TRINITY CELEBRATES NATIONAL TRiO DAY

On Saturday, February 25, McNair Scholars and staff, including Shacoya Atkins (sophomore), Mellissa Delcont (senior), Megan Garcia (sophomore), and Teresa Morrison (assistant director), along with approximately 30 Upward Bound students and staff, participated in Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio (HFHSA) to celebrate National TRiO Day. We worked extremely hard fixing roofs, painting siding, framing windows, and more to make a local family’s dreams come true. “I was so excited to work with HFH in honor of the TRiO programs. Being able to help out those in need really made me appreciate everything I have. It was also great to share the experience with so many Upward Bound Scholars,” Shacoya told us after the event.

HFHSA was the first affiliate to start building houses; since 1976, they’ve built approximately 740 homes in Bexar County. HFH provides educational classes, mortgage counseling, and home maintenance training so homeowners can become self-sufficient. Volunteer Services Assistant Miriela Turner stressed HFH is not a charity or a handout, but a hand up, making the parallels between the HFH mission and what TRiO programs are designed to do very clear. “Since the McNair Program has changed my life in so many positive ways, it truly was a blessing to be able to return that service by contributing to the life changing events of other people's lives,” said Mellissa, who joined McNair in 2009. “Habitat for Humanity was the perfect way to give back a little of what McNair gives to all of us.”

Habitat for Humanity was such a rewarding and fun experience for everyone involved. We were pleased to be a part of this amazing opportunity and to celebrate TRiO!

WELCOME BACK PROVES INSPIRATIONAL

We were proud to have Ivy Taylor, District 2 councilperson for the City of San Antonio, help welcome our returning Scholars on January 10 at the Holt Conference Center. Taylor gave a very personal keynote address that was quite moving and left our Scholars inspired and ready to achieve their dreams. She shared her own journey from college to graduate school and the various careers she’s had, noting that she’s now doing something she truly loves. She stressed that Scholars should: 1) focus their interests; 2) network as often as possible; 3) pursue what they love; 4) develop critical thinking skills; and 5) get involved in their community, especially with nonprofits. The Welcome Back Meeting is always a great opportunity to discuss the calendar of events and get Scholars excited about the upcoming semester.

A Message from the Director...

It’s hard not to get excited about the upcoming Summer Research Experience, which will see talented McNair Scholars working closely with faculty on cutting-edge research projects. This will be our fourth SRE, which means that we are soon to reach the end of our first U.S. Department of Education grant cycle.

The Program has grown by leaps and bounds during the past few years; we now serve far more Scholars than ever before. This growth reflects the dedication not only of McNair faculty and staff, but also of the wider Trinity community, from Admissions and Financial Aid to Academic Affairs to Student Affairs. Trinity leadership, beginning with the Board of Trustees and President Dennis Ahlburg, has clearly aligned the University mission with providing opportunities to first generation, low-income students. I’m proud to be part of an institution that recognizes how the two go hand-in-hand.

Tremendous growth also means, regrettably, that we had to make some truly wrenching decisions as we recently admitted the next class of McNair Scholars. Our eight new Scholars, who will take part in Program activities beginning in the fall, will no doubt continue in the impressive footsteps of their predecessors.

Because we are at the end of one grant cycle, we are also busy preparing to enter the next grant competition (which will take place during the late spring and summer). As we move forward into year six, we will improve Program services and offer some pioneering and cost-effective approaches to academic career counseling, faculty-student research, and Program management.

I can’t wait to share the details of McNair 2.0!

~ Michael Soto
ON THE ROAD AGAIN...

