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Students Meeting Needs of Underserved in Dayton

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Students at Cedarville University will support two local organizations for the 2015-16 Student Government Association's (SGA) philanthropy project.

"The 937" is an SGA initiative to support Target Dayton and Shoes for the Shoeless. Both organizations reside in the 937 area code, the reason behind the project's name. Target Dayton and Shoes for the Shoeless provide for individuals living in poverty, which includes 34.7 percent of the population of the city of Dayton, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The state of Ohio's poverty index is 15.8 percent.

Target Dayton is a ministry in inner-city Dayton that provides hot meals to homeless people. The meals are served family style, rather than through the typical "soup lines" so there can be interaction between guests and workers. The meal follows a worship service that is held in the main auditorium above the food area.

Shoes for the Shoeless provides socks and shoes to children whose families cannot afford them. "Students may not be in the financial position to completely rescue these people, but what we can do, what we do have, is our time," said Patrick Holman, SGA philanthropy director from Carthage, Missouri. "The beauty of a local project is that it gives our students an opportunity to develop personal relationships with those whom they are serving, rather than simply donate money without giving it a second thought."

The 937 stemmed from a student survey taken over the summer in which many students voiced their preference to financially support and serve a local ministry.

Unlike past projects, the SGA has not set a financial goal for students to reach, but has chosen to provide more opportunities for students to interact with those in need and build relationships with them. Students will serve meals and eat with those at Target Dayton and put shoes directly on children's feet when Shoes for the Shoeless makes shoe deliveries to local schools.

Holman believes that The 937 also gives students an opportunity to respond to the biblical declaration to provide for widows and orphans.

"Basic needs go unmet because of poverty," said Holman. "We can't rescue these people, but we are called to take care of widows and orphans. Meeting their physical needs will be our gateway to meet their emotional and spiritual needs as well."

The 937 Project officially begins on October 9 and will continue throughout the 2015-16 academic year. For more information about the project, contact Patrick Holman at gpholman@cedarville.edu or the SGA office at sga@cedarville.edu.

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.