

# RYMONDA DAVIS: HER OWN PLACE AT THE TABLE

**Rymonda Davis** is seizing every opportunity she can. Coming to school in Kansas may have been a culture shock for this native Texan, but she is already making huge strides.

Although she was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Rymonda has known that she wanted to attend Kansas State since her junior year of high school. Rymonda told her mom this, and despite her hesitancy, Rymonda's mother agreed to table the idea until later. It would be Rymonda's determination that would win out.

After a campus visit, Rymonda knew that Kansas State



**Rymonda Davis** on a study break outside Hale Library

was the place for her, because she felt that she had more opportunities here than anywhere else: "The Developing Scholars Program is one of the main reasons I came to K-State, because it is rare for an undergraduate student to be able to work with a professor

doing scholarly research. DSP is a huge opportunity and it definitely was a deciding factor in choosing a university."

Rymonda was also selected as a recipient of the Edgerley-Franklin Urban Leadership Scholarship. While describing the Edgerley-Franklin selection process, Rymonda recalls that she was incredibly nervous and intimidated. "During the interview, they all seemed interested in what I was saying, but I felt like I had no business sitting at a table with people who had accomplished so many amazing things." However, Rymonda impressed the committee

and became one of five students to receive the Edgerley-Franklin Scholarship. Rymonda says that being in the first group of Edgerley-Franklin Scholars gives her a real sense of accomplishment and privilege, but she knows that there are expectations for her and her fellow Edgerley-Franklin Scholars.

Rymonda is majoring in pre-journalism with a minor in non-profit leadership. Rymonda is working with **Dr. M.J. Morgan** of the History Department for her DSP project, which has become affectionately known as *The Grandmother Project*. Rymonda gets a first-hand look at history by interviewing older African-American women in the Manhattan community. Rymonda has always had close relationships with the women in her family, but she is finding out that the relationships that existed between women in the 1920's were different. Rymonda told of one interviewee who "was not really able to develop a close relationship with her grandmother, but there was admiration and respect in her voice when she talked about her."

The Grandmother Project grew out of the work being done through the Kansas State History Department's study of the lost town of Broughton, Kansas. That study, also a DSP research project, was the pilot program for what is now Kansas State's Chapman Center for Rural Studies. The focus of the Chapman Center will be the study of Kansas' rural communities and their history. Dr. Morgan said that Rymonda just stepped up at the right time. Her strong writing abilities, interest in journalism, and communication skills in combination with the strong familial relationships she has with the women in her family, make her a perfect fit for this particular project.

This spring Rymonda was chosen for an internship with the Chapman Project. "I know that my success at K-State is just starting and I know this is where I belong," she said. With just a fraction of her story unfolding, it becomes apparent that Rymonda is well on her way to making a place for herself at the table with people whose stories will live on.

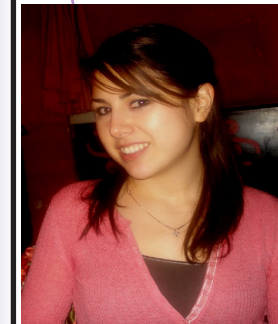
## Scholars' <sup>Developing</sup> Scope

Spring 2009

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*The Developing Scholars Program creates opportunities for highly motivated, diverse, undergraduate students to conduct research with professors in their chosen fields. Scholars are also given opportunities to interact with other successful students, creating an atmosphere where high achievement becomes the expectation. DSP has a record of increased graduation rates and encourages post-baccalaureate studies. DSP is proud to contribute to a culture of inclusion within the campus community.*

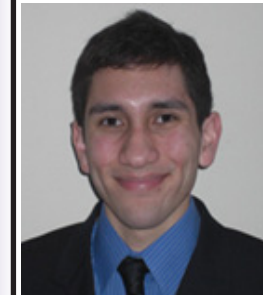
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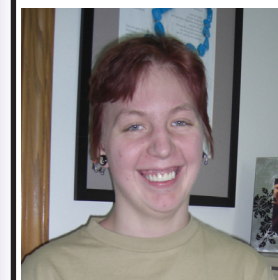
**Olga Martinez'** final semester as a Kansas State student was spent studying abroad in Italy. Olga, from Dodge City, will begin her professional studies this fall 2009, pursuing a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While in Italy, Olga learned that she had been chosen as a national finalist for a \$50,000 scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The Foundation's mission is to "help students of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education." Each year approximately 650 of the nation's brightest students are awarded this scholarship, which helps prepare students to become "leaders in all academic and professional disciplines." Olga also won her third Cancer Research Award this past year. **Dr. Lorena Passarelli** served as her DSP research mentor.



