There is a concept in Judaism called, *Tikkun Olam* which means roughly 'repair the world'. Often in acts of service one finds themselves repairing or mending something or someone or more precisely working to repair that which is torn, frayed, under-funded, under-served, marginalized and ostracized. Yet, anyone who engages in service knows it to be an act of mutuality not of meekness. Service is not just an act of giving from those who have more to those who have less. It is a conversation. A dance. A dialogue of needs and wants. Individual capabilities and Community needs. Community Resources and Personal Resourcefulness. Wants and Needs.

In the four months since I arrived to take over the Office of Academic Service-Learning from Dr. Kathy Stacey, who led this office and University to the national forefront of service education and innovation, I have felt most days to be a dance between our resources and the direness of the community’s needs. Despite the overwhelming struggles of the community, I am more convinced of the University’s place in helping to transform and empower it.

What Dr. Stacey has built over the past five years is an office which trains faculty in academic service-learning methodology, yet also houses several groundbreaking community outreach programs in youth development. AS-L also serves as a University resource or coordinator for: LBC; Michigan Service Scholars; Rollins College Exchange; Michigan Campus Compact Faculty / Staff Awards; Carnegie Classification Application, AmeriCorps VISTA Community Liaison, Non-Profit Summit and Career Fair, and the Southeast Collaborative. Dr. Stacey and her predecessor Dr. Rice have built an office of both national distinction and local notoriety.

In an effort to synthesize my own work in theatre for social change and community based performance with AS-L, we have built upon AS-L’s YYEA (Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act) Board by developing a program which generates youth voice by bringing together youth from around the city (CrossTown) and using theatre as means to share their stories and foster community. CrossTown will intersect with my Winter 09 Community Performance course. The B. Side (Business Side of Youth), a grant-funded program now in its second year, continues to be a powerful and dynamic presence among area youth as a program which supports youth entrepreneurial endeavors, and initiates youth driven business all intended to support the Ypsilanti economy. You will hear more from Crosstown, YYEA and The B. Side later in this newsletter.

I hope to sustain the caliber and the creativity of AS-L as well as develop new faculty initiatives in AS-L interdisciplinary projects and programs, seek avenues to support Service-Learning Scholarship, and continue our partnership with Rollins College in Orlando, FL as we work to develop a ‘Nation Abroad’ program which hosts AS-L courses (with faculty) in various cities and towns nationwide.

I am honored to begin my journey at AS-L. Thus far, it has been filled with energy, possibilities and a trailblazing team of professionals, graduate and undergraduate students all dedicated to bettering our community and ‘repairing’ the world.

Jessica ‘Decky’ Alexander, Director
Office of Academic Service-Learning
734.487.6570, jalexande1@emich.edu
Fall 09 Faculty Fellows

During the Fall 2008 Semester, a new group of faculty received training as Academic Service-Learning Faculty Fellows. They met weekly and were exposed to the latest scholarship in service learning as well as learn how to integrate an academic service-learning experience into their respective courses. Each Faculty Fellow receives one course release time, a weekly two-hour seminar, laughter, challenge, collegiality and guidance in crafting a course which includes an AS-L experience. The Fall 2008 Faculty Fellows are: Guey-Meei Yang and Beth Ament, Dept. of Art; Myung-Sook Koh and Steve Camron, Dept. of Special Education; John Drake, Dept. Of Computer Information Systems and Diana Wong, Dept. of Management.

The Fall 2008 Seminar is conducted by Robert Simmons III, assistant Professor, Teacher Education (curriculum and instruction). Dr. Simmons has both developed several service learning programs and written extensively on service-learning methodology. He is currently coordinating through support from Michigan Campus Compact: a collaborative service-learning project with Young Detroit Builders, and a project with Detroit Service-Learning Academy. His paper “Where is the connection between service-learning and Urban Communities: Using critical pedagogy to frame the context” was accepted by the Urban Review.

The Office of Academic Service-Learning provides support for faculty to plan, implement and assess AS-L in their courses. If you are interested in applying to be a Faculty Fellow for Fall 2009, please contact us at 487-6570 or msage@emich.edu.

The Office of AS-L’s Community Outreach Programs

The Office of Academic Service-Learning has developed several grant-based programs to serve the youth and community of Ypsilanti. Among these programs are: YYEA (Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act) including CrossTown Theatre Troupe and the YYEA Action Board and The B. Side: The Business Side of Youth with B. Side Basics, Young Moguls, B. Side Enterprises and more. Read below or visit www.emich.edu/asl for additional information.

Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act (YYEA)

Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act (YYEA) is entering its sixth year with the Office of AS-L. YYEA seeks to change the way the youth voice is heard by taking action and promoting engagement and decision making in the community.

New this year is the YYEA CrossTown Theatre Troupe. The CrossTown Theatre Troupe is a program designed to help stimulate the youth voice through the use of theatre. Youth who participate gain a better understanding of interactive theatre, improvisational skills and theatre for social change. The CrossTown Theatre Troupe will perform original pieces reflective of their community with the goal of inciting its audience to participate in community based dialogue.

