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UA23 A wkuREAL Opportunity

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Recommended Citation

Markham, Paul N. and Spaulding, Aurelia, "UA23 A wkuREAL Opportunity" (2009). *ALIVE Center Publications*. Paper 2.

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March 2009

Volume 4, Issue 1

A wkuREAL Opportunity



Written By: Jane Olmsted, University College Dean

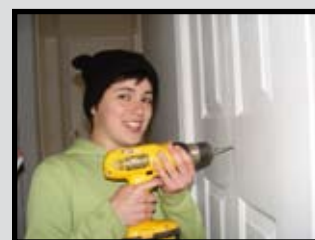
The mission of wkuREAL is, "To reach each adult learner by providing opportunities and support for educational success." Housed in University College (CH 301 and 313), wkuREAL joins and works with other groups on campus committed to addressing the needs of adult learners. Funded largely by the Council on Postsecondary Education, the purpose of wkuREAL is to provide a "one-stop-shop" where non-traditional students can have questions answered, get connected to the proper services, and receive personalized support.

The reason the CPE is encouraging higher education institutions to reach out to non-traditional students is that Kentucky has been losing ground relative to other states in terms of the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher. As Director of the Kentucky State Data Center says, "Kentucky's reality is that we will sink or swim not on how well we educate our youth, but on how well we educate our entire population, whether age 15, 35, 55, or 75. For the most part, our workforce of tomorrow is just our workforce of today grown older...We must educate not just our youth but every one of us. We must educate and re-educate, train and retrain."

Not only is the educational attainment problem for adults acknowledged by policy makers and postsecondary education providers, it is also recognized

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Habitat Impacts Collegiate Challenge



Written By: Cheryl Kirby-Stokes

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge, Western Kentucky University has been selected as one of the top five college chapters in the nation that have made an outstanding impact. Their work will be highlighted in a video thanking students and hosting affiliates for all they have done over the years.

Dr. Bryan Reaka from the Department of Architectural and Manufacturing Sciences has been leading the WKU Chapter for over ten years and has been instrumental in making the chapter well known.

Dr. Reaka notes, "This could not have been accomplished without the support of many people financially (Provost, Dean and Departmental), as well as the people who have assisted with activities that have brought in funds and led trips in the past and future. Notable as well are the people who have promoted these programs through the University. This is most impressive from the students who have

been the ones who have given of themselves to complete these projects."

The chapter's efforts in the community contribute to making WKU the leading university it wants to become. WKU students working with Habitat make an impact locally and globally. In May of 2007, five students accompanied Reaka to Nagua, Dominican Republic on one of Habitat's Global Village trips. He plans to take more students to the Habitat Headquarters in Americus, Georgia and also to Biloxi, Mississippi to the Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter Work Project.

The experiences with Habitat touch Reaka just as deeply as they touch his students. He takes them overseas and all over the country on Habitat projects, and he never fails to be awed by the change in students. He sees his job as trying to build bridges between different communities and different cultures, and although it is easier to tear down a bridge, he says he will never stop building them.

Students Learning in Translation



Written By: Cheryl Kirby-Stokes

Dr. Melissa Stewart's Spanish Translation and Interpreting class has now been serving the Bowling Green-Warren County community for the past two years translating information for agencies as diverse as the Public Library to the Fairview Community Health Clinic. During the Fall 2008 semester, twelve students reconnected with Fairview but also pursued a new partnership with the Bowling Green Human Rights Commission.

The Human Rights Commission needed information to go out to the Hispanic community concerning retaliation and predatory lending. What made the project so significant for the students was not just the translation exercise, but the fact that they, too, learned about a practice that could affect their lives. They were learning as much from the brochure as the people it was geared towards. The vocabulary proved to be challenging due to government language, but again, knowledge was being passed on to not only the clients but also the translators.

Fairview is trying to disseminate information to pregnant and new mothers about car seat safety, gestational diabetes, fetal movement, sleeping tips, and much more. Again, the medical vocabulary proved to be a challenge, but the students commented a number of times to Dr. Stewart about how rewarding it was to be working on a project that was going to be used to educate community members.

Dr. Stewart believes that the extra time and effort to organize these types of service-learning projects are well worth the effort, not only in terms of learning translation skills but also in introducing the students to members of the community and the various ways a person can serve.

In the above photo, students from Stewart's class are featured holding a set of translations.

Ignited by Group Decision Making

Written By: Cheryl Kirby-Stokes

Ms. Shelley Arant, an Organizational Communications major, first came to volunteering as a middle school student in Benton, KY. She was a regular at their county Humane Society, walking the dogs, feeding the animals and cleaning their cages. She admits that once she began classes at Western Kentucky University her volunteer activities ceased, but she knew it was an activity she wanted to get back to eventually. She was therefore greatly pleased when Dr. Jennifer Mize Smith's Group Decision Making class became involved in a service-learning project.

