

Alternative Spring Break 2008 General FAQ

WHAT IS ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK (ASB)?

ASB is a United Way program that engages young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years old in meaningful volunteer service. For the last two years, *think* MTV and United Way partnered to create a week-long alternative spring break in the Gulf Coast. In 2006 100 young people from across the country came together to help rebuild communities in Mississippi and Alabama still suffering from Hurricanes Katrina and Ivan. In 2007 nearly 400 young people came to help rebuild Lake Charles, Louisiana, a community recovering from Hurricane Rita, over a span of four weeks. Building on the successes of the last two years, United Way is bringing ASB to three locations in 2008 – Lake Charles, LA, Biloxi, MS and Detroit, MI.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASB AND POSSIBLY APPLY?

The main site, <http://unitedway.org/asb>, is where you'll find the most up-to-date information on ASB, including the link to the 2008 application. There is also the ASB Blog that is full of pictures, videos, testimonials, etc. at <http://blog.unitedway.org/asb> -- this will be updated regularly, but for now, enjoy 2007's participants' experiences first hand. In addition to the current blog, you can also find the original blog that was created in 2006 by *think* MTV and United Way: <http://stormcorps.typepad.com/>.

WHAT ARE THE ACTUAL DATES OF THE PROGRAM?

ASB will run up to five weeks from the last week in February throughout the month of March.

IS THIS PROGRAM LIMITED TO ONLY IN SCHOOL COLLEGE STUDENTS?

No. We had young people from a wide variety of backgrounds participate both years. Some were in or just out of the military, others were in between jobs while others were in the workforce. The only requirement for applicants is that you are between 18 and 24 years-old and committed to devoting a part of yourself to positive community change. We encourage young people from all walks of life to pursue ASB. We also encourage the "young at heart" who are interested in the program and have United Way volunteer or professional experience to apply as Team Leaders, and lead a group of 10-12 ASB participants throughout their ASB experience.

WHAT IF I AM NOT 18 BY THE TIME I APPLY, BUT TURN 18 BEFORE MARCH?

As long as participants turn 18 by mid-January, ensuring that we are able to conduct the appropriate background checks to clear them for participation, they are eligible.

WHEN WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR ASB?

Applicants will be notified within two weeks of applying.

Are you ready to APPLY?

Go to: <http://surveys8.unitedway.org/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.dll?idx=PXUKGR>

(Or copy and paste the link into your browser)

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO PARTICIPATE IN ASB?

This is a \$150 program fee to help cover the costs of food, local transportation, and building materials for service projects. In addition, participants will be responsible for covering the cost of transportation to and from the ASB site. The anticipated flight costs average around \$200-\$375 roundtrip, depending on where you are coming from. United Way provides each ASB participant his/her own webpage which includes a fundraising tool to help generate the resources needed to cover these expenses. Reimbursement of funds raised to off-set travel costs are granted after the week of service is completed.

WHERE WILL THE PROJECT SITES BE LOCATED?

ASB Host Sites are located throughout the community of Lake Charles, LA, Biloxi, MS and Detroit, MI. Project sites are located throughout the local region of each ASB host site. In Detroit, volunteers will deploy in various neighborhoods. In South Mississippi and Southwest Louisiana, volunteers will deploy across the region to where their efforts will be most helpful.

WHAT TYPE OF LODGING WILL BE PROVIDED?

While the specifics of housing are still being finalized, lodging options are group-oriented (think dormitory-style) at local volunteer centers in the host communities. Some participants at the Biloxi, MS ASB site may be lodged in tents to accommodate all participants.

WILL THE DAILY SCHEDULE INCLUDE EVENING OR OTHER FREE TIME?

Absolutely! Participants will have scheduled activities in the evening but there will be plenty of time for the participants to relax, reflect, hang out and be social. Some participants have been known to grab a few minutes for themselves as well, to read a book, nap, make phone calls home—it is up to you how you spend your free time!

IF I AM SELECTED, WHAT WILL I NEED TO BRING?

The locations of the ASB sites and the facilities at the sites will have an impact on what participants will need to bring. Once participants are selected, they will get a comprehensive list of what they will need to bring. In most cases, we ask every participant to pack light and bring clothes appropriate for the work site.

IS THERE ANY TYPE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE?

Yes, there is. All participants will be covered under a liability insurance policy throughout the duration of the ASB trip from the moment they step into ground transportation at the airport to the time they are brought back to the airport. Participants **MUST** have their own health insurance to participate.

Are you ready to APPLY?

Go to: <http://surveys8.unitedway.org/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.dll?idx=PXUKGR>

(Or copy and paste the link into your browser)

WILL GROUPS SENT FROM OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY REMAIN TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE ASB TRIP?

One goal of ASB is to create an environment of personal growth and self exploration. In keeping with that goal, we feel that mixing groups with people from all geographic and socio-cultural backgrounds is the best way to challenge participants to grow and explore their own beliefs. Therefore, groups of participants can expect to be split up on different work teams. There will be plenty of opportunities to interact during free times in the morning and in the evenings.

IS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED FROM THE AIRPORT/TRAIN/BUS STATION TO THE ASB SITE?

Yes. Once you are accepted to ASB, you will receive information about the correct airport, train or bus station to arrive into based on your ASB site. Ground transportation will be provided to and from the airport, train or bus station to the ASB site.

HOW WILL DAILY TRANSPORTATION TO THE PROJECT SITES BE PROVIDED? WHO WILL OPERATE THE VEHICLES?

We rely on vans or busses to transport participants to work sites. When vans are used, Team Leader will be designated to drive, and in some cases support staff, but never participants. Vans may only be driven by Team Leaders and support staff with a valid driver's license who have completed training on safety instructions for operating the vehicles.

CAN PARTICIPANTS BRING CARS?

While participants can drive to the location of the ASB host site; however, they will not be permitted to use their car throughout the duration of the trip until it is time to leave. This will help us maintain safety during the trip, avoid liability concerns, and minimize risks to participants. The parking location is likely to be a few miles from our campsite to reduce traffic congestion on-site.

WILL PARTICIPANTS UNDERGO BACKGROUND CHECKS?

Yes, all participants will undergo background checks, which will determine whether or not they have been charged with any felonies. Anyone convicted of a felony is ineligible to participate in ASB.

WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE DURING THE PROJECTS? WHAT LEVEL OF SUPERVISION WILL THERE BE?

There will be a Team Leader for each group who will keep the team focused and address potential safety concerns. For any activity in which special skills are required or risks are present, a supervisor with appropriate training and skills will also be present. 1-2 Team Leaders will be assigned per group.

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS. IS THERE A PERSON I CAN CONTACT TO ANSWER THEM MORE SPECIFICALLY?

Yes! There are tons of people behind the scenes working to ensure a great 2008 ASB experience. Feel free to email ASBquestion@unitedway.org, and we will help you out with any additional questions regarding ASB 2008.

Are you ready to APPLY?

Go to: <http://surveys8.unitedway.org/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.dll?idx=PXUKGR>

(Or copy and paste the link into your browser)