NEWS FLASH
EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Produced by the Office of University Relations

Eastern Celebrates Fourth Annual Day of Giving

More than 400 area residents participated in Eastern's fourth annual Day of Giving for people who would otherwise go hungry on Thanksgiving. The Day of Giving, highlighted by a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings, was held from noon to 2 p.m. on Nov. 24 in Hurley Hall.

People Helping People (PHP), a student club at Eastern, runs the Day of Giving, originally created in 2007 by Eastern alumnus Jason Budahazy '09. PHP received support from local stores, Eastern's Honors Club, OLAS, Eastern's Center for Community Engagement, the Office of Institutional Advancement and Chartwells Dining Services. More than 60 students, faculty and staff volunteered for the event.

In addition to the holiday meal, a related canned goods/food drive, held in Eastern's residence halls and in local stores such as Better Value, Ted's IGA, Willimantic Co-Op, Windham IGA and Wal-Mart, took place over the five weekends before Thanksgiving. "One food pantry told us that the food collected through the Day of Giving food drives supplied them with food for more than eight months," said Amy Gorman '11, PHP president. "With the economy being so bad these past few years, more and more people are turning toward local food pantries for help. But with the help of our generous community, we can provide the amount of food our local pantries need."

A number of Eastern student clubs, sports teams and residence halls volunteered to help with the food drives. "I see the Day of Giving as an extremely important event for our community," said Gorman. "It brings everyone closer together on a holiday that is all about giving."

Habitat Club Braves Cold for the Homeless

From noon on Nov. 11 through noon on Nov. 12, 20 members of Eastern's Habitat for Humanity club lived out of a cardboard shelter. For 24 hours, they had to rely on passersby for food and drink and could not return to their residence halls. Club members collected donations and pledges to go toward their Spring Break Collegiate Challenge trip to Lewisburg, WV, where they will work with a local Habitat chapter to build homes for families in need of decent housing.

Eastern TIMPANI Research Reveals Best Toy for Children

On Nov. 17, faculty and student researchers in Eastern's Center for Early Childhood Education (CECE) named Wooden Vehicles and Traffic Signs, a basic toy created by Wilton, CT-based Melissa and Doug, LLC, the 2010 best Toy to Inspire Mindful Play and Nurture Imagination (TIMPANI).

The high-scoring Wooden Vehicles and Traffic Signs toy set has a variety of painted wooden vehicles, including a fire truck and ambulance. It also features 10 common traffic signs that children may be familiar with, such as a stop sign. TIMPANI researchers noted that children playing with the toy engaged in high levels of language and social interaction. Children also exhibited unexpected creative play, even using the container that the vehicles came in to construct garages and bridges.

"The results of this study should give pause to parents and teachers who believe that children today need high-tech, complex toys in order to learn," said Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, the Phyllis Waite Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education and the principal investigator of the TIMPANI toy study.

The TIMPANI Toy Study will be an annual empirical study to examine which toys best promote children's development in three areas: thinking and learning; social interaction and cooperation; and self-expression and imaginative play.

Eastern students also participated in the research. "It was very interesting to see that such a simple toy made such a big difference in the classroom," said Eliza Welling, a senior from Marlborough majoring in sociology who also is pursuing certification in early childhood education. "You don't, as a teacher, have to include all these high-end toys that everyone is saying are amazing. Letting children use their imagination and create their own world is actually more important."

Other students participating in the research project included Heather Russell, a psychology and early childhood education major from Lisbon who graduated in 2009; Huihui Yu, a graduate student from Mansfield majoring in early childhood education; Ashlee Marouski, a graduate student from Mansfield majoring in early childhood education; and Niloufar Rezai; a graduate student from Manchester majoring in early childhood education.

Veteran's Day Challenge

Nearly 100 students, faculty, staff and area residents helped to raise nearly $2,000 by participating in Eastern's Second Annual Veteran's Day Challenge on Nov. 11. Proceeds are donated to the Eastern's Veteran's Scholarship Fund. The challenge consisted of a demanding one-mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups and 300 air squats, followed by another one-mile run.

During the opening Veterans Day ceremony, Eastern President Elsa M. Nunez acknowledged Dan Eckman, a sophomore communications major and co-organizer of the Veteran's Day Challenge who has been on two tours of duty in Iraq. Eckman inspired Eastern's first Veteran's Day celebration in 2008. President Núñez added that both her father and brother are veterans, saying, "The bonds that servicemen and women have with each other are lifelong bonds. We need to understand that in addition to the sacrifices made by our military personnel, their families also make huge sacrifices. We need to thank our veterans every day, not just one day a year."

