

VISIONS

OF

RESISTANCE



The Matrix

Dear Readers,

We know sometimes talking about social justice can get exhausting. Recognizing all of the injustices in the world can be downright depressing, especially when you feel like there's nothing you can do to stop them. That's why we decided to focus on "resistance" in this issue. We wanted to give hope and show that there is always something you can do to combat social injustices. Inspiration for our theme came from Shelby's experience in Ecuador with her host mother (pictured right). You can find her story on page 3.

Resistance doesn't necessarily mean you have to chain yourself to a tree or stage a nationwide protest; it can be as simple as participating in a photoshoot that recognizes the beauty of every individual. You can resist big bad things like patriarchy or racism in your daily lives, just by refusing to accept the stereotypes and attitudes that these institutions promote. While we recognize that these individual actions might not change the world, we believe that the only way to accomplish change is to take a stand.

We encourage you to find inspiration from the pieces within this issue and to find ways to actively resist social injustices in your community. If you have any comments or concerns about anything you read in the following pages, please let us know! We want to know your opinion of this issue, so please feel free to send us an email.

Kelsey and Shelby
matrix@plu.edu



In Remembrance

I'd like to take a moment to dedicate this issue to Patricia Wilson, or as I knew her, Mrs. Wilson. Sadly, Mrs. Wilson's battle with cancer ended this past September. This truly amazing high school teacher was the first person who taught me the meaning of the term "social justice." Moreover, the compassion and care she expressed on a daily basis was a shining example of how to live up to one's principles. Though we may not have always agreed on the right solutions to social problems, Mrs. Wilson inspired me to make the quest for social justice an integral part of my life, and without her I would surely not be co-editor of this publication today. Her presence in the Tri-Cities Prep community will be sincerely missed. Rest in peace, Mrs. Wilson.

Your Co-Editor,
Kelsey Martin

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University Printing
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The Character of Resistance

Shelby Adsero, Political Science & Global Studies [Hispanic Studies Minor] '12

I woke in an unfamiliar place, remembering after a moment, that this place was my new home for the next month. I could hear voices on the other side of the sliding glass door that belonged to my bedroom. I got out of bed slowly, still feeling exhausted with jet lag, but excited for the day ahead. I dressed quickly and proceeded to the kitchen where breakfast had already been placed on the table. My host mom, whom I had only met about 8 hours ago upon arriving in Quito, Ecuador, introduced me to my host father and host brothers. My host family lived in a beautiful two story, three bedroom, three bathroom home with a small front yard.

After breakfast we loaded up the back of a 4-wheel drive Toyota with several boxes of clothes, shoes, toys, blankets, dishes, and other miscellaneous stuff. Then, we piled into the Toyota and headed for the rural mountain communities of Ecuador. Up in the mountains there were no paved roads, only dirt paths. We passed people on horses and motorcycles and rarely saw another vehicle. Randomly throughout our trip we would come upon a little settlement, sometimes with a school, usually with a small store of some type, and with a cluster of homes spread apart from each other. The homes were square buildings made of brick, usually with an empty space where a window pane should be. These were homes without electricity or running water. I noticed clothing hanging up on lines to dry and women hand washing their laundry in a bucket. Most of the homes were surrounded by a few main crops. This faraway place was drastically different from the home of my host family in the city.

As we drove through the rural countryside, we stopped everywhere we saw people and gave away the stuff we had loaded in the back. My host parents made my little host brothers help by giving away their toys to other children. My host mom explained to me that it was important for my host brothers to learn the importance of treating oth-

ers with kindness. This experience was my first introduction to Ecuador and its poverty, but also my first introduction to the kindness and resistance that comprised the personality of my host mother.

It did not take long for me to learn that the social structure in Ecuador was very different from what I'm used to. During our orientation, the staff of our language school told us we shouldn't speak to the maids in our homes like we speak to the rest of our family because it is considered offensive to our families. Maids were considered "below" the family they worked for. One student even shared with us that his host father would make fun of the maid while she was in the same room. At my home in Ecuador, however, the maid was part of the family. My host mother treated her the same way she treated me. Our maid talked with us, ate lunch with us, and joked with us. There was no separation or distinction of status. My host mom had great respect for our maid and treated her as an equal.

...Continued on page 20



Missing the Point

Molly Swanson, *Psychology '13*

The accounts of physical violence against women in the book, *Pimps, Up, Ho's Down*, by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting frighten and confuse me. The book explains the world of hip hop music and why it has such a strong allure to all people despite the often violent themes. The lyrics of so many hip hop songs are perverse and cause me to flinch upon hearing them. Truly pornographic in nature, these words are spoken or sung out boldly. The words do not dictate what is happening but what could. Not all rappers are running around raping and sexually abusing little girls, but the words they are speaking spread ideas about what should be the normal interaction between a man and a woman.

