



## **Rona Whitehead, Activist-in-Residence, Creating Social Change at Stockton College**

***For Immediate Release; with [photos of Whitehead and local students](#); sidebar on student projects begins on page 2.***

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**Galloway Township, NJ** – Rona Whitehead, activist-in-residence at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, has awarded four mini-grants to student organizations to help them create sustainable change within communities.

Awards were received by Women in S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), Students Helping Students, Your Brain Bonanza, and Poetry Anthologies & Art Corner for the Homework Completion Program at Stanley S. Holmes Village.

This is one of many projects Whitehead has worked on during her first semester at Stockton.

As the resident activist, Whitehead works with Stockton's Service-Learning Office to implement awareness and social change within Stockton and its surrounding community. The intention is to create awareness about an issue, providing students with comprehensive knowledge on an issue. Ultimately, she believes awareness will lead students to social activism, allowing them to critically address an issue and be directly involved in providing a solution.

Whitehead, who resides in the Atco section of Waterford Township, Camden County, NJ, formerly worked as a leadership specialist with the Girl Scouts of Central and Southern Jersey. She has experience in curriculum development, program implementation, volunteer management, and facilitating workshops. She earned her bachelor's degree from The University of Pennsylvania in Sociology as a non-traditional student.

Whitehead also sits on the Board of Directors for Camden County Family Support Organization, Children's Continuum of Care, the University of Pennsylvania's Bread Upon the Waters Mentoring Board. She also volunteers with the UPenn Alumni Volunteer Interview Team.

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***-continued from page 1-***

For the upcoming spring 2015 semester, Whitehead will oversee three major programs:

- Students Helping Students begins on Jan. 19, 2015 and involves a mentoring program between Stockton students and Atlantic City High School students.
- On Feb. 14, Stockton will host a Boy Scout Merit Badge Fair.
- From March 8-10, students will take part in Spring Immersion, a new alternate Spring Break. Students will work in Atlantic City to enhance the community by incorporating a job fair, education advocacy, and a building project with Habitat for Humanity.

### **SIDEBAR: Mini-Grants Awarded Through Stockton's Activist-in-Residence Program**

#### **Women in S.T.E.M. \$250 grant**

Elizabeth Clayton, a junior Political Science major from Clementon in Camden County, NJ, is an executive board member of the Coalition for Women's Rights. The Coalition and the Office of Service-Learning co-hosted an event titled Women in S.T.E.M. to "raise awareness of the difficulty women in these fields face." It's a topic that needs to be discussed, Clayton explained, so she organized the panel discussion to feature five women with careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. About 70 faculty and students attended the event, and afterward feedback expressed interest in broadening the scope of the event to create a discussion series that highlights women in all fields.

#### **Students Helping Students \$200**

Carl Archut Jr., Student Senate president, has gathered more than 40 volunteers to participate in "Students Helping Students," which is a high school to college mentorship program between Atlantic City High School and Stockton. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Stockton students will host "A Day in the Life of a College Student" for the high school mentees. "We want to encourage them and let them know that college is the right decision," said Archut. Some students may not know of all the opportunities that are available to them. "We can give them that," said Archut, a resident of Paulsboro in Gloucester County, NJ.

#### **Your Brain Bonanza \$450**

Michael Tumminia, a junior Psychology major from Neptune Township in Monmouth County, NJ, and Melissa Cornelius, a senior Psychology major from Manahawkin in Ocean County, NJ, are co-vice presidents of the Neuroscience Club. After hearing Dr. Christine Gayda, assistant professor of Psychology, lecture about bike safety and the power of helmets to save the brain, Cornelius started to brainstorm ways the club could help promote helmets. A petition is being circulated throughout the campus to gather support to pass a law in Galloway that would require all individuals regardless of age to wear a helmet while on a bike or motorcycle. In the spring, Club members and volunteers will wear helmets to campus for one day and act as ambassadors to educate individuals about bike and motorcycle safety. In addition, Cornelius said, "We want to spread awareness and visit elementary schools to show students that the older kids are doing it," to end the idea that helmets are uncool.

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*-continued from page 2-*

**Poetry Anthologies and Art Corner for the Homework Completion Program at Stanley S. Holmes Village \$150**

Barbara Edelhauser, a second year Master of Social Work major from Toms River in Ocean County, NJ, said, "Atlantic City can be transformed through the arts." She plans to establish an art corner at the Stanley Holmes Village for students to express their creativity. This project follows her extensive volunteer work at the Police Athletic League where she has worked with students on poetry projects. The artist-poet was inspired by her mother, Shirley Lake, who was a poet, educator and Stockton graduate.

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