

Gateways for Incarcerated Youth

Issue 1

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Issue Editor: Tony Zaragoza

Announcing the Gateways Newsletter

The Gateways for Incarcerated Youth Program is happy to announce the arrival of our newsletter. We hope the newsletter will keep us connected with the extended Gateways family including supporters and staff in JRA, at Green Hill, Maple Lane, Evergreen, and Grays Harbor, as well as alumni and friends across the state and country. We'd like to use the opportunity provided by the newsletter to keep you informed about what is happening in the program, but we'd also like to hear from you. Write to us at zaragozt@evergreen.edu or at the address on the back of this newsletter.

In this first issue, we bring you greetings from our new program manager José Gutierrez, a note from Ellen Shortt-Sanchez director of Center for Community Based Learning and Action, some of our recent successes, a review of this quarter's college class seminar book, and a description of our programs. Enjoy!



José Gutierrez, Emily Sladek, Tony Zaragoza, Ellen Shortt-Sanchez, Carol Minugh Photo: Heidi Stygar

Gateways: Empowerment, Philosophy & Freedom

By José S. Gutierrez, Jr., Gateways Program Manager

Greetings:

My name is José S. Gutierrez Jr. I am honored and privileged to serve The Gateways for Incarcerated Youth Program. Gateways encourages pursuit of knowledge and creative thought and empowers our youth to explore the process of earning freedom both physically and mentally.

An important segment of our community is in need of support, empathy and encouragement. It is of great importance today, that

we serve our outstanding young people – especially the brilliant ones who may not know of their greatness. The ones who have been exposed to our world without adequate support from elders, the ones who have made mistakes without being taught that they can also create better options and ways to live.

Gateways' vision is to provide an empowering environment and support system that will engage young people's minds so

that they tap into their talent, identity and self-worth. Through Gateways' popular-education based programs, we will continue partnering with our outstanding teammates at the juvenile institutions, in the community, at our institutions of higher education and with YOU to be a positive factor in the lives of youth! Part of my three-year plan involves a greater effort to invite the contribution of new partners and organizations. My vision includes the expansion of Gateways to

focus on serving, supporting and empowering female youth, whose incarceration rate is alarming.

Again, thank you for this opportunity and privilege to introduce myself. Your demonstration of confidence, support, faith and action are necessary factors that draw our young people and communities to paths of success!

*Respectfully,
José S. Gutierrez Jr.
Gateways*

The CCBLA: A Home for Gateways at Evergreen

By Ellen Shortt-Sanchez, Director Center for Community Based Learning and Action

The Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA) is the public service center at Evergreen that houses Gateways for Incarcerated Youth. We address social issues while strengthening and enhancing student experience by supporting our community's ability to meet critical needs. As a 1999 Evergreen report states, "Community Based Learning enables students to apply their knowledge in concrete situations, to solve problems in partnership with the community...and gives faculty and staff the opportunity to build long-term community relationships which continually inform and strengthen the curriculum...and places the college as a progressive force deeply involved in community work." Gateways for Incarcerated Youth represents one of Evergreen's strongest campus-community partnerships. This incredible collaboration offers youth who have often not had access to positive learning environments a chance through education.

Gateways Staff: José Gutierrez–Program Manager, Ellen Shortt-Sanchez–Director Center for Community Based Learning and Action, Carol Minugh–Founder and Dreamer & Scheemer, Tony Zaragoza–College Class Faculty, Samantha Franks–Challenge Program Coordinator, Astra Martin–Challenge Assistant Coordinator, Emily Sladek–Cultural Evening Program Coordinator, Kathleen O'Brian–Internet Class Study Leader.

Gateways for Incarcerated Youth

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Gateways Programs

Cultural Identity Groups offer participants the opportunity to learn more about their cultural heritage while bonding with others of similar backgrounds. Gateways provides program support to staff with a strong commitment to cultural diversity. Gateways subscribes to the philosophy that when an individual is secure in their identity and proud of their heritage they are able to be more accepting of others.

College Class offer residents the opportunity to work with teachers and students from The Evergreen State College. Evergreen students work as co-learners with residents on a weekly basis. Students read and discuss a college level text, write response papers, and engage in a positive peer relationship.

Diversity Workshop Through small and large group discussions and interactive workshops, students are challenged to participate and learn from multicultural activities to better understand others while further developing their own identities and social skills.

Gateways Challenge Program provides Educational Partners for residents to engage in academic planning, tutoring, goals setting, life skills, pre-college testing, pre-college classes, building self-esteem and critical thinking skills.

