

# Iris Awards Nominations Open



Nominations are now open for the 2014 Iris Awards. The winners will be announced in January, and the recipients will be honored at a reception and ceremony on Monday, March 13, 2014, from 5-7 p.m. in Clark's Gaiser Student Center. Tickets will go on sale in late January.

Following in the tradition of the Southwest Washington Women of Achievement Awards, this event's legacy began at Clark College as a photography exhibit during Women's History Week 1985. In 2012, the Iris Awards were introduced with the same focus: celebrating the lasting and far-reaching contributions of women in Southwest Washington and beyond. As in the past, the awards will be presented in observation of International Women's Day (March 8).

Three Iris Awards may be presented annually. One recipient may be selected in each of three areas: service in the public sector, service in the private sector, and philanthropic leadership. Anyone may submit a nomination. Additionally, more

than one person can fill out a nomination form for the same nominee or provide letters of recommendation.

The awards are sponsored by Clark College, the Vancouver Business Journal, the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and the Clark College Foundation.

Award criteria and nomination forms are available online. Nominations must be received by Friday, December 13, 2013.

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## As the World Turned



Spanish instructor Felipe Montoya, *third from left*, with members of the Spanish Club at the International Students Exhibit.

Clark College hosted a wide range of public events—including films, music, speakers, and panel discussions—during its observance of International Education Week, November 18-21. This year’s theme was “The Language of Learning: Creating a Sense of Place.”

International Education Week (IEW) is a joint initiative of the U.S. Departments of State and Education to highlight the importance of international education and cultural exchange. This is the fifth year that Clark has participated in IEW. According to committee member and International Student Recruitment & Outreach Manager Jody Shulnak, planning the week of activities took more than three months, and the committee is already looking forward to next year, possibly building on the success of this year’s International Photography Contest by working with the Archer Gallery to create an international art exhibit. “Stay tuned!” she said. “IEW gets bigger and better each year.”

Some highlights from this year’s IEW:



Ismet Prcic talks about writing his novel *Shards*.

### **Columbia Writers Series**

The college hosted a reading on November 18 by two highly respected writers as part of its Columbia Writers Series. Ismet Prcic and Zachary Schomburg, winners of the 2013 Oregon



Book Awards for Fiction and Poetry, respectively, read from their work and discussed their writing processes. Prcic, who teaches Drama at Clark, described how writing his novel, *Shards*, served as a way to process his experiences growing up in war-torn Bosnia. The book—Prcic’s first—is semi-autobiographical (the central character is named “Ismet Prcic”) and told through a fractured composite of diary entries, recollections, and speculative imaginings of what might have been.



Former student Marisa Petry, *left*, introduced Spanish professor Erika Nava at the fall 2013 installment of Clark’s Faculty Speaker Series.

### **Faculty Speaker Series**

On November 19, Spanish professor Erika Nava gave the fall presentation of Clark’s Faculty Speaker Series. Nava spoke about her experiences building online classes to teach Spanish. She acknowledged that many people are skeptical that languages can be taught online—including students. Indeed, she was introduced by a former student, Marisa Petry, who said she was concerned about getting enough support in an online environment. Instead, Petry found that Nava’s use of tools like embedded video and Skype allowed her to learn Spanish just as well as she would have in a face-to-face classroom.

“Even today, I use it at the bedside,” said Petry, who is now working as a nurse. “And because of her course, I had the confidence to take other online courses.”

Nava said that she herself initially resisted the idea of teaching Spanish online. “My initial reaction was like many people’s: ‘No way, I’m not going to do that. How will I have the personal connection with students?’”

However, she found herself reconsidering that attitude after her first few years teaching at Clark. “I saw that I had a lot of nontraditional students in my classes who were working full-time jobs and were coming in late to class, really struggling to be there,” she said.

Nava showed some of the ways she makes her online classes feel more interactive and personal. Where many online modules include written instructions, she instead inserts video of herself speaking the instructions “so I can be more present in the class.” She has also connected to students while taking live video in Mexico, providing them with a sort of virtual study-abroad opportunity. Using technology in innovative and thoughtful ways like this, she said, can keep that personal connection between students and instructor strong, even in an online environment.

