

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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- Important Dates
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Thanksgiving Reflection



Paul Felarca, St. Mary's University

Thanksgiving has evolved into an American tradition in which loved ones come together to feast on food, fellowship, watch football and have fun. But the very breakdown of the word

“thanksgiving” should remind us to do just that—to give thanks for all that we have.

On the cold and cloudy morning of Thanksgiving Day, thirteen students, two staff members, one faculty and two guests joined me in lending more than two hours of their time—away from their families and friends—to help more than 4,000 other volunteers from across San Antonio in providing meals to more than 25,000 men, women, children and armed forces personnel.

The Raul Jimenez Dinner is the largest outreach of its kind in the

nation to low-income, home-bound and military personnel on Thanksgiving Day. Only one student had participated in the event in years’ past. For the other students, this was a great opportunity for them to get a glimpse of the stark and harsh reality of poverty in their own back yard.

The event itself was an overall success. Within our group, there was an eighty-three per cent turn-out for individuals who committed to participating in the event. The students not only

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Spirit of Giving



Garnesha Beck, UT Tyler

The spirit of giving was in plain sight during the Thanksgiving Canned Food Drive at The University of Texas at Tyler. Thousands of cans filled the university center the week before Thanksgiving. Student assistants busily

organized mass quantities of various food stuffs during the week of the food drive.

Students who donated food not only became involved in the fight against hunger, but also for the enticing reward of extra credit in particular classes. Chelsie Loftin, a junior from Jacksonville, Texas, was the largest individual contributor with fifty-two cans. She won a twenty-five dollar gift certificate to the on-campus bookstore.

“The East Texas Food Bank works daily to ensure that no man, woman or child goes hungry.”

Advertising for the food drive included distribution of flyers, class announcements, banners and other forms of information

resources. The food drive was not limited to on-campus gathering and drop-off sites—the Cambridge at Tyler student apartment complex also advertised to its tenants encouraging donations by offering twenty dollars off one month of rent for anyone donating cans.

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Iliana Melendez, UT Austin

Important Dates

- Nov. 3: Matt's Birthday
- Nov. 6: Election Day
- Nov. 8: Project 3 due
- Nov. 11: Veteran's Day
- Nov. 11-17: Nat'l Hunger Awareness Week
- Nov. 16: Ann's Birthday
- Nov. 22: Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 30: Activity Reports due
- Dec. 1: Rosa Parks Human Rights Day
- Dec. 3-7: VISTA Leader Training in Lombard, IL
- Dec. 6: Project 4 due
- Dec. 10 Internat'l Human Rights Day

Change...It Is Good

Change, I believe, is something that comes with time and something that is unavoidable, fortunately for some and for others not so much. As for me, I believe that change is something that has been a very important part of my life for the past five years.

In those five years my family has grown, I left my parents home and moved eight hours away. College in itself was a huge change for me. Now I find that life has changed once again and I'm now on a journey, one that as of now has no clear ending, but one that I am thankful for nonetheless.

It first began with my VISTA position. I took it believing that through it I would end my search for a clear transition to what my future was going to look like, and well I find myself now wondering what that is or will be. I do however know that there is and perhaps

never will be a clear ending, but more of a continuum. That continuum comes in many different forms for me. It comes in the form of education, personal and professional growth, social justice teachings/understanding and most importantly: service.

Through my position with the University of Texas at Austin, I have realized that for positive change you need continuum. Over the past couple years, service has become a very important aspect of my life and through it I have come to understand the importance of change, and how the smallest change can lead to so much more. Through my work at the University of Texas at Austin, I have come to comprehend how that continuum of change happens and how important it is to educate others, especially students, of that change and how they play an important role in making that

change possible. The connection of how that happens is one that is very important and is something that is more gratifying than I thought it would be to watch students come to appreciate and understand.

It is something that I have had the opportunity to do through my position as an AmeriCorps VISTA and for that I am thankful. Through time and some struggle, I have come to learn from every single one of those changes in my life, and while not all of those changes were easy, they were not impossible either. They helped me grow into the person I am now, and I look forward to doing much more of it, and because it's the season to be thankful. Thank you family, friends, co-workers, Texas Campus Compact...and thank you change!

