

SWOSU Student Secures \$2,500 for Local Free Clinic

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy senior Melinda Le (left) of Oklahoma City hands a \$2,500 check to Dr. Steven Pray, pharmacy director for the Weatherford Agape Medical Clinic. The funds came from CVS Pharmacy program and will help the WAMC as it purchases medications for Agape clients.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy senior Melinda Le of Oklahoma City knew a good opportunity when she saw it.

And, the Weatherford Agape Medical Clinic has benefited by receiving a \$2,500 check.

Le was working at CVS Pharmacy when she noticed intriguing forms that seemed to be just the thing a local free clinic was looking for. The applications offered free monetary grants through the CVS Caremark Charitable Trust. The catch was that these CVS Caremark Challenge Grants were only available to CVS employees who were also volunteering their time to a charitable organization.

Le approached Agape Pharmacy Director Dr. W. Steven Pray and they completed the forms. Shortly after, they received the check for \$2,500. The CVS district manager told Le that Oklahoma received only two of the 252 grants and the Agape one was one of them.

Agape will use the funds to support its mission of helping provide medical therapy to those who cannot otherwise afford it. Dr. Pray said this support is critical in purchasing medications for Agape clients.

Le's older sister, Jennifer Le, a SWOSU pharmacy graduate, had been volunteering at the Weatherford Agape Medical Clinic Pharmacy in 2006. When Jennifer went on pharmacy rotations, she recommended Melinda to fill her slot. Melinda had already been volunteering at the Oklahoma City Manos Juntas Free Clinic on weekends, so she fit easily into the Agape Pharmacy, where she has contributed her time for three years. Melinda enjoys the work.

"It helps make me feel that I'm making a positive difference in the community," Melinda said. "It makes me think about others besides myself that are less fortunate and how we can at least give back to the community to ensure that they get the healthcare that they need. And I also love the people that I work with too!"

In addition to Dr. Pray, Agape's pharmacy is staffed by a group of dedicated volunteers, including local pharmacists Mickey Dyer and Ross Foster, both of Allen Pharmacy; David Coates, a retired SWOSU pharmacology professor; and Dr. Virgil Van Dusen, who teaches at the SWOSU College of Pharmacy.

Many SWOSU pharmacy students also volunteer. In addition to Melinda, they include Sara Miller, Makinzie Carey, Melissa Gloden, David Cannon, Lori Freno, Angela Ward, Sara Bond, Jeremy Ratliff, Matt Sample and others.

The clinic pharmacy is fully registered with the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy, both as a charitable pharmacy and as a training area for students.

When asked to reflect on her Agape experience, Le said it is a wonderful place for students who wish to volunteer a couple hours of their time just to help out the community.

"It's a great learning and eye-opening experience and helps promote understanding among people who are diverse in ethnic, culture, and economic backgrounds," Le said. "The time that I've spent volunteering at the clinic impacts not only the lives of our community but has also touched my life as well. And I feel honored to have been apart of the Agape team for the last three years."

Persons interested in making donations to help the clinic serve those in need can call Dr. Pray at 580.774.3257 (working hours) or 580.72-2754 (after hours and weekends).