

SUNY Oswego Community Services



The State University of New York at Oswego's Alternative Break Program
Winter Break 2019: January 19 – Jan 27



Alternative Break Info Packet
&
Participant Application
Due: October 5, 2018

About Oz Alt Break

Oz Alt Break is SUNY Oswego's Alternative Break program housed in the office of Community Services. Since 2001, SUNY Oswego students have dedicated their Winter and Spring breaks to engaging in strong direct service to local, domestic, and international communities. These week-long immersive service trips partner with community organizations to support efforts such as animal welfare, disaster relief, youth education, environmental concerns, quality affordable housing, health care, food security, and poverty alleviation.

Alternative Break participants do not “help” or “fix problems.” Instead of viewing our host site communities through a deficit framework, Oz Alt Break works from an asset based model. Our participants (referred to as Alt Breakers) serve alongside community members to strengthen the organization they are serving with. Our service focuses on creating justice, not doing charity. This framework allows Alt Breakers to learn from the knowledge and experience of our host sites while also working towards becoming active citizens who serve for the common good.

Oz Break values:

- **Active Citizenship:** A continuum where the ultimate goal is for individuals to prioritize the community in their values and life choices.
- **Social Justice:** A process and a goal where there is full and equal participation for all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet everyone's needs and full potential.
- **Simple Living:** Limiting our negative impact on the environment and community by keeping within limits that reflect the socio-economic conditions of the communities we work in and lower our ecological footprint.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Commitment to individual and programmatic efforts to build mutual respect, dignity, access, and equity among all groups of people.
- **Self-Awareness and Reflection:** Creating time and space to analyze how we impact the community and ways in which we contribute to and can alleviate social problems.

Trip Elements

Direct Service

All Oz Alt Break trips engage in direct or “hands on” projects and activities that address unmet social needs as determined by the community. Depending on the trip's focus issue, this direct service could look like building or repairing a house, serving meals, working with youth, maintaining hiking trails, creating care packages, and much, much more. Sometimes the work is physically demanding, sometimes it is emotional. No matter what the site, your full participation will lead to you gaining new skills, building meaningful relationships, and working towards a more socially just world.

Reflection and Education

Oz Alt Break recognizes that service is just one component of social justice and active citizenship. The combination of direct service, social issue education, and daily reflections during the trip result in the most successful and transformative Alternative Breaks. Before, during, and after trips, group leaders will facilitate discussions, reflections, and team builders to encourage a deeper understanding of service and community.

Full engagement

Alt Breakers are expected to be fully engaged, body and mind, during the entire trip. One of the most important aspects of full engagement is our commitment to a *Drug and Alcohol Free* experience. Alternative Breaks are just what the name implies, an alternative to traditional college breaks. In fact, the Alternative Break movement began in the late 1980's as a counter cultural response to the "MTV culture" of spring breaks. A drug and alcohol free policy (no matter age or the laws) assures Alt Breakers will provide the best possible service to our host sites and get the most out of their trip experience. If a participant is found to be using, possessing, manufacturing, or distributing drugs or alcohol, they will be required to return home at their own expense. Participants found in violation will not be permitted to participate in Alternative Breaks for at least one academic year.

Accommodations

Meals

Included in trip costs are three meals a day and snacks. Alt Breakers plan, prepare, and eat meals together as a team. In an effort to adhere to our simple living and sustainability values, we budget \$7 per person per day for meals. This budget is almost three dollars a day more than the amount an individual receives through SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits. We accommodate dietary restrictions and allergies.

Housing

Housing is included in trip costs. In the spirit of simple living, groups do not stay in hotels but instead partner with churches, colleges, hostels, and community centers. Air mattresses or barrack-style bunk beds are common. This means most of our housing sites require Alt Breakers to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries. Community Services has several sleeping bags available if participants do not have their own.

Transportation

Transportation to and from sites is provided by the program; including flights for international trips. All domestic trips are traveled to by car. Students who are van trained through the college or who are 21 years of age and older with a valid driver's license are encouraged to sign up as drivers. For car trips especially, Alt Breakers are urged to save space by bringing only one small-medium duffel bag plus a sleeping bag.

Required Info Sessions & Pre-Trip Meetings

Info Sessions

All applicants **MUST** attend an information session in order to be accepted. These sessions introduce students to the basics of Oz Alt Break, introduce each trip, and offer time for applicants to ask any questions.

