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ALL ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

MISSION STATEMENT
At the University of Alabama, the Center for Service and Leadership (CSL) strives to enhance the student experience through active and diverse engagement opportunities in the community. These meaningful and experiential learning opportunities provide students the ability to enhance their leadership skills while becoming active, global citizens. The Center is built upon the foundation that service is transformational for both individuals and communities.

Established in 1993 to serve as a model for community-university partnerships, the CSL is located within The University of Alabama’s Division of Student Affairs. Our staff works continually to cultivate and maintain reciprocal partnerships with social action and community service agencies.

VISION
The vision is to cultivate a culture that produces committed and engaged citizens that understand their leadership potential in creating a better society.

MOTTO
Meaningful Service + Engaged Leadership = Measurable Change.

GOALS
• Increase students’ understanding of local, national, and global social issues
• Increase students’ awareness of personal leadership and civic responsibility based in the Social Change Model
• Increase awareness of the CSL and its core functions and programs
• Increase students’ exposure to and awareness of diverse populations.
• Assist students in articulating their personal leadership and service philosophy and give opportunities for practical experience
CONTACT INFORMATION

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1100 Ferguson Center
Phone: 205-348-2865
Fax: 205-348-7610
Email: volunteer@ua.edu
Website: volunteer.ua.edu
Hours: Open 8-5 pm Monday-Friday

Visit us at volunteer.ua.edu!

VolunteerAtUA @VolunteerBama volunteerbama

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

COURTNEY CHAPMAN THOMAS, MSW

Hello Everyone & Roll Tide!

We are excited that you are interested in learning more about the Center for Service & Leadership. We hope that you choose to embark with us on this journey to make a difference in our community, as well as the Capstone, by further developing your leadership and engaging in service.

There are many wonderful aspects surrounding service and leadership. First and foremost, anyone can serve and lead. Regardless of your background, skills, educational level, or abilities, you are NEEDED to play your role in this community. Leadership is not a position but it is a process in which anyone can engage with.

Second, when you do engage in service and leadership development, you will experience education and culture in a new light as you are introduced to people from all different walks of life.

You will learn more about yourself and others. You will be pushed to think of the role that service should play in each of our lives as we become more engaged community leaders. You might even determine what you want to do with your life or solidify what you are already passionate about.

Third, developing your leadership and using it through service really does matter and make a difference. Last year, students at UA participated in over a million hours of service in Tuscaloosa. These leaders were able to play a role in providing meals for those who face food insecurity, shelter for those who face homelessness, and mentorship for children throughout our community. These hours represent real change in real people’s lives.

I hope that you seize these opportunities to be involved in meaningful service and engaged leadership because together these two do that produce measurable changes. I look forward to meeting you and getting to serve and learn alongside each of you.

And as always…Roll Tide!
2015–2016 HIGHLIGHTS

This was the inaugural year for the Center for Service and Leadership

🔹 75 students served on the CSL's leadership team, overseeing 12 Community Action Teams

🔹 As of the 2014-2015 academic year, 26,000 students participated in service

🔹 Students are completing over 1 MILLION hours of service every year since the 2014-2015 academic year

🔹 That 1 MILLION hours of service provided approximately $21,000,000 in economic impact according to the value of volunteer work for the State of Alabama published by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

🔹 Beat Auburn Beat Hunger (BABH) raised 116,370 pounds of food.

🔹 The University of Alabama Dance Marathon raised $211,342.16 for Children’s of Alabama hospital.

🔹 Bettering Bama, in its inaugural year as a Community Action Team focused on healthcare, placed 236 students in the community. These students did approximately 650 hours of work at the VA Medical Center, local nursing homes, and more.

🔹 Hosted Alabama Leads: A Southern Leadership Conference. In attendance were students from the University of Georgia, Mississippi State University, and the University of Alabama Huntsville.

🔹 500 Mentors and 50 Student Leaders in Al’s Pals completed 29,401 service hours at McKenzie Court, Central Elementary School, Northington Elementary School, and Maxwell Elementary School.

🔹 400 freshmen participated in Ripple Effect 2015

🔹 This year 110 students completed 117,100 hours of service on seven different Beyond Bama: Alternative Breaks trips. This year the trips were to Selma, Alabama; Greensboro, Alabama; New Orleans, Louisiana; Orlando, Florida; La Florida, Peru; and Managua, Nicaragua. This was a growth of 150% since last year!

