

A Day of Service

BU alums answer the call in second annual Global Day of Service

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 16, Al Guinto and about a dozen other BU alumni rose early and arrived at Project Open Hand at 8:30 a.m. The nonprofit provides meals, groceries, and nutrition information to seniors and to people living with serious illnesses in San Francisco and Alameda, Calif.

The group spent about four hours breaking down bulk foods—chicken and pasta—into smaller portions for the organization’s grocery center. “We ended at 12:30 p.m. with lunch together provided by Project Open Hand,” says Guinto (CAS’93). “We were so excited to help that we are going to try to do this quarterly.”

Guinto and his fellow alums were among more than 4,000 alumni, students, families, and friends around

the world participating in the University’s second annual Global Day of Service. They volunteered at more than 100 sites from Boston to Portland, Ore., Shanghai, China, to Brussels, Belgium.

Kicking off this year’s Global Day of Service was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps and its strong ties to BU, a top Peace Corps feeder institution. The event, held at BU’s Trustee Center on April 15, featured music, art, and speakers. Nearly 100 people attended, including many returned Peace Corps volunteers, according to Meg Umlas, executive director of alumni relations.

Umlas says many locations saw large groups of volunteers. In Massachusetts, for example, participants

helped clean up the Boston Esplanade and packed medical supplies at IMEC, a nonprofit that provides doctors in developing countries with quality medical equipment to improve health care for the poor. Volunteers sorted household items at the Wish Project, which provides free furniture, clothing, and home and baby goods to the needy in the Merrimack Valley. They also helped out at Belle of the Ball, an event that distributes prom dresses to underserved Boston-area high school girls.

“We have read some wonderful testimonials from

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Watch videos of returned Peace Corps volunteers sharing their experiences at bu.edu/bostonia.

both students and alumni across the globe that express just how meaningful the day was,” says Umlas. “I think we made an impact on the Boston area and

in many cities across the globe. What we love about this event is that it’s truly a collaboration between the Boston University Alumni Association and BU’s Community Service Center to engage the BU community in one event that makes a difference in the world.”

San Francisco resident Guinto, who works as a relationship manager for the firm SEI, serves on the board of Project Open Hand and says the organization is “near and dear to my heart.”

“Public service is important to me,” he says. “After leaving the Navy—I was a lieutenant and went through the Boston University NROTC program—I wanted to continue to serve my community. Project Open Hand is a great organization with a great mission.”

Guinto says the group who volunteered with him on that Saturday in April plans to participate in the third annual Global Day of Service, set for April 14, 2012.

“The day was great,” he says. “The alums were awesome, and we had so much fun talking about Boston University, what we do now, and how important it is to give back to the community.” **CKB**



Victor Ma (ENG'09) cleans up along the Charles, and Kate Gardella (CAS'14) (top) packs snacks for Project Bread's Walk for Hunger.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CYDNEY SCOTT