

Fall 2016

Community Partnerships Literary Magazine X 2016

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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Connecticut College

LITERARY MAGAZINE X
2016



“No social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of dedicated Individuals”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Scholar Activists...

BUILD COMMUNITY...

...MAKE CHANGE

"I am building relationships with a wide range of people, taking risks and working together to create a better future for all of us. I am building more affordable housing."

"I'm looking at issues from all angles and want to see the big picture. I am analyzing systems and how they can perpetuate inequities."

"As part of a team, I am creating alternatives and constructing consensus. I am designing my teaching and learning experiences and creating a life of meaning and purpose."

Gratitude and Joy to the Connecticut College Scholar Activists!

The Connecticut College
Community Partnerships

Literary Magazine

Vol. X Fall 2016

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for Community Partnerships

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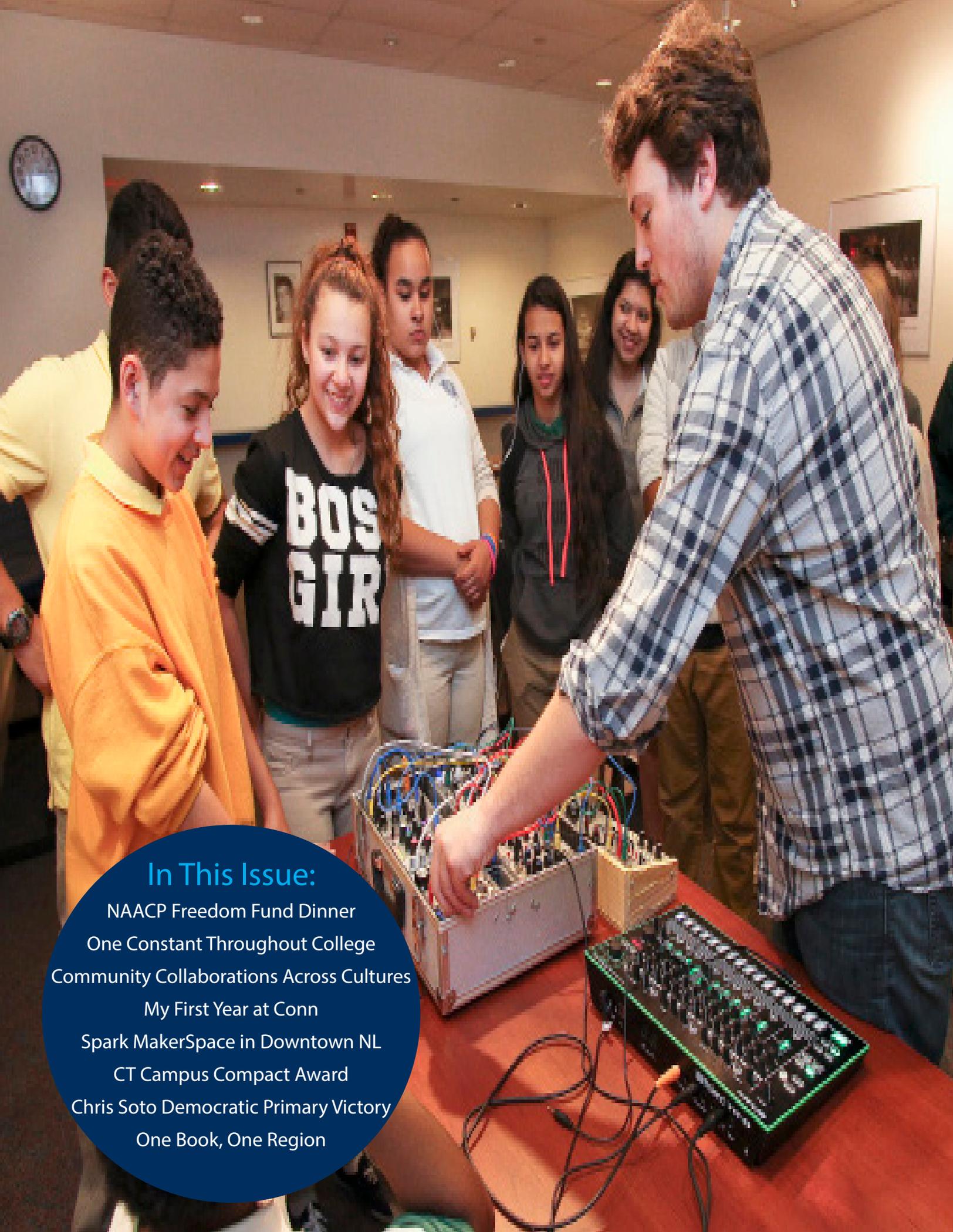
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Christian Caldwell '19