**Jorge Mendoza**, second-year Scholar from Garden City, has been doing field work studying Common Nighthawks and Upland Sandpipers on the Konza Prairie with **Dr. Brett Sandercock**, biology. Even though Jorge has dreamed of being an optometrist for years, he jumped at the opportunity to explore additional interests. Last fall, Jorge heard Dr. Scott Edwards of Harvard University speak on the evolutionary biology of birds. Jorge began an email dialogue with Dr. Edwards which resulted in an invitation to study at Harvard over the summer. Jorge's application for study was accepted, and shortly afterward, Jorge was contacted by Dr. Edwards about an opportunity to present his research with a group of Harvard undergraduates at the 2009 meeting of the Society for the Study of Evolution and the Society of Systematic Biologists in Idaho this summer.



**Robert (Bobby) Gomez**, junior in Elementary Education, Shawnee, was a finalist for the Truman Scholarship which supports graduate studies up to \$30,000 for careers in public service. Bobby plans to apply for Teach for America and then pursue graduate studies in social justice education or sociology and education policy. He later plans to work for a nonprofit education organization and then return to higher education as either a professor of Education or as director of Diversity. Bobby is president of Mortar Board, the Senior Honor Society, and a member of Kappa Delta Pi, the Honor Society for Education and an Inspire by Example Awardee. **Dr. Kay Taylor** was Bobby's research mentor.



**Ashley Wood**, first year Scholar in Anthropology, has been accepted into the summer 2009 Ethnographic Field School in Lake Atitlán, Guatemala. Throughout her experience, Ashley will be living with a Guatemalan family while learning about and conducting ethnographic research. **Dr. Kristen Corwin**, Physics, led Ashley's research project.

- This Spring, DSP is proud to recognize Emma Del Real, Olga Martinez, Jorge Mendoza, Nidia Ortega, and Vanessa Reyes for receiving Terry C. Johnson Cancer Research Awards.
- DSP would like to congratulate Ariel Anib, College of Arts & Sciences, and Matthew James, College of Engineering, for being elected to serve as KSU Senators for the 2009-2010 school year.



# Scholars Give Back

*With opportunity comes responsibility.* This is a phrase used regularly in the Developing Scholars Program. Scholars are encouraged to apply it to their lives as they interact with others, conduct research, and attend classes. **Leonel Hernandez** and **Rose Djiofack** are two students who have exemplified this motto and are making the world better by participating in outstanding community service projects.

**Leonel** is a junior majoring in construction science and management. He is working with **Dr. Blythe Marlow**, instructor in Architectural Engineering & Construction Science, on a project which aims to make Revit Building Information Modeling software available for student use at Kansas State. Dr. Marlow says that "Revit is the next generation in designing/producing documentation for construction projects."

Leonel adds that Revit could make huge contributions to the construction industry because it lets everybody involved know about potential errors during the design process.

As Director of Public Relations for the Associated General Contractors of America, Leonel coordinated the organization's efforts to work with Extreme Home Makeover when the television show came to Chapman, Kansas. Leonel was impressed with the intensity of the project and how quickly tasks were completed. Although he did not get to meet Ty Pennington, the show's star, Leo felt that the hands-on, real-life experience was extremely valuable and gratifying.



Leo Hernandez putting up siding

**Rose Djiofack** is a first-year Developing Scholar majoring in Education and Spanish while getting an endorsement in English as a Second Language. Since her first education course, Rose's dream has been to become a teacher and change children's lives. For her DSP project, Rose is working with **Dr. Laura Kanost**, visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish, on the translation of Cecilia Pérez Grovas and Carolina Rivera's script for the 1995 film *Cilantro y Perejil*, which is part of a larger study on Mexican women screenwriters. Dr. Kanost says that "the goal is to have the translation convey as closely as possible the multi-layered meanings of the original."

Rose's interest in Spanish and Education dovetailed together perfectly for her to become part of the Bilingual Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success (BESITOS) program here at Kansas State. The student organization that comes out of BESITOS is the Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO), and through this organization Rose was able to take part in the third annual Fair Trade Market set up in the Kansas State Student Union. Vendors sold unique, handmade products from countries around the world. Fair trade, according to the Fair Trade Federation website, is about "building equitable and sustainable trading partnerships and creating opportunities to alleviate poverty." Rose said that the event was successful because many people showed up to support the market, which in turn, supports the people who produce the goods.



