Urban Plunge students come to Grand Rapids in January

Typically cities are places students visit for sports events, shopping or work. However, there is another side to American cities rampant with problems such as crime and few resources for education. Urban poverty leaves parents unemployed, families homeless and children hungry.

Students from Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s who are interested in being immersed in an urban center and experiencing poverty firsthand have been invited to visit Grand Rapids’ Heartside District from Jan. 4-6 for Urban Plunge. The Urban Plunge is a 48-hour, one-credit Winter Break Seminar organized by Notre Dame’s Center for Social Concerns. During this time, students will do some direct service, discuss issues with local service agencies, and speak with those affected by urban poverty.

A former Urban Plunge participant had this to say about her experience:

“Urban Plunge provides an eye-opening and heart-wrenching hands-on experience of the realities that many people face within U.S. cities today. It also includes interaction and exposure to the encouraging generosity and ambition of many community leaders trying to change this reality.”

So far, four students have signed up for the Grand Rapids Urban Plunge experience. Watch your e-mail for additional information about how you can meet these students in early January and offer your perspective on how to fight poverty in your community.

Catch up on Notre Dame Club of Grand Rapids news online

Quarterly newsletters are available online! Catch up on Club news at www.GRNDClub.com. E-newsletters are available as PDF downloads, as well as news on upcoming Club events, including community service, spirituality, camaraderie, continuing education and career networking.

Dear Development Office,
Please earmark my contribution to the University of Notre Dame Grand Rapids Club Scholarship Endowment Fund—Expendable Account to assist local West Michigan students attending Notre Dame. My contribution will be applied to the annual football ticket lottery.

Name __________________________
Class Year ____________ Contribution __________________

PLEASE MAIL TO:
University of Notre Dame Attn: Carol Hennion—Development Office 1100 Grace Hall Notre Dame, IN 46556-5612
**ND Glee Club entertains crowds at Grand Rapids concert**

Crowds came to see the Notre Dame Glee Club in concert Oct. 21 in the Cathedral of St. Andrew in downtown Grand Rapids. The Glee Club entertained the audience with classical works, both sacred and secular, spirituals, folk songs, barbershop tunes, and love songs. As always, the concert concluded with the “Notre Dame Victory March.” Also, many thanks to the local families who hosted members of the Glee Club during their visit to Grand Rapids.

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**Fall & Winter volunteer projects**

**Grotto Park:** The Club volunteered at the Grand Rapids Veteran’s Home Grotto Park. The volunteers cleaned up around the park, which Club members also helped to landscape last year, and spruced up the grounds for the veterans’ enjoyment.

**WGUV:** Club members volunteered for the December WGUV Pledge Drive on Dec. 8-9, 30 p.m. Volunteers answered phones to collect donations for the local PBS station.

**Club representsw members at the Grand Rapids Veterans’ Home Grotto Park**

Andrea Larkin, Region 7 director from Lansing, hosted this year’s meeting. Representing the University was Senior Director of Professional Programs for the Alumni Association Mark Burdell. Attending on behalf of the Grand Rapids Club were President Andrew Blum, Treasurer Brian Salerno, and board members Kate Mascari and Maureen Salerno.

**Dues envelopes included in mailing for year-end payments to Club**

Please note the dues envelopes included in this mailing and fulfill your annual commitment to the Notre Dame Club of Grand Rapids.

**Annual membership dues are:**

- $25 for Young Alumni
- $35 for Blue Membership
- $50 for Gold Membership
- $100 for Hibschus Membership

Your dues are used to fund our local ND student directors and to support a wide range of Club activities.

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**2010 Golf & Scholarship Invitational offers new all-day family-friendly events**

**The 2010 Notre Dame Club of Grand Rapids Golf & Scholarship Invitational** will be held at the newly renovated Centennial Country Club on Friday, July 9, 2010, and will include a Family Summer Pool Party, Golf Outing, and, after the dinner banquet, live music on the deck for all ages. The 2010 event will be a new, expanded and more inclusive version of one of the Club’s most successful annual events. Event proceeds go to the Club’s Scholarship Fund to support Notre Dame students from West Michigan with their tuition payments. The Club currently supports 20 Notre Dame students with annual scholarships.

