

granting

DC CREATES NEW PHILANTHROPISTS

Defiance College students take part in a new service program that awards \$12,000 to local agencies

by Debbie Richard, '02, '04, Assistant Director of Marketing

Students complete many forms of service throughout their time at Defiance College. They work in the community, travel throughout the nation and the world, organize book and food drives, volunteer in schools, and conduct research projects that benefit community partners.

A new form of service was recently introduced to DC students - the service of giving back to the community in the form of philanthropic assistance. This opportunity was incorporated into three classes, which included philanthropic projects that awarded \$12,000 in mini-grants.

The Campus Connects Student Philanthropy Program (CCSPP) was made possible by a grant from Ohio Campus Compact, the manager of the grant program established by Cincinnati philanthropist Roger Grein. Having overcome many challenges as a youth, Grein prospered and flourished as the result of help from other people. Because of this, he was easily attracted to create a student philanthropy project when he heard about a college successfully running a similar program. Grein felt it would “help students learn how to be engaged citizens and understand the important role philanthropy plays in the health of our communities, our nation, and the world.”

Campus Compact awarded the grants for the 2008-09 school year. Defiance College’s McMaster School for Advancing Humanity was one of seven Ohio and Kentucky institutions awarded the grant.

“Given the important role that private philanthropists have in addressing the critical issues that face us, it is important to understand the power and role of philanthropy,” said Dr. Laurie Worrall, Dean



Legal Aid of Western Ohio was the recipient of a \$4,000 grant from Dr. Marian Plant's religion class.

of the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity. “Most Defiance College students understand community organizations as volunteers. Having hands-on philanthropic experience will allow students in their future careers to understand the complexity of applying for and receiving grant monies as well as understand non-profit organizations from a philanthropic perspective.”

The DC students designed mission statements for their mini-grant programs and processes for awarding their funds. Each class distributed applications to numerous local agencies and then went through a selection process. More than 25 area agencies submitted applications for the grants. The three courses awarded two \$4,000 and two \$2,000 grants.

The students presented the first grant recipients with their awards at a November luncheon on the DC campus.

“The students have every reason to be proud of what they did,” said Dr. Marian Plant, associate professor of Christian education. Her Beyond Volunteerism religion class chose to award Legal Aid of Northwestern Ohio a \$4,000 grant to provide legal aid services to area individuals in need. “I had an idea of what the focus for the project would be,” she said. “However, it wasn’t what the students saw.”

Dr. Plant’s class focused on how the organizations would make a difference at the root level of a social injustice. They also wanted to help fund a program that was already in place, so that the grant funding



Macro Practices social work class, above, and Latin American History class, right, awarded grants.



could be put to use immediately.

Assistant Professor of Sociology Alesia Yakos-Brown's class also focused on giving grant monies to a program that was already in place. Her Macro Practices Social Work class awarded Northwest Ohio Community Action Commission and Ravens Care Inc. each a \$2,000 grant to assist low income clients with transportation needs.

Yakos-Brown's class, as part of the course, completed a community assessment of the five-county area. It was from this assessment that the group identified transportation as an area of community need. When writing the proposal request, the group asked for organizations to submit grant requests for projects that fit this need.

"As with any experience we have with the College, it was a wonderful and powerful experience," said Angie Franklin, Community Services Director for Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission. "Even though it was a small grant, in the grand scheme of things, we were more excited about receiving this grant because of its connection to Defiance College. It's also a unique and creative way to get students involved in social justice issues and learn more about the community."

A \$4,000 grant from Dr. Michelle Tabit's Latin American History class was awarded to

PathStone, formerly known as Rural Opportunities, to provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault within the northwest Ohio migrant Latino population.

"It was harder than I thought it would be, but very rewarding," said sophomore Rebekka Zeigler. "Because all but one of the grant requests was for organizations that we had had some personal involvement with, it was sometimes hard to keep the emotional side out of the decision-making process. We had to remind ourselves to restrict our decision based on the information provided on the proposal request, not the personal experiences."

Junior Kristal Hober also enjoyed the program. "Dr. Plant is known for getting students involved in class, above the normal course work, but this was beyond that," she said. "We were the ones to make all the decisions. We wrote the mission, the vision, sent out the letters, met with the organizations and chose the organization. It was a great experience and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be able to choose and grant funding that you know is going to a good cause."

The grant was originally provided as seed funding to establish an on-going program for students to continue to make grants. The program was to have been funded 100 percent for the first two years, 50 percent the third year and none the fourth year, requiring the development of a new stream of funding from an external source to sustain the program.

However, as the nation has fallen on hard economic times, so too has the funding for the CCSPP. The program has been suspended until further notice and will not be funded this upcoming year. The McMaster School for Advancing Humanity is working with the College's Office of Institutional Advancement on alternative ways to replace the grant funding. The McMaster School will need to raise \$13,000 each year to support its program in philanthropy.

Roger Grein said "Expose students to the needs of others. It changes their hearts." The philanthropy program is certainly a unique opportunity for students to look at service from a different perspective. It's also a chance for them to experience the impact of giving within the community and how those funds can be multiplied to benefit a larger group. ♦

Support Students Supporting Philanthropy

If you think supporting the McMaster School's philanthropy program is something you might be interested in, please contact Dr. Laurie Worrall, Dean of the McMaster School of Advancing Humanity, at (419) 783-2553 or lworrall@defiance.edu.