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The Promethean: Fall 2009

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The walk was almost unbearable, but not because of the difficulty of the terrain. My legs were weak purely from anticipation as my husband Seth and I dismounted our Mopeds and strode the sweaty half-mile to the rural school house. In the flurry of foreign language, we pieced together that the principal would take us to the classroom just as the school day finished. Overwhelming moments ensued as my eyes became teary at the emotion of the upcoming encounter. We were ushered into the classroom where we stood facing over forty sets of wide eyes that had probably never seen the likes of our pale, white skin. Our translator introduced us to the class and turned to us to say, “Find Aldivo.” We found him instantly, as we eyed the shyly eager young man sitting in the second row. He stepped forward placidly, and spoke only a few words as he reached out his gentle hand to meet ours. He began to kneel, seemingly out of respect, but our translator relayed that, “Aldivo would like to thank God for you, and that you have arrived safely.”

It truly was a moment of deep gratitude! We successfully made the journey of over 10,000 miles, including four flights and a five hour drive to the remote town of Waingapu on Sumba Island in Indonesia. After several months of planning, saving, and preparation, we made it.

Our relationship with Aldivo began a few years ago when we decided to sponsor a child through Compassion International. We had heard the statistics about poverty and injustice around the world. “More than 53% of the total annual deaths of children under five are related to malnutrition.” We wanted to make an impact and not contribute to the problem or feign ignorance. Through Compassion, we have been able to provide monthly financial support that goes directly to support health, education, and development for Aldivo. In addition, we have the opportunity to correspond through letters that are translated and build a meaningful relationship through this sponsorship. To be honest, it was easier to supply the financial support every month because the payment was automatic. We only wrote letters about three times per year. That was, until we met Aldivo in person and experienced the work of Compassion.

(Continued on page 3)
Welcome new and returning Honors Program students! As many of you know, I became Director of the Honors Program in August 2009 after six years of serving as the Associate Director. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the former director, Dr. Kenneth O’Brien, who is now serving as President of the SUNY Faculty Senate. Although I am certainly not a ‘new kid on the block,’ I do consider this academic year to be a new beginning. My goals for this year include not only becoming better acquainted with you, the students this program serves, but also exploring new possibilities for enriching your college experience.

Established in 1974, the mission of The College at Brockport’s Honors Program is to promote academic excellence and enrich students’ learning experience both inside and outside classroom. Our program has long benefited from the input and leadership of its students, and therefore I will continue the tradition of working closely with the student-led Honors Club and Peer Mentor Program. I also plan to establish an Honors Program advisory council comprised of faculty, staff and student members from a broad range of disciplines to assist with evaluating the success of our program and making recommendations for new initiatives. And, if you happen to have an idea or recommendation for the program, please don’t hesitate to share them with me, or use our new ‘Suggestion Box’ located in the Honors Lounge!

Lastly, it is with great pleasure that I announce the new Associate Director of our program, Dr. Priya Banerjee, who comes to us from the Department of Health Science. Some of you may recall that Dr. Banerjee served as Interim-Associate Director in spring 2008 when Dr. O’Brien was on sabbatical leave. With her impressive record of teaching, scholarship and service, we are most fortunate to have her join us on an ongoing basis! The next time you see Dr. Banerjee, be sure to congratulate and welcome her to our Honors community!

Dr. Donna Kowal, Director of Honors Program

FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK

BY DR. DONNA KOWAL

M.T. Anderson’s visit to campus on September 29th was concluded with a forty-five minute speech, including the author himself reading the first chapter from his book, *Feed*. *Feed* was the freshman read for the 2009-2010 academic year at Brockport. The gym was filled with students who had read (or were supposed to have read) the book.

Following his reading of the first chapter of *Feed*, Anderson shared several humorous anecdotes with the audience, including how the pizza delivery boy at his college turned out to be a serial killer. He then moved into a discussion about the book, sharing his opinions about his characters (which he created for the reader to care about), and also how his life influenced the novel.

Anderson admitted that he felt misrepresented as a teen, which is why he is interested in writing about teenage issues today, especially the effect media has on our society. Detouring from discussing the specifics of the book, he mentioned that we are formed by what we see and experience in our culture, which the media promotes. He shared with the audience the statistic that Americans consume 25% of what is produced in the world, while we only make up 4.5% of the world.

