The eleventh annual Pace Makes a Difference Day exceeded the number of volunteers from last year by over 30 students. Not only did approximately 300 Pace students sacrifice sleep on a Saturday morning, but they traded it in to spend their day in the chilling rain to support local organizations. Students crowded into the Gottesman room at 9 a.m. to listen to a motivational speech given by their peer to set the tone for the day.

“What I said in my speech was you have to ask how you can help and then you can take that prep and action to making that happen,” student speaker and senior Rohana Sosa said.

Pace Makes a Difference Day is an event designed to give students the opportunity to volunteer their time on or off campus with a local organization of their choosing. With some exceptions, most of the organizations that partner with Pace for this day change each year. Out of the 12 organizations, two had to cancel due to inclement weather. Students get to choose where they would like to volunteer if they sign up ahead of time, but this year, over 50 students who missed the sign-up deadline came to participate anyway.

“No matter how good gets done, it’s still something to help somebody else,” Graduate Assistant for Leadership Initiatives Carlos Mercedes Meran said. “I’m happy to see that on a day like this, people still came out.”

The organizations include Family Resource Center, Rockefeller State Park, Valhalla Ambulance Corps, Mount Pleasant Public Library, Lifting Up Westchester, Westchester Land Trust, Audubon Marsh Sanctuary, Pace Nature Center, P4K, and Campus Cleanup. The two cancellations were from Pleasantville Garden Club and Westchester Parks Foundation.

“Each event is different,” Meran said. “[For one], we work with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we will have painting, making cards, things like that.”
This voluntary event had a diverse turnout of students including students from almost every Greek Life organization and players from sports teams including swimming and diving, baseball, lacrosse, and volleyball. Students do not need any experience to volunteer and do good for the community.

“I did a lot of volunteer work in the Dominican Republic that really touched me and moved me in so many ways,” Sosa said. “I really wanted to bring that awareness here today, because if you don’t take action on creating a change, it’s never going to happen.”

Although the graduate assistant in charge of the event historically changes each year, Meran is eager to run this event next year and make certain changes for the better. He is looking into working more directly with different colleges, such as Dyson, and getting more faculty involved in the future.

“It brings a bigger sense of community to Pace,” Meran said. “I want to increase that sense of community to Pace. I made it my goal to have more signups than last year, and I did.”

To view the full article online, please visit: https://pacechronicle.com/feature/2018/10/13/pace-makes-a-difference-day-exceeds-expected-turnout/