

"Helping youth empower themselves through education and cultural identity."

Gateways for incarcerated youth



Issue Editors: Alex Southworth & Tony Zaragoza Volume 2 Issue N° 1 — February 2010

Year of Challenges, Year of Continued Success

By Tony Zaragoza

Despite numerous challenges (we won't go into detail but these include: grants ending, tuition increases, budget cuts, and losing staff, among others), the Gateways for Incarcerated Youth program continues to thrive. Gateways offers Evergreen students the opportunity to be peer learners with incarcerated young men in two maximum-security institutions. The college classes and cultural diversity workshops have been full again fall & winter quarters and in the college class the incarcerated students and Evergreen students are working together in a research-centered course. At Green Hill the students chose to focus on the history of music and at Maple Lane on law and criminal justice. Through our Challenge Program we offer one-to-one peer mentoring for incarcerated students. The cultural groups continue to thrive at Green Hill and are once again growing at Maple Lane. Through these combined efforts the program is committed to public service and community partnerships.

Last school year, Gateways raised money and paid the 2-credit tuition for a total of 72 credits aiding a total of 24 students. This growth has continued over the 2009-10 school year. 32 Evergreen students worked in the college classes and several helped to support the cultural groups. Last school year, through the efforts of Samantha Franks, over 20 incarcerated youth had one-on-one educational partners with over 20 community and student volunteers serving as these partners. Samantha is now working with the Cultural Groups and helping with fundraising while Aaron Lee continues the work of the Challenge Program.

We recently received some good news from the Provost's Office that the incarcerated students we work with will receive two-credit tuition waivers for the rest of this year up to \$10,000 and next year up to \$20,000. This means roughly 27

two-credit waivers for incarcerated students this year and 48 two-credit waivers for next year. We already have 17 incarcerated students receiving these waivers this quarter. Gateways also received a funding match for the two Americorps positions (Samantha & Aaron's) we are using to get by in lieu of a program manager. We appreciate this short-term assistance as we look for longer-term financial support. We want to thank all those who supported us in our request for tuition waivers.

Thanks to the leadership of Emily Sladek fifteen performers came to ML and GH from July 08-July 09. Performances range from Aztec Dancers to a Jewish Klezmer band to a Filipino Drill Team. Over 1200 youth attended these performances. The Cultural Evenings began at ML and GH in 2003 and until this year performances have been held every month for the last six years! Emily Sladek continues on as a volunteer and integral member of the Gateways staff.

Ellen Shortt Sanchez, the director of Evergreen's Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA), has been an enormous help as we face our challenges, develop and grow. As part of our meetings and strategic planning, Ellen has offered her wisdom, experience and guidance. The CCBLA has, through her leadership, offered Gateways a home enabling us to solidify our work. She helps get us represented and connected on campus and off, while also mentoring students and staff, and aiding in the upcoming transition between faculty.

Tony Zaragoza has worked as a faculty for Gateways over the last five years, full time for the last two, but will move over next year to make room for faculty who have committed to work in the yearlong college class over the next years: 2010-11: Chico Herbison, 2011-12: Arun Chandra, 2012-13: Savvina Chowdury. *(Continued on Page 8)*

Gateways Staff: Ellen Shortt-Sanchez-Director, Center for Community Based Learning & Action, Tony Zaragoza-College Class Faculty, Chico Herbison-College Class Faculty 2010-11, Samantha Franks-Cultural Groups Liaison, Aaron Lee-Challenge Program Coordinator, Emily Sladek-Advisor, Carol Minugh (Retired)-Founder, Dreamer & Schemer.

Writer & Activist Luis J. Rodriguez Visits

By Tony Zaragoza

This fall writer and activist Luis J. Rodriguez visited Green Hill and Maple Lane. Rodriguez is most widely-known for his memoir *Always Running*, which is about his early life and involvement in gangs and his eventual leaving gang life behind to pursue a life as a writer and activist. Rodriguez has also written several volumes of poetry, a novel, a collection of short stories as well as a Gateways favorite, *Hearts and Hands: creating community in violent times*.

