

2016

# MLK Weekend of Service Assessment Report

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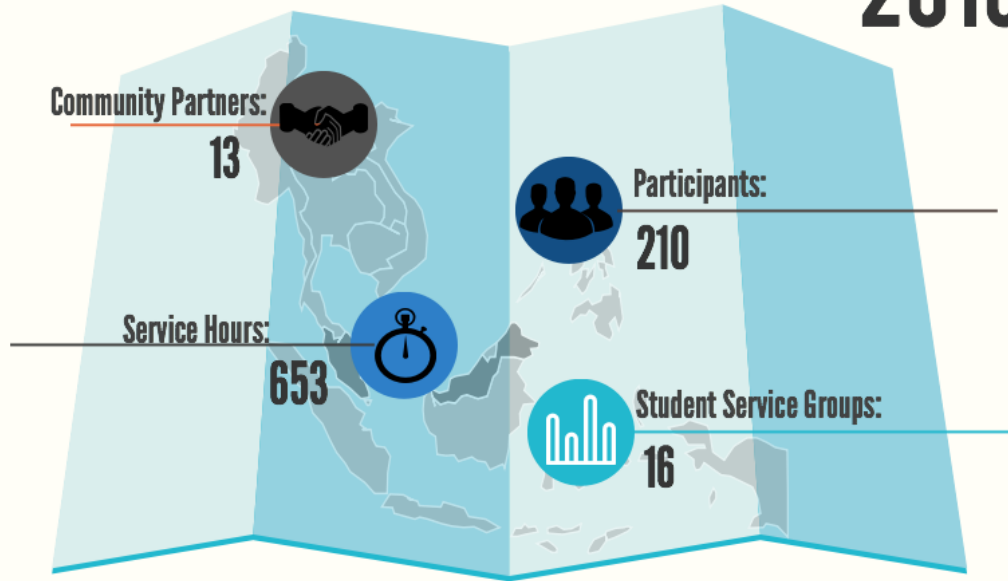
## Executive Summary

Over the weekend of January 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 210 Vanderbilt students working with 16 student service organizations and 13 community partners came together in remembrance of the peace, equity, and social justice efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by donating more than 650 hours of compassionate and dedicated community service. The Weekend of Service is incorporated into a larger MLK Commemoration program of events including lectures, teach-ins, marches, and symposiums. The program concluded with a session reflecting on service and social justice. The importance of The MLK Weekend of Service cannot be overstated, as it exemplifies the empathy and social consciousness of our student body as well as the fundamental link between Vanderbilt and the Civil Rights Movement embedded within the communities of Nashville. As our Academic Strategic Plan directs, “our graduates must be active citizens who solve important problems that confront the world and seek opportunities for discovery.” This report details how the fellowship between university and city is at the core of the Weekend of Service, giving students the opportunity to recognize the important role they play as leaders on campus and in the greater community.



*Members of the London Global Service Program volunteer with Ed Nichols at Second Harvest Food Bank*

# SNAPSHOT: MLK WEEKEND OF SERVICE 2016



 **January 16th - 18th** **102 survey respondents** 

## Strategic Objectives

To make a difference in the local Nashville community by encouraging students, faculty, and staff to come together in a weekend of service in remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Provide student service groups with the opportunity to work with local providers and build their membership.

To further build and develop relationships with local Nashville service partners.

## Recommendations

### *Implementing the Weekend of Service*

- Include the Reflection Session in the programming
  - The 2016 MLK Weekend of Service experienced a decrease in participation from previous years. This may be due to the increasingly developed programming surrounding the MLK Commemorative Weekend that draws students to a variety of learning opportunities across campus, decreasing participation.
  - Student feedback indicates the desire for a deeper connection between the MLK Weekend of Service and MLK Commemorative programming.
- Manage scheduling conflicts with Greek Recruitment
  - Approximately 700 students were involved in Greek Recruitment, which occurred during the MLK Weekend of Service, and impacted participation.
- Diversify community partners
  - Diversify partnerships so multiple student groups do not work with the same community organization. It is important to recall that increasing community partnerships numerically does not have a directly correlative effect on the quality of said partnerships.
- Communicate early on with the Chancellor's Office around projects and potential involvement .

