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Katie Smith

Ouachita Baptist University

Ouachita News Bureau

Ouachita Baptist University

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OUACHITA
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NEWS

For Immediate Release

More than 700 Ouachita volunteers help celebrate 20th anniversary of Tiger Serve Day

By Katie Smith

September 26, 2016

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—A total of 745 volunteers served in Arkadelphia on Saturday, Sept. 24, as part of Ouachita Baptist University's 39th Tiger Serve Day.

The semi-annual community service event is hosted by the Ben M. Elrod Center for Family and Community. Tiger Serve Day began in the spring of 1997 in the aftermath of a devastating tornado that hit Arkadelphia and has been held every semester since. This year's Tiger Serve Day projects, marking the event's 20th anniversary, celebrated its beginnings with the retro theme of "Into the Streets."

James Taylor, a 1999 Ouachita graduate and director of OBU's campus ministries, was among those who participated in the inaugural Tiger Serve Day as well as this semester's service projects.

"March of 1997 was the first time I personally saw how devastating a tornado could be," Taylor reflected. "It was also one of the first times that I saw how much of an impact Ouachita could have on Arkadelphia. I certainly remember walking through Arkadelphia right after the tornado – when we really didn't know how bad things were. But I also vividly remember how willingly people reached out to help each other that night and for many weeks after."

Continuing that tradition of service, 95 teams of students, faculty, staff and alumni met at the Elrod Center at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday before spreading throughout Arkadelphia to participate in 111 service projects. Volunteers raked leaves, mowed lawns, cleaned gutters, painted porches and more for their assigned projects. In honor of the event's anniversary, Ouachita alumni were invited to come back and serve.

Rebecca Pointer, a 2013 OBU alumna and a former member of the Tiger Serve Day Leadership Team, noted that although she is leaving for India next week, "it was the 20th anniversary of Tiger Serve Day, so I had to come back."

"When I was here, I organized who would go where" as a member of the leadership team, Pointer said. "I loved visiting with all the people we serve; we just get to meet so many people."

Ouachita President Ben Sells, participating in his first Tiger Serve Day, served alongside his wife, Lisa, and son, Tyler, on a team with several students.

"It's been fun working with students to help someone who needed the help we could provide," Dr. Sells said. "I was so encouraged to see students streaming out of their residence halls toward the Elrod Center on a Saturday morning to come serve."

Collin Battaglia, a senior Christian studies and biblical languages double major from Bryant, Ark., has been involved in Tiger Serve Day since his freshman year.

“My favorite part is that it provides an opportunity for students to help out people in our community that have no other source of help,” he said. “We get to model the love and servanthood of Christ and, while it is a blessing to those we serve, it also is often a blessing to me as well.”

“I love the fact that it is a joy-filled day for students, faculty and staff to have a really great time,” said Ian Cosh, vice president for community and international engagement and director of the Elrod Center. “We help people in simple ways, but it builds goodwill and strengthens our connections as a university to our hometown.”

For more information about Tiger Serve Day, visit www.obu.edu/serve or call the Elrod Center at (870) 245-5320.

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