

CCGA Hosts Service-Learning Fair

By ANNA HALL The Brunswick News

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As a freshman at the College of Coastal Georgia, Christina Barrios is eager to dig her hands into the opportunities the institution has to offer.

Standing in the bustling student center on the Brunswick campus Wednesday, the Golden Isles native walked from display to display during the school's Service-Learning Fair, hoping to find an organization that would fit her career goals and personal objectives.

Stopping at the Safe Harbor children's service exhibit, Barrios chatted with the nonprofit's representatives, who were on hand to answer questions about its purpose. Safe Harbor is a shelter for children.

While Barrios admits she has never been one to be overly active in community service, she's looking to change that, and Safe Harbor is likely the right choice for her to donate time to, she said.

"I've never really been into volunteer work, but I want to make the most out of my time in college," she said. "I plan to be a social work major to help kids who need help outside of their families, and being able to see what that role really looks like through volunteering (with Safe Harbor) would be very beneficial."

Set up inside the central space of the student center, dozens of area volunteer organizations and nonprofit networks offered brochures about their missions, passed out awareness bracelets and handed out an array of marketing tools to students. Each also provided sign up information sheets for curious potential helpers.

Included on the roster of organizations were FaithWorks, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, CoastFest and Hospice of the Golden Isles.



Representatives from the Satilla Riverkeeper talk to a CCGA student about service opportunities

Touting the benefits of recycling and eco-friendly life practices, Keep Golden Isles Beautiful Executive Director Lea King-Badyrna was on hand to offer opportunities for students. The nonprofit agency's roadside clean-ups, recycling events and other communitywide projects often require many helping hands.

Events like the Service-Learning Fair go a long way to assist her and other community agencies spread the word about their roles in the community, and showcase for students how they can help, she said.

“It’s a great experience to show students, especially those new to the community, all the opportunities they have for taking their education off the campus and into the community,” she said. “It’s a benefit for organizations like ours, as well as helpful to students to increase their involvement.”

At the Habitat for Humanity setup, executive director Bert Brown looked over the impressive list of possible student volunteers who wanted to offer support and time to the home-building group. Often the college partners with the network to help build new homes for those in need while providing valuable learning opportunities for students, he said.

“The college is always ready and willing to work with us and help with our needs,” Brown said. “We’re glad to see that many of these young adults are interested. Every extra hand helps.”