Rose Djiofack reading a Spanish newsletter

## Food for Thought: Inspiration Plate by Plate

One could assume that the best part of Food for Thought is being able to eat a meal which includes dishes ranging from a variety of cultures. Scholars truly went above and beyond in their efforts to make the potluck a success. Smells of dishes from a wide variety of cultures including Asian cuisine, Southern specialties, and Mexican classics filled the room. However, there is much more to this annual DSP event than good food.

The second annual event featured **Mrs. Cheryl Grice**, Manager of Employment Services in the Division of Human Resources at K-State, as the guest speaker. Since Grice's first exposure to politics as a congressional page while in high school, she has stayed involved in politics in a variety of ways. The stories she had to share



about working on campaigns and sitting at watch parties interested everyone in attendance.

Grice also discussed some very serious issues at stake during the 2008 election and explained the need for students to be aware of the principal beliefs and stances of each candidate. She made it clear that it was important for everyone to vote, because each of us has been given the opportunity to have our voices heard. Grice underscored the importance of voting by explaining how current dilemmas facing our nation such as the economy, the mortgage crisis, job market, and social security will have a major impact on future generations.

After her speech, students asked questions. Then the power was put into their hands as they were given voter registration forms. The atmosphere in the room reflected that of sophistication and privilege as Scholars looked to impact the future through the upcoming election.

## Making the News

Now in her final year of Developing Scholars, **Sheila Ellis** is a senior majoring in Mass Communications with a minor in Leadership Studies. To find her, you need to look no further than the Kansas State University *Collegian* newsroom. Sheila was appointed as editor-in-chief of the *Collegian* for this



Sheila Ellis looks over a finished product.

spring, becoming the first African-American ever to hold that position at KSU. When asked about her new position, Sheila responds, "To me, it is a job that needs to be done. I didn't accept or apply for the position because it was something to add to my resume.

I applied because I knew that we needed the work to be done. My freshman year I walked into the newsroom, and I didn't see anyone who looked like me. After four years, who would've imagined that I'd be the one running it?"

Before coming to Kansas State, Sheila was already writing for the *Topeka-Capital Journal*. As a freshman, she became part of the *Collegian's* staff as a writer. The summer of her sophomore year, she landed a \$10,000 internship working for *The Roanoke Times* in Virginia. During her junior year,

she saw a need for diversity in the newsroom and decided to establish the Diverse Mass Communicators (DMC). She then encouraged DMC members to write for the paper and took them on tours of the *Collegian*. According to her mentor **Dr. Sam Mwangi**, "Today, the *Collegian* has the highest number of minorities than at any other time in history--all courtesy of Sheila's efforts."

This spring, Sheila was named one of fourteen Dean of Student Life Outstanding Graduating Seniors. The award recognizes students who have made significant contributions to student life while at Kansas State. During the summer, Sheila will be interning for the Associated Press, the top internship in the nation. When asked how Sheila juggles her studies, DSP research, and *Collegian* commitments, she said, "It's hard, but I've learned to accomplish things that will be beneficial for me in the future. Also, I've had a supportive group of people to help me."

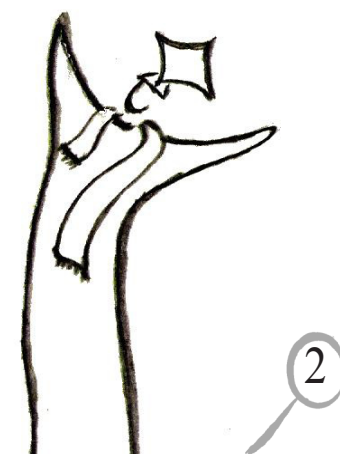
The roles that Sheila has had and the work she has done here at Kansas State will help diverse students interested in journalism for years to come. Sheila's next ambition is to organize an event that would reach out to diverse high school students who are interested in majoring in journalism.

Sheila has had fellow students thank her because they have found internships this summer, and a young African-American woman proclaimed, "I want to be just like you!" Sheila Ellis has established a legacy for herself without even trying. When one person makes such a big difference, many would expect to hear about it publicly, but Sheila is too busy making the news.

