

Community Connections

CSUDH

CENTER FOR SERVICE
LEARNING, INTERNSHIPS
& CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



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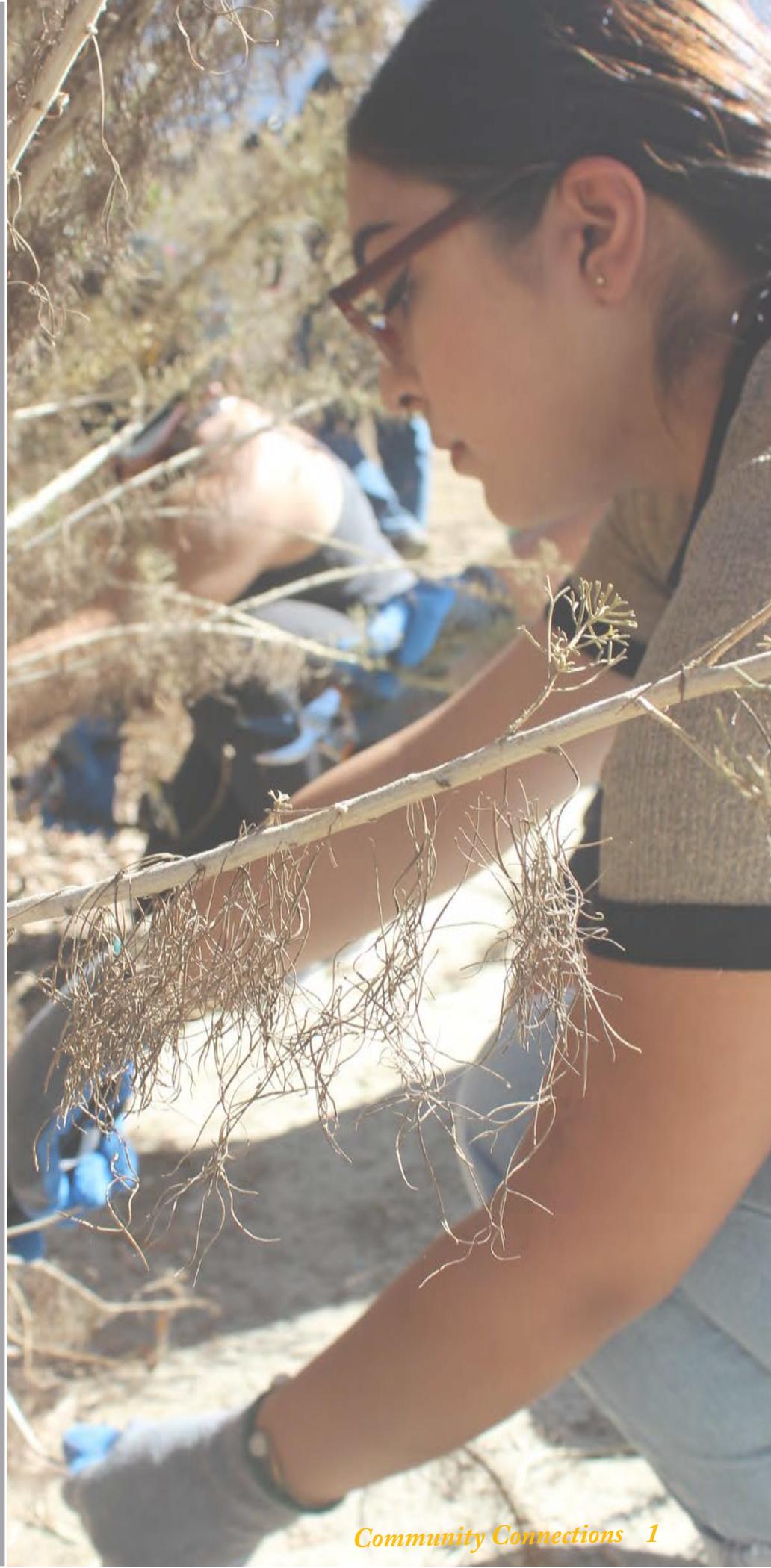
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Service is Our Middle Name

I am so proud of our university's record of service. We understand our campus is vital to the educational, cultural, and economic health of our communities as reflected in the impressive rankings that put the university among the nation's top universities for value, diversity, and community engagement: <https://www.csudh.edu/recognition/>

We have a new university president, Dr. Thomas A. Parham, who values service to our communities and understands the importance of experiential education in providing the best for our students. We have faculty and staff that go above and beyond to ensure our students have the best chances for academic success.

Our center, located in SCC 300, is very student centered as evidenced by the bustling activities of our students as they work on service projects, visit with the staff, work on their assignments in the computer lab, or just hang out. When asked about the philosophy in running our program, we say that we run it by "the Old Woman in the Shoe" method. We like to think we provide a comfortable, safe space for our students where they can enjoy being themselves and realize that we are, indeed, a campus family.

This past year, among our many other activities, we have been working with our youth in Watts to help prepare them for college success. We are proud to have our first students enrolled here at CSUDH and are encouraging them to participate in the many supportive services provided by you, our caring staff, faculty, and administrators, to help level the playing field and prepare them for an increasingly competitive world.

