

SON service surpasses \$200K milestone in less than one year

The School of Nursing at the University of Mississippi Medical Center has long emphasized the value of community service among its educational programs.

Students and faculty in the school have taken that commitment to heart.

According to GiveGab, a social network website that tracks the actual value of volunteer efforts, the School of Nursing has surpassed the \$200,000 mark in donated community service.

Dr. Kim Hoover, SON dean, said the milestone reflects the core values of the school – and of the Medical Center.

“Service learning creates opportunities for our nursing students, students from other programs, faculty and staff to engage with the communities we serve,” Hoover said. “In doing so, we all develop a deeper respect for each other and find meaning in this work that helps better prepare us to meet the complex challenges of health care in Mississippi.”

Each nursing student is required to complete a minimum of eight academic hours of community service each year. As of the first week of December, faculty and students logged 9,441 hours of service on GiveGab, worth \$212,895, based on a national average of \$22 per hour as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The school began tracking its service learning activities on GiveGab last February. Since that time, students from baccalaureate, graduate and doctoral programs in the SON have participated in more than 170 different volunteer efforts – from local events such as health fairs, sports physicals, Stewpot Community Services and Habitat for Humanity builds to statewide programs like the SON’s Mercy Delta Express, the March of Dimes and the Mississippi HeArts Against AIDS campaign, according to Tammy Dempsey, director of student affairs and service learning for the School of Nursing.

“Every activity students do is viewed in light of learning outcomes adopted as service learning outcomes,” Dempsey said. “We look for experiences and activities that expose students to diversity, health disparity, as well as opportunities that allow students to practice professional values and professional skills. If an activity exposes students to these, then it will qualify as a service learning activity.

“Although students are required to complete eight hours per year, most students do a lot more than their share.”

Dempsey said the milestone’s significance to the students is much greater than the number of volunteer hours they can put on their resumes or the amount of money they have donated to worthy causes: it’s the opportunity to work side-by-side with faculty within a community context to make a meaningful contribution – meeting needs in their community.

“Service is part of the culture of the School of Nursing,” she said. “It’s reflective of our core values. It is at our heart.

“We’re all doing it – not just the students, but the faculty and staff as well. We had five faculty and three staff participate in the Habitat build – including the dean. Every time we do a health fair, we have faculty present to supervise the students.”

For more information about volunteer opportunities through the School of Nursing, email tdempsey@umc.edu; to track the School of Nursing’s progress on GiveGab, visit <https://www.givegab.com/universities/university-of-mississippi-medical-center-school-of-nursing>.