Robert Brewer has been incorporating environmental service-learning into his Introduction to Forestry and Wildlife and Fisheries classes for seven years. The Associate Professor of Biology recognized early-on the benefits of engaging students in hands-on learning experiences to reinforce classroom instruction.

Robert partners with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to plan incredible service projects for his students. During the spring 2012 semester, his class took field trips to South Cherokee National Forest to survey the fish populations in Gee Creek and Indian Creek. Their goal was to look at species presence/absence and estimate the quantity of each species that was present. Indian Creek is downstream from a recent timber sale, which put it at risk for a loss of fish population. Fortunately, the students’ survey showed the sale had not impacted the rare species found there. Gee Creek is a popular trout fishery. The students’ survey showed that while fishing pressure had been very heavy, wild trout were still present. Surveys like those conducted by CSCC students provide important indicators that help ensure the variety of species found in regional creeks remain an active part of our eco-system.

You may be thinking, “Hmmm, wonder how they counted swimming fish?” It was not an easy task! Step one was to measure stream gradient, water temperature, conductivity, pH, substrate, and amount of woody material in the water. Step two was to block the downstream edge of the creek with a net. Step three was to strap on a backpack shocker and make three passes collecting fish from a specific stretch of stream. As fish were collected, they were identified, weighed, measured, and placed in a holding net for release after the last pass was completed.

The class also took a trip to Chilhowee Mountain to treat Hemlock trees infested with Hemlock Wooly Adelgid (HWA). HWA is an aphid-like insect that covers itself with a white, waxy “wool” coating, attaches to the base of hemlock needles, and feeds on sap until the needles fall off, causing the tree to starve to death. Treating for HWA is critical because Hemlock forests play an important role in the ecology and hydrology of the mountain’s ecosystem. They provide habitats for birds and other animals and their shade helps maintain cool water temperatures required by trout and other organisms.

Robert personally invested 50 service hours into organizing and participating in these exciting projects and eleven students invested a total of 264 service hours. Their dedication to helping preserve our environment is admirable. The U.S. Forest Service greatly appreciates the students’ volunteer service because they have limited agency resources to direct toward the tasks.

The third annual Volunteer Expo is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the L. Quentin Lane Gymnasium. Community agencies and organizations will staff display booths to share information about their needs for volunteers. Faculty members and students are encouraged to “shop” the Expo for potential service-learning partners. Everyone is encouraged to join the excitement and find out how you can volunteer!
Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Continued

Robert reflected on the projects, “Students were actively and effectively engaged in the Spring 2012 service activities. As a result, many have expressed an interest in continuing as volunteers with the Forest Service and the TWRA. One student applied for and was hired as a technician for this summer.” Students were required to keep a weekly reflection journal describing their experiences. Some of their reflection comments are provided below.

Douglas Buckner: “The field trip to Indian Creek was an interesting one. All we have done thus far has been quite an experience. Going to the cool water stream and catching all of the fish species was very satisfying. I also think I have retained enough to be able to help educate the public, given the opportunity, to understand the importance of the great outdoors. I still look forward to every class. The more I learn, the more I find myself wanting to share. It is truly an amazing class and I feel as though there should be more classes like this.”

Daniel Lawson: “A Cherokee National Forester took us to Chilhowee Mountain to treat a selected stand of hemlocks. We first measured and recorded the diameter of the tree we were treating and fitted it with a specific number on a hang tag. With a soil applicator, we injected a chemical into the soil around the tree’s base. The chemical was designed to make the starch distasteful to deter the Wooly Adelgid. In one stand we treated over 100 trees and recorded data for future treatments. I feel privileged to have been a part of this protection effort. I believe this opportunity to have been a firsthand account of the steps that need to be taken to protect our environment.”

Eric Mitchell: “Overall, this has been the most enjoyable class I have taken at Cleveland State. I am a big fan of hands-on learning and feel that I am better able to retain the information when taught in this manner. The experience of performing tasks that I could be doing (as I continue into this field) was invaluable. It reinforced my decision to pursue a degree in the wildlife and fisheries field. Also, the opportunity to interact with professionals in the field, in a relaxed atmosphere, was also invaluable. They were able to provide some fantastic insight into this profession that could not come from anywhere else.”

