

Honors Student
Association

West Chester
University

HSA

Happenings

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Happenings in Honors

Aid to South Africa

The Honors Student Association's eleventh annual Aid to South Africa event will take place Sunday, April 17, 2016 from 12 – 4 PM. This carnival-style event, complete with games, raffles, prizes, inflatables, arts and crafts, and family fun, raises money and awareness for four beneficiaries located in South Africa.

During the past seventeen years, six delegations totaling over 150 WCU Honors students, faculty, and staff have traveled to South Africa every other year to conduct community-needs assessments and outreach in severely destitute areas. Aid to South Africa began in 2005 as an academic Honors capstone project and has since raised over \$70,000. The Honors College is traveling this year to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa to deliver the funds raised from the event.

The overarching goal of Aid to South Africa is to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to this day in South Africa. Through informative exhibits at the event, the Honors College brings two communities together – West Chester and South Africa – to unite for one common good. If you aren't able to donate to the event, please consider attending Aid to South Africa to learn more about how to make a difference. Visit wcupa.edu/AidtoSouthAfrica to learn more about donations, sponsorships, and more. Organizations benefitting from our donations include:

Nederburg Primary School: A rural school for grades K-8 north of Cape Town. Support in the past has included school supplies (pencils, chalk, notebooks, books for the fledgling library), shoes (not a standard component of their school uniforms), gardening supplies to support a peace vegetable garden, and sponsorships for student athletes to participate in regional and national competitions.

H.E.L.P. Ministries Soup Kitchen: Prepares 6,000 bowls of soup daily and personally delivers soup to eight primary schools in South Africa. School children, and many community members, receive a cup of a soup and a slice of bread everyday. For many, this is their only daily meal.

Nkosi's Haven: Named in honor of young AIDS activist Nkosi Johnson, Nkosi's Haven provides holistic care and support for AIDS orphans as well as impoverished HIV/AIDS women and their children. By serving both children and adults, Nkosi's Haven strengthens the bond between parent and child and creates a safe family environment to flourish in.

Mosaic: Their mission is to develop and implement a self-sustainable model to take care of orphans in South Africa. They provide housing and job opportunities for families that take in two or more orphans. Mosaic continues to support these families by providing skills training for the adults, after school programs for the children, and a safe environment for the entire family.

Photos from Last Year's Event!



Don't forget to "like" our Aid to South Africa page on Facebook! Hope to see you there!

~Taylor McCahan, Aid to SA PR Chair



Alternative Spring Break

Our very own members, Andrew Phillips (trip leader) and Sami Stalford (trip member), selflessly gave their time to help the local community through West Chester University's Alternative Spring Break program over this past Spring Break.

While many students decided to travel internationally for their spring break or spend time with family and friends, a number of students across campus chose to embark on WCU's Alternative Spring Breaks. Some students went to Pittsburg, PA to work with the AIDS Task Force, while others traveled with Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge. We chose to do something a little bit unconventional. Alongside six other WCU students, we spent our week in the heart of Philadelphia, PA working with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's CityHarvest Program, Heritage Farm, and the Stenton Family Manor Hope Garden. Working on these urban farms and community gardens helped to support efforts to provide nutrition, education, and green space for Philadelphia residents. This work is so important because many economically disadvantaged Philadelphians lack access to nutritious produce, and consequently suffer disproportionately from disease, malnutrition, and learning deficits. Some of the beneficiaries of produce from the farms we worked with include community members, food pantries, and housing programs.

This trip was an excellent opportunity for West Chester students to be exposed to and learn about the food system of Philadelphia. Furthermore, gaining insight into complex issues helps produce change-makers who can more effectively work to resolve daunting problems facing people around the world. While we worked throughout the week, neighbors gathered to praise the return of gardening season. It was clear to us that these urban farming efforts have created a positive space of community development for Philadelphians. We may not have traveled far, but it was that which made all the difference. It reinforced the idea that students are best equipped to make a difference through sustained service, where they can become skilled and contribute significantly to the wellbeing of others. These skills can then be carried to help face larger issues in more afflicted areas around the world. ~*Samantha Stalford, junior*



The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs sponsor Alternative Spring Breaks each year. If anyone is interested in attending a volunteer trip next year, keep your eyes peeled for their postings on the website, www.wcupa.edu/_Services/stu.slv/altBreak.aspx.

