

MACKLIN BUSINESS INSTITUTE

Montgomery College Humanities Building, Suite 208
 51 Mannakee St. • Rockville, MD 20850
 Phone: 240-567-1707

www.macklin.org • e-mail: mbi@montgomerycollege.edu

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Macklin Scholars Discuss Service Projects with High School Students

While most college students were dreaming of turkey dinner and a respite from classes on Thanksgiving eve, three Macklin Business Institute (MBI) students were delivering a first-period presentation to the freshmen class at Springbrook High School in Silver Spring. Sophomores Ksenia Prokunina and Crystal Quinones, and freshman Philip Royer, used the opportunity to talk about how the Macklin program is helping those in need. Joining the MBI students were representatives from the Manna Food Center and Shepherd's Table who highlighted volunteer opportunities and how their organizations help the less fortunate in Montgomery County.

This year, the MBI students at Montgomery College made a commitment to the "Walk in My Shoes Global Project." The project's mission, started by Malcolm Cameron when he was a senior at The School Without Walls in Washington D.C., is to provide new and gently used shoes to children living in developing countries. Malcolm started by asking for shoe donations at his high school. By the time he graduated in the spring of 2007, the donations expanded to his family, neighbors and organizations. Cameron is now a student at Temple University and has handed over the responsibilities of Walk in My Shoes to his mother, Barbara Cameron. "I thought that this project was a great

opportunity to show the students ways in which they can help the international community through the Walk in My Shoes Global Project," Prokunina said. "Young people often want to help their communities but sometimes don't know how or where to begin. Giving them a starting point, such as collecting shoes empowers them in the sense that it provides a launching point for their community activism."

During the presentation, a few Springbrook students were called to the stage, asked to take off their shoes and walk in a bin filled with tiny rocks. The demonstration was designed to imitate what it feels like to walk without shoes. The children who need shoes most do not walk in a three-foot plastic bin, they walk miles and miles each day. The MBI students expounded, telling their audience that children whose feet are exposed to soil are more susceptible to the hookworm parasite that enters the host through the bare foot. Once it enters the body it works its way to the organs via the bloodstream. Royer is responsible for creating the Web site and told the audience about the many ways to contribute to a cause such as the Walk in My Shoes Global Project.

"Different people with different skills can play a part in making a project happen," Royer said. "People with skills like photography, programming,

music, writing, and art can all play a part in making a project like Walk in My Shoes come together and be a success."

Each Montgomery County high school student must complete 75 service hours in order to graduate. Springbrook High School began collecting shoes for the project on December 2. Quinones and Prokunina have contacted other schools to join their project.

Macklin Scholars Discuss Their Volunteer Service and Aspirations

Paola Castillo, an MBI freshman, volunteers at her church, St. Rose of Lima in Gaithersburg, and works on projects with Montgomery College's Office of Student Life.

"I actually plan to major in non-profit business management and I'm already on the path to doing something for the community," Castillo said. "Of course, profit-management salaries tend to be greater than non-profit at the professional level, but I feel like my conscience should feel fulfilled more than my want for money."



Macklin Business Institute sophomore, Crystal Quinones, addresses a crowd of Springbrook High School freshmen. She is joined on the stage by Macklin students Ksenia Prokunina and Philip Royer.

Seda Kojoyan, a sophomore in the Macklin program, said the service trips she's taken with Montgomery College's Service Learning Program have been very rewarding.

"Our recent spring break trip to Philadelphia focused on community development," Kojoyan said.

A native of Armenia, Kojoyan spent the Thanksgiving weekend with the service Learning Program again, this time on a trip geared at battling hunger and homelessness in Montgomery County. Kojoyan sees community and national development for developing countries in her professional future while taking time out to volunteer with organizations helping women and children.