



INSIDE

The Volunteer Experience—Rx Rhapsody 1

Alternative Spring Break Outreach 3

ZebraNet 6

Hobbs Farm—A Farm for the People, A Farm for all Time 8

AmeriCorps 10

Career Center 11

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ZebraNet
- AmeriCorps
- Career Center

The Volunteer Experience—Rx Rhapsody

by Raghiv Siddiqui

I was speaking with my infinitely wise friend Jon one day about why we volunteer. Somewhat disconcertingly, we came to the conclusion that we shouldn't—take away the obligation of medical school hopefuls to amass volunteer hours and you are left with a cold invoice from one Charles Darwin who tells you that



Rx Rhapsody is a non-for-profit organization devoted to the power of healing body and mind through music. We will hold free performances for children, seniors and general patients at the Stony Brook Hospital as well as other hospitals around the area. We will hold performances wherever permissible, and actually within the hospitals whenever we can.”

—Except from RxRhapsody Mission Statement

Rx Rhapsody Continued...

there is no competitive advantage in helping others for nothing.

Yet, there we are—me, Jon, and around four to five volunteers with guitars and music in hand, playing Backstreet Boys in a cramped hospital room for an unwell child clapping her hands in time with our music. We are hypocrites and we would not want it any other way.

Rx Rhapsody is a project I founded to reconcile the two great loves of my life: music and volunteerism. Our purpose is to play music in hospitals both locally and within New York City, usually by the bedsides of patients whenever permissible. We are open to the broad spectrum of performing artists that include guitarists to singers to saxophonists—if it can fit into a hospital room we probably have someone who can play it. Since the conception of the club in late 2010, we have experienced some truly unforgettable moments within the various hospitals and specialized clinics (like the Stony Brook Cancer Center) that we have visited. Frequently, the parents of the children for whom we play are moved to tears. In one especially moving winter afternoon in the Stony Brook University hospital, Jon and I began to play some music for a child who was in a catatonic state from which his mother could not coax him. As our acoustic performance of “Brown Eyed Girl” came to a close, he was jumping and laughing on his hospital bed.

At its core, the club is a music therapy initiative. In spite of the best efforts of the regular hospital staff, a hospital is still a place where life and death walk hand in hand on a daily basis. Too often, the psychological component of the inpatient experience is overlooked, and this can have a significant bearing on recovery time and response to treatment. Children are especially sensitive to this, and are thus comprise our primary audience. Music can exert a calming effect and exert actual chemical changes that improve the well-being of the listener—in addition to the legion scientific studies that have ratified this, the musicians of Rx Rhapsody prove it every time we visit.

Since our formation, we have grown both in number of musicians and funding and have most recently been guest performers on several fundraisers hosted by other clubs. We hold practices on a weekly basis, and perform alternatively at the SBU Hospital and Cancer Center twice a week. Furthermore, at least once a semester we visit a hospital in New York City. Our most recent “away show” took place at Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens.

In the relatively short existence of Rx Rhapsody we have been honored with numerous accolades for our work, including several grants, Stony Brook’s 2010 Best New Organization Award and 2011 Distinguished Service Award. Given the success of our current model, chief among our aims is to encourage other colleges to establish chapters of Rx Rhapsody within their own campus-

“Our purpose is to play music in hospitals both locally and within New York City”

VOLUME
III

ISSUE 3

es. We would like for others to experience for themselves the magic of music in the life of those who could use it most.

Please visit www.rxrhapsody.com for pictures and video of our exploits past and present.

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.”

- Mohammed Ali

Alternative Spring Break Outreach

A Better Way to Spend Your Vacation

By William Young

On the night of April 15th, eighty Stony Brook students boarded two buses to begin the journey they had been preparing for, for an entire semester. They would be on these buses for the next 24 – 26 hours. One bus was headed towards New Orleans, Louisiana, the striking ground of the famed Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The other was headed to Pensacola, Florida, the site of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster in 2010. All of these students were on a mission to serve not only their local communities, but the world at large. Although the U.S. is the largest giver of foreign aid to other countries, many forget that there are people in this country that need our help too. For these eighty students, answering the call meant more than just studying these disasters in a classroom, or making a simple donation. It meant meeting these people themselves and helping to rebuild these communities with their own two hands.

For most, life is a balance of work and play. We work most during the school year and we tend to relax during our spring, winter and summer vacations. But have you ever had a vacation where you felt like you accomplished neither work nor play? Have you ever passed a vacation where you felt like you didn't accomplish anything or make yourself useful, but at the same time, you wasted the opportunity to go out and have fun? Although no professor can tell you how to spend your vacation, Stony Brook's Division of Student Life, along with the Alternative Spring Break

ASBO Continued...

