

inside

- Department Focus
- Student Organization
- Student Profile
- Goings On
- Spotlight On

Diversity Center

C. Charles Jackson
Campus Center
Phone: 507-933-7449
gustavus.edu/diversity

Virgil Jones

Director of Multicultural
Programs
vjones@gustavus.edu

Laura Shilling

Administrative Assistant
lshillin@gustavus.edu

GUSTAVUS 
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

MAKE YOUR LIFE **COUNT**

at the center



15th Annual Building Bridges Conference

By Mayanthi Jayawardena and
Rebekah Schulz, 2010 Co-Chairs

Building Bridges is a student-initiated, student-led diversity conference dedicated to addressing today's pressing social and global issues. The conference was founded with the purpose of raising awareness and encouraging dialogue about issues of social justice and bringing together students and the community to address global diversity in a proactive way. Previous conferences have addressed such issues as educational inequality and genocide awareness, with speakers including Erin Gruwell, Paul Rusesabagina, Arun Gandhi, and Lisa Ling.

This year's conference is titled "**Immigration: Surviving the Land of Opportunity**" and will address the struggles immigrants face and the strength required to survive these struggles every day. Our keynote speakers are Kao Kalia Yang, Hmong-American immigrant and author of *The Latecomer*, and Paul Hillmer, history professor and author of *A People's History of the Hmong*.

After learning about the different aspects of immigration from the keynote speakers and workshop presenters, the conference will continue with an action piece, which includes a food drive for the St. Peter soup kitchen, care package assembly for newly arrived immigrants, fundraising for a scholarship for an immigrant student from St. Peter High School to attend a four-year college, and an interactive walkthrough allowing participants to experience firsthand some of the challenges of coming to the United States. These activities will direct conference-goers' attention to putting learning into action—just like our dedicated committee members, all of whom we would like to thank for their commitment to the goals of Building Bridges, best summed up by the following quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

We invite you to come see the results of their hard work on March 13th, beginning with the keynote address at 10 a.m. in Christ Chapel. We promise a conference that will open your eyes to the realities of immigration and challenge you to put that knowledge into practice in your life and the lives of your neighbors.

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 5 : MARCH 2010

HIGHER Ground

diversity center newsletter

organizational focus



Womyn's Awareness Center

By Elizabeth Coco, Co-President of WAC

The Womyn's Awareness Center (WAC) is a student-run organization committed to addressing and raising awareness of important issues surrounding women's lives. These issues include eating disorders, sexual assault, sexuality, reproductive rights, and more. Part of the WAC's mission is to provide the Gustavus community with a variety of events concerning certain issues in an effort to raise awareness.

WAC Week is our first event of the year. On each day of that week we focus on a particular issue. For example, the Inequality Bake Sale seeks to raise awareness surrounding equal pay for men and women. As part of the week of activities, we also host a *Heterodoxy* release party. A feminist literary magazine, *Heterodoxy* offers a chance for students, faculty, and staff to publish works (poetry, prose, photography, etc.) that have to do with women's experiences. This year was particularly exciting, as we celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Protest and Speak Out Against Sexual Assault, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and "Smitten Kitten" speaker are also included in our week of events.

The *Vagina Monologues*, perhaps our best-known event, takes place in February or March. The *Vagina Monologues* is an episodic play written by Eve Ensler. Its mission is to end violence against women and girls, to break the silence, to make people aware of the violence that affects one in three women in the U.S. and throughout the world. (see www.vday.org). This year the performances will take place on March 5 and 6.

On March 24, the WAC is bringing *I Heart Female Orgasm* to the Gustavus campus. It is a Feminist sex education program. Through humor Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot talk about the female orgasm. The program is inclusive of people of all genders and sexual orientations.

The WAC also serves as a safe space for students to express their concerns or simply chat about daily activities with their peers. We hold meetings every Tuesday at 9 p.m. in the WAC (next to the Dive). All are more than welcome to attend our weekly meetings and our events!

department focus

Office of Alcohol and Drug Education

By Ally Pelton, Peer Assistant

Stress. Balance. Roommates. Sleep. Nutrition. Relationships. STIs. Gustavus Culture.

What do you think of when you hear these words? Maybe they strike a chord with you when you think of your college experiences. Maybe you just talked to someone about one of these concerns. Maybe you need more or less of one of these words. In any case, the Peer Assistants program, housed in the Office of Alcohol and Drug Education, deals with all the above issues and more.

The Peer Assistants program is celebrating its thirtieth year this fall, and the program doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon! The Peer Assistants are a nationally recognized peer education organization focusing on healthy decision-making and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The 13 Gustavus students who volunteer with the program focus on bringing awareness to many issues throughout the year, including mental health, drug use, healthy relationships, and making the most of college life. The PAs host multiple events every semester and lead workshops in the classroom and in residence halls.

In February, the PAs are hosts of *K.I.S.S. Week*, with events every day that focus on healthy relationships and sexual responsibility. In March, the group is bringing campuswide awareness to issues students face during Spring Break, and March is also the time when the PAs are looking for new applicants for the next school year. *Walk-a-Mile In Her Shoes*, a nationally-recognized event about domestic and relationship violence, is happening on-campus in April.

