



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Special Programs

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Wichita State University  
Special Programs and  
TRIO Day 2017 go to:  
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Deltha Q. Colvin, Associate Vice  
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“TRIO: The Blueprint for a Lifetime of Success,” is the long standing theme for the Special Programs Magazine. This year, we are looking at our own former students from each program. At Wichita State, the TRIO programs, Office of Disability Services, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) are administered through the Division of Student Affairs under the Office of Special Programs (OSP).

On February 21, the OSP is excited to host the day and evening program sharing the accomplishments of the programs and former participants. This year, the programs stand proud in recognizing the individuals who participated in the programs and have gone on to successful careers.

The nine TRIO programs, three GEAR UPs and the Office of Disability Services provide services to thousands of individuals who are in postsecondary, secondary or middle school. The middle and high school students, persons with disabilities and adults are able to expand their knowledge base and learn from quality personnel.

The TRIO Day celebration is an important collaboration of the programs and highlights the services and activities of the oldest and youngest programs. Each program is a natural complement of the other to provide comprehensive services

to address the needs of the populations served. A committed and dedicated staff work to ensure opportunities are available to eligible participants from middle school to postsecondary education.

The directors and their staffs are to be applauded for a quality Special Programs Magazine and day-long program. The College Access, Retention and Success Conference (CARS) is a first-time effort to collaboratively share information about the programs with others to get the message out about the importance of the programs and what they offer.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended and the Higher Educational Opportunity Act of 2008 are the authorizing legislation for the TRIO Programs. Equal Educational Opportunity for individuals served by the programs is a commitment to participants. The programs acknowledge the continued support and commitment of individuals from the community, USD 259 and Wichita State. The participants in the programs have accomplished much and continue to make their mark on the city, state, region, and nation.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Special Programs Magazine.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deltha Q. Colvin".

Deltha Q. Colvin  
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Special  
Programs

## Rising Star

Layla Berry



## Outstanding Alum

Robbin Davis



**U**pward Bound Wichita Prep (UBWP) is proud to announce that Layla Berry as its TRIO achiever for 2016-2017. As a senior at Heights High School, Berry is working on scholarships and carefully weighing her options for college. Her top choices are the University of Kansas and Wichita State.

The Upward Bound staff are excited for Layla as she is about to begin the next chapters in life. As the staff reflect over Layla's UBWP chapter, she has transformed from a quiet mouse to a roaring lion, ready to state her opinion. Layla entered UBWP as a rising ninth grader, quiet, shy and her voice barely audible.

During Layla's first summer production her contributions consisted of taking pictures, as there was no way she was getting on stage. After her first year, Layla's mother reported she was glad that her daughter was in UBWP. Now, Layla has new friends and is open to new experiences. Layla is the life of UBWP, the connector, organizing the students for social gatherings. She is in touch with those who have graduated, as well as the younger "children." That's what she calls the underclassmen, as she too refers to herself as "just a child".

Layla takes education seriously; she maintains a 3.58 grade point average. Her humor and outgoing personality makes everyone smile, laugh, and sometimes shake their heads. Layla Berry, TRIO Achiever today, POTUS tomorrow.

**R**obbin Davis, a 1985 alumnus of UBWP, graduated from Langston University in 1988 and returned to WSU to pursue a master's degree. It was then that she volunteered for Upward Bound. While volunteering, she was selected as the program's communications instructor—a position she held until the summer of 2016. Davis also served as coordinator for Upward Bound's 50th anniversary in 2015.

While teaching in the humanities department for Butler Community College, she received the "Teaching Excellence Award." Davis taught for 22 years at Cowley Community College. During her tenure, she always reserved her summers to teach for Upward Bound—her passion. Davis has been involved with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) for 20 years. She served as Pastor of St. James AME church in Wellington, KS and Pastor of Bethel AME church in Hutchinson, KS where she also serves as vice-president for the Ministerial Alliance and youth coordinator for the NAACP. Currently, Davis is a motivational speaker traveling throughout the nation presenting workshops on diversity, the power of enthusiasm, women's self-worth, creating and maintaining a healthy mind, body, and soul, dealing with difficult people, and working optimistically in the workplace.

Happily married and having reared three successful daughters, Davis contributes much of her spiritual, educational and professional successes to Upward Bound. She learned great study habits, a healthy level of self-esteem and an attitude to never give up. Upward Bound molded her life and she vows to continue to be a positive impact on the youth.

## Outstanding Alum

Billy  
Dempsey Jr.



**B**illy Dempsey Jr. entered the TRIO Talent Search (TS) program in 2003 as a seventh grader attending Holy Savior Catholic Academy in Wichita, KS. Since Holy Savior was not a TS target school, the program selected him on a walk-in basis. The parochial school is situated in a predominantly low-income African American neighborhood.

In 2008, Dempsey graduated from Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School and entered Wichita State that same year. He majored in computer science, and worked as a tutor for TS tutoring math and other subjects to middle school students. During this time, he gained valuable experience being an IT specialist for the Kids Training Team at WSU.