Outreach Program offers qualified Stony Brook students a worthwhile alternative.

The Alternative Spring Break Outreach Program started five years ago with a handful of Stony Brook students eager to serve not only the local community, but also the community beyond Stony Brook's borders. In August 2005, a terrible storm system named *Hurricane Katrina* began its journey from the southern tip of Florida, moving across the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, gaining strength as it traveled. The most damage was done in New Orleans, Louisiana when the city's levee system failed and the city was flooded causing a significant number of deaths as well as significant property damage to the city. As one of the deadliest and costliest storm systems in United States history, the storm continues to shape life in New Orleans. A significant amount of those who remain in the city still live in temporary housing accommodations. As the city struggled to rebuild itself, its cries for help were heard in Stony Brook. The brave few that answered the call would begin an effort that would allow future Stony Brook students to witness dramatic snapshots of hardship that they would not soon forget.

The Alternative Spring Break Outreach Program (ASBO) is a registered organization on campus that works with the Division of Student Life to send willing Stony Brook students to another part of the U.S. to perform community service. Since its inception five years ago, ASBO has sent hundreds of students to different places in need. This year, ASBO sent students to New Orleans, Louisiana, to help victims of Hurricane Katrina; and Pensacola, Florida to help those affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill (also known as the BP Oil Spill). But getting to these places is no easy task for any student. Interested participants first go through an application and screening process in the fall and prepare throughout the year for their trip in the spring. Out of about 200 applicants each year, only eighty are selected to participate in the program. Being accepted means committing yourself for an entire year as well as completing a two credit internship with the Career Center attending guest lectures, and going through intense mental preparation along the way. Students complete the Red Watch Band training with the division of student life along with keeping journals of their experiences, culminating into a final reflection paper which details their long journey of service. Many students who have considered going abroad to study or perform community service have found a much more flexible alternative with ASBO.

"These trips are always amazing because I feel like it's all about personal growth and building a community," says President Alex Alvarez, "just getting to know all the members you're serving with and having that bond, that's my favorite part." And that's exactly what members did on the 26 - 28 hour bus ride to Pensacola Florida. "At first, it can be uncomfortable, but you get to know everyone, especially on the way back," he explains. On the bus ride, students watch movies, play group games and get to know each other. It is truly part of the bonding experience that makes this kind of experience unforgettable.

**"just getting
to know all
the members
you're serv-
ing with and
having that
bond, that's
my favorite
part."**

VOLUME
III

ISSUE 3



"Alternative Spring Break Outreach (ASBO) is a student-developed, student-run community service organization whose mission is to promote critical thinking, social action, and civic engagement for a lifetime by combining education, reflection, and direct service on the local, regional, national, or international levels. ASBO trains and immerses students in a purposeful service experience designed to connect students and community members while enhancing growth, mutual awareness, and life-long learning. Students and Advisors will participate in "immersion" experiences of community service." – ASBO Mission Statement

After arriving at their work site, students are given housing and free meals as part of their \$500 - \$600 fee for the trip. Students will leave the Friday before spring break after classes and arrive at their destination on Saturday night. They are then shown to their rooms and given some time to sleep before receiving their

wake up call at 6am Sunday morning. At that point, students will begin their week's work. In New Orleans, the students worked in a children's center attending to and caring for young children. They also assisted teachers with classes and daily activities. While they were there, they enjoyed the culture of the city as well as a History Haunted Tour Group Event. Meanwhile, in Florida, students worked in the coastal wetlands of Pensacola to raise awareness for the environmental damage the oil spill had caused while working to restore the area to its former state. During their stay, they also enjoyed a dolphin cruise while watching the sunset. Each of these groups also participated in culture immersion events such as attending cultural performances and dining on local cuisine. "There is no other way to have such an impact at such a big level while having so much fun and making new friends along the way," says Biology major Herman Khalsi who attended the Pensacola trip. In fact, that is what ASBO is all about: making an impact while making new friends along the way. If you're still not convinced, just ask Business and Sociology Major William Keating, "ASBO changed my life. My current goals and ambitions wouldn't exist if not for ASBO."

If you would like to be a part of this amazing experience, please contact ASBO co-presidents Hector Ian Martinez and Justin Williams at asbosbu@gmail.com.



ONE STOP ACCESS TO JOBS, NETWORKING, AND AN EXCITING CAREER

REGISTER ON ZEBRANET!