Hannah Gant, Spark Founder



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NEW LONDON NAACP 57TH ANNUAL FREEDOM FUND DINNER AT OCEAN BEACH

Penney Beaubrun '11
Holleran Center Assistant Director for
Alumni Development and Publications



Sunday June 12 was a very tragic day as we all learned about the senseless act that took place at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. During this horrid event, we lost 50 brothers and sisters who were mostly of Hispanic descent. Moments like this leave so many of us feeling vulnerable, not knowing where or whom to turn to. So many questions were raised as it could have happened to any of us. This summer, we also witnessed many unjust interactions between minority groups and the police force. In several cases, police brutality was used causing serious injuries and/or deaths. Such events usually try to isolate us but the following week was the New London's NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner at Ocean Beach and there, we were able to witness the collectiveness/solidarity that exists within New London. The act of terror that happened in Orlando did not stop us from uniting and continuing the everlasting work needed to be done in our communities. The room was packed with activists, change agents, and go getters celebrating the achievement of so many hard-working community advocates. Conn students, faculty and staff attended the event, thanks to the generosity of the Dean of Equity and Inclusion, the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) and Community Partnerships offices. Throughout the event, you could definitely feel the influence that many of the attendees had on each other. You could tell that those present were there to support, inspire and elevate future generations. For example, our very own Tracee Reiser and her husband Robert Hayford provided a scholarship to a local student Kenya Capers for her outstanding service to the New London community. What better way to encourage younger generations than by

investing in them!

The theme of this year's celebration was "Our Lives Matters, Our Lives Count". The event opened with a praise dance by "Lion's Den" Dance group with five talented young girls dressed in sparkly grey costumes. They danced to Kirk Franklin's: Wanna Be Happy? These following lyrics stuck out to me because no matter how bad the tragedies that occur are, we should never give up because we matter. We are the fruition of our ancestors and we are both resilient and powerful. We just need to keep reminding ourselves that we are worthy and highly capable!

If you're tired of being the same
If you're tired of things not changing
It's time for you to get out the way
Don't get stuck in how you feel
_Kirk Franklin

At the ceremony, five very influential community members were recognized: Ernest Hewett, William Cornish, Kenneth Reels, Barbara Brown and Sara Cheney. Four scholarship recipients were also honored: Devon Verdini, Goodness Adekoya, Sandrine Etienne and Kenya Capers. All are serving in different leadership roles and doing exemplary work in the New London community. The event was a success! Poems, speeches and spoken words left everyone inspired and wanting to do more for their community.

We could not have chosen a better place to be at that moment. This event was truly inspiring and many of the speakers made sure to remind us that "Our Lives Matters, Our Lives Count".



Community Partnerships: The One Constant Throughout My College Experience

Aleksandr Chandra '16, AmeriCorps VISTA



As a recent graduate from Connecticut College, I am thinking about the good fortune of working closely with Community Partnerships (formerly OVCS) on various projects over the last four years. I was initially introduced to Community Partnerships during my first year orientation when all five hundred first year students were assigned to various service sites throughout the New London community for a day. During my service at Winthrop Elementary School I met Kim Sanchez, the Associate Director of Community Partnerships. I explicitly remember turning to Kim and saying that I wanted to get more involved with Community Partnerships given my extensive background in community service throughout high school. Since then, the Community Partnerships staff and its director, Tracee Reiser, have remained constants throughout my college experience. By working closely with Community Partnerships in different capacities, it has cultivated within me a certain civic ethos and a propensity for community building. It has taught me about the value and ethics of civic and community engagement and about the long standing community partnerships that Connecticut College has with the New London community.

