For Immediate Release

Teamwork was the buzz word for more than 300 Georgia Perimeter College students, faculty and staff members who turned out for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

With the theme of “Beyond the Dream,” the GPC teams fanned out to a dozen sites in metro Atlanta, including the Carver Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta, Clarkston Community Center, and the Brook Run Dog Park in Dunwoody. Spending more than 1,200 volunteer hours, the groups dug ditches, cleared brush and painted schools and community centers, among other projects. At the Carver Boys and Girls Club, GPC volunteers were joined by a cadre of helpers from the Harland Clarke Corporation, who helped sponsor the event.

“Dr. King was such a big advocate of being an agent of change in your community, so we decided to put the focus on civic engagement,” said GPC event organizer Angela Avery-Jones.

Jacquita Brown, a freshman at GPC, had never volunteered before. “This was my first time to do community service, but I thought, why not come out and do something that would benefit others,” she said.

Brown was among dozen volunteers at Brook Run Dog Park in Dunwoody. She and her team dug up boulders and roots and wielded pick axes and shovels to clear a 150-foot drainage ditch in the park.

Wearing an “I love GPC” t-shirt, David Bennett trudged through the mud at the dog park. “I go to school on the Dunwoody Campus, and I thought this would be a good way to give back to the community,” said the math education major.

“We needed this ditch so water would flow to the drain,” said Laine Sweezy, president of the non-profit Brook Run Dog Park Association.
“Hundreds of people use this park, but it’s a completely volunteer effort. That’s why GPC’s service group effort is so important to our organization.”

In downtown Stone Mountain, students helped direct parade-goers during that city’s annual MLK Day parade. “I was serving others, but also learning history at the same time,” said Phebe Dowels, a GPC Decatur Campus student who worked on the project. “As a kid, I had listened to Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, but it was the first time I was actually there in Stone Mountain, and applying what I had heard in that speech,” she said.

Nearby, at the base of Stone Mountain, another group of GPC volunteers cut overgrown bushes and brush and cleared walking trails of invasive plants, opening up space for native plants.

Khadijah Hawkins, a GPC pre-nursing student, relished the opportunity to be outside, as did Samuel Powers, a business administration student. “I love this, especially anything that gets me outside and working in the community,” said Hawkins, who was busy pulling privet and brush from a trail. Powers, who is president of the business club on Clarkston, was “just happy to get outside after being stuck inside all week with the snow.”

“We never would have been able to clear this area by ourselves,” said Naomi Thompson, an education instructor at Stone Mountain Park. “The volunteers were a big help, and will help open up this area... I’m excited to see what native plants will grow.”

Over at Clarkston Campus, students, faculty and staff took up pens instead of pick axes to write thank you notes to military personnel. The “Project A Million Thanks” is a year-round campaign to show appreciation to U.S. military members serving our country.

“This is the least I can do. I don’t have money, but I have time,” said Whitney Durrah, a political science major. “Plus, it feels good to do this.”

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Georgia Perimeter College, the third largest institution of the University System of Georgia, serves more than 25,000 students through four campuses and several sites in metro Atlanta. For additional information, visit www.gpc.edu.