

CCBLA

Center for Community-Based Learning and Action

Spring 2017 Newsletter

LEAD: Long-term Collaboration

The Evergreen State College Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA) and Kokua Literacy and Education for Adults with Disabilities (LEAD) since 2010.

Breezie Dzakovic MPA '10 approached the CCBLA with the idea for this pilot literacy project for adults with disabilities. At the time, she worked as the Kokua Volunteer Coordinator and was passionate about supporting adults with disabilities to lead independent lives. She recognized that the model of community based learning was a great match. Evergreen students could help in an adult education setting where they contributed to disability community independence and extended their own learning while tutoring on campus.

CCBLA Director Ellen Shortt Sanchez BA '92; MPA '10 combined her background in volunteer literacy programs (primarily with immigrant learners) and a heartfelt interest in this project, creating an innovative collaboration between campus and community. Students could be a volunteer resource and have the chance to learn from our neighbors and an esteemed nonprofit organization.

Six years later the program is going strong. Randi Miller, Kokua program coordinator, matches college students with adults with disabilities for one-on-one tutoring on campus at the Evergreen library. In partnership with the CCBLA, LEAD tutors are recruited in the fall to serve from January to June. Evergreen faculty Dr. Chico Herbison has begun offering the tutor training created by the late Dr. Nancy Payne, Evergreen alumna.



LEAD Graduation 2016

The program has now expanded to St. Martin's University. LEAD is a learner driven program, and learners choose the subjects on which they will collaborate with their tutors. Together, learners partner to expand knowledge of academic subjects, job related skills, hobbies and, most importantly, to cultivate friendships.

Randi notices college students find many benefits from their participation in LEAD. "They develop an authentic personal connection with their learner. Tutors often find that their interactions with learners are exceptionally open and honest. Through weekly sessions tutors learn patience, perseverance, and exercise new and creative methods of teaching and communicating. In addition, while the tutors build their own skills in the community and on campus, they teach others how to be

more inclusive and how to be a society that embraces diversity." Recent graduate and LEAD tutor Ben Haddix BA '16 confirms that LEAD promotes the Evergreen focus of learning across significant differences.

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“My learners teach me different things, they both inspire me daily and have given me a sense of direction, in terms of what I value in a working relationship and also in terms of my purpose as an advocate and as a part of a diverse community.”

Learners also value the personal connection. Often adults with developmental disabilities face lives of extreme isolation and discrimination. Given the highly supervised nature of their lives, LEAD is a unique and cherished opportunity for most learners, as they are allowed independence and agency in choosing what

they will work on during the school year. In these ways, LEAD helps to fill a gap in social services for adults with developmental disabilities in the Olympia/Lacey community. Terri Rose, parent of a LEAD learner, shares that “Kokua and the LEAD program put Dylan in direct face-to-face contact with college faculty and support staff that made a difference in Dylan’s path to college.”

Being a LEAD tutor offers Evergreen students pathways for their future work. Izi LeMay (BA ‘16) shares that “being a part of LEAD for the past three years

strengthened this belief in me, so I feel more passionate about pursuing my career goals. As an occupational therapist, I hope to be a tool for clients to reach their own personal goals, much like I have been a resource to my learning partner to reach her educational goals.”

In 2017–18, a new Evergreen academic program, “Student Originated Studies: Culture, Community, and Disability” will be built around the LEAD program and will offer a credit bearing community based learning experience with faculty Dr. Chico Herbison, Kokua, and the CCBLA.

Learning to Innovate: Community Based Research in Green Building *By Cameron Tull*

This past quarter I had the good fortune of working with the NW Ecobuilding Guild as part of the larger SOS: Community Based Learning and Action program. Chris van Daalen, an active member of the NW Ecobuilding Guild and leading investigator/editor/curator for their Code Innovations Database project, led me and several other non-Evergreen interns through a community-based research curriculum tailored specifically toward uncovering, understanding, and recapitulating innovative ‘green’ building projects and policies that exhibit a progression towards more ecological/social conscience in the building field.

We worked on several case studies, documenting the project or policy being showcased with a focus on how the project or policy got legally approved. With several hundred and counting case-studies published on their website, codeinnovationsdatabase.org, the database intends to act as both a reference source as well as an educational tool, making the approval process for ‘alternative’ and/or less conventional green building materials and methods more streamlined and accessible.

