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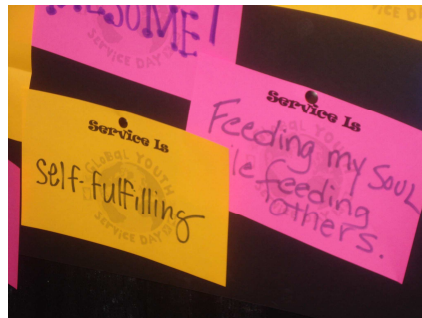
A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE: GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY HEADS TO THE MALL OF AMERICA

— KEELIN YENNEY

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What does service mean to you? "Service Is Duty." "Service is Helping your Community and making it a better place." "Service Is Being Helpful and Having Success." These were just a few of the many responses from youth on Global Youth Service Day held on April 25th at the Mall of America.



on service projects which included decorating bags for Meals on Wheels, writing letters to troops and decorating cards for sick children, assisting Pet Haven in making dog and cat toys, assembling dental hygiene kits for homeless shelters, and decorating reusable shopping bags. Audience members were serenaded by the music of Parallax, who even performed a special song they had written for the day. St. Paul Johnson High School Motion Crew wowed us with their amazing break-dancing moves and Cooper High School Step Team drew our attention during the Stomp routine.

In addition, service went Skyping! In order to truly make our event global, we Skyped with youth from Canada, Montana, and Fergus Falls, MN to find out what they did to make a difference in their communities.

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Pictured Above: Youth decorate reusable shopping bags at GYSD Celebration of Service. Bags donated by HandsOn Twin Cities

The Five Promises

Caring Adults
Safe Places
Healthy Start
Effective Education
Opportunities to Help Others

In partnership with Delta Dental of Minnesota and the MN Timberwolves/Lynx, the MN Alliance With Youth held its annual Global Youth Service Day to celebrate the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each year through service and volunteering. Global Youth Service Day is the largest service event in the world and is the only weekend that specifically focuses on what young people can do to change the world.

Energy and excitement filled the Best Buy Rotunda during the entire Sunday afternoon. Between the performances, prizes, and service projects, youth and families eagerly joined in on the celebration. Hundreds of young people participated in the many hands-

□ I never knew all this work and gardening could be so fun! □

Achievement Plus: Global Youth Service Day

— Samantha Thomas, AmeriCorps Promise Fellow

Students at Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School in East Saint Paul got their hands dirty on Thursday April 22nd and Friday April 23rd for Global Youth Service Day. Forty 5th graders helped break ground on the school's new Butterfly Peace Garden and it was not an easy job. From pulling weeds, picking rocks, to spreading compost students helped prepare the site for planting. Many of the students exclaimed, "I never knew all this work and gardening could be so fun!"

Did you know you can compost the pizza cardboard that the recycling company won't pick up? Thanks to Neil Cunningham from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the students learned that you can by using sow bugs. To help explore the composition of soil, students made their own soil using a little gravel, sand, peat moss and organic

matter. They then received several varieties of seeds to plant at their homes. Lashaun, 5th grader, reported going home and planting her seeds to start her own garden. However, she lost a bell pepper seed along the way so hopes that "when I am walking home I will find a pepper plant growing"

Students hope to continue to make the garden a reflection of peace by cultivating a space that is an extension of the school and welcoming to all. As Gunner, one 5th grade student said perfectly, "I liked helping make our school and neighborhood look nice. This neighborhood is known for people want [ing] to move out, I want people to see this neighborhood as nice and good for the Twin Cities."

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MN Lynx Basketball Player Candice Wiggins made an appearance and shared her experiences on volunteering with the audience. A special thank to Candice for being a positive role model to young people of Minnesota. The day would not have been complete without honoring the difference young people make in their communities. MN Timberwolves mascot Crunch helped present the Delta Dental Serve a Smile™ Select Youth Leadership Award to Spring Lake Park High School's chapter of Family Career and Community Leaders of America (*pictured below*). They received a \$1000 check to donate to the charity of their choice. Congratulations to Spring Lake Park High School!



A special thanks to our many partners who helped make this happen as well as our emcee Mike Rylander and our youth emcees Brianna Baker, Youth Advisory Council member, and Hannah Niemer, member of Youth Service America's National Youth Council. The Alliance would also like to thank the planning committee and all of the day's volunteers for making Global Youth Service Day a success.

Statewide Partner Network Spotlight: NYLC

The Mighty Mississippi Could Lead to Many Adventures

A Brief Reflection of Two Years of AmeriCorps

— Mason Fong, AmeriCorps Promise Fellow

Two years ago I was working on the second deck of the Jonathan Padelford for what I thought was going to be another trip up and down the Mississippi River. A trip that I had taken many times over the past five summers while in college trying to stay afloat. To my surprise this trip changed my life. As I began to talk to one of the guests I became more intrigued with their work and organization, NYLC. Friendly and ashy bearded Mike, who is now a co-worker said, “check us out on the web.”

Later that night I went home and immediately hopped onto my computer and went to the NYLC website. Soon after reading about the National Youth Leadership Council I clicked on the “Jobs at NYLC” link. Unfortunately the only position was something called an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow. This position offered a minimal living stipend, health benefits, an education award and was a year-long commitment. I thought to myself, “I’m a college graduate and I deserve more.” In addition I was looking for a job, not an opportunity to serve. However, since I was having a difficult time finding full-time jobs to apply for I applied for the AmeriCorps Promise Fellow position.

