Small School, Big Impact

Walla Walla University, College Place, Wash., has a new partnership with a local homeless shelter. The Christian Aid Center established an internship for two Walla Walla students that includes a room in a house near the shelter’s brand-new, first-time facility for women and children. The interns are on call for intakes and other support and stay one week per month in the shelter itself.

“We’re very excited to see our two students involved from the ground floor,” says Susan Smith, professor of social work and sociology and the dean of the School of Social Work. “They’re able not only to do their practicum work, but also see the program come together and get both a macro and a micro point of view.”

And for such a little school, Walla Walla has a long reach—all the way to Montana. That’s where it has two other campuses, in Missoula and Billings, exclusively for its MSW program. Why? More than 20 years ago, a number of MSW students who were commuting from Montana to Washington because there was no MSW program in their state “urged us to start a program there, so we did,” says Smith.