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## Students gain leadership skills through Peer Coaching program

By Liz Wordelmann, '10

St. Bonaventure University students have the opportunity to mentor members of the incoming freshman class by becoming peer coaches. The program began in the 2009-2010 academic year and is a part of the CORE (Collegiate Opportunity to Reach Excellence) program for first-year students. The peer coaches facilitate engagement with St. Bonaventure for the freshmen that they work with and help transition from high school to college.

“Some freshmen have a difficult time adjusting, finding their place, making friends or joining organizations/clubs,” said Mariesa Gianni, Peer Coach coordinator. “The Peer Coaching Program gives freshmen a peer coach who acts as a big brother/sister to help them with these difficult adjustments.”

As a peer coach, upperclassmen have the opportunity to provide a meaningful service, develop leadership skills, have their efforts recognized on a co-curricular transcript and network with students, staff and faculty. They receive ongoing training throughout the year to enhance their professional and coaching skills.

“This is a volunteer and personal development program, and not a paid job, making it ideal for the candidate who would appreciate being part of a close-knit group of pre-professionals with a high campus profile, and wishes to give back to the University and fellow students in a vitally important way,” Gianni said. In the first year of the program 28 upperclassmen (sophomores to seniors) were accepted.

This year the program is looking to welcome 40 peer coaches. Applications to become a peer coach are due March 24 and the students selected will be notified on April 7. Each peer coach will be assigned two to four freshman and will help them to increase their connection to St. Bonaventure through individual worth, academics, and social and university networks. Peer coaches have a minimum contact agreement of one hour per week with each assigned freshman individually or in groups. In addition to weekly discussions, peer coaches are expected to communicate with their freshmen through e-mail, phone and/or text each week. The peer coach and their freshmen also have to participate in informal meetings with faculty and/or staff members during the semester and develop group activities for their freshmen peers.

“Peer coaching provides opportunities for freshmen to get to know upper class students, to develop relationships and to learn about the University and college success from students who have already been successful at St. Bonaventure,” Gianni said. For more information about the Peer Coaching program or how to apply, please contact Mariesa Gianni at giannimm@sbu.edu or Dr. Nancy Casey at ncasey@sbu.edu.

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## SBU student cashes in on The Price Is Right

By Bobby Gohn, '10

St. Bonaventure University junior Nick Sylor bid his way onto the stage to stand next to Drew Carey on “The Price Is Right.”

Sylor found himself on the popular daytime game show with his friends and teammates during his trip to California with the St. Bonaventure men’s rugby team.

“Our coach, Clarence Picard, set it up,” said Sylor. “We had an extra day in Los Angeles and he decided to schedule a trip to The Price Is Right.”

The Price Is Right runs on a first-come first-serve basis, so the entire team waited in line for about two and a half hours before entering the audience.

About halfway through the show, Sylor was asked to “Come on down!” Proudly wearing his St. Bonaventure Rugby T-shirt, Sylor jumped from his seat to join the other contestants. Sylor planted himself next to Drew Carey after guessing the exact price on a pair of bicycles.

“I bid \$800 and everyone else bid higher.” said Sylor. “Drew Carey then said, ‘The actual retail price is \$800.’ I ran up on stage and collected my \$500 for bidding the exact price.” Sylor lost his game, but was given an opportunity to spin The Price Is Right wheel. He spun \$1, which gave him \$1,000 plus a bonus spin on which he won an additional \$10,000. Sylor won a shot at the Showcase Showdown, which included a new Ford Mustang, a trip to Hawaii and a home entertainment system. He overbid on the showcase and lost, but he still walked away from the show \$11,500 richer.

You can watch the entire chain of events unfold on The Price Is Right March 31 at 11 a.m. on CBS.

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## Phi Rho Hut-A-Thon to Raise Awareness About Homelessness

By Jessica Nothnagle, '10

In an attempt to raise awareness about homelessness and mental health issues in the community, Phi Rho will host

the annual Hut-A-Thon fundraiser the weekend of April 9 at St. Bonaventure University.

The event will be held next to Plassmann Hall near the Grotto from 5 p.m. Friday, April 9, until 12:20 p.m. on April 11. Phi Rho is the St. Bonaventure chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, the international honor society for students, professional counselors and counselor educators.

According to Anna Prudente, Phi Rho vice president, those who donate their time to the Hut-A-Thon are typically members of Phi Rho and graduate students in the counseling education program. Faculty of the School of Education and faculty members throughout the university, including the president, Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., S.T.D., donate money. Members of Phi Rho will set up a wooden hut and maintain it throughout the weekend. Participants sit in or stand around the hut, experiencing what it is like to be homeless, which better prepares them to be future counselors. They hope to contribute to changing the perception of homelessness and mental health issues in the community.

