



Connecting Campus and Community

Connector

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Exploring Connections Appalachia, Berea College and Service

The Berea College commitment to the Appalachian region is an integral part of its history and its present-day mission. Service to the Appalachian region is one of the Great Commitments of Berea College, and developing “service-oriented leaders for Appalachia and beyond” is part of the College’s strategic plan. The students who work and volunteer through CELTS programs are leaders in keeping Berea College connected with Appalachia.

A focus on Appalachia is interwoven into service-learning and the student-led service programs at multiple levels: local, regional, national, and global. When serving in the town of Berea, students learn about and help to respond to challenges that affect our community as well as communities throughout the region, such as poverty and environmental degradation. Some of our local partners, such as Save the Children work throughout Appalachia. Some, like Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and the Kentucky Environmental Foundation, while focusing their work in Kentucky, address issues that are affecting the Appalachian region, as well as communities in other parts of our nation and world. When students serve with these agencies, they can gain a broader perspective on regional, national, and international approaches to community development and change.

Students also serve directly with partners located in different parts of the region, which offers insight into the challenges faced by specific communities. One of these communities is the Clearfork Community Institute, located in the Clearfork Valley, a two hour drive from Berea in northeastern Tennessee. By partnering with the Clearfork Community, students are able to learn from community leaders who have been working for decades to accomplish community change amidst the challenges of absentee land

ownership, extractive industries, limited employment opportunities, geographic isolation, and other challenges.

SFA Student Director Pat McGrady '07 reflected on a challenge that he observed during a recent visit to Clearfork, “My trip to Clearfork made me realize a huge dilemma in Appalachia: Appalachia is aging in place. The youth seem to be losing interest in staying, and small communities like Clearfork are trying to cure this phenomenon while trying to remain autonomous

in a world of increasing big business. It is those on the verge of retirement and beyond who seem to be most worried about this issue.”

Students have also been actively involved in responding to the changing demographics of the Appalachian region. Like the rest of the nation, Appalachia has been experiencing an increase in Spanish-speaking community members. Berea College students have started a student-led service/service-learning program called the Hispanic Outreach Project to respond to the needs of Spanish speakers in our

local community. The students involved in this program have also been making connections with leaders in the region who are responding to similar needs in their own communities. These regional connections help to strengthen the work we do here in our local community.

In order to further explore our Appalachian connections, a CELTS labor meeting this fall highlighted a panel of students who have CELTS labor positions and who are from Appalachia. SFA Student Director Pat McGrady, explained, “The labor meeting attempted to break down the stereotype of Appalachia being one culture. We invited Chad Berry, Director of Appalachian Center, and five students from various ethnic and geographic backgrounds in Appalachia.” The



Juana Diaz tutors a child in English as a second language at a Madison County school.

Service Learning in the Curriculum

The Schedule of Classes now includes a service-learning course designation! The Spring Term 2007 Schedule of Classes revealed the debut of the new designation for courses that meet the Active Learning Experience requirement, including service-learning courses. The ALE requirement is part of the new General Education core curriculum, and taking a service-learning course is one way that students can meet this requirement. For several years, students and faculty have been asking for a service-learning designation. The new designation will allow students to find service-learning courses that they want to take and will help them better plan their schedules. Geri Guy, '08 is one of the students who is pleased with the new designation: "I think it's a great thing because I enjoy taking service-learning classes, and now I know when it's a service-learning class that I'm signing up for." This new designation is a great step forward in service-learning at Berea College.

Ashley Cochrane, Service-Learning Coordinator

Three-Year Service Learning Grant Ends

September 30 marked the end of the three-year Learn and Serve America (LSA) Consortium Grant, which has funded much of the Berea College service-learning programming since October 2003. The programs that have been made possible by this grant have enriched the quality and quantity of service-learning at Berea College. The numbers paint a picture of a vibrant and growing service-learning program.

