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## Gandhi Day unites MDC students

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Staff Writer

More than 130 Miami Dade College students celebrated National Gandhi Day to support the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Gandhi Day began with a brief presentation given by English professor, Carlos Gonzalez, and students from the InterAmerican Campus. Following the presentation was a communal breakfast.

"Feeding one another will be our first Gandhian practice for the morning," said Gonzalez to the participants. As the day progressed, students prepared to plant food gardens in Overtown and spread mulch at the Lotus House, a female homeless shelter located near the Wolfson Campus. Some students said their experience in Gandhi Day was beneficial.

"Gandhi Day is a day when students come together to help out the community to reflect on our lives and share with other people," said Lia Scarinci, a North Campus project representative. Scarinci, also a theater major, said that Gandhi touched the hearts of many people and encourages young adults to learn by his actions.

"We need to make peace in society to fix this [DREAM Act] problem and spread awareness just like Gandhi did," said Scarinci. "As I walk through the garden that we are working on, I feel positive energy radiating from it," said Manuela Aguilar, a psychology and philosophy major from InterAmerican Campus.

Hospitality management major, Pablo Abilez, of InterAmerican Campus, said he used to be homeless and by spreading mulch at the Lotus House, made him feel content to give back to the community.



Photo by Kimberly Parker

MDC students volunteer at the Lotus House, a female homeless shelter near the Wolfson Campus, by spreading mulch and planting food gardens.

"I felt this time around I should help out other people just as I have been helped out in the past," said Abilez. Douglas Dunn, agent for Overtown Community Garden, said he was impressed with the work the volunteers accomplished. "Magnificent help accomplishes a lot," said Dunn. "What the volunteers do in one day, takes us and employees thirty days to complete." The DREAM Act is a bill that has been introduced in Congress. If passed it will provide legal

status for immigrant students. By combining Gandhi's peacemaking principles with the social issues of the DREAM Act students hope to make a difference. "Gandhi was a complex man who still holds our imaginations in part because he reminded the world that common people do indeed make a difference," Gonzalez said. "Never underestimate the power of commitment." The service-learning project was sponsored last fall by the Federation of the Imagination and MDC professors Carlos

Gonzalez, Alex Salinas, Emily Sendin, Marisol Varela, Eulett McKnight-Samms and Roots in the City, an environmental and community organization. In 2006, about 300 students participated in the event. But Gonzalez said that the volunteers showed more leadership this year.

"Last year the school paid for it, but this year it is all about self-motivation," said Gonzalez. "From food, transportation, gas and posters, the students made it happen."

## Inside

New recreational room opened for MDC students  
Page 2

Action, horror, and fantasy movies for November  
Page 4

A hip-hop version of Romeo and Juliet  
Page 4

Remembering horror movies of the past  
Page 5

Fashion on a Budget  
Page 7

Education vs. Employment  
Page 8

Pre