Since the advent of student protest in the 1960’s and 1970’s in the United States, student activism has battled the unfair characterization of being a radical movement of students, characterized by loud protest and gaudy behavior. While in some cases it may very well be those things, and with good reason, at the heart of student activism is a reciprocal relationship between student and university. It may take on a tamer nature, or even be built into the bureaucratic process. The real fight for student activism in higher education is over the tendency of students and faculty to relax towards parasitism, where the transmission of knowledge flows in one direction from teacher to pupil. Students suck knowledge from the professor in pursuit of a good grade in the course and then do as they please.

Students meet with Peter VanderMeulen, CRC Director of Social Justice

What needs to happen is that the knowledge students gain from their courses, and the passions and gifts that they are instilled with, need to be injected back into the core of the institution. It is a kind of institutional reciprocity in which students’ knowledge is not just used for future application at their jobs, but as a readily available resource to use to create a well-functioning institution. Student activism, then, is a teaching back to the institution what the institution has taught them.

However, there is a specification which must be made. When I talk about this reciprocal relationship, for example, I do not mean that if you have taken a course in “Grant Writing” that you are obligated to give back to your institution by writing a grant so Professor so-and-so can conduct research on “Why trees change color in the fall” though a noble pursuit in itself. No, the feature on which student activism is anchored is a commitment to seeking justice. And it is not only one issue of justice that should be pursued, but a collective and holistic justice.

But how is this to be done, this reciprocal, justice-oriented relationship between student and university? First, students need to know the inner-workings of their institution, beginning with how decisions are made on campus. What is the structure of the college’s decision-making body? Second, a student must know what the core values of a university are. What is the University’s mission, and to what, specifically, has it professed commitment? Third, one must know which administrators, professors, and staff members are sympathetic to the cause. One needs wise allies and persons who carry influence to help advance the issue. Fourth, one must strive for group cohesion and fitting leadership which causes the movement to live or die because of internal organization and the appropriate delegation of tasks.

The actual implementation of student action takes wisdom and discernment. First, transparency between students and administration is vital to honest communication and trust. Second, this opportunity should be used to educate all parts of the college: students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Third, outlets should be offered to those who do change their way in thinking because of the movement. And fourth, in the words of Jim Wallis, “protest is good, but alternatives are better.”

Students are active in the Grand Rapids Community through StreetFest.

In order to advance justice, organizations around campus need to eavesdrop on one other. Justice is not limited to just one issue that one is passionate about, but because of human constraints we are unable to fully delve into all issues of justice. By dialoging with other justice organizations around campus, groups can rally to a cause if it needs considerable support. In this way, universities can be made more justice-oriented. Student activism can educate, shift practice, form tighter knit communities built on common interests, mutual respect and trust; and navigate a university in the direction

“The pursuit of Shalom doesn’t just bring hope, it brings wholeness, integrity, fullness, connectedness to life. In this way fragmentation is overcome within the meaningful harmony and integrity of a life embedded in God’s callings. God’s grace in Christ brings reconciliation, healing, and wholeness to lives that are broken by the power of sin.”

- Douglas Schuurman, Vocation
For three days I was involved in leading different groups of first year students to various sites around Grand Rapids where they could live out the concept of service-learning. Each day began for me at 8:00 in the morning when the sound of my alarm screeched across my eardrums, and somewhere in that space between dreaming and waking I found the resolve to begin the day. This past summer I had the opportunity to act as a student leader for StreetFest.

StreetFest represents an enormous amount of planning and precision to make it successful. After waking up each morning, I met with my fellow StreetFest leaders in the Chapel Undercroft where we all received our various assignments for the day, picked up any necessary materials for the various service projects we would be involved in, and met any adult mentors that might be joining our group for the day. Afterwards I went up to the Chapel where I attempted, amidst the incoming mass of first year students, to connect with the orientation group that I would be working with for the day. Then everyone involved in StreetFest, leaders and students, had the opportunity to worship together before we all divided into our separate groups for a breakout session. The intent behind each breakout session was to discuss the concept of service-learning as well as to become oriented to the specific projects that each group was to be working on for the day.

From the breakout session, I took a group of usually 15 students, and met our transportation for the day. Shortly thereafter we were dropped off at our assigned organization, where we spent the day becoming familiar with how the organization served a specific community of people. At the end of each day, I spent some time with my group reflecting on their experiences for the day.

This is a general outline of the schedule for StreetFest each day, but this is not why I woke up each morning to participate as a leader in StreetFest. StreetFest does represent an enormous amount of planning and precision, but it also represents and means so much more. What I take away from the experience of StreetFest is the unexpected, the unanticipated, and the wonderfully surprising. StreetFest is something that happens in the space between and around people working together in community, and it is in that space that God shows you things you never would have seen or heard or otherwise experienced.

