Celebrating Volunteers

Community contributes to UOW’s Success

By Kate McIlwain

Hundreds of community volunteers contribute to many important aspects of campus life at the University of Wollongong each year. They range from the volunteer “patients” who help UOW medical students develop their diagnostic skills to people who serve on administrative boards and committees, bringing their outside skills and experience to the University.

Other volunteers work with students on their resumes and job interviews to prepare them to enter the workforce through the Career Ahead mentoring program, while the University also enjoys a high level of consultation with Indigenous elders.

These are just a few examples of the ways in which volunteers contribute to UOW. So while the annual Chancellor’s Awards in October recognised the efforts of four individual volunteers who received the 2010 awards, the emphasis was on celebrating and thanking the hundreds of volunteers who contribute to UOW in so many ways.

Chancellor Jillian Broadbent hosted the Celebrating Volunteers event to recognise voluntary service by community members and graduates of the University. Awards were given in two categories – voluntary contribution to the University and voluntary contribution to the community.

Murray Reid and Mike Archer received the two University awards and Susan Young and Estrella McKinnon won awards for their contribution to the community.

Speaking at the ceremony Ms Broadbent said community involvement was a key part of the University’s strategic plan into the future.

“For example, we’ve had 140 volunteer patients and that component of volunteers from the community is an important part of teaching those young doctors to have experience in the medical profession,” she said.

Ms Broadbent also said the University deeply valued its partnerships in the community.

“There were a large number of nominees for the awards and according to the panel they were all of a very high quality, so I want to congratulate all those who were nominated,” she said.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton said strong community backing is one of UOW’s key strengths.

“What a wonderful set of stories that you can multiply by pretty much anyone in this room,” he said of the winners’ citations read out at the ceremony.

This is about honouring the link between our city and our region and our volunteers. I feel honoured to be Vice-Chancellor of a university that has so many people who are making this contribution.”

By pretty much anyone in this room,” he said of the winners’ citations read out at the ceremony.

Chancellor’s Awards recipients

Murray Reid is a founding director of the University Recreation and Aquatic Centre (URAC). A Chartered Accountant, he has contributed expert financial advice and time for countless meetings, awards nights and various formal and informal discussions since 1996.

Mike Archer has been a member of the number of community committees that have helped broaden community representation and community input on new University proposals and developments. The Public Affairs Manager at BlueScope Steel has also participated in working groups to address strategic issues, including the development of the University’s Community Engagement Strategic Plans from 2008 through to 2013.

Susan Young is a bilateral cochlear recipient who started a Cochlear Implant Support Group in the Illawarra in 2008. The network has now grown into the Cochlear Implant Club and Advisory Association and Susan continues to manage this branch and also contributes at a state level.

Estrella McKinnon’s voluntary work in the Illawarra community has spanned a 30-year period, where she has worked as a Justice of the Peace available to the migrant community and as a consultant to various multicultural and women’s groups. She has helped promote justice and equity for the migrant community by advising on semantics, legal rights and activities to generate income.

“Whatever I see photos of the young Hazara girls of Central Afghanistan in a classroom with books and teachers, I know what we are doing is worth every ounce of effort we put in.”

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Spotlight on Volunteers

Tim Gray

Habitat for Humanity

“After we built the house in Nepal we had a house dedication ceremony. The whole village turned out – a truly awesome and amazing community event.”

Sharyn MacKenzie

SQA

“I feel pride and privilege at being able to make a positive contribution to the resettlement of African refugee families in the Illawarra.”

Sally Stevenson

Indigo Foundation

“Whenever I see photos of the young Hazara girls of Central Afghanistan in a classroom with books and teachers, I know what we are doing is worth every ounce of effort we put in.”

Sue Maidman

Illawarra Carer Carers

“The best thing is when someone comes out of the clinic and tells me they don’t have to see the doctor for 12 months – I feel as happy as they do.”

Paul Wand

Wahiyangah Indigenous Centre

“There is an obvious gap in circumstances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. I feel positive when I am able to work in addressing this disadvantage.”