VISIT WWW.STONYBROOK.EDU/CAREER
AND THEN CLICK ON THE ZEBRANET LINK

ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT
AND START YOUR SEARCH!

SEARCH FOR
JOBS/
INTERNSHIPS

- Fairs
- On-Campus recruitment
- On & off campus positions

CAREER/
INDUSTRY
RESEARCH

- Vault Career Insider
- GuruNation
- Internships.Com

NETWORK
W/EMPLOYERS
& ALUMNI

- Employer Database
- ZebraCan

ATTEND
WORKSHOPS/
EVENTS

- Career Center Workshop/Events
- Employer Information Sessions

ZebraNet is also your one-stop-shop for
Volunteer Opportunities and Service Projects

Here are a few examples of service projects posted on
ZebraNet:

- Making Strides against Breast Cancer Walk—
ID#16382
- Part of the Solution Food Pantry—ID# 13891
- Better World Books Book Drive—ID# 16458
- Little Flower Children and Family Services
College Tour—ID#16396
- St. Baldrick's Foundation—ID# 16353

Please visit ZebraNet to find more opportunities like this and
many more!

Stony Brook at Hobbs Farm

Written by: William Young

*A Farm
for all
People, A
Farm for
all Time*

VOLUME
III

ISSUE 3

On April 11th, a small group of Stony Brook students travelled to Hobbs Farm in Centereach, Suffolk County. There, they set to work harvesting vegetables amongst hundreds of neatly planted crops on a vast stretch of farmland. In the greenhouse, another team of Stony Brook students was busy at work planting small patches of broccoli, cauliflower, peppers and other summer vegetables. For the rest of the day, students would team up with the owners of the farm and other volunteers and caretakers to collect and harvest food. What makes Hobbs farm so special? The farm has a long history dating back to 1906 when the family of James Hobbs came from Georgia and settled in Long Island working the farmland in the area. Eventually, the Hobbs family purchased the land they had been working on and established Hobbs farm. In 1955, James's son Alfred Hobbs took ownership of the farm. He farmed his own property as well as rental farmland in the surrounding area for many years. Though he received many offers to purchase the land for commercial use, Alfred Hobbs decided to keep the property hoping that it would remain farmland and continue to feed the people of Long Island for as long as he was alive.

But Alfred Hobbs' dream did not die with him. After he passed away in the late 1990s, Alfred Hobbs passed on the farm to the nearby Bethel AME Church where he was a member. The transfer of ownership was slow however, and for a time, the farm was vandalized and fell into a state of disrepair. But in 2007, the Church finally found itself in a position to take ownership of the property. That year, the Church formed *Friends of Hobbs Farm* and set to work rebuilding the farmhouse and the barn. They then began to restore the land starting a two-acre cooperative gardening project on which grow several varieties of crops. The produce from this farmland is distributed to local food ministries on Long Island. The purpose of the farm is two-fold. The first is to provide food for those suffering through difficult times on Long Island. In this way, the Bethel AME Church can reach out to the needy. But it also reaches out to volunteers like the volunteers from Stony Brook who volunteered their day to help Bethel AME carry its message of hope to those with none. To this day, the Bethel Church and the *Friends of Hobbs Farm* continue to work to restore the land to its original state and purpose, all while honoring the Hobbs family legacy of generosity, which continues to live on at the farm.

Hobbs farm is a non-for-profit community farm as well as the last African American family farm on Long Island. With so much history and a reputation for distinguished community service, Stony Brook decided it had to be a part of it. The Leadership and Service Committee of Campus Residences, led by Miriam Rios, Quad Director of H-Quad, decided that Hobbs farm was worthy of Stony Brook's attention. A small handful of Stony Brook students answered the call, including students from the Community Service Club on campus and students from the Leadership and Service undergraduate college. Students spent a good part of the day at the farm (lunch was served) and



“Hobbs Farm is a historic farm that seeks to maintain a spiritual, physical, and academic connection with Christ by using its agrarian setting to serve the local community.”

– Hobbs Farm Vision

had the opportunity to work the farm, all while serving the community. “For someone whose hands have never touched the rich soil of the ground, it felt great to do something that not

only helps the environment but has other contributions as well,” says Tamica Shilletto, Residence Hall Director of James College and coordinator of the event. Tamica also sits on the Leadership and Service Committee at Campus Residences.