It would be easy to just believe only ideas are spread, but there are actual accounts of violence. Women are sexually abused and gang raped while their shame is video-taped for later display. In this way, the aggressive words of hip hop lyrics become real actions. One horrifying example is of the gang raping and sexual abuse of rapper Mystikal's hairdresser. She stole from him and he chose to punish her by violently humiliating and overpowering her.

It would seem that this issue of physical violence is confined to one race and one color of skin. But as author T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting points out, "Hip hop is not a culture of violence. American culture, however, thrives on aggression. Violence, when deemed necessary, is seen as a viable alternative, one that has been sanctioned, institutionalized, and unilaterally practiced in the United States..." (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007, p. 75). African American men are not the only people committing these crimes. White men are just as guilty.

The race of a person committing a crime is important. The color of the perpetrator's skin changes the amount of media coverage, the intensity of hatred against that person and the way in which the story is painted. An illustrative example of this is comparing the alleged molestation of little boys by Michael Jackson to the seemingly constant alleged molestation of little boys by Catholic priests. White people can appeal to the legislative system and the police force when violence is committed against them or by them. While black people can do this as well, often times, they are painted as the "poster boy" of violent crime. American society is run by the white patriarchal system and if black men want to excel in that world, they have to fight for their success, making a big name for themselves by earning more money than anyone else. Despite winning success, "...they prefer to stay connected to the street culture whose invaluable lessons and realness have allowed them to earn their bread and butter as 'authentic' hip hop artists. In effect, the hairstylist took Mystikal's 'shit', his money, what was his, and he took in return what was undeniably hers," writes author T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007, p. 75). Mystikal used rape to get revenge just as the soldiers at Abu Ghraib used sexual assault to get revenge on America's behalf. Violence as a tool to get something someone wants is inherent in America, not just to hip hop rappers, and that should terrify everyone.

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting. (2007). *Pimps Up, Ho's Down*. New York: New York University Press.

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Charity: The Pure Love of Christ

Allie Hamilton, Communications '14

The mission of the welfare program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to serve and care for those suffering around the world. The Church welfare program seeks to emulate Jesus Christ by lovingly providing for the temporal needs of God's children. In reference to the Church welfare program President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, "this work of providing in the Lord's way is not simply another item in the catalog of programs of the Church...it is central to our doctrine; it is the essence of our religion." The Church's commitment to caring for the poor and the needy is at the root of our faith.

The Church welfare program was established in 1936 to relieve suffering from the Great Depression. Seventy-five years later the program now serves 146 countries, benefitting millions all over the world. Member or non-member, the Church of Jesus Christ cares about the needs of anyone and everyone.

The Church operates 80 farms in North America to provide food for the hungry, along with 80 cannery facilities to preserve and transport these commodities. The welfare program also provides medical and educational supplies, equipment, and services. Humanitarian services are included in the Church's welfare efforts, as well. Deseret Industries, a Church run non-profit program, helps over 78,000 people find jobs every year.

These efforts have been so fruitful only because of the approach of equipping people to become self-reliant. Enabling others to provide for themselves is most effective as well as fulfilling for both the giver and the recipient. The recipient is able to maintain a sense of pride and individual efficiency, while the giver finds joy and satisfaction in knowing that they have assisted in raising the quality of someone else's life. The words of a Chinese proverb support this method: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed



him for a lifetime." By providing people with the means to support themselves, long-term benefits are maximized.

This program is ideal because it helps many people to break out of the systemic cycle of poverty. There are no confining limits as to who can receive aid and there is no negative social stigma, which often goes along with receiving aid. The Church welfare program also resists inequality when it comes to distribution of aid; there is no special criterion to make one eligible, simply being in need.

The welfare program is sustained by the selfless charity of faithful members of the Church. Members joyfully volunteer their time, skills, and talents to every step of this great work. Monetary support for the welfare program comes from the donations of members in the form of fast offerings. Every month, members are invited to go without food or water for two meals and to then donate the money they would have used on these meals to the poor and needy. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin explains, "When we fast, ... for a short time, we literally put ourselves in the position of the hungry and needy. As we do so, we have greater understanding of the deprivations they might feel. When we give to the bishop an offering to relieve the suffering of others, we not only do something sublime for others, but we do something wonderful for ourselves as well."

...Continued on page 20

A Drop in the Pond

Starre Helm, English '12

I'll paint a picture of resistance.

Resistance has many faces. It can sit quietly in a corner building its strength or it can be at the forefront raising its voice against the rising tide of society. Resistance can be seen at a protest rally full of adults or on a playground during that first moment when a child thinks, "I don't wanna do what everyone else is doing." It's the students making a conscious effort to question their way of thinking, but even more, letting their friends know why they want to examine their way of thinking. Resistance is the bystanders who speak up when their hearts scream, "This is wrong." Resistance starts with a single, simple idea: that everyone should be treated equally in a world that is unequal. Take that idea and drop it into the pond. It will ripple and spread.



