



Meet the Winners of the National Volunteering Day Contest!

Charles Phillips
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In our 10 years of community service work, we have empowered thousands of youth and adults to be agents of change in their communities and other disadvantaged communities around the world. Now is time to say thank you to our international volunteer network presenting the winners of the National Volunteer Week Contest.

It is important to mention that it was difficult to select the winners, because all essays and photos we received were very good, but more importantly written/taken from the heart. We formed a global jury, which was comprised of members of our global team and volunteers from the Americas, Africa and Asia.

Service For Peace thanks all participants for their enthusiasm and spirit of service.

Here are the winners:

ESSAYS CONTEST WINNERS

1. [First Place: Isaac Batun \(Winner of a digital camera\)](#)
2. [Second Place: Hannah Kang \(Winner of an iPod Shuffle\)](#)
3. [Third Place: Mohd Nayum Parvez \(Winner of an SFP T-shirt and Mug\)](#)

(click on each name above to read their essay)

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

1. **First Place: Toby Gullery (Winner of a digital camera)**
2. **Second Place: Abdel Perera (Winner of an iPod Shuffle)**
3. **Third Place: Isaac Batun (Winner of an SFP T-shirt and Mug)**



1st Place:
Tobey Gullery,
United States



2nd Place: Abdel Perera



3rd Place: Isaac Batun, Ghana

We will send our winners their prizes by in the mail during the first week of June, 2011.

Congratulations and thanks to all the participants for being part of our Global PeaceMakers network of alumni who tranform the world through service.

In service,

The Service For Peace Global Team



First Place: Isaac Batun (Winner of a digital camera)

“Peace is something you wish for; it is something you make, something you do, something you give away”. Robert Fulghum.

Volunteering with SFP enabled me leave my comfort zone to share valuable time with people who really needed change and peace in their lives. Volunteering enlightened me on what life really meant to other people. Fortunate people see the peaceful and bright side of life, whiles others get to see the deplorable aspect of it that is calamities and wars.

As a volunteer I experienced a rare opportunity of meeting colleagues of my age group from different countries with different cultures, nationalities, religious beliefs and so on. Instead of classifying myself to be part of a simple network, I rather saw myself being elevated from a network of young future leaders to a very powerful and peaceful generational leaders across the world who would cross any length to make the world a better place to live.

Working together to provide shelter in the form of a classroom block for little children to build their foundation for higher education was worth spending time for. Although it seemed an easy task, I had to learn to be tolerant and also learn the ethics of team work to make the project a success.

Volunteering with SFP exposed me to some travel experience which I would not have gained anywhere. I experienced how life was in another country, how people relate to each other differently from my country. I also had a wonderful experience of eating dishes I never expected to have eaten in my life.

Volunteering with SFP helped me unearthed my leadership potentials. This experience came up as a result of the early morning motivational sessions we had to encourage and motivate one another for the rest of the day. Another source of my potential was through the diverse groups we were put into to plan activities for each day. These groups were not discriminatory; were made up of black and white people and we all considered ourselves as one people who have come together to work towards the success of a particular goal and ultimately to make peace our priority.

Another wonderful aspect of my volunteer experience was how we passed the night each day. All the young men and women slept separately. The evening before bedtime was also a great experience. The evenings were always memorable to me since I get to listen carefully to the reflections of my colleagues after a long day's work. Some reflections are motivational which were worth writing down, some were funny for instance someone carrying a bucket for first time in his or her life, some were touching for instance someone learning to share food or water with a colleague or waking a friend from oversleeping when its daybreak and so on.

Volunteering with SFP made me understand the importance of how valuable a human life is and how rewarding it is to put peace in one's heart and mind.

Long live Service for Peace.

Happy National Volunteers Week Celebrations.

Second Place: Hannah Kang (Winner of an iPod Shuffle)

Hannah Kang (Hyekyung) 8th Grade
Turn of River Middle School
Ms. Wade Rachel's Challenge Club

My name is Hannah Kang, and I am an eighth grader who attends Turn of River Middle School. My life had changed completely. Not because I won a million dollars, but only because I joined Service For Peace and their 40 Days of Peace Community Service projects through my school and the Rachel's Challenge Club. Truthfully, if I had to choose between a million dollars and being apart of the community service, I would choose being in a family of the club, without hesitation. Doing community service is worth much more than any amount of money. Did you know spending your own free time to do service projects make changes to the world? The projects are nothing big, but when a group of people join in, we work all together, like a family, and share love and care.

