

The Joy of Giving to Those Who Cannot Give Back

High school girls from around the U.S. dedicated part of their summer to volunteering at community service projects in Boston while living at the Bayridge University Residence.

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While summer is synonymous with TV reruns and midnight burritos for many high school students, fourteen girls from around the US gathered in

Boston this summer to spend part of their vacation in service. Service in the City is a program for high school women that engages them in community service opportunities around the city, and teaches that true citizenship starts in everyday life among family and friends.

This year the girls spent many hours every day volunteering at different charitable organizations: playing with children at the Salvation Army day care; performing a talent show at the Vernon Hall nursing home in Cambridge; compiling clothing packages at Cradles to Crayons, an organization in North Quincy dedicated to providing children with the necessary items they need to flourish. After a full day around Boston, the high school girls returned to the residence in Back Bay for workshops on topics like human dignity, moral personality, identity and freedom.

When asked for the themes they thought inspired Service in the City, the participants volunteered: Love. Friendship. Perseverance. Service. Dignity. Respect. As one explained, “Service is not only work, but also the way you interact with the people you are working for.”

Service in the City is sponsored by Bayridge Residence, a student residence for young women in Boston's Back Bay and a corporate apostolate of Opus Dei. Bayridge residents Emily Austin, a doctoral student at Boston University, and Helen Keefe, an undergraduate at Harvard, organized and led this year's program.

“The goal is that these girls go back home with a greater sense of love and responsibility for those around them, manifested in little deeds of service,” said Emily, director of Service in the City. “I know we're

succeeding when one girl tells me that after her experience washing dishes at Rosie's Place, a resource center for homeless women in Roxbury, she wants to work on not complaining at home when it's her turn to do the dishes."

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