

June 13, 2011 | By Brook Williamson

UC San Diego Volunteers Donate 62,000 Hours of Service Worth \$1.5 Million

More than 3,300 members of the UC San Diego community donated over 62,000 hours of service during the university's 50th anniversary celebration, contributing roughly \$1.5 million of free labor, according to calculations from Independent Sector, which provides the value of a volunteer hour.

"I am so proud of our students, staff, faculty, alumni and university friends for giving their time and energy to help others through the Volunteer50 program," said Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. "We far surpassed our initial goal of reaching 50,000 cumulative hours of service. We truly are a community of visionaries, innovators and overachievers."

Volunteer50: Chancellor's Call to Service was launched in September 2010 as part of the 50th anniversary commemoration. Service is an integral part of the university's mission and UC San Diego is named by Washington Monthly as No. 1 in the nation in rankings measuring "what colleges are doing for the country."

In addition to the 50,000-hour cumulative goal, Chancellor Fox also had challenged each campus community member to perform 50 hours of service. More than 200 people met that challenge and a few individuals far exceeded it. The top Volunteer50 hour loggers, as of June 8, are staff member and Volunteer50 co-chair Pepper Lane, 665 hours; staff member Mark Kinsey, 592 hours; and retiree Gayle Barsamian, 513 hours.

UC San Diego Fiscal Assistant Monica Castrejon donated more than 450 hours helping friends and others with eldercare; she cooks, cleans, shops for groceries, helps with personal care and drives people to their doctors' appointments. "There are people out there who can't help themselves and they need someone to rely on," she said. "It brings me a sense of accomplishment and pride, but mostly joy, that I can make a positive difference for others." The Volunteer50 program was intended to encourage volunteerism and also showcase the widespread and diverse contributions of the UC San Diego community. This past year, volunteers participated in a range of projects—from beach clean-ups and community enhancement to tutoring and mentoring programs—in locations all over the county, from

Southeast San Diego to East and North County. Some alumni and other university members performed their service in other parts of the country and even abroad, as far away as Singapore and Japan.

Monica Castrejon logged more than 450 hours with Volunteer50.

While UC San Diego students, staff and faculty were participating in relief efforts and fundraising activities to help people in Japan affected by the triple disaster earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation scare, alumnus Jacob Searing, now a resident of Tokyo, traveled several hours to the town of Ishinomaki where he spent eight days performing manual labor tasks, such as scooping out mud from shops and houses. “This country has given me so much in the nine years I have lived here and now it is time to give something back,” he said. “People who have never volunteered do not know what they are missing. Volunteering can really open a person’s mind and that is exactly what education is all about.”

Castrejon echoes that sentiment: “For me volunteering is an integral part of living. The willingness to give, to help, to go out of your way for friends, family and someone you don’t even know, makes for a better community, a better world and better people.”

UC San Diego has made the Volunteer50 program a new tradition on campus and will continue to encourage service and inspire new generations of students, staff, faculty and alumni to give back to their communities. “I thank all of the participants and the Volunteer50 committee members, including co-chairs Kim Newin and Pepper Lane, for helping to establish the new program, for organizing and taking part in numerous volunteer projects, and for continuing the university’s legacy of service,” said Fox.

For more information about UC San Diego’s 50th Anniversary and Volunteer50, visit 50th.ucsd.edu.

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