



Local students volunteer to help others during spring break



BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - For most college students, spring break means spring break - beach, ocean, and parties. Well, that wasn't the plan for some local U.B. students. Instead of looking for the hedonistic break, some young folks decided to give others a break on their break. They are the focus of this week's Inspiration Friday. By definition in the unofficial college handbook, this is spring break. But back here, there are more than a dozen

U.B. students who are redefining this vacation.

Program organizer Terri Frysh said, "These students have selected to stay with us and volunteer and spend the week going to different volunteer sites."

The 14 students have chosen to take part in the university's second annual Alternative Spring Break program.

"I can go to the beach anytime."

Rasheeda Alford is a senior Psychology major from Syracuse.

Rasheeda Alford said, "Normally, I do lot of volunteering at home, but never worked in group. I like to be by myself. I've grown lot since I've been here working with people. It's been great."

The group consists of students from here and abroad, including China and Sri Lanka, like Gagee, a sophomore Accounting major.

Gagee said, "People are suffering. I have seen a lot of dying in front of me, seen people go through poverty, so I just wanted to help."

So for this past week, the group has worked long days at organizations like here at the Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center in East Aurora, as well as the Ronald McDonald House, Habitat for Humanity and Benedict House, cleaning, building and just helping out.

Tishanna Daniel is a junior Anthropology major from the Bronx.

Tishanna Daniel said, "When someone tells me 'thank you for helping out,' it means the world to me, so that's why I chose to do it."

Each volunteer was specifically chosen by organizers, out of more than 30 applicants, to take part in the program.

So how did they work together?

Freshman Andrew Gage of East Amherst sums it up.

Andrew Gage said, Oh, we've gotten really close. I wasn't expecting us to click so well together, but everyone's been really nice to each other, getting to know each other has been lot of fun."

They don't get paid or receive college credits. In fact they had to pay 50 dollars for room and board, a small price for a priceless adventure.

Program organizer Heather Schoff said, "They get to hang out at night together, get to know each other better, know what makes 'em tick, have in depth conversations that really get personal."

Now that's a spring break to write home about.

"Working in a group, laughing the whole time, being around different people, going out, helping people and seeing how the littlest things make people smile. It's great, just makes you feel good inside."

Story by Victoria Hong, WIVB.