

Another Angle

Power of volunteering understood after build

This past winter I joined Ithaca College's Habitat for Humanity for its personal benefits and not for its primary purpose. I was more interested in spending time with my close friends than taking part in community service events. Yet after a construction trip to North Carolina, I gained a new knowledge behind becoming a volunteer for a community



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service organization. I learned that in volunteering, there is a requirement of making sacrifices for the benefit of others. Unfortunately, community service is often used for personal benefits or as a crutch to improve one's college résumé. However, I feel that there is a much deeper feeling involved in volunteering that some people may take for granted. Whether the sacrifices are large or small, one still gives up something for a complete stranger. This beautiful ideal is the basis for all volunteering. If someone is guilty of volunteering without having their priorities straight, it is not necessary to feel shame.

In fact, it wasn't until the second or third day of being in North Carolina that I gained a new knowledge of why I was building this house. It was actually a series of events that caused me to recognize the importance of our trip and what it meant to the community. Building the house was a monumental experience, but it did not make the biggest impact on me. The community's reaction to our presence is what awoke me to the cause and significance of our trip.

Whether at the local Wal-Mart, bowling alley or one of the numerous churches we dined at each night, our group was always indirectly reminded of how we were



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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MEMBERS from Ithaca College volunteered their time during spring break to build two homes in Georgia for low-income families.

significantly changing someone's life. This reminder came in forms of handshakes, thank you's, applause or even, in some cases, tears. We realized that our own hands and bodies were working each day to improve a life.

Our newly gained wisdom made us recognize that the task that lay before us held more purpose than any class or test we had ever stressed over in the past semester. The personality of our work site had completely changed. Former complaints and disagreements between our construction team dwindled. We were no longer cursing at each finger crushed with a 10-pound hammer, or at least not as much. As one may put, it we were like a well-oiled machine.

Once the house was completed, my entire body filled with a sense of accomplishment. Though it may be cliché, I have never been more proud of myself in all my life. I hadn't

hit the winning hoop, aced the hardest test or finished the race first, but I had improved someone's life. Words can not describe what one can learn from this trip. I'm sure my own experience may differ from others, but in the end they are all beneficial.

I strongly encourage Ithaca's student body to become more involved in this incredible organization. Habitat's greatest ability is to unite people from all backgrounds to create a team of extraordinary capabilities. Only as a united body do we become an incredible means to improve someone's life. Whether it be by becoming a member, participating in weekly builds, taking part in one of our many fund-raisers or simply recycling a can, you will be improving the life of a stranger.

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