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COMMON THREADS: A reception at Rice University celebrates the work of the Blue Triangle Quilt Guild.

Quilt Exhibit Illustrates a Historic Strand

While working on a research project for her sociology class Race and Religious Faith, Rice graduate student Aundrea Matthews stitched a bond between Rice and Houston's African-American community.

Together with women leaders in the African-American community and the Houston Enriches Rice Education (HERE) Project, Matthews organized a quilt exhibit at the Rice Media Center.

Matthews reached out to African-American women who are working to preserve the history of Houston's Third Ward, particularly the Blue Triangle Community Center, while completing work on her ethnographic research project. The group included Charlotte Bryant, who was part of the force that kept the 1918 center open when the YWCA attempted to close it; Jerona Williams, founder and president of the Blue Triangle Quilt Guild; and fellow quilter Auian Ward. One discussion led to another and the idea of holding a quilt exhibit at Rice was born.

This fall, more than 300 people visited the Rice Media Center to view the 49 quilts on display. They also

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Bringing Scholars Together

When the Center on Race, Religion and Urban Life (CORRUL) called a meeting in the fall for professors and graduate students interested in race issues, more than 30 people from seven departments showed up.

"Teaching and research on racial issues is happening at Rice, but in isolated pockets," said Michael Emerson, the Allyn and Gladys Cline Professor of Sociology and CORRUL director.

To bring together and support professors and graduate students whose work examines race issues, CORRUL has created a program called Race Scholars at Rice (RSR). "The purpose of the program is to create a body that nurtures an intellectual community of like-minded scholars," said Jenifer Bratter, assistant professor of sociology and assistant director of CORRUL, who came up with the idea.

Bratter said that after three years at Rice, she noticed that there was a need to have a central place for the discussion of race. "There is a critical mass of scholars at Rice whose core research subject is race," she said. In visiting other universities that have similar programs to RSR, Bratter said she saw how faculty and graduate

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PAGE 6: A new program at Rice University in which middle school and high school teachers spend a month doing nanotechnology research is motivating instructors to try new methods for teaching science.

A New Minor Addresses Poverty and Inequality

Thanks to a grant from the Bridgeway Charitable Foundation, the School of Humanities has established a new minor in Poverty, Justice and Human Capabilities (PJHC) to enrich students' understanding of poverty and inequality.

"Many concepts of poverty only focus on money and don't consider that money is just a means to an end," said Diana Strassmann, editor of the Journal of Feminist Economics and professor of the practice in humanities.

Housed in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (CSWGS), the poverty study minor emphasizes a "capabilities approach," which considers what people are able to do and be. For example, the program considers whether people live to old age and engage in economic and political activities, rather than strictly what they have or do not have. The program attempts to bridge the vast gap between our ideas about poverty

and the complex realities of hardship.

"The PJHC minor considers the whole multitude of impediments to human well-being, including discrimination, unequal access to health care and education, lack of political freedoms and a variety of other factors," said Strassmann, who also is director of the PJHC.

The program is similar to others at leading universities across the country and gives Rice undergraduates an important opportunity, as well as promotes Rice's commitment to cutting-edge fields and to the larger community.

The PJHC minor combines high-caliber undergraduate courses with internship experiences for students to work in the summer or study abroad with agencies that help disadvantaged communities. It also includes interdisciplinary courses taught by professors from many departments and is designed to supplement all majors.

Rice senior Julia Ager participated in an internship at the Texas Department of Child



LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE: Rice student Yordanos Gebretatios '09, an intern with the Children's Defense Fund, assists clients during the "100% Campaign" to help eligible students from the Houston Independent School District receive health coverage.

Protective Services (CPS). "Working at CPS has made many of today's racial inequalities tangible to me," she said. "This internship has showed me many of the battles that our society must still overcome to create equal opportunities for all." ■

—CASEY FLEMING

Managing Editor

Journal of Feminist Economics

Rice Employee Helps Others

Fluency has escaped Rice employee Vicki Schutter since she was a young child. Though she has suffered the emotional pain of being a stutterer, Schutter hasn't let her speech impediment stand in the way of supporting others like her.

