

'Tis the Season to Give Back

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Photo taken by kaseithiahewitt.wordpress.com/

If You Can't Feed 100 People, Then Just Feed One

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, New York City consists of more than 59,000 homeless people, a large portion of whom are families. Worst of all, this figure continues to grow. As the weather gets colder in NYC and with the constant presence of the homeless on the streets of Manhattan, the local CARP chapter sought to address the issue. The CARP @ New York City chapter hosts their weekly meetings on Wednesdays during the lunch hour. In preparing for the season of giving, they decided to base their semester community impact event on feeding the homeless. Although they recognized it was just a first small step, at least it was something. In the words of Mother Teresa, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one."

CARP Gives Back



Local CARP members assemble care packages for the homeless.

They produced and distributed goody bags with peanut butter & jelly sandwiches, granola bars, fruits, and of course love and concern for one's fellow man. They reached out to people in Penn Station, Grand Central, Bryant Park and the Chelsea High Line. One of the local members, Judilee King, shared the value this experience offered her:

"It was a good experience handing out food to homeless people in New York. There was one woman sitting by the bathroom in Penn Station who kept repeating to strangers, "I'm so hungry, I'm so hungry, please any food?" and when I came by and gave her a sandwich and some snacks she was so grateful. The experience made me think about how often I take food for granted and how easy it was to

do this project with CARP."

The core team also asked for help from surrounding offices and volunteers. After all, if each of us makes a small contribution, help can reach much farther. Heather Fraser-Harris, an employee for the Women's Federation for World Peace USA United Nation's office, also volunteered to give one goody bag away to a homeless person on her way home from work. Here's how the experience of contributing just a little can go a long way:

“I approached an older man standing in the rain holding up an ad sign directing people to a restaurant, and I asked him if I could offer him the [CARP] food. He was taken aback and looked so confused, and asked me why. I said it was just a small gift. He then looked straight at me and smiled. It was incredible. It still blows my mind how such a simple act can add so much value to someone’s day, and how so little can mean so much. We ALL have kindness to share. So let’s help each other give more to the world.”

Attitude of Gratitude

Heather’s short testimony is a nice reminder of the power of the season of giving. This is why CARP encourages their chapters to engage in campus or community impact events that serve others. CARP believes that social responsibility, or “an ethical framework which suggests that an individual has an obligation to act for the benefit of society at large,” can be highly beneficial to the one who serves. Service can foster a sense of value as well as expand one’s perspective about how the less fortunate live, which in turn may inspire gratitude for things we take for granted.

Do Something

Have you ever considered a problem in your community worthy of contributing your time and just a bit of effort? Even if the task seems too big, if you can help at least one person, isn’t that still worth it? For those who contributed to the CARP impact project in NYC, the new experience opened their eyes to exploring and considering a new perspective and possibly new opportunities to continue to help in the future. You don’t need to be an expert, or rich, or blessed to give back. You just need to give.