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## Winthrop Students Learn Through Service on MLK Holiday

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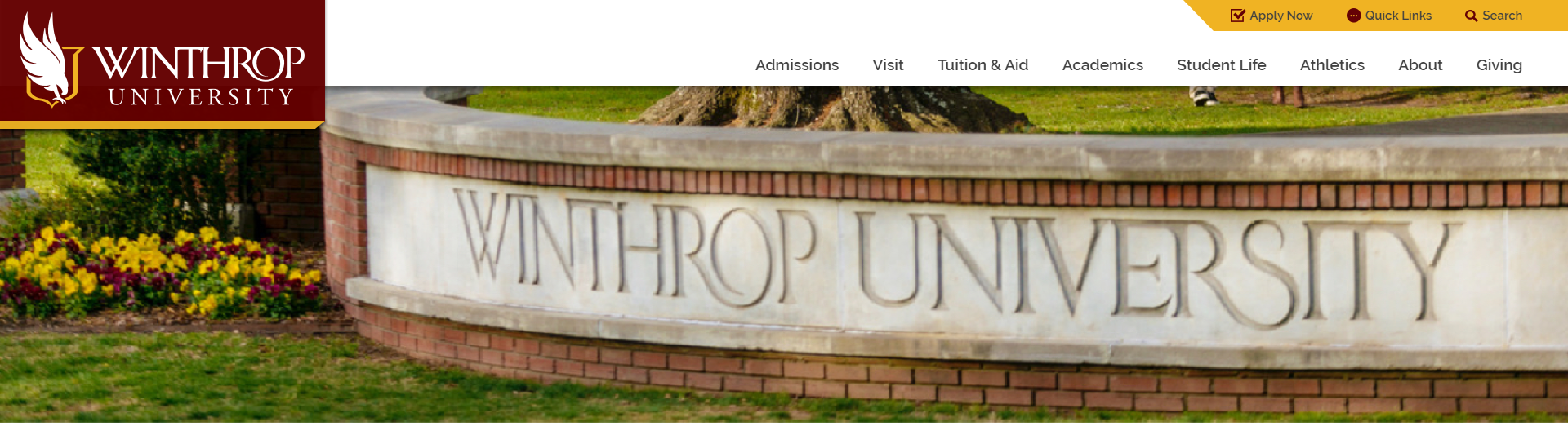
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Winthrop Students Learn Through Service on MLK Holiday

January 29, 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

- Students spent a total of 1,152 hours in the West Center during the Jan. 21 holiday.
- Laura Rankin Foster, program director for volunteer and community service with the Center for Career and Civic Engagement, said it was amazing to see the students come out to serve and pay honor to the civil rights leader.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – More than 250 Winthrop University students assembled food packages and made mats for the homeless on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

In all, the group worked a total of 1,152 hours in the West Center during the Jan. 21 holiday.

Laura Foster, program director for volunteer and community service with the Center for Career and Civic Engagement, said it was amazing to see the students come out to serve and pay honor to the civil rights leader.

“The day was educational, service centered and impactful for the students, but the impact goes much further because they were able to touch seven organizations through thoughtful and inspirational messages and food,” Foster said. “The eight mats that were assembled saved 5,600 grocery bags from going into the landfill.”

President Dan Mahony, who pitched in to make sandwiches with First Lady Laura Mahony, told the group that Martin Luther King Jr. was one of his heroes growing up. He kept a picture of the Nobel Peace Prize recipient on his bedroom wall to remind him to work harder to make the world a better place.

Before disembarking for assigned service projects, volunteers enjoyed a performance by Winthrop’s Vision of Prayer Gospel Choir and a message from Emily Price, a Winthrop alumna who works at Pilgrims’ Inn. She stressed the importance of service related to hunger and homelessness.

Organizers divided the 256 Winthrop students, seven York Technical College students and four Clinton College students into groups.

Each group had a mission. One group worked on large, wooden frames to weave mats out of donated plastic bags that could be used as bedding on a cold, wet ground. Others put together 1,800 sandwiches or assembled 4,000 bags of fruit mix and pretzels. In another area, students sat at tables and wrote inspirational messages on stickie notes to attach to the food packets.

Group MLK leaders – 31 total – guided their peers in the work and helped keep the projects moving.

Afterwards, the BLITZ Step Team from Castle Heights Middle School performed during lunch.

Seven organizations benefited from the service projects: Renew Our Community, York County Council on Aging, Urban Ministry Center, Pilgrims’ Inn, Salvation Army, Veterans Affairs and the Bethel United Methodist Church Warming Center.

Seven area businesses gave donations: Publix, Gourmet Nuts & Dried Fruits, Sub Station II, Charlotte Avenue YMCA, Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds, Harris Teeter in Fort Mill and Rock Hill, Earth Fare, Tropical Foods, Food Lion, Best Rent A Car, RA Foster Development and Sodexo.

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