*See video of Erika Nava discussing her approach to online learning.*



German professor Julian Nelson, *right*, translates the German children's poem his student is reading.

### **International Read-In**

On November 20, poetry filled the air of PUB 161 as students and staff read favorite pieces in different tongues. Sociology professor Carlos Castro read "Pueblo Tropical" by Nicaraguan poet Salomón de la Selva. English professor Jill Darley-Vanis read "La Beauté" from Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and provided a handout showing the dramatic variations between three English translations of the poem. Student Joy Robertson-Maciél, meanwhile, read a prose passage in Portuguese from Brazilian writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis.

The prize for most gruesome readings, however, had to go to the students in Professor Julian Nelson's German classes, who read from classic German children's poems. One passage, from the classic collection *Der Struwwelpeter*, told the tale of a naughty child who sucks his thumbs—until a tailor chops them off. Another told the tale of a friendship between a cat and a dog, which ends with one of them getting shot. "There are no happy endings in German, sorry," said Nelson with a laugh.



Saudi students Majed Alhumaidani, Saleh Almaki, and Faisal Aljubaylah talk about their country and culture.

## **Saudi Student Panel**

Also on November 20, three international students from Saudi Arabia spoke about their country, its culture, and their experiences living in the United States. It was clear that life for a young person in America is very different from that of a young person in Saudi Arabia. For one thing, it's lonelier; all three students spoke wistfully about their closely knit families and about the comfort of having lots of relatives living together. "When I was home, all my day was scheduled to be about my family," said Saleh Almaki, the eldest of 11 children by his father's two wives. "But here, every day is scheduled to be about myself."

The students, all three of whom are Muslim, also expressed hope that they could help dispel American misconceptions about Islam. Faisal Aljubaylah said he wanted Americans to understand that "the first letter of Islam is 'learn'—not just 'learn about Islam,' but 'learn about other cultures and religions.'"



Students provided music during the International Student Exhibition.

### **International Student Exhibition**

On November 21, students gathered in Gaiser Student Center to enjoy art and music with an international flair. Many students from instructor Felipe Montoya's Spanish classes wore skeletal Day of the Dead face paint as they stood before the traditional Day of the Dead altars they'd created as extra-credit projects. In Mexico, these altars often honor deceased relatives—here, students created altars to celebrities passed. One was devoted to Michael Jackson, complete with framed fingerless glove; another, honoring Elvis Presley, included a guitar.



Christian Fairchild and



Amanda Murphy show off their Day of the Dead altar to Pancho Villa.