Elective Courses in Service-Learning

SLE 2400 and 2500
Service-Learning Project I and II
(3 credits each)
Students become involved in a semester-long service-learning project with a community service agency. Students select an existing service project or plan and implement a service project designed to meet a community need. The student reflects on their experiences in reflection seminars, online discussions, and a reflection journal/portfolio. The student completes 50 hours of service during the semester. Interested students may continue their service into a second semester taking SLE 2500 and completing an additional 50 hours of service.

SLE 2410, 2420 and 2430
Service-Learning Experience I, II, and III
(1 credit each)
Similar to Service-Learning Project I & II, these courses are designed for the student who is interested in a shorter-term service project. Students in these courses complete 20 hours of volunteer service during each semester of enrollment and reflect in monthly class seminars, online discussions, and a reflection journal.
She is the Champion...!

The CSCC Service-Learning Team proudly announces Alejandra Hoffer, Associate Professor of Spanish, as the 2012 Service-Learning Champion! The Service-Learning Champion Award is a faculty/staff nominated award honoring a fellow member who has demonstrated commitment to the promotion of service-learning.

Alejandra joined Cleveland State Community College in 2002, to “teach Spanish,” but those who know her best share the perspective of Associate Professor of Human Services/Social Work, Jana Pankey: “Alejandra Hoffer exemplifies excellence in the field of teaching. She immerses students in activities that involve service-learning, while exposing them to cultural aspects related to the courses she instructs. I have witnessed her dedication to students from tutoring, to facilitating Spanish Club meetings, to coordinating Latin Night, to sponsoring incredible international travel. To me, these experiences are invaluable and cannot be taught in the classroom setting.”

Dr. Carl Hite, CSCC President, expressed his support of Alejandra, “Living in a global society is an expression we have all heard. Alejandra Hoffer is doing her best to make sure her students are prepared to live and excel in that global society. The experiences she provides are outstanding. Her students are having an opportunity to learn a language and participate in as variety of cultural events, including travel to other countries. She truly shapes the entire student in her teaching. She is one of a kind.”

Dr. Jerry Faulkner, former V.P. Academic Affairs, also recognized Alejandra’s teaching insight, “Alejandra is an extraordinary teacher because she recognizes the value of learning that occurs outside the four walls of the classroom. We are very proud of her accomplishments.”

Each spring, Alejandra prepares students for an exciting summer semester of international service-learning by teaching the language and culture of countries they will be visiting. She also involves them in the collection of special items needed those areas. In addition to teaching classes, Alejandra coordinates Latin Night each spring. She begins her efforts one year in advance of the actual event and invests countless hours planning, making phone calls, visiting potential participants, corresponding, conducting club meetings, creating contracts, handling invoices and other paperwork, searching for gifts, and then managing the event. Latin Night draws more than 300 visitors each year and everyone who attends is treated to an evening of free authentic Mexican food, music, and dancing. Students reflect on how pleased they are to bring their families on campus to share what they are learning in class. When asked about Latin Night, Alejandra said, “It is my reward to see students enjoying the event…to see them learning and dealing with the culture…to see them in another setting with their families. Their faces show appreciation. All the work meant so much to so many students. It keeps me going.” With such effort, one might think Alejandra would have no energy to serve with colleagues for other college events, but that is not the case at all. She also invests her time into helping with the annual spring Cultural Fair.

Each summer, Alejandra dedicates a full semester to international service-learning for students of advanced Spanish courses. She frequently takes them to her home country of Chile to study, learn, and live. In 2010, the class traveled to Chile to study and help earthquake and tsunami victims. Students stayed in local homes where they learned unique aspects of Chilean culture that helped serve the population. In 2011, she led a service trip to a vocational school in the poor community of Penalolen Santiago Chile. The one-month intensive language program gave students hands-on service experience. They delivered warm clothing to students and teachers of the vocational school. They learned about careers through observing, talking and visiting with professionals in criminal justice, education, nursing, and business. One student reflected, “I learned so much about myself and my abilities. I wouldn’t exchange that experience for anything and will carry those memories with me forever. It was the perfect amount of time in the perfect place with the perfect teacher.”

