Koinonia

Purpose Statement:
Koinonia exists to prepare students to be actively engaged Christ-followers who are knowledgeable about the many local and global issues facing our world, the possible solutions to these problems, and the opportunities they have to be actively involved in the solutions. This is accomplished by local outreach opportunities, social justice education programming, and summer missions.

Student Leadership Team:
Jenna Preskitt, Joseph (JoJo) Grissom, Tyler Henderson, Pat Goins, Aaron Alford, Leanna Tucker, Sue Turner, and Mandi Green.

Advisor:
Margaret Grady Turner

Active Members:

1st Semester Events:
Dream Center Trip, Campus & Community Clean-Up, Love by Laundry, Royston Block Party, Holiday Celebration at the Brown Convalescence Center, sock and underwear drive for the children of Royston’s government housing, and the Nashville homeless ministry trip over winter break.

2nd Semester Events:
Love by Laundry, Adopt-a-grandparent, gift bags for Heart Haven Domestic Violence Shelter, Northeast Georgia Animal Shelter service trip, Port St. Lucie domestic mission trip, iRespect Block party, Katrina Relief service trip to New Orleans, Costa Rica mission trip, and Tanzania mission trip.
Candace Dorsey

“In my opinion, Dream Center was one of those service projects that I will never forget. Going door to door to homes that housed people who were addicted to various drugs to people who believed that nothing will ever go great for them was hard to endure. We knocked on these peoples doors to welcome them with food and hope by giving them a flyer to the local church that was affiliated with Dream Center. If they didn’t answer our knock, we put food on their door handle and prayed over their door. While I was praying over one door, I suddenly felt an urge to pray for bondage and for God to release those bondages by speaking tangible things that I believe were the ones that enslaved this person. The door opened up and there stood a woman crying. She thanked us for praying over her door and for the food. She was telling us how church has hurt her even though she still wants to go for the fact that she knows she is lost and needs something new in her world. We started naming things that we could do for her but she only said yes when we said “would you like a hug.” When I embraced her cold, sweaty, and frail body, I started to pray for her and wept with her. This small gesture of hospitality ended up being a huge gesture of hope to give for her life. I believe that if we step out in faith and do the little things like this, we can make a huge impact for the kingdom.”
BUDDY BREAK

Ministering to children with special needs and their families is a priority for Royston Baptist church. They have partnered with Nathaniel’s Hope, a non-profit based out of Orlando, Florida, to put on programs such as CSP (Connections for Special Parents), Family Fun Day, and Buddy Break. All children with special needs are VIPs and “buddies” are friends for VIPs. This year several EC students have partnered with Royston Baptist to become “buddies” and help minister to these very dear children and their families.
“Working with families who have children with special needs has been such a privilege and eye-opening experience. I am able to relate due to the fact that I have a disability myself, and through the Buddy Break program I was able to share stories, emotions, and build great relationships this past year. Being with these families and children on a regular basis helps me to serve and withdraw from myself, but at the same time grow by learning from these children. The EC volunteers being there for these children with special needs means they have someone to look up to, someone to love and play with them, and nothing more than one-on-one time. I believe these are the most important benefits for the children having me and other EC students in their lives, and it is a blessing to serve them.”

-Rachel Gregory
Love By Laundry

October 23, 2010 & February 26, 2011

EC students team up to show love by doing laundry for those visiting the Laundromat.
“This semester Koinonia has been very successful so far, and I have truly been blessed through our service projects. The one that meant the most to me was when we did Love by Laundry. I came into this event expecting to be a blessing for a lot of people. Never did I think I would also be the one being blessed. There were on two accounts where people actually gave us money instead of us helping them, and I was just really amazed to see people show back an even greater love for us just because we made a decision to come out and help others. What probably changed my life the most from doing this was actually getting to talk to some of the people about their lives and where they came from. One lady we helped talked about how she was never really in church, and how her parents separated when she was young, and how she just had a really harsh life. But she went on to tell us how she was able to find the Lord through all this pain and how He has been able to change her life. It just reminded me how great our God is and that he is always there to pull us out of any mess that we get in. I really enjoyed this event and will definitely do it again even if I am not with Koinonia.”

