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Take a break to volunteer

■ Volunteer opportunities abound both on and off campus for interested students this spring break

By Anna Seeley
for the Emerald

For many students, spring break is a week away from homework, teachers and lectures.

Instead of spending it lounging in front of the television and eating junk food, why not spend some time out in the community volunteering? Whether it's working at a soup kitchen, working with troubled youths or just picking up trash at a neighborhood park, volunteer work is often appreciated.

A good place to start a quest to volunteer is at the Community Internship Program's office, located in the breezeway of the EMU. There, staff members are available to help point students in the right direction to get information on a group or organization they would be interested in volunteering for.

"We are the link between the community and students," said Marcella Marchesano, the CIP executive director. "We offer programs based on experiential learning and hands-on learning."

The CIP helps place students in programs in many areas, including leadership, mentorship, public schools, outdoor schools and Building Blocks. Students can get involved teaching middle school students about higher education, or working with at-risk youths one-on-one. Students can even receive academic credit, depending on how many hours they work.

"Most organizations are looking for kids with a good work ethic,

good academic standing, and who are dedicated and really interested in learning," Marchesano said.

Another place on campus that can always use an extra hand is the Women's Center.

"The Women's Center offers a community of women dedicated to creating social change through educational endeavors and social events," said Lori Brown, the office coordinator. "We offer drop-in referral services on issues pertaining to women, such as safety, LGBT, issues and child care."

Volunteers at the Women's Center can also get involved in organizing and planning events such as Take Back the Night and creating the center's newsletter, "The Siren." The center also offers internships for its sexual assault peer support program.

"If people want to get involved on a one-time basis, they can always hang up fliers, do follow-up phone calls or work on our networking list," Brown said. "We provide a learning environment so students don't need to come to us with certain skills."

The YWCA is another group on campus in need of volunteers.

"Our program aims for gender equality and diversity," Director Kathy Kozlowicz said.

YWCA volunteers would be involved in a number of activities, including event planning, PR and helping to create the center's magazine, "Identity."

During spring break, the YWCA could use volunteers to help plan its spring events, such as Race Against Racism.

"We are looking for volunteers who are organized and can follow through," Kozlowicz said. "Volunteers would be working without a lot of supervision, so they need to be responsible and willing to learn."

Get involved during spring break:

Women's Center — 346-4095

YWCA — call Kathy Kozlowicz at 346-4439

Red Cross — 344-5244 or e-mail info@usa.redcross.org, or visit www.redcross.org

Salvation Army — 343-3341, or visit www.salvationarmy.org

Community Internship Program — 346-4351

For students who are not spending spring break in Eugene, there are many volunteering opportunities nationwide. For example, local public schools, day-care centers, or youth programs can use volunteers. Organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army have offices and programs in many cities across the country and need a great number of volunteers.

"We have over 900 volunteers in Lane County," said Marianne Ansart, Red Cross health and safety and volunteer director. "We always need volunteers. We never have enough of them."

Red Cross volunteers are involved in a variety of different programs including Meals on Wheels, youth programs, first aid, CPR and safety classes, and the disaster service. Volunteers do things such as deliver and package meals or help with fundraising.

Volunteer work doesn't require a lot of knowledge or experience. All volunteers need are time, dedication, and a caring heart.

"Volunteers really don't need to have any certain skills," Ansart said. "Just a willingness to want to volunteer."

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Africa

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pose of the symposium is to highlight the importance of Africa and how central the country is to university study.

"We're trying to get Africa on people's maps," he said. "We have a large African-American population that has really put a stamp on American culture, so we really need to know about Africa and care about what's going on there."

Gottlieb's presentation, "The Wisdom of Children: An Anthropological Perspective on Engaging African Modernity," centered on the beliefs of the Beng people, an ethnic group of Africa's Côte d'Ivoire, and how Americans need to recognize other groups' modernity.

"When thinking about the modern world, we need to expand our thinking," she said.

She said it is important to study African children because there are more Africans than any other race on the planet. She said it is also important to study them because thousands of African children live on the streets, are fighting in the country's wars and are physically ill.

"Ignoring the children of Africa would be ignoring the continent," she said.

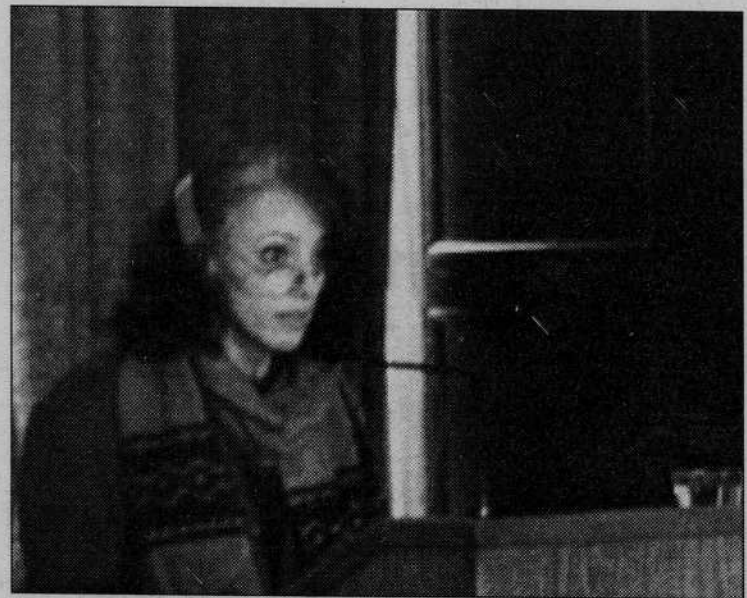
Gottlieb spent several years in Africa, researching the Beng people.

She said they believe when babies are born they are still in the Wrugbe state, which is both the after-life and the before-life.

Gottlieb said the group believes children are reincarnated and have a great deal more mental and spiritual power than adults realize.

"To them, babies have desires but are unsure how to communicate them directly," she said.

Gottlieb said she learned of one Beng family whose newborn baby was unhappy and constantly cry-



Tom Patterson Emerald

Acclaimed cultural anthropologist Alma Gottlieb speaks in Gerlinger Hall.

ing. Spiritual individuals in the village told the parents the baby was unhappy with his name because it did not reflect his name in his former Wrugbe life. She said the family changed his name and the baby seemed happier.

"The children need to be viewed as respected people because that's the way it was for them elsewhere," she said.

Gottlieb said the Beng people use another belief to explain the country's high infant mortality rate. She said they believe that if parents mistreat their babies in some way, either physically or mentally, the Wrugbe people will reclaim them. In other words, the children die to return to their former lives, she said.

Monica Price, a senior anthropology major, attended Gottlieb's presentation and said Americans often have a common misconception that other countries aren't as developed and modern as their own country. She

What: Engaging Africa: A Symposium Exploring the Future of African Studies

Where: Gerlinger Alumni Lounge

Cost: Free

When: Today, Mar. 2

9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.: Panel Presentations and Discussion

7:30 p.m.: Mongo Beti, Cameroonian novelist: "How can one be a writer in an underdeveloped country?"

For more information, call the Oregon Humanities Center at 346-3934.

said the independent beliefs of the Beng people show that they are more advanced than others might think.

"Both West Europeans and Americans have consistently seen themselves as more modern but clearly we're not better than anyone else," she said.