Happy Holidays!!

The Starfish Story



By Loren Easley

Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied, "Throwing starfish into the sea."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the sea?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference."

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."

Effective Time Management

1. *Set goals.* Make a list of specific attainable goals, both personal and professional, and set deadlines for reaching them. Review goals monthly.
2. *Make lists.* Create a daily to-do list for your work style. Create a system to identify urgent, important, and “if there’s time” priorities items on the list. Start with urgent items.
3. *Be realistic.* For an eight hour day, plan for six hours of accomplishments.
4. *Get organized.* Get a daybook, buy one or make one with a calendar and note pad, for the central headquarters for your schedules and lists.

5. *Include “Me” time.* Write yourself in for appointments and keep them. Block out time for reflection and other activities to recharge: sports, reading, hobbies, etc.
6. *A place for everything.* Put something where it belongs and it’s always there. If you don’t know where it belongs, decide right away.
7. *Delegate.* Decide what others are able and willing to do, and ask for help if you need it.
8. *Learn how to say no sometimes.* Promise yourself to decline demands upon your time. Practice this if it is difficult for you. Set a limit of how many “got-a-minute?” requests you will entertain each day.

9. *Cluster.* Arrange similar tasks to do at once, or those that need to be done in the same place and go there once.
10. *Effective rather than efficient.* Effectiveness is the right thing at the right time, not the wrong thing quickly.
11. *Start small.* Some call it “chunking,” taking one big goal and downsizing it into smaller doses. Keep your to-do list detailed so daily activities add up to the larger goal over time.
12. *Quality rather than quantity.* Fewer meaningful experiences in a day are more valuable than a slew of blurred memories.

¡Feliz Cumplianos!

Matthew Zielsdorf & Ann Lewandowski

celebrate their birthdays this month (Nov. 3 and Nov. 16). If you’re looking for the keys to Ann’s heart, look no further than her hubby Dave and her two dogs, Paco and Goliath. Matthew enjoys riding his bicycle and listening to Air America Radio.

Recommended birthday gifts: slippers, soy bacon, dental floss

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Next issue’s theme

Frozen Wasteland:

Compassion Fatigue & the Mid-service

Slump

Bulletin Board

The application process is now open for the 2008 **Swearer Student Humanitarian Award** and the **Frank Newman Leadership Award**. Visit www.compact.org/awards for more information regarding the process, including deadlines and requirements.

The 2008 **Thomas Ehrlich Faculty Award** application period begins January 22, 2008. Applica-

tions are due by March 21, 2008. Visit www.compact.org/awards for more information.

...
Congratulations to Iliana Melendez who won Project 3!

...
Dine-around topics have been finalized for the Student Leadership Institute, they include:

1. *Consumption Junction:* When corporate responsibility meets the

dinner plate

2. *The Community Crock Pot:* Integrating communities and building partnerships

3. *If You Can't Stand the Heat:* Environmental imperatives of global climate change

4. *Your Piece of the Pie:* Youth political participation in the 2008 presidential election

Experiences and Conclusions

As a first year Vista, everything was a first for me. Thankfully, I learned a lot. Not only was I interested in poverty, civic engagement and Service-Learning on a personal level, but thanks to training provided by AmeriCorps and Texas State Technical College Harlingen, I feel as though I contributed immensely to a new train of thought with our student body.

Reflective-based successes through civic projects and Service-Learning projects have caused a contagious

habit of critical thinking. Students on campus are actually having open dialogues on an inner circle basis, about local issues. Well, of course they are, you talk about anything with your inner circle friends right? Sure. But the difference is that now, it isn’t mere complaining about what they don’t like. Now, it’s more discussion with implementation of problem-solving. Now, it’s with a sense of ownership. Now, there’s action!

