

Curse of the Starving Class



"See, I always figured on the future. I banked on it. I was banking on it getting better. ... I figured that's why everyone wants you to buy things. Buy refrigerators. Buy cars, house, lots, invest. They wouldn't be so generous if they didn't figure you had it comin' in. At some point it had to be comin' in." –Weston, *Curse of the Starving Class*

Clark College Theatre opens its 2013-14 season with a mordant examination of American aspiration, *Curse of the Starving Class* by Sam Shepard. Winner of the 1976-77 Obie Award for best new American play, this is a major work by one of theatre's most respected and



celebrated writers. The

production is directed by Mark Owsley and runs Nov. 8 – 23.

At once dark and absurdist, comic and challenging, *Curse of the Starving Class* focuses on the dysfunctional Tate clan—the drunken dreamer of a father, burned-out mother, rebellious teenage daughter, and idealistic son—as they struggle for control of the rundown family farm in a futile search for freedom, security, and ultimately meaning in their lives. Clark College Theatre Program Director Gene Biby says, “Given the recent economic crisis, the issues raised in this drama are as relevant today as they were 35 years ago.”



Cast includes Derek J. Neiman (Weston), Emily Wells (Ella), Katie Lindstrom (Emma), Nicholas Detering (Wesley), and Andy Houseman (Taylor). Production includes nudity, strong language, and adult themes.

Show Dates: November 8, 9, 15, 16, 21, 22, and 23. All show times are at 7:30 p.m. November 16, there will also be a 2:00 p.m. matinee.

Ticket Information: Students (with ID) \$9; Alumni (with membership) \$9; Senior Citizens \$11; General Admission \$13. Tickets may be purchased in person at the Clark College Bookstore in Gaiser Hall, online, or by calling 360-992-2815. All shows held in the Decker Theatre in Frost Arts Center.

If you need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event, contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Gaiser Hall room 137, two weeks before the event.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

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Student Leader Profiles: Pathways Peer Mentors



Pathways Peer Mentors, *left to right*, Julie Mercado, Mark Damian, Alana Leon-Guerrero, Jamie Brindley-Bagent, Chantear Song, and Seunghyun Roh

Students who enroll in Basic Education at Clark College often find themselves facing a host of challenges.

What kind of challenges? “Oh my gosh, there are so many!” exclaims Pathways Peer Mentor Jamie Brindley-Bagent. “Everyone has different stories: if you don’t have money, if you don’t

have parents to help you, if you don't have a place to stay, if you think of yourself as dumb.”

Thankfully, students enrolled in Clark's Adult Basic Education—as well as its English as a Second Language and IBEST programs—can turn to their Pathways Peer Mentors (PPMs) for support and advice when the road gets rough. PPMs are fellow students who have successfully transitioned from ABE, GED, and/or ESL programs to college-credit academic classes at Clark—or who are first-generation college students. Their unique experience gives them insight into the challenges faced by their peers, allowing them to provide necessary support, guidance and encouragement to help those peers stay in school and achieve their long-term educational goals.

This year's Pathways Peer Mentors are:

Jamie Brindley-Bagent, 19, grew up in Vancouver. She is studying criminal psychology and hopes to earn her master's degree in this field, eventually becoming a detective. “I know it's really hard to go to college and I want to show people that they can do it,” she says.

Mark Damian, 17, grew up in St. Petersburg, Russia. He is pursuing an associate transfer degree, with the goal of becoming an engineer. A Running Start student, he enjoys working as a Peer Mentor because “there's a lot of opportunity to make new friends.”

Alana Leon-Guerrero, 21, is originally from the island of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently studying for her Associate of Arts degree, she plans to transfer to Washington State University Vancouver after graduating from Clark. “I decided to become a Pathways Peer Mentor because I want to help people and let them know that there are a lot of resources on campus.”

Julie Mercado, 21, began at Clark taking ESL classes; she currently is enrolled in the I-BEST Academic program, which

allows students to enroll in academic classes while simultaneously receiving Adult Basic Education assistance within the class. A native of Guadalajara, Mexico, she came to the United States at age 18. "Now that I am a Pathways Peer Mentor, I get the satisfaction of seeing how we help people," says the aspiring elementary teacher.

