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**SPECIAL
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IN THIS ISSUE:

Student:
Sonya
Shifflett

Professor:
Debbie
Stevenson

Employer:
Westside Housing
Organization
(WHO)

Student Stressor:
Tips to relieve
stress during
inclement winter
weather

Upcoming Events:

**Internship
Workshop:**
Tuesday March 1st,
2011

**Social Sciences
Mock Interview
Day:**
Tuesday April 5th,
2011

Sonya Shifflett Uses Spanish To Advance Her Career

By Shelly Summerour



Right after graduation Sonya Shifflett found that her degree in Spanish had made her very marketable. She had been offered several positions, all of which required the ability to speak Spanish. Unsure of which direction to go, what Sonya did know is that she wanted to work in the non-profit field. She said she was honored when her current employer, Westside Housing Organization, approached her about employment. "Park put me in an excellent position to seize the opportunity to work in an established and respected non-profit organization." Sonya finds it very rewarding that she is able to make a difference in "one little corner of the world." Sonya gets to apply what she has learned from her degree every day in the Spanish-speaking neighborhood where she lives and works. Even if she stumbles on a word from time to time, she has found that it tends to make people comfortable enough to open up to her. "Spanish helps me feel like a member of my community." She has developed a deep appreciation for the Hispanic roots in her neighborhood, which has helped her reach out to those new to the community or to the country. Sonya gives credit to her experience at Park University. "English or Spanish may not even be one of my client's languages, but the cultural intelligence I learned from Park aids me in reaching out to them." At Westside Housing Organization, one of their missions is to create more energy efficient residences. Sonya informs residents of these programs and encourages them to participate. She also helps members of her community find necessary resources, such as assistance with paying rent or funding for extracurricular activities. "I am really proud to be a part of the Westside neighborhood. I am working to help it maintain its authenticity while watching it grow."

Sonya gives the advice that learning how to speak Spanish is necessary if you want to work in the non-profit field. "It is the 'lingua franca' used by your clients, colleagues and friends." Not only will this ability open up doors in this area, but in other career fields as well, such as in hospitals, law firms, service industries and even ad agencies. Sonya recognizes that a Spanish degree can be challenging and even frustrating at times, however, it will be well worth it in the end. Sonya claims that the "depth of appreciation you will gain for other cultures will surprise you."

Westside Housing Organization (WHO)

By Shelly Summerour

Westside Housing Organization (WHO) is a non-for-profit corporation in Kansas City, MO that repairs and rehabilitates houses, works as a community organizer and develops real estate. Primarily serving the Latino community, WHO also focuses on environmental sustainability. According to their mission statement, they use "the principles of planet, people and prosperity when evaluating all of its plans and actions." They help houses meet code and work to improve the conditions of neighborhoods so that they stay affordable and healthy. Founded in 1973, WHO has invested over \$35 million in the local community. Real estate that they have developed includes houses for sale, multi-family rental units and community space. Working together, WHO partners with neighborhood residents to advocate for neighborhood improvement and sustainability. In fact, over 80% of the board of directors live in the community they have helped build. Their office is located on 919 West 24th Street in Kansas City. For more information about WHO, please visit their website at www.westsidehousing.org.

¡Saludos! Profesora Debbie Stevenson

By LaKeisha Brashier-Halde



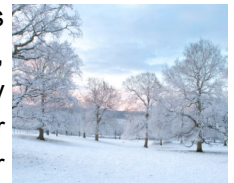
Professor Debbie Stevenson is an adjunct professor of Spanish at Park University. She received her Master of Arts in Spanish, and a Bachelor of Arts in English. She always had an interest in language and actually had the opportunity to study in Spain. She once taught at the community college level, but after deciding to pursue more hours, applied to Park. She really likes Park, and in fact tutors Spanish in the Academic Support Center. She would like students to know that the Spanish major can create many employment opportunities not only here in America, but in Spanish speaking countries as well. Professor Stevenson says, "Teaching is an obvious option, but being bilingual can give students an edge in other career fields as well such as the medical, accounting, and law professions". She advises that it takes a lot of studying and time commitment to learn a language. Having an aptitude for language is good, but time is the biggest factor. If you decide that Spanish is the major for you, she also recommends applying for the numerous scholarships available. Professor Stevenson says the program is very active on campus including sponsoring the upcoming Language Fair on February 15th. She has high hopes that the fair will draw attention to the Spanish major, especially attracting the attention of area high-school students, helping the program continue to expand and grow!

"It takes a lot of studying and time commitment to learn a language. Having the aptitude for language is good, but time is the biggest factor."

Student Stressor: Winter Weather Worries

By LaKeisha Brashier-Halde

So far this winter, we've had 3 snow days due to inclement weather. While this usually causes feelings of elation, the subsequent piling up of chapters to read, papers, assignments, etc. can definitely be headache-inducing. To help combat any unnecessary frustration, students should check their e-mail and/or contact their instructor for instructions on missed class work. Also, reserve extra time to read or study until the next scheduled class period. Be sure to check Park's website for closings in the event of future inclement weather, and in the meantime, be safe and keep warm!



Career Development Center Upcoming Events

Internship Workshop

- Tuesday March 1st, 2011
- 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Louise Morden Board Room
- Parkville Campus

Attend the Internship Workshop and learn the process of obtaining an internship. We will explore resume/cover letter writing, dress for success, and interview preparation. If you already have a resume completed, bring it for review.

Register: traci.klasing@park.edu

Social Sciences Mock Interview Day

- Tuesday April 5th, 2011
- 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Park University
- Parkville Campus

Students are invited to sharpen their resume and interviewing skills with Mock Interview Day. This unique interview day is open to all *Criminal Justice, Psychology, Social Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work majors*. Each participant will interview with 2 companies to gain exposure to different interviewing styles.

Register: traci.klasing@park.edu