

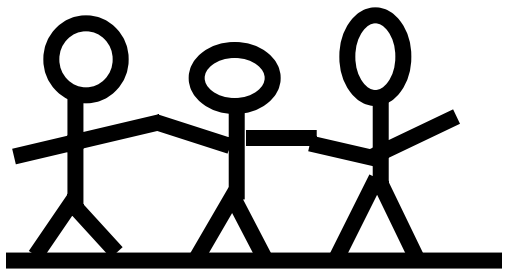
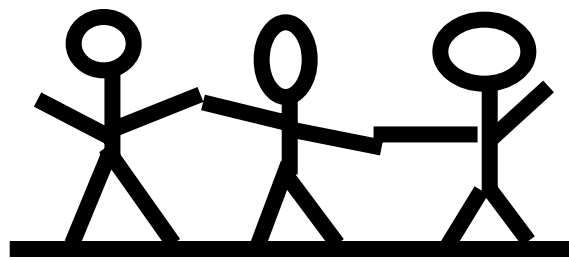
Perspectives



Courtesy of the Volunteer Service Corps

Students, like this VSC member, will have an opportunity to volunteer with local schools through WAKE.

WILD



WAKE

Volunteering

Two students share joys of volunteering

By Suzanne DuBose
Perspectives Editor

Many students dedicate a portion of their college careers to volunteer work. Their leadership and dedication makes volunteer organizations such as the Volunteer Service Corps, Peer Health and Alpha Pi Omega fraternity thrive on campus.

In honor of National Service month, two students have reflected on their college volunteering experiences. Through their own creativity, generosity and organization they have continued the tradition of university service in the community.

Senior Erin Graves

Coming to the university from a small town in South Carolina, I was excited about the many service opportunities that abound on this campus. I eagerly participated in my first Project Pumpkin, which due to the tradition that surrounds it seems almost mandatory as a freshman. After this first experience of leading a frightened five-year-old through the festivities while trying to control my big sunflower head costume, I became more involved in VSC instead of just waiting for next Halloween. Though I remained dedicated to my first service experience by working on the planning committee for future Project Pumpkins, I also branched in to other areas of campus service. Particularly, I have been active with Wake Alternative Break—as a participant in Charleston, S.C., and Boston, and as a coordinator in Oklahoma.



Graves

Not to be limited by surroundings again, I sought different opportunities off campus within Winston-Salem. I volunteer regularly at Sci Works, which brings together my interest in service and my Biology major. The most rewarding of my experiences, though, has been as a Disaster Action Team member with the American Red Cross. Through this group, I meet the immediate needs of disaster victims, whether they have been displaced because of a house fire or inclement weather. This weekly reminder of the bad fortune that life can sometimes bring makes concern about philosophy papers and chemistry tests less worrisome.

What I have gained through my service work extends beyond the friendships, memories and experience. The work I have done also means more to me than that it fills a resume and impresses potential employers. I have a deeper understanding about my place in my surroundings—while I am certainly lucky to have gone through life with little turmoil, I am not without motivation to help others. In fact, because of the blessings in my life, I feel more compelled to serve those less fortunate.

Proverbs 29:18 reads: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

In the fall of 1995, I had a vision. A vision that I never knew would become a reality. A group of friends and I were invited to Atkins Middle School to speak to a sixth grade class about our experiences in college and what we did to prepare ourselves for that milestone in our lives. After we spoke with this class, word spread and several other teachers invited us to come and talk to their classes as well. We soon had talked to all the sixth graders at Atkins and what started as a simple show-and-tell project was soon turned into a vision.

A close friend, junior Kwasi Asare, and I decided to expound on what we had started and turn this "rap session" into a full mentoring program. We named the program Target because our mission was to target troubled youth and provide them with guidance on how to be successful. Target has developed a full curriculum with such topics as peer pressure, family values, goal setting, conflict resolution and study skills. We have sponsored a Greek step show at Atkins, a trip to the football spring game, and the first annual Atkins Day at the university where kids were treated to a campus tour, lunch and rap session with students, student-athletes and administrators.

Out of all the programs, organizations, and projects I have done at the university in my three years here, this has been the most meaningful because I have watched the kids at Atkins grow and develop into model students. Many more of them than before have found the right path to success, and that is the ultimate reward for my work. In the coming years, I hope to see Target continue to flourish and build upon the foundation that a few friends of mine and I started so that our vision can continue to be a reality. The motto that I developed for Target can summarize my feelings about my experience with this program:

I can make an impact!
I can make a difference!
I will make an impact!
I will make a difference!

VSC provides projects for service month

By Suzanne DuBose
Perspectives Editor

April is National Youth Service month, the main focus of which is to motivate young people to be involved in their community.

Community service can be an inspirational experience that benefits not only the community, but also the person who is giving their time and talent.

"To volunteer and reflect on serving others is a satisfying part of college. In the midst of all one does not know, caring for others provides measures of satisfaction not necessarily found in class," Chaplain Ed Christman said.