### *Communicating the Weekend of Service*

- Outline clear communication plans
  - Create a planning document that outlines, with specificity, the means by which the Weekend of Service will be communicated to Vanderbilt. This should include dates, costs, media channels, staff assignments and protocol for review which will, in turn, avoid some of the confusion experienced this year (specifically regarding listserv management).
- Begin publicizing the MLK Weekend of Service earlier in the Fall Semester
  - In order to better recruit for the MLK Weekend of Service 2017, publication of the event should begin in November as students leave campus in the beginning of December. Winter break impacts communications, resulting in decreased student responsiveness and student enthusiasm for university-related programming. If service projects are registered by the beginning of December, the beginning weeks of the spring semester can be used to recruit volunteers, which is often much easier than obtaining service projects.
  - A listserv miscommunication severely limited the audience who received information on the Weekend of Service, also hindering the participation.
- Advertise the Weekend of Service through the same media channels used to promote the larger MLK Day events, promoting participation and informing students how they can become actively involved.

- Publicize the assessment results of the Weekend of Service across media platforms (Vanderbilt newsletters, trimester/annual report, websites, listservs, social media, etc.) in order to promote student awareness and encourage participation moving forward. This will also highlight the work done by community partners and potentially draw student support to these organizations.

### *Assessing the Weekend of Service*

- For 2016 create a more robust assessment rubric leading into the Weekend of Service that creates and details the following components:
  - Student participant survey
  - Student site-leader survey – asks questions about experiences organizing and recruiting students, the logistics of the day itself, finances, communication, etc.
  - OACS staff focus group
  - Community partner survey – brief, 3-4 part questionnaire
    - This rubric will be utilized to fully gather information from interested stakeholders and participants, informing Weekend of Service development in academic year 2017/18.
- Encourage student leaders to document their activity before the Weekend of Service begins so an accurate tally of hours, partnerships, and volunteers is recorded and student leaders understand the necessary measurements.
- Be sure to ask OACS staff their individual recommendations for improvements to the Weekend of Service, which will then be detailed in future iterations of this report. This could be conducted as a focus group (above), but also more formally by written responses.
- Include within the assessment instruments a questions about whether student projects addressed issues of race, power/privilege, civil rights and activism, etc.

## **Methodology**

To properly assess the MLK Weekend of Service and the impact it made on student participants, OACS staff created a paper assessment instrument composed of open-ended and Likert-scaled questions. These questions were designed to capture the opinions of students as well as gain clarity regarding who composed student cohorts and their partners in the community. OACS staff hosted a breakfast for site leaders on January 14<sup>th</sup> which was attended by five site leaders. Surveys were distributed to site leaders that morning; those who could not attend the breakfast were emailed the survey.

Site leaders were responsible for disseminating surveys to their groups at the conclusion of service events, and were instructed to emphasize the importance of completing them. The surveys took approximately 5 minutes, and site leaders were responsible for collecting and returning the surveys to OACS the following week. Site leaders were also reminded via email to hand in the surveys. 102 surveys were returned, representing 49% of the reported Weekend of Service participants.

From a methodological perspective, paper surveys were utilized to maximize the response rate. It was felt that students would be most likely to respond to a survey distributed immediately following their service event, when the experience was fresh in their minds and they were together as a group. The survey was kept intentionally brief at eight questions to encourage participation.

## **Results and Analysis**

Approximately 210 students were reported to have participated in the MLK Weekend of Service. 16 student service groups partnered with 13 community organizations (primarily non-profits) and logged approximately 653 hours of work. 102 participants completed assessment surveys, yielding a 49% response rate. This is an increase of 16% from 2015. The MLK Weekend of Service was held one week earlier this year, due to the length of Winter Break. The MLK Weekend of Service conflicted with fraternity and sorority recruitment events. The decline of participation in the MLK Weekend of Service was in part due to these scheduling conflicts. As a result of Greek recruitment, 700 students joined a Greek organization over the weekend, representing 54% of undergraduate women and 34% of undergraduate men claiming affiliation with a Greek organization. Additionally, OACS' communication strategy was disrupted due to confusion over specificity of listserv recipients. This challenge has been addressed and corrected. Starting publicity for the MLK Weekend of Service before Winter Break in future years is advocated as a good way to keep the event in students' minds over the break.

## **Student Comments**

The following student comments were taken from the free response question "how could your Weekend of Service experience have been improved?"

