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For more information:
Sarah Squire (805) 565-6889
Fax (805) 565-7250
ssquire@westmont.edu
www.westmont.edu

DESIGNERS WITH A CAUSE

Students in Westmont's Publication Design course taught by Professor Scott Anderson designed the 2008 annual report for Cancer Center of Santa Barbara. At the request of Matt Neal, a former college staff member who is married to a Westmont alumna, they carried the project from concept to finished product. Neal works in development at the Cancer Center.

"A topic that is always covered in my publication design classes is the importance of doing pro-bono work, of using your talents to serve your community," says Anderson, who is also an award-winning designer and illustrator. "A service-based project like this is a perfect integration of faith and learning, which is a key educational goal of all academic departments at Westmont. It was also a wonderful opportunity for the students to work on a real-world project."

The student designers were Christine Acker, Taylor Callan, Jessica Conrad, Hillary Dunks, Danny Grant, Ben Johnson, Kayla Kane, Fern Lim, Niki Ng, Meghan Nowell, Joel Phillips, David Richardson, Bethany Sie, Aaryn Smith, Brandon Waybright, and alumna Lauren Salaun, who audited the class and was a key contributor.

Neal was familiar with the work Anderson had done for Westmont and knew it would reflect the work of the Cancer Center. "Our hope was to get the project into play with Scott; we knew we would end up with a huge win-win," he says. "The final product is a real jewel for us." He approached Anderson in the fall of 2008 about working the project into a course, then met with the students early in the spring to inform them about the work of the organization and the goals of the annual report.

Since the design was pro-bono, Anderson requested that the money saved would be put toward the printing budget, allowing them to produce a quality, full-color report. The cost saving also translated into more direct services to patients, according to Cancer Center representatives.

Anderson and Neal also agreed that the students should have as much creative freedom as possible. To start the process, each student created a design direction for the report. In small groups, they decided on the best proposal from their group, and then voted as a class on the top two. These final choices were presented to Neal and other staff at the Cancer Center, who chose a design created by senior Bethany Sie. Each student was assigned a spread to build around Sie's proposal, and Sie became the art director, completing the final editing of the project.

"Westmont students are learners, and they exude respect for those who are suffering in the world," Neal says. "I knew they would treat the report with the dignity it deserves."

Early on, Anderson realized that almost everyone in the class, including himself, had been touched by cancer in some way, which made their work all the more significant. "There was a real emotional investment for us as we tried to contribute in our small way to the noble, important work being done at Cancer Center of Santa Barbara."

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