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UNH Celebrates Ben Thompson Day, Cleans Up Community

By [Lori Gula](#)
UNH News Bureau
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April 15, 2003

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire will commemorate the birthday of Ben Thompson, who in 1890, left his 500-acre farm to the state for the purpose of creating New Hampshire's public university.

Ben Thompson Day will be held Wednesday, April 23, 2003, bringing students, faculty and staff together to participate in the campus community clean-up.

The event begins at noon in front of Thompson Hall with the presentation of the University Community Scholarship and the Volunteer of the Year Award. After joining in a chorus of "Happy Birthday" and enjoying a piece of birthday cake, participants will roll up their sleeves for the afternoon activities.

Volunteer clean-up efforts will reach across campus and into downtown Durham. College Brook will be a special focus area. Often called the ecological heart of campus, College Brook runs from College Woods, through campus to Durham where it meets the Oyster River. The Oyster River watershed (including College Brook and Pettee Brook) is the primary source of water for the UNH/Durham community. The clean-up of the brook helps maintain the health of the watershed by removing harmful litter and debris while providing an opportunity for volunteers to get a better sense of where Durham's water comes from and how important it is to protect the watershed.

As a part of Ben Thompson Day, recognized chapters in the UNH Greek system will lend their efforts to local area businesses for the second annual The Enviro-Spot clean-up. In this program, individual Greek chapters team up with specific local businesses in and around Durham's Main Street to help clean and beautify the downtown area. The program is a collaboration of the Durham Main Street Program, the Durham Business Association, Interfraternity and Panhellenic councils, the Office of Sustainability Programs and Office of Greek Affairs have made this program possible.

Ben Thompson Day is sponsored by UNH Alumni Affairs, Partnership for Social Action, the Office of Sustainability Programs, the University Community Scholarship Fund, Facilities Services, Operating Staff Council, Student Activity Fee Council, Student Senate and University Hospitality Services. For more information, contact Justine Stadler, Office of Sustainability Programs, 603-862-4088, or Marianne Fortescue, Partnership for Social Action, 603-862-2197.

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