Known for her quiet wit, warm smile and outgoing personality, Schutter was recognized by the National Stuttering Association (NSA) this summer for her many years of service to the stuttering community. A self-help organization and support network for people around the country, the NSA presented Schutter with her award at its 26th annual conference in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"The greatest experience I have had as a member of the NSA is being able to watch kids who stutter grow up with the kind of



VICKI SCHUTTER

support and confidence that I never had," said Schutter, a staff assistant in Rice's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Passionate about the cause, Schutter has been involved with the Houston chapter of the NSA since 1985. The local chapter provides information, advocacy and mutual support for people who stutter and their families. A few years ago, former Mayor Bill White, the city of Houston and Volunteer Houston recognized Schutter's efforts with a certificate of appreciation for her outstanding volunteer work.

"Vicki has been instrumental in shaping the Houston chapter of the NSA as we know it today," said Lee Reeves, former chairman and current board member of the NSA. "She campaigned for and hosted the first major annual conference outside of California, and her dedication was instrumental in guiding the board toward reinventing the Houston chapter."

Growing up stuttering was painful for Schutter. "It doesn't affect me now nearly as much as it used to because the more I accept myself, the easier other people seem to find it to accept me," she said. In 1978, Schutter was hit by a car while riding her bicycle. She suffered a brain stem injury, and when she

regained consciousness, she was perfectly fluent for the first time in her life. That lasted for about three or four weeks before the stuttering gradually came back.

"It's kind of like as my body healed from the accident, my stuttering healed also. I wasn't happy when we realized that the fluency was temporary. I felt really, really bad because I knew it hurt my parents," Schutter said.

"My parents always loved and supported me, but my stuttering baffled them, as it did most of the speech therapists we visited," she said.

Her father prayed every night that she be cured of stuttering. "He said that after the accident, he walked into the hospital room and saw me lying there on the table, all battered and bruised, and he said he realized stuttering is nothing. He told me that he never prayed that prayer again." ■

—MARILYN HOWARD JONES

Communications Director

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Using Business Skills to Help Change Education

Eldridge Gilbert, a school principal and current student in the Rice Education Entrepreneurship Program (REEP), is using his newly acquired managerial and communication skills to facilitate the opening of Yes College Preparatory School's newest campus in Houston.

REEP, part of the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business, combines business management with an innovative educational entrepreneurship curriculum. The inaugural class of students will graduate this spring and will possess not only these managerial skills and leadership abilities, but also the ability to change the educational system at their schools.

Gilbert's classmate, Paul Castro, has been the principal at Westside High School since 2005. He is incorporating management skills from his organizational behavior courses to gain schoolwide acceptance for new grading policies he has implemented at the high school.

Both Gilbert and Castro have gained crit-



EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS: (left) Paul Castro and (right) Eldridge Gilbert.

ical thinking skills while at REEP. By using the managerial principles taught at the Jones School, the REEP students have started to change the educational environment in the Houston area.

"They are true entrepreneurs with leadership skills, management abilities and team-building capabilities," said Andrea Hodge, REEP director.

REEP students come from a variety of school districts, such as Aldine ISD, Alief ISD, Houston ISD, Humble ISD, Klein ISD and Spring Branch ISD and from charter schools that include YES Prep and KIPP. For more information on REEP, please visit our Web site at reep.rice.edu. ■

—MELISSA BENNETT

REEP Interim Marketing and Communications
Manager

Dinner Dialogues Encourage Participants to Share Their Faiths

Discussing religion over dinner may violate one of the cardinal rules of Miss Manners, but for the Amazing Faiths Project (AFP), that's perfectly fine.

In 2007, the Boniuk Center for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance at Rice and Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston partnered to create the first Dinner Dialogues in Houston.

