

MBA Students Take Time for Public Service

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Tulane University has built a national reputation for public service in recent years. Now, that reputation is going global. Adding to the university's list of international service projects, a group of MBA students in the A. B. Freeman School of Business pitched in with recent volunteer work in Argentina.



Pupils at a Buenos Aires elementary school thank MBA student Jamin Butler, center, after his volunteer work. (Photos provided by the A. B. Freeman School of Business)

During an [MBA](#) Global Leadership class trip to Buenos Aires, 50 students volunteered at a day of public service. One group planted vegetable gardens at a children's home for Huerta NiÃ±o, an organization that works to combat child malnutrition. Another group worked with Banco de Alimentos, a food bank, to prepare and distribute healthy meals at an elementary school.

The students also packed boxes of food at a food bank warehouse, then helped serve meals at a school that the foundation supports.

While the projects were completely voluntary and in addition to a busy academic schedule of lectures and site visits during the November trip, more than half the class participated in them.

“It was very satisfying to know we left something behind in Argentina that helped someone else,” says student Karen Goldman, who worked on the gardening project.



A group of Tulane MBA students builds and plants vegetable gardens at a children's home during their Global Leadership trip to Argentina.

The service projects were a great way to expose MBA students to some of the challenges of poverty, says student Patricio Campuzano. “Business is never just business. It's very personal, and there are many people who are going to be affected by our decisions as managers. I think projects like this help remind us of that. If your success means someone else's failure, then maybe it's not a success after all.”

In keeping with Tulane's model of public service, John C. Howard, associate dean for graduate programs, asked the volunteers to write a paper with recommendations for the organizations they helped.

“My main interest was to get the students to apply some of their business expertise and experience,” says Howard. “I think more and more businesses are starting to realize that you do well by doing good.”

Mark Miester is the editor of Freeman magazine for the A. B. Freeman School of Business.