

THE STOCKTON CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Fall 2023 Newsletter



(L-R): Taylor Dulemba, Coordinator of Service-Learning; Shawn Cooper, Coordinator for Community Programs and Leadership; Heather Swenson Brilla, Supervisor for Community Projects and Community Engagement Assessment, Trish Collins, Community Engagement Liaison and Site Supervisor

SCCESL staff attend the October CUMU Conference in Washington, D.C.

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities held their annual conference from October 15 to October 18, 2023, at the Westin Downtown D.C. Hotel and Conference Center and four of the SCCESL staff were able to attend. This year's conference, titled "Resilient Campuses, Resilient Cities", was attended by over 450 leaders in higher education from around the world. SCCESL staff attended sessions on community-engaged data collection and assessment, social mobility, fundraising, and meeting students' basic needs, among others.

The staff is excited to bring best practices and innovative ideas back to Stockton to continue developing reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships with our community partners.

National Voter Registration Day at Stockton



On Tuesday, September 26th, members of the Engagement Leadership Team helped Dr. Claire Abernathy and the students in her class, Stockton Votes, to register Stockton students to vote. Andrea Sandoval (left) was among several of the SCCESL student leaders who supported this important work on campus.

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Engagement Leadership Team members (L-R): Azra Mahisa, Brian Scott, Damaris Spring, Tiffani Keen, Lina Garrido, Mackenzie Tierney, Madelyn Sacco, Lauren Whaley, Olivia Lovett, Ashley Ramirez, and Nathalie Valladares

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week at Stockton University

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, a national week of service and educational activities, took place from November 13 to 17, 2023. It is sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. Stockton University has held events for over 7 years and this year the Engagement Leadership Team of the SCCESL chose three projects, a SNAP Challenge, Project Clean Plate, and a birthday cake kit food drive.

The SNAP Challenge is when you live off of the SNAP budget and eat meals within that budget for the day or the week. This year's SNAP budget was \$6.05. Stockton's Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning shared this information on social media accounts with the hashtag #stocktonsnap23 to encourage people to try it for a day and write reflections about what they encountered for the day.

One reflection from a participant who talked about the challenges.

"Some challenges I experienced while completing the SNAP Challenge were planning and prepping meals due to prior commitments and plans, as well as not knowing if what I was eating was filling enough. When I was planning what I would eat, I expected to be pretty full throughout the day but that was not the case. I realized that I had advantages during this challenge, such as access to a grocery store and kitchen equipment. I was able to see what it is like for people who live like this daily and it allowed me to understand the importance of food quality, and the food we should be providing people."

Project Clean Plate was a partnership between Chartwells Dining Services and the SCCESL. The project is intended to create awareness of the amount of food that is wasted in the N-Wing Dining Hall, the all-you-care-to-eat dining facility on campus.

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Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week at Stockton University (continued)

The following report comes from the Engagement Leadership Team themselves.

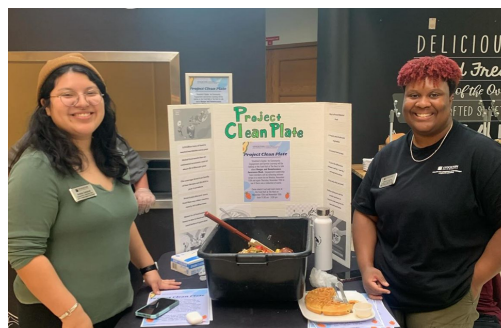
“We started this project by scraping food on November 14th and 16th. We laid out a plan to see who would be collecting the measurements on the scale for each day. Each member was assigned a task. We all collaborated as a team to have a successful outcome.

We made a poster with facts about food waste and the purpose of this project. As every student came up to scrape their plates, they would take a moment to stop and read. At first, we did not see many students scraping food off of their plate. As lunch got busier, almost all the students who were walking by were scraping their food. By the end of lunch, we noticed how the bin was almost full of food.

We were able to see how many people were throwing a lot of food away. Some individuals just took one bite and threw away their food. At the beginning of lunch on Tuesday the 14th, the scale showed 22 pounds. When the calculations were finished, it was found that on Tuesday, 1.74 ounces were wasted per person. On Thursday, November 16th, the total food waste was 63 pounds which meant that 4.22 ounces were wasted per person. We expected the second day to have less waste, but there were numerous high school campus visits going on that day and they all came to our dining hall to use a meal ticket.

