

# Students choose service, work during spring break

*Two service-learning trips offer a chance to build houses and see different points of view*

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Features Editor

Some students plan to spend the next week near pristine, white beaches in the Dominican Republic. Others will travel to Charleston, a quaint city on the coast of South Carolina.

However, there will be little time for relaxation.

The primary activity of these Service Learning-sponsored spring breaks will be building houses.

Kathy Manning, director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning, will accompany 10 students on the program's first international spring break service trip to the Dominican Republic.

"My hope for students is to have an experience in a culture outside of the United States and to see first-hand the conditions people are living in," said Manning.

The group will be staying in Barahona, whose population nears 75,000. Habitat for Humanity began building the country's first Habitat homes there in 1987.

Each day students will travel seven miles to the construction site located in the tiny village of Jaquineyes. The workday will begin at 8 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. each day. The group will be constructing houses with concrete walls and roofs due to the frequent hurricanes that sweep across the island. Manning said students have worked hard to raise money for the lodging and transportation expenses.

Erin Lawless, a senior Biology major and sociology minor, has participated in every spring break service trip since her freshman year.

"A service trip for spring break is very fulfilling," she said. "It is a genuine experience you cannot get any way else."

Lawless, who helped build a Habitat house in Guatemala during winter term, has prepared for the trip with visits to El Centro de Espanol. She has also traveled to Spain, Ireland, Ghana and West Africa.



Photo By Kathy Manning

*Kathy Manning, director of Service Learning, said Elon students in the Dominican Republic will work with concrete blocks to build hurricane-resistant homes. Habitat construction will begin at 8 a.m. and last until 4 p.m.*

"I decided to go to the Dominican Republic for a new place to see and for more Habitat experiences," she said.

Gregory Halstead said he never misses an opportunity to travel abroad. The junior economics and psychology double-major studied business for one semester in Uruguay and learned "how to live as an Uruguayan."

"After seeing that people do have negative feelings about our culture, our USA bubble and its effects on others...I think it is so important that we fight terrorism with peaceful actions," said Halstead. He said his biggest challenge on the trip will be learning about the native Dominicans' lives, struggles and celebrations.

While some students are traveling abroad for service, nine others are driving four hours down the road to Mt. Pleasant, S.C. to work with the United Methodist Relief Center volunteer program.

The UMRC is an organization dedicated to rebuilding and replacing dilapidated houses of low-income families in the Charleston city area.

Freshman Jonathan Aleshire, who is the co-organizational liaison leader in the Elon Volunteers! office, helped plan the trip to give students another service opportu-

nity over spring break.

According to Jess Snow, the trip's student leader and staff photographer, the Elon service project could involve "anything from painting to installing insulation or putting up drywall."

All of the students and the trip's adviser, Steve Anderson, assistant director of Residence Life, will live in the Volunteer House during their week-long visit. The three-story, dormitory-style building is equipped with a full kitchen and the students will cook many of their meals there. Their workday will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end around 4 p.m.

"I think this trip will be different from a normal spring break trip because I have the opportunity to go out and help someone while having a lot of fun at the same time," said Snow.

The students will participate in nightly reflection sessions and then have free time to explore Charleston.

"At the end of this spring break trip, I know I will have grown as a person far more than just lying on the beach for a week," said Aleshire.

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## Dominican Republic



**Student Trip Leader:** Doris Molina  
**Town where house will be located:** Jaquineyes  
**Average temperature in March:** 79 degrees

## South Carolina



**Student Trip Leader:** Jess Snow  
**Town where house will be located:** Charleston area  
**Average temperature in March:** 68 degrees

See Campus Candids for more spring break trips p. 14