*So know that the following pages are about **you** and the imaginative and colorful ways you find to engage our local and global communities.*

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CSUDH GREEN APPLE DAY OF SERVICE

#choo







CSUDH held its first ever Green Apple Day of Service to promote awareness of the importance of developing a more sustainable campus. In a partnership between SLICE, Office of Sustainability, and Professor of Biology Dr. Connie Vadheim, student volunteers had a special opportunity to learn and gain hands-on experience on how to properly care for native plants. Prior to the service day, Dr. Vadheim held an interactive workshop that educated and trained students about the different native plants on campus and the appropriate pruning technique needed for specific plant groups.

On October 19, 2017, over 40 volunteers worked together to prune and care for three native plants gardens on campus. With the leadership and supervision of expert faculty Dr. Vadehim, Dr. Bryan, and Kelley Dawdy, Heritage Creek, Dreams garden, and the West Basin Garden received a much needed care. With garden gloves, pruners, shears, trowels, rakes, trimmers, and loppers at hand, volunteers worked hard to care for their campus! Volunteers gave more than 165 hours of service during the two day event.

“Thank you for this opportunity to learn a new skill and gain some knowledge about not just my campus but nature in general. I’ve become very inspired by this

volunteer experience and feel it has enriched my goals in life to a great extent!” shared a volunteer during a follow up survey.

“It was great! I met some cool new people and was able to contribute to the well being of this campus,” another volunteer wrote reflecting on this volunteer experience.

All of the volunteers agreed that the Day of Service made them feel more a part of the campus and feel they have a better understanding of the importance of using native plants.

It is the hope of SLICE and the Office of Sustainability that the Green Apple Day of Service will be one of many efforts to educate and inspire our campus community about sustainability and our role in creating a healthier and safer learning environment for our students.

We want to thank Dr. Vadheim, Dr. Bryan, and Kelley Dawdy for sharing their passion and expertise with us. Also, thank you to the staff at Parking Services and our campus Police Department for making sure our volunteers were safe.







The Annual CSUDH Pow Wow is an opportunity to express our culture and share it with other people who have not seen it before.

The drums could be heard from across the university as CSUDH celebrated another successful Pow Wow. For the last 8 years, CSUDH has hosted the Pow Wow to celebrate and honor the indigenous people of the Americas bringing Native artists dancers, and visitors from across the country.

For Spiritual Leader, Jimi Castillo, “Uncle Jimi,” as most of us know him, the annual Pow Wow holds a very special meaning. “The Pow Wow is a special time to meet old friends and make new friends,” he shares. When asked what makes the Dominguez Hills Pow Wow so unique, Uncle Jimi points out the location of the university. “The Pow Wow provides an opportunity to recruit Native Americans to choose this university as their school of choice for higher education. Dominguez Hills is located where it is accessible to people of color, especially the indigenous people.” He continues, “People are finding their way to the Pow Wow, and after the genocide and forced assimilation, the Pow Wow allows younger people to find out who

they are and the region their people came from.”

Uncle Jimi talked about the impact of genocide and forced assimilation of Native Americans that separated many Native American from knowing and expressing themselves, and their identity. That is why the Pow Wow like the one held in Dominguez Hills is so important for people trying to find and learn about their Native identity. “Having the Yaqui Dancers or the Hoop Dancers or the Bear Dancers enables people to connect to their origins or their roots.”

“Pow Wow traditionally came from the Algonquian Nation and it was called the “Paw waw,” a gathering of the spiritual leaders. As the years passed, it turned into a social gathering,” states Uncle Jimi sharing the history of the Pow Wow. “Now the Pow Wow is a time to express our cultures in dance and teach people.”

Uncle Jimi comes from the Tongva and Acjachemen Nations. He has served as our Pow wow’s Spiritual Advisor for the last eight years but has been an advisor for more than 45 years. Uncle Jimi became a Spiritual Advisor to incarcerated men more than 25 years before retiring from the Department of Corrections. He began his calling



“Before you know where you are going, you need to know where you come from. Be proud of who you are and where you come from”

as a Spiritual Advisor/Counselor when a young man called him about the need for Spiritual Advisors in the prison system especially for Native Americans. Although Uncle Jimi has since retired, being a Spiritual Counselor is a lifelong commitment. He continues to work with the men at American Indian Changing Spirits Recovery Center, the only rehabilitation program in southern California specifically structured to serve Native Americans. Earlier this year, Changing Spirits was recognized with the prestigious Yawa Award at the 10th Annual San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Forging Hope Ceremony. Organizations

that receive this award are honored for their extraordinary work to support their communities. Uncle Jimi was present to receive the recognition on behalf of the Changing Spirits program.

Uncle Jimi also visits local schools to teach children about Native American culture and history. He recently visited a fourth grade class in Grant Elementary school in Long Beach where he shared stories, artifacts, and songs of the Tongva Nation. The children were in awe and fascinated by the experience. It was their first time interacting with someone who descended from the original inhabitants of the city that they now call home. "Being with those children was the highlight of my year," Uncle Jimi shared.

For Uncle Jimi, the Pow wow is one way the stories and cultures can be preserved, but it has also been a way to share and welcome others who want to learn about the Native American community. Uncle Jimmy is honored to bless the grounds every year in preparation for the Pow Wow. You often see him hugging and talking with everyone.

When I asked Uncle Jimi what he would like others to learn and gain from attending a Pow Wow, he said, "I want them to learn about our culture but I also want them to be inspired to get connected with their roots and who they are. Before you know where you are going, you need to know where you come from. Native or not Native, be proud of who you are and where you come from."

