



SCCE COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Tom Hannon, Acting Executive Director
Atlantic City Housing and Urban Redevelopment Agency

Since 2014, the Atlantic City Housing Authority has been partnered with Stockton University and the Atlantic City Police Dept. (ACPD) in conducting a Homework Completion program for the young residents of Stanley Holmes Village and Buzby Village. The program is held in our community rooms, right after school every day that school is in session.

The program has been tremendously valuable for these boys and girls in ways we could not have imagined when we first began the program. Initially, we

wanted to lend academic assistance in a safe, secure environment. The partnership with ACPD was meant to establish police officers as positive role models for the youth living in Public Housing. The relationships which have formed between the participants, the Stockton tutors and the police officers have created personal connections with people they might never have come to know in their own lives had this program not existed.

The academic benefits to the boys and girls has been substantial and measurable. Students

who were previously failing, or falling below their assigned grade levels have made tremendous advances, giving them not only recognition back at school, but also a personal sense of pride and accomplishment. Children who were not otherwise recognized in their home life, now have a sense of confidence and achievement which will take them a long way, beyond what is learned in books and lesson plans.

Each year, the number of participants at each site grows larger and larger. Parents have come to learn, through word of mouth, that the Homework Completion Program is a valuable resource and partner to help educate and mentor their children. The Program periodically reaches out to these parents and invites them in, so they can see how their child is progressing and to reinforce the positive messages and encouragement that can be carried back into the home.

The future of this program is boundless. Stockton's Homework Completion Program have been established in other locations, such as the PAL Building on New York Avenue. Perhaps, as the Program grows, we will one day see Academic Competitions among the sites, rewarding the participants for Best Improved Grade Point Average, or most books read. Education, self-esteem and positive personal relationships are the keys to opening the world of possibilities to our young community members. Atlantic City Housing Authority is proud to be a partner in unlocking that potential.

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SCCE SNAPSHOTS

Quick Notes from our Work

Please visit our completely revamped website, www.stockton.edu/scce to learn about all of our projects, meet our team, learn how to become a Student Fellow, and how to use the SCCE to develop your community-based project.



The SCCE is pleased to say that we are working with 13 undergraduate Student Fellows, 1 Alumna Fellow, 1 MSW intern and 1 BSW intern. This represents the largest staff we have ever had and the results are evident in our ability to manage consistent, evidence-based, and mutually beneficial programs in our community.



On Saturday, October 21st, SCCE Executive Director, Merydawilda Colón received the Secondary Education Award from the NAACP Mainland/Pleasantville Branch.



Faculty Development videos on Scholarship of Engagement and, working with the SCCE and Office of Service-Learning, are in their final stage of production.



The SCCE held two “Pop-Up Pants Shop” events in Atlantic City over the summer. At Buzby Village and at Stanley Holmes Village, students and their parents were invited to “shop” for school uniform pants which had been donated by the community. Parents came to pre-register their students for the Homework Completion Program and free backpacks and school supplies were distributed.



The SCCE’s World Food Day screening of “Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story” featured speakers from Chartwells, Student Affairs and the Community Food Bank of South Jersey.



The SCCE has participated in several disaster relief efforts this fall. We connected with our sister center at the University of Texas at Austin to create a list of supplies needed after Hurricane Harvey. Stockton’s community sent cases of adult and baby diapers and hygiene kits to the school which distributed the items to displaced students.



Dr. Merydawilda Colón worked with colleagues to plan ¡Manos a

la Obra!, a musical fundraiser supporting Unidos por Puerto Rico, an organization providing aid and support to those affected in Puerto Rico by the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Dr. Colón also picked up and arranged to ship to Puerto Rico the feminine products and supplies from the “My Choice” drive which was held by the Social Work Program and Social Work Club.



The Center’s Community Resource Collaborative has been working with the Food Insecurity Committee to operate the Food Program on campus. This semester XX students have been served.



The Center’s monthly third Thursday food drives have seen a decrease in participation due in part, we believe, to the number of natural disasters which have occurred since the semester began.



How can you join us and
Make Your Mark?

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN SCCE STUDENT FELLOW

10 Questions with Askhia Khawaja

What does a typical day as a Fellow look like? In my personal experience, my typical day as a Fellow is a busy day. If it is a Monday, then I know that I must be at Atlantic City High School by 2:30 pm to lead the cooking shift for “Campus Kitchen at Atlantic City”. If it is a Tuesday, then I know that I must be at the high school sooner than 2:30 pm because that is the packaging/delivery day for Campus Kitchens. However, a typical day as a Fellow begins with the question, “how am I going to make a difference today” and it ends with reflecting on the difference that you made that day!

What are examples of projects you are working on? I am working on the “Campus Kitchens at Atlantic City” program. Every Monday we go to Atlantic City High School and prepare 100-150 meals in their kitchen and on Tuesday, we deliver those meals in the Atlantic City, Pleasantville, and Absecon Community. On every third Thursday of the month, I am in Campus Center Meeting Room 5 leading the Stockton Food Drive.