Feedback from those participating in service-learning programs supported by the LSA grant reveals a community excited

The following service-learning activities occurred between October 2003 and September 2006 and were facilitated by the LSA grant:

- 84 service-learning courses and projects in 21 disciplines
- 30 faculty completed the Faculty Fellowship in Service-Learning seminar
- 9 service-learning workshops for faculty, community partners, and students
- 32 Service-Learning Mini-Grants awarded

about the impact of service-learning on student learning and community change:

"It's the difference between learning and growing. With regular classes, you learn, but with service-learning classes, you can *grow*."

Paul Shaw, '08

"The spring 2006 service-learning seminar ... gave me the conceptual foundation for creating my own service learning course ... and supplied me with the academic tools to make my course a success and a positive learning experience for my students."

Dwayne Mack, Assistant Professor of History

"I am very fortunate to be working with CELTS, a great resource ... on the cutting edge of service-learning, ... which addresses the needs of our students and community."

*Jerry Workman, Volunteer Coordinator,
Berea Community Food Bank*

Exploring Connections CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

panel included Oliver Bugariski, '07 (Shelbyville, Tennessee), Debra Bulluck, '09, (Huntsville, Alabama), Jose Gonzales, '08 (Keyser, West Virginia), Lindsey Walker, '09 (Hiwassee, Georgia), and Maranda White, '07 (Buckhannon, West Virginia). These students represented the diversity of Appalachia, coming from urban communities, small towns, and rural unincorporated communities. Some of the students moved to Appalachia as teenagers, and some of their families have lived in Appalachia for generations. Each of the students described their home community and identified some of their community's strengths and challenges. Chad Berry facilitated the conversation, encouraging students to notice the diversity of the region, as well as similarities that exist among the communities represented.

Debra Bulluck, '09, reflected, "Being on the panel was really exciting because I was able to speak proudly and honestly about my community and the positive growth that is occurring in parts of Appalachia. I probably represented one of the largest communities in the Appalachian region and ... I see that being an Appalachian comes in many 'shapes and sizes.'"

Maranda White, '07, noticed contrasts between her own experiences of Appalachia and those of others: "I liked hearing the diversity that was within our staff and in the Appalachian region ... I was amazed at hearing how different my experience growing up in West Virginia was from Debra's growing up in Alabama. I learned a lot about other areas that I would not normally consider to be in the Appalachian region."

Oliver Bugariski, '07, originally from Macedonia, realized how he contributes to the diversity of Appalachia, "Appalachia

has many faces. As immigration is changing today's world, it's changing Appalachia as well. It was at the panel that I realized that I am one of those faces that is changing Appalachia. But Appalachia is also changing me as well in its own way."

A basic principle of service-learning is that each person involved is a teacher and a learner. As we continue to partner with Appalachian communities and community organizations, it is important to recognize that learning and service go in both directions. We can learn much from community leaders who generously share their time, experiences, knowledge and skills. As students, faculty, staff and community partners work alongside each other to address the needs of a diverse and dynamic region, we share traditional Appalachian values of hospitality, innovation, resourcefulness and the struggle for justice.

*Ashley Cochrane,
Service-Learning Coordinator*

Opportunities to Know and Serve the Appalachian Region

Berea College's strategic planning document, "Being and Becoming," acknowledges that "to know and to serve Appalachia is a reciprocal benefit to the College and to the region." We in the Appalachian Center couldn't agree more, and we're all fortunate to be neighbors with CELTS. Staff in both CELTS and the Appalachian Center have agreed to work even more closely in the coming years to provide additional opportunities to know and to serve the Appalachian region.

One of the ways we in the Appalachian Center plan to realize such opportunities is by continuing to enhance our engagement with students. I want to describe through three students' perspectives how they're discovering their Appalachian connection, how the College is helping, and the kinds of activity in which they're presently engaged as well as the kind they envision for the future.

