On October 16, Mr. Joe Horan, a physical education teacher from the Syracuse City School District, presented to the C.U.R.E. Program. He spoke about the realities of teaching and coaching in urban areas. The presentation offered amazing insight to all those aspiring to become teachers, especially teachers in urban areas. Mr. Horan has gained a lot of attention because his program, “Building Men”, has been recognized as having impact on the middle school boys enrolled in the program. This program is a reflection of his philosophy on coaching, which utilizes time on the court coaching basketball, along with practice sessions in the classroom teaching life lessons to his players.

The C.U.R.E. students valued the presentation and the information that Mr. Horan had to offer. Molly Krug, a senior in the C.U.R.E. Program, said, “I keep thinking about how great the future of our kids would be if all teachers in inner-city schools had the same mentality as Mr. Horan.” Jordan Ramos, another senior in the C.U.R.E. Program, added, “I think it’s awesome how the program focuses more on achievement outside of the basketball court. This isn’t always the case since many schools place a higher priority on success on the playing field. This is a program that has the ability to change students’ perception on school, which can over time change a school’s culture.”

Joe Horan’s presentation was inspiring as well as informational to the C.U.R.E. students and the other members of the college community that were in attendance. To find out more about the Building Men Program, visit buildingmenprogram.org
I am not a product of urban schools. Growing up on Long Island and attending a private Catholic school, I was sheltered in many ways from the reality of public schools and the inequity that exists among city schools. I may not have had a first-hand experience of attending an urban school, but my passion for becoming an urban educator is strong. This is mostly due to the inspiration I have gained from my mother, a Special Education teacher and former urban educator in Bronx, NY. I’ve known I wanted to be a teacher since my first day of kindergarten. Flash forward twelve years and I chose to enter the field of Speech Pathology. I really had no clue what that meant until I was able to shadow a speech pathologist at Percy Hughes Magnet School during my freshman year in FSA 101. C.U.R.E. gave me the amazing opportunity to spend time in a school during my first few weeks as a college student. Prior to my field observation, I had no idea that being a speech pathologist could focus on things such as conversation skills, following directions, or storytelling. I was able to see how games and activities were used to illicit specific behaviors in both group and individual settings. It was then that I realized I was in the right place and that I made the right choice to pursue speech. I had an incredible experience through observing and I learned what it really meant to be a speech pathologist and to be an educator in an urban school.

I have come to realize that C.U.R.E. has helped me develop both of my passions through my major and through urban education. I have been able to connect more with becoming an educator through C.U.R.E. classes and monthly meetings while also learning about more science-based, clinical aspects of speech pathology through my major. The courses I have taken have opened my eyes to numerous issues in schools, how these problems are affecting students, and what I can do as an urban educator to make a difference. Without the knowledge I have gained from C.U.R.E., I do not think that I would have the confidence as a future educator that I do today. C.U.R.E. is a defining part of my story. It has molded me into the student, individual, and professional that I am now and the person I hope to be after my time here at Cortland. I was lucky enough to be a part of this program and to become a leader on campus through the assurance and direction I have gained from being a part of the C.U.R.E. program.

Join the C.U.R.E. facebook group to stay connected and share your story.

Search C.U.R.E. Program or go to -
https://www.facebook.com/groups/147092188664441/
Freshman Brianna Kuhn, is a first year C.U.R.E. Scholarship recipient. Brianna is from New Jersey and is currently the program’s only out-of-state student. She is truly enjoying Cortland and taking advantage of new experiences. She appreciates the size of SUNY Cortland’s campus, and the diversity of the student population.

Brianna found the transition between home in New Jersey and college in upstate New York to be difficult at first as a result of being so far from her family and friends and coming in knowing no one. Now she feels comfortable here at Cortland and says that she has met a lot of people, which she had not expected to do this early. She thinks that the C.U.R.E. program has helped and reassured her that Cortland is the place for her. When thinking back to C.U.R.E. Interview Day last April, she said that she came in unsure if Cortland would be a good fit and was considering attending her parents’ alma mater in New Jersey. After witnessing the family like atmosphere of the C.U.R.E. Program, she left the campus knowing that SUNY Cortland was her number one choice and is happy to be a part of it today.

Students enjoying the President’s Reception at the SUNY Cortland Alumni House. Back Row (from left to right): Anthony Terzolo, Andrea Tirrell, Nicole Guerra, Jordan Ramos. Front Row (from left to right): Molly Krug and Lakshmi Nair.
Anne Burns Thomas – Perspective of The Program Coordinator

In the past few weeks, I have had several conversations with colleagues in teacher education and families of prospective students. Many are concerned about the job prospects for new teachers and wonder if there will be enough jobs for all the new teachers that graduate from SUNY Cortland. I can't speak for all programs, but I have been very impressed by the ways that recent C.U.R.E. graduates have found exciting positions that take advantage of their skills and preparation for urban teaching placements. In the past year, we have seen teachers hired in New York, Texas, and Maryland and multiple hires in fields as diverse as inclusive special education, physical education, and administration. A recent survey by Buffalo State’s Career Services center found that the quality that school leaders are seeking most in prospective teachers is effective classroom management. C.U.R.E. students are prepared to think about classroom management in terms of building relationships with students and making content culturally relevant. I believe that this kind of focus on classroom management as more than “behavior modification” sets C.U.R.E. graduates on the right path to feeling prepared for positions in urban schools.

Do you have any stories to share about the ways that classroom management worked for you as a new teacher or things that you wish you had known? Please take this opportunity as alumni to share with future teachers from C.U.R.E. You can share your story on our Facebook page (search C.U.R.E. Program and request to be added to our group) or by emailing me at anne.burnsthomas@cortland.edu.