

Alternative Breaks Breaking News



Donations Appreciated

Send To:

Alternative Breaks
Attn: Harriett Steinbach
Leadership & Service Unit
Campus Box 3090
Normal IL 61790-3090
Make checks payable to:
Illinois State University
Foundation

**“Be the Change you
wish to see in the
world”
Gandhi**



New Updates to Strategic Planning!

New Vision:

Illinois State University enacts social change
locally, nationally, and globally.

New Mission:

To challenge Illinois State University to become
leaders in cultural and social awareness through
education, strong direct service, and reflection.

Alumni Brunch

By: Adam Hucek

Last year, Alternative Breaks alumni were reunited at a brunch. The event was during the 2010 Homecoming weekend and what a success it was. There were 40 people in attendance from current leaders back to 2002 leaders.

The celebration was held in the Prairie Room on the second floor of the Bone Student Center. The event showcased the history, the present, and the future of the AB program.



Jamie Clark, 2010 ASB Student Coordinator, presented the history of the program through pictures from past trips. Clark was able to collect pictures from previous trips and show how the trips have evolved yet stayed the same over the year.

Nicole Moore, 2010-2011 ASB Coordinator, Stephanie Zarinana, 2010-2011 AWB Coordinator, and Allyson Pope, 2010-2011 Club AB Coordinator, presented on the current state of the organization.

Before the event was over, AB Director Adam Hucek helped reconnect everyone back to the Active Citizen Continuum model and idea of being an “Active Citizen.” Everyone was asked to reflect on their lives and determine what more can they do to continue on their journey to being an Active Citizen.

Hucek went on to say one way to stay connected with the outstanding organization is through donations, suggestions, and ideas. Donations can be made to ISU Foundation online or sent to Harriett Steinbach in the Leadership and Service office. Everyone was also asked for any contacts or suggestions with service sites.

Jill Piatcitelli, Break Away Executive Director, sent a message via video. Piatcitelli was able to share about her experience with the Illinois State University chapter. Touching on where we have come and where she can see our program going. She commented on our leading the change on how trips are operated. Some best practice models have come from our program.

This event provided alumni the opportunity to stay connected and stay involved. Some alumni began talking about starting an Alternative Break Alumni Board to help keep everyone connected. It is this kind of dedicated and passionate people that have inspired and changed the ISU program to what it is today.

We thank everyone for their support of the program and plan on continuing to offer opportunities to stay connected every couple of years, almost like a class reunion.

Serve on and continue doing great things. Let’s make a difference, one action at a time.



Students gather for information at Festival ISU.



Alternative Winter Break: Guatemala

By: Becky Gilbert and Brooke Craig

This past winter we had the opportunity to travel to Guatemala. We stayed in a town called Xela, which is 4 hours away from Guatemala City. This required us to hike up the intense mountains to make it to our final destination.

When we arrived in the little town we were surrounded by volcanoes and a magnificent view. This view was cut short as we saw all the work we could accomplish in the community. We worked in a school called Miguel Asturias Academy, which is a private school that offers opportunities for children to receive a better education at a low price (<http://www.asturiasacademy.org/>).

The government always tries to close it down for their unconventional teaching ideas. Some of their unconventional teachings included men and women as equals and that men should also be doing house work. They also taught English, which is something that all students are offered.

While at the school we did general cleaning up, updated the website, painted classrooms, labeled the school with English, Spanish and Quiche words (a language many Guatemalan's use). Our biggest project was organizing the school library.

They had over 3,000 books and we put each one into a computer system, labeled them, organized them by grade level, and placed them in the library. It was a huge task that would have taken the staff there at least a year to do and we were able to complete it in 10 days. It was also the first public library that was in Xela and many of the surrounding areas. The other libraries they have are behind bars and you cannot check out a book.

This opportunity made a life time of a difference for us and the community.



Alternative Spring Break: Helping 5 Cities around the United States

By: Nicole Moore

Where *did* spring break go anyway? Well, the 225 students and faculty/staff members who participated in Alternative Spring Break (ASB) have an answer for that!