- Publicize the Weekend of Service more
- Interested in having a larger impact in the community
- Would love to do more projects in the future
- Desire to work more directly with planning the Weekend of Service project
- Service projects should be more closely related to MLK or Civil Rights
- Desire to engage in more meaningful dialogue
- Longer volunteer time

### Sample Student Responses

#### Weekend of Service Assessment

1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? Sophomore
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? OACS
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: visiting senior living home
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 2
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
for the VIEW program
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
more related to MLK / Civil Rights movement

#### Weekend of Service Assessment

1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? Soph
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? VSVS
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: built robot kits for future classroom use
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 2.5 hours
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
Necessary for commemoration
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
All days should mention MLK and roots of Weekend



**Weekend of Service Assessment**

1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? First-year
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? Manna Project
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: sorting & packing food items at Second Harvest Food Bank
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 2
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
I wanted to do something to give back to the community, and I thought this would be a perfect opportunity to do so.
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
I would have liked to have some kind of educational thing beforehand so that we would know exactly how our work affects the organization & impacts the community. Also so that we could learn more about Second Harvest in general.

**Weekend of Service Assessment**

1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? sophomore
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? VIEW/OACS
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: visited a senior home and played games w/ them
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other seniors
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 3
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
to engage more in the unseen parts of the Nashville community
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
-engaging in more meaningful dialogue w/ those that we helped

**Weekend of Service Assessment**

1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? sophomore
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? VIEW
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: socializing with residents at Homingside of Belmont
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other assisted living
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 1 hour
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
member of the VIEW program
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
a bit more time / more thorough debriefing on the issue