In the summer of 2012, Alejandra partnered with Jason Holcomb, EMT Instructor, to take Spanish Language and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) students to San Pedro Sula Honduras for a service-learning experience with Dr. Ronald Coleman and Doctors Without Borders. Students visited patients, translated language, and
She is the Champion Continued

assisted doctors. Students also made service presentations to two community schools and one hospital.

Each fall Alejandra plans local service-learning projects for students. In fall 2010, she and six students volunteered with the Three Kings Feast at St. Therese Church, where they fed many of our community’s poor citizens. Each fall Alejandra and many of her students volunteer with Christmas Memories, where they lead children of need through two joyous hours of Christmas shopping. Alejandra also supports Taylor Elementary students. She and students purchase gifts, pack and deliver Christmas boxes. The project is open for campus-wide participation and there are often more boxes prepared than are needed. Extra boxes are then delivered to children at local women’s shelters. When schedules permit, the Spanish Club also provides a Christmas concert for Taylor students.

CSCC faculty members speak highly of Alejandra Hoffer. They refer to her tireless dedication to student learning and all the successful work she does behind the scenes without taking personal credit. They speak of her musical talent and how she often uses her guitar and voice to reinforce student learning. They recognize how she eliminates the intimidation of learning a second language, by providing hours of patient tutoring (on her own time). They describe teaching methods that give students a full Spanish experience…not just a lesson in Spanish language.

Jana Pankey said, “I think Alejandra’s service-learning activities are above and beyond required educator responsibilities and she is truly deserving of the Service-Learning Champion Award.”

Alejandra, thank you for your tireless dedication to making a difference in the lives of Cleveland State students. Congratulations on being selected as the 2012 Service-Learning Champion!

All That and a Couple of Kits!

During the fall 2011 semester, Margaret Horten, Instructor of Early Childhood Education, collaborated with Sandy Whetmore, Early Childhood Education Adjunct Instructor, and Suzanne Wood, Associate Professor of Coordinator Early Childhood Education, to identify a service-learning project for students of her Math and Science in Early Childhood Development class. Students were challenged to develop Math and Science Kits for use by Pre-K through third grade teachers at Taylor Elementary School. Margaret and Sandy invested a combined fifty hours preparing, leading, and participating in the project. Sixty students devoted a total of 600 hands-on hours researching state science and math standards and writing lesson plans based on those standards. They also identified, collected, and packed materials for the kits and delivered them to Taylor Elementary School.

Teachers at Taylor Elementary benefited from having ‘teaching ready’ kits. Elementary students benefited from visual, hands-on, fun learning opportunities. Cleveland State student reflection involved making a classroom presentation of their project, lesson plans, and materials collected for the kits. Each student also participated in a pros/cons assessment of the overall project as a way to improve the process for future students.

Margaret said, “The math and science kits project is excellent for helping students realize that becoming a teacher does not guarantee they will always have the materials needed to teach according to state standards. It helps them understand the standards and how information is taught at different grade levels. Working with Taylor also opens students’ eyes to one of the rural areas of our community and the positive impact they can make by volunteering their services now and in the future.”
The CSCC Service-Learning Team proudly announces the Nursing Faculty Team as the winner of our first Service-Learning Champion Team Award.

The rally cry, “all for one and one for all” comes to mind when we think of the CSCC Nursing Division, made up of Judy Norton, Millie Carroll, Victoria Hight, Dawn Steele, Nancy LaBine, Nancy Herrig, Nancy Thomas, Sonya Franklin, Kelly Ford, Jennifer Shearer, Lisa Ste. Marie, Maureen Baksh-Griffin, Priscilla Simms, Vickie Still, and Joyce Brock. As the first divisional team to embrace service-learning, the nursing staff has set a positive leadership example.

Nancy LaBine, Dean of Health, Wellness, and Nursing/Director of Nursing, acknowledged the team’s accomplishments, “Service-learning in the Nursing department is a team effort. Service-learning is integrated into all nursing classes. All faculty team members contribute and/or serve as mentors. In addition to leading the charge for service-learning, many of the nursing faculty members give liberally of their time to various community projects. I am very proud to be part of this dedicated team of medical and academic professionals.”

