CityQuest 2011
Post-Event Review

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Fall, 2011
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Description

- On the Saturday before the start of Fall Quarter classes, all new SPU students are invited to participate in a day of community service activities in teams with classmates from their University Seminar course. Following a morning kickoff rally students are transported to work projects around Seattle. The day concludes with group debriefing discussions facilitated by student team leaders as the group returns to campus.

Goals and Vision

- CityQuest serves as a first exposure to the SPU mission “to engage the culture and change the world.”
  - CityQuest encourages cultural engagement; students experience first-hand the work of a variety of community-serving agencies through which ongoing involvement has the potential to change the world.
  - Community engagement initiated through CityQuest is supported throughout the college experience by the John Perkins Center.
  - CityQuest provides a meaningful connection between students, faculty, and community, creating opportunities for ongoing academic and service connections.
  - Student participation in the CityQuest event and ongoing service is increased through recruitment of Faculty USEM professors to participate in the project.
Statistics

Participants:
- 760 members of the SPU community, including new students (freshmen and transfer students), 120 returning student leaders and 15 University Seminar faculty.
- **625 new students represent 74% of Seattle Pacific’s 2011 incoming new student class.**
- 15 University Seminar faculty participants represent 41% of professors teaching this freshman cohort class (37 total).

Transportation: 20 chartered school busses

Sites served: 27

Community Partnership:

BECU contributed $5,000 toward CityQuest 2010. This generous support highlighted BECU’s support of Seattle Pacific University and its dedication to community engagement.

CityQuest has long been recognized as an important example of Seattle Pacific University’s commitment to engaging the culture and changing the world through practical community service. New students arrive at SPU excited to participate in their university’s spirit of service; the event is an important drawing factor that encourages students to understand and appreciate their new community.

BECU’s sponsorship of CityQuest highlights the community commitments of both organizations. As new students learn about Seattle Pacific’s commitment to “engage the culture and change the world” through hands-on community involvement during CityQuest, they are simultaneously introduced to BECU’s commitment to service.

BECU’s $5000 investment in CityQuest was recognized publically through:
- Post-event informational booth
- Online recognition at [www.spu.edu/cityquest](http://www.spu.edu/cityquest)

Other opportunities for sponsorship recognition include:
- T-shirt branding
- Speaking roles in the morning rally
- Product donation/placement
- Involving sponsor’s staff as volunteers at CityQuest project sites
CityQuest begins with a rally in Martin Square, located in the heart of campus. Students gathered early before the event to enjoy the music of hip-hop artist Celestine Ezinkwo and the SPU Chapel Worship Team. Later, John Perkins Center staff encouraged the group to understand the one-day work of CityQuest as an introduction to the work of reconciliation and community development.

One freshman student remarked, “My experience with City Quest was wonderful! It was a great way to connect with my classmates and it made the first day of class much less nerve-wracking. I actually had friends to sit with and did not have to awkwardly find a seat and ask the intro questions again (What is your name? Where are you from? Which dorm are you in? What is your major?) We were able to share in an experience in which we were helping those in need and that automatically made our bonds stronger.”
Individual Impact
After CityQuest, students reflected on their experience. These are some of their thoughts:

“CityQuest was amazing. It was so cool to see how easy it is to help a lot of others in a short amount of time. We are able to pack tons of squash and apples. It’s nice to see the University join together for an excellent cause!”

“I think all my [CityQuest group members] enjoyed their experience. The work was good, difficult at points, but I think it helped them to bond and come together. They actually had work for us to do, so that was good!

“CityQuest was AMAZING! I had so much fun! My uPod and I went to World Concern and wrote thank-you letters to the people who donate to the cause. We also had the chance to sign up and volunteer more time with World Concern. All in all, CityQuest was amazing and I wouldn’t change a thing.”

“The work project was an excellent opportunity to get to know my uPod better while serving.”

“Our CityQuest experience was great! The hosts were very welcoming, introduced the project and talked about how they got involved in the restoration of the forest. Our group seemed to really enjoy getting to volunteer, and it was a team building experience for them, as we worked together to pass heavy buckets of gravel up the hill at the site. I loved hearing the students interact with each other and I heard lots of conversation and friendships forming. They were all open to the opportunity to come back and serve again, and we had a meaningful discussion about the project and how to get involved in volunteering once we were back at SPU.”

“The students were able to talk with each other on a different level. They all seem to be getting along quite well with one another and have a least a small group of people that they can connect with! They enjoyed the small, fun, and funny things that happened during the day, such as dropping a wheel barrow of wood chips, or seeing a rat run across the sidewalk.”

“Throughout the experience I was able to meet many new people and serve with them which helped me feel welcomed into the Seattle community and SPU.”
Service Partners

In 2011, 27 Seattle-area agencies hosted CityQuest service teams. Work projects included:

- Environmental restoration
- Community cleanup
- Facility maintenance
- Organization and cleaning

- Bridge Care Center
- CoffeeTalk at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church
- El Centro de la Raza
- Empowering Youth and Families Outreach
- Fremont Abbey Arts Center
- Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mt. View
- Friends of Hicks Lake
- Friends of Interlaken Park
- Friends of John C. Little Park
- Friends of Lewis Park
- Friends of Lincoln Park
- Friends of the Burke Gilman at Sand Point
- Genesee Schmitz Neighborhood Council
- King Conservation District
- Lettuce Link - Marra Farm
- Magnuson Park Wetlands- Native Plant Society Stewards
- Making the Jungle into an Orchard
- McClure Middle School PTSA
- Meadowbrook Community CARE
- Moving Planet Seattle: A Day to Move Beyond Fossil Fuels
- Nature Consortium
- Sacred Heart Shelter
- Seattle’s Union Gospel Mission --- Men’s Shelter
- Taproot Theatre Company
- Thornton Creek Alliance
- Urban Impact
- World Concern
Connecting Students, Faculty and Community

One of the important features of the CityQuest program is its ability to connect students and faculty in a group project before the start of classes. Throughout Welcome Week, students are grouped with their University Seminar classmates.

Students benefit from their professors’ presence during CityQuest; in 2006 a student remarked, “Our USEM professor came with us on CityQuest and I was impressed by that. I would encourage all USEM professors to join their class and set the example for their students.”

Fall, 2011 faculty participants reflected on their CityQuest experience:

“[CityQuest] worked out really well again this year. It’s a great way to start off the year and begin a relationship with the students”

“The activity (the tedious task of writing thank you cards) spawned some great discussion about the “invisible” costs of aid work—donors must be thanked, etc.”

“The Urban Impact CityQuest experience went just like planned. Students enjoyed the chance to work with an urban church and there was plenty of work to be done. Many commented on how much better they got to know each other at the project.”

Benefits of faculty participation in CityQuest include:

- Stronger connections between faculty and students. Student-faculty interaction is an important component of freshmen retention.¹
- Enhanced USEM content, providing connection to real-world and community serving activities. Participation in community-serving activities related to course content has a significant impact on students’ vocational choice, academic success and self-efficacy.²
- Promotion of a lifestyle of service, instilling SPU signature values.³