

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY



HONORS COLLEGE NEWS

Special Edition

Coat Drive 2018

The Honors Coat Drive is a wrap!

The 13th annual Honors College Coat Drive was a huge success! With the help of the entire campus community, the Honors College collected over four hundred coats and donated them to the families that participate in the Passaic Family Head Start.

Dr. Barbara Andrew, Dean of the Honors College, is delighted by the record number of donations and the outpouring of support for this annual effort. She is especially pleased that many Honors students took advantage of this opportunity to complete their civic engagement requirement for the Honors College.

"I am so pleased that the Honors students planned, promoted and participated in this event. Civic engagement helps us appreciate and learn meaningfully about ourselves, our current societal circumstances, and the interconnected nature of today's world," said Andrew. "This project benefits our community and adds to our students' leadership development. It is wonderful to see so many students actively engaged in this project."

Andrew pointed out that civic engagement is one of the learning outcomes of the Honors College and noted that helping students on the path to an enriched, accomplished, and compassionate life is also one of the goals of the Honors Mission statement.

"Our annual Coat Drive especially exemplifies our commitment Civic Engagement at William Paterson," said Andrew. "We are already looking forward to next year."



Honors students helped sort, count, and pack the Coat Drive donations.

This year's numbers...

| | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| 406 | Coats/Jackets |
| 74 | Hats |
| 90 | Pairs of mittens/gloves |
| 32 | Scarves |

Thanks for helping us collect a record number of donations for Passaic Family Head Start!



Honors students delivered the Coat Drive donations on Monday, November 19. Pictured are: (standing from left) Desiree McCray-Clark, Lily Fritsch, Alexander Velasco, Shawn Gaffney, Shaina Arias Garcia, and Anthony Finnen, (front row) Abigail DeBel, and a Head Start student.

Sharing the warmth with our friends at Passaic Family Head Start

Facts about Passaic Family Head Start:

- Passaic Family Head Start serves about 250 low income working families in Passaic, New Jersey.
- Head Start was developed as a grass roots organization seeking to empower parents, involve the community and provide low income children an opportunity to receive a quality educational experience - thus a “Head Start” in their education and life experience.
- Head Start is a federally funded program serving 3-4 year old children and their families since 1974.
- In addition to education, each child receives Health, Dental, Immunizations, Hearing, Vision, Lead Poisoning, Nutrition, Speech, Language, Mental Health and Disabilities screenings.
- Over 5,500 children have been served since the inception of the program.



Ms. Robin Nayda Burgos, Director of Passaic Family Head Start (back row, center) led a tour of the facility and discussed various Head Start initiatives with Honors students who traveled to Passaic to deliver the Coat Drive donations.



While visiting Head Start, Honors students had the opportunity to interact with children in the classrooms.

“The long-standing partnership that we have with the Honors College at William Paterson University has been beneficial to everyone involved.

The Coat Drive donations are greatly appreciated by the families that are served by our agency, and the experience helps WP students learn in a very meaningful way.

In addition, the Head Start students love having stories read to them by the Honors students, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration in the future.”

*- Ms. Robin Nayda Burgos, '09
Director of Passaic Family
Head Start*

Putting the **COMMUNITY** in community service



Gina DiCristo poses with the coats she collected.

Each year, the Honors College relies on members of the William Paterson community to help make the Coat Drive a success.

“When we first sponsored the event back in 2006, we never imagined that it would become a permanent Honors civic engagement project at William Paterson,” said Jan Pinkston,

Assistant Director of the Honors

College, who is responsible for much of the behind-the-scenes work on the coat drive. “We owe the success to all the great members of the WP community who step up and support the project year after year,” remarked Pinkston.

Claudia Gears who works in User Services at College Hall is one of the people who has supported the Honors Coat Drive from the beginning. “Claudia has been very supportive of our efforts over the years, and we can always count on her to come through with a donation, and also help us advertise the event in the University announcements,” said Pinkston.

