Sullivan College of Technology and Design (SCTD) is proud of Craig Niemann, chairperson of the Computer Graphic Design and Dynamic Web Development programs. In August, he was selected as the first recipient of the Kentucky Association of Career Colleges and Schools (KACCS) Community Service Award.

Niemann’s efforts to support the Salvation Army’s Center of Hope, a homeless and transitional living facility serving the Louisville metropolitan area, convinced the award sponsor, McGraw-Hill, and its representatives that he deserved the award. Among an array of projects he oversaw for the center, Niemann led faculty, staff and students in blanket and towel drives, the building of a deck and new fence for the women’s shelter, the cleaning and outfitting of both an indoor and an outdoor children’s play area, and many other tasks and events.

Niemann utilizes service learning as a routine instructional approach in his classroom. Service learning opportunities provide students with real work experiences, opportunities to interact and negotiate with real clients, and material for their resumes and portfolios. They also allow students to apply classroom learning to real problems.

For non-profit organizations, service learning provides many benefits as well. The organization receives the skills, products and human capital they would otherwise be unable to afford or would purchase at the expense of providing services for and to their clients. Non-profits have the chance to review and get the best work, as students in a class generally work on the same materials and present them to the client for his/her selection. Non-profits can also “test drive” potential employees and the benefits they might bring to the organization.

Because of the many benefits it offers, Niemann does not have to seek service learning opportunities. Instead, non-profits frequently contact him to request help. When a request fits the curriculum of a class being offered, he strives to meet the need.

Niemann believes that the use of service learning offers numerous benefits to the college. First, those working on the projects develop a sense of community, teamwork and common purpose. Additionally, the college receives recognition for its continued service to and partnership with non-profit agencies. Service learning allows the college to be a significant, contributing member of the community in which it operates.

Niemann invests hundreds of hours in service learning projects each year. He is most deserving of the honor bestowed on him, the first KACCS Community Service Award. Thanks to McGraw-Hill Higher Education Division for sponsoring this award.