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Alternative
Spring Break
(30)

15 weeks 6 days ago

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ASUI Website

Alternative Spring Break

We were on TV!

Submitted by mississippi on Tue, 03/21/2006 - 7:19pm.

Everyone:

I've added this to the ASUI website and wanted to repost it so people can copy and paste it and send it to friends and family, etc. The link and directions to check us out on Fox News is below.

69 students, staff, and alumni from the University of Idaho spent their spring break in Waveland Mississippi, participating in relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The Alternative Service Break volunteers from UI were on Fox News and you can check it out online. Go to http://www.foxnews.com/video2/player05.html?032006/032006_fr_lilgren&FOX_Report&Helping%20Hands&acc&U.S.%20%26%20World&-1&exp To view the blog from the trip, visit <http://asui.uidaho.edu/blogs/taxonomy/term/4>.

[Blog entries by mississippi](#) | [234 comments](#) (category: Alternative Spring Break)

It's so hard to say goodbye

Submitted by mississippi on Fri, 03/17/2006 - 8:41pm.

What an incredible week. I cannot explain in words the emotions and feelings that I have about what I have seen here. There is so much to say. I am so grateful to have been able to come on this trip and experience this. I have learned so much about myself and others. I have reaffirmed my passion and commitment to service. I have been blown away at what Idaho has done in this community.

Just to recap on the rest of my week, since I haven't written in awhile lots has gone on. On Wednesday we finished the home of the woman we had been working on since Monday. That afternoon we headed over to another site where we did some random yardwork where we got to carry huge cinder blocks around. It was challenging but very satisfying. That evening we headed over to a local convent store where the owner cooked hamburgers for us. It was a fantastic evening. We all sat around laughing, talking, and eating. It was a warm evening and just the kind of thing I needed to refresh me in the middle of my week. The man from the convent store was so generous, he gave us so much. I couldn't believe his hospitality. It was amazing. We went back and visited him this afternoon, Friay, just to say goodbye. He kept thanking us and asking us to come back for lunch or dinner at his home. He was so giving, and he really didn't have much at all. Before we left he offered his home for us to stay in if we decided to come back here again. He was an amazing man. The people here are so giving, although they have lost everything.

Thursday was my favorite day. The day started off a bit rough with some confusion on where exactly we were suppose to be, and some not so great directions that we were given. After about an hour of driving around we finally arrived at our job site where there were already about 40 people. My group decided that we needed to find something else to do because there were already too many people at the first job site. So we split into two groups and headed out into the neighborhood. After searching for only about 15 minutes a man told us that he needed some help painting the trim on their daughters house. A group of seven of us girls headed over to the house. It was a really good project and a lot of fun. We listen to music and painted ALL the trim in this womans house. all morning long. Around lunch time the father walked into the house and told us that he was going to make lunch for us. He told us that his wife was going to make us Jumbolia and fried chicken. We cleaned up and finished painting and headed over to the house. During lunch we found out all about the family we were doing work for. The grandparents and 2 of their children all had houses all on the same property. They were all working together to rebuild what they had lost. The father then told us that he hadn't planned on paintint the trim that day, and that when his daughter got home it was going to be a suprise that her trim was finished. That was really cool feeling to know that we were able to do something for someone that they didn't think they would have been able to get done that day. I thought it was so cool that it was going to be a suprise too! The lunch that we ate was amazing! The southern cooking was absolutley delicious. I think it was the best fried chicken I have ever had. After lunch we did raked up lots of debris and did some other yard work for the family. Later in the afternoon the family invited us inside their trailor to watch a video about Waveland and the hurricane. It was the same video we had watched the night before, but watching it with the family was really moving. He explained a lot about the video and the pictures. At the end of the day, I realized that this was the reason I had come down here. I felt like we had done very little, but for the family that we had worked for it was a lot. I came down here to help people, and that's what I did yesterday, I helped this family. Even if to me what I did was small to them it made a difference and I realize now that this is what matters. That evening we had a big bonfire and listened to music with all of the other colleges here in Waveland. It was so cool to be on the beach under the moonlight with everyone. It was like something out of a movie. It was a great way to end the day.

