

“This is my calling. Everything in my life has been leading to this path, literally from childhood.”

— Laura Peterson

Senior Laura Peterson is studying to become a state-certified elementary teacher for English Language Learners (ELLs). Interested primarily in critical pedagogy and bilingual education, Peterson plans to work in refugee communities, marginalized communities, and communities that slip through the cracks of public education systems. “I feel that educational equity and broader justice issues are intimately linked,” she says.

Peterson mentors at-risk youth in Shelton through the S.O.C.K. (Save Our Country’s Kids) Youth Center. She recently completed the English as a Second Language (ESL) tutor training through Mason County Literacy and began volunteering as an ESL tutor for immigrant adults and children.

Her day starts at Hansen Elementary where she is a “participant, tutor, volunteer, and observer” in Judy Theine’s and Joe Munoz’ ELL room. During the next phase of her 10-credit internship, she moves to Garfield Elementary to work in the same capacity with Melody Borcharding, the director of the ELL program for Olympia Public Schools.

“My favorite part of working at the schools is getting to know the students: their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, their personalities, their stories,” she says. “I am thrilled and grateful to have the opportunity to do something with so much immediacy and importance.”



Introduction to Natural Science students Tara Bogdon and Jessica Bryan let the middle school students at the Evergreen Science Carnival know “Your Stomach is NOT a Toy!”



William Saguil

“It is up to me to be a catalyst in the classroom.”

—William Saguil

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) works in local high schools promoting college to students who may not consider it an option. Evergreen undergrad William Saguil is a College Preparation Assistant (CPA) in the program. “College is not just a dream,” says Saguil, “it can be a reality for everyone. CPAs work with teachers and students tutoring and offering college visits and college knowledge workshops.”

A self-described low-income and first-generation college student, Saguil’s path has had many obstacles. “There was not much support in my community,” he says. Despite the hardships, he graduates this year with a B.A. emphasizing psychology. He wants to make sure the kids he works with have it easier. “It is my privilege to walk the path with them and prepare them for the challenges and benefits of a college education. Working with students has made me a better student.”

Last year he worked in Woodbrook Middle School. This year he’s at Lakes High School in Lakewood. “It is phenomenal to see the progress my students made in one year,” he says. “They have become more attentive, more socially engaged and more confident. GEAR UP plants seeds of determination and hope. I am proud to water and care for these seeds, knowing that they will blossom.”