

STOCKTON CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE-LEARNING

June 2021 Newsletter

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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. MERYDAWILDA COLON, LSW, PHD.

SCCESL has moved to F101 -- Stop by to See Us Today!

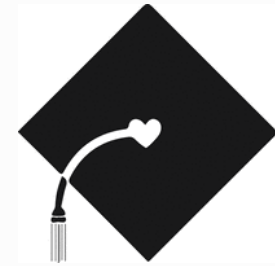
I invite you to take two actions, read our Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (SCCESL) June 2021 Newsletter, and stop by our new location in F101 at the Galloway Campus. The SCCESL Team and I stand ready to collaborate with you on community engagement and Service-Learning activities that you are planning or would consider planning for the upcoming academic year.



STOCKTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Partnership with The Sustainability Program and NAMS

SCCESL has recently partnered with the Sustainability Program and NAMS to grow plants in the Stockton Community Garden, located behind the First Year Residence Halls on Stockton's Galloway campus with the collaborative goal of increasing access to healthy foods to the local community.



The Stockton Community Garden is becoming an important service site for the AmeriCorps member, Bonner Leaders and Student Fellows!

GRADUATES

Congratulations to our Class of 2021 Graduates!

- *Olivia Fields*
- *Kyrah McQueen*
- *Mariam Eskandar*
- *Veronica Rowland*
- *Madelyn Dubbs*
- *Christopher Lipari-Pazienza*
- *Madison Hindermeyer*

STUDENT FELLOWS AT WORK

Three "Home Grown" Programs Continue During Pandemic

This semester the SCCESL had **12 Student Fellows** who staffed the Homework Completion Programs at Stanley and Pleasantville, the Virtual Homework Program and the Naturalization class.



CLUB BRIGHTENS THE SPIRITS OF OLDER ADULTS

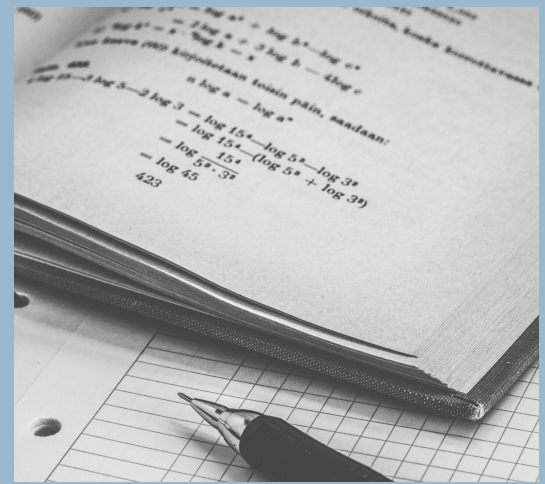
"THINKING OF YOU" CARDS SUPPORTS OUR OLDER ADULT COLLABORATIONS

The Gerontology Club made over 500 Thinking of You Cards for the older adult residents at Pleasantville High Rise, Royal Suites, and New York Avenue Apartments.

The project, a collaboration between The Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (SCCESL), The Stockton Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA), and the students of the Gerontology Club, was created by Trish Collins, Community Engagement Liaison for SCCESL and SCOSA, and Christine Gayda-Chelder, Faculty Advisor of the Gerontology

Club and the SCOSA Service Coordinator.

Even though older adults may be confined to their buildings, the cards are our way of letting them know we are thinking of them during the COVID-19 healthcare pandemic.



SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Homework Completion Programs at Stanley Holmes Village and the Pleasantville Public Library continued this year with a reduced capacity and both programs supported a smaller number of youth while observing the Covid-19 mitigation measures. The staff of the SCCESL interviewed parents and guardians of the youth in the Homework Program at Stanley Holmes Village to learn about the impact of the program, some of the statements that were shared were:

"The kids feel very safe with the police officers in the room and they help the kids too with homework."

"The program is really nice; the kids need the extra help and they want to come all the time. I had to get my grandson a Library card because he wants to read all the time now."

"Ms. Trish and the tutors are doing a great job with the kids and she keeps me updated about what's going on with the program."

The Virtual Homework Completion program was created to maintain support of the youth in South Jersey through Zoom. 460 youth registered for the program this year and 186 Stockton students tutored the youth who participated.

