

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

Exemplary Citizenship



Bob '50 and Sally '55 Schaefer with Oswald at the Clark County First Citizen ceremony

Clark College alumnus Robert Bob Schaefer 50 has plenty of accomplishments and accolades to his name: former Washington state Speaker of the House, a Fifty-Year Award of Honor from the Washington State Bar Association, 2006 Outstanding Clark Alumnus. On Oct. 1, he added another honor to that list when he was formally named the 2013 Clark County First Citizen.

Schaefer joined a group of 71 other community standouts during a ceremony at the Hilton Vancouver Washington.

Pat Jollota, the 2012 First Citizen, presented this year's award to Schaefer after lauding him as "a very wise person." Others called him a "solutions person" with a gift for bringing people together to improve things in his community.

A video highlighted Schaefer's career, volunteer activities and family life. The presentation touched upon how Schaefer and his wife, Sally, have worked for decades to ensure a brighter future for Southwest Washington. Some of Schaefer's lifelong passions include early learning education; local government leadership; and economic development, particularly the high-tech industry. He was instrumental in establishing Washington State University's Vancouver campus and in creating Paradise Point State Park.

The event had a definite Clark College connection from the beginning—with musical performances by Clark students—to the end, when Schaefer announced he was donating half of his \$1,000 award to Clark College Foundation.

Such generosity has been a hallmark of Schaefer's career. Schaefer, 83, explained to the audience how he and his sister were adopted as children and were raised to help others. He grew up in Clark County, attending Vancouver public schools and Clark College, where he met Sally (Clark College class of 1955, recipient of the 2012 Iris Award, and a First Citizen recipient herself). He later transferred to Willamette University to study law.



Clark College President Bob Knight, *far right*, and SEH Vice President of Operations Ben

Bagherpour '75, *far left*,
congratulate Bob Schaefer '50,
center, on his award.

After passing the bar, he got a job with Clark County Prosecutor's Office, while serving in the Army Reserves. He ran for the Washington State Legislature in 1958, spending \$560 on his campaign. He won that election, going on to serve four terms, from 1959 to 1967, and serving as Speaker of the House in his last term.

Reflecting on his past political work, Schaefer bemoaned the lack of compromise and personal relationships between current political parties. "I think it's a sad commentary of our system that these (personal relationships) are not taking place today," he said.

On the day that the federal government partially shut down because of legislative stalemate, he reminded the audience that public officials must compromise: "You just don't get your way," he said. "It has to be worked out, and it has to be in the public interest."

Schaefer wrapped up his remarks with a reminder that Vancouver is a "can-do community."

"My prayer is that each of us can participate in some way to carry out this can-do philosophy for the future," he said.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley (see more photos on Flickr)

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

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

Thirty Years of Beauty



**“The World Filled Up” by
Stephen Hayes**

Clark art instructor Stephen Hayes is having a 30-year retrospective at Lewis & Clark College's Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art. The show opened September 10 and runs through December 15.

"I have admired Stephen's work since I met him more than 20 years ago, when I was the director of Maryhill Museum and we had a small exhibition of Stephen's work," says Hoffman Gallery director and curator Linda Tesner. "Since then I've made sure to follow his career. He is a fantastic painter and his work has only become more and more interesting. I love that he is able to capture the spirit of place without making a slavish likeness; it is as if he is able to evoke the landscape as much as paint it."

"Stephen is the best kind of instructor at Clark, with tons of real-world experience, fabulous skills, and the passion to share it all with his students," says Clark art department chair Lisa Conway. "Stephen is a consummate professional, and a virtual icon among West Coast painters. The Hoffman Gallery at Lewis & Clark is a prestigious institution, and it is heartening to see a great artist get this level of respect and recognition."

Hayes began teaching at Clark about two years ago after he gave a presentation as part of the Archer Gallery's Clark Art Talks. Members of the Art Department faculty approached him after his lecture to ask if he would be interested in teaching at the college. Hayes says that working with Clark students in classes like Drawing I and Two-Dimensional Design helps him examine his own artistic process, as well as that of his students.



