We welcome the responsibility to serve

"We welcome the responsibility to serve" is an aspect of the Loras College Catholic identity statement which resonates especially well with students. Over Thanksgiving Break, fifteen students traveled to McKee, Kentucky, to continue the longest running service trip tradition at Loras. The team worked with St. Paul's parish to address needs in this Appalachian community. Fifty-three students, faculty, and staff spent the January break week in a variety of service trips focused on working side by side with those in need. In April during Holy Week, another dozen students will take it a step further by serving in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. communities, as well as, participating in social action efforts and the legislative process in our nation's capital. These annual trips to locations both domestic and abroad provide Loras students with a unique experience designed with service as its core foundation; and reflection on the need for systemic change in light of Catholic Social Teaching. These are great opportunities for students, faculty and staff advisors will work alongside residents of the communities they visit to address human, social and environmental needs.

Thus far this year the service trips which have taken place include:

**Thanksgiving Break (November 19-25, 2011) - McKee, KY**

The longest standing trip in Loras' Service Trip history, this trip is focused on helping the local residents at St. Paul's Parish. Students work on housing improvements, visit with the elderly and learn about the Appalachian people. Students also organize a Thanksgiving dinner and entertainment for residents of the area. Loras student teams have been making this trip for over 30 years!

**New Orleans, Louisiana (January 21~28, 2012)**

Loras students will be working through PNOLA to continue to help with the reconstruction of the devastation still left behind by Hurricane Katrina six years ago. Students perform hands-on work not only with the reconstruction of homes, but they also work hand-in-hand with the people of the New Orleans community in order to help them rebuild their lives.

**Morton, Mississippi - Sisters of St. Francis (January 22~28, 2012)**

Morton, Mississippi, is a predominantly African American and immigrant, rural, Southern community which experiences high unemployment and school drop-out rates. Working with the Dubuque Franciscan sisters there, the Loras team will assist with outreach in local high schools, after-school tutoring programs, and presence to the elderly, as well as, learn about the history and culture of the area. "It's a great opportunity to immerse yourself in a community different than your own, and not only serve others but learn from them," said Dain Leytem ('11), supervising adult on the Morton, Miss., trip.

**APUFRAM - Flores, Honduras (January 22-28, 2012)**

This trip involves working with APUFRAM schools and programs, an organization that provides services to the people in this rural area of Flores, Honduras. The Loras team will serve the community in many different ways. They will spend time with the children at various sites around the Comayagua Valley, visit English classes, partake in daily spiritual activities, work on labor projects, visit the local towns, and do sports and crafts with the children.

**Glenmary Farm - Vanceburg, Kentucky (January 21~28, 2012)**

On this trip, Loras volunteers will take part in an immersion experience that blends service, prayer and a simple community lifestyle at the Glenmary Farm. The team will work on construction projects, in nursing homes, adult daycare centers, and a food pantry, and on many other activities around the farm and in the community. In the process of learning about the Appalachian culture, students often find that they learn a lot about themselves and the people they are serving.

**Louverture Cleary School/The Haitian Project -Croix des Bouquet, Haiti**
This trip involves working in a coeducational, Catholic boarding school which nurtures academically talented and motivated students from the poorest Haitian families to maximize their potential and enable them to work toward building a Haiti where justice & peace thrive. The team stays within the school compound (walled campus) and works alongside the students and staff on campus improvements and labor-intensive projects.

According to Kevin O'Brien ('11), special projects manager and a trip advisor, “Service to the community is at the forefront of the Loras mission, but it's not just a statement. Students' willingness to put themselves out there, learning, reflecting, and growing themselves and the community is where the mission comes to life. Sometimes it's hard work, but with many Duhawks lending their hands, it makes it fun, light work.”