Volunteers of the Month - Lidia Zayas and Jenisse Ruiz

It doesn’t take much research to figure out that Lidia Zayas, a business finance major, is a dedicated student, volunteer, and Suffolk community member. Although Lidia is only a sophomore she has already carved out a niche for herself through involvement in various student organizations. Completing high school in Florida and then moving to Boston to attend college has given Lidia perspective on community involvement as well as the importance of service.

Here at Suffolk, she has devoted her time and energy to many causes, including the Black Student Union, the Women in Business club, and the Journey program. She is also treasurer of the Suffolk University Hispanic Association (SUHA) and is an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) Leader for the 2013 program. Aside from her ASB leadership, she also participates in Connections to College and the weekly Prison Book program through S.O.U.L.S.

Lidia says that her passion for service is rooted in youth violence prevention and related issues. Of all the service she has done, she says her most meaningful and impactful experience was her trip to Monroe, NC. While there she was able to work side-by-side with the families, for which she was building houses, as well as hear their stories and get to know them.

Lidia's advice to new students or students who are looking to further their involvement is to just jump in and get involved. She says it has been a great way to meet people and that by working with community members, "You're not just changing their lives; they're changing yours."

Jenny Ruiz has made her mark on Suffolk through many campus efforts, both service related and otherwise. A senior this year, she has taken her sociology interest beyond just academics to many areas of involvement with students and other community members. Jenny was born and raised in Boston, and is thus very familiar with the social justice issues and needs for service within the community.

She is a member of SUHA and is also involved with Connections to College (C2C) and the weekly Prison Book program. Jenny's main interest with service is community development, an interest which has been furthered by her involvement with the C2C program. Growing up in an urban area has given her insight into the issues faced by inner city kids, and has prompted her to stay involved with efforts to combat those issues.

Her most meaningful service experience came from Suffolk's Annual Service Day. She volunteered with Casa Nueva Vida, an organization that houses families and assists them in gaining the skills and education they need to further their success and permanently remove themselves from poverty. She says that the director of the program and the motivation of the resident families made a permanent impression on her and caused her to become more involved in those issues.

Jenny advises students that want to be involved in service to "Look at it as more than just donating time; be an advocate for change. It changes how you look at things."