

# Altruism at its BEST

Each volunteer experience has its own reward. For Converse students, faculty and staff – both individually and collectively – service to others is a way of life.

Gwen Stembridge '10 of Atlanta, Georgia is a Bonner Leader at Converse who volunteers at the Charles Lea Center ten hours a week. Serving in her community allows her to connect with people she may not have otherwise met. She helps facilitate the art, music, gym and library classes in the Parsons Day Habilitation Program at the center. She also uses her experiences to educate her fellow Converse sisters about the challenges individuals with disabilities face on a daily basis. For Gwen, awareness is a key component of motivating others to volunteer. "If I think of service as a challenge and vehicle for making the world a better place for me and others to live, I am more motivated to put my best effort into it."

Another student community volunteer is Claire Hughes '10 of Phenix City, Alabama. Claire is part of the Daniels Leadership Program, and was a leader in Summer Serve this year where she helped incoming freshmen acclimate into the Converse community. Claire has always loved volunteering. "Not only does it help mold you as a person but it shows the community that the institution you represent educates young adults to care about world and community issues."

Converse students, faculty, and staff find that team spirit is strengthened and morale is boosted when they work together to help the greater community. The Division of Student Life volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for two hours each Wednesday morning

*Below: Members of Crescent, a service organization for sophomores*



*Above and below: Gwen Stembridge '10 helps facilitate classes at the Parson's Day Habilitation Program at the Charles Lea Center.*



during June and July. They donated 89.5 "sweat equity" hours to Vivia "Cookie" Bigsby, a Sodexo employee and single mother who has completed 210 of the 400 work hours required to move into her new three-bedroom home.

Crescent, a sophomore service organization, raised \$4,000 last year for The Haven Shelter during the 1889 Week Coin War, a fundraising project in which the undergraduate classes compete to raise the most change for charity. Crescent donated both their proceeds and their time, using a third of the raised funds to remodel a large children's playroom and a room allocated for a family. "From this experience we definitely learned to sacrifice for service," says Tiana Pires, last year's president of Crescent. "The Haven project was a 13-hour undertaking that we managed to complete in one day."

These volunteer workers are true testaments that people can make a difference, one good heart at a time.