



News Release

36600 SCHOOLCRAFT ROAD • LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48150 • www.madonna.edu • 734-432-5740

Contact: Candace Lambert, marketing officer
clambert@madonna.edu
734-432-5556

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Madonna Students Devote Spring Break to Katrina Clean-up

LIVONIA, Mich. – Sixteen Madonna University students spent their spring break clearing brush, bramble, dead trees and debris left from Hurricane Katrina at the University of Southern Mississippi. The students, who traveled to Mississippi as part of Madonna’s Alternative Spring Break program, created a half-mile nature trail for USM’s Golf Coast Research Lab.

“I never imagined that creating nature trails would have such an impact,” said Cari DeLamielleure, a Madonna journalism/PR and sociology major from Brighton. “Not only are they a nice addition to the Lab, they also provide a way to engage the community in environmental education and recreation.” The research facility, which borders marshland, develops culture and stocking programs for recreational finfish species including bass.

Madonna University’s Office of Service-Learning offers an Alternative Spring Break trip annually to provide assistance to an outside community in need. “We’ve gone to the Gulf Coast for the last three years to help hurricane victims,” said Kevin West, director of service learning at Madonna. “Each year students report having been ‘transformed’ by the experience. They come back motivated to help people and communities in distress.”

In previous years volunteering in the Gulf Coast, Madonna students have rebuilt homes, worked with grade school children whose schools had been consolidated after Katrina, and sorted case files for the Office of Long Term Recovery in Biloxi, Miss. “When I think about our Alternative Spring Break trip, I remember the impact we made, the individuals we befriended, and how we changed a community for a lifetime,” said DeLamielleure.

Madonna University’s Office of Service-Learning promotes, supports and sustains effective service-learning partnerships between Madonna students, faculty, staff and the community. Service-learning fulfills the University’s mission by instilling in students a respect for diversity and a commitment to serving others. In cooperation with community organizations throughout metro-Detroit, the Office serves as a resource to students enrolled in service-learning classes, and it provides a number of opportunities for students to volunteer.

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