**Weekend of Service Assessment**

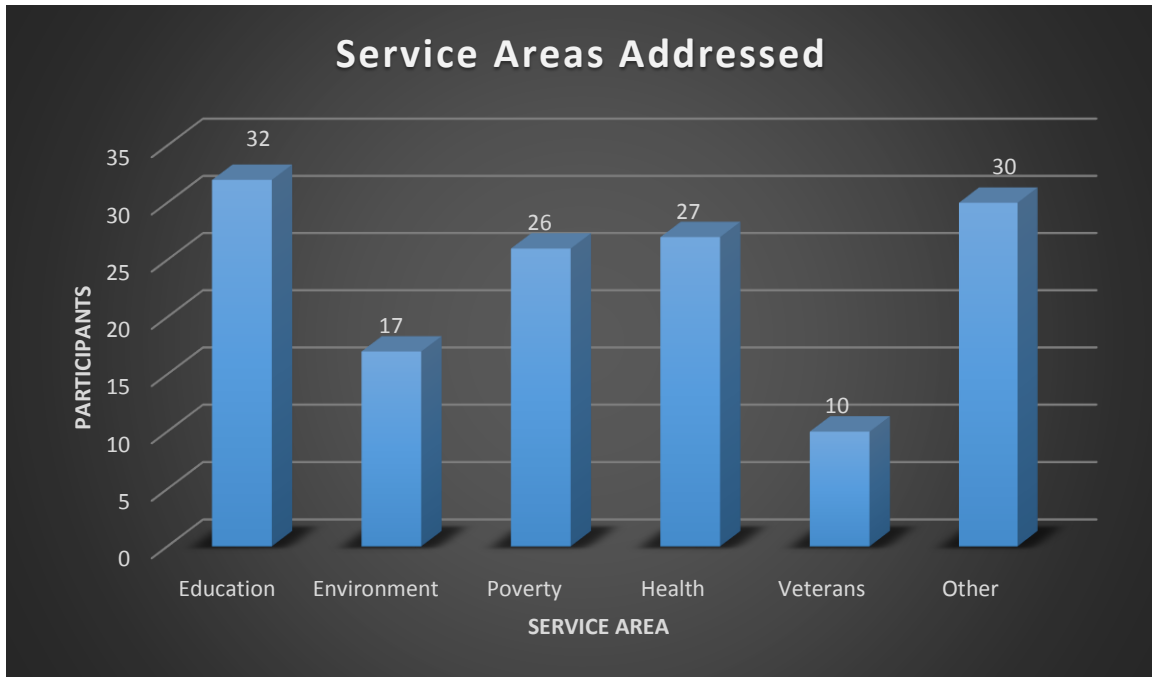
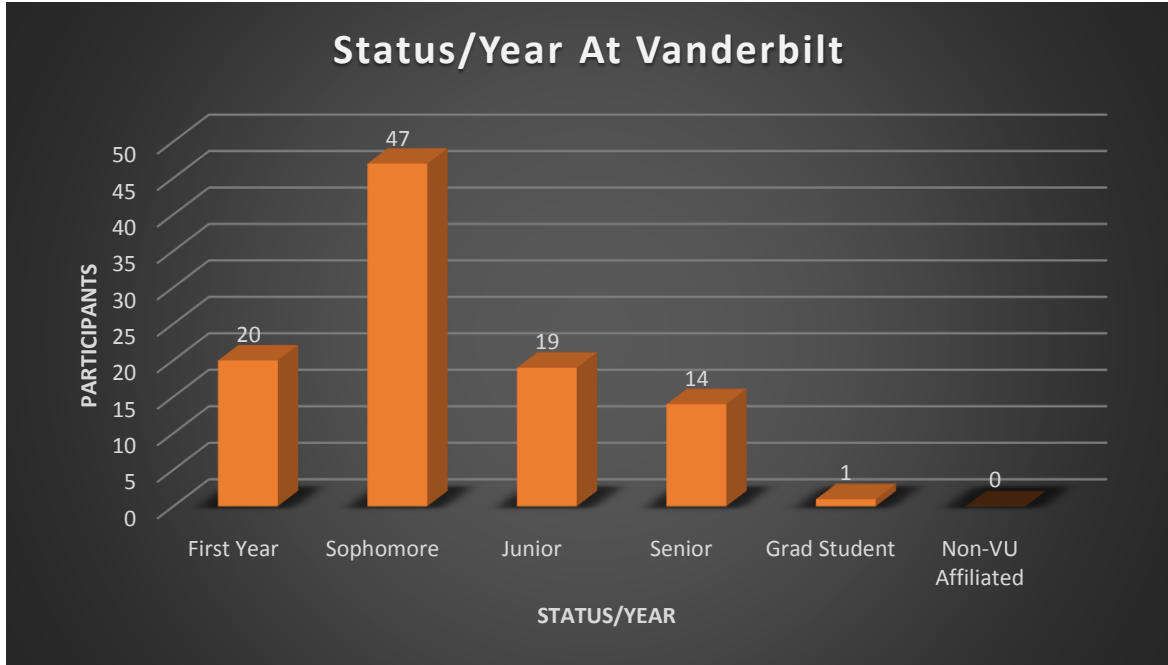
1. What is your current status/year at Vanderbilt? sophomore
2. Which VU student organization did you work with? VIEW
3. Please briefly describe the nature of your service project: we went to a senior home and played games with them
4. What service areas were addressed in your project? (check all that apply)  
 Education  Environment  Poverty  Health  Veterans  Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours did you volunteer for this project? 3
6. Please indicate the impact the MLK Weekend of Service made on you personally:  
 Transformative Impact  Strong Impact  Moderate Impact  Mild Impact  No Impact
7. Why did you participate in the Weekend of Service?  
through new, but I'm glad we went
8. How could your Weekend of Service experience been improved?  
Maybe a different weekend. I also didn't totally see how this related to MLK but super fun!

