



RVCC President Michael J. McDonough presents the College's Board of Trustees Service Learning Leadership Award to students (from left) Shannon Hellem, Emily Daigle, Mathew Santoro, and Erik Lister.

Education majors honored with RVCC's Service Learning Leadership Award

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Four Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) education majors have been honored with the College's Board of Trustees Service Learning Leadership Award. The annual award honors students for their outstanding leadership and personal development attained through their service learning work. It focuses on projects showing a high level of initiative in all areas of planning including identifying the community need, planning the service, and putting that plan into action.

RVCC's Service Learning Program enables students to use community service as part of their coursework and receive credit for the experience.

"The accomplishments of the four education majors demonstrate the power of service learning to enrich the quality of life in our communities, as well as the educational experience of our students," said RVCC President Michael J. McDonough. "Each year, more than 1,000 RVCC students provide service to over 250 local community organizations within 85 different courses—donating the economic equivalent of over \$1 million in service."

The students, Emily Daigle of Phillipsburg, Shannon Hellem of Flemington, Erik Lister of Basking Ridge and Mathew Santoro of Ringoes, were recognized for creating a new professional learning community called "Teach2Matter at RVCC." The new initiative offers pre-service teacher candidates a "mini-residency" by having them serve in local middle and high schools and engage other students in addressing important global issues. Students are taught to use 21st century technology to construct, address, and solve a specific problem, using such tools as search engines, social media for collaborative efforts, and video and/or website construction. It also helps the RVCC students to foster their professional passion early in their college careers and creates long-lasting partnerships between local schools and the College for future endeavors.

Teach2Matter@RVCC is based on the national Choose2Matter global movement that challenges and inspires students to work collaboratively to develop innovative solutions to social problems. The Teach2Matter initiative is part of the College's new Teagle grant project, a three-year, multi-state service learning project aimed at developing students' civic and moral responsibility and assessing student learning outcomes. The students' work will be shared regionally and nationally through conference presentations and publications.

To date, some of the students' efforts have included filming a documentary video; designing a website; crafting a logo to market Choose2Matter and Teach2Matter at RVCC to prospective community partners; and connecting with educators around the world through social media. The students also have been invited to intern with the national organization throughout the summer of 2014