Seunghyun Roh is from South Korea, where he learned to enjoy helping students during his time as an English tutor. Now studying at Clark through International Programs, he decided to become a Peer Mentor because he "wanted to have more experience with people from other countries." He hopes to become an engineer.

Chantear Song, 26, grew up in Washington state. She is studying elementary education. "My goal for the future is to be a bright, influential teacher for students," she says, adding that she chose to become a Pathways Peer Mentor to "challenge myself, get out of my comfort zone, and help people."

This year, the PPMs have begun using a new tool in their work: bright-orange "Look for the Good and Praise It!" appreciation note cards. These notes offer students, staff, and others a vehicle for offering thanks and encouragement. "It's one thing to talk about the power of appreciation; it's another thing to experience its uplifting, invigorating impact," says Marilyn Sprague, PPM Program Coordinator. "With the appreciation note cards, PPM mentors have a simple, easy-to-use tool guaranteed to build ABE/ESL students' confidence."

The notecards are available in the Pathways Center (TBG 229).

Story co-written with Suzanne Smith

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Penguin Profile: Billy Henry



Billy Henry began lifting weights as a teenager, an experience he found so empowering that he decided to create a nonprofit dedicated to promoting athletics and physical fitness among the blind and visually impaired.

Cast your mind back to your high school physical education classes and ask yourself: How many of those activities could you have done blindfolded? Basketball? No way. Relay races? Only if someone made significant changes to the way it was organized. Dodgeball? *Please*.

Small wonder, then, that almost 70 percent of all blind or visually impaired school-aged children in the U.S. never

participate in any sort of sport, physical activity, or physical education program. The result is that many miss out on opportunities to boost their confidence, teamwork skills, and both physical and mental health. But thanks to Clark student Billy Henry, all that's changing in the Pacific Northwest.

Henry, 21, is the executive director of the Northwest Association of Blind Athletes (NWABA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating opportunities for blind and visually impaired people to participate in sports and physical activities. He founded the organization in 2007, when he was all of 15 years old.

Henry, who is legally blind due to a congenital condition called optic nerve hypoplasia, might well have become part of that 70 percent of non-active youth if he hadn't discovered the sport of powerlifting in his teens. Energized by what he calls the "life-changing" boost in self-confidence and strength provided by competing in this sport, he decided to create the NWABA to share that feeling with other blind and visually impaired people.

"I just saw a real need in the community," says Henry. "There are a lot of challenges to blind and visually impaired people joining sports and physical activities, and I wanted to give them that opportunity to gain confidence and self-esteem to carry into other parts of their lives."

The organization started small, with just six people practicing powerlifting in the Henry family's garage; Henry's parents would make dinner for the team twice a week. "I got a couple friends to be on the board of directors—it took some arm-twisting," recalls Henry, who at the time was attending Hudson's Bay High School. "I sat down with a friend to fill out the 32-page IRS application for 501c3 [nonprofit] status. Fundraising was really challenging. We held a lot of bake sales."

The effort paid off: Over the next six years, the organization grew in leaps and bounds. In 2012, more than 1,000 blind and visually impaired people participated in NWABA events, which now include activities like judo, tandem cycling, swimming, track and field, skiing, baseball, golf, and an adaptive form of ping pong called showdown. With an operating budget of \$150,000, the organization has expanded its reach to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana; this summer, it hosted the 2013 National Goalball Championships, featuring a sport specifically developed for blind and visually impaired athletes.



Clark student Billy Henry became interested in weight lifting while still in high school, in part because the sport allowed him to compete on an even footing with sighted athletes. Here he holds a trophy from the World Association of Benchers and Dead Lifters.

Henry now operates out of an office in downtown Vancouver, which he moved into in the fall of 2010—the same time he enrolled at Clark to study business administration. “I chose Clark because it allowed me to stay local and I knew it had a good reputation for its disability support services,” says Henry. “They’re phenomenal. They’re really experienced with

working with blind and visually impaired students and understanding each student's individual needs."

