



Community Partnership In Action

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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.

## The Civic Engagement Office & Undergraduate Participation

The Civic Engagement Office supports undergraduate work in Norristown through the CPIA (Community Partnership In Action) Initiative. Bryn Mawr students are involved in on-going volunteer programs, Praxis community-based learning placements and one-time events in the Norristown community. This fall we also have students who are earning their Federal Work Study awards while working for non-profits in the Norristown area, and an Effective Grantsmanship workshop series that supports student learning around grant application processes and partners them with community organizations that receive assistance on specific grant research or writing.



*Student Coordinators at the 2008 Fall Into Norristown Festival (L to R): Charlene Desanges, Becca Rossi, Samar Aryani-Sabet, Emma Cohan*

## Undergraduate Programs

### SALVATION ARMY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

CPIA organizes a group of student volunteers who assist in the after-school program. Our volunteers participate once a week, travelling to Norristown and supporting the Salvation Army staff with the teen and youth programs.

### CONEXIONES: BREAST HEALTH INITIATIVE

“Conexiones Saludables por Mujeres” (funded by Susan G. Komen) is a multi-agency breast initiative with a goal of eliminating barriers in access to breast health information and the use of breast health resources by the target population. Bryn Mawr is currently working with staff from ACLAMO to develop outreach efforts that will result in increased knowledge and awareness, completion of clinical breast exams, appropriate use of mammograms and linkage to bilingual, culturally-informed support for those diagnosed with breast cancer.

### GOTWALS PLAYGROUND PALS

Developed in the Fall 2008 at the request of Gotwals' staff, Playground Pals is designed to help targeted students learn to engage in cooperative play and work together in a team. Volunteers eat lunch with students who have been identified as struggling to work and play cooperatively with their classmates. Volunteers then organize sports and activities for these and other students during recess.

### COMMUNITY-BASED WORK STUDY

Bryn Mawr's Community-Based Work Study Program is designed to give undergraduate students the opportunity to earn their financial aid awards through employment at off-campus community service agencies. Work study students are working at a number of different Norristown organizations.

### EFFECTIVE GRANTSMANSHIP

Effective Grantsmanship is a workshop series designed to teach undergraduate students the basics of non-profit fundraising. Students participate in 22 hours of non-credit workshops and assist community-based organizations with specific grant research or writing projects during the semester. Participating organizations in Norristown: ASSETS Montco, Central Montgomery MH/MR Center, Forteniters, Genesis Housing Corporation, Montgomery County Foundation, Valley Youth House, Why Not Prosper?, and the YMCA STRONG Program.

### VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Bryn Mawr's VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program will begin its 6th season with two information sessions on November 20th and December 2nd. Tax preparation by IRS-certified volunteers from Bryn Mawr College will begin late January in Norristown with our community partner CADCOM.

## Norristown Community Practice Program : Graduate Participation

The Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) expands the scope of the College's campus-community partnership to include a graduate field placement initiative, the Norristown Community Practice Program (NCPP). The program is designed to provide 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. The interns work approximately 16-24 hours per week in a Norristown agency as well as participate in monthly seminars, share information about their fieldwork, engage in critical dialogue, and share ideas with members of the Norristown communities and with other members of CPIA. Graduate students in Norristown are working at 7 different agencies this year.



*Norristown Bus Tour: Chris Kaasmann (Norristown Weed & Seed), John Edwards, Ruth Strickland, Kailly Muthard, and Erica Laue*

### CURRENT NORRISTOWN PARTNERS

ACLAMO  
ASSETS Montco  
CADCOM  
Carson Valley Children's Aid  
Central Montgomery MH/MR Center  
Eagleville Hospital  
Forteniters  
Genesis Housing Corporation  
Gotwals Elementary School  
Interagency Council of Norristown  
Laurel House  
The Lincoln Center  
Montgomery County Foundation  
Montgomery Hospital  
Salvation Army  
Valley Youth House  
Why Not Prosper?  
YMCA, STRONG program

### Graduate Student Involvement

One of the students who has a heads up on local knowledge is **Bertha Staples-Tucker**. Bertha is a second year part-time student who has worked full time at Laurel House, Montgomery County's domestic violence agency. She is now involved in working with women and men who are not residents of the shelter. A parent and local resident, she is able to give fellow students a better historical and political understanding of what are the local issues.



*Norristown Bus Tour: Dana Cantelmi, Chris Kaasmann, Nicole Zimmerman*

At Laurel House, she is joined by **Kailee Muthard** and **Erica Laue**. Kailee is an advanced-placement student under the supervision of Director Minna Davis, and Erica Laue is a new student and recent college graduate from New Hampshire. Erica is working with Laurel House staff to review and improve its work with those in the LGBTQ community. She is also getting experience with the DART II program which partners with local police departments and assists them on domestic violence calls.

At Montgomery Hospital, **Nicky Zimmerman**, a part-time student also working in a long-term care

facility, is serving on the inpatient psychiatric unit. She is learning about the challenges faced by low-income patients surviving with a mental illness when also facing housing and insurance problems. She is supervised by Elton Richardson, a Bryn Mawr grad who has been a field instructor for many students over the years.

Two Bryn Mawr students are at Central MH/MR this year. Central is the non-profit community mental health agency for central Montgomery County. **John Edwards** is a first year student back in the area after a stint practicing law in Chicago. He is joined there by **Merin Wexler**, a part time student in her second year and first placement. She is spending time with an art therapist, as well as sitting in on groups. Both are working with adult outpatients, working up to running groups and meeting regularly with clients one-on-one.

The Lincoln Center, a nonprofit organization serving school districts with alternative education options and drug and alcohol prevention services, is providing a placement to **Katelyn Tuoni**, a recent human services major from the University of Delaware. She is involved with the agency's VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) work in Norristown.

**Jennifer Finore** is a new student at Eagleville Hospital, an inpatient facility for drug and alcohol prevention and treatment in the Norristown suburbs. All the patients have dual diagnoses, most often their substance abuse combined with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. Before

Bryn Mawr, Jennifer had experience in a long-term care facility and is adapting to the shorter-term relationships with the patients receiving substance abuse treatment.

The new Carson Valley Children's Aid (a merger of two agencies that occurred in July) is the home this year for four Bryn Mawr students.

In the adoption department, supervisor Stacy Triumph (MSS, MLSP '05) is supervising three students who are working on matching children with families interested in adoption. Their work takes them all over the Philadelphia area as they must complete evaluations, interviews and home studies. The students are **Rebecca Lee**, **Samantha Scheck** and **Dana Cantelmi**, all first year students.

**Jean Lawrence**, a career changer from the administration of the Philadelphia School District, is working at the Norristown Family Center, a part of Carson Valley Children's Aid. She is involved in the area's Truancy Abatement Initiative, in which she will be attending court when parents and students have been charged with too many unexcused absences. The initiative aims not to penalize families, but to connect them with services that could help improve family management, personal issues or the relationship with the school. Jean is also researching how the Family Center can better work with families of young children on kindergarten readiness as part of the United Way's Success by Six strategy.

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