**STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Serendipity Room provides students with an escape

**MELISSA CACERES**  
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In GC 343, the silence is deafening.

"The noise, music and conversation from the first floor of the University’s Graham Center fails to reach the corner room on the third floor — and students like it that way."

The Serenity Room, which opened to students, faculty and staff on Jan. 9, is a room designated for those who wish to unwind in a quiet environment.

Its uses include meditation and prayer, which for many Muslim students is an essential part of their everyday routine. "To be a Muslim, you must complete five daily prayers and they have to be at certain times. We need to have quiet, clean environment, free from distractions," said Sarah Usman, the previous president of the Muslim Student Association, who mentioned that she use to pray in the stairwells and between bookshelves in the Green Library.

The room comes equipped with wall panels to separate the space for each student. While they are allowed to bring their own floor mats, things such as incense, candles and music are prohibited.

"The idea has a lot of merit since it’s going to hit home with a lot of international students and even just random students who lean towards that path of tranquility and meditation," said Sanjeev Udhnani, vice president of Student Government Association at the Modesto Maidique Campus.

As a pilot program for the University community, the space is open for use 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"Everything that’s being done now is to garner support for the Serenity Room because we want to show administration [the results] in numbers and how we’re going to measure that data is by having a pilot project," he said.

Udhnani, who was behind the establishment of the room, said he had been hearing student concern over having a separate, tranquil space for each student.

**Board of Trustees**

Former BOT leader named chairman Emeritus

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Former Board of Trustees Leader, Albert E. Dotson has been given the opportunity of retaining his professional relationship with the University whilst relinquishing most if not all responsibilities, and named senior personal relationship with the University’s Graham Center.

Dotson has been working with the University for three decades, most recently acquiring the title of Board of Trustees Chairman in 2009.

Upon approval of Dotson’s emeritus status, Albert Maury, who is the current BOT chairman said that Dotson “bleeds blue and gold.”

"I am humbled that the trustees elected to honor me in this fashion," Dotson said in a press release. “I will always be a Panther at heart, and I will continue working to help the finest institution in the Universe reach its fullest potential.”

Dotson began his service with the Board of Trustees in 2001. Before then he had worked on the FIU Foundation Board from 1983 to 2001.

Dotson was a part of the BOT Presidential Search Committee that ultimately appointed current president, Mark Rosenberg, as the University’s fifth president.

Prior, he worked on the presidential search committee in 1986 that appointed President Emeritus Modesto Maidique.

Dotson has worked as the chairman and CEO of several businesses and now works as a business consultant.

He is also an active member of the community, now serving as chairman of the FIU Athletics Finance Corporation Board of Directors, the boards of the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition, the Orange Bowl Committee, Santa Fe HealthCare and the Salvation Army.

He has also participated on the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Board of Governors, served at Baptist Health and on the board of Barry University.

He received a Ph.D from Trinity Southern University in Dallas and an honorary doctorate from Barry University.

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**Information Technology**

Online harassment still present in student life

**DIANA MARTI AND TIFFANY HUERNO**  
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University student, Christian Rodriguez, remembers the first day he faced cyber bullying.

When Rodriguez was in eighth grade, he was hiding a big secret from his family and friends - a secret that could potentially break friendships and expose his real self.

He was gay.

One day after school, he confided in his best friend, Jose Pereda.

“He wasn’t very accepting of it,” Rodriguez said. “He had a lot of issues with it.”

This eventually led to Pereda ignoring Rodriguez the rest of the year.

Months had passed when Rodriguez decided to log on Yahoo! Messenger, an instant messaging site. What he found was quite surprising.

“He called me a faggot and all these derogatory names,” Rodriguez said. “It was a very difficult moment that I had with him and cyber bullying.”

Rodriguez got over it and has since joined Delta Lambda Phi at FIU, the nation’s first fraternity for gay men.

"I now help other ‘brothers of mine in the fraternity with bullying issues,“ he said.

Cyber bullying and stalking affect 99 percent of people over 18, according to the national hate online abuse research of 2011, but it can also happen at a very young age.
Experts say internet bullying affects person’s trust levels, self-esteem

“IT was bullied in middle school,” said University student, Marissa Gold. Gold said it has left her with big scars. She now faces anxiety issues.