## Congratulations, Graduates!

### Spring/Summer 2009

Rosemary Almeida	Liberal, KS	Kinesiology
J. Uriel Estrada	Liberal, KS	Education/Biological Sciences
David Griffin, Jr.	Manhattan, KS	Social Sciences
Matthew Martinez	Dodge City, KS	Biological Sciences
Miguel Martinez	Liberal, KS	Biological Sciences
Olga Martinez	Dodge City, KS	Biological Sciences
Areli Monarrez	Liberal, KS	Biological Sciences
Andrea Pardo	Kansas City, KS	Masters of Architecture
Dina Sanchez	Dodge City, KS	Biological Sciences
Kristin Wilkes	Olathe, KS	Sociology





# "DEVELOPING" Scholars

Some may look at the Developing Scholars Program, and only see the “Scholar” aspect of it, but the “developing” part of the program should not be overlooked. All of the students in DSP are developing, but being a first-year Scholar presents a unique set of challenges.

**Barbara Braga** and **Ed Alvarado** are both first-year Scholars with a voracious desire to learn and achieve. Barbara and Ed feel privileged to be in DSP, because the program gives them a lot of opportunities. Barbara said that working with **Dr. Stefan Bossman**, Chemistry, has broadened her perspectives, and she has developed an interest in Biochemistry. Ed credits DSP for giving him a chance to make a close connection



Barbara Braga in the chemistry lab

with his mentor, **Dr. Donald Saucier**, in Psychology, and that connection gives him more confidence when approaching other professors.

Barbara’s research project is studying how tuberculosis

bacteria grow in certain chemical conditions. Barbara did not immediately understand the significance of some parts of the project, but as the project has progressed, she has realized that seemingly insignificant tasks can play a large role in the project. Ed is involved in a social psychology research project. Specifically, Dr. Saucier and he are looking at prejudices and people’s reactions to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Both Scholars found themselves to be well-suited for college studies and for their research projects, but the transition was difficult. Barbara and Ed, like most beginning Scholars, had the daunting experience of being thrust into a research group which primarily consists of graduate and/or doctoral students. However, after having the terms, process, and goals explained to them, as well as getting a few weeks of experience, Barbara and Ed both felt comfortable in their environment which has helped them begin to develop their scholarly potential.



Ed Alvarado prepares to hit the books.

## Headed toward the Mountaintop

The Developing Scholars Program is proud to announce the acceptance of three of our Scholars into the McNair Scholars for 2009: **Jesús García**, junior in Human Nutrition/pre-medicine from Merriam, Kansas; **Rita Pérez**, senior in Human Nutrition from Garden City, Kansas; and **Kristel Williams**, junior in Elementary Education from Wichita, Kansas. As McNair Scholars, our students will receive funding to continue their research over the summer. McNair also provides preparation for the Graduate Record Exam and funding to attend conferences and prepare for application to graduate programs. Together, the Developing Scholars and McNair programs are forging a pathway beyond the baccalaureate as Jesús, Rita, and Kristel head toward the mountaintop of higher education.



From Left to Right: **Rita Pérez**, **Jesús García**, and **Kristel Williams**

## DSP Academic Gold Medalists: 4.0

### Spring 2008

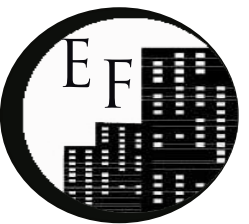
Janette Carrillo  
Nathan Garcia  
Michelle Hubin  
Amber Tyler  
Jessica Rodriguez

Danielle English  
Danielle Hoskins  
Olga Martinez  
Matthew James

### Fall 2008

Eduardo Alvarado  
Devi Bluvan  
Karmen Harris  
Kristel Williams

## Making a Difference in Urban Communities: The Edgerley-Franklin Urban Leadership Scholarship



A select group of motivated freshman was given an enormous opportunity this past Fall with the development of the Edgerley-Franklin Urban Leadership Scholarship. The scholarship is given to students who want to positively impact urban communities after graduation. Recipients receive \$3000 a year for up to four years as long as they maintain a 3.00 grade point average. “It is an honor to be part of such an elite program,” said Matthew Ho, freshman in Architecture, Planning & Design. “I’m very fortunate to have been blessed to have the opportunity to be an Edgerley-Franklin Scholar.”

Enhancing the quality of urban life is the main focus of the program. Scholars will receive leadership training through Leadership Studies and will participate in the Developing Scholars Program to learn research skills. “The Developing Scholars Program helps groom students, intellectually, socially, and ethically,” says Anita Cortez, Administrative

Director of DSP. “We, along with Leadership Studies, are providing the tools for Edgerley-Franklin Scholars to reimagine how they can influence the future of our urban communities.” As the scholarship continues in years to come, new recipients will be integrated into this tradition.