The Hobbs Farm trip was just one of the many events the Leadership and Service Committee oversees. “The Leadership & Service Committee is focused on creating leadership, as well as civic engagement opportunities for students involved in Hall Council. Our goal for this academic year was to offer opportunities for each Hall Council to get involved in a different social justice topic and this goal was accomplished. Next year we hope to continue these monthly initiatives and gain more participation from students.” The committee also puts on residential Blood Drives each semester, debates and lectures relating to social justice and various other events throughout the year including an environmental can-collecting event in which students built sculptures out of recycled cans, and a bulletin board contest. Tamica hopes that this trip to Hobbs Farm would only be the first of many. This summer, she is planning a return visit with Stony Brook faculty and youth from the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) Summer Camp. Tamica also hopes that this can become a per-semester event for Stony Brook students and that more and that through programs like these, more and more students will come to know the value of giving back.

“For someone whose hands have never touched the rich soil of the ground, it felt great to do something that not only helps the environment but has other contributions as well”



AmeriCorps: Students Earn Scholarships Through Community Engagement

For the next year, 70 fortunate Stony Brook University students will be eligible to take advantage of the AmeriCorps Education Award enabling them to receive a \$1,132 scholarship. In return they must complete 300 hours of service work for local nonprofit organizations.

The Career Center offers the program, which is a federally funded three-year grant with support from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Students may use the scholarship to pay for education costs at any college, university, or approved post-secondary institution or school-to-work program. A voucher may also be applied to pay back qualified student loans already incurred by the students.

In the process, AmeriCorps members learn new skills, acquire leadership experience, and gain a sense of satisfaction from positively impacting the lives of others.

“The application process this year was very competitive because of the high interest in community engagement programs among higher education institutions,” said Urszula Zalewski, Career and Volunteer Programs Coordinator at the Career Center. She said that Stony Brook University’s AmeriCorps Program has a long history of outstanding achievements and this helped Stony Brook receive the additional funding for the new three-year cycle. “We have 100 percent enrollment and retention rates since 2004, which is a huge accomplishment,” said Zalewski.

The Career Center reaches out to students through other departments, utilizing ZebraNet, the Community Service and Service-Learning Web site, to market available positions and provide extensive details about the application process.

Stony Brook students have served the following organizations: Response of Suffolk County, The Elsie Owens Health Center, CHILL/Center for Prevention & Outreach, Four Seasons Nursing Home, Montefiore Hospital NYC, Oxfam America, PAR FORE Mentoring Program, Stony Brook Ambulance Corps, Stony Brook University Medical Center/Ambulatory Surgery Center, Stony Brook University Medical Center/Blood Bank, Stony Brook University WISE Program, Suffolk County Perinatal Coalition, Sunshine Prevention Center, the City Bar Justice Center, the Town of Oyster Bay/G.A.P. Program, South Huntington School District and Adaptive Aquatics.

Participating students address community needs in health, education, public safety, homelessness, hunger and poverty, performing tasks such as leading community health campaigns, tutoring, and mentoring youth of all ages, conducting food collections, working on environmental projects, and responding to natural disasters by providing relief for victims.

For more information and application, visit

<http://www.career.sunysb.edu/content/vcs/ameri-corps>

Career Center

Stony Brook University * W-0550 Melville Library * Stony Brook, NY 11794-3363
Phone: (631) 632-6810 Fax: (631)(632-9146)

Understanding Yourself:

- * Individual Counseling
- * Self-Assessments and Career Tests
- * Career Resource Library
- * Zebra Career Advising Network (ZebraCAN)

Preparing Yourself:

- * Resume and Cover Letter Review
- * Mock (Practice) Interviews
 - * Outreach Programs
 - * Employer Involvement at the Career Center
 - * Diversity Professional Leadership Network (DPLN)
- * Testing Program for Graduate School Admissions

Gaining Experience

- * ZebraNet
- * Job and Internship Fairs
- * On-Campus Recruiting (OCR)
- * Internships (Part-time/Full-Time)
- * Volunteers for Community Service (VCS)
- * AmeriCorps Education Award Program

If you are looking for volunteer opportunities or want to get your student group involved in volunteering please come visit the Career Center, located at the end of the Zebra Path, next to the Book Store in the basement of the Melville Library.

Whether you are looking for opportunities on Long Island or in New York City, we can help you find them and connect you with various organizations!

Volunteer Opportunities include but not limited to:

*Youth/Elderly
Homelessness
Education
Medical*

Learn about various grants and awards related to community service for your student group.

Do you want to be featured in Stony Brook Serves for the next month? Want to showcase your student group and the great work you are doing? Want to be the featured student leader of the month? Contact us and send us your story. Please email your name (individual and/or student group), email, phone and a story describing your service accomplishments to Urszula Zalewski, Senior Career Associate, at Urszula.Zalewski@stonybrook.edu.

We hold the rights to decline any story from publication.