Students contribute to Haitian relief efforts

By Julia Turner
Contributing Writer

Tuesday, Jan. 12, was a horrific day in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Late that afternoon, an earthquake of magnitude 7.0 hit the city and left it in complete devastation.

The physical damage was immense and the death toll is still being determined as families wait in dread for workers to sort through the rubble. All around the world, people’s eyes turned to the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, and the response has been incredible. Even on Tech’s own campus, students have organized a way to send the country relief.

Gaelle Belhseine, first-year IAMl, is a first generation Haitian-American student here at Tech. For Belhseine, the earthquake was and is really personal as some of her family still live in Haiti. After the quake hit, she immediately “wanted to help in any way possible,” Belhseine said, and she started drawing to some of her friends about ways to do so.

Reginald Liger, fourth-year EE, is also a Haitian student that still has family in Haiti. Before the earthquake, he was already a member of the Caribbean Students Association (CaribSA) and turned to them for support and ideas.

“They wanted to do a relief effort also so they gladly spearheaded this effort with me,” Liger said.

Through mutual friends, Belhseine and Liger met to discuss ways to get a relief effort started. Together, the two have started Angels for Haiti group as a branch of CaribSA.

They, along with a group of other interested students, made a plan for collecting monetary and itemized aid for Haiti on campus. They have put boxes in all residence hall offices, held a candle lit vigil on Jan. 14 for the incident and are collecting money at all home basketball games as well as on Skiles Walkway from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. everyday.

Many students and faculty attended the vigil that featured students sharing thoughts, songs and reciting poetry about the incident. President Peterson was also on hand to say a few words about the tragedy.

According to Belhseine, they have been met with an overwhelming response with over 200 volunteers as a part of Angels for Haiti now.

“It’s exciting to see so many people coming out to help,” Belhseine said.

“The Georgia Tech community wanted to help Haiti, so their support came in droves,” Liger said.

The response from administration and other services has been tremendously well.

“Thank you to all students and faculty for all your help and donations,” Belhseine said. She explained how both the Housing and Athletic departments have been extremely accommodating for the organization as well as the many off-campus and on-campus initiatives.

CareerEco gives students, employers more options

By Becca Belka
Contributing Writer

Georgia Tech Career Services will be partnering with CareerEco to hold a virtual career fair on Feb. 2-4.

CareerEco provides a green alternative to traditional career fairs by cutting down on the resources that are used by students and employers to meet. The program hopes to reduce the financial, time and carbon waste that can be associated with employers finding quality candidates.

Since CareerEco’s founding, it has been successfully connecting job seekers with employers through not only its signature virtual career fairs, but through standard job postings.

After CareerEco’s launch at Tech, virtual career fairs (VCF) are becoming more popular on campuses due to their win-win advantages for both job seekers and employers.

“They offer flexibility in terms of the hours when a student can connect to employers without ‘dressing up’ for the job search until there is serious interest in the jobseeker by a prospective employer. Also VCF’s prevent unnecessary travel by recruiters and an overall reduction in waste of paper/trinkets/shipping by employers which makes it a more sustainable way to recruit,” said CareerEco President and CEO, Gayle Oliver-Plath.

These advantages are attracting top employers such as Google, Sprint and JP Morgan/Chase, in addition to entrepreneurial companies, and more companies are registering each day. Being virtual allows employers to participate from their office, connecting more recruiters to Tech than ever before.

The VCF is open to all majors and years offering full-time positions, internships and co-ops. From there, students are able to research prospective employers, submit their resume and even participate in live chat rooms with various companies of their choice.

Companies also have the option to use a live face-to-face video chat option to interview more serious candidates through CareerEco.

With trends moving more and more toward virtual hiring, the VCF looks to be a sure way to get ahead of the competition. Attending a VCF allows job seekers to research the company while corresponding with them making you appear as a more informed and prepared contender.

CareerEco is also a great resource for those students looking for sustainable jobs as many green employers utilize the service.

Just as CareerEco can help employers maximize their resources utilized in finding employees, students also greatly benefit from the fact that they do not have to waste the time walking around career fairs talking to employers that may not be interested in them. With the VCF there is more of a direct line of communication.

