

Health & Poverty

WCU & Homeward Bound: Health Fairs for the Homeless Population of Asheville

Faculty Elizabeth Sexton (ehsexton@email.wcu.edu) with final semester nursing students engaged in a collaborative project with various agencies (Homeward Bound, WNCAP, Dale Fell Clinic, and Buncombe County Dept. of Health) to provide targeted health fairs at A HOPE Day Shelter twice a year. This included students doing an IRB approved Qualtrics survey to identify the health concerns and interests of the homeless population and then planning a health fair. With the help of the nursing students and collaborative agencies the health fairs have provided health screenings for 1) blood sugar 2) blood pressure 3) BMI 4) hepatitis c and HIV and 5) foot checks and has provided interventions of 1) community resources 2) nutrition education 3) smoking cessation education 4) mental health education 5) seeing a medical provider if having abnormal values and 6) flu immunizations when appropriate.

Dr. Sexton said about this collaborative project, “The WCU & Homeward Bound: Health Fairs for the Homeless Population of Asheville project is of great value in the engagement work that we do with our final semester nursing students. For their clinical experiences in population health, this project allows them to assess, engage with, and provide targeted health services to a very vulnerable population. It helps the students understand the caring aspect of nursing as they learn experientially about the homeless population. In the didactic class we study about the homeless population but through the project the students get to know the homeless by name as they learn about the challenges the individuals face. In terms of my scholarship we are in the process of writing an article about the health fair projects and share with other community nurses on the data we have gathered through the qualtrics surveys over the last 6 semesters.”

For more information see: <http://homewardboundwnc.org/the-solution/homeless-services/>

If you would like your community engagement work recognized through the STAR Engagement Projects program, please submit your proposals through the [Community-based Activities Faculty Survey](#) administered annually in the spring semester from early April – late May.