Specialist in mental health, Lauren Struck at a Coral Gables counseling center, deals with cyber bullying patients on a daily basis.

Struck said cyber bullying can affect people in a number of ways.

“It can affect the way they form attachments, their trust levels with other people, their ability to extrovert and share things with other people and the risks that they’re willing to take in life,” she said. “They may feel stunted or hesitant, where they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

Struck said this may also affect self-esteem and the ability to make friendships.

“I think the next step after the child has been bullied is to get them help. Whether it’s through a therapist or just having a good level of discussion,” Struck said.

“The longer parents or guardians wait, the worse it’s going to get.” The cyber bullying statute in Miami-Dade County was passed on April 30, 2008.

“Cyber bullying is a statute that was enacted in order for the school board to deal with children or students who are being either bullied or harassed via Internet, school, hazing, etc.” said Detective Roland Garcia.

He said that it is important that parents be involved with their child.

“The parents are reporting the incidents, not the students,” said the Miami-Dade detective adding that the more involved the parents are, the more likely their child is to open up to them.

Struck agrees. “They need to talk to their child about what affected them emotionally and socially, and start addressing those issues right away,” she said.

This story was researched and written for JOU 3300 Advanced News Writing taught by Professor Teresa Ponce in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

All faiths and practices welcome

ROOM, PAGE 1

quiet area since summer 2011.

While the space was originally going to be open starting Nov. 2011 to Jan. 2012, by the time it was approved by the Student Affairs department, “it was already finals time.”

Funding to provide the room with panels and other adjustments, cost around $150 total, according to Udinnani. The money was provided through SGA discretionary funds.

“We’re doing this in the hopes that those who want to observe their faith, meditate, or even just sit and relax,” said Udinnani. “It’s a serene, quiet room that students can go to escape the loud hustle and bustle of GC and have their own little corner.”

With a small corner that is anticipated to bring followers of many different religions, SGC-MMC held focus groups during the fall semester to brainstorm any kind of conflicts and scenarios that might come up in the serenity room.

In 2008, University of South Florida incorporated their serenity room into the design of the 233,000-square-foot, Marshall Student Center to give the institution’s 39,000 students “an oasis in the desert, a harbor in the storm of hectic campus life.”

The University also hopes to do the same by including the idea in the future GC expansion plans. “It hasn’t been approved or funded yet, but this is definitely something of interest that we want to dedicate some space to,” said Carlos Carrasco, senior director of business finance and building operations at GC.

Depending on the results of the pilot program, rooms may also be opened at the Biscayne Bay Campus and Engineering Neartcamp.

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Alvah Carr Asst. Sports Director

BBC Marketing Director

Joseph Scull Asst. Marketing Director

Amanda White Sports Director

Laura Bridee Marketing Director

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Panthers set for revenge against MTSU

The last time the Golden Panthers squared-off against Middle Tennessee, on Dec. 29, they were breaking in a new lineup in the frontcourt while adjusting their play from the guard positions. Although FIU out-shot the Blue Raiders from the field, the Golden Panthers were unable to secure the win.

On Jan. 12, FIU (4-11, 1-2 SBC) got its second opportunity against the Sun Belt Conference’s best team; this time at U.S. Bank Stadium.

INCONSISTENT PLAY

Head coach Isiah Thomas was not pleased with the effort shown in his team’s 54-50 defeat to last place Louisiana-Monroe on Jan. 7.

“Our [players] just got to learn that there is one way to play.” Thomas said.

One of the issues that have plagued the Panthers this season has been the inconsistent play from the guard position.

“We kept settling for the three [pointers], we kept shooting long shots,” Thomas said.

The frontcourt of Dominique Ferguson, Brandon Moore, Gilles Diericks and Joey De La Rosa has struggled to make a consistent impact for the Panthers on both sides of the floor. In their last game against ULM, FIU had a tough time establishing the frontcourt offensively.

“We did not have enough patience to move the ball and put it inside,” coach Thomas said. “Our size and our height is our advantage. We have to play inside-out.”

