Community Engagement Institute (CEI) Monthly Newsletter

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APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

CEI HIGHLIGHTS

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATING STUDENTS

Congratulations to our CEI graduates! As you embrace the challenges and opportunities that await, may your future be filled with success, fulfillment, and endless possibilities. Thank you so much for all your hard work and dedication to your degree as well as at CEI!

LAUREN ARTERBURN
IMPACT CENTER

MEGAN BETTS
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

EMILY BRINKMAN
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

EMILY SMITH
IMPACT CENTER

LEAH STARBUCK
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

ANGELA STEGMAN
EDUCATION INITIATIVES

TAYLOR WALLACE
CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH & EVALUATION

INCREASING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH THE COMMUNITY GROWTH INITIATIVE

Thank you to CEI members (*Patricia Houston, Akron Davis, Chad Childs, Janell Stang, Chantal Nez, Megan Betts, and Abbi Wenz*) for their mission to increase health equity through Community Growth Initiative (CGI). Specifically, barriers experienced by community-based organizations serving marginalized populations in Wichita are addressed through the initiative. This initiative also works to support community organizations that are often overlooked by other community funding resources. The Community Growth Mini-Grants help community organizations enhance their capacity to serve and empower vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Wichita community.

The Community Growth Board, which consists of representatives from grassroots organizations within and serving the Wichita community, oversees the application, award, and celebration process. This year's board reviewed 37 applications and awarded $15,000 between 20 organizations.

In February, a kick-off event was organized for the awardees, providing them with the opportunity to network and gain insights into other community organizations. Additionally, all applicants have the chance to participate in four training sessions, provided by CEI staff members:

- Budgeting Process and Crafting Questions to Ask Funders
- Narrative Crafting Workshop
- Fundraising Fundamentals
- Marketing 101

This year's cohort will end with a celebration in June, where awardees will share how they used their funds.

EMPOWERING ENGAGEMENT: EXPLORING PROPOSED CHANGES TO WAIVERS

CEI's Center for Organizational Development (COD) supported a series of in-person and virtual meetings for the public to learn about upcoming changes to the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) waiver and Brain Injury (BI) waiver being proposed by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS).

At these meetings, staff from KDADS presented information and COD facilitated processes for participants to ask questions and share feedback.

Learn more about the waivers.

CEI STAFF HIGHLIGHT: SONJA ARMBRUSTER

Congratulations to Public Health Associate for CEI's Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI), Sonja Armbruster, for earning the Doren Fredrickson Commitment to Public Health Award from the Sedgwick County Health Department during Public Health Week (April 1 - 7)!

Dr. Doren Fredrickson was one of the SCHD's public health heroes. He passed away in 2008 after dedicating his life to the health of the Sedgwick County community. That life and legacy is commemorated in the annual award given in his name to an individual who has demonstrated a lifetime of public health service.

Ms. Armbruster shared in her acceptance speech, "When we connect with each other, whether it be our neighbors, or our coworkers, or our elected officials, we can build those relationships that protect our health and enrich our lives…As we look to the future, let us continue to create conditions where everyone has an opportunity to thrive in good health. Let us break down barriers to access and strive for health equity for all and let us never lose sight of the profound impact that our collective commitment to public health can have on shaping a brighter, healthier, and more resilient future for the generations to come."

Armbruster was surrounded by her peers, family, friends, and local leaders at the Sedgwick County Commissioners meeting when she accepted this award. One of the most inspiring parts of the meeting was how every county commissioner, regardless of political background, was able to speak unanimously of her positive impact in the community and was able to share personal stories of her service and expertise.

Learn more about the award and its history.

UPCOMING EVENTS

KANSAS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER (CHW) SYMPOSIUM 2024
June 11 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Pre-Symposium Event: June 10 from 1 – 5 p.m.
Wichita, Kan.

Attend the Kansas CHW Symposium for a day filled with a wide variety of speakers, breakout sessions, and activities with CHWs from across the state. The theme of this year is *"Evolving CHWs: Fostering Leaders, Amplifying Voices, and Advocating for Sustainability."*

Our keynote speakers (pictured) are Co-Executive Directors and Co-Principal Investigators for the CHW Center for Research and Evaluation.

If you are already planning on coming to the symposium and will be here a day early, attend the Pre-Symposium Event! Experience educational speakers, the premiere of the new CHW documentary and a social gathering to follow.

- Learn more about the symposium.
- Register to attend.
- Contact CEI's Center for Public health Initiatives (CPHI) with questions.

VICTORIA ACEVEDO
MA, CHW, MPH

NOELLE WIGGINS
EdD, MSPH

CALL FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS
KANSAS PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE (KPC) CONFERENCE 2024
Harvesting Hope in the Heartland
October 3 – 4 | Pre-Conference: October 2 | Wichita, Kan.

