

News Release

Office of Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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College Students and Staff Selected for Community Service Awards Central, Post, Southern, Trinity, and UConn Honored

Hartford, April 9 – Of 103 nominations submitted for the 2014 Higher Education Community Service Awards, six were selected for the honor and celebrated last evening (April 8) at a dinner conducted by the [Connecticut Commission on Community Service](#) and the [Office of Higher Education](#) at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

Nearly 200 students, faculty and staff from colleges and universities throughout the state attended the annual event which was led by William R. Dyson, chair of the Connecticut Commission on Community Service, and Jane A. Ciarleglio, Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education. The event featured an inspirational presentation by actor, psychologist and poet, Dr. Michael Fowlin.

Two awards recipients were selected in each of three categories of Student, Student Group, and Faculty and Staff based on their ability to design projects which distinctly serve a community, incorporate originality and unique approaches, substantially raise student participation, and address community problems. The six recipients of the 2014 Connecticut Higher Education Community Service Award are listed below with highlights of their community service.

Student Awards

★ **Miranda Polaski, Post University**

As president of the Sustainability Committee, Polaski launched initiatives to bring about sustainable and environmental change on campus. She led the campus to join the National Recycling Day pledge event, and organized a 5k run for Komen for the Cure, and a basketball game for the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

★ **Nordia Meggie, University of Connecticut, Storrs**

Meggie created “Pipeline Connect” which pairs mentors from the African American and the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Centers with 7-12 grade participants from Communities That Care in Hartford. The project helps low-income youngster and their families prepare for college.

Student Group

★ **Beta Mu Sigma Fraternity, Southern Connecticut State University**

The Beta Mu Sigma Fraternity added a new initiative to Southern’s partnership with Connecticut Special Olympics – hosting a formal dance for all towns with a registered Special Olympics team. Southern hosts the summer games annually, and the Beta Mu Sigma Fraternity works closely with Connecticut Special Olympics throughout the year.

★ **JELLO (January Experience of Living, Learning & Outreach), Trinity College**

JELLO began four years ago as a winter break service project and now conducts year-round service projects with A Hand Up Inc., NINA, Knox Parks and the Connecticut River Watershed Council. JELLO members volunteer weekly at A Place of Grace, and at Grace Episcopal Church’s food pantry in Hartford’s Parkville section.

Faculty/Staff

★ **Hannah Hurwitz, Central Connecticut State University**

Hurwitz directs Community Central which serves the New Britain community while offering students real-world experience. Community Central serves a wide variety of constituencies, ranging from high school students who need

tutors, to job seekers seeking re-training, to the homeless and the needy. Community Central provides a wealth of opportunities for student volunteers.

★ **Stacy Christensen and Jill Espelin, Central Connecticut State University**

Nursing professors Christensen and Espelin secured a downtown storefront to conduct free health screenings and deliver weekly health education presentations. The health clinics, run by nursing faculty and senior students, offer blood pressure testing, diabetes testing, cholesterol screening, BMI calculation, stroke risk assessment, weight loss counseling, and vision screenings among other services.

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