

Service & Learning Center gets new home, programs

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By Ashley Leavitt

After giving service to the community, the Service & Learning Center is prepared to serve more efficiently in a new building.

The Service & Learning Center, previously located in a small corner office of the Sharwan Smith Center, has relocated to 185 S. 300 West.

The new building accommodates the workers' needs better because it has more space for storage and projects, Service & Learning coordinator Pam Branin said.

With as much service as the Service & Learning Center offers, the new building is five times bigger than the former one, Branin said.

Lacie Robinson, vice president of the Service & Learning Center, said the new building includes offices, a garage and a basement.

"We used to have a storage unit and our office was very cluttered," Robinson said. "Now we are an office and we have room to work. We have 29 service leaders this year and all of us would not fit in that office."

After school programs for preschool, middle school and high school aged children along with serving senior citizens are some services the Center provides, Branin said.

McKenzie Coombs, a junior psychology major from St. George, said she is a volunteer for the Service & Learning Center with a strong belief in service.

"I think the biggest impact the center has had on me is become a part of the community and to help (the community) more," Coombs said. "I think that service isn't something that will help you in that moment, it's something you can learn from and experience your whole life."

The Center also hosts Bread and Soup Night every first Monday of the month and the annual Sub for Santa every December, Branin said.

The Service & Learning Center has a new literacy program in which volunteers will read books weekly to children, Branin said.

Accompanying the literacy program will be an incentive program, which allows student volunteers to earn prizes, Branin said.

Branin said the Service & Learning Center allows students to gain "resume quality experiences" for the future.

"They are meeting people who can provide a letter of recommendation and be a good source for them," she said. "Beyond just career preparation, it provides students with a more well-rounded education; they also learn how to help the community."

Earl Mulderink, the faculty coordinator of civic engagement, said he promotes service and learning in faculty positions since five years ago.

Mulderink said his office has moved into the Service & Learning Center because Provost Brad Cook suggested it.

"Our new provost comes from a strong background of service and learning," he said. "I'm looking optimistically at how he can help build our programs here."

For more information on how to volunteer, visit www.suu.edu/ss/service.