Small Change, Big Difference

University Communications
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When you visit the University of Arizona BookStores this holiday season, you'll have an opportunity to make a lasting impact on someone's life.

The BookStores and the Arizona Student Unions have teamed up with the UA Cares [1] campaign to help raise money for the Arizona Assurance [2] scholarship program. Through a combination of grants, federal work-study funds and merit aid, the program covers tuition and housing costs so that its recipients can graduate debt-free.

UA Cares is the UA's annual workplace giving campaign, in which employees can designate payroll deductions or one-time gifts for specific University programs or community nonprofit organizations. Â

Employee badges and "table tents" at BookStore cash registersÂ â€“ sporting the slogan "Now we can!" â€“ encourage shoppers to make a donation along with their purchase. In addition, posters and table toppers have popped up throughout the Student Unions to help raise awareness of the program.

"Many stores and supermarkets across town offer donation points at their cash registers where customers can give to various causes," said Edith Auslander, former UA vice president and senior associate to the president, who now works as a consultant to Arizona Assurance with the UA Foundation [3]. "That's how we got the idea."

Arizona Assurance â€“ a priority of UA President Robert N. Shelton and his wife, Adrian â€“ provides tuition and housing to Arizona high school graduates whose family income is at or below $42,400.

To be eligible [4], students must be Arizona residents coming straight from high school and must meet the UA's admission requirements.

About 2,000 students currently participate in the program, Auslander said. Â

"Arizona Assurance will greatly increase the number of educated people in Arizona," she said. "The program will give new aspirations to their family members and make it more likely for their own children to strive for a college education."

"It will have a multiplying positive effect. I believe the end result will be dramaticÂ â€‘ a much better, educated work force throughout the state."

When Auslander suggested a special promotion to Debby Shively, director of UA BookStores [5], and Bill Shiba, head of Arizona Student Unions [6], her idea was greeted with "immediate enthusiasm."
"Both have gone out of their way to make this happen, because it affects so many students, most of whom wouldn't be here were it not for Arizona Assurance," Auslander said. "The BookStores and the Student Unions are right at the heart of the UA. This is where faculty, staff and students come together."

"I truly believe this is a great opportunity for more people to be informed about Arizona Assurance that might not even know the importance and what the program really does for our students," Shively said. "The opportunity for our community to give to this incredible UA student program at the UA BookStores makes it easy and more convenient to support this cause."

Shively scheduled training classes for the sales floor staff who would be interacting with customers to make sure they were well-informed about the scholarship program. Â

"We had amazing support from our student cashiers to assist with this type of transaction at the cash register," she said. Â

Holly Altman, director of outreach and community partnerships in the UA Office of Community Relations [7], who directs the UA Cares giving campaign, added: "I see Arizona Assurance as a perfect bridge between the UA and the community because it helps members of the community to attend college who otherwise wouldn't be able to."

Last year's UA Cares campaign netted $26,759 for the Arizona Assurance scholarship program, with a total of 173 gifts.

In addition to cashiers at the various UA BookStores locations, cashiers at the Student Union Meal Plan Office also can accept donations.

For more information about Arizona Assurance, visit assurance.arizona.edu [8] or contact Edith Auslander at 520-621-2393, 520-235-1588, or auslander@al.arizona.edu [9].

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