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March 22, 2007

**WILLIAM & MARY STUDENTS TRAVEL TO PETERSBURG FOR SPRING BREAK**

Twelve undergraduates from the College of William & Mary skipped the traditional trip to the beach to spend their Spring Break serving the community in Petersburg. “We really enjoyed our week in Petersburg, working with residents and growing the partnership between the City and William & Mary,” said Hannah Ayres. Ayres, a junior, participated in the Phoenix Project’s pilot program last summer and encouraged her classmates to spend their vacation week in Petersburg.

The students kept an exhausting schedule over seven days. They completed the following projects:

- Repaired homes for low-income homeowners with Elderhomes and Petersburg Urban Ministries;
- Conducted a survey of downtown business owners to guide economic development efforts with Fort Lee through the Army Community Heritage Partnerships Program;
- Inventoried commercial and residential structures to assist LISC’s effort to revitalize neighborhoods;
- Created marketing materials for Serenity, a nonprofit organization that serves the HIV/AIDS community;
- Painted and carpeted the HOPE Center for Downtown Churches United;
- Assisted Sycamore Rouge with efforts to garner valuable feedback from patrons; and
- Researched environmental issues related to the Appomattox River for the city government.

On Tuesday the students delivered 1,200 brand new copies of the book *The Story of the World*, to the Petersburg Public Schools. This history book, suitable for students in grades 4-6, is intended as a gift from the Phoenix Project for each of the children to take home with them. The books, valued at \$25,000, were contributed by Peace Hill Press.

On Thursday the students met with Mayor Annie Mickens to learn more about Petersburg’s revitalization plans. “Talking with the Mayor about the many opportunities on the horizon for Petersburg helped us see how our College, working with Virginia State and other local universities and community members, can help further the City’s revitalization,” said Valeria Harris, a William & Mary senior.

In addition to serving the community and participating in civic life, the students enjoyed Petersburg’s cultural scene, attending Friday for the Arts! and a performance at Sycamore Rouge. They also toured the Petersburg National Battlefield and the Siege Museum.

The Phoenix Project brings resources from multiple institutions of higher education to meet community-identified needs in Petersburg. Students, faculty and administrators work with community members year-round on economic and community development projects in the City, while advancing the universities' mission of teaching and research. Community organizations that wish to request assistance should complete an online form at [www.phoenixproject.org](http://www.phoenixproject.org) or call the Phoenix Project at (703) 644-1605.

This summer in Petersburg the Phoenix Project will debut the full version of its Nonprofit Leadership Programs. Dozens of undergraduate and graduate students from throughout Virginia will spend ten weeks learning and serving in Petersburg. Students interested in working with the Phoenix Project should email [nlp@phoenixproject.org](mailto:nlp@phoenixproject.org).

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