



# Circle K: Touching Lives, Enriching the World

By Christine A. Doyle, M.B.A. '04

Make the world a better place. Touch another person's life. Bring a smile to a child's face. At UAlbany, more than 50 Circle K club members are doing exactly these things – and enriching the University, the Capital Region community and the world beyond simultaneously.

Formed in the 1930s, Circle K International has evolved into a collegiate service organization that promotes fellowship, leadership and service. Today, more than 12,000 college students on 507 campuses in 15 nations collectively perform more than one million hours of service through Circle K.

UAlbany Circle K members, who represent a range of ages, backgrounds and majors, gather weekly to create and promote service projects that will benefit their neighbors. They serve meals to the homeless at the Albany Soup Kitchen and the Capital City Rescue Mission, mentor children at the Arbor Hill Community Center After-School Program, and participate in walk-a-thons and other fundraisers for various charities. Along the way, they develop life-long friendships and critical leadership skills.

Five elected officers – all women – currently lead the UAlbany club. Lauren Combs, president; Liz Reinhardt, vice president; Nicole Kennedy, treasurer; Rachel Krongelb, secretary; and Michal Yehezkel, editor, expertly juggle classes, homework and extracurricular activities while determining the club's meeting schedule, dues structure and service activities.

Those activities range from hands-on disaster relief efforts to fundraising. Last January, eight Circle K members traveled to New Orleans to gut houses not touched since Hurricane Katrina in an effort to salvage them. "You never quite look at the world the

same way again after you have seen it at its worst," observes Kennedy, who will earn her bachelor's degree in accounting in May 2008 and her master's the following year.

In April, club members participated in another meaningful, yet demanding, experience: organizing Circle K's first-ever benefit concert. Krongelb, a communication major slated to graduate next May, recalls, "We booked bands, had bands cancel, booked other bands, and arrived to a roomful of chairs without a stage during a Nor'easter!" The proceeds,

more than \$350, were donated to the American Heart Association in memory of Kermit L. Hall, the late University at Albany president.

Members of UAlbany's Circle K also coordinate projects with their peers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Russell Sage, Adirondack Community College and The College of Saint Rose. In addition, they attend conventions that

bring together all New York State clubs, districts and Kiwanians.

Over the years, the Circle K club at UAlbany has been recognized by other clubs throughout the state and by its local sponsor, the Delmar Kiwanis, for its efforts in increasing membership and raising money for such organizations as the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Its members, however, are modest about their contributions to bettering the lives of others. Asked how she expects to benefit from her service in Circle K, Krongelb sums up the club's philosophy: "This isn't about me. It's about helping others."

Christine A. Doyle, M.B.A.'04, was a Circle K member as an undergraduate at SUNY Oswego. Now the adviser for UAlbany's Circle K, she invites club alumni with ideas for service projects to contact her at (518) 591-8626 or [cdoyle@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:cdoyle@uamail.albany.edu).



These Circle K members spent part of their winter break in New Orleans, gutting homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

## The Circle K Family

Circle K International is just one in a family of Kiwanis service organizations geared toward all ages.

- **Kiwanis International:** a worldwide service organization comprised of individuals working to improve their communities
- **Key Club:** a coeducational international service organization for high school students
- **Builders Club:** a service program providing young people aged 12 to 15 the opportunity to help their school and community, while building a positive future for themselves
- **Kiwanis Kids:** a combination of three programs – Terrific Kids, Bring Up Grades and K-Kids – providing elementary-school students opportunities to grow into capable, competent and caring leaders
- **Aktion Club:** a service program that provides life experiences for adults with developmental disabilities to encourage them to hone their leadership abilities and citizenship skills



Circle K was recognized as Outstanding Community Service Club at the Student Association Awards Banquet May 9. Rachel Krongelb, adviser Christine Doyle and Outstanding Executive Board Member Award recipient Nicole Kennedy (left to right) were on hand for the ceremony.