Last year, Dr. Barbara Andrew, Dean of the Honors College, had an idea that would not only help bring in more donations, but would help Honors students meet their civic engagement requirements. She suggested that Honors students who were interested, could work with their outside schools, churches, or community organizations and conduct their own “mini” Coat Drive, and then add the items to the Honors Coat Drive collection.

This year, four students jumped at the chance to organize and conduct their own coat drives. Gina DiCristo, a senior Honors student in the Social Sciences Track said that her project was not about getting the hours, but rather, about truly helping those in need.

“Each year during the holiday season, my family donates in some way through our church by making a meal or buying clothing for someone,” said DiCristo. “We enjoy doing that, but I wanted to do more this year and thought that organizing my own mini-coat drive was the perfect opportunity.”



Rachel Polzer enlisted the help of her father to unload the donations she collected.

time to do good deeds, even with my busy schedule.”

Honors sophomore communication major, Jesse Norman, also organized a mini-coat drive. Norman worked at the Shop Rite in Galloway, NJ for two years and has maintained a strong relationship with the management there. He was able to place signs and a collection box in the store, and also ran a recorded message in the store, promoting the coat drive.

“Making a difference in the community is a big deal,” said Norman, who is already making plans to expand his coat drive next year.

Rachel Polzer, an Honors freshman, got many people from her entire hometown of North Haledon involved. Polzer designed posters and advertised on the town’s Facebook page. She also put a collection container on the front steps of her house.

“I learned that making a difference does not necessarily involve doing a large-scale project, and that goals can be accomplished by doing small events on a local level,” said Polzer, who was surprised by the number of donations she received. “This is proof that a chain reaction can start with just one person.” Polzer advises current and



Cassie Soto poses with her donations.

future Honors students to participate in the Coat Drive. “It’s not as daunting as it seems and you can do it,” she said.

Cassandra Soto, a sophomore English and elementary education major, conducted a coat drive at the Catherine A. Dwyer Elementary School in Rockaway, NJ. She has contacts at the school through a high school independent study student teaching experience in C.A.D.

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Community Service... (continued from page 3)

"This coat drive helped me realize that I can truly be a part of something larger than myself, and that I live in a community that is willing to give back to those in need," said Soto. She credits the Principal at the elementary school for her success.



Lily Fritsch, Honors College Graduate Assistant

"Mr. McGovern allowed me to set it all up and gave me tips about small details that I hadn't thought of," acknowledged Soto. "It was a great learning experience."

Lily Fritsch, the Honors College Graduate Assistant, also got in on the action this year. Fritsch, who graduated from the Honors College last spring and completed the Cognitive Science Track, is back at William Paterson pursuing an M.S. in Communication Disorders and Sciences. While sitting at her desk in the Honors office next to the growing coat drive collection, she came up with an idea to have her own mini-coat drive by placing a collection box at the WP Speech and Hearing Clinic.

"Delivering the coats to the Passaic County Head Start was a fulfilling experience. It took what was just a pile of coats blocking my desk chair to an experience that brought joy and opportunity to the families of Passaic Family Head Start," remarked Fritsch.

For the past eight years, Jan Pinkston and her son, Jon, have worked with Radburn Elementary School in Fair Lawn to collect the items in the school's lost and found. Each fall, Principal Jill Lindsay, sends a notice out to parents that unclaimed items will be donated.

"We are always in need of children's coats, and Mrs. Lindsay's willingness to work with us is extremely helpful," said Pinkston. "It's also great publicity for William Paterson University, and it helps spread the word that WP Honors College students are leaders in the community."



A WP Shuttle Bus transported the students and donations to Passaic Family Head Start.

How it all started...



Michael Blizzard ('07) at the very first Honors Coat Drive in 2006.

Honors graduate, Michael Blizzard, came up with the idea of starting the Honors Coat Drive back in the fall of 2006 while serving as President of the Honors Club.

"I was inspired to help people in the

community and thought this would be a good way for Honors students to get involved and make a difference," said Blizzard. "With the support of the Honors College staff and the William Paterson Community, we were able to assist many people that year."



Students in Jan Pinkston's Honors Pioneer Success Seminar Class learned about the importance of civic engagement when they helped process the donations.

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