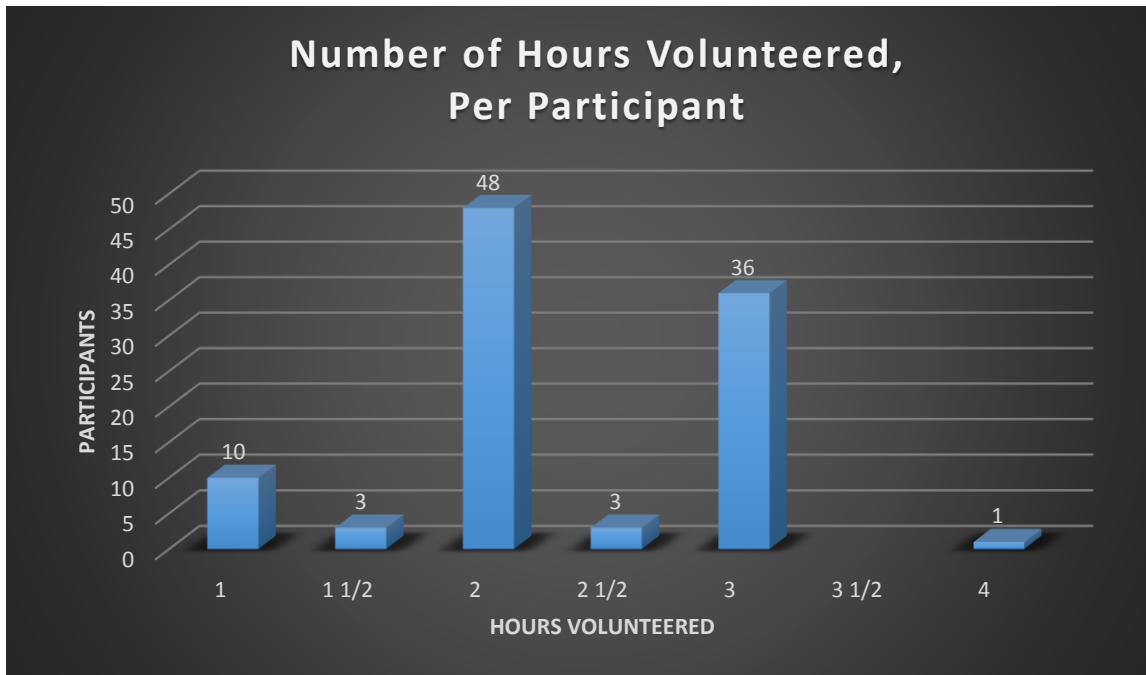
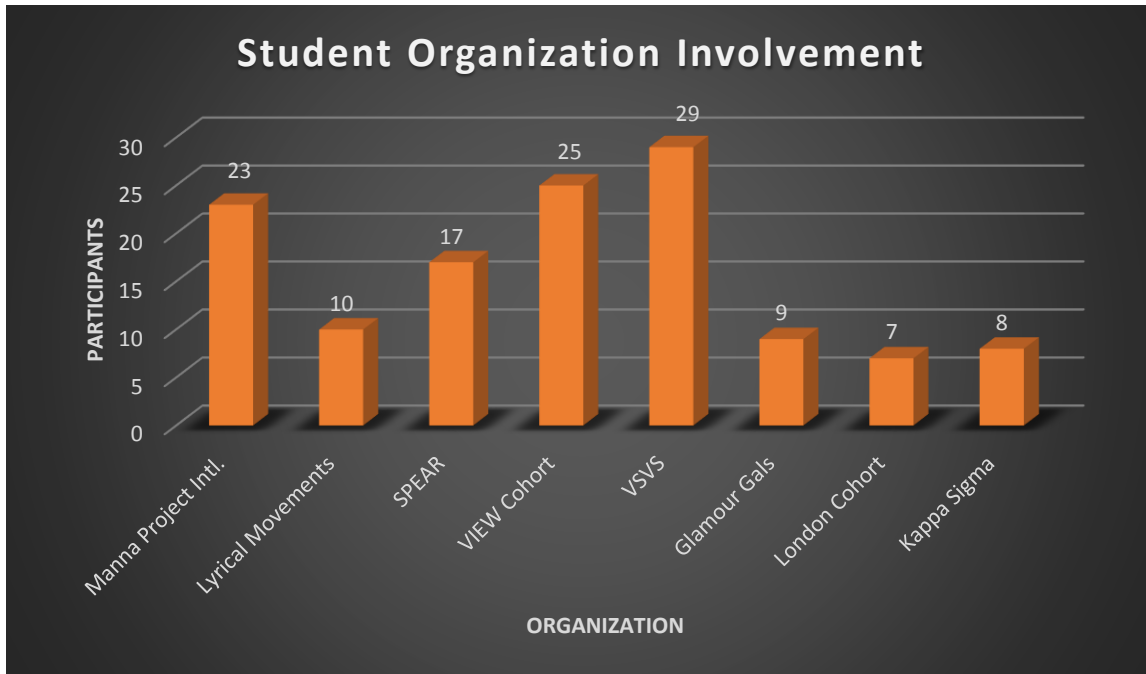


