NATIONAL STUDENT DAY BUILDS MOMENTUM IN ONLY ITS SECOND YEAR

Celebration of student volunteerism triples in size!

By Charles Schmidt

Last year, the National Association of College Stores (NACS) considered its initial attempt to help its members encourage social responsibility among students a success. In 2011, just over 560 college stores registered at www.nationalstudentday.com and held celebrations of student volunteerism across North America.

“We were very pleased with member participation in the initial event. Reaction by students, the national media, and on Twitter and Facebook was positive,” said NACS CEO Brian E. Cartier, CAE. “For the 2012 edition, we hoped to build on that success. What we experienced was beyond even our highest hopes.”

This year, the second annual National Student Day saw 1,550 college stores register on the official website www.nationalstudentday.com and pledge to hold in-store events on October 4, nearly triple the amount that did last year. The celebrations, which drew tens of thousands of students and raised thousands of dollars for charity, consisted of giveaways, parties, contests, discounts and more.

Many showcased the innate creativity of NACS’ members. The store at Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, Iowa, recruited volunteers from the administration, faculty and coaching staffs to serve as targets for a pie-throwing booth. Others, such as Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Columbus State Community College, Columbus, Ohio, partnered with local animal shelters, collecting donations of food and other necessities.

NACS once again provided a free downloadable marketing toolkit that included everything a store would need to plan and promote a successful National Student Day program. An inexpensive starter kit also was created and sold for a nominal fee to help smaller members or those pressed for time and resources.

In addition, NACS supported its members’ in-store efforts with a nationwide contest that rewarded students who demonstrate their volunteerism. Students uploaded their stories to the website, and three lucky winners, voted on by their peers, won scholarships in the amounts of $3,000, $2,000 and $1,000. Seven additional submissions won iPads that were awarded by a random drawing. (The winners’ stories can be seen on www.nationalstudentday.com.)
“For years, college students have been volunteering across their campus community and beyond,” Cartier noted. “From cleaning up a local park to serving as a Big Brother or Big Sister, they have taken time out of their hectic schedules to perform selfless acts without seeking recognition. National Student Day, with its tagline of Study – Serve – Celebrate, is a way to applaud these students for their efforts. Our stores wanted to be part of that.”

It’s also a way to help broaden the pool of volunteers. “While competition and prizes are involved, the true goal of the contest is for college students to share their often life-altering volunteer experiences, thereby inspiring others. Hopefully, we are encouraging those who already give of their time to continue doing so, while inspiring those who might not currently volunteer to begin,” said NACS Director of Public Relations, Charles Schmidt.

Plans are already underway for the Third Annual National Student Day, scheduled for October 3, 2013!


NATIONAL STUDENT DAY, BGSU STYLE

By Emily Blaylock

The second annual National Student Day was more than a celebration for Bowling Green State University students. The event was a chance for students to give back to the community while learning about service opportunities to further their contribution. The BGSU Bookstore and Office of Service-Learning collected donations of non-perishable food items, personal care items and pet items to benefit local food pantries, women’s shelters and the humane society. Additionally, the bookstore accepted monetary donations, allowing students to give to the charity of their choice using any form of payment.

BGSU Dining Services also supported the event by placing donation boxes in locations around campus. Other departments joined the celebration, including the Bowen-Thompson Student Union, PNC Bank, and 10 service-oriented student organizations. The Bookstore at BGSU Firelands, a branch campus in Huron, Ohio, also joined the celebration, contributing significantly to the total of more than 1,200 donation items collected.

Large banners covered the Student Union windows at the event for students to respond to statements such as: “The good work we have done,” “What is collaboration?” and “Our work for the future.” Students could write on the banners about their volunteer experiences as well as what collaboration and service mean to them or what they plan to do in the future.

Every student who made a donation or signed up with a student service group received a raffle ticket to win prizes. More than a hundred students received a free, custom-designed BGSU National Student Day T-shirt by working the event or through a raffle every 15 minutes. The grand prize winner got to choose between an Apple iPad and a free semester of textbooks. Three runners up also received $50, $75, and $100 bookstore gift cards.

Because the national event fell on the first day of BGSU’s fall break, the bookstore and the Office of Service-Learning decided to hold the event two days early to take full advantage of the student celebration. The value of the donations collected to benefit six local charities was nearly $3,400, and the service organizations signed up many student volunteers for future events, making the 2012 National Student Day celebration a big success at Bowling Green State University.

Emily Blaylock is a Student Manager for Marketing and Promotion in the BGSU Bookstore at Bowling Green State University. She has worked in the Bookstore for the past 18 months, starting as a student intern and recently advancing to her current position. Emily is currently a junior majoring in Visual Communication Technology, with a focus in Photography and Print Media.
SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL STUDENT DAY AT SDSU: A SUCCESS

By Ben Eisenstein

What a day! With more than 1,400 student volunteer hours submitted and a sizable increase in campus participation, it is safe to say that the second Annual National Student Day at San Diego State University (SDSU) was a big success.

The work started in June with a brainstorming session between Aztec Shops staff and campus representatives, including the Student Life & Leadership office and executive officers from Associated Students. We decided to use participation numbers from the first Annual National Student Day at SDSU as baseline data and set the following two ambitious targets for this year’s celebration:

- Increase total community volunteer hours among students during the opening month of school by 50 percent to 940.5 (627.5 in 2011); and
- Increase the number of participating students by 50 percent to 234 (156 in 2011).

The results exceeded our objectives: 277 individual SDSU students officially submitted more than 1,400 community volunteer hours during the month of September.

HOW DID WE DO IT?

