A Note from the Director

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade. –Chinese Proverb

In the past year and a half, the Office of AS-L has been planting a lot of trees and in various fields, terrains and towns. The trees have different planters and caretakers: from a trio of high school age youth determined to launch their own line of bags and clothing; to a professional staff member who successfully navigated internships in 20 local businesses and non-profits for over 50 youth; to an MFA graduate student who through passion and tenacity has laid the groundwork for a youth theatre troupe focusing on youth voice and a faculty member in World Languages who believed that engaging in service could assist his ESL students in language acquisition and comprehension.

In this newsletter there are highlights from our thriving and growing B. Side program, anecdotes from our first CAS-L grant recipients and details on the expansion and rooting of CrossTown Theatre Troupe for youth. Our hope in the Office of AS-L is to continue planting trees for many generations so that they can seek shade, climb, or build castles.

Nation Abroad

Nation Abroad Academic Service-Learning Program, is a pilot collaborative project between EMU’s Office of Academic Service-Learning and Rollins College’s Office of Community Engagement supported through funding and guidance from the RNR Foundation. Nation Abroad is similar to a study abroad experience providing students with opportunities to experience other cultures, languages, foods and customs, yet within the continental United States, and most importantly through engaged and meaningful service.

In this Summer 2009 pilot, EMU Professor of World Languages James Perren developed a course entitled: Nation Abroad: World Languages Service Learning. Both undergraduate and graduate students in ESL (English as a Second Language); international students required to take ESL courses; foreign language students and a graduate student in educational theatre participated. The goal of the course was to provide students with the chance to combine critical thinking with practical multilingual communication opportunities as they make an active contribution to society. Faculty and students joined community agencies, programs and projects in the local area to participate in service opportunities while meeting course outcomes and goals. The students engaged in authentic language experiences in world languages (English, Spanish and regional dialects) as used outside the classroom through projects with some of Rollins’ community partners including Immokalee Seminole Reservation and Apopka Farming. The service projects, required in an AS-L experience, were intense, rigorous and met needs defined by the partners.
CAS-L Grants

The Office of Academic Service-Learning implemented the Community Academic Service-Learning (CAS-L) grants for the first time this fall. The CAS-L grant program supports programming expenses related to innovative AS-L class programs/projects at EMU. We recognized that in order to implement an AS-L course or experience, materials and/or travel expenses are necessary. This program is intended to ease a barrier of initiating and implementing AS-L courses and projects. In Fall 2009, Paul J. Ramsey and Susan Badger Booth were both awarded CAS-L Grant funds to support their strong community and academic service-learning experiences. See below for more details.

CAS-L Grant funds are still available for Winter 2010. Please visit www.emich.edu/asl or email msage@emich.edu for more information and applications.

Paul J. Ramsey, AS-L in Social Foundations Courses

Paul J. Ramsey is conducting a study of the use of academic service-learning components in social foundations courses. While many undergraduate students are quite engaged with social foundations content, they sometimes have difficulty seeing how the material better prepares them for life in the classroom. An academic service-learning requirement could help bridge this divide between theory and practice for students, as well as provide a useful service to the community. Currently, Dr. Ramsey is teaching two sections of the same undergraduate foundations course (SOFD 328W), one with a service-learning requirement and the other without. Through a comparison of course evaluations, surveys, and student work (including reflection journals purchased with the CAS-L grant), it is hoped that this small-scale experiment generates some useful data to add to the growing literature on academic service-learning in education courses.

Susan Badger Booth, AMPlifying the Arts

The Arts Management and Administration Program and the AMPlifying the Arts Student Organization, in collaboration with Campus Life, hosted a 2-day festival of campus arts and culture November 18 & 19, 2009. AMP connects student artists and student arts organizations with performance spaces and campus audiences. CanArt is a centerpiece of the Amplifying the Arts Festival. CanArt sculptures are large-scale art pieces made out of cans of food as a creative way of bringing attention to National Hunger and Homelessness Week and the desperate need to keep area food banks stocked. Teams of students built CanArt sculptures in three campus buildings: the Student Center, Halle Library and the College of Business. During the festival, a panel of professional artists will be judging these sculptures for creativity, interpretation of theme and creative use of the cans. Teams of students include: VISION, Greek Life, SAHAH (Students Against Hunger and Homelessness), IGG – Intermedia Gallery Group, and CEO Club of the Entrepreneurship Programs. This year AMPlifying the Arts collected nearly 7,800 cans! In addition to CAS-L Grant funds, cans of food have been donated from local supermarkets Meijer and Busch’s. After the festival was completed, all cans were distributed to the EMU Children’s Institute and to Food Gathers (www.foodgatherers.org), a local food bank, as part of their holiday food drive.

APPLY NOW!

CAS-L Grant funds are still available for Winter 2010. Please visit www.emich.edu/asl or email msage@emich.edu for more information and applications.
The Business Side of Art: The B. Side of A

This past summer, with support from Michigan Works!/ETCS, The B. Side piloted the B. Side of A Summer Youth Employment Program. The B. Side of A focused on skills-development in the areas of graphic design, web design, written expression and publication, music production, green gardening and food production and fashion/textile design. Sixty youth ages 14-24 underwent an intensive eight-week skills-development training, interwoven with entrepreneurial training and work experience through local internships opportunities in their skill-development area. Each skills-development session was facilitated by an adult specialist in the field and was created with the goal of youth honing their craft in an individualized environment and the development of a product/service.