🔹 The CSL collaborated with over 120 local nonprofits.
COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS

- Administration
- Al’s Pals Mentorship Program
- Bama Year One
- Beat Auburn Beat Hunger
- Bettering Bama
- Beyond Bama: Alternative Breaks
- Green Alabama
- Habitat for Humanity
- Impacting Bama
- Leading Bama
- Serving Bama
- Supporting Bama
- University of Alabama Dance Marathon

The CSL coordinates programs that involve the entire campus in an effort to unify students, faculty, and staff through service to others. We need students and student organizations to serve and support our programs by participating and recruiting others to do so. We hope that you join us for our events!

We will also host consistent, weekly service events led by our student staff. Check back at the beginning of each semester for more information!
ADMINISTRATION
TEAM LEADER: Jillian Hutt
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER: Rachel Robinson
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: csladmin@ua.edu
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Time management, critical thinking, goal setting, & marketing and advertising experience.
PURPOSE: To promote events for all teams at The Center for Service & Leadership through advertisements, marketing and press releases. The administration team works with all of the teams to better promote and help UA students learn more about The Center for Service & Leadership events.

ALS PALS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
TEAM LEADER: Caylee O’Connor
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Leslie Barton; Jasmine Blair; Alyssa Campbell; Jamie Lynn Carraway; Fiona Coupe; Khiante Falls; Madeline Keeney; Allyson Pitzel; Marco Santana; Caitlin Strohm
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: alspals@sa.ua.edu
FACEBOOK: Al’s Pals Mentoring Program
TWITTER: @alspalsua
INSTAGRAM: alspalsua
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Civic responsibility, conflict management/resolution, adaptability, & decision making.
PURPOSE: To organize and promote the Al’s Pals afterschool mentoring program for youth in the Tuscaloosa community.

Al’s Pals is a one-on-one mentoring program serving youth in the Tuscaloosa community. Programs take place after-school from 2:30-5:00 p.m. on Monday thru Thursday. Current sites include Central Elementary School, Englewood Elementary School, Matthews Elementary School and Maxwell Elementary School. Mentors commit to serving one afternoon a week for at least a semester. Homework assistance is provided and the mentor and mentee choose skill builders that will help improve their academic success. Enrichment/recreation activities include hands on science projects, drama, Spanish classes, and Zumba exercises, with crafts offered as well. Al’s Pals is determined to combined academic assistance and fun, culture-building exercises to cultivate lifetime bonds between mentors and mentees.

Online applications are available at volunteer.ua.edu. All applicants are required to interview and consent to a background check. Interviews are scheduled during the summer and at the beginning and end of each semester.

For more information, go to volunteer.ua.edu or contact alspals@sa.ua.edu.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: “Even though the student leaders are from entirely different backgrounds, with majors from every end of the spectrum, and individual points of view, we were all able to connect on one thing: our dedication to community... By the time we left Camp McDowell Sunday morning, I had made memories and friendships that will last me much longer than just this weekend.” ~ An Al’s Pals Student Leader
BAMA YEAR ONE
TEAM LEADER: Allen Engle
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Claire Carpenter; Christina Scott
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Public speaking, articulation of servant leader principles, community building.
PURPOSE: Bama Year One is a freshman, service-based experience where students will examine service as it pertains to leadership. Participants are also given opportunities to apply servant leadership principles out in the community and discover areas within the CSL for future involvement.

BEAT AUBURN BEAT HUNGER
OCTOBER 1, 2016 - NOVEMBER 16, 2016

2015 RESULTS: University of Alabama: 116,370 pounds
Auburn University: 211,625 pounds

TEAM LEADER: Courtney Charland
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Faith Barringer; Melanie Brown; Megan Coffin; Sarah Cole; Bethany Corne; Katelyn Cutshall; Sarah Lane Davidson; Eli Galindo; Wesley Harkins; Josh Hillman; Jes Hryn; Gabrielle Jeffreys; Taylor Ragan; Madison Redmill; Anna Saggio; Liz Schlichting; Kourtney Wadkins
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: babh@sa.ua.edu
WEBSITE: beatauburnbeathunger.ua.edu
FACEBOOK: Beat Auburn Beat Hunger
TWITTER: @UA_BABH
INSTAGRAM: @UA_BABH
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Exposure to diverse populations, fundraising, event planning, & empathy.
PURPOSE: To organize and promote the annual Beat Auburn Beat Hunger food
drive that pits The University of Alabama against Auburn University to see who can collect the most food in the weeks leading up to the Iron Bowl.