The scholarship was created in the names of the Edgerley and the Franklin families. Both families have strong passions for the urban communities as well as significant ties to Kansas State. Paul and Susan Edgerley served as leaders while attending K-State and continue to do so, along with their brother Steve, through efforts in their urban communities.

Dr. Franklin served as K-State’s first African-American student body president. He is currently the president of Penn Valley Community College in Kansas City. “It is our hope,” Dr. Franklin said, “that we can inspire students who come from the urban community to K-State to consider giving back, going back to help make the urban community better.” The first five recipients are **Eli Anderson**, **Rymonda Davis**, **Matthew Ho**, **Edmond Rivera**, and **Derrik Wiggins**.



Edgerley-Franklin Scholars relax in the office.

## Administrators Walk the Walk

- Anita Cortez, Provost Duane Nellis, and Assistant Provost Alfred Cochran have never missed the Developing Scholars annual research poster symposium—until this year, that is. This year, they are representing the DSP at the Higher Learning Commission National Conference where they are giving a presentation entitled, *Supporting Student Success: Graduating Diverse Students in the Midwest*.
- This spring Dr. Farrell Webb and Ms. Cortez will have their chapter, “Developing Scholars: Targeting Excellence Using the Axiom of Achievement,” in the monograph *Broadening Participation in Undergraduate Research: Fostering Excellence and Enhancing the Impact*, published by the National Council on Undergraduate Research.

## Balancing Acts

Josh Seematter has been the Developing Scholars’ graduate assistant this year, as he finishes his Master’s Degree in English. Josh has also had to allot time and effort to finding a job. Josh received his B.A. in English Education from Washburn University, and he wants to teach high school English in a school with a diverse student population. To this end, Josh has interviewed with Teach for America and is awaiting results.

Jannet Coleman began working on a Master’s Degree in Kinesiology this spring. An alum of Developing Scholars, Jannet Coleman is the graduate assistant coordinator for the Edgerley-Franklin Scholarship. Along with these responsibilities, Jannet is preparing for the upcoming Mrs. Kansas United States Pageant in May, as well as the annual officer training course to further her career in the Army. Eventually, Jannet plans to attend dental school.



## Former Scholar Returns to Campus with Scholastic Aspirations

The Developing Scholars Program began in 2000, and one of the members of that inaugural class, **Alicia Edison**, has since traveled to New Zealand and Australia as well as completing her Master's work at the University of North Texas. Today Alicia finds herself back at Kansas State University working on a Ph.D. in Sociology.

One of 20 students in DSP when it began, Edison said she is impressed with how much it has grown. "We all felt special that we were part of the inaugural group. We knew that we had to prove that we were smart enough to do this, so DSP would be able to receive the necessary funding to grow."

During Alicia's second year in DSP, she conducted a research project with **Dr. Donna Potts** that focused on exploring different perspectives of being biracial in South Africa. Interestingly enough, this



**Alicia Edison** during a visit to the DSP Office

project proved to be the most beneficial, because Alicia is now studying racial inequalities in her Ph.D. work. Alicia credits the research she did for DSP as giving her an advantage in academia. Having research experience "made it easier for me to work with faculty and not feel intimidated by power dynamics," she explained.

Alicia began as a psychology major, but changed to sociology because she wanted to study social issues that affected a larger percentage of the population. At Kansas State, Alicia is studying the fluidity of racial identity. Alicia comments, "Being biracial myself, I have always been curious how people identify themselves and why only certain racial identities are validated." Through her research she hopes to "open up the eyes of society." Along with studying, researching, and teaching classes, Alicia has begun writing a book chapter based upon a content analysis of movies which examines the influence social class has on racial identity. As a representative of DSP's inaugural class, Alicia has helped to create a tradition of striving for personal, academic, and social excellence.



## Outstanding Scholarship and Excellent Athletes

As members of the Developing Scholars Program, Scholars are required to balance a number of activities and responsibilities. From school to extracurriculars, Scholars must become experts of time management. While all have much to balance, two Scholars also coordinate athletic competitions into their academic calendars.

**Matthew James** is an academic honor student and a second-year Scholar majoring in Industrial Engineering.

Matt is working (along with Scholar **David Willis**) under **Dr. Todd Easton** in the Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering department. They are working on a project which studies the movement of infectious diseases. Matt says, "We're helping to construct a program that will visually model how infectious diseases, with various speed, recovery, death rates and other variables, move through Clay Center, Kansas." The goal is for them to predict scenarios and mitigations strategies that may be effective in rural communities. Their research will eventually be expanded to a tri-county area and then the state level.

