Eleven students from St. John’s University and the College of St. Benedict in central Minnesota spent their spring break last week volunteering at the Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) and local disability-related community organizations. The students, both graduate and undergraduate, are part of the Alternative Spring Break program, which pairs students according to their interests with a service spring break experience. Volunteers represented a wide range of disciplines and cited numerous reasons for their service.

"It’s a good experience to gain understanding of different people and sort of broaden your horizons," stated one of the volunteers.

Students spent the week engaging in a wide variety of service learning projects including a fun evening bowling with the TOP Sports participants. Other projects included yard work at the Developmental Skills Laboratory (DSL), a day program for adults with developmental disabilities, and time spent with DSL participants in one-on-one and small group social activities. Other CPD and college projects that were the recipients of volunteer service included Project PEER: Postsecondary Education, Employment and Research, Aggies Elevated, and Up to 3 Early Intervention. Volunteers also helped community organizations, including Deseret Industries and Common Ground, including a day spent skiing and snowshoeing with youth and adults with disabilities.

Reflection time was also allotted each day for students to write their thoughts about their experiences. Local host families housed the volunteers.

More photos are available on our CPD Facebook page.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to the "Bennies" and "Johnies"!