



The Southern Colorado Educational Opportunity Center

By Dorothy Choat

Welcome to SCEOC or EOC for short! How about all those acronyms (ESL, EOC, LSS), you've got to love it! I am Dorothy Choat and I have been the EOC Lamar Site Coordinator for just a little over a year. The EOC office assists students in accessing college. Our Trio program is federally funded and sponsored by Colorado State University-Pueblo. We have an office in LaJunta (OJC), Trinidad (TSJC), Pueblo (CSU-P & the Pueblo Work Force Center) and Colorado Springs (PPCC).

Often times we are the first contact with students. We provide assistance with Admission Applications and the Colorado Opportunity Fund. We help students find scholarships, provide college application fee waivers to those who qualify, transfer support and ohhh... soooo much more. However, our claim to fame is the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). We know it like the back of our hand! We outreach and provide support to area high schools by sponsoring FAFSA Workshops. In addition, we assist with student loan default rehabilitation, and on occasion we have been known to provide free tax preparation under the IRS/VITA Program.

Often times the applications and paperwork associated with enrolling into college can be overwhelming and frustrating. I believe our job is to provide quality assistance and a smooth process for students as they begin the first steps into post-secondary school. As Site Coordinators it is our passion and deep desire to assist our students. I can see this passion in all my EOC colleagues, I see it in their faces and in the way they talk about their students. We hope that we are a positive part in their journey to higher education. If you have a student who needs assistance, please send them to EOC!!! Check us out on Face book! <http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=79140018958>

Interview with Amy Jaime Coordinator, Adult Transition Services

What are some of your current projects?

Current projects as coordinator of ATS include collaborating efforts with Colorado Workforce, located here in Lamar, on bringing in and implementing the WorkKeys system. The WorkKeys system assesses job skills critical to the real world expectations of employers. The WorkKeys system can also identify gaps between employment needs and student skills, which enables educators to focus on keys to student success in those areas.

Another project that I am working on with DSS is the Colorado Works Participant Program. This program will entail bringing in participants to job shadow different positions within our various LCC departments. This is an opportunity to bring in participants to LCC departments in order to create a working experience for these individuals. I believe the Colorado Works Participant Program will not only benefit the participants, but also LCC and our community as a whole.

Finally, I am getting up to speed on reporting to CDE information needed in regards to our AEFLA funded grant as well as getting the required training to be a GED, ESL and ABE examiner.

(Amy Jaime interview continues on page 2)

Inside Volume 1, Number 2, Spring 2010

Southern Colorado EOC

By Dorothy Choat

Interview with Amy Jaime

Coordinator, Adult Transition Services

Voces Unidas (Spanish and English)

By Rene Gonzalez

My Role as a Job Coach at PCDDSS

By Pamela Reed

A Field Trip to the Betz Building

By Janet Gottschalk

The Fifth Page: Lamar Community Interview

By Monty and Melissa Thompson

Interview with Amy Jaime, continued

Do you have previous experience with working in these kinds of activities?

I had the opportunity to work in the ATS through the AEFLA program at the beginning of 2001. I am excited and feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with this student population again. It is a very rewarding feeling to see your students progress and accomplish their goals in order to improve their everyday skills through conversation and education.

This is my first opportunity to work with DSS and Workforce on these new projects, but I am looking forward to the challenges and collaboration to help bridge the gaps between agencies and within our community.

How and when did you become interested in a career in education?

I have always been interested in a career in education. However, I myself did not start college courses until I was older. I was a non-traditional student. I was married and a mother of two before I felt the need to pursue a college education. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others who may not have felt they could accomplish getting a high school diploma, much less a college degree. My goal was to be a definite force and influence on young students in order for them to value not only themselves, but their education.

As the years went by I realized the different components that are needed, but attainable, to be able to reach and appreciate ones educational success. I currently hold a BA in education, as well as my MA in student counseling. I believe with my education, along with my own life experiences, I can become that force and influence to the students here at LCC. It is my hope to help individual students realize they hold the empowerment to true and gratifying success no matter what age they are.

Who have some of your major influences been in your professional life?

I would have to say my family has been the most and major influence in my professional life. When my father went back to school to obtain his doctorate, it triggered me to think about going to college myself. He is currently a

Join the Next Meeting of the Lamar Area Transition Working Group

Wednesday, April 21st
9:00 a.m. To 11:00 a.m.
Trustees Building 114

More info: 719-336-6646

professor at CSU Pueblo. My mother also valued education and is an ESL instructor at an elementary school. I love to hear the stories of success they have had with their own individual students and admire their passion for their jobs and accomplishments.