In 2015, Dempsey graduated from WSU and became an application support analyst for INVISTA-Koch Industries. In this role, he provides systems analysis support to private companies and governmental facilities in the U.S. and abroad. When asked how his experiences in TRIO impacted his educational and professional life, he indicated that he was able to more readily apply what he learned in class and develop a “great work ethic.” Dempsey advises students to work on critical thinking and problem solving skills as keys to future success.

Dempsey is a shining example of how the program works at its very best. He believes so much in the program mission that he mentors current TS students.

## Rising Star

Shamya  
McCoy



**S**hamya McCoy is making the most of her time as she ponders her future. While very serious, Shamya is having a lot of fun taking advantage of all the opportunities that have been presented to her. She has been a student in TS since the eighth grade. Currently, a senior at Wichita Southeast High School, she plans to attend Wichita State next year to study physics and engineering. Shamya is always challenging herself and chooses to take rigorous courses such as honors and advanced placement chemistry, physics, and calculus. She maintains a 3.68 grade point average, is on the honor roll and actively involved with the Theater/Thespian Society. She also volunteers for Operation Holiday, is a freshmen mentor at her high school, and has a job.

Shamya’s strong work ethic, positive attitude, and respectful demeanor has opened many opportunities. TS counselor, Tahmina Rahman, nominated her to attend the Girls in STEM conference held at WSU. Tremendously moved by the experience, Shamya said, “When I went home Sunday afternoon, I felt enlightened and motivated about STEM, to keep pushing to become the chemical engineer or physicist engineer I know I can be. The journey will not be easy, but I know I have the will power and ability to achieve that goal and so much more.” Through TS, Shamya has received college applications assistance, attended ACT preparation workshops, and assistance in applying for scholarships.

# Student Support Services

## Rising Star

Shayla  
Ingalls



**S**hayla Ingalls is a junior at Wichita State with a 3.9 GPA. Shayla is double majoring in communication sciences and disorders and psychology. In 2014, she enrolled in TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) because she needed academic support to graduate.

Shayla is very active at WSU. She's been accepted into the Honors College and looks forward to the research experience that is offered. She also holds many leadership roles in various campus organizations; she is a student ambassador, an honors peer mentor, an active member of the Community Service Board and the treasurer for Wichita Honors Events and Activities Team. Shayla promotes Wichita State by giving campus tours to prospective students. In her free time, she enjoys her friends, volunteering, reading and movies.

Shayla believes her educational experience has been enhanced with the support of SSS. She has overcome the financial hardships of college through scholarships and free printing that SSS offers. Academic advising from her SSS advisor has reduced her fears about college and made her feel welcomed and important. Currently, Shayla tutors for SSS where she is able to share her knowledge with other TRIO students. She plans to graduate in 2018, then pursue a doctorate degree in audiology in order work at a children's hospital. The support and opportunities offered by SSS make her believe her educational dreams are within arm's reach.

## Outstanding Alum

Mikki  
Phan, PhD



**M**ikki Phan, PhD graduated from Wichita East High School in 2003 and enrolled at Wichita State that fall. Despite not having a firm idea of what she wanted to study, she chose to attend college right away. Her mother, who was enrolled in college at the time, advised her to join SSS for guidance and support. There, she received tutoring for advanced chemistry courses and was offered scholarships for her good grades. Phan also participated in the McNair Scholars Program. She initially decided to study biochemistry but later changed her major to psychology. In May 2015, Phan earned a doctoral degree in human factors psychology from WSU.

Phan indicated one of her most memorable times at SSS was being a math and Spanish tutor. She especially remembers helping one student pass math upon the third attempt. This gave her great satisfaction knowing that she played a role in this student's success. Currently, Phan is a user experience researcher for Google in the San Francisco Bay Area.

When asked how SSS helped her in terms of her education and career path, Phan said, "SSS helped most through the counseling advice I received from Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd who encouraged me to pursue the major that I truly wanted instead of the one my parents wanted. Also, being a tutor for SSS helped build my confidence. Lastly, the scholarships I received from SSS were very beneficial toward my education as it helped in securing books and other materials during the time both my parents were laid off."

## Outstanding Alum

Nick Taylor



The Office of Disability Services (ODS) recognizes Nick Taylor as their 2016 alumni. Taylor graduated from Wichita State with undergraduate degrees in business administration, sports administration, and a Master's of Education in sports administration in 2007.

Taylor was born with arthrogryposis, a congenital disease that restricts muscular development and affects joints in the body. He uses a motorized wheelchair for mobility. Even though he would be described by many as having a severe disability, Taylor has become one of the world's greatest wheelchair tennis players in the quad division. At the Paralympics, he has won three gold medals, one silver medal in doubles competition and one bronze medal in the singles division, making him one of the most decorated Paralympians ever. Additionally, Taylor won over 100 tournament titles, four U.S. Open doubles titles, and 14 straight World Cup Team championships.