Aunty Kate Davis

South Coast Women’s Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation

“I have strength and faith for myself and others. It’s not about what I do, it’s who I am.”
Grant Projects

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<tr>
<th>GRANT RECIPIENT PROJECT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Sandra Jones, Centre for Health Initiatives</td>
<td>An educational resource for peers of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: Dapto High School, Wollongong High School</td>
<td>This research project seeks to increase the awareness and understanding between secondary school students and their peers with autism spectrum disorders. It will also develop strategies for teachers and support workers to facilitate social interaction between these students.</td>
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<td>Professor Lori Lockyer, Faculty of Education</td>
<td>AIME – Connecting to Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: AIME Wollongong, Careways Community, participating schools in the AIME Wollongong Project</td>
<td>This project aims to ensure that transport arrangements for Indigenous students and mentors involved in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) Wollongong project continue. It will also develop a better model for the transport network that will allow for reduced financial load on partnering schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Sue Duchesne, Faculty of Education, Bega Education Centre</td>
<td>Opening doors between families and schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: Eden Public School, Eden Preschool, Eden Childcare Centre, Eden Marine High School, Eden Land Council</td>
<td>This project seeks to open doors between families and schools in Eden by identifying parental beliefs, aspirations and practices of the local community about their involvement in children’s education in the various stages of school. The project will help develop a range of strategies to engage families in their children’s education, leading to improved educational outcomes for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Will Price, Faculty of Science</td>
<td>Illawara Science on Show – enriching community understanding of science in the Illawara region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: Illawarra Science Teachers Association, Wollongong Science Centre</td>
<td>This project will improve access to the research and teaching resources of the University’s Faculty of Science. The project team will create a tailored collection of materials and education resources. This project will increase the accessibility of resources like the Howard Warner Collection and the planned Hobbit and Climate Change, Geode and Fossils exhibits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Karen Walton and Associate Professor Karen Charlton, School of Health Sciences</td>
<td>Improving the nutritional status of clients of Meals on Wheels services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: Northern Illawarra Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>This project will provide information on the nutritional status of homebound clients of Meals on Wheels services in the Illawarra and identify ways the service can be improved to better target those older adults most at risk of malnutrition in the community. It will also develop and evaluate the introduction of a ‘snack pack’ program and nutritional screening resources pack.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Elias Kyriazis, Dr Alan Pomeroy and Heather Marciano Centre for Research in Socially Responsible Marketing</td>
<td>Reducing the incidence of cancer in people with mild intellectual disabilities by providing information and resources for early detection and cancer prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partners: Cancer Council NSW, Disability Trust, NSW Council for Intellectual Disabilities, Department of Human Services, Greenacres, Illawarra Forum</td>
<td>This project will develop a guide for people with mild intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties or low literacy skills to learn how to participate in skin cancer checks, breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening. It will develop communication resources promoting Cancer Council information and an introductory guide for organisations who want to provide information that meets the needs of the disability sector and broader community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ingrid Errington, Faculty of Science</td>
<td>GreenCONNECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partner: Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF)</td>
<td>This project supports the development of the GreenCONNECT recycling team. See main story for further details.</td>
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Community grants help refugees gain job skills

By Kate McWhan

The University of Wollongong’s latest round of Community Engagement Grants are designed to have far reaching consequences – from helping Illawarra refugees gain key employment skills to boosting nutrition in Meals on Wheels and reducing the risk of cancer in people with disabilities.

The Community Engagement Grants Scheme (CEGS) has provided over $50,000 in 2010 to fund seven diverse projects – each a partnership between University staff or students and community partners with a clear community benefit.

“This is a fantastic example of the University being really engaged with the local community,” said organisational leader Leanne Crouch, who is UOW’s Community Engagement Manager.

“We’re working together on actual issues and needs of the community.”

UOW established CEGS in 2005 to encourage and support community engagement projects, and since then more than $250,000 has been awarded to 34 projects.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Rob Scott said it hadn’t been an easy task to decide this year’s seven recipients because of the quality of the 27 applications. He said the seven projects chosen represented diverse community causes and were very worthy of being funded.

GreenCONNECT was one of the successful applicants. Led by UOW Faculty of Science student Ingrid Errington who volunteers at Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF), GreenCONNECT will help Illawarra refugees to gain important job skills through an ongoing recycling program at festivals like the Illawarra Folk Festival and Viva La Gong.

