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Building Community Across Colleges

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application:

BUILDING COMMUNITY ACROSS COLLEGES

When you include community, nonprofit organizations and university collaboration, students enrich their lives in and out of the classroom. My mission has been to bring community to my colleagues and JWU students university wide. Due to Covid-19, SunRise Forever, Inc. has focused on helping RI residents. As Board Chair of this nonprofit, I have been actively involved in launching a fresh fish project, called “SunRise Fuels with Fish”. A collaboration with the Rhode Island Food Policy Council, the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island and the African Alliance of Rhode Island to distribute fresh fish to over 300 families weekly.



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SIGNIFICANCE OF OUTCOME

Being able to bridge my two worlds of my humanitarian work with SunRise Forever, Inc. and collaborating with colleagues and students from Johnson & Wales has been rewarding beyond measure. The support of administrators, faculty and students has allowed the weekly distributions to continue each week. I have been able to network with colleagues and meet new students from various programs. Introducing our students to the other volunteers from the nonprofit and residents receiving the goods has been very rewarding.

Local news, Channel 12WPRI, covered a story on the work that my nonprofit has done, which has brought new businesses to support the mission. The families affected most by the pandemic have also benefited from the growth of all those participating. In addition, through this initiative, I will be presenting at a national conference in February 2022 and sharing with professionals the various ways to look for nonprofit organizations and ways to incorporate volunteer work into the curriculum.

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DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARLY INQUIRY

Johnson & Wales University’s Providence campus offers a plethora of programs within various colleges. Teaching a 4000 level Integrated Learning course focused on diasporic communities, ILS 4070, has brought a wonderful “close to home” experience for my students. Many of the residents benefiting from the SunRise Fuels with Fish program are first generation and of West African descent. The College of Food & Innovation and The College of Health & Wellness have also supported this initiative and volunteers from vast programs have stepped forward to help. The CFIT students are able to practice their knife skills by filleting the fresh fish each Saturday. Each week the type of fish changes, allowing students to challenge themselves. The College of Health & Wellness has participated with students volunteering from DIET 2050, Community Nutrition. These students gain experience and knowledge with vast foods, nutrition and community outreach which is part of the course objectives.

OUTCOME

Three hundred Rhode Island families continue to be served local fresh fish and produce every week. The collaboration between The College of Arts & Sciences, The College of Food & Innovation and the College of Health & Wellness have showcased the strength of colleagues across colleges. Johnson & Wales students have demonstrated their interest in growing both personally and professionally. This opportunity has proven repeatedly that community is strong within this university and we continuously try to give back to our state and residents.