Former Maayor Bill White and a team of community interfaith leaders came up with the idea in 2006 after being inspired by the photography book by Roy Spence titled "The Amazing Faiths of Texas," which documents the growing diversity of religious expression throughout the Lone Star state. The team decided to gather people of all faiths and backgrounds to begin a conversation and learn about the role of faith and spirituality in their lives.

The highly structured discussion poses thought-provoking questions present in

almost every faith tradition and worldview. Dinner Dialogue participants sign up as guests, moderators or hosts. Guests participate in the dialogue by picking cards from a deck that contain such questions as, "When in your life have you felt the presence of God or the Divine the most?" or "Do you believe in an afterlife?"

The AFP staff selects and trains moderators to prevent interruptions and disruptions and to maintain an atmosphere of respect. Hosts provide a simple vegetarian meal that everyone can share and enjoy.

Groups are organized to achieve maximum religious diversity.

The dialogue adheres to the AFP guidelines in which people either speak in turn or listen. Oftentimes, participants forge deep connections and form new friendships. Many groups reconvene long after the initial dinner dialogues to continue the conversation and to get to know one another socially and personally. There has been an abundance of positive feedback from the participants, and

many of them expressed interest in participating again next year.

White summed up the experience by saying: "The dinner I attended was moving for all participants. We not only learned about the traditions and personal struggles of people from various faith traditions with spirituality and ethics, but there was also an intimacy and sense of 'being known' that occurs only when people share very personal things important to them in a safe environment."

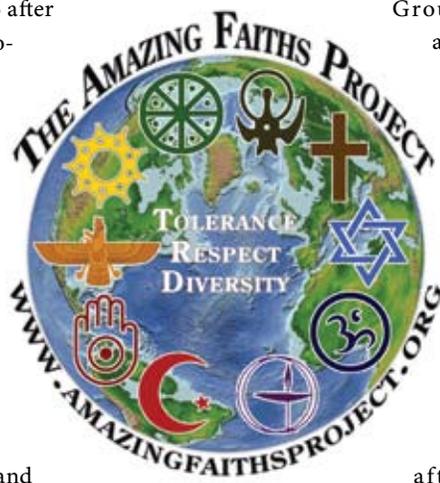
Through these exchanges, people of different faiths have built and strengthened community bonds, helping to create a barrier against hatred and intolerance.

The Dinner Dialogues are the cornerstone event of AFP, which continues with other activities and events throughout the year, such as faith tours, women's spiritual gatherings and a world religions lecture series given by Boniuk Center scholars. The Boniuk Center strives to understand and promote conditions that make peaceful coexistence possible locally, nationally and throughout the world.

For upcoming events, call 713-348-4536 or send e-mail to tolerance@rice.edu. ■

—VON NGUYEN

Special Projects Coordinator
The Boniuk Center for the Study and
Advancement of Religious Tolerance



The HIV/AIDS Crisis

Changing health behaviors may require more than scary statistics to motivate people to take action. To help aid in educating people about HIV/AIDS, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has developed Act Against AIDS, a five-year communication campaign to reduce HIV/AIDS incidences in the U.S.

In October, CDC campaign workers came to Rice, where they hosted a roundtable discussion, one of several being presented around the country, and spoke to local journalists and leaders of nonprofit organizations. These discussions are the first phase of the organization's national campaign.

Co-sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Community Relations, Public Affairs and the Houston Association of Black Journalists, the event was designed to discuss the incidences of HIV/AIDS within the African-American community and what

local media can do to assist in informing the public.

"Infectious disease is a hot topic for a number of years and then the media moves on to the next crisis," said Mary Benton, a reporter for KPRC-TV and president of the Houston Association of Black Journalists. "The CDC wanted to re-engage the news media to let people know that this problem is not going away."

"Every nine-and-a-half minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV," said Booker Daniels, health communications specialist at the CDC.

And the situation is even more grave for certain groups, he said, pointing out that although African-Americans comprise just 12 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 46 percent of the country's citizens living with HIV.

"While there is an increase in HIV in African-American women, it continues to affect African-American men, in particular, African-American gay and bisexual men,"

Daniels said. He added that the HIV crisis in the African-American community is the CDC's top prevention priority.

