

# **Inaugural Black Student and Family Fair**

More than 125 people attended the Black Student and Family Fair in Gaiser Student Center on April 15. Although most students were of high school age, middle school and elementary students also attended.

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**Clark College hosts  
Northwest Regional Equity  
Conference**



# Northwest Regional Equity Conference

*Sharing Strategies for Anti-Racist Practices*

**February 24-26, 2021**

Registration is now open for Clark College's 2021 Northwest Regional Equity Conference. This year's theme is "Sharing Strategies for Equity and Anti-Racist Practices."

The online, two-day conference aims to improve equitable, sustainable experiences and outcomes for historically under-represented students and employees of the higher education system through effective instruction and anti-racist supports. This year the conference will broaden its scope of topics beyond higher education.



Left to right: Rashida Willard, Randolph Carter, and Michael Tuncap at the 2020 NWREC.

“We see racism playing out before our eyes, and conversations around anti-racism are as much needed right now as they have always been, but what is really needed is anti-racism in action,” said Rashida Willard, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Clark College. “We all benefit by sharing our experiences and learning from those who bring their expertise to these vital conversations.”

This conference has been broadened to include governmental, non-profit, and corporate sectors. It is really geared toward individuals across the nation who would like to broaden their social justice knowledge or remove institutional barriers for historically underrepresented populations.

Workshops include:

- Bias and Discrimination in AI systems
- A Call to Anti-Racism -Teaching Cultural Diversity to Health Care Students
- Data Storytelling
- Creating IMPACTful Mentoring Opportunities for BIPOC Students
- Restorative Justice
- Employee Engagement and Retention

- Best Practices for Working with Incarcerated Students
- Disability Justice
- Building a Community of Collective Care
- Making DEI Training Count: Overcoming Common Pitfalls
- Creating Pathways for Native, Latinx and Afrocentric Education from High School through College
- Equity in Student Conduct

“We created the conference last year because we saw a need to elevate the discussion, seek out best practices, and take action,” said Willard. “These are the very issues we are working on at Clark College. We are working on becoming anti-racist – not just on paper, but in everything we do. We want to share these best practices with community. We are in a time of seismic change as our nation grapples with systemic racism, politics, the pandemic and the economy. The Northwest Regional Equity Conference provides a pathway forward for communities ready to take the next step.”

For more information about NWREC: <http://www.clark.edu/campus-life/student-support/diversity-and-equity/equity-conference/index.php>. Those who need accommodation due to a disability can contact Clark College’s Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314, 360-991-0901 video phone.

## Keynote Speakers

**Talila “TL” Lewis** is a community lawyer, educator, and organizer whose work highlights and addresses the nexus between race, class, disability and structural inequity. Recognized as a 2015 White House Champion of Change and one of *Pacific Standard Magazine’s* Top 30 Thinkers Under 30, Lewis engineers and leads innovative and intersectional social justice efforts that illuminate and address grave injustices within education, medical, and legal systems that have gone unaddressed for generations. A recent graduate of American

University Washington College of Law, Lewis has received awards from numerous universities, the American Bar Association, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, American Association for People with Disabilities, the Nation Institute, National Black Deaf Advocates, and EBONY Magazine, among others. Lewis is a 2018 Roddenberry Fellow and a 2018 Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity.

**Aaron Reader** is a practitioner, poet, activist and educator, with extensive experience in diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education. He has served higher education in a number of capacities over the last decade from teaching, social justice, education equity, and currently is the Vice President of Student Services at Highline College. In addition to his work in higher education he has a passion for poetry and spoken word. He has been identified as workshop leader, facilitator and speaker for colleges, summits and conferences. Reader has been recognized as a local spoken-word artist who has a powerful, emotional, real, and conscious style.

**Dr. Angel B. Pérez** has worked for over two decades to realize his belief that diversity and academic excellence go hand-in-hand, and that every young person who aspires to higher education should have the opportunity to achieve. A recognized thought-leader on issues of equity and access in American education, Pérez is a tireless champion for under-represented communities and a creative advocate for reform. Named by a *Forbes* article in 2019 as the most influential voice in college admissions, Pérez strives to build an educational ecosystem that better represents today's America.

