Presidents' Leadership Award





Hannah O'Halloran

Saint Anselm College

Hannah O'Halloran became involved in Saint Anselm's community engagement before she had even enrolled as a freshman at the college. As a senior in high school she shadowed a Saint Anselm student, and ventured out to a community-based refugee outreach program during that shadowing experience. She was immediately drawn to this deep community involvement, and for the past three years she has journeyed ever deeper into community with each new semester. Hannah is fully committed to community engagement: it provides her with a place to join with people to challenge the status quo and work toward a better tomorrow.

Hannah joined the Meelia Center's coordinating team as a first semester freshman. She urged us to send her back to the refugee outreach program where she had shadowed, and we were happy to oblige. She immediately inserted herself into the program and into the lives of the children and families. She wanted to try everything, from educational support and family enrichment to integrated pest management. The more things she was able to master the more she wanted to try. Hannah proved to be a reliable community partner, an effective problem solver and an excellent manager of student volunteers and service-learners. Not surprisingly, as a junior Hannah was promoted to a staff support role on Meelia's management team. There she helps to manage over a dozen student coordinators involved in the Access Academy which provides campus-based educational programming to refugee, immigrant and under-represented high school students.

Hannah's community work extends far beyond her coordinating roles. She is directly involved with the local homeless teen drop-in center and outreach work, she helped to facilitate a prevention group for at-risk adolescents, joined a team to rehabilitate the home of an elderly man recuperating from serious illness, and provides monthly support to foster and adoptive children.

Hannah is a selfless leader. She responds to almost every call for help, but never seeks out attention or praise. The friendships that she forms and the change that she contributes to is enough reward for her. We have every reason to expect that Hannah O'Halloran will continue to seek out friendships and change in the community long after she graduates from Saint Anselm College.