An unprecedented number of campus visits, open houses, forums, and interviews has taken our Scholars to these universities:

Karen Artola-Gonzalez
Univ. of Texas Law Fair (Austin, TX)—Oct. 4, 2011
Univ. of Tulsa Law School (Tulsa, OK)—Feb. 22-23, 2012

Rebecca Carey
Univ. of San Diego (San Diego, CA)—Jan. 30, 2012
Univ. of Washington (Seattle, WA)—Feb. 9-12, 2012
Univ. of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI)—Feb. 16-18, 2012
Stanford Univ. (Stanford, CA)—Feb. 24-26, 2012

Mellissa Delcont
Univ. of Chicago (Chicago, IL)—Apr. 2, 2012
Northwestern Univ. (Chicago, IL)—Apr. 3, 2012

Victoria Gbenjo
Temple Univ. School of Podiatric Medicine Open House (Philadelphia, PA)—November 18-20, 2011

Peggy Guo
Texas A&M HSC College of Medicine (Temple, TX)—Aug. 24-25, 2011
Univ. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas, TX)—Sept. 8-10, 2011

JUNIOR SCHOLARS TOUR TEXAS GRAD SCHOOLS

On March 26, eight junior Scholars visited Southern Methodist University in Dallas with Prof. Amy Stone, tutorial faculty, and Teresa Morrison, assistant director. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies—led by senior assistant dean Barbara Phillips and assistant to the dean Phyllis Payne—put together an exciting day full of class lectures, faculty meetings, and campus tours. James Quick, AVP for research and dean of graduate studies, welcomed us and later shared lunch with us. We also took an opportunity to try out Indian and Ethiopian food, a first for many. Reviews were mixed, but we enjoyed the experience nonetheless!

We headed back north on April 5 with three Scholars to visit UNT in Denton and UNTHSC and TCOM, both in Fort Worth. Once again, the Scholars had an opportunity to tour the campuses; meet with graduate students, staff, and faculty; and sit in on classes and labs. A number of people were instrumental in making our visit a success, including graduate student recruiter Patricia Spencer (UNT), admissions coordinator Felicity White (UNTHSC), and director of admissions Mike Kennedy (TCOM).

NOTABLE SCHOLAR HONORS AND AWARDS

While we cannot possibly list everything, here are some of the most notable of our Scholars’ accomplishments this year:

♦ REBECCA CAREY—Psychology Student of the Year
♦ KAREN ARTOLA-GONZALEZ, JONATHAN GALLEGOS, SAMANTHA GONZALEZ, and TANVI PATEL—Twelfth Edition of the Showcase of Student Academic Talent
♦ SHALEE WALLACE—accepted into the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP)
♦ MELLISSA DELCONT—Meritiorious award, AACR 7th Annual Undergraduate Student Caucus and Poster Competition (USCPC)
♦ KALLLIE PFEIFFER—Honorable Mention, Society for Photographic Education (SPE) South Central Conference Student Member Show
♦ KRISTINE YI—Trinity Alumni Association Student Service Award for Outstanding Service to the Community
♦ RACHEL ALLEY, JOHN KERR, and DEVON POWERS—awarded the Financial Aid for Science and Technology (FAST) Grant
FALL 2011-SPRING 2012 CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE & PRESENTATIONS