Clark College Director of Access Services Tami Jacobs says that the college has a high proportion of students who are blind or visually impaired, in part due to its proximity to the Washington State School for the Blind (just a block away from Clark's main campus) and its strong working relationship with the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind. Jacobs says she and her staff work hard to provide a welcoming and supportive learning environment for students of all abilities. Jacobs says she has been impressed by Henry's work ethic, both in class and with the NWABA. "He is driven, passionate, and looks for solutions outside of the box," she says.

"It's interesting, because at the nonprofit I get a lot of hands-on learning," says Henry. "And at the same time I do learn a lot in my business classes that I've brought into the nonprofit. Reading financial statements is *much* easier since I've taken Accounting."

Henry has taken a mix of in-person and online classes, noting that online classes offer certain advantages for the visually impaired. "I struggle with math, and I really like [taking] math classes online because I can go back and watch a video lecture over and over, and get as close to the screen as I want," he says. "That's more challenging in a room with a whiteboard. But I also really like the personal interaction that you get in the physical classroom setting."

Henry expects to graduate from Clark in 2014 and plans to attend Washington State University Vancouver afterward to earn a bachelor's degree in business. Meanwhile, he plans to continue growing NWABA, even if that means eventually handing the reins over to someone else.

"It's hard, because I want to keep doing the work," he says.

“But getting my education is very, very important to me as well.”

Eventually, he would like to earn a master’s degree—either in business or in health care administration. When someone mentions that health care organizations could probably benefit from his unique perspective, Henry chuckles softly.

“Yeah, that’s what I thought, too,” he says.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

No Prank: Clark Prof Co-Wrote with Kelsey



English professor
James Finley

From the “Hidden Lives of Clark College Employees” files, we bring you this detail about English professor James Finley: He once co-wrote a novel with Ken Kesey as part of the legendary Northwest author’s graduate-level course in creative writing. Blogger Theodore Carter recently interviewed Finley about his experiences as a student in that class and about the novel he and his classmates produced and eventually published in collaboration with Kesey, *Caverns*.

Finley, who is perhaps better-known around campus for his work with the Columbia Writers Series, provides a thoughtful distillation of what he learned about writing from the experience. He reveals that Kesey—famous for the antiauthoritarian novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and his psychedelic shenanigans with the Merry Pranksters—possessed a strong work ethic and a dedication to craft, qualities Finley clearly has taken to heart himself.

Everyone’s Involved



Phi Theta Kappa advisor Melissa Sinclair, *far right in yellow shirt*, gives students information about the program.

Gaiser Student Center was bustling with activity on October 2 as students attended the college's first-ever Involvement Fair. In previous years, the college has hosted a quarterly Student Club Fair, but this year the event expanded to include tables for not just clubs, but also departments and programs like Financial Aid, CollegeFish.org, and the Bookstore.

"We wanted to expand on the engagement opportunities we were highlighting for students," explained Director of Student Life Sarah Gruhler.



Brandon Nimmo

Clark student Brandon Nimmo was manning a table representing the college's Penguin Help Desk, a free service staffed by Computer Support Specialist students that provides computer assistance and repair to students, faculty, and anyone in the community. Nimmo said he'd received a lot of visitors at his table interested in the Help Desk's services—though, he added, they might have to wait a bit to access them. "We have a lot of computers there waiting to be fixed right now," he said. "We stay very busy."

Nimmo wasn't interested in signing up for any clubs himself. "I honestly don't have time," he said. The Air Force veteran is currently juggling working 30-to-40 hours per week at the Veterans Administration with a full-time class load and helping to care for his daughter, 2, and stepdaughter, 13.



Chess fans get a game in at the Chess Club table.

This is the challenge facing many Clark students—they're too busy balancing jobs and family and homework to participate in extracurricular activities. But, Gruhler said, it can be helpful to their long-term success if they do.

“In Student Life we emphasize out-of-class learning opportunities,” she said. “Clubs are a great way for students to pursue their interests and try new things while gaining experience, learning new skills and connecting with other students. Future schools and employers are not just interested in your degree, but in all the other experiences that set students apart as individuals. Clubs help students connect, network and ultimately provide support to help them achieve their goals.”



