



# Student-Led Community Outreach Program Receives \$50,000 From University's Citizens Board

The \$50,000 Citizens Board Sebastian's Hero Award, the highest amount given, was granted to the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Department of Community Service (DOCS) program at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.



Members of the DOCS team make their presentation to the Citizens Board.

When they are not learning, studying, or practicing, Miller School students find innovative, impactful ways to serve the wider South Florida community. They collaborate with faculty and each other on projects that, with support from alumni and friends, can generate change and bring lasting benefits to the people they serve.

For the last 25 years, the University's Citizens Board has supported such projects through its Changemakers Student Fund, which in turn is supported by member dues and donations. Each year, the Changemakers Committee reviews project proposals submitted by students, faculty, and staff across the University of Miami institution, and narrows the field to three finalists. The finalists who presented their projects to the Citizens Board membership at a ceremony on Feb. 2



exemplify the depth and breadth of the student service at the University.



(From left) Wolfson DOCS team members Ankit Shah, Victoria Gabor, and Emily Swafford; and Amar Deshpande, M.D., '02, associate dean for medical education and administration and DOCS physician advisor

The \$50,000 Citizens Board Sebastian's Hero Award, the highest amount given, was granted to the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Department of Community Service (DOCS) program at the Miller School. The program gained the most votes of the Changemakers Committee and members-at-large. Established in 2000 and staffed primarily by student volunteers, Wolfson DOCS operates nine community health fairs in many of South Florida's most medically underserved areas. The fairs provide health education and screen for hypertension, diabetes, various cancers, and other conditions for which these communities are at elevated risk. The health fairs also serve as portals for access to care for patients identified as needing medical follow-up.

"[This award] meant a lot," said medical student Victoria Gabor, M.D. Class of 2023 and executive student director of Wolfson DOCS. "For us, our mission is clear, and we're very passionate about providing the best care to the populations we serve. The fact that the board sees this vision, as well, and supports us means we'll be able to ensure our patients receive the kind of care they deserve."



## Award Will Support Wolfson DOCS Community Health Initiatives

The \$50,000 award will support three new initiatives at the community health fairs.

- **New exam tables at the women's health station:** "We have several exam tables, but they are in poor condition," said Gabor. "The pelvic exam puts our patients in a vulnerable position, and we want them to feel as comfortable as possible."
- **Hemoglobin A1c testing:** The funding will also allow the team to implement a more advanced point-of-care glucose test, which previously wasn't offered due to the cost. "It's a more expensive, but it's better a better overall test – it gives you a broader idea of their health and how their sugars have been maintained," said Gabor. The new test also doesn't require the patient to be fasting, which makes the test more accessible and eases patient discomfort.
- **STI testing:** The students will now be able to offer testing for sexually transmitted diseases to improve the health and quality of life for the individuals they serve. "We haven't previously tested for this in the past because we couldn't afford it," Gabor said. "According to guidelines, a lot of the patients we see would qualify."

The Citizens Board is a select group of more than 230 South Florida business and civic leaders who actively support the University's philanthropic and programmatic priorities while also serving as its ambassadors to the community. Since its inception more than 75 years ago, the Citizens Board has



raised an estimated \$454 million for the University of Miami.

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