Sportsmanlike Conduct

Fall 2014

A group of freshman football players spent their first summer in New York City tackling trash, sacking leaves, and picking off loose branches in Riverside Park. Their efforts were part of a community-service program that Lions head football coach Pete Mangurian started, to instill an appreciation in his incoming players for their new urban home. While some players pulled weeds and moved mounds of dirt in temperatures that topped ninety degrees, others volunteered at a local preschool — reading to children, helping them with arts and crafts, and chaperoning field trips.

“One month living in New York City, working alongside all our wonderful neighbors, alongside the Columbia community, you start to understand what it means to be a leader,” says La-Verna Fountain, Columbia’s vice president for construction business services and communications, who helped Mangurian design the program. “I think it will show up on the field, and it also means, more importantly, that our athletes are going to be leaders on campus and in the community.”

Thirty-four freshman Lions participated in the three-week program, which ended with them giving presentations about what they did and reflecting on the experience.

Says Mangurian: “A lot of these guys are from much different places than New York City. It’s a life lesson to learn how to interact a little outside your comfort zone. Another positive is they become more familiar with Columbia and the people here. This is a win-win situation for everybody involved.”



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