Stephen Hayes in a self-portrait

“Teaching always keeps you reminded that you are in a process yourself,” he says. “When you have to explain something to someone who has no idea what you’re talking about, that really forces you to establish clarity for yourself. That in turn has an impact when you enter the studio: You have more clarity.”

Hayes sounds humbled by having a gallery focus on his entire body of work. “It’s pretty awesome, obviously,” he says. “One doesn’t get this opportunity very often. ... It’s fantastic to be able to look back and to see both the continuity and the changes in direction along the years.”

Hayes says he doesn’t plan to tell his students about the show. “There are posters around, so they may well find out about it,” he says. “But I’m not making them take a special field trip or anything.”

Images courtesy of the Hoffman Gallery

Honoring Excellence



On Opening Day 2013, Exceptional Faculty Award plaques were presented to, *left to right*, Darcie Thompson (accepting the award for her mother-in-law, Mickey Thompson), Patti Serrano, Bruce Elgort, Tony Chennault, and Mike Arnold.

Clark College President Bob Knight announced the recipients of the 2013 Exceptional Faculty Awards during the 2013 Commencement ceremony on June 20; they were presented with engraved plaques during Opening Day on September 11. This year, five faculty members—two part-time instructors and three full-time professors—received the award, which honors excellence in teaching.

The Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards are presented

annually to full-time and part-time faculty members in recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the college. Nominations are submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors. The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993.

This year's Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are:



Mike Arnold

Mike Arnold, Health and Physical Education

Mike Arnold began teaching at Clark College in 1989 and over that time has taught everything from archery to weight lifting, as well as coaching athletic teams. His students praise him for helping them improve not only their bodies, but their minds and characters as well. "Not only does he want you to do well in his class, he wants you to do well in life," wrote one student in his nomination.

Another student wrote, "Mike Arnold is one of the most caring,

respectable, honest and genuine people I have ever met. He is willing to help any student that is in need. ... He is more than a teacher; he is a friend and a mentor.”

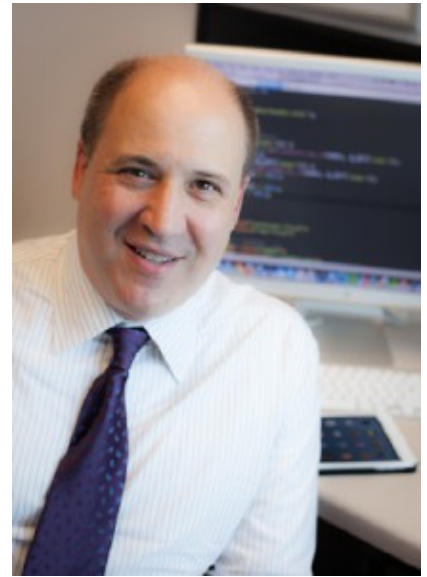


Tony Chennault

Tony Chennault, Biology

“Simply put, Tony Chennault is the best professor I have ever had,” wrote one student in nominating Chennault for the Exceptional Faculty Award. Many students praise Chennault for making a notoriously difficult series of classes—namely, Human Anatomy and Physiology—fun and understandable.

Chennault, who also teaches Human Biology, began teaching at Clark in 2008 and received tenure in 2011. He strives to make his students feel comfortable as they tackle challenging material, providing them with helpful study tips and mnemonic tricks for learning anatomical terms. “I believe this award is a reflection of having a job that I truly love and am passionate about, and I take pride in bringing that passion and energy to class every day, trying my best to make learning the science of the human body fun for the students as I have fun, too,” he said.



Bruce Elgort

Bruce Elgort, Computer Technology

Bruce Elgort has only been teaching at Clark since winter quarter 2013, but already he has made a huge impression on his students. “I was worried when I started his class that I wouldn’t be able to learn the material or properly grasp the concepts, but after I was in Bruce’s class for an hour, I felt confident and comfortable and able to learn anything,” wrote one nominator.

