Spencerian College’s Community Service Event Wins National Award

Spencerian College’s Louisville campus received a National Service Award from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) for their participation in ACICS’s community service event We SERVE. A total of 194 schools and 3,162 volunteers completed 13,616 hours of community service.

Spencerian participated by first hosting a Health and Wellness Fair for the Shively area community on May 22. A committee of staff and faculty members worked hard for six months to plan the event. A total of 12 exhibitors plus six departments from Spencerian College performed health screenings and provided information and referrals. The health screenings included: blood typing, body mass index, flexibility, blood glucose, cholesterol, respiratory/oxygen, spinal stability and bone density. The Metro Health Department brought the mammogram mobile unit, and the Red Cross Bloodmobile accepted 23 successful units of donated blood.

The Week of Giving, which evolved into several months of collections, resulted in monetary donations, food, hygienic supplies and a 46-inch television, among other items. In all, 2,683 items were donated and $1,494 in cash and gift certificates was collected.

“One of us devoted a lot of time and energy to this project,” noted Jan Gordon, executive director. “This was a great way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of ACICS and the 120th anniversary of Spencerian College and give back to our community.”

Respiratory Therapy Director Shannon Terry served as the committee chair for the project. Under her direction, the group chose two local non-profit organizations to benefit from a campus-wide competition between programs to bring in donated items. They chose Southwest Center, which addresses the growing need for programs and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities, and Shively Area Ministries, an official site for the Dare to Care food drive that also offers financial assistance to those who qualify.

One hundred participants attended the Health Fair, and the Spencerian family hosted booths and volunteered to ensure a successful event. Many area organizations were represented, including the Brown Cancer Center, Ocean Dental and the Louisville Vegetarian Club. Community Outreach Coordinator Karen Swinney said, “Community service is an extremely important component of Spencerian College’s mission and vision. The entire school came together to make a positive impact on the people of this community.”

Clothesline Project and Domestic Violence Awareness Week

Over the past decade, Dr. Tonnie Renfro has encouraged her psychology and sociology students to participate in the Clothesline Project and Domestic Violence Awareness Week.

The Clothesline Project is a public display of individually created tee shirts that illustrate with words, colors and symbols the personal stories of women’s experiences of intimate, interpersonal violence (Chicchito 1994; Foley 1995). The original project was inspired by an artist at a Take Back the Night rally in 1990. This project is a metaphor on two levels: traditionally, women shared their stories over backyard fences while hanging their laundry out to dry, and laundry has been traditionally considered “women’s work.”

The project has four elements: to bear witness to victims and survivors; to help with the healing process; to educate and bring about awareness; and to provide a network of support and encouragement.

Students are advised that their choice in the women they choose can possibly open old wounds or trigger an awareness of old memories. They are also advised that sharing intimate, personal experiences can be difficult, and that the purpose of the project is not to open themselves up as a form of group therapy. Students are instead encouraged to utilize support groups and other forms of counseling, should this experience reveal issues for them.

On the walls of the Student Lounge, tee shirts are displayed from this experience reveal issues for them.

Students are asked to follow this color code when selecting a tee shirt: white for women who died of violence; yellow for women who have been battered or assaulted; red/orange for women who have been raped/sexually assaulted; blue for survivors of incest; green for survivors of child sexual abuse; purple/lavender for women attacked because of sexual orientation. Students will then decorate the shirt in honor of the woman they choose, and the students will write an explanation about the shirt, which can include a poem, letter or commentary.

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In addition to the excellence in Community Service Award, Spencerian also received three additional awards from ACICS: a Founders Circle award for being one of only five original members still affiliated with ACICS, an award for being an ACICS accredited school for more than 50 years, and an award for educating students for over 100 years.

From left to right - Melissa Vaught, Adriana Nethery, Allan Roberson, Angela Jessup, Kelly Hartman, Christina Dejulieti, Amy Burks, Holly Johnson, Lauren Kuhn, Brook Hammans, Erica Bedmon and Tim Brodie.