The Pow Wow is a reflection of the type of community at Dominguez Hills. The weekend long event is not possible without the incredible work and contributions of Accounts Payable, Facilities Services, PCLASS, Police, faculty and staff. We especially want to recognize the students from Dr. Janine Gasco's North American Indians service learning class who spent the entire semester helping plan for this event. The efforts and contributions of volunteers are a true testament to how committed our students are to service and to the communities.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

Reintroducing the native stingless bees in Yucatan, developing the CSUDH urban farm and living lab, and starting a non-profit with a mission to help the visually impaired are among the array of community engagement and research projects presented in the 5th annual Community Engagement Symposium.

Service has always been ingrained in the university's identity. Since winning the President's Higher Education Award in 2014 from President Obama, students, faculty, and staff have remain committed to serving and transforming the communities around the world.

Joseph Burton is one of the many students who presented in the symposium. For the last two

years, Joseph has been working hard to build his non-profit organization called Hearts for Sight Foundation with a mission to bring adaptive fitness and occupational services for the visually impaired and diabetic community.

“Showcasing our nonprofit to the Dominguez Hills community was a great resource for us. The exposure was helpful in attracting potential student engagement and student volunteerism. The Symposium offers a platform that is welcoming to all and it provides a place where students can share their community involvement to their fellow peers and faculty members. While students share their opportunities at the symposium, many of them will find like-minded peers who will often want to partake in life changing opportunities as well,” Joseph shares.

This year, four faculty members were recognized

for the Faculty Fellows in Service Learning Award for incorporating quality service learning into their classes. Dr. Angela Macias, Associate Professor in the College of Education had her students help elementary schools around the community develop evidence-based strategies to help a need in the schools. In Dr. Paul Fornelli's Digital Media Arts class, students team up with on campus organizations to produce public service announcements, press releases and other advertising campaigns. Dr. Jessica Federman's Human Resources class helped high school students with interviewing while Dr. Joan Budesá's class connects the impact of women in agriculture through community service with the campus' farm!

Dr. John Thomlinson, Professor and Chair of the Biology Department was awarded the Environmental Leadership award for his commitment to sustainability and especially his commitment to his students.

Other awardees include the Human Services Department for their effort to provide meaningful and hands-on experiences for their students. Path Ventures was highlighted for Outstanding Community Partner, and Dr. Rod Hay was awarded the Community Hero Award for his invaluable leadership to the university!

The committee hopes that the annual symposium continues to grow each year. "We realize the projects presented during the event are only a glimpse of what our students are doing in the community," said Internship Coordinator Francisco Checkinco "We want to provide a platform for students to share the work they are doing and inspire others as well."



Earth Day





A Solar Powered popcorn machine, bicycle blender, solar-powered golf carts, and solar-powered fountains were only a few of the many cool and sustainable gadgets featured in this year's annual Earth Day festivity. Community partners, students, faculty, and staff gather each year to celebrate the Earth and find innovative ways to live more sustainably.

This year's theme was "Root for the Planet," which allowed diverse perspectives and ideas on how to address issues facing the planet. There were tables that featured sustainable food and farming practices. Harvesting Howard shared his expertise in finding food and medicinal uses of plants and trees in our everyday environment. Students and other guests enjoyed his delicious acorn chips and elderberry jelly! Campus Dining also shared their plans for doing more to improve sustainability in dining operations. Janine Gasco, Professor in the Anthropology Department, spoke about how sustainable practices were integrated in the indigenous people's way of life.

Student engagement was overwhelmingly successful this year. Anthropology, the Native American Indian Association, Organizacion Latina Estudiantil (OLE), and Women in STEM were among the student organizations that participated in this year's Earth Day. Many students also came to play Bingo, giving students an opportunity to visit various exhibition tables and learn about topics, including energy saving, food composting, indigenous food, and recycling. Students even participated in tree planting. A group of volunteers with the leadership of student intern Alicia Salmeron planted a citrus tree near the loading dock of Loker Student Union (LSU).

Ellie Perry, the university's sustainability coordinator, took the lead in organizing this year's Earth Day. Her extensive experience in sustainability was a valuable asset in growing the annual event and introducing more diverse ideas to care for our environment.

I am an
AmeriCorps
Member, and I will
get Things Done.



THEATRE



“I will get things done for America- to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.”

(nationalservice.gov, 2018)

This is the pledge that all AmeriCorps programs in the country takes when committing to service. AmeriCorps members around the country are using their talents and time to make a difference. CSUDH is proud to have two AmeriCorps programs housed in SLICE. Our very own Toros are making their own mark for a more equitable and just nation.

Our university’s AmeriCorps programs, Jumpstart and JusticeCorps have so much to be proud of this year. This year alone, more than 15 Jumpstart Corps members and all of the Justice Corps members including the JusticeCorps representative earned their Bachelor’s degree! It is hard to ignore the contributions, hard work, and sacrifice these students give each year, especially when the numbers of hours given to serve the community add up to more than 17,000! Jumpstart and JusticeCorps gave an estimated \$400,000 worth of service. Thanks to their hard work, more than 200 preschool students in Compton California are entering kindergarten ready to succeed, while countless self represented litigants found hope and assistance in navigating through the complicated procedures of our legal system.

For many corps members, this is not their first year in the program. Cathleen Vasquez, the JusticeCorps representative was a former JusticeCorps member who is now leading and supporting the newly enrolled.

Erin Quigley, one of the seven team leaders in Jumpstart, was a corps members the previous program year.

