

May 2012
Volume 1, Issue 8

Upcoming Events
[Student Events](#)

Kente

8pm May 11, 2012
Function Room

Fall 2012

Back to School BBQ

1-4pm September 3, 2012
Yaman Park
Rain location
Interfaith Center

Diversity Retreat

September 7-9, 2012

Islamic Community Dinner

5-7pm September 24, 2012
Interfaith Center

[CGIS Race, Resistance, and Reason Conference](#)

October 20, 2012
SUNY Cortland

Unity Celebration

5-6:30pm October 23, 2012
Function Room
Corey Union

Drag Show

November 18, 2012
Function Room
Corey Union

Acapalooza

December 1, 2012
Function Room
Corey Union

A Letter to the Campus

Dear Campus Community: I would like to thank the SUNY Cortland campus community for your support this 2011-2012 academic year. Without the support, collaboration, and willingness of our campus partners, we could not have accomplished the huge gains that the office has reported. For the third year, the Multicultural Life and Diversity office has expanded our campus impact through training, seminars, student programming, campus initiatives, and new personnel. Two highlights for me were the NCBI Police Training and the 3rd Annual Student Diversity Conference. A special thank you to Mr. Lyndon Huling, Ms. Ann Cutler, Ms. Nicole Holtz, Vice President Sharer, Vice President Prus, President Bitterbaum, and Carlos Medina (Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at SUNY System) for your unending support. 2012-2013 promises to be a year of growth that includes institutional assessment and a sustainable diversity plan. Wishing you all a safe and productive summer. Thank you from all of us here in the Multicultural Life and Diversity office.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The month of May commemorates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, which is a celebration of the culture, traditions, and history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian American Heritage Week during the first week of May. This date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (by many Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869. Multicultural Life and Diversity will be hosting a display in the Memorial Library through the month of May to celebrate and educate the community about various important pieces of literature from the Asian/Pacific Islander community, as well as information about different cultural organizations on campus that serve the Asian/Pacific Islander community. Our office will also be using this important celebration as a kick-off point for "Community Conversations." This month we will focus on the Asian community on campus.



Areito



La Familia Latina student organization hosted the Areito Celebration on April 21, 2012. Areito is traditionally a ceremony associated with ancestor worship performed by the Taino people of the Caribbean. These ceremonies involved dances and music and played an important role in Taino social, political, and religious culture. The evening consisted of Speaker/ anthropologist/philanthropist Dr. Boyd Servio-Mariano speaking on "Tronar Tambore: Channeling and Nurturing Our Indigenous Culture;" and a workshop by Dr. Boyd's family & friends the "Lumalali" Garifuna Drummers.

A Capella and Pitches Be Crazy



April 12, 2012 Seniors Night performance by SUNY Cortland A Capella and Pitches Be Crazy. Tryouts for A Capella are scheduled for Thursday, August 30, 2012, and Acapalooza is scheduled for December 1, 2012. Mark your calendars!

Community Conversations

Multicultural Life and Diversity is proud to announce we will be facilitating a "Community Conversations" initiative about campus climate at SUNY Cortland. This feature will be highlighted in our newsletter, and the complete interviews will be posted on our newly created blog: <http://blog.cortland.edu/sunycrtdiverse/>

The goal of the Community Conversations series is to promote a dialog on campus around the experiences of different populations of student, staff, and faculty. We want to hear YOUR voice, and encourage you to share your thoughts through the online community.

Lin Lin, associate professor of Social Studies Education in the department of Childhood/Early Childhood Education, spoke with us about her experiences around Chinese/Asian heritage in her life, and at SUNY Cortland. Below is a small sample from the full interview.

"We speak Chinese at home with the kids, and my husband is also Chinese. The Chinese heritage is very important in our life... there is something bothers many people here from China, and that is that we in our culture value the tradition of taking care of our elders at home. Finding a balance between succeeding at my job, keeping my kids around, and then taking care of my mother can be a struggle at times. With my daughter, she was very resistant because none of her friends spoke Chinese so she didn't understand why she needed to speak Chinese. Eventually we went back to China to visit, and she went to a Chinese school and she realized she could learn Chinese even though it would be hard. After two months it fell into place and now she is a junior going to college and realized how privileged she was and that being Chinese is something she should value.

