

Citizenship Day gets UWO students active in Oshkosh community

by Mandy Potts - Wednesday, August 22, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/20488/citizenship-day-gets-uwo-students-active-in-oshkosh-community/>

For Jeremy Lee, spending the day volunteering with the children from the Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh brought back a certain sense of familiarity.

“It’s really home to me. I come from a big family and this brings me back home, playing with a bunch of kids,” said Lee, a community adviser in North Scott Hall at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Lee, along with more than 130 other UW Oshkosh students, faculty and staff, volunteered at agencies throughout the community Aug. 22 as part of the annual Citizenship Day.

Each back-to-school season since 1996, the UW Oshkosh Department of Residence Life has made the day a priority; Citizenship Day reflects the campus community's continuous commitment to volunteering in the greater community.

“The event is important to the University and its students because it connects student staff members to organizations and encourages their return to those organizations throughout the academic year,” said Lori Ligocki, community development specialist for community engagement for the Department of Residence Life.

“Definitely people look at us as people who hold leadership roles,” said Lee. “My philosophy is to lead by example and maybe others will follow and that will make a difference.”

And making a difference is exactly what Citizenship Day does.

Lori Fields, Radford Center Director at the Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh, said the day is a good collaboration because it encourages kids to think about college.

“It’s good exposure for our kids,” she said. “We encourage the UWO students to talk about their experiences in college. Plus, the extra help is always welcome and we are grateful to have them here.”

As it turns out, the UW Oshkosh student volunteers also have a great time while teaching lessons, playing with the children and doing as-needed cleanup projects.

Ethan Rueckheim, a UW Oshkosh junior studying history, let loose and played a little football with the Boys & Girls Club students and other volunteers during his volunteer session.

“Teamwork!” he yelled to the children scattered throughout the grass while handing out high-fives. “That’s what it’s all about guys! Teamwork!”

The Boys & Girls Club was not the only agency that reaped the benefits of UW Oshkosh volunteers

during Citizenship Day. Students also volunteered at the Oshkosh Area Food Pantry, Oshkosh Public Library, Paine Arts Center and Gardens, Salvation Army, Oshkosh Seniors Center and the Christine Ann Center, a shelter for women and children who have survived domestic violence.

Each agency has needs different from the next, which is what makes the day so exciting for UW Oshkosh students.

Eamon Bauman, a junior studying computer science who works in the Management Information Office, tried his hand at weed-whacking the grounds of the Christine Ann Center. After a few tries, his equipment was up and running and he was off to make the yard a little more beautiful than it was when he started the project.

“It’s really important to be here because we have to make an impact and show that people my age can make a big difference,” he said.

Adam Rich, a seven-time Citizenship Day volunteer and residence hall director in North Scott, said Citizenship Day is just one component of the two-week long training student workers are required to go through each year.

“Every year, this is one of the favorite days of training,” said Rich. “It uplifts us and hopefully provides some inspiration to others.”

The Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh and Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services are both United Way-supported agencies. This year, the Oshkosh Area United Way is celebrating 50 years of service in Oshkosh. UW Oshkosh is a proud supporter.

Learn more:

- [Snapshots: Citizenship Day](#)
- [Oshkosh Area United Way](#)
- [Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh](#)
- [Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services](#)