

NOMINATION FORM
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE LEARNING COMPETITION

Institution

Title of Project

Project Director

Contact Information for Project Director

Establishment Date of Project

Unit That Administers Project

Total Number of Students Involved

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINATED PROJECT
(Insert your answer after each question.)

1. For purposes of this competition, the Commission on Higher Education defines service learning as college student learning at any level and in any situation that is *linked* in a direct, hands-on fashion to the resolution of a problem or concern in a target community outside the institution *and is related* to a college course with some type of reflection activity. How does your project meet the parameters of this definition?

2. Specifically, which segments of the college/university community does your project involve?

3. How many students (specify degree levels to the extent possible) does the project affect?

4. Describe the target community or communities your project serves.

5. Describe your project's effectiveness in helping to solve the problems or concerns in the target community.

6. Describe the degree to which your project enhances student learning while providing specific examples of the service learning activities the college students engage in. Also explain how the service learning activities reinforce or apply what the students learn in the classroom.

7. Is there academic credit associated with the project (not necessary for submission)? If so, please explain the particulars.

8. If funding is required, how is the project funded and what is the approximate annual budget for the project?

9. Add any other comments you may have about your project.

You may also include supplemental information about the project (such as brochures, pictures, etc.).

Please return this form via e-mail by **February 27, 2015**, to:

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Student helps amputee learn to walk

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By Ashley Barker

Public Relations

Nathan Mansell finished his pro bono physical therapy session with 52-year-old Mikell Felder on May 15 by saying "I love you."

Felder, a homeless Charleston native who had his right leg amputated just above the knee in 2007, responded, "I love you more."

The relationship that the unlikely pair has is held together by a powerful belief in Jesus and a faith that Felder will walk on his own once again.

Mansell, 23, a second-year PT student in the [MUSC College of Health Professions](#), began volunteering in 2008 for the hot dog ministry, an event held four days a week in an empty lot on Meeting Street between Lee and Jackson streets. During the evenings, volunteers take grills and cook up hundreds of hot dogs for homeless men, women and children in the area.

Mansell was originally responsible for squirting the ketchup and mustard on the bread. He took it upon himself to get to know some of the folks who would regularly show up for the free meal.

One man caught his attention quickly. Felder, who many people around the area called Dusty because of his past fighting experience, frequently rolled up to the lot in his dirty wheelchair with many of his belongings attached to the back.

Felder told Mansell that he was struck by a vehicle on Meeting Street in January 1991. The driver carried Felder on his windshield for four blocks before he fell off, then drove off leaving him for dead.



Mikell Felder went through the line for a free meal from volunteers of the hot dog ministry on May 15. The ministry is held four days a week in an empty lot on Meeting Street.



Nathan Mansell, a volunteer at the MUSC CARES Clinic, helped Mikell Felder put on his prosthetic leg.

Years later, Felder's leg became badly infected and doctors gave him two options – return to the hospital every three months for a surgery to clean the leg out or amputate it.

"I told them, 'You ain't going in my leg in the same cut every three months,'" Felder said. "So I said, 'Sir, if you take my leg away, the Lord will help me.'"

In the past, Felder would drink alcohol "like a fish," something he's not afraid to discuss. But when he started having seizures, kidney failure, congestive heart failure and high blood pressure in addition to dealing with his amputated leg, doctors told him that he must give up the habit and begin dialysis three days a week. He said he's been sober for three years.

Felder also admits to being arrested and kicked out of multiple homeless shelters because of fighting with other men. He credits a nightmare that plagued him for months to changing his outlook on life.

In his dreams, Felder's older sisters would be crying at his funeral.

"When you see yourself in a casket ..." he paused and closed his eyes. "I'd wake up screaming. That's when I stopped drinking. I don't still have the dreams. They're gone; I hope they stay gone too."

After spending enough time with him, Mansell finally learned that Felder received a prosthetic leg after his amputation. But a woman, who Felder was staying with, threw it away, forcing him to rely only on the wheelchair.