Rodriguez gave poetry workshops to the Gateways College Class, spoke to the Cultural Diveristy Workshop, and gave a talk to the student body of Green Hill School. At the talk he emphasized five tools for keeping one's life on track: 1) find your art, 2) find your spiritual path, 3) find your cause (something beyond yourself), 4) find help (we can't do it totally alone), and 5) own your life (be in charge and control of yourself—own up to your mistakes and enjoy your successes). He did various exercises with us to help us work on our poems and gave us advice about how to approach writing. We've included one of the poems Rodriguez wrote in the exercise and in this newsletter are additional poems from the incarcerated youth.

In addition to his work with incarcerated students, Rodriguez offered public talks at Evergreen campuses in Olympia and Tacoma, as well as classroom visits to Evergreen programs, and the keynote address at the NW National Association of Chicana and Chicano Scholars Regional Conference.

Five-Minute Poem During Writing Workshop

*There is a green floor where we stand,
a memory of grass, of a field, of nature unadorned.
Wild, free, I'm thinking of a kid running
down a grassy slope, falling, getting up,
doing somersaults, getting grass stains,
dirt on hair, leaves on clothes.*

*The green floor is fake, unreal
a symbol of outside,
inside it's a remembrance
of what used to be.*

*Too many things are symbols,
representative, no longer
what is nature, what is blue with smells.*

Sometimes the symbol becomes all we remember.



Luis J. Rodriguez (left) visited Green Hill and Maple Lane. His visit was made possible by MEChA de Evergreen, Gateways, numerous academic programs and academic deans. Thanks to all who made his visit possible. (Photo courtesy of Luis Rodriguez).

Gateways Cultural Group Activity Updates

By Samantha Franks

Green Hill:

The Chicano Group at Green Hill currently has 14 youth involved. They are working on painting a mural that encompasses iconic images of Mexican leaders. They hope to finish and present this mural during their Cinco De Maya performance. We would like to welcome Anthony Lewis as a new Co-Facilitator.

The African American group hosted a dialogue on Martin Luther King Jr. Day where they presented multiple video clips of black leaders and posed questions to the audience to answer and discuss. They are preparing for the Black History Month performance which will be held on February

25th. They have been working with Papa Secks on a drum routine and will perform for the youth at the institution.

The Native American group currently has eight youth involved they hold regular sweats on Sundays at Green Hill.

The Asian Pacific Islander group currently has seven youth involved, the group is working on a Chinese new years event.

Maple Lane:

The Chicano group is currently studying Spanish language, Aztec history, and the Mexican revolution.

(Continued on Page 8)

Organize your team now for the 2nd annual Gateways for Incarcerated Youth kickball tournament!



Coming to a field near you late spring quarter 2010. All proceeds go to continued support of incarcerated youth.

Collected Poems. Written by incarcerated young men at Green Hill and Maple Lane Schools.

Untitled.

George Staten

If heaven was a mile away
I'd probably pack my bags
And go back home.
Cus there's bad in this world,
No matter where you're from,
Suburbs to slums
The ghettos infested wit guns
Do drive bys and use suburban trucks to run,
The high class society is against drugs
But when they go to rehab

I am

By Darryl Bankston

I'm a boy writing of my pain.
I'm a person living a life of shame.
I'm your son hiding my depression.
I'm your brother, make a good impression.
I'm your friend acting like I'm fine.
I'm a wisher wishing this life weren't mine.
I'm a boy thinking of suicide.
I'm a teenager pushing his tears aside.
I'm a student who doesn't have a clue I'm the
boy dating you.
I'm the one asking you to take care.
I'm your boyfriend hoping you'll be there.

