

OPINION

TERRY KROE

LARRY KING

MICHAEL H



OMAHA DAILY HERALD FOUNDED 1865

OMAHA DAILY WORLD FOU

UNO SPRING BREAK

Time off to help others

If visions of college students drinking and partying are what come to mind when the term “spring break” is used, consider this: For the 10th year in a row, hundreds of University of Nebraska at Omaha students will help others rather than themselves.

No sandy beaches, but that never seems to bother the young men and women — more than 1,700 this year — who participate in Seven Days of Service, a volunteer event that began Saturday. Students disperse around the Omaha metropolitan area to help Habitat for Humanity, Lauritzen Gardens, the Stephen Center, Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful and 10 more nonprofit institutions.

The students renovate, repair, paint, build, plant or, in general, do what needs to be done for the nonprofits they help and for the people the nonprofits help. The project began in 2003 with seven students from a service-learning class. They rounded up a total of 70 volunteers, who worked on two houses. The proj-



I STILL HAVE A SLOT!

Habitat for Humanity, Lauritzen Gardens, the Stephen Center, Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful and 10 more nonprofit institutions.

The students renovate, repair, paint, build, plant or, in general, do what needs to be done for the nonprofits they help and for the people the nonprofits help. The project began in 2003 with seven students from a service-learning class. They rounded up a total of 70 volunteers, who worked on two houses. The project grew fast. Really fast.

At first, Seven Days of Service was the only community service project at UNO. Now there are 16 service days during the academic year that collectively, over the past 10 years, have contributed \$2.3 million in work to the Omaha area. Some 4,000 hours of work were given just last year during Seven Days of Service, according to UNO's Kathe Oleson Lyons.

Lyons, who coordinates service projects, said students tend to return year after year, sometimes asking for the same assignments. They "take ownership" of their projects, she said. About 95 percent tell organizers they will be back the next year to volunteer again. Some, Lyons said, return to the nonprofits they helped and become regular, year-round volunteers.

A few young volunteers do jobs directly related to their university studies, Lyons said. Construction science majors may help plan construction projects. Public relations majors interact with the media. The project teaches them a lot about leadership and event management, she added.

All of the various projects are popular with some volunteers, she said, but one activity — demolition — is an attention-getter. "They really love any kind of demolition, tearing things down," she said.

Many colleges do spring-break service projects, she said, but UNO is unusual in that it concentrates on the local community. Often, she said, students elsewhere travel to other parts of the country or around the globe to do their good works. It's important for UNO students "to learn that they can serve right here at home" and that there is a local need, she said.

UNO's wonderful focus on community stewardship and its efforts to instill in its students a broader view of Omaha and its people are as welcome as the spring crocuses now blooming. The long-term commitment the program fosters is welcome indeed.



THE PUBLIC

Council vote strengthens

On March 13, Omaha City Council members Ben Gray, Pete Festersen, Ch... and Garry Gernandt made history 4-3 to pass the Equal Employment... Their vote not only represented... thing to do, but it also reflected the... large majority of people who live... work in Omaha.

Contrary to what was expressed... council members who did not support... passage, the ordinance is not divisive... unifying. It unifies us around the... and principles of inclusion, justice... spect for all people — not just some...

It does not threaten individual... It protects them. Furthermore, it... positions Omaha among a growing... of national cities of similar size w... ues and welcomes all law-abiding... of society.

Inclusive Communities is proud... served as a member of Equal O... alition of allies, individuals from... and lesbian, gay, bisexual and tran... community, of businesses, small a... and of organizations with a share... — that a community is not weaker... diversity. It is strengthened by it.

Barbara Angel
Execut
Inclusive C

No need for discriminati

Wait and see. The Omaha City... just opened the floodgates for mo... by the homosexual community. It... nationwide.

I believe there already are law... books protecting individuals aga...