“We don’t get any kind of prize or much recognition for it,” said Prudente, “and we are not seeking those items, but sincerely want to help those in the community who are facing struggles in their lives.” Prior to the event, members of Phi Rho will try to collect as many donations as possible from individuals in the community, friends, family and co-workers. They will also collect donations on campus while they are in the hut. Proceeds from the Hut-A-Thon will benefit Genesis House, an Olean homeless shelter for single women, children and families in the community; the St. Bonaventure counseling clinic; and Phi Rho.

Last year, the event raised \$365 for Genesis House. Checks can be made out to “Phi Rho” with “Hut-A-Thon” on the memo line. All donations need to be made by April 15. To set up a time for the money collection or to request further information on the Hut-A-Thon, contact Anna Prudente at [prudena@sbu.edu](mailto:prudena@sbu.edu), Dr. Mary Adekson at [madekson@sbu.edu](mailto:madekson@sbu.edu), Ashley Sinner at [sinnerar@sbu.edu](mailto:sinnerar@sbu.edu) or Stephanie Young at [youngsa@sbu.edu](mailto:youngsa@sbu.edu).

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## SBU hosts Challenge-25 Mathematics Contest

The 2009-10 Challenge-24 Mathematics Contest was held Saturday, March 13, at St. Bonaventure University.

There were 52 students from 10 local area schools participating. The schools include: Cuba Elementary, Cuba-Rushford Middle School, Hinsdale Central School, four Olean elementary schools (Boardmanville, East View, Ivers J. Norton, and Washington West), Olean Middle School, Otto-Eldred Elementary School, and Otto-Eldred Middle School.

Challenge-24 is a game in which contestants are presented with four numbers between one and nine. The object is to combine the numbers, using each number once, to produce an answer of 24. Any of the standard arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division) may be used as needed to get the result.

Medals were awarded to the first-, second-, and third-place students at each grade.

They were:

- 3rd grade --

First Place: Hira Mirza (Boardmanville)

Second Place: Reagan Stitt (Boardmanville)  
Third Place: Andrew Sheeler (Otto-Eldred)

• 4th grade --

First Place: Kara Howard (East View)  
Second Place: Alyssa Ramarge (East View)  
Third Place: Joey Copella (East View)

• 5th grade --

First Place: Darian Sherlock (Cuba Elementary)  
Second Place: Mark Miller (Otto-Eldred Elementary)  
Third Place: Cameron Kane (Washington West) (more)

• 6th grade --

First Place: Madison Forrest (Olean Middle School)  
Second Place: Heath Stewart (Otto-Eldred)  
Third Place: Cierra Grimaldi (Cuba-Rushford Middle School)

• 7th grade --

First Place: Monica Moses (Olean Middle School)  
Second Place: Alexis Sova (Olean Middle School)  
Third Place: Moe Morris (Cuba-Rushford Middle School)

For more information, contact Doug Cashing at [dcashing@sbu.edu](mailto:dcashing@sbu.edu).

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Spring break service trips draw students across the U.S. and abroad

Boston. Syracuse. Kingstree, S.C. Mexico and Ireland. Some three dozen St. Bonaventure students visited those communities for a non-traditional spring break experience, offering the fulfillment only service to others can provide.

Sr. Suzanne Kush, C.S.S.F., director of the Franciscan Center for Social Concern, was encouraged by how enthusiastic the first-year students have been in their participation in service activities.

"They (the freshmen) were a group who got involved from the very beginning this year," Kush said. "They arrived on campus interested and wanted to get information and signed up. To me it's encouraging to think that if they have such enthusiasm their freshman year, they will just build upon it and have a very enriching education."

Participation this year was so great that each trip was maxed out and some students were on waiting lists, Kush said. This year, the Franciscan Center for Social Concern sponsored spring break trips to St. Francis House in Boston,

Franciscan Collaborative Ministries in Syracuse and St. Anne's Shrine in Kingstree.

"All the trips are particularly chosen so that some marginalized, vulnerable population is served," Kush said. "The students were given a variety of experiences (rural and urban locations)."

St. Francis House is a multipurpose day shelter that offers breakfast and lunch, clothing distribution, job seeking and housing services, counseling and art therapy to its guests. Its setup and offerings effectively improve the quality of life for many individuals.

"St. Francis House tries to move people from a temporary living situation into a better quality of life," said Kate Heaton, the shelter's volunteer coordinator. Freshman Jessica Rehac was among the eight students and one faculty member who traveled to Boston.

"I was especially impressed at how quickly a group of students who hadn't even met each other came together to work nearly flawlessly," Rehac said. "We really grew as a group during the week we spent together in serving others."