Ms. Arant says, "Being involved in a service-learning project was the first time I had the opportunity to put my studies into practice for a real organization. Too many times students get to pretend they are helping an imaginary organization. Service-learning projects address complex problems in real-time settings rather than simple problems in isolation."

Her team's project involved working with South Central Kentucky's Kids on the Block program, helping them revamp their Festival of Sand fundraiser. Ms. Arant surprised herself at the beginning when reading the program's bio, she said she, "still didn't care about the project. But when I went to the facility and saw what they did for the community, I knew I could help. I knew I had something real to give to them, and I wanted to be involved."

Ms. Arant's team was responsible for presenting new ideas to promote, raise funds for and show

appreciation towards those who support Festival of Sand. A new idea they brought to the table involved a dinner at the finale of the event recognizing supporters and winners. Although there was no definite decision as to whether these ideas will be implemented for the 2009 event, Ms. Arant still found the experience beneficial because it offered, "an opportunity for students to engage in problem-solving by working hand-in-hand with our teacher, other students and the organization rather than only to draw upon knowledge from a textbook."



"Going out into the community to help completes the transition from something that just makes you feel good to fulfillment."

Involvement with this organization made Ms. Arant "happier."

"Parents make you become involved when you're younger. Going out into the community to help completes the transition from something that just makes you feel good to fulfillment."

In conclusion, Ms. Arant says, "This project helped me be more aware and more involved in our community. Like many college students, I came from a different town. I did not know the community, and I certainly wasn't involved in any organizations. Being forced to get off campus made me more aware of my community."

South Central Kentucky

Kids On The Block



Hope Harbor Reaches Out



Hope Harbor provides non-judgmental and confidential support services to those who have been affected by sexual assault or abuse and attempts to reduce the risk of victimization. These services are available to residents in Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson, and Warren Counties in Kentucky. The main office is in Bowling Green with satellite offices for additional counseling services located in Franklin and Glasgow.

Hope Harbor provides free services in four major areas. These services include the following:

Legal Advocacy

One way to regain a sense of control in the aftermath of sexual victimization is to learn as much as possible about the criminal justice system. To facilitate a victim's understanding of this process, Hope Harbor provides legal advocacy support services to victims who are engaged in the legal system.

(1) Accompaniment to court proceedings or other meetings with law enforcement or criminal justice agencies; (2) The provision of education regarding how the legal system operates and what the rights of crime victims include; and (3) Referrals & Resources.

Community Education

Programs are available for schools, churches, businesses, civic organizations, and others. Programs are appropriate for pre-school age and up. Topics include: body safety,

self esteem, sexual harassment, dating violence, rape awareness, risk reduction, internet safety, and recognizing child sexual abuse for parents and teachers.

This program is primarily funded through United Way of Southern Kentucky, which provides over 65% of the program's budget. Thanks to funding from United Way and the Rape Prevention Education (R.P.E.) Grant, Hope Harbor is currently able to offer all programs at no cost to the communities it serves.

Crisis Intervention

Volunteers provide support, encouragement, and education for victims. With the help of advocates, victims make informed choices about their recovery. Advocacy may be provided by volunteers or paid staff. Multiple advocate training sessions are held every year.

The toll-free 24 hour hotline (24-Hour Crisis Line 1-800-656-HOPE) is available to victims of recent or past abuse and their friends and family members who need to talk about issues related to sexual assault.

Hope Harbor recognizes that rape and incest are not traumas experienced solely by the individual. Rather, they are significant, life-changing events experienced by victims, their families, partners, spouses, siblings, children, friends, etc.

Individual treatment is aimed at stabilizing the management of emotion and strengthening healthy coping skills. Family treatment focuses more on the prevention of disruption to the family during a time of crisis following disclosure of sexual abuse and trauma.

Community Outreach

March has been designated as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" in Kentucky. Every year Hope Harbor works with the S.A.A.M. Committee to bring a number of awareness events into the community.

Hope Harbor provides informational booths at back-to-school bashes, health and safety fairs at schools, companies and other events.

For more information regarding our services or events, please go to our website at Hopeharbor.net. There you can find event schedules and other opportunities to become involved.

Submitted By: Hope Harbor

Coalition Addresses Drug Issues

SOK members attending a training in California last July



The Save Our Kids Coalition (SOK) began in 2003 when a group of concerned citizens organized themselves to address the drug issues in Warren County. In order to expand their capacity, SOK became a nonprofit organization in the spring of 2006, and they hired their first Executive Director by that Fall.