For seven years, Taylor volunteered as director of operations for WSU's Men's Tennis program. He has served as the vice president of Wheelchair Sports Inc. for the last five years, and as an inspirational speaker at high schools, elementary schools, and other organizations sharing his story and encouraging people with and without disabilities to reach their full potential.

"Disability Services played a critical role in my success as a student at Wichita State. Without their note-taking services, test-taking services, computer lab, and overall place I knew I could always go if I needed help, I never would've finished the three degrees that I did," says Taylor.

## Rising Star

Shelia Ibanga



This year, ODS has selected Shelia Ibanga as TRIO Day Student of the Year for 2016. Sheila was not chosen because of her degree, grade point average, or outstanding services provided to the university. Instead, she is honored for her persistence in pursuing and graduating in December 2016 with a general studies degree emphasizing in sociology and women's studies.

Her journey to pursue a two-year business education degree began at WSU in 1981. However, this changed to an accounting major in 1994. At the time, she had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was a single mother with two girls ages five and 11.

Her initial studies at WSU were difficult; adjusting to college life meant she was managing a household, working, and studying. She soon realized to complete a degree she would need assistance and found ODS in the fall of 1994. While participating in ODS, Sheila used note takers, escorts, and extended test time.

Although Sheila had many setbacks in her educational plans and personal life, her goal has always been obtaining a college degree. Now, one of her daughters is a college graduate and currently serves in the U.S. Marine Corps, and her other daughter is pursuing a college degree. The ODS staff honors Shelia Ibanga for all her accomplishments.



# Upward Bound Math Science

## Rising Star

Christopher Solis



## Outstanding Alum

Christina Kitzke



Christopher Solis is a five-year participant of TRIO Upward Bound Math Science Center program (UBMS). He attends Sumner Academy of Arts and Sciences where he is enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program.

A dedicated leader, the UBMS staff expects to see his leadership acumen further develop in college. Christopher's willingness to lead has grown over the years. He has a desire to be a part of the decision-making processes in his school, community and UBMS. He has developed the confidence to know that what he has to say matters, for himself and for others. He is a consensus builder and servant leader who is always interested in what is best for the larger group.

Christopher is very involved in music, community service projects, band, intramural tennis and Engineers without Borders. He is an exemplary UBMS student because he is equal parts leader and capable follower. Christopher is willing to follow directions and he has the academic ability and common sense to solve a problem. These skills make for a powerful combination. Christopher said, "My advice to other students is to get into Upward Bound and take full advantage of every opportunity."

Christopher has had many chances to volunteer through UBMS by working on a community garden, helping clean debris from a tornado in Oklahoma, and working the Heart Walk in Wichita. "This program has helped make me a conscientious, dedicated, discerning, intentional, and purposeful young man," says Christopher.

Christina Kitzke, a five-time summer participant of UBMS and graduate of Wichita State where she earned degrees in biology and psychology. Kitzke is also an alumni of the WSU McNair Scholars Program, where she developed the skills to ascertain a graduate degree. With a Masters of Education, she currently teaches biology, forensics, and chemistry at Wichita North High School.

Kitzke is being honored for multiple reasons, including successful completion of UBMS, high school graduation, college matriculation and graduation, and future investment in others. In addition to her personal success, the staff is proud of the support she provided the program. She has served as student assistant, summer staff, and interim curriculum coordinator. She volunteers to work with current students working to overcome many of the same barriers that she faced. Program students and staff treasure her. Kitzke is the epitome of the program's slogan, "I'm living proof!"

"I had no one at home who had ever gone to college. No one talked about my future or how to get there. TRIO changed that. UBMS gave me the skills I needed to pursue a future." She advises students, "Be a sponge, and be thankful. The impact of the program isn't just educational. It's an encompassing lifelong impact. The people you meet and the people skills you build are invaluable. Take what the program has to give and run with it. Know that you can do great things. TRIO can be the vehicle that helps you get there. Just remember that when you do arrive, be willing to be someone else's vehicle."

## Outstanding Alum

Meladee Garst, PhD



**M**eladee Garst, PhD was chosen as an honoree because she exemplifies what the McNair Scholars Program is all about. During her two years in the program she took full advantage of opportunities given to her. She conducted scholarly research with James Snyder, PhD and Robert Zettle, PhD.

Garst completed all of her tasks in a timely manner as well as attended research conferences and presented her findings from these projects. The staff sees her as a true role model. She has served many times on the alumnae panel for the program and is currently serving on the McNair Alumnae Advisory Board. She willingly sees scholars and provides advice to them regarding graduate education.

Garst is grateful to the program. She says, “Without the McNair Scholars Program I don’t think I would be where I am today! TRIO, in particular McNair Scholars Program, helped me reach my dreams. I am forever in debt to the assistance that was given to me, the experiences and relationships I made through the program, and ultimately how the McNair Scholars Program helped me get to my dream of being a psychologist.”

She advises students to, “take advantage of these programs and give them your all. I truly believe that it takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a village to become the adult you are supposed to be. Find your village and use that village to help you get to where you want to go, so that one day you can be in someone else’s village!”

