Featured Stories

Collaborative Students Leave Lasting Impact on Students with Autism Through Behavioral Assistant Program

In recognition of Autism Awareness month, we are featuring the Behavioral Assistant Program (BAP), one of the Collaborative Center’s signature programs where Rutgers students volunteer directly in local special education programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in pre-k through 12th grade. BAP students first undergo training in Applied Behavior Analysis-based instructional strategies to prepare for working with the students with Autism, such as discrete trial instruction, prompting, data collection, and the use of reinforcers. They then observe their assigned classroom to meet the staff and students, and afterwards are paired with a student to work with regularly one-on-one.

Noel Aprile, the behavioral analyst for the school district, created the program with Dr. Maurice Elias from the Collaborative and Rutgers Psychology Department in the 2014-2015 school year. Initially, the program began with 8 BAP volunteers in 7 classrooms across 4 school buildings, pre-k through 8th grade. Now, the program has about 20 Rutgers students per school year, assisting in 13 classrooms across 7 buildings, and has expanded to include the 12th grade. "BAP provides the opportunity for Rutgers students to develop understanding of the disability through direct interaction with a number of children who possess unique strengths and challenges. They can then apply that practical experience and understanding in their current and future interactions with others," said Aprile.
The Behavioral Assistant Program has a profound impact within the community, both in and out of the classroom. According to Aprile, "One of the greatest things about BAP is that the program fosters greater awareness of Autism, and may create a ripple effect in the community. Each volunteer who works with our students and learns more about Autism may teach others in the community and on campus. On a small scale, when a BAP volunteer encounters a person with Autism in the community, they will likely respond differently than they would have prior to working with our students. On a larger scale, broader awareness and acceptance has the potential to lead to greater benefits for individuals with Autism."

Interested in learning more about the Behavioral Assistant Program? Email collaborativerecruitment@gmail.com.

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**Rutgers Bonner Leaders Build Safer Homes in West Virginia Over Spring Break**

During Spring Break, ten students in the Rutgers Bonner Leader program and staff from the Collaborative Center engaged in a week of service through an alternative break to West Virginia. The group worked with the Appalachia Service Project to repair homes for low-income families in the local community. Some projects included building a deck, laying carpet, sheetrocking a bathroom ceiling, and replacing a rotted floor.

By helping to make these homes safer for families, the Bonner Leaders were able to learn more about the community as well. "Going to serve with the Appalachia Service Project in Wyoming County, West Virginia not only allowed us to gain some new skills and experiences by doing some amazing work as volunteers like building a porch and fixing a roof, but we got to get to know the homeowners and hear their story which made us understand their beliefs and life choices even though they may have been different from our own," said Sierra Winder, a Bonner on the alternative break. "I think it made us all realize that the socially constructed line between the Northern and Southern states can be eliminated if we all just discussed the questions we have respectfully rather than make assumptions based off what we see and hear online. All in all I think I can speak for everyone when I say the trip was amazing despite the cell service issues, which ended up kind of being a good thing because it forced us Bonners to connect with each other."
Student Spotlight:

Areeba Siddiqi (SAS, Class of 2020)

Collaborative Center Program:
Community Research Assistant Program

What is your project?:
I am working on a Community Organization and Outreach Research Project in partnership with Central Jersey Diaper Bank AECDC (Anshe Emeth Community Development Corporation). There is a total of three subprojects, which my partner Cassie Bollinger and I have been working on along with coordinating with our community partner, Ginny Adams Kafka. These three projects are: Faith Community Research to create relationships between different faith communities in Middlesex County for diaper drives and to increase outreach; next is to research new and creative Diaper Drive Ideas and organizations that can host diaper drives; and lastly Adopt a Mom Publicity Plan to find new audiences and press to advertise this fundraising campaign to.

Why did you want to be a part of the CRA program?:
CRA is a comprehensive program which allowed me to get the Rutgers research experience while also learning about the importance of civic engagement and acting upon that duty to serve the community.

What has been your favorite part of the program so far?
My favorite part so far is the people I am working with who encourage me to strive to do my best. Johnny is an amazing coordinator who introduced me to the program. Cassie is
a great partner who has so many unique ideas. And Ginny entrusts us with responsibilities and assigns these cool projects that I have become very passionate about seeing go through. The Collaborative Center is just the best because it fosters caring people.

**Upcoming Events**

You're Invited!

The Collaborative's Year End Celebration

Join us to celebrate the 2018-2019 accomplishments of our students, faculty, and community partners with dinner, recognition, and good company.

**Thursday, April 18th, 2019**

4:00 - 6:00 PM

Trayes Hall

Douglass Student Center

100 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

RSVP

**Quick Links**

Undocumented Student Resources

Service-Learning Resources for Student Mentors

Service-Learning Resources for Faculty and Staff