Cold Steel Chain

By Justin Marsh

*Cold steel chain
clanking in
showers
to the rhythm
that is
the equivalent
of a prisoners
heartbeat.
Cold steel chain
grinding down
the asphalt
in haste
to meet
a prison cell.
Cold steel chain
sweating in the
sun but never
sees the stars.
Cold steel chain
waited in
the blistering cold
for a better life.*

Dad

By Antwon Reche

I really miss you.
Most times I need a tissue cause I get stuck on this issue.
How could you leave me?
Did you not mean it when you said you love me?
I remember how you used to hold me and now it's just a distant
memory.
Now there's a feeling of hostility about how you abandoned me.
Now it's just a fantasy, what would my life be like if I were your
priority?
Yes, I love mommy but she'll never understand me like you
daddy.
It's the kid in me that finds it necessary to tell you how I feel.
My emotions.
The ones I tried to kill but they still live cause they're far too
strong.
Tell me; is it wrong to have waited this long?
Just to tell you that I miss you and;
Most times I need a tissue cause I get stuck on this issue.
How can you abandon someone who is kin to you?
Don't worry I don't hate you,
I just pray that God blesses you.
DAD.

Conformity

By Tyler Burrow

I wake up to conformed solitude. The sun shines but it's out of my grasp. Many more years before I can touch the sweet fibers of my Kentucky bluegrass. Perfect blades stand so tall and so proud in the wind sway in sweet harmony making me think their glory will be short lived for on them run the dogs and children play for who will get to the ball faster.

Home Away From Home

By Joseph Sims

The place I feel safest is home away from home.
Living with a best friend,
That's like a brother, -ensures that I will never be alone-
Someone to also watch your back and
Shown that we have grown
Now I'm more light hearted
And know that I'm never on my own.
Home away from home-
And family that has always grown.

Leadership

By Rory Chaten

I'm a leader because
My minds more focused on how I walk
Than others urges for me to talk
I move swift but smooth while my mind's
Steady
So I don't face the consequences for makin a decision
when I really wasn't ready.
I learn from my mistakes, not letting
Them damage my self-respect or pride
Mixing everything in a pot that's gone
Wrong and use it to build a bigger stride,
Instead of letting staff knock me down
I bandage the bruises and keep movin,
No cave for being judged
I can't be stopped
Can't be stopped
I'm a leader because for generations
It's been in my blood.

This spring, look for a new Gateways book featuring poems, artwork, and prose by incarcerated youth. All proceeds will go to supporting incarcerated young men at Green Hill and Maple Lane Schools.

