

## Gateways for Incarcerated Youth

Talib Williams, Gateways Program Coordinator

Gateways is a program that survives through the sacrifices that staff, mentors, and volunteers make daily to ensure that marginalized youth understand that access to higher education is a right for everyone, regardless of who or where you are in life. We here at Gateways do not always get the opportunity to spotlight specific people who make an impact, not only on the youth, but on the program as well. We would like to introduce you to Brett Egan, Gateways Coordinator for the Green Hill School Academic Mentoring Program (AMP).

### How did you learn about Gateways?

Gateways served as the beacon that initially drew me to Evergreen. After finishing a two-year degree at the local community college, I was unsure of where to go forward. I have always had an interest in working with incarcerated youth, or youth that were deemed so “bad” that society felt the need to lock them away in prison. I just never knew how to go about finding a way to work with them in a way that was not continuing the cycle of oppression that they deal with daily. After I expressed this to one of my professors, they asked the question, “have you ever heard of the ‘Gateways’ program at Evergreen?” Fast forward to today, here I sit trying to explain my experience with a program that has completely engrossed and changed my life in such a profound way.

### You have been with the program a little over a year now. What roles did you play in support of Gateways and how has the experience been for you so far?

To say that my experience with Gateways has been a transformative one, as both a student and individual, would be a huge understatement. When I started my college journey four years ago, if someone would have told me I would find my “home” here

at Gateways serving incarcerated youth, I would have probably not believed them. Now I cannot imagine life any other way. My experience with Gateways has been three-fold. I spent two quarters as a student in the Gateways college class starting my second quarter here at Evergreen, then as a volunteer coach/mentor over the summer months, and now I am working here in the CCBLA as the Academic Mentor Program (AMP) coordinator at Green Hill School.

My role in a nutshell is to make the possibility of going to college more accessible to the youth down at Green Hill by providing as many resources to them as possible. Those resources might be something like a FAFSA workshop, or taking the time to explain what the admissions process might look like. You have to understand that the level of experience might vary widely; we work with youth who may have quit going to school in the sixth grade, to youth who are currently taking correspondence classes to earn college credits. One of the most valuable resources Gateways provides, in my opinion, is the relationships that form between the youth at Green Hill, and the Evergreen students who participate in the program.

### Can you explain how relationship-building is key to college access?

These relationships often provide the foundation for the first seeds of a college experience being planted. The youth’s exposure to Evergreen students might be the first encounter they have had with someone outside the prison environment, or the environment that spawned the predicament that landed them in Green Hill in the first place. The point that cannot be understated here is that the Evergreen students, who are oftentimes the same age as the youth at Green Hill, provide a living,



Gateways AmeriCorps member Emma Weichmann and student Maddie Coffelt-Richardson doing outreach.

tangible example that college might actually be a viable option for them, which they might not have considered before.

### Can you give any current students looking for some meaningful service work within their educational career some advice?

When I started at Evergreen, I was enrolled in a two-quarter program which I had to leave after my acceptance into the Gateways college class. After telling my professor at the time that I would be leaving, the only thing he said is that Gateways would be a “transformative” experience for me. At the time, I thought “ok, whatever that means,” but now looking back, that was the most concise and true statement he could have made.

Gateways is a program that serves a specific community, but serving a community outside my own has made me a better student, husband, father, and human being in general. I realize I am just one person, but I truly believe that the positive effects of this program affect not just me, but everyone past and present who has been involved in the program.

Brett Egan is serving Gateways as an AmeriCorps member through Washington Campus Compact College Access Corps for the 2017-18 year.

## Gateways AMP Update in Group Homes (Community Facilities)

by Emma Weichmann, *Youth in Service Americorps member at CCBLA/Gateways*

Gateways AMP (Academic Mentoring Program) spread from Green Hill (a juvenile prison in Chehalis) to two group homes in 2015. Since then, more than 25 youth have been involved in the program at Touchstone group home (Lakewood) and Oakridge group home (Olympia). More than 20 Evergreen students have been involved as well. In the AMP program, students spend two hours a week at each group home. We put on workshops, play games, and spend time getting to know each other better and exploring interests. This year we have put on workshops about budgeting, job searching and interview skills, and cooking. Jessica Dean, a nutritionist from Seamar Community Health Center, facilitated the cooking workshop. We made three stir fry dishes, and black bean brownies as a dessert. We learned about the nutritional benefits of cooking rice with an oil, and why pairing carbs with proteins is good for you.