-Arron Alford
Campus and Community Clean-Up  
September 29, 2010

“For the Community Clean-up, we set off to two restaurants in town: Burger King and Asian Wok. Walking in the doors I felt like a crazy person with cleaning supplies and gloves on my hands. The expression on the cashier’s face was priceless when I told her we were there to clean their bathrooms. She asked us why we were doing this and I knew that my words might not make sense to her. We were there to show that God cared about her and we wanted to do something that no one enjoys to make her day a little easier and lighter.”
“I’ll never know what God did that day through this service project and I’m ok with that. I have seen Him minister to people through the oddest conditions and cleaning bathrooms for a restaurant definitely is odd. It was also very humbling and enjoyable. It’s amazing how service projects bring people together, from a variety of backgrounds. So different, but we’re all called to reach out to one another and help those in need. Stories like these are amazing blessings from God. Koinonia has provided so many opportunities of service and they always open my eyes, my heart, and my understanding of God a little wider. Koinonia has shown me more of who my God is and more about my purpose in life. God’s love is overwhelming.”

-Jenna Preskitt
Block Party at the Royston Government Housing Complex

November 6, 2010

“I think the greatest thing about the block party was getting to connect with the people who live there. We as a society tend to classify one another and really highlight the differences in each other, whether that is skin color, socioeconomic status, cultural upbringing, etc... The block party gave everyone there, students and non-students, Caucasian and African-American and Latino, middle class and lower class, the opportunity to come together and connect with one another. In doing so we were able to really highlight where we are the same as human beings and be truly counter cultural as the Bible calls disciples of Christ to be.”

-Rick Turner, Resident Area Director
Adopt-a-Grandparent

Ministering to the elderly is a priority for Marytere Mateo, founder of the Adopt-a-grandparent program, and many other students at Emmanuel. Every semester EC students visit the John Brown Memorial Convalescent Center and spend time with the residents. They do everything from painting finger nails to singing Christmas carols to delivering hand-made Thanksgiving cards.
“I never realized the impact I could have on someone’s day before I went to the nursing home. It has changed how I want to spend my time. All these people want is to feel important and like someone cares about them. It is a great opportunity to share the love of Jesus.”

Jaclyn Klerk
Tyler Henderson and Jessica Wooten get ready to deliver stockings to the children living in the Government Housing Complex in Royston. Over 20 students got together to decorate the stockings as well as donate candy and toys to fill them.
AJ Castro and Matt Stanley get ready to deliver Christmas gifts to three at-risk children in the community. The residents of Wellons Hall collected needed items and toys for the boys.
Nashville Homeless Ministry
December 7-15, 2010

Emmanuel College partnered with Friendship World Outreach Pentecostal Holiness Church in Tennessee to minister to the homeless and poverty-stricken population of Nashville. Students wrapped and delivered gifts to underprivileged children, hosted cook-outs and set up tents for homeless individuals, and led prayer and worship services.
“The trip to Nashville was an amazing opportunity to personally show the love of Christ to people with physical and spiritual needs. I had the privilege of helping serve these people by providing meals, clothes, tents, worship services, prayers, and simply spending time with them. This experience ignited a passion inside of me to do whatever I can to meet the practical needs of the homeless and to just spend time talking with them, listening to their story, and sharing Christ with them. This trip helped me to view the homeless and needy people the way that God sees them and to always treat them with the love and respect that they deserve.”

-Victoria Garrett
Partnership with the Housing Authority’s After School Program

iRespect Mentoring for Girls ~ MOO Mentoring for Boys ~ The Arrow Tutoring Program

“This semester I had the wonderful opportunity of tutoring and mentoring children ages four to thirteen at the Royston Housing Authority. Tutoring the children has been great for me, but what I love even more is hearing about their lives and their goals and aspirations. It’s such a great honor to be able to encourage the next generation and to actually have a voice in their lives. When I first came to the center, I didn’t know that I would also be working with very little children, such as the four to five three-four year olds we have, but they have impacted me just as much as the older children. Especially one child whose name is Jacob. Because of all that Jacob has been through in his short four years, he doesn’t speak. The only time of happiness that takes place in Jacobs’s life is when he is at the community center. The sweetest thing in the world is when he gets to run around outside with all of the other children and for once he is not a statistic, he is not abused, he is just a little boy running around outside. The Royston Housing Authority Community Center is not just a building, but a safe haven for these marginalized children. I thought that I loved people before, but volunteering at the center has made me a much more compassionate and better person that I ever was before.”

-Mandi Green
“iRespect has been one of the most rewarding experiences! Every week is something new. The girls are learning how to love and respect people, as well as accept love for the first time. It’s so great to get to be part of that! I look forward to spending time with them every week. ”

-Jessica Wooten

“The best part about mentoring these kids is the kids themselves. I love being able to get to know everyone of them individually. It’s so incredible to me to see how different these kids can be at such an early age. The best part about it is the love that each one of these kids can show you. The first week I was there, one would have thought that these kids had known me for their whole life. That is so incredible to me. And the only reason these kids act this way toward me is because I give them my time. I love that by just showing these kids attention they return that attention with love. That is why I enjoy kids and enjoying this mentoring program.”

