

A Step Forward

Paul College professors host business workshops for Lydia's House of Hope residents

Friday, August 17, 2018



DANIEL SILVERMAN AND RESIDENTS OF LYDIA'S HOUSE OF HOPE POSE ON THE UNH WALL ON THE THOMPSON HALL LAWN

On June 26, eight female residents of [Lydia's House of Hope](#) went back to school for a special day of business workshops taught by Paul College faculty.

Lydia's House of Hope is a 12-month transitional living facility in Somersworth, New Hampshire, for homeless families and single women. The program is designed to provide education, training

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and counseling to residents with the explicit goal of moving them out of chronic homelessness and into sustainable, self-supporting, independent living.

Daniel Silverman, Paul College lecturer in decision sciences and director of the full-time MBA program, also directs and is the founder of the [Out of Hibernation 5K](#) in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. This annual road race has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars for various local charities, including Lydia's House of Hope. After learning about Lydia's House of Hope through his charitable 5K, Silverman was inspired.

"I've met all of the residents, and they are humble and grateful for all of the support that has been offered by the community. Many of the residents never completed high school and lack some of the basic business skills that make them marketable," he says. "They have the need, and we have all of the resources at [Paul College](#), so why not invite the residents to campus and have them experience a day of college life? They will learn a bit about business, and perhaps they may be inspired to return to academia."

Silverman coordinated a day of workshops at Paul College for the residents focusing on business etiquette, conflict management in the workplace, negotiation and quantitative analysis using Microsoft Excel, which he taught with fellow Paul College professors Rachel Campagna and Paul Harvey. Flash drives with class content preloaded were donated by [UNH Advance](#), an NSF-funded initiative at UNH that seeks to help advance the careers of female faculty, of which Paul College professor Christine Shea serves on the leadership team.

"We spent the entire morning managing data in a simulated retail environment. We covered functions and budgeting, what-if analysis and quantitative decision-making. In the afternoon, the students participated in a workshop on negotiation, participating in

roleplay activities that provided them insight into salary negotiation. All of the students were enthusiastic and engaged. The majority of the residents will re-enter the workforce in entry-level positions, many in retail. The workshop was designed to provide them with literacy in Excel, the basics of negotiation, workplace behavior and business etiquette,” Silverman says.

“I felt like a real UNH student,” adds one participant. “It was really great to experience the classrooms and the campus. I am so grateful for the new knowledge.”

Another student told Silverman that she wished it could have been a multi-day workshop. This student has since enrolled in a program that is tutoring her for the GED. Silverman has agreed to help her with that, as well as act as an advocate for her when she applies to college.

“Again, you have come through for us and we are so grateful and in awe of your generosity and support,” says Theresa Tozier, director of Lydia’s House of Hope. “The team at UNH Paul College has been a big part of the journey to help these women and children have a better life.”

Silverman, Campagna and Harvey have volunteered to hold the workshop again for next year’s residents, and sharing their experience has inspired other Paul College faculty to want to participate. Silverman says Liberty Mutual was made aware of the event and would like to extend next year’s workshop to include mock interviews with real hiring managers as well as resume development.

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