The Office of Equity & Engagement is dedicated to promoting sustainable and innovative solutions. One of the keys to our success is we perpetually provide opportunities for our campus community to engage in meaningful discussions about the issues surrounding every aspect of IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access. We believe sharing educational insight, paired together with interactive learning experiences, can provide the foundation for the best possible future outcomes here on our campus and beyond!

According to a recent report in WorkTango, Intersectionality: What it is and how it fits into DE&I (n.d.), “Here’s the thing: we all have layers of identity. And each of these layers brings a multitude of different experiences. When we’re able to understand, compare and address the experiences of women in the workplace with those of men, or people of color, or transsexuals, or people with disabilities, or individuals who take prayer breaks throughout the day, or people from low-income housing who ride the bus to work every day, single parents, immigrants, veterans, new hires, those with long tenures, and any varied combination of these and so many other identities — we establish a culture of belonging. We furthermore, create a diversity, equity and inclusion culture with policies and programs that support the whole person, each and everyone. Interconnected Identities are the Historical Roots of Intersectionality.”

According to Merrill Perlman (2018), “intersectionality” was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a civil rights activist and legal scholar. In a paper for the University of Chicago Legal Forum, Crenshaw wrote that traditional feminist ideas and antiracist policies exclude Black women because they face overlapping discrimination unique to them. “Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated,” she wrote in the paper (Perlman, 2018).

As the current DEI Research Assistant & DEI STARS (Scholars taking off Academically and Rising to Success) Program Coordinator for the Office of Equity & Engagement, I’m often asked “what compels you to do this work in a time when the work of Equity and Justice is being challenged and in some areas of our society completely banned?” My answer is simple: I am passionate about helping to change the trajectory of the lives of people who exist in society under the systematic oppression of inequities in education, economic inequality, housing insecurities, health care, poverty and other forms of oppression. I am committed to helping eradicate these ills and furthermore driven by my desire to create a better future for my children and generations to come. This is evidenced through my work and service to my community and the world-at-large. I have always believed that actions speak louder than words. Therefore, I lead by example!
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Written By: Catreese Qualls

The Mental Health Awareness event held by DEI Stars and Arab Women United Club in collaboration with Disability Support Services, the Center for Experiential Learning and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) was held to further promote awareness to MENTAL HEALTH issues within our communities.

Each of the Clubs and organizations are committed to working together to help prevent the STIGMA associated with Mental Health issues in order to help improve lives of the 1 in every 5 Americans currently suffering with some form of mental illness and contributes to increased rates in suicide and negative outcomes in education, health, employment and homelessness among others.

According to NAMI “Depression and anxiety disorders cost our global economy $1 trillion in lost productivity each year and Depression is notably the leading cause of disability worldwide.” For these reasons, the Office of Equity and Engagement is working with organizations both on and off campus to help address the Mental Health crisis!

CELEBRATING ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Written By: Catreese Qualls & Dr. Anna Maheshwari | Photo by: Dr. Anna Maheshwari

Dr. Anna Maheshwari is the current Chair of the English Department, faculty advisor to the Asian Students Association, community advocate for women & children, volunteer and servant leader to multiple organizations who work to meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations.

In a recent interview with Dr. Maheshwari, she shared “Besides having an opportunity to stand before students every year and help them realize their true potential, I am most proud of the Share Joy program that I coordinate each year. This program provides a Christmas gift bag filled with gifts to the Wayne County Family Shelter residents - the gift bags include something warm, something fun, something edible, and toiletry articles.

The entire Schoolcraft community comes together to make sure each child gets a gift. The smiles on the children's faces when they receive the gifts - priceless!”

Dr. Maheshwari continued, “I am also very proud of being an advisor to the Asian Students Association! The club organizes various cultural events throughout the year to showcase the rich cultural heritage of various countries. All proceeds from the events support the Schoolcraft Food Pantry that provides nonperishable food to financially challenged students and their families.”

METE HOMAYRA ADIBA

Written By: Catreese Qualls

Quotes by Homayra Adiba

Emerging scholar Homayra Adiba, is a freshman studying Fine Arts and is currently the President of the Phi Theta Kappa Omicron Iota Chapter at Schoolcraft College. She had the following analysis to share:

“As a South Asian, I feel hopeful knowing that Asian Americans are the highest-earning income group in the USA. We are initiators, inventors, businesses, doctors, engineers, and artists. However, I do not see enough representation of people like me in the media, community, or school. This is why I think Asian American Pacific Islander Month is an opportunity for us to come together, exchange our stories and ideas, and to build better communities and representation for coming generations.”

