Community Engagement Institute (CEI) Monthly Newsletter

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JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

CEI HIGHLIGHTS

EVOLVING CHW: INSPIRING CHANGE AT THE KANSAS CHW SYMPOSIUM

The Kansas Community Health Worker Coalition kicked off June with the 9th Annual Kansas Community Health Worker (KSCHW) Symposium at WSU's Rhatigan Student Center. On May 30, Governor Laura Kelly proclaimed June 10-11 as Kansas Community Health Worker Symposium Day, setting the stage for an event that buzzed with energy and enthusiasm.

Nearly 300 Community Health Workers (CHWs) and allies gathered to network, learn, and celebrate. The symposium was packed with inspiring speakers and breakout sessions under the theme "Evolving CHWs: Fostering Leaders, Amplifying Voices, and Advocating for Sustainability."

Keynote speakers, Noelle Wiggins and Victoria Adewumi, Co-Executive Directors of the CHW Center for Research and Evaluation, shared their extensive experience in advancing health and educational equity through the CHW model and participatory research. Noelle has worked with CHWs for over 35 years, including directing La Familia Sana in Oregon, while Victoria has facilitated community empowerment and health equity interventions for marginalized populations. Congratulations to Hailey Collins for earning the 2024 CHW of the Year award, honoring her outstanding contributions and adherence to KSCHW Core Competencies.

Shout-out CEI's **Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI)** staff and other symposium committee members for all your hard work planning the event! Thank you to the following sponsors for their support:

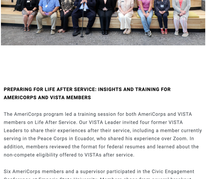
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Aetna
- Healthy Blue
- Mid-America Regional Council
- Sunflower Health Plan
- United Healthcare Community Plan
- United Methodist Health Ministry Fund
- Wichita Medical Research & Education Foundation

We look forward to starting the planning process for the next symposium and look forward to seeing everyone again!

Learn more about the KSCHW Coalition.

A COMMUNITY SUMMIT: EMPOWERING YOUTH AND ADULT LEADERS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

CEI's **Prevention Initiatives (PI)** spearheaded our inaugural Kansas "Community Summit" in our new, formal partnership with CADCA, engaging nearly 60 youth and adult leaders from coalitions and youth organizations statewide at WSU's Wesley Hall. CADCA covered all expenses including lodging, transport, training, and meals, with additional gift cards provided for youth participants. CADCA has decades of experience leading communities to partner for positive social change and represents over 5,000 community coalitions in the United States.



On behalf of KDADS, PI has supported the Kansas Prevention Collaborative in maintaining a "sustaining membership" of CADCA for the past nine years and this is our first contracted work for the international leaders."

Pictured is a group photo of all the attendees of the first day of the Community Summit.

Learn more about CADCA.

PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER SERVICE: INSIGHTS AND TRAINING FOR AMERICORPS AND VISTA MEMBERS

The AmeriCorps program led a training session for both AmeriCorps and VISTA members on Life After Service. Our VISTA Leader invited four former VISTA Leaders to share their experiences after their service, including a member currently serving in the Peace Corps in Ecuador, who shared his experience over Zoom. In addition, members reviewed the format for federal resumes and learned about the non-compete eligibility offered to VISTAs after service.

Six AmeriCorps members and a supervisor participated in the Civic Engagement Conference at Emporia State University. Members chose from several breakout sessions about making an impact in their communities through service, and they had the opportunity to meet other AmeriCorps members from across Kansas.

Pictured below are three former VISTA Leaders participating in a panel discussion for Life After Service at the training. From left to right: Felicia (Smith) Saunders, Danay Barrera, and Rachael Holland.

ENGAGING RAWLINS COUNTY: COMMUNITY VOICES DRIVE CHNA ANALYSIS

CEI's **Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI)** staff members, including Ty Kane and Tina Payne (pictured), hosted two lively community listening sessions at the Shirley Opera House in Atwood, Kansas. The goal was to gather feedback on top health concerns identified in a recent survey. Approximately 15 participants, including representatives from the local health department, hospital, mental health center, dental clinic, and faith and business communities, joined each session. One table was filled with representatives from the Rawlins County Core Community, which is a nonprofit organization creating relationships for individuals working to solve poverty. Their diverse insights will be crucial for the **Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)** analysis and final report.

