



Report to Allegheny Conference 2016

Students live on \$2 a day to better understand poverty

Facing high winds, hail storms and pounding rain, several Bluffton University students slept outside and under makeshift tents as part of the Two Dollar Challenge, April 4-8. The challenge is a global, grassroots movement in which participants limit their daily income to \$2 a day in order to get a glimpse into the complex economic lives of those in poverty.

"One of the main goals of this event is learning how to evaluate and rethink how we actually deal with poverty," said Blake Hershberger '18, an international peace, conflict and justice studies major from Canton, Ohio.

Students slept under tarp and pallet shelters they built on top of Shoker Science Center while still taking part in classes during the day. Each evening, the participants organized discussions based on provided readings about economics and poverty.

"It wasn't as easy as I thought it was going to be," said Donny Beachy '16, a business administration major from Sugarcreek, Ohio. "It was pretty difficult because of the conditions we had, but that made the challenge more realistic."

The Two Dollar Challenge started in 2006 at the University of Mary Washington when a professor gave his economics students a challenge to live on \$2 a day for a week. The movement spread. This year's event focused on being a sidekick rather than a hero. That idea resonated with Hershberger.

"We learned about how we should think and listen before we actually do something to try and help," said Hershberger. "We should not always be a leader but more of a sidekick. We need to work hand in hand with people in need if we really want to try to help."

The goal of the challenge is to develop new and radical ways of dealing with a problem. By asking a person to live on \$2 a day, the Two Dollar Challenge pushes people outside of their comfort zones in an effort to reevaluate global poverty and society's role in its end.

It also challenged some of the misconceptions surrounding poverty.

"I think the thing that I learned the most was that you really can't assume what homeless people need," said Mackenzie Butler '17, a food and nutrition major from Norwich, Ohio. "A lot of people, including our friends, would offer food, which was against the challenge, but we really needed blankets, gloves and chapstick. I wouldn't have thought about giving those things to someone who is really in this situation."

By the end of the week, about 20 students participated in the challenge on various levels, and three students are using the

challenge as experiential learning for an economic development class research paper including Beachy.

"I learned there's not just one fix to everything," said Beachy. "We have lots of different problems. We also have lots of different ways to fix them. We sometimes think that just giving money is the way to best fix things. That's not necessarily the case."



May Day Coronation

Bluffton University's annual May Day ceremony took place on Saturday, May 7, and included the traditions of the crowning of a king and queen and the Maypole dance by first-year students.

Filling the roles of king and queen this year were seniors **Samuel Stucky** of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Alicia Rodriguez of Phoenix, Ariz.

Stucky majored in mathematics and music. His parents are Max and Lynda Stucky.

Rodriguez majored in food and nutrition with a concentration in dietetics. She is the daughter of Albert Rodriguez and Jane Yoder Rodriguez '81.

Thank you, Allegheny Conference!

Samuel Stucky recently graduated from Bluffton University. He attends Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

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