My husband and children I would have to say have been the most influential in my career. With my husband's support, we have instilled the value of an education in our children from the time they started preschool.

I believe the struggles they observed of me trying to raise a family, work and continue working on my degrees showed them the worth of an education. They have come to realize that without an education in the field you are passionate about, you may not have the opportunity to have a job you truly can be happy with and feel accomplished in.

What is the key to success for adult learners in ESL, GED-Prep, and Career Development classes at Lamar Community College?

I believe the key is to have the support and encouragement that is so desperately needed to help students realize they can reach the goals they have set out to achieve. If you have others that not only believe in you, but help you to obtain the skills to succeed, there is no room for failure.

Most important is the belief in oneself. Once students realize they are capable of anything, they gain the empowerment that is needed for educational purposes as well as life in general.

It is my hope that we as the ATS staff will be the difference through teaching, motivating, supporting, encouraging and empowering each of our students, so they may be enlightened to know that they are the one true key to their own reality of success.

Contact: Amy.Jaime@lamarcc.edu

Voces Unidas, Committee of the Lamar Chamber of Commerce

Por Rene Gonzalez, Presidente

Voces Unidas es un Comité de la Cámara de Comercio de Lamar y es dedicado a crear un liderazgo diverso, dedicado a la economía local, y a la comunidad en un ambiente positivo. Basado en la comprensión, aprecio, y valor de las diferencias y lo similar de otros. Nosotros trabajaremos juntos para quitar efectivamente barreras y reforzar nuestra comunidad por su diversidad. Igualmente por eso "Voces Unidas" fue escogido como un nombre para nuestra organización, significando que como voces unidas de la comunidad todos nosotros podemos trabajar para crear un ambiente de muchas culturas y ideas para una misión positiva común.

Lo que hace Voces Unidas a corto y largo plazo, y la visión de la organización es por la mayor parte un objetivo. Simplemente, Voces Unidas ha desarrollado algunos puntos de interés. Uno de esos centro de atención es Cultural\Etnico\Reconocimiento y Conservación Históricas. Junto con apoyo de la comunidad tratamos de continuar la Celebración de Cinco de Mayo, 8 de Mayo, 2010. Juntamos información para la conservación de "La Colonia" una era que trajo parte de la mezcla de culturas a Lamar y al área local. Voces Unidas también apoya a Lamar Community College en el desarrollo de los edificios de Prowers County Welfare Housing.

Con el conocimiento de diversidad del área, el conocimiento social, y con comunicación continuamos mostrando como un comité pueden trabajar juntos y funcionar en la comunidad con una imagen positiva. Demostrando con trabajo dedicado en acontecimientos y recursos de fondos de varios eventos en el año que trae nuestra comunidad juntos como el Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, Fiesta de Otoño, y muchas otras celebraciones. Voces Unidas dice a la comunidad que somos un grupo de varias personas con participación en nuestra comunidad y nosotros esperamos hacer un cambio en una manera positiva para crear una comunidad más fuerte. Esa participación en nuestra comunidad es el asunto más importante y pertinente a Voces Unidas en este momento.

Voces Unidas, Committee of the Lamar Chamber of Commerce

By Rene Gonzalez, Chairperson

Voces Unidas, a Committee of the Lamar Chamber of Commerce, is dedicated to creating a diverse leadership, economy, and community in a positive environment. Based on understanding, appreciating, valuing and embracing the differences and similarities of others, we will work together effectively to remove barriers and strengthen our community through its diversity. Equally that is why "Voces Unidas" (United Voices) was chosen as a name for our organization, meaning that as united voices of the community we all can work to create an environment of many cultures and ideas to be heard as one with a common positive mission.

What Voces Unidas is doing towards near-term and long-term goals and vision are mostly all in one. In simple form, Voces Unidas has developed some focal points of interest and development. One of those focal points is Cultural\Ethnic\Historical Recognition and Preservation. We are trying to continue the Celebration of Cinco de Mayo, May 8th, 2010, along with support of the community. We are gathering information for the preservation of "La Colonia," an era that brought some of the mixture of cultures to Lamar and the surrounding area. Voces Unidas is giving support to Lamar Community College's development of the Prowers County Welfare Housing.