Saudi Students Club members Majed Alhumaidani and Ahmed Biladi share dates and culture with their fellow students.

For first-year student Ahmed Biladi, a student club is also a way to promote understanding about his culture. Biladi, 18, is one of a growing number of Clark international students from Saudi Arabia—in fact, fall 2013 marks the first quarter that Saudi Arabia is the most common country of origin for Clark international students, the result of new partnerships between Clark College International Programs and educational organizations in the Middle East including the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission.

When Biladi first came to the United States, he encountered some disheartening preconceptions about his homeland. “Some of the most bizarre questions I’ve gotten have been: ‘Do you guys still ride camels? Is the country covered in sand? Do you still live in tents?’” he said with a laugh. “There’s a lot of misinformation about Saudis, so we decided to start a club to share our culture with the Clark community.”

The newly formed Saudi Students Club hopes to combat myths and promote understanding between American and Saudi cultures. “There’s an ignorance of culture on both ends that leads to a lack of communication,” Biladi said, offering a plate of imported dates to passersby.

According to the Office of Student Life, more than 400 people attended the Involvement Fair.



A total of 59 clubs, programs, services, and departments had tables at the Involvement Fair, which was attended by more than 400 people.

Photos: Jenny Shadley/Clark College

Phoenix Flies High



The staff of the 2013 *Phoenix* posing during the journal's unveiling in spring. Art professor Kathrena Halsinger, *far right*, is their advisor.

Congratulations to the staff of *Phoenix*. Clark's literary and art journal just won third place in the Western-Pacific division of the Community College Humanities Association's 2013 Literary Magazine Competition.

"I think the quality of *Phoenix* is a reflection of the quality of the strong arts program that the college, and the greater community, continue to support," says art professor and *Phoenix* advisor Kathrena Halsinger. "The arts are the stuff of life and therefore are relevant to all. We really work hard to be inclusive and get people across campus to be involved. We've also been fortunate to be supported by our departments and the ASCC to keep the program strong."

New agreement's a HIIT



HIIT student Rachel Cribben says the ability to pursue a bachelor's degree without leaving her home in Vancouver is "extremely important" to her success in the program.

In a move that will provide residents of Southwest Washington with the opportunity to train for high-paying jobs in a rapidly expanding field, Clark College and Bellevue College have signed an articulation agreement that allows students at Clark to earn a bachelor's degree in Health Informatics Information Technology (HIIT) from Bellevue through online and remote classes—without leaving the Clark College campus.

"In our ongoing conversations with regional employers, we realized there was a need for Health Informatics Information

Technology professionals and responded quickly to that need, but we also realized that there would be a need for students to take their education to the next level," said Debra Ortiz, director of allied health programs at Clark College. "This is a great opportunity for students to stay here in the region and get a bachelor's degree in a rapidly growing field."

Health Informatics is the science of managing electronic health records and coordinating the computer information systems used by hospitals, clinics, insurance companies, and health care professionals. HIIT professionals work in customizing software for large health care institutions, as well as in data analysis, training clinicians on how to use computer systems, database management, and many other related fields. Demand for these skilled professionals is increasing as more and more health care organizations switch to electronic records-keeping, and as the graying Baby Boomers spur an increase in demand for health care. Indeed, the Bureau for Labor Statistics predicts that demand for HIIT specialists will increase by 21 percent between 2010 and 2020—a rate that's 50 percent higher than average job growth in all fields.

Clark introduced its HIIT program in winter 2012 in response to regional workforce needs. From the beginning, the program was designed to allow graduates to transfer to four-year institutions, including the Oregon Institute of Technology. However, this new agreement with Bellevue College allows students to continue paying in-state tuition while pursuing their Bachelor of Science degree; because the classes are offered online or remotely, the agreement also allows students to complete their four-year degree without leaving Vancouver.

