Close to 2,000 visitors came to campus for this year’s Community Day to learn about the University and enjoy an afternoon packed with more than 50 performances, attractions, and events.

Naturalist Rusty Johnson and his red-tailed hawk, above, were a new and popular addition this year. Children and adults alike clustered around Johnson and took pictures of each other with a live version of the University’s mascot. Fifth-graders from the University of Hartford Magnet School, left, played several songs on recorders to the delight of their parents and others in the crowd who gathered to listen.

Joseloff Hosts Environmental Art Exhibit

Oversized red map pins bearing numbers began appearing along the Park River on campus in April. Totaling 20 in all, the pins marked areas of interest identified by local scientists and historians as part of Mary Miss: City as Living Laboratory, Hartford. The multipart, ecologically themed art installation was created to bring attention to the Park River and its watershed by Miss, an internationally renowned environmental artist. The exhibit was on campus April 21-May 29, 2011.

The Hartford installation draws from another Miss project called FLOW (Can You See the River?), commissioned by the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Both seek to engage citizens and make them aware that local watersheds provide their drinking water and support their lives, and that their actions directly affect the watersheds that surround them.

The Hartford exhibition was part of Park Water Arts, a yearlong eco-arts festival spearheaded by Sherry Buckberrough, associate professor of art history and chair of the department, together with Mary Rickel Pelletier, director of the Park River Watershed Revitalization initiative.

At right: Inside Joseloff Gallery, visitors found a large floor map of the campus section of the river with the points of interest marked and a wall key with information on the highlighted points. Armed with a large foldout map detailing the map pin locations, visitors could visit the sites along the river selected by Miss.
Singing in the Rain
JOY AT COMMENCEMENT 2011 NOT DAMPENED BY SOGGY WEATHER

Nothing, and certainly not the rainy weather, could spoil the mood for the University’s 54th Commencement ceremony. Approximately 1,500 graduates and thousands of their families and friends huddled under rainbow-colored umbrellas for an abbreviated main ceremony on Gengras Lawn.

Anne Garrels, former National Public Radio senior foreign correspondent and author of Naked in Baghdad (2003), which chronicles her experiences in Iraq before and during the war, was the keynote speaker and recipient of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Garrels received a loud burst of applause upon announcing that she was about to give the shortest Commencement speech ever.

“You are amazing,” Garrels told the graduates as they sat through on-and-off rain. "I don’t think anything could dampen the spirit of this amazing institution and your achievements." Her full speech, as she intended to give it, can be heard at www.hartford.edu/commencement.

Also receiving honorary degrees at Commencement were dancer and choreographer Peggy Lyman Hayes ’05 (Doctor of Fine Arts), real estate entrepreneur and philanthropist Simon Konover (Doctor of Commercial Science), and Grammy Award–winning saxophonist, bandleader, and composer Paul Winter (Doctor of Music). In honor of the graduates, Winter performed his original composition, “Sun Singer,” on soprano saxophone.

Richard J. Cardin ’62, a visionary business leader and tireless supporter of the University, received the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award at the ceremony. Cardin, who earned a bachelor’s in English from the College of Arts and Sciences, has served on the board of regents for 11 years, and was cochair of the steering committee for the University’s $175 million Campaign of Commitment. A strong supporter of the liberal arts, he sponsors an annual lecture series that brings nationally acclaimed writers to campus and also underwrites the undergraduate literary magazine, Aerie.

The 2011 recipient of the Hartford Alumni Award is David Macbride ’73, a prolific composer and professor of composition and music theory at Hartt. Macbride, who holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from Columbia University, has written more than 200 works, ranging from solo, chamber, and orchestral music to music for television, dance, and theatre, with particular emphasis on music for...
7. Ten of 28 graduates from Saudi Arabia gathered for this photo before the ceremony. They are the first group to graduate after studying at the University under the King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship program. Most earned degrees in mechanical, electrical, or civil engineering. About 20,000 Saudi students study in the United States under the scholarship program, which is designed to foster greater cultural understanding between Saudis and people of other countries.

8. Anne Garrels, former NPR foreign correspondent, was the keynote speaker. Simon Konover (left), real estate entrepreneur and philanthropist, with former chair of the board of regents Arnold C. Greenberg (Hon. ’89).

9. Composer and musician Paul Winter plays “Sun Singers.”

10. Peggy Lyman Hayes ’05, dancer and choreographer, listens as President Harrison reads the citation for her honorary degree.

11. Matthew Forte received the Belle K. Ribicoff Prize for academic excellence.

12. Kaitlyn Brescia was awarded the John G. Lee Medal for academic excellence and community service.

13. Joseph Dahlmeyer will study at Oxford University for two years as the recipient of the John G. Martin Scholarship.

14. Percussion. His compositions have been performed extensively in the United States and abroad. His Percussion Park was performed at the University in April (see story, p. 7).

