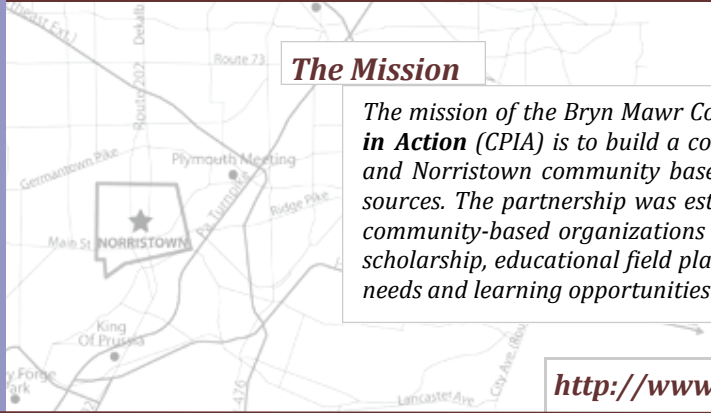


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## The Mission

*The mission of the Bryn Mawr College/Norristown Community Partnership in Action (CPIA) is to build a collaborative relationship between the College and Norristown community based on a reciprocal sharing of assets and resources. The partnership was established in 2002 by the College and several community-based organizations with the goal of connecting faculty, student scholarship, educational field placements and volunteer services with real life needs and learning opportunities in our local community.*

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/ceo/community/cpia/>

## PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CADCOM

CADCOM (Community Action Development Commission) has been an integral and active partner in engaging Bryn Mawr students in the Norristown community since the inception of CPIA. Its mission, "to mobilize the human and financial resources of Montgomery County by initiating, developing and administering community and economic development programs designed to provide the tools needed to achieve self-sufficiency," has guided our ongoing collaborative work.

In 2003, Bryn Mawr College and CADCOM staff built a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance partnership that in the spring of 2009 recruited more than 30 active volunteers and brought more than one million dollars in tax returns and savings to the community members of Norristown and Montgomery County. The program trains undergraduate students in basic tax preparation and offers free tax preparation services at CADCOM.

The partnership has flourished and in February, Phyllis Mason, Asset Development Coordinator for CADCOM, and Ruth Strickland, Program Coordinator for the Civic Engagement Office, presented on the VITA partnership at the PHENND (Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development) conference. They led a conversation with college and community-based organization staff about developing successful partnerships through the VITA program.

"Our partnership with Bryn Mawr College is the essential component to the success of the VITA program. The student volunteers and CPIA staff are committed, knowledgeable, flexible & supportive. This is what community partnership and civic engagement are all about," says Phyllis Mason.

And there's more...This spring, VITA student coordinator Adrienne Webb has broadened her own relationship with CADCOM through Bryn Mawr College's Community-Based Work Study program. While earning her federal work-study allotment, Adrienne is assisting with the Family Savings Account Program, furthering her own knowledge and understanding of financial education, access & the community of Norristown while providing valuable skills and work to CADCOM.



*Student coordinators Samar Aryani-Sabet, Ruth Goodlaxson, Charlene Desanges at the Clothing Sale Fundraiser for the Walk Against Hunger.*

## Students Raise \$800 for Norristown Food Cupboards

Innovative fundraising efforts led by Civic Engagement Office student coordinators Samar Aryani-Sabet and Charlene Desanges helped raise over \$800 for the Walk Against Hunger, benefitting Norristown food cupboards at Agape Church and CADCOM. The students collected clothing from Greene Street consignment shop (Bryn Mawr, PA) and held a donation-based sale on campus. In the past year, clothing sales hosted by undergraduate student coordinators have raised over \$1200 for Norristown partner organizations including ACLAMO, Agape Church and CADCOM.



Bryn Mawr College participants at the 2009 Walk Against Hunger, Philadelphia, PA

## NCPP Graduate Students Say Goodbye

It was a bittersweet ending for the year as eight of the Norristown Community Practice Program (NCPP) social work students gathered together for a social outing. Meeting at La Tacqueria La Michoacana at the end of the semester, students enjoyed Mexican food and shared experiences from their placements at Central MH/MR, Carson Valley Children's Aid (CVCA), Laurel House and Montgomery Hospital.



Merin Wexler & Bertha Staples-Tucker at La Tacqueria La Michoacana.

Most of the students are wrapping up their first-year placements and are moving

beyond Norristown. However, Bertha Staples-Tucker, who completed a workplace internship at Laurel House this year, will move her placement to the Norristown Family Center at CVCA next year. Staples-Tucker is a resident of the community and is committed to making a difference. Her participation in the enhanced placement this year helped other students gain a different understanding of the work done by local

agencies. "It's good that there are a lot of agencies here in walking distance of each other and able to reach a lot of people," Staples-Tucker said. "But when I go home I'm not sure that the people in my neighborhood are hooked up."



## CPIA PROGRAM BRIEFS

### NORRISTOWN COMMUNITY PRACTICE PROGRAM (NCPP)

The program is designed to provide Social Work graduate students who have field placements in Norristown the opportunity to integrate their work with individuals, groups and communities in Norristown with an understanding of the local social, geographical, political, racial/ethnic and religious contexts.

### PRAXIS

Bryn Mawr College's community-based learning program, Praxis, aims to connect students enrolled in a specific academic course to community-based efforts. The program aims to enhance students learning and provide useful service to partner organizations.

### COMMUNITY-BASED WORK STUDY

This program is designed to give undergraduate students the opportunity to earn their financial aid awards through employment at off-campus community service agencies.

**CURRENT NORRISTOWN PARTNERS:** ACLAMO, CADCOM, Carson Valley Children's Aid, Central Montgomery MH/MR, Eagleville Hospital, Forteniters, Gotwals Elementary School, Interagency Council of Norristown, Laurel House, The Lincoln Center, Montgomery County Foundation, Montgomery Hospital, Norristown ACPPA, Salvation Army, Why Not Prosper?



Dana Cantelmi at the April 22nd Family Summit.

## Graduate Students Create Summer Food Resource Guide

The contribution of three Bryn Mawr College students who assisted with a Norristown family resource fair may last a long time. Samantha Schech, Dana Cantelmi and Becky Lee were introduced to the Norristown Central Advisory Board through their internships at Carson Valley Children's Aid. Observing a meeting where community leaders and social service providers discussed how to best reach those in need, they were quickly roped in to coordinate a presentation for the April 22nd Family Summit on food resources. This led them to track down all the community food cupboards and discounted food programs in the area, as well as a list of free meal locations, soup kitchens and summer lunch places for children.

They consolidated their findings into an attractive and colorful display, full of maps and information on healthy snacking. They also designed brochures to quickly help families locate free food resources that will be distributed far beyond one fair.

"Everyone we spoke with was friendlier than I expected," said Samantha Schech. "People were very helpful and focused on what was best for the community. Everyone in the agencies and government seemed well connected."

### SALVATION ARMY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Volunteers support the teen and youth after-school programs with homework help, mentorship and monthly workshops.

### GOTWALS PLAYGROUND PALS

Volunteers eat lunch and spend recess with students who have been identified as struggling to work and play cooperatively with their classmates.

### VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VITA)

Tax preparation by IRS-certified volunteers from Bryn Mawr College at CADCOM in Norristown is in its 7th year.