

Rays of Sunshine



A Senior's Goodbye

By Erin Lembo

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Four years ago I entered Villanova as a slightly confused and somewhat intimidated freshman. "Get involved in something!" seemed to be the mantra that my parents, professors, and orientation counselor stressed so much over those first few days. The question was, how? Sure, it was easy to get involved in clubs and organizations in high school; but this was a new situation. I found myself wandering aimlessly among booths and tables at the activities forum in the pavilion, randomly jotting down my name and email address on various sign up sheets. I didn't really know what to expect as I left that day, but when I received an email from Project Sunshine I figured I didn't have anything to lose by getting involved. Little did I know what this organization would come to mean to me over the next four years.

I remember my first trip, to Southwest Community Learning Center. When I walked in the door that first day

I remember the feeling of being sized up by a group of 5th grade girls, and it was a little unnerving. As I sat down with them and introduced myself I knew immediately that this was going to be an important experience in my life, and hopefully in theirs. I went to Southwest every week, and although there were some difficult days, I realized that every time I came back it got a little bit easier. By the end of the semester the kids had accepted us not only as their tutors, but also as their friends. When I signed up for Southwest the following semester, I remember the shock on their faces when I came back. They were so excited to see that I had returned, I knew that day that this was an activity that I could not easily give up. I worked with my friends at Southwest for five semesters, but I also branched out into the other organizations that Rays of Sunshine works with. I did jazzercise with the women of Divine Providence, worked with the football team of

Benjamin Franklin High School, played with preschoolers of Hickman, and tutored students at St. Nicholas of Tolentine School. Through all of these experiences I have learned a lot of very powerful lessons, and I know they will serve me well after I leave Villanova.

Doing service through Rays of Sunshine has taught me patience, compassion, creative thinking, and perhaps most importantly, how important it is to keep your promises. From my first day at Southwest, I knew that I had to honor my commitment to those kids or we would never have a fruitful relationship. Once they realized that I was going to come back, they always gave their best effort and were simply amazing. Rays of Sunshine has given me so much over the last four years, I know that it's going to be very hard for me and all of the other senior volunteers to say goodbye.



Get excited for Sunshine Day 2006!

By Jamie Berg & Vanessa Pralle

Sunshine Day 2006 is right around the corner! On April 22nd, from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM, we will have approximately 100 students on Villanova's campus to participate in our mini-carnival, themed "Peter Pan's Neverland." The students will be from the agencies which we currently tutor or have previously tutored, including Hickman Temple Day Care, Universal, Northern Home, St. Phil's, St. Nick's, Mt. Zion, Southwest Community Enrichment Center, and Our Mother of Sorrows. Each of these students will be paired with a

Villanova buddy for the day, so we will need many volunteers to make this event come together successfully. As in the past, the students will also be able to create an art project, bounce in a pirate-shaped bounce house, compete in games, participate in contests, interact with costumed characters, have their faces painted, and eat lots of festive food! We'll also need volunteers to help with these activities, so your help would be greatly appreciated. This year's Sunshine Day will see the return of a thematic Photo Booth, generously sponsored by Vil-

lanova's Inter-Hall Council; Rays of Sunshine is very honored to be able to work with IHC again this year! We will be holding a recruitment session on **Thursday, March 23rd, at 6:00 PM in the East Lounge of Dougherty**. If you're interested, please stop by to find out how you can get involved! If you are not available at this time, sign-up sheets will also be available in the Rays of Sunshine Office, Dougherty 215.

Sunshine Day Committee

Congratulations to the members of The 2006 Sunshine Day Committee

- Administration Chairs: Nadina Cavanaugh and Jane Kim
- Agency Chairs: Jessica Corbett, Marissa Prosky, April Gonzalez, Kristyna Carroll, Alexandra Constantine, and Pukhama Demosthenes
- Decorations Chairs: Angeli Taduran and Daniesha Hunter.
- Art Chairs: Liz Palmer and Angelica Velasquez
- Service Chairs: Tiffany Allard and Liz Circe
- Food Chairs: Emily Cotton and Krystle Shafer
- Games Chairs: Meaghan Keenan and Anne Kelly

"Peter Pan's
Neverland"

Sunshine Day is
April 22, 2006.