PASSHE Trip 2016

Each year, two students from each of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's (PASSHE) Honors programs apply and are selected to embark on an educational and culturally enriching trip. This year, two of our very own members, junior Jackie Giovinazzo and sophomore Sigfried Aragona, were chosen to go on the 2016 trip where they will be traveling along the Camino de Santiago in Spain. Sigfried graciously shared with us some of his thoughts for this upcoming experience.

What are your expectations for the trip?

Honestly, I don't know what to expect for this trip. The director of the trip this year is IUP's Honors Director, Caleb Finegan. He even stated that summing up one's experience on the traditional pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago, is extremely difficult. I am prepared and keeping an open mind about the trip since it will be a tremendous human experience full of opportunities for growth and adventure.

What are you excited about most?

I am most excited about traveling to a different country. I haven't been outside the U.S. since I was three years old to go to the Philippines, so this is my first time in Europe. I am also excited to meet people from all over the world during this trip along the Camino. I'm excited to learn about myself, and the world during this unique travel experience.

What will you be doing on your trip?

Right after Finals Week, Jackie and I will be heading to IUP to complete some research about the history and value of pilgrimages, as well as the role of spirituality in the human experience. After that, we will be travelling to Spain in which we will be walking 15 miles everyday for 2 weeks from the city of Leon to Santiago de Compostale, walking the same trail monks, royalty, and peasants have walked in medieval times. After our walk, we have a class with representatives from the other PASSHE Honors colleges and discuss various themes surrounding pilgrimages and journeys. We will then spend the night at a hostel, encountering people from all over the world, and do this every night until we reach our final destination, the sacred burial site of St. John.



What do you hope to gain from this trip and your experience?

I hope to gain a richer appreciation for the world. This is a very broad and vague statement, but I want to experience the world in a genuine way by meeting a diverse set of people, testing my body in nature, and deliberating philosophical topics. This trip will surely be a rich, deep development in human spirit and mentality, molding an open-minded perspective on life and the world.

Social Media Spotlight: @good_vibes_eatery

In a world where social media is a staple in everyone's day-to-day lives, it is nice to see people using the World Wide Web to benefit others in the community. Rachel Dodson, a sophomore nutrition and dietetics major and member of HSA and the honors program, started a food blog on Instagram to do just that.



What were your motivations for starting your food blog?

I really wanted to start a blog where I can talk about life, share recipes, and support local businesses, and I thought the best way to start was sharing posts through Instagram.

What do you hope to give to your followers and the community through your blog?

I hope my account can promote and encourage people to support local businesses and shop local. West Chester has a pretty awesome food scene and it deserves our support. I hope the community is inspired to eat a little healthier because it doesn't have to be extremely difficult. For me, it is a daily reminder to strive for balance. With this blog as a basis, I plan on writing some sort of cookbook for my capstone- whether it is geared towards eating healthy in college, the patients of the diabetes prevention class I volunteer for, a recipe and self esteem book for the YMCA program *Girls on the Run*, or for some other part of the community I am involved in.



Follow @good_vibes_eatery on Instagram to see more of Rachel's healthy eating recipes and learn more about the local businesses in West Chester's community!

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Upcoming Events and Service Opportunities

Executive Board Elections- April 14

Aid to South Africa- April 17

ODK Outstanding Faculty Nomination Ceremony- April 20

Relay for Life- April 23

HSA Banquet- May 1

Please contact Jaclyn Giovinazzo at JG813126@wcupa.edu for upcoming HSA service opportunities!

HSA Happenings is a student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association. Its purpose is to supplement the West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.

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