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UNH Student Volunteer Efforts Earn Fidelity Community Service Awards

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Four students at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire have received Fidelity Community Service Awards in recognition of their service to area nonprofits.

The four honorees are enrolled in the Whittemore School's Introduction to Business course taught by Ross Gittell, James R. Carter Professor of Management, and were required to complete a minimum of eight hours of community service as part of learning about corporate social responsibility. Each winning student’s nonprofit received a $1,000 grant. On average the students in the class donate more than 5,000 hours of service a year.

“We developed the Fidelity Community Service Awards program to recognize the excellent volunteer work of Whittemore School students and to raise awareness about the important contributions they are making in the community. The earlier we can introduce business students to volunteerism and community involvement, the more likely they will be engaged in community service throughout their college careers and beyond,” said Alison Stebbins, regional general manager for Fidelity Investments in New Hampshire.

Ashley Enderson of Wolfboro Falls, NH, won the Fidelity Literacy Award for her work with Seacoast Reads. The Fidelity Literacy Award recognizes a student volunteer project that promotes literacy and/or helps strengthen reading skills.

Twice a week, Enderson tutored a second-grader at Mast Way Elementary School in Lee. “Every time he saw me at the door, he would jump up with excitement, grab his book basket and follow me out the door,” says Enderson, who noticed an improvement in her student’s reading and spelling. “From this experience I have gained a new appreciation for kids, self fulfillment for making a difference in a child’s life, and great respect for my student for making a difference in my life.”

Sara Kantowski of Tilton, NH, was honored with the Fidelity Innovation and Technology Award for her work with Health First Family Care Center. The Fidelity Innovation and Technology Award recognizes a student volunteer project that helps a nonprofit organization use technology to initiate changes in its operations and service delivery channels to expand or improve service.

Health First Family Care Center is a community health center that provides primary healthcare to residents of the Twin Rivers Region of New Hampshire. Kantowski conducted a needs assessment for the center. “I learned about an exciting organization aimed at helping our community become a stronger and healthier place. I left feeling rewarded and satisfied with the services I had offered,” Kantowski says.

Steven Zaks of Wycombe, Penn., won the Fidelity Community Investor Award for his work at St. Thomas More Catholic Center. The Fidelity Community Investor Award recognizes the student volunteer project that provides the greatest benefit to families and individual
residents in or around New Hampshire such as projects about affordable housing, health and human services, transportation, arts and culture and the environment.

Zaks participated in a clothing drive for the homeless at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Boston. “I went into this experience thinking that I was just doing this because it was required, but after it was all over, I realized that it made me feel good about myself to help these people. I also gained a much better perspective on homeless people and realized that they once lived normal lives that took a turn for the worse,” Zaks says. “I always had the idea that they were just lazy and didn’t want to work, but that is not true. These people need much more help than they are receiving.”

Chelsea Latham of Huntington, NY, was awarded the Fidelity Financial Education Award for her work with Stepping Stones, Krempels Brain Injury Foundation. The Fidelity Financial Education Award recognizes a student volunteer project that helps to promote personal financial education and further individual understanding of personal finance concepts such as budgeting and savings, avoiding credit and investment risks, philanthropic investment strategies, and understanding different economic models.

At Stepping Stones, Latham helped with accounting and allocation of grant money. “Overall, volunteering with Stepping Stones made me want to do something good with finance, like help out nonprofits, instead of billion dollar corporations. I could not have participated in a more enriching experience,” she says.

Fidelity Investments is one of the world’s largest providers of financial services, with custodial assets of more than $2.6 trillion, including managed assets of $1.3 trillion as of June 30, 2006. The firm is the largest mutual fund company in the United States, the No. 1 provider of workplace retirement savings plans, the largest mutual fund supermarket and a leading online brokerage firm.