Then with Local and Area Diversity Awareness, Social Awareness, and Communication we continue to show as a committee that we can work together and function in the community with a positive image. Proving it through hard work on events and fundraisers at various times in the year which bring our community together like the Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, Fall Fest, and many other events. Voces Unidas is telling people who we are, and that as a group of people with varied backgrounds, through involvement in our community, we are hoping to make a change in a positive manner to create a stronger community. That involvement in our community is the most important and relevant issue to Voces Unidas today.

The Role of a Job Coach at PCDSS

By Pam Reed

I am Pamela Reed, Job Coach here at Prowers County Department of Social Services (DSS). I have a B.A. in Human Services. My position is funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Funds from CSBG provide a range of services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals with the focus of lessening poverty. I work with individuals throughout Prowers County who fall below 200% of poverty to enhance skills that lead to self-sufficiency. I help people overcome barriers to employment, such as child care, legal issues, transportation, substance abuse, domestic violence, and even reputation. I help potential employees develop strategies to upgrade their skills, such as furthering their education. I can help participants discover where their natural interests and skills lie, and can identify training opportunities. I want participants to find stable and fulfilling work, I want them to increase their family's income, and I want them to be able to reduce their reliance on public assistance.

Clients who receive TANF through DSS, which is temporary aid, have to complete a certain number of hours of work experience each month to receive benefits. Hours include a combination of job skills training, education, and actual work experience. I am currently in the process of setting up work experience sites throughout the county. My goal is to place a client in the field that most interests them, so that they can gain the needed skills in that area. I want to create opportunities for participants to enhance their employability. I focus on matching the needs of the supervisor and the needs of the client. As Job Coach, I stay in contact with the client and the work site to make sure that everything is going smoothly and mediate any conflicts or problems.

I can give businesses information regarding tax credits and federal bonding programs. We can subsidize a worker's training period and pay for Workman's Comp. I can work with local employers to develop on-the-job training opportunities. Instead of an employer having to weed through applications, I can have in mind a

(Pam Reed's article continues on page 6)

Monty and Melissa Thompson Interview

(continued from the page 5)

What do you learn from your interaction with your students?

Melissa: That even at a young age, every child is unique and different. From their personalities and attitudes, to their goals and dreams; the only common factor is age. It is refreshing to see the innocent outlook that children have on life. It seems to put parts of life back into perspective, sometimes.

Monty: I have to agree with Melissa, even as adults we sometimes overlook the fact that everyone is different. Whether it is in their approach to life, in their learning styles, and in their own values. The interaction with the students is the best part of what I do. To make someone smile who has had a bad day or a bad week, that in itself means the world to me. If I can make you smile one time in life, then for that one time you felt good about life and yourself, and that means everything to me.

Our Field Trip to the Betz Building

By Janet Gottschalk

In the evening GED class, we discuss what the student's plans are for the future and what they want to do after they receive their diplomas. From these discussions, I have learned what activities the students are involved in, what they have done in the past, and what they would like to do in the future. As they are sharing, I tell them about some of the programs available at LCC whereby they can pursue their dreams. I began thinking about showing the them what they can learn, instead of just talking about it.

In late February, we took a "field trip" to the Betz Building to attend Kenny Maestas' Web Design class. As his class worked and presented some of their projects to us, Kenny talked about what types of careers are available in this field. Some of the students had never thought about doing that type of work before. After class, we walked around the building, poked our heads in rooms that were open, and talked about various subjects that are taught throughout the building. As we walked back to our classroom in Bowman, the students began asking about other types of programs and subjects they could study at LCC. I was excited about their enthusiasm concerning what was available to them right here at home. The more they can get connected to LCC, the greater the probability they will enroll in other classes.



The Fifth Page

A Lamar Community Interview

Monty and Melissa Thompson

How did each of you become involved in education and teaching?

Melissa: Our oldest son struggled at a young age in school and was starting to be labeled or targeted as a child with learning disabilities, when in fact there wasn't anything mentally or physically wrong other than he could not find anything to motivate him or keep himself on task. After a couple of years he was beginning to believe that he had the problems others were saying, until he got in the right classroom with the right teacher. She took a broken child and helped build him up. I wanted to help other children in the same way.

Monty: In my case it was more of people knowing what I could do and having faith in me to do this type of "work." I have always loved to help or be of service to people. I worked in customer service oriented jobs quite a bit over the years and always found myself wanting to do more for the customer than I was required to. When this position came open, I hesitated, not knowing if I could actually teach; but I found it to be more than just teaching. I could think of nothing better than taking a person that has seen some hard times and is looking for some sort of direction and helping guide and shape a path that they could be not only proud of but successful in the end.

