

Alternative Breaks

Our Mission

Alma College Alternative Breaks provide transformative opportunities through direct, hands-on service, education, and reflection that seeks to meet the needs of our local, national, and global community.

No matter what your interest is, there is an Alternative Break opportunity for you.

Alternative Breaks allow students to spend time doing service work while traveling outside the community. This may involve community engagement in a variety of contexts, from providing childcare in a homeless shelter to being involved in disaster relief efforts. Whatever you're doing, you'll have fun while reflecting on what is important to you in life.

What is Alternative Break like?

Most service teams include 8 to 20 people. Each team has a staff advisor and student leaders. Prior to departure, the entire team meets regularly to better understand what to expect on the trip.

Not surprisingly, Alternative Break opportunities have been well received by Alma College students and staff. The program has grown from a single trip of 20 participants in 2003 to over 100 participants each academic year.

In addition to learning about social issues, Alternative Break participants experience the local culture at their destination. Each service opportunity includes time to sight see, enjoy a local restaurant, or relax with friends. Alternative Breaks encourages full engagement through living and eating simply, limiting technology and being alcohol- and drug-free. Curious about what Alternative Break is like? Ask one of the student leaders listed in Alma Connect.

Multiple Alternative Break opportunities are offered to students during academic breaks. These service experiences are available at affordable costs for travel, room and board.

Alternative Breaks: April 2023

[Register HERE](#)

Serve and connect with fellow students who share an interest in one of the following topics:

Alternative Break	Description	Dates	Location
Environmental Education with <i>Forest Hill Nature Area</i>	Support environmental education programs for local kids by completing maintenance and construction projects at the Forest Hill Nature Area	April 24	Gratiot County, MI
Disability Support with <i>Dream Works Resale Shop</i>	Help the shop move locations by packing and moving items, sorting goods, cleaning, etc. and support a nonprofit that provides vocational and social opportunities for adults with disabilities.	April 27-31	Ithaca, MI
Disaster Relief with <i>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</i> Closed - FULL	Support disaster recovery from Hurricane Harvey in Houston, TX. Participants should be prepared for physical work, indoor or outdoors, in any weather. This group will be flying to Texas.	April 22 - 29	Houston, Texas
Environmental Sustainability with <i>Redwood National Park</i> Closed - FULL	Volunteers will work on outdoor maintenance and clean up projects in support of the park. Participants should be prepared for physical work outdoors in any weather. Accommodation will be either camping or rustic cabins. This group will be flying to California.	April 22 - 29	Redwood National Park, California
Interfaith Community Development	Support a variety of indoor and outdoor projects that support the Beaver Island community in	TBD - Week of	Beaver Island, MI

with <i>Beaver Island Christian Church</i> <i>CANCELED</i>	preparing for the upcoming tourist season. In collaboration with the Alma College Chapel and Beaver Island Christian Church. Participants of any faith (or none) are welcome. This trip will include a short flight to Beaver Island.	April 22 - 29	
Food Security with the <i>Gratiot Community Garden</i>	Prepare the community garden for the new growing season. May include putting up deer fencing, preparing the garden for planting, creating signage, etc. Participants should be prepared for physical work in any weather.	Sat. April 29	Alma, MI
LGBTQ+ with the <i>Gender Affirming Closet</i>	Help sort, wash, and organize donations at the Gender Affirming Closet at Alma College	TBD	Alma, MI

Alternative Spring Breaks: February 2023

Not currently accepting applications.

Alternative Break	Description	Dates	Location
Local Engagement with <i>Gender Affirming Closet, Gratiot Community Garden & Greater Lansing Food Bank</i>	LGBTQ+: Monday February 27 & Tuesday, February 28 - help the Gender Affirming Closet switch out seasonal winter clothes to spring clothes which will include washing the clothes and tracking inventory. May include craft and jewelry-making projects as well. Food Security: Friday March 3 - spend the morning planting seeds for the Gratiot Community Garden and the afternoon at the Greater Lansing Food Bank	February 27 & 28 March 3	Mid-Michigan