Fortunately, I was hired and given the opportunity to serve while gaining valuable work experience. I learned very quickly that worth is more than just monetary compensation.



The opportunities that were created were worth more to me than what I deserved for being a “college graduate.” I currently have a better understanding of the importance of experience and service. My current position allows me to facilitate trainings and discussions about how service and service-learning can impact someone’s life and their community. A student once said to me during a reflection, “I now know why it is important to for me to care about the community.” Based on experiences like this one, I continue to be passionate about my work and the people I work with.

As I said previously, that trip up and down the Mississippi River changed my life. In the past two years I have met countless individuals who have done great things with youth and their communities in order to better our collective community including Ana who lives in Colorado, Hisham from Palestine, and many great youth workers in Minnesota. The programs in place allowed me to learn more about myself. The opportunities to learn and network have been endless. Finally, creating memories that will last for a lifetime has been a blessing, such as creating experiential learning experiences, working with drastically different communities (for example Naytahwaush and Woodbury, Minnesota to Doha, Qatar) and having youth saying, “That was life changing, thank you.” No one knows where the Mississippi

River will lead them and whose lives they will change.

The Month In Photographic Review



Pictured Above: (right to left) A group of youth share what service means to them at the GYSD Celebration of Service; Our Youth E m-Cees Hannah and Brianna pose with E m-Cee Mike Rylander and event coordinator and Alliance staff member Gina Nelson; International visitors from Guyana and Namibia stopped by Dayton's Bluff Elementary to learn about gardening during the school's GYSD service event!

Peace Doves and Jane Goodall: A Special Day at Funky Minds

-Katy Fiedler, AmeriCorps Promise Fellow

Anna called. "I volunteered us to decorate the hall for an upcoming lecture by Dr. Jane Goodall. We can make two giant peace dove puppets and multiple tree murals." My first thought – DR. JANE GOODALL? Biologist extraordinaire? The pioneering woman who spent so much of her life living amongst chimpanzees in Africa is now on a lecture circuit? My second thought- what do peace doves have in common with chimps? Finally I felt like I should be surprised by this, but was not. My year at Funky Minds has been filled with enough surprises that I have come to expect the unexpected.

Dr. Goodall began a program to encourage youth to take leadership in solving the environmental and social problems our world faces today. Her organization, Roots and Shoots, is aimed at empowering children to connect with their community to make a positive impact.

Kofi Annan selected Dr. Goodall as an International Ambassador for peace. She in turn requested that on International Peace Day, hundreds of peace doves be flown in observance of the holiday. Our group learned about Dr. Goodall, her organization and mission and embarked on our project.

Materials were collected; metal clippers, chicken wire, yards of table clothes, a sewing machine and acrylic paints. Oh- and don't forget the olive branch! Programming hours were set aside to ensure timely production. Anna took a dove to her elementary school and charged

the Funky Minds crew with the

task of completing the next dove. The finished doves would each have a wingspan of 18 feet and be used to decorate Beth El Synagogue during Dr. Goodall's upcoming speech.

I learned that the act of creating the peace doves is what the peace dove puppets are all about. Peace doves are an international symbol of peace, unity, and togetherness. The act of creating such a symbol- in an obviously magnified and seemingly unmanageable form does just that. I can't say that undertaking this project was always a peaceful endeavor. Putting a group of students together with metal clippers and chicken wire was often anything but peaceful. But unifying? Yes! I have a feeling that Jane knew that when she uploaded the puppet instructions to her website.

On April 19th Dr. Goodall addressed a crowd of over 1,500 people inspiring us with her reasons for hope. In spite of the problems our world faces, she looks to the human brain, the human spirit, the resilience of nature, and the compassion of children as her reasons for hope. Our students demonstrated that hope through this project.



Pictured Above: Supervisor, Students and Promise Fellow pose with Jane Goodall

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Special Note:

The MN Alliance With Youth and Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School had the honor of hosting two visitors from the national program "Volunteerism: United We Serve." Two leaders in their professions from Guyana and Namibia were invited to Minnesota by the United States Department of State and traveled around the U.S. on a 3-week professional exchange program. They had the opportunity to visit with Promise Fellow Sam Thomas and her fifth grade students to learn more about service-learning and its role within the school. They also observed a lesson on soil and gardening and helped students prepare for creating their own community garden next to the school. Thank you to the Minnesota International Center for allowing us to introduce Global Youth Service Day and service-learning with your international visitors.



Engagement. Voice. Success.

The Minnesota Alliance With Youth is a statewide collaborative network of partner organizations, schools and communities advocating with and for youth to ensure all young people have the resources they need for success.

The vision of the Alliance is that all young people in Minnesota are connected to their communities, have hope for the future and are able to realize their dreams.

Minnesota Alliance With Youth

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May

Youth Work Matters Workshop

Leadership Matters

Minneapolis - May 21

9 a.m. - Noon

Location: UROC, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N., Minneapolis 55411

Cost: \$25

www1.extension.umn.edu/youth/Training-Events/