

# College sets Key Goals for use of Service Grant

By ERIKA CAPEK The Brunswick News

May 28, 2010

With a \$150,000 grant in place, College of Coastal Georgia officials hope to have more students out in the community learning real-life skills by helping others.

The College of Coastal Georgia Foundation was awarded a grant from the St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation for \$75,000 each year for two years, starting in 2010, to fund a Center for Service Learning on the campus.

"This really is a way to design a curriculum to allow the student, in essence, to use the community as a classroom," said Valerie Hepburn, president of the college.

The goal is to have every student involved in at least one service learning class while at the college, Hepburn said.

Besides getting real-life skills, which will make students more valued as employees, they will experience the spirit of civic engagement, Hepburn added.

"What we know is that if we have students start these experiences early in life, they will continue into adulthood," Hepburn said.

Some classes at the college already take part in service learning.

This spring, students enrolled in the Business and its Environment course worked with organizations such as the Salvation Army and Ferst Foundation, an organization that provides free books to parents of children up to 5 years old. The Salvation Army helps people in need.

Students had to understand the issues facing the organizations, identify trends and collect information that would be helpful to the agency.

"We're trying to tie in things that the faculty are doing in the classroom with volunteering in the community so the students will be able to apply what they're learning and, therefore, be more engaged," said Holly Christensen, director of the college's Camden Center and chair of the quality enhancement plan committee.

"I think it's a very positive thing for the students and the community. It's a win-win situation."

Without the grant, Christensen said it would have taken longer to put everything in place.

College officials applied for the grant in February and sent out the good news to trustees and friends of the college Monday.

"This is huge for us," Hepburn said.

The first funding will be received July 1, the beginning of the new state fiscal year.