

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Holland Home Volunteer Project
- Paid Summer Internship
- Financial Seminar Wrap-up
- Textbook Savings

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# The Acquisition

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## SSS Gives Back for the Holidays

This holiday season, the peer mentors in Student Support Services wanted to find a volunteer project that our students could get involved in. The mentors chose to contact nearby Holland Home and see how we could best assist and serve them.

Through conversations with Mary Scramlin, the volunteer coordinator, we learned that they would be traveling to Meijer Gardens to see the *Christmas and Holiday Traditions* exhibit, which highlights trees and displays depicting holiday celebrations from over 40 countries across the world.

"All the different themed Christmas trees kind of stood out in their own way. It was interesting to see how each reflected a different culture around the world using things they are best known for," said sophomore Annabel Wiley.

Our mentors were eager to work with Holland Homes on this project and were hoping for a massive volunteer effort to further the campus's 125,000 Acts of Aquinas initiative. However, due to limited sign-ups,



Catherine Biewer, Yasmeen Ahmed, and Annabel Wiley take a moment from volunteering with Holland Home at Meijer Gardens for a group photo.

Scramlin only needed three volunteers. An e-mail request generated ten SSS students willing to help out, with Wiley, and freshmen Yasmeen Ahmed and Catherine Biewer being the first to respond.

Wiley jumped at the chance to help others during the holidays. "Going to Meijer Gardens was a great opportunity, especially with all the tree and other decorations they have up. And it's always nice to be able to do something nice for someone ... and knowing you're the reason they're happy," Wiley said.

The trio helped push Holland Home residents in wheelchairs

through the various displays and talked with them about their own traditions, and just connected with them during their time at Meijer Gardens.

That connection was something that all three volunteers noted after the trip. Ahmed and her resident really hit it off during the visit.

"I could tell the lady I was pushing in the wheelchair was having a good time. She talked to me about the exhibits as well as her family and her life. That really made me feel good because not only was I helping give her the opportunity to go out and enjoy

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# Creative Strategies for Saving Money



Students listen to a savings presentation by PNC Bank.

The third and final financial literacy workshop presented by Student Support Services for the Fall took place in mid-November. The theme of the day was savings. So, it was only fitting that students were given not one, but two workshops to help teach them better methods of savings.

The first event, a lunch-and-learn session on providing students with strategies for short-and-long term savings plans was led by managers from local PNC Bank branches.

They spent their time addressing the thirteen students who attended on why it is important to start a savings plan, how compounded interest works, and provided them with several options

to help them start preparing for financial issues after college.

Freshman Louis Gonzales definitely took the lessons to heart. "I learned it's important to start saving now, no matter

how little you start off with, because it adds up over the years," he said.

Later that afternoon, in the library, SSS Program Specialist LaShondra McMillian and Diversity Initiatives Director Marnika Brown co-taught a workshop on extreme couponing. They led 18 students on a fast-paced, fun learning experience on how they can save lots of money through coupons. For students living on their own off-campus, this was an especially beneficial program.



Marnika Brown leads a seminar on couponing.

"I realized that in a few months I am going to be on my own, and that budgeting is going to be really important," said sophomore Chelsea Sedlecky. "I really liked how Marnika and LaShondra used real life experiences to explain some of the reasons they started using coupons."

Students who missed our seminars or would like to learn more, please visit our web page and click on the financial literacy link under the 'Links' page where you can use the free Cash-Course program. This will allow you to learn more about budgeting, saving, and eliminating debt, both for during college and for after you graduate, at your own pace.

Remember to 'like' us on Facebook. Search "AQ Student Support Services" to see our page.

## Mentors share with SSS freshmen

Freshmen SSS students found exam cram week to be a little more pleasant thanks to the work of elves in the Student Support Services' office.

Well, not elves exactly, but the peer mentors went to area businesses and departments on campus to provide special

goodie bags to help the freshmen survive their first exam cram. Inside some bags were coupons for free subs at nearby Jimmy Johns, free breakfasts at Brandywine, and Subway offered coupons for \$1 breakfast muffin melts.

