



# Working Side by Side: Creating Alternative Breaks as Catalysts for Global Learning, Student Leadership, and Social Change

*Shoshanna Sumka, Melody Christine Porter, Jill Piacitelli*

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"This is not a collection of stories about students who have miraculously transformed communities and themselves in a single week. While *Working Side By Side* inspires, it does so by thoughtfully raising and addressing the major complexities and challenges inherent to this type of community engagement. The authors provide many practical tools and frameworks for ethical and effective Alternative Breaks. The book signals the maturation of a movement while reminding us about potential pitfalls."

--Thomas Schnaubelt, Ph.D., Executive Director, Haas Center for Public Service, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Resident Fellow, Branner Hall , Stanford University

"I and many other champions of service-learning have long had our doubts about short-term service including alternative breaks. *Working Side by Side* speaks directly and authoritatively to these concerns. Its focus on authentic relationships, capacity building, and preparing students to recognize and address systemic oppression is both philosophical and eminently practical. This volume is an essential resource for educators and student leaders who seek to engage students in alternative breaks."

- Barbara Jacoby, Faculty Associate, Leadership & Community Service-Learning , University of Maryland

This book constitutes a guide for student and staff leaders in alternative break (and other community engagement, both domestic and international) programs, offering practical advice, outlining effective program components and practices, and presenting the underlying community engagement and global learning theory.

Readers will gain practical skills for implementing each of the eight components of a quality alternative break program developed by Break Away, the national alternative break organization.

The book advances the field of student-led alternative breaks by identifying the core components of successful programs that develop active citizens. It demonstrates how to address complex social issues, encourage structural analysis of societal inequities, foster volunteer transformation, and identify methods of work in mutually beneficial partnerships. It emphasizes the importance of integrating a justice-centered foundation throughout alternative break programs to complement direct service activities, and promotes long-term work for justice and student transformation by offering strategies for post-travel reorientation and continuing engagement.

The authors address student leadership development, issue-focused education, questions of power, privilege, and diversity, and the challenges of working in reciprocal partnerships with community organizations. They offer guidance on fundraising, budget management, student recruitment, program structures, the nuts and bolts of planning a trip, risk management, health and safety, and assessment and evaluation. They address the complexities of international service-learning and developing partnerships with grassroots community groups, non-governmental and nonprofit organizations, and intermediary organizations.

For new programs, this book provides a starting point and resource to return to with each stage of

development. For established programs, it offers a theoretical framework to reflect on and renew practices for creating active citizens and working for justice.

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**Deloris Wagner:**

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