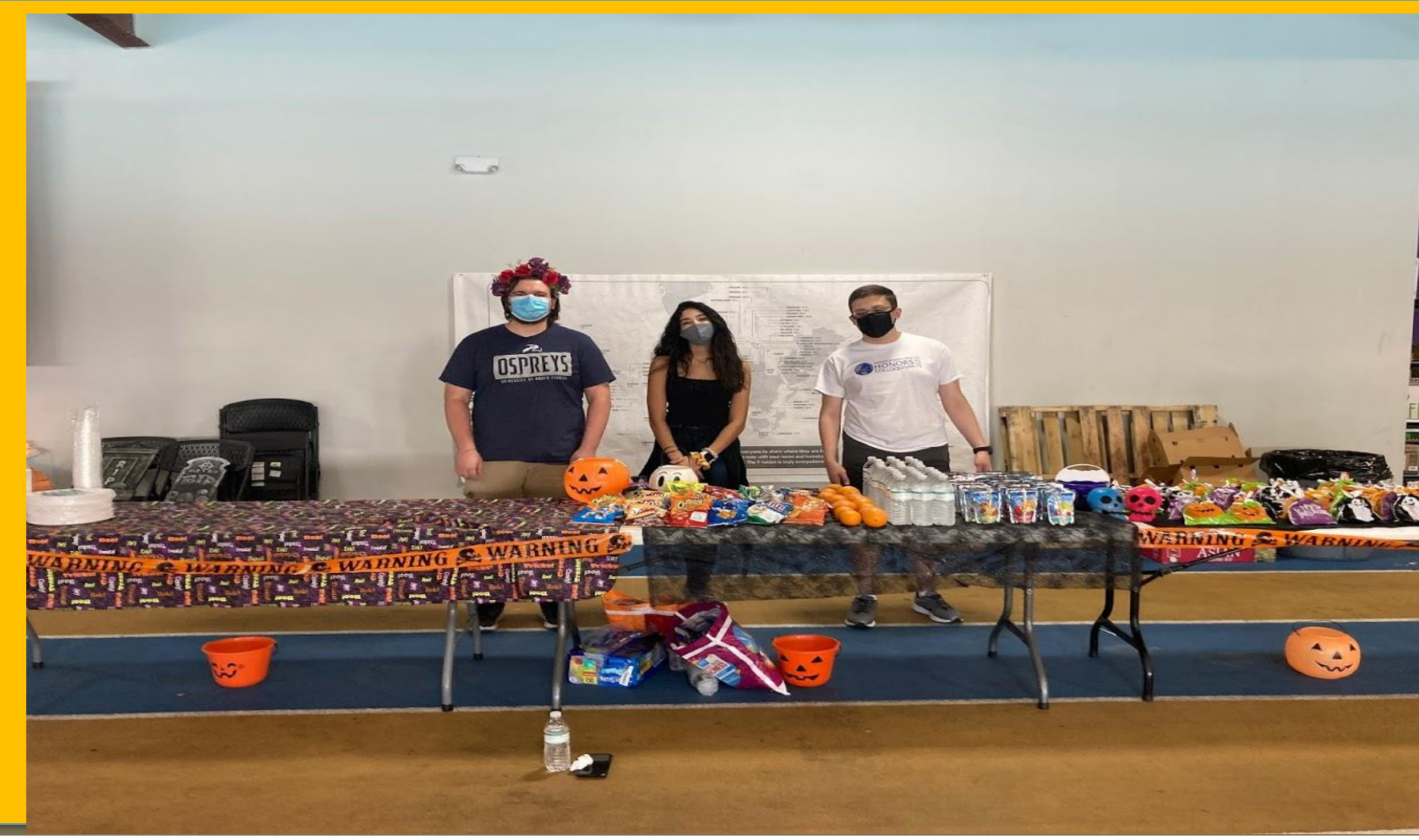


An Event to Remember

Our Service Project Poster



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Service Activity

For our service project we held events for refugee children that have never experienced American holidays and many of them struggle with reading. In order to help these children, we held and/or planned for two events for American holidays. Through all of this we hoped to help these refugees to better integrate into society by introducing them to American traditions and helping them to become more literate. We served approximately 15 kids at each event. We were able to improve and expand this service project through making the events Covid-19 compliant. As a result of Covid-19 restrictions, we then held the events at the duPont YMCA, and went through extra sanitary measures to make sure as many people as possible could attend the event despite the pandemic.



Impact

The Halloween event cost \$339, took 5 hours to plan, an hour to set up, and lasted almost three hours long. In total, around 15 kids and their parents came. The only physical things we left behind was a box of donated decorations along with the crafts and smiles the kids got to take home. While the impact may seem small in relation to the cost of the event, the true value is not found in the money or time spent, nor the donations and gifts; it is found on the kid's faces as they painted pumpkins and experienced an American Halloween.

Sources

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/refugee-services/overview.shtml>

Connections

- ❖ In Outcasts United by Warren St. John, Luma takes the Fugees team trick or treating in hopes of introducing them to a new culture. Similarly, Halloween is an invented tradition that we utilized in order to immerse the children into our imagined community. Halloween and trick or treating have been practices synonymous with American culture for decades.
- ❖ By hosting a Halloween event, this imagined community as we learned hopefully will help them feel connected to their new American identity wherever they go. Part of that is because of these smaller holidays unique to us that we celebrate.



- ❖ In Dr.Courtwright and Dr.Gallo's lectures, we discussed the importance of economic disparities on immigration and the pull factor of education. In this event, We met parents who sacrificed a lot for their children to have better opportunities.
- ❖ We saw what it was like for some children to not have adapted to the English language like Dr.Kaplan mentioned. Especially when they weren't as confident asking for extra goody bags/ water.

That's why we are honored to help..



Our Motive

Jacksonville, FL is a well-known refugee-refuge hotspot with a wide variation of different cultures. While Florida itself is a popular resettlement area for the Latino refugee population, it is important Jacksonville itself receives those from many different nationalities, “including Burmese, Bhutanese, Iraqis, Eritreans, and [many] others (“General Program Overview”). From that same source, we also know that an overwhelming 25% are refugees under the age of 19. We note this in order to get across two points, that A.) Jacksonville, and specifically the area around where we work (the DuPont Y.M.C.A.), is home to refugees unfamiliar with the area, and B.) a large portion of them are children. Our work as the Events subsection of the UNF Honors Colloquium is to help the transition so many face prior to their arrival. On top of fleeing economic and social crisis, these people are also looking for a sense of stability and normalization, an understanding of the world around them, which is why it is amazing that we can deliver an introduction to some of the State's most exciting cultural experiences to these kids, to give them, and in turn their families, a warm welcome to our beloved culture.

Our Reward

Collectively, we agree that this event has helped us better handle group-based situations and taught us how to quickly adapt to the unexpected. The organization of the event was done in groups, allowing us the experience of working side-by-side, skills then put to the test at the event. When we got there, we never knew what to expect, as we didn't know the layout of the Y.M.C.A or what supplies would show up. It was our built skills and trust that allowed us to adapt, putting together something beautiful, worth it in the end. The smiles on their faces, amazing. Many of these kids had never had a Halloween before and the fact that we helped give them one of their first cultural experiences here was heartwarming. Highly rewarding in the end