

Volunteers gather at Ivy Tech Community College to kick off the 2017 O'Bannon Institute Day of Service.



O'Bannon Institute Day of Service Makes Major Community Impact

Alisha Taylor remembers that the massive crates of potatoes at the Hoosier Hills Food Bank were stacked nearly as tall as she stands. Within a few hours, she and 24 other German American Bank staff members repackaged thousands of potatoes into smaller bags ready to be delivered to food pantries.



Alisha Taylor.
Photo by Martin Boling

On that same day, six Duke Energy staff members painstakingly constructed a Little Free Library that now graces a neighborhood street corner, providing books for adults and children.

That day in April was Ivy Tech's O'Bannon Institute Day of Service. More than 600 people from Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington and the community, including businesses, banks, and schools, volunteered their time and energy to benefit Bloomington and surrounding communities. They provided more than 1,000 hours of community service to 24 nonprofit organizations and agencies including Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Monroe County Public Library, Monroe Smart Start, and Shalom Community Center.

This year, for its 2018 Day of Service, Ivy Tech invites individuals and community partners to help it again reach its goal of providing 1,000 hours of community service on Friday, April 27.

"A small group of people can make a big impact, even for a day," says Taylor, a mortgage loan assistant for German



Bruce Calloway.
Photo by Martin Boling

American's north region, who helped organize its efforts. "If more people realized how a few hours can make such an astronomical difference, they would volunteer more often."

The Day of Service is part of Ivy Tech's O'Bannon Institute for Community Service. Established in 2004, the institute is an annual opportunity for the community

to come together to discuss issues of importance and unite in service to others.

Taylor says German American staff came together from all three regions to repackage potatoes and put together groups of donation bags for the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. She particularly enjoyed the day because she worked with employees she doesn't normally interact with—all wearing red company T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Standing Together." German American's reputation for community service, Taylor says, was a big factor in her decision to work there.

"We're all willing to pay back, and we're always looking for ways to get involved," she adds. "Ivy Tech made it easy for us to do that."

Duke Energy volunteers had the same positive experience, says Bruce Calloway, government and community relations manager for south-central Indiana. They opted to make a Little Free Library, a small, decorated box on a stand. Tools and building materials were supplied, and they followed kit instructions. "We did the gluing, screwing, and put on the roof," Calloway says. "It takes some work and you have to pay attention to what you're doing."

The Day of Service is "close to our hearts at Duke Energy," he explains, because the company's foundation previously donated \$5,000 to support the initiative. "We thought it would be great to be on the other side of it," Calloway says. He says the company plans to participate in the Day of Service again this year. "We're happy to be partnered with Ivy Tech on so many different levels."

Representatives of organizations on the receiving end of the initiative are also thankful to Ivy Tech and local volunteers.



Two groups of about 25 volunteers, including Ivy Tech's Youth Leadership Academy of middle school students and another group of Ivy Tech staff and high school students, volunteered at the Monroe County Public Library (MCPL). They worked inside and also did landscaping and cleaning of garden beds on library grounds.

Marilyn Wood, library director, says volunteers did a great job organizing and arranging books in the fiction area, as well as inspecting materials for damages and finding missing items in the children's section. "We're trying to create a safe and welcoming place," Wood says. "When those things look better, that can engage our community better."

Jennifer Kellams, assistant manager for access and content services, says she was impressed by the enthusiasm of the volunteers. "They seemed genuinely excited to be helping, and a couple [of the Ivy Tech staff] even expressed interest in volunteering at MCPL in the future."

Volunteers assisting Shalom Community Center painted a room at A Friend's Place, an overnight shelter for those experiencing homelessness. Sue Murphy, volunteer coordinator, says Shalom is dependent on volunteers on a regular basis to help provide services and work in its kitchen. But she says Shalom also needs help maintaining facilities and grounds. "It's wonderful when we have a group that is willing to spend a few hours and help us with those things," she says. "They showed initiative and got in there and got the job done."

For more information on the O'Bannon Institute for Community Service and the Day of Service, visit ivytech.edu/obannon.

• Barb Berggoetz

Day of Service April 27, 2018

Visit ivytech.edu/obannon
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