

# BC3's 2016 Involvement Fair boasts active turnout

November 1, 2016

(Butler, PA) When Glenn Jones isn't dousing burning buildings, he's sometimes called away from his parks and recreation classes at Butler County Community College to respond to carbon monoxide poisonings, automobile accidents, or natural gas leaks.

When Kristi Sipes isn't serving pizzas 25 hours a week, she's driving nearly 60 minutes each day to and from BC3's main campus in Butler, where she is a full-time chemistry and biology student.



When single mother Cheyanna Reynolds isn't tending to the needs of her 7-year-old daughter, she's working 20 hours a week as a nanny and pursuing 14 credits toward a degree in social work at BC3.

Yet for each, it's not enough. They want to do more - for others, their communities, themselves.

Jones and Sipes were among nearly 150 BC3 students, staff and faculty who attended BC3's 2016 Involvement Fair, where 29 campus clubs and organizations, and community groups, solicited new members and volunteers.

"This," said Sherri Osborne, BC3's Assistant Director of Student Activities, "is probably one of the best turnouts we've had... This year's (turnout) seemed more active."

For two hours, visitors examined brochures or pamphlets from any of the 19 tables arranged in horseshoe fashion inside Founders Hall, or the 10 stations at the center of the room, each covered in alternating blue or white cloths. Some visitors would go on to fill out registry forms.

There was a table for Student Government, manned by John Paul. Nearby, James Manning and his Student Veterans Association; lab technician John Chos and his Guitar Club; and Brenna Stubenbort and her Social Work Club.

There was Lisa Leonhard, of the United Way of Butler County; Deb Moran, of AmeriCorps; Chelsy Olsen, of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Butler; Sarah Sauers and Lacey Campbell, of Community Care Connections; Patsy Ann Johnson, of the American Association of University

Women; and Victoria Smouse, director of programs and community outreach at The Lighthouse Foundation, where Reynolds - the single mother from Butler - will begin volunteering four hours a week each Thursday at the food bank.

She'll help the needy gather their groceries. She'll bag their groceries. She'll help them select vegetables.

"It started out because of a (social work) class," Reynolds, a first-year student, said of her upcoming volunteer work at the Christian outreach organization in Butler that helps the needy in northern Allegheny and Butler counties.

"And then, because I talked to my friend about it and got involved in a church, I figured it was a good way to get our girls out there as well. Get them to understand helping others is a good thing to do."

Reynolds is among the latest BC3 students to aid The Lighthouse Foundation, and assist their impoverished neighbors, Smouse said.

Many BC3 students collected gifts for The Lighthouse Foundation's Toy Shop that will be held at Bakerstown United Methodist Church in Gibsonia on December 12. Roughly 650 children from 215 needy families received toys purchased through donations or collected by businesses, organizations and institutions, Smouse said.

Other BC3 students walked with families through the Toy Shop, aiding in selections or helping families to their vehicles after their toys were wrapped.

Volunteering at The Lighthouse Foundation, Smouse said, give BC3 students "a chance to become part of a greater picture."

That's what inspired Jones, a second-year student from Meridian, to speak with Smouse on Wednesday.

"I've seen their building before, advertising for food bank days," the volunteer firefighter said. "I think it is a great program."

He said he would like to become involved - if he can find the time. He spends three hours on Mondays at Butler Township's Station 3 firehouse, and more as a first-responder "depending on what happens in the community throughout the week. Some weeks there is nothing. Some weeks there are four or five in one day.

"But it's definitely important to help other people."

Like Jones and Sipes and Reynolds, students - and BC3 faculty and staff - often want to help others, Osborne said, but don't know how to start, "where to take that first step."

The Involvement Fair, Osborne said, "gets them engaged and involved on campus and outside of the classroom, out in the community. This brings it all to them. It's all in one place."

After talking with Leonhard, Brody Whited signed on with the United Way of Butler County.

“I’m really into volunteering,” said Whited, a first-year secondary education student from Karns City who is pursuing 17 credits and works 15 hours a week at a clothing store. “I try to be a caring person.”

Back at Karns City High School, she volunteered with Kids that Care to “help people in our community,” she said.

“If we can help others, it’s necessary,” Whited said. “I have it really good, so I would like to help others.”

As would Sipes, a first-year student from Zelenople who also signed on with the United Way of Butler County.

“I want to give back to the community a little bit,” she said. “The United Way keeps everyone together. Everyone should give a part of themselves to the community. Everyone needs help in certain ways.”

Up to 10 BC3 students showed an interest in volunteering with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Butler, said Olsen, the incoming director. Particularly in the after-school program at Emily Brittain Elementary or the middle school in the Butler Area School District.

“I think we have a few who will become bigs for our programs,” Olsen said. “They are very interested and very motivated to volunteer in the community.”

That type of character among BC3 students, Osborne said, “makes me happy. Volunteering is near and dear to my heart. It is not lost on students that they are getting valuable experience from volunteering. It can help them get jobs. They can put it on their resume. Employers look for things like that - what does this applicant do in his or her free time to learn? If they are going to help others, it means a lot.”

Among other groups and organizations at the Involvement Fair were End Alzheimer’s, the Grapevine Center, Glade Run Lutheran Services, Butler County Farm Tour, ANR/AWC, VOICE, Amedisys Inc., Next Gen Climate, the Butler County Democratic Committee, Athletics, Student Ambassadors, Work Study, Career Services, the Hospitality Club, Pioneer Players, Phi Theta Kappa, PTA Club and Armco Credit Union.

Many students who attended Involvement Fair entered a drawing for a chance to win Pioneer Café gift certificates. Winners were Sipes, \$50; Cory Haser, \$25; and Kavita Prajapat, \$10.

For more information, contact Osborne at [sherri.osborne@bc3.edu](mailto:sherri.osborne@bc3.edu) or 724-287-8711, ext. 8448.

*Photo Caption: Lisa Leonhard, executive assistant at the United Way of Butler County, enlists a Butler County Community College student volunteer on September 28 during Involvement Fair at Founders Hall on BC3’s main campus in Butler.*