"I, too, was impressed at how quickly our group bonded," added first-year student Meaghan O'Rourke. "What stood out to me even more was everything the shelter offers to the people of Boston; it truly is an effective avenue toward improvement. With each opportunity I have to serve, I find myself with a better understanding of the world I live in."

Student Gina Oldani was caught off guard at the number of people who were recently unemployed and had turned to St. Francis House. "It was an instant reminder of the fact that anyone, including myself, could be in that position at any time," she said.

At Franciscan Collaborative Ministries, on the north side of Syracuse, students had the opportunity to prepare and distribute lunches and work in the free medical and legal clinics. "It's a very eye-opening experience," said freshman Patricio Alfonso.

"For me, the Syracuse trip to Franciscan Collaborative Ministries was an education beyond all explanation," added student Michael Gargano.

"The compassion and generosity of the volunteers toward the disenfranchised of society gave me the tools to become more aware of people in need. It showed me that we ... need to show respect to all people regardless of their situation."

In Kingstree, S.C., students served with St. Anne's Outreach Mission assisting with home repair and visits, tutoring and grocery delivery. Students were also given the opportunity to serve at a Chamber of Commerce dinner, Kush said.

"Basically whatever was needed, we responded to," Kush said.

"I went on the service trip for spring break because I love helping others. I feel that my life is not fulfilling if I do not lend a helping hand," said freshman Franceline Demosthenes. "When we were tutoring, one of the students said he thought I would make a great teacher; that means a lot to me."

St. Bonaventure University prides itself in carrying out Franciscan traditions. Service is a prominent tradition set by St. Francis, who gave his life to serving the less fortunate.

"These service experiences give students the opportunity to enrich their educational experience," Kush said.

“It’s very easy to talk about the marginalized, but when students get to have a hands-on experience and meet these individuals, they become more sensitive to their needs.” The opportunity to volunteer at St. Ann’s gave student Shanequa Ravenell a chance to learn about herself and her family.

“It was heartwarming to find out that my family — as far as I can trace it — was started in Andrews, S.C., only 25 miles from where we volunteered. Even without finding this out, I felt as though I was helping family,” she said. Likewise, the St. Ann’s community welcomed the St. Bonaventure group into their homes and lives like family. “They cooked, cleaned, and showed us that true hospitality is the Southern and Franciscan way,” added Ravenell.

Mary Rose Kubal, Ph.D., assistant professor of political science, and four students traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border, specifically to the Tucson-Nogales region, during spring break. Through Borderlinks, a non-profit organization hosting the trip, the students gained an understanding of the complexities of immigration issues and the impacts on neighboring communities. The vocational service trip focused on the education of political, social and immigration issues, explained Kubal, and included visits to a migrant shelter, fair-trade coffee roasting business, and a Japanese-owned maquiladora (assembly plant) in Agua Prieta, Mexico. At the CAME migrant shelter run by the Catholic Church, “CAME allowed us to meet migrants and talk with them about their struggles living in Mexico,” shared Nicole Wiggins, a junior from Montezuma, N.Y.

“It was very moving to hear their stories and it really put things into perspective with their situation versus, life in the U.S. Visiting the reservation was also a great opportunity to see the land and to learn about their culture.” As that group headed southwest, another SBU contingent made its way to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Through the Mychal Judge Center for Irish Exchange and Understanding, 13 SBU Clare Forum students and two staff members were able to talk with peacemakers, paramilitary, political leaders and activists during their weeklong visit to learn more about the division — and reconciliation — in Northern Ireland. Senior Ruthie Harper said the experience gave her “a greater understanding of Northern Ireland’s political troubles and a renewed gratitude for my own country’s democratic freedom, no matter how politically polarized it may be today.” Read Harper’s BV column on her experience at: <http://media.www.thebv.org/media/storage/paper1111/news/2010/03/19/Opinion/Ireland.Trip.Enhances.American.Pride-3891887.shtml>

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## Friday Forum

Date: March 26

Time: 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Location: University Club

Cost: \$3

Presenters: the Ad-Hoc Ellicottville Committee on Faculty and Staff Development

Abstract: On a campus that has no centers for faculty or staff development, where can one go to find information for professional development, e.g., ways to increase student engagement? Our committee has created a resource-rich Moodle site for faculty and staff development. It is currently focused on the challenge of increasing student engagement, but could be used to address other challenges as they appear. What we have created is just a beginning. Broader participation is needed. So, our presentation will be as much about informing you as it will be about inviting you to use and build this new resource on campus.

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## Newsmakers

Dr. Kaplan P. Harris, assistant professor in the Department of English, presented the invited lecture "After New Narrative: Innovation and Its Social Discontents" as part of the Small Press in the Archive Lecture Series at the University at Buffalo March 17, 2010.

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