## Rising Star

Martina Salerno



**M**artina Salerno is a biomedical engineering student at Wichita State University where she has participated in McNair for the past three years. During this time, Martina has worked diligently to prepare herself for graduate education. She is working on her third research project with McNair under the guidance of Anil Mahapatro, PhD, assistant professor for the Department of Biomedical Engineering, and is a current National Institute of Health K-INBRE research grant recipient through Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence.

Martina’s research focuses on improving orthopedic implants, through surface modification, to decrease the chance of infection when implants are placed in the body. She has taken advantage of opportunities to present at several research symposiums, including at the 2016 Materials Research Society Spring Meeting in Arizona.

Martina prioritizes time to give back to the community and work with youth to help spark interest in STEM and inspire them to pursue higher education. Encouraging budding, especially underrepresented, students is something that Martina feels is part of her responsibility as a Hispanic woman in the engineering field. She presented at EOA’s Girls in STEM Conference hosted at Wichita State in May 2016 and also participated in outreach events for Upward Bound Wichita Prep. After graduation in May 2017, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree involving tissue engineering. Martina aspires to conduct research at the university level as a professor focusing on tissue engineering to improve implantable organ systems.

## Disability Support Services

### Rising Star

Joe  
Stroud II



### Outstanding Alum

Rooshad  
Irani



**J**oe Stroud II, current senior at Wichita State is a basketball fanatic. He has often been found camping out before WSU basketball games and following the team on many road trips. Additionally, he is a TRIO Disability Support Services (DSS) participant.

When asked of the impact that DSS has had in his life and education, Joe shared that the programs have provided financial relief through textbook lending opportunities and described the benefit of meeting with program advisors regularly. According to Joe, advising has helped with planning his class schedule each semester and has relieved much of the stress surrounding the new semesters.

Joe is a model DSS participant, who meets with advisors regularly and seeks opportunities for his personal and professional growth. His strengths include his desire to learn and his ability to identify what works for him.

Joe describes his TRIO experience as absolutely terrific and requests the current program staff to “Please keep helping students like him with their dreams.” He goes on to say, “Because of the TRIO programs, I will be able to graduate in May of 2017 with a Bachelor’s of Fieldwork in anthropology, sociology and criminal justice and also with a major in psychology.” When giving advice, his message to other students is, “TRIO workshops also help with learning about real life situations and income. They have become super important in my maturity as a college student and as an adult.”

**R**ooshad Irani is currently a police officer with the Derby, Kansas Police Department. He graduated from Wichita State with a Bachelor’s of Arts in criminal justice and intends to soon pursue a master’s degree in international affairs at Texas A&M University. In addition to his work in law enforcement, Irani devotes time to the community as a YMCA swim coach and mentor to teens at the Wichita Children’s Home.

When asked how DSS helped him, Irani stated, “Being a participant of TRIO DSS helped me build a network of advisors and mentors who were always willing to go above and beyond to help out. Whether it was for classes or looking over resumes, they provided honest feedback and tips to be a more effective learner. I struggled at times with notetaking and organizing my essays and the help I received in those two areas is immeasurable. My advisor taught me to pay more attention to detail and that I need to be able to articulate reasons for making critical decisions or forming opinions. These are skills I use now on a daily basis in my professional life as a police officer.

My advice for current student participants would be to take advantage of the workshops provided by your program, look at them as professional development opportunities that will strengthen you as a person. Lean on your advisors, they are there to help you. Believe in yourself and the effort that you put forth. At the end of the day, your success is up to you.”

# Honoring Our Own:

# Leaders in Service



Wichita State OSP staff have been involved in professional development and advocacy organizations since their inception.

These individuals have worked tirelessly on behalf of historically underrepresented students and have assumed the highest role of leadership positions within various state, regional, and national associations.



Keeping in mind the importance of the cause of low-income, first generation, and students with disabilities, my goal and mission is to ensure that opportunities are available to individuals who might not have had an opportunity to gain access. My life's commitment is to the success of individuals who are trying to better themselves and are committed to growth. - Deltha Q. Colvin



**Deltha Q. Colvin**  
MKN President, 1980-1981  
MAEOPP (EOA) President, 1982-1983  
MKN Hall of Fame, Spring 1990



**Grady Landrum**  
AHEAD President, 2003-2004  
Board of Directors, 1998-2001



**V. Kaye Monk-Morgan**  
MKN President, 2004-2005  
EOA President, 2014-2015  
MKN Hall of Fame, Spring 2011  
COE Board Chair Elect, 2016-2017



**Corinne Nilsen**  
MKN President, 2016-2017  
NCCEP Committee Member, 2015-2016



I enjoy working with diverse groups and bigger picture issues; this gave me the opportunity to deal with larger issues related to the organization. The biggest thing I walked away with was that every organization needs to have representation from as many different constituents as possible. Many voices are needed at the table to lead effectively and keep the organization moving. - Grady Landrum



Grady Landrum





Serving as the president of EOA provided many learning and growth opportunities, personally and professionally. I learned much about intergenerational networking and leadership. EOA is home to multi-generational professionals. Each has different needs and visions of our shared future. Balancing the needs of our veteran members and honoring our past while creating new opportunities to ensure our relevance in the future was my largest task. I think the boards of directors during my tenure were intentional about setting a course forward that is inclusive and progressive.