Locally, Houston has the seventh-highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the country. According to Marlene McNeese-Ward, bureau chief of HIV/STD and viral hepatitis prevention at the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, 16,393 people in the city are infected with the diseases. While African-Americans make up approximately 25 percent of Houston's population, they account for 56 percent of new HIV infections in the city.

Some students said the statistics showed the need for more campus discussion about AIDS. "Since Rice's black community is so small, we want to see what other schools are doing and implement that here," said senior Dorainne Levy, co-president of the Black Student Association. ■

—CINDY DINH

Rice Junior

Empowering the World Through Affordable Knowledge

If knowledge, as Plato believed, is power, Connexions is making it easy for generations of students to empower themselves and make a first-rate education affordable for all.

Over the last few years, Rice University's Connexions has grown into a worldwide leader in the open education movement by allowing authors, educators and learners to develop and share online customized learning materials. A new partnership between Connexions and the South Africa-based Siyavula project, a collaboration supported by the Shuttleworth Foundation, aims to make a full suite of learning materials available for all subjects and all grade levels at no cost. With several thousand new learning modules already available in the Connexions repository and many more on the way, Connexions and Siyavula are hard at

work creating a foundation for bringing free online textbooks and other educational materials to classrooms around the world.

Connexions is also seeking to ease the burden placed on community college students, many of whom find themselves unable to afford the rising costs of textbooks. Last summer, with support from the Maxfield Foundation, Connexions partnered with the Community College Consortium for Open Education Resources to add the textbook "Collaborative Statistics" to the Connexions repository.

By making this established, high-quality textbook available at no cost through the Creative Commons license, Connexions was able to save students money while giving instructors the flexibility and power to create their own versions of the material tailored to their unique needs.

Connexions is constantly looking for new opportunities to forge partnerships and work with community leaders, educators, learners and others with an interest in promoting affordable, high-quality education for students of all ages. Recently, the Connexions Consortium was established to bring together organizations and individuals interested in advancing open-source educational technology and open-access educational content.

Consortium members have the opportunity to collaborate with other open education leaders and stakeholders and take a hands-on role in the innovation that has made Connexions the standard-bearer for the open education movement.

To read more about what's going on at Connexions, please see our blog at <http://blog.cnx.org>. If you are interested in becoming an author or contributing to Connexions in some other way, feel free to contact us at cnx@cnx.org. ■

—JONATHAN EMMONS

Connexions

Community Development Specialist



Bringing the Community at Large to Rice

Part of the mission of Rice's Office of Multicultural Community Relations (MCR), Public Affairs is to engage the university with the Houston community and bring events to campus that address both local and international issues.

On Sept. 23, MCR, the University of Houston and the Houston Association of Hispanic Media Professionals organized a

mayoral debate at Rice. Roy Morales, Peter Brown, Gene Locke and Annise Parker participated in a lively discussion and responded to questions about issues that affect the Hispanic community.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, MCR teamed up with the Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition to present a panel discussion Sept. 24 titled "The Impact of Marriage Education on Hispanic Couples." The panelists included Rachel Kimbro from Rice University, Preston Dryer from Baylor



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RICE ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL
 Oct. 2 - 4, 2009
 Rice Media Center, Rice University
 Free Admission
ricecinema.rice.edu

Featuring Four Award-winning Chinese Films

- "The World" Oct. 2, 7 p.m.
- "Cape No. 7" Oct. 3, 7 p.m.
- Double Feature Oct. 4, 7 p.m.
 - "In Search of Lin Zhao's Soul"
 - "Though I Am Gone"

Sponsored by: Multicultural Community Relations, Public Affairs, Rice University, Asia Society Texas Center, Rice Asian Studies Undergraduate Program, and Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston

University and Laura Celis Black from the University of St. Thomas.