“I chose to serve a second year in Jumpstart because not only was it a part of my life but I became a part of the children’s lives. I wanted to see my students graduate and watch their progress continue. I was also determined to work side-by-side with the amazing teachers and team members in the classroom. I was motivated to join Jumpstart because I want to be a police officer in the community. I care for the community I work for and believe that change starts with our children. I want to know that my hard work is going towards the improving of the community,” shares Erin. In the last two years, Erin has continued to visit and serve at the preschools during the summer...yes...the summer!



Erin's Jumpstart students who started in preschool two years ago are getting promoted to kindergarten.

For Justice Corps representative Cathleen Vasquez, who is now working for the Los Angeles Courts, reflects on the impact of JusticeCorps in the community. "JusticeCorps members are valuable to the community because they are the hope for self-represented litigants. Most of the litigants that come across our center are frustrated and confused with their legal processes and the JusticeCorps members are the light at the end of the tunnel for them. Not only do the litigants lack representation

but also knowledge of the court system. Complicating the process, many are not native English speakers. Our members provide free legal education in order to empower litigants."

Members that serve in JusticeCorps and Jumpstart come from diverse majors. Many who serve in their first year do not have background experience working in the legal system nor working with young children. JusticeCorps and Jumpstart provide their members the extensive training and reflection throughout the year to ensure that students are prepared and confident in their responsibilities.





For the last four years, Dr. Salvatore Russo has led the Court Observer Program at Dominguez Hills. Dr. Russo shares the competitive application process, the experience students receive from the program, and how the program has garnered great success.

I am pleased to have overseen the Court Observer Program at California State University-Dominguez Hills since its revival in the 2013-2014 academic year, and look forward to continuing to work closely with our talented students, and with the Judicial Officers of Los Angeles County. Each October we post an open call for applications from students throughout the university. Students are asked to submit their resumes, transcripts, and an essay explaining their career goals and why they want to be chosen for the Program.

A committee consisting of myself, Cheryl McKnight, and Dr. Hamoud Salhi then winnows the pool of applicants down to the ones we will select for the interview stage of the application process. After a round of interviews, we look to select eight students to shadow a judge in the coming Spring semester. Selected students meet at court each week, once a week, for about four hours during the Spring semester. Students will get the chance, before and/or after each day's session, to ask the judge questions about what they've seen, legal terminology, why lawyers make the decisions they make, etc. A lot of what they see or do each week depends on the mentoring judge's schedule, but in a given semester students will generally get to

watch a few trials, see how jury selection works, watch calendar call, and, if lucky, may be allowed to sit in on settlement conferences. As the students earn the trust of "their" judge, they may get the chance to go to other courtrooms and see other types of law, such as criminal law and family law.

The students we've worked with have gotten a lot out of the program and are effusive in their praise. (The judges and myself also get a lot out of working closely with the selected students.) We have a great track record of Observers, most of whom are first generation college students going on to law school on scholarship. One student from our first year just finished his 3rd year at Syracuse Law; a husband and wife from that same year are currently on scholarship at Southern Illinois. We have another from the following year who just finished at Western State and is sitting for the California Bar this summer. We have a student at University of San Diego Law on a generous scholarship, and one of our more recent Observers is planning to attend The University of Mississippi School of Law after receiving over \$20,000 in scholarships. Any student with an interest in pursuing a legal career is encouraged to apply to the Court Observer Program, and should feel free to contact me if they have any questions.

Students can get more information about the program by emailing Dr. Russo at srusso@csudh.edu

Court Observer Program Elevating Student Success

BY SALVATOR RUSSO

The Blueprint for Student Success

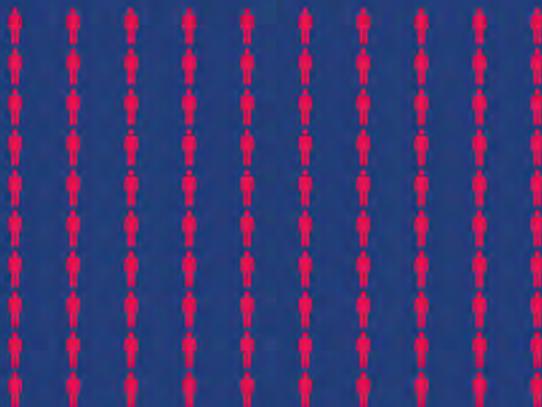
Court Observer Program 2014 to 2017

From Academic Year 2013 - 2014 to 2016 - 2017, data shows that students enrolled in the Court Observer Program Internship showed 100% retention.



Court Observer Program

100% of Students Retained



90% of Students Graduated



*The 10% remaining students are on track to graduate. n=30

Summer in Bulgaria

BY JANINE GASCO





Seventeen CSUDH students participated in the 2018 Bulgaria Study Abroad program from June 8th until June 20th. Dominguez Hills faculty taught courses in Anthropology (Drs. Gasco and Moore), Philosophy (Dr. Pawar), Geography (Dr. Kayantash) and Business (Dr. Norman). While in Bulgaria, we were hosted by Stone and Compass, and we lived in the village of Stolat. We supplemented the course curriculum with field trips to Thracian and Roman ruins, Roman temples and medieval churches and monasteries, a medieval castle, caves and waterfalls, a restored 19th century village, and local farms and markets. We also attended a festival in Stolat marking the 130 year anniversary of the village, a day filled with music, dancing, and food.

Below are some student comments reflecting on their experience.