"I used to walk on it, but it would hurt because it didn't have good padding. Well, I left it in the house when I went to a store one day," Felder said. "When I came back, she had thrown it away because it was scaring her. That's what she said. She'd been doing crack and all kinds of stuff."

Upon hearing the story, Mansell helped Felder into his vehicle, put his wheelchair and belongings in the back and drove him from Meeting Street to the MUSC CARES (Community Aid, Relief, Education and Support) Clinic, a student-run center that

provides free care to uninsured or underinsured patients.

"The reason I chose to help Mikell and the guys from hot dog ministry is that I believe each and every one of us is messed up and that it's only by God's grace that I'm not the one out on the street," Mansell said. "I've got lots of issues, but I believe that despite my inability to earn grace, God gives it to me freely."

Mansell's neuromuscular one professor, [Sara Kraft, DPT](#), is one of the faculty volunteers at the clinic. Together, Kraft and Mansell convinced [Floyd Brace](#) to donate a prosthetic limb for Felder.

"Floyd Brace came in and got very involved," Kraft said. "Low and behold, he's got his limb now. I call Nathan, Nate the Great. He's been this guy's guardian angel. He goes and picks him up, brings him to the clinic, drives him back and usually pays for him to be in a hotel for the night to take a bath and stretch out. He goes to every single one of his visits to try to get him up on his feet again."

Mansell takes Felder to the clinic once a week to stretch, practice putting the prosthetic leg on and taking it off, and work on walking properly. At a recent appointment, with Mansell at his side reminding him to "step all the way through the crutches," Felder was able to stand up and walk around the room twice using a walker and crutches.



Mikell Felder, 52, had his right leg amputated above the knee on Sept. 6, 2007.



Nathan Mansell, a second-year physical therapy student, helped Mikell Felder walk on his new prosthetic leg using crutches.

He proudly caught the attention of everyone in the room by announcing, "Look at me, I'm walking. I'm walking!"

While relaxing afterward and trying to catch his breath, Felder explained his bond with Mansell. "The Lord sent him to me. I said, 'Lord, you need to send me someone to help me because I can't do this all by myself.' I depend on Jesus for everything, and now I have Nathan too."

In the early stages of their relationship, Felder said he'd get mad and say things to Mansell that he now regrets.

"He showed me compassion. He showed me that he cared about me. He takes time with me. He's the brother I should have had," Felder said. "I might say something loud, and he'll look at me and not say anything. But I know he doesn't like it. So I try not to do that anymore."

The age difference between Felder and Mansell has also influenced their bond.

"I'm older than Nathan. Nathan could be my son. But I've learned a lot from him because he trusts in Jesus too," Felder said. "I wouldn't have said that I trusted anyone other than Jesus before Nathan. He ain't going to hurt me or send me to jail. Now, I trust Jesus and Nathan. I trust him with my life."

Once Felder can walk on his own again, Mansell plans to make sure he can get into a homeless shelter. Then, Mansell said, he'll do his best to keep up with Felder but, "there are many more Mikells out there to help."

"My cup is overflowing with a joy that no one can touch, ever. I want others, especially those that hear more car doors locked as they cross the street than the word "hello," to know the same love of Christ that changed me forever," Mansell said. "Mikell just happens to be one that's in my life right now."

Felder made it clear that he will keep up with his new friend regardless of the situation.

"Nathan is really just one of those guys who go above and beyond for anybody and everybody," Kraft said. "If there is a need, he's going to meet it. He really is amazing."

Helping patients, like Felder, who have limited transportation options, is something that Kraft and the other students are focused on at the clinic.

"Some of our folks have really had a hard time getting to us," Kraft said. "Probably our biggest wish list item right now is to be able to provide transportation for people who can't get to us. We're trying to work out a contract with a cab company because there are several who just physically can't make it here."



Nathan Mansell stretched Mikell Felder's back muscles prior to help him put on his new prosthetic leg at the CARES Clinic.

To make a donation to the clinic or learn about other ways to help, contact Kraft at 792-0091 or kraftsv@musc.edu.

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