Perhaps the most appealing part of his speech was the ending, where he told the audience not to believe what he had said, but to instead look the information up for ourselves. This connected him to the audience and also to his book, as he left the gym saying, “Resist the feed.”
Compassion International exists to release children from poverty. By partnering with churches in many countries, Compassion hosts child development centers for entire communities. At these centers, children receive regular health check-ups, training in social and vocational skills, physical exercise, and more! We knew about Compassion on paper, but this February, we had the opportunity to experience Compassion’s success in achieving their goal. We saw the evidence of money put to good use and we saw the joy of the children as we interacted with them.

Most importantly, we realize the impact our sponsorship has on Aldivo’s life. He knows that someone cares for him, and this means “hope.” The very fact that we would be concerned about him means that he’s significant and not worthless like his circumstances tell him. So meaningful is our relationship to him that he calls us his second Mama and Papa. Aldivo was thrilled to play soccer with Papa Seth since we gave him a very special gift—his very own soccer ball! We spent many special moments together and were saddened to see the day come to an end. However, we have begun writing more frequently as we now recognize the necessity of the relationship we develop with Aldivo.

We treasure the lessons we learned in this one-day encounter. We will remember the joy and gratitude of our family in Indonesia who has far less materially but far greater courage, faith, and hope than many other families we know. Having lost two brothers to illness, Aldivo knows great loss and pain at such a young age. Yet he continues to love and hope despite great obstacles. He is indeed one less child who is suffering from the effects of poverty. He has the opportunity to triumph over poverty and in turn benefit his community, island, and country. In a recent letter, with the help of his mentor, Aldivo wrote, “Papa and Mama sponsor whom I love, my family and I are really happy with Papa and Mama’s visit to our area.”

At first I thought, “What can sponsoring just one child do to make a difference in the world?” Now I know what sponsoring one child can do to make a difference. Aldivo is able to become a difference-maker himself. We were asked to “find Aldivo” in the classroom, and what we essentially found in him was so much more. We found the potential to change a community! Think about the difference a sponsor makes in a child’s life and the ripple effect this has throughout the child’s family, community, and country.

If you would like to consider beginning a relationship with a child in need today, visit: www.compassion.com/sponsor_a_child/default.htm?referer=101933 for more information.

Ashley is an Honors transfer student in her sophomore year, studying International Business and Economics.
WASHINGTON REVELATION

BY THOMAS HAPPELL, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR

Anyone who has met me within my first three years at Brockport is likely to know that I am not the sort of person who has navigated his college career with a great deal of direction. I did not select a major until the end of my sophomore year, and when I did, my decision was based on my ability to take courses with my friends. Since the day I began my undergraduate studies, I have struggled to decide which career fields interest me. This past summer I figured out what I would like to do after college by participating in The College at Brockport’s Washington Internship Program. As a participant in the internship program, I was able to work full-time for ten weeks at Qorvis Communications, one of the largest Public Affairs agencies in the country. During my time at Qorvis, I was exposed to a wide variety of clientele and different types of client work. From writing press releases to pitching events to the media, my time at Qorvis allowed me to experience several different types of public relations work. I discovered that the type of situations I most enjoy working at are events.

Interns at Qorvis had a variety of jobs when it came to event staffing. We worked to compile media lists of appropriate people to contact to cover each event, wrote media pitches that were sent to all the people on the media lists, and worked the media sign-in table at events. Some of the events I worked at this summer included a speaking event with Ben Bernanke, a series of tennis matches starring Serena Williams and John McEnroe, and an NBC mini-series premiere.

My internship is directly responsible for helping me realize that I want to work in either a full-service advertising firm or public relations firm that has a heavy focus on event planning. I would highly encourage anyone interested in pursuing an internship experience outside of Rochester to just go for it. The opportunities and experiences possible outside the confines of Western New York are truly worth the cost of working in what is typically an unpaid position.

Submitted By Thomas Happell

SUMMER’S REWARDING EXPERIENCES

BY JESSICA GERACI, MATH MAJOR

“Camp will change your life.” Even hearing this phrase uttered in conversation at the dinner table and yelled across the Rec hall many a time during orientation doesn’t begin to explain my best summer in 18 years. At the beginning of a nine-week journey, this thought is very overwhelming. Even after adapting to the new environment of college and being exposed to all means of new things through Brockport and the Honors Program, the prospect of working with staff from all over the world and campers with needs and abilities across their respective spectrums is daunting. Luckily, it is a challenge that is most rewarding to take.