<p>Environmental Sustainability</p> <p><i>Joshua Tree National Park</i></p> <p><i>CLOSED - FULL</i></p>	<p>Volunteers will work on outdoor maintenance and clean up projects, such as roadside brush clearance.</p>	<p>Feb. 25 - March 5</p>	<p>Joshua Tree National Park, CA</p>
<p>Animal Welfare</p> <p><i>with Horse Creek Animal Sanctuary</i></p> <p><i>CLOSED - FULL</i></p>	<p>Horse Creek Wildlife Sanctuary and Animal Refuge provides medical care for and houses abandoned and abused dogs and seeks good, caring homes for them. Volunteers will work on a variety of projects both with the dogs and in the maintenance of the property.</p>	<p>Feb 26 - March 5</p>	<p>Hardin County, TN</p>
<p>Housing Security</p> <p><i>with Habitat for Humanity</i></p> <p><i>CLOSED - FULL</i></p>	<p>Support disaster recovery from Hurricane Ian, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, whose vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live.</p>	<p>Feb 25 - March 5</p>	<p>Florida</p>

Alternative Winter Breaks: December 2022

Not currently accepting applications.

Alternative Break	Description	Dates	Location
<p>Food Security</p> <p><i>with</i></p>	<p>Sort donations at the food bank and assist with food delivery programs at the</p>	<p>A. December 12&13</p>	<p>Lansing and Alma, Michigan</p>

<p><i>First Presbyterian Church of Alma and Greater Lansing Food Bank</i></p>	<p>First Presbyterian Church of Alma. Sign up for one session or both.</p>	<p>B. December 14&15</p>	
<p>LGBTQ+ <i>with LGBT Detroit and Gratiot Gender Affirming Closet</i></p>	<p>The mission of LGBT Detroit is to increase awareness of and support to Detroit’s dynamic LGBT culture through education and advocacy with integrity and pride. Engagements will include assisting with a holiday party, health fair, and education program, and learning about the organization and affiliates</p>	<p>December 10-17</p>	<p>Detroit, Michigan</p>
<p>Disaster Relief <i>with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</i></p>	<p>Support disaster recovery from Hurricane Florence in New Bern, North Carolina. Participants should be prepared for physical work outdoors in an weather.</p>	<p>December 10 - 17</p>	<p>New Bern, North Carolina</p>
<p>Environmental Stewardship <i>with Everglades and Biscayne National Parks</i></p>	<p>Volunteers will work on outdoor maintenance and clean up projects, such as trail maintenance. Participants should be prepared for physical work outdoors in any weather.</p>	<p>December 10 - 17</p>	<p>Biscayne and Everglades National Parks, Florida</p>
<p>Children’s Health</p>	<p>Volunteer in support of St. Jude’s. Be prepared to do whatever we can to help -</p>	<p>December 10 - 17</p>	<p>Memphis, Tennessee</p>

with <i>St. Jude's Children's Hospital</i>	no job is too small! Expect to participate in support for fundraising programming, among other tasks. In partnership with TKE.		
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Alternative Fall Breaks: October 2022

Not currently accepting applications.

Alternative Break	Description	Dates	Location
Food Security with the <i>Gratiot Community Garden Greater Lansing Food Bank</i>	Support a variety of mid-Michigan partners working to alleviate food insecurity. Expect active outdoor work completing end-of-season maintenance at the community garden as well as indoor tasks sorting donations and assisting with food distributions.	October 13 & 15	Alma & Lansing
Environmental Stewardship with the <i>Friends of the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail</i>	Participate in trail maintenance on the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail in Gratiot County, including brush trimming and removal. Expect to be active outdoors throughout each day, including walking to and from the project site.	October 14 - 15	Alma
LGBTQ+ Support with the	Help sort, wash, and organize donations to the Gender Affirming Closet at Alma College, which provides gender-affirming	October 13	Alma

<i>Gratiot Gender Affirming Closet</i>	clothing and accessories to members of the campus and Gratiot community.		
Disability Support with <i>Day Dreams Inc.</i>	Sort donations and organize merchandise at the Day Dreams Resale Shop, which supports vocational and social opportunities for adults with disabilities.	October 15	Ithaca

* All costs for Fall Breaks will be covered by the Alma Venture program. There is no cost to participants.