To begin with, the community service has changed my life because I learned another important meaning of family. During all of the service projects I have done, people all worked together. Even if we didn't know each other's name, and haven't even met one another ever before, we all worked together. It really meant a lot to me, to be able to work with all of those nice people and be apart of the family. Especially during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, there was a really great experience. During the 40 Days of I've gone to the Smith House, and I was talking to this wise lady. I didn't ever expect

anymore than just having a conversation with her. Later on, I started to choke up while I was talking to her. She reminded me of someone. Someone very important. It was my Granny. She is in South Korea and all I can say is that I love her with all of my heart, and more, but I never appreciated what she has done for me, what she is doing, and for what she will do for me in the future. Everyone works together, as a family, and we realize some forgotten things, like appreciating someone, and we change the world together.

Second, community service had changed my life, because of just the fact that I am making a difference. During the service at the outdoor cleanup and beautification, gardening at St. Lukes Life Works, everyone was introducing themselves, and there was a woman, the coordinator of all of our projects (Ms. Trish), and she said that she is doing this to make a difference. Then, I said to myself, that's the kind of mind I want to have. Meeting these people, or rather, different people, was a really awesome experience. Furthermore, doing these projects by force of parents, teachers or friends will be waste of time. I got to know more people, and Rather than hating to do it, why not enjoy it and make a positive difference? For me, just the fact that I am one of the group, and that I am making a difference, it makes me happy and I encourage myself to do more.

Last but not least, I changed from a person of more receiving, to more giving. Now, it's only a beginning. From today, I will do more services, and do my best to encourage other people to become a part of it. Everyone has a beginning of everything. They don't begin from the expert level from the start. Therefore, everyone should go out of their ways to show kindness through words and actions. Also, for the community, get involved. If you mess up, everybody's got your back. So, join us. Don't be afraid of anything. We are all a family, a family where anyone can join in. Why don't we put all of our effort in and make a better community? Why not take a step forward and make a difference?

In conclusion, I want to especially thank Ms. Trish and Ms. Wade, our club's coordinator, and also, my personal peace-maker, and the friend who opened the door of making a difference for me. I hope everyone gets together and make a better environment, a better community, a better world, and lastly, mostly a world that we are proud and happy to live in. Always wishing for a better community, and for a bigger family, thank you again.

Third Place: Mohd Nayum Parvez (Winner of an SFP T-shirt and Mug)

As an immigrant to the US, most of my experience in recent years has been filled with challenges. Challenges including the language barrier, encountering a completely different culture, leaving my extended family in Bangladesh and growing up in a small apartment in Brooklyn with 4 siblings and my parents. As much as all of these things helped change me, one experience had the biggest effect on me and how I perceive my life today. Over the past summer, I had the chance to visit a small community in Nicaragua. I was involved in a project called Global Potential. The purpose of the program was to allow urban students to live in a rural village in Central America, provide community service while building leadership skills and promoting cultural exchange.

As much as that experience in and of itself was extremely satisfying, I started to notice other things about being in that environment that made me appreciate my life in New York. After staying in Nicaragua for a couple of weeks, I noticed many similarities in the way my host family lived and how my own family lived in Bangladesh. The thing that struck me the most was the close ties between people within the community. It seemed as though everyone knew each other and were all living together as an extended family. This is one of the things that I didn't know I was missing living in Brooklyn.

After spending the six weeks in Nicaragua, I came back home with a real perspective on how I would want my life to be back home. My parents came to America with nothing and they're now able to live in relative comfort even though my dad works 7 days a week. On the other hand, life in the city, for reasons I don't know yet, creates a separation between the people that live there even if they live right next door. If I could somehow find a way to have the American opportunity along with having a sense of living in a community where feel like everyone is accepted and people feel like they are a part of something bigger, that would really be something special. It feels like a big job, but I try to encourage more communication within my community to try to bring a feeling of togetherness. I'm hoping a little bit of effort goes a long way, and I can help bring my community a little bit closer because I still remember how people in Nicaragua community had stayed together.