AmeriCorps hosts lockout

By Lacey Korevec
Features Editor

The world outside of campus cannot always be explained to students through reading a textbook. Last Friday evening, Nov. 14, an event called Lockout: A Night Without a Home set out to teach students about the realities of being homeless and how a single person can make a difference.

The event was co-organized by AmeriCorps VISTA Allegra Grant and head of the lockout committee junior Melissa Borotto.

“I wanted to have a serious setting but I also wanted people to have fun while learning,” said Borotto. “That’s why we had food and activities for people to do. I feel like once people know what the issues are it’s a lot harder to turn your face away and ignore them.”

Students and local food suppliers donated the food that was provided for those who attended the event. Whatever was not eaten was donated to organizations in the area to feed the hungry, according to Borotto.

“We were given at least 500 pounds of food,” she said. “Because of what we did, people were able to eat for a couple days. That’s kind of a big deal.”

The Lockout, which included a panel discussion on homelessness, a blanket making session and a candlelight vigil, probably had the most successful turn out of all the Hunger And Homelessness Awareness events, said Borotto.

“I think that for the first year it was a good starting place and next year I hope to have a lot more people come out,” she said. “I would really like to have seen the faculty and the Greeks get involved because I feel like they could have contributed to it also.”

Junior Stacey Noah said she went to the lockout to get community service hours for an organization that she is involved in but wound up being moved by it.

“I wanted to do something good,” she said. “It really has helped me understand more about how the homeless live and what they go through.”

Making blankets and playing a game about managing limited funds were two of the events on the night’s agenda. According to Noah, the game helped students understand how hard it was for homeless people to live.

“I really liked making the blankets because it’s just something that is needed,” she said. “Warmth is needed.”

Part of the event was linked to the idea of getting a feel for what it’s like being homeless. Senior Adam Reader attended the event to show his support, but said that he sees that idea as somewhat insulting.

“Poverty isn’t something that I want to experience. Most of the people on the street don’t want to be there and to think that somebody’s doing it voluntarily is insulting,” he said.

“When you see a homeless person on the street, it’s not just a homeless person. It’s a man or a woman or a child.”

While he felt that the event had good intentions, Reader said that he did not think it was as effective as it could have been because a large amount of the attendees were already “well informed.”

“It’s an uphill battle to build a base of attendees because people are afraid to address the issue and they’re afraid to be involved because it would require some element of responsibility,” he said. “They think if they don’t know about it they don’t have to worry about it.”

The discussion panel featured some students from Rutgers and The College of New Jersey as guest speakers and Reader said that more experienced speakers would have made the evening more affective.

“So many people working in the social service community are often embittered toward politicians and more specifically republicans in general,” said Reader. “That communicated itself really well through the panel and I think most of the political opinions that were expressed were biased.”

After overcoming homelessness herself, Sharon Woods, a Home Front volunteer, attended the event as a guest speaker.

“[Students] are our future,” she said. “If they educate themselves about it now maybe they can be the ones to change something.”

While trying to raise three young children, Woods said that she spent a total of 10 months without a home on two separate occasions.

“It was hard but if you are determined you can overcome it,” she said. “My children are now successful in society. They have very good jobs and two of them have their own homes.”

Taking part in the event was important to Woods because her input may be able to help somebody else that is in a similar situation, she said.

“I hope that they see that it is a little more educated about homelessness and recognize that its not just people trying to get a hand out,” she said. “I hope that when they hear of homelessness they will help with the solution.”

“Thank God for organizations like Home Front and soup kitchens. But they can’t do it all themselves.”

Join Rider News Call x5256 or come to Wednesday meetings at 6 p.m. in Ceremonial House.  Free pizza!

The Sky is Falling

A female student issued a complaint when a tree limb had fallen on her car in the Kroner Lot. Security responded on Saturday, Nov. 15, at 7:17 a.m., although the time of the accident is still to be determined. The tree itself was not located on university property, but the branches that were hanging over were. Damage to the car occurred on the fender and hood. The tree was located in a backyard on West Long Drive, the street that runs adjacent to the Kroner Lot.

Computer Theft

A computer was reported stolen on Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 10:03 a.m. A male faculty member complained that a central processing unit totaling $1,500 was stolen. The member provided serial and identity information. There were no reported witnesses and the investigation is continuing. Anyone with any information should call Security at x. 5029.

NASCAR comes to Rider

An automobile accident occurred on Wednesday, Nov. 19, at 1:04 p.m. on Library Drive. A car that was leaving Fine Arts had stopped at the crosswalk to let out a passenger before heading down the Campus Mall past Daly’s.

A male driver in the car behind her didn’t wait and decided to pass on the left. Another female driver, coming from the opposite direction in front of the library, saw the male driver.

In his attempt to pass, he cut off the female driver. The female driver slammed on her brakes and veered, striking a female graduate student.

Security cracked down on the male driver, and despite him not hitting anyone, he was blamed for the accident. He was charged with careless driving and lost his driving privileges on campus for 30 days.

Information provided by director of Safety & Security, Vickie Warren

Kelvin Oliver helps make a blanket to be delivered on the Midnight Run event in New York City.

Junior Melissa Borotto speaks to the group in attendance at the AmeriCorp sponsored A Night Without A Home, a workshop designed to teach people about the realities of being homeless.