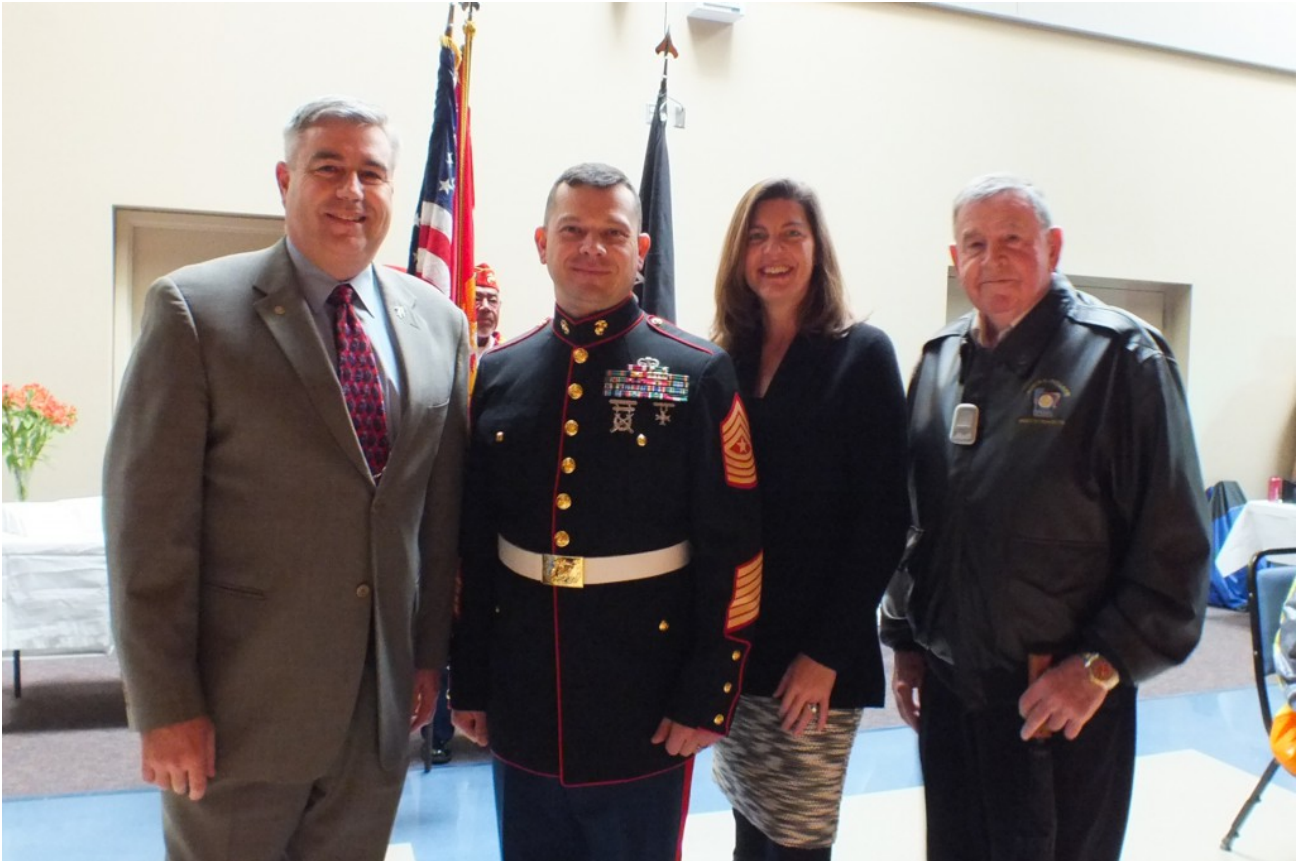
Students Amanda Murphy and Christian Fairchild sat next their altar honoring the spirit of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. “We were going to go with a painter, but one student in our group is blind and wanted something she could enjoy, too,” explained Murphy, who is co-enrolled at Clark and at Portland State University. “We settled on a revolutionary. That’s a theme everyone can get behind: rebellion and revolution. We can all identify with that.”

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. Erika Nava Photo: Clark College/Hannah Erickson*

More photos on Flickr.

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**Gratitude for Those Who Served**



Clark College President Bob Knight, U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Eric Sheline, Community Foundation for Southwest Washington President Jennifer Rhoads, and Clark College Trustee Royce Pollard attended the college's Veterans Celebration.

This November, Clark College began a new tradition: a college-sponsored celebration honoring veterans. The event was held the Thursday before Veterans Day in Gaiser Student Center.

"We need to make sure that our veterans are taken care of," said Clark College President Bob Knight in his welcoming address to the event participants. "We're going to have an annual Veterans Day celebration and, one day soon, a Veterans Resource Center here at the college."



Veterans salute the flag during the Posting of the Colors.

That center could become a reality sooner than expected, thanks to an announcement made during the celebration by Community Foundation for Southwest Washington President Jennifer Rhoads. Rhoads announced that, in honor of CFSWW's 30th anniversary, the foundation would be donating six grants of \$30,000 each to different organizations in the region helping to alleviate poverty, and that the first grant would be going to Clark College to create its new Veterans Resource Center. She offered a quote by the writer Cynthia Ozicks: "We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.'

"Our veterans most deserve our gratitude, today and every day," Rhoads concluded.

Once complete, the center will support veteran students with quality academic and career advising, resource referrals and information regarding military tuition benefits. The center will help expand the services already provided by Clark's Veterans Programs office—services that have led to Clark being named a Military-Friendly School by Victory Media for three years in a row. About 700 veterans enroll at Clark College every quarter; about 500 of them use GI Bill benefits to help pay for tuition, fees, housing, books and supplies.



Clark's Veterans Celebration was a community event, honoring members of every branch of service.