- V. Kaye Monk-Morgan



**Top:** Kaye Monk-Morgan  
**Bottom:** Deltha Colvin, LaWanda Holt-Fields, Sen. Jerry Moran, and Kaye Monk-Morgan



As a low-income, first generation college student and prior TRIO staff member, I am aware of the positive ways TRIO touches students. MKN has over 250 professionals who believe the way I do. Helping disadvantaged students is paying back the people who helped me obtain a college degree. When I moved to GEAR UP, I wanted to help more students statewide. I see TRIO, GEAR UP and MKN working together to help young people achieve their dreams. As MKN president, I hope to encourage other OSP professionals to come together to share our ideas and successes.

- Corinne Nilsen



**Top:** Corinne Nilsen  
**Bottom:** Deltha Q. Colvine, Grady Landrum and Corinne Nilsen



Deltha Q. Colvin and Arnold Mitchem, COE President Emeritus

I bring a diversity of experiences and I work with a unique group of individuals. I think these two things help me frame things differently for the group and this helps everyone gain new perspectives. - Grady Landrum

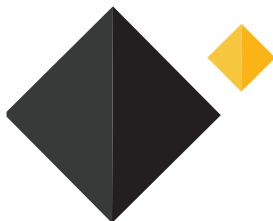
I hope my most important contribution to the TRIO cause is yet to come. My three year commitment to COE has just begun and there are projects underway that I want to continue to support. Building stronger partnerships, a focus of past chair Trent Ball and alumni relations, the charge of Michelle Danvers-Faust are both key to the survival of TRIO. - V. Kaye Monk-Morgan

I think the two most important daily contributions a person can make to programs like TRIO/GEAR UP or ODS is that of service and loyalty. You must want to serve the students who need your help, without regard to time, monetary pay or lack of resources. Know you are making a difference and be proud of what you do! - Corinne Nilsen

Many of the students served by the programs I work with have to fight for opportunities, and I want to ensure these are available to them. Receiving the Walter O. Mason Award has made me proud of the work and efforts I have pursued in life.

- Deltha Q. Colvin

- Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)
- Educational Opportunity Association (EOA) formerly Mid-America Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP)
- Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska Chapter (MKN)
- Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
- National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)



# Educational Opportunity Centers Program

## Outstanding Alum

Kari  
Nilsen, PhD



**K**ari Nilsen, PhD was involved with Educational Opportunity Centers Program (EOC), Student Support Services (SSS), and worked for GEAR UP. At Wichita State, she obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology with a certificate in community psychology (2012), a master's degree (2014) and a doctorate in community psychology (2015). She previously worked as a psychology assistant professor at Southwestern College, and is currently assistant professor for the Family Medicine Department at University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita.

According to Frances Ervin, EOC Executive Director, "Kari is being recognized for her commitment to not only complete a college degree, but for reaching the highest rung in education." TRIO programs helped her build a plan to fulfill her goals. EOC and SSS provided tutoring resources to pass classes, scholarships, course planning advice, and a place to come talk. Nilsen feels fortunate to have been a part of TRIO programs throughout her academic career.

The advice Nilsen has for staff is "keep doing the great things you are doing for underserved populations. You have touched so many lives through the good work you do every day, and it is so appreciated." For students, she suggests prioritizing school because it pays off in the end. "It may be hard, but if you rely on the people there to help you, it is much easier to accomplish."

## Rising Star

Victoria  
Nguyen



**V**ictoria applied to EOC for assistance to re-enter college with the goal of becoming a pharmacist. Victoria is a first-generation student in her early twenties. She graduated high school, entered college, and stopped out of college. Undaunted by this first attempt, Victoria turned for help and was referred to the EOC program.

First, EOC gave Victoria assistance to complete an education action plan. Next, program staff assisted her to complete the college application process and with the application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). Additionally, Victoria, was given a copy of the book titled *100 Things Every Adult College Student Ought to Know*. Being the determined person she is, Victoria also elected to receive academic mentoring from program staff.

According to Ervin, "We are honoring Victoria because she did not give up on her dream. Also, Victoria has been selected to become an EOC Program Ambassador. She is perfect for this distinction due to her academic progress and her desire to encourage others to pursue their dream." Victoria says that a person must have a plan, a map and a mentor to succeed in college. She is currently a full-time student attending Wichita Area Technical College. Additionally, she is participating in the Shocker Pathway Program which will allow her to transfer academic credits to Wichita State for the awarding of an associate's degree.

# Veterans Upward Bound

## Rising Star

Christopher Ohle



## Outstanding Alum

Joseph Moore



**H**ospital Corpsman 3rd class Christopher Ohle joined Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) in August 2016. Christopher served three tours in the U.S. Navy during the Desert Storm/Desert Shield Era (August 1990-May 1991). Upon returning stateside, he was stationed at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD while serving on the Presidential Medical Team at the age of 20.

