Students set service bar high in honor of University of Scranton's anniversary

BY MICHAEL IORFINO (STAFF WRITER)

Amanda Stahl spends most Thursdays explaining Spanish-speaking patients' medical needs to volunteer health care providers at the Leahy Community Health and Family Center.

A senior at the University of Scranton, Ms. Stahl volunteers more than five hours a week at the center - understanding the demand for her help, while also contributing toward the lofty service goal set by her classmates.

"We have about 100 students donating their time to help us reach the challenge," said Ms. Stahl, co-head of translation services at the center.

In honor of the University of Scranton's 125-year anniversary, the center's student advisory board issued a challenge to student volunteers: donate a collective 1,888 hours of community service at the center per semester.

"The number represents the year the school was founded, and we thought the goal was both feasible and challenging," said David Linhares, president of the student advisory board.

During the 2012 fall semester, students tallied about 1,500 hours of service at the center, he said. With the fall semester nearing its mid-December end, the count stands at about 1,050, said Mr. Linhares.

"We are still hopeful," he said.

Launched in 2003, the center offers a wide-range of services, including primary care for Lackawanna County's uninsured population and a student-run food pantry.

Within the clinic, volunteers' responsibilities range from serving as a translator for student nurse to someone organizes paper work. Students also help facilitate a six-week afterschool program, Peacemakers, at the center and an initiative designed to help high schoolers gain acceptance into a college or university.

"Their goal, which really is very ambitious, emulates the Jesuit concept of cura personalis (care for the whole person)," clinic director Andrea Mantione said. "They are really committed to service. They are committed to Jesuit education and making those ideals a part of their adult professional lives."

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