**The goal this year for the University of Alabama is 140,000 pounds.**

Some key dates are as follows:
- BABH Campaign: October 1, 2016- November 16, 2016
- BABH Kickoff Celebration: October 3, 2016
- BABH 5K: Saturday, October 8, 2016

Stay tuned to volunteer.ua.edu for more important dates during this campaign.

Beat Auburn Beat Hunger (BABH) is an annual event that was created by the Center for Service & Leadership (CSL) and the West Alabama Food Bank in 1994.

During the six weeks leading up to the Iron Bowl, the BABH food drive unites students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members to help “fight” hunger and poverty in West Alabama.

In competition with Auburn University and the Food Bank of East Alabama, BABH challenges both institutions to collect the most non-perishable food to help those who suffer from food insecurity. This good-natured competition has made an impact that reaches far beyond the campuses where it began.

Since its inception, Alabama and Auburn have combined to raise approximately 5.1 million pounds of food for Alabamians without enough food to eat!

For more information, go to beatauburnbeathunger.ua.edu or contact babh@sa.ua.edu.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: “Seeing a heated rivalry be used to make an impact in communities across the state year after year? It just doesn’t get much better than that. Beat Auburn Beat Hunger is such a special memory for me. Granted it’s crazy and busy and hectic, but the joy of seeing the number and celebrating with the team is something I will not soon forget.” ~Amanda Fenton, Class of 2016

**SIGNATURE PROGRAM**

**HUNGER BANQUET**

At the Hunger Banquet, students are given the opportunity to experience food inequality and world hunger issues. When students walk in the door, they randomly draw tickets that assign them to different income levels, based on the latest statistics on the number of people living in poverty in the world. They learn information about issues of hunger and poverty on local and international levels. This event is a model of the Oxfam America Hunger Banquet.
**BETTERING BAMA**

TEAM LEADER: Lauren Matthews  
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Mikenzi Brasfield; Kenya Donovan; Taja Dotson; Tomisha Hicks; Drew Rice; Maggie Selesky  
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: betteringbama@sa.ua.edu  
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Interpersonal skills; technical abilities; and critical thinking.  
PURPOSE: To facilitate volunteer opportunities for pre-health students in the Tuscaloosa community. These opportunities include patient interaction at the VA Medical Center; administrative and medical training at Turning Point; and diagnostic work with WellBama.

**BEYOND BAMA: ALTERNATIVE BREAKS**

TEAM LEADERS: Cat Cary & Dwyer Freeman  
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Ethan Von Bargen; Joline Hartheimer; Maggie Holmes; Laura Miles; Tess Moriarty; Janet Ruppert; Beau Schaeffer; Teryn Shipman; Dustin Smith; Alejandra Tenorio  
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: beyondbama@sa.ua.edu  
FACEBOOK: UA Alternative Break  
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Exposure to outside communities, interview skills, coaching, & team work/group dynamics.  
PURPOSE: To host sustainable and ethical service trips for The University of Alabama student body during fall, winter, and spring breaks.  

Dates are as follows:  
Beyond Bama - Fall Break: October 27-October 30, 2016  
Beyond Bama - Winter Break Domestic: December 11-December 15, 2016  
Beyond Bama - Winter Break International: December 11-December 18, 2016  
Location: Nicaragua  
Beyond Bama - Spring Break: March 11- March 18, 2017  

Beyond Bama trips allow students to travel to diverse communities, domestically and abroad, while engaging in service and experiential learning. These short-term service trips during university breaks provide an all-inclusive experience for students while focusing on issues such as literacy, poverty, homelessness, education and the environment. We strive to provide a fundamentally transformative experience for our students while still serving community expressed needs in a sustainable manner.