What motivates you to do your work, and what motivates you about your work?

Melissa: Watching children not only learn something new, but being able to accomplish something and understanding what they are doing at the same time.

Monty: When you see someone reaching out for a little help and taking whatever they can get without asking for more. Seeing them take that and turn into something more than you gave

them to begin with. It has always been the little things to me that seem to make the biggest difference in someone's life. When they leave at the end of the day and say, "Wow, I didn't think I could do that- and I did!." That makes this all worthwhile.

You teach students from two vastly different age groups. Do you ever talk to each other about ways in which your classrooms are similar, or are there no similarities?

Us: Whether it is first grade or adults, people in general, want to learn or to know more. With Melissa, her first grade students have a natural curiosity. As for working with adults, they have to have come to a point in their lives that they want to know more in order to better themselves, their families, and their future.

What is the most important factor in learning, making progress, growing in understanding, and achieving success? How can you assess whether a person is making these improvements?

Melissa: Not giving up on yourself, your dreams. No matter how old you are you should always follow your dreams. When I decided to go back to school, it was a very difficult decision; not only for me, but my family as well. After following my dreams, it was the best decision that I have made.

Monty: I would have to say having a strong support system. Surround yourself with people that will push you to do your best, pick you up when you fall down, and let you lean on them when times are tough. When looking at a person's life, if they always seem to be striving for more out of life, never remaining stagnant, the progress is and improvements in their lives are not only noticeable, but exciting to all of those around that person. To see anyone grow, whether a child or adult, to see them want more from life: that is a strong sign that they will follow their dreams and they will find success.

(The Thompson interview continues on p. 4)



The Sixth Page

Pamela Reed, Job Coach at PCDSS
(continued from page 4)

potential employee who is ready to start work, who is interested in the type of work the employer is offering, and I will actively mentor that employee through the first several months of work, making sure they arrive to work on time, have reliable transportation and child care, and are keeping up with their job responsibilities.

LCC has been very gracious in assisting our participants to become self-sufficient. The college provides space for Crossroads, a class which focuses on transformation, personal change, and discovering one's purpose. LCC also instructs a series of classes which teach Business Basics, Work Styles, and Life Opportunities. These classes focus on interviewing skills, creating resumes, career choices, how to complete job applications, body language, handling problems at work, safety on the job, and the use of computer programs. I have already found that clients who actively participate in these classes are motivated and have a strong idea of who they want to be and the career they want to have. LCC has made the college such a welcoming place for our program participants by including everyone in activities at the college as well as providing refreshments during Crossroads.

I am also currently working to create jobs within the community through CSBG. I want to see Prowers County grow and prosper, and I see this happening through community involvement and participation. My goal is to preserve and create jobs to promote economic recovery and provision of assistance to those most impacted by the recession. Anyone interested in speaking with me can contact me at 719-336-7486 ext. 173. I would love to hear your ideas! Remember, the best ideas start small.

A Short Note from Robb Scott

This is a time of exciting activity as well as anxious and eager anticipation because our office is embarking on initiatives and enjoying partnerships that promise to bring many new and enhanced opportunities for success to our students.

I want to especially recognize and applaud the hard work that our instructors do day in and day out on behalf of their students. The teachers' names are: Cheryl Hart (lead GED-Prep instructor); Brenda Hargrove (Walsh ESL instructor); Steve Doner (Walsh GED-Prep instructor); Janet Gottschalk (evening GED-Prep instructor); Monty Thompson (Career Pathways instructor); Bill Becker (new evening GED-Prep instructor). It is also great that Amy Jaime (new coordinator) is helping to organize our most important projects.

This newsletter provides an opportunity to say a public thank-you to Amber Thompson, Debbie Evans, Christina Lawson, and Dorothy Choat, and LCC Student Services at Betz, for embracing and including our students in the campus community.

Adult Transition Services @ Lamar Community College

Spring Session 2

March 22 – May 12

GED-Prep (campus & Walsh)
ESL (Walsh & Granada)

Summer Session

May 31 – July 23

GED-Prep (daytime & evenings)

Career Pathways

Business Basics (April)

Work Styles (May)

Personal & Career Development (June)
Career Pathways Capstone-PILOT (June)

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