What makes Christopher stand out as an excellent VUB participant is his sense of humor, consistency in utilizing VUB resources, and his commitment in pursuing postsecondary education. He will start classes in spring 2017 at Wichita State in the Barton School of Business, majoring in business marketing with a minor in art and design. Christopher is interested in video production and is currently involved in the community helping to promote local musical artists. When asked about his thoughts on VUB, he had this to say, “VUB has been a blessing to me in ways I never would have thought. The staff have been so helpful in preparation for my college experience. The transition to being a successful returning adult learner at a four-year university has been fortified through VUB’s computer literacy, math and English programs, Rosetta Stone, and active networking with veteran organizations in the community. I wouldn’t trade the friendships or the experiences for anything.”

Christopher has two important quotes he hopes the TRIO staff and students can appreciate: “Can’t, never tried,” by Robert J. Wright and the following by an unknown author, “A closed mouth doesn’t get fed...and I’m hungry!!”

**J**oseph Moore joined VUB in July 2008 after serving in the U.S. Army for three years, including one year tour in Iraq. His love for music and motivation to be the first male in his family to graduate from college encouraged Moore to pursue his bachelor’s degree and, ultimately, become a teacher.

What exemplifies Moore as a VUB participant is his resiliency to achieve his goals. During his academic career, Moore faced difficult struggles, which he overcame. When his grades took a turn for the worst, instead of walking away and giving up, Moore sought help. He buckled down and worked hard to bring his grades up. In July 2014, Moore graduated from Wichita State with a Bachelor’s of Arts in music; he is currently a music teacher at Samuel E. Spaght Science and Communications Magnet School.

According to Moore, TRIO was the helping hand he needed as he finished his degree. VUB provided him with tutors and all the academic help he needed to be successful. His advice and words of encouragement to the TRIO staff is, “never give up or quit! What the staff does, has and will continue to shape the future leaders of our nation as well as our great city.”

To the students of TRIO, Moore leaves the Dr. Seuss quote that changed his life, “Why fit in when you were born to stand out?”

## Outstanding Alum

Amanda  
Griffith



**C**ommunication Upward Bound (CUB) alumni Amanda Griffith, class of 2011, recently graduated from Johnson & Wales University. She attained her bachelor's degree in culinary nutrition with a concentration in clinical dietetics and preparation.

While pursuing the degree, Griffith's program gave her the opportunity to travel and live in six states while studying at three sister campuses.

CUB recognizes Griffith for being the embodiment of the CUB mission and becoming one of the first program students to graduate from a four-year college. She currently works as a food and nutrition supervisor at HCA Wesley Medical Hospital.

She says CUB helped her develop and transfer skills into college living and a new way of life away from home.

She advises graduating seniors to find themselves while focusing on basic and general education courses in case a change of major is later desired, Griffith goes on to say, "Most (students) seem to change majors and it's best to transfer previous credits."

## Rising Star

Brenda  
Duran-Jimenez



**B**renda Duran-Jimenez is a senior at Wichita High School South. She has been an active CUB participant for nearly three years. This past summer, Brenda spent her break refining her passion for activism and experiencing college life on the east coast with Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America. This experience led to her peaked interest in Ivy League schools; she is currently applying to sociology programs at Brown University, Princeton University, and several other prominent institutions.

Brenda deserves to be recognized for her dedication to her studies. As a student with a 3.9 grade point average and taking a challenging course load, she still finds time to be actively involved in CUB and mentors children through a student formed leadership organization. Brenda attributes her academic performance and development in school to CUB's tutoring services and residential program. Brenda emphasizes the importance of motivation to her peers as she says, "Motivation is one of the biggest reasons why I constantly challenge myself academically and socially, with constant volunteering and activism."

Goal oriented, determined, and caring, Brenda Duran-Jimenez has a bright and fruitful future.



## GEAR UP Rising Stars

### North Wichita GEAR UP

Francisco  
Garcia



**F**rancisco Garcia is an exceptional, model student. He is doing well in classes and his grades reflect the hard work he has devoted to school.

Francisco enjoys playing football for his school and participates in JROTC drill. Also a member of a Mexican traditional dance troupe, Garcia is an aspiring and talented musician. He plays the alto saxophone, piano, guitar, drums, accordion and bajo sexto; a Mexican string guitar instrument. As part of Conjunto Zairo, a Mexican band, he performs at quinceañeras, weddings, birthdays, concerts, and dances in Wichita and in other states while keeping his grades up.

Francisco is an outstanding citizen who gives free music lessons to community youth. One of his music students has lung issues and was advised by his doctor to play an instrument. Francisco has spent many hours with this student providing encouragement while teaching him to play and appreciate music.

Usually found with his head up and a smile on his face, he makes sure to motivate and inspire others to do the same. His favorite quote that he tailors to his life comes from President John F. Kennedy who said, “Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.”