"We're thrilled to have this opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues at Clark so that we can offer students convenient access to our online courses," said Dr. Pamela Charney, program chair of Healthcare Information Technology & Management at Bellevue. "This will give students from Clark a

clear pathway to professional success in the exciting new arena of healthcare IT.”

Rachel Cribben is one of those students. Cribben, 27, earned a certificate for medical billing and coding shortly after graduating from high school. But after she and her husband separated in 2011, she realized that she would need to get a degree to be able to support her two daughters, ages 3 and 5. Her mother, who works at Clark, told her about the HIIT program.

Cribben says HIIT is a good fit for her personality and interests. “I like the healthcare field, but I’m more of a behind-the-scenes kind of person,” she says, adding that she hopes to find a job in a hospital’s information technology department and eventually manage her own team of specialists there.

Cribben says the material has at times been challenging. “I’m taking Intro to Local Area Networks right now, and I opened up the textbook and saw all these pictures of wires and diagrams and thought, ‘How am I going to learn this?’” she says. “But then I saw a picture of a [network interface card] and I recognized it from when my brother built my computer. I realized I actually knew what it was already, and it made me think, ‘OK, I can do this.’”

Cribben plans to earn her associate degree from Clark in 2016 and her bachelor’s degree through the Bellevue partnership a year after that. For her, the ability to be able to complete her degree without relocating—and primarily through online classes, so that she can continue to care for her children while being a full-time student—is crucial to her success in the program.

“It’s extremely important,” she says. “I want to do this, and I want to do it well. I want to show my girls that you can do anything that you put your mind to.”

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Managing Change



Director of Change
Management Jane
Beatty

In anticipation of upcoming statewide changes to the community and technical college system, Clark College recently hired experienced manager Jane Beatty to help guide the college through what will be a complicated but beneficial transition.

Beatty has been hired to oversee changes occurring across the college. A great place for her to start is with the college's adaptation of ctcLink, a new, standardized system of online functions that will replace the current computer system used by Washington state's 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs), which is more than 30 years old. In this position,

which is expected to run for about five years, she will identify organizational changes required to make ctcLink successful at the college; represent the college in statewide discussions about ctcLink; and ensure that the college adheres to its schedule for ctcLink implementation. She will also work closely with stakeholders from all departments affected by ctcLink—departments as varied as Instruction, Enrollment, Financial Aid, Information Technology, Business Services, and Human Resources.

“This campus has a rich history and an energy that speaks of excitement, growth, and future possibilities for students, faculty, and staff,” said Beatty. “In learning more about the Director of Change Management position, I realized I could help the college understand, prepare for, and embrace the changes that are ahead of us. In order to fully reach our potential, change must take place. Working together, we can take Clark College toward that vision. I’m really pleased to be a part of that effort and a part of Clark College.”

“As our new Director of Change Management, Jane Beatty’s deep industry experience and understanding of systems implementation will really benefit Clark College,” said Clark College President Robert K. Knight. “She will be a great addition to the college and the executive leadership team.”

About Jane Beatty

Jane Beatty is an experienced leader and manager with a strong commitment to community service. Most recently she was the president of Custom Interface, Inc., a producer of electromechanical devices. Previous to that she worked at Intel Corporation in Human Resources, where she supported a worldwide software implementation that replaced legacy systems in finance, receiving and inventory and helped to drive training, change management and business alignment to the new

system. Despite a two-decade history of success in the private sector, however, Beatty began her career as a high school teacher and welcomes a return to an academic environment.

Beatty earned her bachelor's degree from Emory University and Masters in Education from Georgia State University. Both colleges are located in Atlanta, Georgia, where she was born.

Beatty recently relocated to Camas, Washington, from the Columbia Gorge, where she was an active member of the community. She served as president of the Gorge Technology Alliance, a non-profit that supports STEM education, building strong technology-related businesses and other means of community support. Additionally, she was a member of the Hood River City Council.