Dr. Carl Hite, CSCC President, recognized the Nursing Team’s success, “We all know how critical it is for nurses to work as a team. Our nursing faculty works together to create team opportunities for their students in their many service-learning initiatives. This is a win-win for everybody involved.”

Dr. Jerry Faulkner, former Vice President Academic Affairs, cited the compatibility of nursing and service-learning, “Nurses are servants by the very nature of their chosen profession. We are very pleased that they recognize the value of service-learning and are implementing it in such a big way.”

Working with demanding curriculums, the team incorporated their first service-learning initiative during the spring of 2009. Fourth semester students were given an option to serve 24 additional hours in their preceptorship experience. What a success! Students loved the freedom of approaching their time in area hospitals as they would a job, instead of as clinical time. The service-learning option was offered again in the fall of 2009.

Excitement began to spread throughout the department. During the fall 2010 semester, sophomores were required to identify a service-learning project. Most volunteered with local non-profit agencies and medical facilities. Some, like Rigo Sirin-Pichiya, developed independent projects. Rigo conducted free blood pressure testing, health counseling, and medical referrals for the local Hispanic community and won a national award for his project. Nancy Thomas, Associate Professor of Nursing/Evening Nursing Coordinator, reflected on the initial success of service-learning, “I am convinced that service-learning benefits the students, the community, and the college. It is a win-win-win endeavor and I hope to continue to implement it in the courses I teach.”

Freshman faculty began incorporating service-learning for the first time during the fall 2010 semester. They included service-learning as a requirement of clinical hours and allowed students to choose their own volunteer locations. Students were expected to complete a minimum of five service hours on a specific event date. Many selected the Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinic as their project, where they observed and assisted medical professionals to provide free medical, dental, and vision services. Sonya Franklin, Associate Professor of Nursing, commented on students’ dedication, “Service-learning is not about what you get out of it, but what you can give. The awesome thing is you always get more than you give when you do it with a servant’s heart.”

By spring 2011, faculty and students were convinced that service-learning offered a valuable teaching/learning opportunity and it was offered as extra credit option in all four semesters of the Nursing Program. One student was quoted as saying, “Service-learning and nursing go together like peanut butter and jelly.” Now, that’s a pretty good combination!

Freshmen who chose to participate identified their own volunteer experience and completed ten service hours. Eighty students served 800 hours during the semester. Sophomores who chose to participate completed additional 12-24 hours in their preceptorship experience, volunteered with a community agency, or developed an independent project. Twelve students served over 300 service hours during the semester. The same optional programs continued throughout the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters.

Spring 2012 saw faculty members of the evening nursing program support an exciting student-led project. Students invested 620 hours to produce No Butts!, a smoking avoidance and cessation program designed to educate middle school and elementary school students on the hazards of smoking.

Service-learning will be offered again in the fall 2012 semester as an extra credit option for all nursing students. CSCC Nursing Faculty, thank you for leading the way! Congratulations on winning the 2012 Service-Learning Team Champion Award!
Kelly Ormsby, Associate Professor of English/Learning Support, incorporated a “novel” service-learning project into her spring 2012 English Composition I class. Kelly is a strong proponent of sustainability. As a result, she designed a service-learning project that met English Composition I curriculum requirements and provided hands-on sustainability experiences.

All students were required to write their research paper on an issue related to sustainability. They were also given the option to complete a service-learning component to earn an additional five points on their research paper, plus five points on their participation grade. The project required students to volunteer two hours with an approved community group. Project guidelines also required the community group and service opportunity to have a direct tie-in to their research paper. Upon completion of the volunteer assignment, each student created an informal “poster presentation” for the last class meeting and wrote a reflection paper describing their experience.

Kelly invited local nonprofit agencies engaged in sustainability initiatives to speak to her students. Jennifer Norton, Executive Director of The Greenway Table, spoke about sustainable agriculture practices. Allan Gentry, Assistant Professor and Technology Department Chair, presented CSCC’s Zero Energy Program and other sustainability initiatives. Kelly’s enthusiasm for the sustainability project inspired her students. Six students chose to participate; four volunteered with The Greenway Table and two volunteered with The Shade Tree Board.