Stop by 215
Dougherty to sign
up .

Once and Dones

By Shreya Amin

Rays of Sunshine offers great one-time, no weekly commitment volunteer opportunities called "Once and Dones." Once and Dones offer a variety of one-day trips, usually on the weekends. This year, Rays of Sunshine volunteers have participated in activities with numerous organizations including the Philadelphia Food Bank, Cure for Autism Walk, Hurricane Katrina Relief, Wissahickon Valley Park, Riverbend

Haunted Trail, Shakira Hinton Memorial Garden, Rays Night, Special Olympics, Run for Hunger, Eagleville Hospital, Gallery Mall, Sheppard Elementary School, Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Center, and Centro Nueva Creacion.

The Spring 2006 upcoming events schedule is online at: <http://www3.villanova.edu/sunshine/06weekend-trips.html>

The schedule as well as sign up sheets are also posted weekly outside of 215 Dougherty. If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions, please stop by Dougherty 215.



Fundraising has been a success

By Eric Melchior and Jessica Galdiero

Rays of Sunshine is preparing to host its annual Sunshine Day, our biggest event of the year. Every Sunshine Day we invite dozens of children from various after school programs and agencies to Villanova for a day of fun and games. In order to raise money for this event, Rays of Sunshine held a fast on

Friday March 3rd. Our goal this year was to have 1500 meals donated. Thanks to everyone who participated in the fast and to those who volunteered to collect meals; we raised enough money to support Sunshine Day.

In addition to the fast, Rays of Sunshine is working in conjunction with the

online shopping agency "One Cause" that donates a portion of each purchase to Rays of Sunshine. In order to use "One Cause" just go to <http://sunshine.onecause.com> and start shopping; the rebates automatically go to Rays of Sunshine.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the fast and to those who volunteered to collect meals; we raised enough money to support Sunshine Day.

Rays of Sunshine

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Check us out online

www.villanova.edu/sunshine

Choosing the right trip

By Merin Mathew



*The Villanova Student Life Community Service Office—**Rays of Sunshine**—partners with surrounding communities to offer service in a variety of ways. Our mission is to reach out to all kinds of communities with kindness and compassion and help people whenever and wherever we can. Whether through tutoring, mentoring, or visiting the elderly, sick, and disabled, we work together as a group to bring some sunshine into the lives of others.*

Rays of Sunshine offers a vast array of volunteer opportunities, but choosing the right one can prove to be a difficult task. Each trip offers something different and unique, whether it is the age of the children, the subjects being tutored, or other activities that are involved. Knowing a little more about the new trips available might make your decision a bit easier. This semester some of the trips include Junior Achievement, Northern Home, and Play It Smart.

Play It Smart is an ideal trip for the volunteer who wants to work with older students. Volunteers tutor high school boys, concentrating on SAT practice. These boys are football players and

need extra help to keep their grades up and preparation for a brighter future.

Junior Achievement is a national organization that introduces children to the world of business and economics. Volunteers work with children of all age groups, varying from the elementary to high school level. With our help, these children will gain knowledge about the economic world and be prepared to be better individuals, both in their professional and personal life.

Northern Home for Boys is a trip that promises bonding friendships. Volunteers work with boys who have been declared “neglected” by the state of Pennsylvania. We engage in activities such as counseling, sports, arts and crafts as well as tu-

toring in math, English, and higher learning oriented goals.

All the trips that we offer at Rays of Sunshine promise rewarding experiences because of the volunteers who offer their time and energy to making a difference in others lives. Changing lives by bringing a ray of sunshine to the darkest of hopes, the executive committee simply hopes that you find a trip that is right for you.