As Oliver-Plath said, “Recruiters are never impressed with an uninformated job seeker.”

When asked to give advice for job seekers, Oliver-Plath said, “Be proactive and research the companies that interest you, and then formulate some good questions about the company besides, ‘Are you hiring?’ or, ‘What are you hiring for?’ Also, have a few good lines written out about why you think you are going to be a good candidate for the positions that interest you. Prepare to sell yourself because this is how you will stand out.”

For students to attend, they need to register at www.gatech-careereco.com and upload their resume.
Campus MovieFest brings student creations to big screen

By Nancy Thanki Contributing Writer

From Jan. 14 to Jan. 20, Tech students were frantically creating, shooting and editing movies across the campus and city. No, they were not just feeling the urge to produce movies... They were participating in Campus MovieFest, a student movie competition, which can lead to some amazing resources, networking with Hollywood big-wigs and some great prizes.

Campus MovieFest was created in 2001 by four students at Emory University. It has grown to include over 50 schools in the U.S. and St. Andrews University in Scotland. It is now the world’s largest student film festival.

The international finale was held in Hollywood last year. There is a possibility of the event being held in Las Vegas this year. This year’s message is, “This Could Be You” basing the message on their ilm.

Campus MovieFest has a strong and rich history,” Liu said.

Meanwhile, there is a lot of logistical and behind-the-scenes work that goes into making Campus MovieFest work smoothly.

The Student Government Association (SGA) and the Residence Hall Association (RHA) help with the funding and reservation of the Ferst Center and event fees. Judges have to be found, bills have to be written and recruiting has to be done for a team that can organize the festival in the coming years.

The judges consist of an anonymous group of students, faculty and staff from Tech. The judges will base their decisions on content, overall quality, emotional impact and technical excellence.

The awards include Best Picture, Best Drama and Best Comedy. The winners will then move onto the region.

Students participated in the annual Campus MovieFest this year by making movies from Jan. 14-20. The competition was started by four Emory students and now 50 schools around the country compete in it.

Students agreed to have a good time creating their dreams, “said Dan Costas, one of the four founders of Campus MovieFest. The festival is held over the course of a week and is generally scheduled around exams or other big school events. Tech students have been lucky in the past few weeks because Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day has fallen in the middle of competition week thus, participants are able to spend more time on their film.

There were a record number of entries this year according to Qiyu Liu, the president of Campus MovieFest at Tech, with 144 teams that signed up.

“For such a young event, Campus MovieFest has a strong and rich history,” Liu said.

Liu has been a part of Campus MovieFest since 2002. He has seen almost every hiccup that can happen. But he will soon be graduating with his Ph. D and now the search for a replacement will begin.

“I think most students aren’t aware of the immense planning and manpower required to put on Campus MovieFest. Consequent-

ly, few students ever express interest in getting involved with the organization,” Liu said.

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Biggest Loser Competition inspires healthy changes

By Chris Russell
Contributing Writer

Sometimes being a loser is a good thing. In some cases, it might actually win you a competition and a healthier lifestyle to boot.

The Campus Recreation Center (CRC) just began this year’s installment of its annual Biggest Loser Contest. The program is modeled after the hit TV show, “The Biggest Loser,” and is intended to educate participants on a healthy lifestyle and guide them to lose weight and begin to go to the CRC. On the very first day I went to the CRC, I was drinking at the water fountain and I stumbled upon the ad for the Biggest Loser Competition roughly one day before the applications for the program were due, I took the ad as a sign and decided to enroll right away,” said Chang.

Chang lost another 30 pounds, bringing his weight down to 106 lbs. Then he started thinking about the weight back transitioning from college to grad school but, he didn’t want to lose muscle mass. Though Chang won’t be involved in this year’s program, he says that he still keeps in touch with his personal trainer and is planning on participating in a half-marathon that he wants to run. Chang

“Last spring’s program was very successful and we are hoping to build on those successes for this semester’s program. All participants are expected to want to lose 20 pounds, commit 8 hours per week, participate in a half-marathon with him and some of last year’s participants. The program itself is not a commitment to take lightly. Participants are given physical assessment, personal training, nutrition education, a group fitness membership at the CRC, and motivational coaching. Also included in the $175 faculty fee and $200 student fee are seminars on nutrition, a registered dietitian and a seminar presented by doctors from Stamps Health Services.