Amanda Hall, Education '13

The Five Double You's

*Aaron Bizier, English &
Communications '14*

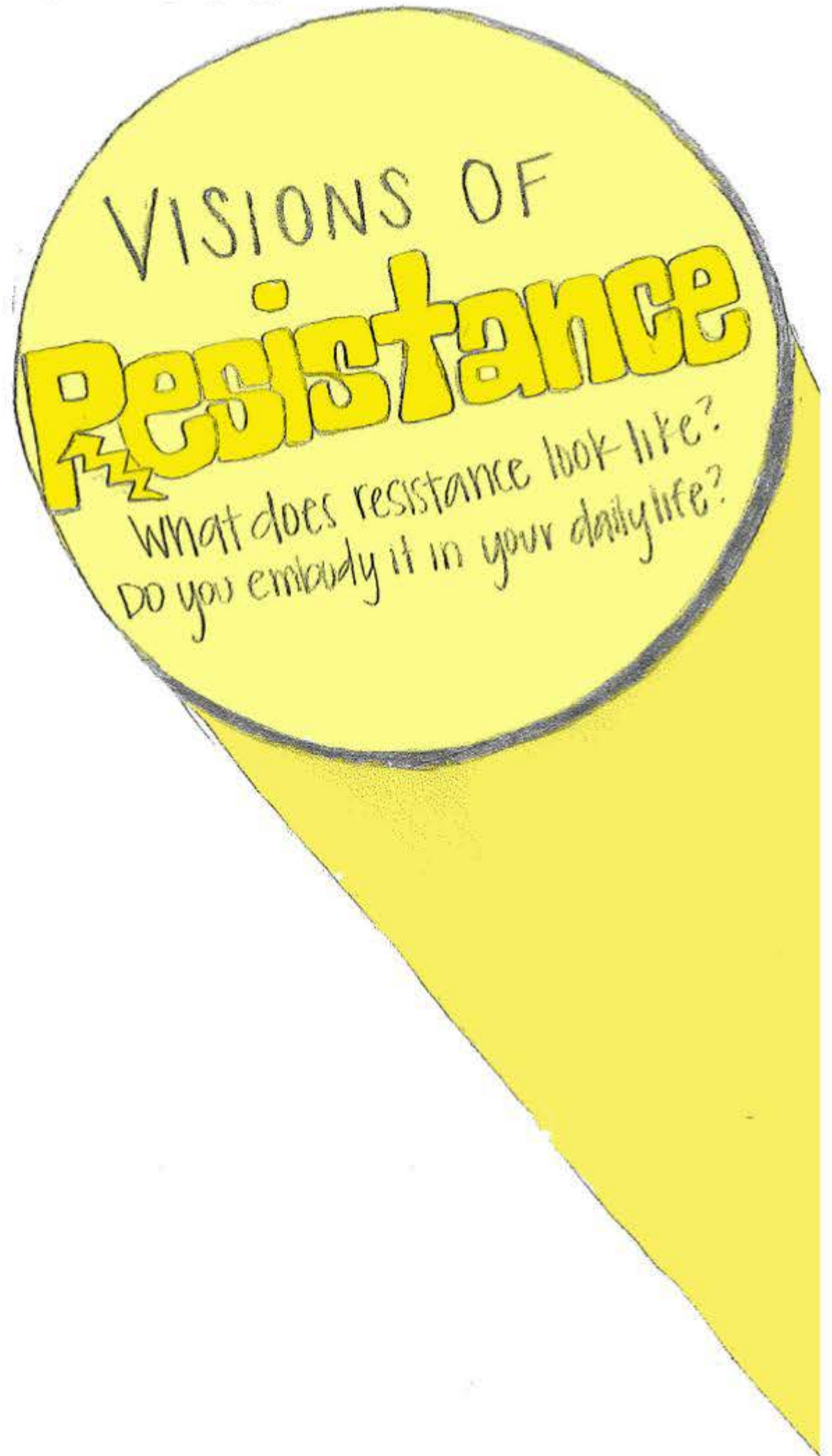
There's the you who's you,
and the you who's not.
Who am I if it's not legal to be me?
Who are you to judge me?
Strength is an adjective to describe me,
somber and split are others.

My eyes roll in their fractured cages,
as I fight back against the wall—
starry visions dance round
my head, while my eyes un-blur
from a legal attack on *my kind. Those people.*
What am I, if I is not good enough?

Two come together, at times, forming one.
Me is a way to describe me—happy.
When will I be free to be me?
Oppressed and self-hating is a way to describe
the other me—nature versus nurture.
Insignificant? *I am not insignificant!*

Where will life take me between pit stops?
Flying higher than Benjamin Franklin's kite
and key, on a clear, stormy night.
Visions of power are relative
and powerful you are not—shit is shitty
when one rules without the other.

Why am I unimportant? Insignificant,
me, myself, and I.
Does myself have to be lower for you
to be self-pedestalled?—Me is happy
just the way myself is. But
why do I take this?



