

Alumni Clubs and the Summer Service Learning Program Challenges and Best Practices: A Working Document 2006

Building upon the Alumni Symposium in March, 2006, and the experience of the Summer Service Learning Program this summer, the following document has evolved. We would like to continue to add ideas and challenges from Alumni Clubs so that this document can assist all Alumni Clubs in either starting the SSLP or enhancing what is already in place. Please send comments to Andrea Smith Shappell at shappell.1@nd.edu.

I. Housing

Challenges/Best Practices

Some students feel isolated when living on site by themselves. Club members should interact with the student each week, possibly for meals. One good outcome from housing on site is it eliminates transportation issues.

Students find too many moves from family to family difficult. Arrange housing with **no more than four** families for the eight weeks, if at all possible.

Food is a concern of students. Three meals need to be provided each day. Be sure students know if they can take food from the kitchen when needed. If students are

Students stay at houses while the family goes on vacation. Some students are very uncomfortable with this arrangement. Students must know before May 1 what the housing will be.

Creative Ideas Currently in Clubs

Maryland Club – One student lives with the SumServe students at Loyola-Baltimore. This gives them a built in time of reflection with other students in Loyola's service program, a chance to visit many sites throughout the city and room and board. The other student lives in community with year-long service volunteers in the Bon Secours Program. Thus there is built in community of peers for reflection and social activities. Room and board is provided.

Chicago-Port Ministries, Corazon a Corazon, Miseracordia; *New York* – St. Anthony's; and other Clubs. Students live at or near the site with members of a religious community or lay community. Benefits are no transportation issues, built in community and room and board provided. The challenge is to make sure the students are not isolated from interaction with the Alumni Club.

Dayton – Host families are found and a grid of contact information is given to all partners. See attachment A. The ideal is one or two host families for the eight weeks who share dinner together, invite students into the activities of their family life and participate

in any Alumni Club events in the summer. The challenge from the other side is when a student does not contribute to the tasks of the household and does not accept the invitations to participate in family activities. Students are told about these areas during their preparation/orientation before leaving campus. Ground rules should be clear regarding food, chores, curfews, visitors, and openness to students to decline invitations.

II. Transportation

Challenges/Best Practices

Alumni families live in suburbs and sites are in the city and there is no public transportation. Arrange car pool with alums who commute into the city. Give the student a bike to ride to the nearest public transportation station, within a reasonable distance.

Clubs require a student to have a car for transportation to and from the site. This works well if the student interested in your site has a car, but most students do not. Be sure to give gas money to the students since they have no income while at the site.

Give the student a car to use. Some Clubs do give students a car to use. Be sure that the student knows if the car is only for transportation to and from the site or if they can use it outside of work time. The students are **not** covered by the University's insurance when driving the car of an alum. If your Club has this arrangement be sure to let me know so that I can make sure the student who is placed with you has a driver's license.

Rent a car for the student to use. Renting a car is similar to giving the students a car. The students are **not** covered by the University's insurance when the rental car is arranged by a member of the Alumni Club.

Only one of two students in your city has a car. Students have car pooled, even when living with different families. It is much more likely to find one student with a car for your city, than two.

Creative Ideas Currently in Clubs

The Boston Club requires 2 of their 3 students to have cars and for years has given the student money for gas.

The Southeast Virginia Club and other Clubs ask one family host both students so they only need one car to travel to the site.

A number of Clubs have found the solution of having students live at or near the site, as discussed above. The challenge in this situation is to still have active interaction between the student and members of the Alumni Club.

III. Site Arrangements

Best Practices

Choose sites in which Alumni Club members are involved, on the board, as volunteers or on the staff, such as Staten Island, Project Hospitality, where a club member is vitally involved and interacts with the student throughout the summer.

Make sure the student will be engaged in meaningful work for the summer which includes as much interaction with people in need of the services that the agency provides, as possible. That is, the student should not be filing or folding clothing donations all summer.

Contact the sites each November to make arrangements for the following summer. Let the Center for Social Concerns know of any changes. Be sure the Center has a current job description.

Communicate often with the student and the site in making summer arrangements. Take the students to the site the first day. Visit the student on site at another point in the summer.

Involve the Club in the activities at the site such as a “fix up” day at a women’s shelter by the Mid-Hudson Valley Club. This involvement does not need to be when the student is on site, but it is a benefit to the student if it is. Ideally, the Clubs have a year-round relationship with the sites.

If there is more than one student in your city, arrange with the sites for students’ to visit each others site, such as the Pittsburgh Club has done.

IV. Club relationship to students

Best Practices

Invite SSLP students to all appropriate Club events, such as a board meeting, send-off picnic, golf outing, etc.

Invite students to young alumni events.

Talk with students about what they do at the site, what they are reading.

Tell students about your involvement in service, social concerns, faith since graduating from Notre Dame. Most students are very interested to hear how others have attempted to integrate these areas into one’s life in a variety of professions.

Let the Center for Social Concerns know if you would like a copy of the readings that the students are required to read over the summer.

Participate in evaluations with the student, site, host families and club members.

V. Communications Issues

Challenges/Best Practices

Students need to feel comfortable coming to the Alumni Contact Person if they encounter problems at the site or with housing.

An emergency plan needs to be in place in case a student is injured. The Center for Social Concerns takes the lead on this, but the Clubs, sites, host families, student's families need to be aware of how to contact all parties.

Students are told that for the 8 weeks their first priority needs to be whatever the site asks of them, their second priority is to attend whatever the Alumni Club invites them to, and their third priority is other activities/family/friends.

If Clubs have concerns about the students behavior - at the site, with host families, etc., contact the Center for Social Concerns.

VI. Funding Ideas

Best Practices

Have a golf outing with corporate sponsors and participation the goes beyond the Notre Dame Club, as the New Mexico Club does.

Ask individuals to sponsor a student with \$1100 and ask for the balance from the Andrews Scholarship Fund. Individual contributions to the University can be earmarked for your Club's SSLP.

Design and sell T-shirts, that are not Alumni Club specific, such as "Boston Irish."

UND nights – some Clubs partner with local Catholic schools for a greater turnout.

Ask a local foundation to sponsor a student, as the Rochester, NY Club does.

If your Club really wants to be involved, has a great site in mind and housing available for a student, contact the CSC to see what can be worked out.