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# A welcome sign for Dreamers



Design by Mia Linnik

Digital Media Arts student Mia Linnik's winning design for a Dreamer-friendly logo

Being a college student can be stressful for anyone, but it carries an extra layer of anxiety for the undocumented. Will they be able to access financial aid? Will they be asked for a Social Security Number? Above all, will talking with a professor or staff member compromise their safety and lead to deportation?

Clark College is taking a new step to reassure these students: It is creating a new logo that faculty and staff can display to show that they are a "safe space" for undocumented students, commonly known as Dreamers.

The concept is much like the "Penguin Pride" sticker unrolled several years ago to indicate safe spaces for Clark's LGBTQUIA+ students. As with that sticker, faculty and staff must undergo specific training before receiving the sticker—in this case, "Best Practices to Support Dreamers," offered by the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

The project is the result of a collaboration between Digital Media Arts students and BUILD (Broadening Understanding, Intercultural Leadership and Development), a yearlong employee training program that focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

After completing the inaugural BUILD cohort together, **Deena Godwin**, **Marilyn Hale** and **Yusufu Kamara** proposed creating a Dreamers logo for faculty and staff to display on windows, workspaces, or online to indicate safe spaces and community support for Clark College Dreamers. And who better to design such a thing than Clark College Digital Media Arts students?

Collaborating with Digital Media Arts department head **Kristl Plinz** and students enrolled in a beginning Digital Media Arts course fall term, the three BUILD members along with Diversity Outreach Manager **Rosalba Pitkin** helped define the client needs assessment, then participated in a student-led design pitch session via Zoom. After weeks of creative development, 24 student designs were submitted for consideration. A committee of 18 faculty, staff, and students—including Dreamers—voted on the designs.



Runner-up design by Jessica Peters

The winner, student **Mia Linnik**, was awarded a \$500 tuition scholarship provided by Clark College Foundation. Her design features monarch butterflies, which have become a symbol for Dreamers because of their long migration patterns.

Here is Linnik's description of her winning design: "This

design incorporates the ideas of community, support and migration. The concept was to create a warm and uplifting feeling with supportive hands and a group of flying monarchs. The Earth communicates the idea that Dreamers are from all over the world, and that we are still a community no matter where someone was born. The hands wrapped underneath the Earth conveys a message of support and care. The monarch butterflies are a symbol for migration. The group of butterflies shows community and togetherness.”

One Dreamer commented on the winning design: “It shows me again that Dreamers come from all different backgrounds and we don’t have a limit or where our dreams/goals can take us. We are resilient and determined to go anywhere our education goals take us.”

BUILD teammate and Economics professor **Yusufu Kumara** said of the winning design: “It takes me back to the first time I came to this country as a Fulbright Scholar in 2006. I met many others like me who came here from all over the world, and we were welcomed and embraced and made to feel like we belonged here by people who barely knew us. Looking at the winning design, I cannot hold back tears thinking back to those days, which considering what is going on now, seems like 100 years ago. I am filled with joy and very proud to have been a part of something bigger than myself. My wish is that this can carry over to other colleges and universities around the country. Let’s make this a national thing.”





Designs by students **Sarah Bounds** and **Jessica Peters** tied for second place. Both students were awarded a \$75 credit to the Clark College Bookstore, also compliments of the Foundation.

It's hard to know how many Dreamer students attend Clark College; by necessity, they often keep their status hidden. This has been especially true in 2020, when the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative has been uncertain. However, the college has made a public commitment to not base admission decisions on immigration status and to not share students' immigration status with others unless required to do so by a subpoena or court order. Furthermore, Dreamers who live in Washington state have an added source of hope: While they are usually ineligible for federal financial aid, they may be eligible for state aid through the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA).

