

Our View

ECSU continues to have an impact

The Windham/Willimantic community certainly appreciates community efforts like the recent Town Pride Town Wide program, where local college students cleaned up various sections of the city.

This aspect of community service has long been a staple of what Eastern Connecticut State University students offer the town.

But as ECSU students showed during the recent Service Expo and Awards Ceremony at the new fine arts building, they are doing more than just “picking up trash.”

Those were the words from Kimberly Silcox, director of ECSU’s Center for Community Engagement.

Several awards were handed out for various student community service initiatives that matched students’ passions for service with local organizations in need of a helping hand.

Most of those honored worked with local school-children.

For example, two separate programs for male and female pupils at Natchaug Elementary School in Willimantic were feted for the way they help these youngsters develop good character, among other goals.

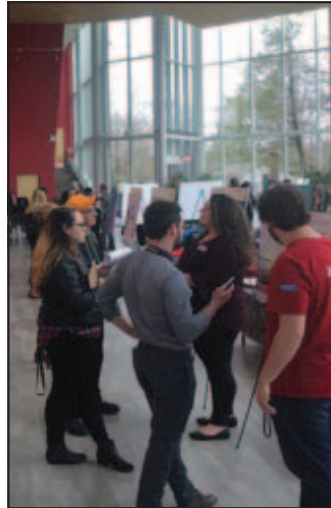
Other programs targeted the environment and other youth initiatives.

While those honored are too many to mention, the general outcome of the awards ceremony was ECSU students are, indeed, an asset to the community in ways beyond just patronizing Main Street businesses and, as Silcox put it, “picking up trash.”

They are providing a key benefit that a university can bring to a community, namely young role models who can truly impact a town and its residents.

This goes against negative stigmas associated with college students in college towns — that students simply party too much and destroy property and harm the quality of life.

Willimantic hasn’t been immune to those concerns, but what was on display April 19 was something much different from the party hearty stereotype many have of these young people.



Eastern Connecticut State University students present their projects in the lobby of the Fine Arts Instructional Center during the Service Expo and Awards Ceremony recently. File photo.