

## SCC Alumna Lives to Serve

Service to others can provide a wellspring of strength, something Sarah Hipp experiences in new ways each day. The 31-year old social worker, advocate, aid worker and missionary has found meaning throughout her life by helping others. “My heart is to serve my community both near and far,” says Hipp. “I work during the day caring for young children and the elderly helping with in home care, and in my free time I volunteer with [LEAF Community Arts](#), [Water Missions International](#), at my church and in [Rwanda](#).”



Sarah Hipp (center) with children in Rwanda (Photo courtesy S. Hipp)

### Finding Hope in Despair

In 2001 Sarah enrolled in the Associate in Arts program at SCC a few months after graduating from Smoky Mountain High School. While enrolled at SCC she was in a bad car accident causing traumatic injury to her brain, breaking her nose and jaw, injuring her knee, causing slipped discs in her back and neck and knocking out her four front teeth. “It was a long recovery and difficult to attend classes in a neck brace, knee

brace, on crutches, with no front teeth, and on a liquid diet,” says Hipp. “Luckily, I was able to finish out the semester with the help of Student Support Services. They provided a tremendous amount of encouragement, helped me get my books on tape arranged, scheduled note takers, and even helped me get from class to class. The hills on campus are tough on crutches! At a time when I was in great need, Student Support Services helped me stay on track.” With the help of SSS, Sarah transferred to UNCA, where she had another traumatic experience when her house burned down. Sarah subsequently transferred to WCU where she was an honors graduate with a bachelor’s degree in social work. The car accident sharpened Sarah’s focus on helping others as her vocation through education, advocating for those in need, and connecting people to support available in their community.

### On a Mission in Rwanda

Sarah became interested in the East African country of Rwanda while working on the festival staff for LEAF Community Arts in Black Mountain. The first mission trip LEAF coordinated was to Rwanda. “I have been working in Rwanda for eight years now and have helped with various projects including getting water, educational and medical supplies to people; helping street children find their way; assisting in the healing process of the victims of genocide; and walking with people through the forgiveness process. To better help the people of Rwanda I am now forming a non-profit organization to be able to assist with this work and advocate for the people of Rwanda.”

### Dream Big! The World Needs You

Sarah has traveled an inspiring path in her life and has persevered despite facing challenges. Her advice to SCC students is to “stay strong mentally, encourage yourself and dream big! The world needs you!!”

### About Student Support Services at SCC

Student Support Services at Southwestern Community College assists students in achieving their goal of graduating from SCC and/or transferring to a senior institution. The program supports students in dealing effectively with all aspects of college life. Services are provided free for students who meet eligibility requirements. Eligibility for Student Support Services is based upon students demonstrating a need for academic support and at least one of the following criteria: Be a first generation college student; meet income eligibility guidelines; or have a documented ADA disability.

Student Support Services is a federally funded, Department of Education Trio Program which provides SCC \$1 million in financial support to assist students in graduating and transferring. Learn how Student Support Services can assist you by calling 828.339.4420 or emailing Susan Bradshaw at [s\\_bradshaw@southwesterncc.edu](mailto:s_bradshaw@southwesterncc.edu).

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Double your chance of graduating!

Student Support Services participants graduate at twice the rate of the general student body at SCC.

### Services Include

Academic Co-Advising

Financial Literacy & Scholarship Workshops

Tutoring

Transfer Initiatives

Supplemental Grant Aid

Academic, Personal and Career Counseling

Volunteer & Civic Involvement

Cultural Enrichment

Resource Loan Program

Referral Service

