

Bonner Today

Create a professional network. Connect with current Bonners. Continue the movement.

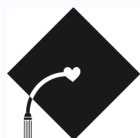
A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 1 - Winter 2011

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Getting Reconnected

Greetings Bonner Alumni! We are pleased to release the first edition of the Bonner Quarterly Alumni Newsletter! As we enter the third decade of the Bonner Foundation, we are excited to reach out to Bonners past and present in new and exciting ways. This quarterly newsletter is only part of our broader Bonner Alumni Initiative. Read on to learn more and join us in exploring the many possibilities.

What is the purpose of the Bonner Alumni Newsletter?

The Bonner Alumni Newsletter will provide our 5,000 alumni with an overview of what is happening within the Bonner Network on a quarterly basis. Through this newsletter and other opportunities, we will begin to "connect the dots" of our alumni around the world,



identifying and highlighting the work and experiences of alumni as they relate to the Bonner Program and its mission. The newsletter will also offer a glimpse into what is going in the current Bonner Network, sharing some of the changes that have taking place over the years and demonstrating the impact that Bonners continue to have around the world.

As our alumni network only continues to grow, it is important that we stay connected and continue to work together in making a positive impact in our communities. Sharing resources, experiences, best practices and

highlighting important information around our network will be beneficial to the growth of Bonners past and present. Through both online communications and local gatherings, we look forward to celebrating our Bonner Alumni who still continue to do service on local and national levels, while also strengthening connections for our personal and professional enrichment.

This is only the beginning...

This is an exciting time for the Bonner Network! This newsletter it is only the beginning of what potentially could be a gateway to many possibilities. I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and will be encouraged and inspired to volunteer your time, efforts and energy, no matter how big or small, in continuing to spread "Bonner Love".

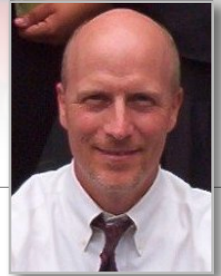
Michael Richardson
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Morehouse College '08
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Bonner: Then and Now

An Introduction from Bonner Foundation President, Robert Hackett



Bonner Alumni, on behalf of the Corella & Bertram F. Bonner Foundation, welcome to the Bonner Alumni Network! As we celebrate twenty years of the program and head into our third decade, we are taking this opportunity to reconnect with the 5,000 people who have graduated from the program. We are hopeful that these connections will provide alumni, current students, and staff with opportunities for meaningful new personal, career- and service-oriented activities.

Those of you who where Bonners in the 1990s were pioneers in creating what has become the largest service-based scholarship program in the country. During that time, your efforts defined what it means to be a Bonner. From you we learned how students can be recruited, trained, and supported over four undergraduate years to develop skills, knowledge, and insights to service effectively.

We also created what we know as the Common Commitments: community building, civic engagement, social justice, diversity, international perspective, and spiritual exploration. These values inform every aspect of the Bonner Network's efforts and grew directly out of our collective experience over those first ten years.

Those of you active with the program last ten years were part of two great transformations that impacted the breadth and depth of our work. First, the Bonner Network grew from the original group of 22 schools to 75 programs in 23 states. Second, your example helped convince institutions to build and improve their programs and campus infrastructures so that every student and faculty on campus can be challenged to engage in community service and service-learning.

Now, we need the help of Bonner Alumni now more than ever. With nearly two-thirds of you working in non-profit and public sector careers and nearly 100% of you engaged in regular community service, we ask for your leadership and involvement to help your alma mater and the whole Bonner Network:

- 1) Recruit the next generation of Bonners Scholars and Leaders;
- 2) Reach out to and mentor one or two of the current group of 3,200 active Bonners as they engage in service, seek summer internships, or take the first steps in their careers near where you live;
- 3) Share your expertise and passion as we seek to build the capacity of the Bonner Network to bring about meaningful change in the world.

Thank you for your continued service and involvement. We know that as Bonner alumni begin to reconnect with each other, current students, and the Bonner community, great things will happen. We look forward to meeting you online and at chapter events in your area!



Beyond Bonner:

Continuing the Service Movement

Photos of students from the 2010 Bonner Summer Leadership Institute and 20th Anniversary Celebration at Berea College in Berea, KY, and the 2010 Bonner Congress Meeting at Washburn University in Topeka, KS.

Being a Bonner provides a distinctive college experience. For many of our current 3,200 Bonners and over 5,000 alumni, the Bonner Program has been a way to meet new friends and mentors, develop a working knowledge of social issues and potential solutions, and interact with the greater campus community in transformational ways.

