

SIUE Pharmacy students take passion for health and helping outside

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EDWARDSVILLE - Nearly 75 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy students lived their commitment to improving the health and well-being of the region by cleaning up and beautifying senior citizens' yards across Edwardsville and Glen Carbon on Saturdays, Oct. 20, 27 and Nov. 3.

The SIUE SOP's Chris Lynch, PharmD, professor of pharmacy practice and director of clinical programs, recognized the need for providing yard clean-up while completing home visits for local seniors.

"I felt this service was needed for safety reasons," Lynch said. "Leaves and limbs create a significant fall risk for seniors. Our primary goal was to create a safe environment in the yards for them to enjoy."

“I also know that seniors take great pride in their homes,” he added. “The home is often the last link to loved ones who have passed or had to move out for healthcare reasons. But, many seniors are either physically or financially unable to keep up with yard maintenance. We were extremely happy to allow them to regain pride in the appearance of their yards.”

With support from community partners, including the Main Street Community Center and the Goshen Rotary Club, the SOP second-year (P2) class, and their advisor Jennifer Rosselli, PharmD, turned Lynch’s idea into reality.

SOP faculty, staff and alumni served as team leaders, while students armed with rakes and trimmers assisted 15 homeowners. Students from all years of pharmacy school participated, as well as those in the Pre-Pharmacy Association. They raked leaves, trimmed hedges, picked up tree limbs, pulled weeds, cut down saplings, cleared out trash and more.

“When this idea was presented, the class was extremely responsive and excited to participate,” said Renee McTee, of Shorewood, secretary of the P2 class. “Although our pharmacy classes keep us busy, we enjoy devoting time to the people in the area who need our help.”

“It’s cool to meet so many people from various backgrounds collectively striving for the same goal,” added Noah Watson, of Rockford, president of the Pre-Pharmacy Association. “This was a great opportunity for our group to get involved in the community.”

The students’ desire to help came as no surprise to Lynch. “In my more than 25 years teaching pharmacy students,” he said. “I have learned that they have tremendous energy and civic responsibility. All they need is a little help organizing events like these, and they are eager to help those in need.”

Today’s pharmacists improve patients’ lives through the medication and education they provide. Dedicated to developing a community of caring pharmacists, the [SIUE School of Pharmacy](#) curriculum is nationally recognized as a model that offers students a unique combination of classroom education, research, community service and patient care. The School of Pharmacy’s areas of excellence include a drug design and discovery core; pediatric practice; chronic pain research and practice; and diabetes research and practice. As the only downstate Illinois pharmacy doctorate program, the SIUE School of Pharmacy is addressing the growing need for highly trained pharmacists in a rapidly growing field.