We decided to focus on email (instead of static campus signage) as the main channel in getting the word out. From the first week in September to the last, we sent out four separate emails letting the student body know what wonderful prizes awaited those who submitted the most volunteer hours. Thanks to support from senior management at Aztec Shops, those prizes included free textbooks for a semester and a $1,000 gift card to the SDSU Bookstore.

Last year, we hosted refreshments only for those who had submitted volunteer hours to Student Life & Leadership. The result was a lot of leftover cookies. Also last year, we only had discounts on a few select items in the bookstore. This year, the snacks were open to everyone and all SDSU-imprinted items were 20 percent off for the day. These changes did the trick and led to a significant increase in student participation in the event!

We were very pleased with the results from the second Annual National Student Day at SDSU and are already excited about year three. By keeping our senior management on board with the initiative, as well as continuing to emphasize coalition-building with campus groups, we expect each National Student Day to be bigger and better than the last.

Ben Eisenstein is the Marketing Manager for the campus stores division of Aztec Shops, Ltd., which includes the San Diego State University (SDSU) Bookstore and its e-commerce site, www.shopaztecs.com. Eisenstein earned his B.A. from SDSU and has more than six years of professional marketing experience. He is currently enrolled in the SDSU MBA program.

THE STRIKE OF THE GONG, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

By Erma Baker

The strike of the gong thundered through the room, muted only by the cheer of the crowd as the room packed with University of Mary Washington (UMW) students celebrated the 10,000-meal milestone!

A small liberal arts university in the heart of historic Fredericksburg, Va., UMW espouses values of responsible leadership, service to others and engaged citizenship in a global and diverse society as part of its mission.

UMW joined with more than 1,500 campus bookstores in honor of National Student Day (NSD) in recognition and celebration of college students throughout North America and the world-changing things they do to practice social responsibility.

To celebrate NSD, the UMW College Bookstore partnered with the Center for Honor, Leadership and Service to engage student volunteers and make a difference in the world by preparing meals for the national non-profit organization Stop Hunger Now’s meal packaging program. Pepsi served as an event sponsor.

Seventy student volunteers packaged dehydrated, high protein, nutritious meals to be used in crisis situations and in feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world. On National Student Day, UMW students prepared 10,000 individual meals to be shipped to impoverished countries.

Marketing activities included:

- A direct email sent by the bookstore to UMW students before the event with a link to the store website and an online sign-up form; and
- A media blitz which included pictures of student athletes, leaders
and administrators holding the “stop hunger now” sign. The photos were also included on social media sites and the student weekly blog.

Stop Hunger Now provided all meal package contents and packing materials and even brought music and the gong. Student volunteers were rewarded with UMW Bookstore coupons and NSD bracelets. The NSD celebration at UMW was covered by the school newspaper and was an awesome celebration.

Erma A. Baker, CPO, VCO, is the Assistant Vice-President for Business Services and Chief Procurement Officer at the University of Mary Washington (UMW) in Fredericksburg, VA. In addition to Procurement, Business Services encompasses the Campus Bookstore, Card Office, Parking Management, Mail/Copy Operation and Campus Vending. In recent years, Baker’s division has included a focus on sustainable practices (socially, fiscally and environmentally) wherever possible.

4,000 STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL STUDENT DAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

By Amy Browns Taylor

For the second year, the University of Cincinnati (UC) participated in National Student Day (NSD) and expanded the celebration beyond the UC Bookstores to include other auxiliary units such as the student union, recreation center, food services and parking services.

Giveaways started at 7 a.m., filling students’ reusable cups with free coffee, and continued throughout the day until 9 p.m. with free NSD T-shirts, a photo booth with campus celebrities including the Bearcat mascot, and green (NSD’s signature color) fortune cookies with parking messages and passes. A 20 percent UC Bookstore discount was offered throughout the day and live models donned new apparel available including the UC Official Fan T-shirt. This resulted in a significant increase in store traffic and sales as compared to a typical Thursday and the 2011 National Student Day.

This year, a large Community Service Fair became the signature event of UC’s NSD celebration. Partnering with colleagues from Student Activities & Leadership Development and the UC Center for Community Engagement, the fair was very successful with 46 organizations participating and nearly 500 students attending. Participants included SPCA, the American Red Cross and the Hoxworth Blood Center with a mobile blood drive.

The fair also included an on-site community service project where students put together 1,150 personal toiletry bags with products donated by Procter & Gamble. The toiletry bags were then distributed to Cincinnati’s Ronald McDonald House and a local organization that provides affordable, safe housing for women. Any student who attended the fair was entered to win a $250 UC Bookstores gift card and a Kindle Fire.

Other activities included live music, an outdoor movie, the Rock the Vote and C-SPAN Election bus, an Oktoberfest-themed lunch in the dining centers featuring a farm-to-fork menu, free UC Sustainability water bottles and chair massages at the Campus Recreation Center.

Major marketing tactics included:

- An email from the student body president to UC’s 42,000-plus students outlining the day’s activities and the national competition for scholarships and prizes;
- Free-standing NSD banners and sidewalk decals placed in strategic campus locations; and
- A comprehensive campaign on Twitter and Facebook.

More than 4,000 UC students participated in the day-long celebration. In addition to the on-campus celebration, 15 UC students submitted their volunteer experiences and participated in the national competition for scholarships and prizes.

Amy Browns Taylor is the Director of Marketing, Publications and Facilitation for the University of Cincinnati’s department of Campus Services and has worked in higher education for 13 years. She oversees campus card operations, the banking services agreement and all aspects of marketing for the 11 Campus Services areas including the student union, housing and food, campus recreation and parking. She has a M.A. in business/arts administration and a B.S. in journalism-public relations from Ohio University.