“Fishing” For The Three C’s: Alternative Spring Break 2012

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OBJECTIVES

The college’s objectives for Alternative Spring Break were to engage students with each other, specific agencies, and the JCC service region. Student goals were varied. Some were excited about specific service projects, some hoped to improve interpersonal skills, and some wanted to feel connected to other students and campus sites, while others sought interdisciplinary service-learning experiences.

By infusing service activities with the FISH philosophy and the JCC promise, the organizers effectively engaged students in service-learning.

FISH philosophy:
• Play
• Make their day
• Be present
• Choose your attitude.

JCC promise: Challenging, Connecting, Caring.

SERVICE-LEARNING

Broadly defined, service-learning is “a process whereby students learn and develop through active participation in organized service experiences that actually meet community needs.” It’s one example of experiential learning, in which students “do to learn, not just learn to do.” ASB service-learning included: gathering questions, problem-solving and team-building activities, service work, and reflective journaling.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Day 1: Humane Society
The Chautauqua County Humane Society is a “no need to kill” shelter that was established in 1905 and depends almost entirely on its 400+ volunteers to maintain its services. ASB volunteers spent the day landscaping CCHS’s “front yard” and interacting with shelter animals, including two dogs from the Prospect Street cruelty case.

Day 2: Hospice Chautauqua County
Hospice Chautauqua County is a non-profit organization that strives to give people diagnosed with a terminal illness care at the end of their lives and aids their families and loved ones in developing coping strategies for the loss. ASB volunteers spent the day landscaping in the garden in front of the building that will eventually become a memorial for families and patients to enjoy.

Day 3: Canticle Farm
Canticle Farm, located in Allegany, New York, is a non-profit Community Supported Agriculture farm that grows organic foods without the use of harmful pesticides and chemical fertilizers. ASB volunteers helped the cause by doing various jobs like pulling carrots, picking spinach in the greenhouses, cleaning leeks, or trimming back excess beet sprouts from the newly growing trays of plants.

Day 4: Allegany State Park
Allegany State Park is the largest state park in New York. It offers people a place to camp, fish, and participate in many other outdoor activities. ASB volunteers spent the day clearing out bushes from an area near a fishing spot that do not grow well in the area and cleared back trees with the help of some other volunteers to let park-goers see into the wooded area better.

Day 5: Dunkirk Senior Center
The Dunkirk Senior Center puts on a monthly “gala” for senior citizens around the area, and ASB volunteers helped prepare for their spring gala. During this day, volunteers helped set tables and put up decorations to put on a springtime scene for the senior citizens. They also helped by starting to organize a small library also located in the building.

RESULTS

The goals of ASB 2012, using the fish philosophy, and based on the college promise, were sufficiently met. Most notably, friendships were built that might never have happened. With students being from different campuses it was a rare opportunity for them to meet students from the other campuses and learn a little more about the college experience of others. There were also many opportunities to learn about the service sites visited.

Students were challenged with different tasks they may have otherwise never experienced, connected with other students and with service sites in the community, and came to care for the other volunteers within the group.

REFERENCES

http://www.hospicechautco.org/services
http://canticlefarm.org