Christine Bensfeld, Beth Derocha, Kara Fisher, Megan Geenen, Allyson Green, Lee Heeringa, Kari Hendricks, Jennifer Horst, Jenny Hossink, Sarah Jelsema, Val Keary, Bryan Kibbe, Kristle Krueger, Jonathan Langdon, Mary Lim, Hannah Maier, Dora McFarland, Samantha Miller, Grace Pae, Kelly Post, Julie Saks, Joanna Seel, Liz Senefeld, Stephanie Skaar, Lindsey Trieb, James Spaan, Rachel VanZanten, Emily Vladuchick, Allie Weeda

Thank you to this year’s StreetFest Leaders!

ACCESS
Adams Park
African Community Fellowship Church
Baxter Community Center
Burton Health Center
Calvary CRC
Camp Fire USA West Michigan Council
Cherry Street Health Services
Community Rebuilders
Creston CRC
Creston Neighborhood Association
Degagé
Eastern Avenue CRC
First Christian Reformed Church
Fuller Avenue CRC
Gerontology Network
Grace CRC
Grand Rapids Children’s Museum
Guiding Light Mission
Habitat for Humanity
Heartland Health Care Center
Heartside Ministry
Heritage Hill Neighborhood Association
Hispanic Center of Western Michigan
Home Repair Services
Hope Community
ICCF

John Ball Zoo
Luther Village
Madison Area Neighborhood Association
Madison Square CRC
Mel Trotter Ministries
Midtown Neighborhood Association
Mosaic Life
New Community Church
Oakdale Park CRC
Other Way Ministries
Plainfield UMC
Pregnancy Resource Center
Ramoth House
Roosevelt Park Community CRC
Roosevelt Park/Grandville Ave. Neighborhood Association
Salvation Army Booth Services
Second Harvest Gleaners
Senior Meals Program
Sherman St CRC
Southeast End Neighborhood Association
United Church Outreach Ministry
Urban Vision Inc.
Well House Emergency Shelter
West Michigan Environmental Action Council - Rain Gardens of West Michigan
YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids
A scenic bike ride of a different sort has been added to the annual StreetFest program at Calvin College this year. The urban bike tour took faculty and incoming Calvin students throughout the city, stopping at several StreetFest sites and was lead by a variety of Calvin faculty and staff.

The objective of the ride was to introduce students to the city and to also show some of the places that Calvin students have been involved in the city. For example, we stopped at Plaster Creek and talked about how Calvin biology students are involved in helping clean up that watershed. And we stopped in Burton Heights, and we talked about how the nursing students are involved with staff from Health Intervention Services. In all, the cyclists covered about 20 miles on the tour. Our hope was when they return, students will have gained an appreciation for the city and many of the challenges the city faces, while also encouraging students to be active citizens during their stay at Calvin and beyond.
I remember my eyes bugging out when I first read the e-mail from the Service-Learning Center. I had dismissed any thought of getting to New York City to join the Interfaith Vigil to Overcome Global Poverty during the United Nations Summit—how in the world would I get there? And now here was my own school offering to drive a vanload of students all the way to New York for three days at almost no cost. God certainly comes up with surprises!

Three weeks later I was on my way to volunteer at a public vigil that, we hoped, would remind world leaders that people of all faiths were watching with votes in mind to see that the concerns of the poor were at the forefront of the Summit’s agenda. Our numbers were small but, as I realized through the course of the event, that only made each of us more dedicated to the cause.

Unfortunately, I can’t say that we got what we asked of our leaders. While each of the 150-plus officials restated his or her country’s commitment to reaching the Millennium Development Goals for halving poverty by the year 2015, the lack of any formal plan for reaching these goals seems to indicate that these commitments are symbolic at best. In a few countries, progress has been made toward equalizing gender rights and providing more AIDS relief, but so much more work remains to be done.

Thankfully, meeting and working with so many dedicated Christians during my time in New York gave me a small but persistent hope that the Church’s commitment to ending poverty will continue to build until our political leaders have to listen. I have faith that this fire newly kindled in us will not go out!

Amy Jonason is a Sophomore on the Social Justice Committee.

The group that went to New York stands in front of a banner that reads “Poverty kills 30,000 children every day. Together we can make poverty history.”

**Social Justice Committee and Service-Learning Center Partnership**

This year the Service-Learning Center and the Social Justice Coalition are forming an intentional relationship because of what the two organizations can offer to each other.

The Social Justice Committee sums up their purpose in a coherent mission statement. “As Reformed Christians in a sinful world we seek to restore society to God’s original intention. The Social Justice Committee will work together to foster dialogue and action on issues of human rights and societal injustices, both locally and globally. This will be done through education, advocacy, consciousness-raising, and networking with campus, community and national organizations.”