The event was originally planned to begin with a Changing of the Colors at the flagpole outside the Penguin Union Building. However, bad weather canceled that portion of the program. Instead, it began with a Posting of the Colors ceremony inside Gaiser Student Center, after which Clark student Petya Grozeva sang the National Anthem. Guests were also invited to write and sign cards thanking veterans for their service; the cards were delivered to retired and disabled veterans at the Vancouver Veterans Administration Medical Center by members of the Clark College Veterans Club.

Sgt. Maj. Eric Sheline, U.S. Marine Corps, 6th Engineer Support Battalion, gave the keynote speech. Since joining the Marines in 1987, Sheline has participated in operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield; was squad leader of an anti-terrorism team in Mogadishu, Somalia; and was deployed twice to Kuwait in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sheline noted that as the U.S. military continues to draw down forces, more and more veterans will be entering higher education in the coming years. He urged all veterans to continue to be role models, even after they leave the service.

"When we leave [to serve overseas], we do great things," he said. "When we come back, we continue to do great things."



Student Success & Retention Administrative Assistant Susan Muir, who served on the committee that helped organize the event, said the college plans to make the Veterans Celebration an annual tradition. She added that there will be another event on May 22 in recognition of Memorial Day.

*Photos: Clark College/Elizabeth Christopher*

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## **Welcome, Tim!**



Clark College Foundation President and CEO Lisa Gibert, *center*, gives new Director of Facilities Services Tim Petta,

*right*, a warm welcome.

Incoming Director of Facilities Services Tim Petta was welcomed warmly by the Clark College community at a reception in the Baird rotunda on Friday, November 15. Petta joined the college on November 4.

Petta has extensive experience in facilities management at the University of California Los Angeles, where he was Senior Educational Facility Planner. As part of UCLA's facilities management team, he was responsible for supporting 175 on-campus and 100 off-campus buildings. He has been involved in a number of large new construction projects—from design and document review to building and commissioning.



Director of Facilities Services holds his welcome-to-Clark gift of a framed photo of the Chime Tower.

Petta began his career early, working in construction while in high school and college. He studied computer science at California State University Northridge, but decided to instead go into plumbing. He quickly rose to a management position,

and has taken management courses through Dale Carnegie Training, Fred Pryor Seminars, and other companies, as well as college courses in mechanical engineering.

As Director of Facilities Services, Petta oversees all capital projects at the Clark College, ranging from the soon-to-be-built STEM Building to minor repairs and improvements. He is also responsible for the maintenance, grounds, and custodial services provided to the college every day. His department includes more than 50 full- and part-time staff in all facilities trades, from maintenance mechanics to grounds specialists to custodians.

Vice President of Administrative Services Bob Williamson welcomed Petta with a framed photo of the Chime Tower and a bright orange Administrative Services T-shirt.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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## **Green Penguins with Wet Feathers**





Environmental Biology students take a break before planting a Chinese Pistache in Scarpelli Circle to smile with Instructional and Classroom Support Technician Tim Carper, who organizes the annual tree planting at Clark.

As Kermit the Frog once sang, it's not easy being green. Admittedly, Kermit probably wasn't talking about shoveling dirt in a cold, quintessentially Pacific Northwest drizzle. But members of the Clark College and greater Vancouver community banded together on November 6 to do just that during the college's annual tree planting. These plantings help maintain the main campus's arboretum, as well as its status as a Tree Campus USA.

The group that gathered under rainy skies to plant trees included students from Clark's Environmental Biology class; members of the Clark College Environmental Club; participants in the Washington Conservation Corps; members of the college's Tree Advisory Committee; and representatives from Vancouver's Urban Forestry. Staff from Clark College Facilities Services



also assisted in the project.



Volunteers clear Scarpelli Circle of non-native plants and prepare it for having a new tree planted in its center.

The group planted four trees. Two of them—an American Yellowwood and a Chinese Pistache—were donated by Urban Forestry and are new species to the arboretum. The group also planted a Knobcone Pine; this tree was actually an offshoot from an older tree on campus that died and was removed. “So technically, it is a new tree to campus as well, because the parent tree had died and been removed from the inventory,” said Instructional and Classroom Support Technician Tim Carper, who has organized the tree planting and Tree Campus USA activities at Clark for the past four years.