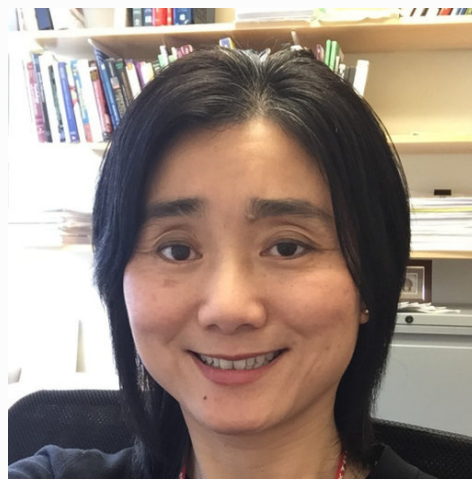
GRANT FUNDING UPDATE

The Choice Grant

The SCCESL began working on the objectives of the Westside Choice Neighborhoods Grant (Peoples component) with the Atlantic City Housing Authority. Dr. Merydawilda Colón, Patricia (Trish) Collins, Master of Social Work interns--Desiree Robinson and Maria Castaneda, along with Dr. Helana Girgis, from the Psychology Program began meetings with residents of Stanley Holmes Village to learn about their needs and future objectives for the creation of the Transformation Plan.

The TD Bank Grant

The Stockton Center for Community Engagement (SCCE) has received \$10,000 from the TD Bank Charitable Foundation to support the Homework Completion Program and its educational efforts on economic literacy for the fourth consecutive year. Since 2014, student volunteers from Stockton and the Atlantic City Police Department have provided academic mentoring and recreational activities at Stanley Holmes Village, Buzby Homes Village and the Atlantic City Police Athletic League.



FROM THE DESK OF THE FACULTY FELLOW

DR. CONNIE TANG, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

In the spring of 2021, Dr. Connie Tang accomplished quite a few things. The most important of those was the completion of a 27-page draft manuscript entitled, "Homework Completion Program in Atlantic County, NJ: The First Five Years," in collaboration with Dr. Merydawilda Colón and Ms. Heather Swenson Brilla. Dr. Tang's main goal as the Community Engagement Fellow is to empirically assess SCCESL's well-known Homework Completion Program both in terms of process and outcome. The completion of this draft manuscript represented a meeting of this main goal. It is apparent from this mixed-method research that the Homework Completion Program is well on its way to achieving the twin goals of preparing children for a college education and building trust between children and police officers.

After the completion of this draft manuscript, Drs. Tang, Colón, and Ms. Swenson Brilla proceeded to prepare a 20-slide PowerPoint presentation and presented it at Stockton University's 21st Annual Day of Scholarship on April 8, 2021. The 25-minute virtual presentation was well attended and received by the audience.

Another unique presentation Dr. Connie Tang conducted, along with Dr. Merydawilda Colón, was to a group of newly-hired professors in their first year of employment at the university. At this workshop, organized by Dr. Kathy Klein and her team at Stockton's Center for Teaching & Learning Design, Drs. Tang and Colón discussed the relationship between service and scholarship when constructing tenure and promotion files.

A final noteworthy project Dr. Tang was a part of in Spring 2021 as the SCCESL Faculty Fellow was her participation in a work group led by Dr. Christina Jackson to develop the Community Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) concentration in Liberal Arts Studies into a possible minor at the university.



The Change Builders Program Thrives

VOLUNTEERS AND ACTIVITIES ARE RESILIENT EVEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES

102 Change Builders were able to complete **1,444.50 hours of service**. Examples of service include one Stockton student who volunteered 12 hours per week with the Salvation Army, totaling 108 hours for the spring semester. 33 Stockton students served varying amounts of one to two hour shifts with the Virtual Homework Program, Mondays through Thursdays, to tutor youth K-12 within the South Jersey area, totaling 219.25 hours served. The Change Builders are coordinated by AmeriCorps Member Paige Richards.



