



# Centering on... environmental justice

Spring 2008

## Did You Know?

### HOORAY!

◆ Washing only full loads in the washing machine can save up to 2,000 gallons a year!

◆ Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil!

◆ More than 50% of a new aluminum can is made from recycled aluminum.



### BOO!

◆ Americans discard 4 million tons of office paper every year—enough to build a 12 foot high wall from New York to Cali.

◆ Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every year.



◆ Americans dump the equivalent of more than 21 million shopping bags full of food into landfills every year.

## Making Loyola Ever Green...by John Dougherty

When we serve, we focus our efforts and energy on the people we are serving. This is the way it should be: only by putting a human face and a human story to an issue can we really understand the toll that injustice takes, and allow service to move our hearts. With so much experience of human suffering and hope, however, it may seem easy to neglect an idea like Environmental Justice. Sure, the polar ice caps might melt a century from now, but my friend needs a home *now* or he might freeze to death. I know that we're using up our natural resources faster than we can replace them, but if I don't spend time with this child on her homework, she'll feel it on her math test tomorrow! This is not to say that we need to reassess all our priorities. Instead, we simply need to become more aware. The next logical question, of course, is: *Why?*

Environmental Justice, the theme of this issue, is more than just recycling, or decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, or eating meat with less water retention (though it encompasses all of those things). Environmental Justice is a foundational issue for all other social injustice. As injustices tend to do, it overlaps and permeates all other crises, from homelessness to fair trade to healthcare. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Injustice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws."

This idea is even more important because of Loyola's Jesuit identity. The planet is not only where we live, but it is God's creation, just as much as every human being. In this tradition, environmental justice arises from seeing the Earth as God's work of art, and respecting it accordingly by treating all of its body as sacred.

Any human institution will, inevitably, have an impact on the environment, and our campus is no exception. In 2007, we consumed 31.70 kilowatt hours and 0.0737 million dekatherms of gas, with our total energy expenditure amounting to \$4.236 million. And despite Blackboard's efforts to create a "paper-less classroom," we printed a total of 15,700,000 pages.

CCSJ has worked toward addressing environmental justice through immersion programs and the Good Stuff Campaign. Every year the Campaign collects hundreds of items that would usually be thrown out at the end of the year donating them to various agencies throughout the city, including long-time partners. Through immersion programs like Spring Break Outreach and Project Mexico, students are also introduced to environmental issues at home and abroad through education, experience, and reflection. As additional good news, the campus at large is making a commitment to sustainability. Single Stream Recycling bins are a common sight. Dining services has stocked up on fair trade products, and are instituting several initiatives to reduce the amount of waste in the dining halls. Last year, CCSJ and the Loyola community participated in RecycleMania, and recycled over 180,000 pounds of waste, over 40 percent of our total waste, and ranked first in the state of Maryland for recyclables per capita (42.56 lbs per person). The construction of the Intercollegiate Athletic Complex (IAC), located on top of a landfill, is also being conducted with an eye towards improving the land and offsetting the environmental dangers of the site.

All of these programs, within our campus and without, are important contributions to the Ignatian pursuit of a just society. In truth, every injustice we address—from public health to housing to homelessness—involves environmental justice. And if you're still wondering why... keep reading!

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## Your Not-so-typical Tour

Last summer, several students and CCSJ full-time staff piled onto a shuttle bus to attend the Toxic Tour. Led by Glenn Ross, a Baltimore resident, activist, and vice president of the Environmental Justice Partnership (which sponsors the tour), the Toxic Tour led its participants through many examples of environmental injustice right here in our hometown. Driving past towering landfills, vacant lots, and boarded homes, the tour took us to city dumps, sewage pumping stations, various factories and plants, as well as into East Baltimore neighborhoods.

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# Student Voices: Present students reflect on their service experiences and passions for environmental justice



## Going Green - South of the Border

### Patrick Fox, Project Mexico Team Member

The region of the Mexican-American border fits many different descriptions and illustrates many ideas. Injustice is prevalent, the poverty is destabilizing, and yet we find green. On the recent Project Mexico trip, we partnered with long time friends and host agency "Los Niños" who have some green projects. We were privileged to work alongside our neighbors in some of these inspiring community projects. The Bee Project, in Mexicali, is perhaps the largest undertaking where a local community has a co-operative venture in honey production. The project invested in their own boxes, and now harvest the honey, as well as the wax and other byproducts to turn into revenue. The honey serves a dual purpose. First it is a natural and delicious alternative treat for children. Honey also acts as a natural medicine. It aids in preventing allergies to local flora as well as to dust. This is an incredible idea for communities in Mexico because of its reliability as a source of income as well as being ecologically safe, and even beyond that, productive. Another green example we found in Tijuana, where we visited, was the Ecoparque. The Ecoparque, an entirely sustainable green space, is a partnership between a local university and the community of Tijuana. The water for all the different plants is taken from runoff from the hillside and then filtered out. The space operates for school groups to educate about how trees and grass are good for our health and what they can do in their own homes to accomplish their own green space. This non-profit group works to better its community by teaching green, something I am certain we will see more of from our neighbors in the South. Let's hope neighbors of goodwill can continue to support each other as we work for a healthy planet.

