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## A summer experience that makes a difference

When bundled up against the cold or wallowing in a miserable case of the "Februraries", it can be difficult to focus on summer. However, now is the time to investigate options for the long summer holidays.

There are valuable enrichment programs and employment options available for young people during the summer. Few, however, are as rewarding as community service experiences. These experiences can be stimulating, gratifying and fun, especially if combined with an intercultural exposure. As a bonus, admission committees at U.S. universities and colleges are interested in students who have reached beyond their own introspective worlds and contributed to society.

Large price tags on some programs reflect supervisory and organizational costs, and sometimes travel. If a participant is inexperienced in navigating in unfamiliar territory, it's important to have a solid infrastructure in place to provide emotional and logistical support. Visions International Inc. (Tel: (717)

567-7853) and World Horizons (Tel: (203) 266-5874) are both respected programs that provide a high degree of care.

"Visions is a non-profit organization which aims to give young people the summer of their lives in the context of performing community service," says Joanne Pinaire, the director of summer programs. "We give young adults the hard technical skills to make a serious contribution in a cross-cultural environment in ways that are challenging and fun."

Students work diligently at community service projects in the mornings, and in the afternoon enjoy outdoor recreational activities. This year, Visions is leading groups of students to Alaska, South Carolina, the Dominican Republic, Tortola and Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, Dominica and three native American reservations in Montana. The sessions runs from June 26 - July 23 and August 1-21.

Judith Manning, director of World Horizons, says that "their young people put in

100% and take out 1000%." Weekday mornings are the time for work in activities such as construction, farming or teaching. A World Horizons brochure explains that afternoon "is devoted to an individual internship program which you select, either on the basis of a particular skill that you can contribute or interest in pursuing a challenge that is new." Working for a newspaper, tutoring children, working in a factory or in a fishery, are but a few of the experiences volunteers have chosen.

"Every aspect of the Horizons program is designed to enable each participant to enter into the life and culture of the indigenous community." This year, they will do just that beginning June 30th for four-five weeks in Botswana, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Alaska, Nova Scotia, Guadeloupe, Western Samoa, Dominica and Carriacou.

Some excellent community service programs offer little or no supervision for its participants and are more appropriate for older, independent volunteers. This fact trans-

lates into reduced costs—only a small registration fee, plus travel expenses, is required. The American based Volunteers for Peace (Tel: (802) 259-2759) and its counterpart, the United Nations Association, International Youth Service (Tel: (44) 01222-223088) in Wales, act as agencies for work-camp projects around the globe.

Their programs are similar, but different. A directory of projects is published annually in early April. The participants engage in a variety of work: construction, restoration, conservation, work with families and those with special needs.

Many other community service programs exist; this is a profile of just a few of the best. "Peterson's Summer Opportunities" guide is an excellent resource for additional options.

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