Sept 12 th	12:30pm	Marano 141	Sept 28 th	10:30am	Marano 143
Sept 14 th	4:00pm	Marano 141	Oct 2 nd	11:00am	Marano 141
Sept 24 th	3:00pm	Marano 141	Oct 3 rd	6:00pm	Marano 143
Sept 26 th	9:00am	Marano 141	Oct 4 th	9:30am	Marano 141

Pre-Trip Meetings

Once you have been selected and placed into a trip, your Group Leader will contact you about Pre-Trip Meetings. These three meetings are an essential and required part of Alternative Break. You will get to know your fellow Alt Breakers, receive important details about your specific trip, and learn more about your host site organization, host site community, and the issues related to your trip topic.

Cost & Payments

The cost of all trips includes transportation (including flights if international), housing, and meals. Payments can be made in cash or check made out to Auxiliary Services. **These payments should be dropped off to a Community Services staff member only.** Do not submit a payment to anyone other than the Coordinator of Community Services or the Community Services GA unless explicitly told otherwise. Be sure to obtain a receipt. This assures the safe acceptance of your payment.

A nonrefundable \$25 deposit of is due with the application. Applications will not be considered until the deposit is submitted. This \$25 will be put towards the trip fee once you have been assigned to a trip. If you are not assigned to a trip you will receive your deposit back.

Need Based Scholarships

Scholarships

A small number of scholarships are available to provide financial assistance to students who qualify for Oz Alt Break, but do not have the financial means to participate. Due to limited funds, we ask that students only apply for a scholarship if the cost of an Alternative Break trip would prevent them from participating. Oz Alt Break reserves the right to confirm the applicant's need with the Financial Aid office.

Scholarship Requirements:

1. Application: All scholarship applicants must complete the attached Oz Alt Break participant application and attend an information session by the listed due dates.
2. Scholarship Section: On the attached Oz Alt Break application there is a "Scholarship" section. Fill out this section in its entirety including the additional short answer question.

Deposit Waiver

Students who are members of the SUNY Oswego Educational Opportunity Program are able to waive the initial \$25 application deposit. EOP members who wish to have the deposit fee waived should check the EOP waiver box in the scholarship section of the attached application.

Meals with Meaning: Food Security for Those with Serious Illness

Organization	<i>Food and Friends'</i> mission is to improve the lives and health of people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other serious illnesses by increasing their ability to provide nourishment for themselves. Dietitians and professional chefs create individualized and nutritionally-tailored meals to be delivery to their clients' homes, provide groceries to go, and offer nutrition counseling and cooking classes.
Service	Packing and delivering meals, interacting with clients
Location	Washington, DC
Cost	\$150

Affordable Housing for All: Homeownership and Repairs in an Urban Area

Organization	As one of the largest Habitat for Humanity affiliates in the country, <i>Habitat Omaha</i> completes more than 40 homes each year for their community members. Families who partner with Habitat Omaha attend homeownership classes, complete 350 hours of sweat equity by helping to build their homes, and purchase their homes through a low cost Habitat mortgage. Habitat Omaha also does home repairs and runs the country's largest Habitat ReStore.
Service	Building or repairing homes in various stages of construction. Participants may also serve in the ReStore organizing donations. No previous construction experience is required as you will go through an extensive orientation of all projects and tools.
Location	Omaha, NE
Cost	\$150

Fighting Poverty and Creating Opportunity: Wraparound Services for Community Success

Organization	Cass Community Social Services combats concentrated poverty in their community by supporting programs for food security, health, housing, jobs and environmentally sustainable industry. Cass believes the best way to lift people out of poverty is to provide them with wraparound services that meet all their needs.
Service	Variety of projects including but not limited to: painting, landscaping, youth or senior citizen work, preparing/packaging/serving meals, or recycling programs. This trip lets you dip your toe in many different activates.
Location	Detroit, MI
Cost	\$150

Staycation: Exploring Oswego County's Challenges and Strengths

Organization	Oswego Health, Oswego County Opportunities, ARISE, Richardson Bates House, Fort Ontario, and other local organizations.
Service	Participants will serve with a different organization each day. Service may include preparing and distributing meals, building wheel chair ramps, working with senior citizens, preserving local historical sites, and more. This trip allows participants to learn more about their Oswego home away from home.
Location	Oswego County, NY
Cost	\$25

Poco a Poco: English Language Learning with Spanish Speaking Youth

Organization	<i>Outreach 360's</i> vision is a world in which every child lives a life of choice. They focus on education, particularly English literacy, and community health as ways to increase opportunity for youth with limited opportunities.
Service	This trip is open to all majors, not just education. Assist English teachers in classroom engagement and lesson planning in rural schools. Work with youth in after-school programs that incorporate learning into play.
Location	Monte Cristi, Dominican Republic
Cost	\$1,100