Thinking back to my time as a student at Connecticut College, I have worked with Community Partnerships through an education course I was enrolled in as a first year student and through various placement opportunities in the local community as a scholar in the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy. In both cases I worked closely with Kim Sanchez to intern in a Spanish classroom at New London High School and to participate in the Extended Learning Time

Program as a student mentor at Jennings Elementary School. Not only did both experiences teach me about the opportunities gap in education systems, but both experiences also taught me about the value of mentorship as one strategy for reducing educational inequities. My junior year at Connecticut College I worked with Dean Tracee Resier to launch an intergenerational contact program in the New London community in a long-standing community partnership with the New London Senior Center. As manager and facilitator of the Sages & Seekers intergenerational contact program I learned the importance of creating open channels of communication between local community partnerships through coordinating logistics. I am also indebted to Tracee and her team for teaching me how to write compelling and coherent grant proposals in order to secure funding for community projects. I took my experiences working with the local New London community, with me abroad when I engaged with communities on a more global level. During the tail end of my junior year and during the start of my senior year I worked with communities in Delhi, India to launch an art-based intergenerational intervention. The skills that I learned through Community Partnerships really helped to make the experience abroad a successful one.

I am grateful to be returning to Connecticut College as an AmeriCorps VISTA in Community Partnerships for the 2016-2017 academic year. I am looking forward to imparting my own experiences cultivating community through capacity building to fellow Connecticut College students interested in civic and community engagement. Additionally, as a resident and professional I am establishing a more intimate relationship with the New London community.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION ACROSS CULTURES

Annette Davis '17

I am living in Ecuador this summer with my host family, the same family whom I stayed with during my gap year before attending Connecticut College. This time my friend and classmate Emma Race is staying with me, and we are completing a project here using grant money we received from the Davis Foundation. This grant provides an incredible opportunity for undergraduates to create and complete a project that promotes peace anywhere in the world. Emma and I arrived here at the end of May and are staying until the end of August to complete our project in collaboration with a local daycare run by a small Ecuadorian non-profit organization. This project has been extremely challenging, as we had to change our original idea due to unforeseen circumstances here. However, working through these challenges in the context of a culture different from our own and continuing with the project has been an invaluable experience for us, and it has provided the oppor-

tunity for us to make genuine and unique connections with people from all walks of life.

Conversing and connecting with a wide range of people is definitely my favorite part of our time here, and my favorite part about traveling in general. I am unbelievably lucky to have an amazing host family. I have connected with them to such an extent that I truly consider them family. We discuss everything from making light-hearted and silly jokes to deep topics of how to raise children, religious and spiritual beliefs, racism and much more. These conversations have profoundly impacted my own personal beliefs and they have also led me to recognize how much my perspective of the world is based in the culture in which I was raised.

The Holleran Center PICA gateway course I took last semester and my work with OVCS have had a great impact on me, as these experiences framed

the way that I have approached this project with the daycare. Emma and I have been sure to emphasize that we want to create a mutually beneficial relationship with the foundation, so as to eliminate the possibility of embodying a white savior attitude. Another important aspect of our project is that it is completely sustainable. It will successfully continue to run without the need of our work or monetary resources after we leave. These values of reciprocity and sustainability were explicitly taught in theory and in practice in the PICA gateway course and they also are a core part of OVCS. Working as a coordinator and driver for OVCS, I learned how important it is to create reciprocal relationships with community partners, which is what Emma and I are trying to accomplish here.

It was also fascinating to find out that the university close to my house, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, has a class very similar to the Holleran Center PICA gateway course except that it is mandatory for all students. The students taking this course are required to complete a certain number of hours at a community partner site, and there are currently 10 interns completing their hours this summer semester at the daycare that Emma and I are working with. This class covers poverty, resilience, education, rights, gender, discrimination and health through readings and discussions in class and through practical experience as a community learner. I was excited to see these important themes as part of the mandatory curriculum for this university, and Emma and I have had opportunities to



have fascinating conversations about these topics with the university interns who we met and became friends with. Understanding the Ecuadorian students' perspectives on gender, discrimination, etc. is valuable to me as I am able to compare it with my own perspective and to see how the perspectives between our two cultures compare and contrast.

