Jazmine Begay, left, works on a holiday craft project with her mentor, CSU student Monica Lopez-Islas, during a weekly session of CSU’s Campus Corps youth mentoring program.

Campus Corps: At-risk youth learn from CSU mentors

BY GRETCHEN GERDING

Jazmine Begay faced multiple challenges in 2010 when she received a court-recommended referral to the Colorado State University Campus Corps youth mentoring program. On probation, receiving treatment for mental health issues, and doing poorly in school, Begay needed positive intervention to turn her life around.

Attending Campus Corps, Begay has made encouraging strides. Now 16 and a junior, she has a goal of passing her classes and graduating from Fort Collins High School, a step she recognizes as important for getting a job.

Campus Corps is part of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the College of Health and Human Sciences at CSU. It pairs up CSU students and at-risk youth ages 10-18 in a group setting to provide academic support and encourage positive social skill development. The groups are supervised by master’s and Ph.D. students and overseen by faculty and therapists.

“Children who are already at-risk are vulnerable to dropping out, substance abuse and delinquent behavior,” said Toni Zimmerman, a professor in the MFT program and a University Distinguished Teaching Scholar, says that “Campus Corps has taught me to appreciate how lucky I am, after learning about some of the situations the other kids are facing,” says Begay. “I want to come back and volunteer as a mentor someday.”

“Campus Corps is funded in part by the Bohemian Foundation. For more information on supporting Campus Corps, or making a referral, contact Director Lisa Kroftach at (970) 491-2177 or lisa.kroftach@colostate.edu, or visit campuscorps.colostate.edu.”

At-risk youth learn

BY SHANNON DALE

“I used to be nervous using a knife,” explains Ashley Nye, a Cooperator Home student. “It is to a job, secondary education, or living on their own for the first time.”

The first lesson at KANC, part of the College of Health and Human Sciences, is knife skills, which students perfect over the course of the semester-long nutrition and cooking lessons. The classes are taught by graduate students in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition under the supervision of a KANC registered dietitian. The Center provides a safe and fun environment to learn while each new recipe challenges students with a new skill and to turn their favorite foods into healthier options.

For Gayna Jibe, director of Cooperator Home, the partnership with KANC provides her students with access to the CSU community. “I want to come back and volunteer as a mentor someday.”

The Kendall Anderson Nutrition Center, which contributes to their independence as they transition out of Poudre School District. “They work together as a team and often bring the recipes home to try with their families.”

The recipes are also taken back to the Cooperator Home, where students plan a menu, grocery shop, and cook for their peers four days a week. Students become comfortable with KANC’s community through KANC with some Cooper Home students taking jobs in the dining halls of the CSU community, including nutrition counseling, healthy cooking classes, and group programs.
said Bialek. “These internships provided a wealth of experience that increased my confidence going into job interviews and gave me a great head start once I hired on with Saunders.”

Prior to graduating and advancing into the industry, students take the time to make a difference in the community. Through initiatives like CM Cares, a service-learning program that infuses leadership, team building, and ethics through community service projects, as well as student clubs that partner with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, their dedication to the improvement of life for people in need in northern Colorado. The CM program, part of the College of Health and Human Sciences, has a proud tradition of excellence and success as a major at CSU. The current placement rate for students is 100 percent with an average of 2.1 job offers per student, and the average starting salary for graduates in Fall 2013 is $53,000, one of the highest among majors in northern Colorado.

The focus of the construction management degree program at Colorado State University can be summed up in two words: Building Leaders. Students hone their skills in the classroom, in the industry, and in the community, in pursuit of a career field that continuously impacts and improves people’s lives. The curriculum of the CM program includes every facet of a construction project from estimating to scheduling to field management. “Every single class is applicable to industry,” said Bill Bialek, a superintendent at Saunders Construction, Inc., CSU alumnus and graduate of Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins. “This is a very unique trait of the CM program.”

Alongside the curriculum, the required internship program provides crucial hands-on experience for a broader perspective on how the construction industry functions. “I completed my internship by splitting it into three broad parts within the construction industry,” said Bialek. “The CM program gave me the hands-on experience for working with one of the best contractors in the world.”

