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Acalanes Holds Annual Community Service Fair

By Jean Follmer



Sophomore Jard O'Rourke, Senior Jane Loria, Senior Rebecca Colby, Senior Jenny Reich, Senior Linda Swift and Junior Ellie Stern at the Acalanes Community Service Fair Photo Jean Follmer

Acalanes High School recently held its annual Community Service Fair on campus. Over thirty vendors were present to solicit the required community service hours of the Acalanes students. The fair is run by students on the Acalanes Community Outreach Board. "The Community Outreach Board plans the Community Service Fair so students can fill their community service requirements," said Ellie Sterns, a Junior and Board member. The fair was part of an entire week of community service related activities that included stuffing brown bag lunches for Meals on Wheels and writing and mailing letters to our military troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Vendor Sandy Long of the small non-profit, Active Reading Clinic, said, "We have all of these needs like data entry and filing. To be able to come here and tap into this enthusiasm is very cool." She said they had already filled four sheets worth of volunteers. Long also said she appreciated the level of organization at the event: "They directed me in, took my things from my car and walked me to my table."

Shelter, Inc. of Contra Costa County also had accolades for Acalanes. "Acalanes has been a really big presence in our organization. It helped start our teen organization. They've done tons of drives for us and the overall support has been very helpful. We can always count on them," said Therisita Ortiz of Shelter, Inc.

In addition to outside entities like Active Reading Clinic, Shelter, Inc., Bay Area Rescue Mission, Animal Rescue Fund and the American Cancer Society, there were student-run service organizations seeking help. New Global Citizens (NGC) is one of those organizations. NGC is a national program that seeks "to educate, equip, and mobilize young people to help solve the greatest challenges faced by communities around the world." It's made up of student-run high school teams throughout the United States that "select one of NGC's global partner projects" to focus on. The Acalanes team "is helping kids in India (near New Delhi) who pick through trash to make money," said Senior Rebecca Colby. The kids suffer from related health issues and Colby said they are trying to "help break the continuing cycle of poverty. It's great because we have a community service requirement at the school. I've been looking for a way to combine my interests for awhile and I want to give back. We're going to be on the Earth for a long time."

Stern said the Community Outreach Board sponsors many opportunities to serve throughout the year. The number of required community service hours increases with each year as does the number

of those hours that must be filled off-campus. Stern said some of the off-campus places they'll offer service opportunities at will be Glide Memorial and the San Francisco Zoo.

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