## Facing an environmental crisis: the individual and their home

### Julia Gerard, Project HEALTH Volunteer

Since my first introduction to Project HEALTH, an organization that mobilizes college students to reach members of their community who are low income, I knew the greatest need for Baltimore clients would be housing. Looking to break the link between poverty and poor health, volunteers work with clients to help them access resources such as education, public health insurance, or finding a job: factors that could improve their situation in life. Yet, the greatest stumbling block to reach these goals is the request for housing. Nearly every client we have seen is the victim of overcrowded, ill-maintained housing, or they lack a place to go each night altogether. The housing shortage in this city has reached a critical point: private low income housing is non-existent and those on the list for public housing must wait nearly a decade. It is painful to meet clients without being able to give a hopeful answer. Stable housing is the first step to security and functional living; thus Baltimore needs a solution. Project HEALTH has begun a change in the lives of many residents, but this change must be widespread to allow a cascade of improvement. Housing is not only a social issue, but an environmental one as well. Poor living conditions affect the health of inhabitants and the condition of the environs: fires can occur due to open flames for heating, resources are wasted due to poor insulation. The effect of such neglect impacts the health of both our clients and our shared environment. Project HEALTH volunteers have developed an empathy reflected by action, and it is our responsibility to spread this concern to expand improvement of our social and natural environments.



## ReNew Orleans

### Mike Tirone, Spring Break Outreach Participant

When I was younger, the term "natural disaster" wasn't thrown around that much. Hailing from the erratic weather of New England, NorEasters were more common in my vocabulary. Through SBO, almost a year after the levees broke I was fortunate enough to spend a week in Violet, Louisiana, a small suburb of New Orleans, volunteering with Hurricane Katrina clean up. As it was Spring Break, a time that most experience travel and tanning, the only burning experience I had was from seeing what a "natural disaster" can do to such a deeply rooted culture. Seeing house after house destroyed by the stagnant water and whipping winds looked anything but "natural." This wasn't your typical Nor' Easter and keeping on with life as usual was impossible. This was an environmentally disheartening storm with social repercussions. Students in my Outreach group asked, why were so many poorer communities destroyed, while others remained untouched? The answer is just as infuriating as the storm itself. As levees and other environmental protectors are often repaired through a community's tax base, communities with residents who are lower-income cannot always afford the proper renovations for their area's levees because of a lower tax base. Conversely, communities with wealthier residents, and therefore a larger tax base, can afford the necessary and costly environmental renovations. Something has to be said about those who lost everything they owned. The most demoralizing thing about flooding is that your belongings are destroyed, but they are not only lost, they become valueless. From what I saw, having pictures shattered and memories visible, but untouchable, is one of the most gut-wrenching feelings a family can experience after such tragedy. When I returned to New England to tell about our work in New Orleans, the only way to put words to such devastation was to reiterate that Hurricane Katrina's effect on the Southern region could not be described as a natural kind of disaster but something much more influentially deviant. While the culture of Bourbon Street and flavor of jambalaya are strongly in tact, the rebuilding of the Big Easy region is definitely big in size but far from completion.



# CCSJ Updates...

## The Buddy System: CCSJ welcomed two new partners in 2007-2008

"Cristo Rey Jesuit intends to maximize the potential of its graduates to assume leadership roles in the business, civic and cultural life of the community as men and women for others." This is the last paragraph of the mission statement of **Cristo Rey Jesuit High School** in Baltimore, one of CCSJ's new partners. Every since its doors opened in August 2007, Cristo Rey Jesuit has become a beacon, shining its light from its location on N. Chester Street in Upper Fells Point. The innovative school provides college preparatory classes and a Corporate Internship Program to students of families with

low economic means. The students work at businesses, law firms, non-profits, as well as on college campuses. We currently have 4 Cristo Rey students here at Loyola: Omari Mitchell in Human Resources, Jenise Helms at The Career Center, Matthew Thompson at the FAC, and Kambriel Lewis in Annual Giving. The money earned by every intern goes towards making tuition affordable. Last semester, an overwhelming 44 Loyola College students tutored for an hour after school four days a week, as well as helped out in the classroom. For more information about volunteering at Cristo Rey, contact Service Coordinator Justin T. White at [jtwhite@loyola.edu](mailto:jtwhite@loyola.edu). **CASA of Maryland**, another new CCSJ partner, works to address the poverty and disenfranchisement that control the

