

# Involvement opportunities abound for SIUE students

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**EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville** students explored boundless opportunities to get involved on campus and volunteer their time and talents throughout the community during this week's Student Organization Activities Fair and Volunteer Fair. Both events were coordinated by the Kimmel Student Involvement Center.

The Student Organization Activities Fair, held Monday-Tuesday, Aug. 29-30, featured informational booths from some of the University's nearly 300 student organizations.

"Student organizations are the most popular way that our students get involved on campus," said Michelle Welter, associate director of the Kimmel Student Involvement Center. "This is a great way for freshmen students especially, who are trying to figure out what they want to do on campus, to connect with the SIUE community and find their home here."

The diverse array of groups represented at the fair included academic clubs, club sports, religious organizations, and more. Student Leslie Hardin signed up to learn more about the annual St. Jude Up 'til Dawn event.

“I have a cousin who just passed away from pancreatic cancer, so I want to help raise money for other kids who are trying to fight it and beat it,” Hardin explained. “When I graduate I want to leave knowing that I was involved in something positive, a good cause.”

Computer engineering major Jonathan Pittman represented the National Society of Black Engineers during the event, sharing the group's mission with students who stopped to inquire.

“We're trying to increase the number of culturally responsible engineers in the field, so we're out here trying to network and get more people to join,” Pittman said.

On Thursday, Aug. 31, approximately 40 local non-profit organizations participated in the Volunteer Fair. The groups ranged from awareness and philanthropic non-profits to health care and educational organizations.

“The Volunteer Fair is something that students look forward to every year to find out how they can get involved and give back,” said Sarah Laux, assistant director of civic engagement in the Kimmel Student Involvement Center. “Students can connect with different organizations for service-learning and volunteer-internship opportunities. Each group here offers great hands-on experiences.”

“I just want to get involved, meet new people and find ways to help the community,” said sophomore Deena Vecchiollo as she perused the booths.

“I want to figure out more ways members of our fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, can volunteer and give back to the community,” explained Parth Maheshwari, a senior majoring in biological sciences, with a specialization in medical science.

Community organizations attending the event emphasized how SIUE students exude the values and personal drive they're interested in to fulfill their volunteer opportunities.

“The opportunity to come here and meet these SIUE students who are so passionate and energetic about giving back is a huge opportunity for us to build our volunteer base and have people connected to our mission,” said Laura Roeseler, development director for Girls on the Run St. Louis.