## Learn More

- View the Zoom recording announcing the winning designs.
  - View all 24 student design submissions.
  - Learn more about how Clark College supports Dreamers at [www.clark.edu/cc/dreamers](http://www.clark.edu/cc/dreamers).
  - "*Best Practices to Support DREAMers*" will be offered February 8, 2021 from 4 to 6 p.m. via Zoom. Click to register here (must be a Clark College employee to attend).
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# Sharing their stories



*Clockwise from top left, Nathan Webster, Rashida Willard, Tyler Monk, and Erykah Weems spoke during an online public forum called "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community." Photo courtesy of VanTalks.*

Two members of the Clark College community shared their experiences of being Black in Vancouver during a public online event held on July 30. Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **Rashida Willard** and marketing professor **Nathan Webster** were among four speakers who told their stories during "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community."

The event was co-presented by VanTalks, Vancouver's version of TED Talks that inspire change, ideas and innovation, and by Ready to Rise, which supports students of color and first-generation college students.

The other two featured speakers were Tyler Monk, Clark County director of Ready to Rise, and Erykah Weems, who grew up in Vancouver and recently graduated from Central Washington

University. She is passionate about supporting and elevating the voices of girls and young women of color who have been impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

At the start of the forum, emcee Monk reminded the audience: “We have four Black folks sharing our experience. We do not speak for all Black folks.”

## **Nathan Webster**

Webster, who grew up in Vancouver and graduated from Mountain View High School, talked about how it felt growing up in a sea of white people. During his presentation, he shared class photos in which he is the only Black person.

“I’ve always been that ink spot in that bottle of milk,” he said. “I don’t see enough Black males in leadership roles in Vancouver. Can we show some love to our Black males? So many of my students at Clark have never had a Black male teacher until they took my class.”

Webster also addressed how he feels being a Black male during an era when police brutality toward Black males is rampant. Too often, white people encounter a law-abiding Black male who is doing nothing illegal and minding his own business, but the white person calls the police.

He said, “White folks, please don’t be scared of Black men. I don’t want to be an endangered species.”

## **Rashida Willard**

Willard says she grew up in pre-gentrified Northeast Portland in a close-knit Black community that included “cookouts, church ladies and aunties sitting on the porch watching out.” Later, she and her husband and their growing family were priced out of their Portland community. After moving to Vancouver, where housing prices were more affordable, she

started looking around for other Blacks and asked herself: "Where are they?"

Willard spoke about the need to pay attention to her actions and words in Vancouver's stores, medical offices, restaurants and her workplace. She talked out her internal monologue when she's in a store: Keep your hands out of your pockets or people will think you're stealing. Her list of "don'ts" was long and included paying attention to her clothing and hair.

She told a story about a time she was grocery shopping when a white stranger asked her to control her child. The woman was pointing to someone else's Black child.

She told the audience, "I don't own all the Black kids in Vancouver!"

On another trip to the grocery store, the cashier asked Willard whether she was going to use her EBT card to pay for her groceries. Willard told the audience that she doubted the cashier asked white shoppers that same question.

After many negative encounters in Vancouver, she said, "I started to wonder where I belong."

She spoke about the need for more local leaders who are not white: "In Vancouver students need to see people of color in leadership positions."

During the Q&A after the presentations, an audience member asked: What's the biggest mistake white allies make?

Willard answered: "Be an ally when the cameras aren't rolling. True allyship is what you are doing when nobody is watching."

She added, "If you're a white person called out by a person of color, listen to them. Believe Black folks."

The event is viewable on the VanTalks YouTube channel.

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# Honoring Dr. King



Clark College will honor the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Wednesday, January 17, with two events—a traveling museum exhibit and a guest speaker—focused on African-American history and art. The theme this year is “1968,” in reference to the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, and the day’s activities will focus on how the events of 1968 shaped American history and culture. Both events are free and open to the public.

The Black History 101 Mobile Museum will be on exhibit in Gaiser Student Center on Clark’s main campus from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Founded by Khalid el-Hakim, this is an award-winning collection of over 7,000 original artifacts. The selection on display will focus on the major events and personalities of 1968, including artifacts related to the 1968 Olympics, Muhammad Ali, Arthur Ashe, the Black Panther Party, Shirley Chisholm, and numerous musical artists who were performing during that time. Supporting material from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Jim Crow era will provide additional historical context.

