

Home > News

Volunteers gather for day of community service

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Kayla Stigall

Posted: Saturday, April 11, 2015 11:00 pm | Updated: 11:12 pm, Sun Apr 12, 2015.

By Jessica Diaz, The Shorthorn staff, and Kenney Kost, The Shorthorn news editor | 0 comments

For the Love of the Lake took place at White Rock Lake in Dallas as part of The Big Event. Student volunteers picked up trash and debris around the lake.

“The Big Event total had a little over 900 students this semester, which is a big up from last year,” said Kathryn Ehlers, site leader and university studies sophomore. “I believe we had about 40 to 50 student volunteers at White Rock Lake.”

The Big Event is an annual event organized by University Events with the purpose of getting students, faculty, staff and the community together for a day of volunteering. This year the volunteers helped at more than 40 locations, according to the University Events website.

Ehlers participated in The Big Event last year and loves White Rock Lake. She said she enjoyed cleaning up the lake and helping it

look better for the people in the community.

“We got a lot of bicyclists going by and thanking us for picking up trash because they ride by here every day,” Ehlers said.

Architecture freshman Matt Austin does public relations for his fraternity and decided to sign up with his brothers and come out and volunteer. They wanted to do something outdoors, he said.

“It is important for UTA students to go out and volunteer because it a good way to get UTA’s name out there”, Austin said.

Jose Padron, business and management sophomore, said he volunteered last year at River Legacy and wanted to volunteer again this year.

“It is important to give back to the community and take time out of your busy schedule to help,” Padron said.

Volunteers also helped at Mission Arlington. About 150 volunteers sorted and boxed supplies, cans and Easter decorations at Mission Arlington, said Anisha John, site leader and social work senior.

She said the work that was finished in one day, thanks to the volunteers, would have taken weeks with the mission's normal staff.

After work was finished, Mission Arlington executive director Tillie Burgin praised the volunteers for their organization and the partnership the mission has with UTA.

“We don’t have to wait for a Big Event,” Burgin told the crowd. “Every day’s a big event at Mission Arlington.”

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Political science sophomore Jestin Patton said his fraternity is committed to community service and he is as well, so whenever there is an opportunity presented to them they try to go out and do whatever they can.

"We are always volunteering, this is just one of the bigger events that we are doing," Patten said.

Biology sophomore Nafi Dewan has done volunteer work before and said this is just something that he loves to do.

"Serving your community is the best way to give back, and in my free time I love doing volunteer work," Dewan said. "It is what I have been doing since high school."

A couple of students stayed after the majority of volunteers left and helped load trash bags onto trucks before they headed out for the Thank You Celebration back at UTA.

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Mathew Shaw contributed to this story.

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