

Friends For Life's Wellness University Students Progress

Ten Wellness University students moved closer to their goal of a 'Degree in Wellness' while one student graduated from the program at a recent commencement ceremony held at Friends For Life. Fifty-six (56) people attended the ceremony to The Wellness University is a comprehensive educational program that helps persons living with HIV/AIDS gain skills necessary to manage the disease while increasing their daily living skills such as literacy, budgeting, cooking and communication. Classes to teach the students about HIV/AIDS and how to maintain adherence with strict medication regimens are taught by a licensed pharmacist provided by Walgreens.

Students earn credits by attending classes taught by professionals from the community as well as by attending their medical and supportive service appointments with various collaborating organizations. As credits are accumulated, the students move from Freshman to Sophomore, etc. until they accrue 400 points at which time they graduate from the program. Upon graduation, students are then able to become a part of the Leadership Development class which requires the students to provide volunteer hours in the community and allows them to assist in teaching some of the regular Wellness University classes as well as providing them with ongoing educational opportunities.



Twenty-seven community organizations including St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Hope and Healing Center and the Medplex participate in the program by providing various services that earn students additional credits. The Wellness University received an award of excellence from the City of Memphis in 2005 with the City noting the innovative nature of the program along with the measurable successes the program achieves with its students.

The program is financially supported by the United Way of the Mid-South, the City of Memphis, the Until There's a Cure Foundation, Gilead Science, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis and the First Tennessee Foundation.