As Emma and I continue to work on our project, I am more and more grateful to have the knowledge I gained from PICA and OVCS, now known as Community Partnerships. Because of these experiences I feel extremely equipped to successfully work with a community partner to complete this project. It has also been exciting to put my knowledge to use in the context of a different culture which has led me to appreciate my choice to be an Anthropology major even more. Recognizing the differences between the Ecuadorian culture and American culture has been essential for me to work efficiently and effectively on this project, and has also made me realize that the core values are the same when collaborating with community members here as well as in the U.S. Mutual respect, sustainability, and reciprocity all are key factors that I learned about extensively at Connecticut College and have now put into practice here. I am so excited to continue working while holding these values at the core of our project.



To find more information about our project with the daycare, feel free to visit our blog AnnetteandEmma.blogspot.com.

MY FIRST YEAR AT CONN

Christian Caldwell '19

As I began my first year at Connecticut College, I became a community site driver for the Office of Community Partnerships. I knew nothing about this office or the city of New London prior to this and as time progressed, I became familiar with the what opportunities were available to me in New London. Formerly known as OVCS, Community Partnerships collaborates with numerous community sites where Connecticut College students are provided with the chance to engage outside the classroom. These sites include schools and Habitat for Humanity which builds and preserves homes for those in need. As a community site driver, I transport students to the partnering community sites and driving around has helped me become very familiar with the New London community. During a typical day on the job, I saw some of my favorite restaurants and places to shop and my sense of direction around the city was enhanced.

When this position came to an end after the spring 2016 semester, I was offered a summer position in the Office of Admissions. This position required me to stay on campus and knowing my way around New London and having a close relationship with Community Partnerships has definitely impacted my summer stay. At the beginning of this summer, I received an invitation from Dean Reiser to attend the Hispanic Alliance Scholarship Award Gala in downtown New London. This was a wonderful event. It was in beautiful ballroom and there was great food and dancing. More importantly, this event acknowledged high school students receiving scholarships for their academic excellence. In addition to this event, I was also invited to the New London NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner at Ocean Beach. This dinner honored highly influential community leaders in New London. These events and working as a community site driver made me realize how close of a relationship the Community Partnerships has with the city of New London. Recognizing this close relationship reminds me of my past experiences back home in Chicago. Although Chicago is portrayed in a negative way through the media, there is a great sense of community there. There are a variety of programs and events throughout Chicago that influence the sense of community that we have there. There was a food event this summer in New London that reminded me of what we call "The Taste of Chicago" back home.

Transporting students allowed me to meet so many different students and create bonds and I am looking forward to continuing my work with the Community Partnerships. Before working in this

office, I didn't know any of the wonderful staff who work there and the opportunities that they offer to students. Overall, it has been a wonderful experience and I look forward to continuing during my upcoming sophomore year.



Christian Caldwell, far right, at the Hispanic Alliance Noche de Gala



Spark Makerspace in Downtown NL

by Hannah Gant, Spark Founder

Spark Makerspace is a community-run workshop and learning center in downtown New London that is organized cooperatively with multiple classes of members, including anchor institutions.

Individual members contribute a mix of time and money monthly to access over 10,000 square feet of creative workspaces that include a woodshop, 3D printers & electronics, commercial kitchen, shared office & meeting space, various art workstations, and a retail outlet. There are a number of shared interest-area meetup groups and member-led classes available to facilitate people's ability to learn, make, tinker, and collaborate in service of making things and making things happen.

Spark is forging relationships with entities that go beyond traditional partnerships to create a legal structure that any person or entity within southeastern CT can become part of that shares a dedication to sparking people, community, and place.

Community organizations and small businesses are helped to be successful through accessing the shared resources that the Spark community possesses and the diversely talented membership base of people who like to be helpful.

A strong working relationship has already developed between Spark and Connecticut College as part of an exploration of what membership within Spark might look like and mean for Connecticut College. Earlier this year Spark hosted the closing event for the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology biannual Symposium. Plans are underway to continue various collaborations with the Ammerman Center as well as working with the Computer Science department to produce New London's first Hackathon event in November. Further, Spark has a working relationship with Connecticut College Community Partnerships and is exploring a range of collaborations.

Currently Spark and Connecticut College are joined by other regional anchors in pursuing a new designation in the state called Innovation Places. Starting in June 2016 CT Next will funnel state grant money toward collaborative initiatives meant to strengthen the ability for cities in CT to develop, attract, and retain local talent for innovative new business development. The local team spans New London and Groton to center its focus on the Thames River. The nature of this work is a perfect fit to help Connecticut College explore with Spark how to scratch the itch that many students have in social entrepreneurship.