Participants must also be beginner exercisers and provide proof that they have had at least one physical from a physician in the last year and are physically fit enough to participate in the program.

The Biggest Loser program tries to put fun, motivation, exercise challenges and healthy dietary habits together for the participants. All these play a role in building a healthier lifestyle and sticking with it,” said Wagner.

By the end of the program—in 16 weeks of daily grueling workouts. While the contestants in the CRC competition don’t have to endure quite the same level of intensity as the television contestants, they do still benefit from the comradery and accountability that comes with gaining healthy not only with trainers, but with your peers.

Competition participants are given counseling, training and guidelines and attempt to lose as much weight as possible by the end of the program—in this case, Apr. 16. The competition officially started Jan. 25 and has a duration of 12 weeks.

Though the program is described as a contest, Morgan Wagner, the program’s coordinator, says it’s as much about the journey as it is the end.

“We try to make it more of a program that educates the participants on a healthy lifestyle, healthy habits and knowledge, so that they can be successful and stick with these things after the program is done. Each year we do the program, there is a ‘Biggest Loser’ winner, but for most of the participants, that is not the number one reason they take part in the program,” said Wagner.

The competition, as well as the chance to get in shape with activity logs. Their progress will be regularly monitored via food journals and three group workouts each week)

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In the spring of 2008, the CRC began the Biggest Loser Challenge and lost a total of 25 pounds during the program.

“I reached my heaviest [weight] during my senior year of college. At around that time, my father was diagnosed with type-2 diabetes and hypertension, due in large part to his poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyle. I realized then that I needed to change the way I lived,” said Chang.

“At the beginning of 2008, I made a New Year’s resolution to lose weight and began to go to the CRC. On the very first day I went to the CRC, I was drinking at the water fountain and I stumbled upon the ad for the Biggest Loser Competition roughly one day before the applications for the program were due. I took the ad as a sign and decided to enroll right away,” said Chang.

After the program ended, Chang lost another 30 pounds, bringing his weight down to its all-time low of 106 lbs. He says that though he gained a bit of the weight back transitioning from college to grad school but, he plans on getting his weight down to 105, then building his weight up again with muscle mass.

Though Chang won’t be involved in this year’s program, he still keeps in touch with his personal trainer and is planning on participating in a half-marathon with him and some of last year’s participants.

The program itself is not a commitment to take lightly. Participants are expected to want to lose 20 pounds, commit 8 hours per week to the program (including three group workouts each week) and maintain food journals and activity logs. Their progress will also be regularly monitored via activity logs. Their progress will also be regularly monitored via

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organizations that have contacted them wanting to donate. As the poorest nation in this hemisphere, Haiti was in need of help even before the earthquake. The members of Angels for Haiti are trying to make the program a permanent organization in hopes of providing continuous support.

Once the destruction is cleaned up, it is hypothesized that the country will still require large amounts of support to raise the quality of life for its citizens. Due to its poverty and under-developed infrastructure, getting the support system extended to first year students on into their second year. The results of the task force are the ThinkBig living communities now available to all students who want a chance to interact with faculty outside the classroom and a concerted effort to bring together programs already in place for sophomores across the campus as well as bring in more large scale events and programs.

This latter effort resulted in Eric Tack’s position, Coordinator of Sophomore and Transition Programs, within the Office of Success Programs.

"Tech does a great job retaining students in their freshman year—other universities look to our Freshman Experience program when creating their own—but there is a gap between that experience and the one students have when they return for their second year," said Tack.

Some of the goals of the programs are restoring the sophomore class identity, providing academic support for major selection and changing and finding leadership outlets for sophomores.

The measures Tack and others have adopted thus far for achieving these goals include a monthly sophomore newsletter titled Year 2 @ Tech and this year’s Sophomore Summit. Additionally, the end of this semester is recruitment for a sophomore class council, which will brainstorm new programs and be a voice of advocacy for the class.