Second-year student Harold Burdette says "I actually didn't realize that I was from Appalachia until ... we read this book called *Storming Heaven* by Denise Giardina that was about the coal wars, and one day in class we had a discussion about where Appalachia was located and what was considered to be Appalachian. When I was in high school," he continued, "they never really made a big deal about being located in Appalachia, so I never gave it much thought," even though Harold grew up in the hills of Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

For third-year student Cathy "Kit" Cottrell, the "discovery" was in some ways similar to Harold's, and just as transformative. She discovered her Appalachian connection "quite suddenly and recently, even though I was born Appalachian and this is my home state." Her life as a young person was difficult: "I dropped out of school in the 8th grade and due to circumstances ended up on the streets trying to survive. I never felt a 'home' connection to anywhere, and I always felt a deep sense of not belonging." Berea College changed that, Kit says. "My first notion of attaching myself to a region or a culture was when I arrived here, and I discovered that I did have roots and that I had had them all along, and those roots were sunk deep into Appalachia. Now, I feel rooted like an oak, and no matter what will become of me, I will never lose that sense of home I have found here."

Louisville-born Beth Bissmeyer began her exploration of Appalachia in high school, when she enrolled in a photography

class. A film about the photography of Shelby Lee Adams "lit a spark" in her mind, "but I didn't pay attention to it again until my first semester at Berea." Reflecting back on her interest in Appalachia, she explains, "I think, like many people, I was intrigued by Appalachia because of its portrayal as 'the other.' It's an area that seems to have been misunderstood and misrepresented for years upon years. I think I was just curious as to what the *real* story was about the region."

We're working to help provide students opportunities to know and serve the region as well as clarify their identity and vocation. Working in CELTS, for example, has led Harold to value service-learning. He recalls how a Bonner scholar service trip to Wheeling last year helped clinch his decision to major in Appalachian

Studies. "I just want to go out into the region and do some good," he says, "to help some people. That's my main goal."

Kit, too, is vowing to serve the region by helping others to know it. "My ultimate goal is to write and do photography," she explains, "and my subject is and always will be Appalachia. So many people," she adds, "have so many stories to tell, and the region is full of color, vitality, and people who deserve to have their voices heard. I hope to help make them more audible." Already, her

photographs of mountaintop removal sites and her work with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) are addressing her goal.

Beth is an English Education major and an Appalachian Studies minor who is "seriously exploring working for Teach for America after graduation," a program that places teachers in rural and urban settings to teach for a two-year stint. "I'd like to teach somewhere in Appalachia and work closely with those in the community, not just students," she explains. Until then, she plans to take a more active role in the local KFTC chapter and "begin discussing how to get more students involved with issues concerning the region."

By intentionally offering students ways to know and serve the region, we engage them on a calling that can benefit the people and the region for many years to come. Such work indeed is a reciprocal benefit to many.

And so it goes.

Dr. Chad Berry, Director, Appalachian Center



Cathy "Kit" Cottrell, Harold Burdette and Beth Bissmeyer.

ALUMNI NEWS

Melissa McDonald, '02, is in Denmark on an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship from the European Union. The European Union provides funding for scholarships to non-European students who have received their Bachelors to pursue a Masters degree in Europe to promote an intercultural exchange of ideas. The program is typically one to two years long and consists of studying at two or more universities. She is currently studying a European Masters in Lifelong Learning at the Danish University of Education and then will move on the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain. If you are interested in contacting Melissa you can email her at mcdonald.melissaa@gmail.com.

Sarah Beth Watson, '05, is currently working as the Assistant to the Registrar at East-West University in downtown Chicago. She plans on attending graduate school this coming fall to obtain her teaching certificate.

William Gyude Moore, '06, is working for Bread for the World in New York City. He is working with Bread for the World's *One Campaign* as their Faith Outreach Organizer. He will work to build a better informed U.S. constituency, particularly among the faith community, around issues of global poverty, hunger and health.

