

## Jax Kids Day

By Cassie Wolfe

AmeriCorps members devoted a day out of their weekend in November to help with the Jacksonville Children's Commission "Jax Kids Day" event. A wide array of free activities and area vendors were scattered between Jacksonville's main downtown library and outside in Hemming Plaza. The lineup throughout the day included a Red Wagon Parade sponsored by Wolfson Children's Hospital, inflatable games and an obstacle course, a climbing wall, flower pot decorating, costume characters, a live DJ and hay rides. Some stations conducted developmental health screenings as part of the family health and safety fair. NFHC members helped facilitate the

different stations and provided help to the participants. A few members had the opportunity to test their artistic skills through face painting and [temporary] tattooing. Bill McKenna was able to employ his tennis skills for the day by playing in friendly mini-matches with children. "Jax Kids Day" turned out to be a refreshing way to meet and interact with children and families from the Jacksonville community outside of our host sites.



## FEED THE CITY

By: Denaé Phillips

On November 20, 2010, several NFHC members along with other volunteers from various organizations served Thanksgiving dinner and donated clothing to over 800 low-income and homeless individuals from Jacksonville. The event was sponsored by the Clara White Mission, which helps Jacksonville's at-risk residents by running job trainings, daily feedings and offering shelter to those living on the street. Throughout the day, volunteers were designated tasks of setting up tables and chairs, organizing clothes, or serving food to participants.

Once the participants were seated, each raised their hands and was waited on by the volunteers. After they finished eating, they stood in line to get an assortment of clothes.

R&B and jazz music blared from an enormous stereo system and warm weather throughout the day provided an enthusiastic environment for both volunteers and those in need. After duties were completed, volun-



teers had a chance to sit down with the participants to share a meal and get to know one another. Caroline Hemeter, a 2010 NFHC member, "thoroughly enjoyed serving at Feed the City. My favorite part of the day was sharing a Thanksgiving meal with the event participants... One man even praised my decision to pursue a career in medicine and encouraged me to travel abroad. I was impressed by how strong these people seemed despite their current living situations." Britta Roach, another NFHC member agrees: "Feed the City has

been my favorite group service project. The Jacksonville indigent community truly appreciated our volunteer services, while we appreciated their company!"

By breaking down the stigma associated with homelessness, Feed the City showed life can be unpredictable and difficult for anyone from different backgrounds. However, having fun is a must for all, regardless of the daily challenges faced.

# Member Highlights

By: Robert Hsu



For Robert Hsu, a second year member, his favorite aspect of serving with North Florida Health Corps has been “getting a firsthand experience on the health disparities we face daily.” Robert serves at River Region Human Services, a substance abuse treatment organization. Serving alongside Erika Abraham, Robert helps link Methadone Treatment clients with resources in the community such as housing, employment, and medical care. Robert has most enjoyed “directly interacting” with clients and reaching out to community contacts in hopes of finding new resources for clients and being someone that can be there to listen to the client’s needs. Robert is from New York, NY and graduated from Cornell University in May 2009. Robert wants to be a primary care physician in an underserved area someday and has valued the “interaction with members of the community and seeing their appreciation.” Robert is an avid sports fan and enjoys traveling and eating many different kinds of ethnic foods. Robert simply believes that “it is what it is.”

Many of us NHFC members trudge through long hours of service, dread about paperwork we have to complete, and try every way possible to fit our living expenses into a stipend. But serving our clients brings a new and rewarding perspective. Denae Phillips serves at the Arc Jacksonville, a place that provides advocacy and quality services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Denae serves more than 20 individuals with developmental disabilities enrolled in the Wellness Program by providing a personalized program of a healthy lifestyle that will improve their well-being. Denae’s favorite part of her site is that the clients, even on a stressful day, can “put a smile on your face in a heartbeat.” Denae is from Stoughton, MA and just received her Masters of Public



Health at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has enjoyed “meeting so many people that have different backgrounds, and learning so much from them.” Denae enjoys outdoor activities and reading fantasy and sci-fi books. Denae’s favorite quote is “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.”

## Birthday Announcements:

Bill McKenna.....December 11

For more information, visit our website: <http://www.northfloridahealthcorps.org>

The NFHC is a special initiative of the