The Center for Service & Leadership (CSL) began taking students on Beyond Bama trips in 1995. The first trip was to the Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa where students worked to positively impact the community youth. As interest grew, more and more projects were added locally, nationally, and internationally. Since the first trip 21 years ago, it’s evident that students want to serve and the CSL can help them get there. Beyond Bama occur during Fall Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break.
The purpose of the program is to involve college students in community-based service projects and to give students opportunities to meaningfully engage with a diverse set of communities. Through complete immersion in communities, student volunteers are able to understand service in a new light, as well as deconstruct social issues in a significant way.

For more information and applications for 2016-2017 trips, go to volunteer.ua.edu or contact beyondbama@sa.ua.edu.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: “One myth about service is that small-scale volunteer projects and jobs have no impact… If you find that you consciously or unconsciously hold this belief, I challenge you to confront and eliminate it entirely. Not all volunteer work is equal, but try for a moment to see your service through the eyes of those you are helping, and how giving something as simple as a shuttle ride can feel like the world.” ~ Janet Ruppert, Class of 2018

GREEN ALABAMA

TEAM LEADER: Keith Johnson

ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Amanda Darling; Andrea Hayes

TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: greenalabama@ua.edu

SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Civic responsibility, creative problem solving, environmental awareness

PURPOSE: To organize sustainable projects and educational opportunities focused on local and environmental causes. Projects for Green Alabama include a community garden project at the UA Arboretum and Lights-Off Alabama, a partnership with Housing and Residential Communities to teach the importance of conservative energy usage in resident halls.
SIGNATURE PROGRAM:

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
SERVICE PROJECTS

TEAM LEADER: Molly Mitchell

ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Natalie Buzzard; Marielle Mathe; Kaitlyn Nelson; Daniel Nielson; Robert Weaver; Austin White; Abigail Wolfe; Nicole Wooten

TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: habitatforhumanity@ua.edu

FACEBOOK: UAHabitatCampusChapter

INSTAGRAM: @UAHabitat

SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Civic responsibility; servant leadership; & organizational awareness.

PURPOSE: To support Habitat for Humanity by engaging University of Alabama students in advocating, building, educating, and fundraising. Our team is thrilled about increasing Habitat for Humanity’s presence on the University of Alabama’s campus with multiple Habitat Build days, awareness events, fundraising opportunities, and rehab projects.

Build Opportunities for Fall 2016
• Weekly afternoon Build days
• Big Build days on Fridays and Saturdays
• Restore and rehab projects

Awareness Events for Fall 2016
• Week of Welcome Events – August 2016
• Fall Get on Board Day – August 25th, 2016
• Homecoming Week Events – September 26th – 30th, 2016
• Act! Speak! Build! Awareness Week – April 2017
• Monthly fundraising percentage nights at local restaurants – dates TBD
IMPACTING BAMA

STUDENT TEAM LEADER: Maggie Chapman

ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Katie Cater; Cassadey Fedel; Lane Griffith; Michael LaGrone; Lexa Rains; Kaitlin Ryan

TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: impactingbama@sa.ua.edu

SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Civic responsibility, network opportunities, & team work.

PURPOSE: To organize projects and events that increase awareness and knowledge of poverty and basic human needs locally, nationally and internationally. Topics focus on the areas of hunger, homelessness, clothing insecurity, literacy, and social injustices that impact our communities.

SIGNATURE PROGRAM

SLEEP OUT

The Center for Service & Leadership (CSL)’s annual Sleep Out promotes awareness of hunger and homelessness while urging participants to take action.

Each year, around 400 UA students, faculty, and staff participate throughout the night. This annual event allows students to experience one night in the life of a homeless person and to raise awareness for the homeless population.

Students rely on using the bare minimal materials to sleep out on campus and to help understand the experience a homeless individual faces each day. UA students make blankets, listen to panelists, watch an educational movie, and walk barefoot around the sleeping area for the TOMS Walk Without Shoes.

SIGNATURE PROGRAM

POVERTY SIMULATION

The Community Action Poverty Simulation is a unique, interactive experience that helps facilitate understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in our community who are living at or below the poverty level. The simulation increases participants’ understanding of hardships and the emotional toll experienced by impoverished members of our society and the work it takes to achieve self-sufficiency.