Additionally, there will be a multi-media presentation delivered by Professor Griff, one of the founding members of the hip-hop group Public Enemy, about how the events of the

late 1960s helped shape that group's art. Griff will speak from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., also in Gaiser Student Center.

In honor of Dr. King's legacy and his call for service, the college is asking guests to bring a non-perishable item for the Clark College Penguin Pantry and the ShareHouse Backpack Program.

Clark College will be closed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day itself (Monday, January 15) in observance of the official holiday.

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## Leadership in diversity



Roslyn Leon  
Guerrero

Clark College Administrative Assistant Roslyn "Roz" Monique Leon Guerrero was recently appointed by Gov. Jay Inslee to the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA).

Leon Guerrero, who is of Chamorro descent, was born and raised on the island of Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). She has more than 15 years of experience working in education, with community organizations and outreach to Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) both

on the islands and in Southwest Washington. Originally hired in Clark's Office of Instruction in 2010, she currently works in the Office of Diversity and Equity where she monitors, manages, and supports the Diversity Center and the office's leadership. She also does outreach, recruitment, and retention of AAPIs. She is the advisor of the Asian Pacific Islanders Club that leads events, education, and outreach for AAPIs at Clark College and the greater Clark County community.

Leon Guerrero works with many organizations and boards in Southwest Washington focusing on AAPIs. She is a standing member of the Faculty and Staff of Color Conference Planning Committee (a statewide committee composed of representatives from all Washington colleges) and a Washington Public Employees Association steward representative for Clark College. In 2015, she completed the Social Justice Leadership Institute, an institute designed for individuals working in higher education in Washington to hone skills, build community, and network with other higher-education professionals.

"Being appointed to the Commission on Asian Pacific America Affairs is an honor and privilege," says Leon Guerrero. "This will actually benefit Clark College in outreaching to diverse populations. My goals while on the commission are as follows: to be the voice and advocate for equitable services for AAPIs in health, education, safety, etc.; to do outreach and educate AAPIs of Washington on the resources available to them; to represent and call out barriers and systemic challenges for AAPIs in Washington; and to work collaboratively with the other commissioners to support AAPIs in Southwest Washington."

Leon Guerrero is not the first employee from Clark's Office of Diversity and Equity to sit on a Washington State commission. Last year, Diversity Outreach Manager Dolly England was appointed to the Commission on African American Affairs, and Program Specialist Rosalba Pitkin served on the Commission on Hispanic Affairs for two terms.

Founded in 1972, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs has an advisory board made up of twelve Governor-appointed commissioners representing the state's diverse Asian Pacific American communities. Commissioners advise the Governor and state agencies on issues that concern APA communities. Commissioner terms are for three years.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# Catching dreams, sharing history



Brent Learned talks about George Curtis Levi's traditional



“ledger art” with attendees of the 2016 Student of Color Luncheon.

The winter 2016 Student of Color Luncheon was filled with history—some of it long in the past, and some of it being made right then. The event featured artists Brent Learned and George Curtis Levi, whose work is currently being featured at the Clark County Historical Museum, speaking about atrocities committed against their ancestors in the 19th century. It also marked the bestowal of Clark’s first scholarship designated specifically for a Native American student.



Dream Catcher  
Scholarship  
recipient Channa  
Smith

The Clark College Dream Catcher Scholarship was first announced at the college’s annual Native American celebration in 2014. Clark student Channa Smith said she was honored to be its inaugural recipient. “When I first applied for the scholarship, I didn’t think much about it beyond, ‘Oh, it would be nice to have some money,’” she said at the reception. “But it’s been really transformative. I didn’t think how much it would mean to me to be recognized for my hard work.”

Smith has been very active in the community, both at the college and in Southwest Washington. A Coast Salish tribe member, she helped start Clark's new Native American Cultural Club and has participated in local Chinook tribal activities since moving to the area.



