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IWU to Make a Difference

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IWU to Make a Difference

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--More than 300 Illinois Wesleyan University students, faculty and staff will clean, take inventory, participate in a haunted outing, donate goods and raise funds as part of the tenth annual "Make a Difference Day" on Oct. 28. By spending time working for local charities and community organizations, "Make a Difference Day" participants will promote volunteerism.

Volunteers will be involved with organizations such as the David Davis Mansion, Bloomington Parks and Recreation, Catholic Social Services, Manner Care Nursing Home, McLean County Day Care Center, the Arthritis Foundation, Scott Health Resources, and Normal Parks and Recreation.

Since 1991, millions have participated in "Make a Difference Day," an event sponsored by USA WEEKEND, a weekly features magazine. USA WEEKEND calls the event, "the most encompassing national day of helping others--a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors."

For 2000, a number of projects and events have been planned by the IWU Career Center. Julie Purpura, a senior International Studies major from Hoffman Estates, Ill., is the IWU volunteer-coordinator. Purpura said, "Volunteering provides us with the rewardable experience of helping others, but it also promotes a valuable learning experience that develops a variety of personal skills." She added, "It can also help students seek experience in fields that are in line with their long-term career goals."

"Students were unaware of the extensive volunteer opportunities that exist within the Bloomington/Normal community," Purpura said. "They are excited to have this chance to assist those that need help."

Projects for "Make a Difference Day" include helping out at the David Davis Mansion with an Irish Halloween celebration called, "Snap Apple Celebration." Help also will be given at the "Halloween Community Fair," sponsored by Catholic Social Services.

Students also will help with cleaning at the McLean County Day Care Center, and Scott Health Resources.

The largest volunteer effort by IWU students and faculty will be in conjunction with the Arthritis Foundation from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Wal-Mart Super Center, 300 Greenbriar Dr., Normal. For each two-hour shift, volunteers will sell donation cards for the Jingle Bell Run for Arthritis, the largest fund-raising run/walk event in the country.

IWU's Alpha Phi Omega, a service fraternity, will decorate the Constitution Trail, a project coordinated by Normal Parks and Recreation.

Other participating campus organizations include, Sigma Alpha Iota, a woman's music sorority; South Asian Student Association; Amnesty International; Inter Fraternity Council, an organization of campus fraternity leaders; and individual students, faculty and staff.