

PRESIDENTS' COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD



21st Century Community Learning Program Southern New Hampshire University

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program (21st Century) is truly a gem in the Manchester community. These afterschool programs operate in twelve elementary and middle schools within the city and provide affordable, safe and engaging after school programming for hundreds of children every day. 21st Century has not only provided a wonderful place for Manchester's youth to spend their afternoons, but is also a welcoming, supportive and embracing environment for SNHU students. Our partnership began at Gossler Park Elementary School's afterschool program and now SNHU service-learning students have a presence at all of the 21st Century sites. As one student says, "I have found my place at this program. I want to keep volunteering after my service learning class is done." Over the years, the partnership has grown to include service based classes, such as IT 270 in which SNHU students work with 21st Century students to create websites and learn basic coding. SNHU also runs a health living program and helps facilitate a Girl Scouts troop at two of the elementary schools. It seems no matter new idea we bring to them they find a way to incorporate it in a meaningful way! In turn, we aim to use our SNHU resources to add to the quality programming that takes place at the schools. We both recognize and value that each entity bring skills, abilities and passions to each other that only serve to enhance our individual programs. Whether it be through service learning, volunteering or experiential learning, 21st Century and SNHU have formed a truly mutually beneficial relationship that has developed into the epitome of what a higher education and community partnership should be. We value this program immensely and look forward to all future opportunities together.