Share your knowledge and expertise at the 2024 KPC Conference!

The conference provides educational opportunities to increase awareness of emerging trends, build skills and knowledge to prevent suicide, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse, and advocate for best practices. The KPC Conference hosts state and local professionals from the various facets of the substance misuse prevention field and related disciplines. Conference breakouts on October 3-4 will be 45-minute, 60-minute or 90-minute sessions.

The Kansas Prevention Conference invites presentations that:

- Reflect on emerging techniques and cutting-edge content related to substance use or suicide prevention
- Provide useful content for the public and prevention professionals
- Stimulate and provoke discussion and audience engagement
- Deliver model practices using approaches for different types of learners
- Present evidence-based strategies
- Use multimedia approaches to enhance attendee learning

The call for presentations will close on June 17, 2024, at 5 p.m.

- Learn more about the conference
- Submit a presentation proposal
- View sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities

SAVE THE DATE
CEI'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
October 28 from 4 – 6 p.m. | Wichita, Kan.

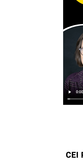
We are hosting a memorable event to celebrate our 40th anniversary and you are invited! We all will have the chance to hear from guest speakers, Dr. Richard Muma, WSU President, and Dr. Shirley LeFever, WSU Executive Vice President and Provost. You are invited to share your CEI memories with us so we can share them at the celebration.

More details to come!

Share your CEI history

THE POWER OF US

CELEBRATING CEI'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY
RECOGNIZING HEATHER PERKINS
Director of CEI's Operation and Finance



Heather Perkins will mark her 16th anniversary with the CEI in May. She plays a crucial role at CEI, supporting the organization's infrastructure by managing finances and overseeing the BizOps team. Heather was initially drawn here by friends, and it's the people at CEI who inspire her to stay. She appreciates the flexibility of the work environment and the alignment of CEI's mission and values with her own.

When asked about her vision for CEI's future, she expressed, *"I hope we become a leading model for workplace wellness, integrating our learnings and practices into our services for external organizations and systems."*

Thank you for all you do, Heather!

CEI PARTNER SHOUT-OUT

EVICTION RESOLUTION PROGRAM

In 2022 the Kansas Judicial Branch was awarded a grant from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for the development of an Eviction Resolution Program in the 18th Judicial District (Sedgwick County). NCSC established this grant program with the goal of developing "holistic, sustainable, and community driven resolutions to housing problems."

The Eviction Resolution Program provides information about the eviction court process to both tenants and landlords and connects them to available resources, including financial assistance, legal aid, and emergency housing. The program also seeks to facilitate the early resolution of eviction matters, in order to relieve the eviction court docket and help litigants resolve cases without prolonged litigation. This is mainly accomplished through mediation which is coordinated by the Eviction Resolution Program Manager and offered free of charge by volunteer court-approved mediators.

At the Kansas Judicial Branch, one of the primary goals is to expand access to justice by creating programs that help litigants, especially unrepresented people, navigate the court system. They have sought to include AmeriCorps members as part of a budding court navigator program in hopes to develop in the coming years.

"CEI has helped make this possible by handling many of the administrative elements of an AmeriCorps grant, which allows the court system to act as a host site and focus on substantive programmatic efforts," said Eviction Resolution Program Manager for the Kansas Judicial Branch, Abigail Lessman (pictured). "Our partnership with CEI and AmeriCorps has been instrumental in creating additional informational materials related to eviction cases and helping litigants navigate the courts, while also building resources at the local self-help center. We believe this is a great step to begin developing our court navigator program across the state."

Learn more or contact Abigail Lessman for more information.

WHAT CEI IS UP TO

CEI CRAFTERNOON

CEI staff participated in the first lunchtime gathering of crafting enthusiasts to celebrate National Craft Month. The "Crafternoon" get-together provided a space for staff to bring lunch and share their love of crafts and bring a project that they are currently working on. Attendee projects included sewing up a stuffed animal, crocheting a blanket, and knitting a scarf. Staff were also encouraged to bring any supplies they'd like to share/swap. The event was so much fun that we are now planning monthly crafternoons on the third Wednesday of each month!

CEI HAPPY HOURS

An old CEI tradition was revived: CEI-wide Happy Hours! Each month, staff are invited to attend an institute-wide happy hour and enjoy a break from their workday to spend time with team members. Everyone from CEI as well as friends and family members are welcome to join these unstructured and informal happy hours. A few locations included: White Crow , The Arcade, The Belmont, MilkThief, and Itzcali. Pictured are famous doggies from COD's Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI) at the White Crow.