This educational and professional development experience was created as a way to help business and community leaders; students, faculty, and administrators; faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and others understand the realities of poverty. During the simulation, participants role-play the lives of families living at or below the poverty level. Participants will experience typical challenges faced by individuals living in the context of constrained financial circumstances including maintaining employment, caring for children or elderly family members, seeking public assistance, and dealing with transportation issues.
LEADING ALABAMA

TEAM LEADER: Kyle Spencer

ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Alma Atassi; Robin Blocksom; Mae Crumbley; Destini Dye; Madison Giddiens; Rolanda Turner

TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: leadership@sa.ua.edu

SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Emotional intelligence, critical thinking, & team building.

PURPOSE: To provide seminars that focus on finding individual strengths, creating a personal mission statement, and other facets of developing leadership. To create events for University of Alabama students that provide opportunities to learn about how they can become leaders locally, nationally, and globally.

SIGNATURE PROGRAM

STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Student Leadership Council (SLC) aids in the individual and collective development of student organizations and the advancement of the campus, by collaborating with presidents across campus. The SLC is an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation concerning topics impacting the UA community directly, as well as, refine your leadership skill set and share programming ideas for the UA community.
SERVING BAMA
TEAM LEADER: Caroline Montz
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Asha Fuller; Kristen Graves; Rebecca Rakowitz; Hannah Ritchie; Brianna Stephens; Jada Thomas; Erin McKee
TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: servingbama@sa.ua.edu
SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Servant leadership, time management, adaptability, & camaraderie amongst peers.
PURPOSE: To provide opportunities for sustained service in the Tuscaloosa community. To foster engaged leadership that will produce active citizens who can bring change both today and in the future.
The Serving Bama team exists to organize weekly service opportunities that appeal to a wide range of students and meet a variety of needs in the Tuscaloosa community. The team aims to provide 8-10 service opportunities per week. Transportation is provided from the Ferguson Center for projects that are not located on campus.
Sample Service Sites Include:
Arts and Autism
Boys and Girls Club of Tuscaloosa
Druid City Garden Project
Habitat for Humanity
Tuscaloosa Headstart

SUPPORTING BAMA
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Arianna Hertzson; Natalie Lowry; Jasmine Phillips; Jurnee Promisee
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA DANCE MARATHON (UADM)

TEAM LEADER: Sarah Urbanski
ASSISTANT TEAM LEADERS: Cavi Drake; Jack Ebersold; Sonny Franks; Kaitlyn Haefer; Ashley Rich

In 2016, UADM raised $211,342.16 for Children’s of Alabama, the Children’s Miracle Network Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama.

TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS: uadm@sa.ua.edu
WEBSITE: www.uadm.ua.edu
FACEBOOK: UADM1831
TWITTER: @UADanceMarathon

MIRACLE NETWORK DANCE MARATHON: www.dancemarathon.com
CHILDREN’S OF ALABAMA: www.childrensal.org

SKILLS DEVELOPED INCLUDE: Exposure to diverse populations, event planning, critical thinking, & self-motivation.

PURPOSE: UADM raises funds year-round for Children’s of Alabama by motivating UA students to personally fundraise, while also reaching out to the Tuscaloosa community. We raise money For The Kids so they can have the incredible experiences that we are able to have here at the university.

Standing for those who can’t.

UADM’s 12 hour no-sitting event will be held at the Ferguson Center on February 11th, 2017.

Here, students, faculty, and local business owners will participate in games, performances, and dancing, while hearing the incredible stories of “Miracle Families” who have been treated at Children’s of Alabama. At the end of the day, we reveal the total and celebrate all the money we raised throughout the year.

UADM’s goal for 2017 is to raise at least $300,000.00.

This is UADM’s 6th year on UA’s campus, and we have raised over $494,000 since our establishment in 2012.

We accept both monetary donations and in-kind donations from businesses in the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham community.
SIGNATURE PROGRAM

RIPPLE EFFECT

AUGUST 15 & 19, 2016  8 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Join us for Ripple Effect 2016 on Monday, August 15 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Registration begins at 8:00 on the Ferguson Center Plaza

Pre-register at volunteer.ua.edu starting in Summer 2016!