The third annual Asian Film Festival, held during the Mid-Autumn Celebration Oct. 2-4, was a resounding success. This year, the festival focused on four highly acclaimed Chinese films, including two powerful documentaries on the politics of violence and terror during the Cultural Revolution. More

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY: (1) Panelists Rachel Kimbro, Preston Dryer and Laura Celis Black discuss marriage education. (2) Four mayoral candidates debate issues important to Houstonians. (3) Professor Mikki Hebl (sitting on left) meets with Community Dialogue Luncheon participants. (4) Community members enjoying the Asian Film Festival reception.

than 350 people attended the festival and also enjoyed the reception on opening night.

MCR collaborated with the Rice Media Center, the Chao Center for Asian Studies, the Asia Society Texas Center, and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston to make the festival free and open to the public.

In addition to these events, MCR sponsors quarterly Community Dialogue Luncheons that serve as a forum for community leaders to discuss social issues that affect all sectors of society. At the Oct. 16 luncheon, Mikki Hebl, professor of psychology, presented "The New Face of Discrimination in the Workplace."

For more information on the MCR community outreach effort, please visit www.staff.rice.edu/staff/Home5.asp. ■

—LEXIE LAWRYNOVICZ

Staff Assistant
 Public Affairs

Teachers Learn New Ways of Teaching

A new program at Rice University in which middle school and high school teachers spend a month doing nanotechnology research is motivating instructors to try new methods for teaching science.

Participants in the summer program included teachers from Houston ISD, Klein ISD, Cy-Fair ISD and Fort Bend ISD, as well as a Colorado school district. Because nanotechnology is a highly interdisciplinary field, the teachers worked in a variety of departments on campus and met regularly to share their ideas about conducting classes.

One survey participant said, “The program opened my mind to new possibilities for my students and rejuvenated me.” Another responded: “The depth of understanding about nanotechnology and the inquiry and research perspective will both add to my ability to teach. It was exciting and intellectually stimulating to be in the research environment.”

The teachers’ research projects included



synthesizing organic and inorganic molecules and investigating the applications of these materials in medicine and the environment. For example, Grace Kwak, a teacher at the Cy-Fair Alternative Learning Center, and Barry Sieber, a Klein High School teacher, worked in the chemistry labs of professors Kenton Whitmire and Jim Tour to understand how reaction conditions changed the shape and size of nanomaterials.

These nanomaterials included metals

with unusual magnetic properties and nanocars — carbon-based molecules that look and move as if they have wheels. In Professor Vicki Colvin’s chemistry lab, Mallam Phillips from Hightower High School developed laboratory protocols for testing the use of nanoparticles as antimicrobial agents to use in his classroom.

Several teachers worked on single-walled carbon nanotubes (SWNTs), long, hollow molecules that have interesting optical, electrical and mechanical properties. SWNTs may have the potential to improve our ability to diagnose and treat diseases, increase the efficiency of electrical transmissions, and build stronger and more durable structures.

Michelle Dean, a Bellaire High School teacher, worked under the mentorship of Carrie Masiello from the Department of Earth Science to develop new methods to prepare BioChar, a charcoal-like substance that may help reduce carbon dioxide levels. Teachers also worked in the environmental engineering labs of professors Pedro Alvarez and Mason Tomson, where they investigated the use of magnetite, a very magnetic iron oxide, to clean contaminated water. Professors Zack Ball and Bog Hauge also worked with teachers to explore the synthesis and properties of SWNTs in their chemistry lab. ■

—JOHN S. HUTCHINSON

Chemistry Professor and

CAROLYN NICHOL

Associate Director for Education

Center for Biological and Environmental

Nanotechnology



FROM THE LAB TO THE CLASSROOM: (left) Terry Huckaby, an IPC teacher at Langham High School, working with Mason Tomson on a project to remove arsenic from drinking water using nanotechnology. (right) David Tetteh, a Furr High School biology teacher, working in Pedro Alvarez’s lab in the Department of Environmental Engineering.



RSR *Continued from Page 1*

students worked together with synergy and inspiration.