Started by SCARF earlier this year, it aims to provide refugees who have been removed from the labour market with a bridge back to work by improving employability.

UOW’s grant funding will help GreenCONNECT to pay the wages and continue the recycling programs that have already proved a success.

The program provides experience in Australian workplace conditions, training in first aid and occupational health and safety, and the chance to practise English skills on the job.

It also helps to reduce the waste produced at different festivals around the Illawarra.

“At the beginning of the year we had a team of 24 from the refugee community around Wollongong that helped sort the recycling at the Illawarra Folk Festival,” Ms Errington said.

“That was a massive success – only eight per cent (of the rubbish) went to landfill. So we thought that we could turn that into a more ongoing project.”

The University of Wollongong has had its position as one of the top two per cent of universities in the world confirmed by its performance in three prestigious international rankings:

QS World University Rankings 2010
Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities 2010
Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2010

These rankings provide a comprehensive assessment of universities across a range of criteria, including research excellence, employer reviews and degree quality.

www.uow.edu.au/about/awards
High achievers inspire students

By Shawn Burns

*Amy bag*

Shawn Burns is no stranger to working closely with the community. Before his academic life, he was the State News Director at WIN Television in Wollongong and a media advisor to a local federal politician.

"My background has always been local media, whether it’s been in the Illawarra working with WIN Television, or in any other area, I’ve worked in local media," he said.

"So I stay connected with our community because I interact with and monitor local media very closely."

Shawn's community connections have influenced how he teaches and prepares his students for the world of television journalism.

"When you’re dealing with young journalists, I think it’s important that they have a good, clear understanding of the community in which they live," he said.

This year, the University launched UOWtv to broadcast video content online and on screens across campus. As part of his teaching, Shawn instructed journalism students on how to work as reporters, camera operators, editors and chiefs of staff to produce weekly news bulletins and feature stories for assessment and to be broadcast on UOWtv.

"This is just one way the students and lecturers in the School of Journalism and Creative Writing interact with the community," he said.

"Our radio, print and television students go out and provide an extra avenue for people within the wider community and the University to tell their stories and have their voices heard," he said.

Shawn also hopes to impact on the way journalists interact with the community through his research, which looks at the media’s representation of people with disabilities.

"If there is one thing I could get through to my journalism students it would be that disability is not something people are, it’s something they have. People aren’t defined by it," he said.

The challenge for journalists is to represent people with disability in a fair, honest and equal way — not just as a hero or a tragedy, because there is so much in between.”

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UOW Giving in the spotlight

By Kate McIlwain & Bernie Goldie

*An education project*

A new lecture series held at the University of Wollongong throughout 2010 highlighted some of the ways UOW’s staff giving program is helping the community.

Free lunchtime talks called Speaker Spotlight Sessions gave staff, students and the community the chance to hear about the charities supported by UOW Cares — a workplace giving program which encourages staff to make regular donations through the University pay system.

Community Engagement Manager Leanne Crouch said the lecture series demonstrated how far UOW staff donations go to help the community.

"The series included lectures from representatives from four of the program’s charities, speaking on topical issues," she said.

In the first lecture of the series Indigo Foundation Chairperson Sally Stevenson spoke about Indigo’s success building and developing schools for young girls in Afghanistan.

The second lecture focused on the UOW Equity Fund that provides scholarships for students in need and Oxfam’s youth engagement programs.

The final lecture for the year was presented by the Australian Conservation Foundation’s Monica Richter, and looked at how cities can become more liveable and sustainable.

Ms Richter outlined ACF’s stance on issues like better designed homes, workplaces and cities, greater investment in public and active transport, and responses to looming global oil shortages.

Ms Crouch said the lecture series was designed to raise the profile of UOW Cares and encourage more staff to donate.

"UOW Cares provides the charities that we support with a steady stream of income and better allocation of funds, due to reduced costs associated with fundraising. And there are no administration fees, meaning that all of the money donated goes directly to the charities,” Ms Crouch said.

Last year the total funds donated by staff through UOW Cares reached $100,000.

