

# Enhancing Community Engagement and Service: Addressing Community College Student Service Learning

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SCCCARES | Community Awareness Resources Engagement Service



## Project & Goals

### Project Details:

Under SCCCARES | Community Awareness Resources Engagement Service programming at Spokane Community College, Community Programs has created opportunities for service-learning, servant leadership, and community partnership. Goals for this project have included: 1) Enhancing Bigfoot Service Saturday infrastructure; 2) Promotion of ongoing community service opportunities; and 3) Creating learning outcomes for student participants through service-learning experiences.

### Outcomes:

- Promoted skills development – interpersonal communication; teamwork; and leadership
- Created meaningful relationships with peers and the community through sharing a common experience through service.
- Built capacity for engagement with community organizations to identify community needs and facilitating effective community partnerships.

## Background & Critical Issue

Since 2018, Community Programs has had over 97 active campus participants engaging in over 357 service hours with a total economic impact of \$9,710 to the greater Spokane region. Learning outcomes and skills for this project/program have included communication, management, event planning, and research skills. The critical issue sought to address through this project was engaging students and the campus community in opportunities for service and community engagement with local non-profit organizations, charities, and social services organizations. This would not only provide opportunities for co-curricular involvement, but equipping participants with knowledge of community resources.

## Partner Organization

Community partnerships developed through this project/program have included: 1) Habitat for Humanity; 2) Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest; 3) Ronald McDonald House; 4) Northwest Harvest; 5) Catholic Charities; 6) Meals on Wheels Spokane; 7) Union Gospel Mission; 8) Salvation Army; 9) YWCA Spokane; and 10) Mobius Spokane.

Partner organizations were able to leverage the use of additional volunteers in providing increased levels of quality service and support to the citizens utilizing their resources. Additionally, service opportunities with members of the Spokane Community College campus community allowed the organizations to provide context, history and background, and opportunities for continued involvement based on participants' areas of study and interest.



Caption: SCC Student Volunteer at Habitat for Humanity

## What I Did

- Provided infrastructure support for registering, approving, and confirming community service participants for one-time events (e.g. Bigfoot Service Saturday).
- Created social media marketing and promotional materials to engage the campus community in opportunities for community engagement.
- Assisted in reviewing and developing training materials for Student Site Leads for community service projects.
- Served as co-facilitator in engaging service participants in pre- and post- event guided reflection.
- Conducted research and outreach to local community organizations to provide opportunities for promoting ongoing community engagement and partnership listings.
- Benchmarked local and regional higher education institutions, specifically researching offices of community engagement, service learning, or community involvement to highlight high impact practices, resources, and infrastructure recommendations to continue to enhance the development and growth of the SCCCARES Community Programs.

## What I Learned

- Increased awareness of the issue(s) of poverty and basic needs insecurity in the Spokane region.
- Heightened knowledge of community services/resources available to support these needs.
- Many of the individuals that are engaging in service opportunities have themselves experienced some form of these challenges or basic needs insecurities.
- Personal fulfillment and enrichment in terms of helping others and serving the larger community.
- There is a high volume of people in need in the Greater Spokane area that are facing basic needs insecurity in terms of food and housing.
- Learned about the contributions that these individuals are making back to the organizations that are serving them.
- This program has allowed us to showcase that the institution/college cares about community engagement and highlighting community resources.
- Being in this position and serving as a role model has helped to motivate my academic success and co-curricular learning.
- I have gained incredible skills in terms of teamwork and collaboration through campus and community partnerships.



Caption: Northwest Harvest SCC Student Volunteers

## What is Next

1. Creating a transition plan for incoming Student Coordinator(s) regarding recommendations on initiatives and projects.
2. Improving registration and reflection processes for Bigfoot Service Saturday event(s).
3. Updating SCC website to promote new community partner sign up and orientation.
4. Continuing research on local and regional institution high-impact practices in service learning and community engagement.
5. Increased marketing and promotion of community engagement, service learning, and co-curricular involvement through classroom presentations.



Caption: Ronald McDonald House Volunteers



## Civic Perspective

Knowing that I am part of a bigger picture in supporting the community is a great feeling. Carrying out the mission of helping others with basic needs insecurity and other community needs has helped me to recognize the volume of struggle, but also the opportunities for impact in the community that are available. This includes connecting others with available resource information and referral.

## Academic Knowledge

This program and project initiatives have enhanced my organizational and technology skills. It has also increased my time management skills, balance, and has kept me motivated to serve as a role model and support for other students wanting to engage in co-curricular and service learning.

## Community Needs

Having the opportunity in this program to learn about and outreach to various community services and resources has allowed further development of our departmental repository of resource information to share with students and with other student services areas on campus that may engage with students needing additional assistance/supports outside of the classroom. Additionally, it has built a better sense of engagement with community partners in collaborative information sharing and events.