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Help Wanted

Christian Na

Columnist

Last time you heard from me, we discussed a few ways that service trips can have unfavorable effects on the communities that volunteers want to help. We talked about volunteerism, exploitation, and Teju Cole's White Savior Industrial Complex. We considered better options—options that respected the communities in which volunteers served and weren't an egregious waste of money. And we looked at the choices we have to make when it comes to service trips and volunteer work, choices that often make helping look a lot different than what we see in pamphlets and Facebook profile photos.

This week, I'd like to share a few (just a few—there are so many more) ways you can volunteer responsibly in areas where help is wanted, and where you're equipped and welcome to serve. Since it's likely that most people reading this are living in or near New Wilmington, we'll start local.

Shenango on the Green (located on South Market Street across from Wallace Memorial Chapel) is just a few cartwheels away from campus, and it's a great place to get started with some hearty, traditional volunteer work. For nursing home residents at Shenango on the Green, any time spent with a college kid is time well spent. They greatly enjoy the company of someone who will join them for bingo, one-on-one visits, a movie night, some live music, or trips to events. And I have found, to boot, that elderly people have some of the strongest characters and the most interesting stories to tell. If you'd like to volunteer here, head to shenangocare.org or simply walk in and chat with the info desk attendant in the lobby!

The City Rescue Mission in New Castle (a 10-20 minute drive away from campus, depending on how fast you speed) is a wonderful operation in the city next door from us. When I started volunteering at the mission's soup kitchen, the head cook told me, "I have one rule in my kitchen: nobody leaves here hungry." The New Castle City Rescue Mission has several incredible programs that provide food assistance, emergency shelter, addiction recovery

guidance and support, and chapel services for local families and individuals. Help is always welcome in the areas of soup kitchen service, office assistance, holiday drive and outreach programs, and donations of food and funds. To get involved, head to cityrescuemission.org or call 724-652-4321.

Want to volunteer with a group of service-minded individuals? Luckily for you, you (probably) attend a college where philanthropy is one of the most celebrated and practiced facets of student life. You have options!

Westminster's chapter of Alpha Phi Omega (a national service fraternity) is always excited to welcome new members and attendees! Alpha Phi Omega has worked with organizations like American Red Cross, Operation Gratitude, and Toys for Tots, while having led food, blood, and coat drives, community events, and fundraisers. Recruitment events take place every semester and are broadcast via all-campus email. To rush or inquire, contact a brother (hey, that's me! - nacv22).

Lambda Sigma, a national honor society for sophomores, is a fun and philanthropic organization whose four tenets are leadership, scholarship, fellowship, and service. Lambda Sigma organizes and contributes to several on- and off-campus service projects like food and clothing drives, and, like Alpha Phi Omega, is run entirely by students, so service projects are proposed and executed by members of the organizations. Freshmen: apply to join Lambda Sigma in the spring, and talk to a current member for more information!

It's no secret that social Greek life permeates every corner of the Westminster experience. Although I'm independent, I have many friends in sororities and fraternities who spend a great amount of time serving the Westminster community and working with their many designated philanthropies (Children's Miracle Network, the Wounded Warrior Project, the Alzheimer's Association, etc.). If you want to stay service-minded and think Greek life might be right for you, try rushing this spring!

Now, if travel is your cup of tea, let's talk about the agencies that do some of the best work in this realm.

For long-term commitments, the Peace Corps, WorldTeach, WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms), Moving Worlds, Habitat for Humanity, and Global Volunteer Network offer decent programs, some of which offer the most desirable kind of projects—trained and supported placement for long-term and sustainable service in communities that request it, with transitional resources for both the departure and homecoming processes. To look further into these programs, search them online, learn their histories and missions, and apply!

Volunteer work should be meaningful for both the helper and the helped. If "make a difference" is your aim, make sure the difference that you're making does no harm. I was going to leave you with that jaded Gandhi bit about changing the world, but I really loathe that quote for how much it's (mis)used, so here's something better. In his preface to *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman wrote these beautiful sentiments:

This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families... re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book... and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.

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Balancing Support for Student and Community Events

Tim Herzig

Columnist

So far this fall, the Westminster Celebrity Series has brought The Four Phantoms, The President's Own Marine Band and Chris Botti to Orr Auditorium. I attended two of those events in what was close to a full house.

Prior to attending Westminster, I made it a point to see many of the School of Music's student and faculty performances and have been disheartened at the lack of attendance at many of these performances. There are some talented individuals and groups at this school, and there is no reason performances should be given to less than a full house.

What are we not doing in this community that prevents us from drawing enough people to fill the auditorium for a FREE recital or an orchestra, wind ensemble or symphonic band concert? I was pleasantly surprised a week or two ago to see much of the main seating area and part of the main balcony in the chapel filled at the combined Concert Choir/Chamber Singers concert, but that seems to be the exception rather than the rule. More frequently, I have observed that attendance for recitals and concerts in this venue has been sparse.

Granted, these events are not everyone's cup of tea, so to speak, but that is no excuse. They are usually scheduled far enough in advance to be properly marketed. Recently, a choral performance in which I am involved needed to be rescheduled, and to my dismay, it was rescheduled on the same date as two other performances that many people in the community in and around this campus already will (or should be) attending. Further, I had long since committed to performing in one of these latter concerts.

