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NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON STUDENTS TACKLING SPRING BREAK WITH PAINTBRUSHES, LADLES — AND ELBOW GREASE

DAYTON, Ohio — For tens of thousands of college students, the supplies of spring break will include shades, sunblock and swim suits. For 144 University of Dayton students, provisions will include paintbrushes, ladles and a lot of elbow grease.

The students are participating in UD's Spring Break-Out program March 12-20, an annual event designed to introduce them to community service throughout the country.

"I was looking for something different — I've already been to the beach," said senior Keith Pfaller, 22, a chemical engineering major from Cincinnati, Ohio. Pfaller is headed to for Berthold, N.D., where he will tutor adults, visit residents in nursing homes and learn about issues of local American Indians.

"I'm going to experience a new culture. You don't get to do that too often," he added. Not exactly sun and surf. But that's the point.

"There's a misconception that these trips aren't enjoyable. But they're tons of fun," said senior Vicki Muhlenkamp, 22, a sociology major from Dayton, Ohio. "They rejuvenate my life in many ways. This wouldn't happen if I were to take the traditional spring break to Florida."

Muhlenkamp is a veteran of spring breakouts, having been to Washington, D.C., last year to lobby in Congress for debt relief for developing countries. This year she will stay in rural Bruce, Miss., and help prepare a building for its conversion to a new Catholic church, teach at a Head Start program and talk with teens about college opportunities.

Last spring, almost 25,000 students across the nation participated in some type of alternative break experience, according to Break Away, a national resource of information on alternative break programs that is based at Vanderbilt University.

Service trips started at UD in 1989 when a small group of students in the Pax Christi student service club organized a trip to the Bronx. By 1991, 35 students participated in four

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service trips, and the number has grown each year since then. This year UD students chose from 15 service trips.

UD Spring Break-Out projects this year range from experiencing American Indian culture and building Habitat for Humanity homes in Eagle Butte, S.D., to learning more about the civil rights movement while touring historical sites in the South, such as Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma, Ala. One group of UD students will provide a wide variety of social services to Latino and African-American communities in Chicago, including helping out in a Head Start program and youth center. Another group will travel to Salyersville, Ky., to perform a variety of service projects in this rural Appalachian community. Still another group will travel to Juarez, Mexico, to learn about immigration issues and worker exploitation along the U.S.-Mexican border.

"This is an chance to do something worthwhile for others," said Nick Cardilino, coordinator of community outreach and service clubs for UD's Center for Social Concern. "It's more than an opportunity to see the issues faced by other cultures. It's a really a way to make deep friendships and to reflect and pray on the experience."

Cardilino added that the spring break program also develops leaders, as each trip is planned and led by students.

Jessica Gruenke, 20, a public relations major from Sheboygan, Wisc., is heading to Bronx, N.Y., for spring break. Her group will work with inner-city children and tutor adults who are working toward their GEDs. They also will help serve at a soup kitchen.

"I spent last summer in parts of Appalachia where I learned about the economics of rural poverty," the sophomore said. "This trip will open my eyes to the poverty found in urban America."

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