

# RECORD GIVING AT THE WOODS



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Izzy Reel, advancement officer for Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, records a video update and a thank you to those who have donated Tuesday during Woods Giving Day in the college's Rooney Library.

## SMWC tops previous bests, breaks \$1.8M mark on Woods Giving Day

By SUE LOUGHLIN  
TRIBUNE-STAR

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College had reached a record \$1.6 million in fundraising even before its annual Woods Giving Day began.

The focus of the day-long philanthropic effort Tuesday then turned to reaching the goal of 1,200 donors to unlock an additional \$115,000 in challenge gifts.

"It is a record setting day," said Brennan Randolph, SMWC president, as he made phone calls to prospective donors from the Woods Student Center.

The success continued throughout the day.

As of 5 p.m., the college had reached the goal and achieved 1,260 donors and raised \$1.8 million. So, officials decided to try for 1,500 donors.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College junior Malachi Hatfield calls a potential donor from a table in the college's Rooney Library on Tuesday for Woods Giving Day.

Turn to **GIVING, A5**

# Giving

Continued from A1

Dollars generated go to the Woods Fund, the college's general, unrestricted operating fund. It supports student scholarships, which in turn support the college's other operating needs, including technology, academic programs, technology, facilities and athletics.

Woods Giving Day is very important in funding college operations, Randolph said.

Last year, the Woods Giving Day raised just over \$1 million.

According to Randolph, this year, the college had an early challenge match. By raising \$550,000, it unlocked an additional \$450,000 by the end of January.

"That really kind of propelled us forward," he said. The large match was unprecedented in the 11-year history of Woods Giving Day, the college's single, largest fundraising event.

The Woods Student Center was filled with students, faculty, staff and alumni making calls to prospective donors.

Once again, Tonya Sawyer's students in sports communications and sports financing classes were among those helping out.

Sawyer is a Woods assistant professor of sport management and she chairs the business and leadership department.

Her students "are learning in the classroom and applying what they've learned to real-world experience today," Sawyer said.

Many of the students aspire to careers in the coaching industry or as athletic directors.

"They have to learn how to communicate and they have to learn how to ask for money in the industry. This does both of those," she said.

The Woods Giving Day "is extremely important" for the college, Sawyer said. "It helps the college continue to thrive and offer opportunities to keep our students successful and provide opportunities that other institutions normally cannot provide."

SMWC is a small, private, liberal arts institution that offers small class sizes and individualized instruction,



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Tonya Sawyer, assistant professor of sports management at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, makes a call to a potential donor from the college's Rooney Library on Tuesday for Woods Giving Day.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Sara Boyer, associate vice president for student success at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, talks to a potential donor during the 11th annual Woods Giving Day on Tuesday in the college's Rooney Library.

and it helps students make real world connections, she said.

Woods senior Blake Patterson was among many students helping call prospective donors Tuesday morning.



PATTERSON

Often, those he contacted wanted to chat and reminisce about their time at the Woods.

Patterson, a math major who attended Clay City Junior/Senior High School, aspires to a career as a secondary math teacher.

This marked his third year helping raise funds on Woods Giving Day.

The Woods is built on community and creates strong bonds among its students, he said. "I feel like it is very important to give back."

Donations assist current students and pave the way for future Woodsies, he said.

People can give through midnight Tuesday. They can call 888-769-0013; give online by going to [giving.smc.edu](http://giving.smc.edu); they can mail a check with "Woods Giving Day" in the memo.

For those who mail a check, the address is PO Box 70, Saint Mary of the Woods, IN 47876.

*Sue Loughlin can be reached at 812-231-4235 or at [sue.loughlin@tribstar.com](mailto:sue.loughlin@tribstar.com). Follow Sue on X at @TribStarSue.*