

12-2016

Community Partnerships Newsletter December 2016

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Recommended Citation

Gresham, Virginia; Giacalone, Margie; Rardin, Brynne; and Lynch, Patrick, "Community Partnerships Newsletter December 2016" (2016). *Community Partnerships Newsletters*. 3.
<https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/cpnews/3>

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CONNECTICUT COLLEGE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS **NEWS**

December 2016

Build Community

Make Change



March of Resilience

Virginia Gresham '17 & Margie Giacalone '19

On November 21, 2016 a group of 20 Connecticut College students were bused at 2pm by the Student Government Association (SGA) to the "United Against Hate - March of Resilience" by Connecticut Immigrants Rights Association (CIRA) in Hartford, CT. The Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance describes it as a call to "Join leaders from across the state as we continue to stand for our community. We are defined by our resilience, strength, and love for our community...". At 3:30pm students from Connecticut College met outside of the Abraham A. Rubicoff United States Court-house (450 Main Street, Hartford, CT) to learn and spread the "Know your Rights" for immigrants material. Since the College has many international and DACA students, it was extremely important and beneficial to engage in dialogue and support at the event. In addition, the students gathered into several lines with local community members and chanted strong and uniting words against fears that the Trump Regime may create. Then, at 4:00pm the group lines marched down Main Street to the Old State House to come together in a circle for a rally. The event was supported by the police who had two lanes of Main Street shut down for the event. The students returned to Connecticut College around 6:30 p.m. once the march was over.

BATTLE OF THE PANS



Connecticut College Community Partnerships collaborated with Thames River Family Services to raise funds for services for young mothers and children facing homelessness.

It was standing room only as people gathered together in the Hood Dining Room and the Faculty Lounge in the Blaustein Humanities Center to witness the first annual “Battle of the Pans”. This special collaboration was a new dimension of the 150 year old rivalry between New London High School and Norwich Free Academy. Those two schools have played each other on Thanksgiving Day and the competition is the oldest high school sporting event in the United States. Some students prefer food to football, so organizers of this event developed the culinary rivalry. As the guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres prepared by world renowned Chef Dan Giusti, student teams from New London High School and the Norwich Free Academy designed and prepared unique dishes in the Hood kitchen. Culinary students from the Grasso Tech High School and their chef teacher judged the dishes for taste, pre-

sentation, and nutrition. Although the rivalry was intense, everyone had fun and enjoyed the festive event. New London edged out NFA to win the trophy, a gorgeous copper pan with a plaque on the front. Both teams had to comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture standards for a school lunch and the gorgeous foods presented will be incorporated into the school food programs. Chef Dan Giusti and his company Brigaid are working with New London Public Schools to transform how public schools incorporate food into their education and support services. Connecticut College students are interning with Chef Dan and college students, staff and faculty are designing partnership projects to advance this transformation. In addition to ticket sales, the event raised funds through a raffle with the prize being Chef Dan coming to your home and preparing dinner for eight. “In these divisive times, it’s special for us to come together in the spirit of rivalry, yet committed to working together for the most vulnerable in the region,” said Tracee Reiser, Senior Associate Dean for Community Partnerships.

Higher Edge 5th Anniversary

Brynne Rardin '17

For many individuals, college is a no brainer. But for some, college is either not an option or something they have never been exposed to. This exposure is so important because it gives students the opportunity to see what they are capable of and can help set them up for a bright future. Higher Edge has had a huge role in this exposure in the New London community.

Higher Edge is an important organization for high school students because it gives them the opportunity to look at, apply to, get funding for, and attend colleges.

They have had a huge affect on the New London community, mainly by helping students move through the steps of looking and applying to college, but also by providing funding and support to students throughout their college years.

But Higher Edge doesn't end with the students; Higher Edge has worked throughout the past five years to engage with students, faculty, parents and even more importantly, the community.

Higher Edge has done a great job creating an opportunity for the New London community to get involved and have an impact on the Higher Edge program. One of the biggest ways they involve the community is through their annual event which gives people from all over New London the opportunity to be directly involved with students' college experiences through donations, and hear from them what their successes have

been during their time in college. One of the most successful events held by Higher Edge is Dancing for Degrees. Students that are in their senior year of high school or in college are paired up with a community leader. They work with a teacher and practice a choreographed dance. They then perform their pieces and community judges evaluate them. The model is similar to Dancing With The Stars. This event not only gets students involved in something fun, but it brings out a great crowd and helps the community get involved and see the results of Higher Edge in action.