I would say I have had more positive experiences at SUNY Cortland than negative around promoting Asian heritage on our campus. The office chaired by Noelle Chaddock Paley has helped, and the previous Provost made really conscious efforts to bring diversity to campus. One very positive thing that I see would be the year that I was hired they also hired two other Asian faculty, one from South Korea and another China. When we hire several teachers from similar backgrounds, it helps us feel like we are not alone. The three of us have bonded. As we increase the diversity of the faculty and teachers on campus, we can't help but share our perspectives with our students. Allowing students to hear a different perspective is something that can be very positive.

One area that I think should be addressed is the different certifications and requirements to become a teacher here. I was lucky the year that I was hired that I was able to be selected without the American teaching certificate. That has become a barrier for teachers from Asian now, as many without American teaching certificates cannot make it through the interview process."

EOP Awards Ceremony

The Educational Opportunity Program held their awards reception on April 26, 2012. This event recognizes the outstanding achievements of the students in the EOP program who have gone above and beyond academically, socially, and in their leadership roles this year. Multicultural Life and Diversity is proud to have worked with the EOP class this year, and recognizes their accomplishments.

National Day of Silence Rally



Spectrum (Cortland's Gay/Straight Alliance) held a Speak Out rally in the Voice Office on April 20, 2012. Students on campus remained silent during the day to represent those voices that have been silenced due to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment. Jennifer Pedersen, president of Spectrum, stated: *"We all deserve acceptance and we all deserve support. Today we were silent to remember those people who did not find acceptance and who did not find love and support from the people around them. But let us not be silent any longer. Let our voices be strong, let our voices be heard, and let us speak out against discrimination."*

Passover Seder and Holocaust Remembrance Event



The Hillel student organization held several events during the week of April 9, 2012 including their annual Seder dinner, and several Holocaust remembrance

themed events. Multicultural Life and Diversity office student employee Glodibal Natera attended the *"One Survivor Remembers: The [Gerda Weissmann](#) Story"* event. This is her reflection:

"On Thursday, April 12, I attended a Holocaust Survivor event based on the experience of Gerda Weissmann. Ms. Weissmann shared her memoir, which included interviews with her discussing her experience as a young Jewish girl during the Holocaust. She lost her sibling and father at a very young age and was forced to confine herself in the basement of their family home. After being separated from her mother at a concentration camp, making three close friends and then losing them on what was called the Death March, Greda began to lose faith. She contemplated suicide several times on the train to a concentration camp, but through memories of her father telling her to never give up hope, she decided to keep going. Eventually, Greda was assisted by an American Jewish man named Kurt Klein, who she later married.

Greda currently lives in Buffalo, New York, has children and grandchildren. If you ask Greda why she decided to survive, she will respond saying: "I needed to fight for injustice." Greda made it her responsibility to fight against the harsh treatment she encountered as a young Jewish girl. When Greda was rescued, she decided to become a writer, and wrote several books to share her story around the world.

As you can see, I learned a lot about Greda Weissmann during this Hillel event. I am glad I had the opportunity to learn this much about her life. This documentary had a bigger impact on my than any book I have read, or lecture I have attended on the Holocaust. I am actually in search for one of the several books she has written and am eager to continue learning about other survivors."

Food for Thought

Multicultural Life and Diversity recently collaborated with the Cortland Prevention Resources and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Center to host a "Food for Thought" event about the LGBTQ community of color in Cortland. Twenty-five campus and community members participated in a frank conversation about unique challenges of this community, and ways Cortland can become more accepting and welcoming to the LGBT community of color. The group reflected on concepts of multiple-identities and ally-development within underrepresented groups.

Student Leadership Awards



Several award recipients

We would like to congratulate the 2011-2012 student leaders who received an award on April 19, 2012. The event, chaired by Mary Kate Boland (assistant director of Student Activities,) showcased the diverse student leadership on our campus and recognized many of their outstanding accomplishments.

