

## Honors Program

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### HONORS STUDENTS CONTINUE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SHIPPENSBURG, Pa. – A group of Shippensburg University Honors Program students and faculty recently spent a week in the Dominican Republic to implement their service-learning project, “Reach Out: A Shippensburg University Honors Program Literacy and Leadership Initiative.”

Nine SU students and three faculty members traveled to Santo Domingo, the capital city, to work with children and their teachers at the Pathways of Learning elementary school from January 9 to 16. This marks the second year of the Reach Out project.

Senior elementary education major Kristen Imboden created an instructional manual to enhance literacy education at the school. During their week in Santo Domingo, the SU faculty and students used the literacy manual to conduct training workshops for the school’s teachers. They also demonstrated many of the innovative teaching techniques in the manual by working directly with students in the classroom. “The literacy focus of the project allowed me to apply disciplinary knowledge gained through my four years at Shippensburg University,” Imboden said. “I was able to conduct research that applies to my field of study and change lives in the process. It was an incredible experience.”

During their week in the Dominican Republic, the SU students met a Shippensburg University alumnus, Susanne Bergey, who teaches at St. George’s Preparatory School in Santo Domingo. The SU students met with St. George’s faculty and students to consider ways that they might become involved with the Reach Out project. The SU students also visited La Universidad Dominicana Organización & Método to discuss the possibility of establishing a foreign exchange program with the university.

Dr. Tomoko Grabosky of the Counseling Department, Dr. José Ricardo-Osorio of the Modern Languages Department and Dr. Gretchen Pierce of the History Department mentored the students as they prepared curricular materials during the fall semester and accompanied them to the Dominican Republic. “Traveling to the Dominican Republic was a life-changing experience,” Dr. Pierce said. “In just one short week, I got to help several dozen at-risk children in Santo Domingo improve their literacy skills and learn to love coming to school.”

Each year, the SU students hold several fundraisers to support the Pathways of Learning School. This year, the students will focus their efforts on raising funds to aid in the construction of a new

school building to relieve the severely overcrowded conditions at the current school. They also plan to develop additional curricular materials and travel to the Dominican Republic next January to work with the teachers and students at the school.

For more information about the SU Honors Program's Reach Out project, please visit <http://www.ship.edu/honors/reachout>.

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*The Honors Program at Shippensburg University provides an outstanding undergraduate experience that emphasizes scholarship, leadership, and service. The program is made up of 150 students who are chosen based on academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, and evidence of leadership and civic engagement. Students benefit from small classes, outstanding instruction, exciting research, study abroad, and internship opportunities, and special social and cultural activities. For more information, visit <http://www.ship.edu/honors>.*