Amanda Hall, Education '13

Love Your Body Day: Resisting Society's Narrow Template for Beauty

Stefanie Range, Nursing '14

Each year, an overwhelming number of PLU students enthusiastically sign up to take part in the annual "Love Your Body Day" Photo Shoot, hosted by the PLU Women's Center. At the shoot, participants can anticipate posing "pseudo-nude" behind large paper hearts. The hearts are painted with confident exclamations of body-related pride, and they add almost as much brightness and warmth to the photographs as do the self-assured smiles of the models behind them.

So what exactly is it about this photo shoot that rallies so many students to take part in it? What is the cause for such vast campus-wide enthusiasm? Clearly, PLU students are passionate about resisting the unrealistic message that a woman's value can be measured through her compliance with society's narrow standards of beauty. At the shoot, participants are asked to write why they are participating. Some people say that they want to express pride for their individuality or curves, or perhaps something more obscure and unrecognized due

to media's obsession with glamorizing only a small selection of the female anatomy. Some participants say that their body does so much for them (takes them on adventures, allows them to dance and hike and exercise, etc.) that they simply want to return the favor. Others make it very clear that they are in fact there to resist modern stereotypes of "beauty" by contributing to a compilation of photos with all different examples of what that word constitutes.

Through "Love Your Body Day," PLU students of all cultural backgrounds, from all walks of life, of all different shapes and sizes and hair colors and heights choose to recognize and celebrate that their remarkable diversity is the root of all beauty. Through this event, PLU students choose to resist in the simplest of ways: by modeling (literally) a mindset of self-acceptance and dignity.



Resisting The Urge of “Not”

Nate Jackson, Computer Science '11

Love Your Body was something I participated in not only for others, but for myself more than anything. Much like the kid in gym class who was afraid to undress in front of others in fear of what they might say or think, I was embarrassed of what others would think of my body. Although others say that there is nothing wrong with me, I used to, and still kind of do, have problems with my body. Over the years I've been working hard to change that perception by working out (I am an athlete), and just doing activities that I normally wouldn't be comfortable doing. Some examples are running outside without a shirt or going swimming. During my Women and Gender studies class this semester, the professor told us about Love Your Body Day, encouraging us to sign up. In my mind I knew I didn't want to do it, but I also knew that if I did I would overcome a major hurdle in my life and better myself. For a few weeks, I fought a resistance within myself to not sign up. One night, I actually sat down by myself and told myself that it would only help me feel better about myself, and if I could do this, then loving my body would become so much easier. Right then and there I forced myself to sign up.

A few days after signing up, I got cold feet and wanted to back out. All I could think about was how everybody would see my photo and my body—the photographer, people at the fashion show, and everyone who buys a calendar. The thought made me nervous. I was going to back out until a friend asked if they could do the Love Your Body picture with me to which I enthusiastically consented.

At first, it was a relief to know someone would do it with me. At the same time, I also felt like this was something that I wanted to do for myself and by myself. Regardless, I was resisting participation in Love Your Body. When the day of my picture finally came, I sat nervously waiting for my turn and my partner. When my partner finally arrived I felt more relaxed, knowing someone I knew was doing it with me. We took our picture and went back home for the day.

Since Love Your Body, I've felt a lot better about myself. The strength that my mind used to have over me, to make me resist loving my body has gone down tremendously. At first, I resisted my desire to take a photo because I was self conscious, but then I resisted my own personal resistance and uncertainties. May it have been just the act of my not wanting to do the photo, or not do it with a partner; it felt as though I kept having some kind of internal conflict. In the end, I'm happy that I did it. If I had the opportunity to do it again I would. This wasn't just for myself, but it was for others who don't necessarily feel the best about their bodies. Love Your Body, because if you don't, nobody else will.

RESISTANCE



Amnesty International A Petition for Resistance

Show your support for Amnesty International's resistance strategies.
Each will be implemented to push for social change and protect human rights.

Name

Address

1. *Peaceful Protest*

2. *Letter Writing*

3. *Advocacy*

4. **Education**

5. **Petitioning Governments**

6. *Exposing Injustices*

7. **DEFYING CYCLES OF OPPRESSION**

8.

9.

10.

GREAN Resistance

“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win” –Mahatma Gandhi

Resistance means to stand firm against opposition, and fight to protect what you value. Resistance is at the heart of GREAN’s Philosophy. GREAN is the on campus environmental club; it stands for GrassRoots Environmental Action Now. GREAN club is all about being a grassroots activist, which means we choose to head onto the battlefield and fight with everything we have. The members of GREAN stand up individually and collectively to make our voices heard. Because we value the earth and all who inhabit it, we speak out and take action against those who damage our environment. As people who willingly claim the label “environmentalist,” resistance also means not following trends because they are convenient or popular. We are able to withstand the adversity or negativity that will inevitably come our way.