Caleb Diebolt, co-coordinator of Eastern's Veteran's Center, helped to organize the celebration, said he was overwhelmed at the number of people who attended the celebration. "We have almost 200 veterans on campus, ranging from 19 to their '60s. There is no generational gap among our veterans. I want to thank Eastern for helping our veterans and thank you to all our veterans. America appreciates your service to our country."

Above, Veteran's Day returning champion Pam McGraw does pull-ups, while Mike Clancy, Josh Herald and Kevin Clancy participate in the open one-mile run.

Hartford Courant Columnist Tom Condon Speaks

Tom Condon, columnist, editorial writer and editor of "Place," a Sunday commentary section of the Hartford Courant that focuses on architecture, planning, transportation and the environment, was the University Hour guest on Nov. 17, discussing how cities can grow "smartly" in the future. Condon focused on current projects in eastern Connecticut and indicated ways in which students can be involved in these developments. He is an advocate for green building designs; mixed-use town centers; and ways to get more citizens involved in the conservation of historical sites and the development of their towns.

Outstanding Alumni and Donors Honored

Pictured above, left to right are Debra A. Skelton '81, Bert Nussbaum '63, Anthony J. Brandenburg '75, Dorothy '56 and Ron Carlyle, Mark Masinda, Madeline Bernstein.

On Oct. 22, the ECSU Alumni Association and the ECSU Foundation, Inc., honored seven individuals with President's Leadership Awards during a luncheon in the Paul E. Johnson Community Conference Room of the J. Eugene Smith Library.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes outstanding achievements by Eastern graduates who have demonstrated exceptional leadership or have achieved professional success or distinction. The Alumni Association presented this award to two alumni: Anthony J. Brandenburg '75 and Debra A. Skelton '81. Brandenburg currently serves as Chief Judge of the Intertribal Court of Southern California and has more than 16 years of service on the bench in both municipal and superior courts.

Skelton, of Branford, graduated from Eastern with a BA in English and a minor in Communication. She retired last year after a 27-year career in the U.S. Air Force. Since her retirement as a colonel last year, she has moved to a civilian position with the 1st Air Force's Installations and Services Division where she specializes in contingency planning.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented Bert Nussbaum '63. He taught elementary and middle school and worked as a guidance counselor, prior to serving for 27 years as principal of the Joyce Kilmer School in Milltown, NJ. Nussbaum is a member of the President's Legacy Society and has served as a member of the ECSU Alumni Association Board of Directors since 2008.

The Hermann Beckert "Friend of the University" Award was presented to Mark Masinda, building maintenance supervisor in the University's Office of Facilities Management and Planning. "While many people work very hard to make sure Eastern is always looking it's best, the person most responsible for this on a daily basis is Mark Masinda," said Kenneth J. DeLisa, vice president for institutional advancement.

The ECSU Foundation has presented three generous donors with Distinguished Donor Awards, given to individuals who have lifetime giving of at least $35,000. This year's recipients included Madeline Bernstein, Dorothy Carlyle '56, and her husband, Cameron "Ron" Carlyle.

Mrs. Bernstein has established an endowed scholarship in honor of her late son, John J. DelMonte Jr. '73 and is a member of the President's Legacy Society. The Carlyles have established the Dorothy N. Carlyle Scholarship fund, as well as naming Eastern as beneficiary of a six-figure Charitable Remainder Unitrust.

CAB Honored at Regional Conference

The Campus Activity Board (CAB) received a Excellence in Programming award for the second year in a row at the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Northeast Regional Conference Nov. 4-6 in Hartford. Eastern student Jessica Ruddy '11, from East Hartford, also received the Kenneth M. Bedini Student Leader Award for her outstanding contributions to the region and for making a difference at Eastern. Jessica is a dean's list student; vice president of the Senior Class Committee; CAB's special events coordinator; a member of the Pathways to Leadership Program; and a student orientation counselor.

Eastern Student Named 2010 Latino de Oro Awardee

On Nov. 6, Lisa de La Rosa, a sophomore majoring in Business Administration, was honored as the winner in the Student category of the Sixth Annual Latino de Oro Awards. The awards ceremony took place at the Theater of Performing Arts in the Learning Corridor of Hartford before an audience of 400 people. The event was sponsored by the Identidad Latina newspaper. In addition to De La Rosa's award, Art Professor Imna Arroyo was nominated in the Art and Culture category.

