



University Name:

California State University, Chico

Organization Name:

Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE)

Organization Website:

<http://www.aschico.com/cave>

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Background

Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) is a student-run organization on the CSU, Chico campus and has the largest student participation of any campus organization. CAVE is a nationally recognized volunteer organization that has been serving the community since 1966. Each year CAVE has over 90 student staff and four professional staff who operate 16 different community service programs and support faculty using experiential learning as pedagogy in CSU, Chico courses. CAVE's motto "Life is for Learning" supports the program's philosophy that the community is a compelling classroom for hands-on learning. CAVE's student volunteers work with children, older adults, veterans, and the homeless, as well as working on environmental projects and with local animal shelters.

Mission and Purpose

CAVE's mission is to provide Chico State students with meaningful volunteer opportunities, to develop student leaders, and to serve a broad base of community needs.

CAVE's purpose is to connect students at California State University, Chico to their community through volunteerism and sustain the operation of all 16 programs successfully. In addition, we place a strong emphasis developing professional and leadership skills to our student staff members participating in our organization.

Structure

CAVE is a hierarchical organization where student leaders have increasing responsibility and supervise one another in specific community engagement projects. Exemplary volunteers in the programs are hired as group leaders. Group leaders recruit, screen, supervise, and evaluate the volunteers enrolled in their specific programs. Coordinators oversee specific programs, supervising group leaders, providing overall direction for the program, and facilitating communication with community partners. Because of the size and scope of CAVE—90 student leaders and more than 1,500 volunteers and service-learning students placed annually—an additional level of leadership was established around "program areas" such as Kids Programs, Community Connection Programs, Weekend Immersion Programs, Experiential Learning, Operations, and Outreach. Six student directors and four professional staff form the leadership team and oversee each of the six program areas within CAVE, providing overall direction and support to the student leaders in their area.

Motivation for Providing Service

Civic engagement efforts are inherent to an individual's success in higher education. The concept that the community is a classroom and students learn from hands-on-experience fosters leadership and professional development. Civic engagement reinforces the original principle of higher education, which is the development of leaders and community improvement. Being involved and connected with volunteerism are associated with higher GPA, leadership, retention rates, professional development, and graduation.

The community of Chico needs these civic engagement efforts that CAVE provides to offer support to underserved populations like children, older adults, veteran's, environment, people who are homeless, and sheltered animals. These populations are served through the various programs at CAVE. Each year more than 1,500 student volunteers participate in these programs, providing over 46,000 hours of community service.

Strategy and Activities

I. Retreat:

Prior to every semester, the CAVE Leadership Team facilitates a three day retreat to provide professional and leadership development to the 90 student staff members preparing them for the upcoming semester. New staff members are given all the tools to succeed in order to hire, train, and evaluate volunteers. Through workshops and staff bonding, retreat sets the tone for the new semester.

II. Recruitment:

Recruitment occurs during the first three weeks of the semester where CAVE staff members recruit Chico State students to volunteer in one of the fifteen programs. Every staff member is required to table for three hours and present seven CAVE talks informing classes about the opportunities within CAVE. During this period, staff collects applications, interview volunteers, and train volunteers through orientations.

III. Volunteer Maintenance:

Throughout the semester, group leaders are in constant communication with their volunteers. Every three weeks they give their volunteers care calls. Care calls check in with the volunteers to ensure they are not experiencing difficulties in their placement, current with their service hours, and having a positive experience in the community.

IV. Outreach and Philanthropy

Each semester CAVE staff outreaches into the community to find alternative projects to further our mission of service. Through researching community needs, CAVE staff attaches to a community partner's service projects. Whether it's by promotion of the event to our CSU Chico campus population, or by lending the helping hands of CAVE's 90 staff members, our intent is to make a difference by enhancing the project or event's success. In addition, various community drives are chosen throughout the semester to collect and donate goods to many of the populations CAVE serves.

V. Volunteer Recognition Event:

At the end of the semester CAVE staff holds a volunteer recognition event to acknowledge volunteers for their hard work and efforts throughout the semester. There are guest speakers like CSU, Chico President Paul Zingg, community partners, and volunteer testimonies. A reflection activity is facilitated by CAVE student staff members to ensure the volunteers understand the impact they make on their community and the populations served.

