

# Hampton Union



## City Year at Seabrook Middle School

By Nancy Rineman  
hamptonunion@seacoastonline.com  
Tuesday, January 26, 2010

SEABROOK — Seven City Year volunteers committed to the success of Seabrook Middle School students are making great strides toward achieving that goal.

The group of young adults began their service at the school in the fall, and now the trademark red City Year jackets are a welcome sight for students and staff alike.

Members of the Seabrook City Year team moved to the Seacoast from areas as close as Farmington to others as far away as the West Coast.

All say they are enjoying the experience of living in New Hampshire.

Diane Marchese of Farmington said as a student at Farmington Senior High School, she was considering AmeriCorps when she was contacted by City Year. With plans to spend 10 months with City Year, options Marchese will be considering will be whether to extend that time to a two-year commitment, or begin studies at Keene State College.

Coming from Lodi, Calif., Amber Siddle-Manas not only enjoys her work at the middle school, but the New England weather as well.

"I'd never seen snow falling before," said the University of California San Diego graduate.

Siddle-Manas said she was enrolled in the International Studies Program but realized her volunteer work could be more useful here.

"Our country needs so much," she said, adding that she decided to commit to getting her education in the United States.

When City Year team member Charlie Walker was growing up in Columbia, Md., he worked at his mother's summer day camp.

As a student at Morgan State in North Carolina, he made a decision to reach out to the City Year program.

"It's much more than a red jacket," Walker said of the easily recognizable City Year attire.

"It's a symbol of spirit and pride," he said. "It means a lot when you show it to other people."

Paul Riley of Wilmington, Del., (the first state, he quickly pointed out) is a graduate of Elmira College in New York. As an English literature major, he was looking at AmeriCorps to give him some perspective on where his service would most be needed. After signing on with City Year, it didn't take him long to feel good about his decision. A trip to Boston to hear Charlie Rose, founder of City Year, strengthened that feeling.

"It blew me away," Riley said, "discovering the intensity and education that's required."

"It's the greatest thing I've ever done," he said.

Riley said that while he and his fellow teammates focus on keeping middle school students on track and enhancing their development, the City Year Program returns the favor when it comes to its volunteers.

"City Year is very focused on helping us as well for after this," Riley said. "City Year is really about building up both communities and us."

Another California native, Sandra Carbajal of Vacaville, Calif., wasted no time in showing her exuberance for the job and its location. As a high school senior, she said that when she heard she was accepted into City Year, it sounded "too good to be true."



Nancy Rineman Photo Shown are Seabrook Middle School City Year volunteers Sandra Carbajal, Diane Marchese, Chris Steinkamp, Paul Riley, Amber Siddle-Manas, Bear Bruun and Charlie Walker.

Today, that initial feeling still rings true.

"I love it a lot more than California," Carbajal said. "I love the weather, the snow. It's so awesome."

Her specialty is computer programming, but now Carbajal said she is considering teaching.

"City Year is helping me," she said, explaining that the LACY Program focused on Life After City Year.

Team leader Chris Steinkamp, a 2008 graduate of the University of Colorado, was considering a work in a national service program, disaster relief or education. Now in his second year with City Year, Steinkamp is enjoying working with Seabrook Middle School students as well as the area itself.

"I love it up here, with the mountains, the beach," Steinkamp said, and his plan for the summer will be to perform youth leadership work most likely at a summer camp.

City Year has also proved to be rewarding for Bear Bruun of Washington, D.C.

"I wanted to do something with education," Bruun said.

Bruun said he had a friend in Boston so he knew a little bit about the area.

"When I got here, it was exciting, a new place," Bruun said, adding that while he didn't want to be accused of bragging, he feels the Seabrook Team is the best.

Bruun said that he enjoys the City Year experience, and is considering the possibility of studying government and politics and perhaps going to law school.

"They are invaluable to what we do here at school," said Seabrook Middle School Assistant Principal Les Shepard.

"They meet with the kids, give them an opportunity to talk, help them with organizational issues, homework, math concerns," Shepard said.

"They are an extra pair of hands," Shepard said. "You name it — they help us."

With after-school hours spent attending the students' games, running homework help projects, or committing to library time, Shepard said the City Year Team goes "above and beyond."

"They are great role models for our kids," Shepard said.