Students pursuing a degree in construction management at CSU learn more than simply how to manage a complex construction project. They have their personal skills to serve the community. They obtain the tools necessary to make an impact on people’s lives. “They are, essentially, contributing to something larger than themselves.”

For more information on the Department of Construction Management at CSU, visit cm.colostate.edu.

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BY SHANNON DALE

Computer games retrain the brain

James Folkestad, associate professor in CSU’s College of Education, demonstrates a computer game designed to help mitigate players’ cognitive biases in decision-making.

We all have cognitive biases: those patterns in our thinking that alter how we react when confronted with incomplete information or are operating under time pressure. These biases can lead to bad decision making, something especially detrimental for those in high-stress, high-stakes positions. However, once you learn to recognize your specific cognitive biases, you are able to make sounder, more effective decisions. But how do you train your brain to overcome those biases?

James Folkestad, associate professor in the School of Education in the College of Health and Human Sciences, is working with a team to develop the Intelligence Advanced Research Activity Sirius program, a computer game that challenges players to recognize their cognitive biases and then learn strategies to avoid them in simulated environments.

The game, known as CYCLES, creates virtual situations where players move their avatar around the space and experiment. His team aims to teach players sets of strategies to mitigate certain cognitive biases. One strategy included in the game encourages players to slow down, resist their initial “gut” reaction, and consider alternative evidence. The player then encounters situations where they are given the opportunity to exhibit these behaviors. A record is kept in the game log files to see if, and when, they perform the targeted behaviors. When a pattern of bias emerges, the game reinforces the learning objectives by reminding the player to work on avoiding those biases by slowing down and considering alternative evidence.

The project involves its own high-stakes context. The Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity group, a U.S. agency that works with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, funds the grant for seven different teams in a competition format. Folkestad is part of a team led by Tomislav Strakowski at the University of Arizona, Ross Marty at CSU, and the gaming company 1st Playable. The interdisciplinary team of psychologists, educators, linguists, game scholars, game developers, and communication experts provides a work space for innovative thinking and has led to the success of the game. Based on the performance and outcomes of the games, the IARPA has eliminated all but three teams— with Folkestad’s team still in the running.

Folkestad works to develop behavior-based learning objectives and then to translate those objectives into the game world or game situations. His role in CYCLES includes incorporating feedback to player behaviors in order to reinforce what is being taught through his behavioral log-based design.

“The game is designed to help players retrain the brain. It is an important tool for intelligence agencies to be able to train their employees on the fly.”

BY JACOB LEWIS

University of Colorado Boulder

“Ultimately these experiments were designed to understand how games work in training on biases and bias mitigation and how different game manipulations impact learning as well,” Folkestad explains. “We just recently found out that our game was the first to be selected for use in an actual training classroom. It is nice when you can contribute to a research-based understanding, but it’s outstanding when your work is selected for use.”

Recently, the IARPA training games were reviewed by U.S. intelligence agencies. The CYCLES game was the first one chosen for use in training U.S. intelligence agents.
High quality education for young children

BY TONY PHIFER

There's no better way to describe Colorado State University's Department of Occupational Therapy. The OT program is one of the best in the country, and is continually seeking ways to better serve the community.

U.S. News and World Report lists CSU's OT program No. 6 nationally among similar programs in its 2014 rankings. And current and former students ranked CSU No. 1 in a survey by graduatepro-grams.com.

"Our outstanding faculty have earned recognition at local, state, national and international levels for the quality and impact of their work, whether that work is related to advancing a excellent education or to advancing basic and applied research related to helping people do what they want and need to do every day," said Wendy Wood, department head. "With more than 500 applications each year for 50 admission slots, we also have outstanding students who are motivated and interested in advancing best practices in occupational therapy."

Wood's department, part of the College of Health and Human Sciences, was designated a "Program of Excellence" by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. It offers two master's programs and admitted its first doctoral candidates in Fall 2013.

Among its many program offerings, the OT department's New Start program is among the most notable. Established in 2013 with the help of a $1.5 million gift, the program's New Start program is among the most notable.

