

Wake Forest freshmen lend a hand at agencies

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Before buying books, registering for classes or learning their way around campus, a group of about 40 incoming freshmen at Wake Forest University decided to begin their college experience by volunteering in the community. These students took part in a two-day volunteer pre-orientation program called S.P.A.R.C. (Students Promoting Responsibility and Action to the Community).

Designed by the Office of Volunteer Services at WFU, the program intends to give students a close look at the important role community service plays in the life of WFU. Students spent Monday and Tuesday of this week at AIDS Care Service, the Food Bank, Samaritan Ministries and the Bethlehem Community Center, cooking meals, mentoring young children and landscaping.

Cathie Dorgan, soup kitchen manager for Samaritan Min-

istries, said that the university has been collaborating with them for several years by providing students as volunteers.

"(Students) are more than willing to do anything," said Dorgan, who said the students performed tasks such as cutting up fruit and setting tables for the lunch crowd.

Anna Dawson is among the freshmen volunteers who signed up for the S.P.A.R.C. program after having been an active volunteer in high school. Dawson, who is from Columbia, S.C., saw this as a perfect opportunity to learn about her new home, Winston-Salem.

"It was a great opportunity to be able to meet lots of other students not knowing anyone, especially from my area, going to Wake Forest," said Dawson, who hopes to volunteer with children in the community once classes begin. "You get to help the people in the community; you get to become very familiar with everyone, not just the students but the people who live



Freshman Anna Dawson helped serve food to the homeless at Samaritan Ministries.

Photo by Courtney Gaillard

here."

Many of the regular volunteers at Samaritan Ministries are

older retired people, who give of their time on a weekly basis for four hours at a time, Dorgan

said. Most days an additional four to five volunteers could be of great help to the staff at

Samaritan Ministries.

Freshman Lowell Tillatt is a native of Winston-Salem and he too was involved in a number of volunteer and outreach programs while attending Mount Tabor High School.

"It makes me feel good and I can help other people," said Tillatt, who volunteered at Samaritan Ministries before entering WFU. "I like doing this. It's fun. Anywhere where I can be of service I will try to do as much as I can."

Dorgan encourages this bunch of new students to continue volunteering when their class schedules will permit.

"Soup kitchen team is really unique. They really get to be friends. It's like a family," Dorgan said.

Samaritan Ministries is holding a recruitment meeting at its facility on Patterson Avenue for interested volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering at Samaritan Ministries, call 748-1962.

Ansa

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Next week, Ansa will be on the same page as Forsyth County readers. Ansa, who has penned five novels, including her latest work "You Know Better," will take part in the community reading of Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird."

"The whole city reading one book is a great idea," she said. "Folks are looking to books for direction and answers."

She said she agreed to take part in the Forsyth County Library's "On the Same Page"

project because she's a "library girl."

"Reading expands your world," she said. Ansa recalled the days when she went to a segregated library in Macon. She said the black library didn't have all the books the white library had, but when the librarians saw that she was an avid reader, they got her the books she wanted.

Ansa said "To Kill a Mockingbird," the story of a young Southern girl coming of age, resonated with her when she read it. "Most books by first-time authors are coming-of-age

stories," she said. "Harper Lee got it all in the book, coming of age, racism, injustice — the wonderful stuff of childhood and discovery and awakening."

The Forsyth County Library hopes others in the county feel the same way about the book. The "On the Same Page" project strives to get as many county residents as possible to read the classic. There will be several group discussions as well as many other reading-related activities from Aug. 28 through Oct. 22.

Ansa will be in Winston-Salem during the three-day

kickoff festival on Tuesday, Aug. 27. She is scheduled to make appearances at Special Occasions, for a book signing at noon, and the Leinbach Gallery (off of Reynolda Road, past Old Town Elementary School) for an author reading at 7 p.m.

Her four books — "Baby of the Family," "Ugly Ways," "The Hand I Fan With" and "You Know Better," are all family stories, she said.

"I bring stories of Southern blacks and women to the forefront in a fully dimensional way," she said.

Ansa says her inspiration

came from the people in her family whose stories shaped her as she grew up. But there was one book that spoke to her and her lifestyle, "Their Eyes Were Watching God," by Zora Neale Hurston.

"I read it and I was just stunned," she said. "She wrote about bean pickers and maids. These are the people I grew up around. I thought their lives were fascinating."

Ansa said that "Before Their Eyes," she didn't see herself in the pages of the books she read.

Another influence for

Ansa's work is nature itself. She is an avid bird watcher and a gardener. "We are all connected on this earth; we all call this place home," she said.

In her work, she ties nature, spirituality and the human condition together to tell her stories. "Baby of the Family," her first book, was chosen by the Georgia Center for the Book as one of the Top 25 Books Every Georgian Should Read. The book also was awarded The American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults in 1990 and won the 1989 Georgia Authors Series Award.

Medals

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shoot the kids, and I suddenly realized that the Vietnam syndrome that we were supposed to receive within the first 10 years — they said if you don't receive any problems, you won't have any. First 10 years went by — hey, I only had one dream, maybe something else; I'm fine....

"We had night operations (in Operation Starlight in the Vietnam War). They are...the scariest. When you're pinned down in your foxhole and it's night and incoming is coming, the pope himself would be afraid. You're just pinned down; you can't go anywhere and you hear it coming and you think it's coming on you this time, and it's the most frightful feeling. I'm into sensations, but that got to me."

Contrary to former thinking, now doctors point out that people may show symptoms of what used to be called Vietnam syndrome more than 10 years after their military service in the Vietnam War. Manns said, "And they changed the word (from Vietnam syndrome) to post-traumatic stress disorder, but you get higher percentage in your disability; it's more serious."

"I wanted to pick up my gun in the classroom, and I said when this girl turns this corner, I'm going to shoot her. I had already, in my imagination, killed a kid. I get there early, and I know who's coming. Oh, this kid is coming back. I knew I was going to strangle him, lay him dead. I sort of waited by the door, like this, and waited for the kid to come in. Boy, I was really out of it that day. So the principal came in. The kids were afraid of me. And then I realized — I reached for my coat and my hat and I said, 'Sir, I can't take this.' I just left. I went straight to Forsyth Memorial Hospital Emergency."

Manns said he never harmed any students when he relived his Vietnam horrors in the classroom. "This was going on in my mind, but I did find myself reaching for an imaginary rifle. Ohhhh, now I know: I had to leave. I really felt the fear. I was in danger for myself and others. I certainly was. I'm much better now."

Manns, who looks as if he could still fit into his military uniform, proudly says he is 64 years old. "I'll be 65 December 26. I'm retired from everything. Social Security coming in. Sitting on Easy Street. I bought my dream home. I don't know what else there is to do."

When asked how he feels about getting the 11 service commendations Friday, Manns said, "Overwhelmed, overwhelmed. The congressman and his assistants really did a fabulous job in obtaining these medals and everything else that I've asked for. They have really gotten on Congress, and they have received all my medals for me. I don't know what I would have done without them."

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