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## **Sharing hope and respect**

### ***College students serve overnight shift at homeless shelter***

by KATIE MOORE  
staff writer

WINSTON-SALEM — Eight students from Wake Forest University's Catholic Campus Ministry recently spent the night at a local homeless shelter.

It was a service project that brought them outside of their comfort zones and gave them a glimpse into the lives of those less fortunate.

The students served at Samaritan Inn located in downtown Winston-Salem June 25-26. Their duties included serving dinner, taking turns watching surveillance monitors throughout the night and helping to prepare breakfast in the morning.

In between their chores they spent time getting to know the men in the shelter.

"I was really unsure of what this undertaking would be like," said Nikki Garcia, a senior, who had done some previous volunteer work at shelters but had never spent the night.

"Overall, it was a really great experience to reach out to people who may not see their own worth some days," said Garcia.

After dinner the students cleaned the kitchen, mopped the floors and spent time talking to the men staying at the shelter.

"We got to attend the evening devotional service, during which one of the men told us about his life and read Scripture passages," said Rachel Fedders, a sophomore.

"Afterwards, other guests spoke out about their hardships and how the shelter had helped them to find hope," she said.

Hearing the stories gave the students a first-hand look into the personal struggles of people in their community.

"Often during times of economic hardship, it is difficult for the fortunate to see just how lucky they have been," said student Michael Montoya.

"I think that it is important for those who have been blessed to take a step back, realize that the down and out have had some bad luck, and lend some aid in whatever manner possible," he said.

Serving in the shelter also helped the students realize that even a small gesture can make a difference to a person who is struggling.

“As our campus minister told us, we don't have to be able to offer deep words of encouragement or know just the right thing to do or say to be able to help these people out,” said Fedders.

“Just by smiling and treating them with respect, we can help them remember that they are deserving of respect,” she said.

The students are planning to serve at the shelter again this summer.

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