This year, ASB had 5 buses travel to 5 separate locations across the United States to work with social issues through community service. In Florida, participants worked with disaster relief on the beaches of Pensacola, where the oil spill



hit just a year ago. Participants also traveled to Georgia, and worked with Habitat for Humanity to build 2 houses. In New Jersey, we had an all Greek trip; participants refreshed summer camps for underprivileged youth. In North Carolina, participants restored and conserved ecosystems. In Pennsylvania, participants also worked with environmental issues and trail restoration. In total, we completed roughly 6,000 hours of community service, which is incredible.

Not only are participants and faculty/staff raving about their experiences on ASB, but the communities we served had only praise for ASB. In North Carolina, ASB received thank you notes with encouraging words for the participants



and trip leaders. In Georgia, participants got the chance to meet the family they were building the house for, and they were so very grateful for students spending their breaks doing service; they repeatedly visited the house and interacted with the volunteers. The community outreach ASB received this year made our trips that much richer.

So, ASB, what's all the hype anyway? If you looked at the program from an outsider's view, you would see a program that puts on service trips for students. So what? Talk to anyone who has ever been on an ASB and you will quickly



learn what's so special about a week of service. Not only do you get to give back to others, but you learn about the social issues in the communities you serve. This year was magical, students made connections with the social issues, the communities they served, and those they went on the trip with, making this year such a success. Now what? Some participants returned to their service sites for summer volunteering. Many teams have stayed connection. Everyone is reflecting on how they will move on the Active Citizen Continuum.



Blogging during Alternative Breaks Trips

By: Danielle Flack



My name is Danielle Flack and I am a sophomore Early Childhood Education major with a minor in Psychology. I experienced my first Alternative Spring Break when I went to Atlanta, Georgia in 2010. Our trip issue was flood relief and we did a wide array of awesome service projects throughout our time there.

A few of us were given the chance to blog about our week-long experience. I stayed in a three story old church and I honestly did not get to blog too much. It was either due to not having enough time or no Internet connection. However, when we all had a chance to blog we shared our experiences, feelings, and thoughts. Some of us discussed the educational experience we had when we were touring the house of Martin Luther King, Jr. while others shared thoughts about the clean- up they were doing at Piedmont Park or the fun they were having while playing with the kids at Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Center.

Alternative Breaks' bloggers have made the front of the ISU web page the last two years. We made it in 2010 for Alternative Spring Break and in 2011 as well, for Alternative Winter Break International. I was able to blog for Alternative Winter Break too when we traveled to Guatemala. Perhaps the reason why people keep following our blogs is because we are not only sharing our experiences but we are also educating ourselves and others. The people reading a post may be inspired to make a change themselves. Alternative Breaks here at ISU is making huge strides and it's only going to keep getting better.

Check it out all the blogs at blogs.ilstu.edu/alternative-spring-break



Alumni Scholarships Make a Big Difference for Individuals

Every year we have participants unable to participate in a trip because of financial reasons. As a group of Breakers wanting to change the world, this is a struggle that we should address as an organization. Some alumni share this same vision. This year, several AB trip alums donated scholarships to allow students the opportunity to have the “AHA” experience they had as undergraduates and ultimately creating more Active Citizens.

**Adam Hucek, Rick Lewis, Lauren McGing,
Harriett Steinbach and David Wischusen**

Thank you for all the support you continue to give to the ISU AB program.

Awards and Plans

Every year the Alternative Breaks chapters associated with Break Away apply for the National awards offered.

This past year there were 153 chapters given the opportunity to apply for these awards and our program took full advantage of showcasing our hard work.

Illinois State University Alternative Breaks walked away with the following awards:

Harriett Steinbach
Staff Advisor of the Year

Illinois State University
1st Runner Up- Program of the Year

These awards are not the result of one year, but of the collective work of so many leaders that came before us. To that we thank you for everything you did to make our program what it is today!

This year we developed a strategic plan for the next 5 years of the program. As we look to the future of Alternative Breaks, we cannot do it alone. We will need your support to help us achieve our goals.

Photo's from Club AB's First Weekend Trip to Joplin, MO