Three graduating students were honored at Commencement for their exceptional accomplishments. Matthew Forte, a music history major in The Hartt School, was recognized with the Belle K. Ribicoff Prize, which is awarded for academic excellence. Forte received praise for his skill as a conductor and plans to pursue a Graduate Performance Diploma in orchestral conducting at Hartt.

Joseph Dahlmeyer, a chemistry major in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the John G. Martin Scholarship, which makes possible two years of study at Oxford University’s Hertford College in England. Dahlmeyer will be working toward a master’s in organic chemistry at Oxford with an ultimate goal of earning a PhD. Kaitlyn Brescia, an English major in the College of Arts and Sciences, was awarded the John G. Lee Medal, which recognizes academic excellence and community service. During her senior year, Brescia spent time in Natal, Brazil, working to help feed and provide clothing for the homeless. She turned her experiences into articles for Vi Livre, a quarterly missionary newsletter.

Five faculty members were recognized this year for their outstanding achievements. Jack L. Powell, professor of psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching; Timothy Black, associate professor of sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences and director of the Center for Social Research, was presented with the James E. and Frances W. Bent Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity; Jerry Katrichis, associate professor of marketing in the Barney School of Business, was recognized with the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Sustained Service to the University; and Joan O’Mara, associate professor of speech and drama in Hillier College, received the Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award. In addition, the Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize, now in its third year, was awarded to Bryan Sinche, assistant professor of English in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Also part of the Commencement crowd were the Golden Hawks, members of the Class of 1961. Fifteen members of the class, who graduated from the University 50 years ago, braved the weather to don golden robes and attend the ceremony.
Music with a Purpose
HOW A UNIVERSITY CONCERT SERIES BROUGHT JOY IN MANY WAYS

After 11 years, nearly 200 concerts, and almost $160,000 raised for Greater Hartford nonprofit organizations, the University’s MUSIC for a CHANGE benefit concert series ended on April 30, 2011, with a final show featuring musicians Kenny White and Liz Longley.

Irwin Nussbaum, associate vice president for student life and director of the Student Success Center, launched the series in 2000 with the goal of using music to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations.

“It’s been a real thrill for me to use music to help the community,” Nussbaum says. “There’s nothing better than that.” MUSIC for a CHANGE followed a long-standing tradition in folk and acoustic music of supporting social change.

Nussbaum points out that the series fit the University’s commitment to community because it welcomed community members onto campus for some great music, while the proceeds helped nonprofits serve people in the surrounding communities who need it.

During its run, MUSIC for a CHANGE series proceeds were distributed to a wide range of local nonprofit organizations, including Interval House, FoodShare, Habitat for Humanity, and Connecticut Special Olympics.

The series was able to raise the funds by bringing top-notch entertainment to campus, like music headliners Art Garfunkel, Wynton Marsalis, Shawn Colvin, Alison Krauss, Richie Havens, Jonathan Edwards, and Aztec Two-Step, rounded out by comedians Paula Poundstone, Steven Wright, and The Capitol Steps.

“For the last three years, the lack of an individual or corporate sponsor meant ticket revenue has just been covering the concert expenses, and there is nothing left over for our Hartford-area cosponsoring agencies,” said Nussbaum in explaining the demise of the series. “I would be very happy to revive the benefit concert series if a sponsorship presents itself.”

Keep Your Old Sneakers Out of a Landfill

Physical therapy doctoral student Alyssa Itzkowitz D’12 organized a Nike Reuse-A-Shoe drive on campus this spring. Itzkowitz, who is president of the Student Special Interest Group of the Connecticut Physical Therapy Student Association, had been searching for a project to bring together students in the physical therapy schools within the state.

The Nike sneaker-recycling program seemed to offer an opportunity for some friendly competition among the schools. Nike grinds up the collected sneakers, then sells the material to companies that build sports surfaces like running tracks and tennis courts.

“The idea of using these sneakers for basketball courts, tennis courts, high-school tracks, playgrounds, and other surfaces appealed to us,” says Itzkowitz. “We work with athletes and citizens who run or play sports for exercise. Recycling the sneakers as material for sports surfaces just made sense.”
The Halls Were Alive with the Sound of Music

COMPOSER’S GIFT TO THE COMMUNITY IS THE JOY OF PARTICIPATING

As many of the 100 or more attendees tried to jam into the elevator outside Millard Auditorium, Associate Professor Michael Anderson and graduate student Owen Weaver sat on the elevator floor to perform “Flowering,” a popular musical selection. Played with chopsticks on the rims of 10 ordinary clay flower pots, the piece was offered numerous times that evening.

