



IRA WYMAN

One to one: Harvard senior Tim Sheiner tutors inmate Lou Martee for Phillips Brooks House

Doing Good

Students are signing on for community service again in impressive, effective numbers

At first glance, Georgetown University senior Mark Fox could be mistaken for any Yuppie-in-training: his rugby shirts and fashionably faded 501 jeans might brand him as just another guy with BMW's on the brain. But this premed student is not merely another material boy. Instead of whiling away his Saturday mornings sleeping off hangovers, he leads 17 other Georgetown students into the blighted neighborhoods of nearby southeast Washington, D.C., to spend time with inner-city kids, catching a matinee at Kennedy Center or just tossing a ball around. And despite the stereotyping of his peers as varsity apathetes, Fox says he is not unusual. "Sure, some [students] are career oriented, some are party animals," he says. But many, he finds, "see something besides a career as the goal of their undergraduate education."

Like thousands of students nationwide, Fox is trying to personalize such monumental causes as poverty and hunger by getting involved in community service. A surge in all varieties of volunteerism is now energizing charitable projects at schools across the nation, where students are showing up in

greater numbers than at any time since the 1960s. At Harvard, for example, 56 percent of the class of '86 said they participated in public service, compared to 35 percent in 1983. At Tulane, CACTUS (Community Action Council of Tulane University Stu-

dents) has become the most popular extracurricular activity, with 600 students—more than double the number of just two years ago—involved in everything from tutoring slum children to providing medical care during Mardi Gras. At DePauw in Greencastle, Ind., students even pay for the privilege of living in Third World privation while participating in aid projects. And at many schools, the trend is being encouraged with credits, fellowships and grants.

This fresh crop of do-gooders tends less to starry-eyed innocence or zealotry than its predecessors. Remarkably diverse, these helpful students come from all political persuasions—although they're all more likely to seek M.B.A.'s than martyrdom. There are Reaganauts who want government out of the welfare business as well as liberals who wear their bleeding hearts on their sleeves. The majority probably fall in the neutral category, according to Sister Nancy Ann Flumerfelt, a sociologist who advises both political and nonpolitical groups at Michigan's tiny Aquinas College. "They are very comfortable collecting cans for charity, but they're not comfortable trying to deal with what agri-business is, or why the family farm is going under," she declares.

At the bottom line, these pragmatic idealists are finding ways to pencil compassion into the timetables of their careers, making the spirit of events like Live Aid concrete, and gaining a sense of belonging in the bargain. Some, it must be admitted, are looking for a dash of public service on their résumés. "Altruism is chic," jokes



STEVEN BAMBERG

Feeding force: Columbia-Barnard students make lunch at a church near campus