The Save Our Kids Coalition mobilizes community volunteers to engage in a wide variety of counter-drug initiatives for Warren County. During the past year, SOK has written and received over \$200,000 in grant funding to build increased capacity and to run counter-drug initiatives for Warren County. The following are a few highlights of 2008.

Save Our Kids worked with the local school systems to coordinate a facilitator training and established a network of community training based on the Parent-to-Parent program, including sessions delivered in Spanish. Created by Bill Oliver, a parent who has a daughter who has suffered from substance abuse, Parent-to-Parent provides parents with insight on how to prevent substance abuse with their children and how to intervene if their children start down that path.

Working with the local school systems, Rivendell, Bellewood, and the local KY-ASAP Board, SOK has coordinated a network of youth treatment providers based on the Seven Challenges Program. Seven Challenges is a youth substance abuse treatment

process that "challenges" youth to take an honest and responsible look at their drug use. Based on the network, if youth transition between local providers, they no longer have to "start over" with a new treatment modality, but can continue within the same Seven Challenges process. In order to expand access and support for youth, the network has partnered with The Medical Center to offer community-based support groups at Greenwood Mall based on the same Seven Challenges system.

Also in 2008, SOK created its first Youth Task Force that includes youth members from all middle and high schools in the Bowling Green and Warren County Public School Systems. This group of youth created and implemented the GR8Rthan1 program, a massive, multimedia, social marketing program to target underage drinking by providing the truth and challenging the common misperception that "everyone is drinking." Looking to expand their reach in 2009, GR8Rthan1 (as the youth group is now called) will continue to lead the community in addressing drugs that affect youth. Based on their work, GR8Rthan1 has been nominated as the PRIDE Youth Prevention Group of the Year.

Based on their work in addressing over-the-counter drug use by youth, Save Our Kids was honored by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America on February 12th in Washington, D.C. as the first "Dose of Prevention Award" winner. This award is presented to only one coalition across the nation that has shown exemplary service in combating cough medicine abuse.

In 2009, The Save Our Kids Coalition looks to build on past successes and to continue to expand the collaborative community effort to protect our children and community from the harmful effects of all drugs.



www.SaveOurKids.org

Submitted By: Save Our Kids Coalition

A wkuREAL Opportunity

(continues from front page)

at a more grass roots level by the WKU Regional Stewardship Advisory Council (RSAC). In the report for the RSAC that detailed the input from the regional forums, concerns such as the following were frequently raised:

- the need for more adults to have bachelor's degrees
- the need for a more highly skilled and better educated workforce
- the need for constant retraining for new jobs
- the need for facilitating the non-traditional student returning to education
- the need for more programs for non-traditional students

Thus, a clearly defined regional problem that emerged from the regional analysis was greater access to higher education, particularly for working adults. However, adult learners face challenges when they try to access higher education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, adult students often:

- have delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; may lack standard HS diploma
- attend part-time while working full-time
- are financially independent of parents
- are a single parent and/or have dependents other than a spouse

If left unaddressed, any one of these issues can

become a significant barrier to an adult learner's access to and completion of a college degree. University College, thanks to CPE stewardship funding, formed a planning and implementation committee August 2008, which worked throughout the fall to review research on adult learners at WKU and to coordinate several

new initiatives to complement the good work already being done by several organizations on campus to address the particular needs of adult learners (non-traditional students). WkuREAL is now entering Phase II, which includes the establishment of the Adult Learner Advisory Council, with representatives from across the campus and in the community.

The "3 Ps" of wkuREAL

- A **philosophy** that recognizes the unique needs of non-traditional students and understands that the university can better provide access and meet the needs of students who do not meet "traditional" demographics.
- A **place** where non-traditional students can come to browse materials, talk to adult learner counselors, navigate WKU web pages and begin the process of entering the university
- A streamlined **process** whereby students can make the transition back to school, even if it's been several years.



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Striving for a Healthier Community

Smart Bites Hits Schools

The Smart Bites program is homegrown and one of a kind. The idea for the program came from a Bowling Green teen who believed that a "healthy smart card" that provided discounts and other incentives for healthy foods would motivate young people to make better food choices while eating out. In the spring of 2008, the Healthy Weight Kids Coalition received funding from the Institute of Medicine through its Kellogg Health of the Public Fund to conduct focus groups with middle and high school students to determine the feasibility of implementing such a program. The teens spoke and HWKC listened and designed the program based on information provided from area youth.

During the planning process, WKU nutrition experts analyzed the menus of the restaurants teens said they most often frequented. This resulted in the development of "Smart Bites: A Guidebook to Healthier Eating in Bowling Green", which identifies menu items that are "smart choices".

Youth are bombarded daily with messages that discourage healthy food and beverage choices. The Smart Bites program includes counter top and table top displays for participating restaurants that promote the healthy choices.