### South Wichita GEAR UP

Alexander  
James



**A**lexander James is a freshman at Wichita South High School. He has been a part of South Wichita GEAR UP (SWGU) since the spring of 2014. James currently maintains a 3.9 grade point average while serving as the Freshman Student Council vice president. He has attended summer camps at Emporia State University and online tutoring. He has also been named the SWGU Student of the Month.

The work Alex has been doing and continues to do shows that he is dedicated to completing high school and going on to postsecondary education. The courses he is taking are preparing him for his future. He aspires to a career in the Secret Service. He goes out of his way to be respectful and seeks additional help with classes during the school year and summer.

SWGU has impacted Alex's life by giving him experiences he would not normally receive in order to prepare his future and college life. He has won two of SWGU's educational awards and uses them to further his knowledge inside and outside of the classroom.

Alex would advise future students to take advantage of all GEAR UP programs because “they are here to help one succeed.” He goes on to say, “To the staff of SWGU, keep it up, you are making a difference in your students' lives. Thank you!”

## Outstanding Alum

Abraham Rodriguez



Abraham Rodriguez participated in Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP (KKGU) from 2005 to 2009. He received his undergraduate degree in accounting from Wichita State. Currently, he is a business analyst for Koch Agriculture and Energy Solutions' Process Innovation Team. He is instrumental in transforming processes and leveraging technology to help people create more value for internal and external customers.

Rodriguez was selected as an honoree because he has demonstrated persistence and resilience. He worked hard and never gave up on his goal of obtaining a degree. Despite the obstacles and challenges he faced, he continues to be positive and has high expectations of himself.

Rodriguez states, "TRIO and GEAR UP were the catalysts that enabled me to become the person I am today." He further asserts that he doesn't know where he would be without the incredible mentors from those programs who invested in him and supported him during high school and college. "They helped cast a vision for my future, one that was much bigger than I ever would have dreamed for myself," he says. He goes on to say that if not for the people in TRIO and GEAR UP, he would not get to "work with incredible people, doing amazing things, learning more than I ever imagined and enjoying every minute of it!"

He advises students to challenge themselves and keep growing, to rise to the occasion in all that they do, and to try their best even when they don't feel capable or believe they have what it takes to be successful.

## Rising Star

Lillie



KKGU has transformed the life of a student named Lillie by providing support, mentoring, networking opportunities, and elevating her collegiate goals. She has been in foster care since elementary school, and for most of her childhood, she has moved from one foster home to another. Just over two years ago, she joined her foster parents and their family and has since blossomed into a person with a purpose and clear future.

Lillie took advantage of mentoring, college advisement, volunteering, scholarship assistance, and campus visits to Fort Scott Community College (FSCC), Pittsburg State University and other institutions. Participation in KKGU activities and services has identified her as one of the most active former St. Francis foster care youth in Region 1.

Through her passion for learning and reading, Lillie maintains a 3.14 GPA and made the Marmaton Valley High School's National Honor Society. She stands to graduate ranked ninth in her 2017 graduating class of 21.

Throughout high school, music and faith have been a big part of her life. She has been accepted to play trumpet for the Greyhound's College Marching and Jazz and Performance bands at FSCC next year. Lillie plans to complete an associate of arts program and transfer to Emporia State University to pursue a secondary education major focusing on history. Her career plans are to teach in a high school setting.

## KKGU Outstanding Alum

### Outstanding Alum

Amanda King



### Outstanding Alum

Dalton Schoonover



**A**manda King feels proud and honored to say that she is a Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP (KKGU) scholar. As a sophomore in high school she took college classes and soon discovered the high costs associated with tuition, books, and fees. She began searching for scholarships and came across KKGU. She met the eligibility criteria and was accepted into the program in 2003. With the assistance of KKGU, she was able to graduate high school and entered college as a junior, quite a feat. She graduated with honors from Harding University with a degree in exercise science. From there, she moved to Florida where in 2014 she received a Masters of Medical Science. Currently, King works at a hospital treating and providing care to patients.

The KKGU staff remembers King for being very active and highly motivated during her participation with KKGU. While obtaining her bachelor's degree, she was awarded the KKGU Scholarship, which provided her the opportunity to achieve her educational goals.

King says, "GEAR UP allowed me to focus on my studies instead of worrying about how I was going to pay for books and tuition each semester." She goes on to state, "I'm ready to be empowered, to be a leader, to be someone you're proud to introduce. Life is hard enough on a daily basis, don't let excuses tell you that you can't or aren't good enough to chase your dreams." She gives special thanks to GEAR UP and the people behind it.

**D**alton Schoonover was involved with KKGU throughout his time at Pittsburg State University, where he obtained a degree in justice studies with an emphasis in criminal justice and a double minor in psychology and sociology in May 2014. He also has a master's degree in criminal justice from Wichita State which he completed in a year and a half. Currently, he works at the Southeast Kansas Regional Juvenile Detention Center as a detention supervisor and training officer. He is responsible for supervising the daily activities of all juveniles within the facility making sure that the clients follow rules, policies, and procedures.