Camp Loyaltown in Hunter, NY serves developmentally disabled individuals of Nassau County. As Director Paul Cullen tells the staff on a regular basis, the two weeks the individuals spend at camp are the best two weeks of their year. Fortunately for the camp’s staff, we have the privilege of gaining just as much from those two weeks as the campers do. Even though 23-hour workdays and non-verbal, autistic, or wheel-chair bound campers make the job seem exhausting, daunting, and overwhelming, my days have never been more meaningful. Never have I had such a positive outlook on life and a concrete example of how great a difference one person can make in the world.

Although summer camp counselor is a typical job description for a high school or college student, working at Camp Loyaltown is so much more than a job. The staff at Loyaltown is a group of the kindest, most generous, and most caring people I’ve ever met. Being part of an organization that strives to enrich the lives of individuals means that every single person you meet will be willing to support, love, and motivate in ways you never dreamed possible. By the end of the summer, I became a firm believer that changing people’s lives is the best way to change your own.
Since arriving at Brockport as a freshman three years ago, I have spent progressively less time in my hometown of Penn Yan, New York, as my educational career has taken precedence. However, this past summer, I had the unusual opportunity to pursue an internship in my field in the very town I grew up in. For two months, from July through August, I interned at the Yates County Arts Center in Penn Yan, gaining experience in my potential future career of arts administration. A gallery that also offers workshops and classes, the Center is a place I have been many times, but only as a student. This summer I had the chance to see the other side of the organization.

I was involved in many administration activities, from everyday tasks such as processing mail and writing invoices to learning about grant writing. I helped to hang the art for the Center’s August show, *Potpourri*, and attended board meetings. I came to understand how the Center functioned on different sources of funding, and how volunteer and paid employees worked together to keep the organization running. Through these activities, I gained a deeper comprehension of both arts administration and of my suitability for a possible career in this field.

The highlight of my internship activities, however, was planning a new community outreach event called Celebrate Art Family Fun Day. This one-day event included seven hands-on art workshops in two locations, live music, and various art demonstrations. I was responsible for publicity, ordering refreshments, calling volunteers, etc.; coordinating everything was complex but richly rewarding. About 150 people attended the event, and many commented on how much they enjoyed their day. Through the organization and planning, I learned the qualities of organization and multitasking that are essential to arts administration. I also realized that I enjoy non-profit work, and find it deeply rewarding to provide a service that enriches the lives of others.

When looking for internships, I had begun my search in the Rochester area, yet the Arts Center internship turned out to be the perfect fit for me. I believe I had more opportunities to explore aspects of arts administration in Penn Yan than I would have had in other circumstances. At the Center, my director, Fran, had known me for years, and thus trusted me with more responsibility than I might have found elsewhere. Placed in charge of Celebrate Art, I was able to realize how much I enjoy non-profit service work. In a relaxed small-town setting, I was allowed greater involvement with many more activities than I might have in the city, and I thus received a more well-rounded introduction to arts administration. Sometimes the best opportunities turn up in the most unexpected places.
**Peer Mentoring: The View From Both Sides**

Compiled By Justin Jackson, History Major

The Honors Peer Mentoring system is a unique program specifically designed to welcome and support new Honors students into the Program and The College at Brockport as a whole. Both mentors and mentees receive valuable knowledge that contributes to their overall college experience. Below are unique perspectives from both sides of the peer mentoring experience:

**The Mentor Experience:**

“The program helps not just the mentee, but also the mentor. The leadership skills and experience gained in the program help you down the road. I love being able to be seen as someone the mentees can talk to and easily relate with.”

~Bethany Young, Senior

“Being a mentor looks great on a resume and I know that I have personally talked about it in interviews. It’s a great example of leadership and community service and a way to give back to the program.”

~Amanda Wood, Senior

**The Mentee Experience:**

“It is more personal than most APS classes, and it is much easier to ask questions of your peers than it is to ask a professor. The mentors have recently gone through what we are just experiencing, and this also makes the discussions easier. They are usually informative and know how to help. I would like to become a peer mentor. My peer mentors thus far have been helpful and friendly. It seems like a good way to get involved in the Honors Program.”

~Amanda Napieralski, Freshman

**FAQ From Freshman Mentees**

Q: “How do I access my DARS? What is a DARS?”