Results

Since our founding in 1966, Community Action Volunteers in Education is proud to provide civic engagement and volunteer opportunities to the students at Chico State. Through the 16 different programs, CAVE's student volunteers work with children, older adults, the homeless population, veteran's, environmental projects, and local animal shelters. In the year 2012-2013, CAVE cleared and placed 796 student volunteers plus 885 experiential learning students to serve the community. More than 46,000 hours were served while making a difference in the City of Chico.

Budget

CAVE Operating Budget

16 Program Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Live scan screenings· Weekend Immersion program travel costs· Older adult activity supplies· Kids programs tutoring materials	\$6,000
Cost of Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Envelopes and postage stamps for letter writing campaign· Printing for promotional flyers· Raffle tickets for 50/50	\$100
Volunteer Recognition Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Papers for reflection activity· Name tags· Snacks and drinks· Decorations· Pens	\$500
Equipment and Office Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 1500 volunteer applications· Copy paper, pens, pencils, folders, etc.· Screening packets	\$8,500
Training/Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Staff retreat· Director/Coordinator training	\$2,000
Advertising and Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Posters/flyers· Tabling supplies	\$750

TOTAL	\$17,850
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Sustainability

CAVE is constantly looking for new programs to appeal and cater to the needs of our student body at Chico State, and because of this in the fall of 2013 CAVE initiated the development of a new mentor program called Wildcat Involvement Network (WIN). Participating in a one-on-one connection with an upperclassman, new students will discover all the possibilities Chico has to offer and receive guidance for personal and professional development. The WIN program fosters a sense of camaraderie and civic engagement amongst peers during their transition into the Chico community. The mentors will encourage each student to reach their fullest potential while embracing the Wildcat Way.

The success of CAVE is achieved by recruiting passionate volunteers to provide service in the community and hiring motivating and inspiring leaders to sustain CAVE's mission. Every semester we recognize "super star" volunteers and urge them to apply for group leader positions and give them tools to climb the hierarchy within the organization.

Lessons Learned

In participating with CAVE, volunteers learn the importance of civic engagement and make connections within the Chico community. CAVE provides Chico State students the opportunity to impact various underserved populations. Through these experiences volunteers gain professional and leadership skills transferrable to their future endeavors.

Programs

Kids Programs are designed to meet the special needs of children ages 5-17, including those who are physically, emotionally, and developmentally disabled.

- Classroom Aide
- E.L. Connections
- Excel
- Noon and After School Activities
- Special Pals
- Tutorial

Community Connections Programs serve a variety of social, recreational and educational needs of older adults, peer mentors and the homeless, as well as working on environmental projects and with local animal shelters.

- Adopt-a-Park
- Senior Circle
- Animal Connection
- Adopted Grandparent
- Chico Homeless Ambassadors
- Wildcat Involvement Network

Weekend Immersion Programs provide social, recreational, and educational episodic activities outside of the greater Chico area.

- Golden Gate National Park
- Alternative Spring Break
- Yountville Veterans Home

Experiential Learning is an opportunity to get hands-on experience with the theories discussed in class, while also helping a local non-profit or school.

Testimonials

Quotes from Student Volunteers

"We can talk all we want about "how to teach" in the Liberal Studies program, but you never really learn until you are put in the role of an actual teacher with real students sitting in front of you. Thanks to my CAVE experience I feel much more comfortable about my decision to

go into teaching, and I feel more confident that I will do a good job when I get my own classroom." - Classroom Aide volunteer

"CAVE has given me an insight to civic engagement in the sense that I have become more aware of local issues and have a desire to invest in the community, to take ownership of it. It's important that students acknowledge that we don't just go to school here. We are members of the community and should make meaningful contributions."
-Chico Homeless Ambassadors volunteer

"I think CAVE programs are an asset to a college education. I wish more people had the inclination to volunteer. I know some majors require such participation, but as a business major, we have no incentive to participate. I think if everyone was required to volunteer for just one semester, they would gain knowledge that is not attainable from any classroom."
-Adopted Grandparents volunteer

Quotes from Student Staff Members

"My experiences as a CAVE staff person gave me invaluable training in public speaking, organizational work, and relating to people of my own age in a leadership role."

"Now that I am out of school I understand what a valuable experience CAVE was. I truly appreciate the opportunities you gave me to explore and develop my skills and talents. You do so much good for so many people!"