



A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN- MADISON SINCE 1907

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Fall 2009

STUDENT COUNCIL DEBUTS LEADERSHIP

By Sarah Iliff,
Chaplain Intern

Chaplain Intern Tracy Nolan has headed off to seminary at McCormick in Chicago, and two new interns have joined the Pres House staff: Sarah Iliff and Christy Strickland.

On a rainy weekend in late August, the new Pres House Student Council met for their first retreat. The house on Lake Delton provided an excellent atmosphere to rejoin after the summer. The retreat included good conversations, thoughtful reflections and fun fellowship, but one purpose of the retreat was to ask and start answering, “What is the Pres House Student Council?”

A group of eleven students makes up the brand-new Pres House Student Council. This student leadership team was developed out of the 2009 Pres House Strategic Plan as a way to expand student leadership opportunities. Each individual brings gifts and talents into Pres House. As a group, they are dedicated student leaders who will continue to form their identity over the next year. The starting vision of the Pres House Student council was to embrace change, embrace risk, embrace the campus, and welcome all. They agreed that they want to expand on outreach and leadership.

Over the past few months
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Alison Crane traveled to Guatemala in January 2008 on a service trip with another Pres House member and Madison’s Covenant Presbyterian Church. She plans to return to Guatemala in January 2010.

PRES HOUSE EMBRACES CHANGE AND TRANSFORMS A MEMBER

By Alison Crane

Ms. Crane started as an occasional freshman worshiper at Pres House in the fall of 2006. Today, a senior, she is on the executive committee of the Pres House Board of Directors.

For those of you who have ventured out of your home in the past few weeks—or even looked out the window—it has probably become clear to you that a season of change is

upon us. Fall has arrived, school has started, trees are exploding in color, and those lazy summer afternoons have faded into chilly, blustery days. The UW-Madison community is full-swing into the semester and Pres House is filled with students attending worship, small groups, the study lounge, and more. It is unmistakably a time of change.

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STUDENT COUNCIL SHAPES MINISTRY

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the council has answered many questions that impact Pres House greatly. For example, it established the small groups for the fall semester, decided where to go for the Spring Break service trip (South Dakota), planned ways to reach out to other students, and selected volunteer service dates and projects for the community.

Pres House values student opinions and leadership highly. With the blessing of the staff and the Board of Directors, the Student Council has been empowered to shape the ministry programs of Pres House.



The Council is designed to let students have a significant voice in the direction of Pres House as well as be a space for students to help each other turn ideas into reality: Top row (L-R): Pastor Mark Elsdon, Ken Huxtable, Maggie Wright, Michael Kling, Travis Serebin, Jonathan Reid. Middle row: Intern Christy Strickland, Diane O'Brien, Alicia Powers, Cody Hanson. Front row: Alison Crane, Karen Fields, and Intern Sarah Illif. Junhwa Kim is not pictured.

PRES HOUSE HELPED CRANE LEARN TO APPRECAITE AND VALUE CHANGE

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I must admit that change is not something to which I am particularly receptive. I like the comfort of stability and will do most anything to maintain it. I don't like to make sudden moves, and I certainly can't come to a decision without agonizing over *all* of the possibilities, much to the chagrin of, say, the waiter taking my order. However, over the years I have come to accept changes more easily, and my time at Pres House has shown me how exciting change can be.

Change is something that Pres House welcomes with wide-open arms. It is a cornerstone upon which this community is built. Change is not merely an unspoken, understood idea—it is physically documented as one of the four Pres House Principles, which reads, "We embrace change." That is not only a powerful and bold statement, but also one that reflects the very existence of this church.

This year alone has brought many new faces and experiences. Over the summer we said goodbye to our music director, chaplain intern, and fund development manager, but are now blessed with the gifts of four new individuals: Jonathan Overby (minister of music), Mary Rathbun

(communications coordinator), Sarah Illif (chaplain intern), and Christy Strickland (chaplain intern). This year has also marked the birth of the Pres House Council, a collection of eleven students and the two interns, that makes decisions about activities such as small groups, service opportunities, social gatherings, and more.

As I reflected upon all of the change that Pres House has witnessed, I paused to contemplate the change Pres House has seen in me.

CHANGE IS SOMETHING THAT PRES HOUSE WELCOMES WITH WIDE-OPEN ARMS. IT IS A CORNERSTONE UPON WHICH THIS COMMUNITY IS BUILT.

This fall is the fourth and last fall for me here in Madison. It's hard to believe that more than three years ago I arrived at UW-Madison to look for my niche on campus. As a freshman, I was both excited and a bit dazed. I eagerly explored the campus in search of activities and places to belong, but at the same time I savored my anonymity in a school of 40,000 students. Born and raised a Presbyterian, I wanted to continue exploring my faith, so one fall day I wandered

into Pres House. I was greeted with an exceptionally warm welcome and a close-knit community that, in a way, I was a bit unprepared for. In the beginning, I attended worship semi-regularly and appeared at one or two events, but voluntarily remained on the periphery of the community. As the year went on, I began staffing the building once a week and came most Sundays, but still found myself unwilling to lose my anonymity and commit to joining this community.

