

A&M students take class project one step further to help raise toys for local charity

By RHONDA REINHART
Staff writer

cramped living conditions of its inhabitants, the group realized it actually wanted to implement the unity it had for the campaign.

Washington, a senior agriculture development major with an emphasis on public relations and leadership, said the group realized it could make its project a reality and give something back to the community.

"We felt it was important to focus on the children," he said. "Nothing hurts me more to see tears in the eyes of a young person. It really grabbed hold of us — trying to help out here."

Washington said eight different personalities united to make this project a success.

"We've come together and created a common vision greater than ourselves," he said. "We saw a need for something, and we met those needs. Everyone sincerely believed in it — that we could make at least one child's life better."

On Saturday, Nov. 22, the group will be holding a toy and book drive to benefit abused children seeking shelter at Phoebe's Home.

The group's project became real, in part, because of the help it received from the community.

Various businesses and student groups donated time, capital and resources to make the toy and book drive possible.

The group also has a television commercial advertising the drive and providing awareness about domestic violence that is going to air more than 300 times on various television stations.

Washington thinks the toy and book drive could be something Phoebe's Home could turn into an annual or biannual event.

Kern-Foxworth said she is really pleased with the work the group has done because the students were not required to go out and do this.

"The enthusiasm the students have is infectious," she said. "They got me enthused. They're just bubbling over. This is what a professor lives for — seeing students thrilled about working hard. That group is a shining example."

Litzler, a senior speech communications major, said knowing the project was going to be a reality made it more exciting.

"We weren't really pumped about doing a mock project," she said. "It's made us more motivated to know we were actually doing it. It's neat to know that we are going to help the children and make their lives a little better. Our teacher almost fell over when we told her."

Litzler said even though she is excited about the toy and book drive, she is worried about the turnout.

"I knew it was going to be a big job," she said. "But it's all coming together now, and it's making me nervous. I'm just so excited. I can't wait."

Kern-Foxworth said the Phoebe's Home project has given the students a chance to apply the knowledge they learn in class.

"Experience is always the best teacher," she said. "It gives them the opportunity to see the community in action and what it feels like to give back to the community."

When the group was formed, the students hardly knew each other. But since the beginning of the semester, they have met at least once a week and sometimes as many as three times a week to work on the project. They have brought together their different styles and ideas to produce a finished product that went above and beyond what was required in class.

Washington said he has had bad experiences with group projects in the past, but he said he has enjoyed working with this group.

"This has been an awesome group to work with," he said. "They are going to make an employer one day a tremendous employee."

Groans and rolled eyes are often typical responses to the assignment of a group project. But for eight students in Marilyn Kern-Foxworth's Public Relations and Mass Studies course, the mournful crowds and bad attitudes were replaced with the desire to put out quality work and make a difference in society.

J.W. Washington, Karen Litzler, Jessamyn Boultinghouse, Elke Simmons, Jason Langridge, Tatsuki Ohashi, Kara Olin and April Bailey were to design a mock public relations campaign for Phoebe's Home, a center that provides counseling, support and shelter for abused women and children.

Following the steps of the public relations process, the group of students talked with representatives of Phoebe's Home and researched the center's needs and services. They designed a logo for the home and developed a strategy to increase public awareness of Phoebe's Home and domestic violence.

But after the students visited Phoebe's Home and saw the



DEREK DEMERE/THE BATTALION

From top left) Tatsuki Ohashi, Jason Langridge, J.W. Washington, Karen Litzler, Kara Olin, Jessamyn Boultinghouse, Elke Simmons and April Bailey designed the public relations campaign for Phoebe's Home, a shelter for battered women and children.

GHOST

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SG: Oh yes. In fact, I took a big pole today and shed a sack of kitties out the river. They're still floating up water!

[Brak joins the conversation]

Q: Hi Brak. How are you?
Brak: Oh, you know. I'm cutting muffins.

Q: Brak, what exactly are you?

Brak: I'm a cat-monkey. That's what I am. If you took a cat, and a monkey, and fused them together, that's what you'd get.

Q: It seems to me that—
B: It seems to me that you've lived your life like a

candle in the wind! Sorry.
Q: It seems you've ridden Space Ghost's coattails into the limelight. Are there any takeover plans or movie deals of your own in the works?

B: I am not at liberty to talk about that right now. My agent has told me to keep my mouth shut.

Q: Do you have any

plans to join Ted Turner's World Championship Wrestling organization in the fight against the NWO?

B: I think the NWO is a farce. I think that Hulk Hogan will rise up again and become the good man that he is. I saw those movies he was in. I saw Mr. Nanny. He is not the bad man he claims he is.

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