NU Gives Back...To Cabrini Connections

On Saturday May 21st the Cabrini Connections' program hosted a group of 14 Northwestern University students as part of the NU Gives Back: Service Day. Hundreds of Northwestern University students spent their day in various non-profit organizations, schools, and communities throughout the Chicagoland area as way of "giving back" with a day of service.

We had a GREAT group of fellow Wildcats that selected Cabrini Connections as their service site. We started the day with introductions which was great because as staff we wanted to get to know the students better, but it was also a good idea because not all of the students knew each other before the introductions. The Cabrini Connections' staff then provided the group with more information about the history of the organization and information on the present Cabrini Connections and the Cabrini Green community so that the students could have a stronger connection to the program as they completed their responsibilities for the day.

And before it was time to get to work, we provided a preview of a "Challenge" that we were going to close the day with. We asked all of the students to write down the names of five people that they consider to be their mentors and to keep those names in mind as they complete their service projects for the day. And then they were off to work.

The 14 students broke up into teams and completed a variety of tasks for the day. Some cleaned and organized the storage room, some students completed a mural on the wall of the front office, while others cleaned and provided maintenance work on the desks and chairs, organized the library, cleaned the desktops on all of the computers in the computer lab, and a variety of other projects that needed attention in the center. We had the music going, there was a lot of laughter, a lot of teamwork, and more and more relationship building as we all got to know each other throughout the day. The day started around 11am and ended around 2pm, but at 1:30pm we got back together as a group to present this “Challenge.” At the start of the day we discussed the pieces to the puzzle that make programs like Cabrini Connections' work. The NU students said you need students, volunteers, a safe environment, staff, and donors. We then expanded that last piece to the puzzle that was mentioned, the donors that provide financial support. As we got back together as a group a couple of students talked about their experience that day and shared that with the group. We then asked all of the student to take out their notecard with those five names on there and posed this "Challenge:" the students have to contact their five mentors and thank them for all that they have and continue to do in their lives, share their day of service experience with them, and encourage their five mentors to support their day of service efforts by making a donation to Cabrini Connections. The student that brings in the most donations by our Annual Year End Dinner will be provided awarded a special invite to our Annual Golf Benefit.

I know I am biased but I feel that Cabrini Connections is a GREAT program, but we are only great because of all of those that come together to make this work. The students, volunteers, parents, staff, Board Members, community partners, and the donors! When you have all of these pieces working together, supporting each other, and working towards a common goal, success HAS to be the result. So I encourage you to become one of those pieces to the puzzle and help Cabrini Connections continue to be great.