



Stockton College's Make A Difference Day Service Projects Draw More Than 100 Volunteers

Volunteers Served in the Community, Reflected on Superstorm Sandy

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**Contact: Susan Allen
Office of News and Media Relations
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Susan.Allen@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4790**

Galloway Township, NJ- Over 100 students from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and more than 20 community organizations joined volunteers across the country on Make A Difference Day, the largest national day of community service, on Saturday, Oct. 26.

Volunteers who served in the community worked with the southern branch of the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, the Eastern Service Workers Association and the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. On-campus activities focused on long-term recovery from Superstorm Sandy.

At the Food Bank, Stockton students joined other community volunteers and contributed to packaging 5,000 boxes with Thanksgiving food items, which will be delivered along with turkeys to families in need over the holiday.

Volunteers who went to the Salem United Methodist Church in Pleasantville helped to host the Eastern Service Workers Association (ESWA) Halloween Party and Fundraiser Benefit. The Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) Honors Fraternity decorated for the party and donated costumes for underprivileged children.

Dr. Ann Walker and Dr. Mary Padden, both professors in the School of Health Sciences at Stockton, worked with Nursing students to promote healthy eating at the Boys and Girls Club. Chartwells, the college's food provider, donated seven dozen apples and cans of peanut butter for a healthy snack.

On campus, Nicole Schoenstein, a junior Psychology major from Weymouth, served as a project leader and worked with a number of Golden Key International Honour Society (GKIHS) **-more-**

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members, to organize books, clean toys and assist with clerical work at Free To Be, Stockton's childcare center.

"Giving back to the Stockton community is how we made a difference. [Free To Be staff members] were appreciative of our efforts," said Schoenstein, who is a member of the Stockton Honors Program and the GKIHS.

On the main campus, volunteers commemorated the one-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy. "Last summer we realized the importance of commemorating Hurricane Sandy at its anniversary and that we wouldn't be done recovering," said the Rev. Juliann Henry, manager of pastoral care for AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center.

Make A Difference Day was an opportunity to "pause and reflect at how far we've come," she explained. "We need to take time to regroup and gain strength for the continued process of recovery."

Representatives from a number of organizations including the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Arc of Atlantic County, New Jersey Hope and Healing, and the Atlantic County Division of Public Health were on campus to offer assistance to Sandy victims.

A series of reflective art projects gave students the opportunity to express their thoughts about Sandy recovery. A chalk art project transformed the dormitory walkways into passages, drawings and reflections about Sandy.

Volunteers with the Sandy oral history project used audio recorders to document the experiences of Sandy victims who were willing to share their stories. The project is part of a larger initiative of the Stockton Wellness Center to record and archive three- to five-minute Sandy narratives.

Project leader Brian Pluchino, a professional services specialist, said, "Several people shared their amazing stories of recovery and helping others, revealing the impact of the storm."

In the afternoon, volunteers on campus came together to listen to the Rev. Henry's interfaith service. "Today we gather, on the eve of the first anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, to remember where we were this time last year and to mark the ways that this storm has changed our lives and changed our community," Henry said.

She pointed out three lessons learned: that recovery work is painful, not everyone wants to be rescued and that grace is real and can carry one through the day.

Make A Difference Day, sponsored by the Office of Service-Learning and the Center for Community Engagement, is part of the college's semester of service. November service projects are centered on national Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Nov. 17-23, 2013.

Photos and captions can be downloaded via [Flickr](#).

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