Jeff Hurt, '05, will be spending another year in Austria. He has been accepted at a local university (Karl-Franzens universitaet Graz) where he will be working on a Masters in English-Spanish-German translation and/or interpretation. He also has a job working with teenagers as a language assistant.

United through Chemistry

Berea College's Dr. Mark Cunningham, high school teacher Lori McCay, and Berea College student Jessica Fagan worked together this fall to initiate a service learning CELTS grant project between the Berea College Chemistry Department and the Berea Community High School Chemistry Program. Through their collaboration, funds were provided to purchase needed educational supplies for the local high school science program.

Ms. McCay's advanced placement chemistry students took a field trip to the Berea College chemistry laboratories this past November, where they worked with Dr. Cunningham's Organic Chemistry II students to complete an experiment they otherwise could not perform. Students also learned about laboratory safety and advanced instrument analysis. The department has also begun to donate supplies to the high school. In the spring, the high school students plan to return to perform another laboratory with Dr. Anes Kovacevic.

Students from Appalachia and similar rural communities are currently a minority in the chemistry field. Many students choose not to major in chemistry because of the difficulties they experience once they reach the college level. These difficulties usually relate to the lack of funding in science programs, directly affecting the preparation they receive in the high school setting. The collaboration's goal is to improve the participation in chemistry by students from Madison County, while locally strengthening the involvement of Berea College in the community.

Jessica Fagen, '07



Carl Williams, Ms. McCay, Daniel Crump and Berea sophomore Anthony Reynolds working together.

Program Spotlight:

Berea Reads and Berea Counts

Do you remember learning to read or to add and subtract? If these skills were easy for you to master, you may not remember much about the process; but if you struggled to gain these skills, you may have many unhappy memories. For the past ten summers, Students for Appalachia (SFA)—with the assistance of the Labor Program and Education Studies—has offered a free tutoring program for local children in reading and math. For eight weeks during June and July, children in the primary grades are matched with a reading tutor and/or math tutor and receive three hours of one-on-one instruction each week.

Preparation for the summer program begins in March when local teachers are contacted for referrals to the program. Once names are received, information and an application is sent to each parent. If parents wish to register their children, they return the necessary paperwork. Berea College students—often elementary education majors or child and family studies majors—are hired as tutors. During the 2006 summer, forty children received tutoring in each subject. Special funds are available to Berea College through the federal America Reads and America Counts programs, a part of Work Study funding. For the past two summers, SFA has been able to offer transportation services, as well.

The one-on-one teaching situation is very beneficial for children struggling to learn to read or to master math skills. Each tutoring session is tailored to the needs of the particular child and professional reading and math consultants work with the tutoring staff. As the children become comfortable with their tutors, a strong bond grows that also helps make the summer a success.

For the Berea College students who gain practical teaching skills, the experience is very valuable. Reading tutor Alexis Rush commented: "The students I had this summer challenged me to apply what I have been learning about children for the past four years as an Elementary Education major, as well as defining the teacher I one day want to be. This experience provided me with social challenges, methodological practice as well as use of creative teaching approaches. Working in this program this summer has allowed me to see my own strengths and weaknesses, as a teacher."

Betty Hibler, Associate Director of CELTS

Community Partner Spotlight: Kentuckians for the Commonwealth

It's been a very busy fall for Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC), not only with the usual business of registering and informing voters for Election Day, but also in planning for the upcoming legislative session this spring. We have plenty to do to prepare for the 2007 General Session of the legislature in Frankfort and more hard workers and bright minds are always a welcome sight.

