THE STUDENTS HAVE FOUND THIS TO BE A FABULOUS EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO THEIR STUDIES.

Dr. Amy Phelps, an economics and quantitative sciences professor in the Palumbo Donahue School of Business at Duquesne University, has been involved in service-learning in her through her statistics classes, Quantitative Analysis I and Quantitative Analysis II.

Dr. Phelps and her class have collaborated with three community partners: Bethlehem Haven, the RX Council, and Light of Life Rescue Mission. Bethlehem Haven is an organization dedicated to helping homeless women in the local area. The RX Council is focused on helping individuals access health insurance, and Light of Life Rescue Mission, which is an organization that provides food, shelter, and life transforming recovery programs designed to help individuals rebuild their lives.

Dr. Phelps’ goal is to get the students into these organizations, to look through data, run analyses, and determine if the program is currently reaching its intended goals or if change is needed. After conclusions are drawn about the current program, suggestions, backed by data evidence, are given to these organizations. “We are helping non-profits look at their data and provide evidence to change their programming so they can better serve.” Statisticians can indirectly use their talents to help serve the individuals of the community by serving the organizations that provide community support.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING

Although the partnership allows the students to bridge their technical learning in the classroom with real life work, these partnerships also open the eyes of the students to see a part of life which they are not used to.

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Students see people: true members of society that need help, are willing to be helped, and can be helped. The students see this and as a result have a stronger drive to help the organization.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Dr. Phelps is very excited to tell anyone who is willing to listen that “the feedback from the students and community partners has been fabulous!” Students write about how this project has changed their views of statistics and its application to real life work, along with writing about how the experience has changed their outlook on the community. In general, these partnerships through service-learning help the students to learn statistics in a different way. Dr. Phelps knows that “stats isn’t just a core course that you never see again. Statistics is a viable discipline, a natural application.” These programs help bridge the gap between textbook technical learning and working with real data. This experience also proves statistics are used within all aspects of life.