On Saturday, December 1st, students, faculty, staff, and members of the local and regional community came together to recognize student scholarship at the college’s Fall Student Conference. The conference featured oral presentations, multi-media displays, professional posters, and 3-D exhibits. Students were considered for awards in a whole range of areas and the high quality of scholarship at this term’s event made deliberations difficult at best. Community-based learning figured prominently in both representation at the conference and in the resulting awards. Students Alex Bach and Eli Walker were recognized for their work with the Friends of Sears Island. The two students presented their non-personal interpretation of the organization which featured a much-needed brochure, wayside/exhibit, and video. The project was carried out as part of the Interpretive Methods course facilitated by Associate Professor Tom Mullin. Bach and Walker received the Unity Partnership Award which comes with a $250 cash prize and certificate of recognition. Most importantly, they designed 3 products that will actually be used by FOSI to more effectively communicate the organization’s mission, vision and needs. Other contenders for the award included projects with Upward Bound, the ME Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, area schools, land trust organizations, and the Future Farmers of America. Some of these projects took top honors in the categories of Conservation, Education, Sustainability and Academic Excellence. Our congratulations and thanks go out to all students, faculty, staff and community partners whose efforts have made this good work possible.

Students, Community Members Come Together in Support of Hunger Relief Programs

The 18th Annual Empty Bowls fundraiser was attended by more than 150 people on the evening of December 4th. Approximately 60 UC students contributed to making this year’s event another successful endeavor. While some donated bowls crafted in pottery classes, others helped with set up, serving, and clean up on the day of the gathering. Three wonderful soups were prepared by the Unity Barn Raisers Community Meals volunteers, and Monica Murphy, owner of Crosstrax Deli, baked loaves upon loaves of peasant wheat bread. Meal ingredients were donated by local growers. Several professional potters from in and around the mid-coast region generously donated bowls to this much-loved event.

All told, the 2012 gathering raised more than $1900. The proceeds will be evenly distributed between the Volunteer Regional Food Pantry, located in Unity, and Veggies for All, a project of Unity Barn Raisers.
In the Environmental Citizen: Trails and Tours Around Unity, UC students have teamed up with the Waldo County Trails Coalition to build a hiking trail between the Unity Community Trails and recently established MOFGA trails. Last year a previous section of the course, under Instructor Jean English’s leadership, worked on a similar project with the Trails Coalition, a group organized by the Unity Barn Raisers, with combined efforts of several organizations that maintain trails around the Waldo County area. The main goal of this class has been to complete the trail between the college and MOFGA grounds before semester’s end. English has taken on the class again this year to help lead the students through this project: “My favorite way to learn is to learn while I’m doing something hands-on, and that’s how I approach this class. The one thing I haven’t said yet is how much fun it is to be outdoors, doing something tangible and valuable for the community, with these students. I love the way they get along and generally seem to enjoy the work, and the way they come together to accomplish a goal.”

While the students learn trail-building and group coordination skills, the Waldo County Trails Coalition draws closer to their goal. By 2013, they hope to have completed a trail which connects the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance trail system and the Georges River Land Trust trail system at Frye Mountain with the Mount View School complex; and in 2014, they hope to connect the MOFGA Education Center trails with the Mount View school complex. “Community trails can create strong social networks, as people hike and chat together. I see that happening every week with the class. When the students leave Unity and move to other areas, they’ll have some knowledge and ability to help create trails wherever they go, if they want”, says English.

