

The Stockton Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning

Fall 2022 Newsletter



From Left to Right: Judy Ward, Don Guardian, Kaleem Shabazz, Merydawilda Colón, Leamor Kahanov, Claire Swift, and Vince Polistino

THE SCCESL CELEBRATES TEN YEARS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT!

On August 23, 2022, the Stockton Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning celebrated the beginning of its 10th year with a reception in the Fannie Lou Hamer Room at the John Scarpa Academic Center in Atlantic City. The event opened with remarks from Dr. Leamor Kahanov who said, “The center’s vision has always included a strong community focus. Community engagement and service is part of the fabric of our Stockton community and the fabric of the university. The center is a beacon of hope and a successful model for lifting each other up.”

Dr. Merydawilda Colón the SCCESL Executive Director talked about building our signature community program, the Homework Completion programs. Her philosophy has always been, “You can’t just create programs because you think the community needs them. You have to listen and act on what they find is a need for them. They are the experts,”

The center worked with former Atlantic City Police Chief Henry White to start the program first in Stanley Holmes. Chief White said it’s been hugely successful, and he credits it with decreasing crime in neighborhoods. “If we could get the children that are in some of our most challenging neighborhoods to just do their homework, they have more than a fighting chance of being successful,” White said.

“It developed a good relationship between the police department, the youth and their families. They got to interact with our officers when they are not on calls and those relationships were really beneficial.” White said it also gives real-world experience to Stockton students and provides the youth with role models to show them that college is possible.



HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

This year, the Bonner Leaders and Student Fellows collaborated to plan the SCCESL initiatives for Hunger and Homelessness week. The events took place from November 14th through November 18th. In-person and asynchronous events were held across campus, including the End Hunger in 30 Challenge, where they were educated on various topics regarding hunger and homelessness, and the SNAP Challenge, where students were encouraged to attempt to eat for one day on the New Jersey SNAP budget for a single college student (approximately \$8.00). They also participated in in-person events. Two major events were the Oxfam Dinner and Project Clean Plate. Throughout the week, Bonner Leaders and Student Fellows assisted in reflections, food drives, and other events. Overall, the week brought a deeper sense of awareness of food insecurity to campus and increased the Center's drive to work on some of the issues we see in our communities regarding hunger and homelessness.

Project Clean Plate, Ann Delva and Kiara Cisneros

To advocate and spread awareness about Project Clean Plate at Stockton University, we tabled with a display board and pamphlets at the Food Hall at the Nest, which is open during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The Food Hall at the Nest is buffet style, and students serve themselves.

Most students do not portion out the food they put on their plates. By tabling the lunch hours at the Food Hall at the Nest, we gave out pamphlets, explained Project Clean Plate, and ways to decrease waste, and informed students of food drives on campus. We tabled on Monday, November 14th, Wednesday, November 16th, and Friday, November 18th. On Monday, we spread the word, and on Wednesday and Friday, we weighed the food waste from 11:30 to 1:50. Both days had different results due to the number of students at the cafeteria. On Wednesday, there were 36 pounds of food waste and Friday, 19 pounds of food waste.

The results were eye-opening because, in a small amount of time, we got more than 19 pounds of waste. Imagine the number of pounds of food thrown out a day, a week, or a month. This project only measured the amount of food waste for about four hours, which concluded with 55 pounds of food waste. To get a clear picture of food waste at Stockton, we will need to weigh all three meal times. Overall, Project Clean Plate demonstrates to us as fellow Stockton students how privileged we are that we have the right to waste food while many struggle to even have food.

Student Fellows' Reflections on the SNAP Challenge

Olivia Lovett:

"Putting together this event was a huge learning moment for me, as I had never coordinated such a widespread event before. Learning the ins and outs of social media marketing and overall event planning has made me more confident in my abilities and motivated me to plan other events. While this event has room to grow in the coming years, the support from faculty and my peers allowed for the event's overall success."

Sara Fagan:

"This past week, I participated in Stockton University's SNAP challenge. The goal of this challenge was to make three meals that total eight dollars or less for the entire day, which is the average amount that college students receive in daily SNAP benefits. For breakfast, I made toast with peanut butter, an apple, and a granola bar which totaled \$1.91. For lunch, I made pasta with pasta sauce. Lunch totaled \$1.35 and kept me energized until dinner. I made chicken with rice and broccoli for dinner, and that totaled up to \$4.63. In conclusion, I achieved my goal and spent \$7.89 worth of food for the entire day. I was able to complete this; however, I can see people facing challenges eating with this budget every day."

UPDATE FROM THE SCCESL FACULTY FELLOW, DR. ANTHONY DISSEN

This Fall 2022 semester, Dr. Anthony Dissem, Stockton Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning Faculty Fellow, led a Splash of Community Engagement Webinar on November 10, 2022 called "Creating Your Self-Care Toolkit" for faculty, staff, students, and community members. This presentation focused on proactive methods of not only preventing stress and burnout, but how to plan for stressful situations by creating a toolkit that one can call upon during times of difficulty. This presentation was our most well-attended Splash of Community Engagement Webinar to date and was met with rave reviews from all who attended! This will be followed up with a second Splash of Engagement Webinar on March 23, 2023 to continue this important conversation and support all members of our community.



*Anthony Dissem, EdD, MPH, MA, RDN, CPH
SCCESL Faculty Fellow 2022 - 2023*

STOCKTON HOSTS THE PERUVIAN CONSULATE



Dr. Merydawilda Colón collaborated with Brian Jackson, COO of the Atlantic City Campus, and Edelinda Nambo of the Atlantic City Government and hosted the Peruvian Consulate at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center on October 1, 2023. Two hundred and seventy-three consulate services were provided on that day. The Peruvian Consulate and the community verbalized their appreciation for Stockton's support.