About ctCLink

ctCLink is the implementation of a single, centralized system of online functions that will give students, faculty and staff 24/7 access to a modern, efficient way of doing their college business. But it's about much more than new software. As the existing legacy software is replaced with modern technology, all college districts will also redesign and align current business processes.

ctCLink will be a massive upgrade for the entire CTC system. Students, faculty and staff will have access to information from anywhere at any time, with many processes available from a mobile device. Students will use online tools for doing their college business and they'll have a more common experience across the CTC system, whether they transfer from one college to another or attend two or more CTCs at once. They will have one student ID and use common online tools for everything from admission to graduation. Among many other things, colleges—and the system as a whole—will benefit from a single source for accurate and timely data and the

standardization of select administrative processes to support efficiency and effectiveness across the system.

ctcLink is anticipated to take five-to-six years to fully implement. Two pilot colleges, Tacoma Community College and the Community Colleges of Spokane, have been chosen to begin implementation in summer 2014. Other colleges will follow in “waves” of up to eight colleges each. It has yet to be determined in which wave Clark College will be.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Finding the Right Path



Katie Brown '98, who was named Washington state's 2014 Teacher of the Year, displaying her pride in Shuksan Middle School, where she has taught for 11 years.

Clark College '98 alumna Katie Day Brown was named Washington state's 2014 Teacher of the Year in an awards ceremony held on September 23 in Seattle.

Brown (whose last name was Day when she attended Clark) says that Clark was a crucial part of her educational journey. A graduate of Fort Vancouver High School, she began college at the University of the Redlands in California but realized that it wasn't the right fit for her. However, her intended transfer destination—Western Washington University—wouldn't accept her out-of-state credits.

"So I went back home and thought of Clark," she says. "They immediately said, 'OK, we can work with you.' They got my credits to transfer and I was able to start as a sophomore. I don't really know what decision I would have made if Clark hadn't worked with me. It really helped me continue my education without any interruption."

Brown adds that Clark was where she took her first anthropology class. "It was one of my favorite classes," she says. "That's what sparked my interest in anthropology."

Indeed, after receiving her associate degree with honors from Clark in 1998, Brown went on to earn a bachelor's degree from WWU in anthropology in 2000. Originally, she didn't plan on becoming a teacher, but found herself drawn to the profession after what she calls a "series of aha moments": volunteering at a high poverty school in college, playing soccer with kids while studying in Costa Rica, and listening to Alaskan tribal elders teach young people about their history as an AmeriCorps volunteer. She returned to WWU to earn a teaching certificate in 2003 and then earned her master's degree in education from Seattle Pacific University in 2009.

Brown now serves as the English Learner Learner specialist at Shuksan Middle School in Bellingham, Washington, where she has earned praise for her ability to collaborate with her colleagues to respect diversity and serve students who may be experiencing language barriers.

As Washington state's Teacher of the Year, Brown will serve as an ambassador for the teaching profession in 2013-14 while continuing her work at Shuksan. She also will be considered for national Teacher of the Year, which is awarded by the Council of Chief State School Officers. President Obama will announce the winner in a special ceremony at the White House in the spring.

Brown says that she remains a strong advocate for community colleges. "Here at Shuksan, whenever we talk about college, I make sure to include community college in the conversation," she says. "It can be a really great option for the right student."

Photo courtesy of Katie Day Brown

Penguins in the News



Rick and Jeri Kemmer in Tanzania, where they first learned about the moringa tree.

In 2012, *Clark 24/7* profiled BEECH Administrative Assistant Jeri Kemmer for the work she and her husband, Rick, have done to create a nonprofit planting moringa trees in developing countries. The moringa tree can be of great benefit to people living in marginal economies; its leaves and green seedpods are nutritious, its dried seeds have coagulant properties that can help filter contaminants in dirty water, and its ripe seeds produce an oil that can be used as machinery lubricant.

At the time of our article, the Kemmers' nonprofit, Strong Harvest International, was just getting going. Recently, however, it's been gaining more publicity; the *Columbian* ran an article on Strong Harvest earlier this month, and just last night KATU aired a segment on Strong Harvest and the moringa tree. Kemmer, meanwhile, says she and Rick plan to continue growing the nonprofit, eventually expanding into Tanzania and Haiti. (They currently operate in Nicaragua and Mexico.)

Photo courtesy of Jeri Kemmer