Carper noted that the Yellowwood and Pistache weren’t just new species to the campus—they were entirely new genera. “We are very close to having trees representing every genus that will reasonably grow in our climate and is available to us,” he said. “That has been kind of the guideline for adding to the arboretum.”

The fourth tree, a Snake-Bark Maple with colorful leaves and bark, was appropriately enough planted near Frost Arts Center.

*Photos: Clark College/Hannah Erickson*

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## Q&A with: English instructor Alexis Nelson



English instructor  
Alexis Nelson

English instructor Alexis Nelson has taught at Clark College for four years. Last year she became active in the committee that organizes the college's Columbia Writers Series (CWS), which brings accomplished writers to the college to read from and discuss their work; the next installment of the series is on Monday, Nov. 18. Nelson, who earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of California at Santa Barbara, has a Master of Fine Arts degree in Nonfiction Writing from Portland State University. Recently, *Clark 24/7* chatted with her about CWS, as well as about a new

English course she's helping to develop and her own recent brush with literary fame.

**I understand you've become part of the group that organizes Clark's Columbia Writers Series. Could you tell me a little bit about that event and its purpose?**

The Columbia Writers Series brings professional authors to campus to read from and talk about their work. We bring in local and national fiction writers, nonfiction writers, poets, playwrights and screenwriters. As for the purpose of the series, last year I had a student tell me she didn't "get" poetry until she attended a CWS reading, with the poet Matthew Dickman. Hearing Dickman read his work helped this student appreciate and understand poetry in a new way, and it got her interested in attending more readings in the future. To me, that's what CWS is all about: enriching the educational experience of Clark students by introducing them to contemporary authors and by exposing them to literature in a new way. The series also emphasizes Clark's role as a center for arts and culture within the community, and it builds connections between Clark faculty, students, and members of the public.

**CWS seems to be undergoing a sea change recently. What's the thought process behind that, and what can we look forward to seeing at CWS in the future?**

There is a core group of English department faculty that is really excited about CWS right now, and we've been putting a lot of work into getting great authors to come to campus and creating more awareness of our readings. We're all writers ourselves, and we see so much opportunity to build this series into something truly special for Clark and the community. We've also been working on building stronger connections between CWS and some of the other exciting creative writing

initiatives we have at Clark. For instance, last year, Clark's art and literary journal, *Phoenix*, published a fantastic interview with one of our CWS readers, Charles D'Ambrosio. D'Ambrosio is an award-winning author with a national reputation, and having that in-depth interview with him was great for *Phoenix*, not to mention a wonderful opportunity for the student who conducted the interview. We'd love to be able to do more things like this in the future, in addition to continuing to bring in the best writers from the Northwest and beyond.

**Tell me about this coming CWS reading.**

I'm really excited about the November 18 reading for a couple of reasons. First, we're going to have two writers: poet Zachary Schomburg and fiction-writer Ismet Prcic. Zachary and Ismet both won Oregon Book Awards this year, so this is a chance to hear two of the Northwest's best contemporary writers share their work. I'm also especially excited for this reading because Ismet actually teaches at Clark—he's an adjunct in the Drama department—so we'll also be celebrating Clark's talented faculty. Ismet was born in Bosnia and his award-winning novel *Shards* tells the story of a young Bosnian immigrant, so there's also a connection between the November 18 reading and International Education Week, which will be happening at the same time.

**I know you've been developing a Creative Nonfiction course at Clark. How did that come about, and what role do you think the course will fill at Clark?**

Creative nonfiction is an important genre that has become a lot more prominent and popular in the last couple of decades. It's a diverse genre that includes things like memoir, personal essay, travel writing, and even journalistic pieces that use some of the techniques of fiction-writing such as description and scene-building. If you look at other schools that offer fiction and poetry writing courses, most of them



will have creative nonfiction writing classes as well. My MFA is in nonfiction writing, and I'm a nonfiction writer myself, so when I saw that there weren't any creative nonfiction courses being offered at Clark, I wanted to design one. I think this class will help round out the creative writing offerings at Clark. It's also an important course because this type of writing is fun and creative, but it also has practical applications. If you're interested in writing for magazines, you need to know creative nonfiction. Being able to write a great personal essay will also help with college and scholarship applications.