Student Employee Recognition Ceremony



Multicultural Life and Diversity would like to recognize Jessica Borio, Rachel Bonavita, Cristina Millan, and Andrea De Caires for their contributions to the office this year and for being recognized at the 2012 Student Employee Recognition Ceremony.

End of the Year Reflections

We asked students from the various student organizations housed in the VOICE Office to reflect on their year, and share a thought, goal, or final comment as the semester winds down.

Women of Color

“Great semester, the E-board worked like dream team together. Our events and programs went extremely well and I’m excited about what next year has to offer.” –Violeta

PASA

“The semester went well. I wish we had more stable membership, as that would have added to the continued conversations we were trying to have. Overall, it was a great semester for us!” –Shaniqua

Black Student Union

“Very successful year as far as trying new things like the Kings and Queens conference, but there is always room for improvement.” –Wan’Que

Hillel

“Being part of Hillel has provided us with a great group of friends, and a stress reliever from the demanding work load of our classes. Being Jewish is a big part of who we are, and Hillel has become an important part of our college experience. This is our third year as active members of Hillel, and we have loved every minute of it.” - Andrea

Caribbean Student Association

“We reached out to a lot of other organizations to help with refugees this year, which was a goal. The Caribbean week collaboration with Urban Education was very good as well. Taste of the Caribbean was fantastic, and I am proud to announce that the proceeds of Music for the Cause went to Doctors Without Borders.” –Yashema

La Familia Latina

“Through trials and tribulations La Familia Latina has become a familia rather than a club” –Stephanie

Spectrum

“We are on the road to improvement... there is always room to grow, and we are looking forward to the next semester where we will implement new and improved ideas.” –Miguel

M.O.V.E

“My experience with M.O.V.E has been an adventure as a organization. We’ve had our ups and downs but I still enjoyed every second of it. Next year we want to accomplish much more, we look forward to starting off the 2012-2013 semester with great events.” –Juan

APAC

“APAC has had a very successful year, with several great events. I am excited to see how the organization grows next year” -Cristina

#Open Your Eyes

Multicultural Life and Diversity intern Cristina Milan has recently posted her second entry in the “Open Your Eyes” series on the [MLDO Facebook page](#) and through our Twitter account [@sunycrtdiverse](#). To read the complete blog, click [here](#). Below is an excerpt from the blog:

“It’s no secret that stereotypes are thrown around on our campus and in the community. Our campus demographic consists of students, staff, and faculty from all over the state of New York (and other parts of the globe), and for many of us, college has been the first time we have really interacted with individuals we have not been raised or socialized around. We must all make a conscious effort to educate each other through conversation, programs, events, and intentional engagement.”



Alumni Page

We are pleased to support our alumni through Multicultural Life and Diversity, and would encourage you to stay connected with our office. We provide a variety of opportunities to get involved through speaking engagements, conference participation, and other initiatives with the department.

Ways to stay connected

If you have not done so already, we encourage you to update your alumni information. You can find the form to do that [here](#).

Join the Multicultural Life and Diversity Alumni Facebook group [here](#).

Bookmark our [SUNY Cortland Multicultural Life and Diversity](#) site. You will find updates about various conferences, reunions, and other alumni related events. We have page dedicated specifically to you, the [alumni](#).

Follow us on Twitter @sunycrtdiverse

Opportunities for involvement

Speaking Opportunities

We hold a variety of events every year that require keynote or guest speakers. Multicultural Life and Diversity is dedicated to bringing our alumni back to Cortland to share their wisdom with our current students, staff, and faculty about their experiences. Events such as Kente, Unity, the Multicultural Reunion, and the Student Diversity Conference are all venues that we would encourage our alumni to consider speaking.

Multicultural Alumni Reunion

We are in the early stages of planning our next Multicultural Alumni Reunion. We will keep you posted through our Multicultural Alumni page online and through the Facebook group about dates and locations for the next reunion.

Student Diversity Conference

The 4th Annual Student Diversity Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice is designed to provide students with the and a venue to share their research, build their resumes, and network with other students across New York State around the core values of diversity, equity and social justice. We would like to encourage graduate students to attend and present at the conference next year.

[Save the Date: April 14, 2013](#)