

# theshield

| THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT PUBLICATION OF ROCHESTER COLLEGE |



## *any direction* YOU CHOOSE

You're on your own.  
And you know  
what you know.  
You're the one who'll  
decide where to go.

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# Detroit Urban Plunge

## A Week Of HOPE

By | **RAFAEL FLUKER**

In recent years many scholars have begun to detest the way in which young people flippantly use the word “awesome.” Previous cohorts fear that the newer generations may dampen the true magnitude of the word’s definition. The word implies an “overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration or even fear that is produced by a grand, sublime, supreme power.”

With that being said, I can courageously proclaim that this year’s Detroit Urban-Plunge trip was truly awesome.

The trip was an odd blend of intense service and soothing fellowship. It became immediately apparent that the roles the Rochester College students played catered directly to their personalities. Collectively, the students made a team of passionate workers that lovingly and naturally built relationships.

Many noteworthy events took place as a result of this furious love, and three instances were truly awesome. The first occurred in an area that is notorious for drug use, prostitution and violence. While at Cass Park (a.k.a. Jurassic Park), students had the opportunity to make food for the homeless, as well as clean the park.

While there, RC students met a deaf homeless man with a surprisingly chipper demeanor named David. Despite his inability to read lips and our inability to understand sign language, David still made multiple efforts to communicate with the RC students. When students searched to find a pencil and pad to dictate our thoughts, our own Brian Potthast realized that this was not our first encounter with David. In fact, the pad that Brian carried recorded a conversation between previous RC volunteers and David. The former conversation took place roughly two years ago in a different section of the city.

Even though the volunteers on the trip were not present for the first conversation, they were teleported back to this moment via a yellow pad. This made it easier to understand his past

experiences and focus on his present state. We were able to break bread, converse and exchange numbers.

The second awesome event occurred while Rochester students did what they’re known for—sing! During a student-led worship session, we were joined by “Lawnmower,” a local Detroit resident who battled depression and crack-cocaine addiction. While participating in the service, he felt led to address some of the ailments that plagued his life and decided to rededicate his life to God.

The last awesome experience took place in Ms. Haug’s classroom at Carstens Elementary. Carstens is the nucleus of a drastically impoverished neighborhood and is currently in jeopardy of being closed down. While there, the students worked to renovate her class by organizing books, painting, fixing the computers, cleaning and donating organizational equipment.

Two days after our efforts, reporters from *The New York Times* visited Ms. Barb’s class and did an article on the importance of Carstens Elementary.

To effectively express the many great moments of the trip, members would have to sit down with all the pictures and explain them one by one, but to some it all up, I would have to say that the Detroit Urban-Plunge trip was simply awesome.



Photographs Courtesy Of | REBECCA MILLIGAN



To read *The New York Times* article on Carstens Elementary, visit:  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)  
 and search 'Carstens Elementary.'