### **How do Clark students respond to the coursework in this class?**

When I taught nonfiction writing at Clark last spring, I had a number of Running Start students who were in their teens; there were also several returning students in their 30s and 40s. To me, this diversity is part of what makes Clark special. Particularly in a class where you're writing from personal experience, having students who have been through a lot in their lives and others who are just beginning to figure out who they are makes for a dynamic class. The students were so respectful of one another, and I think that both the older and the younger students learned a lot from each another.

### **How has teaching this course informed your own writing process?**

Teaching forces me to think about how different pieces of writing are put together, and to put into words ideas about craft that I might not otherwise fully articulate to myself. I also like to do all the writing exercises that I give my students along with them, and this can sometimes open unexpected doors for me and lead to new work. Overall, it's just great to be immersed in reading, thinking, and talking about the kind of writing I'm most passionate about. It's like breathing richer air.

Finally, I know you're hesitant to talk about this, but your essay, "On Love and Memory," was recently listed as a notable essay in *The Best American Essays 2013*. How does it feel to have your work recognized by such a prestigious publication? Also, since the original essay isn't available online, could you share a little about its theme?

One of my grandmothers had dementia and the other currently has Alzheimer's; so the essay is partly about what they've gone through and partly about my own fears of losing my memory. It also, like the title suggests, explores the relationship between memory and love. The essay is structured like a collage, with short, discrete sections that are woven together to create a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. It's a somewhat experimental kind of writing that I've been really excited by lately.

I was thrilled when the essay was published in the first place (in a great journal called *The Normal School*), but knowing that it stood out to the editor of the *Best American Essays* series feels even better. At the same time, it's funny how quickly the initial excitement over getting news like that fades, in the sense that it doesn't make the work any easier. I'd imagine that even getting a big book deal or winning a prestigious prize would be same. Afterward, you still have to go back to your desk and figure out how to put more words on the page.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# 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*

See more photos on Flickr.

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# Educating for the Seventh Generation

On Friday, November 1, the aroma of fry bread wafted through Gaiser Student Center as Clark College hosted its annual “Educating for the Seventh Generation,” a celebration of Native American cultures and mini-powwow. The event included food, music, dancing, and socializing among the estimated 275 guests.

Native American flautist Isaac Trimble provided music as guests arrived. Then emcee Sande Allman and arena director Ed Goodell got the event started. Clark College President Bob Knight and Clark College Trustee Jack Burkman welcomed the assembled guests on behalf of the college and its trustees; Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt also offered a welcome from the city. Native American military veterans led the grand entry, after which there was an invocation and then an honoring of the recently passed. Clark College Facilities Services fiscal specialist Lori Jimerson spoke in memory of longtime Clark employee and supporter Bob Moser, who died in December 2012. Moser was a strong supporter of Clark’s Native American student group when it was first receiving charter in the early 1990s.

Much of the rest of the evening was given to dancing,



including a “Tiny Tots” dance hosted by Child and Family Services and a series of exhibitions of the powwow dance styles of all the tribes in attendance. Guests also enjoyed “Indian Tacos” served in the adjoining cafeteria, while drummers provided music for the occasion. The dancing continued late into the evening, with a diverse range of dancers—from grandchildren to grandparents, some dressed in full regalia and others in jeans and T-shirts.

This is the fifth year that Clark College has coordinated and hosted an event in honor of Native American Heritage Month. It is one of four signature events hosted by the college annually to celebrate diverse cultures. According to organizers, the title references “a responsibility to pass on and teach the future seven generations to protect our resources, culture and heritage.”

A selection of photos are below. [Click here](#) to view the full Flickr album.

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## **Choppers, Gunk, Bugs and Barges**

On Saturday, November 2, Clark College’s main campus was

fizzing like a lab beaker as hundreds of students participated in the Southwest Washington Elementary Science Olympiad. Almost 300 third-through-fifth grade students from 19 local elementary schools participated in the half-day event, which included five competitions: Green Eggs Go Bam!, Chopper Challenge, Tug-o-War Gunk, Benthic Bugs, and Buoyant Barges. (See complete results from the contest.) In addition to hosting the event, Clark provided more than 60 volunteers, most of them students. This was Clark's sixth year of hosting the event, which helps promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) among young learners.

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*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

*View photos from this event on Flickr.*

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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*