“Going to Bulgaria was scary

for me; I have never traveled alone on a plane, and I had never flown out of North America. However, it was an experience that needed to happen. I was able to discover new food and cultures, meet different people who spoke a different language, and see history in its raw form.”

“Studying in Bulgaria gave me the opportunity to challenge myself by stepping out of my everyday life and experience something completely unfamiliar and exciting.”

To learn about how you can participate in the 2019 program go to <https://www.csudh.edu/ceie-intl/study-abroad/programs/bulgaria/> (note: details about 2019 will be posted soon!)

Also, check www.stoneandcompass.com for more information about our hosts in Bulgaria.

Students with Dr. Moore and Dr. Gasco at Roman ruins of Nocolopolis Ad Istrum





CSUDH

Totes for Tots





You can hear the gasps, giggles of pure joy as the children at YWCA Child Development Center line up to pick a gift and take a picture with Santa.

Led by SLICE and Jumpstart, corps members set the goal of collecting 200 toys for the children Jumpstart serves. It was a hefty goal, but the generosity of CSUDH every year during the annual drive has always been astonishing; and last year was no different. Students, staff, faculty members dropped by the SLICE office to deliver their gifts for the children.

To no one's surprise, our CSUDH campus delivered! The goal was surpassed, and more children were able to receive a gift from the drive.

Corps members and other student volunteers came during Friday afternoons to add a personal touch to each present, tying a bow and inserting a tag with, "Love, your DH family."

Friday morning on December 22 when the entire campus was closed, students and staff filled three vehicles with gifts to deliver to the YWCA. Dressed as Santa's little elves, our students decorated the YWCA's conference room with large gifts, snowflakes, and snow. While the children waited in their classroom for Santa Claus (a CSUDH student volunteer) to arrive, the volun-

teers stacked the gifts across the conference room.

"We appreciate this so much," Preschool Director Hilda shared as she joined the festivities. Hilda started the gift-giving event with a few words of gratitude for Jumpstart and CSUDH's commitment to the children each year. Parents cheered and shared in the excitement as their children partook in the event. Every child in the room, including the preschooler's siblings and the teachers' children, went home with a present that day.

"It was incredible to bring so much joy to these children!" a corps member shared. "Seeing the children so happy and their parents so appreciative is a constant reminder of why we serve."

Jumpstart hopes to make this a yearly tradition with the children they serve.

Jumpstart and SLICE would like to thank the entire Dominguez Hills family for their generosity. For the last four years, the campus family has provided gifts during the holiday season to many non-profit organizations including the Elizabeth Ann Seeton Residence, Long Beach Rescue Mission, Villages at Cabrillo, YWCA, and Volunteers of America.





Service an Ingredient for Student Success

Our students at Dominguez Hills continue to prove why service is the heart of this university. Meet some of the students who are leaving a big impact in our local and global communities while earning their degrees! They exemplify the true meaning of student success through their grit, resilience, hard work, and commitment to making a positive change in the world.





From Dominguez Hills to the Philippines

“This last Spring Break, I was privileged to accompany other students aspiring to become medical professionals to the Philippines to help render medical care to those in need. The poverty was profound, but the people were amazing. Although their need for the basics for survival was great, they were always smiling and appreciative of everything we did. This community brought home to me the struggles of my own family as new immigrants with little education trying to ‘make it’ in a strange country.”

Janette Ramirez recounts her experience visiting the Philippines earlier this year to provide medical care to some of the most impoverished communities in the country. Many may have read about Janette in last year’s newsletter when she was chosen as one of California Campus Compact’s Community Engagement Fellows. Using the scholarship money she won to pay some of the travel expenses, Janette got the experience of a lifetime serving and learning from the Filipino people. “Poverty was everywhere but everyone was happy and grateful,” Janette shared.

When asked why she decided to go to a country more than 8000 miles away, a country she has never been to before, Janette expressed how important it is to help others no matter where they come from or who they are.

“I did not know what to expect, but I knew I wanted to help. This experience further validated my purpose and my calling in life.”

Janette is a Biology major who hopes to become a pediatrician one day. She will be earning her degree in Fall 2018. In addition to excelling in her classes, Janette is keeping herself extra busy serving the community. She is currently a COPE Health Scholar interning at St. Mary Hospital in Long Beach. She is also one of our Health Center student assistants and is partnering with Dr. Sophia Momand to help with the HOPE outreach and upcoming projects to give free medical care to the homeless.

When asked what inspires her to become a doctor, Janette answered, “Growing up in a community where rampant poverty is the norm,

it was hard to dream big. However, witnessing my older sister accomplish her dream of getting a degree despite so many barriers, gave me the courage to reach for my dream. My love for science and my love for my community are what drive me to pursue a career that means something important that can help others. I want to break every stereotype there is and become an inspiration to little girls who might also dream of becoming a doctor someday. My story resonates with so many youth in our Latino community. I have witnessed how lack of educational opportunities, lack of mentors, discrimination, and lack of resources can and will hinder our youth from obtaining higher education. That is why pursuing a STEM degree to apply for medical school is more than just a dream for myself but a dream for my entire community. I want to transform my community into a place where youth are encouraged and guided to pursue careers that they might never have been exposed to, and I want to instill the fun, beauty, and importance of science in my community.”

Educational Outreach to Native Americans

Janette and Alejandra were among the winners of last year's California Campus Compact Community Engagement Student Fellowship Scholarship. During the Fall semester, both Alejandra and Janette researched the impact of diabetes on the Native American community and developed culturally relevant educational materials to present to organizations serving indigenous people.

