Gift Giving

For many members
of the Boise State community,
volunteerism is more than just an afterthought.
Here are a few stories
behind those who give of their time
for the greater good of all of us.

STUDENT TAKES HER VOLUNTEER HABIT TO NATIONAL LEVEL

By Justin Endow

For Boise State sophomore Angie Vandermeer, the concept of volunteering began in church.

"I became really active when I was in junior high, and from there it just became habit," she says.

"I really don't even think about whether or not I'm going to do it. The question is what I'm going to do."

This year, she is learning what it takes to be a leader in volunteerism at the national level

Vandermeer is one of 40 students nationwide selected to attend leadership seminars sponsored by the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), a national nonprofit organization that educates college student leaders about community service.

Vandermeer has already attended two of the three COOL seminars, which were



held in Washington, D.C., and New York. The third conference meets this spring in Salt Lake City.

"The program is a series of intensive leadership seminars designed to instruct student volunteers in the best methods for organizing and publicizing service work," she says.

"The idea is to meet tons of people, learn what other campuses are doing and build some networking channels so we can share our ideas." Vandermeer has already done her share of organizing volunteer efforts. She has coordinated Boise State's involvement in Into the Streets, a national student volunteer day, the last two years.

Currently, she is volunteering for the Ada County juvenile court system's mentoring program, in which she serves as a "big sister" to a troubled teen, and she is co-coordinating the volunteer

recognition banquet, which will honor the most active student volunteers.

Vandermeer also is coordinating the Volunteer Service Board's Hunger Banquet. For this project, 100 students will buy tickets that have been randomly assigned to one of three levels: poverty level, middle class or upper class. Students will get meals consistent with the wealth classes they were assigned to. This event is designed to accurately reflect the wealth and hunger levels of the world per 100 people.

On top of all that, Vandermeer, a criminal justice major, is the chief justice of the student government judiciary board.

She is certain that volunteering will be a big part of her life for a long time to come.

"I've learned so much in my volunteering that I never would have gotten in a classroom," she says.

QUINN HELPS PREVENT DISEASES, RAISE AWARENESS

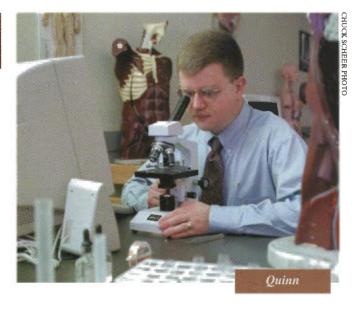
By Justin Endow

Mike Quinn's volunteer efforts have made a difference in the Boise community and in far-flung locations around the globe.

The 27-year-old environmental health and biology major coordinates several local volunteer projects, from blood drives at Boise State to a flower project to benefit the American Cancer Society.

Before that, Quinn provided medical relief to citizens in Thailand and Malaysia during a stint as a preventative medicine technician in the Navy.

"Malaria and dengue fever, which are mosquito-borne diseases, were rampant in Thailand when we first got there," Quinn says. "We set up a program to teach the people how to control the mosquitoes.



Within two years, the cases of malaria and dengue fever had gone down drastically."

"I try to lead by example, to serve others from leadership positions," he says.

He is president of Boise State's Pre-Med Club, which sponsors blood drives three times each school year, and is a member of the Volunteer Services Board and the Service-Learning Advisory Board.

He serves on Boise State's new Health Advisory Board, which sponsored activities for World AIDS Day, established peer advisory groups to provide students information on sexually transmitted disease prevention, and distributed free condoms to students.

In March he helped organize Daffodil Days to benefit the American Cancer Society. "We sold daffodils because they represent renewal, but they also symbolize a cancer patient's survival," he says.

Quinn is also a member of Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue and certified in CPR and first aid. And along with all that volunteer work, he finds time for his duties as the ASBSU Senate's pro tem.

Quinn says he gets the most satisfaction from his volunteerism when he can influence situations or people for the long term. And he tries to motivate others to get involved.

"I like to volunteer for impact," he says, "and a broader impact comes from encouraging others to volunteer." □

PROFESSOR WORKS TO CHANGE NURSES' CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

By Bob Evancho

Today's nurses, asserts Pam Gehrke, are a different breed. No longer are they primarily bedside caregivers. Like Gehrke, some of them have become forceful activists for public awareness and reform in areas that extend far beyond the traditional realm of the nursing profession.

"Much of society still sees nursing as a profession primarily caring for those with illnesses," says the Boise State nursing professor. "But it's much more than that.

"Nurses are an untapped resource for health information. What often is not seen is the work nurses are doing in areas such as health promotion and safety," Gehrke adds.

And along with fellow nursing professors Judy Murray and Nancy Otterness, Gehrke is not just paying lip service. In the community health nursing course they teach, Gehrke and her two colleagues require their students to select a current health issue, research the topic and present their findings as if testifying before a group of policy-makers.

In the spirit of community-mindedness and volunteerism, some of Gehrke's students have taken the project beyond the classroom — actually presenting their findings to civic and school officials and helping to influence policy decisions in some cases. They include:

- A project on detecting asthma in schoolchildren and improving school attendance.
- A project presented to the Idaho Association of School Boards and Idaho School Administrators that focused on suicide awareness and prevention
 - · A project, which won an



Idaho Public Health Association Student Award of Merit, that addressed the prevention of firearm accidents among children.

• A study on illegal parking in spaces designated for the disabled that was presented to the Boise City Parking Commission and helped change some city ordinances.

For her role in guiding her students during these and other civic-minded projects, Gehrke was awarded the 1998 Public Health Nurse Creative Achievement Award by the Public Health Nursing Section of the American Public Health Association for creative contributions to public health nursing.

"In our profession it has become increasingly apparent that we need to become advocates for health promotion in some areas," Gehrke says. "The students learn that with the information they have, they can assist those who make policies. Judy and Nancy and I strongly believe that for nurses to be competent in the 21st century, they need to become involved in the policy-making process."

Thanks to Gehrke, some of them already are. \Box

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