

## Alternative Spring Break

When most people think of Spring Break, they do not necessarily think of sleeping on hard floors and spending hours in the heat doing manual labor. But that's just what community-service minded Franklin Pierce students and staff do every year during Alternative Spring Break.

Last April, 13 Franklin Pierce University students and two staff advisors – Assistant Dean of Student Involvement Scott Ansevin-Allen and Director of Judicial Affairs Bill Sweet – teamed up with Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge to work on building homes in Wilmington, Del. The students and advisors drove down together in three vans, offering their time and energy to paint and do interior and outdoor project work on the newly built or rehabbed homes.

"I established the Franklin Pierce Alternative Break Program in 1999, leading each trip with the support of dedicated students since that time," says Scott Ansevin-Allen. "It all started when I saw an opportunity to mix my love for experiential travel with my commitment to service. Growing up, I had the opportunity to experience our country and the world; the ASB Program allows me to pass on a taste of what I experienced to our students. There are so many regions and cultures within this nation to be explored and understood. I have always framed the experience to incorporate both a service component and an opportunity to experience the local culture. I think it's a great program because students become well-rounded citizens – I enjoy watching them grow. The best thing about it from my perspective is that our students have the opportunity to live out their commitment to the greater good."

During Alternative Spring Break, all of the students slept on the floor of one of the Habitat for Humanity houses and took turns cooking in teams. Shortly after the students' arrival, they were given the opportunity to meet with a family that would be



Franklin Pierce University student volunteers during Alternative Spring Break.

moving into one of the Habitat for Humanity homes. The couple explained to them how they would be able to give their children a better home and described the positive changes that Habitat for Humanity had made in the neighborhood by rehabilitating homes there.

"I love helping others and trying to make a difference," said **Amelia Walters '13**, one of the student team leaders of the 2013 Alternative Spring Break. "That's what I want to do with a career. It's hard work, but it's rewarding – especially when you get to meet the family. You know you're changing lives." Amelia was part of the Alternative Spring Break program for three years while at Franklin Pierce and plans to volunteer with AmeriCorps before ultimately becoming a doctor of physical therapy. "This trip really inspired me to continue to do volunteer work. I know I can be involved in something that can make a great change – and it's really fun!"

The other team leaders for the 2013 break were **Miranda Mantello '13**, **Kathryn Bernier '13**, and **Brad Arena '14**, who all helped plan the week. The 2014 Alternative Spring Break team leaders are Brad Arena and **Dave Schwartz '14**. Students who are interested in Alternative Spring Break generally complete applications for the program by November; Scott and the team leaders meet with them weekly in order to prepare for the annual March trip.

"I look forward to the upcoming Alternative Spring Break 2014," says Scott. "It's always a highlight of the academic year." 