The true essence of Bonner, however, goes beyond college. Our alumni are a testament to that persevering spirit of service; a recent survey of about half of our alumni indicates that about 65% of them now work in the government and non-profit sectors. Almost all of our alumni have shared that they still engage in community service on a regular basis.

As Bonner graduate, you are part of one of the largest and most historic networks of students engaged in service. Every hour of service, every social issue that you worked on, and every person you touched throughout your service has brought the Bonner vision into sharper focus — a vision that students can become issue experts and community organizers equipped for the real

world and its challenges, that reciprocal campus-community relationships can empower the needy, and that institutions of higher education can transform our communities from the bottom up.

As we have built our capacity over the past twenty years, we have strengthened our impact. With new resources, trainings, and networking opportunities, Bonners are continually taking their service to new levels. Students across the network have been empowered to build the capacities of their service sites through leading innovative projects such as the sustainable development of new programs or initiatives, writing an issue or policy brief, securing crucial resources for the organization, assessing community demographics and statistics related to the organization, and writing an academic thesis that brings experience and issues of justice from the field into the gaze of the academic community, and much more.

Today's Bonners are a core of motivated, enlightened, and engaged students who will go on to influence their communities as you

have done so before them. Current Bonners will soon join you in the movement "beyond Bonner", making the difference as advocates, academics, community organizers, public officials, religious leaders, business executives, teachers, healthcare workers, mothers, fathers, friends, and citizens.

As we look toward the third decade of the Bonner Foundation, we also look back to you. Your service has laid the groundwork for a national student movement of civic engagement and social action that still continues today, and we encourage you to reconnect with your alma mater's program or with a campus program near you.

We celebrate your service and your commitment. Come share it with those who continue the movement today!

Kelly Behrend
Bonner Alumna
Richmond '10
(kelly@bonner.org)



Alumni Survey Findings

In 2010, a third of our alumni reached out to share their story

Earlier this year we kicked off our first large-scale Bonner Alumni Survey. The feedback we received was tremendous and the findings very significant. In the process, we received contact information for over 3000 alumni. A total of 1,054 alumni responded to the survey, for a 32% response rate. Below you can find some of the preliminary findings from our survey:

Profile of Respondents

- represented 24 schools
- are evenly distributed across the 20 years
- women represented 71% of the respondents
- 78% were white, 11% African-American.
- 46% had received MS or MAs and 17% had terminal degrees, with many planning for a terminal degree.



Bonner 20th Anniversary Mural, painted by Bonner staff and students from across the country at the Summer Leadership Institute at Berea College

Key Findings

- Many had done a year of full-time service after graduation:
 - 10% had done a year of service with a faith based group
 - 8% served with AmeriCorps sponsored year-of-service programs
 - 2% worked with Teach for America
- A remarkable 31% work in the government sector and 34% in the nonprofit sector.
- The largest employment group is teachers (24%)
- 33% responded that the Bonner Program gave them advantage in finding a job and/or influenced the career they chose.
- 90% voted in the last November election (much higher than the national average for their age group).
- 78% had volunteered in the last 12 months.
- 50% attended in the last year a public meeting in which there was discussion of community affairs and worked with others to fix or improve their neighborhood.
- Aspects of college that most contributed to their professional identity and career goals were academic coursework, long term service, work in the community, and internships.
- Reflection experiences in college were mostly likely to help them clarify personal values and understand diverse perspectives, from a list of 10 outcomes.

Alumni Profiles

How three alumni have leveraged their Bonner experience

Michael J. Brewer

Morehouse College '09

What is one of your favorite Bonner memories?

The brotherhood on campus between Men of Morehouse is strong, and for my Bonner class and me that bond was intensified through our shared Bonner and service experience. Any time we were together was an occasion to remember, but our Bonner service trip with Habitat for Humanity in Destin, FL after our freshman year stands out vividly -- I've never had so much fun doing manual labor, and I felt so rewarded to know that I helped contribute to the home and future of a deserving family. Equally memorable is my time at my service site, Jumpstart Atlanta, which provided early childhood education to low-income 3-5 year olds. Working with children is something I never thought I'd do, but it made me appreciate to impact of a positive, educational influence in the early stages of a child's life. Plus, our Corps of members were unforgettable -- I'm still good friends with a lot of the people I met in that program.

What kind of work have you been involved with since leaving college?