The work completed this term not only improved my research and writing skills, but also provided me with a vehicle through

which I could explore topics of interest related to the green building field. While Chris’ curriculum initially centered around laying the foundation for the technical research and writing skills needed to complete a thorough and informative case study, it wasn’t long before we were each assigned a case study project to dive into. My interest in ecological design and development is broad so when I was offered the opportunity to profile the tiny home ‘eco-village’ community, Occupy Madison (OM) Village, I immediately accepted. I was acutely familiar with the idea of using ‘tiny homes’ to remediate homelessness, but I had no prior knowledge of the social and legal challenges a group could face when simply attempting to provide a safe, healthy, and communal environment for a few homeless individuals. While this particular project in Madison did achieve legal and social approval despite an immense and drawn out public process, it really impressed upon me three themes:


1. the reality of NIMBYism (i.e. larger cultural values/biases) hindering a project from getting actualized;
2. the specialized skill-set needed to navigate the waters of “public process”;

3. the unrelenting ‘good-ness’ of certain people to make personal and financial sacrifice for the wellbeing of others.

Despite not being a ‘local’ project, the housing and homelessness issues of Madison, WI as well as the more general positive/negative social patterns outlined above, resemble the broader patterns evident within our own Olympia, WA community. And while the tiny home village model, as exemplified by OM Village and others, may not be the best or end-all-be-all approach for alleviating homelessness in a community, it certainly provides an opportunity for grassroots, horizontally organized groups to:

- provide a better standard of living for themselves
- at a fraction of the price
- with the opportunity to add value back into the larger community

This learning opportunity was embedded within the SOS: Community Based Learning and Action program model, which allows students to partner with a community based organization, in my case the NW Ecobuilding Guild, and gain a valuable hands-on learning experience while simultaneously doing meaningful work for the larger



community. The SOS program ultimately acted as a launching pad for my involvement with the Ecobuilding Guild, where I am set to continue this work in both an academic and internship capacity during the spring

term, shifting my focus towards researching, documenting, and advocating for more regenerative design and development projects in the local area. I look forward to seeing where this educational journey will take me,

within Evergreen and beyond, as I continue to pursue the most effective means of re-integrating human systems (built environment and social/cultural) back into the ecosystems that surround and compose us.

An Interview with Drew Vinson

By Uriah Thomas, Gateways CAC AmeriCorps

Gateways for Incarcerated Youth deeply impacts Evergreen students, surrounding community members, and the youth at Green Hill (JJ&RA facility). The program provides positive growth experiences for those involved. We asked an Evergreen student contributing to the Gateways program to talk a little about their own involvement and how it has impacted them, “It means the world to me. It’s the sole reason I’m at this school. I didn’t apply to any other school because I wanted to come here.” This particular student, like many others, came to Evergreen specifically to be in the Gateways program. “[The] biggest thing that appealed to me [was] because I was a teen stuck in similar facilities, and I like to be able to support them”. By contributing to Gateways, Vinson bridges that gap and allows trust to build, along with healthy, resourceful relationships.

The mission of Gateways is to provide resources, genuine human interactions, and opportunities for the youth to grab onto the academic and personal dreams that may seem out of reach. Vinson has been a part of the program for several years now, in the college class and through one on one mentoring sessions at Green Hill and group homes. He has a unique continuing outlook on the influence the program has on the youth we serve, “It gives youth a sense of ownership over their academics” and “provides opportunity to enjoy a sense of humanity.”

Being a part of Gateways allows those involved to thrive through the sense of strong, committed community fostering many wonderful memories. When asked to reflect on a memory, Vinson mentioned the opportunity to see the youth performing their culture group presentations. “The

African American culture group was so great and seeing their families there—and they got to dress up in their own clothes.” Not often a sight we get to see week to week when we visit the institution, it created an opportunity to again acknowledge humanity that our world too often denies to those who are incarcerated.

Gateways allows community-based learning to reach Green Hill, creating inspiring experiences for all participants. It would not be possible without the incredible people like this student, who contribute to the growth of the youth while discovering their own growth in the process.