The performance was a selection rendered during the mid-April premiere of Percussion Park: A Musical Landscape by David Macbride ’73, professor of composition and theory in The Hartt School. Macbride is also the recipient of the 2011 Hartt Alumni Award. The unusual composition, newly adapted for the Hartt Percussion Ensemble, was directed by Benjamin Toth, chair of Hartt’s percussion department. The multisite performance encouraged attendees to roam the halls of the Fuller Music Center at their own pace in search of the dozen or so mostly percussion ensembles.

It all began in Millard Auditorium with “Dancing—a quinter for pieces of wood, triangles, finger cymbals, and shakers.” Audience members received maps and a program and then ventured out, perhaps heading for “Noise—solo for three cymbals,” being performed in the second-floor hallway. A little more than an hour later, they would return to the Millard stage to participate in the finale, “Meditation,” using various provided percussion instruments.

Toth says that Percussion Park reflects Macbride’s interest in sharing his work with his community and is a natural extension of the many family concerts he has presented in the area. The composer agrees.

“All composers from time to time think about the relevance of their work to the real world,” says Macbride. “One way composers can bring their music to people is to present it in non–concert hall settings. Since I live across the street from Elizabeth Park, I wrote a piece in 1990 called ‘Rose Garden,’ which was a site-specific work written for the Hartford Symphony to be played in the Rose Garden at Elizabeth Park that included audience participation. "Musicians also think about finding new audiences to play for. I have been playing at senior citizen homes, community centers, and schools for many years, often with my two kids. When older and younger people can get together and enjoy doing something fun and meaningful, everybody feels good."
Two Weeks in Haiti
PROVIDING AMPUTEES WITH NEW LIMBS

The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that shook the southern part of Haiti in January 2010 was the most powerful to hit the nation in a century. Despite assistance from U.S. and international aid groups, recovery has been slow, complicated by a cholera outbreak that has claimed more than 4,000 victims so far.

Last October, Paul Armstrong, an adjunct faculty member in the physical therapy department, flew into the Port-au-Prince airport to spend two weeks at Hospital Albert Schweitzer in Deschapelles, Haiti, fitting amputees with prosthetic limbs.

“It’s hard to describe the devastation and suffering in Port-au-Prince, which took the brunt of the shock from the earthquake,” Armstrong says. “There were tens of thousands of people living in tents with no electricity or running water and very, very poor sanitation. It’s no surprise that Haiti is now suffering from a cholera epidemic that makes things even more difficult for the people living there.”

In addition to teaching in the University’s prosthetics and orthotics program, Armstrong manages 14 employees who build prosthetic and orthotic devices for Hanger Orthopedic Group, a leading provider of prosthetic and orthopedic products and services. Hanger is also the University’s partner in the Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics degree program, which is launching its first cohort of students this summer. He also manages the practice and treats patients at Hanger’s branch office in Vernon, Conn.

It was through Hanger that Armstrong traveled to Haiti. His trip was sponsored by the Ivan R. Sabel Foundation, named for Hanger’s former CEO, which provides prosthetic and orthotic care to those who cannot afford it. The foundation maintains a regular rotation of three or four Hanger prosthetists who go to Haiti for two-week stays. Physical therapists at Hanger’s clinic come from Physicians for Peace.

Most of the patients that Armstrong saw arrived by van at Hospital Albert Schweitzer, which is about two-and-a-half hours from Port-au-Prince in an area not damaged by the earthquake. The hospital’s electricity came from two giant on-site generators. The staff also made weekly trips to an orphanage in Port-au-Prince, where they fitted patients initially for prosthetics who later came to the clinic to receive their new limbs.

“Every morning the van from Port-au-Prince would drive up, and the waiting room was suddenly filled with people. The youngest was about 3 years old and the oldest was probably 60. Half of our patients were victims of the earthquake, but the other half had lost limbs in accidents or due to poor medical care,” Armstrong says that in his Connecticut practice a busy day would mean seeing five or six patients. In Haiti, he would see 15 to 20.

Despite what most would consider very rough conditions at Hospital Schweitzer and a grueling pace, Armstrong enjoyed the experience. He was able to build prosthetic devices for patients and send them directly to physical therapy at the hospital. “We could see right away if adjustments were needed. You don’t get that kind of immediate feedback in private practice. And it was nice to focus on treating the patients and not have to worry about insurance coverage.”

Eventually Hanger hopes to turn the clinic over to Haitian medical professionals. Part of Armstrong’s time there was spent teaching new techniques and human anatomy to the four Haitian technicians who work at the clinic full time. With time and additional training from Hanger, he feels they will become capable clinicians.

Asked if he would be willing to return to Haiti at a later date, Armstrong says, “Yes, I would. I think anyone who works in health care is drawn to situations where they can help others. And being in Haiti made me see how much impact I could have in people’s lives.”