



Enos Elementary School kindergarteners Tyiesha Moore, Danielle Hamm and Daniel Woods show off their new gloves donated by SIU School of Medicine. For 16 years, SIU faculty, staff and students have befriended Enos students through the Adopt-A-School Program.

Hometown Help

Through Diverse Outreach Programs, SIU Gives Back to the Community

Though we all can't cure a disease, we all can help our local communities thrive. At the School of Medicine in Springfield, gestures as simple as donating gloves or buying a geranium can make a difference, as numerous programs and opportunities let faculty, staff and students to reach out to their fellow citizens.

The eagerness to help is everywhere at SIU. A newly established community service catalog

originally was intended as a resource for medical students who wanted to get involved in community volunteer activities. "But word spread around the School," says Susan Hingle, M.D., assistant professor in SIU's Department of Internal Medicine. "And soon employees wanted to participate too."

The result is a catalog of more than 100 outreach opportunities for volunteer work with

national organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Habitat for Humanity, and Springfield community assistance agencies such as Rutledge Youth Foundation, which helps abused or neglected young people become productive and independent adults, and Sojourn House, which supports victims of domestic violence. Information on overseas volunteer programs also was included.

The zest for community service is nothing new to SIU, particularly for those involved in Springfield School District 186's Adopt-A-School Program, in which a local business "adopts" a school in need and supports its students through a variety of activities, from clothing drives to holiday treats for room parties.

Through the program, SIU has maintained a friendship for 16 years with Enos Elementary, where 98 percent of students come from low-income homes. Enos, a kindergarten through fifth-grade center of about 275 students, sits only a few blocks from SIU's Springfield campus.

Enos Principal Dr. Lanie Tadlock recalls many instances of how SIU's help has made a difference. "One of our first-graders had outgrown her jeans, but she didn't have any others, so she was sent to school in them anyway, unbuttoned and unzipped," she says. "Thanks to SIU's donations in the Adopt-A-School Program, we could give her brand-new sweatpants."

Each year, hundreds of SIU staff members donate time, talent, supplies and money to help the Enos students succeed. Nancy Zimmers, SIU's director of public affairs and coordinator of SIU's Adopt-A-School program, credits the enthusiasm of SIU employees for the robust, year-round effort. "The program is really in SIU's consciousness," she says. "Employees make it part of their daily lives to find ways to help Enos School, whether it's donating paper, giving used books, buying new items, or donating time — we've had an amazing response."

An SIU committee coordinates the activities. Each fall and spring, volunteers donate new school supplies to Enos students, who are in awe

when they see conference room tables piled high with brand-new book bags, notebooks, folders, pencils, pens and art supplies. "Some students come to school with absolutely nothing," says Dr. Tadlock. "Getting new school supplies is like Christmas for them."

The efforts continue all year, as employees donate winter hats and gloves, participate in career enrichment activities, assist with an annual art exhibit, host visits to SIU's Pearson Museum and volunteer for a mentor program, in which they aim to create structure in the lives of the students.

Last September, Brian McCloskey, SIU's budget director, became a mentor to Dominick, 9, a fourth-grader who lives with his grandmother. Every Wednesday, the pair gets together at Enos

to work on Dominick's math and spelling assignments, play basketball in the gymnasium, enjoy artistic activities and talk. "Dominick was a little quiet at first, but he's starting to open up to me," says McCloskey. "He loves basketball and is a really good artist."

Though McCloskey spends only a small amount of time each week with Dominick, he says being a mentor helps him

as much as it helps Dominick. "Making personal contact and helping other people is very fulfilling," he says. "Dominick is always excited to see me, and that makes me feel good." Dr. Tadlock has seen 16 years of students inspired by SIU's involvement with them. "I've seen changes in the students during the school year," she says. "The older students say they plan to drop out of school, but after a few months with their mentors, they plan to finish high school, go to college and have a career. It's an amazing impact."

Dr. Tadlock sums up SIU's importance to the teachers and students of Enos School: "We would be devastated if SIU wasn't a part of our lives."

The Children's Miracle Network (CMN) is another way SIU employees and students help the local community. Working with St. John's Hospital in Springfield, the School established and continues to operate comprehensive, specialized clinics that serve the needs of chronically ill children with unique medical problems.

SIU faculty and staff support CMN by volun-

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**-Dr. Lanie Tadlock
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For numerous years, SIU employees have donated their time to the annual CMN telethon and various other outreach activities.

teering for various fund-raising activities including staffing concessions at outdoor fund-raisers like the popular carry-out chicken dinner, helping at the annual True Cullers 21 Interiors Home Tour, contributing to the WNNS Lite Rock 99 Miracle Marathon for Kids Radiothon and participating in the annual telethon.

An annual golf outing is a volunteer-intensive fund-raising effort for Camp COCO (Children's Oncology Camp Organization), an annual, week-long summer camp for children ages 6-16 who suffer from leukemia and other cancers. Generous contributions support the camp, which is free of charge for campers. SIU fund-raisers such as an annual spring geranium sale also help support the Camp COCO fund.

Another growing community service is the School's Mini Medical School program, which lets the public take an active role in managing their own health by learning about medicine.

Part of a national concept established a decade ago, the program underscores the responsibility physicians have for public education. Participants don't have to work in the health-care field to understand the topics discussed at the Mini Medical School. As one of its main goals, the program introduces and explains the latest issues and developments in health care and research in everyday language.

"A big part of medicine is educating patients — not just healing them," says Bob Hanfland, '04, one of a group of medical students who organized this year's Mini Medical School. SIU is the only medical school in the U.S. at which medical

students take on the entire responsibility for organizing and presenting the Mini Medical School.

For a small fee, the public attends evening lectures and question-and-answer sessions on selected topics one night a week for six weeks. Using layman's terms, the sessions have covered subjects such as breast cancer, congestive heart failure, prostate cancer, hematology, coping with grief, the history of medicine, infectious disease, managed care, mental illness, physical examinations and substance abuse. "It's as in-depth as the audience wants," says Hanfland.

Mini Med School activities are popular in the Springfield community, and many of the same attendees come back every year. This year's topics included bioterrorism; evidence-based medicine; melanoma and skin cancer; geriatric evaluations; finding medical information on the Internet; and infertility. Of course, these sessions are no substitute for a visit to the doctor, but Hanfland says, "We try to give the public knowledge they can use to maintain their health."

These diverse programs and events are just a few of the ways SIU School of Medicine's faculty, staff and students are reaching out in central Illinois. And through helping others, says Dr. Hingle, we also are helping ourselves. "Everyone wants to feel valuable, and volunteering is an excellent way to give back to the community. Volunteers get a lot more out of it than they put into it." ■