The Service-Learning Center has been particularly involved in a sub-group of SJC labeled “Local.” Students who are interested in pursuing local justice are open to many of the contacts that the Service-Learning Center has developed.

The hope is that through this partnership, Service-Learners will come to understand the role of justice that the SJC emphasizes, in their activities and take the time to question the structural issues that create social problems.

We also hope that members of the Social Justice Committee will be able to recognize issues of justice in their own communities in order that they can become advocates as well as connect issues of justice to relationships with people who experience injustice.

Janelle Vandergrift is this year’s Social Justice Committee Liaison and Communications and Research Coordinator for the Service-Learning Center. She is a Senior and a Sociology Major.
U2 is one of the most recognizable rock bands on the planet and can boast a strong presence in the music industry for over 25 years. What has sustained this band? How have they remained culturally relevant? More importantly, what impact has their common faith had on their music? These questions, with particular emphasis on the last one, are topics for discussion in Steve Stockman’s newly revised book, *Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2*.

The author is no stranger to Calvin’s campus. Stockman has visited multiple times; most recently, he lectured here when the first edition of this book came out and was also a featured speaker at the Festival of Faith and Music Spring 2005. His background gives him particular authority to speak about U2. As the Presbyterian chaplain at a university in Belfast, he understands distinct Irish themes that are visible in U2’s music. It is through this religious lens that he is able to give meaning to the band’s spiritual themes.

Steve Stockman skillfully writes about many of the phases of U2’s continual transformation. He begins by pondering the question, “If I could ask Bono three questions, what would they be?” In order to give the casual fan a solid context, he examines the setting of Dublin in the late 1970’s and early 80’s, when the band formed. From U2’s first album, Boy, to the new editions material on the Vertigo tour and their November 2004 release, *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*, Stockman picks out the particular spiritual themes from each of their 11 albums and their respective international tours. He recognizes, though, that U2’s Christian faith is visible outside their recorded music. Their involvement in the Live Aid concert of 1985 and Bono’s subsequent trip to an Ethiopian orphanage were formative in their spiritual development and Stockman’s book reports on these pivotal events.

*Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2* is a necessary read for everyone. It helps even the serious U2 fan to reexamine and rediscover the spiritual depth of this rock band. For the casual listener, Steve Stockman’s research in popular culture sources like *Dublin’s Hot Press* and the *Irish Times* gives his book distinct Irish flavor, a unique perspective for most Americans. For everyone in between, it offers a refreshing critique on the Christian spiritual themes and the personal faith journey found in the music and members of U2.

---

**Spanish ABSL at Adelante High School**

In order to receive credit in my Spanish 201 and 202 classes for the outside of class participation, I did service-learning at Adelante High School, a bilingual school in Grand Rapids. Over the course of the year, I helped out in an ESL class, a science class, a literature class, and I helped a student taking a class independently. During my time there I helped the students individually, answering questions and helping them to understand what they were reading and how to do their work.

Volunteering at Adelante High School was such a great and worthwhile experience because I feel that I’ve benefited from it in many ways.

My ability to speak Spanish and understand it spoken by native speakers considerably improved. I also learned about what the experience is like for Hispanics who immigrate to the United States, and why they do it. Plus, I formed relationships with people from all over Central America. I feel so blessed to have had this experience and plan on volunteering there again in the future.

Kristle Krueger is a Sophomore and a CPC for the Service-Learning Center as well as a Spanish student.
Student activism has long played an important role in the development of knowledge, skills, values and identity for American college students. For Calvin College students, activism, rightly understood, has great potential to contribute to their development as “prime citizens” of God’s kingdom.

A variety of courses and programs at Calvin College provide students with the tools to explore issues of justice, poverty, culture and race through the lens of a Reformed worldview. The Service-Learning Center has long been one of these programs, and now has developed a three-credit course that explores contemporary and historical efforts by colleges and universities to teach justice and provide meaningful opportunities for service to local and international communities. This course covers a variety of topics ranging from an understanding of Biblical Shalom to various faith traditions and how they have nurtured Christian activism in students. Enrolled students are also assigned relevant service-learning placements as well as communal and personal, oral and written reflection.

Readings in the course draw from a variety of sources, and inform students’ knowledge of both theoretical underpinnings and strategic approaches to activism from Reformed Christian perspectives. Students completing the course are able to articulate the connection between their studies at Calvin College and their calling as members of a higher kingdom, their calling to “do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with their God.
Calvin College and the Ready for Life Program

Calvin students participating in Academic-Based Service-Learning through Education 306 and Recreation Therapy 314 are partnering with the Christian Learning Center’s Ready for Life Program. Through these courses, students gain valuable experience working with people with cognitive impairment. Mutually, the Ready for Life participants gain valuable experience in developing healthy habits, building reciprocal friendships and learning social and life skills.

