What is the Alternative Break Program?
FRIENDS Alternative Break Programs (FRIENDS ABProgram) provide college students an opportunity to be immersed in a Blue Ridge Parkway community and engaged in volunteer service as an alternative to traditional spring or fall breaks. Each FRIENDS ABProgram is focused on Blue Ridge Parkway project needs, such as, but not limited to, restoration of Parkway assets and/or trail construction or maintenance.

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway designed the Alternative Break Program to broaden and deepen the relationship between future stewards, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Blue Ridge communities. FRIENDS’ goal is to connect a higher learning institution with America’s Most Visited Park and America’s Scenic Drive — the Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition, students develop a lasting relationship with the Parkway and they are exposed to critical social and cultural issues within the park’s communities.

Students learn about the communities they visit, participate in community volunteer projects and attend educational activities to learn about the Blue Ridge Parkway’s culture and heritage. Students may learn to flat foot, visit local industries, play regional instruments and much more, adding to their personal understanding of the Blue Ridge!

Alternative breaks have a heavy emphasis on group and individual reflection on the volunteer service they are providing to both the Parkway and the local community. The FRIENDS ABProgram challenges students to think critically and react to issues faced by the communities they are involved with and provide service to. Our parks may not survive the federal financial cuts; but with the investment of volunteer service, the Blue Ridge Parkway’s resources and assets can be preserved.

In past years, students visited local educational institutions, volunteered at food banks, studied the local economy and met community leaders. Being immersed in diverse environments enables participants to experience, discuss and understand social issues, as well as enhance their knowledge of the culture and heritage of such a unique region.

FRIENDS Alternative Break Program means serving as a volunteer where you are needed. Each student will use their own talents to serve — it is a personalized volunteer program. FRIENDS has provided Alternative Fall and Spring Break Programs to Notre Dame, Vanderbilt and Shawnee State students, which have fostered overwhelmingly positive volunteer service results for the Blue Ridge Parkway and Parkway communities.

Why Should I Do It?
The mission of the FRIENDS ABProgram is to contribute volunteer service the Blue Ridge communities and the Blue Ridge Parkway, while having a positive impact on a student’s life. FRIENDS ABProgram attracts students who want to make a lasting difference through service, while engaging critical reflection and social action. After this experience, students return their communities with new outlooks and methods of shaping their schools, cities and park systems in a positive manner.
Here are some of the comments students have made in the past about the FRIENDS Alternative Break Program:

“I’ve never been so proud to be a Virginian. Born in Harrisonburg and raised in Alexandria, somehow all this amazing culture has been hidden from me. The music, the dancing, the history and the food...I never knew there was such a powerful way of life down here.” — Arthur Farmer

“I think the thing that I’ve come to really appreciate and admire during my visit is how much pride the people have for the culture, traditions, customs and, obviously, the Blue Ridge Parkway. I find it incredibly fascinating how passionate everyone is about living here and preserving the environment. Everyone has been so kind and hospitable to us and that is in itself a great reflection of the character of the people here. It’s been such an incredible experience being immersed in the culture and the Parkway.” — Christine Ke

“This week I have been amazed by the gracious hospitality of FRIENDS. I am so thankful for the chance to experience the beauty of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the culture of Floyd, VA. I will leave this week with a profound appreciation of this place and the people.” — Rachel Conry

“It is all about protecting and preserving what is important to me. Coming here and raising awareness for the Blue Ridge Parkway makes me realize how important it is to do this so that the younger generation can still appreciate the culture in the future.” — Bella Maftuz
**Cost**

FRIENDS ABProgram does not include transportation. Each participant in FRIENDS ABProgram pays $150-300 for the week which includes all of their food, housing and experiences. Costs will vary based on the lodging facilities, meal plan and other miscellaneous expenses identified for each student. Group size will be limited based upon lodging facilities and projects anticipated. If this is an amount the students cannot fund; we can look at alternative ways to deal with budget issues such as camping and being responsible for their food.

Domestic flying trips/international trips can vary due to the cost of airfare which may range from $450-$1500. FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is not responsible for transportation to the FRIENDS ABProgram site along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

*Cost of the program may vary. Please contact FRIENDS to discuss options.

**What should I bring?**

Your gear needs will vary greatly based on your trip, project location and accommodations. To get you started with packing, we have included suggested equipment checklists that should cover your basic needs. If the program requires students to camp at one of the various camping sites on the Parkway, students will provide their own tent, sleeping bag, pad and all personal gear, including eating utensils. FRIENDS will provide tools for the volunteer service projects.
This list is a general guide for trips offering indoor accommodations. Your equipment needs will vary based on the project and climate. Pay attention to any special instructions from your host for your specific project. Don’t hesitate to call us if you have any questions regarding clothing or equipment needs for your trip.