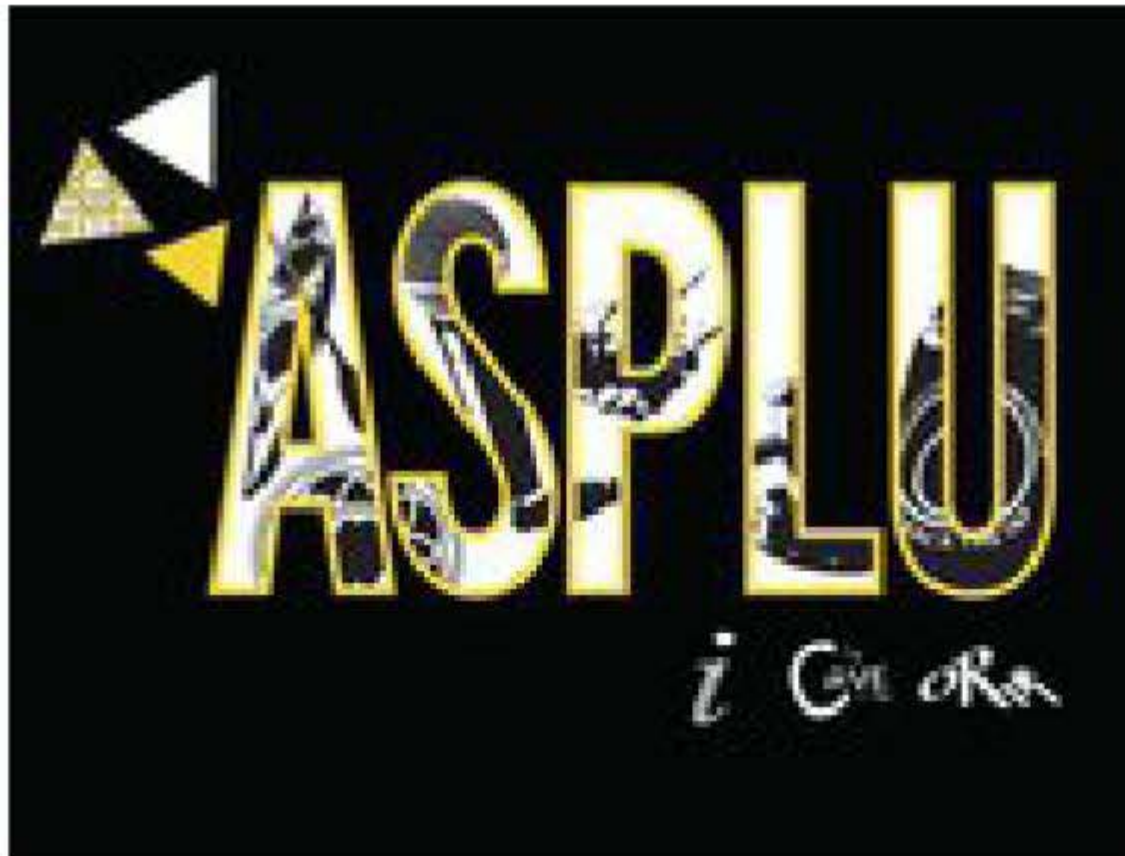
GREAN recently took part in a climate rally in Seattle for a grassroots environmental movement called 350.org. We stood in solidarity to show our resistance to climate polluters and corrupt government. We showed them that we are a force to be reckoned with; saying we will fight and we will be heard.



RESISTANCE

Associated Students of PLU

Emily Bishop, ASPLU Public Relations Officer



Despite not having celebrities, paparazzi, or multi-million dollar meetings every week, ASPLU is a lot like American Idol. We strive to hear the voice of the unheard, and bring their

voice to the attention of the student body and administration of PLU. ASPLU works to both be aware of and actively working against the subordination of students under the administration. With a student body of over 3,500, it's easy for student opinion to be lost. We work to actively seek out the student voice and advocate that this voice be heard. Without intentional action, it's easy for our voices to be lost. When we work for the students, we work against the resistance to not only hear student opinion, but listen to it.