A: A DARS report tells you all of the course requirements for your major and general education. It indicates the classes you have taken, the classes you need to take, and the classes you are taking right now. You can find your DARS report on Banner. Select the Student Services tab, then the Student Records option, then DARS audit. Choose “submit an Audit” to see your updated report. You can use this report in constructing your four-year plan and your schedule for the upcoming semesters.

Q: “How do I sign up for intramurals?”

A: Visit Brockport.edu/recservices. Under the Intramural Sports Tab there is an option called Registration Directions. You can also visit Rec Services in Tuttle at the Hub or by calling 585-395-5081.

Q: “What do I have to do to stay in the Honors Program?”

A: In your first two years at Brockport, you must take three Honors Courses in addition to Honors 112. Most of these courses satisfy some General Education Requirement. If your General Education requirements are filled, you can create your own Honors course with permission from the director. In your Junior and Senior years, you must take Honors Contemporary Issues, Junior Colloquium, and produce an Honors Thesis (HON 490). Keep these requirements in mind when structuring your four-year plan. You must also maintain a 3.25 GPA and take one Honors course per year to remain active in the program.
“Well, O’Brien, what did you do on your summer vacation?”

“What summer vacation?” I answer.

This isn’t a complaint you understand, since my loss of a summer was self-inflicted, a product of my willingness to run for President of the University Faculty Senate (UFS) and then, to be elected. As an adult, I’ll gladly accept the responsibility for my actions. But, even if this summer has been without a “vacation,” it certainly has been interesting. So, when Justin Jackson, co-editor of the Honors Newsletter, asked me to write a short piece telling you all what my new job (life?) is like, I thought it might be interesting to offer a summary of what it has involved so far.

You may not know it, but SUNY has a new Chancellor, an experienced educator/administrator named Dr. Nancy Zimpher, who was convinced to leave the University of Cincinnati where she served as President for the past five years and come to Albany. A month before my “first official day,” I was called to Albany for the Chancellor’s first news conference, part of a gathering of fifty faculty from across the system who were invited to attend the public event. The press conference, where the Chancellor announced her pending 64 campus tour, was followed by a private lunch with the faculty, during which she moved easily from table to table, introducing herself, and she then answered any and all questions from the floor.

Her direct answers reassured the assembled faculty members that we have a Chancellor who understands the nature of public higher education, appreciates the importance of all teaching and research faculty, and carries with her a set of goals that seeks to put SUNY at the heart of the revitalization of the state’s struggling economy. In addition, she has a special passion for fixing the leaky educational pipeline. In New York, more than 30% of those who enter 9th grade do not graduate four years later, a stunning figure that illustrates the annual loss of talent and skills so sorely needed if we are to share a healthy economic future.

My job has many parts, and my first task was to learn more, particularly about the SUNY system and its constituent elements. When I was offered a chance to tag along on a number of stops on the Chancellor’s much-publicized tour, I quickly accepted, adjusting my schedule to match hers. In the end, I joined the caravan for 7 stops, visiting every SUNY sector except doctoral centers. The Chancellor is now using much of what she learned on her stops across the state to begin to craft a Strategic Plan. This is a daunting task, since it involves melding many different institutions, each with a distinct history, campus culture, and set of programs into a unified plan.

With 64 campuses stretching from the eastern end of Long Island to Fredonia in the west, from Plattsburgh and Potsdam in the far frozen north to Nassau and Suffolk Community Colleges on Long Island, SUNY is characterized by a wildly diverse array of institutional missions and programs. Despite this diversity, however, there is also something called “SUNY,” a system that promises to be more than just a collection of its many parts, which is why the Chancellor has committed herself, her team, and the University to create a focused Strategic Plan for SUNY by the spring. This is an incredibly tight time-line, with seven planned meetings across the breadth of New York in mid-winter, each to be attended by more than 200 people.

Another part of my job is to represent faculty on a variety of occasions, such as that first news conference, represent faculty as a member of the SUNY Board of Trustees, the body that sets policy for the entire system, represent faculty on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, and represent faculty as one of the seventeen members of the Chancellor’s Executive team. So, I will be speaking at the Student Assembly’s meeting this fall in Binghamton, as well as at a similar meeting of community college faculty.

To do this, I travel. A good part of my time is spent in Albany, where I have an office overseen by a superb office staff member, and part of my time is spent in Brockport, where I have the office in Morgan (and part of a wonderful secretary’s time).
Since I’m still teaching HON 395 “Junior Honors Colloquium” this semester, a large part of my time is spent traveling by car, train, or in the air (which is where I am as I write this), from one place to another.

