

Young Angels Noted at Mount Pisgah

“She has been an angel to us.” With praise and thankfulness, a gentleman shared what an incredible difference a Mount Pisgah Academy student has made in his family’s life. His mother is a resident of the Pisgah Valley Retirement Center. Jessica Sloop, a freshman at MPA, developed a relationship with the lady while caring for her. The lady had almost entirely quit eating and things looked bleak, but then, “they really hit it off, and my mother is eating 100 percent whenever Jessica comes.”

This kind of positive youthful impact is one reason there are approximately 50 Mount Pisgah Academy students working in the retirement center. Since 1975, the nursing home has provided many jobs for students, which was the original primary mission of the nursing home. Few nursing homes are able to offer the added dimension of young people caring for and befriending their residents. But, even more importantly, it means MPA can continue to provide a solid work program.

Pisgah Industrial Institute opened in 1914, with just 10 boarding students.

Though no tuition was charged, the founders resolved to provide work opportunities for needy students to pay for their rooms, meals, and laundry. The farm, dairy, kitchens, and laundry provided jobs, and later a small hospital was established on campus, along with a two-year nursing degree program.

A number of different industries for student labor have existed, but the largest and most enduring has been the nursing home, now known as the Pisgah Valley Retirement Center. The philosophy of the school includes the following vocational objective: Teach the student to respect the dignity of worthwhile labor, regardless of supposed social status.

To provide additional support of the work program and financially disadvantaged students, Mount Pisgah Academy recently became a partner school



in the Pathways to Success scholarship program of the Commonwealth Foundation. This substantial scholarship program emphasizes both the value of work experience and of being successful in the classroom. Jessica Sloop is just one of the 15 recipients of the scholarship this year at MPA (*some of which are pictured above*). Almost all of these students are receiving \$4,000 scholarships and may continue to receive it each year at Pisgah, given student progress and demonstration of need. To be eligible a student must be new to the boarding school experience. Learn more about this scholarship program at www.commonweal-foundation.org.