Safe Harbor is a shelter/home for children in need of a safe, living environment. It offers youth basic needs of food and shelter and provides the counseling, nurturing, and structured, safe environment they’ve been missing on the outside. Safe Harbor’s around-the-clock services include: crisis intervention; food, clothing and shelter; medical care; life-skills training; tutoring; job skills assistance; recreational, social, and cultural activities on and off an accordion program. Individual, family, and group counseling as well as parental and family support services are at the core of Safe Harbor’s offerings. Reunification of the child with his or her family is Safe Harbor’s top priority and these counseling services are key to this process.

Referrals: Several roads lead to Safe Harbor. While most referrals come from the Department of Family of Childrens Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice, referrals also come through family members, the court and school systems, and members of the clergy. In addition, youth have even been known to self-refer in crisis situations. Since the majority of referrals come from Georgia’s Glynn County and immediate surrounding counties, children referred from these areas are given priority. However, Safe Harbor often accepts the placement of children from other counties within Georgia and occasionally runaway youth from across the nation. When receiving a referral, Safe Harbor seeks as much information as possible to determine how best to confront and serve a child. A child’s medical records and school placement information are important to insure transition into Glynn County schools.

Additional Programs: While the shelter is the heart of the organization, Safe Harbor offers so much more to the community. Each year, Safe Harbor extends its counseling and other services to youth and families in Glynn County and nearby areas, through four additional programs:

- Safe Harbor houses children from birth through age 17 who are referred to the center primarily through Department of Family of Childrens Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Children seek refuge at the Safe Harbor shelter for both the short- and long-term.
- Basic Center provides short-term care and housing for children from birth through age 17 who have run away from their home or who have become homeless.
- National Safe Place is a nationwide program that provides refuge for children who feel threatened or children who are in danger. Safe Place refuge sites often include office buildings, public facilities, and other popular locations that span communities across America. These locations are identified on forging islands with a yellow-and-black, diamond-shaped sign indicating their participation in the Safe Place network. In Glynn County alone, there are more than 30 Safe Place locations, including convenience stores, fire stations, schools, and local businesses.

The term “Community Networking” in higher education refers to the process of community networking, which involves coordinating community relationship-building activities across institutions. Community Colleges and Universities and Colleges explores strategies that tap the resources of both the institution and the community while benefitting both.

A Snapshot of Glynn County, Georgia

Population: 79,626
Major Cities: Brunswick, St. Simons Island, and Jekyll Island

The College of Coastal Georgia (CCG) is the only four-year, state college in Glynn County, Georgia. With a student body of approximately 3,800, the average student is first-generation and Pell Grant eligible. 66% of the students are female, and 67% are Caucasian. As part of its reaffirmation of accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), CCG adopted a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) designed to support student learning and improve student engagement via service-learning. The overarching goal is to integrate and enhance student learning and development through high-impact student experiences that also meet community needs. 54% of students are Glynn County residents, which means they have a vested interest in ensuring the viability and sustainability of their community and thriving Glynn County.

The Octave promotes community networking and creating awareness and accountability regarding pressing social issues that continually undermine the health and well-being of the community.

Community Networking in Glynn County

- Through community networking, service-learning programs can connect to the local community to enrich the institution’s curriculum, create meaningful service-learning projects for both students and community partners, and help form deep partnerships beyond the life of a single service-learning course.

- By connecting with community partners, students can gain valuable work experience and exposure to the real-world challenges faced by local organizations.

- Service-learning projects can also provide opportunities for community partners to learn from the experiences of students and faculty, leading to increased awareness and support for their mission.

- By fostering a culture of collaboration, service-learning can help bridge the gap between academia and the community, promoting mutual benefits for both parties.

- Through community networking, students can develop a deeper understanding of the issues affecting their community, leading to a more informed and engaged citizenry.

- By engaging with community partners, students can develop important life skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

- Community networking can also provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own values and beliefs, leading to personal growth and development.

- By working with community partners, students can gain a sense of meaning and purpose in their education, leading to a more fulfilling and meaningful college experience.

- By connecting with community partners, students can develop important professional skills, such as networking,. In addition to the formal requirements, students may also be required to participate in service-learning experiences as part of their coursework. Once students have completed these service-learning experiences, they can use the information they have gathered to develop service-learning projects that are of interest to them, and to develop strategies to remedy the issues. To this end, the course addressed the following questions:

1. What does it mean to study social problems from a sociological perspective?
2. How are the individual experiences of people connected to broader social and historical forces?
3. How do social inequalities get organized?
4. How can community networking be used as a strategic and intentional tool to overcome social inequalities?
5. How do race, class, gender, and sexuality shape our experiences and social life more generally?

- GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES: Students demonstrated...
   - An understanding of the evolving political, social, or institutional developments of the United States
   - Analytical skills in their exploration of the complexity of human behavior and how historical, economic, political, or spatial relationships develop, persist, or change

- SERVICE-LEARNING OUTCOMES: In this course, students...
   - Experienced the impact of the transnational flow of course materials, concepts and knowledge to new communities
   - Engaged in the community and developed leadership skills by accessing the larger community as a networking resource for course-specific skill building and learning

- DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK: While exploring these questions, students studied contemporary sociological concepts, which promote mutally beneficial and reciprocal exchanges of teaching and learning among students, community partners, and the course instructor. Each of the aforementioned stakeholders served as co-educators during the life of the service-learning course.

- The democratic framework helped students understand society and social problems within the 21st century by applying course theory to real-world problems and working with community partners, engaging in the societal development of the semester. All students were asked to complete a list of the most pressing AND persistent social problems in America. Students began with a list of 50 and gradually narrowed the list to ten by voting democratically. The final list and vote both served as an analytical and critical thinking tool—which helped students expand their thought process and gain an understanding of the complex nature of persistent, social problems and related issues of inter-sectionalism. They also helped students develop an understanding of civil discourse as well as an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

- After narrowing the list to ten, students observed that many of the problems they identified contributed to a lack of social cohesion and impact areas (e.g., education, health, and income). Students worked with the instructor and service-learning staff to identify community partners with programmatic missions devoted to the three impact areas.

- Six community partners were selected to work with students in groups of five to tackle complex issues that were specific to Glynn County. Safe Harbor was selected by students and the instructor as one of the six community partners because its mission aligned with the impact areas of education and health (i.e., children).