Kelly reflected on the impact of her project, “It really energized my teaching. The theme and local connections enriched our class discussions. Students were excited to share related experiences and observations with the class, which provided a more meaningful and engaging context for writing and research.” Kelly is already thinking of ways to make her sustainability service-learning project more robust and the service-learning team is here to support her! Great project, Kelly!

The Greenway Table

Executive Director, Jennifer Norton, started The Greenway Table of Cleveland, Tennessee in 2009. Jennifer shared the organization’s mission, “The Greenway Table believes connecting people to their food and the importance of food choices can (and has) impacted individuals and families’ health and the local economy. We encourage people to visit our website http://growchattanooga.org/foodguide for information about the food movement and farms in our region.”

Through the use of educational gardens and sustainable agriculture practices, The Greenway Table has become an ever-growing food and food-education resource for Cleveland and Bradley County. Their goal is to provide resources for teachers, space for service-learning, and an atmosphere of sustainable awareness. The agency works land in an ecological manner to leave it in better condition than it was found. They apply sustainable gardening methods that use organic seeds and plants, less fertilizer, and no unnatural chemicals. Cover crops, companion and diversity planting are also used.

The Greenway Table became a Cleveland State Community College Service-Learning Community Partner in 2009. Jennifer reflected on the partnership, “Cleveland State has been a great partner for exposure of students and establishment to our organization. From Suzanne Bennett’s knowledge and support and the maintenance crew that built our building—to Kelly Ormsby’s service-learning projects and all the volunteers we’ve met through It’s All About the Green, we are grateful for and look forward to continuing our partnership.”

The Greenway Table sponsors a number of events throughout the year to increase visibility of their mission. In October they will present their third annual Farm to Table event, where they highlight the year’s accomplishments and share plans for 2013. Local meats, cheeses, and produce will be used to create the event meal. Proceeds will be used as “seed money” for upcoming planting and educational endeavors. They also sponsored their third annual Toddlers at the Table event on June 25, where children ages 2-5 were invited to attend a free session to learn about gardening while enjoying fun, food, and friends. The organization is also hosting a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) event from May to November 2012. CSA has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from farmers. You may go online at http://www.thegreenwaytable.com/index.php/the_garden/event_list/ to read more about these and other events.

Cleveland State Service-Learning supports the mission of The Greenway Table, appreciates their partnership, and looks forward to ongoing collaborative opportunities to “Make a Difference!”
One, Two, Three Serve!

Jason Sewell, Director of Student Relations, continues to seek ways to involve students in life enhancing activities. Jason incorporated service-learning into his Success and Leadership class during the fall 2011 semester. He focused on identifying and making contact with three community agencies that depend upon volunteers—The Ark of Cleveland, The Caring Place, and The Salvation Army. He identified a specific day that all students would volunteer for three hours with the agency that best aligned with their interests. Conducting a day of service gave students something specific to look forward to and ensured there would be a team of students at each agency.

Jason shared his perspective on the benefits of incorporating service-learning, “Including a service-learning component was a great addition to my Success and Leadership class. Service-learning is such a win-win for everybody involved. Students get to break the monotony of classroom instruction by getting out into the community to serve, the agency benefits greatly from the volunteerism, and the college wins by being able to use people resources (students and employees) to give back and be involved in the community.”

The Ark of Cleveland is Bradley County’s ‘No Kill’ Humane Educational Society. Their mission includes kindness to all living beings; proper care and the need to spay and neuter animals; increasing pet adoptions; helping owners place unwanted pets; finding homes for found and rescued pets; and providing an information and referral service. Bob Caylor, President/CEO, provided this account to the Cleveland Daily Banner, “Cleveland State Community College Success and Leadership students recently visited The Ark Leave Alive Shelter. The students focused their time on Ark pets. Some of the activities they accomplished included: bathing dogs, behavioral enrichment by walking and playing with dogs, cleaning kennels, and giving lots of TLC to each dog. Ark cats were treated to play time, brushing, and thorough cleaning of their kennels. Huge thanks to this group for giving their time to Ark pets!”