While Elgort is relatively new to teaching in a college setting, he has a long career in computer technology. He has worked for major technology companies, including Sharp and Underwriters Laboratories, and launched his own successful software company. When he teaches courses about programming, HTML, and PHP coding, he brings real-life experience from the work world into his classroom—a classroom that extends into the virtual realm through help sessions conducted via social media. “In today’s hyper-connected, ‘always-on’ world, the ability to extend the physical classroom is something that has become an integral part of all my work at Clark,” Elgort says.



Patti Serrano

Patti Serrano, Business Administration

Patti Serrano has had plenty of time to develop fans at Clark College—she began teaching here in 1981, beginning by teaching Fashion Merchandising before transitioning to Business Management and Marketing courses. During that time, Serrano has demonstrated leadership at the college time and again. She helped draft the college’s Strategic Plan and participated in the college’s last three accreditation efforts, as well as serving on countless committees to improve college functions; she has also served as head of the college’s Business Department and chair of the Business Division. Additionally, she is a committed educator.

“Having known Patti Serrano for over thirty years, I have personally seen the many, many hours she has devoted to helping her students with guidance in professional and personal advice,” said one coworker. “She has been a positive force for hundreds of students.”



Mickey Thompson

Mickey Thompson, Paralegal

Mickey Thompson entered the legal profession in 1977, and she brings both a depth of knowledge and a great enthusiasm about paralegal work to her teaching. Students point to the countless hours she has spent serving as the advisor to the Clark College Law Club and to her patience when guiding them through the thicket of legal terminology.

“She’s compassionate, organized, strict, and funny all at the same time,” wrote one student in her nomination. “Legal procedure is tough and complicated, and Mickey makes sure that all of her students understand the course material and have a good grasp on the concepts.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

The End of an Ara



Ara Serjoie bids a heartfelt farewell to the Penguin Nation.

More than 100 guests gathered to say goodbye to Clark College Foundation's Ara Serjoie, who has accepted a position in California, and to share funny and touching memories of their relationships with him during an August reception at Gaiser Student Center.

Jan Oliva, a philanthropic partner of Clark College and community leader, called Serjoie a visionary who excels at inspiring others to give of their time and treasure. "You cannot say no to Ara," she said. "He has a vision and shares it with everyone."

Oliva also expressed what many in the room had experienced: Serjoie's genuine compassion for others and deep belief in the mission of Clark College has left a legacy at the college.

Jeanne Firstenburg, also a major donor to Clark College, said Serjoie has become a personal friend whom she will greatly miss.

Serjoie, senior vice president at the foundation, announced his departure to California State University, East Bay, in

Hayward, Calif., in June. He will serve as the vice president for university advancement and president of the foundation.

Bob Williamson, vice president of administrative services at Clark College, said, "The era of Ara is over, but he will be more than remembered: He's a legacy. We are a better place for Ara being here."

Williamson referred to several facilities and programs on campus that have been created or enhanced due to Serjoie's fundraising adeptness and strong community relationships: the Oliva Family Early Learning Center, Little Penguins' Gardens, Firstenburg Family Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center, and Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy, as well as many student scholarships.

Greg Wallace, Clark College Foundation Board of Directors chair, called Serjoie a "remarkable talent," adding, "Ara has a quick wit, he's engaging, very bright and he knows everyone from the region and remembers each of them."

Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation, said that when she was searching for a vice president of development seven years ago, she was looking for a partner who would work side-by-side with her. "I needed someone who could bring the foundation to a new level and could teach me about the amazing world of development," she said.

She said she found that and more in Serjoie: "He has my deepest respect and admiration. The community holds the college in high regard because of his professional ethics, responsibility to philanthropy and his unwavering belief in the mission of Clark College."

When Serjoie rose to speak, he said, "This evening is not about me; it's about you. It's about the students and the wonderful work faculty members and staff do every day in service to our students."

Then, with tears in his eyes, he said, "All of you have been kind to me over these past seven years, and for that and more you are forever in my heart."

Photo: Clark College Foundation/Rhonda Morin