Currently, there are ten participating restaurants that offer discounts for Smart Bites card holders who make a smart choice -- either a Go (green) or Slow (yellow) choice. In addition to discounts, Smart Bites participants can win prizes awarded monthly at each public high school and middle school. At the end of the school year, a grand prize will be awarded to one student at each school.



Mayor Set To Energize BG

Let's get moving, Bowling Green! Living healthy isn't just about losing weight: it's about forming habits that will last a lifetime.

Choosing nutritious foods and making exercise a daily activity are important, too. That's where the Energize BG program comes in – we're here to help you track your progress and provide you with the support you need to be fit and healthy. Energize BG is a brand-new initiative led by Mayor Elaine Walker that encourages residents in Bowling Green/Warren County to get moving, one minute at a time.

Whether you stay active by walking, running, biking, household chores, gardening or swimming, you can use this website to track your minutes and watch your progress.

The goal of Energize BG is to track millions of minutes of physical activity—and beyond—that we can achieve together.

Visit this website often to log your minutes and share your stories. We can even help you convert miles into calories burned, so you can track your own weight loss goals.

Energize BG can help you find trail maps, park information, activity guides, and information on upcoming fitness events like runs, walks, and bike rides.

Together with your neighbors and friends in the Bowling Green community, you can do your part to help us log millions of minutes. Each time we log 1,000,000 minutes, we will celebrate!

Upcoming Community Events

Service-Learning Brown Bag Meet 'n Greet

**Tuesday, March 24th
11:00am
ALIVE Center**

Please come to our Service-Learning Brown Bag Meet 'n Greet. This is your chance to not only learn a little about service-learning, but also to network with WKU Faculty/Staff and local Community Partners for potential service-learning collaborations. All participants will receive materials about how to pursue a successful service-learning partnership as well as curriculum development, reflection exercises, surveys, evaluations, etc.



Women of Achievement Awards



"Women Taking The Lead To Save Our Planet"

BGHRC is currently accepting nominations for this year's awards, which will be presented on Friday, March 27th at their annual Women of Achievement Awards Dinner. The cost of the dinner is \$40 and will be held at the Carroll Knically Conference Center at 6:00p.m.

For more information, visit
<http://www.bgky.org/humanrights/>

Nonprofit Community Calendar March-May

- 03/02 Warren County Public Library's *Photographer Jason Childress* exhibit begins
- 03/03 Hope Harbor's *Healthy Days*
- 03/05 Riverview at Hobson Grove's *Hello Dolly: Paper Dolls in South Central Kentucky*
- 03/10 Warren County Public Library *Toddle Time*
- 03/17 Cultural Enhancement Committee's *Talkoproject: (re)generation*
- 03/21 VISION meeting
- 03/26 Hope Harbor's *Take Back the Night*
- 03/27 Bowling Green Human Rights Commission's *Women of Achievement Awards*
- 03/28 *Total Fitness Connection's Run & Walk for Children* benefiting the Family Enrichment Center
- 03/31 Warren County Public Library's *Get Curious About Science with Curious George*
- 04/04 Barren River Area Child Advocacy Center's *Great Teddy Bear Run*
- 04/18 WKU Libraries' *Kentucky Writer's Conference*
- 04/18 VISION meeting
- 04/19 WKU Libraries' *Southern Kentucky Book Fest*
- 04/20 Orchestra Kentucky's *An Evening of Rodgers and Hammerstein Classics*
- 04/23 *Bowling Green-Western Choral Society*
- 04/23 Bowling Green Symphony Orchestra's *JOYOUS*
- 05/17 *NECCO Day at the Ballpark*
- 05/31 Orchestra Kentucky's *HYMNFEST III*

For more upcoming events, please visit
www.wku.edu/alive



Welcome Serena!

Ms. Serena Bradbury is working at the ALIVE Center through the Americorps VISTA program. Americorps VISTA is a national service program specifically targeted to fight poverty. She is serving a one year term with her first eight months at a local nonprofit organization, CASA, where she worked on volunteer recruitment, fundraising, and public relations. She will finish out her VISTA term at the ALIVE Center helping with updating the resource directory, building and strengthening community partnerships, and creating and participating in special community projects focused on poverty.

Serena received her Bachelor of Arts with a major in Mathematics and a minor in Criminal Justice from Lindsey Wilson College in May 2008. She spent much of her time in college and high

school participating in community service organizations including the Bonner Leader Program, Humanity Hands (who works with Habitat for Humanity), Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4-H, Green River Animal Shelter, and Adair Elementary Family Resource Center.

After her VISTA term, she plans to go to Western Kentucky University to work on her Masters in Secondary Education. She plans to become a high school Mathematics teacher. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, singing, acting, dancing, and playing tennis.

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