"The tools required for good health can be taught, and that's what I'm here to do," said Lipsey. "We are in the business of changing the culture of how firefighters approach their health. Most people think we're just going to tell them to exercise and eat right. While those habits are important, our assessment encompasses so much more," Lipsey said.

"About half of all heart attacks have no preceding symptoms. Individuals who feel and look healthy may still be at risk of having a heart attack. That's why we screen heart health assessment is so important. By the time each firefighter completes the testing, we can gauge their risk of heart disease, metabolic issues such as diabetes, and other issues – and tell them how to maximize their lifestyle and habits for optimum health, or make sure they seek immediate medical attention."

Each firefighter completes two tests of the HPCR. "Tests include measuring blood parameters, body fat, blood pressure, pulmonary function, flexibility, and muscle strength and endurance. Firefighters also undergo maxi- mum treadmill ECG tests that are reviewed on the spot by a cardiologist to identify heart-related concerns. After testing, the firefighter receives a comprehensive results summary and health action plan during a follow-up session. In addition to the tests at CSU, Lipsey travels to fire stations to conduct test- ing and provides follow-up sessions."

Lipsey cited several instances when firefighters believed they were in good health only to leave testing with life-saving information. In one case, life-threatening heart abnormalities were discovered in a seemingly healthy firefighter. This likely saved his life, as the firefighter soon underwent open heart surgery with six bypasses.

Lipsey called for the importance of good health only to leave testing with life-saving information. In one case, life-threatening heart abnormalities were discovered in a seemingly healthy firefighter. This likely saved his life, as the firefighter soon underwent open heart surgery with six bypasses.

"I love to empower people to be the best they can be, and having good health is a huge part of that," Lipsey said. "The tools required for good health can be taught, and that's what I'm here to do."

"It has been exciting to witness the growth of the HPCR's outreach to firefighter health under Tiffany's leadership," said Magic Israel, chair of the Department of Health and Exercise Science. For more information on the services available to the public, contact Lipsey at (970) 491-3842 or visit hes.chhs.colostate.edu/research.

Excellence defined

Tiffany Lipsey, right, tests a firefighter candidate's fitness as part of an evaluation in CSU's Human Performance Clinical/Research Lab.
Fermentation studies from Appam to Zha cai
BY MICHAEL PAGLIASSOTTI, HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND HUMAN NUTRITION

Fermented foods and beverages are all around us: cheese, tea, sake, beer, Appam (pancake made with fermented rice batter) and Zha cai (preserved “pickled” vegetables). The science behind the production of these foods and beverages, and understanding the organisms involved in fermentation, are the foundation of a new undergraduate major in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Colorado State University.

The new major, fermentation science and technology, will prepare students for employment in industries that utilize fermentation in food and beverage production, provide research opportunities that range from external fermentation of food and beverages to intestinal organisms that facilitate digestion and influence health. In addition, the new major will provide experiential learning opportunities for students, such as internships, both on- and off-campus.

Colorado State University, through the new fermentation science and technology major in the College of Health and Human Sciences, has taken a giant step in making our state a leader in fermentation science education.

To learn more about the program, see fermentation.colostate.edu.

Social work researchers find placement with kin a good option for children in need
BY SHANNON DALE

In the last 10 years, the Social Work Research Center, housed in the School of Social Work within CSU’s College of Health and Human Sciences, has conducted innovative research that has yielded significant enhancements to local and national social work practice. Dr. Marc Winsor, Ph.D., Assistant Director Helen Holmquist-Johnson, Ph.D., and Statistics/Methodologist Rebecca Orsi, Ph.D., operate the center with a focus on providing data-driven results for social work interventions and programs.

The SWRC is best known for its research on kinship care, a term referring to children placed with grandparents or another family member when the parents are unable to care for them. Through extensive study of the latest research and a published Colorado-based study, the SWRC has found that children in kinship care have fewer behavioral problems, fewer mental health disorders, better well-being, and less placement disruption than do children in foster care.

“[There has been an increase in Colorado in the placement of children with kin],” says Winsor. “We have probably contributed to this trend through our work with state and county child welfare agencies in providing them with evidence that this pathway is safe and effective.”

