



PRESS RELEASE

UF Students Helping To Make A Difference

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By Lauren Delucia

Dozens of University of Florida students donned gardening gloves Sunday as volunteers at the Dreamer's Garden in Gainesville as part of "Make a Difference Day," a national day of helping others.

"Working in the garden was a lot of fun because living in an apartment complex, you don't really have a yard or access to land where you can do this kind of work," said Jeff James, a UF senior majoring in food and resource economics. "I wish I had more time to do stuff like this."

Dreamer's Garden at NW 4th Street and NW 10th Avenue is filled with marigolds, herbs, lemon trees, plants and vegetables. Residents in the community nearby can adopt a plot within the garden.

James is the community service chair of Alpha Kappa Psi fraternity and nearly 30 members of the fraternity volunteered, clearing the garden of overgrown weeds and plants, picking up trash, planting seeds and making brick pathways within the garden.

The garden area was one of four volunteer sites the UF Center for Leadership and Service sponsored for "Make a Difference Day."

About 200 students and organizations including Junior Panhellenic, Alpha Kappa Psi and Service Ambassadors volunteered with Keep Alachua County Beautiful, Jungle Friends Primate Sanctuary, the Natural Area Teaching Lab and Village Green property.

"I'm very happy because each volunteer site is overflowing with students today," said Adrian Gonzalez, director of Make a Difference Day. "We couldn't have had better weather because it's cool and not too sunny."

Some students registered to volunteer at Alachua's Volunteer Gateway Web site.

But most participants registered Sunday morning at the Plaza of the Americas and were sent to one of the four project areas.

Kristen Brooks, a UF freshman majoring in telecommunications, also spent her afternoon at Dreamer's Garden with Junior Panhellenic.

"We found seeds so we've been planting vegetables around the garden," Brooks said.

Created by USA Weekend Magazine, "Make a Difference Day" is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of October.

UF had the official volunteer day on Sunday, so it wouldn't conflict with UF's Family Weekend.

In 2004, 3 million people registered on the USA Weekend Web site as having volunteered in their communities.



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