Bonner Serves on Campus in Many Ways

GALLOWAY NATIVE WINS HIP AWARD

Bonner Leader and member of the Bonner Leadership Team Divya Rajput received a HIP (High Impact Practice) Award in April 2021 as part of the Inaugural Equity in Academic Achievement Dinner and Fundraiser. In addition to being a Bonner Leader, this Galloway Township native is the Head T.A.L.O.N. T.A.L.O.N.S. are responsible for helping new students register for classes while also giving them a realistic view of academic, social, and emotional changes that may occur in their transition to Stockton by attending Orientation and Welcome Week events.



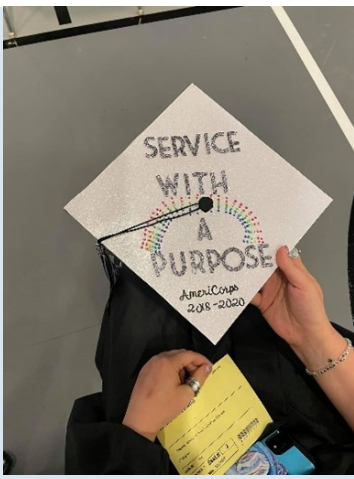
CANVA TRAINING PROVIDED FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

On January 14, 2021 and March 1, 2021, as a part of the SCCESL commitment to the Atlantic County Community Resource Roundtable, Student Fellow, Sydney Bazillian, facilitated a series of workshops on using Canva for their agencies' marketing, promotions and website development. Over 20 partners participated and future workshops on advanced features are planned.

National Volunteer Week Successful with 10 Events

SCCESL hosted a series of 10 events for National Volunteer Week, which is a nationwide celebration that recognizes volunteers, their connections with community partners and honors the sustainable change they've fostered during their service. This year's theme was "The Value of One. The Power of Many." to highlight the impact of a united community during this time of the pandemic. This week hosted events in a hybrid format, so it could be accessible to those in-person or online. Events sought to provide volunteers with all the tools they need to get involved on campus, how to talk about their service on resumes and in interviews and upcoming opportunities for those who wish to continue their service beyond their undergraduate experience. Some of the events included: Earth Day Jimmie Leeds Road Clean Up, Virtual Reading to Children Event held at the Chelsea Boys & Girls Club, and a Virtual "Service Year" Panel where participants learned about the many service options available to them after graduation. Panelists included Paige Richards, the Bonner Student Leader Coordinator, Mariah Fabel, an Artist Year Fellow, and Alex Frame, a City Year student at a public school in Philadelphia.

BONNER LEADERS SOAR TO GREAT HEIGHTS



A FOND FAREWELL TO GRADUATE ASSISTANT

In May we wished Veronica Rowland a fond farewell from the Stockton Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning. Veronica had graduated from Stockton University with her undergraduate degree in May 2019 with a Bachelors of Sociology and Anthropology. After a formative experience in community engagement and community asset mapping with Professor Joe Rubenstein, she applied for the AmeriCorps position in Fall 2019. A partnership between New Jersey Campus Compact and SCCESL, the AmeriCorps member is charged with facilitating the Stockton ChangeBuilders Program. This developmental leadership program is focused on students invested in service and volunteering and many hail from the Atlantic City EOF Program. Veronica was the AmeriCorps member for two years, earning a stipend and a Segal Award of over \$12,000. During the 2020-2021 year, she was the Bonner Program Graduate Assistant, working to facilitate the Bonner Program and support with days of service, programming and ChangeBuilders. She graduated in May 2021 with a Masters in American Studies from Stockton. Veronica has recently headed to the Philadelphia region and is interested in working in nonprofits focused on food systems and community education.

Pictured here are Madelyn Dubbs, Christopher Lipari Paziienza, and Madison Hindermeyer (L to R). All graduated from Stockton in Spring 2021. Madelyn and Madison graduated with Bachelor of Science in Health Science. Chris graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and will be continuing at Stockton for his MA in Criminal Justice, as well as remaining on the staff of Residential Life and as a Student Senator. Madison Hindermeyer works currently in a surgical center in Philadelphia and will be pursuing her post-baccalaureate nursing degree. Madelyn Dubbs will be pursuing a Master's in Health Policy and Administration. Chris is also the 2021-2022 Newman Civic Fellow, a national distinction through Campus Compact.