With the guidance of Cheryl McKnight, Janette and Alejandra developed educational materials on prevention and management of diabetes, a disease that is rampant among Native Americans. Alejandra and Janette presented to the clients and staff of American Indian Changing Spirits to culminate their service project.

As aspiring medical professionals, both students felt honored to have had the opportunity to work with a community that is often forgotten.

"Not only was I able help raise awareness but I got to learn and understand how special the people are and how resilient they are," Janette shares.

"Through this experience, I feel more determined to pur-

sue my goal of becoming a doctor," Alejandra shared how this experience has encouraged her in accomplishing her goals.

Alejandra and Janette will be graduating in Fall 2018 with their Bachelor's degree in Biology and look forward to taking the next steps to apply for medical schools.



The first annual Legal Fair was hosted at CSUDH by JusticeCorps and the Pre-Law Society during the 2017 Fall Semester. During the legal fair, students had the opportunity to network and meet representatives from a variety of prominent law schools, government agencies and LSAT preparation businesses. JusticeCorps student representative, Cathleen Vasquez and Pre-Law Society President, Kevin Andoaga teamed up and worked relentlessly to provide CSUDH students a chance to meet professionals from prestigious law schools such as UCLA and Loyola Marymount School of Law as well as federal agencies such as the FBI. Students interested in pursuing a law degree had the opportunity to meet prominent figures from esteemed schools including the Dean of Admissions from Chapman University and the Associate Director of Admissions from USC. Students also had had the opportunity to speak to a representative from the Blueprint LSAT preparation course to gain a better understanding of how to prepare for the LSAT and how they could attend the preparatory courses. Other legal entities that attended the legal fair included UC Hastings College of Law, The University of San Francisco and Pacific University, and McGeorge School of Law.

Kevin and Cathleen coordinated the event to help bring awareness to various opportunities and options for CSUDH students. What a better way to help our students than to bring the resources into campus. Overall it was a successful event. Both Kevin and Cathleen hope to continue hosting the Legal Fair annually with the support of SLICE, JusticeCorps, and the Pre-law Society.

Students hold First Annual Legal Fair

BY XAVIER PINEDA



Being a Light to an ~~‘invisible’~~ Indivisible Population

In Spring 2018, Suzette Mitchell received her Master’s of Social Work from California State University, Dominguez Hills. A Master’s degree is not the only achievement Suzette will be taking along with her in the next chapter of her life. With her degree in tow, she has her future sights set on an educational doctorate degree to further her mission as a social entrepreneur.

Suzette is a tribal member of the Goshute, Shoshone Nation. As a woman of African and Native American descent, Suzette is passionate about empowering the Native American community which includes Black Native Americans. Suzette dedicated much of her undergraduate and graduate studies building a community for Native American students. The CSUDH student body and entire campus community could share their narratives to promote comradery, acceptance and collaboration.

In her quest for advocacy, she provided a safe place for students to connect and share their culture by developing the first ever, Native American Indian Association (NAIA) in 2016. Suzette emphasized the importance of providing a platform that would empower NAIA to share their own unique cultural experiences to guarantee an authentic representation of Native American culture.

“Society says that Native Americans are invisible. This is not because we do not exist, but because for so long our identities have been suppressed. As a Black Native American, I want to be a bridge that will allow others to discover the precious, cultural capital they possess. I want them to know that they are important and that they are loved. My mother taught me that every human being has value, meaning that each person has a purpose and a voice. I want our students to find their

voice so they can share their own narratives as counter narratives to the dominant discourse,” Suzette states.

Suzette is proud to be a Black Native American. “I am humbled, privileged, and empowered because I have the best of both worlds.” Suzette shares that she is grateful to have the opportunity to interact with all that she is, and is empowered by her Black and Native roots because of the contributions of both nations. “Both have gone through such adversities, yet both are still standing and advancing!”

As an alumna of CSUDH, Suzette will continue her volunteerism by supporting the advancement of Native American students and promoting opportunities for engagement with the CSUDH community. She highlights the support of the CSUDH faculty, staff and students for making NAIA a success. In particular, Cheryl McKnight and Dr. Lisa Sueki for their mentorship and unwavering support.

Suzette also encourages CSUDH to continue advancing its efforts to promote and support the Native American student population. “Native American students have the highest disparities especially, in educational attainment. We need to create more space and resources that will allow them to share their concerns and support their educational endeavors while at CSUDH.” Suzette shares, “While CSUDH has expressed interest in developing a minor in Indigenous Studies, a major would also be an excellent way to present authentic Native American history and engagement, and Native American students would witness their own stories taught. An Indigenous major would also promote the premise of cultural competency taught at other universities and provide opportunities for all students to explore other career options.”



Suzette Mitchell completed her Bachelor's of Science Degree in Human Services and a Master's of Arts Degree in Social Work.

Hearts Sight

We first met Joseph Burton when he applied to showcase his project at our 5th Annual Community Engagement Symposium last year. That is when we learned about Joseph's incredible story of how he started a non-profit organization called Hearts for Sight, whose mission is to provide health, educational, and employment services to the visually impaired community including those suffering from diabetes.

In an interview with Joseph, we learned his story of resilience and how service has impacted his success.

