November AWEstar Shelley Muniz

Shelley Muniz, our November AWEstar, is a Library Specialist at Columbia College Library. She has been employed at Columbia College since 2002, and is proud to be part of the library team.

Shelley grew up in Modesto, attended Modesto Junior College, and then transferred to Sonoma State University where she majored in Geology, with a minor in Anthropology and moved to Sonora in 1973. Before coming to Columbia College, Shelley worked for thirteen years as a teacher’s aide and librarian for Belleview School.

Shelley is very active in our local writing community, is part the Word Project, organizers of First Friday readings at Sonora Joe’s each month. Her latest short story, Even Then, is included in an anthology of short stories about mothers and daughters titled Wisdom Has A Voice : Every Daughter’s Memory of Mother. Shelley has also helped initiate and organize author talks as a Columbia College Library sponsored event. Their first featured speaker for 2012 will be Suzan Stills, local author of Commune of Women.

In 2002, she helped organize the book collection for the Tuolumne County Library Born to Read Program and selected titles for Worlds of Wonder, the County Bookmobile. The idea for the children’s book collection in the Columbia College Library was collaboration between Shelley, Larry Steuben, and Kathy Sullivan. “When Shelley started working for the library, she strongly advocated that we build a Kids Book Collection,” says Larry Steuben. “It is my opinion that our Kids’ Collection is one of the very best.”

The AWE committee’s commitment to student wellness and success were a good fit for Shelley. She helped brainstorm and implement the GPS program. Shelley helped organize the Haiku contest for GPS Tool #6, Shhh, What was That. Last year this contest was very successful, with participation from students, faculty, and staff. Shelley hopes the same will hold true with this year’s Haiku contest, beginning November 14th. Shelley was also instrumental in bringing slam poet, Christina Perez, to Columbia College.

Shelley loves the academic environment at Columbia College, and appreciates the dedication of faculty and staff. “There is a constant effort here to understand the whole student, to encourage active learning and self-thinking. Students are encouraged to look at the big picture, and I like that,” she says.

AWEstar Tutor’s Corner with Lauren Kelly

As a student and a community member, I value the Community College system and find myself blessed to be a part of Columbia Community College. My name is Lauren Kelly and I have been privileged to be a tutor in the Academic Achievement Center since my junior year in high school. I was a part of the Middle College program and I genuinely believe that becoming an AAC tutor was one of the best things to become as a new student. The environment, the community, the integrity and success all helped me to become the student that I wanted to be—helpful and prepared to learn. I am honored to have taken such great and diverse classes at this aesthetically and institutionally brilliant campus. It is an exceptional gift to be around a community that helps an individual to grow developmentally. To be a part of such a community is to be being a Columbia College student. I have been inspired to continue my education and to pursue a career in the medical field. This aspiration has its foundation in what I have been able to witness by living in Tuolumne County. Being a part of Columbia College has allowed me to witness what a community can
be. I am humbled to be a part of your student body!

With more time at Columbia, I have become increasingly aware of the effects of students categorizing their efforts in courses. All too often, I see, as a tutor, students trying to memorize or work on just one topic at a time when the real “ah-ha!” moments emerge when the student is able to connect what they are working on at the moment to something that they have studied in the past—near or far. Examples of this phenomenon are unique moments of independent learning that have been facilitated by deep and meaningful instruction.

The fusion of student possibilities and instructor goals creates opportunity for learning how to learn.

As critical learning becomes increasingly important, students are pushed to be less and less dependent on their institutions. However, there is opportunity for the instructor to facilitate independent success for students. Knowing how to learn is a valuable component of a high-quality education. It is also valuable for the students to know how a course is designed so that they are able to make connections between classes. I encourage all instructors to continue promoting student dialogue where connections can be made between the course topics and additional materials can be made. It is imperative for students to make these associations. It is important for instructors to create a learning environment where a broader sense of learning is made available. Here, students are required to take risks in their development as not just students, but as human beings. It is here that “ah-ha!” moments are more frequent and can be applied there in the class, and beyond.

A W E s t a r T u t o r ’ s C o r n e r C o n t i n u e d

The GPS Committee sponsored a Haiku Contest based on GPS Tool #6 “Shhh What Was That?”

The haikus were so good the judges had a difficult time choosing the winners. The Judges were Meryl Soto, Wendy Griffiths, Bender, Liz Rumney, and Shelley Muniz.

First place Faculty/Staff Winner: Jill Johnson

First place Student Winner: Deanna Jaxine Stinson

“Open your mind wide
Jump in the sea of knowledge
Get wet with new ideas”

Check out the Winners
(Link will open up a PDF)

A W E S t e e r i n g C o m m i t t e e M e e t i n g

The AWE Steering Committee met to brainstorm how to preserve and pursue our Victory Garden Harvest we started in the spring.

The AWE Steering Committee members broke out into multiple groups, headed by students and we revisited the past Victory Garden ideas and decided what we wanted to keep and created new ideas as well.

Four groups worked with the list of ideas that were brainstormed at our spring “victory garden meeting.” As we discussed our ideas it was clear that there were several strong themes: Playful/Fun Gatherings, Support for Students and General Morale Building, Transportation and Showcasing Student Work.

Many of these ideas were simple and easy to implement, and an inspiration for FIG proposals. More student participation to adopt an idea and work on it was suggested and the committee will work on helping to make this happen.