For more information about UOW Cares go to: www.uow.edu.au/about/community/giving/ or contact Leanne Crouch on 4221 3110.

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ELEVEN YEARS OF GRADUATE SUCCESS

By Ben Creagh

*A football career*

At the latest Elevate session, the students heard from young leaders who are already succeeding — St George Illawarra Dragons player Ben Creagh and 22-year-old entrepreneur Carly Gardar.

Through a question and answer format at the forum, Ben said he tried to lead by example with younger footballers coming through the ranks.

One of the ways he has shown leadership is by combining his professional football career with a part-time Bachelor of Commerce at UOW — where he is an ambassador for the Dragons and UOW’s formal partnerships.

Ben was one of the first Dragons players to combine football with study, and has encouraged a number of younger players to do the same, because the “football bubble” he and other players live in will eventually end and they need to be equipped for life outside football.

Carly, who is also a commerce student, spoke about her experience starting a multinational construction business at 18.

Buying a tower crane is not high on most teenagers’ agenda, but after receiving an inheritance from her mother and being guided by her uncle who worked in construction, Carly did just that and is now a director of her own multi-million dollar company.

Carly said her mother had been the cornerstone of everything she did and she hoped her mother would be proud of what she has achieved.

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2010 marks the 11th consecutive year that the University of Wollongong has scored five stars in the categories of Getting a Job and Positive Graduate Outcomes.

This demonstrates that UOW is a place where students not only get a five-star education, but a five-star chance of gaining a job at the end of their degree.

(2011 Good Universities Guide – Universities & Private Colleges)

www.uow.edu.au/about/awards
A very special gift

By Kate McIwain

The University of Wollongong held a Ceremony of Appreciation last week for those who are perhaps the University’s ultimate volunteers.

The ceremony celebrated the generosity of people who have donated their bodies to UOW for medical and science research through the Body Donation Program. Since the start of the program in 2006, the program has received 77 donations and more than 500 people from the community have pledged to donate their body in the future.

The simple but moving Ceremony of Appreciation was a chance for donors families, and future donors to reflect on the importance of their gift. Speaking at the ceremony, program coordinator Dr Darryl McAndrew told guests that donors had given the “ultimate gift”.

“You are making a difference to the education of the next generation of doctors and health practitioners,” he told the audience.

Vice Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton said that although the ceremony was brief and simple, it marked a gift of great importance.

“When our future doctors and health scientists go out into the real world, they have to be able to reflect on the importance of their gift. The simple but moving Ceremony of Appreciation was a chance for donors families, and future donors to reflect on the importance of their gift.”

Professor Sutton also assured the guests at the ceremony that the University had protocols to ensure every body donated was treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

We hope you have enjoyed this special supplement highlighting aspects of community engagement the University of Wollongong shares with the Illawarra region.

First medical graduates

By Kate McIwain

The 2010 summer graduation ceremonies will mark an important milestone for the University of Wollongong when the first group of Graduate School of Medicine students join the ranks of UOW Alumni. Around 65 students will be the first to hold a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) from UOW.

The ceremony will be held on December 13, and Her Excellency NSW Governor Marie Bashir will be addressing the students. Professor Bashir was in attendance to welcome the same group of students when they started their degree in 2007.

In the last four years, hundreds of volunteer patients, community groups and forums and rural health placements throughout NSW have played an integral part in the Graduate School of Medicine’s success.

“The University of Wollongong would like to thank the Illawarra community for their ongoing support of our future doctors and medical practitioners.”

William Body, an honours student in the School of Health Sciences, spoke to guests about how the program had made a huge difference to students’ understanding of the human body. He said he was studying with students who would one day become physiotherapists, medical physicists, nutritionists, radiographers, health teachers and allied health practitioners – who would all use their knowledge studying in anatomy classes to be better health professionals.

“Thanks to the Body Donation Program these students will be able to give a better value of care to their patients,” William said.

Above: Health sciences student William Body chats with guests about the importance of the Body Donation Program. Below: Body Donation Program coordinator Dr Darryl McAndrew and Graduate School of Medicine receptionist Ruth Morris mingle with guests at the ceremony.