The Panthers have been out-rebounded in their last eight contests.

DEFENSIVE STALLWARTS

The one constant that the Panthers have had during conference play is it’s defense. The implementation of the 2-3 zone defense has been the foundation for the Golden Panthers this season. Through the first three games in Sun Belt Conference play, the Panthers are in the top five in blocked shots, defensive field goal percentage and three-point percentage. In all three conference games this season, the Panthers have held their opponents under 40 percent shooting from the field.

CONFERENCE BEST

Middle Tennessee (13-2, 4-0 SBC) enters the matchup against FIU on a seven-game winning streak after defeating Louisiana-Lafayette 65-53. Guards Marcus Knight and Raymond Cintron will provide an outside shooting threat for MTSU.

In the last meeting against FIU, the front line of forwards JT Sulton, LaRon Dendy and Shawn Jones matched the physicality of the Panthers front line. The trio combined to tally 43 of the Blue Raiders’ 71 points in the win.

For the sixth consecutive contest, the Panthers will be without senior guard DeJuan Wright against Middle Tennessee due to a leg injury.

The Panthers have dropped four out of their last five games without the senior guard from Detroit.

“We need to solidify its defensive category. For the rest of the season, the only other team that FIU faces who has at least two players 6’10” or taller is UALR on Feb. 16. Once Moore and De La Rosa get more accustomed to the offense, an improvement should be seen in time on Feb. 16. Once Moore and De La Rosa get more accustomed to the offense, an improvement should be seen in time.

The team’s leading scorer DeJuan Wright, who injured his leg in the first half at Maryland on Dec. 14 and has failed to return since, can be used as an excuse to the team’s stagnant offense in their last game. They scored just 50 points and shot 32 percent from the field.

Just one week ago the Panthers were able to put up 83 points in the victory at Western Kentucky without him. Even though the offense has struggled to find that go-to player who can constantly give you double digit points, they shouldn’t have to. One of the big advantages FIU will have against most teams in the Sun Belt is size. Thomas finally has a team this year that is not extremely guard-heavy. Now that he has the size, Thomas must find a way for these big men to produce in the paint. They have four players that are 6-9 and taller, but none of them are averaging double digits in any statistical category.

Despite the size, sophomore Dominique Ferguson is the only big man to have significant playing time, since Brandon Moore was out for 11 games and newcomer Joey De La Rosa was out for a dozen. Gilles Diericks is only a freshman and averages just 15 minutes per game. “We have size and we didn’t use it to our advantage,” Thomas said after their 54-50 defeat to ULM. “We practice everyday putting the ball inside, our size and our height are our advantage and we got to play inside-out, not outside-in.”

For the rest of the season, the only other team that FIU faces who has at least two players 6’10” or taller is UALR on Feb. 16. Once Moore and De La Rosa get more accustomed to the offense, an improvement should be seen in time for the conference tournament. No longer can Thomas try to rely on Ferguson being a force down low. If they want to stand a chance in the tournament, Ferguson must be moved to his natural position of playing outside on offense, rather than force him to try and go inside. Although offensively the size isn’t being used, defensively, FIU has allowed less than 80 points in a game the entire season. The 2-3 zone defense makes it hard for any team to get inside. Also, their length creates difficult shots for opponents.

What it all boils down to is not being consistent. FIU has not won back-to-back games yet this year. If they can play the way they did against George Mason when they completed arguably the biggest upset in FIU basketball history, or even when they traveled to Maryland and lost by just four respectable points, then a loss like the one against ULM would never have happened. “At Middle [Tennessee] it’s a five-point basketball game, then we go to Western Kentucky and it’s an 18-point win,” said Thomas. “And then we come here and... well maybe we should stay on the road. We’ll keep working with the guys and try to get them better.”
There are two teams in the Sun Belt that nobody wants to see right now: the FIU Panthers (11-5, 1-2 SBC) and the Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders (12-5, 4-0 SBC). Both teams are riding winning streaks, FIU with a four game and Middle Tennessee with a six game. One of those will come to an end when the two teams meet at U.S. Century Bank Arena on Jan. 12.

