Support Grows For ‘SLU Make a Difference Day’

An estimated 1,800 SLU students, faculty, staff and community volunteers braved the cool, damp weather Oct. 26 to participate in the fifth annual “SLU Make a Difference Day.”

Support has grown steadily during the last several years, with the number of volunteers more than doubling since 2000. Make a Difference Day is a national day of service — a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors — and the largest community service effort in the nation. More than 2 million volunteers participated last year, and an estimated 22 million people in need benefited.

This year’s numbers were up substantially from last year, when 1,200 volunteers participated; the year before it was closer to 850. Bernie Schaefer, director of SLU’s Center for Leadership and Community Service, credited Alpha Phi Omega (APO), SLU’s co-ed student service fraternity, with getting the word out and encouraging peers to get involved. SLU has the second largest APO chapter in the country.

KMOX-AM and APO were sponsors of the event. This is the second year that KMOX helped to promote the event. Carole Buck, widow of KMOX broadcaster and philanthropist Jack Buck, and KMOX on-air personality Carol Daniel participated in the morning kickoff.

Participants gathered early Saturday morning at the University’s Robert R. Hermann Stadium to organize into groups. They received T-shirts and lunches before dispersing to more than 60 outreach locations.

Volunteers prepared and delivered food, organized community Halloween parties for children, pulled weeds, spread mulch, picked up trash and built homes. But most of all, they made friends and a difference throughout the community.

On the same day, SLU also sponsors Homeward Bound, which is a resource day for homeless individuals in the area. The joint effort of the city and county Divisions of Homeless Services includes informational booths, medical testing and other useful assistance.

Homeward Bound augments SLU’s Open Doors, a spring event at SLU that provides people in the community with a hot meal, new clothes and a chance to take advantage of resources such as Catholic Services and Employment Connections.

Support Grows For ‘SLU Make a Difference Day’

JULIUS HUNTER JOINS SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY FAMILY

Award-winning newscaster Julius Hunter will join the executive staff of Saint Louis University President Lawrence Biondi, S.J., in early December. A prominent St. Louisan with more than 30 years of broadcast and print news experience, Hunter holds the senior anchor position at KMOV-TV Channel 4 in St. Louis, a post he has held for 26 years.

“I am thrilled about the opportunity to come to a great university and be a part of its bold and progressive mission,” he said. “After talking with Fr. Biondi on several occasions, I have found that I am in complete agreement with his vision and with the goals of the University.”

As vice president of community relations, Hunter will fill a new position on the president’s executive staff. He will represent the University to various civic, cultural and institutional boards and lend support to initiatives and community groups. In addition to community outreach, Hunter will enhance and promote culture at the University by fostering and linking cultural events and initiatives to SLU resources.

“The executive staff and I are excited about the addition of Julius to the SLU family,” Biondi said. “Julius has a strong reputation for community service and outstanding relationships with key leaders in the St. Louis metropolitan area. He is committed to young people and to St. Louis.”

Before joining KMOV, Hunter served as an anchor at KSDK-TV in St. Louis for five years. He also regularly hosted a radio talk show on KMOV-AM and wrote a weekly St. Louis Post-Dispatch column on little-known facts about St. Louis history.

Hunter is the host of the Young Heroes in Music program on KFUO/Classic 99-FM, featuring young African-American musicians. He is the founder of a mentoring program at the Pierre Laclede Elementary School in St. Louis and was the first African-American to serve on the board of the Missouri Historical Society.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

SLU IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMUNITY

Some of you may have noticed recent news stories about Julius Hunter joining the Saint Louis University family; 1,800 people participating in the fifth annual SLU Make a Difference Day; or St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and I touring areas under consideration for a tax increment financing (TIF) district.

There are so many other things that happen every day at this University that are never covered on the evening news. Many may affect you, our Saint Louis University neighbors. This newsletter was initiated to improve communication with our neighbors. We want you to know what to expect when we make campus or even community improvements. But we also want you to know what services and facilities are available for your use and enjoyment.

In this issue, there are stories about Julius joining us and SLU Make a Difference Day, but there is also information about two new programs that will put $3 million to work to improve diversity in our medical school. A story about students shares some of the reasons she is committed to a life of service. She, and three other SLU students, have received service-oriented scholarships from Kurt and Brenda Warner’s “First Things First” Foundation.

