

On Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, I was able to attend the Student United Way Leadership Retreat thanks to the generous contribution of United Way St. Croix Valley. I met with about 35 other students from across the nation to collaborate ways to improve Student United Way and their relationship with local United Ways.

We began with lots of ice breakers and name games, which helped to loosen us up and acquaint us with one another. We got to be goofy before getting down to business! Mike Brooks of United Way Worldwide led us into discussion, and we broke up into different classes throughout the weekend to focus on team culture, volunteering and ideas, marketing and publicity, fundraising, and other topics important for the success of Student United Ways.

Throughout the weekend, we formed amazing and helpful relationships, provided and obtained feedback and ideas, and were immersed in synergy. The lines between faculty and students became blurred, and all that remained was a group of leaders with one common goal: to LIVE UNITED.

Attending the Retreat equipped me with many tools I am excited to bring back to my local community in hopes of creating a snowball effect for both Student United Way and United Way. I wish to work together with our amazing team at United Way St. Croix Valley to promote education, income, and health for our community and our world, and am confident in the knowledge that every volunteer hour makes a difference!

Special thanks to Mike Brooks, United Way of Greater St. Louis, and especially United Way St. Croix Valley for this wonderfully educating and uplifting experience!!

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