

Pacific Lutheran Center for Public Service Receives Silver Spoon Award

PLU's Center for Public Service was among five organizations to be awarded a Silver Spoon Award by the Emergency Food Network on March 18.

Given annually, the award honors the volunteers and organizations that are key to ending hunger in Pierce County. This is the first time PLU received the award.

Through service learning projects, internships and the student environmental club GREAN, PLU students regularly work on projects supported by the Emergency Food Network. These projects include Mother Earth Farm in the Puyallup Valley and the Cannery Project in Kent.

Formed in 2000, Mother Earth Farm is an eight-acre organic farm that produces more than 150,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables each growing season. All the produce is distributed directly to local food banks and hot meal programs.

Farm manager Carrie Little teaches volunteers about organic gardening and how to produce food in a sustainable way. The experience of several students at the farm played a major role in the founding of PLU's Community Garden, located on 121st Street South across the street from Ingram Hall, explained Oney Crandall, director of the Center for Public Service.

The Cannery Project is a partnership with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Bishop's Storehouse in Kent. Through the project, fresh and frozen foods are canned and re-packed to increase the food's shelf life. The canned goods are distributed to local food banks, reducing the need to purchase canned food.

"It's the largest distributor of food in Pierce County," said Oney Crandall, director of the Center for Public Service.

PLU students have volunteered at both projects, but the experience is more than a good deed. It's also an opportunity to learn, Crandall said.

"Students learn about the larger circumstances that cause hunger and how they can begin to apply their academic studies to questions of injustice in the world," Crandall said. "They learn how they can work together with many other people to find solutions."

Pacific Lutheran University Communications staff writer Megan Haley compiled this report. Comments, questions, ideas? Please contact her at haley_mk@plu.edu.