Our efforts to empower students

and student organizations are shaping our local world. Assisting and empowering our newly formed Environmental Club has led to a campus effort with city-wide clean-ups, tree planting and recycling initiatives. By empowering the Student Government Association, the student body has focused their attention to policy making, politics, the importance of voting and the power of media.

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Joshua Hernandez, Texas State Technical College

Giving

The UT Tyler softball team solicited their sponsors to join the cause and raised more than five hundred dollars, which will purchase about 1,188 meals. In total, UT Tyler donated 4,684 pounds of food that will make about 3,659 meals. The contribution did not just end with cans. On Monday, November 19, thirty-eight volunteers from UT Tyler spent the evening at the East Texas Food Bank sorting 10,000 pounds of donated food, which will provide about 7,812 meals!

All contributions were donated to the East Texas Food Bank in order to help end hunger for needy East Texans.

Reflection

enjoyed their time in service, but they also made a connection. A component of St. Mary's mission statement reads, "... [It] fosters the formation of people of faith and educates leaders for the common good through community..." A key social teaching about the Marianist charism that encompasses St. Mary's Catholic identity is lending service to others. My observation is that my students got it. They understood the whole mission, the identity, their purpose in life. If most of them had only heard of stories about poverty before, they were quickly introduced to a scenario they will never forget.

In talking with the students, all of them had plans to spend the rest of the day with family. Although they did not directly say it, their responses proved the underlying gratitude and thankfulness they had. Families, an abundance of food, a nice home to go to... all things most folks take advantage of. For those two hours, though, my students saw the disadvantages, but quickly dropped any disconnect that still exists among many Americans. The question remains—will they be thankful enough to create change so others can have advantages like themselves?

Experiences

This makes me anxious to start our new programs next semester. With a widened audience and a variety of mediums, I hope to see a pivotal point in this college's student body history.

Obtaining VISTA Happiness

Ten Tips for Obtaining VISTA Happiness

- I. Sit down when you see your first paycheck...or don't even look at it (there isn't much there)!
- II. Find the local newspaper: it's usually *free* and lists *free* things!
- III. Ask for discounts!
- IV. Hungry? Go to department meetings...there is usually *free* food!
- V. Readjust to dorm life...quickly!

VI. Readjust to cafeteria food...quickly!

VII. Remember to keep calendar updated.

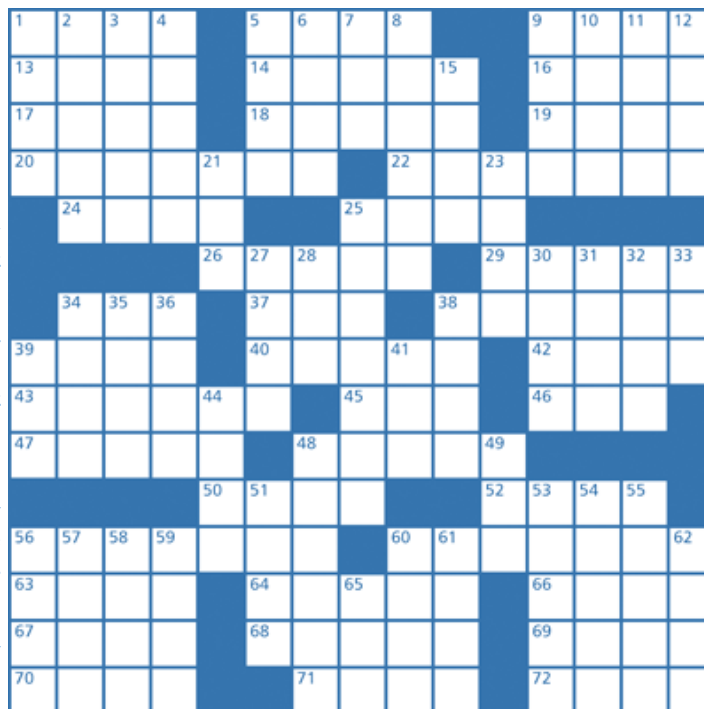
VIII. Keep an open mind.