lives of many Latino immigrants. Their programs include direct services, education, advocacy, organizing and a new Workers' Center which assists immigrant workers to connect with responsible employers and achieve economic self-sufficiency. This year, Dr. Donovan's and Dr. Ward's service-learning courses partnered with CASA to offer service-learning opportunities related to the Latin American content in their courses. Additionally, Loyola students with conversational Spanish skills and an interest in social justice work in the immigrant community can get involved in their Workers' Center outreach, educational programs, tax preparation and legislative advocacy. For information about volunteering at CASA, contact Liz Alex at [ealex@casamd.org](mailto:ealex@casamd.org).



## SumServe: A New Home and A New Format

SumServe, CCSJ's summer service immersion program, is undergoing a change this year. Starting this summer, SumServe will now become Sociology 403: Sumserve Practicum and Seminar – a three credit sociology class that fulfills the Sociology Practicum requirement. Following the same format as SumServe (32 hours per week of service in a local community agency and a weekly seminar followed by agency visits), the new course will allow a larger number of students to enroll in the experience. Additionally, up to four spots will be created for students who are interested in the experience, but who don't want or need the credits. If you are interested in the SumServe course, please contact Mary McNeish-Stengel at [mmcneishstengel@loyola.edu](mailto:mmcneishstengel@loyola.edu). If you are interested in the fellowship program, contact Christina Harrison at [charrison@loyola.edu](mailto:charrison@loyola.edu).

## Meet the CCSJ Staff: Dennis McCunney

"My life at Loyola was inextricably linked with service, they were married right from the start." Dennis McCunney was referring to his service experiences as an undergrad at Loyola in the late Nineties, but his words serve as a fitting description of his entire career. As the Assistant Director of Student Staff Development, Dennis is a familiar face to the Center's student service coordinators as well as the professional staff.

Born and raised outside of Philadelphia, Dennis was introduced to service at a young age through his family, Boy Scouts, and Jesuit high school. He only began to think seriously about a deeper involvement in service, however, during his freshman year at Loyola College. This interest, and the need for a work study job, led him to apply for a job within the Center (then CVS). He was offered a position as a volunteer coordinator for an after-school tutoring program. "I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into," Dennis said, "but I thought it sounded interesting and I thought I might be up to the challenge." During this time, Dennis was also seriously examining his faith, and questioning how much he identified with his Catholic upbringing. His work in service, he says, was integral in helping him to discover what he truly believed and valued.

Graduating from Loyola in 1998 with a Philosophy degree, Dennis went on to receive his Master of Divinity degree from Weston Jesuit School of Theology. His work at the Center had fueled his interests both in service and higher education, and he eventually got a job as a campus minister and community service coordinator at Canisius College in Buffalo. After the birth of his first daughter, Nora, he returned to Loyola, becoming a member of the Center's professional staff. He now lives in Maryland with his wife, Kathy, and their two daughters, Nora and Anna.

Although some students may be familiar with Dennis' interest in motorcycles, sometimes overlooked is his passion for environmental justice. He believes very strongly that these issues are foundational for all other social justice issues, citing the impact that the cycle of poverty and wars can have on the environment. "If we can't live rightly on the planet," he asked, "can we really live rightly with each other?"

On campus, Dennis heads the Good Stuff Campaign, which collects donations of any and every reusable item that students might normally throw away at the end of the school year. This "good stuff" is then donated to various agencies throughout the city. The program encourages students to think about their consumption and the waste that we all make, as well as provides an opportunity to offset the environmental impact caused by our campus. "I hope the program helps people think about how much stuff they have and accumulate, and how much they really need, and raises questions about their own consumption," Dennis said.

Center for Community Service  
and Justice  
Cohn Hall 08, Loyola College in Maryland  
4501 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21210



## Further reading...

If you are interested in environmental justice, you might want to read one or more of the following suggestions!