The young men at the group homes are not totally confined to the facility, and there are always requests for field trips out of the group home. Each month, the young men tour Evergreen's campus, learn about different projects on campus (like the campus foodbank satellite), and spend time at the recreation center where we play basketball or watch a Geoduck game, box, use the weight room, or climb the rock wall! Between the two group homes, eight trips were made to campus. Touchstone group home also took a trip to Skateland to roller skate and celebrate a great quarter.

As a program that seeks to prioritize youth voices, AMP highly values the feedback of program participants. In a reflection survey, the young men at Oakridge group home stated that they liked the "positive interactions, support, and help" in AMP. They listed that they learned "people skills and how to speak," "skills, plans, and interviews," and how to "budget money." Two young men said they learned "how to get a job."

As we move into winter quarter, program goals are to continue cooking workshops (thanks to Seamar, Jay's Farmstand, and Olympia Food Co-op for donations!), and have more workshops led by group home participants.

If you would like to participate in AMP at the group homes, please email Emma at [weichmae@evergreen.edu](mailto:weichmae@evergreen.edu). We leave Evergreen at 4:00 on Tuesdays, returning at 8:00, and on Wednesdays at 5:30, returning at 8:30. Please plan on committing to one of these days for the remainder of the quarter.

## SOS CCBLA students in action



*SOS CCBLA fall students meeting at Traditions in downtown Olympia.*



*SOS CCBLA Students in front of Billy Frank Jr. housing.*



*SOS CCBLA fall visit to Dispute Resolution Center.*

## SOS: CCBLA Community Work in Challenging Times (Fall 2017 and Winter 2018)

Offered in collaboration with Evergreen's Center for Community-Based Learning and Action, the SOS program offers students deep internship experiences with regional grassroots organizations and education programs. Faculty rotate in to teach and bring their foundations of experience, disciplinary expertise, and community collaboration. In fall 2017, Leslie Flemmer worked with students to ask: What are the economic, social, political, and educational challenges that communities face today? What ideas and skills enable us to accompany and collaborate with local communities and schools as they address the challenges they face? The program spent a day in downtown Olympia visiting local initiatives. Students served with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), the Dispute Resolution Center, CIELO Project, Sound Learning, Lydia Hawk and Lincoln Elementary Schools, Rochester Middle School, Centralia High School, Clallam County Mosaic, and Kokua Services for Adults with Disabilities, Sound Outreach homeless community support, Animal Rights and Welfare, NW Immigrant Detention Resistance, and Youth Arts and dance programs. Final presentations showcased responsible, self-motivated students who valued collaborative learning, shaping a community of co-learners, and learning from and with community organizations and educators.

This winter students will continue community work with faculty member Catalina Ocampo by providing support to work in community settings and schools through internships or projects. The program builds skills and offers a collaborative space to share experiences and learning. The program engages the practical and theoretical issues of community work: How do you enter a community? What are challenges you might face? How do we value our own distinctive identities while respecting differences we encounter? What skills do communities find useful? What are the ethical features of this work? How does "collaboration" differ from "helping," and what strategies can lead to community collaboration?

## Community-to-Community Day of Service for New-Student Orientation Grew in 2017



*New students painted a mural for Hummingbird all-inclusive art studio as part of United Way Day of Caring and Evergreen's orientation week Community-to-Community Service event. 458 new students engaged at 20 community sites.*

## Community Service Work Study

Students participated at a number of local organizations using work-study funding to learn on site and contribute to the work. Sites included PIPE, Sound Outreach, Pizza Klatch, Kokua, Gateways, YWCA, Family Support Center, Pear Blossom Place, TC Food Bank, CIELO Project, Rebuilding Together, Media Island, Hope Garden, Community Lifeline and TUPAC Tacoma. Sound Learning, Shelton Innovators After School program, and Media Island have positions open winter quarter.

## CCBLA Fall Events: Immigration Forum/Task Force



*Presenters Maru Mora Villalpando and Wendy Pantoja.*

Addressing the Undocumented Student Task Force (USTF) Summer Institute appeal to address broader immigration policy impacts, we invited speakers to share immigration, detention and community response. This information prepared students to support immigrant struggles and positioned the institution to better serve the most vulnerable students and community.

