

PRESS RELEASE

College students forgo traditional spring break plans

250 college students will spend their spring breaks volunteering with UrbanPromise in Camden

Camden, New Jersey, March 2010 – Most college students would describe their perfect spring break as a week on the beach with plenty of rest and relaxation, minus all responsibility. However, for these college students, who represent 19 different colleges and universities across the US and Canada, their perfect spring break looks a little different; it looks like service.

Over the course of the next six weeks, over 275 college students will filter in and out of Camden, NJ partnering with UrbanPromise to help expand the non-profit's mission statement to "equip the youth of the city with skills necessary for academic achievement, life management, spiritual growth and Christian leadership."

Since its humble beginning twenty-one years ago, UrbanPromise has expanded from only one summer camp to a variety of activities for all ages ranging from after-school programs, private schools, job training courses, multiple summer camps, and sailing courses to name a few. With this expansion comes a need for hands; and college students from coast-to-coast are answering this call.

College "Workgroups" will spend their spring break immersed in various activities all geared towards a common goal; UrbanPromise's dedication to *build a city of promise... one child at a time*. The staff and youth of UrbanPromise have their hands full after a long winter and are eager to put the zealous college students to work. Work projects look different each day ranging from demolishing buildings, building bunk beds, and shoveling snow, to working in the classroom alongside the dedicated teachers. A third year, international studies major from Pepperdine University, Ashley Perez, proclaims her desire to just *serve*. "Honestly, whatever I can do to help. You have to expect the unexpected so whatever comes your way you are ready to do."

Shortly after the school bell rings come the AfterSchool programs where college students are given the opportunity to jump in and cater to the needs of the most prized possession of Camden; the youth. In reflecting on the first day with the kids, college student Becca Stankis expressed her initial insecurity. "I didn't expect the kids to just open up to me like they did. It was incredible to just be able to spend time with them on such a real level."

The youth in Camden are faced with staggering statistics regarding the lack of education, crime rates and poverty, but don't let this fool you. The sense of sadness one might expect from the kids of the city is healed by a bandage of love and encouragement from the staff and volunteers of UrbanPromise giving each and every child a hope not

only for the future, but a hope for today.

Director of Workgroups, Jim Cummings challenges the college students upon their arrival with a question of responsibility. "Whose responsibility is it to change the destiny of Camden? Because we are past the point of blame."

Pepperdine group leader and second time Workgroup participant, Senior, Heather Bradshaw says, "I don't think it's anyone's responsibility [to fix the city of Camden], but we do have a responsibility to help. Realistically, we know we can't change a whole city in a week, but each baby step counts for something whether we can see the big picture or not."

Four years in college may seem like a time of self discovery to many, but for these unique college students who have given up their spring break to volunteer in Camden, NJ, self-discovery takes on a much different form. Self-discovery begins with selflessness.

To learn more about the work UrbanPromise is doing in Camden, New Jersey visit www.urbanpromiseusa.org

Schedule for visiting college groups for Spring Break 2010:

Feb. 27- Mar 6: Pepperdine University, CA (21 participates)

March 6-13: Ursinus College, PA (10 participates)
William & Mary College (12 participates)
Alderson-Broaddus College, WV (4 participates)
Grace Covenant Church College Group, VA (20 participates)
King College, TN (14 participates)
The College of New Jersey (11 participates)

March 14-20: Dordt College, IA (10 participates)
Bowdoin College, ME (15 participates)
Samford University, AL (8 participates)
University of New England (10 participates)
Calvary Baptist Church College Group, KY (35 participates)

April 18-23: Bates College, ME (10 participates)
Brookline Baptist Church College Group, MA (15 participates)

May 1-7: UrbanPromise Toronto College Group, Canada (15 participates)

May 9-15: Alderson-Broaddus College, WV (14 participates)

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