### Suggested Items (Essentials marked by an asterisk)

#### Clothing:
- * Broken-In Hiking/Work Boots
- * Leather Work Gloves
- * 2 Pair Long Pants
- * 2 Long Sleeve Shirts
- * Rain jacket & Pants
- Camp Shoes or Outdoor Sandals
- 3 Pair Liner Socks
- 3 Pair Heavy Boot Socks
- Wool Sweater, Shirt or Down Vest
- Mid-weight Jacket (Synthetic Fleece Or Light Down)
- 2-3 T-Shirts
- Warm Hat
- Underwear
- Thermal Underwear
  (Top & Bottom depending on climate)
- Shorts

#### Equipment:
- * Daypack
- * Sleeping Bag or Linens (appropriate to climate)
- * 2 1-Liter Water Bottles
- Flashlight/Headlamp & spare batteries
- Duct Tape
- Matches in Waterproof Container
- Whistle (for emergency signal only)
- Reusable Container for carrying lunch/sandwich
- Pocket Knife

#### Personal Items:
- Towel & Bio-degradable Soap
- Sun Hat and Bandana
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Insect Repellent
- Personal Toiletries

#### Personal First Aid Items:
- Adhesive Bandages
- Hydrocortisone Cream
- Sterile Gauze Bandages
- Medical Tape
- First Aid Cream
- Anti-histamine (for allergic reactions, itching)
- Second Skin Gel (for blisters & burns)
- Tweezers
- Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Aspirin, etc.
- Diarrhea Medicine
- Ace Bandage

#### Miscellaneous:
- Large Garbage Bags (to keep gear dry)
- Swimsuit
- Camera
- Binoculars
- GPS Unit
- Compass/Maps
- Nylon Cord, 25-50’ (for clotheslines, etc)
- Backpack Chair/Camp Chair
- Reading Book or Field Guide
- Tetanus Booster
  (highly recommended if you’ve not had one in past 5 years)

**ABSOLUTELY NO ANIMALS, WEAPONS OR FIREARMS! NO EXCEPTIONS!**
FRIENDS Alternative Break Seven Guiding Principles

**Service:**
Programs provide an opportunity for participants to engage in direct or “hands-on” projects and activities that address critical but unmet social needs, as determined by the Blue Ridge community. Community interaction during service projects and throughout the week is essential to the break experience.

**Orientation:**
FRIENDS provides information to each school in advance to help students understand their Blue Ridge Parkway community. Prior to departure, participants should be oriented to the mission and vision of the community partner or organization(s) with which they are working. Participants are encouraged to look at the context of the work of the organization within the broader community and to become allies to their mission and vision.

**Education:**
Programs include sessions on issue specific educational, social, community, cultural or environmental topics. These sessions provide a different perspective to participants with a historical, political, social and cultural context on the issues affecting their area.

**Training:**
Participants are provided with adequate training in skills necessary to carry out tasks and projects during their break experience once they reach their site. Examples of training include learning basic split rail fence construction or trail maintenance procedures.

**Reflection:**
During the trip, participants reflect upon the experiences they are having - synthesizing the direct service, education and community interaction components. FRIENDS site leaders set aside time for reflection to take place, both individually and in a group setting.

**Break Experience Project Requirements:**
All participants are asked to provide FRIENDS either a written paper reflecting on their experiences or a group video on the value of their experience. How did your break experiences translate into a lifelong commitment to active citizenship or stewardship? It is FRIENDS goal for students to continue participating in volunteer efforts in their local area, learn about possible internships, engage politically in their community, become future stewards for our parks and/or make life choices that benefit the entire community.

**Diversity:**
FRIENDS’ encourages participants to represent the diverse range of students present in the campus community. Coordinators should recruit with this end in mind.
FRIENDS Alternative Break Program

School Sponsor Application

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is pleased to offer its Alternative Break Program to interested universities. Participants make tangible connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they will encounter in jobs and experiences outside the university setting. FRIENDS aspires to provide an engaging and informative week-long experience and service opportunity along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

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<tr>
<th>DATES REQUESTED:</th>
<th>BEGINNING DATE _______</th>
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<tr>
<td>FALL BREAK _______</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK _______</td>
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SCHOOL NAME: ______________________________________

CONTACT PERSON: ___________________________________

(TITLE) (LAST) (FIRST) (M.I.)

SCHOOL ADDRESS: ___________________________________

(STREET) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

PHONE: (_____)(_______) - _________

CELL: (_____) _______ - ___________________

DATE: _____/_____/_____ SIGNATURE _________________

If interested, please complete and submit this application to the following address:

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.
ATTN: Alternative Break Program
P.O. Box 20986
Roanoke, Va. 24018

540.772.2239 (fax)
540.772.2992 (phone)
staff@friendsbrp.org
FRIENDS Alternative Break Program

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DATES REQUESTED: BEGINNING DATE _______ ENDING DATE _______
FALL BREAK _______ SPRING BREAK _______

NAME: ____________________________________________________________________________________

(LAST) (FIRST) (M.I.)

HOME ADDRESS: _____________________________________ _______________________________________
(STREET) CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

HOME PHONE: (______) ________ - ________ CELL PHONE: (______) ________ - ________

SCHOOL: ___________________________________________ _______________________________________

SCHOOL ADDRESS: ___________________________________ _______________________________________
(STREET) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

ACADEMIC YEAR (CIRCLE): FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE JUNIOR SENIOR

ARE YOU 18 YEARS OF AGE? _______ YES _______ NO

WHICH BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY DISTRICT WOULD YOU PREFER? (Refer to the map on page 3)

______________________________________           ________________________________________
FIRST CHOICE                           SECOND CHOICE

DATE: _____/_____/______ SIGNATURE ________________________________________________________

The School Sponsor Application must be approved prior to students submitting this application. If interested, please complete and submit this application to the following address:

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Inc.
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