Also covered in this newsletter is the topic of the Grand Center TIF district (above right). It is worth mentioning because this would be the first district-wide TIF for the St. Louis area and could help generate more than $400 million in new development for Midtown. Some of the revenue generated by the TIF is earmarked for a potential arena project and for development of the property at the northeast corner of Grand Avenue and Lindell Boulevard. The TIF revenue also would be used for renovations of several older Grand Center buildings, development of new housing, museums, parking and other improvements.

The development of the SLU campus has long been the centerpiece for the revitalization of the Grand Center area. A proposal of the TIF district would bring exciting new changes for the area around the University. We hope to see the addition of more dining, retail and housing in and around Grand Center. With TIF revenues, many of those projects could become reality.

GILSINAN EARNs AWARD FOR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

James F. Gilsinan III, dean of the Saint Louis University College of Public Service, was presented the SLU 2002 In Touch with the Community Award at this year’s SLU Make a Difference Day kick-off.

Gilsinan was recognized for his efforts with the University’s Habitat for Humanity project and his ongoing commitment to the community at all levels. Whether serving on an area board of directors or serving food to volunteers on a Saturday, Gilsinan is an inspiration.

The annual In Touch with the Community Award recognizes one University faculty or staff member who has made a remarkable contribution to the St. Louis community. This is the second year for the award, which was presented by KM OX radio’s Carol Daniel.

Dr. Jim Gilsinan (left) with KM OX radio’s Carol Daniel.

President’s Coordinating Council and has written numerous books and articles on public policy, criminology and ethics. He takes a modest approach to his achievements.

“Jim Gilsinan is very creative in finding ways to energize and involve others with whom he interacts,” said University President Lawrence Biondi, S.J. “He is a motivating force and positive role model for students and others as he puts our Jesuit mission to work throughout the community.”

Gilsinan is a member of the President’s Coordinating Council and has written numerous books and articles on public policy, criminology and ethics. He takes a modest approach to his achievements.

“When you look at all the great work students, faculty and staff do in the community, I feel this award is not just for me,” he said. “It is representative of the entire SLU family.”

Gilsinan knows the importance of sharing one’s talents with the greater community. He recognizes that community work is a win-win situation for everyone involved. “Being exposed to lives different than our own causes us to reflect on the gifts we have been given,” he said. “This, in turn, enhances our spiritual and emotional growth.

W hen we give of ourselves, we get much in return.”
Habitat for Humanity Honors University with Service Award

Habitat for Humanity of St. Louis has recognized Saint Louis University with the Harvest Homecoming Award, an honor given to area organizations that exhibit outstanding service contributions in the St. Louis area.

“We want to recognize specific organizations which share our mission in making St. Louis a better place to live,” said Courtney Pittman, development director at Habitat for Humanity. “Saint Louis University has been an avid supporter of our program for the past two years, and we want to thank SLU with this award.”

SLU and Habitat for Humanity have been partners for several years however, for the past two years, the University has increased its involvement with the organization by co-sponsoring homes. This year, SLU teamed with 11 area high schools to build a home for a local family in Wellston, Mo. Together, they hope to have the home completed by early December. In addition to its work with Habitat for Humanity, SLU operates many outreach programs that benefit the community, including the Health Resource Center, the Civil Law Clinic, the Family Development Center and SLU Campus Kitchen.

Habitat for Humanity presented the award at its annual Harvest Homecoming Dinner in November. Dr. James Gilsinan, dean of the College of Public Service and recipient of SLU’s 2002 In Touch with the Community Award, accepted the honor on behalf of the University.

Five other groups or individuals also were recognized for their service contributions. They included: Edward Jones, Tim Berry of St. Louis Equity Fund, Rick Sullivan, Rabbi Susan Talve, the Peoples’ Health Center and the Disciples of Christ Congregation.

Habitat for Humanity St. Louis is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry where people of all backgrounds, races and religions unite to build houses in partnership with families in need.

Hellenkamp participates in a SLU residence hall program called Micah House, where she lives with other students dedicated to community service efforts in neighborhoods near the University. During the past few years, Hellenkamp has been an active volunteer with Karen House, a shelter for homeless women and children, and has mentored children through the Tyler Place program. She is an active member of the student organization JUS-TICE, which strives to achieve sustained social change through experiences with and for others.