Joseph is no stranger to adversity. At the age of five, Joseph was placed into the foster care system and suffered from depression and obesity. Despite these hardships, Joseph refused to give up. Working with his therapist, Joseph was removed from all medications by the 9th grade and began volunteering and becoming involved in sports. At the age of 13, Joseph was adopted into a loving home. That summer, Joseph lost a lot of weight, regained his health, and was on track to graduate from high school when he was diagnosed with a rare vision disorder called retinitis pigmentosa. Joseph was told that by the age of 21, he would completely lose his sight. Just when Joseph had every reason to give up, Joseph instead used it to further fuel him in accomplishing his goals.

"The challenges and obstacles have thickened my skin. I feel I am one of the most resilient and persistent persons you will meet. Because of my unfortunate circumstance, I knew in order to create the life I want to live, I needed to gain control of my emotions," Joseph shares.

Fast-forward to today, Joseph has earned Associate degrees in Psychology and Behavioral Science. He is now a senior at Dominguez Hills majoring in Psychology. He hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Organizational Psychology and eventually earn a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership.

Attending CSUDH was important to Joseph. "I came to Dominguez Hills because I wanted to experience what it was like to be around people who looked like me. Growing up in foster care, I was stripped from my culture and I knew that Dominguez Hills would provide an inclusive atmosphere that is predicated upon student-first initiatives. I also wanted to move to Los Angeles county because while finishing my education at the JC level, I was also working on the development of a wellness program for those affected by blindness. Since I can't drive due to my visual impairment, I relied on public transportation to get to LA and back home to San Diego. These rides were taxing, I wanted to move up here to be closer

to my newly developing endeavor.”

Joseph’s journey has inspired him to start his own non-profit organization, the Hearts for Sight Foundation to serve the visually impaired community.

“I created HFS because I wanted to see a healthier blind and visually impaired community. There was a time after my first go around with school where I became severely obese! I was also experiencing changes with my vision. I knew the changes were a byproduct of my current lifestyle. I didn’t want to be an obese blind person so I made drastic changes to my daily routine. I started working out everyday to lose weight and I studied how I could improve my vision through advancing my nutritional understanding. I was able to lose over 100 pounds in a short period of time. I felt so much better about myself. I had more confidence which also improved my self-esteem. I gained an understanding that I can pursue anything I set my mind to.

After improving my health, I wanted to learn more about my visual deficiencies. I enrolled myself into the Braille Institute where I had the opportunity to learn and work with the visually impaired. It was there when I realized that people who are blind or visually impaired are at the highest risk of becoming victims of some of the country’s leading causes of death.

I also did research and found that there were no organizations addressing the health and wellness needs of those affected by blindness. I started health and wellness classes at Braille Institute and it quickly became one of the most popular classes. I even went many steps forward and created a wellness intervention program for the blind, which I called the Hearts For Sight Foundation. The foundation became an official 501(c)(3) in April 2016.”

In his closing statement, Joseph expressed, “I have always been a firm believer in community impact. My community has impacted my life in a tremendous way. Although I am nowhere near my lofty goals I have set, it is my community that keeps me motivated to continue pursuing what I know to be challenging!”

You can support Joseph and the Hearts for Sight Foundation by visiting their website and donating!



You can learn more about Joseph's foundation by visiting his website. heartsforsightfoundation.org



Paying it FORWARD

Kevin Andoaga is a Political Science major who was recently awarded his bachelor's degree in political science. He hopes to become a civil litigation lawyer and potentially own his own law firm.

Kevin is passionate about serving the community. In addition to being the President of the Pre-Law Society, Kevin was an intern for the office of Assemblyman Mike Gipson which gave him the opportunity to interact with the community and empower them to be involved in the political process. Earlier in the Fall semester, Kevin and another student coordinated the very first Legal Fair, helping students learn about law schools and other resources to prepare them for graduate programs in Law.

Kevin has used his position as the President of the Pre-Law Society to advocate for the importance of service to the community.

“Most of the opportunities that I have been able to take advantage of almost always come from someone giving me a chance to do so. I could not express how grateful I am with the people who have helped me do what I do every day. I feel that the most appropriate way to approach it is to pay it forward, help the community, meet people, and make meaningful connections which will last a life time. These are things that one could only accomplish by being involved. Being in college is the perfect time to do so, since you are surrounded by so many people that want to help and meet you. It takes a village to raise a child, so take the steps to be part of the village too,” Kevin explained.



Kevin shares how his service helped him succeed as a student, a community member, and a professional. Earlier this year, he was nominated and appointed as the first of the “30 under 30 Most Powerful interns” in California by the Your Turn Intern Expo. Recipients of this award are honored for their valuable contributions during their internship placements and making significant impact in their local communities. Kevin was also the Chairman for the university’s Mock United Nation team. During their competition in Santa Barbara, Dominguez Hills garnered half of the awards!





High Schoolers get a **SLICE** of Service

SLICE was fortunate this summer to have had two high school students share their talents and time to support our center. Marvin Roque from Carson High School completed more than 120 hours of service during his six week internship through the International Trade Education Program (ITEP). SLICE has partnered with ITEP in the last four years to provide high school students with hands on experience in the work field. During his six weeks internships Marvin had the opportunity to work with students, faculty, and staff in various capacities. Marvin helped with the New Student Orientations (NSO) this summer and had the opportunity to interact with college students

and staff from various departments on campus.