Current Peer Assistant Mary Dierkes, a sophomore history major, says her favorite part of the program is "the people I've met and the relationships I've built on-campus with both students and faculty." Susie Kramer, a senior psychology major, says the PA program benefits the Gustavus community by "acting as a bridge between administration and the student body. This bridge gives students more of a voice in campus issues, and this serves the greater community for the better." Overall, the Peer Assistant program has given both its members and the Gustavus student body a place to reflect on issues concerning college life, to brainstorm programming ideas, and to call "home."



student profile



Jennifer Tejada

Hey there! My name is Jennifer Tejada and I am a senior sociology and anthropology major from New York. The word “shocked” cannot begin to describe my reaction when I first stepped into the small town of Saint Peter to start my freshman year at good ol’ Gustavus. Being from a big city and coming to a town where it’s like Cheers and everyone knows your name wasn’t the easiest thing to get used to but the Diversity Center has always been there as a place to keep me sane.

The D-Center has provided me with great opportunities and a great deal of support. It’s a place where I can do homework, relax, or even beat some friends at a round of UNO!

During my four years at Gustavus I’ve been part of some amazing organizations, including OLAS, Study Buddies, and Gustavus’s student-run radio, KGSM. In the spring of 2009 I studied abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. There, I focused on Argentina’s social movements and human rights. Going abroad was probably the best thing I’ve ever decided to do at Gustavus. I was able to learn about a new culture and see the most beautiful sites I have ever seen. When I came back from Argentina, I wanted to continue my passion for studying abroad by interning in the Center for International and Cultural Education (CICE) office. Interning at the CICE has been a fruitful experience in which I have met incredible people and have guided others in their journey to see the world.

*“If you can’t convince them,
confuse them.”*

~ Harry Truman

goings on

Diversity Events

March 2, 9, 16, & 23 | Meditation with Bhante Sathi
7:00–8:00 p.m. | Linner Lounge

March 5 | African Night
5:30–7:30 p.m. | Alumni Hall

March 5 | Vagina Monologues
7:00 p.m. | Björling Recital Hall

March 6 | Vagina Monologues
2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. | Björling Recital Hall

March 8 | Cultural Show
7:00–8:30 p.m. | Alumni Hall

March 9 | Game Show
7:00–8:30 p.m. | Market Place

March 12 | Gustavus Idol
7:00–9:00 p.m. | Market Place

March 12 | Karaoke Night
9:00–11:00 p.m. | Dive

March 12 | Dive Night: Amy DJ
10:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. | Dive

March 13 | 15th Annual Building Bridges Conference
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. | Christ Chapel

College Calendar

March 4 | Day at the Capitol
7:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. | St. Paul

March 10 | Internship Fair
11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. | Heritage Room

March 12 | Health Profession Fair
11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. | Banquet Room

March 27–April 5 | Spring Break/Easter Recess

spotlight on

World Watch and **Cultural Connections** are brought to you by the Crossroads Program. Through their shared interest in world cultures, languages, and contemporary global issues, members work to develop a broader understanding of the world in which they live and contribute to the education of the College community as a whole. Think Globally, Act Locally—The Crossroads Program.

World Watch

Afghanistan: Karzai Criticized over Afghan Poll Watchdog Move — President Hamid Karzai is being criticized for his removing of foreign observers from a UN - backed electoral watchdog. The five-member Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), tasked with reviewing voting fraud, previously had three foreign members appointed by the United Nations, and last year nullified a third of Karzai's votes in the presidential poll as fraudulent. Karzai's decision could put him in new conflict with Western donors who have said they will not fund September 18 parliamentary elections without electoral reforms.

Geneva: UN Weather Meeting Agrees to Refine Climate Data — Experts at a UN climate meeting have agreed to collect more precise temperature data as part of a global effort to monitor climate change. The *World Meteorological Organization* says delegates at a meeting in Antalya, Turkey, approved in principle a British proposal to gather land surface temperature data more frequently and ensure the process is transparent. The decision comes after e-mails stolen from a British university last year prompted public debate over the reliability of climate change predictions.

Sudan: Sudan to Offer Darfur Rebels Government Posts — The capital city of Khartoum will offer Darfur's most powerful rebel group government posts as part of a future peace deal to end conflict in Sudan's west, according to recently signed and unveiled documents setting out the terms of negotiations. The documents were the first concrete sign that Khartoum is prepared to share power with its bitter foe in the western region — a development that could alienate existing allies there and complicate preparations for the upcoming April elections. But rebels from the *Justice and Equality Movement* (JEM) played down chances of reaching a final peace pact by March 15, as outlined in a framework deal for peace talks that was signed in late February.

Cultural Connection

March 1 — St. David's Day (Wales): The Feast Day of Saint David commemorates the patron saint of Wales, who was a Celtic monk of the sixth century and wrote the *Monastic Rule of David*. The date of March 1 was chosen to commemorate Saint David's death on that date in the year 589 – a date which has been celebrated by followers ever since.

March 21 — Now Ruz/Naw Ruz/NouRooz (Baha'i, Iran): Now Ruz is a Persian national festival that celebrates the Iranian New Year. Unlike many other festivals in parts of the Middle East, Now Ruz is not exclusive to one religious group. The festival lasts for thirteen days and is a time of renewal and joy.

March 28 — Palm Sunday (Christian Communities): Palm Sunday always falls on the Sunday before Easter Sunday in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. It signals the upcoming end of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week. The day commemorates the spreading of palms and clothing in Jesus' path as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey prior to his crucifixion.