Working with the Campbell and Cochrane Collaborations has brought international recognition for the SWRC. By analyzing more than 20 years of research on kinship care, SWRC compiled the best available evidence into one systematic review. This has been especially helpful for child welfare practitioners who are more likely to read an easily accessible source for the latest research on kinship care than sort through the research on their own.

The SWRC is happy to announce its most recent grant, which provides funding to evaluate Colorado’s Title IV-E Waiver Program from 2013-2018. With 43 counties across the state participating, the grant provides valuable funding for counties to test new approaches to delivering services to the community.

The project is just getting started, but we are excited to evaluate child welfare interventions that provide kinship support, family engagement, permanency roundtables, trauma screening, and trauma treatments,” says Winsor.

Nutrition Research for your life
The Kendall Anderson Nutrition Center offers affordable services to the community including:

• Nutrition Counseling
• Body Composition
• Resting Metabolic Rate Testing
• Group Programs in Weight Management and Dining with Diabetes
• Cooking Classes: Gluten-Free Dining Series Offered Spring 2014

Pair of interior design alumnae create Otter-iffic office spaces
BY TRACY KILE SCHWARTZ

Colorado State University’s Department of Design and Merchandising, which challenges its interior design students to develop unique and inspiring projects preparing them for the expectations of companies seeking bold new twists to interior spaces.

Nancy Richardson (housing and interior environment, ’82), and Laura Arledge (interior design, ’98) put an exciting spin on spaces in the OtterBox corporate headquarters in Fort Collins. The building boasts a spiraling metal slide where employees, fondly referred to as “Otters,” can live out the playfulness of their namesake.

Richardson, co-founder of OtterBox and president of the Otter Care Foundation, believes a company’s culture serves as a vital inspiration for its employees. It should be reflected in the designs found in any corporate headquarters including OtterBox’s buildings. “Space affects productivity and happiness,” she said. “Interior design is the canvas that expresses who we are. Everything here reflects our values and our culture.”

This passion for creating functional and fun spaces developed during Richardson’s time at Colorado State University. This sentiment is also shared by her fellow alumna, Arledge, who serves as lead designer for Blue Ocean Enterprises, which manages OtterBox’s campus in Fort Collins, as well as other facilities in China and Ireland.

Arledge appreciates the real-world technology she learned during her time at CSU, which she was able to apply immediately in her career. “I also learned how to be deadline-driven towards a tangible end result,” she said.

With a laugh, Richardson explained, “In my day, technology was a scale and a pencil.” Stephanie Clemons, professor of interior design in the College of Health and Human Sciences at CSU, noted that today, students use the most current versions of interior design software, including hands-on experience with programs like Revit, making them marketable to big firms immediately upon graduation.

Richardson’s educational push wasn’t always headed toward design. “The whole CSU experience unlocked my realization of my creativity,” she said. “In my junior year, I switched upon graduation.

Richardson’s educational push wasn’t always headed toward design. “The whole CSU experience unlocked my realization of my creativity,” she said. “In my junior year, I switched to design, and I loved it. I went for it!”

Once she found her niche in interior design, she loved going to classes. “The impact of finding her chosen field has stayed with her through the years, as her appreciation for what she got out of CSU. “I feel educated and confident, she said.

In school, Arledge acknowledges that she found her passion for interior design, but wasn’t sure how it would impact the world. By reflecting company values of engagement and giving back to the community, “we are encouraged to create a positive impact on society through design. We have the opportunity to really make a difference here,” said Arledge. “The excitement is contagious.”

Clemons, who taught Arledge while she studied at CSU, brought her back into the classroom recently for a special collaboration with interior design students through an OtterBox project. OtterBox presented the class with space parameters and guidelines for a current construction project in Fort Collins that will include offices and a restaurant. Students participated in a design charrette activity, in which they worked in groups to quickly brainstorm and design possible interior layouts and space plans for the building.

Both Richardson and Arledge have spent time presenting to students in Interior Design about the OtterBox headquarters design.

Reflecting on her recent visit and her years at CSU, Richardson said, “You never know where your life path will take you. For me, the design path continues to direct my life.”