Life in My Hands

By George Staten

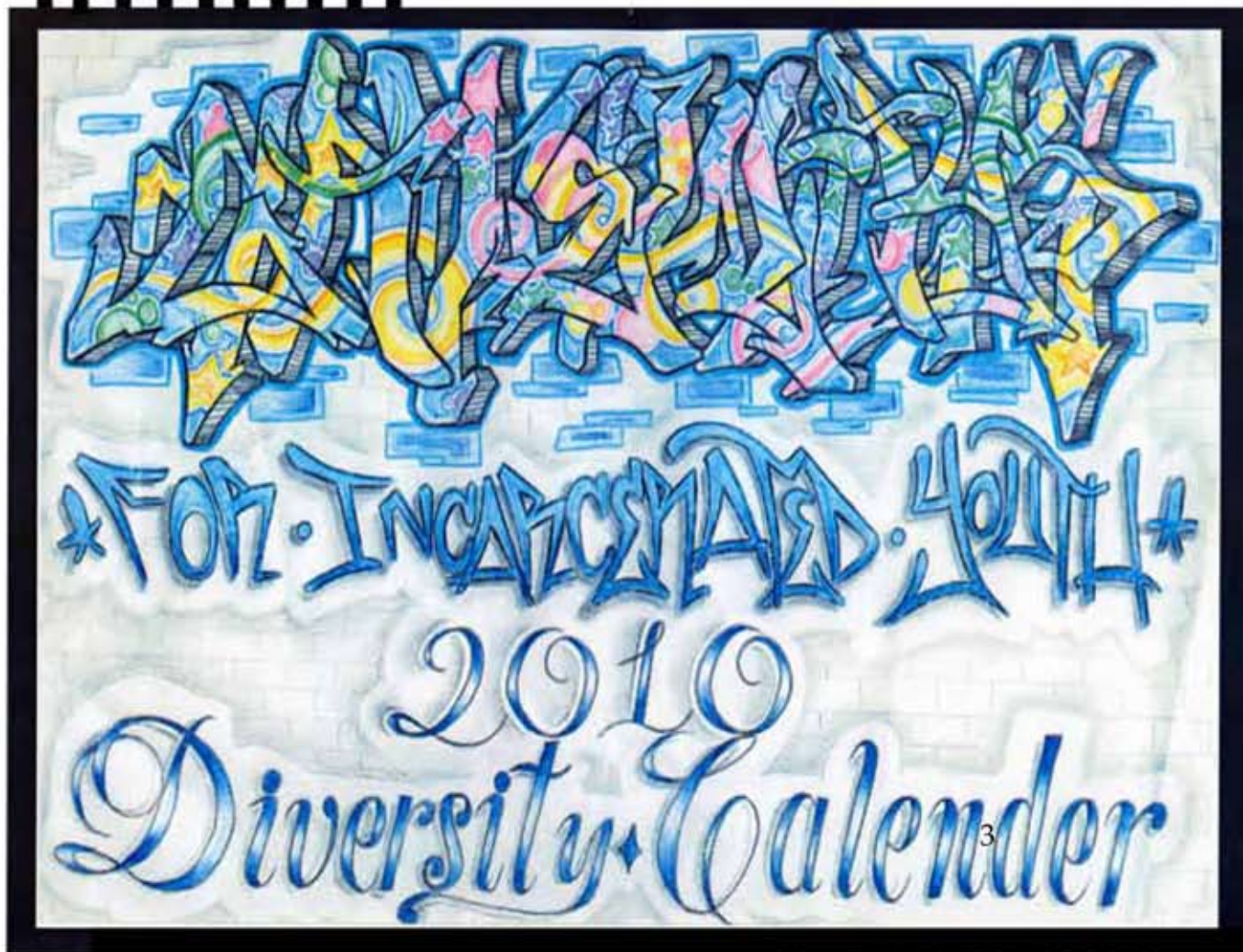
Life starts with I
Who says I shall
Not go on
In this world,
Who says I don't
Deserve a beautiful
Girl
God has showed me
A plan to have a
Better life,
God gave me a
Choice
Right or wrong
I shall not
Think twice.
My future starts
New.
Thanks to a
Special woman who
Is an inspirational
Motivator and supporter,
The miracle adversary,
I ponder,
If I can help?... I wonder.
I was once blind
But now I can see,
The shining light
From an Angel.
That God has
Sent to me.
Only time can tell
What destiny holds
The rest is up to me
To look under the folds
Life is in my hands.

The End.

There is still time!

Pick up your 2010 Gateways Diversity Calendar

**in the CCBLA (SEM II) today
for a discounted donation!**



**Featuring artwork and poems
by incarcerated youth from**

Green Hill and Maple Lane Schools.

**All proceeds go to the continued support of
incarcerated youth.**

2009 Gateways-JRA Retreat a Great Success

By Aaron Lee

Each year Gateways invites staff from Green Hill and Maple Lane Schools to participate in a retreat and training. This year Dalya Perez and Norma Alicia Pino from Academic Advising and First Peoples here at Evergreen graciously donated their time, energy, and skills to facilitate the day's workshops and plan the event that took place in the Long House at Evergreen. The day started with a welcoming and update about Gateways and gave new incoming faculty as well as current Gateways staff and faculty a chance to speak about the importance of the program at Evergreen. In attendance were the 2010-11 faculty Chico Herbison and 2012-13 faculty Savvina Chowdhury both of whom spoke to the importance of the program and their excitement about being a part of it in the coming years. This year we were able to welcome Naselle Youth Camp to the retreat in addition to Maple Lane and Green Hill Schools.

This year Dalya and Norma Alicia planed a day centered on helping staff at the Intuitions learn the skills necessary to facilitate youth driven and directed Culture Groups at the intuitions.

Through a variety of exercises and workshops Gateways and JRA staff worked together to learn the nuts and bolts of facilitating workshops with the youth and how to implement youth driven agendas and programs in the Intuitions. The day saw much humor, including one exercise where participants were asked to go cheek to cheek with varying responses. After some good laughing it was time to debrief about how to use the exercise with the youth and brainstorm ideas around how to change and adapt similar exercises for use at the intuitions.

