Fearless: Ben Litwin

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Fearless: Ben Litwin

Abstract
Volunteering with different groups and organizations through Alpha Phi Omega, creating spaces for religious expression at the college, and interning at a coalition to serve low-income housing families, Ben Litwin ’14 fearlessly promotes social change on and off campus. [excerpt]

Keywords
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Disciplines
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Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

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Volunteering with different groups and organizations through Alpha Phi Omega, creating spaces for religious expression at the college, and interning at a coalition to serve low-income housing families, Ben Litwin ’14 fearlessly promotes social change on and off campus.

This summer, Ben participated in an internship program at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington D.C., where he served as one of 30 students from around the country, working to change policies related to low-income housing. Ben worked as an assistant to the professionals in the Religious Action Center (RAC), an organization that has served the Washington D.C. area for 50 years and encouraged the Reform Jewish community to participate in legislation and social reform efforts.

While the RAC serves a variety of communities, Ben was working specifically with the National Low Income Housing Coalition to “advocate change in the tax code to be able to lower people’s taxes while increasing revenue to support housing projects for low income families.”
On campus, Ben fearlessly promotes not only public service as a member of ΑΦΩ, the college's service fraternity, but also celebrates and spreads awareness on campus for Jewish traditions as one of the co-presidents of the Hillel club. “During my first year here,” Ben says, “we had a Hillel club—it existed—but it wasn’t very involved and did have a lot of activities.”

But that started to change when Ben began organizing Friday night services every month. He soon assumed the responsibility for organizing such events, which led him to become the unofficial president of Hillel. There have been some changes to the club this year since hiring Jenny Dorman to consistently run and organize the group, but Ben and his co-president maintain many responsibilities.

This month has been busy for Ben as the beginning of the semester coincides with the Jewish High Holidays. To celebrate Rosh Hashanah last week, the club organized services with apples and honey, traditional foods eaten to celebrate a sweet new year, and this evening marks the beginning of Yom Kippur.

Tonight and tomorrow in celebration of Yom Kippur, Ben and the Hillel club have organized several events for anyone interested in being involved. “We’re having Kol Nidre services tonight to start Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) which will include services tomorrow morning, a text study in Hillel House in the afternoon, and a break-the-fast meal in Hillel house tomorrow for dinner.”

Whether promoting social change in Washington D.C., volunteering on campus, or organizing opportunities for religious expression on campus, Ben Litwin fearlessly inspires those around him to serve the community.

http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2013/09/13/fearless-ben-litwin/