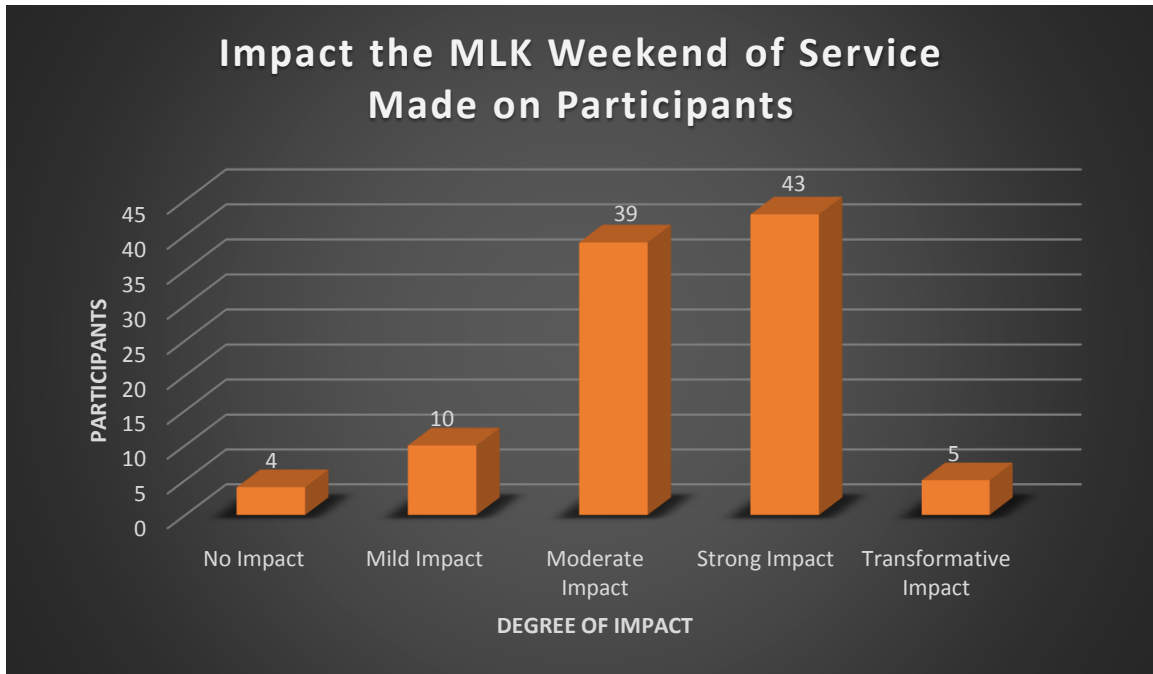
*Chancellor Zeppos and Mayor Barry join students in the MLK Joint Day of Service*

## **Survey Data**

All survey data was synthesized from the analysis of 101 paper surveys. The number of returned surveys represents approximately 49% of all MLK Weekend of Service volunteers.