Graduating Student Leaders

The SCCESL is proud of our
December graduates:

Christine Whaley
Kerstin Maguire
Nichole Data



HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAMILY FUN DAY AT STANLEY HOLMES VILLAGE

On October 22, 2022, Student Leaders and staff from the SCCESL collaborated with the Atlantic City Housing Authority, the City of Atlantic City, the Atlantic City Midtown Community Development Corporation, and AtlantiCare to execute a health and wellness street fair on Adriatic Avenue in Atlantic City. Residents who participated accessed community resources, received food baskets and were entered into drawings for prizes. Youth in the community enjoyed face painting, games, and music.



Student Fellow Sam Adelman creates ornaments with the youth at Buzby Homes Village

SCCESL DONOR RECOGNITION

The SCCESL is grateful this fall to Dr. Diane Holtzman, whose donation to the Homework Completion Programs funded the youth's holiday parties including games, crafts, pizza, cupcakes, and gifts

Dr. Holtzman's commitment to the SCCESL and the community makes the work of the Center possible!



Student Fellow Lindsay Raphael plays a snowball relay game with the youth at Buzby Homes Village

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR FOR STUDENTS

On October 25, 2022, 19 community agencies visited the university to share information about the off-campus support services available to students. The agencies included the New Jersey Department of Labor, Avanzar, the Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center, Con Vivir of Hammonton, Volunteers of America, and the Mental Health Association. On-campus offices and centers visited with their off-campus counterparts to network and share information with the intention of creating a strong social support network for Stockton students.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION AT THE WESTMINISTER CHRISTIAN WORSHIP CENTER

Patricia Collins, Shawn Cooper, and Stockton student volunteers which include Bonner Leaders and Student Fellows supported the operation of the monthly food distribution events of the Westminster Christian Worship Center of Atlantic City, NJ, managed by their minister, Dr. Thelma Witherspoon. The distributions took place on the 4th Wednesday of July through December 2022. 1,110 families per month have been served. The experience has been rewarding for the Stockton staff and volunteers and we look forward to continuing to support the Westminster Christian Worship Center in 2023.



L. to R.: Trish Collins, Desiree Robinson, Shawn Cooper, and Rev. Thelma Witherspoon





Left to Right: Patricia Collins, Kaleem Shabazz, Ralph Hunter, Sillon Williams, Paula Goddard, Shawn Cooper, Merydawilda Colón, and James Jones. In front, Ann Delva, Janai Reaves-Ortiz, and Alicia Jenkins.

NAACP PANEL DISCUSSION

Patricia W. Collins served as Chair, Shawn Cooper and Chris Lipari Pazienza were Co-Chairs of the NAACP Panel Discussion on October 10, 2022, which was held at the John F. Scarpa Academic Building in Atlantic City. The Panel Discussion was a follow-up to the 113th National NAACP Convention held in Atlantic City from July 14, 2022 to July 20, 2022. The Panel Discussion also focused on important issues such as voter registration, the importance of everyone being involved in their community, workplace, and where they attend school. More details can be found at <https://stockton.edu/news/2022/naacp-sccesl-panel-fy-22.html>.

The panelist included: Council Kaleem Shabazz, Ralph Hunter, Paula Goddard, two Stockton students, Sillon Williams, and Alicia Jenkins. There were nearly 50 attendees (Stockton students, faculty, staff, community members, and high school students from Atlantic City and Pleasantville). Guests included SCCESL's Executive Director, Dr. Colon, Dr. Leamor Kahanov (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), Dr. Jessica OShaughnessy (Associate Provost and Professor of Mathematics), Cabinet Members, Legislators, and community members.

NAACP CONFERENCE

Patricia Collins and Shawn Cooper volunteered at the 113th NAACP Annual Conference at the Atlantic City Convention Center from July 14, 2022, to July 20, 2022, by attending several meetings and training in preparation for the event, as well as assisting with the packing and issuance of memorabilia. They, along with the NAACP and the Convention Center staff members and the men and women of law enforcement, supported the various flows of traffic throughout each floor level to each workshop, which included, but was not limited to, the plenary session with Vice-President of the United States, Kamala Harris and the NAACP Experience with various vendors and authors. Also, during this time, we kept with the spirit of celebrating the NAACP experience and standing up for equality amongst others, as we acknowledged others that they were there and a part of the celebration as we called out their names listed on their badge. This gave many a sense of belonging and comfort and they thanked us for doing so verbally and with high fives in the air and a smile on their face.



L to R: Alicia Jenkins, Sillon Williams (President, Stockton NAACP Student Chapter), Jasmine Burdett, and Shawn Cooper (SCCESL Staff Member)

Homework Completion Programs by the Numbers

66 Youth in all Homework
Completion Programs

Pleasantville Library
10 Youth

Stanley Holmes Village
41 Youth

11 Atlantic City and
Pleasantville Police
Officers

Buzby Homes Village
15 Youth

106
Stockton Tutors

56 SCCESL
Student Leaders

839 total visits
by youth



Dr. Merydawilda Colón, PhD, LSW
*Executive Director of the Stockton Center for
Community Engagement and Service-
Learning
and Tenured Professor of Social Work*



Patricia (Trish) W. Collins, MA/OM
Community Engagement Liaison



Heather Swenson Brilla, MSW, LSW
Community Projects Coordinator



Erin O'Hanlon, MAIT
*Coordinator of Service-
Learning*



Shawn Cooper, MA
*Senior Program
Coordinator*

This year the SCCESL staff's professional development includes reading *Delivering on the Promise of High-Impact Practices*, edited by John Zilvinskis, Jillian Kinzie, Jerry Daday, Ken O'Donnell, and Carleen Vande Zande.

Contact us!

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Visit our website at
www.stockton.edu/engagement