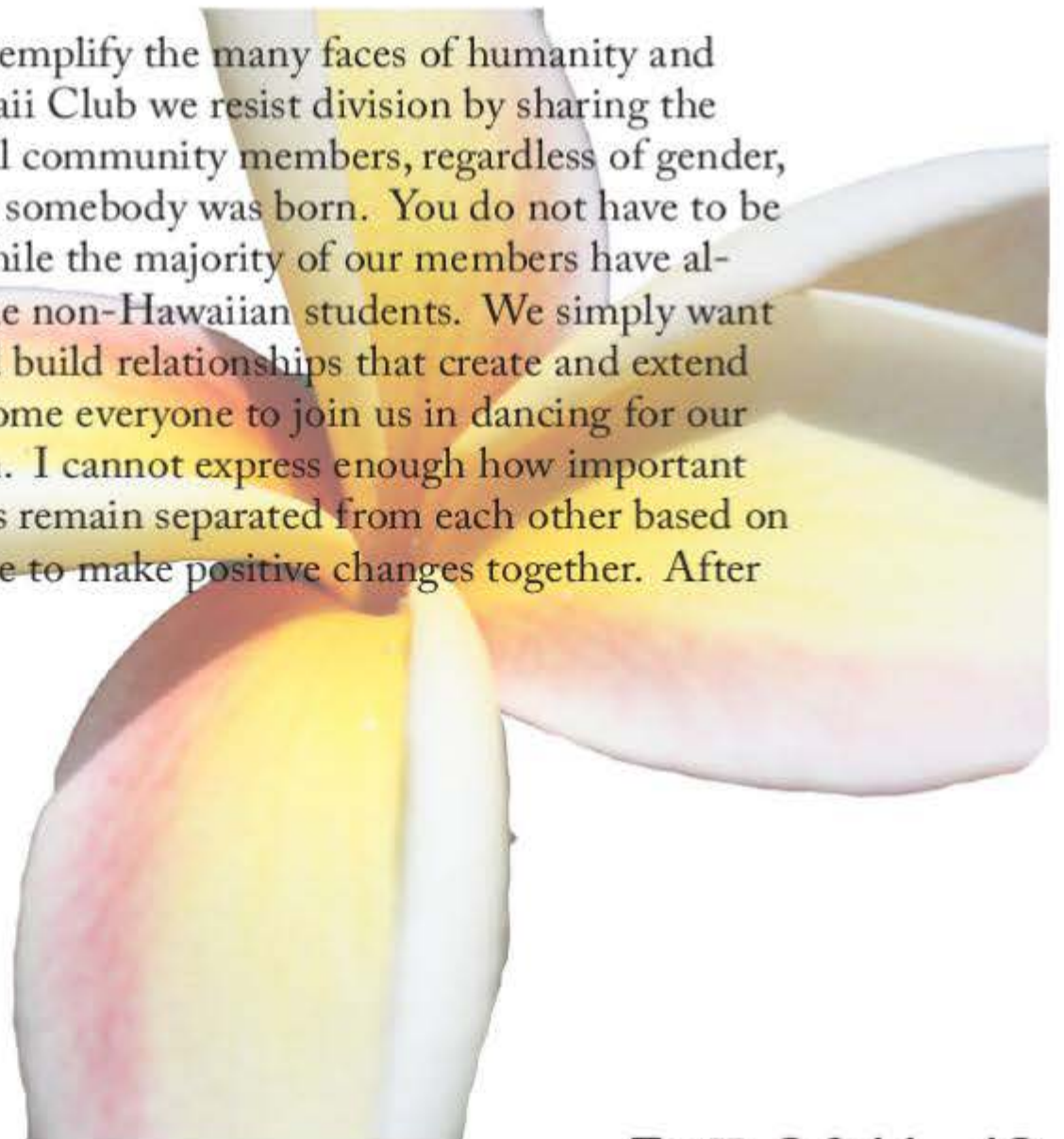
Around Campus

Hawaii Club: Spreading Ohana

Paris Cochran, Hispanic Studies & Environmental Studies, '12



Just like the islands, Hawaii Club is here to exemplify the many faces of humanity and show the beauty that each person is. In the Hawaii Club we resist division by sharing the Aloha spirit with all. We do this by embracing all community members, regardless of gender, weight, sexual orientation, dance ability, or where somebody was born. You do not have to be from Hawaii to be a part of the Hawaii club. While the majority of our members have always been students from Hawaii, we also welcome non-Hawaiian students. We simply want to share our culture and tradition with others and build relationships that create and extend Ohana, which means family. To do this, we welcome everyone to join us in dancing for our annual luau, participating in a Hawaiian tradition. I cannot express enough how important openness and warmth is for our club. If we always remain separated from each other based on culture, tradition, and ethnicity, we can never hope to make positive changes together. After all, we are all one big Ohana.



Resistance Through the Eyes

*Dr. Jennifer Smith, Acting Director
of the Women's Center*

I resist the notion that men and women are polar opposites.
I resist the idea that prejudice and intolerance are inevitable.
I resist the sense that change will never occur.
I resist the suggestion that resistance is futile.
I resist privilege in all its forms.
I resist the stereotype that feminists are ball-busting, humorless man-haters.
I resist willful ignorance.
I resist a world where violence is normalized and accepted.
I resist the belief that one person can't make a difference or that small actions don't somehow change the world.
I resist the nefarious -isms.
I resist the assumption that the Women's Center is for women only.
I resist so that my students, my niece, my nephew, and my friends' children can know a better world.
I resist the belief that lived experience doesn't count, that our stories aren't transformative.
I resist the temptation to remain idle in the face of injustice.
I resist because I don't have a choice.
I resist.