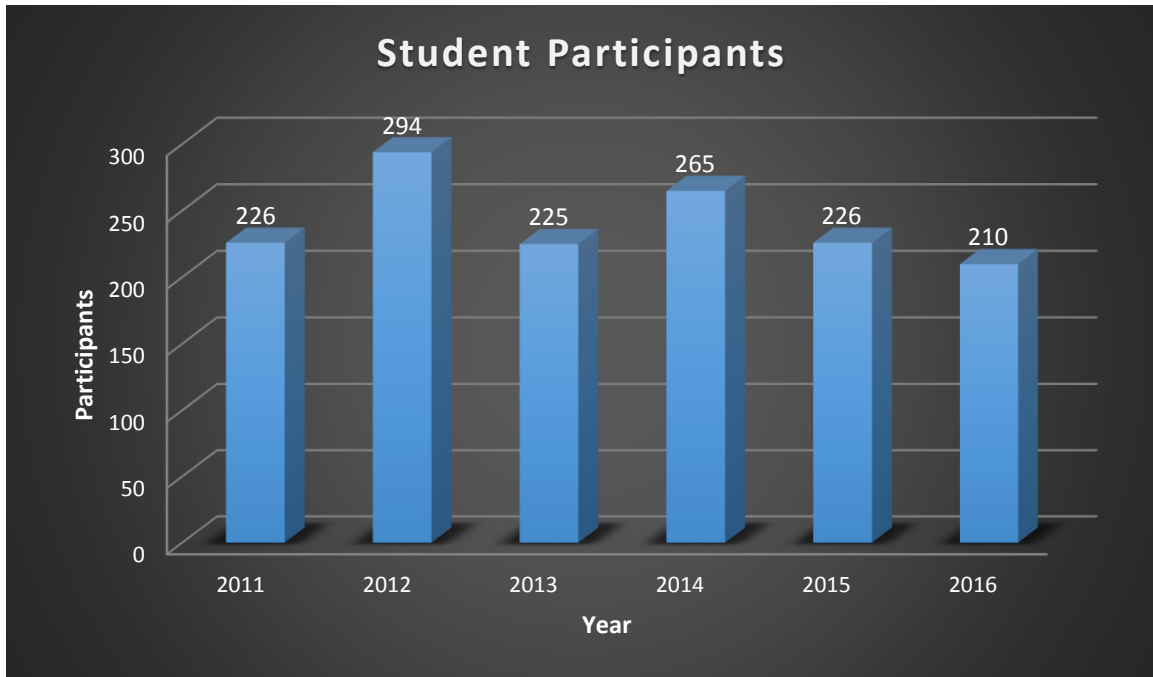




Student Organization	Community Partner
<b>Manna Project International</b>	Second Harvest Food Bank
<b>Alpha Phi Omega</b>	Hope Lodge
<b>Vanderbilt Students Volunteering for Science</b>	VSVS
<b>The Afterschool Program</b>	TAP
<b>Kappa Sigma Fraternity</b>	ThriftSmart Nashville
<b>Harmonies for the Elderly</b>	Crestview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
<b>Lyrical Movements</b>	Sing Me a Story Foundation
<b>Glamour Gals</b>	Nashville Dress for Success
<b>Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility (SPEAR)</b>	Hands on Nashville

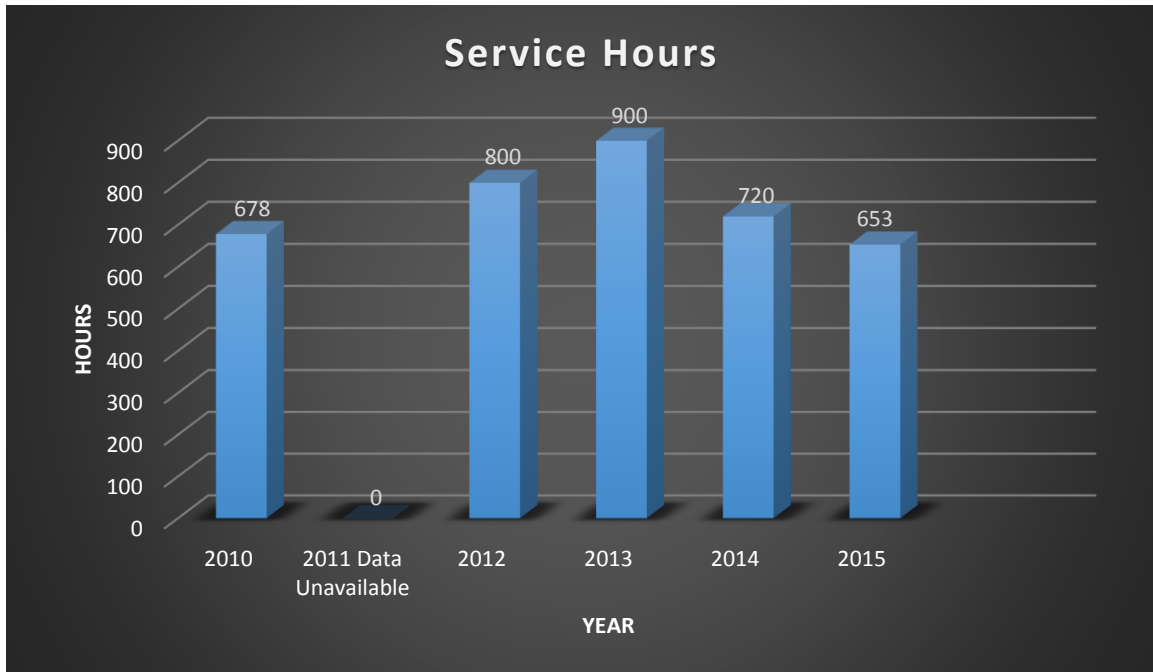
<b>Joint Project with Belmont, TSU, Trevecca, and Fisk</b>	Second Harvest Food Bank
<b>OACS Global Service Projects</b>	Safe Haven Family Shelter
<b>OACS London Global Service Project</b>	Second Harvest Food Bank
<b>OACS VIEW Cohort</b>	Morningside at Belmont Assisted Living
<b>Are You M.A.D.?</b>	TN Association of Blind Athletes
<b>Juggling and Physical Arts Club (JPAC)</b>	Nashville Tools for Schools
<b>Vanderbilt Garden Initiative (Vanderbilt Food Justice)</b>	Hands on Nashville