Eastern Hosts Poverty Conference

Connecticut Campus Compact joined Eastern's Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and Division of Student Affairs to host the Issues of Poverty Conference on Oct. 29 in the Betty R. Tipton Room. Patricia Julianelle, legal counsel for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, delivered the keynote address. Charlie Chatterton, associate professor of health and physical education, and Elaine Zimmerman, executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Children, also spoke.

Keynote speaker Patricia Julianelle, legal director of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth.

Attendees at the conference explored the challenges of poverty reduction and opportunities for volunteer partnerships. Agencies represented included the New England Consortium, End Hunger Connecticut, Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition, Windham Region Coalition to End Homelessness, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and Turn the Curve Initiative.

Conference audience takes a break to stretch.

Eastern Staff and Students Honored by Access Agency

On Oct. 26, The Access Agency in Willimantic presented Kim Silcox, interim director of Eastern's Center for Community Service, its Community Service Award, expressing "sincere gratitude for your commitment to nurturing civic responsibility and engaged learning among youth and your dedication to building effective, productive partnerships that strengthen our community." Access Agency President/CEO Peter DeBiasi presented the award to Silcox.

Only a year after its grand opening, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) at Eastern has grown rapidly. This past year, Eastern students donated more than 12,000 hours to local nonprofit agencies, schools, museums and town offices on long- and short-term projects.

Designed to be the bridge between the greater Windham community and the University, the CCE connects students, faculty and community members, allowing them to share ideas, resources, knowledge and training to create positive change in the region.

The Access Agency also recognized five Eastern students for their work in the Volunteer Income Tax Asssistance (VITA) program. Students recognized honored Brian Mills '11, a business administration major from Tolland; Linsy Lopez '13 from Hartford; Ogoegbunam Chukwuogor '12, an accounting major from Mansfield Center; Noemi Tello '11, an accounting major from Norwich; and Charlotte Smith '14, a business administration major from West Hartford.

Health and Physical Education Students Shine

On Nov. 19, students from the Department of Health and Physical Education placed first in the Connecticut Chapter of the Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CTAHPERD) College Bowl. The Jeopardy-style event contained questions from categories such as Exercise Science, Tests/Assessments, Motor Development, Games/Sports and Pedagogy. The students, who were split into two teams of three, were allowed 15 seconds to discuss the questions proposed with their team before writing their response on a white board for judging. Students Gianna Trombino, Jamie Kohn, Maxim Fantl, Conal Brandon, Cory Wasniewski and Brian Lowe, along with faculty captains Robert Horrocks and Greg Kane, were challenged in competition from students from Western, Central, and Southern Connecticut State Universities.

Eastern Hosts Public Service Panel Discussion

Eastern hosted a panel discussion on community service on Oct. 27 in Eastern's Student Center Theatre. Participants discussed their organizations and how students can engage in national service outside of college. The event was part of Eastern's University Hour series.

Panel participants included recruiters from Americorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, Our Piece of the Pie and City Year. The audience had the opportunity to ask questions about programs and learn what it takes to become a volunteer. At left, left to right, Kimberly Sanchez, Public Allies; Audra Lavoie and Morgan Fagant from City Year, Rhode Island; former Peace Corps volunteers Sociology Professor Mary Kenney and Ryan Lesley; VISTA volunteers Colin Doherty and Kristina Scherber; and panel moderator Maiyah Gamble-Rivers '11.

Annual Health, Wellness and Benefits Expo

More than 50 health agencies, vendors and representatives convened in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center on Oct. 19 for the 18th Annual Health, Wellness and Benefits Expo. The program included demonstrations, performances and free health screenings throughout the day.

Masterworks by Contemporary Figurative Painters at Eastern

Scott Bricher's "Release," 2007, oil on canvas, 36" x 40."

The Julian Akus Gallery at Eastern presented "Solemn & Sublime: Contemporary American Figurative Painting" from Oct. 21 through Dec. 2. A University Hour talk also took place on Nov. 3 in Shafer Auditorium, followed by a reception in the gallery. "Solemn & Sublime" drew together the work of 13 living American painters, all of whom honor a centuries-old tradition of figurative work which they infuse with a contemporary sensibility.