Learn more about previous community health assessments and planning activities provided by Rawlins County Health Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS

KANSAS PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE (KPC) CONFERENCE 2024
Harvesting Hope in the Heartland
October 3 – 4 | Pre-Conference: October 2 | Wichita Marriott

Join us for the 7th Annual Kansas Prevention Collaborative Conference. Reach Kansas' brightest prevention professionals and community coalitions! Levels start at $250 and customizable sponsorships are available.

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.

- **Learn more** about sponsorships
- **Learn more** about the conference

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

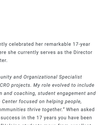
40th Anniversary Timeline Rewind – Our mission statement has evolved!

2013 – WSU Center for Community Support and Research partners with communities and organizations to strengthen Kansas through education, leadership development, facilitation and research.

2024 – The Community Engagement Institute is dedicated to facilitating learning, developing innovative solutions and building capacity with organizations across the state of Kansas.

What history do you have with CEI? 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 TERESA CORNEJO
Director of CEI's IMPACT Center

Teresa Cornejo recently celebrated her remarkable 17-year journey with CEI, where she currently serves as the Director of CEI's IMPACT Center.

"*I started as a Community and Organizational Specialist working on COD and CRO projects. My role evolved to include leadership facilitation and coaching, student engagement and the development of a Center focused on helping people, organizations, and communities thrive together.*" When asked what is your biggest success in the 17 years you have been here, Teresa replied, "*Helping students move from excellent students to exceptional professionals.*"

Thank you, Teresa, for being a significant part of CEI's history and future.

CEI PARTNER SHOUT-OUT

THE BARTLETT ARBORETUM

Founded in 1910, Bartlett Arboretum is a beacon of hope in Sumner County, Kansas. With deep roots in the local lore, Bartlett is proudly listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and home to 20 State Champion trees, expansive gardens, and a collection of mature tree varieties, both native and exotic. The arboretum plays host to a popular concert series, educational field trips, garden clubs, and outdoor enthusiasts of every age. A volunteer-run arboretum, the Soil Sisters and Brothers lovingly tend to the property, ensuring the land lives long into a second century to inspire and teach our children's children.

When the local community lost its grocery store a few years ago, Bartlett Arboretum established an AmeriCorps-led food initiative to help provide healthy seasonal produce for its neighbors. Two AmeriCorps VISTAs shepherd this project, growing year-round produce and managing more than an acre of gardens and orchards. Last year, over 2,000 pounds of abundance were shared with the local food bank, sold in a farm-to-table storefront in Belle Plaine, fed to volunteers, and canned and preserved by loving hands to sustain volunteers and patrons through the winter months.

In working with the land to regenerate the soil and grow resilient crops, the food initiative focuses on the long-term goal of sustainable farming using systems that nourish the land, its people, and its community.

Pictured are the AmeriCorps VISTA members: Annie (left), Vicky (right) and AmeriCorps Kansas member, Deanna (middle). Visit the **Bartlett Arboretum website** for more information and a calendar of upcoming events. **Learn more** about the AmeriCorps State and VISTA programs.

WHO CEI IS REMEMBERING

DR. PAIGTON MAYES

Dr. Paigton Mayes, a dedicated and valued former member of CEI, passed away on Monday, June 3. Her contributions through her work in **Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI)** and the **Center for Applied Research and Evaluation (CARE)** have had a lasting impact on the organization and community.

"*Paigton's impact on the CPHI team and the Kansas public health system was immense. Paigton's smile, laughter, and positivity were contagious. Her intelligence, tenacity and skill as an evaluator impacted countless projects including research on black maternal health, Kansas primary care, local public health systems and workforce, and more. Paigton was selfless, kind, and an inspiration to those she leaves behind,*" shares Ty Kane with CPHI.

Dr. Paigton Mayes was not only our colleague but also a friend to many, and her presence will be deeply missed and remembered here at CEI. Read obituary, send flowers, or share a memory of Paigton, **here**.