Karen Artola-Gonzalez
Oklahoma State University Research Conference
Teaching of Evolution and the Selection of Textbooks: Texas Case Study
February 23-24, 2012 Tulsa, OK
~
Rebecca Carey
The Society of Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Meeting
High in the Sky or Down in the Gutter: The Effect of Name Verticality on Self-Esteem
January 26-28, 2012 San Diego, CA
~
Christina Cooney
2011 Las Vegas International Academic Conference Integrative Management
October 9-12, 2011 Las Vegas, NV
~
Mellissa Delcont
Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting—Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN) Poster Session
Estrogen and Testosterone-Induced Neuroprotection in a Parkinson’s Disease Cell Models
November 10-15, 2011 Washington, DC
~
Jonathan Gallegos
2011 South Texas Regional McNair Scholars Research Conference, University of the Incarnate Word Motivation and Prospects of Self-concept Change Affect Desire to Enter Friendships: Maze Skills and Processing of Social Scenarios
September 17, 2011 San Antonio, TX
~
The Society of Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Meeting
High in the Sky or Down in the Gutter: The Effect of Name Verticality on Self-Esteem
January 26-28, 2012 San Diego, CA
~
Samantha Gonzalez
243rd American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting
Biochemistry of Fly Eye Color: defects in eye pigmentation synthesis pathways in Drosophila melanogaster
March 25-29, 2012 San Diego, CA
~
Lauren Holguin
243rd American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting
Synthesis of Phenyl-substituted 4-4 linked Bis-Indenyldiene Dications
March 25-29, 2012 San Diego, CA
~
John Kerr
44th Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Southeastern Symposium on System Theory (SSST) Robot Operating Systems: Bridging the Gap between Human and Robot
March 10-14, 2012 Jacksonville, FL
~
Si Ying Li-Gonzalez
243rd American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting Thermodynamic studies of lauryl acrylate porous polymer monoliths used in capillary electrochromatography
March 25-29, 2012 San Diego, CA
~
Valerie Martinez
Latin American Studies Student Symposium Aztec Ceramic Figurines: An Analysis of “Female Holding Child” Hollow-Rattle Figurine
April 20-21, 2012 Birmingham, AL
~
Tanvi Patel
American Association for Dental Research Conference Ameloblastin Expression Levels Influence Smoothness of the Enamel Surface
March 21-24, 2012 Tampa, FL
~
Kallie Pfeiffer
2011 South Texas Regional McNair Scholars Research Conference, University of the Incarnate Word Synthesis of Phenyl-Substituted 4-4 linked Bis-Indenyldiene DiCations
September 17, 2011 San Antonio, TX
~
Devon Powers
2011 South Texas Regional McNair Scholars Research Conference, University of the Incarnate Word The Faculty Perceptions of Millennial Students
September 17, 2011 San Antonio, TX
~
Laura Sandling
2011 South Texas Regional McNair Scholars Research Conference, University of the Incarnate Word Clientelism in Mexico: Do Federal Funds Continue to be Redistributed as a Result of Party Discretion?
September 17, 2011 San Antonio, TX
~
Aimee Vidaurri
2012 Western Political Science Association (WPSA) Annual Meeting Clientelism in Mexico: Do Federal Funds Continue to be Redistributed as a Result of Party Discretion?
March 22-24, 2012 Portland, OR
SENIOR SCHOLARS PARTICIPATE IN INNOVATIVE TEACHING UNIT

Our Scholars had the great honor of being invited into Trinity’s new Collaborative for Learning and Teaching—a place usually reserved only for faculty—for a unit entitled, “Preparing for Life as an Academic.” Prof. Wilson Terrell Jr., tutorial faculty for the GNED 4110 course, initiated the joint venture with Diane Persellin, professor of music education and co-chair of the steering committee for the Collaborative. The three-week unit allowed students to learn how to prepare a syllabus and a lecture; work with one another, Persellin, and McNair staff to create a lecture on a topic of their choosing; and present that lecture to the class for videotaping and critique. Prof. Terrell beamed, “I’m REALLY excited about the [unit], and [Scholars] will get a lot of hands on to preparing a lecture….I think this is one of the best units we’ve ever offered!”

Persellin added, “The new Collaborative for Learning and Teaching was pleased to host and work with the senior McNair Scholars. These Scholars did a great job of creating and delivering short, engaging lectures. I was so impressed with their work and felt like I was watching my future colleagues. I hope the Collaborative and the McNair program can work together again in the future!” We hope for the same!

MLK COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE

Ilyasah Shabazz,—author, producer, social activist, and daughter of Malcolm X—was the guest speaker for the 2012 Martin Luther King, Jr. commemorative lecture. Terrin Blackmon (sophomore) won a VIP dinner with Ms. Shabazz. Terrin and several other Scholars also attended a meet-and-greet and the evening lecture. Scholar Laura Sandling (junior), who attended the lecture, shared that “although [Shabazz’s] entire lecture was intriguing, my favorite parts were when she shared her memories of her father and mother.” Samantha Gonzalez (junior) said, “I really enjoyed Ms. Shabazz’s lecture because of not only how historically informative it was, but [also] because of how thought provoking [it was]. . . . She was a very impressive…woman that I would not mind becoming when I get to her age.” Special thanks to Soi Ithavong, coordinator of Diversity and Intercultural Relations, and Wilson Terrell Jr., tutorial faculty, for extending these amazing opportunities to our Scholars!