(Left to Right) Keli’i Kauli, Sloane Crabb, Uriah Thomas, Gateways Staff



Support the program

Join Us for Dodgeball for Gateways –
Saturday May 13th Evergreen CRC

Save the date

CCBLA Student Recognition Event –
May 15th 5-6pm at Longhouse

About Gateways

Despite the barriers that youth in the juvenile system encounter, with the right tools and support they can succeed as students, which sets them up for greater health and success in work and life.

Gateways provides the individualized approach needed to reengage incarcerated youth in learning and community. Our focus on culture—helping all students learn their own and respecting others—is critical to breaking the cycle of incarceration, violence, and recidivism.

And our program works.

Since 1996, over 1,000 incarcerated youth have made academic gains in attendance, grade-level promotion, and unlocked their potential for change.

Gateways: Continuity and Consistency from Greenhill to Group Homes

By Keli'i Kauai, YIS AmeriCorps

One of the biggest values we emphasize within our Gateways for Incarcerated youth program is that of consistency. We value being able to build connections with the youth over time. Working with the local group homes has helped us maintain these relationships and expand them past the limiting walls of Greenhill.

Over the past six months we have had multiple youth move through our Gateways programs. At the group homes we currently have six youth who were previously at Greenhill Juvenile Detention center in our AMP or college programs there. The importance of them having a consistent program and seeing the recognition in their face when we show up is invaluable.

The youth coming from our college class program are often-times very willing to participate in workshops at the group home and are consistently very critical thinkers. Their skills in workshop facilitation and high level questioning are built at Greenhill and these youth are able to carry that forward with them. The youth who were not previously in Gateways are able to see the level of discussion our program fosters as we welcome them to join us in workshops. These workshops, which are often youth driven, discuss urgent ideas and current controversial topics.

The group homes also provide a more laid back environment where the youth can be themselves. It has been so fun to see the youth reclaim their identity through their clothes, their hobbies, and often-times, their humor. At Greenhill it seems to me that individuality is taken, or muted, by limiting self-expression. At the group homes we are able to see each individual for everything that makes them unique, and challenge them to expand their ways of thinking.

By working with the youth starting at Greenhill and moving to the group homes we have been able to maintain consistency and valuable relationships so much more easily. We are able to have a continuity that makes our program more than just a college class or mentoring session. We are able to build a community around the youth and by supporting them after their release from Greenhill.

Mentors who are at Greenhill are still able to maintain contact with youth they may have known from Greenhill AMP or their own college class. The youth are also able to ask about mentors and friends from Greenhill and keep up with people from our Gateways program. I think this also allows the youth to feel like they are part of a community of people who care about

their well-being and want to support them every step of the way. Most importantly I believe the youth can feel empowered by the relationships we build being equal. We learn from them just as much as they learn from us, no one is providing more or less.

This year has been so incredible as far as the relationships we have been able to maintain. I am truly appreciative of our work at Greenhill and its continuation into the group homes.

CCBLA and Gateways Staff 2016-17

Director: Ellen Shortt Sanchez

Campus Food Bank Coordinator:
Jordan Billiot

CYS AmeriCorps Tutor/Mentor Coordinator: Keli'i Kauai

SOS: CCBLA Faculty:
Lin Nelson, Pete Bohmer

Work Study Community Service Coordinator: Serene Lawrence

CAC AmeriCorps Gateways AMP Coordinator: Uriah Thomas

Gateways Administrative Support:
Sloane Crabb

Gateways Faculty: Dr Joye Hardiman, Dr Larry Mosqueda

Gateways Program Coordinator: Talib Williams

“We value seeing the youth, and being able to build connections with them over time.”

Community Service Work Study Program *By Serene Lawrence*

Community Service Work Study Coordinator

The Community Service Work Study Program has been coordinated by CCB-LA staff since 2012 and is designed for students to use their financial aid to work and build capacity at local non-profit organizations. The work study program offers students a chance to explore potential career paths and gain valuable skills and hands-on experience in the fields they hope to pursue post-college. During the 2016-2017 academic year 16 Evergreen students served 12 local organizations.

Through working at these organizations for ten hours per week, students learn about what approaches, solutions and alternatives these organizations use to address the many challenges in our community, at no cost to the organization. This work can often lead to deeper community

connections for Evergreen students and open doors for future employment with organizations that match their interests, passions and goals.