Despite Matt's rigorous schedule, he took on a new challenge this fall. He competed in Recreational Service's intramural wrestling competition. Matt did not compete last year, but he practiced before the tournament and felt confident. At the end of the three-day competition, Matt had won the 197-pound division of the tournament proving that Scholars can perform on many different levels.

**Kristel Williams**, junior in elementary education, may seem as though she is managing the impossible. Along with her responsibilities as a Developing Scholar, Kristel works as an assistant in the DSP office, is a member of the Kansas State track team, and is a full-time student who earned academic honors in the fall. On the track, Kristel continues to represent her team well. She attends weight-training sessions and practices, so she can help the team and set new personal records. During this Spring track season, Kristel is running in the 4x400-meter relay and either the open 400 or 800-meter run.

For her DSP project, Kristel and her mentor **Dr. Gail**

**Shroyer**, are evaluating the College of Education based upon guidelines from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Kristel and her mentor are examining one standard in particular which looks at content knowledge, how it is taught, and professionalism based upon the NCATE manual. How does she balance it all? Kristel credits her success to prayer and the blessing of having wonderful, supportive people around her every day.



## Jeremy Williams Studies University Retention Rates

As Fall 2008 approached, **Jeremy Williams** was eagerly anticipating his freshman year and was already beginning to think about his research project. Williams wanted to study and track individuals as they advanced through the university. He quickly realized the magnitude of such a project, so he worked with his mentor **Dr. Brian Niehoff**, Department Head of Management in the College of Business, to develop a study that would capitalize on Jeremy's interest and have a scope that is more realistic. Dr. Niehoff has experience studying the behaviors of those in the work force and their views



**Jeremy Williams** relaxes after his presentation at Target on Excellence.

of themselves within the organizations that employ them. Jeremy and Dr. Niehoff are particularly interested in the perception freshmen students have of themselves on college campuses.

Jeremy and Dr. Niehoff were surprised to find how little information related

to their focus was available at the University. The two developed their focus based upon ideas within Organizational Behavior theory, for instance, that "certain jobs fit certain people based on their behavioral patterns." This plays a large role in the project. Performance in the workforce has an impact on the way individuals perceive themselves in an organization. Jeremy and Dr. Niehoff applied this idea to students on a college campus, specifically on how freshman undergraduates view themselves, and how those perceptions correlate with retention. Jeremy and Dr. Niehoff created a survey which would help them understand student behavior. The two have compared the survey results of a control group of freshman and a "minority" group of freshman that have received the same survey.

"I feel pretty comfortable with my mentor. He's always willing to work with me," says Jeremy. Dr. Niehoff's familiarity with Organizational Behavior theory was a perfect match for Jeremy's area of interest. Because of his work on the research project, Jeremy has taken an interest in his mentor's work. Jeremy's involvement and research have given him a sense of belonging, and he has begun to consider a degree in Economics.

## Rake N' Run Serving Others... One Leaf at a Time

On a chilly, fall Sunday afternoon Scholars gathered in front of Hale Library to meet for Developing Scholars' second annual Rake N' Run community service event. Six groups of Scholars were sent to different neighborhoods in Manhattan with one mission in mind: raking leaves. Scholars knocked on doors and asked residents' permission to rake and bag their leaves for them. If people weren't home, Scholars would rake their front yards, leave a note about DSP on the door, and run to the next house.

Residents who were at home when the Scholars arrived were not only delighted to receive help with their yard work, but they were also pleased to see young people participating in a community service project. Residents who were not present when Scholars arrived surely appreciated the work that was done. "We were out of town this past weekend and what a wonderful surprise it was to come home to a clean front yard," commented Manhattan resident Richard Pitts.

This year students were able to identify neighborhoods that needed extra assistance. One resident who was blind said her husband had just recently broken his ankle, and it was nice to have people help out. Another said she had just finished cancer treatments, and with her partner in Iraq, she really needed the help. Despite the cold weather, Scholars were excited to help others. First year Scholar Jaime Tobon, pre-dentistry, stated, "I thought the Rake N' Run was a great success; I was really impressed by the teamwork that DSP displayed. I feel proud of DSP because we made a difference in the community."



**Ariel Anib and Alejandro Estrada** work on bagging leaves.