Barger Leadership Institute Volunteers with Detroit Partnership

The Barger Leadership Institute participated in Detroit Partnership Day on March 28th. The Detroit Partnership was founded in 1999 and seeks to connect University of Michigan students with Detroit communities through community service. This year over 1,000 volunteers from Ann Arbor spent the day in communities around the City of Detroit.

BLI volunteers spent the day at the Historic Fort Wayne Coalition. Fort Wayne operated as Michigan’s premier military fort from 1845-1973. Today the Fort has been reopened by a group of dedicated volunteers seeking to preserve the history of the location. Each summer Fort Wayne opens to visitors to go on tours as well as to watch reenactments from various military eras.

Each spring it is a massive undertaking to clear the fort grounds from any damage that occurred throughout the winter, and remove overgrowth from around the buildings. This can be a very time consuming process, as Fort Wayne largely relies on volunteers for maintenance efforts. Devoting an entire day to having dozen of volunteers work on restoration around the fort was very helpful in preparing for a spring opening.

Volunteers thoroughly enjoyed working around the fort and learning about its history. BLI Fellow Chloe Hurley reflected, “I was happy to donate my time and efforts for something that I hope many people choose to visit one day!” This was also a great opportunity for group bonding within BLI. Elizabeth McLaughlin summed up her experience by saying, “by the end of the day, I knew we had positively contributed to the Historic Fort Wayne and grown closer as a BLI group.”
Following their day of service the volunteers headed to Belle Isle where they were greeted by former Michigan football coach Lloyd Carr. Carr thanked the crowd of over 1,000 students for spending their day volunteering, and he encouraged all students to continue giving back to the City of Detroit and to the State of Michigan.