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When They Graduate and Move Away, Many Grads Continue a Campus Holiday Tradition in Their Communities

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Covenant House, a temporary shelter for teen-age mothers will be the location for the University of Dayton's New York alumni chapter's Christmas Off Campus celebration. About 25 UD graduates will host a Christmas party for the mothers and children staying at the Covenant House, located at 427 W. 52nd St. between 9th and 10th streets. The party will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5. For more information, call Kim Hertlein at 516-759-0367.)

WHEN THEY GRADUATE AND MOVE AWAY, MANY UD GRADS CONTINUE A CAMPUS HOLIDAY TRADITION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

DAYTON, Ohio — Students at the University of Dayton take a day off from classes on Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and host a party for thousands of children and adults.

Alumni from the University of Dayton are continuing that tradition across the country.

They may not get to take a day off from work, but they are setting aside time to celebrate the holidays with children, the elderly or other members of their communities.

For example, at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8 — the same time that UD students will be ushering children around the holiday celebration on the UD campus — UD graduates living in the Philadelphia area will be hosting a party at the People's Emergency Shelter.

"I always think of it as my early Christmas," says Claire Hughes, coordinator of the project in Philadelphia. "It's the kickoff of the Christmas season for me and puts me in the spirit."

About 85 percent of UD alumni participated in the Dec. 8 Christmas on Campus event while they were students — an event that includes a Mass, tree-lighting ceremony, music concerts and games for as many as 5,000 people.

Alumni are keeping the tradition alive with their families and college friends in Christmas Off Campus, an offshoot of the annual celebration. Alumni in 19 chapters across the country will try to make the holidays a little brighter for others in their communities through a variety of volunteer projects.

In San Francisco, alumni will prepare sack lunches for the homeless and help serve meals.
at the Glide Memorial. In the Atlanta, Chicago, Tampa and Washington, D.C. chapters, alumni will be hosting Christmas parties for mothers and children staying at temporary shelters.

In Pittsburgh, UD alumni and students at North Catholic High School will team up to throw a Christmas party for at-risk youth in their community.

Last year about 600 people took part in Christmas off Campus events, according to Laura Hooper, assistant director for regional programs in UD’s alumni relations office.

“Even though they’re across the country, they are still continuing a UD tradition,” Hooper says. “They enjoy giving back to the community and it makes them feel that they are still a part of the University.”

UD is a private, co-educational institution, founded by the Society of Mary, a Roman Catholic order that emphasizes community. Approximately 11,000 graduate and undergraduate students currently attend UD.

UD alumni chapters taking part in Christmas off Campus include Akron/Canton, Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Detroit Indianapolis, New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Rochester, San Francisco, St. Louis, Tampa, Toledo and Washington D.C./Baltimore.

For media interviews, call Laura Hooper at (937) 229-3299. For more information, call Erika Mattingly at (937) 229-3212.