Sophomore year arrived and I returned to Pres House with a renewed vigor to become a part of and enjoy such a unique community. I attended worship regularly, staffed the building, went on Fall Retreat, volunteered at Pres House and in the community, and joined in a few fellowship events. In January, I joined another Pres House member and Covenant Presbyterian Church on an annual service trip to Guatemala. Pres House offered me not just a place to worship, but a place to explore and grow in my faith. I built close relationships with other students and staff and came to appreciate my friends at Pres House more than ever. I finally realized that I had found a community I wanted to belong to that had welcomed me all along.

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Crane - Continued from page 2

As junior year came and went, I found myself even more engaged at Pres House. In July, I became a member of the Board of Directors and served on the programming committee. The opportunity to serve on the Board as a student has been infinitely interesting and very fulfilling. I continued to engage myself in faith, social, and service activities, and often helped to host the study lounge or organize and set up events. Enamored with Guatemala and my friends there, I returned once again.

This year is another exciting year to be at Pres House. I am blessed to be surrounded by a wonderful community that plays such an important role in my life. I look forward to

another trip to Guatemala this January and all of the other activities Pres House has to offer. As I continue to serve on the board and the Pres House council, I continue to be able to make change happen here at Pres House.

Despite my frequent internal battles with change, I must always remind myself that the only thing consistent in life is change. For every change I resist that brings difficulties, I reject one that brings joy. As I look back on these past few years, I can see what a big impact Pres House has had on my time here. Just as Pres House has evolved into a dynamic and ebullient community, so too have I developed into a more vibrant person than I was three years ago. These changes have been worth not just enduring, but worth celebrating.

OVERBY REVIVES PRES HOUSE CHOIR



Pres House Music Director Jonathan Overby conducts and Pres House Pianist Michael Hillestad accompanies the Pres House Choir's first performance. (L-R) Sara Pridham, Sarah Iliff, Jonathan Reid, Benjamin Fortin, and Trajan McGill.

Pres House is thrilled to announce the arrival of our new Minister of Music/Music Director, Jonathan Overby. Jonathan brings a wealth of experience and talent with both directing and singing in traditional, gospel, folk and world music styles. He is the host of "Higher Ground," a radio show highlighting world music with African roots that airs weekly on Wisconsin Public Radio.

Jonathan has already been hard at work significantly expanding the Pres House music program. Part of

this expansion is the revival of a Pres House Choir. This fledgling student choir sang for the first time on Sept. 27. They plan on singing at Sunday worship once per month initially and hope to grow in size and involvement from there.

The first group of students to participate includes Sara Pridham, a senior at UW-Madison. Sara is the granddaughter of Walter and Karen (Frick) Pridham who sang in the Pres House Choir in the 1950s.

Support Pres House

Throughout this newsletter you have read about the exciting activities happening at Pres House. Ministry at Pres House is only possible through generous donations by alumni, friends, and churches.

Please give today by using the enclosed envelope or send your contributions to Pres House at 731 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. You can also give online at www.pres-house.org/donate.

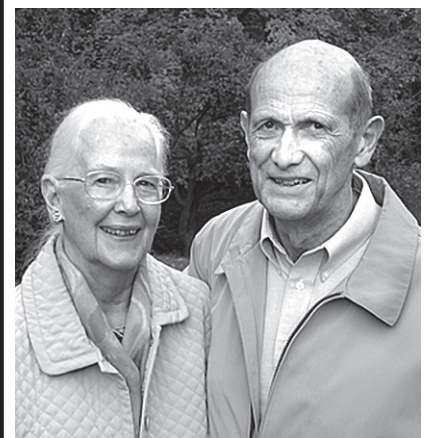
KEEP THE MUSIC ALIVE

There is no telling how or how long joining the Pres House Choir could influence your life.

Alyce Casper (BS' 48) and Paul Andrus (BPH' 46) met in the Pres House Choir and, Alyce said, "We have been singing ever since."

On Sept. 11, 1948, Doc Lower married them in the Pres House chapel and now, more than 60 years later, Alyce and Paul Andrus have named Pres House in their estate plan.

Please join the Andruses as members of the Cecil and Janice Lower Legacy Society by remembering Pres House in your will or estate plan. For more information contact Pres House at 608-257-1030.





The new academic year kicked off with a number of events this fall, including this Friday night bonfire at Picnic Point.

Photo by Pres House member Haley Christensen

PRES HOUSE SEEKS TO BE A SPIRITUAL HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CAMPUS. IN KEEPING WITH THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF HOSPITALITY, PRES HOUSE IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING A RELIGIOUS CENTER AND HIGH QUALITY STUDENT HOUSING TO PROMOTE THE SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL GROWTH OF RESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY. PRES HOUSE IS A MINISTRY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S.A., AND WELCOMES INDIVIDUALS OF EVERY PERSPECTIVE AND BACKGROUND.

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