

Alfred University community rallies to help displaced students

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At 9 this morning, an email went out on the Alfred University campus, seeking donated clothing for nine Alfred University students displaced by a fire which destroyed a Main Street building this morning. Within minutes, the Student Affairs office was inundated with clothing and offers of other assistance for the students, who lost everything: shoes and clothing; computers; cell phones; books; backpacks, wallets and purses. "I was amazed," said Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs, about the response from faculty, staff, other students and community residents. Powell Campus Center was transformed into a one-stop center for the students directly affected by the fire, as well as other community residents who were temporarily displaced by the fire; until the scene is cleaned up and the other buildings in the block are checked, firefighters are not allowing residents of the other second and third-story apartments to return. Woughter was aware of 14 additional AU students who are temporarily displaced, along with one staff member and a family of six. All are being offered help. Those in need of assistance were given clothing; information about how to get food and counseling; and assistance in locating temporary or permanent housing. Any of the students who are displaced are being offered space in University-owned facilities until they can make permanent arrangements. The University is also loaning students laptop computers to use. Woughter said local churches and community organizations have organized drives and started to collect needed items. The University has set up a special fund to help the students as well. Donations may be made to Alfred University, with the stipulation the funds are to be used to assist the students. "If anyone ever wondered what we meant when we talked about Alfred being a community, we saw it today," Woughter said.