Ripple Effect is the annual kickoff day of service during Week of Welcome that provides an important opportunity for new and returning students to get connected and reconnected to the Tuscaloosa community. A variety of community needs are highlighted and students are provided a hands-on experience in making a difference! Ripple Effect is designed to help students see the service opportunities that exist for them during their time at the Capstone – opportunities that will help them grow as individuals, become global citizens, and enhance the campus culture of our beloved institution.

All students are welcome! Lunch will be provided for volunteers and you will receive your first ever 6 hour service credit on SLPro. Space is limited, so sign up today at volunteer.ua.edu!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: “Ripple Effect was a really fun experience, and one that I will always remember throughout college and forever after! Thanks to UA so much for allowing me to go on this, I plan on taking up many more volunteer work opportunities from the university while I study here!” ~ 2015 Ripple Effect Participant

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Each year, the Center for Service & Leadership (CSL) and The SOURCE give awards to recognize the accomplishments of student organizations and individual students who have been instrumental in providing quality programs, opportunities for involvement, and community service to the campus and to the Tuscaloosa community throughout the year. Awards, nominators, and nominees are invited to attend.

Some awards given each year include: Star Bloom Volunteers of the Year Award; the Henry M. Lipsey Heart of Service Award; and Community Partner of the Year Award.

2016 Recipients

STAR BLOOM VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR:
Jessika Banks and Max Mittenthal

HENRY M. LIPSEY HEART OF SERVICE AWARD:
Amanda Fenton; Caroline Miller; and Tyler Sullivan

COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR:
University of Alabama Arboretum

Nominations will be available in Spring 2017! For more information, go to volunteer.ua.edu.
WANT TO VOLUNTEER?
WONDERING WHERE TO FIND THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU?

Service Learning Pro is the central hub for volunteer opportunities and service learning at UA. With over 225 community partners, 60 Greek organizations, 150 student organizations, and 200 faculty currently using the system to post volunteer opportunities, SL Pro is the “one-stop shop” for finding volunteer opportunities that interest you.

By using SL Pro, you will be able to:

• Browse available volunteer opportunities on-campus, in Tuscaloosa, and beyond
• Sign up for volunteer projects online
• Log and track your volunteer service hours
• Find information on any service-learning courses you are enrolled in and search for volunteer opportunities approved for your service-learning course
• Communicate easily with the supervisor of your volunteer project
• Print a portfolio of your service experiences when you graduate

SL Pro is utilized all over campus, so we are encouraging ALL students to create profiles. Even if you aren’t ready to start volunteering now, you will be one step closer to finding the perfect opportunities for you! Getting started in SL Pro is easy. It takes less than 1 minute to create a profile!

Instructions on how to register in SL Pro:
Go to http://slpro.ua.edu.
• Click on “Login” in the Student box.
• Click “Create a profile.”
• Enter your personal information and create a username and password (we recommend using your myBama username and password since it’s easy to remember).
• Click “submit profile” at the bottom of the page, and you will be logged into SL Pro and directed to your homepage.
• Click “browse” in your profile to see the volunteer opportunities currently available to students.
• When you find a project that interests you, click “register now” and you will be signed up to serve.
• You can return to SL Pro at anytime to log your volunteer hours, review your service record, and sign up for new volunteer opportunities.

Questions? For help with SL Pro, contact Merrill Flowers in the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility at merrill.flowers@ua.edu or 205-348-6494.

Want more information on volunteer opportunities? Contact the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility at cesr@ua.edu or the Center for Service and Leadership at volunteer@ua.edu or visit their website at volunteer.ua.edu.
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE?

Although it is apparent that community service benefits others in some way, before creating and maintaining widespread programs, policymakers would like to know how exactly students themselves benefit from participation in these activities. A great deal of research has been done on this subject, resulting in evidence for multiple kinds of benefits. Among the most significant gains reported are the psychological, social, and cognitive benefits experienced by students.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS:

Overall, sources indicate that students have shown increases in positive feelings and mental health, and decreases in depression and stress.

LESS STRESS & DEPRESSION, AND MORE LIFE SATISFACTION

From their analysis of collected data, Peggy Thoits and Lyndi Hewitt (2001) assert that “voluntary association membership contributes to decreased psychological distress and buffers the negative consequences of stressors (Rietschlin 1998); it increases life satisfaction and decreases depression (Van Willigen 1998).”

