



West Haven Community House

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West Haven Community House Welcomes UNH Students

(West Haven, CT – March 15, 2018) Students from the University of New Haven have been spending their spring break walking the halls of some local elementary schools this week as part of the university's Alternative Spring Break program where students spend their week working in teams to complete services at various New Haven and West Haven locations. The program, which is open to university students who choose to stay on campus during spring break, offers students an opportunity to explore different types of careers.



“Other colleges offer outreach programs out of the state and out of the country, but here at UNH we stay in the area and work with local organizations to assist in needs in our shared community”, said Courtney Skipper, Graduate Assistant and coordinator of Alternative Spring Break and President’s Public Service Fellowship.

This week, a team of UNH students has been working alongside teachers from West Haven Community House’s before and after school program. The Community House provides before-and-after-school childcare at seven West Haven schools including Carrigan, Mackrille, Molloy, Pagels, Savin Rock, Seth Haley, and Washington. Traditionally, after school programs have been seen as a place to provide a safe haven for children while offering various kinds of recreational activities. However, the Community House’s program provides a variety of interactive activities including Literacy and

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) projects that support the school day curriculum through fun, hands-on experimental learning.

UNH students concentrated their efforts this week each day after school at Seth Haley, Pagels, Washington and Molloy assisting the after school program teachers in an activity related to engineering and science.

The activity, conducted in the form of a challenge, is specifically structured to give school-age children the opportunity to improve social skills and general problem-solving strategies while developing a basic understanding of science concepts and engineering design. The “Drinking Straw Structures” activity allows children to come up with their own design to build a structure using straws. Rather than giving children detailed instructions of how to build a house or bridge out of straws, the children create and construct their own design. The process parallels, in some ways, what real engineers do in their design process.

“The collaboration between the UNH students and the Community House is a win-win for both the school-age children in the after school program, and the college students who develop leadership and teambuilding skills while volunteering their time and talents to a local non-profit”, said Amy Guay-Macfarlane, Assistant Executive Director of Programs at the West Haven Community House.