The bags also contained

some brain food for exams, such as granola bars, gummy snacks, and other trinkets. If you were unable to pick up your bag from your peer mentor, please see June Stevenson in the SSS main office.

# Paid Summer Internship for Future Doctors

If you are interested in becoming a medical doctor or researcher, the University of Michigan has a great opportunity you do not want to miss.

The University of Michigan's Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) is offering a ten-week, paid summer internship for undergraduate students who are potentially interested in obtaining a combined MD/PhD degree to focus on academic research on medicines dealing with human diseases.

The internship will pay students

\$4,200 and provide housing, but students must pay for their own meals.

Other program expectations include performing full-time research in a faculty laboratory, attending weekly luncheon presentations given by faculty, obtain clinical exposure opportunities by shadowing physicians, attending a two-day retreat in Toledo, and attending a formal MCAT preparation class taught by the Kaplan Review Center.

This opportunity is available spe-

cifically for students who are from low-income families or from cultural and geographic areas underrepresented in the sciences.

Students must have a 3.0 GPA, have completed an organic chemistry lab class or a biology lab course, and not be applying to medical or graduate school for 2012.

For more information, please visit their website: <http://www.med.umich.edu/medschool/mstp/>. Please see your program specialist if you're interested in applying.

If you have any wonderful ideas for a cultural event this Spring, please see or e-mail Jill Straub.

## Alternative Textbook Strategies

Before you know it, the holidays will be over, a new year will have begun, and classes will begin anew. And, as the new semester greets us, so does a new season of textbook shopping. The prices for textbooks seem to rise each semester but investing careful thought into how and where you buy the textbooks can help alleviate some of the cost:

### Buy used

**Buy international**—often, textbooks will have an international version. Sometimes, they will have a different cover, but the content is the same and cheaper.

### Use an older edition.

**Check out local libraries**—look at AQ's library to see if there is a textbook put on reserve. If you don't see one there, visit a local library, especially an academic library.

Often, they have a strong collection of resources that are extremely useful for your research.

**Become an Amazon Student**—Amazon.com offers a free membership program that gives college students six months of FREE Two-Day Shipping and email alerts for textbook discounts. All you need to become a member is a .edu email address.

### Buy textbooks from the following websites:

Barnes and Noble  
[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

Amazon [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Alibris <http://www.alibris.com/books/textbooks>

ValoreBooks <http://www.valorebooks.com/>

Ebay [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

Half.com <http://www.half.ebay.com/textbooks>

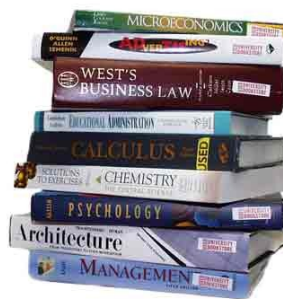
Chegg <http://www.chegg.com/>

When purchasing from the above websites, you can usually buy the book new or from one of the website's registered sellers.

You can also rent the textbooks, and at some sites books can actually be bought back.

Chegg.com even offers a few unique features, including e-textbooks and "Read While You Wait."

So, try using these tips and make purchasing your textbooks easier on yourself—all it takes is a little thought and planning!





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**AQ We Believe.**

If you would like to schedule an appointment to speak with any of our program specialists, please feel free to do so. We are excited to serve you.

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# SSS Gives Back for the Holidays

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something, I was also giving her someone to talk to," Ahmed said.

For Biewer, the experience was more than just a short-term way to help others. Through this volunteer effort, she also took something away from this experience that was extremely impactful.

"There was a moment right before we

were done touring, when one of the ladies told us about how she wanted to do so much more, but now couldn't. It hit me really hard, the idea that I should do things now, and not wait. It was a great learning moment," Biewer said.

The other two volunteers also echoed similar statements about what an amazing experience they had, and how they loved

brightening someone else's day.

This was a fabulous outreach effort that was completely coordinated by our peer mentors, and we hope to continue this partnership with Holland Home as well as seek out other opportunities for more students to get involved in service. So, please look for additional events this Spring.



Annabel Wiley and Yasmeen Ahmed travel through the greenhouse.



Annabel Wiley maneuvers through an exhibit.