The Caring Place addresses basic spiritual, physical and social needs of the disadvantaged in Bradley County, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, or disability. The agency assists low-income individuals and families by offering food, clothing, counseling, and other services. Terri Williams, Volunteer Manager, expressed the agency’s appreciation by writing, “I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and the Cleveland State Leadership class for volunteering time in the food building. The Caring Place could not assist those in need in our community without the help of volunteers. Many will be blessed by your kindness. I enjoyed working with each and every one.”

Living their motto, “Doing the Most Good,” The Salvation Army serves and ministers to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of families, individuals and emergency personnel. They are involved in community development, health services, and emergency disaster services. Gina Ballinger, Salvation Army Volunteer Coordinator, led CSCC students as they assisted with a Christmas Gift Wrap fundraiser in the Bradley Square Mall.

Jason’s personal involvement with each of the projects allowed him to hear and see student reactions. He shared, “While at the agency locations and when facilitating classroom reflection, I heard students talk about how not-for-profit organizations benefit so much from volunteers like them. They really seemed to learn and understand how necessary these organizations are and that they could not do their great work without volunteers.” Jason required all students to complete a post-service reflection paper. Some of their comments are noted below.

DeAndre Allen: I learned that you have to be committed to whatever you do in order to be a leader. I learned I am very good with animals. I would recommend The Ark as a volunteer opportunity.

Cashmere Champion: I learned that I have the ability to think outside-of-the-box from experiencing the activities. I would recommend volunteering at The Ark because it is always important to help and give back to our community.

Gerard Gore: I learned that many people are in poverty and what a good deed it is to help them. I learned I have a lot of patience because I stood for three hours packing food. I would recommend others to volunteer at The Caring Place.

Brittany Ramsey: I learned that it takes teamwork and dedication to help one another. During my experience at The Caring Place, I learned that I have the ability to help someone in need with only my time and that I can speak through my actions.

Hannah Brown: Helping people gave me a very rewarding feeling and allowed me to work with different people. I have strength in communicating with people. I would recommend volunteering with The Salvation Army. They were very friendly and showed that they care by freely donating their own time.

Meghan Smith: I learned that helping people makes a difference in more than one person’s life. It really made me feel good about myself. I learned I was very willing and eager to help out. I would recommend volunteering with The Salvation Army. It was a great experience.

Jason is looking forward to providing future student volunteer opportunities. He reflected, “This was an enjoyable experience for everyone involved and I will definitely continue to incorporate service-learning into my class.”
A Lesson on Taxes

Jim Meir, Associate Professor of Accounting, corporated the federal Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program into his fall 2011 Income Taxes class as an extra credit service-learning opportunity. VITA volunteers provide free federal income tax return preparation assistance to low income taxpayers. Jim shared his perspective, 

"The hands-on aspects of VITA should help students come full circle with the information they learn in the Income Taxes class. I think it is ideal for them to participate with a local VITA center to gain tax preparation experience in a setting with co-workers who can serve as advisors and mentors."

As a student of Jim’s Income Taxes class, Beverly Newman was the first to complete a volunteer assignment with VITA. She attended local IRS training to become a certified tax preparer and was assigned to serve at the South Cleveland Community Center. As a VITA volunteer Beverly provided the same services as a paid tax preparer. Reflecting on her experience Beverly said, “Working with VITA was a good experience for my future tax accounting career. I was amazed at how the rules learned in class related to my real world experience.”

The IRS website shares famous tax related quotes. One is from Albert Einstein, “The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax.”

Congratulations to Jim Meir for having the courage to teach an Income Taxes course and the insight to incorporate VITA as a service-learning opportunity. The service-learning team looks forward to supporting Jim as he continues to provide the VITA service option.

Service-Learning Faculty Consultants

For help incorporating service-learning, contact:
Sherry Holloway, (423) 473-2385 • Susan Webb-Curtis, (423) 614-8718
service_learning@clevelandstatecc.edu

Visit our webpage for more information:
http://www.clevelandstatecc.edu/service_learning

At our Service-Learning website, you will find community agencies looking for student volunteers and faculty partners, as well as forms, sample syllabi, and other resources to help you with your service-learning activity.