



VISTA leads work to improve engagement with minority communities

Christian McCleary recently joined SPCLC as an Adult Literacy VISTA. His service project is to better engage communities of color, specifically African Americans, in the pursuit of Adult Basic Education. This will include building an ethnic-specific mentoring program.

Christian has begun meeting with many member agencies, observing classes, and reaching out to or visiting external community agencies such as NDCAD and Ujamaa Place to solicit advice and feedback on the project.



He plans to meet with students and staff to find out what makes a positive impact in student success for those who are least likely to persist in education. He will do so by facilitating focus groups and activities.

From there he will work with the Minnesota Literacy Council to develop a training for potential volunteer mentors.

Christian moved here from Maryland just a couple weeks ago, and is so far enjoying his time in Minnesota! He is a former GED student himself, and served a year helping with the Conservation Corps in Maryland. He is dedicated to the education of both youth and adults, and has repeatedly said how excited he is to be here with us. It will be great to see his perseverance pay off, especially since we have quite a few students who have had to stop out but are now returning.

“College Yes!” extends college prep for recent high school graduates

HUBBS Center is expanding their College Readiness Academy services this fall. "College Yes!" already has about 30 students enrolled in this new initiative, designed to serve recent English language learner high school graduates from St. Paul Public Schools who need to improve their academic skills in preparation for college.

“The program serves students who are recent graduates from city high schools, but don’t have adequate college skills, are under 24, and are interested in college,” said Hubbs Supervisor Scott Hall. “It’s a four-hour class, five days a week. They concentrate on academic reading and writing, teaching to the

CCRS standards. The class will become a cohort, learning together but allowing for differentiation as needed.”

Teacher Janet Sparks said, “The main purpose of the curriculum is to increase their literacy so that they will not only do better on the Accuplacer, but will be better prepared to succeed in college, in general. They need exposure to more complex text and to learn how to delve into dense, informational pieces and extract evidence to use in their verbal and written answers.”

“Additionally, I incorporate digital literacy with students regularly opening assignments that are sent via email, browsing websites for research purposes, creating/editing/sharing Google Docs and preparing and giving presentations using Google slide and Powerpoint,” she added.

Scott noted that the recent school experience of the students is an advantage: “Since they’re right out of high school, they know how to ‘do school.’ They want homework, and attendance has been really good so far. Our aim is to get them to a point where they can go into a CRA Tier 1 or 2 class. The majority right now are Karen students, and some Somali. They’re very motivated.” Hubbs plans to start a similar class in the evening, which would also serve students with high school diplomas from other countries.

Janet summarized, “What excites me about this class is the fact that it is new -- I love breaking new ground. I am thrilled to be teaching high school graduates. A lot of the skills that are necessary to being a good student (being prepared with supplies, knowing how to study, to take notes, to complete homework) are not new to them and they are already demonstrating these strengths. I’m so looking forward to seeing this cohort through the 2016-2017 school year!”



“College Yes!” students at Hubbs.

Adult Diploma Update

The Adult Diploma program at Hubbs continues to develop. Amy Stotzheim, who handles advising for the program, said “Currently, we have about 20 active students and will be adding more in the next couple of weeks. The interest is definitely there, but it is a big commitment and it is hard to complete with the lowering of GED scores and availability of free tests.”

She added, “We are lucky to have the creative, knowledgeable, and motivating teachers we have working on ADP. They’ve created some incredible lesson plans and projects that are CCRS aligned and digestible for the students. Because of the teachers, we have had 8 complete since we have started and more are in-process.”

Amy discussed one student’s experience: “Omar is a prime example of the obstacles of being an adult learner. He started out very strong, but had to cut back because of work and then was unable to attend altogether because of work. He only recently was able to return for a refresh in math so he could pass the GED Math to complete that competency. Omar was also an ideal candidate because he had almost all of his credits from high school but didn’t pass the CA grad exams and needed math credits.”