During the lunch break the rest of the campus community was invited to share lunch with Gateways and JRA staff and talk about their experiences with Gateways. Don Bantz and Julie Slone came as well as a number of community members, current Challenge Partners and members from this years College Class. This was yet another opportunity for everyone involved to see the importance and support of Gateways not only at Evergreen but in Olympia as well with members of CYS coming out and speaking about the importance of Gateways and the ways in which we work together.



Gateways for Incarcerated Youth and JRA staff attended a workshop hosted by Gateways and First Peoples Advising at The Evergreen State College Longhouse in Olympia, WA on November 19, 2009. (Photo by Emily Sladek)

Challenge Program Continues to Thrive

By Aaron Lee

The Challenge Program saw many successes with Samantha Franks last year; due to her hard work and diligence in recruiting volunteers from Evergreen and the surrounding Olympia communities we started the 2009-2010 school year with 10 returning mentors; more than double the total of mentors for the 07-08 year. Interest in the program is growing with more and more people wanting to be involved with the Challenge Program. Three Info Sessions have been held and have been instrumental in recruiting new volunteers for the program. These will continue to happen every other week on Wednesday at 4:00 PM each quarter for the rest of the academic year.

This year also saw Challenge Partners taking on more and more responsibility, from logging extra hours and fundraising to helping Gateways Faculty, Tony Zaragoza, design and implement a college level math contract for the youth based on the Algebra Project curriculum. Other mentors continue to work with youth on getting ready to enter college as well as completing high school or studying for the GED, SAT and ACT tests. Special thanks go to Alvina Wong, Jamie Bartels, Ben Groves and Maylin Urbon for dedicating extra time to working with their partners. Alvina is working with two partners while also helping out the Asian Pacific Islander Culture Group at Green Hill. Jamie and Ben have and continue to be instrumental in organizing and implementing the math class at Green Hill, with Maylin they have each spent close to 12 hours a week at the intuition and countless hours designing and planning the content. Alexander Southworth has also stepped up and continues to not

Cultural Groups

(Continued from Page 2)

The African American group meets on Fridays. They are working on a two day performance for black history month where they will "dance through the times," showing different historical African American dances.

The Asian Pacific Islander Group meets on Fridays. They performed the xoca for the talent show intimidating the audience with the warrior dance. They are currently designing a group flag.

The Native American Group held a Gathering of Nations, where they invited the youth of Maple Lane to watch a power-point and a drum performance by the Cowlitz Tribe. At the end of the performance the Tribe gifted them a Grandfather Drum. They hold sweats every third Tuesday.

only put in extra hours with his challenge partners but also to help fund raise for Gateways by tabling at this years Fall Arts Walk in the cold and rain. All the Challenge Partners dedicate themselves fully to working with their partners, without them there would be no Challenge Program.

Interest in Gateways is starting to spread to other campuses with Evergreen Tacoma and South Puget Sound Community College requesting more information about the Challenge Program and Gateways in general. Gateways has been asked to speak to an SPSCC class on criminology about the Challenge Program and about our experiences working with incarcerated youth. In all, despite the hardships we are facing Gateways and the Challenge Program continue to thrive.



Challenge Partners Trevor and Harold (above) work together at Green Hill School in February 2009 (Photo by Alex Southworth)

Continued Success

(Continued from Page 1)

Other faculty have committed to teach in subsequent years but we are still finalizing the schedule.

Despite any setbacks we have experienced over the last year, Gateways will continue in its mission to provide educational opportunities for incarcerated students and strengthen notions of self and community through cultural awareness and empowerment. You too can become part of this important work. The Gateways 2010 calendars are still available. The calendars feature drawings and writing of incarcerated youth. You can get yours at the CCBLA. For more information on how you can get involved or how your donations can help our work please contact the Gateways office at 867-5633. Don't forget the 2nd annual Kickball Tournament coming up toward the end of spring quarter. You can organize a team or we can put you on one. It's a lot of fun and all proceeds will go to support the incarcerated students.