- ◆ *1001 Ways to Save the Earth* - Joanna Yarlow
- ◆ *Silent Spring* - Rachel Carson
- ◆ *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* - Larry Rasmussen
- ◆ *Sand County Almanac* - Aldo Leopold
- ◆ *Spell of the Sensuous* - David Abram
- ◆ *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* - Al Gore

*What are they saying about environmental theology?*  
-John Hart

- ◆ *Catholics for Climate Change*  
[www.catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org)
- ◆ *Spirituality and Health Magazine*

## Your Not-so-typical tour... Continued from Cover

Drawing on his experience as a lifelong Baltimore resident, Ross pointed out examples of the way environmental injustice overlaps with other forms of injustice. Particularly, Ross said that it was no accident that many of the most heinous environmental hazards in the city are located in low-income, largely African-American areas. Several particularly affecting examples: 1) The location of the old Baltimore City Dump is now a hill above the Jones Falls stream. Due to underground water flow, all of the contaminants in the soil are washed into the stream, where they are ingested by the fish living there. Often, people experiencing homelessness eat these fish because they cannot afford to buy food unknowingly pouring dozens of poisonous substances into their bodies. 2) A recycling company which mixes crushed glass, asphalt, and tar for street repaving, but also jettisons glass dust into the air. This was recognized as an environmental hazard because people living in the area were inhaling it and coughing up blood. The city paid for relocation but then re-opened their old homes as Section 8 housing (for low-income families and individuals; again, largely non-white), without alleviating the glass dust problem. 3) The lot behind the former site of the Armco Steel Plant used to be a military cemetery, but it was plowed over and covered with soil. When spring came, sunflowers and African ferns began to sprout up from the soil. Ross and his neighbors gathered the sunflower seeds and brought them home to cook and eat. Years later, men in full HAZMAT suits collected the plants. It turned out that they had been planted in order to collect various toxins (African ferns for arsenic, sunflowers for lead) within the soil. There had been no signs posted or warnings given to the residents. Each site has a story like these and the tour had a profound effect on the students and staff who attended. "I saw Baltimore through a new environmental lens and saw the challenges that an industrial town has when it comes to cleaning up the toxins left," said Marya Howell. "It was an eye-opening event that reminded me how we are all interconnected."

Another important aspect of the tour was Glen's explanation that environmental hazards affected not only specific areas, but the city as a whole. He discussed the way that contaminated groundwater evaporates and returns to the Earth as rain or dew, carrying its toxic properties with it. This means the pollution which spills into the Inner Harbor is also in the rain that soaks our hair and skin on our way to class. Something to think about next time we cross campus!



## CCSJ Spring Calendar Report

As well as our semester's weekly ongoing service programs and monthly Last Sundays at Beans & Bread, January marked our annual Project Mexico Immersion trip and spring Community Service Fair. In February, students participated in the Retreat to the Street U.N.I.T.E weekend and danced the afternoon away at the annual Senior Citizens prom. Additionally, 100+ SBO participants gathered for their Pre-departure meeting. February also brought fruitful educational events including a lecture entitled "Migrants: Illegals or God's Ambassadors" delivered by Dean Brackley and a Soup & Substance\* on "Voting for the Common Good." Thus far, March has marked the Social Justice Stations of the Cross\*, a Summer Justice Scholars Roundtable discussion, a house dedication for the Habitat Interfaith Build\*, our bi-annual Celebration of Service, an educational presentation on Habitat for Humanity, the screening of the film "The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo," the joint debut of the Project Mexico and the Jamaican experience photography exhibit in the JustArt Gallery\* (still on display!) and the participation of over 100 students in the Spring Break Outreach Immersion Program. Recently, we also held a number of festivities in collaboration with Maryland Day including "A Taste of Service" hosted by Viva House, our annual Women's Meet & Eat, and an opportunity for employees and students to gather together to stuff hygiene kits for the guests of Viva House.

On the Horizon...

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> – Blood Drive, McGuire Hall, 11am-5pm

April 10<sup>th</sup> – Encounter El Salvador Fiesta

April 12<sup>th</sup> – Special Olympics, FAC, 7am-1pm

April 16<sup>th</sup> – Dinner with Doctors, VIP Lounge, 6-8PM

April 17<sup>th</sup> – Spring Celebration, Reading Room, 3-6pm

**April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 17<sup>th</sup> – Good Stuff Campaign**

May 20-29<sup>th</sup> – Encounter El Salvador Trip

June 23 - August 1<sup>st</sup> – St. Ambrose Summer Camp

April 8<sup>th</sup> – Guatemala Human Rights Commission Speaker, Knott Hall B01, 6:30pm

April 11<sup>th</sup> – Summer Justice Scholars Grant Applications due McGuire Hall West, 5-7pm

April 14<sup>th</sup> – Student Leader Hunger Awareness Dinner McGuire, 7-9 pm

**April 17<sup>th</sup> – Youth violence in Baltimore Panel Discussion, College Center Room 113, 6PM**

April 27<sup>th</sup> – Last Sunday Meal at Beans & Bread

May 12 - 15<sup>th</sup> – Faculty Fellows Seminar

June 29<sup>th</sup> – Last Sunday Meal at Beans & Bread

August 25<sup>th</sup> – Faculty Fellows Seminar

\*in partnership with Campus Ministry