Alicia Dennis, Christian Learning Center Student

You are probably wondering what I and three other people are doing at Calvin College. We are doing a fun program that is getting us ready for the next step in our lives and one that I have been afraid to take. I joined this program after I graduated from Grand Rapids Christian High School. It has been a good experience for me.

Our program is giving me college experience without the stress of homework. The program is called Ready for Life; it helps us learn about how to meet new people, how to get along with many different people, how to stay healthy and deciding about training and careers.

I am learning how great Calvin College really is and how nice everyone that goes here or works here is. I have been helping my community too. Soon we will be getting work experience. I am getting good practice by helping out in the community going to retirement homes and helping the people there. We have been working on staying in shape on Monday, Wednesday and Friday by walking around the track.

Our group enjoys going to chapel, eating at Johnny’s and I have been working out at the gym. During a typical day, we have devotions; learn how to plan meals and money management skills. Our goal for the year is to learn to be able to live independently.

Allie Weeda and Alicia Dennis

Allie Weeda, Calvin College Recreation 314 Student

My name is Allie Weeda and I am a sophomore at Calvin. Every Wednesday afternoon I go to the weight room and assist Alicia in weight training. Alicia comes ready to workout with a lot of excitement and willingness to learn.

Through each workout session I hope for Alicia to gain better knowledge on how to correctly lift weights and use the weight room for her benefit. She has done a wonderful job so far catching on to the different muscles she is working, and has done a great job at counting while breathing during her lifting sets. I hope every time we go is a fun and meaningful time for Alicia. With this experience I have learned how to better instruct Alicia when lifting weights, and I am grateful I have the opportunity to help her. Also, I have also gained better knowledge of certain weight machines, exercises, and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. I look forward to going to the weight room every Wednesday afternoon. This time is nice because it is filled with both learning and fun. We can both have fun learning and just talking to one another.

Christian Learning Center Students at Calvin

Glen Van Andel, Calvin College HPERDS Department Chair

Throughout my academic career, I have been a believer in experiential learning. Learning by doing is often the best teacher in the complex educational process. So, when I heard about this opportunity to partner with the Christian Learning Center (CLC) in an exciting project that brought CLC students to campus for peer-teaching/learning experiences, I was impressed with the potential educational opportunities for our recreation therapy majors. After six weeks of partnership, I have not been disappointed. Although it has taken more time to work through the logistics of the program, it has been worth the time and effort. Students have been more engaged in the learning process, the experiences have provided concrete opportunities for applying abstract concepts, the program provides a common core or theme for the course that makes learning relevant to each student and provides a context for learning, and the students get a better sense of their vocational fit for the profession.

In addition, there are many more intangible learning outcomes that are likely emerging from this experience such as, our understanding of and appreciation for persons who are different from ourselves; our ability to develop authentic relationships with persons with different abilities, and our understand and acceptance of our own strengths and limitations. How do we learn these important life lessons without first hand experiences? We don’t. Thanks to the CLC Ready for Life program, our students are more prepared to live out their calling to be agents of renewal and hope in a broken world.
Learning to Serve, Serving to Learn.

Service-Learning Center
Calvin College
Commons Annex
1765 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4404

Phone: 616-526-6455
Fax: 616-526-6644
E-mail: slc@calvin.edu

We’re on the Web!
www.calvin.edu/slc

Back Row (from left to right)
Jeff Bouman
Director
Katie Timmermans
SBSL Coordinator and Research
Maria Beversluis
SBSL Church Liaison
Paul Vliem
ABSL Social Science Coordinator
Nathan Tonlaar
SBSL Work Study Coordinator
Ryan Kruis
Administrative Support
Brittney Stelpstra
StreetFest Coordinator

Front Row (from left to right)
Chris VanZanen
Administrative Assistant
Lori Gesink
Associate Director
Dietrich Bouma
ABSL Natural Sciences Coordinator
Grace Miguel
ABSL Spanish Coordinator
Rachel Meyer
ABSL Education Coordinator
Daniel Heffner
ABSL Contextual/LLA Coordinator
Janelle Vandergrift
SBSL Coordinator and Research
Nate Ward
SBSL Community Partnership Coordinator/Spring Break Trip Coordinator

This Year’s Service-Learning Center Staff

This Year’s Staff Covenant
Because of God’s grace in calling us his own, we seek to live out our identity as His beloved. For us, the Service-Learning Center staff of 2005-2006, this identity encompasses …

Hospitality: Humbly and genuinely creating space for ourselves and others in all we do.
The Pursuit of Justice: Being courageous agitators, sensitive to the needs of individuals, yet aware of our relationships to Creation, communities, and institution.
Celebration: Feasting in the blessings of each day and holding fast to hope, grace, and joy in a broken world.

We, the Service-Learning Center staff, commit to this identity, confident that our world belongs to God.