Of the Women's Center

Jennifer Warwick, Victim Advocate and Voices Against Violence Project Administrator

For victims of rape and abuse, silence can be a seemingly safe shroud that protects them from society's ill-aimed blame and persecution. Beliefs that victims are responsible for their rape because of their choice of clothing or decision to drink alcohol permeate our society and are reinforced on many levels. When a victim chooses to disclose their assault they, rather than



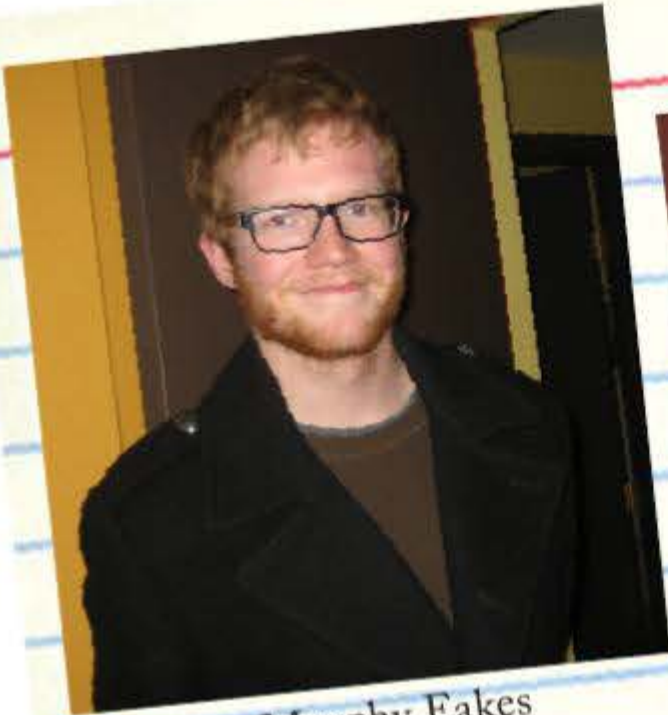
the person who harmed them, are often the target of blame and ridicule, causing these victims to suffer ongoing trauma and pain. These beliefs about who bears responsibility for an assault create a culture of silence that prohibits victims from getting the support and justice they both need and deserve.

As a university who cares for members of our community, particularly those who have been harmed, we have a responsibility to resist the victim-blaming beliefs from permeating the values and mission we share as Lutes. We must not perpetuate a culture that enforces the idea that victims are to blame for the harm they suffered; we must resist this culture of silence so that victims are empowered to shed this seemingly pro-

protective shroud and let their stories be heard. Yet, creating a community that resists these beliefs, which are so dominant and insidious, requires a concerted and courageous effort. Challenging a friend who tells a sexist joke, for example, though easier said than done, can make a huge impact on our campus's culture of intolerance for violence and oppression.

To resist is to take a risk, but the reward of this risk is too great not to try.

Resistance Through the Eyes



Murphy Eakes

Sarah Martin



Krystal Smith

Murphy Eakes - Green Dot Intern Social Work '12

Resistance is a major theme for the Green Dot program. Having the ability to intervene in red dot situations is resisting the bystander effect. Someone is not always going to be there to help others out. We call on individuals to take charge of their lives and to promote the wellbeing of the community through resisting the common occurrence of inaction. Resistance through Green Dot translates into attending one of the 201 workshops and gaining the tools one needs to further extend the reach of active bystanders in our community.

Of the Women's Center

Sarah Martin – Women's Center Intern Hispanic Studies '12

When I was first asked to write this statement, I was a bit confused about the theme of "visions of resistance." It seemed like resistance was so negative, and not an accurate description of my work at the Women's Center. But after a little thought, I came to realize that a lot of what I do is resist. Resistance from the belief that I need to look like Jennifer Lopez, from the thought that women are only good for making sandwiches, from the idea that I am not as strong as a man and need protecting. My thesaurus says that the antonym of resistance is surrender, and at the very least, I know that I am not surrendering.

Krystal Smith - Victim Advocate Intern Social Work '12

As the victim advocate intern at the Women's Center, I am constantly bombarded with reminders of resistance. My work as an advocate involves promoting social justice for all and with issues of social justice also comes resistance from those who are benefiting from the institutions. I must engage in the process of resistance in order to ensure that change occurs and my client's needs are met. Resistance is part of the greater scheme for change and advocates must overcome the resistance in order to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Resistance Through the Eyes

Claire Plourde, English and Women's Gender Studies '12

I would like to say that resistance is automatic for me.

I would like to say that I don't get tired, overwhelmed, saddened, discouraged or hopeless.

But I do.

And when I do, I sometimes forget about resistance.

But then I remember.

And when I do, I activate my power. I stand up. I am not afraid to say "no." Other times, I'm not afraid to say "yes."

When this happens, I'm a force to be reckoned with. I walk tall with confidence. I operate with strength. I feel the hope. I can see the positive change on the horizon with my community behind me in full support.

I would like to say that this happens all the time.

I would like to say that resistance is automatic for me.

And then I remember – it can be.



Kristina Snaring, Social Work '12

Sexual Assault Peer Education Training Intern

We live in a society that has become very passive. Many live by the motto "if you can't beat it, join it." I am in awe of how much individuals have let society shape their personal values and beliefs. Both males and females are socialized to believe that they are simply not good enough in almost every aspect of their lives. What happened to the voice of the individual in the midst of a culture that is so violent against women?

