

Projects at the Park

The Center for Service-Learning totes a long list of invaluable community partners, ranging from business organizations to non-for-profit agencies, to local schools to neighborhood associations. Each community partner is connected with a course specific service project that fulfills a predetermined need directly affecting their target constituency. Every once and a while there comes a community partner who undertakes more than one project and serves as the nerve center for a variety of MCC service-learners.

This semester (Spring 2009) Wilson Commencement Park has stepped up to the challenge of harboring several different service-learning initiatives. Wilson Commencement Park (WCP) is a transitional housing program that strives to empower low-income, single parent families to attain long-term goals of self-sufficiency and sustained employment. The park provides family support services, life-skills training, and mentoring to all of its residents. With over 68 affordable two to three bedroom apartments WCP is able to serve a

great number of people in Rochester.

Currently, there are four different service projects occurring at Wilson, two of which are under the supervision of professor Donna Haeger from the business administration department. In conjunction with her course 'BUS 135: Supervision for the 21st Century' Professor Haeger's students are conducting mock interviews and collecting professional articles of clothing for the residents of WCP. "It's inspiring, the students really get charged up about it" says Professor Haeger. The students have a lot of freedom with each project and they have been doing a phenomenal job at preparing things in a very professional manner. Students conducting the mock interviews have been developing their own process for interviewing in which they conduct the interview, evaluate the interviewee, and then leave time for questions and feedback from the WCP resident. With the clothing drive, students from Haeger's class are creating a campaign to set up collections all over the MCC campus collecting



interview clothes to develop a sustainable Working Women's Wardrobe. Professor Haeger says that her students have been amazing her with their independence and skills in project management. "So far this project has been very fulfilling" says Haeger. Her students will be submitting service journals that document their experiences along with a comprehensive self-assessment upon their completion of the project.

In the Art department, Professor Jason Smith leads his students in a project to create personalized artwork for WCP promotional and informational mailing material. Smith's students visited WCP to brainstorm ideas for their artwork. Currently, they are creating drafts that will end up being used to represent the Park, their residents, and their mission. These art students will gain valuable experience in

what it is like to develop a piece of artwork for an outside client.

The fourth and final project is for future educators enrolled in EDU 200: Foundations of Education. These service-learners provide tutoring assistance to "Rafiki," an afterschool homework help program. Tutors in EDU 200 must complete 20 hours of service throughout the semester where they are able to get a taste for developing lesson plans and working one on one with students.

Wilson Commencement Park has raised the bar for future community partners. Also enforcing the concept that MCC's Service-Learning program can provide a variety of different services to just one organization.