



Over 500 Stockton Volunteers Partner on Community Projects in 11th Day of Service

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Galloway Township, NJ - Over 500 students, faculty and staff worked on community projects in Atlantic and Cape May counties today, as The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey held its 11th fall Day of Service.

This year's event allowed Stockton to give back to the larger community, which helped raise \$25.36 million in the college's "You Make the Difference" comprehensive fundraising campaign, which concluded June 30. Over 30 service projects took place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the Galloway campus and at local businesses and organizations.

Stockton President Herman Saatkamp started the tradition of kicking off the fall semester with community service when he first came to Stockton. The event continues to grow in number of volunteers and new community partnerships.

"One of the most important things in human life, higher education and your lives is: How do we all get along? That requires service and a commitment to the community," said President Saatkamp, in welcoming the volunteers. "That's what we're doing here today - making contributions to our community a central part of our education and our lives."

A number of projects focused on the environment, including building osprey-nesting platforms, planting fall crops at the college farm and cleaning up the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) Environmental Park in Egg Harbor Township, the nature trail at the Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton College in Galloway and sites on Stockton's campus.

Six freshmen sawed, drilled and attached screws to four wooden osprey-nesting platforms, under the supervision of Jon Rosky, an adjunct professor in the School of Business' Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies program.

Two of them will replace deteriorated nest platforms in the back bay behind Ventnor and Margate, one will go along Route 30 between Absecon and Atlantic City and the fourth site is yet to be determined, Rosky said.

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Previous platforms built for ospreys, (a large, fish-eating hawk which happens to be the college mascot), have worked, Rosky said.

“On Thursday night I paddled my kayak past a nest (behind Margate) built by students two years ago and there were two birds in the nest ready to leave,” he said. “When the birds are fledged (able to fly), that’s a success.”

At Stockton’s organic farm run by students on the Galloway campus, volunteers planted crops including broccoli, kale, red cabbage and spinach. Mary Pham of Haddon Township, and Jessica Webster, of Estell Manor, co-manage the operation, which features composting and a solar panel to power an irrigation pump. The site has no other source of power, so water is collected in an elevated catchment system and mostly gravity is used to get the water to the field for irrigation.

On campus, among the many projects was making teddy bears for use in hospitals and emergency rooms. “Project Linus,” as it is known, was staffed by members of Circle K, a campus club that is part of an umbrella of organizations led by Kiwanis International.

“I can sew and I enjoy showing others how to do it,” said Zuleika Delgado of Cape May Court House in Middle Township, Cape May County. “Having the opportunity to put a smile on a child’s face when they get a teddy bear is priceless,” said the senior Public Health major.

Christian Blackwell of Newark, a junior majoring in Social Work admitted, “It’s been a while since I’ve sewed, but it’s really fun and a good cause.”

In Atlantic City, Stockton students helped as children and families at Stanley Holmes Village garden apartments celebrated their Annual Back to School Cookout and Health Fair. Activities included face painting, balloon sculpting, serving food and gathering the children to enjoy fun activities, said Dr. Merydawilda Colón, interim executive director of the Stockton Center for Community Engagement and professor of Social Work.

Dr. Colón served as Stockton project leader, and students from the Stockton chapter of the Golden Key International Honour Society volunteered.

Also in Atlantic City, volunteers worked with the Eastern Service Workers Association (ESWA) to canvas the neighborhood to inform workers of their rights and benefits due to loss of work and casino closings. At Covenant House, volunteers helped beautify the grounds.

“This is the third year the Girl Scouts came to campus for a College-101 Experience Day,” said Diana Strelczyk of the Office of Service-Learning, which helps organize the event along with the Office of Student Development and the Division of Student Affairs. “This allows girls from environments where college is not a given to experience a day-in-the-life through teambuilding activities, a faux college class and small workshops.”

Other projects included digital preservation of historical photos and documents for the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey, located in the Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton College in Atlantic City. Volunteers also worked for The Shores at Wesley Manor, a senior living facility in Ocean City, and distributed information on the Community Food Bank at Kennedy Park in Somers Point. The Mays Landing Merchants Association got help with data entry and social media to promote its activities.

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