This could be the reason why our data regarding the amount of food waste was skewed, as many students in high school were excited to eat in the dining hall, resulting in some of them eating with their eyes rather than their stomachs. Overall, we observed that the majority of the people were interested in the project. They scraped off their food waste and asked us what this project was about.”

The birthday cake kit drive is intended to offer food pantry clients the ability to make a full birthday cake when they are celebrating someone in their family.



SCCESL ELTs Andrea Sandoval and Damaris Spring

The Engagement Leadership Team members on this project took boxes to all the academic school offices to collect donations of cake mix and frosting. Another donor supplied cake pans, birthday candles, and cans of cream soda so that the student leaders could make birthday cake kits. Not everyone knows that you can substitute a can of soda for the eggs and oil in a boxed cake recipe.

Here is a reflection from one of the Engagement Leadership Team members:

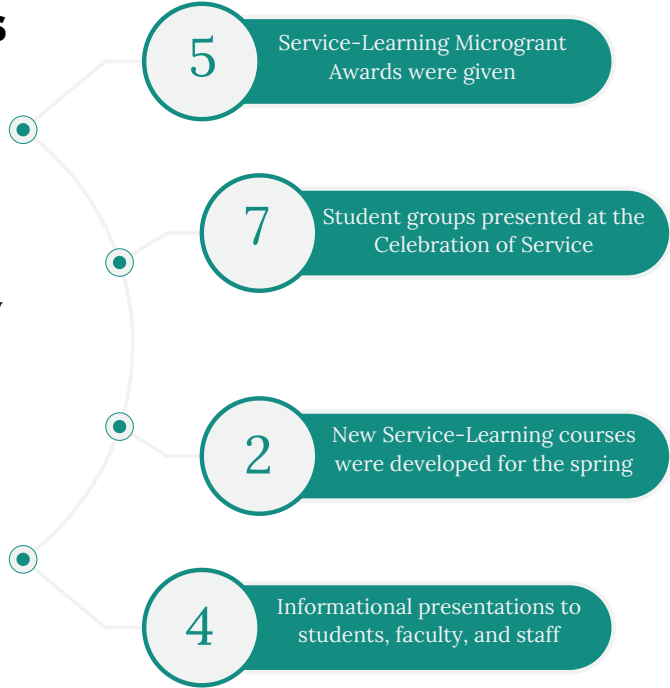
“It can be difficult for people to have access to cake ingredients because they can be costly, and even cake mix requires fresh ingredients. Because of this, people sometimes can’t even participate in traditional birthday events and celebrate a day that is meant for them. This drive was an opportunity to change that. The response to this drive was a huge success, bringing in 47 boxes of cake mix and 44 tubs of icing. We created 18 cake kits and they will be brought to the Westminster Food Distribution Center to be handed out to give people an opportunity to feel special on their birthday. I am so passionate about this project because it emphasizes dignity. I believe that projects like this are important.”

Service-Learning Updates



The SCCESL is pleased to welcome Taylor Dulemba as the Coordinator of Service-Learning. Taylor comes to Stockton from Ocean County College where she worked in Career Services. She is already using her community engagement skills to work with community partners, faculty, and students to

continue to grow Service-Learning at Stockton. In her three short months at the SCCESL, Taylor already has some impressive Service-Learning accomplishments. Check out the infographic at right!



Fall Projects and Programs

ChangeBuilder Updates

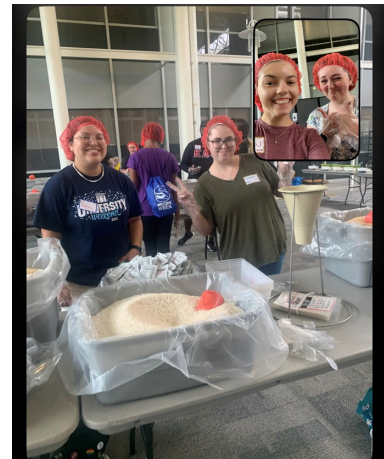
This fall, 48 ChangeBuilders participated in 336 hours of service with over 20 community partners including the SCCESL homegrown programs, the Chelsea Bazaar in O'Donnell Park, the Ronald McDonald House, and National Stop the Violence.