Well I have a voice, and it is a voice that resists gender inequity. I know I might only be one, but I can make a difference. I will not tolerate oppression and discrimination against women, or anyone. Each and every day is a choice, and I choose to push against those cultural norms; I choose resistance. My work at the Women's Center and as a peer educator is my opportunity to resist. It is my chance to let my voice be heard, and hopefully I will influence others to do the same.

I find comfort in reading quotes. I turn to this one when I doubt my contribution as an individual. It motivates me to do whatever I can to have an impact in this world.

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."

~Edward Everett Hale



Of the Women's Center

*Jonathan Grove,
Men Against Violence Coordinator*

As the only male staff person at the PLU Women's Center, and one of very few nation-wide, it may be strange to hear me discuss "Resistance." Women's Centers have been positioned as a haven for women from the oppressive patriarchal culture we live in. As a result, it can seem odd that a man is part of that community given that patriarchy is understood to represent his interests. However, men's resistance to this system is critical, though defining exactly what that resistance means for men has often proved challenging.



Resistance to harmful systems of social power is practiced by increasing awareness of the harm done and creating conversations to illuminate healthy and/or less harmful alternatives. For men this certainly means educating ourselves and others that:

- While a small percentage of men sexually assault 1 in 4 college women and 1 in 6 boys at some point in their lifetime, most men continue to simply feel guilty by association. We do that by convincing ourselves that these are "women's issues" and that we somehow are not deeply connected to women. As a result, we allow excuses to be made for perpetrator actions by blaming victims and we remain silent rather than challenge the harm done to those we love.
- Homophobia harms all men by denying our right to be valued for the entirety of who we are – from our emotions and relationships with other men, to our sexuality. Instead, we kill ourselves (sometimes literally) trying to fit someone else's definition of who we should be, while our insecurities drive us to devalue anyone not "man enough" (ie: ourselves and gay men, trans folks, and women especially).

The conversations we need to have should start with these issues, but focus on creating less painful ways of being men. Without language for and demonstrated examples of masculinities that accept and represent the entire man – including men's emotional depth and love for others, especially other men – the status quo will remain. We all need deeper relationships with the men in our lives: fathers, brothers and friends. Yes this can be scary, and absolutely requires hard work, courage and leadership – but isn't that what we expect of men?

The Character of Resistance

Continued from page 3

In Ecuador, socio-economic and racial divisions are very apparent. The upper class looks down their nose at the lower class, blaming them for crime and stating that they are unemployed or poor because they are lazy. Furthermore, there are distinct prejudices based upon race. It is common knowledge that if a “white” Ecuadorian and a “black” Ecuadorian are applying for the same job, the “white” Ecuadorian will always get the job over the “black” Ecuadorian. There is the stereotype in Ecuador that “black” individuals are thieves who cannot be trusted. The indigenous populations in Ecuador are subject to the same prejudices. There is also the societal stereotype that immigrants are responsible for all the crime; that the Cubans and Columbians are all bad people. At a nail salon we met a Cuban immigrant and my host mom asked the woman, “How does my country treat you?” and she listened intently to the woman’s story. My host mom did not believe in the societal stereotypes of immigrants. She would always say, “There are good Ecuadorians and bad Ecuadorians, good Cubans and bad Cubans, good Columbians and bad Columbians.” Her point was that you cannot judge people based on their ethnic identity or economic status.

My host mom taught me that resistance can be carried out simply by being the kind of person society is not. Through her attitudes and actions she resisted her society’s stereotypes of poverty and race. She is a person with a kind heart who makes a conscious effort to form a relationship with the people she encounters in life. She taught me that we can make the biggest difference with our character. My host mother’s actions were small, but if we all to take small actions towards doing good things, then together we can make a huge impact.

Charity: The Pure Love of Christ

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As a member of the Church, I am blessed to be able to do my part to provide for others in the Lord’s way. The joy that comes from fulfilling this sacred duty to lift the hands that hang down is truly like no other. President Thomas S. Monson stated, “One might ask, concerning those who assist in the welfare program, what prompts such devotion on the part of every worker? The answer can be stated simply: An individual testimony of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, even a heartfelt desire to love the Lord with all one’s heart, mind, and soul, and one’s neighbor as oneself.”

Faith is a principle of action, and the Church welfare system is simply an outflow of our love for Jesus Christ. It is our privilege, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to be able to reach out in love to our brothers and sisters in need through the Church welfare program. God cares about providing for our temporal needs, as well as spiritual. He has chosen to allow us to take part in serving one another, for the blessing of all his children. I am thankful for such an opportunity.

To learn more, visit providentliving.org.

1 Uchtdorf, Dieter F. Providing in the Lord’s Way. General Conference Oct 2011.

2 Wirthlin, Joseph B. The Law of the Fast. General Conference Apr 2001

3 Monson, Thomas S. Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance.

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Fall 2011