Here is a quick look at some of most important issues:

- We have a sponsor for a bill that will raise the minimum wage to \$6.50 per hour from \$5.15 per hour (where it has been stuck for a decade now). This is among the most important of our initiatives, especially since after the recent election, 28 states now have minimum wages over the federal minimum.
- The Stream Saver Bill, designed to enforce already standing laws prohibiting the dumping of mine wastes into nearby valleys and streams, polluting communities and causing flooding.
- A bill restoring voting rights to former felons who have completed their sentences, as opposed to requiring each to request their rights back from the governor.
- Defending against an anticipated bill attempting to outlaw any community from putting extra protections in place for themselves from industrial air pollution (aimed at limits on the pollution in Rubbertown). The bill was closely defeated last year and the sponsoring senator has already promised to bring it back for this session.

The Kentucky General Assembly will be meeting for most of February and March during the next semester. Each of the above-mentioned bills, as well as all other matters of legislation, will be considered during this time. KFTC will be lobbying for the length of the Regular Session and all are invited to attend whenever they can. Lobbying can be among the most important and insightful experiences for any civically-engaged citizen and is surely among the best ways to get to know those who are supposed to be representing you. Whether you are a permanent Kentucky resident or just here for school, the policies of our legislature affect you and you have the right to influence them. All who come will be given a short training and assistance while attending, so first-time lobbyists are encouraged!

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Berea College students who traveled to Louisville for the Urban Witness Tour earlier in the semester. Beth Coleman, Martin Claar, Daniel Wright, Brandie Wagers, and Rebecca Cleary attended our weekend event in the Rubbertown section of Louisville to learn about and to take action against the uncontrolled pollution affecting the people of its communities *right now*. Participants learned about the synthetic rubber and other chemical manufacturers, including such giants as DuPont and Rohm and Haas, and their legacy of unhampered emission of chemicals into the air that has made the city of Louisville the most polluted in the southeastern United States, with higher cancer, respiratory-related death, and childhood asthma than much of the nation. Community members also shared their stories of illness, frustration, and at times death that have impacted them over the years. Afterwards, everyone took to the streets, informing and involving residents and registering voters. *Kenneth Johnson, '08*

Students Inspire Others to work on Hunger and Homelessness

Every year, CELTS sponsors students to attend the COOL conference, in the hopes that our students will be inspired to try new things or create new projects here on Berea College's campus. In the case of JoEllen Pederson, '07, Jose Gonzales, '08, and Patrick McGrady, '07, this is exactly what they did. After attending a session on Hunger and Homelessness at the 2005 COOL Conference in Philadelphia, these students decided to start a Hunger and Homelessness week here at Berea College. This fall marks the second Hunger and Homelessness Week these students have coordinated and both have been very successful at raising awareness of issues dealing with hunger and homelessness on our campus. Events this year included: an Oxfam Hunger Banquet, candle light vigil, panel discussion with local hunger and homelessness experts, a fundraiser for Bereans United for Rent and Utilities Relief and a movie, which highlighted world poverty issues. JoEllen Pederson, a senior from Swoope, VA, wanted to create Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week because, "of the tendency for college students to be seen as apathetic towards poverty issues." She went on to explain that the goal of Berea College's Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week is, "to increase awareness of world poverty issues on Berea College's campus."

However, these students are not just giving back to Berea College's campus. At the 2006 COOL conference, they presented

a workshop that explained how other campus could start a Hunger and Homelessness Week of their own. Jose Gonzales, a senior from Keyser, West Virginia, felt that a workshop at COOL would "motivate and inspire others to make changes within their own communities." Patrick McGrady, a senior from Beckley, West Virginia, added, "The COOL conference was a great place to share my own experiences working on hunger and homelessness issues. I was able to use my sociological imagination to connect my work on this issue with my studies."

As these three seniors have inspired people from both Berea College and other campuses, we hope that they have also inspired you to do something about hunger issues in your area. For ways to help, visit the following websites: www.bread.org, www.oxfam.org, or www.one.org.

Heather McNew Schill, '99, Bonner Scholars Coordinator



JoEllen, José and Patrick relax in the sunshine.

