

Newhouse PR students to highlight ‘green’ work at SU Showcase

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Going “green” for a group of Newhouse public relations students doesn’t mean hopping on the sustainability bandwagon with some superficial eco-friendly spin just to attract publicity. For the members of Hill Communications, the Newhouse School’s student-run public relations agency, it’s all about service and giving back through green initiatives to help Hill’s clients achieve their communications goals.

Hill Communications will be highlighting some of their recent green activities during the upcoming *SU Showcase* event to take place on May 2 in the Schine Student Center. The focus will be on their efforts to green the City of Syracuse’s parks on behalf of client Syracuse Parks Conservancy (SPC).

“I feel really fortunate to be working with a client like Syracuse Parks Conservancy,” says Victoria Napoli, junior public relations major and Hill’s SPC account supervisor. “They’re doing lots of great things to make the city’s parks more sustainable, while also involving the community. SPC initiatives like Earth Day cleanups, tree plantings and maintaining cross country ski trails are getting residents involved and helping the environment.”

From jumpstarting Syracuse Parks Conservancy’s Twitter account and helping design their brochure to assisting with special events, Hill Communications is seeing a renewed interest in Syracuse’s green spaces. The group’s focus on youth outreach has been an important component of its urban parks initiative.

“We see lots of great benefits from getting kids involved,” says Napoli. “The parks allow them to enjoy open spaces, fresh air and the wonder of nature. Outdoor activities also keep kids physically active, which can help combat childhood obesity. Working with SPC to get children involved with the local parks will hopefully keep them coming back for years to come.”

Napoli and some of her fellow Hill members recently participated in the Comstock KidFest, the Syracuse University Service Organization’s carnival event held at Flanagan Gym for Syracuse City School District children. Hill teamed up with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry’s *Green Campus Initiative* (GCI) student group to have the kids plant flower seeds using GCI’s homemade compost. Hill also had an SPC display on hand to provide information on all that the parks have to offer. Earlier this semester, Hill helped SPC put on its sixth annual Snowman Convention for Syracuse City School students. Students made snowmen using a variety of materials, including some reused and recycled, which were then displayed at Meachem and Sunnycrest ice rinks.

The group’s most recent community service endeavor also highlighted its environmental enthusiasm and excitement for working with children. Hill members visited the Golisano

Children's Hospital on April 20 to "bring the outdoors inside" for the kids at the hospital by helping them decorate and plant seeds in personalized flower cups. After they finished the craft activity, the children had the opportunity to trace their hand on a large banner titled "Give Earth A Hand." The finished banner will be hung on display in one of the hospital's lounges.

"Our goal was to bring the beauty of the environment inside to kids who might not have the opportunity to play outside as much as they want to," Napoli says. "It's an incredible feeling to know you have brightened a child's day by simply helping them plant a seed."

Going green isn't a totally new direction for Hill Communications. Last fall it held the "Drop Your Jeans" campaign and collected more than 500 pairs of donated denim jeans that were then recycled into natural fiber home insulation. The group also recently redesigned its logo to give it a greener, more organic feel that's more in line with its eco-friendly approach.

"We're definitely conscious of environmental issues and doing our part to help make the world a better place," says Cristina Nogueras, junior public relations major and one of Hill's account executives for the SPC account. "By being more sustainable and helping our clients to do the same, we truly are the green communications firm that we're branding ourselves as."