Channa Smith was named the inaugural recipient of the Dream Catcher Scholarship at the 2016 Student of Color Luncheon. Multicultural Retention Manager Felisciana Peralta, *right*, presented the scholarship.

After the scholarship was presented to Smith, Learned and Levi spoke about creating the art that makes up "One November Morning." This exhibit depicts the Sand Creek Massacre of November 29, 1864, when more than 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho people were killed in Sand Creek, Colorado, by U.S. Army soldiers.

"You have to know where you come from to know where you're going, and that's what we're trying to do," said Levi during the presentation. He urged students at the luncheon to remember their own history and communities as they progressed in life. "Go back to your communities after you graduate and give back," he said.

“One November Morning” will be on display at the Clark County Historical Museum through May 28. As part of its “Native Voices” exhibit, the Clark College Libraries is hosting a free art walk on Friday, March 4, that begins at Cannell Library with a reception, then visits the Native American basketry currently on display at Archer Gallery, and ends at the Clark County Historical Museum.

The spring 2016 Student of Color Luncheon will be held in May. It will feature the announcement of the recipient of Clark’s 2016 Constance Baker Motley Scholarship, which is given each year to a Clark College student of color.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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## **Clark employee part of social justice pilot project**



Roslyn "Roz" Leon Guerrero, *third from right*, attends a retreat in 2014 with her fellow members of the Social Justice Leadership Institute's pilot cohort. *Photo courtesy of Roslyn Leon Guerrero.*

Clark College employee Roslyn "Roz" Leon Guerrero was invited to be part of a new cohort project designed to develop leadership skills in community college employees from historically disenfranchised or underrepresented populations.

Leon Guerrero, who identifies as a Chamorro from the Northern Mariana Islands, was one of 20 members of the pilot cohort of the Social Justice Leadership Institute. Members met five times over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year to participate in activities designed to help them grow their leadership skills, develop a systemwide network of colleagues, and learn new tools for supporting diversity at their respective institutions.

“There is so much to share about the growth and development I received from being a part of the SJLI first cohort group,” says Leon Guerrero. “There was a lot of reflection on me personally and professionally. Being able to come together with a group of awesome and inspiring individuals, sharing the same struggles and challenges, and mentoring and empowering each other is uplifting, inspiring, and heartening. If there was one word I could use to describe this experience, it would be ‘blessed.’”

Leon Guerrero, who has worked at Clark College for more than five years both in the Office of Instruction and now in the Office of Diversity and Equity, first heard about the SJLI from psychology professor and early childhood education division chair Debi Jenkins. Moments after Jenkins’s email, she received another from the Office of Instruction asking if she was interested in participating. Just a few weeks later, she was walking into the Whidbey Island Institute to attend a three-day retreat with the rest of her cohort.

The remaining four meetings took place at Bellevue College, which houses the SJLI. Leon Guerrero says that over the course of the year, she learned how to identify and use her personal strengths—a valuable experience. “Being able to focus on myself and understanding myself is important especially in my work in the Office of Diversity and Equity,” says Leon Guerrero, who currently serves as that office’s Administrative Support.

Leon Guerrero says she hopes to create a similar program here at Clark, and hopes other Clark employees will apply for the 2015-2016 cohort of SJLI, applications for which are due August 1. She offers this advice to anyone interested in participating: “Remember to do self-care before SJLI. Always reflect on yourself, and have an open mind . SJLI is not an avenue for you to find someone to take in your stuff; rather, it’s a safe place for historically underrepresented individuals to learn, grow, develop, and reflect on themselves

so they can grow and succeed in their position in higher education. Be your authentic self in everything you do. ”

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## The Poetry of Social Justice



“Poetry is about being able to speak the truth,” said Aaron Reader in his keynote address during Clark’s 2015 Martin Luther King observance. “And Dr. King not only spoke the truth, he acted on it.”

“Dr. King started the battle, but the war has not been won.”

