Welcome to Winter Quarter!

Director’s Corner

Dear CWTAP Community,

In March, it is Eastern’s turn to host this year’s CWTAP Student Institute in Spokane, WA. Students from all over the state, from all three schools (UW Seattle, UW Tacoma and Eastern) convene for this unique opportunity to network and share knowledge and practice information all in a collegial and supportive environment. This year’s theme is “Differential Response: Emerging pathways to child safety and family engagement.”

In this issue we highlight two CWTAP graduates who recently hosted a free multicultural festival for foster children, caregivers and the community. The festival was held in Mt. Vernon and was very well received.

We also highlight two current students from our Spokane part-time day program. Please read on for further updates from our programs around the state.

Happy new year,
Diana Patterson

Save the Date

21st Annual
Children’s Justice Conference
May 13 & 14, 2013

For more information go to www.dshsejc.com

Important Winter Quarter Dates

Jan 7: Winter Quarter Began
Jan 21: MLK Holiday, EWU closed
Feb 18: President’s Day, EWU closed
Mar 22: Last Day of Quarter

Helpful Links

National Association of Social Workers: www.naswdc.org
Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org
Children’s Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org
Casey Family Programs: www.casey.org
National Resource Center for Child Protective Services: www.nrccps.org
I had the honor of interviewing CWTAP student Leon Covington about his life and the journey that led to his acceptance into the MSW program. Leon is in the Spokane part-time day program and will graduate in the spring of 2014.

Leon was born in Nashville, Tennessee. Around age five he moved with his mother and two sisters to south central Los Angeles, CA. Leon emphasized the vital role his mother played in his life describing how she would work two or more jobs at a time to ensure the family had food and shelter. He went on to report sometimes when food was scarce his mother would forgo meals to ensure the family was fed.

I asked Leon what it was like growing up in south central LA. He described to me a culture of drug use, violence and gang activity. He also emphasized the lack of positive role models in his community, which was made more painful by the absence of his own father. Leon went onto say the male role models in his neighborhood were often gang members and drug dealers; he indicated the drug dealers would recruit young men to sell drugs—it was a strong temptation for many because of the money, cars, and other material possessions that accompanied the activity. Leon stated he refused to become a product of his environment, instead he became increasingly determined to become a source of inspiration to other young men from similar backgrounds.

When asked what made a difference for Leon, why he did not go down the path of drugs and violence as many do, he again shared the importance of his mother who would scrimp and save as best she could to involve him in sports activities as much as possible, basketball in particular. Leon indicated his abilities in basketball eventually led to a basketball scholarship that took him first to the College of Eastern Utah. Though Utah was quite a culture shock coming from the environment of south central LA, Leon understood the importance and need to get away. Eventually Leon was able to help his mother and sisters leave the area as well, in fact they are now living back in Nashville, TN. Leon eventually transferred, again on a basketball scholarship to Lewis-Clark State College where he met Dr. Clouser, a college professor. Dr. Clouser mentored and inspired Leon and helped ensure he stayed on track to earn a degree. Leon shared that students on sport scholarships are not always given the guidance needed to make sure they graduate with a degree after they stop playing sports. Leon graduated with a degree in Education and Social Sciences which led him eventually to find employment with Washington State and ultimately with the Children’s Administration Division of Licensed Resources. Leon indicated my persistence in suggesting he consider applying to the program helped him take the next step in his education.

Leon is engaged to be married later this year to his fiancée Rebecca. Leon went on to say his mother and fiancée are great sources of support to him. Leon left me with a quote I believe sums up his journey, “our initial circumstances should not dictate our future.”
Everett Graduation:
Congratulations to our 6 Everett CWTAP students who graduate December 4, 2010.

The ceremony will take place at 2:00pm at the Historic Everett Theater, located at 2911 Colby Avenue in the heart of downtown Everett, at the intersection of Hewitt and Colby Avenues (south of the Bank of America Building).

Site News

Cheney: Cheney full-time 2nd year students graduate this spring. Cheney full-time 1st year students begin foundation practicum spring quarter.

Spokane: Two advanced standing students joined the CWTAP cohort, welcome!

Everett: Students begin advanced practicum spring quarter 2013.

Vancouver: The Vancouver MSW program is currently recruiting advanced standing students, MSW application deadline is March 29, 2013. Go to http://www.ewu.edu/csbssw/programs/social-work.xml for more information.

Yakima: Students will graduate spring 2013, you’re almost there! Recruiting is underway for our next cohort, MSW application deadline is March 1, 2013. For more information visit http://www.ewu.edu/csbssw/programs/social-work.xml.

Alumni Spotlight

Claudia Palomera and Enrique Guillen
By Chris Williams

On September 22, 2012, EWU CWTAP alumni Claudia Palomera and Enrique Guillen were among those hosting the region’s first multicultural festival for foster children, caregivers, and the community. Titled “Embracing Our Cultural Identity-Why Culture is Important,” the event rallied more than 150 community members of all ages and backgrounds, giving them an opportunity to interact with other cultures while celebrating their own. Performances by Native American Violinist Swil Kanimm, Bailadores de Bronce, and Mariachi Juvenil Voces de Mexico punctuated an all day lineup of dazzling and diverse speakers and acts.

The event drew participation from community organizations such as Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, Planned Parenthood, and Compass Health as well as representatives of Ethiopian and Peruvian culture and arts and crafts displays. “It was great to see them so proud about sharing their own cultures and curious about others at the same time,” says Guillen, referring to the speakers, performers, and attendees alike. Guillen and Palomera’s expertise was indispensable in orchestrating the event, according to another event planner, who cited Palomera’s coolness under pressure as being crucial to the event's success: “Claudia is able to go above and beyond her call of duty as a social worker...and feels very empowered in doing so.” Guillen’s command of the crowd and public speaking skills were also pivotal in unerringly navigating an event that could otherwise easily have collapsed into chaos.
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