

# Hawk tackles world hunger, creates student fellowship

Sheri Trusty, Correspondent 9:03 a.m. ET Jan. 1, 2017



(Photo: Sheri Trusty/Correspondent)

FREMONT - Three years ago, Crown Battery owner Hal Hawk connected with the United Nations World Food Programme in an effort to fight hunger around the world from his hometown of Fremont. Hawk and his friend Carl Hughes — both John Carroll University graduates and Rotary International members — created a WFP Fellowship Program at John Carroll that gives students the opportunity to work with the World Food Programme in Rome or Washington, D.C.

The program allows the students to gain experience in policy and international development program administration. The most unique aspect of the fellowship program is that it is completely self-funded.

“We put together a fully funded fellowship program. No money for it comes from the World Food Programme,” Hawk said. “Many people want to place students, but they want a stipend. Now our program is used as a template (for other universities).”

WFP provides food to needy people in countries around the world in an effort to not only feed them but to also help stifle violence.

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“The World Food Programme says that hungry people do desperate things. If we can feed them, maybe we can stop them from doing some of the desperate things around the world,” Hawk said.

“They go any place there’s an emergency need, most notably in Syria. When there was an earthquake in Nepal, the World Food Programme hired Sherpas to carry 500 kilograms of food in.”



Fremont native Hal Hawk visits Rome, where a program he helped to create allows students to work with the United Nations World Fellowship Programme . (Photo: Submitted)

The idea for the fellowship program was inspired during a trip to Rome.

“We were in Rome to celebrate the 50th anniversary of a John Carroll graduate, and Carl Hughes mentioned he was going to visit a friend with the World Food Programme,” Hawk said. “I told Carl, if you have a close friend at the World Food Programme, John Carroll should be involved.”

The fellowship program is in its third year, and from the onset, it drew a lot of interest from students wanting to participate. Each year, two students are chosen to work through the summer in Rome, and two are chosen to work in Washington, D.C.

“In our first year, we had 95 people apply for four spots,” Hawk said.

Last year, Hawk made another trip to Rome to get a firsthand look at the students’ progress.

“Rome is so beautiful. It is my favorite place to visit now,” he said. “We had dinner with the two students. They were loving their life there.”

Hawk and Hughes enlisted the help of their local Rotary clubs to help fund the program.

“We challenged the Rotary to give up a lunch once a year and give the funds to the World Food Programme. If we all gave up a lunch, we could raise 15 to 17 million dollars,” Hawk said.

The men first challenged their own local clubs. The Fremont Rotary club raised \$635 in one year, and Hughes’ Maumee club raised \$1,235. Now the men want to take the challenge around the world.

“We’re working with the district governor in Rome,” Hawk said.

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