One conflict is the matinee performance of Theatre Westminster's production of *Eurydice*. The other is the big Christmas show put on by the Mercer County Community Band. That concert typically fills the Mercer High School auditorium and makes it more likely that another Westminster student performance could be poorly attended.

Instead of competing with other departments and the community for audience members, we should be doing everything in our power to support our students and colleagues in their endeavors. As a student and a member of that community band, I should not have to choose to either play with the group to which I am already committed or sing in a rescheduled concert.

To be fair, I spoke to our choral director, Dr. Schade, about this, and I don't blame him for the scheduling conflicts. He did what he needed to do with the information he was given, but we need to do better. There are seven days in a week. Aside from *Eurydice* being on the school's calendar, Westminster is not located on a secluded island separate from the surrounding community. Why wasn't information available to him about other events in the community?

We should be promoting Theatre Westminster's production on campus and in the community. We should balance that with supporting 100-plus members of our community in the Mercer County Community Band and inviting them and their audience to visit one or more of our performances rather than scheduling competing events. The more involved we are in the community, the more involved the community will be with us.

Students will attend free events in which they are interested if they know about them and have time to do so. Perhaps sending an email more than a few hours to a day in advance would be helpful, but as for letting the community at large know about these events, is the issue money, time, or maybe a lack of interest within the community? Is it a failure to communicate? Are we even aware of what is happening in the surrounding communities, and do we even know how to discover those details?

I cannot attend each performance in which I am not involved. There are too many things competing for my time and the time of all the students and faculty here for us to do it all. We should, however, be able to reach out to enough people in the local community to support our student performers and be able to schedule events that do not conflict with events happening in other departments and the community around us.

Theatre Westminster's production of *Eurydice* is November 30 - December 2 @ 7:30 p.m. and December 3 @ 2:30 p.m. in Beahly Theatre.

The Westminster Voices' (previously known as the Men's and Women's Choirs) concert is December 3 @ 3:00 p.m. in Wallace Memorial Chapel.

The Mercer County Community Band's annual Christmas concert is December 3 @ 3:00 p.m. in the Mercer High School Auditorium.

Copy edited by Taylor Hertzler

Science Isn't Everything (When Choosing a Major)

Mackenzie Marino

Columnist

I came to this campus with one large misconception: if you aren't getting a science degree or a business degree, your degree will be worthless. I came in as a molecular biology major, feeling pressured to "succeed" and "make money," as if the only professions that make money are scientists. I came in with the assumption that science equals money, that there is no other way to be "successful" in life.

For some, perhaps this is true. Maybe for some of you, science will be the only way to have a profitable life. That doesn't mean that the only important things in life are your fields. I suppose I had my awakening while taking my Twentieth Century Europe course last semester. Many people in the class were not history majors. I wasn't at the time, either, though that quickly changed (not just because of that course, but it helped). The course material was deemed "unimportant" by so many biology, biochemistry, and chemistry majors because it wasn't about science—as if the world revolves purely around their disciplines or as if nothing else matters.

Please do not fall into this trap. I know most people hear "liberal arts education" and think "oh, that's nice" but forget about all the stuff we learn in Inquiry. I'm sure you remember. You know—the importance of learning about all disciplines so that you can be a well-rounded individual. It sounded reasonable to me, like it was a bit of a no-brainer—of course you have to learn a little bit of everything so that you can handle almost any problem that may come up in a future job. However, as I witnessed, that's definitely not how everyone feels.

I'm not saying that everyone should live, breath, and die history. I understand that everyone has their own individual interests, and for many, these interest lie in the sciences. That just is not the case for everyone, though, which is why I write this article. Too many times, my passions have been belittled by someone who believes their own subject to be more important than mine. There are just as many reasons to study history as there are to study biology, just as many to study music as chemistry, as many to study philosophy as physics, and as many to study English as biochemistry. There's no reason to act like your choice in major is better than anyone else's.

It's not true that only science will bring you to a job that makes you a lot of money—there's no one-hundred-percent guarantee, no matter what you do, that you will land a job that earns you those fabled dollars. This probably sounds cliché, but it's the truth: study something that you love, something that brings you happiness. I realized that biology was not for me once I saw that everyone else in the class was really enjoying the labs, that to them, it wasn't a huge chore and a miserable three hours. This is what they wanted to do for the rest of their lives.

It wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I'm at my happiest nose deep in a history book, learning about people long gone, trying to understand their motives and comparing past events to what is happening today. I'm a firm believer in the concept that we should learn from history. I want to be an anthropologist, I want to be a historian, I want to be a professor, and I have my own reasons for this.

I tell you all of that to help you understand that everyone has a reason for choosing their major. They can have simple dreams or grand aspirations. It doesn't matter what they want to do, only that they want to do something, want to achieve something with their degree—just like you have goals for your degree. Keep that in mind the next time you want to tell someone that they'll "never get a job with a major like that."

My advice is this—the next time you take a class that isn't related to your major, put equal effort into it. Commit yourself to caring about it, at least a little bit. You might discover that sociology isn't as dumb as you thought it was. Maybe you'll learn something valuable from that English course. Maybe chemistry isn't as difficult as you thought it was. Maybe, just maybe, there really is a reason you have to do a little more exploring outside of your discipline.

Oh, and one more thing—don't listen to your skeptical parents, grandparents and other family members. Get that degree in philosophy, in music, in art, in whatever you want. You can make your dreams happen with enough drive, no matter what the doubtfulness might say.

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