Presidents' Good Steward Award



Sarah Jenness

Director, NEC First Year Program

New England College

Sarah Jenness, Director of the First Year Program at New England College, exemplifies what an amazing staff member and NEC community member should be: patient, hard-working, and always looking for ways to help build the partnership between students and the local Henniker community. As the director of the First Year Program at NEC, Sarah helped create the Bridges to Learning seminar, a two-credit course which introduces students to a range of experiences that will facilitate their transition to the academic, social, and community life at New England College. During the course, students are asked to engage in a variety of activities: group discussions, self-assessments, reflective writing, and other interactive experiences, including a Bridges project. The Bridges Project promotes public service in each of the sections and this year, NEC Bridges classes promoted eleven community projects. Some examples include: School Wide Recycling Initiative, CHaD walk to raise awareness for Cancer research, Make a Wish Foundation fundraiser, Thanksgiving baskets for local families in need, the Wounded Warrior Project, and volunteering at the White Birch Community Center.

As part of the Bridges First Year Program, Sarah has instituted the Peer Leader (PL) program, consisting of upper class students who assist new students in their transition to college life. Beginning at Orientation, PLs welcome students and their families to campus and then continue to provide support to new students throughout the fall semester in the Bridges to Learning seminar and beyond. They not only help first-years connect with campus resources, but they also strive to build camaraderie and help new students engage in the greater NEC community.

Sarah embodies the type of staff member that is always challenging students to put service to the larger community at the forefront of the undergraduate college experience.