Home Away From Home
By Kenisha Mwangase ’20

I had been excited about the Bucknell host family program ever since I had heard about it from other students who had already been engaged in the program. My excitement was finally fulfilled at the 2016 Host family event. Before the event took place, I was anxious and I was worried about whether or not I had made the right decision to join the program but all my doubts disappeared once I got to the event. After being at the event for a few minutes, I had identified my host family and I had already started to see why many upper class students had spoken so highly of the program. At the event, my host family and I participated in various fun activities together. First, we decorated frisbees on a paint splatter wheel and then we painted wall decorations in our desired styles, while we waited for the paint on our frisbees to dry out. There were many other cool activities that made the atmosphere welcoming and joyful. However, my favorite part of the event was seeing many different flags set up all around the room. This made me feel at home even though I was far away from home because seeing my flag made me realize that my host family, as well as other host families, were not only accepting me into their families but also that they were accepting my culture, my beliefs and my practices. This made me feel at home in that room even though I was with people I had just met, because for me, as a global citizen, home means being comfortable enough to express myself with all the characteristics that define my personality as well as my culture. The Bucknell host family program has only fulfilled my expectations and more thus far and I recommend this program to more international students like myself. The program is a good opportunity to get involved in the Lewisburg community as well as learn more about the American culture.

*More photos from the event on page 5
Solidarity 2016: Business as Usual

By Jackson Pierce ’18

This year’s Solidarity March was an amazing experience for all involved.

As we moved in swaths across the quad, down the hill, and into the Hufnagle Park amphitheater, I felt blessed to be a member of such a unified community. So many talented poets, musicians, and dancers. A welcoming audience. The offices and organizations who bring the whole March together work tirelessly, and they deserve to be proud of what they create. It’s impossible to leave an event like that feeling anything less than electrified.

However, when all is said and done, it is but a flash in the pan. The March is a cotton candy illusion of unity, a 90-minute block in which we can all feel like we’re doing something to help the cause. For some people, that’s enough. Perhaps the rest of us need to check our expectations.

In conversations with my roommates, we compare events like Solidarity to brief sparks in the back of a cave. They are bright and beautiful, they are essential, but with no fuel to feed on, they quickly fade and leave us in the dark. Bucknell needs a fire.

Forgive my cynicism. I’ve seen the last three solidarity ceremonies, and they do improve every year. Attendance has increased, and the performances are consistently breath-taking. Over time I’ve also seen the campus take baby steps towards inclusion, with the growth of programs such as Common Ground and Community Dinners. Personally, I feel more comfortable than I did as a first year.

But we must never confuse winning the battle with winning the war. Until the entirety of humanity learns respect, empathy, and compassion for one another, that fight rages on. On campus, we can hardly make it through a single year without at least one major display of hate, let alone thousands of micro aggressions. It will take a lot more than a few rallies to actually change our culture of ignorance. Once the post-Solidarity glow dies, the conversations stop. The subtle hate, the fear, it all comes back with a vengeance.

True change requires commitment. You don’t spend 90 minutes in a gym and become Arnold Schwarzenegger. You wouldn’t meditate for an hour and call yourself a monk. Solidarity is no different. It’s a lifestyle, one that takes constant practice and awareness. That’s a tall order for young undergraduates who already have a lot on their plates.

It’s so easy to be silent. Sometimes we’re too scared, or tired, or just plain busy. Sometimes we don’t feel like we know enough, or that it’s not our job to argue and educate. And that’s okay. This is something bigger than us. And that’s not a reason to give up, it’s just something to be mindful of.

In our struggle we grow strong. In those moments where you think to yourself “I should have said something,” you become braver. You become closer to finding the courage to speak up. Please continue to seek that courage long after this year’s march. And next year’s too.
Common Ground 2016

By Sam Jacobson ’17, Facilitator

Common Ground 2016, always a delight. Being secluded at Cowan to intentionally get to know fellow students’ stories is an opportunity that sadly too many of the wider Bucknell community misses out on.

Each year Common Ground is different. It is constructed from the stories and perspectives that folks bring to the table; new people every year means new stories and new opportunities for learning. By nature, Common Ground encourages self-exploration in a group of people who are looking to share in the labors and fruits of that exploration.

This year’s director staff (Anushikha Sharma, Sharon On, and Kendra Spruill) worked diligently to give real ownership of the retreat to the facilitators. In past years, traditional activities have dominated, and, out of a fear of messing with the CG magic, activities have not been changed/updated. This year the directors de-constructed the entire retreat and worked with facilitators to build the retreat again from the ground up. One example of a reconstructed activity, the race and gender iceberg, allowed CG 2016 to delve in detail into the differences between race/ethnicity and gender and then how those identities interact and inform each other. This intersectional terrain is one way to continue to challenge participants and facilitators, and engage everyone throughout the retreat.