An International

Two Months in South Africa

This summer I spent two months in South Africa volunteering with Student Travel and Exposure to South Africa. This non-profit organization recruits volunteers from all over the world and places them in different locations in Africa. I was amazed to see so many people from all over the world volunteering; it gave me the courage to go out and give it my all.

For the first month, I was positioned in Capetown, along with two others, in St. George's Orphanage for Girls. There were about 40 girls there who ranged from 2 to 20 years old. It was horrific to know that most of them were abused and abandoned.

We planned numerous activities for the girls and planned for them at weekly staff meetings. The girls were so excited by our activities. It was a delight to see the excitement in their eyes. I connected with them so well, I thought of them as my

own sisters. It saddened me to see the girls and wonder how anyone could just abandon a child that was so full of life and compassion. The girls taught me a great deal and made me appreciate life and all the simple things that I take for granted. I wrapped up my month in Capetown volunteering at a children's hospital.

I next went to Johannesburg. While there, I volunteered at a primary school and a high school. It was amazing that almost all of the classes had at least 40 students in a room and only one teacher. Most of the kids had no chairs and had to share textbooks. The government of South Africa does not give money to the schools so school fees must be paid once a month. Many of the kids came from extremely poor families and I wondered how they ate if the money went to school fees. The children had major dreams and goals but had the

doubt in their minds that they would ever accomplish them because they were poor. Hearing such things dismayed me because if they can dream, they can achieve anything.

My trip to South Africa was a trip of a lifetime. It was both sobering and encouraging. Sober to see how these people live, the townships, poverty, crime and diseases. However, it was encouraging because I realized that this is the calling I have been waiting for and I can make a difference. It encouraged me to become a missionary.

Throughout the trip I learned more than I expected and I believe I have grown to appreciate the blessings in my life. You think you know everything there is to know about life, but one can never know unless you leave your comfort zone. The experience I had broadened my perspective about the world. *Dallyda Tatchi, '09*

My Summer in Turkmenistan

I did my second summer of service in Turkmenistan again. I focused my efforts on educational opportunities for high school students.

The general education system in Turkmenistan is strong; however students are not exposed to additional interactive activities outside of the classroom as students in America are. For that reason, I came up with an idea to create an opportunity for teenagers to widen their outlook and learn new things not only through textbooks, but through participation and involvement in different clubs and programs. Some of my service included free English conversation classes open to the community and a summer day camp for high school graduates, which was focused on Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Going back to the same organization I worked for before attending Berea College helped me to compare and see how much I have grown and how much I have learned through a year as a



Participants in the summer day camp.

Bonner scholar and as a student.

The most challenging project that I had to work on was a day camp for teenagers. I did most of the planning and training myself, but I was not given a chance to apply some of the knowledge that I have acquired to make my service easier. Instead of taking a leadership role, I had to assist the staff, which I did not have a problem with. However, it did make me dependent on them; I could not make certain decisions on my own. Instead, I approached it as a way to learn how to be more

flexible and tolerant. There were times when I thought I would have to face a conflict, but going back to Bonner Trainings and remembering issues that we discussed within the working group helped me to avoid it.

During my time in Turkmenistan, I was able to experience a lot and could clearly feel how much I have changed, personally and professionally. It was really helpful to go back and see at what level I am standing now. I am ready for a new academic year.

Bahar Nuriyeva, '09

Summer of Service

Mission: Mazahua, Mexico

Editor's Note: A group of ten Bonner Scholars traveled to rural Mexico to volunteer at Mazahua Mission. Below are reflections from three of them.

I have always wanted to go to another country and experience another culture firsthand. I also have always felt connected to rural areas simply because I was raised in a rural area. I was a little hesitant about going to a country where I didn't speak the language, however. I was a little afraid of how I might be treated.

I took Spanish classes in my first two years of high school and I tried to refresh my skills before I left. I thought I was doing a really good job. I thought this right up until I arrived in Mexico.