-Pat Goins
As the school year came to a close, students gathered to serve in variety of different ways. Some students made gift bags for Heart Haven, a domestic violence shelter. Other students traveled to Lavonia to volunteer at the Northeast Georgia animal shelter. Another group of students spent the afternoon at the Convalescence center in Royston. This service Saturday was the perfect way to wrap-up the Spring semester.
“I was so impressed with the number of students who volunteered for service Saturday in April. It was the week before final exams but students were still willing to spend their time helping others. I feel very blessed to be surrounded with such caring students.”
-Margaret Grady Turner, Koinonia sponsor, Associate Campus Pastor at EC
Spring Break Service Trip to Port St. Lucie, FL
April 30, 2011

Several EC students spent their spring break helping EC alumni with the start up of a new church. Students helped with a variety of projects including door to door ministry, sanctuary set up, and much more.
The two best parts of the Port Saint Lucie were the opportunity to get to know and serve with the students who went on the trip and the opportunity to serve alongside EC Alum’s who are starting a church. The trip gave me the opportunity to interact with some students with whom I have not had that opportunity. For some, this was their first mission trip. I liked we could make that connection with Kevin, Jim & Phil as they labor in the field. It’s important to show students that we are supportive of them and their ministry after they have left Emmanuel. I look forward to going back next year to see how the Well Community Church as progressed.

-Liz Gardner, EC staff member
“The team worked on a house which is owned by the mother of a local pastor, who rents it for her sole source of income. The house is over 100 years old. It is located right next to the Lower 9th Ward which got a lot of attention when the Katrina flooding was taking place. The trip was coordinated through the Disaster Relief Ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New Orleans. The team worked very hard, got along great, and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities to tour New Orleans, and of course, the French Quarter.”

Phil Cortese, trip leader, Director of Campus Life at EC
Costa Rica Mission Trip  
May 22-31, 2011

This mission trip was honestly one of the greatest experiences I have ever had. I think it had so much to do with our team. We all had the same attitude which was the following: We were there to do God’s work and most importantly absolutely no complaining. We all allowed God to use us in some way or fashion to get His work done for His children!

Being in Costa Rica was truly overwhelming. God definitely opened my eyes to the petty stuff we cry about over here in the states. It was just so amazing to see the amount of faith the people there had in God through the situation or position they were in! It didn’t matter if they were homeless or children at an orphanage, smiles were still on their faces.

I learned so much about myself, each person on our team, and the culture of Costa Rica. They are living PURA VIDA! I didn’t want to come back. If you feel like God wants you to go on a mission trip, forget about the money or whatever else usually scares you away and listen to Him. Have faith in Him then He will make it happen for you! That’s what I did and I have no regrets. I fully recommend mission trips! It will be a life changing experience. You won’t be the same when you return home.

-Ashley Jackson, EC Senior
In May 2011 a six-member, short-term mission team from Emmanuel College made a nineteen-day mission trip to Tanzania, Africa. The team participated in personal evangelism, construction work, ministry to orphans, worked with elementary school children, distributed school supplies, and distributed forty mosquito nets. Each team member had the opportunity to minister through their unique ministry gifts.
“This trip to Africa was an incredible experience that I will never forget. It was my first plane flight, the first time I have been away from my family, and my first mission trip. It was a lot to take in, but with God next to me every step of the way, I came through it understanding more about God’s love and my job to love all his children all over the world. It was extremely hard for me to see the children and the way poverty affected them. I was emotionally drained by the end of the trip. I come from such an amazing family, and it is hard for me to see people hurt. On this trip God developed a deep sense of compassion in my heart. I will never forget my trip to Tanzania! It will always be something for me to share with people.”

-Chelsey Williams
Every year since 2006, the institutions of higher learning with the most impressive commitment to community service are recognized by the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. This program recognizes institutions that significantly impact their communities and achieve measurable, social change. This year the application made it quite clear that the program was increasing their standards and criteria for earning a spot on the honor roll, as well as decreasing the number of institutions that they would be recognizing. There are over 80 accredited colleges and universities in the state of Georgia, and only 13 made the Honor Roll, including Emmanuel College, Franklin Springs. Emmanuel will continue to impact the surrounding local community through innovative service programs and make social justice and civic engagement a congenital part of the Emmanuel campus culture.