Since graduating with a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science from Morehouse, I've worked mostly in the political and non-profit sector. My progressive principles and passion for public service have led me to several state and local electoral campaigns with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, Georgia State Senator Vincent Fort, Georgia State Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan and the Democratic Party of Georgia, and policy-driven non-profits such as the Black Alliance of Education Options, a national school choice organization, and Georgia Equality, a statewide LGBT advocacy organization. Currently, I serve as Chief-of-Staff to Georgia State Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan (D-Austell), where I manage her legislative office and help implement her legislative agenda for the people of Georgia's 39th House District.



Where/how do you see the Bonners impacting the future?

Bonner alum are gifted with one of the most unique education experiences available to undergraduates -- our scholastic education is optimized and more fulsome because its conjoined with a service curriculum. Bonners are equipped with the knowledge, skill and experience to change the world for the better for its most vulnerable people and toxic issues because we've been trained to see how we can use our talents to serve others and community. In whatever avenue we pursue, Bonners leave a mark because we are committed to service -- that never turns off.

Hunter Goodman

Rhodes College '99



What is one of your favorite Bonner memories?

Today, many people comment on the strength of my handshake. I simply smile and say "Mrs. Bonner taught me that." Mrs. Bonner was a petite woman in stature but large in spirit. Many Bonners approached her expecting a dainty handshake but instead found one full of strength and confidence. This small act reminded me that every first impression sends a message!

Mrs. Bonner taught me many valuable lessons. I was very fortunate as a student and staff member to meet Mrs. Bonner. Whether driving Mrs. Bonner's car on one occasion when an extra driver was needed, taking Mrs. Bonner to a baseball game in South Carolina, or watching her keen interest in each Bonner Scholar at a student reception in her home, I got small glimpse into the Bonners' passion and understanding in the value of education.

What kind of work have you been involved with since leaving college?

I have worked in positions both in higher education and non-profit leadership that focus on connecting academic, education, and community. After graduation, I served as coordinator of the Bonner Scholars Program at Wofford College. While there I continued to practice my interest in and love for student affairs and civic engagement work. Three years later at the University of Southern Mississippi, I directed the Office of Community Service Learning which is both the volunteer clearinghouse for the community and service-learning hub for the campus. For the past five years, I have served as the Executive Director of Arkansas Coalition for Excellence (ACE): Arkansas' association of non-profits. As the state-wide convener and connector of charitable non-profits, ACE champions nonprofit best practices, builds a strong public policy voice through advocacy and research, and unites non-profits for opportunities to work together. My work now ranges from non-profit administration and management to fundraising and program development.

How has the Bonner Program impacted your life?

The Bonner Program was a great experience for me as I went through college. It helped shaped my perspective on how I view the world and what my role is as a citizen. By gaining knowledge of the social injustices that occur throughout the world and serving as a Bonner Scholar, I realized that I have a true passion for service and that I can always contribute back to the community. Bonner has helped shaped my career interests as well as provide me with the necessary experience of working in the non-profit sector serving various organizations and programs. The people that I have met through the Bonner Program have also been some of the most unique individuals that I have come across in my life and I have built strong relationships with many of them. In all, Bonner was a great experience and life changing in many ways.

Where/how do you see the Bonners impacting the future?

Bonner Scholars have tremendous potential to impact the future. Bonner Scholars impact all aspects of life through their time, talent, and experience. I believe that we are all most effective when we work together.

Jerome Goings Oberlin College '10

What is one of your favorite Bonner memories?

One of my best Bonner memories was during my senior year when we visited schools with Bonner Programs to make a new Common Commitments video. Two other Oberlin senior interns and I took a road trip, visiting fourteen colleges and the Bonner Foundation to interview students, administrators, and service partners about the value of the Common Commitments and what they mean to each individual. The trip was eight days long! We took film footage the whole way, and we created a compendium of videos (which you can find on the Bonner channel on YouTube). We were able to meet so many Bonners at these schools; hearing these stories about what Bonner and community service meant to them was very enriching. Bonners from all the schools accepted us with open arms, and I really felt the whole Bonner Love thing too. This trip really made me reflect on my experience as a Bonner and changed my outlook on what the Bonner Program really stands for and means. It was a great experience and a trip that I will never forget.



What kind of work have you been involved with since leaving college?

I am currently serving as a full-time Bonner AmeriCorps member for the Rutgers Future Scholars Program in New Brunswick, NJ. Since my graduation from Oberlin College in May of 2010, I have continued my work in the non-profit sector as a grant writer for the Patrick Kelley Youth Foundation in Las Vegas, NV and now as an AmeriCorps member serving in New Jersey, addressing college access issues. I am looking to gain as much experience as I can before I go back to school in the hopes of attaining an M.B.A. in non-profit management in a few years from now. My ultimate goal is to run my own non-profit organization focused on youth development and education.