CENTER OFFERS INTREPRETATION DURING LIVE MEETING



Dr. Merydawilda Colón, Irvin Moreno-Rodriguez, Program Assistant for the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Center, and Maria Castaneda, Social Work Graduate Intern, collaborated with the Pleasantville Police Department to interpret the content of a Safety Meeting led by Chief Sean Riggan and Lieutenant James M. Williams via Facebook live on January 14, 2021. Irvin Moreno-Rodriguez provided technical support to stream the meeting live.

AWARDS and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHANGEBUILDERS SCHOLARS AWARD

Ruth Ovil, (Psychology, BA '24, 4.0 GPA), received the ChangeBuilder Scholars Award through New Jersey Campus Compact. ChangeBuilders at Stockton engage with peers and community partners while growing personally and professionally through workshops, conferences, and other similar events. The ChangeBuilders Scholars Award is provided annually to an exemplary Changebuilder at Stockton University. The following quote comes from a letter of recommendation sent on behalf of Ruth:

"Within her time in EOF, she has embraced every policy, every opportunity, and every meeting, while approaching each day with a growth mindset. I particularly admire her ability to do her own research, and think critically about a problem, while also asking for help when she needs it."

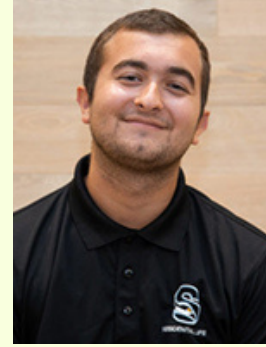
NATURALIZATION CLASS LEVERAGES NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUCCESS

SCCESL's Naturalization classes continued via Zoom this year with 23 participants. Two of the participants in the class became naturalized citizens this spring. One of the SCCESL Student Fellows, Ivett Carrasco, gave her reflection on working in the Naturalization Class this year:

"My experience with the naturalization project has been amazing! I got to work with many dedicated and hardworking people who seek citizenship. I chose this project because I am bilingual and felt that with programs such as English learning or naturalization classes, being bilingual can give non-English speaking students comfort when they are learning. I also chose to work on this project because as someone with Hispanic roots, my parents went through the process of becoming citizens. It was from my parents and these naturalization classes where I understood the importance of being a citizen. It is projects such as this one that help strengthen the community. This project is creating change for all these people that seek citizenship, and I am very honored to be a part of it."

- Ivett Carrasco, Naturalization Class Tutor

CIVIC NEWMAN FELLOW



Christopher Lipari-Pazienza, (Criminal Justice, BA '21) received the Newman Civic Fellowship this year. The Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes and supports community-committed students who are changemakers and public problem-solvers at Campus Compact member institutions. Fellows are nominated by their president or chancellor on the basis of their potential for public leadership. The following quote comes from a letter of recommendation written by the president of Stockton University, Dr. Harvey Kesselman:

"What impresses me most about his application is that, in addition to this rigorous academic schedule, Mr. Pazienza has successfully pursued several contributions to our campus. For the last three years, he has been a Bonner Leader, supervising up to 30 students a year and representing the institution in external meetings and conferences. He has also contributed his own time and talent to community-based events to support voter registration."

SCCESL INTERNS

The SCCESL hosted four interns this year. Chantal Ramirez and Katya Kose (Early Childhood Studies) worked in the Virtual Homework Program, Sam Adelman (Visual Communications) supported the SCCESL Social Media accounts and marketing, and Maria Castenada (Master of Social Work) served in many of the SCCESL community programs including leading the Virtual Homework Program in Pleasantville and the Naturalization Class.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL MLK DAY OF SERVICE



As one of the largest days of service hosted at the university. This year the 2021 MLK Day of Service hosted about 400 volunteers at 23 projects on Galloway and Atlantic City Campus, at off-campus community partner sites and virtually via Zoom! This event's occurrence during the pandemic,



allowed SCCESL staff to refine their models and protocols for hosting service activities and set precedent for in-person and virtual service opportunities in the future, since it was the first large scale annual service event run in a hybrid format.

This event marked the launch of websites dedicated to our days of service and allowed us to connect with the surrounding community that could not physically be present that day due to the pandemic.

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

