International Studies Internship Fall 2011
Intern: Drew De Los Santos

Organization: Baptist Child Family Services (BCFS)
   International Children’s Services
Supervisor: Lupe Fernandez, Community Support Coordinator

The goals and objectives of the BCFS International Children’s Services are: to house, clothe, feed, educate, and prepare for entrance into and success in American culture illegal immigrants, specifically boys from ages 12-17, while they go through the process of obtaining a visa to stay in the United States. The boys come from several different countries, including but not limited to, Mexico, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, China, and India. There is also a juvenile girls’ home on the property.

My main duties as an intern include, but are not limited to, organizing volunteer groups to visit the shelter, updating volunteers through the use of the Google group, organizing holiday events, organizing visits to sporting events, music events or other appropriate cultural events on Trinity’s campus or in the San Antonio area, organizing cultural enrichment presentations, and helping the Community Support Coordinator (Lupe) with professional letters, formulating ideas/possibilities, and whatever he asks, within reason. It is the responsibility of the intern to maintain communication with Lupe, and keep up with various events as they happen, otherwise there may be miscommunication concerning what the shelter has available for use or what exactly will happen when the event takes place. As well, some things are time sensitive and it is the responsibility of the intern to remind Lupe of this and that they themselves also be aware of time sensitive events.

There is a lot of promise within the shelter and Lupe is really looking to expand what is available to the boys and how involved the San Antonio community is with the shelter. Slowly but surely, the Trinity community is helping with this. The main problem concerning Trinity is the lack of volunteers going to the shelter, especially Spanish speaking volunteers. I would suggest to the intern(s) to make connections at the beginning of the semester, or right before, in order to secure place in the calendars of large groups (Alpha Phi Omega, various fraternities/possibly sororities, Delta Sigma Pi, business fraternity, Latino Exchange, International Students Association, and/or any other possibly interested parties). Perhaps looking into TUVAC week of volunteering or Sigma GIVE day, whatever is the Spring equivalent to either. As well, there is opportunity for musicians to get involved at the shelter, artists, math tutors, computer enthusiasts, any sports team whether collegiate or intramural, so perhaps using contacts or resources in those areas would be a good idea. I would also suggest putting an ad in Lee Roy. Another outreach tactic could be an article in the Trinitonian. Any outreach should emphasize need, possibility for diverse volunteers, and encourage Spanish speakers to come.
One of the goals not achieved over the Fall semester is a soccer tournament held at Trinity University. If started soon enough, this could happen in the Spring semester, and so I recommend it as the first thing the next intern take on. The idea here was to have a tournament between shelters around the San Antonio, Central Texas or Texas area, based on possibility. I would suggest shelters around central Texas for the first tournament. Things to consider here: possibility/probability of ability to have tournament at Trinity, snacks, drinks (water or Gatorade), small trophies or prizes (MVP, Most Sportsmanly Conduct, etc.), soccer players/volunteers as referees and to help run the tournament. The next intern’s main concern of these would be reserving the fields and organizing volunteers. Another goal not achieved, simply due to funding problems, is a cooking demonstration/lesson. Inessa Stepanenko is the contact to the chefs for this activity. Her email: istepane@trinity.edu, her cell number: I am not sure if this can happen next semester, but because the contact exists, I would suggest the next intern see if this is still a possibility.

Two goals achieved were a Dia de los Muertos celebration, and connection and scheduling with Say Sí, an art program focused on community outreach. I implore the next intern to help Lupe maintain relations with Say Sí. As well, look into celebrating holidays from various countries represented within the shelter, or atleast look into doing culture days or something to make the boys feel more at home.

Two possible goals for the shelter include a community garden and some outreach events concerning the juvenile girls’ home. To achieve a community garden, grants are available for application. As someone who is still interested in volunteering and working with the shelter, though not as an official intern, I lend my services to this task, as it is something I am heavily interested in making happen. One thing I noticed was a lack of diverse activities for the boys, including activities outside. Though they are allowed to play sports outside, I believe a constructive outside activity such as a community garden would be an indispensable experience to them, one both enjoyable and educational as well as rewarding. Concerning the girls’ home, perhaps women leaders from campus as speakers, or sororities to volunteer there. Another idea is college-prep, trade school, and career advice.

In conclusion, there is a lot to be done at the shelter, but this leaves room for creativity and ingenuity, which I suggest the next intern take advantage of.