The Panthers will have to find a way to contain Forward Ebony Rowe of the Blue Raiders. Rowe comes into this game averaging a double-double, with 16.7 points per game and 10 rebounds per game.

In their last game, the Blue Raiders trounced the Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns 104-53, where five different players reached double digit scoring.

Heading into this game, the Panthers are on a roll of their own. In fact, the last loss the Panthers suffered was against the same Blue Raiders 58-53 on Dec. 21 in Murfreesboro.

In the last meeting, Jerica Coley was held to only 17 points and five assists, just making 7-18 shots from the floor. Other than Fanni Hutlassa (13) and Finda Mansare (13), no other Panther could even reach six points.

The key will be on how well Mansare can matchup against Rowe in the paint. In their last meeting, Rowe was dominant inside, grabbing 13 rebounds and scoring 15 points.

The offense has been run through Coley, then dishing it off to Hutlassa as she tries to find open space.

If Coley cannot find open space, then Hutlassa will either shoot or try and get it down low to Mansare for points in the paint.

As of late, Mansare’s role in the offense is scoring in double digits in five of the past six contests.

Holy Coley
Coley heads into this game coming off her best performance of the year, where she went for a career-high 36 points against ULM on Jan. 7. For her performance, she was awarded the Sun Belt player of the week recognition.

She is the third leading scorer in the nation, averaging 24.9 points per game. Not only has her scoring been off the charts, but she also has 7.5 rebounds and 4.9 assists per game, making her top 20 in the nation.

Head coach Cindy Russo simply stated how great of an athlete Coley is. “Jerica is everybody’s game plan,” Russo said. “We really need to execute our offense so that we can get her the ball back. She has to be everybody’s game plan, she attracts a committee to stop her.”

FIU looks to extend win streak against Blue Raiders

With three meets to go, Panthers focus on CCSU

“IT’s a team that beat us last year so we want to finish at home with a win and take that confidence to the next level,” Horner said.

The last meet that CCSU competed in was at the USA Winter Nationals at Georgia Tech on Dec. 1-3. The focus for the team is preparing for the Sun Belt championship.

“Doing the little things right, working our turns, our starts and our finishes,” Horner said. “Just racing properly and not taking anything for granted. That’s the biggest key right now.”

With a score of 312.08.

A LOOK AHEAD
FIU will now put their focus on the last three meets of the season before the SBC tournament, including the final home meet of the season against Central Connecticut State on Jan. 14 at 12 p.m. There is a bit of a revenge factor coming into this meet.

PACk THE HOUSE NIGHT! GIVEAWAYS FOR SPIRITED FANS!

WOMEN AT 5:30 PM
MEN AT 7:30 PM
1ST 100 STUDENTS RECEIVE A T-SHIRT & CHEER STICK
U.S. CENTURY BANK ARENA
305.FIU.GAME
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Swimming & Diving

FINISH a MEET

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ELECTIONS 2012

ROCK THE VOTE

Students expected to break voting records this year

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College students all over America took a well-needed study break and showed up in unprecedented numbers for the 2008 presidential elections. It is estimated between 22 to 24 million young people, age 18 to 29, flooded the polls to cement their vote for the next head of state, according to CIRCLE, a nonpartisan center dedicated to civic research. That is over two million more than in 2004.

In fact, amid the high number of young American voters, those with at least one vote cast in the election are among the most represented voters. Four years later, and riding on the heels of 2008’s considerable turnout, we stand to find out whether our generation will have the drive to rock the vote, or on the contrary, if Generation Y will become the generation that did not show up.

“I plan on keeping myself informed on the elections and news,” said Gracie Aguero, a senior political science major.

Aguero, who was under voting age in 2008, said that she made it a point to vote herself in the loop with the elections and will continue to do so. Some college students have also taken a hands-on approach and provided the back-bone to many presidential campaigns in recent years.

“I'm currently volunteering with the Newt Gingrich 2012 campaign,” said Daniel O’Quinn, a business management and political science major. “I think it’s pretty safe to say that I will become even more involved. With the help of other students from universities such as Barry and Florida Atlantic, these elections will prove to be the most pivotal in American history.”