My Spanish skills were not good at all. But the people of Mexico didn't care. They took special care when speaking with me. They would help me pronounce a word over and over until I got it right. They did all of this with a smile.

Slowly, my Spanish began to improve and so did my friendships. One of the people I became the closest to was a retired nurse who volunteered at the Mission named Esther. We began to view Esther as our mother. We called her Mama Esther and she called us her sons and daughters. Esther wanted to learn to speak English and I wanted to learn to speak better Spanish.

Esther taught me many things. She helped us navigate the subway system in Mexico City. She taught me how to make plum jam. She would sit and talk with me for long periods of time. Every now and then, we would get stuck on some word, but we always managed to work through it and continue our conversation. She also made an amazing tea that healed me when I was sick. I will always remember Esther and what a truly amazing person she is. I feel that just by meeting her and spending time with her my life was enriched.

—Lindsey Walker, '09



Zach Francis teaches English to Mazahua students as part of his Summer of Service.

There is only one thing that you have that can be of value to the people of Mexico. It just so happens that it is the most important thing in the world. It is education. Education is the most important commodity in the market of life. It is a tool that can allow people to help themselves. It will allow Mexicans to fix Mexico. English is power, especially in Mexico. If you have it, you go far; if you don't, you plow the fields and ride the donkey... I hope all of you realize soon the chance that you have to make a difference in this country.

—Alex Gibson, '08

Although I was appointed to teach in a handful of select villages and towns throughout the predominately Mazahua-populated, rural area, I realized that I was the one being provided with an education. I was taught dedication after witnessing perfect attendance from the children of San Antonio Mextepec, who arrived for class each day on time (and sometimes earlier). I recall learning how to trust and laugh with children in

Dolores. For those older children in our class who were not as attentive or well-mannered, they still showed a yearning for our conversation and acknowledgement and gave us opportunities to test and teach us patience. In the small town of Plateros, I learned a great amount about giving, culture, family, and doing more than what is asked of you.

—Zachary Francis, '08

Staff Spotlight: Sheila Lyons

In this issue of *The Connector*, we would like to introduce you to Sheila Lyons, the CELTS Administrative Assistant. In her job, she does a little bit of everything. She likes to say that she works “behind the scenes...doing the clerical work and little extras” that make everyone “feel at home.” Sheila is probably the most familiar face of CELTS to the students, because she’s the one in the office to answer their questions and help them out, always with a smile.

Sheila says that the students “remind me of myself.” She graduated from Berea College in 1987, with a B.S. in Nutrition. She describes her childhood in Bowling Green, Kentucky, as fairly sheltered; coming to Berea was her first time away from home. She thinks that Berea “brought me out of my shell,” as well as helped her develop a strong work ethic.

In 1989, Sheila returned to Berea to work in Alumni Relations, and in 1991, she came over to Students for Appalachia (CELTS was not established until 2000). Her favorite part of the job is working with students. She also enjoys sharing some of the



traditional “homecraft” that is so important to her. Sheila has been particularly involved in the SFA Day Camp, where she has taught crafts to children, from the littlest 4 and 5 year-olds to the teens.

The beautiful quilts that Sheila made with the help of the older children can be seen brightening the CELTS walls. Anyone who has attended an event at CELTS knows that Sheila is an amazing baker and cook. Over the years, she has won several prizes at the College employee picnic, including a First Prize for her “Decadent Carrot Cake.”

Sheila and her family live on a farm in Lincoln County. She is married to Rick Lyons, and they have two children Samantha, 17, and Evan 10, and 2 dogs, 2 cats, 9 chickens, and lots of cows. The family grows and sells produce at the Berea Farmers’ Markets; Sheila appreciates the opportunity to share wholesome food with the community. She feels that her farming, along with her gardening, baking, and quilting, are ways that she helps to keep the “arts of the home” alive.

Dr. Meta Mendel-Reyes, Director, CELTS



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