Agua Limpia: Clean Water Efforts After Hurricane Maria

Organization	Since Hurricane Maria, <i>Proyecto Agua Limpia</i> has distributed water filter systems to families across Puerto Rico. Partnering with the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust and using a public health approach, they look at health issues related to water quality and contamination.
Service	Distributing water filters to municipalities in Puerto Rico that do not have consistent access to clean water. Testing water quality and educating families on how to use water testing kits.
Location	Multiple municipalities in Puerto Rico
Cost	\$600

OZ Alt Break Participant Application

Winter 2019

Please complete all below information by typing your responses. Applications should be submitted by email to Service@Oswego.edu. Applications are due October 5th 2018 by 4pm. A \$25 nonrefundable deposit in cash or check made out to Auxiliary Services must be submitted to complete the application. DO NOT give the despot to anyone other than Community Services staff unless explicitly told otherwise.

Personal Information

Full Name: _____ Student ID#: _____
Last First

Permanent (Home) Address: _____
Street Address City State Zip Code

Local (Oswego) Address: _____
Street Address City State Zip Code

Phone Number: _____ Oswego Email: _____

Graduation Year/Semester: _____ Major/Minor: _____

DOB: ____/____/____ T-Shirt Size: S M L XL XXL

Gender: _____ Do you have a valid passport (for international trips): Yes No

How did you hear of Oz Alt Break: _____

Drivers

Drivers are needed to help transport participants to and from service sites. If you are able, please serve as a driver for your trip. If you check yes for either of the bellow options, you will be placed as an official driver and should expect to take on that role during your trip.

If you are 21 or older and will drive a rental car/mini-van, please check box

If you have completed the college's 12-passenger van training course and
will drive a 12-passenger van, please check box

Student Involvement

Prior Alternative Break experience (year and location):

Organization/Club(s) involved with:

Additional skills, experience, knowledge that relates to Alternative Break:

Trip Preferences

Please rank your preference for sites from 1 to 6, with 1 being your first choice and 6 being your last choice. If you are not interested in a site, mark it as N/A. We do our best to assign people to the sites they would prefer, but there is no guarantee you will be placed in your first choice. See trip descriptions on last page of the information part of this packet.

Trip Issue	Preference 1-6
Meals with Meaning	
Affordable Housing for All	
Fighting Poverty and Creating Opportunity	
Oswego Staycation	
*Poco a Poco: Youth Education	
Agua Limpia: Clean Water	

* This is an international trip. If you do not currently have a valid passport, you must begin the process of obtaining one immediately after being placed.

Short Answers

Take your time answering each of the following questions. There are limited spots on each trip, therefore, well-written and thought out responses are a significant part of the selection process.

1. Which of the Oz Alt Break values or trip elements (listed in the information part of this packet) do you most relate to and why?
2. What do you hope to learn, accomplish, and/or gain from this experience?
3. Based on your trip preferences, explain why these issues are important to you.
4. Oz Alt Break puts great emphasis on community, cooperation, and reflection during our trips. Explain a time when you had to work in a group and faced obstacles. What role did you play in overcoming those obstacles so you could continue to work as a team?
5. Alternative Breaks often take participants out of their comfort zone, requiring a certain amount of flexibility and open-mindedness. What is an example of a time when you were open-minded and flexible? How will you prepare for and cope with any challenges faced during this experience?

Need Based Scholarship

Due to limited funds, applicants should only apply for a scholarship if the cost would seriously deter them from participating in Alternative Breaks. Oz Alt Break reserves the right to confirm financial need with the Financial Aid Office. Depending on the amount allotted, scholarship funds may not cover the full cost of the trip. In this instance, participants are required to pay all costs exceeding the scholarship amount.

Would you like to be considered for an Alternative Break scholarship? Yes No

Are you in the SUNY Oswego Educational Opportunity Program? Yes No

Explain how the scholarship will impact your ability to participate in Oz Alt Break:

Trip Agreements

Please review the following statements. Sign and date to indicate your agreement to adhere to each of the statements.

- I will respect all members on the trip and everyone I meet at the site.
- I will be an active participant in all aspects of the trip including:
 - Providing service at volunteer site
 - Preparing meals
 - Making decisions as a group
 - Cleaning the space we will be staying in
 - Reflection and discussion sessions
 - Team builders
- I will not consume drugs or alcohol while participating in the Alternative Break Program. If I violate this agreement, I will be sent home from the trip at my own cost and my participation in future Alternative Break trips will be temporarily or indefinitely suspended.
- I will attend all pre-trip group meetings.
- I will pay the required participant fees by the dates they are due.
- I understand that participant fees for this program are nonrefundable. If I withdraw from this trip for any reason, I am aware that I will not be refunded any money I have contributed.

I, _____, understand that by signing this agreement I agree to abide by all
(print full name) the statements above.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____