The purpose of my group of Cal Turner Fellows (Elizabeth Coyle, Matt Kynes, Tonya Ogden, and me) was to continue and expand upon the work in nutrition education of previous CTP fellows, Katie Taylor (Peabody), Elizabeth Williams (Divinity), Joanna Robinson (Law) and maintain our relationship with the Oasis Center by providing unique hands-on opportunities for residents to learn about nutrition and healthy cooking, and by creating stand-alone/replicable lessons and events the Oasis Center’s Emergency Shelter can easily implement on an ongoing basis as their residents change.

Throughout this year, we have each been involved in creating and coordinating events such as viewings of documentaries *Supersize Me* and *King Corn*, trips to the Farmer’s Market to buy fresh locally-grown organic food, planting of the Center’s community garden, and cooking meals with the residents. Although, I was unable to attend a few events due to my participation in a study abroad program, I found the children were engaged and interested in the programs I was able to attend, which made this project incredibly worthwhile and fulfilling. The relaxed atmosphere and flexible design of our events allowed us to easily provide the residents’ with nutrition education, knowledge regarding food production, options for healthier meals, etc.

Our group met with Lucie Stone at the Oasis Center several times a semester to generate ideas, schedule events, gain insight, and receive feedback. This was a critical element to our project allowing us to adjust programs as needed and incorporate the Center’s suggestions. I strongly recommend keeping Lucie as the contact for the Center should this project move forward next year. She was helpful, accessible, and enthusiastic about working with the Cal Turner Program. Additionally, I recommend approaching Andrew Suitter, Volunteer Coordinator, to work with the Fellows, particularly on volunteer
training in the beginning of the year, as well as to explore ideas for programming at the Oasis Center’s main facility.

In the fall, we hosted two documentary viewings after working with Lucie on the scheduling and design of the events. First, we decided to show *Supersize Me* and started the evening with discussion and questions related to fast food, eating habits, etc. At certain points in the movie, we stopped to engage residents in more conversation about what they were viewing and ended with a discussion as well. I enjoyed seeing how quieter residents opened up as the night progressed became actively involved in the dialogue. The key to working with the Center’s residents is to be informal, relaxed and approachable. By not pushing them too hard to participate, they become more comfortable with participating, making relationship-building easier. Our second documentary showing was of *King Corn*, and we again had introductory activities, discussions, and questions throughout the evening. Both evenings went well, and are simple and easily replicable either by next year’s fellows or by staff at the Oasis Center.

I was abroad for the first half of spring semester, but based on what I learned from my group members, they had successful and fun experiences with the residents when they took them to the Nashville Farmers’ Market to buy fresh, organic food. The purpose of these trips was to purchase items to plan a menu and cook a meal with the residents at the Center later in the week. Residents were involved in choosing the menu ahead of time and making purchase decisions so they had more of a vested interest in the trip. Residents were also able to speak with farmers and those who were selling products at the market, facilitating informal education about healthy food, nutrition, and food production. When cooking the meals, the residents had an opportunity to build relationships and sense of community, create something they could be proud of, and learn more about healthy food and meal preparation.
Also in the spring, we joined the staff and residents in preparing and planting the Center’s garden. This allowed us to be outdoors and get to know residents individually rather than in a larger group setting. The garden is planted twice a year and is something future fellows can easily take over, providing continuity to the project. Our final project is to plan a large-scale dinner, similar to the meals prepared earlier in the spring, for resident and their families at the main Oasis Center Facility. We hope to engage a local chef in teaching and cooking locally-produced, organic, healthy food with the residents.

Some final broad recommendations are to plan ahead, take into account the Center’s schedules/plans for the residents, and keep in mind that weather could affect events. Our Fellows group also had several other ideas related to nutrition education that we were unable to implement this year: create recipe booklets for residents to use as a resource/take home, attend cooking classes with residents, and build the Center’s kitchen resources. I strongly recommend working with Michelle Bukowski and Lucie Stone to implement these ideas and develop new projects to benefit the Oasis Center and its residents regarding healthy eating habits/choices and food education. The Cal Turner Fellowship Program gave me an opportunity to work with an organization and people I may have otherwise not been exposed to and enhanced my education as a graduate student by allowing me to meet, get to know, and work closely with students from other graduate schools. I am grateful for the opportunity and its impact on my experience at Vanderbilt.