The exhibition was inspired by the catalogue "Selected Contemporary American Figurative Paintings," which was published in 2009 by the Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House, and edited by Qimin Liu, Eastern associate professor of visual art.

Achievement First at Eastern

Eastern alum Scott Trepanier brought his fifth- and sixth-grade students from Achievement First School in Hartford to Eastern on Oct. 20 to interact with Eastern students in Health and Physical Education Professor Darren Robert's Elementary Games and Activities class. The event in the Francis J. Geissler Gymnasium was designed to provide a practice teaching session for Eastern students who plan careers in teaching, and provide some enjoyment and insight into Eastern for the Hartford students as well.

Best Buddies Eastern Goes To Washington D.C.

On Oct. 23, Eastern's Best Buddies chapter participated in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Challenge in Washington, D.C. The challenge is a 5K foot race, youth walk and 5k bicycle race designed to raise money for non-profit organizations helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was one of the first advocates to protect the rights of those suffering from intellectual and developmental disabilities. She began by organizing the Special Olympics in 1968, which influenced her son, Anthony Shriver, to create Best Buddies.

Best Buddies Eastern raised $300 and participated in the Youth Walk. Eastern was the only Connecticut Best Buddies chapter to go to Washington, D.C.

Disability Awareness

Disability awareness at Eastern was celebrated with two weeks of activities in early November. During the first week, students "donned" a disability and spent time navigating campus in wheelchairs and with arms in slings to simulate amputated limbs. During the second week, Eastern hosted alumni Nikole Doolittle '10 and Michael Whelan '07, who spent time speaking to classes in the Health and Physical Education Department.

Creating awareness of individuals with different needs it the focus of disability awareness at Eastern. The two weeks of activities provided the campus community with opportunities to experience a disability as well as hear about living with a disability.

Hotchkiss on Mark Twain

On Nov. 10, Craig Hotchkiss, education program manager for the Twain House and Museum, discussed the transformation of Samuel Clemens into Mark Twain as a consequence of living in Hartford for 20 years. The presentation was part of the Eastern's University Hour series.

Clemens once said of Hartford, "I think this is the best-built and handsomest town I have ever seen." Hotchkiss's presentation, along with the Eastern Theatre Program's production of an adaptation of Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner's "The Gilded Age," from Nov. 9 to 14, represented Eastern's contribution to the 2010 Centennial Celebration of Twain's role as one of our nation's foremost literary icons.

Dada Lunch

On Oct. 13, several students collaborated on the development and design in the performance, Dada Lunch," presented in the Student Center Theatre as part of Eastern's Year of the Arts. *DADA Lunch* was a one-hour brown bag presentation of short avant-garde theatre pieces. The production was the work of students in Professor David Pelligrini's Experimental Theatre course. The class and the pieces performed were all experimental in nature, and drawn from important art movements in the early 20th century.

Eastern's Food Runners

Above, left to right, Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, Alyssa Pezzello and Kyle Droniak load a van in Main St Café parking lot.

Every 3.6 seconds, somewhere around the world, someone dies of starvation. As tragic as this fact is, eight students from Eastern Connecticut State University involved with the Food Runners Organization are trying to impact this statistic. Food Runners is an organization that collects leftover food from local restaurants and farmers markets to give to local soup kitchens.

Every Tuesday at 2 p.m. the eight students, through Eastern's Center for Community Engagement, head down to the Main Street Café to gather leftovers. Colin Doherty, Eastern's Community Service Coordinator and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, serves as the lead runner. "I have worked in food services since high school, and in doing that you see how much food is wasted when it could easily be donated," says Doherty. Eastern students Brit Cava '12, a political science major from Torrington; Maiyah Gamble-Rivers '12, an art history major from Providence, RI; and Jackie Bishop '11, a secondary education and history/social science major from Newington are working with Doherty.

Eastern Faculty Present at Geoscience Conference in Denver

Several Eastern Connecticut State University's faculty members presented at the 122nd annual meeting and exhibition of the Geological Society of America (GSA), held from Oct. 31-Nov. 3 in Denver, CO. Eastern presenters included Peter Drzewiecki, associate professor of environmental earth science (EES) and secretary of the Limnogeology Division of the GSA; Fred Loxsom, Eastern's endowed chair of sustainable energy studies; Drew Hyatt, chair of the EES Department; and Alevtina Smirnova, assistant professor of environmental earth science. More than 6,000 scientists attended the convention, which covered 156 topics including geochemistry, petrology, volcanology and alternative energy.

