

WRA Alumnus Honored for Community Service



Hudson resident Andrew J. Haile has been honored by Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, for his commitment to community service while a student there. Haile, a 2003 graduate of Western

Reserve Academy and a member of the Middlebury College Class of 2007, was presented with the John M. McCardell, Jr. Public Service Award at a dinner on April 25. He was one of nine student volunteers who received special recognition for community service leadership. He and the other honored volunteers were nominated by service agencies throughout Addison County, Vermont, by local individuals, and by their peers.

The John M. McCardell, Jr. Public Service Award is “given to students who best exemplify efforts that bring Middlebury, both the college and the town, more closely together for a public benefit.” Specifically, Haile was cited for his work with the homeless in Addison and Chittenden Counties, where he organized a group of Middlebury students to regularly serve at the John Graham Emergency Shelter in Vergennes.

In presenting the award, Tiffany Sargent, director of the Alliance for Community Engagement in Middlebury, explained that Haile first became sensitive to the problem of homelessness while attending Middlebury’s School in France during the fall semester of his junior year. Fluent in French, he often spoke with and shared food with some of Paris’ homeless persons. When he returned to

Middlebury in the spring of 2006, he committed himself to serving the homeless in Addison County.

Haile started by volunteering with the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) in Burlington, Vt. He recruited a small group of fellow students to serve lunch at the shelter once a week. However, the distance between Middlebury and Burlington at times presented problems. At the suggestion of the COTS staff, the group turned its efforts to serving the John Graham Emergency Shelter in Vergennes. One day each week, the students, under Haile's leadership, planned a dinner, raised the money to purchase food, shopped for, cooked and served it to the homeless and hungry at the shelter. Over time, the group of volunteers, which initially numbered eight, grew to about 40. Haile encouraged a number of freshmen and sophomores at Middlebury College to assume leadership roles and carry on the service after he graduates on May 27.

Haile and his fellow honorees were presented with certificates of achievement from Dean of the College Timothy Spears and recognition from the more than 100 students, faculty, staff and community members in attendance at the dinner. In addition, a \$300 donation will be made by the College on behalf of each award recipient to the nonprofit organization designated by the student.

Following his graduation, Haile plans to spend two years on a Peace Corps assignment in a yet-to-be-determined West African French-speaking country. He is the son of John and Susan Haile of Hudson.