Westminister Food Distribution

Shawn Cooper continues to collaborate with the Westminister Christian Worship Center, Dr. Thelma Witherspoon, and Dr. Thelma Rice on their monthly food distribution events. This event continues to not only provide over 1,000 meals to families in need but also hygiene and clothing items.



Shawn Cooper (Left) poses with EOF-AC ChangeBuilder volunteers at the food distribution event



SCCESL Leaders: Andrea Sandoval, Christine Whaley, Lauren Whaley and, Madelyn Sacco at the New Student Day of Service in September

More Fall Projects and Programs

On October 20, 2023, Dr. Merydawilda Colón, Trish Collins, and members of the Engagement Leadership Team (ELT) contributed to the success of Coast Day. The event was held at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center in Atlantic City. Dr. Susanne Moskalski led the event coordination with Dr. Anna Pfeiffer-Herbert and other colleagues from Marine Science. Atlantic City High School students and the Egg Harbor Township High School students attended. In attendance were also the Atlantic City Police Officers David White and Azale Carter-Reynolds, who partner with the SCCESL in the Homework Completion Program at Stanley Holmes Village. The officers transported youth from the Homework Program to the Coast Day event.



The SCCESL was invited to present about High Impact Practices: Community Engagement, Service-Learning, and Global Engagement in the Center for Teaching and Learning Design Teaching Academy. The session took place on October 27, 2023. SCCESL Executive Director, Merydawilda Colón, Coordinator of Service-Learning, Taylor Dulemba, Director of the Office of Global Engagement, Dr. Patricia Sagasti-Suppes, and Dr. Arnaldo Cordero-Román conducted the presentation.



Dr. Merydawilda Colón collaborated with Professors Cynthia King, Emari DiGiorgio, and Arnaldo Cordero-Román to coordinate a presentation by Poet Maricela Guerrero from Mexico at the South Main Street School in Pleasantville. Maricela Guerrero read some of her poems to the students, and they asked insightful questions about her motivation to write poems. Maricela addressed their questions and thanked all in attendance for welcoming her and their interest in her poetry.

[Check out this article about Professor James Chairman and his Service-Learning class' fall project at Reed's Organic Farm and Animal Sanctuary!](#)



2023 Fall Student Leader Graduates



Lina Garrido Kristine Garcia Ariana Ramirez

Lina, Kristine, and Ariana have been valuable members of the SCCESL student leadership team for over three years. All three have worked in the Homework Completion Program in Pleasantville and the Naturalization classes at the Scarpa Academic Center, as well as many individual projects involving the support of the Spanish-speaking community in South Jersey.

They will be dearly missed! -Merydawilda Colón, Shawn Cooper, Patricia Collins, Taylor Dulemba, and Heather Swenson Brilla



The final mural at Stanley Holmes Village



Pictured above from L to R: Olivia Lovett, Chris Lipari Paziienza, Shawn Cooper, Trish Collins, Nick Cerniglia, and Alyssia Marshall

Summer Arts Camp at Stanley Holmes Village

The SCCESL hosted an afternoon summer arts and crafts camp at Stanley Holmes Village from August 21st to August 23rd and from August 28th to August 30th, 2023. Youth in the Stanley community had an opportunity to use their creativity and art skills over the six-day program. The camp hosted an average of eight youth per day from kindergarten through sixth grade. During these two weeks, the youth artwork, which is displayed on the wall in the community room, included rock painting, puzzles, and a group mural. The youth had an opportunity to build relationships with each other and the Center's Engagement Leadership Team (ELTs). These relationships carried into the fall of 2023 Homework Completion Program held in the community room at Stanley Holmes Village.

The summer arts and crafts camp was staffed by ELTs Olivia Lovett and Alyssia Marshall, Chris Lipari Paziienza (former Engage NJ Changebuilder VISTA), and recent graduate and student leader for the SCCESL, Nick Cerniglia. Trish Collins was the site supervisor and was assisted by Shawn Cooper.

Fall 2023 SCCESL Homegrown Programs

1,329

Hours were served in the homework completion programs by Stockton students

78

Youth participated in the Homework Programs

128

Stockton Students Volunteered in the Homework Programs

What a great semester!

Youth visited the Homework Completion Programs 754 Times

8

Atlantic City and Pleasantville Police Officers and Fire Fighters Volunteered in the Homework Programs

18

People participated in the Computer and Internet Classes at the Scarpa Academic Center

20

People participated in the Naturalization classes this fall and one participant became an American citizen