



# Service-Learning: Creating a New Generation of Civic Leaders

Camarillo, Calif., Sept. 6, 2007-From Sept. 17 to 23, California State University Channel Islands will join thousands of education institutions across the country taking part in Learn and Serve Challenge Week to raise awareness of the benefits of service-learning.

Service-learning is a teaching method that incorporates community work into the curriculum, thereby giving students real-world experience in their field while meeting pressing community needs. Channel Islands has established partnerships with more than 25 community-based organizations and schools in Ventura County. As a result, CSUCI students have tutored at-risk youth in reading and writing, created art classes for the children of Meta Street Housing Development, captured oral histories of evicted farm workers in Oxnard, worked to bring electricity to the homes of orphans in Rwanda, and conducted field research in La Manzanilla, Mexico to address ecosystem issues caused by the rise in tourism. Here, student collected data will be used to inform local restoration and educational initiatives.

Colleges and universities are increasingly adopting service-learning as an integral component of the education experience. Last year alone at California State University Channel Islands, more than 400 CSUCI students participated in 30 service-learning courses, providing more than 6,500 hours of service and an economic benefit of \$133,000 to surrounding communities. In addition, CSU Channel Islands is working in partnership with Moorpark, Oxnard, Ventura colleges, and with Santa Barbara City College to train more faculty to teach service-learning courses.

Why this focus on service-learning? In addition to aiding communities in need, service that is tied to the curriculum reinforces classroom learning and thus bolsters academic achievement. Service-learning also has been shown to improve workforce readiness, develop problem-solving skills, and increase voting and other forms of civic participation. In other words, it helps prepare students to become responsible leaders-both in their professions and in their communities.

The United States government recognizes the importance of service-learning in creating tomorrow's civic leaders. Learn and Serve America, a federal program that supports service-learning at all levels of education, enables one million students to engage in this work with the aim of instilling "an ethic of life-long community service."

The impact of service-learning is enormous. Campus Compact, a coalition of more than 1,000 college and university presidents dedicated to serving the public good, has seen student service soar as campuses make service-learning and other forms of community

engagement a priority. Last year alone, students at Campus Compact member schools contributed \$7.1 billion in service through campus-organized programs.

As an active participant in this movement, California State University Channel Islands is proud of the contributions its students, faculty, and staff have made to the community and grateful to the community partners who have enriched the lives of those on campus. CSUCI encourages all those interested in the future of our democracy to take time this week to learn more about how service-learning is transforming students and the communities they serve.

For more information about CSUCI's service-learning activities contact Ceal Potts, communications specialist at CSUCI, at 805-437-8490 or [cecilia.potts@csuci.edu](mailto:cecilia.potts@csuci.edu)