THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE’S ALTERNATIVE BREAK PROGRAM

Spring Break 2023: March 13th – 18th

Alternative Break Info Packet
Application Due: February 10, 2023

About Spring Break Stay-cation

Spring Break Stay-cation is UNH’s Alternative Break program housed in the office of Civic & Community Engagement. Prior to 2020, UNH students have dedicated their Spring breaks to engaging in direct service to local and domestic communities. This immersive service trips partnered with community organization to support efforts such as youth education, environmental concerns, quality affordable housing, and poverty alleviation. These efforts were led by a student organization called Alternative Break Challenge, which hasn’t been able to run since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited to offer our first alternative break since 2019!

Alternative Break values:

To ensure meaningful and memorable trip experiences for all participants and leaders, the Alternative Break Program at University of New Hampshire adheres to the Eight Components of a Quality Alternative Break as described by Break Away®. The combination of direct service, social issue education, and daily reflections during the trip result in the most successful and transformative Alternative Breaks.

- **Strong Direct Service**: Programs provide opportunities for participants to engage directly with community members through hands-on projects and activities. Projects are informed by community identified assets and needs in conjunction with community partners.

- **Full Engagement**: Alternative breaks provide participants with an opportunity to live in line with community, program, or trip specific values. Programs should create opportunities for individuals to consider ways of aligning values and actions with regard to choices about the alternative break experience. Examples include: accommodations, food, team selection, technology, transportation, packing, and spending money. One clear example of Full Engagement is the Alcohol & Drug-Free component inherent within alternative breaks. Strong programs develop and communicate philosophies and corresponding practices around how participants will approach these topics during an alternative break.

- **Diversity and Social Justice**: Alternative break programs include participants representing the range of students present in the campus community. Leaders recruit for, design, implement, and evaluate their program with this end in mind. Strong programs engage participants in dialogue that furthers understanding of how systems of power, privilege, and oppression relate to social issues and service work in communities. This deepened awareness enables students to do more responsible, sustainable, and impactful community work.
• **Orientation**: Before, during, and after the alternative break experience, participants and leaders engage in discussions designed to introduce the communities, organizations, and projects with which they are engaging, and to explore the trip itinerary and get to know one another.

• **Education**: Pre-trip activities and readings provide a framework of intersecting perspectives developed to help participants understand the root causes and effects of social issues, provide context for the issue as it relates to the host community, and connect participants’ personal life choices and experiences to the topic.

• **Training**: Throughout the entire alternative break experience, participants and leaders receive adequate training in skills necessary to carry out service activities during the trip. Leaders receive additional training to prepare them for the experience of facilitating a positive trip experience for peer participants. Ideally, participants gain life-long skills that provide them with opportunities to engage in their community upon return from the trip.

• **Reflection**: Leaders will engage the team in daily reflection discussions and activities, synthesizing service, education, and community immersion components. Time is set aside for this to take place individually and as a group, and occurs both organically and through structured activities.

• **Reorientation**: Back on campus, leaders and participants have the opportunity to share their experiences with others and transfer lessons they’ve learned through continued education, service, advocacy, and/or philanthropy. Participants reflect on how to make informed choices moving forward that benefit others.

**Leaders:**

Two students will serve as the co-site leaders of the Alternative Break trip and will ultimately be responsible in leading all aspects of the trip. A co-leader can:

• Balance your strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps you are miraculously alert, cheerful and inspired both early in the morning and late at night . . . but could use some help with financial record-keeping.

• Provide checks on your thorough preparation. For example, before your break begins, it is important that you confirm orientation plans—and it is good for your effectiveness, and definitely for your sanity, to have a fellow participant double-check your plans during the planning process.

• Share the responsibilities. For example, two days before break, when you have a paper due in a class you have been neglecting, you will be ecstatic that your teammate can go to Civic & Community Engagement office to pick up any necessary paperwork or speak with the program coordinator about a certain issue.

• Address the needs of different participants: Some people respond better to extroverts, or maybe to those more quiet, approachable personalities; others are most relaxed and willing to participate in the company of women/men or both. For this reason, it is best to try to pair people who balance each other, who are of different genders, and whose strengths combine to be an “Ideal Site Leader”.

Trip Elements

Direct Service
All Alternative Break trips engage in projects and activities that address unmet social needs as determined by the community. Depending on the trip’s focus issue, this direct service could look like building a house, serving meals, working at an after-school program, trail maintenance, and more. The work is physically demanding and emotional, but your full participation will lead you to gaining new skills, building meaningful relationships, and working towards a more socially just world.

Education + Reflection
Service is just one part of social justice and active citizenship. The combination of direct service, social issue education, and daily reflections lead to the most successful and transformative Alternative Breaks. Trip and community leaders will facilitate discussions and reflections to build a deeper understanding of service and community.

Accommodations

Housing
For participants who live in a residence hall that is a vacation or break hall, they will be able to stay in their spring housing assignment at no extra cost. Students that live on-campus in non-vacation halls will be placed in alternate on-campus housing and Civic & Community Engagement will cover the cost. Students who live off-campus will remain in their existing housing.

Meals
Dining plans will be in place, so you will swipe in for breakfast and dinner. If you do not have a meal plan, we will cover the cost. Lunches will be in the community, either pre-packed or purchased while we are out. CCE will cover any costs associated with ensuring all participants have 3 meals per day. Participants will be responsible for any additional snacks they may want.

Transportation
We will be using Extension’s 12-person van each day. Leaders will be driving the van and will be defensive driving certified and have a clean driving record. We may take busses or trains for some parts of the trip, the costs of which will be covered by CCE.

Required Meetings
After submitting your online application, applicants will be required to participate in a 15 minute Zoom meeting with one of the Alternative Break leaders. This will be a chance to answer any questions the applicant may have an ensure that they are ready to contribute to the experience of the cohort.

There will be a pre-trip meeting set once all the participants are selected. You will get to know your fellow Alt Breakers and learn more about the host sites and social issues related to the trip.