How has the Bonner Program impacted your life?

The Bonner Program was a great experience for me as I went through college. It shaped my perspective on how I view the world and what my role is as a citizen. By gaining knowledge of the social injustices that occur across the world and serving as a Bonner Scholar, I realized that I have a true passion for service and that I can always contribute back to the community. Bonner has helped shaped my career interests as well as provide me with the necessary experience of working in the non-profit sector serving various organizations and programs. The people that I have met through the Bonner Program have also been some of the most unique individuals that I have ever met and I have built strong relationships with many of them. In all, Bonner was a great experience and life changing in many ways.

Where/how do you see the Bonners impacting the future?

Bonner Alumni can be very useful for current Bonners by sharing their stories and experiences with them and taking on mentor type roles for local Bonners. Bonners are very diverse in so many ways and this collective network of different experiences is very unique in comparison to what other programs and organizations have to offer. As educated individuals, Bonner Alumni have academic backgrounds and service experiences that can really help current Bonners prepare for life after college.

I would like the opportunity to network and connect with other alumni living in my region. I also think it would be great to have Alumni speak as panelists at Bonner events like Summer Leadership Institute and to reach out to alumni near Bonner schools to meet and speak with students about their experiences as a Bonner and life after college. Establishing communication within the network is important; let's do it!

Alumni Network Vision & Outcomes

The Bonner Network is continually expanding, reaching nearly 10,000 alumni and current Bonners in the coming year. Through strengthening relationships among our Bonners past and present, there is limitless potential in the professional and personal enrichment that could be facilitated through a formalized Bonner Alumni Network. Such a network would enable alumni to share their experiences by connecting with other former and current Bonner students through professional development, service and civic engagement. This vision's desirable outcomes are to:

- Create a professional network, providing career pathways for current and former Bonner students
- Connect with current Bonners through mentoring and civic engagement
- Continue the Bonner Service movement from college service beyond

Contact Information

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Now What?

Log on to the Bonner Alumni Network Wiki for more information and to find or establish a Bonner chapter near you:

[http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/
Bonner-Alumni-Network](http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/Bonner-Alumni-Network)

Staying Connected

Join us online to learn more about opportunities in your area!



Photo from a recent Bonner Alumni event with the Austin, TX chapter. Pictured from left to right: Katie Grills (Rhodes), Denise Baxindine (Richmond), and Molly Powers (Rhodes).

Reconnect with a Bonner Program Near You

Get involved by supporting the Bonner Programs closest to your local area. All Bonner Programs have ongoing service events and workshops in which Alumni can participate. Serving with current Bonners, participating in and facilitating workshops and trainings, and recruiting and mentoring new Bonners are just a few ways that you can invest in the current Bonner Network. Log on to the Bonner Alumni Network Wiki (<http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/Bonner-alumni-Network>) to find the campus administrators for a program near you. You can also connect with them on [LinkedIn](#), a great professional networking tool.

Sign Up for the Alumni Listserv

If you're not sure about making a commitment but still want to be in the loop of current Alumni news and activities going on in your area, join our Email Listserv and Alumni Directory. Through periodic communication, the Bonner Foundation, local alumni chapters, and Bonner coordinators and directors can keep you up to date on all the opportunities available to you. Through the listserv and directory, you will also be able to receive the quarterly Bonner Alumni Newsletter and stay informed on current Alumni news.

Start an Alumni Chapter in Your Area

One way to stay connected is through organizing a Bonner Alumni Chapter in your local area. This can start with just a social gathering, like dinner together! With an alumni chapter you can plan a variety of events from social gatherings to service events, continuing where you left off as Bonners. You will be able to connect with alumni from all across the network that are in your local area and interact with Bonner Programs closest to you. If you are interested in doing so, please contact Michael Richardson at mrichardson@bonner.org.

Join Bonner Social Networks

The Bonner Network has a prominent presence online through a variety of social media tools. This helps our alumni, students, and staff stay connected in familiar, easy online platforms.

- Join our [Facebook](#) group (National Bonner Program Alumni) and "Like" our Bonner Network fan page (Bonner Network) to get connected with Bonners from around the country.
- Find our [LinkedIn](#) group page (Bonner Network) to make professional connections with Bonners past and present.
- Check out our [Blog](#) for news, reflections, and professional opportunities from staff and students from around the network (or sign up to be a blogger yourself!) www.bonnernetwork.posterous.com
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) @BonnerNetwork for tweets on news and conferences across the country.