Monthly Cultural Evening takes place once per month and is open to the entire campus. The performances and presentations provided by the cultural evening are intended to entertain, educate, and enhance the audiences understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

Associate of Arts Degree Program at Green Hill is taught as a hybrid distance learning program that allows Green Hill students to enroll in full time courses online through Grays Harbor Community College. The curriculum is fast paced, challenging and collaborative with excellent faculty who are student-centered.

What's happening?

by Carol Minugh, Gateways founder and dreamer and schemer

Things are exciting at the Gateways office. The new project Manager José Gutierrez was hired in September to manage the programs and lead the Gateways staff. Samantha Frank came on as the Americorps volunteer and volunteer coordinator for the Challenge Program. Haley Lowe left us for a position at Region 6 Parole. Tony Zaragoza became the faculty for the Diversity and College programs at Maple Lane and Green Hill. Carol continues in her position of "Dreamer and Screamer." Ellen Shortt-Sanchez, Director of The Center for Community Based Learning and Action, oversees all of the community based programs including Gateways. Emily Sladek has continued to make the cultural evenings an opportunity for local performers to share their talents with the youth at Maple Lane and Green Hill—a greatly appreciated service. The volunteers led by Astra's example and dedication are the backbone of the program. Their commitment to being there for the youth is invaluable to the program. The evaluation process is underway and by the end of this year we should have solid data on the programs successes.

José is a manager who looks to the future of the Gateways program and how youth will be able to succeed in the world when they are released. Samantha brings her exuberance into the office with her special dance and "Awesome!!" when things are moving the way she wants them. Tony's commitment to students and learning is something to behold, "Is there enough time in the day to do all the things he does?" Carol is doggedly trying to find funding for the programs. The team is great and we look forward to the work of Gateways.

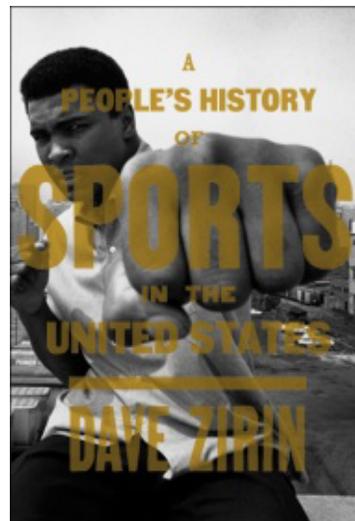
The culture programs at Green Hill completed this years' garden project with an annual Harvest dinner coming primarily from the garden. The cultural Coordinators Butch, Gus, Mike S, Tony, Ben and Mike G. continue to do a fantastic job of facilitating the groups and empowering the young men to build on their strengths.

Gateways will become a teenager this spring, 13 years of engaging Evergreen students and incarcerated youth in supportive education and empowerment.

College Class Book Review: Only a Game?

by Jai, Rory, & Tavonne

Zirin, Dave. *People's history of sports in the United States*. The New Press, 2008.



Sports only a game? Dave Zirin obviously thinks otherwise. His new book *A People's History of Sports*, examines the intersection of sports and politics. He offers an account of the struggles of North America's

oppressed, starting with Choc-taws playing lacrosse, slave games in the South, the struggles of women and gay athletes, and reaching all the way forward to a critique of Michael Jordan and his failure to use his fame to take any stance on social issues.

We have been reading this book in our college class. We recommend it to those who enjoy politics, sports, or history in general. The book first caught many of our attentions because our love of sports. In the end we all learned more than what we had expected. We read about the connections between sports economics, politics, religion and racism and the effects on society.

Before we read this book many of us had no specific idea why Muhammad Ali would be on the cover. Zirin gives a detailed explanation why, as well as the story behind Ali's strong fight for freedom, justice, and equality.

This book gives a whole new view on sports, and it helped us realize how today's sports came

to be. It talks about blacks fighting for acknowledgement, and the same for all women. Common thought has you believing that Jackie Robinson was the first African American baseball player and not Moses Fleetwood who played almost 50 years before Robinson. It is an influential book because it helps those who are interested in sports understand the struggle of those who have been silenced. For example, Martina Navratilova was a tennis player who was not silent about the sexism and homophobia in the sports world.

This book helped us realize how sports came about and how they changed, as well as how sports affect us today. A lot of powerful people came from sports and a lot of powerful movements come from athletes that chose to speak out.

We highly recommend this book to you!

Thanks to Dave Zirin for writing to us with answers to our questions as we read his book.