Hellenkamp also has participated in one of SLU’s mission trips to San Benito, Texas, and hopes to study in El Salvador next fall. She also gives her time to an informal youth refuge mentoring program and Taproots School of the Arts, a program that helps to raise the self-esteem of inner city children and build community through the arts.

A after she completes her major in social work at SLU, Hellenkamp plans to serve with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps working with the people of Latin America. Because of her passion for diversity and culture, she eventually hopes to have a career in community organization work in Latin America. “Latin America has such a spirit and a warmth,” she said. “It is a magical place, but it is in need of positive social change. I love diversity and celebrating other cultures and look forward to a challenging and rewarding life.”

DISHING DIRT:
Laura Derges (left) and Emily Bailey were among the SLU nutrition and dietetic interns who helped put in vegetable garden beds Oct. 7 on Compton Avenue between Rutger and Hickory streets. The beds are designed to teach students at Banneker and Sigel schools where certain foods come from. Third-graders from these schools will plant their own gardens there in the spring.

A PERSONAL STORY OF A LIFE FOR OTHERS

“When people of the world are oppressed, we are called to help those persons live life more fully.”

These are the words of Saint Louis University sophomore Colette Hellenkamp, one of four recipients of the Kurt Warner Scholarship. The scholarship, sponsored by Warner’s “First Things First” Foundation, is a four-year award given to students who are dedicated to committing their lives to service. Hellenkamp and Michael Cantone were the very first recipients. They were chosen in fall 2001 for their strong academic achievement and devotion to the University and St. Louis community. This year, the Warner scholarship has recognized Katie Fitzgerald and Alexandria Collins for their dedication to service to others.

Hellenkamp’s desire to serve began at an early age. Her parents, former members of the African Peace Corps and committed volunteers, had a tremendous influence on her decision to serve the greater community. “Through their example, they always taught my siblings and me to love everybody as much as possible and give our gifts and talents anyway we can,” Hellenkamp said. She also attended a Jesuit high school, which she says was “a motivating influence for me to commit to service work.”

Hellenkamp participates in a SLU residence hall program called Micah House, where she lives with other students dedicated to community service efforts in neighborhoods near the University. During the past few years, Hellenkamp has been an active volunteer with Karen House, a shelter for homeless women and children, and has mentored children through the Tyler Place program. She is an active member of the student organization JUS-TICE, which strives to achieve sustained social change through experiences with and for others.

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New Programs to Help Diversify Health Professions

Is fifth grade too early to think about being the first person in your family to attend college and pursue a career in medicine? A new program at Saint Louis University bets it isn't.

The program — called the Multicultural Initiative for New Doctors (MIND) Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) — aims to increase the number of promising minority students applying to medical schools nationwide while attracting the best and brightest to SLU's School of Medicine.

Funded by a $1.4 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, the program primarily is designed to help students of African-American, Native-American and Hispanic backgrounds become the first in their families to go to college, and ultimately, become doctors.

Students may participate in the program as early as fifth grade, with continuing support programs offered to them at each subsequent stage of their academic careers — until they graduate from medical school. This year, 740 students will be accepted into the program, with 50 new students accepted each subsequent year. With low attrition, the overall number of students is expected to remain relatively constant.

"This is a direct pipeline to medical school and beyond," said Dr. George H. Rausch, associate dean of the SLU School of Medicine and the program director. "Our long-term goal is to improve diversity in our medical school and in the physician workforce."

A companion program — funded by a $1.5 million three-year grant — will create an additional office in SLU's department of community and family medicine to recruit minorities to primary care practices, support them while they are in school and offer ongoing education to keep them practicing in the community. Those interested in becoming nurses, clinical lab scientists, nurse practitioners, dietitians and other health professionals also are being recruited.

"Minorities aren't entering medical school and other programs that educate health professions at a rate that's consistent with their representation in the population," said Mark Mengel, M.D., chairman of the department of community and family medicine at Saint Louis University School of Medicine. "We want to improve the diversity of health professionals. By doing this we'll be able to create a workforce that's more responsive to the underserved population's needs."

For information about MIND, call the office of multicultural affairs at (314) 268-5398.