



University of Pittsburgh

Division of Student Affairs

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Pitt Make a Difference Day Named Winner of National “Make a Difference Day” Award

The University of Pittsburgh’s largest annual single-day service project—Pitt Make a Difference Day, commonly known as PMADD—was selected as one of 14 winners of the national 2016 Make a Difference Day Award.

The award is presented annually by TEGNA Media, with the support of the Arby’s Foundation and the Points of Light Foundation, to community organizations that make a difference in their local communities through participation in the national Make a Difference Day program. Pitt has been a participant since October of 2008, when the first Pitt Make a Difference Day took place.

TEGNA Media representatives were on campus earlier this month to present a \$10,000 grant to Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kenyon Bonner, Director of PittServes Misti McKeehen, and several student leaders who play a major role in organizing the event. A video of the check presentation can be viewed at <http://www.makeadifferenceday.com/#1302-2017-award-winners/1323-difference-maker-4>.

Pitt Make a Difference Day 2016 was one of 2,000 nominees for this year’s award. The event engaged more than 3,875 volunteers from the Oakland campus, in addition to volunteers at each of Pitt’s regional campuses, making it one of the largest days of service in the region. More than 100 community agencies were served through PMADD this year. From just a few of the projects, Pitt assisted in creating 2,480 Sleep Survival Kits at Cribs For Kids, filled over 35 city trucks with debris, planted over 200 trees, and more than 25 community garden beds were winterized, among many other projects.

The grant will enable PittServes to forge stronger connections with community partners and specific neighborhoods, such as Homewood, which has been identified as the site of the University’s new Community Engagement Center and is scheduled to open this fall.

“It is fitting that, as we prepare for the 10th anniversary of PMADD, we are in the position to invest an additional \$10,000 into our communities, as a result of this award,” said McKeehen. “We will solicit a request for proposals for sustainable projects that we can fund for PMADD 2017. It’s important that we focus on what communities are asking for, and that we have a long-term impact in the neighborhoods that we partner with not only on Make a Difference Day, but year-round.”

Dan Lampmann, who served as chair of the PMADD 2016, and is graduating this weekend with a degree in communication and rhetoric, said, "Pitt Make a Difference Day is really important because it's one of the first chances students have to get involved in the community. And once students become engaged, and see the positive impact we can make, then service often times becomes part of their life-long commitment to helping others."

Bonner said that he fondly recalls many long days (and nights) preparing for the first PMADD back in 2009, when he served as the associate dean of students and director of student life.

"There was some uncertainty that first year about whether or not we could actually pull off the logistics of sending a couple thousand students out into the communities on school buses," he said. "But our students, staff, and faculty rose to the occasion, and it has been very rewarding to be a part of a program that has grown so much during the past decade, not only in terms of the number of students who participate in the event, but more importantly, because of the impact our students are making in our communities."

The City of Pittsburgh recognized the impact of PMADD at a special in October of 2015. Mayor Bill Peduto and city council issued a proclamation commending and thanking the students, staff and community volunteers, and declared October 24, 2015, Pitt Make a Difference Day in the City of Pittsburgh.

"It's great to see so many students engage in service through PMADD and other opportunities provided through PittServes," Bonner added. Service is part of the culture at Pitt. We love seeing our students lift others up as they climb in their personal journeys."

MORE ON PITT SERVES

There was an excellent article on PittServes director Misti McKeehen in yesterday's edition of the *University Times* (www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=43585).

More information about PittServes also can be found on the department's Web site (www.pittserves.pitt.edu).

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