**Contact event Co-Chairs Bob Belomonte at bbelmonte@appliedimating.com or Tim Clark at tclark@vbacpas.com with questions or suggestions for the 2010 golf outing.**

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**Final exam care packages delivered to campus dorms, apartments**

**Fifty-two Notre Dame students received final exam care packages from the Club earlier this month.** The packages, containing school supplies, snacks, Notre Dame hockey jerseys, and a $5 Jimmy John’s gift card, were compiled with donations from Mascari & Associates, Life EMS and DistrictNet International. They were delivered to campus by parent volunteers on Dec. 11-13, the weekend before final exams.

Thank you for continuing to support this project, which is appreciated so much by the students. If you’re interested in making a donation or helping with next year’s care packages, contact Kate Nagengast at kngengast@iuvsv.net or 648-2722.

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**Did you know? Facts about Notre Dame**

- **Notre Dame is rated among the nation’s Top 25 institutions of higher learning in surveys conducted by U.S. News and World Report, Princeton Review, Time, Kiplinger’s and Kaplan/Newsweek.**
- **Notre Dame is one of the few universities to rank in the top 25 in the U.S. News and World Report survey of America’s best colleges and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Directors’ Cup standings of the best overall athletic programs.**
- **Notre Dame ranks fourth in a listing of “dream schools” in a survey of parents by the Princeton Review.**
- **The top four are Harvard, Stanford, Princeton and Notre Dame.**
- **Notre Dame’s graduation rate of 95 percent is exceeded only by Harvard and Princeton.**
- **Notre Dame’s 95 percent retention rate between freshman and sophomore year is among the highest in the country, thanks in large part to the University’s unique First Year of Studies program.**
- **Club attends Mass in Alumni Hall after UConn game**

A Club Mass was held at Alumni Hall on Notre Dame’s campus as part of the University of Connecticut Club football weekend. Before the game, the Club also hosted a tailgate in the Joyce South parking lot. Thanks to all who attended these events.

**Two Club Tailgates for Fall Football Season**

The Club hosted two tailgates this season, one when Michigan State visited South Bend and one when the University of Connecticut visited. Club hosts Jim Kirkwood and Kevin McDermott provided hot dogs, brats, munchies and refreshments. Each tailgate was attended by 20 people or more throughout the day. Club members saw old friends and even met some new ones.

Both games provided exciting endings with Michigan State’s final drive concluding with an interception late in the game, and Connecticut dashing our Irish hopes in double overtime.

**Networking Luncheons continue to draw crowds**

The Club held its second quarterly Networking Luncheon hosted by Maureen Salerno at Watermark Grille on Nov. 13. It was great to see familiar ND/SMC friends and to meet new ones as well. Thanks to everyone who has been able to attend.

Our next luncheon will be in February. Check your e-mail for details about the event’s date and time.

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**Men’s basketball group outing in January**

The Club was able to procure 40 tickets to the men’s basketball game versus West Virginia on Saturday, Jan. 9. The group will cheer on the Fighting Irish in the newly renovated Joyce Arena. An e-mail was sent to all Club members in early October, and the people who responded to the offer purchased the tickets we were allotted from the athletic department.

**Grand Rapids teachers attend campus conference**

The Club again sponsored two local teachers to attend the Excellence in Teaching Conference, which was held on campus the weekend of Oct. 9-11. One teacher attended from All Saints Academy and the other represented Assumption School.

**Club provides information to prospective ND students**

The Club hosted a Notre Dame Information Night in the Varnum Law Offices downtown on Oct. 27. LeSiane Sadler from the Admissions Office attended and gave a presentation about admissions and student life to a group of 60 attendees representing high schools throughout West Michigan.

**Notre Dame football fans gather for game watches**

The Club hosted two game watches this fall for Notre Dame football away games. Sixteen people attended the Purdue game watch and 10 people attended the Pitt game watch, both hosted by Club President Andrew Blum.