“Through this experience I gained the confidence to network and to explore my interests. I have always been a shy person and this internship gave me the opportunity to gain leadership skills and learn new skills. It was so much fun getting to know the people in the university,” Marvin shares. For his final project, Marvin created a presentation to share everything he has learned from his internship. (You can see it by scanning the QR code). Marvin will be completing his high school education next year and hopes to enroll at CSUDH and major in Physics. His goal is to become an astrophysicist and obtain his Ph.D. Marvin

was excited to meet Dr. Jim Hill earlier this summer and looks forward to the opportunity to be mentored by him.

Andrea Arteaga is a junior in North High School. As an aspiring artist, Andrea helped us with SLICE’s marketing and outreach materials. Andrea graced us with her talent by painting the cover page of this newsletter. The painting is inspired by the commitment to and impact of our students to the community. The painting represents the diversity of our students and the lasting impact they make not only in our local communities but also our international neighbors. “I looked at all the photos from all the community service

events, and I tried to capture the heart of who our students are and what they are doing,” Andrea shared how she came up with the idea of the painting. She will be completing her high school education in Spring 2019 and hopes to major in Illustration and minor in Political Science. Andrea is not only a talented artist but she will be graduating from high school completing seven Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Thank you to Marvin and Andrea for all their hard work this summer. SLICE is excited to see them continue their education and continue serving the communities.

SLICE is blessed to have the opportunity not only to work with our college students but also get connected with high school students in the community. It is our goal to provide high school students the opportunity to explore the university

and pursue their professional interests. Through programs like ITEP, SLICE is given the opportunity to mentor and support high school students as they explore the endless opportunities that a higher education can give them.



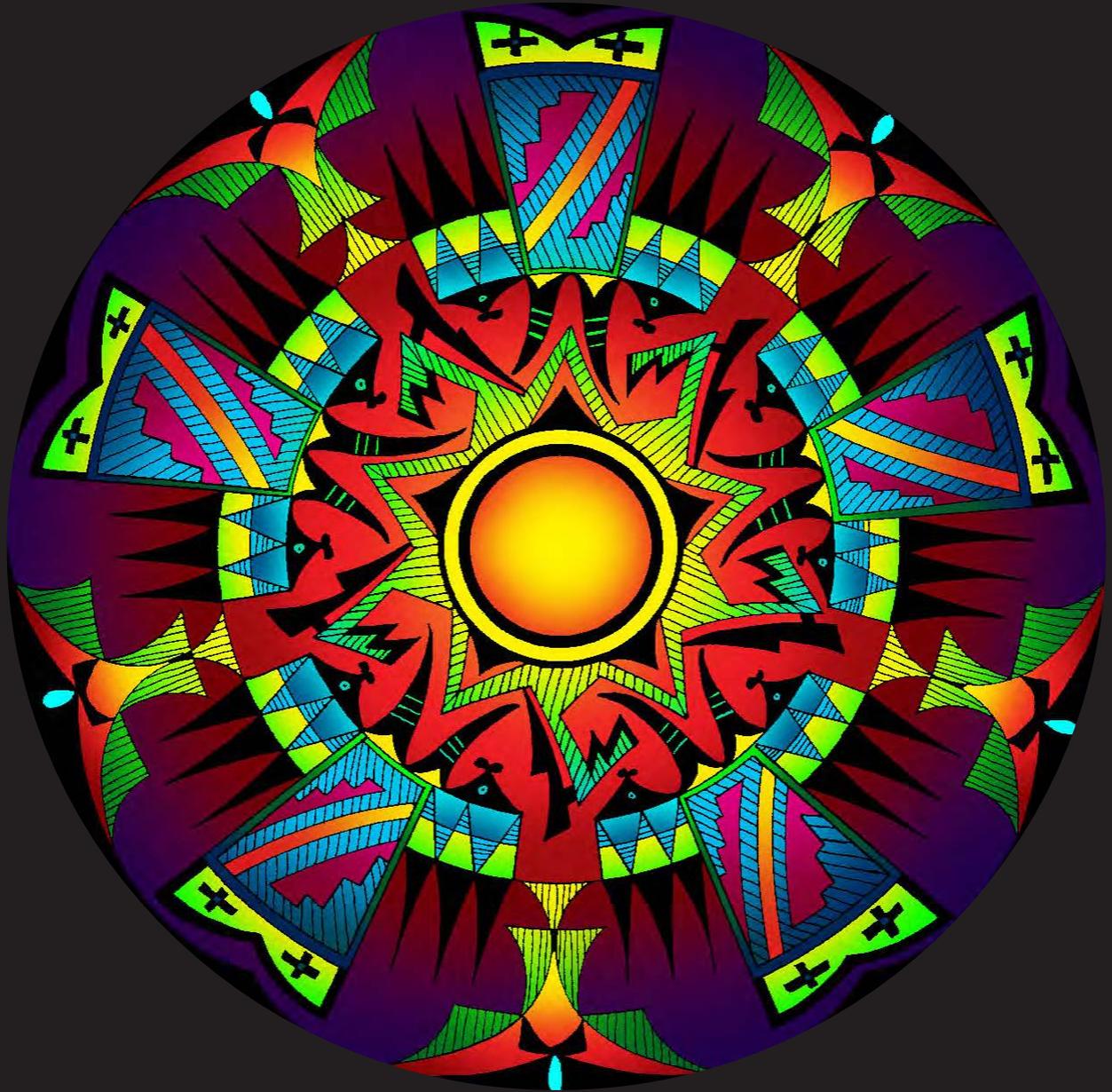




Thank you President Willie Hagan for your leadership and unwavering support to the entire Dominguez Hills University and the communities we serve. We will miss you!







CSUDH

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