

# Guilford earns national recognition for community service

By Zachary Thomas  
STAFF WRITER

Have you ever helped out at the community garden? Participated in Solarpalooza over fall break? Volunteered at the Glen Haven apartment complex? Or assisted students down the road at Newcomers School for a day?

If so, you're part of the reason why the Corporation for National and Community Service named Guilford College to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the sixth year in a row. The annual federal recognition is the highest distinction a college or university can receive for its commitment to community service, service learning or civic engagement.

"It's in our DNA," said President and Professor of Political Science Kent Chabotar of Guilford's emphasis on service involvement. "You can be rich or poor, you can be from the South or from the North, you can be an American or someone from overseas, but the idea of community service is universal."

Guilford's core values, especially those of stewardship and community, bolster and encourage the concept of service to the community. Guilford students participate in a variety of service opportunities through a wide range of venues.

Junior Kiel Williams, for example, organized science workshops for students

at Jefferson Elementary School through Guilford's Society of Physics Students.

"In each consecutive week, the Jefferson students learned to build effective marshmallow-toothpick bridges, tried to align lasers to hit a target and built simple circuits," said Williams about this semester's activities.

For Williams, service links directly to his

Problem Solving sponsors student-led service projects. One recent project explored and polled students about their perception of alternative healthcare.

Another service opportunity, Bonner Scholars program, has members complete 140 hours of community service each semester as well as two summer service projects.

"Our service sites are open to everyone,"

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Kent Chabotar, president and professor of political science

interests.

"The part of it I most enjoy is the opportunity to make science real," said Williams. "Too often science has become reduced to a pile of vocabulary words, especially at the primary level."

Other organizations and courses on campus also support service to the community. Guilford's Center for Principled

said James Shields, director of community learning, in an email interview.

Shields emphasized that service transcends any one group or set of people on campus.

"For example, we have former and current Guilford athletes, like Justin Bradley, who conduct a summer basketball camp through his nonprofit, Unity Hoops," said Shields.

Courses like Community Problem Solving

even incorporate service learning into the curriculum and class experience. Students this semester had a chance to volunteer with the Occupy Greensboro camp, among other selected sites.

For Director of Admissions Andy Strickler, it is not so much that Guilford offers service opportunities — most schools do — but rather how Guilford manages to tie community service back to its heritage and values.

"Service and engagement in the community are significant pluses for an applicant," said Strickler in an email interview. "Our role is to talk about how we do (community service) here at Guilford, and how we are different than our competitors."

According to a Guilford Beacon announcement and Shields, Guilford students contribute between 45,000 to 60,000 hours of service each year at a variety of locations.

Guilford clearly has made its commitment to community service a top priority for the school looking forward.

"The new SLRP II is trying to make that kind of service and internships even more a part of the curriculum than it is now," said Chabotar, speaking about Guilford's strategic long-range plan.

From sustainable development to student organizations to specific courses, Guilford teams with volunteer service and community involvement opportunities.

How will you get involved today?

# Vigil commemorates Trayvon Martin, debate continues

By Bryan Dooley  
STAFF WRITER

Silence and a tranquil rain marked the April 4 vigil for Trayvon Martin as the college participated in the "1,000 Campus Vigil" in solidarity and support for Martin and his family.

"I had so much emotion in me each day," said senior Nina Frazier, organizer of the vigil. "With every new development and breaking news story my blood was boiling. I needed to find something positive to do with that negative energy."

Frazier continued, "I decided to do the vigil because it was bringing people together to show unity in peace across the United States. ... With all of the rallies and protests sometimes we forget to take a moment to reflect on situations."

It all began when Martin, a 17-year-old African American, walked from a convenience store in Sanford, Fla. carrying a bag of Skittles and a can of iced tea. George Zimmerman followed him and shot him.

Zimmerman, the shooter, is a white Hispanic neighborhood crime watch volunteer. He has recently been charged with second degree murder.

According to The New York Times, Florida's "law grants immunity to people who act to protect themselves if they have a reasonable fear they will be killed or seriously injured."

"A law like ('Stand Your Ground') really makes it open season for people to simply shoot," said James Shields, director of community learning. "It wouldn't be such a bad law if there weren't stereotypes. The unfortunate thing is that stereotypes are easy, but what this situation tells us is that they can be very dangerous."

Shields continued, "We have a similar law in North Carolina. Whether or not you agree with (it), the reality is that somebody voted for these laws. For some, this incident evokes memories of the civil rights movement."

"The difference between now and then is during the movement, blacks were not seen as a group of people with rights," said junior Alvita Mayo, Sister 2 Sister chair. "So when they were mistreated, yeah it was wrong, but it was normal, expected. Today, blacks are supposed to have rights and be seen as equal, not supposed to still continually be

seen as the inferior race."

Despite the laws, many people blame this situation on racism that has continued in the U.S. since slavery.

"Even in 2012 with the first black president in the White House, which is obviously a sign of progress, there are still very deep-seated stereotypes, prejudices and biases — particularly those directed at black males which endanger



On April 4, students gathered in solidarity and support for Trayvon Martin, the seventeen year old who was shot and killed six weeks ago. Despite the cold night, mourners joined together to reflect upon the situation and get rid of negative energy.

their lives," said Jorge Zeballos, Latino community program coordinator.

Zeballos continued, "There is a deep-seated fear of the black man in this country that has not been addressed or acknowledged. It probably goes all the way back to the narrative that developed around the black male regarding slavery. The black male was framed as someone to be feared, and that has not gone away yet."

Some blame the media portrayals of African Americans in today's society for attitudes that led to Trayvon Martin's death and the controversy around the decision whether or not to arrest George Zimmerman.

"I think it goes further than fear," said Jada Drew, Africana community coordinator. "It is also hatred that drives racism for black males in the U.S. If you cut on a television and you count how many times you see a black man, more than likely they won't be portrayed in a positive light."

Drew continued, "Black males are not portrayed as doctors, lawyers, family members, and productive members of their community. They are portrayed as rappers, thugs and baby daddies. That is the tape that is played over and over again."

Ramah Russell, an organizer of Guilford's vigil, is passionate about the case.

"I feel that when Zimmerman basically was indicating that Trayvon did not belong in that housing, it reverted back to the Jim Crow days when blacks were not allowed in white neighborhoods unless they were working there or, if they were seen there at any time, they would be harassed about it," said Russell in an email interview.

Russell continued, "I want Americans to stop with all the racial stereotypes and accept that black males can actually succeed and have a promising future for themselves. I also would like for all minorities to actually be treated as fair individuals."

The widespread reactions to Martin's death may have a positive outcome.

"I see a lot of events that are being talked about along with this Trayvon Martin murder," said Zeballos. "Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups are starting to support this case. It may be a chance to expand the civil rights movement in a way that it has not before."