THAT “FEEL GOOD” FEELING

According to an article in Current Health 1 magazine, “[i]n a recent survey by Prudential Insurance Company, the number-one reason that young people named for volunteering was that it made them feel good. Eighty-nine percent said so.”

IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH

Steven Smith (1999) indicates that “[v]olunteering appears to be related to longer life spans and improved mental health,” although he also notes that “…the type of volunteering is likely to make a big difference in the effects on mental health.”

SOCIAL BENEFITS:

By participating in service projects, students forge bonds with each other, as well as other members of the community. These bonds enhance
their interpersonal skills and increase their social network. Additionally, volunteerism can lead to increased care for others and a desire to cooperate and get involved in positive ways, even among those who had previously exhibited antisocial tendencies (Smith 1999). Another major benefit of volunteering is the feeling of social connectedness that appears to be waning in our increasingly segmented society.

Many students have reported an increased sense of social responsibility, and a subsequent desire to “give back” to the communities from which they have come.

TRUST, COOPERATION, AND CITIZENSHIP

According to Steven Smith (1999), “[v]olunteering by teenagers... appears to modestly inhibit antisocial behaviors.” He also indicates that, in addition to reducing negative inclinations such as mistrust and lack of concern for others, volunteering can create positive forces. “Volunteerism can create social capital-- that is, social networks of trust and cooperation-- that can then promote greater political involvement in public affairs.” (Smith 1999)

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In a 1991 article by Marty Brewster et al., various students offer their testimonials which link increased volunteerism to increased communication skills. Additionally, Matthew Nelson of the University of Michigan attests to similar gains in his personal reflection on past volunteering experiences.

POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

Many sources indicate, and indeed many organizations have been set up on the premise, that community service projects help redirect energies of at-risk youth to more positive social activities. “For example, City Year, is a largely volunteer program that brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to work on community projects. It is hoped that participation in City Year activities will... offer youths more direction and hope for the future, and provide a learning experience on serious social problems.” (Smith 1999)

COGNITIVE BENEFITS:

There is a common saying that “you learn something new everyday.” This definitely holds true for volunteering. With each new experience, old skills are developed as new ones are learned. New information is integrated with past experience, and one’s knowledge base grows.

Additionally, the lessons learned from volunteering frequently support and enrich understandings of how the community is set up to function. Furthermore, when students reflect upon and share their experiences, they experience great cognitive gains. Diane Hedin (1989) says that:

“One of the best supported findings of research about community service is that students learn most (knowledge about the people for whom they volunteer, attitudes about being responsible, and being active citizens, and problem solving skills) when they are in programs that have regular opportunities to process and talk about their direct experiences.”

These cognitive gains are a large part of the reason for incorporating volunteering and community service into various curricula and requirements.
POLITICAL AND CIVIC AWARENESS
An article by Steven Smith (1999) states that “[t]hrough participation in voluntary associations, individuals will develop a keener appreciation for civic affairs and understand more completely their obligations to participate in the political process.” Indeed, people learn about the politics of their civic systems by experiencing and observing the effects of the policies on their communities.

EXPOSURE TO DIVERSITY, MULTICULTURALISM, AND DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING
Sandra LeSourd (1997) states that “[p]erspective taking is the intellectual ability that is germane to affirmation of differences for clarification of the public good.” This means that it is necessary to take the perspectives of others in order to truly understand the benefits that come out of differences. By becoming involved in various aspects of community life, facets which students would be unlikely to involve themselves otherwise, students gain new information to consider and new ways to think about things. Frequently, they learn a lot from conversing with those whom they help or work with, as they may encounter new points of view. According to LeSourd (1997), this is beneficial because the “ideals of democratic life cannot encompass all members of the national community until people of different traditions listen to the voices of others.”

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
According to Diane Hedin (1989), “[t]he situations in which young people learn most are ones in which they have the opportunity to determine what needs to be done at developmentally appropriate levels of responsibility.” When students are given the opportunities and responsibilities of decision making in a task that is interesting and important to them, they tend to think more deeply about the issues at hand and “use their most complex thinking skills” (Hedin 1989) to solve the problem.
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