

## **Connect & Commit – June 2010**

The 2009-2010 school year was a huge success for Connect & Commit. Nearly 600 students, teachers and parents participated in service-learning activities both in the classroom and through the Connect & Commit club. Together the students, teachers and parents of Winchester High School have completed more than 3,000 hours of service through the Connect & Commit club. With over 45 projects including fundraisers, one-time service opportunities, and curriculum-based service-learning, the Winchester community has been more involved in service than ever before. This year saw the birth of some fantastic new projects including a cross-age tutoring program between high school Spanish students and fourth graders at Muraco Elementary School. Together they read the book *How Tia Lola Came to Visit/Stay* and the Spanish students helped fourth graders with the pronunciation of Spanish words they identified in the book. The students involved in the Connect & Commit club planned the first ever Hoops for Haiti basketball tournament to benefit earthquake relief efforts. Together with the annual Desserts for Doctors fundraiser, students raised more than \$10,000 for Oxfam America and Partners in Health.

Many of Connect & Commit's signature events also continued to be a success this year including two Blood Drives which collected more than 40 pints of Blood, the Thanksgiving-away Drive which collected goods from clothing to food and bikes all donated to more than ten local charities, Desserts for Doctors, a delicious dessert auction which raised nearly \$1300 for Partners in Health, and finally Youth Service Day. Collaborating with the Winchester Youth Center, the students put together more than a dozen cleanup and painting projects all over Winchester which brought together about 200 students from McCall and Winchester High School in a day of service to their community.

Both in the classroom and after school in the Connect & Commit club, students have been active and engaged in learning about topics like poverty, the environment, and global health and have taken action to find solutions to these problems through service, fundraisers and generating awareness among their peers. It has been a privilege to work with such passionate students and teachers and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together in the 2010-2011 school year.

In Service,

Kristen Ritchie  
Program Director