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University of Rochester Students Volunteer Excellence

Monroe County 4-H Program connects with community service fraternity

Rochester Youth Year AmeriCorps VISTA, Theresa Lippa came to the Monroe County 4-H Program with the intent of spending her year of volunteering promoting urban 4-H clubs and programming. The Monroe County 4-H Program, administered by Cornell Cooperative of Monroe County, brings positive youth development activities and curricula to clubs, schools, recreation centers, libraries and groups throughout Monroe County.

Ms. Lippa began her quest to establish urban 4-H clubs by getting in touch with personnel at Rochester City School District. She connected with fourth and fifth grade teacher Lianne Dupree at School 29. Through this partnership, the in-school 4-H club "Peace Gardeners" was born. Students in Ms. Dupree's class have begun each day by reciting the 4-H Pledge every morning and benefit from having 4-H curricula interspersed with regular classwork throughout the day.

When it became apparent that Ms. Dupree would require some additional support for her energetic and enthusiastic students to get the most from their experience, Ms. Lippa connected with members of local service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega (APO), from the University of Rochester. APO is a co-ed, community service fraternity whose goal is to have its volunteers serve the greater community while building lasting friendships and honing leadership skills.

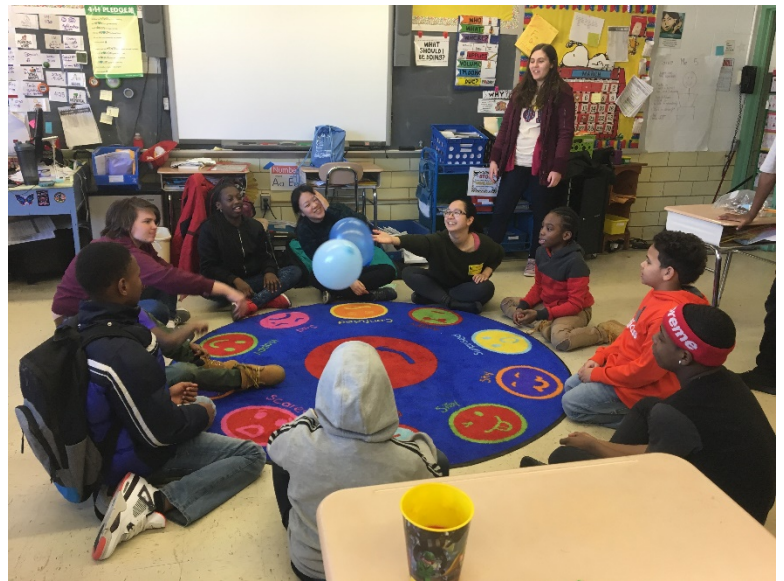
Eight APO volunteers signed on to assist the "Peace Gardeners" at School 29. For 5 weeks, these volunteers presented activities, played games with and read stories to the students, helping to develop valuable social- and life-skills. For those 5 weeks, the 4-H Program staff was able to watch these volunteers make a difference in the lives of the students at School 29. Each volunteer displayed leadership, compassion, reliability and patience in her interactions with students.

Through their phenomenal volunteerism, APO members Jillian Abendroth, Eleanor Haase, Sachi Inoue, Edith Lee, Michela Maiola, Caryn Jones, Emily Mason, and Emma Wishiewski supported one of the most active in-school 4-H clubs in Monroe County, and exemplified the traits that the 4-H Positive Youth Development mission wishes to promote.

Monroe County 4-H Program staff look forward to extending the partnership with APO to the next school year, and to continue to provide positive youth development to Monroe County youth in all settings.

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(Left) In a team-building STEM activity, students compete to build the best spaghetti-marshmallow tower.
(Above) APO Volunteers play floor volleyball with the "Peace Gardeners" 4-H club during their extended learning time.
Photos by Theresa Lippha

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