IX. Embrace all the retreats and trainings you never know who you will meet!

X. Celebrate all your achievements...even the little ones...like getting a phone in your office!

Submitted by **KellyAnn Grace**, St. Mary's University

Mental Floss



Down

- 1 Maximum number of wives allowable for one man, in the Qur'an
- 2 ___ with (equal to)
- 3 "Understand?"
- 4 Howard Hughes's all-wood plane, the "Spruce ___"
- 5 "Whole Lotta Shakin' ___ On"
- 6 Assns.
- 7 "___ blu, dipinto ..." ("Volare" lyrics)
- 8 Peanut, in Dixie
- 9 Bruins' sch.
- 10 Game delayer
- 11 King of Siam's hiree
- 12 Reply to "Shall we?"
- 15 Go parasailing
- 21 AOL is one
- 23 Nose: Prefix
- 25 Minnesota pol whose action figure battled "Evil Special Interest Man"
- 27 Crow's-nest cry
- 28 Young seal
- 30 NASA's ___ Research Center
- 31 "No Crime for a ___" (Crime novel with a Gerald Gregg-designed cover)
- 32 List-ending abbr.
- 33 Senator Patty Murray, a "___ in tennis shoes"
- 34 Beef or pork cut
- 35 "Dark ___ of the Moon" (Pink Floyd album that supposedly syncs up with images in "The Wizard of Oz")
- 36 Forearm bone
- 38 Refs' stoppages
- 39 Islands music
- 41 "This ___ test"
- 44 Cleveland's lake
- 48 Have no doubt
- 49 ___ lane (carpoolers' convenience)
- 51 Other than paragraph indents, the ___ Sea Scrolls have no punctuation
- 53 "___ sucks!" ('70s slogan)
- 54 Maze notation
- 55 Regatta racer
- 56 Ship's lockup
- 57 Continental coin
- 58 Essayist's alias
- 59 Tale of adventure
- 60 Yahtzee need
- 61 Like ___ of bricks
- 62 In a purposeless way
- 65 NASCAR ___

Across

- 1 Verne's circumnavigator
- 5 "___ farmer" (emptier of town toilets, in Tudor England)
- 9 Mountains dividing Europe and Asia
- 13 Basie's "___ Clock Jump"
- 14 Stackable cookies
- 16 Accessory for Mr. Peanut
- 17 Not exceeding
- 18 Home that might have a seal-intestine window
- 19 In 2001, physicist Carl Kruszelnicki conducted a study of bellybutton ___
- 20 Marvin Gaye-singing Claymation band, the California ___
- 22 A bunch of this fruit is called a "hand"
- 24 Numbered rds.
- 25 Dress designer Wang
- 26 "___ Moon" (con-theme movie starring Ryan and Tatum O'Neal)
- 29 Witch trials locale
- 34 Baton Rouge sch.
- 37 Attila, e.g.
- 38 The Supreme Court ruled that this fruit is a vegetable
- 39 The Free-___ Party of the 1840s-'50s
- 40 "Phiber ___" (the first hacker to serve time in a federal prison)
- 42 Wax-coated cheese
- 43 Human organ often sold on the black market
- 45 GI-entertaining gp.
- 46 Word segment: Abbr.
- 47 Have ___ to the ground
- 48 Shameless
- 50 Light bulb, in comics
- 52 Works of praise
- 56 British singing group whose members didn't like the group's name
- 60 Designer of a wagon known as a "clockwork car"
- 63 The Home ___ Party of Hawaii (political party of 1900-12)
- 64 Taxpayer's dread
- 66 Poker variety
- 67 Pupil's locale
- 68 Athenian politician whose name gave us a word meaning "extremely harsh"
- 69 An amoeba has one
- 70 Animal that will climb an argan tree for its fruit
- 71 Place of bliss
- 72 Airport that serves Paris

Cryptoquote

BV SGC UFTF MGBWM HG JXGGH D OBOF, UGCZE

SGC CJF D JBZFWIFT? - JHFNFXW UTBMXH