While Evergreen's academic programs teach students about the history and impacts of social and environmental issues, the Work Study program aims to fill in the gap between student learning and impact by providing opportunities for students to apply their learning to action.

This year students have been assisting staff at their Work Study sites to provide critical community services such as: providing shelter and resources to homeless families, residential support for the disabled, home repair and maintenance for low-income households, food bank operations, providing educational and counseling services to adult immigrants and victims of sexual assault and creating supportive spaces for marginalized community populations such

as: LGBTQ youth, students of color and incarcerated youth.

The organizations that have partnered with the Work Study program to employ Evergreen students this year include: The Thurston County Food Bank, Partners in Prevention Education, The Evergreen Trans and Queer Center, Sound Learning, Kokua, Family Support Center of South Sound, Choice HS Graduation Matters, CIELO, Rebuilding Together, SPSCC Diversity and Equity Center and Tacoma Community House.

The CCBLA staff is proud of the hard work, dedication and passion Evergreen students bring to the local organizations and populations they serve. Their work leaves a positive impact on our community and strengthens the legacy of Evergreen students actively contributing to social and environmental justice.

Veterans Community Engagement *By Richard Bernsten, SOS:CCBLA Student*

After retiring from a lengthy career in the U.S. Army in 2013, I decided to redirect my experience in leadership experience toward agriculture. At first this may seem like a stretch: why would veterans want to become farmers? The truth is that many of us come from rural backgrounds and already have a family history in various forms of agriculture. The veterans who do not come from an agricultural background are already proficient in many of the skills considered useful in farming. We are used to long hours, working in bad weather; we can work alone or in teams and given minimal guidance, we are often self-motivated.

Most of my own connection to farming is from years before the Army. Realizing that while I had years of relevant work experience, I had precious little knowledge about ecologically sound farming techniques, so I enrolled at Evergreen. Many of the classes I have taken have been centered around

either ecology or agriculture, but I needed to find a way to connect my veterans with agriculture.

I spent winter quarter in an SOS designed around community engagement. Within the program I also had the opportunity to conduct an internship with GRuB, a local non-profit centered around the idea of "bringing people together around food and agriculture." As an organization that was founded by Evergreen alumni it has an established history of working with Evergreen students and interns. Currently we are working to build a veteran-led farming program and by doing it through an SOS, I was able to make broader connections to other community projects.

This project is still in the construction phase and we will continue to learn from the experience as it grows. Community connection is challenging work, and this was a great opportunity to bring together

veterans, Evergreen, GRuB, and other local programs under one umbrella.



Evergreen students volunteer with Nature Nurtures Farm as part of the CCBLA-organized day of action called Community to Community, which happens each year on Friday of Orientation Week.

José Gómez Farmworker Justice Day 2017

Edgar Franks, Community to Community Development, Bellingham, WA, Ramon Torres, Familias Unidas por la Justicia, Farm worker Union, Skagit Valley, WA, Maru Mora Villalpando, Latino Advocacy, NW Detention Center Resistance, Ernesto Lopez from Arizona Puente, Phoenix Arizona, Fanny Cordero, Interpreter, Arianne Aquino and Lucas Ayenew, Student Workshop Presenters

Farmworkers are largely disregarded and a forgotten part of the workforce. Immigrant workers come from communities that are marginalized, targeted, or made invisible. In these dangerous times, we need to examine the intersection of food systems,

workforce, ethics, and justice regarding migrating or new communities. With growing tension over “borders” and “the other” we need to learn from resistance movements in Arizona to respond nationally. The conditions facing farmworkers here in the region connects issues of food production, labor, public health, social justice, and cross-national movements. This year’s event paid particular attention to the challenge of asking for accountability from public officials and lawmakers to recognize communities and their struggles. This helps engage and connect those interested in the issues (food, justice, labor) and those compelled by the chal-

lenges of visibility in governance and just laws (legislative process, law enforcement, immigration and labor laws).

“Their community has a quiet voice here because the volume has been diminished by oppression. Farmworkers have always been excluded from Labor Protection Laws. Familias Unidas de la Justicia is the only union for farmworkers in the green, fertile, agriculturally sound state of Washington.” - Hanna Conn, SOS:CCBLA Student



400 students from eight academic programs attended the event photos from Spanish Speaking World Students