“This program will bring together scholars and expand our research and make our intellectual lives more enjoyable,” Bratter added.

The goals of RSR are to serve as a resource to the university community by providing lectures and opportunities for networking, serving as a resource and mentor for graduate students who investigate race-related issues and acting as a facilitator for interdisciplinary

collaborations. The RSR will also maintain a Web site to communicate the group’s activities.

Two events kicked off the RSR program. At the first, J. Kameron Carter, associate professor in theology and black church studies at Duke University, discussed “The Riddle of Religion: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Global Theological Condition.”

The second event was a panel discussion on “What Does It Mean to Study Race and Racial Inequality in the 21st Century?” On the panel, along with Bratter, were Regina

Branton, assistant professor of political science; Alex Byrd, associate professor of history; and Caroline Levander, Carlson Professor of Humanities and director of Rice’s Humanities Research Center.

For more information about the RSR, contact Garrett Dolan, executive director of CORRUL, at gdolan@rice.edu. ■

—DAVID D. MEDINA

Director

Multicultural Community Relations

A Visit to Rice Inspires Students

A dream came true for the hard-working fifth-graders from Burrus Elementary School when they earned a visit to Rice University this fall.

As a reward for passing all portions of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test the previous school year, the students from the exemplary school spent a day on campus, visited an array of sites and listened to inspirational talks about the need to attend college.

“The trip provided real-world mathematical concepts and vocabulary for the students,” said Joyce Thompson, a fifth-grade teacher, who, along with fellow teacher Charles Dorsey,

accompanied the students.

“Many of the students have been encouraged to attend college; however, having lessons like this on a college campus will inspire them to study harder in school and continue to be their best throughout their educational studies,” she added.

Anne Papakonstantinou, director of the Rice University School Mathematics Project (RUSMP) and Richard Parr, RUSMP’s associate director for curricular and instructional programs, conducted the tour. The mathematical concepts that the students explored began at Lovett Hall, where they discovered patterns, symmetry, concentric circles and geometric shapes.

Other highlights of the tour included visiting William Marsh Rice’s statue, enjoying the whispering niches of the Physics Building and admiring the decorative frieze cut into the marble at the entrance to Anderson Hall. Later they visited the “R” Room in Rice Stadium, where David Bailiff, head football coach; Jason Washington, assistant football coach; and two student-athletes stressed the importance of developing goals and setting standards to achieve dreams. ■

—CAROLYN L. WHITE

Associate Director of Elementary and Intermediate Programs
Rice University School Mathematics Program



ENCOURAGING WORDS: (left) David Bailiff, head football coach, speaks to Burrus Elementary students. (right) Burrus Elementary students listen to Jason Washington, assistant football coach, during their visit to Rice.

Quilting *Continued from Page 1*

attended one of three receptions or listened to a panel discussion on the significance of quilting in the African-American community.

In her research, Matthews examines how quilting in the African-American community is a form of artistic expression that is connected to religion.

“Historically, quilting has been a tool black women use to share their Christian values and tell their stories of survival and history, as well as provide a cost-effective way to keep their families warm,” said Matthews.

“This event united people who represented a spectrum of diversity, talents and beliefs all coming together for one common cause,” said Williams.

The quilting project is in line with the goal

FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER: Quilt created by Terry Scott, mother of Rice sophomore Tia Scott, in honor of her matriculation at Rice University.

of HERE’s founder, Anthony Pinn, the Agnes Arnold Cullen Professor of Humanities and professor of religious studies, to advance Rice’s relationship with the larger Houston community.

Matthews and the ladies of the Blue Triangle Quilt Guild provided an opportunity to make this connection. “We reached back to the past,” Matthews said, “and brought forth opportunities for the future.” ■

—JAN WEST

Assistant Director
Multicultural Community Relations





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AT LARGE



INSIDE THIS EDITION: A dream came true for the hardworking fifth-graders from Burrus Elementary School when they earned a visit to Rice University this fall.

David D. Medina, Director, Multicultural Community Relations, Office of Public Affairs