And when away from home, I live out of hotel rooms, sterile environments that try above all else not to offend. And, like all modern folk who work from the road, I carry my Blackberry, my iPod, and a small computer so that I’m almost never out of touch. Not fun! Still, no Facebook or MySpace, so maybe there is still hope.

Another part of my job is to administer, which in this case means making certain that the internal operations of the UFS (which meets three times during the year) function as well as possible. Last month, for example, I planned and hosted the Fall Planning Conference for the Senate, which is where each of the seven standing committees met and hammered out their agenda items for the upcoming year. My job included setting an agenda for the meetings, arranging for common sessions as appropriate and making certain that every member of each committee left the meeting with a clear understanding of the work of their committee, their role in that work and a genuine sense of the totality of work the committees were undertaking this year.

I am also the person the Chancellor or her staff comes to for recommendations of faculty to serve on University committees, an important task, and one made impossible by the fact that I know so few of the 17,000 teaching faculty in SUNY. I’m still learning how to rely on the people I do know for recommendations.

So, what is this new job? I’m still not sure; it’s a work in progress. I know it’s not the kind of presidency where I can order anything to happen, but it might be the kind where I have a voice in the most important decisions the University administration will be making. The job will surely change after the Strategic Planning process concludes this spring, when there will probably be another issue or System initiative that will demand my attention. We already have a budget crisis – $90 million to be cut in the current budget – with more to come.

In all that I do, however, because of the time I have spent with you I remember that our real job is the education of almost a half million students, each of whom has come to SUNY with their own story, their skills, their dreams, and their goals. As a public university of many parts, SUNY has been designed to serve all those varied needs, maybe even transforming them, and in the process – this is the touchstone of public higher education – enriching all of us, students, faculty, and citizens alike.

In its simplest terms, I guess my job is to facilitate that education by adding faculty voices to decision-making processes, and by reminding members of the SUNY administration and the Board of Trustees what is happening on the ground, on our campuses and in our classrooms, labs, libraries, offices and residence halls across the system. That is where the real work, yours, mine and ours, is taking place.

Dr. Kenneth O’Brien
President, University Faculty Senate
**THE CREATIVE HONORS STUDENT: ART AND POETRY**

**My Mind**
By Amber Karpie

Is it just empty space of theories,
Or a failing abyss, full of impacts
Raining down to erode loneliness,
From those who encircle it like doves,
Breathing in through where creativity lacked,

Or could it be a crumpled piece
Of cheap lined paper, renewable,
Reusable, hardly recycled or saved,
Mass manufactured for the demand,
Always torn and bent for its master,

Maybe a dream from a sleepless night,
Drumming over heartbeats,
It shakes the soul, instituting its
Primitive existence, its hallow voice,
Shaping the time around itself into halos,

It could be as real as the reality in textbooks,
Created to frighten and display limits,
Of numbers and facts as simple acts of nature,
In this place of chaos, where it’s the only
Place of escape.

**Effervescent**
By Charity Henderson

**Id Engager**
By Elise Micale

**Self Portrait**
By Laura Schmitt
Who Is
By Amber Karpie

Who is to say  
Where blame may lay  
Or when happiness will free another day  

Who is to know  
Where flowers go  
After frozen by winter’s blanket of snow  

Who is to care  
If no one’s there  
Pausing a moment that’s not yet shared  

Who is to hold  
When skin stays cold  
And fingers untouched do as they’re told  

Who is to kiss  
After a love so missed  
Walking from temptation too large to resist  

Who is to fly  
And never ask why  
How to rise above tears once they are cried  

Who is to fall  
As others stand tall  
Reaching for those unable to call  

Who is to live  
Longer than those who did  
Touching the world of evils to rid  

Who is to pray  
A small moment each day  
Holding hands together in dreaming as they lay

Seasons Change
By Kyle Fuller

The sky is cloudless  
Warm sun beating on my face  
Summer, stay with me.
Contribute to the honors newsletter!

The Honors Program Newsletter is a publication dedicated to the Honors Program faculty, students, and alumni. Articles are written by Honors students and are designed to provide information to the Honors community. Content will include a variety of topics, including research, Honors program news and events, student and professor spotlights, experiences, and creative work. For submissions or more information, please contact Justin Jackson at jjack4@brockport.edu.

Honors Program Newsletter:
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