January 2008 • Community Service  University of South Carolina students are increasingly involved in helping their communities. This issue of “Causerie” examines students’ interest and participation in community service and provides information on some of the ways Student Affairs and Academic Support helps students engage in service.

Most students volunteer
Whether it’s because of University 101 requirements or personal interests, a majority of South Carolina students have participated or plan to participate in community service activities.

Students in Greek letter organizations participate in community service
More than 16 percent of students participate in Greek letter organizations, and giving back to the community through service is one of the cornerstones of Greek life. Last year, Greek members devoted more than 8,000 hours to community service activities and donated approximately $132,000 to local service agencies.

University experiences prompt students to help their communities
Of the 70 percent of South Carolina alumni who report volunteering at least annually, more than 68 percent of them say that their college experiences influenced them to do so.

Of the students who participate in community service, 24 percent say that volunteering has taught them more about diversity.
Resources to help make our students better students

Community Service Programs  
www.sa.sc.edu/communityservice

Community Service Programs (CSP) coordinates community involvement at the University. More than 75 service agencies collaborate with CSP to provide service opportunities to students. A few of the activities CSP sponsors each year include:

**MLK Day of Service:** Each January, hundreds of students, faculty and staff come together to serve the community in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by volunteering with local non-profits.

**Service Saturdays:** Once a month, this program offers as many as 200 students the opportunity to spend a half-day of service in the Columbia community.

**Day for Dillon:** Each spring, CSP takes a group of students to volunteer in Dillon, a community located in one of the poorest counties in the United States. Last year’s events included cleaning and painting an elementary school.

**Alternative break trips:** Fall and spring break trips provide students the chance to meet new people and serve those in need. Last fall, students traveled to Johns Island to build homes for low-income families.

In 2006 - 2007, more than 3,400 students volunteered for about 10,400 hours of community service. Through CSP’s Canned Creations Homecoming event and Carolina Cares holiday programs, the University made donations valued at about $193,000 to the Columbia community.

Carolina Service Council  
www.sa.sc.edu/communityservice/csc

Carolina Service Council is a student organization that works closely with Community Service Programs to coordinate various volunteer projects throughout the year. The organization strives to raise awareness of world issues and support the Carolina community through service.

Dobson Volunteer Service Program  
http://www.sa.sc.edu/stlife/dobson.htm

The Dobson Volunteer Service Program is a capstone service experience at the University. Participants engage in service internships during an academic semester or the summer by working in needy communities in the United States and abroad. The program is available to undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty who meet the selection criteria.

Dance Marathon  
www.uscdm.org

Dance Marathon is a 24-hour event held each February to raise money and awareness for Palmetto Health Children’s Hospital. Each year, hundreds of participants raise money in complementary events, including a 5K run/walk, a date auction and monthly fundraisers at local restaurants.

Last year, more than 600 people participated in Dance Marathon, which raised more than $103,000 for the hospital.