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Into the Streets Welcoming Remarks

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

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• Welcome and, behalf of the entire University community, thank you for being here today and thank you for being part of this longtime Western Michigan University tradition,

• For all of us, Kalamazoo is home—year-round or for eight months—it doesn't really matter. We're fortunate to be a part of this place. Kalamazoo is the community that helped give this university birth, and now, embraces us all as integral parts of the neighborhoods and the cultural and academic life of the city.

• It's always easy to say we owe this community our time, energy and effort. It's quite another thing to actually turn out—on a Saturday morning—and pledge time to specific organizations, and individuals who need our help. Opportunities like "Spring Into the Streets" give us the impetus to step out of our workday world and into the lives of the people around us.

• This is a chance to really see the kind of impact each of us to make as an individual. It's a chance to really know our fellow community members, see how you can help them fill their needs and learn how that, in turn can affect your own life.

• We do also have a reputation to uphold. Last year, students on this campus put in more than 600,000 hours of service—632,408—and we were named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll With Distinction. That is an amazing accomplishment. We are all about continuous improvement,
though, so let's see if we can aim for 700,000 hours this year. Today is an enormous opportunity to boost that number.

• I see by the looks on your faces that you're excited, eager to be out there meeting people and curious about what the day will bring. Have fun, too. When you're cleaning up at the Nature Center, raking yards in one of the neighborhoods, or preparing gardens for Fair Food Matters, enjoy yourselves and the opportunity to reach out and get to know new people. Come back to campus tired but invigorated and have a wonderful weekend.