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EIU Alumni, Locals Invited to Participate in Panther Service Day

Apr-13-2009



Eastern Illinois University volunteers soon will be prowling throughout Coles County, looking for ways in which to better the community-at-large.

Local alumni and county residents are invited to join students, faculty and staff during EIU's seventh annual Panther Service Day, scheduled to take place Saturday, April 25.

Since 2003, members of the university and Charleston communities have collaborated for this event, during which volunteers work on various projects for the benefit of all.

Alison Mormino, former student body president who now works for Eastern as a philanthropy director, brought the idea of a Panther Service Day (originally known as "Bucket Brigade") to Eastern's campus in 2003. Her plans were patterned after a similar program created by an Alton, Ill., resident in 1988.

The local effort was considered an enormous accomplishment, and Mormino was proud to see a high turnout of EIU students, who made up the majority of the 150 volunteers. The effort also earned a Governor's Home Town Award, presented in November 2004 through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

As the university prepares for its seventh year of participation, it is once again inviting area residents -- especially local alumni -- to come join in this opportunity to serve their own community while networking with other EIU alumni and current students.

Panther Service Day 2009 will begin with an EIU/Coles County Community Brunch, sponsored by the EIU Alumni Association, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the front of Old Main (the "castle"). In case of inclement weather, the brunch will be moved inside the building.

An opening ceremony will begin at 11:30 a.m., and will feature comments by EIU President Bill Perry and Charleston Mayor John Inyart.

Then, from noon to 4 p.m., participants will be assigned specific service projects as coordinated by Student Government. Volunteers, who are asked to register in advance, will be asked to designate the category in which they are most interested in volunteering: elderly care/support, nature/conservation, relief/disaster support or youth development/outreach.

Specific tasks will include cleaning up around Lake Charleston, creating American Red Cross preparedness kits, painting Rotary trash cans, cleaning and sorting items for the Children's Advocacy Center and the Mattoon YMCA, visiting local nursing homes, and picking up trash around Charleston.

Participants can sign up for the brunch and/or community service portion of the day, depending on their own personal schedule/physical capabilities.

Alumni wishing to register should contact the EIU Alumni Association, 217-581-6616 or 800-ALUM-EIU, alumeiu@eiu.edu, or complete and return the .pdf form found here: <http://www.eiu.edu/~alumni/img/psd2009reg.pdf>.

Other local individuals, organizations or businesses interested in volunteering or attending any of these events should contact Ryan Kerch, EIU Student Vice President for Student Affairs and event organizer, at either rmkerch@eiu.edu or by calling 581-7673.