

AU student devotes year for service

By Clint Rice
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Raphael Dunfey, a sophomore in the School of International Service, devoted an entire year of his life to service when he deferred his enrollment at AU to spend a year in D.C. as a City Year volunteer.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to school right away," he said. "I'd gotten into [AU], so I was already into D.C."

Instead of coming to AU immediately after graduation, Dunfey joined City Year's civic engagement program. As part of the program, Dunfey helped coordinate monthly service projects and went to middle schools and high schools across D.C. to get students to volunteer.

"At first, they just looked at it as a chance to get out of class," he said. "When we actually went out and talked to them, told them what we were doing, they were really appreciative."

City Year is a community service organization that allows 17- to 24-year-olds to spend 10 months performing community service in 18 locations in the United States and one in South Africa.

Volunteers receive a \$200 weekly stipend and a grant of slightly less than \$5,000 towards education at the end, according to D.C. City Year media manager Cristina Gomez. Other D.C. City Year programs include a program to combat illiteracy and a program to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS through education.

Dunfey said he learned about City Year through recruiters that came to his high school. He had worked in a soup kitchen in high school, but said he did not know why he decided to spend 10 months doing community service.

During the program, Dunfey said he did not have much difficulty living with his \$200 weekly stipend. He lived with five other City Year volunteers and was

eligible for food stamps, he said.

Dunfey is not the only AU student involved in community service. More than 1,200 AU students volunteered 48,315 hours through AU's Community Service Center last year, according to Donald Curtis, the center's operations coordinator.

"We've got a strong group of students who are really involved in service," he said.

Despite the large number of AU students active in volunteering, the center would like to see more students volunteer, Curtis said.

"Our goal is to try to serve those who are interested in service, but it also is to reach out to those who aren't really interested," he said.

Dunfey said he had plans to spend more time in community service. He is considering working with City Year again or joining the Peace Corps after graduation, he said.

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