Speaking of stories, a common request immigrants get is that people want to shorten our names. If you say my name wrong, I will patiently correct you but if you shorten my name for convenience, I will request you call me ‘Homayra’ again. I met many immigrants whose names were changed to Alex or Sam where their names would be Abdullah or Samsuddin! ‘They cannot say my name, so I went along with it’ they said. If we can speak in a different language every day, then people can at least call us by our real names. Americanizing our names says a lot, but America does not only belong to Alex and Sam. It belongs to Abdullah and Samsuddin as well.”

– Homayra Adiba

OCELOT CHANGE AGENT | FACULTY REFLECTION SPOTLIGHT

Written By: Catreese Qualls & Dr. Anna Maheshwari | Photo by: Dr. Anna Maheshwari

Dr. Anna Maheshwari

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Mental Health Awareness Month

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OCELOT CHANGE AGENTS

DEI STARS FELLOWS SPOTLIGHT

By: Catreese Qualls | Photo by: Catreese Qualls

The Office of Equity & Engagement is thrilled to introduce the Ambassadors of our 2023/2024 DEI STARS Fellowship Program! Matthew Morrow is a current Freshman in the Schoolcraft Nursing Program whose mission is to help eradicate injustices in healthcare through his work in pediatric and hospice care. Matthew is an LGBTQ Committed Activist and Human Rights Advocate!

Akisha Ellington is a current Senior in the Schoolcraft Nursing Program and a leader, Mental Health Advocate, Women’s & Childrens Rights Activist and human relations specialist committed to creating new, innovative ways to improve the quality procedures that support better patient outcomes.

Alyssa Argy is a current Senior and EMU Transfer bound emerging scholar and student leader majoring in Communication Arts. Alyssa is a Mental Health Advocate dedicated to helping individuals protected under the American Disabilities Act reach their fullest potential through their own efforts and actions. Alyssa believes that by sharing her lived experiences with ADHD that she can be the change in her community who continues to break the stigma associated with mental health.

Our STARS are shining brighter than ever before! Over this past semester, our Fellows have successfully planned, developed, and executed multiple events including, a Mental Healthcare Symposium on Unseen Disabilities, Women’s Healthcare Symposium, Breaking the Stigma | Mental Health Action Day and an upcoming historic first Juneteenth Community & Campus Wide Event in collaboration with a plethora of organizations who support the work of IDEA. These include Dress for Success Michigan, Michigan Round Table, L.E.A.R.N, Movement & Capacity Building Specialist JustLeadershipUSA and AMEN 4 Youth, LLC among others.

These opportunities help our Student Leaders improve their reality ready skills and increase their overall ability to successfully navigate the workforce. The Office of Equity & Engagement has taken the IDEA Strategic Theme to New heights by creating original programs such as the newly launched Heritage Event Series and Theme based Symposiums that focus on equity, accessibility and sustainability through partnerships with community organizations to provide further educational support to the content specifically tailored with students, staff, faculty and administrators in mind.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 17TH
Livonia’s First-Ever Pride Celebration
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Civic Center Park at Livonia City Hall
Free public event will include opportunities for our community to receive educational support, community service outreach and an opportunity to connect with Schoolcraft College | Safe Place Club members, food, fun and more!

JUNE 19TH
Juneteenth 2023 Community / Campus-wide Celebration hosted by DEI STARS Fellows
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Schoolcraft College Outdoors between the Forum and Liberal Arts Building
A Juneteenth Celebration dedicated to this year’s theme: Inheritance & Legacy Discovering our Roots
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENT
In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, dedicated to helping break the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

1. Olga Fryzel-Almaraz & Catreese Qualls
2. Alima Ali holding microphone
3. Ayven Hunt, Zahraa Alrafish, Deboranica Polk, Matthew Morrow, Joanne Dawson, Alyssa Argy, TaQuilla Kusero
4. Catreese Qualls holding microphone
5. Todd Stowell & Dr. Michael Oliver holding Microphone

ASIAN CLUB ~ COFFEE & CONVERSATION
Stop Asian Hate Advocacy Campaign Event.

6. Lieutenant M. Mayes and Chief Mark Engstrom, Travis Michalak, Izabella Allie, Madison Ling
7. Dr. Marty Heator, Deboranica Polk, Catreese Qualls, Madison Ling (seated) Travis Michalak, Todd Stowell
8. Deboranica Polk (standing), Yunus Cotton sitting, Todd Stowell, Izabella Allie seated next to Travis Michalak

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Stay Connected
Please visit and share Schoolcraft Connection website: schoolcraftconnection.com
Student Activity Sign-up: bit.ly/3tYzCtA
Committed to crafting a more inclusive community for all. Contact us at dei@schoolcraft.edu and visit schoolcraft.edu/idea

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