In our plugged-in digital world, young people are finding themselves increasingly connected to today’s political issues. In 2008, youths voters said the economy was their top pick as the most important political issue. Eliana Jimenez, a sophomore majoring in journalism, said the economy remains her biggest concern.

“It truly is hitting people hard, including myself, and it’s definitely affecting college students because we are less students can afford to go to school,” she said. On the other hand, for O’Quinn, the upcoming elections will center themselves on maintaining a country with a distinct moral compass.

“I'd enjoy seeing the next president reverse Roe v. Wade. We have the right to life, which is being utterly misrepresented, as abortions have been far too numerous. We've deleted a complete generation of people that could’ve been,” he said, regarding the heated debate on abortion. Others say a lackluster job market will push our youth to the polls.

“We want to live the dream of having a well-paying job, owning a home and being able to have some luxuries. And when we grow old, we want to be sure that there is social security for all of us,” said Olga Urbina, a health service administration major. “Job security is very important; one of the biggest fears for a college

ART BEAT

Frost museum earns highest accreditation

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While the Metropolitan Museum of Art has historical interiors of the Van Rensselaer House and the American Museum of Natural History has irreplaceable artifacts, the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum caters to its community and university through photographs, paintings and sculptures of the 20th century, and are recognized for it.

Accreditation is the achievement that takes a museum to a higher nationally recognized standard. Awarded by the American Association of Museums, the Frost Art Museum has succeeded beyond to gain this high recognition.

Just 5 percent of the approximated 17,500 museums nationwide are actually accredited. Initially accredited in 1999, The Frost Art Museum has received this recognition once again and is also one of the 50 recognized museums in Florida.

“The opening of the new building and reaccreditation dovetailing, a number of essential documents and policies and procedures were updated. This puts [us] in the best possible position to continue serving our community as a World’s Ahead museum of excellence,” said Carol Damian, director and chief curator of The Frost Art Museum.

Accreditation is given to those museums that apply for it and surpass a rigorous amount of requirements.

The mandatory accreditation process requires a thorough year-long self-study of all the museum’s operations, such as financial, governance, collections stewardship, public programs and community engagement.

The second step is the site visit conducted by one of AAM’s outside peer reviewers.

The final decision is granted based upon these two reports by the accreditation commissioner, such as Dewey Blanton, director and spokesman of AAM.

“Accreditation looks at all aspects of the museum’s operation, from soup to nuts,” said Blanton. “It takes 2 to 3 years to go through the whole thing.”

The goal of AAM is to promote the proper practices in educated decisions, contain resources and sustain itself financially and fairly.

“[Accreditation] validates our
Student turnout in 2012 will “make up a significant 1/4 of the electorate”

VOTE, PAGE 5

student is graduating and not having a job.”

Being on the brink of entering what some would call the real world seems to be pushing college students and recent graduates to secure their futures in the polls, while supporting a variety of issues.

“We are at the immediate future of the U.S. As we step out on to the real world, we will be automatically placed with the deficits of the past years. The decisions made by the winning candidates will have a great influence on how our adult lives will commence,” said Urbina.

A little over half of all eligible voters under the age of 30 rallied for the previous presidential election.

According to Rock the Vote, an organization dedicated to building the political power of the millennial generation by engaging the youngest set, young people will make up a significant 1/4 of the entire electorate in the upcoming presidential race, making this demographic a potentially powerful bunch. “I think the young vote will be very important continuing into 2012,” said Jimenez. “That was, as important as our votes are, most people our age will probably choose not to vote because they are either not familiar with the candidates or they simply don’t care enough to vote.”

Whether or not this is true remains to be seen in the coming year. As the November elections approach, only time will tell if we will continue to see an increase in political interest from the youngest electorate voters.

FROST, PAGE 5

work in knowing that we uphold and maintain the standards and best practices of the profession.

It feels rewarding for all of us to be recognized for our continued hard work,” said Damian. Being recognized by the AAM’s standard also has its perks considering that it can be a prerequisite for loans from other museums funding from certain foundations and local or state governments.

