

SIUE's School of Pharmacy Clean Up Yards for Local Senior Citizens

by Kalli Collins

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EDWARDSVILLE – As part of their clinical practice, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SOP) students provide home visits for senior citizens in the area. The SOP students and faculty go further than only providing health checks to their senior patients. “I noticed that they have a hard time keeping up with some of the larger jobs around the yard, and the state of their yards presented real fall risks,” said Chris Lynch, PharmD, professor and director of clinical programs. “We started this program in 2017 to provide yard cleanups for local senior citizens. Having a group of energetic and altruistic students is a real godsend when it comes to this type of service.”

Throughout April, the SOP students and faculty have set days to go out in the community to pull weeds, cut up large limbs downed in recent storms, plant flowers and help with various other yard jobs for senior citizens in the area.

“It is always nice to see how much of an impact you can make in someone’s life,” said Zach McNealy, a second-year pharmacy student from Waterloo. “Volunteering in the community helps give us an idea about the diverse lives our patients can live and the best way to help people is to first understand where they are coming from.”

“Serving our community and to see the homeowners’ appreciation was very uplifting,” said first-year pharmacy student Kaylie Wolter from Peoria. “It made me realize how a little help can go a long way. I feel extremely privileged to be in a position to give back to the community and make their day a little better.”

The Main Street Community Center and Joe’s Market Basket donated supplies for the service project and partnered with the SOP to help locate seniors in need of yard cleanup services.

“The local community has been so welcoming towards our program,” Lynch concluded. “This is a very small repayment of that kindness.”

Today’s pharmacists improve patients’ lives through the medication and education they provide. The [School of Pharmacy](#) is dedicated to developing a community of caring pharmacists through a curriculum that is nationally recognized as a model for offering students a unique combination of classroom education, research, community service and patient care. Areas of excellence include a drug design and discovery core, pediatric practice, chronic pain research and practice, and diabetes research and practice.