CrossTown Theatre Troupe works in collaboration with Ozone House Drop-In Center in providing this service to community youth. Troupe members also are given the opportunity to participate in free workshops presented by EMU graduate students. If you would like to contact the CrossTown Theatre Troupe you can email the new directors: Jenny Sawtelle-Koppera and Shella Kelsey at cross-towntheatre@gmail.com or by calling the Office of Academic Service-Learning at 734-487-6570. Check the CrossTown Theatre Troupe out in their first performance at the MLK celebration January 19, 2009 at the EMU Student Center!
The B. Side: The Business Side of Youth

The B. Side: The Business Side of Youth stimulates business and professional skills and encourages creative and intelligent risk taking and instills financial independence and community responsibility in youth ages 13-20, within the economically depressed community of the greater Ypsilanti area.

The B. Side achieves this through:

● Developing a mentorship program among youth, Eastern Michigan University (EMU) faculty and students and business leaders in the community
● Offering curriculum (B. Side Basics) and community based-programs, drop-in consultation and training and community-based events focusing on youth entrepreneurship, career development and leadership
● Creating partnerships among schools, businesses, nonprofits, institutions of higher education, government entities, and community members to support youth-run enterprises (Digital Inclusion and B. Side Store)
● Providing an incubator space for entrepreneurial training, displaying and selling youth-produced work and operating youth businesses
● Developing a system of micro-lending for youth owned businesses (Young Moguls Club).

The vision of The B. Side is to establish a youth-driven entrepreneurial and leadership culture that provides economic opportunities and stimulates the desire for academic rigor and perseverance to graduation for Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County area youth. The B. Side worked with over 150 youth entrepreneurs, community leaders, business owners, and college students in its pilot year 2007-2008.

Digital Inclusion

The B. Side launched its first B. Side Enterprise this Fall. On October 18th, 2008 Digital Inclusion opened with a contract from Washtenaw County. Under this contract Digital Inclusion will refurbish 86 computers. The refurbishment includes cleaning the units, troubleshooting and loading new operating systems. Digital Inclusion employs one site supervisor, Victor Tran an EMU student, and 9 youth from the surrounding community. Digital Inclusion is currently working out of an office at the College of Business. The program will end this first session in mid December and will pick up again in Winter 2009 with a new group of youth. We have big plans for Digital Inclusion, and are looking to take it to a whole new level by Summer 2009.

The B. Side Welcomes New Director Jack Bidlack

There is something different about The B. Side. In late September, a new Program Director stepped in after Shamyle Nesfield returned to school to pursue her law degree at Wayne State University. Her replacement, Jack Bidlack, comes to the program from the small business community. He has owned and operated two small businesses in retail for 20 years. Jack received his Bachelors of Business Administration from Eastern Michigan in 1992 and will wrap up his Masters Degree in Human Resources and Organizational Development by Summer 2009. Jack is also a longtime resident of Ypsilanti with a willingness to help youth develop the skills and knowledge in the business world. We welcome Jack and look forward to working with his creative vision and energy.

Joining Jack Bidlack and Assistant Director Angelino Hamilton Broderick this fall is Graduate Assistant Angelos Fitzpatrick. Angelos is working as the Community Coordinator for The B. Side and will be involved with all elements of The B. Side Program to ensure community collaborations and participation.
The mission of EMU’s Office of Academic Service-Learning is to build the infrastructure which will support students, faculty, administrators and community members in their efforts to implement academic service-learning experiences within their curriculum.

Michigan Service Scholars- Student Teachers

In partnership with Michigan Campus Compact and AmeriCorps, EMU was selected to pilot the second Michigan Service Scholarship Award for Student Teaching. Those selected to participate will be required to integrate a Service-Learning Project into their student teaching curriculum. Students who complete their student teaching (and thus the 300 hours of required service) and a service-learning project will receive a $1,000 educational award. This pilot program kicks off in Winter 2009 with 25 student scholars. MSS Student Teachers is being coordinated by the Office of AS-L and professors Wendy Burke and Robert Simmons in Teacher Education.

MCC Venture Grants

Michigan Campus Compact’s Venture Grants are financial awards ranging from $1,000-$3,500 and are available to individuals or groups from MCC member campuses who wish to develop or expand community service programs, service-learning opportunities, and/or civic learning activities. Community service includes volunteer activities/projects which meet the needs of the community. Service-learning integrates within the academic curriculum a thoughtfully organized service experience and provides structured opportunities for students to think, talk, or write about their service participation (reflection). Civic learning includes engaging students in a public purpose, social action, advocacy, community-based research, citizenship and/or renewing the civic mission of higher education. **Deadline: December 1, 2008**

For application details visit: www.micampuscompact.org /grants.asp

Upcoming Events

- **December, 2008**
  - AmeriCorps VISTA Charlene Martin begins her year long appointment as EMU’s Community Outreach Liaison

- **December 1, 2008**
  - MCC Venture Grants Due

- **December 20, 2008**
  - B. Side Basics Fall Graduation and Showcase

- **January-April, 2009**
  - AS-L Faculty Fellows Winter Seminar

- **January 10, 2009**
  - Gorilla Tactics: Gorilla-Con Charity Gaming Event Benefiting The B. Side as well as other organizations

- **January 19, 2009**
  - MLK 2009 Celebration
  - CrossTown Theatre Troupe performs