There are many foundations or philanthropy who will only give financial grants to accredited museums. To be eligible for state funding, [museums in Florida] have to be accredited by AAM,” said Blanton. Being accredited shows that a museum is significantly superior to the competition of many others (Pave- ment’s individual records’ deluxe editions range at about $60-80 per record); deluxe editions range at about $60-80 per record); better yet, all of the newly released material will be available for download under a pay-what-you-want price structure at the group’s Bandcamp page. Ultimately, Mangam et al created a reasonably priced alternative to learn all about the band, discover its early material and obtain a better grasp of the evolution of their sound. While both of the band’s LPs share certain common traits in their sound, the beauty of discovering the nuances in their second LP, the changes in the themes and lyrics, and much more cohesive sound, becomes a reward in itself, as “In the Aeroplane Over the Sea” was and remains one of the most important and influential independent records to be released. The sheer agony and anguish in the vocals and the raw unfiltered sound of the percussion and guitars set a pattern that is still found in modern alternative music. While most new bands try and revive the sounds of decades past, Neutral Milk Hotel remains at the forefront of independent music; its sound remaining as crisp and fresh as it was first released, giving fans hope for future generations to have the opportunity to experience it as well.

Indie band will put new material at pay-what-you-want price structure
Laptop use should be limited in classroom

JUNETTE REYES
Staff Writer
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Students at the University have managed to integrate the use of their laptops into their classroom experience, for better and for worse.

While most laptop-using students appear to be diligent in the classroom while using them to take notes, others wander into the Internet to browse websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and so on.

It is the time and place of those students that is being wasted, but I still find this to be an unreal habit that should cease.

The misuse of laptops can prove to be risky for students since it presents them with one more distraction for them to over-think on focusing in their studies.

The only action I see fit to solve this problem would be to limit the use of laptops in the classroom. This could be simply by not using a laptop in the classroom unless it is necessary or by somehow integrating their use into the current lesson.

Of course, this would be to the chagrin of most laptop-using students who truly use them for taking notes, but it is not as though using laptops is their only way of doing so.

Before arriving at college, some students, like me, were exposed to the old-fashioned way of taking notes with a pen and paper without ever having to touch a laptop.

Some professors on campus do not even allow laptop use in their classrooms, and yet those students manage to take notes without them. Those few students that use class time to check their email on their laptop prove that it is very easy for a laptop to become a distraction.

As students, we can barely afford to be distracted, especially, of all places, within the classroom.

As it is, the time and money of those students being wasted every time they surf the Internet on their laptops during a lecture, but limiting their use in the classroom presents the possibility that those students would take further advantage of their time in the classroom, having one less distraction stopping them from fully appreciating the lesson being taught.

Of course, limiting the use of laptops within the classroom would mean that most students would suffer for the acts of few, but it would also mean that students would be one step closer to achieving their goals of excelling.

It would drive most students into changing their note-taking routines, but if it means making students more attentive to their professors, then so be it.
TLC Brigade gives a helping hand to at need faculty and staff

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There will always be tough times, according to Jose Miranda, clinician at the office of employ- ment assistance, while explaining one of the services instead of the family having to pay the funeral home approximately $8,000 to hold services for their loved one, the family only had to pay $400. The group collects specific items, such as furniture and basic clothing, for newborn children, and a food bank receives donations of non-perishables.

"We had a year when a family lost their home due to fire, and so we provided food for them," Miranda said. Most of the time, people use the bank as a one-time occurrence. Yet Miranda stresses that if people do need ongoing help with food, then the Brigade will provide resources from food banks and food drives.

As a food bank is for FIU faculty, staff and retirees, in cases of emergency, students may also receive help through the student's council.

Donations are accepted throughout the year. During the holiday period, the donations exceeded the expectations. "We tried our best to spread the word out there and ask people to donate food, and they were very, very generous for the holidays," Miranda said. "We received tons of donations from other employees wanting to help other fellow employee." According to Fernandez, in its two years of existence, the TLC Brigade, lead by chair Raul Moncarz and co-chair Rosenberg, helped more than 500 people, including victims of natural disas- ters in Haiti, Chile, China and Japan.

"[TLC Brigade] is one little thing that at least we can do for each other," Miranda said.