(This blue bear, shown above left, helped entertain convention-goers.)

Africa Club Holds Annual Dinner

Communication Professor Christopher Ayeni delivered the keynote address at the African Club's second annual dinner on Nov. 5. "Big dreams should be a big part of your reality," said Ayeni to the audience of students, faculty and staff. "There is no short cut to success, even though the journey may seem long and the path may be thorny, there should be no giving up on your dreams. Take full advantage of the opportunities Eastern offers, and set high goals for yourselves."

Tim Talley, a senior from Ohio majoring in communication, views African artifacts.

Eastern Sports

Nearly 100 former and current Eastern players and coaches, friends and family joined the 50th Anniversary celebration of the men's soccer program on Oct. 10. A reception dinner was held during the afternoon, and the alumni were honored at halftime of the men's soccer game against Kean University that evening.

The 1961 team – the first official one in program history — received special recognition and was awarded plaques at halftime of the game. At the reception dinner, the current men's soccer team presented an Eastern Soccer warm-up jacket to former coaches Tom Nevers and John Fitzgerald and to Carol McMillan, whose late husband, John, coached the 1960 club team. Present from the 1961 team at the reception were head coach Nevers, Bill Meehan '65, Denise Lamontagne '90, Thomas Reynolds '83, Bernice Laferriere '93, Brian Cassidy '87, Jason Brasher '92, Leanne Shoop '92; Charter members returning to honor first class of inductees 25 years ago (1986), Kathleen Regan '79, Thomas Nevers (first soccer coach), David Geissler (son of the late former AD and coach, Francis Geissler), George Dargati '60, Joe Narotsky (first HOF Committee Chairman in 1986). Not pictured is John Caneira '74.

Eastern Athletics Recipient of First LEC President's Cup

With a cumulative student-athlete grade-point average of 3.02, Eastern Connecticut State University is the top academic institution in the Little East Conference, according to the inaugural 2009-10 President's Cup standings.

"I would like to congratulate Eastern Connecticut State University as the inaugural recipient of the Little East Conference President's Cup," said Commissioner Jonathan C. Harper. "It is remarkable, along with Keene State College, that the 2009-2010 academic year featured the same two institutions headlining both Commissioner Cup and Presidents Cup standings." The Commissioner's Cup is awarded to the Conference member school with the best cumulative athletic performance.

Eastern, which finished second in the Commissioner's Cup standings last year, narrowly edged Keene State to earn the inaugural President's Cup. The President's Cup trophy measures the highest cumulative grade point average of all institutions in the Little East Conference. Each athletic department calculates its student-athletes cumulative grade point average in the conference's 19 championship sponsored sports.

"I am very pleased that Eastern's student-athletes have won the first President's Cup competition," noted Eastern President Elsa M. Nunez. "This award recognizes the outstanding academic achievement of our student-athletes and reaffirms the quality of students on our liberal arts campus."

Eastern in the News

- On Nov. 15, Early Childhood Education Professor Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, along with students Liza Welling and Huihui Yu, and preschool teacher Ashlee Marouski, talked with Wayne Norman on his morning radio show on WILI-AM. They explained how toys promote social, intellectual and creative activity in preschool-aged children and the results of their study of children's toys.

- Political Science Professor Helma de Vries was a guest on the Wayne Norman Show on WILI-AM radio on Oct. 28 with two of her students, Jennifer Succi and Elizabeth Hesterberg, to discuss the HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign that de Vries' students are organizing with community organizations like the Windham AIDS Program.

- The Oct. 22 editions of the Norwich Bulletin and the (Willimantic) Chronicle ran front-page stories of the congressional debates held in the Betty R. Tipton Room on Oct. 21.

- The Oct. 20 edition of the Norwich Bulletin ran a story on the Second Congressional District debate that took place at Eastern later that day.

- The Oct. 19 edition of The (Willimantic) Chronicle ran a story on students from a hydrology class using an auger to collect soil samples to test for hydrolic conductivity.

- On Oct. 5, Elizabeth Peterson, director of the Julian Akus Gallery, coordinator of Gallery and Museum Services; Gail Gelburd, associate professor of visual arts; and David Pellegrini, chair of the department of performing arts, talked with Wayne Norman on WILI-AM about Eastern's Year of the Arts.

- The Sept. 19 edition of the Hartford Courant ran a feature story on the hurdles of first-year generation college students, showcasing Eastern's Wiley Dawson of Bridgeport.