

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Freshman learning community serves Bona Vista

KOKOMO, Ind. — Alivia Steward learns about leadership — by serving.

As part of her Indiana University Kokomo freshman learning community, Steward, from Delphi, spent an afternoon painting an office with her classmates at Bona Vista.

“What better way to learn to work together, than to volunteer?” she said, wielding a roller to paint sage green paint on a wall. “Working together also helps me get to know my classmates, and we’re giving back to the community at the same time.”

The freshman learning community, taught by Kristen Snoddy and Joann Kaiser, focuses on leadership. It is paired with a literature course, focused on Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

Students performed many needed projects at Bona Vista, a Kokomo not-for-profit.

“By requiring students to work in group outside the classroom, we provided a setting where students were required to step up as leaders, and learn when someone else should take the leadership role,” said Snoddy. “We also provided a benefit to a local organization that gives to so many people in our community.”

In addition to several painting jobs, the students cleaned out a greenhouse, moved and added on to office cubicles, and filled potholes.

Jeff Mercer, Bona Vista’s director of maintenance, appreciates their help. He has a small staff maintaining 14 facilities; so the extra help means they can get more done.

“The things they’ve done today will support our staff,” he said. “They’ve helped us out a lot.”

All IU Kokomo freshmen participate in a learning community, with several to choose from, based on their majors and interests. Amber Phillips, from Delphi, chose this one for the leadership content and because of the literature selection.

“I’ve learned how to read and understand novels, which will help me in future classes,” she said, adding that she’s also learned leadership skills and made some friends.

Michael Gammons, Kokomo, and Jordan Smith, Peru, worked with a Bona Vista crew to move a set of cubicles, and build new ones.

Smith gained skills in being an effective part of a group project, and was glad to do something to assist a local agency.

Gammons said the freshman learning community taught him communication skills, which will be important to him with his career in criminal justice.

“I’ve learned how to take a leadership role, and how to be a follower, when it is constructive,” he said, adding that he enjoyed the volunteer service.

“It makes you feel good to be able to help someone.”

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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