 and 2008; he has completed ten books throughout his career. His two recent publications include *Faithful Education: Madrassahs in South Asia*, and *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh*.

Through living and traveling in Bangladesh, Dr. Riaz was a volunteer at the time the Grameen Bank (GB) was emerging. GB is a banking system that provides credit to the poorest of the poor based on mutual trust, accountability, participation, and creativity in rural Bangladesh. Dr. Riaz has experienced empowerment first-hand through this system and views it as a learning experience for all. His hope is that the GB system will eventually change the face of poverty.

Currently, Dr. Riaz is focusing his research on migrant Bangladeshi and the identity of politics in Britain. He also teaches the Seminar in Community Development, which is one of the core courses of the ACED/ACD Sequence. The context of the seminar relates his case studies with his past experiences and combines them with the experiences of the students. His goal through teaching this course is to facilitate the process of community development by forming a bridge between the students, academia, and the field.

Brownfields Redevelopment Project

The Stevenson Center has begun a new partnership with Kansas State University (KSU) to address brownfield redevelopment in the Midwest. Brownfields are properties that have actual or perceived contamination and a potential for redevelopment. They are often abandoned, unused, or underused industrial and commercial properties that vary in size, location, age, and past use. The many abandoned gas/service stations across the country are an example. Communities often lack the technical and environmental expertise and the funding to redevelop brownfields in their neighborhoods.

The Center for Hazardous Substance Research (CHSR) at KSU works with communities to support them in brownfield redevelopment. The primary goal is to empower communities with an independent understanding of the underlying technical issues related to hazardous substances so they may contribute substantively to the decision-making process when sites are cleaned-up and reused. Since 2004, the Stevenson Center has offered services to small towns and rural counties wishing to redevelop brownfields. The Center works to identify funding, assist in grant-writing, foster community-wide collaboration on projects, and serves as a liaison with government agencies and environmental engineering firms.

CHSR secured grants from the Environmental Protection Agency to assist communities in a ten-state region of the Midwest. It has partnered with the Stevenson Center to focus on Illinois. The partnership combines the technical strengths of the CHSR with Stevenson's community development experience to offer a wider range of services and expertise to communities confronting brownfields. The partnership enables the Center to expand its services from rural areas to include small and mid-sized cities.

Communities continue to confront the challenges brownfields pose to redevelopment. Working together, the Stevenson Center and the Center for Hazardous Substance Research at KSU will support them in overcoming these challenges and building stronger communities.

College Announces Outstanding Service Awards

Dr. Frank Beck, Director of the Stevenson Center and faculty member of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, was recently awarded the 2008 College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Service Award for his extraordinary service accomplishments. "All of this year's winners have devoted much time and energy in service to the College and to ISU," said Associate Dean Sally Parry. "We are very proud of and grateful to each of them." Dr. Beck has developed a clear mission for the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development, also working to obtain grants and contracts, including one recent grant for \$500,000 from the US Department of Agriculture. He has served on five search committees, many departmental committees, and has chaired four and served on ten graduate committees. Dr. Beck has also advised the Sociology honors society and was a member of the College's Strategic Planning Committee. Currently, he serves as a manuscript reviewer for several journals and is associate editor for *Southern Rural Sociology* and *Sociological Inquiry*, a member of the Task Force for Rural Education, and a Scoutmaster. We are very proud of Dr. Beck and all his hard work!

Update from Jim Nelson

Former Assistant Director for Student Affairs, Jim Nelson, visited the Stevenson Center before Thanksgiving, expressing appreciation for the continued teamwork among the Center's staff and partners, and expressing interest in alumni/students' whereabouts. He has more recently served as Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, and currently serves as Co-President of the Conference of NGOs Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security--encouraging linkage of participatory development initiatives, human rights and peace building. He and his wife, Dr. Jyl Josephson of Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, live in Jersey City, NJ. They look forward to sharing family news this holiday season. Please e-mail Jim at JimNelsonGlobal@yahoo.com.



Dr. Ali Riaz, Professor and Chair of Politics and Government

Peace Corps Official Visits Stevenson Center

Ms. Julie Driver, Program Manager of the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program, visited Illinois State University's Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development on Wednesday, September 10, to assess the progress of the Peace Corps program sponsored by the Center. Every two years, officials from the Peace Corps offices in Washington, D.C., visit Fellows programs across the country. The local program, one of the first in community and economic development, educates Applied Economics, Political Science, and Sociology students as it simultaneously provides service to governments (such as the Town of Normal) and community agencies (such as the Economic Development Council of the Bloomington-Normal Area and McLean County Community Compact/University of Illinois Extension) through graduate assistants and interns. While here, Ms. Driver met with students, faculty, community agencies, and ISU administration. "When I go around the country, I always use Illinois State as an example of how to run an excellent Fellows/USA Program," said Julie Driver.



Peace Corps Official Julie Driver with Assistant Director Beverly Beyer and Director Frank Beck

Update from the Republic of Georgia

Peace Corps Master's International Alumna Kelly Uphoff has started an organization in the Republic of Georgia to support families affected by the August 2008 South Ossetian conflict. She began her Peace Corps assignment in Gori, Georgia, in 2007. Kelly experienced first-hand a missile attack by the Russians on the village where she was staying. Once hostilities ended, Kelly became the Executive Director of the Gori Regional Education Fund (GREF). The organization's mission is to provide scholarships to students who can no longer afford to go to school in the Gori region. The price of tuition for one year at Gori University is \$1,070, and GREF hopes to sponsor at least 45 students over the next two years. "I feel a responsibility to continue to serve the people that I came here to serve and I hope that our organization is able to make a difference and help the people of the Gori region return to a normal life and a path to a better future," Kelly stated. GREF is a registered NGO in the Republic of Georgia and a partnership between the University of Georgia, Gori University, and former Peace Corps Volunteers. More information can be found at www.gorifund.org.

AmeriCorps Members

The Stevenson Center is in its fourth year of providing AmeriCorps Member status and benefits to some of our students serving in Illinois. Current members include:

- Christine Holmes is working with McLean County Community Compact, an organization that supports youth in their transition from school to careers
- Adrienne Martin is serving both Kankakee Community College and the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County
- Jessica Murphy is planning a homeless count and developing an outcome evaluation tool for the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
- Viktor Schrader is assisting the Town of Normal's Uptown Marketing Manager on a number of projects.



AmeriCorps Opening Day Ceremony, October 24, members Jessica Murphy and Adrienne Martin

Give a Gift to the Stevenson Center

We want to serve more communities and more students. Thus, reducing the cost of these services so that more underserved communities can benefit from the great work of our students is a primary goal. Donations reduce that cost. Thank you for your consideration.

Check one or Both:

Student Service to Communities

Endowment

\$10

\$15

\$25

\$50

\$100

Other \$ _____

Please send checks payable to the Stevenson Center or visit us online at www.stevensoncenter.org to make a donation.

Annual Peace Corps Conference

Assistant Director Beverly Beyer attended the annual Peace Corps Fellows/USA and Peace Corps Master's International Coordinators' Conference at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. The three-day event in late September included a number of useful sessions, a recruiting fair, and the chance to share information with coordinators from across the country. At the invitation of the Fellows/USA Program Manager, Beverly gave a brief presentation on campus relations. This semester, Illinois State signed a memorandum of cooperation to continue our Master's International Program.

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