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Office of University
Communications

October 9, 2014

Outreach Project Provides Supplies for Shelters, Teaches Students Importance of Philanthropy

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. — In only 60 seconds, Gardner-Webb University students worked to improve the lives of homeless individuals this week. Dozens of students gave a minute of their time to package socks and personal care items for shelter residents during the University’s first “60 Seconds of Service” community outreach project on Thursday, Oct. 9.

Participants picked up a pair of socks and stuffed each with wet wipes, deodorant, lip balm, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Organized by the GWU Alumni Relations and Community Engagement offices, the project was a quick way for students to help the community and learn about the importance of serving others, said Leah Clevenger, alumni relations director. “We truly asked students to give just one minute,” she explained. “We provided the supplies and an opportunity for students to create a reference point for their future of the importance of service.”

Serving as a student leader for the event, junior psychology major Dijhia Sheely helped recruit people to fill socks with items. “I’ve had fun and helped out at the same time,” she shared. “With this type of project, you’re easily able to give back and meet other people on campus.”

In about an hour, more than 150 students participated in the “60 Seconds” effort, filling nearly 200 socks that were donated by community members in supply drives at Gardner-Webb in September. Alumni donated the dental products, and members of Broad River Community Church provided additional supplies for students to assemble, Clevenger said.

“The items become a kit to be handed out by area homeless ministries,” said Micah Martin, GWU Director of Student Leadership Development and Community Engagement. “It’s a simple concept, but it really matters to someone in need.”

Senior computer science major Quinten Burton donated his time to the project after seeing residents in need of socks and basic care items while visiting homeless shelters. “Usually, you see donations of clothes and food,” Burton offered. “Fewer people think to give socks and toothbrushes. This is teaching us to take a little bit of time to help out with a cause that’s really important.”

Gardner-Webb staff members and students will transport some supply-stuffed socks to homeless residents in Cleveland County (N.C.) and Spartanburg County (S.C.) shelters. Other supplies will be distributed in New York City during a Community Engagement and Campus Recreation offices-sponsored trip during Fall Break this month.

The sock supply effort is the first of several “60 Seconds of Service” events planned this academic year. Other upcoming projects include “Capes for Kids,” where participants will make superhero capes for children in hospitals, and participation in “National PB&J Day,” when students will make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for homeless shelters.

“We’re living out our school’s motto (Pro Deo et Humanitate) by doing good for God and humanity through these projects,” Clevenger said. “Students don’t have to feel like they’re making a commitment to just one group. They can help everybody.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).