



SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE EDUCATION CLUB COMPLETES SERVICE TO GASTON COUNTY, NC, SCHOOL

March 15, 2011

LATROBE, PA – Ten members of the Saint Vincent College Education Club and a recent alum traveled to Pleasant Ridge Elementary School in Gastonia, North Carolina during spring break March 12-13 to assist in beautifying the school grounds and painting a mural of the school's mascot on a wall in the cafeteria.

Pleasant Ridge was chosen since many families in the area are unemployed and facing poverty due to the region's loss of the furniture industry in recent years. Nearly 100% of children attending the school receive free or reduced school lunches. Gastonia is located eight hours from Latrobe near the South Carolina border.

The project was organized by Dr. Veronica I. Ent, Education Club advisor, associate professor and chair of the Education Department, with the assistance of a colleague from Winthrop University, Dr. Mark Dewalt, professor of education. Dr. Dewalt's scholarship and research focus is on schools in poverty areas and the needs of children in rural Appalachia. Dr. Ent asked her colleague to identify a school that would be most deserving of the club's service. Last November, the Education Club collected 11 boxes of school supplies for Pleasant Ridge that were given to the students just before Christmas.

Dr. Ent, an art graduate of Ohio University, drew the mural of the school's mascot prior to the arrival of Club members. When the College students arrived they were directed by Dr. Ent and Dr. Dewalt to divide their work between groundskeeping and the mural painting. Students began working at 8:30 a.m. and finished the mural at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Louise Lomick, principal of Pleasant Ridge, tearfully told the student volunteers, "this was the nicest thing anyone has ever done for our school. The newly planted flowers, greenery, mulching, and the mural will be held close to my heart everyday. My appreciation is just beyond words."

--Photo: *Students attending the service trip to rural North Carolina included, back row, left to right, Justin Merulli, a freshman elementary instruction major from Aliquippa; Chris Morrone, a senior math major from North Huntingdon; Aaron Frech, a sophomore elementary instruction major from Leechburg; Bethanie Kern, a junior graphic design major from Avella; Heidi Hellmuth, a junior English major from Walkersville, Maryland; and Natalie Larson, a sophomore elementary instruction major from Harrisburg. Seated, from left, are Rose Biller, a continuing education mathematics major from Mount Pleasant; Shelly Pruchnik, a senior chemistry major from Windber; Meghan Waterbury, a junior English major from York; Sarah Dillon, a senior English major from Bethel Park; and Club Advisor Dr. Veronica Ent.*