

Answering the Call to Serve

ON APRIL 17, more than 3,000 BU alumni, students, faculty, and staff around the world served lunch to the homeless, helped build a home for the needy, cleared trails in state and national parks, and volunteered at local food banks.

They were part of the Boston University Alumni Association's inaugural Global Day of Service, which, along with individual alumni and the BU Community Service Center, organized community service opportunities from Boston

Some 3,000 volunteers turn out to help out

to San Francisco, Sydney to Shanghai. There were approximately fifty sites, including the Greater Boston Food Bank, the Franklin Park Zoo, in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the Downtown Women's Center, in Los Angeles, California, and Blackwattle Bay, in Sydney, Australia.

Children enjoy the rides at a carnival in New Delhi, India.



VERONIQUE FOLCOLINI

Parul Vadehra (COM'03) of New Delhi, India, organized a free carnival for underprivileged children enrolled in the academic support program of her family's charity, Love & Care. The nongovernmental organization offers health

care, education, community development, youth, and female empowerment programs that benefit women and children in urban slums and villages.

The children ate ice cream, sipped cold drinks, had their faces painted, and

enjoyed rides, games, and a performance by the band Cyanide. "The members of the band interacted with the young crowd, sang popular Hindi film songs, and even had the children take over the vocals of some of the numbers," Vadehra says. "This was the highlight of the day."

Justin Latona (ENG'95) of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, organized a cleanup of a section of Crandon Park, in Key Biscayne. A cold snap had damaged the tree life, littering the ground with dead palm fronds.

"Although we had

a turnout of less than ten, we worked like a small army," Latona says. "The two Miami-Dade workers who assisted our group said they came around the corner thinking there was a group of fifty or more helping."

Day of Service chair Ed Westerman (CGS'66, COM'68) spent the morning of April 17 with alumni and students at the AstraZeneca Hope Lodge in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, where cancer patients traveling more than forty miles to Boston for outpatient treatment can stay for free. The group emptied the trash and cleaned the kitchens and laundry rooms.

That afternoon Westerman and other volunteers helped out at an annual event called Belle of the Ball, sponsored by Anton's Cleaners. The business collects, cleans, and distributes prom dresses to high school juniors and seniors who would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend their school's prom. Volunteers helped nearly 400 young women choose dresses, shoes, and purses, among other duties.

Westerman calls the Global Day of Service a success. "I always have high expectations," he says, "which is why next year, I would like each of the 3,000 to get at least one additional person involved so that it begins to exponentially grow." **CKB**



MATT KALINOWSKI

Sorboni Banerjee (COM'02), a 7News reporter and weekend anchor for WHDH in Boston, volunteers at Belle of the Ball in Boston, distributing prom dresses to high school juniors and seniors.