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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
@cedarvillenews

Health Sciences Collaborate to Serve Underprivileged Youth

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Thanks to a partnership between the Cedarville University School of Nursing and Department of Exercise Science, children in Springfield, Ohio will be getting a boost in health education and exercise activities.

The initiative will be led by Rachel Parill, Ph.D., associate professor of nursing, and April Crommett, Ph.D., associate professor of exercise science. Crommett and Parill, along with several Cedarville students, will work with the Springfield Promise Neighborhood to give better access to physical activities and health resources for children in low-income households.

Nursing students have been serving in Springfield in a variety of capacities for the past five years, but after seeing the need for increased physical activity for children, the department of exercise science was asked to lend its expertise.

The Springfield Promise Neighborhood (SPN) is a placed-based and asset-based poverty alleviation project. SPN operates in a 110-block area of Springfield that is home to 3,800 residents and 406 students at Lincoln Elementary School.

All of the students who reside inside SPN live below the federal poverty guidelines and lack access to playgrounds, day care facilities, and the kind of enrichment and civic associations that mark a vibrant place to live and raise a family.

"This is a vulnerable community and our students see those challenges," said Parill. "Children need a thriving community to grow up in, and we've been asked to be part of the solution."

The project being undertaken by Cedarville students consists of two components; physical activity and healthcare. Exercise science students have been tasked with creating and leading wellness classes at local churches while nursing students are creating ways to educate people about healthcare, including which resources are available locally.

Katherine Alexander, a senior nursing major, said, "Working with the Springfield Promise Neighborhood increased my confidence in my ability to come alongside a community in need and use the gifts and education that God has blessed me with to improve the health and environment for my neighbors," said Katherine Alexander, a senior nursing major from Springfield, Illinois.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,711 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.