The program culminated in a community showcase which was held on August 27, 2009 at Celebrations in Depot Town, Ypsilanti. The showcase featured youth products created from their skills-development sessions which were available for purchase. Some of the products included: vegetables grown from the community garden, salsa, a book titled “The Light Beyond the Darkness” a collaborative group work, t-shirts, dresses, purses, their CD “Live Life”, etc. In addition to skills development, the B. Side of A youth learned such soft skills as: customer service, attendance, resume writing, interview techniques, conflict resolution, taking initiative, leadership and diversity, working in a team, problem solving and accountability.

The B. Side is currently seeking funding to continue this successful program into 2010. If you know a youth or instructor who may be interested in The B. Side of A, please call 487-6570 or email Jack Bidlack, B. Side Director at jbidlac1@emich.edu.

Young Detroit Builders

This is the third year of the Michigan Campus Compact and Corporation for National and Community Service College Access and support program in partnership with Young Detroit Builders. This year, The Office of AS-L and The B. Side are proud to coordinate the young adult’s experiences while on EMU’s Campus.

Young Detroit Builders to provide 40 young adults ages 18-24 with classes towards completing their GED, skills development, and hands on experience at job sites. The Detroit-based young adults travel to Eastern’s campus weekly for 24 sessions over six months to receive math, science, writing, construction management and entrepreneurship training. EMU faculty, staff and students such as Steve Francoeur in Biology and Amy Johnson in Communication provide access into their courses. YDB young adults also meet with student boards and organizations and receive presentations by the offices of career services and admissions. This year AS-L and The B. Side will work with three cycles of approximately 13 young adults, ending in April 2010. The B. Side takes each group through B. Side Basics- 24 hours of entrepreneurship instruction and hands-on application in developing their own business plan. Other sessions have included collecting and analyzing samples from Parker Mill Park (seen in picture below), visiting EMU’s Rec Center and a workshop in non-verbal communication.

AS-L and B. Side’s participation in YDB is paid for through the generous of a multiyear MCC Learn and Serve grant, Building Communities, Building Lives.

If you are interested in finding out more, volunteering or have a student organization or board that would like to interact with YDB, please contact the Office of AS-L at 487-6570.

The Littlest B. Side Member

The Office of ASL would like to welcome the newest member of the B. Side: Sara Elizabeth. Angelina Hamilton Broderick, B. Side Assistant Director, gave birth to Sara on Oct 31, 2009. Welcome Sara!
CrossTown Theatre Troupe’s Sophomore Year

Last year, CrossTown Theatre Troupe (CTT) began under the direction of MFA candidate Jenny Koppera and undergraduate student Shella Kelsey and the advisement of AS-L director, Decky Alexander. A core group of 15 students from the Ypsilanti area made up CrossTown Theatre Troupe. After a successful performance at EMU’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration and a community performance last April at Parkridge Community Center with several EMU students, CrossTown began to grow. This year, due to that growth we have been fortunate enough to be granted funding for our program and are being sponsored through the 21st Century Bright Futures Program, Gear Up Program and the Office of Academic Service-Learning. Because of this funding, CTT is able to have proper staffing and be part of after-school programming in Willow Run High School, Wayne Memorial High School and Ypsilanti High School. Since October we have been working once a week with students to build a theatre ensemble and start discussing and working with different issues related to high school students.

The mission of CrossTown Theatre Troupe is to create and engage youth voice through the use of theatre. CTT strives to recognize what issues the youth community deems most important, provide a safe place for teens and young adults to share their experiences, highlight the diverse nature of our neighborhood, and help establish a greater sense of accomplishment for the youth community. This semester we are working to create personal narrative performance pieces with the CrossTown Youth. These personal narratives will be collected and performed in an MLK day Celebration performance on-campus at Eastern Michigan University January 18th.

This year our teaching team consists of CrossTown Graduate Assistant, Erin McDonald (2nd year MFA candidate, Drama/Theatre for the Young), CTT founding director Jenny Koppera (3rd year MFA candidate, Drama/Theatre for the Young), Kristala Pouncy (1st year MFA candidate, Drama/Theatre for the Young), Tommy Simon (1st year MA candidate, Performance Studies), and Tae Hoon “Big Fire” Yoo (2nd year MFA candidate, Drama/Theatre for the Young).

Given that our staff has such varying experience, what they can offer is incredibly beneficial. Students can get not just one theatre experience, but experience theatre in its many different forms and styles. CrossTown also serves as a lab for Drama/Theatre for the Young graduate students who are able to come in for guest artist workshops in their varying expertise.

As a theatre troupe that continues to grow and transform we are always looking for new input and ideas from our students. If you have any questions, or know of an interested student please contact crosstowntheatre@gmail.com and check out our website at: www.yyeacrosstown.com.

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 with their curriculum.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- December 12, 2009: B. Side Basics Graduation
- January 18, 2010: CrossTown Theatre Troupe MLK Performance at EMU
- February 9-10, 2010: Michigan Campus Compact Institute (Traverse City, MI)
- January-March, 2010: Nominations accepted for ASL and Dale Rice Awards
- February-March, 2010: Apply to become a Fall 2010 ASL Faculty Fellow

Community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.
~Henrik Ibsen