What is perhaps most exciting is the planning process over the upcoming winter involves working with the Regenes Group, specialists in regenerative economic development, to facilitate a process called Story of Place.

Learn more about Spark by visiting www.spark.coop.
Learn more about Story of Place by visiting www.regenesgroup.com/services/story-of-place.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & NL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WIN CONNECTICUT CAMPUS COMPACT AWARD

Connecticut College and New London Public Schools were selected to receive the 2016 Campus Community Partnership Award from Connecticut Campus Compact for ENRICH, an extended learning time program providing New London middle school students and Connecticut College students with a range of dynamic teaching and learning activities. CTCC's awards honor representatives of member institutions who exemplify the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to implement all forms of public engagement, providing civic pathways to academic and career success, and nurturing a culture of engaged citizenship on campus and within communities.

The winners of the 2016 awards, including Connecticut College and the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, were honored at the first annual Civic Action Summit June 2, 2016.

ENRICH is a key component of the partnership between Connecticut College Community Partnerships and New London's Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. The College's Holleran Center for Community Action & Public Policy is a partner as well. Building on two decades of partnership, ENRICH grew out of effective mentor programs between the College and NLPS and now engages middle school and college students in activities designed to ignite curiosity, love of learning and community building. "ENRICH has been a very successful and mutually beneficial program for Connecticut College and New London, and a great example of what can be accomplished through these important community partnerships," said Tracee Reiser, senior associate dean of community partnerships and associate director of the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy. "Our team of staff, students, faculty and community partners is honored to receive this recognition from CTCC." Our college students acquire experience and vital skills and are able to integrate new perspectives, insights

and knowledge into their studies while the middle school students learn the College campus and pursue dynamic special interests."

Through the program, middle school students travel to the College after school two days a week and engage with College student mentors and workshop leaders. They eat a nutritious meal, complete homework and participate in academically oriented workshops. At the College, the middle school students work with the College students to study and practice piano and music theory; build self-confidence and think critically about the images and messages they receive through the media; learn filmmaking, editing and production; and create lava lamps blending scientific inquiry with artistic creation, for example. They also swim in the College pool, skate in the ice rink, and engage in dance and athletics that promote physical fitness and well-being.



In addition to the workshop content, the workshop leaders and mentors focus on building strong positive relationships with the youth, sparking their interest in education. The College's Dining Services partner with ENRICH and provide delicious nutritious food, the College's Athletic Center provides a range of outstanding facilities, and the Office of Events facilitates teaching and learning spaces for the partnership throughout the campus.

A wide range of Connecticut College students participated in this year's award winning program including first-generation students. "They want the middle school students to deeply understand what it takes to get to and succeed in college and other post high school opportunities," said Patrick Lynch '12 program supervisor. "They are transforming how the middle school students see themselves and working with the teachers to advance them on the path toward high school graduation and success in post-secondary education."

Chris Soto, founder of Higher Edge, wins Democratic Primary

Founder of Higher Edge Chris Soto defeated the longtime state Rep. Ernest Hewett on August 9, 2016 in the Democratic primary in the 39th state House District. Soto beat Hewett by a nearly 2-1 ratio — 994 to 513, according to unofficial results provided by the Democratic registrar of voters. Connecticut College is located in the 39th district.

About 25 percent of the 5,977 eligible voters in Dis-



tricts 1 and 2 turned out to vote in the primary, much higher than most had forecast and higher than preliminary numbers for other primaries around the state. Soto said the number of votes cast and the wide margin of victory shattered the notion his support was solely Latinos. “We wouldn’t have had those numbers if it was just Latinos,” Soto said. “Did we have a strong Latino base — absolutely. It was huge. But this was not just one group of people. It’s about passing the torch. It’s time for something new.”



Soto is a U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduate who served five years in the Coast Guard, earned a master’s degree from Brown University and founded the New London-based nonprofit Higher Edge. The organization guides low-income youth into and through college. He is also an instructor in the Connecticut College Holleran Center for Public Policy and Community Action and students intern at Higher Edge through Connecticut College Community Partnerships (formerly OVCS).



ELECTION YEAR

2016!

