Held on January 16, 2015, this festive event involved 175 elementary school children from the Windham Public School system and the Charles Barrow STEM Academy. To assist with this event were 43 Eastern volunteers who contributed a total of 110 hours of service.

Several tables and stations were set up to involve each group of students at an activity depicting Dr. King’s philosophy of peace, equality and respect.

Here, children wrote words and phrases related to peace on paper peace doves.

The story The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein was read by volunteers to the children so they could understand about giving back. There were murals of trees displayed for the children to stick leaves and hands they decorated related to age-appropriate ideas of giving. For example, cleaning their room or doing chores at home without being asked.
Respect Recipe Cards were created by the children with their own ideas in giving and showing respect through kind words and generosity. They needed to understand that respect is important in each person’s life regardless of who they are.

**Respect Recipe Cards**

| 1 Cup of Kindness | 2 Handfuls of Helping Hands |
| ½ Cup of Generosity | 1 Armful of Understanding |
| ¾ Cup of Manners (please, thank you, you’re welcome) |

**Veterans Center**

Eastern’s Veterans gave age-appropriate presentations of their experiences in serving our great country to the children attending the MLK Afterschool Celebration.

Shown here are Lt. Constantine Macris from the US Navy along with Eastern students Alex Love, US Naval Reserves; Lary Schmitz, US Navy; and Kevin Lacy, US Navy to answer the many questions asked by the interested students.

**Professional Clothing Collection**

The Center for Community Engagement collected clothing from Eastern faculty and staff during the month of January. The Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM) was in need of clothing to help those less fortunate dress appropriately for interviews and/or the job market. The CCE collected 571 articles of clothing including men’s and women’s suits, casual clothing, sweaters, skirts, slacks and miscellaneous accessories. The Center for Internships and Career Development also served as a collection site.
Plunge for Hunger
February 7, 2015

On a snowy, ice cold Saturday, 250 Eastern students, staff and members of the community plunged into the frigid waters of the Natchaug River to help raise money for the Covenant Soup Kitchen. This year, the Soup Kitchen had a matching grant from the Ossen Foundation that doubled the funds raised up to $50,000.

In addition to the 50+ volunteers who helped or plunged, members of the Eastern Rugby Team, past and present, participated in and raised a total of $102,000. In addition, they willingly shoveled snow from the beach before the event and broke up ice that had formed at the shore.

“Normally I’m very good with words but after seeing this event, I am speechless,” said Ray Aramini, Rugby assistant coach. “The members of the Rugby Team are so committed to the Covenant Soup Kitchen knowing that this money translates into feeding hungry people. This is our fourth year we have plunged for hunger,” Aramini said.

Blood Drives at Eastern
February 2, 2015
April 6 and 7, 2015

The Center for Community Engagement and the Campus Ministry co-sponsored the two remaining blood drives of the academic year in the Betty Tipton Room. Though February 2nd, the first day of the two-day drive, was canceled because of a snow storm, Eastern students, faculty and staff rallied on February 3rd donating 72 pints of blood. The final drive was held on April 6th and 7th generating a total of 128 units of blood.
Because of the dedicated efforts of Nancy Brennan, Administrative Assistant from Campus Ministry and Adriana Love, University Assistant from the CCE, a total of 84 Eastern students volunteered 140 service hours during the two drives and recruitments. Volunteers cheerfully checked in donors or served pizza and pancakes at the canteen.

**Arts and Culture Series**
February 27, 2015

Learning about Russia
On February 27th, approximately 250 children and teachers from the 5 Windham elementary afterschool programs visited Eastern to participate in exploring the country of Russia in the Betty Tipton Room. There were 35 Eastern students who helped the children at the various craft stations. Some of the activities included building a Russian building with construction paper and markers, learning beginning steps in ballet, making Faberge eggs using plastic eggs and gems, having their picture taken in Russian peasant clothes as well as making Olympic torches with construction and tissue paper.

This fourth annual event was unique because the children were never exposed to learning about an Eastern European country before. Countries explored in previous years were Africa, India and Puerto Rico.

“Not only is Russia culture rich, it’s topical and relevant. Some of the kids have participated in the day all four years; they’re broadening their worldview beyond the Windham community,” stated Max Goto, event coordinator working in Eastern’s Center for Community Engagement as an AmeriCorps VISTA. “The Arts and Culture Series provides enrichment for the elementary schools’ already robust afterschool programming... it gets the kids out of their classrooms and exposes them to college and college students. It’s a fun and engaging way for them to learn about different cultures” said CCE Director Kim Silcox.
2015 CCE Service Expo and Awards

On April 8, the Center for Community Engagement celebrated the achievements and highlights of all the CCE-sponsored student volunteer programs throughout the year. Because the programs focus on many social causes and humanitarian efforts in the community, it seemed fitting to hold the event at 750 Main Street in Willimantic which is owned and operated by Andrew Gütt, also owner of Cafémantic.