This year’s facilitator group was hands down incredible. Ariana Fisher, Ashley Lutjen Sandonato, Sha-Asia Taylor, Brittany Caceres, Erin Clark, Laur Hudson, Laura Poulton, Max Fathauer, Matt Alexander, Morgan Muller, Subarno Turja, and Tamara Hijazi combined to create something that can’t be replicated. Some joke about CG magic, it infects campus in the hours, days, weeks following the ‘end’ of the retreat. That magic is created by the facilitator staff, and nurtured by the CG family.

From one white-heterosexual-cis-able-bodied-upper-class-man to the wider campus community, CG 2016 ruled.

This fall break, I was enlightened with the beauty Common Ground has to offer to the humans that attend. In simple terms, we immersed ourselves in important matters including race, gender, sexuality, class, ability status and the intersectionality of it all—learning to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. However, words can never truly capture the power that it has on its participants.

Throughout Common Ground I couldn’t help but feel there was magic in the air. People voluntarily exposed themselves with the trust that their vulnerability and stories would be embraced in the most sacred ways possible—to be learned from by their peers to create a healthier environment once returned back to campus.

By Sam Lauriola ’19, Participant
Celebrate Difference: National Coming Out Day

As a celebration for National Coming Out Day, Bucknell students, faculty and staff participated in a photo shoot, organized by the office of LGBTQ resources on campus. All the participants were dressed in their “Celebrate Difference” shirts to show their support for the issues surrounding the LGBTQ community.

Common Ground Continued...

Although many students come out of the retreat claiming to have been unaware of the unwelcoming and sometimes hostile atmosphere of the campus for marginalized groups prior to Common Ground, I was already exposed to certain social ills that plague Bucknell. Because of this, I had been searching for a safe—yet brave—space, a community of people who care about the same issues I do and who care about making change with the hopes of dismantling injustice.

Unlike any other, the retreat provided me and my fellow CG participants with this desired community and even better, a family of diverse perspectives and an unspeakable richness that enables us to continuously reach one Common Ground.
Bridging Worlds: What Does It Mean To Be an International Bucknellian?

By Nigesh Prajapati ’18

Bucknell Community dinners were developed in response to student and staff interest in having meaningful “dialogues across difference” on campus. Community dinners provide the opportunity to take time to have real conversations about issues of diversity. Students, faculty and staff come together to learn, teach, and listen to each other. These dinners give a chance for everyone to get to know each other through open conversations, to explore understandings of the world, and to broaden their perspectives. This shared experience can help develop a truly inclusive campus community.

This month’s community dinner was themed “Bridging Worlds: What Does It Mean To Be an International Bucknellian?”. It emerged from the Conversation Partners program, which the Writing Center began last fall with grant support from the Hillsdale Foundation.

During the dinner, one of the main topics of discussion was how Bucknell students can develop a deep understanding of different cultures and diverse perspectives. The discussion proceeded into a brainstorming session. One of the ideas was to initiate an institutional change on campus by making these types of conversations a requirement within each department. In order to achieve this, Bucknell needs to provide more institutional support in the form of safe spaces to talk about these issues, curriculum and faculty support, so that the students learn to value international and diverse experiences on campus.

The dinner ended with the hope that the conversation that night can lead to deeper understanding for all students, both international and domestic, building bridges to future learning as well.

Snaps from Home Away from Home

Photo Credit: Julia Friedman
Upcoming IEA Events

UnHerd Series: Race and Identity Beyond the Color Line
Come join Dr. Charmaine Wijeyesinghe to reflect on your own experience of race and how it intersects with your other identities.
Part 1: November 8, 7-9 pm
Part 2: November 9, 6:30-9 pm
Walls Lounge, ELC
*FYIS Credit Eligible

Gender in Today’s Economy
By Alyssa Schneebaum (’06)
This lecture will discuss, broadly, the relevance of gender in economic relations, processes, and outcomes.
November 7, 7 pm
ELC Forum

International Student Panel.
Strategies for the Internship Search
November 7, ELC Center Room, 5 p.m.
RSVP to the International Student Services office at
http://goo.gl/forms/k8534OyGpcoGAt043

Community

Dinner Exploring Spiritual Identities: How Can People’s Faith Identities Fit in at a Secular University?
November 15, ELC Walls Lounge, 5 p.m.

UnHerd Series: Race and Identity Beyond the Color Line
Come join Dr. Charmaine Wijeyesinghe to reflect on your own experience of race and how it intersects with your other identities.
Part 1: November 8, 7-9 pm
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Bill McCoy (LGBTQ Resources)
Rosalie Rodriguez (MSS)
John Colatch (Religious life)
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Ariana Stuhl (ISS Grad Assistant)
Marthe Beauvais (MSS Assistant)

Editors: Chanda Singoyi, Nigesh Prajapati

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