

Crew Leaders Needed for Cats in the Community Day

University Communications
October 2009

The University of Arizona Cats in the Community Day planning committee has selected its beneficiary for the University's signature volunteer event and is seeking crew leaders to begin planning for the 2010 improvement project.

The Wildcat School, a nonprofit charter middle school with ties to the UA, will get a makeover from UA volunteers in March. The school, which focuses on math and science, moved from its old home near 12th Avenue and Drexel Road into a new building at 25 E. Drachman St., near Stone Avenue, this year.

While teachers at the school have volunteered their efforts and worked with contractors to help transform what was once a dingy warehouse into a functioning school for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders, there is still work to be done.

That's where UA students and employees will have a chance to help.

Every year, hundreds of UA community members and local merchants come together for [Cats in the Community Day](#)^[1], a daylong volunteer event to make over one local nonprofit organization.

Last year, volunteers worked to revamp the facility for Project YES, an after-school tutoring and mentoring program in South Tucson. (*You can watch their efforts in the video ['UA Makes a Difference Through Cats in the Community Day'](#)*^[2].) The year before, the beneficiary was the Primavera Foundation, which works to fight poverty and homelessness in Tucson.

This year's beneficiary was chosen largely because its mission aligns so closely with that of the University, said Holly Altman, director of outreach and community partnerships in the Office of Community Relations, which organizes Cats in the Community Day.

At the [Wildcat School](#)^[3], UA students offer academic and social support as mentors for the middle schoolers, while University professors work with teachers at the school.

The Wildcat School's goal is to expand to include a high school next year, said the school's director, Lina Susee. Most of the school's students come from low-income families, and the intent is to help them go on to college and take advantage of the University's [Arizona Assurance](#)^[4] program, which pays for college for students from families with an annual income of \$42,400 or less.

As the school plans for its future, UA volunteers will show their support through volunteer projects such as painting, cleaning, helping with computer networking, holding book drives and much more, both during and leading up to Cats in the Community Day on March 6.

Planning for the event is under way, and crew leaders are needed in the following areas:

- Handyperson jobs – One or two people are needed to work with a small crew on jobs like installing doorstops, repairing ceiling fans, replacing window screens, installing clocks and fixing the intercom system.
- Construction – A person with construction experience may be needed to lead a team in building a stage for the school's cafeteria. An architect already has created a design and has a materials list. This project is dependent upon grant funding.
- Painting – People are needed to help organize paint crews and help paint shop volunteers and student art class leaders organize general volunteers and paint materials.
- Lunch – A leader is needed to plan and organize a team to serve lunch to volunteers.

General volunteers will be able to sign up for the event after the winter break, and an announcement will be sent out at that time via 3-D memo, Altman said. Last year, more than 300 people volunteered.

In addition to general projects, Cats Day volunteers also will work to make the Wildcat School campus a little "greener" in an effort to integrate one of the school's focus areas for the year – sustainability – into the project.

Volunteers, led by members of the UA's [PARASOL](#)^[5] rain harvesting club, will work to create sustainable gardens and a rainwater harvesting system for the school.

Also, as they did last year, UA art students, under the direction of art professor Jackson Boelts, will work to create a mural at the school.

Cats in the Community Day is made possible through grants and in-kind donations. This year's project already has received a \$5,000 grant from the Marshall Foundation, Altman said. Â

Susee said the project will be a big morale boost for the school.

"It's going to be phenomenal. Things are going to happen to the school that we've only dreamt of," Susee said. Â

The Wildcat School's other theme for the year challenges students to look to their heritage, culture and traditions to answer the question "Who am I?"

Susee said the Cats in the Community project will help the students feel a sense of pride in their school and in themselves.

"These kids come from backgrounds where they're loved but their families are struggling," she said. "I can hardly wait for the kids to come in and to watch their little faces beam."

Those interested in volunteering as project leaders should contact Altman at 626-4671 or haltman@email.arizona.edu ^[6]. More information is also available on the [Cats in the Community Day](#) ^[1] Web site.

Source URL: <https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/crew-leaders-needed-cats-community-day#comment-0>

Links

[1] <http://www.catsincommunity.arizona.edu/> [2] <http://uanews.org/node/24528> [3] <http://www.wildcataz.com/> [4] <https://financialaid.arizona.edu/assurance/default.aspx> [5] <http://www.sustainability.arizona.edu/studentinvolvement/groups/> [6] <mailto:haltman@email.arizona.edu>