

Community service: Is our work working?

CHRIS SAUNDERS

As you all know, before we begin our senior year, we are required to do sixty hours of community service, or "service learning" at any nonprofit organization near our hometown. This is a great idea, in theory, if only for the fact that sixty extra hours of community service looks good on college apps. However, things may be flawed with the program as a whole.

First of all, the idea of forced volunteer work is quite ironic in itself. It is also one of the main reasons that some Science and Math-ers resent the program. Many people on campus think that if the guidelines were not so stringent, the requirement wouldn't be nearly as hard to complete. As indicated by my student leader reflection sessions that we had on the first ALT day, people want their volunteer work to be more voluntary.

One of the foremost problems addressed was the rule that we can't work anywhere other than nonprofit organizations. In my own case, I was limited to choosing from the nursing home and the public library because there are no other nonprofit

organizations in my hometown. Neither would have given me much training for my endeavors later in life, but I ultimately chose the library.

Besides that, many people complained about the fact that we were not allowed to switch jobs in the middle of the summer. While it would complicate things for those involved in handling the community service paperwork, some students expressed concern that they may be given projects that do not take the full sixty hours to complete and may wish to continue working on another project with another organization.

I can't say that I fully support this philosophy, but it would have been nice to do something other than cleaning children's book covers with Windex because the library didn't have anything else for me to do.

Moreover, the reflection that we must do on our community service seems a bit

questionable as well. Many of us really have little to reflect upon now except the sweet reassurance that it's over and we're a step closer to graduating. The poster session this year was, like the previous poster sessions, a great way for people to share their projects, but it wasn't really taken seriously by the students. Most of the discussion about the posters stemmed from the two that did not pass inspection.

The following student leader sessions seemed to be overkill too; those who discussed further had few positive things to say about their experiences and focused on how some of us were underestimated, underappreciated, and underpaid; not to mention overwhelmed with the amount of skills that we gained from our community service projects.

All in all, the project is a great way to give back to our respective hometowns, but for it to be truly successful in the future, volunteering will have to seem a little less forced.

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Current Events

Continued from Front Page

Musharraf reelected in Pakistan

Pakistan has held its first general election since 1999. General Pervez Musharraf is continuing as President, although he has been controversial for his support of the United States in Afghanistan, his handling of the disputes in the Kashmir region, and the coup that brought him to power.

Cuba signs contracts with U.S. companies

Cuba signed contracts worth \$90 million with American food companies. This is the largest trade agreement negotiated since 1962, when America began a trade embargo.

In Namibia, no more "Mickey Mouse Club" or "Dallas"

Namibia's president and information minister, Sam

Nujoma has forbidden western television in the country, but with few programs produced in Namibia, programmers were unsure what to do.

Dalai Lama now in contact with Chinese government

According to an envoy of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan religious figure is in contact with the Chinese government again.

Religious bill considered by House

In response to the June ruling by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance was a violation of separation of church and state, the House of Representatives considered a bill that supported references to God in the Pledge and national motto. The bill affirms support for "under God" in the Pledge, and it restates that "In God we trust" is our national motto.

Letter to the Editors

Give me "Letters to the Editors" or give me death!

I am very concerned - you could even say distressed - about the lack of "Letters to the Editor" in this fine journalistic institution. Each time a fresh copy of The Stentorian is laid at door, I turn to the Editorial Page with vain hopes of finding a priceless sentiment from another student. As always, though, my hopes are dashed and I throw away the paper in disgust. I will no longer stand this abomination. Give me "Letters to the Editors" or give me death!

J. WAN

Letter Policy

The Stentorian reserves the right to edit for mechanics, content, and/or appropriateness. The Stentorian may choose not to print any letter based on quality, content, or space. We do not print anonymous letters. We ask authors to remain respectful of all persons and institutions when voicing their opinions.

Rules for a delightful meal with your face

SAMIA ILIAS

Perhaps some students have noticed others in the cafeteria eating meals, dessert, or even fruit with their faces. Are they just too lazy to get up to get fork? Are they doing some sort of weird experiment? No, and no. They are just having a nice, quick stress-reliever called an eating contest.

Eating contests are great for everyone. One can not only eat his food but end up with it up his nose and smell it for the rest of the day. It provides a little laughter for everyone to see their best friend look like a fool, and laughter is always a good thing - especially on a day when you have three tests back-to-back.

Recently, these eating contests have come to the attention of some staff members who are not exactly thrilled with the idea of eating with faces. Although the administration has not banned eating contests, they do

request the participants to reduce the attention that eating contests attract. To avoid any possible problems with staff members, I suggest following these guidelines to make the PFM experience pleasurable for those who do and do not enjoy eating contests:

- 1) Have eating contests in the back of the cafeteria.
- 2) If there is a crowd of spectators watching, keep the crowd at a maximum of six people, as not to cause too much of a commotion.
- 3) Request that the spectators cheer for the contestants with their inside voices and have finger-claps.
- 4) Whenever possible, try to include a teacher or SLI in the contest, just to avoid any possible problems with other staff members. Mr. Lathan is always happy to participate.
- 5) Always clean up after yourself!

By following these five guidelines, one can be ensured to avoid receiving levels and have a de-stressed mealtime.



Mandy McDermott

Paul Smith, Mr. Lathan, Dylan Sandler, Jason Denney, Samia Ilias, Sher Vogel, and Ben Jarrett participate in a dessert eating contest out on Bryan lawn.

the stentorian

the north carolina school of science & mathematics
1219 broad street, durham, nc 27705

<http://www.ncssm.edu/stentorian>

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