Not registered to vote?

**Election Day:
November 8, 2016**

Come to **Community Partnerships** and complete a voter registration form.

Crozier-Williams, Room 217

One Book, One Region

A Powerful Partnership



Attorney Bryan Stevenson

Those who promote regionalism usually talk about shared resources, integrated transportation systems and economic development strategies. The One Book, One Region is another type of regional initiative that brings people and entities together... to read...and to explore the most urgent issues of our era. On April 4th, Bryan Stevenson, the author of our latest One Book, One Region selection, *Just Mercy*, mesmerized a capacity crowd in Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College. This occasion also launched College President Katherine Bergeron's Distinguished Lecture Series.

2016 is the 14th year the One Book One Region initiative has engaged the public in book discussions, related special lectures, films and performances, held at local libraries, schools, colleges, and community centers. In previous One Book One Region years, people from all walks of life asked "What would be fair and equitable immigration policies", read the book *Across a Hundred Mountains* and met the author Reyna Grande. We remembered and tried to understand the horror and complexities of the Holocaust, reading *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel* and talking with author Louise Murphy. We examined issues of health care in Haiti and dialogued with author Tracy Kidder. We discussed the trauma and healing of those affected by 9/11, read *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and met author Jonathan Safran.

These forums provide opportunities for people to build relationships and understanding. We talk, listen, and struggle, often displaying differences in perspectives and identities. At the same time we reach out and create spaces necessary to expand awareness and broaden viewpoints. We work together to bear witness to and interpret the human experience and connect our humanity with others. This relationship building, this community building, is ever more necessary in our times of political and social turmoil. The One Book One Region (OBOR) initiative also fosters collaborations among institutions and creates pathways to share resources. The Libraries of Southeastern Connecticut, Bank Square Books, Connecticut College, UCONN Avery Point, New London Branch of the NAACP, the Jewish Federation, the Community Coalition for Children, the Day, the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the New London Police Community Relations Committee and area high schools all joined together this year to advance OBOR.

This year the One Book One Region selection committee chose the book *Just Mercy* by Attorney Bryan Stevenson, one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time. Groton Public Library, Connecticut College and other area institutions implemented a series of free and open events and book groups that explore topics connected to the themes of the book- inequities in the justice system, compassion, community and police relations, racism, mercy human rights and justice. High school and college students are reading the book and wrestling with the far-reaching challenging questions posed by the author. Many of the readers of *Just Mercy* are also strategizing about methods of change, actions to take – individually and collectively - to build more justice, equity and mercy. We warmly welcomed Bryan Stevenson to our region and on the evening of April 4th we became better prepared and further inspired to be the active citizens necessary to make our region and beyond more just and more merciful.

THANK YOU

TO OUR 2015-2016 COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR WORKING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND PARTNERING WITH CONNECTICUT COLLEGE TO EDUCATE STUDENTS TO PUT THE LIBERAL ARTS INTO ACTION IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY.

- Alliance For Living
- Backus Hospital
- Beech Brook Farm
- Beachwood Rehab Center
- Child and Family Agency
- Church of the City
- Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center
- Drop-In Learning Center
- Dual Language Academy
- FRESH New London
- Garde Arts Center
- Girl Scouts of Connecticut
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hearing Youth Voices
- High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Center
- Higher Edge- Access to Achieve
- Homeless Hospitality Center
- Hygienic Art
- IASC (Immigration Advocacy & Support Center)
- L&M Hospital
- Mystic Aquarium
- New England Science & Sailing
- New London Adult & Continuing Education
- New London Community Health Center
- New London Community Meal Center
- New London Historical Society
- New London Landmarks
- New London Main Street
- New London Office of Development & Planning
- New London Public Schools
- New London Senior Center
- New London Youth Affairs
- OIC of New London
- OIC of New London
- Public Library of New London
- Republic Education
- Riverside Park Conservancy
- Safe Futures
- SECWAC
- Sound Community Services
- Southeastern Connecticut Coalition
- Thames Valley Council for Community Action
- United Cerebral Palsy of Eastern Connecticut
- Writer's Block Ink

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

- Eleanor Roosevelt



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Community Partnerships

Build Community ... Make Change



LITERARY MAGAZINE X

a publication by Connecticut College

Community Partnerships