That was one line from “Sleepwalking,” the poem spoken-word artist Aaron Reader chose to begin his presentation honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., held January 21 in Gaiser Student Center. Reader had come to Clark as the keynote

speaker for the college's annual Martin Luther King Day observance.

"It's because of Dr. King that I am able to speak to you today," Reader told his audience. "It's because of Dr. King that I was able to get a master's degree. At one point, people like me didn't even go to college."

Reader grew up in Oakland, California. In his teens, he began using poetry as an outlet to express the ups and downs of being a young African-American male in inner-city America. Today, in addition to his spoken-word performances and his work as a motivational speaker and workshop facilitator around issues of diversity and equity, he also serves as the director of multicultural services at Bellevue College.

In was in his capacity at the college that he was invited to participate in a seven-day bus tour of significant sites from the 1960s civil rights movement, and much of his presentation focused on that experience.

"I went to the south and I realized that I have been sheltered living here in the Pacific Northwest," he said. "We went to a spot where we got off the bus, and the guide said, 'We don't let students go down that road there because that's where the Ku Klux Klan are.'"



Aaron Reader with MLK  
Celebration Committee

members, *left to right*, Felisciana Peralta, Rosalba Pitkin, Michelle Golder, Rosalyn Guerrero, and Dolly England.

Reader said that the experience not only gave him a deeper connection to the history of civil rights in this country, but also some uncomfortable insight into disparities that remain today. He recounted one moment when the 30 members of his tour group—a combination of college students, employees, and alumni—arrived at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. King was shot and killed in 1968 on the second-floor balcony.

“I’m looking up at this thing and I’m starting to lose it,” recalled Reader. “I’m getting choked up. Some of the students were starting to cry. And then one of the [white] faculty said, ‘How many of you are up for Starbucks?’”

Reader said that afterward, he had private conversations with some of his colleagues to explain how that moment had been hurtful to the students of color on the tour. He told the audience to be ready to have such conversations themselves. “As social-justice activists, as warriors, you’re going to have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable,” he said.

Afterward, during a question-and-answer period following Reader’s presentation, a white faculty member asked how she and her white colleagues at Clark could help support diverse students at the college.

“Number One is to listen,” Reader advised. “Oftentimes, I think that when we think we get it, we shut our ears off. Don’t be so quick to say, ‘I understand.’ Before you say you understand, take a moment to really listen.”

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

*Video: Nick Bremer-Korb*



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# Compass Points to Sirius Bonner



Special Advisor for  
Diversity and  
Equity Sirius  
Bonner

Sirius Bonner, Clark College special advisor for diversity and equity, was presented with the Compass Award at the Urban Spark Collective's fourth annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast, held January 18 in Clark College's Gaiser Student Center.

The Compass Award is given to an individual or organization that carves a new path for diversity and inclusion in education, in the workplace, or through community engagement. As Special Advisor for Diversity and Equity, Bonner advises and supports Clark College's Executive Cabinet, College Council, Cultural Pluralism Committee and the entire college community. Since joining Clark in 2011, Bonner has introduced

new programs to the college; brought a sharper focus to issues of power, privilege and inequity; overseen the opening of a new Diversity Center on the main campus; and expanded the number of opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to build their skills.

Bonner earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree from Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Before coming to Clark, she served as the Director of Multicultural Recruitment and the Multicultural Affairs Student Program Coordinator at Reed College and later as the Assistant Director of New Student Programs for Diversity Recruitment at Portland State University.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast is sponsored by a number of community organizations. The event is the brainchild of community activist Deena Pierott, who is the founder of diversity executive search firm Mosaic Blueprint. This year, the breakfast had a surprise guest: U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia), who worked with Dr. King in the Civil Rights movement, spoke to the assembled guests. In her remarks upon accepting the Compass Award, Bonner said she was inspired by Rep. Lewis, noting that he had inspired her to “get into trouble” in the quest for equity for all people.

Vancouver Mayor and Clark alumnus Tim Leavitt presented the award to Bonner. The event keynote speaker was Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia, an Oregon native and psychiatrist at Oregon Health & Science University.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*