

10-5-2011

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### Recommended Citation

"The REAL Dayton" (2011). *News Releases*. 821.  
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## The REAL Dayton

**10.05.2011 | Students, Service and Giving**

Nearly 60 University of Dayton students this week will spend their fall break getting to know the "real" Dayton and learning how to make it a great place to live.

Now in its third year, REAL Dayton enables students to Reach out, Enrich themselves, act for others and Learn about the city their University calls home. A total of 59 students (13 former participants returning as leaders) will participate in the program, which runs Oct. 5-8. The theme is "Living in and helping to build a just city."

Past participants say the program helps them experience life outside of the college "bubble," said Kelly Bohrer, the University's coordinator of community outreach. It challenges stereotypes and assumptions and turns students into advocates for the region, she said.

"It's a weekend to really put the University's mission of learn, lead, serve into practice," Bohrer said. "It's a great opportunity for students to find out who their Dayton neighbors are, lend a helping hand, learn about the region's assets and culture and learn how they can be good neighbors in this community."

REAL Dayton begins with dinner on campus Wednesday, Oct. 5, and ends with dinner off campus Saturday, Oct. 8, at the homes of University of Dayton faculty, staff, alumni and friends. Students will spend Thursday and Friday nights at Cricket Holler Retreat Center after invigorating days of immersion into the cultural life of Dayton.

Students will take a tour of Dayton neighborhoods and meet community partners with the University's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community; tour cultural sites around Dayton; and do four community service projects with 17 community agencies.

Students also will have the chance to eat food from local restaurants, interact with people who live within Dayton's city limits and reflect on their experiences with local community members and activists during a panel presentation on Thursday.

The intent is to help University of Dayton students feel more connected to and more concerned about the greater Dayton community, Bohrer said.

"We didn't want this to be just a service weekend or just a retreat or just an immersion into Dayton," she said. "We wanted elements from all three of these types of programs, so there are service projects, educational activities, guest speakers, tours, cultural site visits and reflections — both on the service done and on deeper issues of social justice."

REAL Dayton students will serve with "Grow with Your Neighbors" community gardens, Dayton Christian Center, Life Essentials, Partners in Community Living, House of Bread, St. Mary's Development Corp., Good Neighbor House, Adventure Central, St. Vincent's and Men's Gateway Shelters, Homeful, Habitat for Humanity, Five Rivers MetroParks, YWCA, First Baptist Church, Dayton Water Department, Nassau Community Urban Farm and Compassion First.

As part of their orientation to Dayton, students will also visit the Dayton International Peace Museum, Fifth Third Field, Wright Brothers Cycle Shop, Riverscape, Garden Station, the Dayton Art Institute, Carillon Park and Second Street Market.

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