

Florida State University student a Florida Point of Light

Allison Vega leads by example—and she's gotten the governor's attention.

The active Florida State University senior, a social work major, serves the community in many ways, and Florida Governor Charlie Crist recently recognized Vega as a Point of Light for exemplary volunteerism.

"Vega is an inspiring example to her peers and all Floridians. Through tireless service, she continually reaches out and enhances the lives of others in her community," said Gov. Crist, who, as part of his administration's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, selected Vega as the final of four Points of Light from Florida's Hispanic community.

As vice-president of FSU's Caring and Helping in Community Service—CHICS@FSU—a student volunteer group, Vega helps coordinate service activities. Through leadership and example, the social work major encourages her peers to get active in volunteer opportunities such as the Leon County Humane Society dog wash, Relay For Life, Dance Marathon and the WFSU Pledge Drive.

"I feel like everyone should give back to the community," she says. "We are all a part of it and everyone needs help once in a while."

Vega also has taught children at a pre-school in Costa Rica, volunteered at the Frenchtown Boys and Girls Club, and spent her spring break clearing nature trails with Alternative Break Core. Currently, Vega is also an active member of Oxfam International student chapter and working full-time as an intern with Guardian ad Litem, an advocacy group for abused and neglected children involved in dependency cases.

While she gives to such causes as much as she can, Vega says she receives much in return. "It makes me feel like the work that I am doing is affecting people," she says. That is really all I want, to help the world become a better place."

At times the motivation has been particularly personal for Vega.

"My most treasured experiences have been participating in Relay For Life," Vega admits. "Both years (2006, 2007) that I have walked, it has been a very emotional experience. My uncle died from cancer, and it has affected many members of my family."

After graduation in December, the Orange Park native plans to pursue a master's degree in public administration, concentrating on international public policy. "My dream job would be to work for an international human rights organization like Amnesty International," she says.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, the Points of Light award recognized outstanding members of the Hispanic community dedicated to public service in Florida. Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated nationwide and runs September 15 through October 15. A panel of judges comprised of leaders in the areas of volunteerism and service evaluate all nominations and make recommendations to the Governor for the award.