

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Community Engagement at Richard Stockton College Reaches Far Beyond Campus

Two Mays Landing Residents, One Bridgeton Resident are Community Engagement Award Recipients

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Galloway Township, NJ- Students, professors and staff members at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey have touched the lives of individuals across the world through a number of community service projects.

On Monday, January 17, 2011, during the College's 7th Annual Martin Luther King Day of Service, Community Engagement Awards were presented to a student, faculty member, staff member and student organization who have gone beyond the call of duty to make a difference. Nearly 400 volunteers participated in Day of Service.

"While MLK Day of Service has become a local tradition, Stockton's community engagement footprint spans a global community. From Uganda to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., Stockton has come to the aid of those reaching out for a helping hand," said Dr. Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., Stockton's president.

The first Community Engagement Awards were presented in 2007. The winners, who are nominated by members of the Stockton community, demonstrate an outstanding record of service.

"The nominations we received were a clear indication that Stockton community members are generous in their community engagement efforts," said Kim McCabe, director of publications and creative services and this year's selection-committee chair.

Esther Grace Smith, a junior business major and a resident of Bridgeton, was nominated by Diane Holtzman, assistant professor of business studies.

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During the summer of 2010, Smith volunteered at Bayada Nurses in Millville, a home healthcare service. She gave 136 hours of her time to assist with office management and to help elderly clients.

During the fall of 2010, Smith volunteered at Tri County Community Action Partnership in Bridgeton, the federally-designated Community Action Program (CAP) for Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties, by assisting with community events.

Smith currently volunteers at Victory Assembly of God Church in Pittsgrove. At Stockton, Smith assists with the Stockton Christian Fellowship program, the Stockton Republican Club and Community of Scholars.

Holtzman said, "From having Esther Grace as a student in the management skills class I teach, I find her willingness to help others in class, and on campus, as well as her willingness to help members of her religious community, the civic community, and the local community, as excellent examples of a Stockton student engaged and helping others."

Smith's service reaches both the young and the elderly. "For example, she does home-visitations with elderly in the Millville/Bridgeton area, assists with childcare in the church she attends, assists with the Stockton Christian Ministry and, through this organization, aids students when needed," said Holtzman.

Diane Falk, professor of social work and a resident of Mays Landing, was nominated by John Searight, professor emeritus of social work.

In February of 2010, Falk spent a month in Lukaya, Uganda, where she provided social work services to support the development of a school, the Mustard Seed Academy. Falk serves as an advisor to Real Partners Uganda, the organization supporting the academy. While in Uganda, Falk keep a blog, which can be accessed at <http://dianefalk.blogspot.com/>.

Falk is currently project director for the Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program (BCWEP), a consortium that supports social work majors from seven New Jersey colleges and universities and encourages students to enter professional positions in New Jersey public child welfare agencies. The BCWEP has provided funding and support to 240 students in their senior year who have completed the program and are now working as social workers in the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Of the 240 students, 82 are Stockton students.

Falk has served as a member of AtlanticCare Behavioral Health's Board of Trustees, where she was recently awarded status as emeritus trustee, for thirteen years.

Searight explained that Falk accomplished her service "with hard work, selfless commitment of time and effort, and a steadfast vision of improving conditions in communities, both local and international. She gets things done without drawing attention to herself."

Jose "Nick" Santana, a painter, was nominated by Debbie Sallis, a building maintenance crew supervisor.

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Santana visits veteran hospitals, including Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland, on a regular basis. He has also volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City where he taught a number of youngsters how to cook during a cook-off event.

Sallis said, "Nick gives his time endlessly for veterans...[and] when family or friends are in need, Nick is the first in line. Nick has been instrumental in coaching youth sports [and he] is truly an engaged citizen."

Stockton's Student Veteran Organization (SVO) was nominated by Thomas O'Donnell, assistant dean of students.

In 2010, the SVO raised the fifth largest amount of money in the nation for homeless veterans during National Vet-Aid Day, and they raised \$12,000 for veteran student scholarships by hosting the first Stockton Student-Veteran Scholarship Golf Tournament.

O'Donnell said, "The organization is currently involved in sending care packages to soldiers overseas, and they continue to give back to the American public by working hard to provide shelter for the homeless."

After the Community Engagement Awards were presented, the volunteers taking part in Stockton's MLK Day of Service embarked on a number of local community service projects.

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