

Headlines



“ATHLETES GIVING BACK” SUPPORT ROCK ISLAND COMMUNITY

May 10, 2006

April 29th was a cool, soggy day for Augustana College students to volunteer their time and especially their effort to help out the [Broadway Historic District](#) Association in Rock Island. More than 40 volunteers from Athletes Giving Back and students and faculty from the [Augustana College](#) Geography Department worked with neighborhood residents to spread mulch where it was needed along 17th Street.

In 2001, the City of Rock Island renovated 17th Street, which is a major traffic arterial through the Broadway neighborhood, complete with new decorative lampposts, street signs, planters, perennials and saplings. Over time, mulch from these areas has been washed or blown away. New mulch was needed on 17th street, and Athletes Giving Back and the geography students helped with the backbreaking work.

Working through light drizzle and rain for nearly four hours, the volunteers finished the project ahead of schedule. Work included clearing organic and non-organic debris out of planting areas, unloading and spreading mulch, and even removing and trimming some trees. By the end of the morning, almost every volunteer had filled a trash bag with yard waste, sticks, trash, and other debris. It was a muddy, hard job, but the students were good-natured and very efficient. In a steady rain, two carloads of students from Athletes Giving Back helped neighborhood residents unload a dump truck overflowing with yard waste at the city's Public Works department.

Student Erin Blecha helped recruit volunteers from Athletes Giving Back, while Dr. Charlie Mahaffey brought in the geography students. Primary organizers for the project included Tim Brinkmann, a senior in the geography department who is also an intern in the Rock Island Community & Economic Development Department, and Jill



Doak, a neighborhood planner for the City of Rock Island and a 1987 graduate of Augustana College.

The Augustana College grounds crew, City of Rock Island [Parks Department](#), and the City of Rock Island [Public Works Department](#) all donated tools for the effort. Mulch was acquired from Kodiak Construction, and Kodiak Construction's owner, Dan Carothers, offered his time and one of his trucks to help out with the project. Rock Island Clean and Beautiful donated gloves and trash bags for every volunteer.

Seventeenth Street looks clean and neat once again, just in time for the annual [Broadway Tour of Homes](#) to be held May 20 and 21. The neighborhood will host more than a thousand visitors for this annual event. The Broadway Historic District Association is a group of Rock Island residents who actively promote the historic architecture and quality of life in this Victorian-era neighborhood. Broadway is located between 7th and 14th Avenues and 17th and 23rd Streets in Rock Island, or approximately 10 blocks west of the Augustana College campus.

"We're so grateful for the hard work by all the students," said Ms. Doak. "It means 17th Street will show nicely as visitors arrive. With the average age of our neighborhood volunteers being in the 50's, and with a fairly large number of absentee landlords along 17th Street, the help of the students was vital."