One of the main proponents of service on campus is the Volunteer Service Corps, a student-created and run organization providing a wide variety of service opportunities for any one interested.

"This is a student run organization, student-initiated and student-lead. VSC is the clearing house of service, especially for students," said Paige Wilbanks an assistant vice president for student life and the VSC coordinator.

"Participation in Volunteer Service Corps activities provides students with opportunities to live out the university motto of *Pro Humanitate*. Such experiences contribute to the education of the whole person and the development of character while improving the life of the community," Mary Gerardy, an assistant vice president for student life, said.

Following the National Service month theme, the Volunteer Service Corps has two very special one-time service opportunities for April.

Winston-Salem in the Lives of Deacs is a one-day urban plunge allowing students to volunteer at agencies and schools throughout the community.

"It takes place on a Thursday afternoon, students go out in teams and work on specific projects," Wilbanks said.

"We're trying to get the students and faculty of Wake Forest together to go out into the community and volunteer," junior Chris Harris, the coordinator of WILD, said.

Students are divided into groups of 10, given promotional can huggers and bottled drinks and sent on their way to do anything from picnicking with disabled adults to clearing debris from a play ground area.

"There are about 16 organizations we're working with. Just to name a few, there's Habitat for Humanity, Human Service Alliance, Special Children's School and the list goes on and on," Harris said.

This year WILD will be a part of Greek Week, and Harris said he hopes many Greek organizations along with various clubs and service organizations take part.

"There's an extra incentive for organizations to take part. The organization that has the highest percentage of people show up — we'll donate a sum of money to whoever they choose," Harris said.

The exact sum to be donated is currently unknown, but the money must go towards a charity or special organization of the group's choice.

Individual students are also encouraged to participate. WILD especially provides a unique opportunity for students who have not previously volunteered to have a trial run at various service organizations.

"In general, this event allows you to put your foot in the door to volunteering, to get involved with other students, then you can pass on the experience to others and hopefully continue to volunteer," Harris said.

WILD will take place from 3-6 p.m. April 16. Transportation will be provided by VSC from campus. Interested students may pick up registration forms available on the VSC office door at Benson 321.

The other special one-time service opportunity provided through the VSC for National Service month is



Courtesy of the Volunteer Service Corps

A student in clown costume volunteers at Project Pumpkin, Volunteer Service Corps's largest service project. Clowns are also needed for WILD, another Volunteer Service Corp activity.

"Participation in Volunteer Service Corps activities provides students with opportunities to live out the university motto of *Pro Humanitate*. Such experiences contribute to the education of the whole person and the development of character while improving the life of the community."

Mary Gerardy

Assistant vice president for student life

Wacky Activities for Kids with Energy.

WAKE coincides with the Special Olympics held on campus by the Student Athlete Service Alliance.

"We provide a carnival atmosphere when (the athletes) are waiting for their events," Wilbanks said.

For the past three years, around 500 children, most of whom are elementary students, come to Kentner Stadium for the Special Olympics. WAKE's goal is to provide a fun source of entertainment for these children and their parents.

"We need people to help prepare for the carnival and to help out," senior Jenn Gentile, the chairwoman of WAKE, said.

"Student organizations are needed to sponsor booths and to sponsor children as well," Wilbanks said.

WAKE is asking for groups of students to organize booths for the carnival.

Past booths have featured face painting and games, and a dunking booth featuring administrators and professors that will also be featured this year.

"Individuals who want to have a booth just need to staff a couple people per hour. We have prizes donated from local companies in town," Gentile said.

Students are also needed to serve as escorts, help with publicity and decorations and to dress in costumes, especially clowns, for the occasion Gentile said.

Gentile also hopes university athletes will come in uniform as well.

"If any of the sports team members would like to come to the carnival in their uniforms the kids would really love that; they love college athletes," Gentile said.

WAKE will take place from 9:30 a.m.-1p.m. April 28. Interested students may contact Gentile at Ext. 6589.

Though these two opportunities are wonderful ways to get into the spirit of National Youth Service month, the VSC provides a wide range of service opportunities for students year-round.

"This month should also be a challenge for people to try out a couple different things with the expectation to return to these activities in the fall," said Wilbanks.

Over 700 students volunteer through the 35 agencies connected to the VSC. There are several divisions of service provided by the organization: service involving children, schools and the community at large, extended service and one-shot service opportunities.

"Pretty much anything you want to do we can make sure you get involved and get a chance to do that," junior Katie McKenna, a co-chairwoman of VSC, said.

Any interested students can find out more information, or get directly involved, by simply stopping by the VCS office.

"The best way to get involved would be to just stop by the office. We have people in there from ten (a.m.) till three (p.m.) every day, and they can give them more specific information about any group they want to work with. Also, at the beginning of each semester we usually have a fair of some sort where we bring a lot of the organizations on campus," McKenna said.