

NEWS RELEASE

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Student volunteers give back to community, help residents with fall cleanup

‘A simple act of kindness can have a profound impact’

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Month Day, Year

Menomonie, Wis. – A group of 23 University of Wisconsin-Stout student volunteers hopped a school bus recently, loaded with rakes, compostable leaf bags, gloves and youthful energy.

They spent the afternoon helping 11 Menomonie homeowners with Fall Yard Cleanup, an annual activity organized by the [Involvement Center](#). The center worked with the [Dunn County Aging and Disability Resource Center](#) to identify homeowners in need of assistance and coordinated the activity to coincide with the City of Menomonie’s yard waste pickup date.

Gail, a local homeowner, was excited to see the bus pull up in front of her house. Large silver maples and elms had dropped a mass of dry leaves on her yard.

“It’s wonderful to have the students help because I can’t do it myself,” Gail said. “They’re whirlwinds. I appreciate it so much.”

Fall Yard Cleanup, which began as a part of [StoutReach](#) in 2016, is a way for students to connect to the community.

“It showcases how a simple act of kindness can have a profound impact,” said Jessica Kielcheski, student affairs manager. “Participating in service promotes positive self-esteem and personal growth.

“Our students feel good about the opportunity to give back, and they gain a deeper understanding of civic responsibility while gaining experience and skills in areas like leadership, communication and problem solving.”

Students have different reasons for wanting to participate.

Houa Choua Her enjoys helping the elderly, and she has good memories of volunteering in elementary school in Wausau. As a sophomore in the [human development and family studies](#) program, volunteering to help the elderly fits in with her major.

“Being involved in the community is important,” Her said.

For Cole Windhorst, a [supply chain management](#) junior from Osseo, customer service is a priority. “I volunteered because I like meeting new people,” he said. “I like making people happy and making their day.”

And for some students, volunteering is an entirely new experience. Ariana Moua, a [business administration](#) sophomore from Green Bay, hasn’t been involved in community service before, but she feels it’s a good experience to prepare her for a career in business.

The event was designed to be contact-free, as the center doesn’t wish an individual’s health concerns to be a barrier to receiving support.

“The homeowners that we support through this initiative are always so grateful,” Kielcheski said. “Many homeowners show their appreciation by just waving through the window, and some send little thank you notes for us to share with the volunteers.”

Each year after the cleanup, the center receives requests from neighbors and friends of the homeowners looking to be added to the list. The center adds addresses as it can, depending on the number of volunteers that register.

UW-Stout students looking to volunteer can view a list of opportunities in CONNECT. Organizations and individuals wanting to list an opportunity may email Kielcheski at kielcheskij@uwstout.edu.

UW-Stout is [Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University](#), with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes.

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Photos

UW-Stout student volunteers gather to help with a community fall cleanup.

Students rake maple leaves, clearing a Menomonie homeowner’s front yard.

Students bag leaves, spending the afternoon participating in community service.