The Waldo County Trails Coalition mission:
Connecting Waldo County communities through trails to celebrate our heritage of natural and working landscapes.
To learn more about the Waldo County Trails Coalition and how you can become involved, contact Unity Barn Raisers at 948-9005.
Twelve Unity College students have been hard at work this Fall preparing to enter area classrooms as Project C.O.O.L. ME educators. This exciting new initiative, College Outreach for Ocean Literacy, is a joint effort between Unity College and the Maine State Aquarium to promote ocean awareness and increase ocean literacy in Maine schools through hands-on, engaging, in-classroom programs delivered by trained college students. The project is based on a national and state need (and a national demand) for increasing student awareness and connective understanding to our oceans and its resources. Students will promote a balanced approach to the conservation and use of marine resources while inspiring new generations of students to pursue ocean related careers and become positive ocean leaders. The project is currently targeting programs for the PreK-2 classrooms, where there is the greatest need to grab student attention and interest early on, and the greatest lack of standards addressing these subjects. In Spring of 2012, four UC students co-designed three introductory units with staff at the Maine State Aquarium. Now, a cohort of 12 UC students from a range of majors including marine biology, wildlife biology, teacher education, environmental policy and captive wildlife care, is preparing to be the first team of Project C.O.O.L. educators. In the coming months, they will pilot the first three units—“Ocean Food Webs”, “Fin-tastic Fishes”, and “Tide Pool Tales” in area schools. Associate Professor of Marine Biology, Aimee Phillippi and Community-Based Learning Coordinator, Jen Olin have been mentoring the students throughout the process, in collaboration with Aimee Hayden-Roderiques, Manager and Natural Science Educator of the Maine State Aquarium. Olin and Phillippi were also instrumental in helping the Aquarium secure a $6,000 grant from the Maine Coastal Program in support of project start-up costs. As part of the partnership, the college will receive use of a 150 gallon salt water tank system to house marine organisms for integration into these and future ocean literacy units. When the programs have been perfected, the UC team will provide training to undergraduate teams at other institutions across the state to expand access and participation. Project C.O.O.L. ME hopes to ultimately create and deliver ocean literacy content for students in Maine all the way up to grade 8. To find out more about the program, contact Jen Olin in the Office of Community-Based Learning at Unity College.
Student Artwork Honors Community Volunteers

Last spring we told you about (and showed) the beautiful collection of 3-D clay relief pieces that Randy Fein’s students crafted for Unity Barn Raisers as a way of portraying the organization’s mission and vision. This semester, Randy has been right back at it with a new group of students. The class is continuing to use clay relief as a vehicle for communicating key values of UBR’s programs. Students in the class have been learning about UBR’s services by participating in them alongside key volunteer leaders whose efforts have helped to make the community-focused organization successful over the years. These experiences, combined with personal interviews of UBR volunteer members, have inspired the creation of a series of new pieces designed to honor those folks.

“The class has provided what I hope is a valuable platform to get students thinking about concepts of community and its many forms. Throughout, we have taken time to compare and contrast virtual communities with those that emphasize a more physical presence,” noted Fein. This most recent suite of tiles will be mounted in the UBR foyer area, alongside last year’s installation.

Students in the Environmental Citizen: Art Builds Community II proudly display the clay relief tiles that will be mounted at Unity Barn Raisers in recognition of volunteer contributions to the organization’s mission, vision and many programs.

Get the Guide!

Waldo County Area Local Food Guide!

The third edition of the Waldo County Area Local Food Guide, a print directory that helps citizens locate and purchase local foods, is now available. Contact the Office of CBL for a print copy, or download the guide from the UC website:

https://www.unity.edu/community_based_learning/notable

Thank You!

To all students, faculty, staff and others who have provided service this year, and to the many organizations who have hosted Unity groups, shared their expertise and enriched our student programs!
Women’s Maternal Health Project Mobilizes Students

What do a piece of string, plastic bag, pair of latex gloves, alcohol wipe and hand sanitizer all have in common? They are among the ten simple materials that significantly increase the likelihood of a safe home birthing experience for both mother and baby. Konbit Santé, a Portland-based non-profit that works with Haitian health care providers in the Cap-Haitien region of the country, put a call out for help in sourcing these materials. Because most women in Haiti continue to give birth in the home, access to these simple materials has been proven to reduce both infant and maternal mortality. The supplies are used by traditional Haitian birth attendants who receive the kits through mobile outreach clinics. The kits also include a newborn cap, small blanket, and small stuffed toy. The bag and baby items become gifts for the new mother and baby.

In October, students at Unity quickly mobilized a plan to support this effort. They reached out to both the campus and their home town communities, including family, friends and former teachers for donations, which included not only the supplies noted above, but also cloth, thread, and ribbon for making the cloth bags that hold the contents of each kit. The community generously responded; senior Cassandra Thayer tracked and inventoried all project supplies, while junior Candace Robinson coordinated a series of sewing circles which included use of sewing machines and stitching by hand.

Other students put their skills to work sewing, setting up donation boxes and assembling the kits. Local community members were also among the project’s participants. Unity College Trustee Arlene Schaefer brought along her sewing machine and UniTel employee and local resident Jayne Sullivan, known for her work on the Arts for Hunger and Bead for Life projects, joined students in preparing the kits. To date, a total of 56 birthing kits have been made and will soon be delivered to the Konbit Santé office in southern Maine for shipment to Haiti. The project is expected to continue into the spring and students hope to expand their support for Konbit Santé’s work in other areas.

To learn more about the Office of Community-Based Learning, contact Jen Olin: jolin@unity.edu or call 948.9273