## Longitudinal Data and Analysis

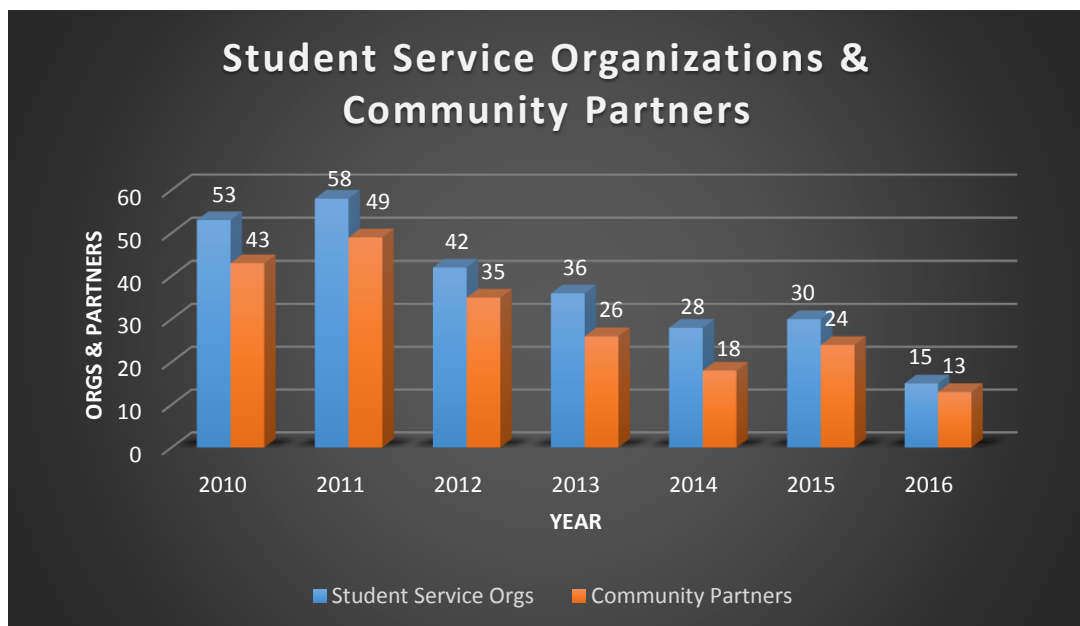


We see a decline in participation going forward from 2012. As 2012 was the second year of the program, students may have anticipated the repetition of this newly annual event. The 2015 decrease may be due to the increasingly developed programming surrounding the MLK Commemorative Weekend that draws students to a variety of learning opportunities across campus. As these events are not competitive, and participation in the Weekend of Service could be affected by the prevalence and benefits of these programs. In 2016, the decrease in participants is largely due to the conflict with Greek Recruitment. In order to better recruit for MLK Weekend of Service 2017, publicity of the event should begin in November. If service projects are registered by December, the beginning of spring semester can focus on recruitment of volunteers, which is easier than coordinating service projects.





We see a decline in the number of service hours completed since 2013. While this decline exists, it is not necessarily a negative outcome nor does it reflect negatively on the quality of the program itself. With fewer projects registered, the number of hours will likely decrease. Similarly, the amount of time spent volunteering is not indicative of the quality of the service provided or the depth of learning taking place for students' cognitive growth and community development.



The number of participating student organizations has decreased since the high-water mark of 2011, with a tapering effect of approximately 43 organizations for the past four years. The number of community partners has similarly decreased. There has historically been overlap between student organizations working with the same community partners. One aspect to focus on for 2017 will be the diversification of partnerships so we don't have multiple student groups working at the same place during the MLK Weekend of Service.