UNH Class Collects Tents For Haiti

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UNH Class Collects Tents For Haiti

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UNH Outdoor Education

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DURHAM, N.H. – For students in an outdoor education class at the University of New Hampshire, it was an opportunity to help that they couldn’t pass up.

A Massachusetts rock climber who recently returned from Haiti put out the call for tent donations to provide much-needed shelter for people from that earthquake-devastated country. And the students, who are in the Organization and Administration of Outdoor Education course taught by professor Michael Gass, were in contact with summer camps and outdoor programs throughout the region as they planned their annual outdoor jobs fair.

“Many of these outdoor programs and camps have functional tents that they’re no longer using,” says Gass, noting that while the program may have upgraded to higher-quality or newer tents, the old ones are generally still useful. “We are in the right place to leverage this.”

The students hope to collect 100 tents from the 30-plus exhibitors who will attend the outdoor jobs fair (Feb. 18, 2010) in search of qualified summer employees. UNH’s outdoor education program raided its own gear closet to donate six tents.

The rallying cry to the outdoors community came from Mark Richey, a climber and woodworker from Newburyport, Mass., who traveled to Haiti in January to volunteer with Partners in Health. “I can honestly say that nothing could have prepared me for the unimaginable scene of destruction and suffering I witnessed in Port-au-Prince,” Richey wrote in an appeal to fellow climbers. “Port-au-Prince itself is in ruins and everywhere we traveled there were vast cities of makeshift tents occupying any clear space, sheltering thousands of homeless and terrified citizens. During the day the heat is oppressive, there are mosquitoes, and soon it will rain.”

To donate a tent, which must be in functional condition, either bring it to UNH’s outdoor jobs and camp fair Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010 in the Granite State Room of the Memorial Union Building, or contact Gass at 603-862-2024 or mgass@cisunix.unh.edu.

UNH’s outdoor education program is one of the leading academic outdoor education programs in the world with undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs. With a strong cadre of award-winning faculty and students, it was the first university program to be recognized by the Association for Experiential Education as Organizational Member of the Year (2003).

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.