KKGU honors Schoonover because he took advantage of the many resources and activities offered. Despite many hardships in high school, Dalton never gave up. He was awarded the KKGU scholarship throughout his undergraduate studies. That recognition allowed him to focus on academics and eased the financial burdens he experienced while a college student. "With my mother being a single-parent for the majority of my life, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP gave me an opportunity that many kids in my situation do not get," says Schoonover.

He hopes that students do their best to receive good grades in high school. Doing so, may lead to scholarship and other opportunities such as the ones he was afforded. Schoonover believes that students will succeed if they look at their struggles as simple challenges. "Make sure to always set realistic goals but have a plan for short-term goals and long-term goals," he advises.



As part of the National TRIO Day festivities on February 21, 2017, the Office of Special Programs is planning to host a free conference designed for WSU faculty, staff, public school educators, administrators, and community agency professionals. The College Access, Retention and Success Conference (CARS Conference) will be held from 10am to 1pm at the Rhatigan Student Center, 2nd floor, on the campus of Wichita State University. The topics will range from strategies to effectively address issues regarding middle school students to college students.

The presentations will be led by TRIO, GEAR UP, and Office of Disability Services staff. Many of the ideas suggested have been designated as best practices in the field, especially those that address problems typically associated with low-income, first-generation, foster care youth, returning adult students, veterans, and students with disabilities.

The tentative schedule for the CARS conference will include short sessions designed to provide lots of information and opportunities to ask questions. Each program will have a table on the 2nd floor for attendees to visit and receive additional information. There will also be door prizes for those who visit the tables. A webpage has been developed for the conference updates, information on registration, and to contact programs for information.

For more information and to receive latest update on the CARS conference, please visit [wichita.edu/cars](http://wichita.edu/cars).



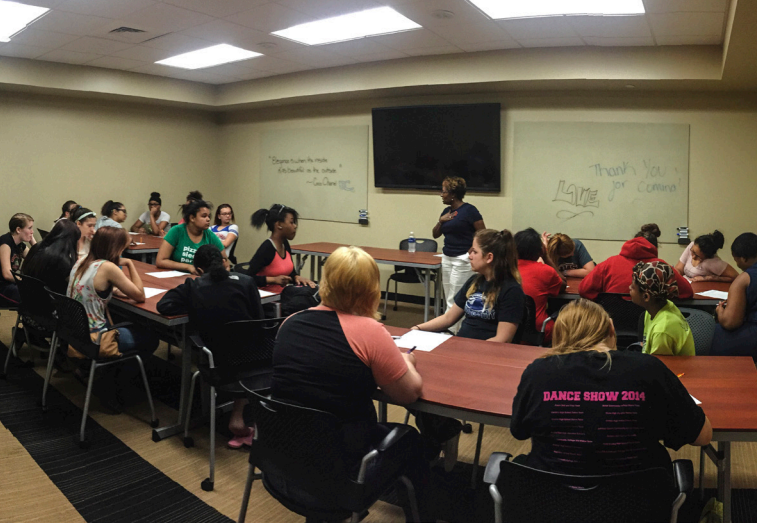
**Delinda Royse,**  
Director of  
Development for  
the Division of  
Student Affairs at  
Wichita State

As the director of development for the Division of Student Affairs at Wichita State, Delinda Royse sees her role as a support person to enhance the programs under the Office of Special Programs. She tirelessly works to provide resources and other promotional items to help make learning more attractive to students.

Royse says, “I have always felt that any and all requests regardless of size will eventually benefit one of our students. If it makes a student want to be here and participate (in the programs), it is worth looking for it.” Her passion for helping those with few resources began when her children were going through the public school system. She witnessed students who didn’t have school supplies or money for field trips. She helped one particular little girl who “disappeared” from the school roles. She often wonders what happened to this child but she sees her role now as another opportunity to help students.

Prior to coming to Wichita State, Royse worked for the United Way of Plains, then in national sales. She was very successful in these roles but lacked a certain personal reward that her work with WSU has now filled. “Every time I see the passion you all have for your students, I know I am in the right place,” Royse exclaims.

# Faces of GEAR UP



**NATIONAL TRIO DAY AGENDA**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2017**

**Wichita State University**

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**CARS Conference**

**(Open to the public)**

**10.00 am to 12.00 pm: Rhatigan Student Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

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**NATIONAL TRIO DAY BANQUET**

**(by invitation only)**

**Beggs Ball Room, Rhatigan Student Center**

**5.30 pm to 6.00 pm: VIP Reception**

**6.00 pm: Greetings & Welcome**

**Proclamations: State, City & University**

**Acknowledgement of Special Guests**

**Dinner & Video Showcase**

**Awards: Honoring Our Own**

**Felicitations: Building Bridges & Service Awards**

**Recognitions: Special Programs Staff**

**Networking & Social Time**

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**TRIO Programs are funded 100% and GEAR UP is funded 50% by the U.S. Department of Education and hosted by Wichita State University under the Division of Student Affairs.**

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