Wellness Grant Feature of the Month: Gourley Clinical Teaching Center

Wellness Ambassador: Melyssa Rehman

Wellness Ambassador Melyssa Rehman used her department’s Mini-Grant funds to pursue innovative wellbeing initiatives for the Gourley Clinical Teaching Center staff and faculty. With the grant funds, Melyssa was able to purchase yoga mats, stair steppers, a battle rope, and an agility ladder for group exercise classes. Additionally, the remaining funding was used to purchase rock painting supplies such as paint brushes, paint pens, acrylic paints, and a rock painting book for group painting sessions.

By purchasing these items, Melyssa hoped that Gourley staff and faculty members would be able to meet twice a week – once for a group exercise class and once for a rock painting session. By scheduling weekly exercise classes, Melyssa’s goal was to promote health and wellbeing by engaging in yoga, Zumba, complete body exercises, and group walks around the campus walking loops. Melyssa also wanted to compliment the physical wellbeing aspect of her Mini-Grant use with a social wellbeing aspect via group rock painting. The goal with this initiative was to establish time for staff and faculty to enjoy a period of relaxation and socialization through a creative painting session.

Across both initiatives, Melyssa reported that her goals were met. Twelve out of the 14 office members participated in the events, and all participants expressed thorough enjoyment of the activities. Melyssa reported that many of her colleagues asked for additional events to be held on days when they were not previously scheduled, suggesting a greater demand for these types of events in the future. One of the most positive outcomes from these initiatives was how much colleagues were able to connect and bond during these activities. On stressful days in the office, Melyssa would hold impromptu rock painting sessions for colleagues to come together, release some tension, and talk about the stressors of that day. Positive outcomes weren’t only seen within rock painting sessions. Additionally, Melyssa reported that the exercise classes provided opportunities for staff members who didn’t typically engage in physical exercise to join the group and break a sweat. Overall, Gourley staff members greatly enjoyed the time they were able to spend together, bonding as a team while improving their physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

In the future, Melyssa hopes to continue offering activities such as these. Her colleagues have even expressed new activities they would be interested in trying together. Melyssa plans to continue reminding her colleagues that physical and mental health are vital and should be prioritized even within a busy schedule, and will encourage her colleagues to stay involved when future events are offered.