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Lori Wright

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Seacoast Reads, Manchester Food Pantry Among Organizations To Benefit From Community Service Of UNH Students

Contact: Lori Wright
603-862-0574
UNH Media Relations

May 13, 2004

DURHAM, N.H. – Four New Hampshire nonprofit organizations received $1,000 in recognition of the community service work performed by student volunteers from the University of New Hampshire at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics and Fidelity Investments' Merrimack Region first Community Service Awards.

The awards were presented Wednesday, May 12, 2004, to students enrolled in the Whittemore School's Introduction to Business course taught by Ross Gittell, James R. Carter Professor of Management. The students were required to do a minimum of eight hours of community service as part of learning about corporate social responsibility, and the awards – a $1,000 grant – will go to the nonprofit organization or agency where they completed their volunteer work. On average the students donate more than 5,000 hours of service a year.

“Community service is a critical part of the academic mission of the university because it instills an appreciation and dedication to civic responsibility and citizenship. These students, through their volunteer efforts, are an example of the importance of students engaging the community to extend their knowledge beyond the university,” UNH President Ann Weaver Hart said.

The Fidelity Literacy Award, which recognizes a student volunteer activity that promotes literacy and/or helps strengthen reading skills for a variety of age groups, was awarded to Meryl MacCormack, a first-year student from Nashua, for her work with Seacoast Reads. Seacoast Reads places UNH volunteers in elementary schools and after-school programs to help second- and third-grade students improve reading and writing skills. MacCormack helped ‘reading buddy’ Courtney, a second-grader in Mrs. Brown’s class at the New Franklin School in Portsmouth, improve her reading abilities. “I can see why businesses engage in corporate responsibility – it’s so rewarding, and the respect you get from other people from being involved in the community and giving back is a reward in and of itself,” MacCormack said.

Seacoast Reads will use the $1,000 award to purchase additional books and magnetic letter white-boards for student volunteers to use in the schools.

Michael Boucher, a sophomore from Milton, Vt., was awarded the Fidelity Innovation and Technology Award for his work with the American Red Cross Great Bay Chapter. The award recognizes a student volunteer project or activity that helps a nonprofit organization use
technology to expand or improve service. Boucher, who still volunteers with the chapter, assists the American Red Cross two mornings a week by creating databases and spreadsheets for volunteer and marketing purposes. His work supports the organization’s efforts to market training classes, including CPR, First Aid and Lifeguard Certification. Boucher also has received training on a database that manages information regarding students that have completed Red Cross certification classes. The American Red Cross will use its $1,000 award to expand the organization’s ability to better inform the community of its critical life-saving services.

Because of the high number of entries in the Fidelity Community Investor Award, two students were recognized for service: Gloria Tamdji, a first-year student from Corona, N.Y., for her work with the Durham Public Library, and Amanda Genesky, a junior from Manchester who volunteered with New Horizons Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry in Manchester. The Fidelity Community Investor Award recognizes the student volunteer project or activity that provides the greatest benefit to families and individual residents of the Town of Durham, although this year, the second award went to a student who volunteered in the Manchester community.

Tamdji completed her volunteer work in association with the Williamson residence hall’s adoption of the Durham Public Library as a community service partner. In the spring semester, she and 14 Williamson Hall students worked to sort and catalogue the library’s book inventory in coordination with a new database. The hall’s residents hope to expand the partnership with the library, creating new educational opportunities for the Durham community in the form of reading hours, tutoring groups, and hosting games and activities at the library. The $1,000 award will assist the library in these endeavors.

Genesky volunteered her time with New Horizons Soup Kitchen in March, helping to feed hundreds of low-income individuals and families in the Greater Manchester area. New Horizons will utilize the $1,000 award to help purchase provisions for the soup kitchen.

Fidelity Investments is one of the world's largest providers of financial services, with custodied assets of $1.9 trillion, including managed assets of $1,021.3 billion as of March 31, 2004. Fidelity offers investment management, retirement planning, brokerage, human resources and benefits outsourcing services to 18 million individuals and institutions as well as through 5,500 financial intermediaries. The firm is the largest mutual fund company in the United States, the No. 1 provider of workplace retirement savings plans, one of the largest mutual fund supermarkets and a leading online brokerage firm. For more information about Fidelity Investments, visit www.fidelity.com.