

## **Young student group lent a helping hand at the HRC on CONCORDIA serves Day**

**Kent Bewley, Staff Writer**

On CONCORDIA serves Day, a small group of roughly 20 students and staff members volunteered at the Hub Resource Center in Orange, where they served homeless people there in a variety of ways.

Students and faculty performed services including working at the front of the center, helping out arriving patrons with signing up for shower services and smartphone charging, cleaning areas such as the kitchen and a playroom for kids and playing board games with some of the patrons.

The HRC is not a homeless shelter; it is a place where homeless people passing through or staying in the city of Orange can come to find a place to sit down, eat and interact with each other on a regular basis. It is located on West Struck Avenue and is filled with bungalows where staff members organize supplies such as food and water along with other essential amenities.

Kaitlin Williams, Coordinator of Records for Commencement and Degree Conferral, was part of the group that went to the Hub, which was her second ever CONCORDIA serves Day experience. Williams likes the day of service because it “engages the whole campus community, whether it’s faculty, staff, or students we all serve together alongside each other and benefit the community we all love.”

Williams decided to volunteer at the Hub Resource Center because “This year, I wanted my Serve event to be really hands-on and to really get to know the people that we were helping... and that was so awesome, just getting to know the people that we’re blessing and hear their stories...”

By appearances, the homeless patrons at the Hub were mostly in the senior age group, with an even ratio of men and women present. They had picnic tables to sit at to eat breakfast and interact with each other along with members of the volunteer group.

One of the students who volunteered at the Hub was Olivia Costello, a Freshman who has previous experience in volunteering at pantries and shelters in her hometown in New Jersey. Costello also runs a non-profit back home that provides necessary food and hygiene items to students in her community who need that support and assistance every week.

Costello’s observations of the homeless population in her local community were a big reason why she signed up for the group that volunteered at the HRC, where she ended up working in the kitchen and helped the workers at the Hub “clean and organize their area as well as their outside shed area.”

Costello likes that Concordia “dedicates a day for students to be able to serve their community as a whole” and that she thinks that it is “really great that Concordia gives us the opportunity to give back”.

Elsewhere at the Hub, Williams worked at the shower check-in station and it allowed her and others to meet a lot of the homeless patrons who walked onto the property during the mid-morning hours that the volunteer group was present. Williams said that while the patrons were waiting to get their names on the shower check-in list, “there was some small talk about what they’ve been up to that day, how long they’ve been going there...”

Williams added that the HRC is “an amazing organization” and that she was so impressed with all the resources that the center offers along with how organized it was for the purpose of helping out homeless people who come to spend time there whenever they can.

“They knew every single person there by first name and they knew all about their lives and they really prioritize loving them before anything else and that was very prominent for sure”, Williams said.

Costello said that her impression of the Hub is that “it is a great resource and does amazing work with the people that come in, and I had a great time learning how they work and how we as volunteers helped them considering the work that they do for the community.”

The Hub Resource Center is open on weekdays from 7 a.m to 1 p.m and on Saturdays from 9 a.m to 1 p.m. To learn more about the services and volunteer opportunities that the HRC provides, please visit their website(<https://thehuboc.org/hub-resource-center>).

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