The keynote panel with Tacoma-based Northwest Detention Resistance included the screening of their new video ([www.nwdcresistance.org](http://www.nwdcresistance.org)). Latino Advocacy members Maru Mora Villalpando and Wendy Pantoja presented to 150+ students in the library lobby. Afternoon workshops were presented by Familia Student Group and the Strengthening Sanctuary Olympia Community organization.



Students attending Familia workshop.

We live in a volatile time for immigrants in the United States and on college campuses. Due to federal policy changes including rescinding DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and increased immigration detention and deportation, a strength-based system of campus and community response is needed that honors immigrant leadership. Hearing organizational processes and impacts helped us understand policy and enforcement changes and local responses. The Underserved Student Task Force, the Latinx Standing Committee, and Familia Student Group advocates for Evergreen students mobilized this

important educational event that offered specific action steps. Many thanks to the staff and student researchers through First People's Advising that crafted the Retention Proposal and Supporting Undocumented Student training for staff and faculty and the community-based Strengthening Sanctuary Initiative.

Students participated from academic programs that included Alternatives to Global Capitalism, Media Works, SOS: CCBLA Community Work in Challenging Times, Seeds of Change, and Power in American Society.

## CCBLA Winter Events: José Gómez Farm Worker Justice Day

"Justicia Ahora: Guest Workers and the Movement for Farm Worker Justice," was held **Wednesday, January 24, 2018.**

### José Gómez Farm Worker Justice Day 2018 JUSTICIA AHORA: GUEST WORKERS AND THE MOVEMENT FOR FARM WORKER JUSTICE

Join us for a day of events centered around the fight for Farm Worker Justice. There will be a morning panel followed by afternoon workshops.

#### WHEN

**Wednesday, January 24**

**Panel:**

10 am—1 pm

**Workshops:**

2 pm—4 pm

#### OUR GUESTS

**Rosalinda Guillen**, Community to Community Development

**Ramon Torres**, Familias Unidas por la Justicia  
TBA

#### Sponsors:

Students for Food Security  
CCBLA  
President's Equity Fund  
Clean Energy Committee  
SOS: CCBLA  
Seeds of Change  
Alternatives and Resistance to Global Capitalism  
Political Economy and Social Change  
Reproduction: Gender, Race and Power



#### WHERE

**The Evergreen State College**

**Panel:**

Library Lobby

**Workshops:**

H2A Guest Workers: TBA  
Pre-Tribunal Workshop: TBA

#### STAY TUNED

There will be a follow up Day of Action on Monday, February 5th that will include attending a farm worker's Tribunal at the capitol from TBA-TBA, in TBA, followed by TBA?

<https://www.facebook.com/CCBLATESC>

## Youth Visit Evergreen from WaHeLut Indian School for MLK Day 2018

Forty-three middle schoolers from WaHeLut participated in a college access day at Evergreen. Youth in Service AmeriCorps members from CCBLA and WaHeLut successfully planned a packed day. After a welcome at the Longhouse by Executive Director Tina Kuckkahn-Miller, they enthusiastically participated in workshops with faculty Yvonne Peterson, Native Student Alliance, and First People's Advisor Karama Blackhorn. The group was led through a tour of the Carving Studio by Laura Grabhorn, and then to lunch (donated by Old School Pizzeria) in the Unity Lounge and Queer and Trans Center. A representative from Admissions gave a presentation and a glimpse of A dorm where Evergreen student tour guides took youth through campus. Many students chatted about whether or not they wanted to attend college. The tour ended in the CRC, where youth and Evergreen basketball players connected. The Evergreen men's basketball team, on their Facebook page, posted a short video of the game, with the caption "Geoduck athletes having some fun at the WaHeLut College Access Day at Evergreen."



## CCBLA Spring Events:

Look for CCBLA Annual Student Recognition Open House coming this spring!

CCBLA and Gateways Staff 2017-18

Director: Ellen Shortt Sanchez

AmeriCorps VISTA Campus Food Bank Coordinator: Jordan Billiot

CYS AmeriCorps Tutor-Mentor Coordinator: Emma Weichmann

SOS: CCBLA Faculty: Leslie Flemmer and Catalina Ocampo

Fall Community Service WS Coordinator: Juan Carlos Ruiz Duran

CAC AmeriCorps Gateways AMP Coordinator: Brett Eagan

Gateways Administrative Support: Maddy Coffelt-Richardson

Gateways Faculty: Jon Davies

Gateways Program Coordinator: Talib Williams



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