Connecticut College has been partners with Higher Edge for years. College students have the opportunity to intern and learn with Higher Edge while contributing.

Higher Edge has had such a huge success rate over the past five years that they expanded their organization to Willimantic in partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University. This helps students within other parts of Connecticut get the support and help they need to apply to college and succeed as well.

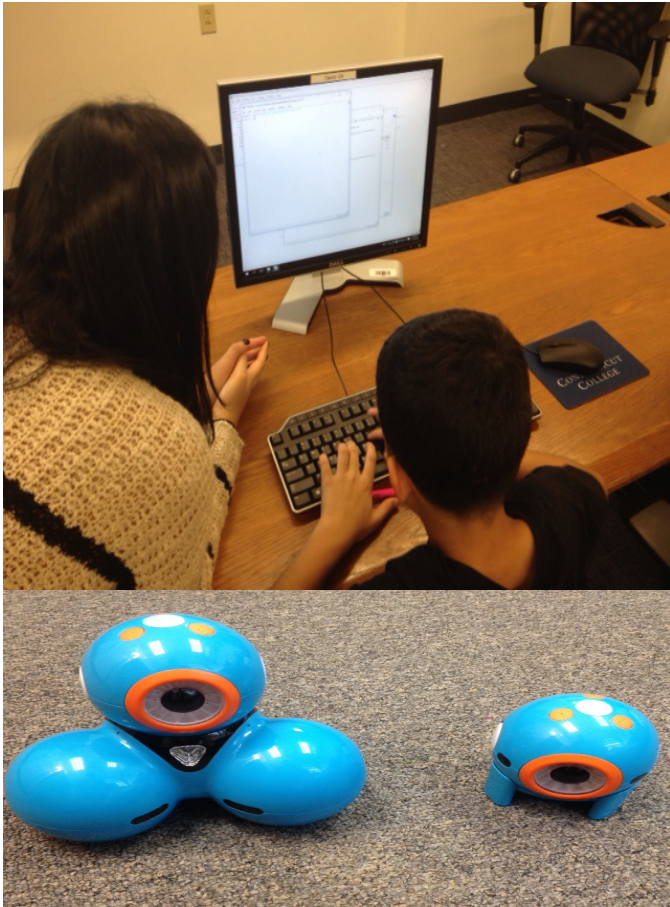
Higher Edge has been helping students make their way to and through college for five years. And with this year being their fifth anniversary they decided to do things a little bit differently for their annual event in order to highlight all of the successes they have had in the past five years.

Students from New London High School, Connecticut College, and Eastern Connecticut State University gathered with New London community members, Higher Edge staff and students, and Connecticut College staff and faculty to hear some empowering stories from professors and students who have impacted and been impacted by Higher Edge. A tunnel of memories was designed by a Higher Edge graduate to celebrate some of the main steps taken by Higher Edge in their success over the last five years. Food was enjoyed, raffle tickets were bought, and fun was had by everyone who attended.

As a Connecticut College student who has enjoyed numerous Higher Edge annual events, some of the best moments for me during the 5th Anniversary event was hearing one student, who was displaced from her mother during the earthquakes in Haiti, speak about the impact that college and Higher Edge have had on her life, and hearing her speak about Chris Soto, director of Higher Edge, and the work that the Higher Edge staff have done for her. It was powerful watching her speak about her struggles and talk about her strengths. Higher Edge has done and continues to do a powerful job in guidance and emphasizing the importance of education and building skills and knowledge to get into and succeed in college.

Dot & Dash

Patrick Lynch '12, Assistant Director for College & School Partnerships



Connecticut College and Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School have built a strong partnership throughout the past two decades. The partnership provides teaching and learning environments and advances the educational and social development of the college and middle school students. One component of the longstanding partnership is the collaboratively developed mentor programs. Over the last three semesters, students from Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School have traveled to Connecticut College twice a week to participate in the ENRICH Mentor Program. During their time on campus, middle school students and the college students work together in a series of workshops that expand learning opportunities, such as songwriting, piano, film, STEM, and art.

This semester, students have enjoyed the unique experience of working with two educational robots named Dot and Dash. The workshop was created in collaboration between Sam Simonds '19, a Connecticut College sophomore studying computer science, and members of the Community Partnerships staff. The workshops have given Sam an opportunity to share his passion for computer science by leading a series of computer lab sessions and interactive activities with Dot and Dash that introduce the basics of coding while combining elements of engineering and innovation. Sam hopes that the workshops will encourage middle school students to pursue further education and future careers in STEM related fields.