What are the skills and experiences you use daily? Leading a program requires for me to use my leadership skills while making sure that I am also helping the volunteers understand the purpose and benefits of the program. In addition, working in a commercial kitchen requires me to be extremely alert at all times and aware of my surroundings because you do not know when someone might be passing you with a hot 2-inch pan!

What attributes does someone need to have to be really successful in this position? I think an essential ingredient to being successful in this position is passion and cultural competency. Regarding attributes, one should be devoted, flexible, genuine, open-minded, responsible, and professional.

What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face? One of the most significant challenges that I faced in this position was picking classes. I had to be careful while choosing courses because I wanted to make sure that they would not interfere with my work

schedule. At times, I would select 6 pm courses just to make myself available for the programs. Also, one of the prominent challenges that I faced while working in the community was when I would be



asking people if they would like a free meal. The difficulty in this process was the part where I had to make sure that my body language or tone did not hurt the dignity of the recipient of the meal. In other words, I had to be cognizant of my word choice: making sure the words were not implying anything that would affect the pride of the individual.

What training programs are available to you? During my three years in the center, every day has consisted of me learning something new. For Campus Kitchens at Atlantic City, I attended a Campus Kitchen Boot Camp in Washington DC during the summer. To work with the students at the Homework Completion Programs, I am required to take Protection of Minors training every semester.

How could you use this experience for advancement or professional development? As a Fellow, I have worked with people from all different age groups and ethnicities. It has allowed me to be culturally competent while also helping me learn more about the problems faced by the residents of the Atlantic County Community. This experience has taught me that change comes gradually, and that consistency is the key to creating successful and sustainable community programs. Also, this experience has encouraged me to pursue a Masters in Social Work.

Why did you come to this project? I started working with Melissa, a former student leader at Campus Kitchens in AC, and I begin to learn how this program used food as a means to help people. Later,

I saw the outreach that took place during the delivery shifts. In other words, this program did not only provide people with meals-temporary solution, it made sure that those individuals were provided the contact information of community resources, longer-term solution, which could help their situation. The fact that through this program we were providing people with more long-term solutions to their problems was the thing that attracted me the most.

What's your favorite part about working here?
My favorite part about working here is the office

environment; Dr. Merydawilda Colon is the best boss one could ask for, and the rest of the office staff is always supportive and extremely helpful. Also, in my view, this is one of the most diverse offices at Stockton University, that engages with the outside community daily.

What gets you excited about SCCE's future? I am excited to see the Stockton Center for Community Engagement grow and bring more programs to Atlantic City and surrounding communities. Also, I look forward to this center creating more culturally competent and well-rounded Stockton Graduates.

Campus Kitchen at Atlantic City is a part of a national hunger fighting organization, **Campus Kitchens Project**, which has prepared and distributed 3,354,047 meals across the country since its inception in 2001.

To register to volunteer for **Campus Kitchens at Atlantic City**, or any of the SCCE Community Programs for the fall or spring semesters, please visit our website at www.stockton.edu/scce and click on the link, "I want to volunteer!"



CAMPUS KITCHENS AT ATLANTIC CITY HAS SERVED OVER 700 MEALS SO FAR THIS SEMESTER AND, WITH THE HELP OF CAT CLARKE AND THE STOCKTON FARM, HAS INCORPORATED MORE FRESH VEGETABLES INTO OUR MENUS THAN EVER!

SCCE PROGRAMS IN REVIEW

What We Have Been Doing This Semester

HOMEWORK COMPLETION PROGRAMS

After a strong registration period, kicked-off by two Pop-Up Pants Shop events, The Homework Completion Programs at **Stanley Holmes Village** and **Buzby Village** are as successful as ever.

At the request of the Pleasantville Police Department and in collaboration with the City of Pleasantville, the SCCE has created a new **Homework Completion Program at the Pleasantville Public Library** that meets on Wednesday afternoons from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. This program is open to all students in Pleasantville and we are actively seeking Spanish-speaking Stockton volunteers to tutor the youth who participate.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS CLASSES

ELL classes continue to meet at Saint Mary's Episcopal Church: 118 West Bayview Ave., Pleasantville, 08232 on Thursdays from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm and at Ministerio Por Gracia Sois Salvos: 111 North 3rd St., Pleasantville, 08232 on Fridays from 5 pm to 7 pm and Saturdays from 10 am to 12 pm.

AFTERNOON TEA AND OLDER ADULT GAME DAY

The SCCE has increased the number of program days in Atlantic City and Pleasantville and now brings a team of Stockton volunteers, Student Fellows, faculty and staff to Housing Authority five residential complexes in Atlantic City and one in Pleasantville three Fridays each month. In addition to their work with the Atlantic City and Pleasantville Housing Authorities, the SCCE has collaborated with Community Havens, an older adult housing facility in Atlantic City, to bring social programs on the first Friday of each month. These programs are well-received by the residents and the number of Stockton volunteers keeps growing!

NATURALIZATION CLASSES

Taught by Student Fellow Alejandra Londoño and supported by Dr. Jessie K. Finch, the SCCE's Naturalization Classes continue to meet at the Carnegie Center every Tuesday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The program had its 10th graduate in November as another student passed the Naturalization exam to become a US Citizen.