Today, Friday, was very short but a very good end to the week. We worked at a home close to where we are staying. There had been three houses originally but now they are all gone. Our job was to pick up debris and knock down brick fire places. I spent most of the morning making smoke fires to fend off the nats. It wasn't the most important job but it sure made working in the woods A LOT easier. It was hot today, but I was grateful to have a beautiful day to end the week. This evening we had a fantastic seafood dinner at a local resteraunt it was so fun to have all 70 of us piled into one resteraunt. I love eating and sharing memories with people I care about, and that's exactly what this was. This evening we are all getting ready to head back to Moscow. Everyone is trying to pack up their clothes and make sure they say their goodbyes until we all see eachother again in Moscow. This was honestly the best spring break that I have ever had. And I can say that without any hesitation. Thank you to everyone out there who made this possible. Thank you to my parents first off, for alway supporting me in all of my endeavors. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this financially possible: Dean of Students, especially Bruce and Elizabeth, The Parent's Association, The Alumni Association, especially to Tim and Kristy for helping me with all of the little things, to the Development Office especially to Caroline for always encouraging me and making me believe that anything is possible. Lastly, thank you to everyone who supported us and helped us get to where we are. Thank you all for everything and all of your help. To all of you who are reading this, all I ask is that you don't forget what we wrote. Remember these people, and remember that they still need help. The most important thing is just to remember.

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Going Home!

Submitted by mississippi on Fri, 03/17/2006 - 12:48pm.

Wow! I can't believe that this week is over! The sights, sounds, and smells will never leave my memory. To come to an area that I have never been to and meet people from a completely different culture was quite an experience. There is no way for me to explain to you what all has happened. The pictures you see on TV are nothing compared to the disaster that came to the Gulf Coast.

It is an amazing feeling to know that the work that we did this week has truly impacted so many people. From cleaning the beaches to completely knocking down houses, I have grown immensely. Often times, we see the photographs of torn up homes with nothing but the foundation still standing. We forget to realize that it was someones birthday or someones anniversary the day that Katrina hit. I was walking along the beach on the second day and came across a banner that was for a boy's seventh birthday. Or fishing an old photo album out of the water with no pictures in it because they all disintegrated. The home videos, pictures and heirlooms will never be retrieved. What you remember is all you have.

All along the beach and the streets of Waveland are FEMA trailers parked in front of piles of debris. A piece of plywood labels the property's address and the owner. Often times they also write messages that let other townspeople know that they are alright.

I am and will be forever grateful to the kind people of this area. One convenient store owner held a barbeque for all of us from Idaho and cooked us all hamburgers. One woman, who's house we gutted, asked for all of our names so that she could create a plaque of some sort to place outside of her home when she finished rebuilding. People honked and waved and stopped to thank us consistantly throughout the week.

Although I had a ton of fun, I have to say that I am rather excited to return home. The long days and sleepless nights have started to take it's toll on me. I will always remember Waveland and hope someday to return when the city is back to it's former beauty!

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Zach's Last Day

Submitted by [mississippi](#) on Fri, 03/17/2006 - 12:20pm.

Hi,

I'm ready to go. After a long week of work we finally got to get cleaned up. It is a beautiful day, I'm enjoying it. I can't wait to go get some good grub. I feel like we did a lot of good work. I think the money we donated as an ASUI government was well worth it. The money from the other donors was well spent too. We could have never made as much of a difference as we did by just sending that money. Plus, 63 students had an eye opening experience that is as important to their education as any class. Hopefully their experiences will end up improving the university as a whole as well.

I'm out.

Zach Olson

[Blog entries by mississippi](#) | [2 comments](#) (category: [Alternative Spring Break](#))

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#)

[next page](#)

[last page](#)

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