The 30 program displays were divided into 6 categories which were judged by professionals from Eastern and the Windham community. First Place ribbons were awarded to the following programs:

- **Going Green Award** – CLICK program, operates a commercially licensed kitchen and garden for community use and supports local agriculture efforts.
- **Broadening Horizons Award** – Puentes al Futuro, an afterschool Windham Middle School program.
- **Strengthening Communities** – CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), helping recovering adults with job searches, interviews and resume writing.
- **Kids First Award** – Windham High School Afterschool Program, assisting HS students with homework, tutoring, and enrichment activities in art.
- **Leadership Development Award** – Windham High School Afterschool Program.
- **Best New Program Award** – Jumpstart, working with preschool children in reading, writing and social skills to prepare them for elementary school.

**Committee Choice Award** – judges’ choice going to Kids, Books, Athletics (KBA); energizes children with interactive reading and physical activities.

Five awards were presented to those excelling in their work, programs or community involvement. From left to right, back row:
- **Faculty/Staff Community Engagement Award** – Christine Dombkowski, CCE Assessment and Systems Coordinator and Windham High School Afterschool Program Coordinator.
- **Service Learning Award** – Professor Nicolas Simon, Sociology.
- **Community Partner Engagement Award** – Bill Stover, Director of Engagement for Windham Public Schools.
- **Outstanding VISTA Recognition** – Max Goto, CCE Volunteer and Event Coordinator.
- **Student Community Engagement Award** – Katharine Ferrone, Eastern’s Best Buddies Chapter.
- **Outstanding Community Event Award** – Connecticut Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry, Pastor Rick Haverly, First Congregational Church, Willimantic.

“Not all students make this commitment, so your example is important in growing this movement,” said Luis Rodriguez, CCE Assistant Director and host for the event.

### People Helping People Win Award

On April 14, People Helping People (PHP), an Eastern student club, received one of the two student group awards at the 2015 Connecticut Higher Education Community Service Awards at the State Capitol. This annual event recognizes students, student groups or faculty/staff from Connecticut colleges and universities that have achieved outstanding volunteerism and community service. Two Center for Community Engagement (CCE) student leaders, Jeannine Gemma and Lily Egan, accepted the award along with Max Goto, Eastern’s AmeriCorps VISTA. For the past seven years, PHP has organized students to volunteer at High Chase, formerly Lyon Manor which is a residential center for adults with disabilities in Willington. Once a week, Eastern students would interact with the residents doing crafts, playing games, bringing snacks, going on field trips or just listening to their many stories. “Eastern could not be more proud of People Helping People and its members for their commitment to social justice, community service and the betterment of our world” stated Kim Silcox, CCE Director.

“Receiving this award is such an honor as the clients of High Chase have been through so much,” stated Jeannine Gemma, PHP vice president and a social work major graduating in May. “I am so glad that we are able to bring happiness to their lives.”

From left to right, William Dyson, chair of the Connecticut Commission on Community Service; Jane Ciarleglio, executive director of the Office of Higher Education; Eastern student Jeannine Gemma, vice president of People Helping People (PHP); Eastern alumnus and AmeriCorps VISTA Max Goto, former president of PHP; and Eastern student Lily Egan, member of PHP; and commissioner of the Connecticut Commission on Community Service.
Town Pride Town Wide
April 25, 2015

Every spring, the Center for Community Engagement, the Town of Windham and the Chamber of Commerce, Windham Region co-sponsor the beautification of the town of Willimantic. After a harsh winter, many community businesses were eager to have Eastern student volunteers help them clear brush, plant flowers and shrubs, paint rails, pick up trash and any other sprucing up that was needed. This year, there were 150 volunteers who worked on 25 projects at 20 different sites adding up to over 535 community service hours.

Max Goto Day

May 4, 2015 was designated by proclamation from Mayor Ernie Eldridge of Windham as “Max Goto Day”. Max has been Eastern’s AmeriCorps VISTA member for the past two years. An Eastern graduate from Hamden, CT, Max has been a dedicated volunteer leader not only as a VISTA but also when he was a student worker with the CCE. Max has been a catalyst for positive change and volunteer action, affecting the entire community with his cheerful attitude. Over 2,000 Eastern students have benefitted from his guidance and support, making a real difference in the lives of children, adults and the elderly. He will be sorely missed as he moves on to bigger and better things!
Awards

January, 2015  Eastern received the prestigious Carnegie Foundation Classification for Community Engagement, one of 240 institutions receiving the award this year. This award was the culmination of two years of work gathering data from across the campus on the many ways Eastern is engaged in the community.

May, 2015 The Center for Community Engagement was awarded the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce Community Engagement Award at the Chamber’s annual Awards Dinner. This award is given to “an individual, organization or agency exhibiting extraordinary concern for the welfare and betterment of the people in their community and by providing needed services to the region.”

May, 2015 for the fifth time, Eastern has received the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, recognizing the exemplary community service contributions of students, faculty and staff. The application is submitted by the CCE on behalf of the University and highlights outstanding community service activities from across the campus.
June, 2015 The Center for Community Engagement and the Puentes al Futuro/Bridges to the Future program were selected for the Connecticut Campus Compact Campus-Community Partnership award.

For the past four years, the CCE has worked with Rose Hernández from Windham Public Schools to manage this afterschool and summer program for middle school and high school students from Windham which explores cultural heritage, promotes academic achievement and develops personal skills.

Contact us at cce@easternct.edu
Visit us on campus at the CCE House, 333 prospect Street
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ECSUCenterforCommunityEngagement
Blogger: http://easternvolunteer.blogspot.com

http://www1.easternct.edu/cce/