Pittsburgh area deals with drug crisis

CARLIS M. SPIVEY with ANDREW CARDONE
THE VOICE EDITORS

A 34-year-old mother from Richland Township left behind her three-year-old son. A Pittsburgh firefighter suspended after nearly dying on the job. A 20-year old from Ross Township waiting to be admitted for treatment. A Donora police officer on trial for stealing heroin from an evidence room. All of these people, and many more, have been affected by the outreaching spread of heroin; killing some and ruining the lives of others.

Pittsburgh is one of many metropolitan regions suffering from a nationwide crisis in heroin and opioid overdoses. Nursing Lab Coordinator for CCAC North, Julie Paul, says that hospitals don’t necessarily help when it comes to addiction, “As healthcare professionals, we should be exploring alternative therapies for pain. Instead, hospitals medicate children without thinking twice.” Paul continues, “These medications are addicting. Giving children addictive drugs could turn into much bigger problems for them as adults.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health conducted a study of the amount of overdose deaths in Pennsylvania over the past 35 years. They found that fatal drug overdoses in Pennsylvania have increased 14-fold between 1979 and 2014.

The highest overdose rates were among white females between the ages of thirty-five and forty-four.

The amount of overdose deaths in Allegheny County alone, in 2016, were estimated to be around 300 people. And the epidemic is growing.

Heroin, and drugs like other opiates, and opioids, are killing our population. It’s very important for people to see and know the importance and severity of this issue.

Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid in which is said to be, roughly, 10,000 times stronger than morphine and approximately 100 times more potent than fentanyl.

Recently, the presence of carfentanil in illicit drug markets has increased, bringing upon plenty of concern.

The overall strength of this drug could ultimately lead to an increase in overdose and overdose-related deaths, even among opioid-tolerant users. According to Rich Lord, writer for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, “Sometimes there are two, other times a dozen, but babies born opioid-dependent are ‘a constant issue’ in the Magee-Women’s Hospital of UPMC maternity ward, according to Richard Beigi, the Oakland hospital’s chief medical officer.”

Lord continues, “On Dec. 15, there were eight such babies, and this year Magee has seen close to 500 pregnant women who were using opioid rehabilitation medicines like methadone or buprenorphine, or actively using painkillers or heroin, Dr. Beigi said. ‘That’s maybe six or seven percent’ of pregnant patients, he said.”

Michelle Schwartzmier, mother of 20-year old overdose victim, Casey Schwartzmier, sent out a very honest obituary following her daughter’s death. She explains that her daughter was struggling with addiction. “Casey never wanted to be defined only by her addiction and mistakes, she was so much more than that. She made it clear if she was to ever pass as a result of it, she wanted people to know the truth with the hope that honesty about her death could help break the stigma about addicts and get people talking about the problem of addiction that is taking away so many young lives.”

Illustration by Robin Cleary / CCAC Voice

New service offers electronic transcripts

CCAC is now offering electronic transcripts. After reviewing multiple vendors, CCAC chose the National Student Clearinghouse to represent the school, allowing electronic transcripts for a nominal fee.

The announcement was made in December of 2016 and the service is available now.

CCAC’s Registrar and ITS offices worked together to bring this service to fruition. “We have worked together to ensure that this partnership would be the most seamless for our students,” Registrar Diane Jacobw wrote in a letter to the campus community.

After weeks of testing and planning, the National Student Clearinghouse is prepared to provide students with the ability to send their transcripts as well. The process should only take a few minutes.

Requests for transcripts can be accessed through the myCCAC Portal, my.ccac.edu or through the National Student Clearinghouse website.

Photo courtesy of CCAC Portal

Students can now request electronic transcripts online.

IN THIS ISSUE...

03 CAMPUS National Technical Honor Society thrives at West Hills
04 ARTS & LIVING ‘Luke Cage’ continues Marvel/Netflix partnership
05 SPORTS CCAC North bowling team succeeds in Las Vegas
06 OPINIONS Campus President encourages grit in college

The National Student Clearinghouse is an organization founded in 1993 by the higher education community. CCAC has become one of over 3,600 schools participating in this service.

Transcripts are necessary for students who hope to transfer to a four year school and continue their education. Some employers may also require transcripts.

Registration Clerk, Carol Peterson says there are some problems with the service. “The first time a student uses the program, it can be kind of stressful and a bit time consuming.”

Some students, specifically, the students without debit or credit cards, cannot use the transcript service, as payment is required online.

“Some people seem to be quite successful with the service, however,” says Peterson. “If a student has an email through the transfer school they hope to go to, their transcript can be sent and received within hours.”

Official transcripts from CCAC will include a list of courses taken, final grades, and the number of credits attempted and completed. Students may track online how long it takes to prove that their request has been fulfilled.

Transcripts may be sent electronically or in paper format. A $5 fee is charged for this service.

Requests for transcripts can be accessed through the myCCAC Portal, my.ccac.edu or through the National Student Clearinghouse website.

Photo courtesy of CCAC Portal

Students can now request electronic transcripts online.
CCAC Introduces Dean of Libraries

William Jakub is the college’s new Dean of Libraries.

Jakub has identified a need to be a balance between the autonomy and uniqueness that is each campus library & LRS. Jakub hopes to bring the local and college communities together for fundraising. “At some point in time I envision the libraries & LRS being involved in some capacity with fundraisers and/or community events,” he says. “As I tour many of the libraries, I’m learning of their participation in various food banks and other giving that people attain at different levels and its various nuances always outpaces what society is truly willing and able to do. Learning, as we have seen over the last number of decades, is something that people attain at different levels and abilities,” he says. “In short it is not a one stop shop. Rather, learning is achieved by people at all different levels and by a myriad of different means.”

Andrew Cardone / CCAC Voice

CCAC welcomed William Jakub to the new role of Dean of Libraries in January, though he is certainly not new to the field. Jakub has been a member of the Library & Information Science profession for well over 30 years, having served as the Chief Administrative Officer and Library Director at Franciscan University for 17 years and, prior to that, as an Evening Administrator of the University of Pittsburgh Library System for 20 years.

He has also served in the capacity as an assistant professor in Legal Studies/Political Science, as well as an adjunct faculty member with the Graduate Studies department in Library Science at Clarion University.

Jakub’s educational background includes a post graduate Advanced Studies Certificate in Library & Information Science, a Masters of Library & Information Science, a Master of Arts in Law & Criminal Justice, all from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science/Geology (Earth Sciences) from Duquesne University.

As Dean of Libraries, some of his job duties include providing leadership in the development of Library & Learning Resource Services (LRS) focusing on and facilitating student success. Advocating and promoting all things Library & LRS, and developing & overseeing long range and strategic planning for the Libraries & LRS.

The new DoL is also a defender of privacy and advocates the proper use of information technology “I defend and take seriously my obligation as a Librarian & Information Science professional to defend privacy, access to information, work against censorship, support, promote and defend patron confidentiality. These are just not words to me. I believe in them and stand by them.”

Having just started last month Jakub is still in the process of formulating a vision for the libraries. Nevertheless, he says that each and every library and LRS is doing an incredible job at meeting the educational, tutoring, information access, and research needs of the CCAC community. For the last few weeks Jakub has been meeting and speaking with all of the staff at all of campuses and listening and gaining their input as to better develop a plan by which to attain the libraries’ collective objective.

As for long range plans, Jakub has identified a need to be a balance between the autonomy and uniqueness that is each campus library & LRS. Jakub hopes to bring the local and college communities together for fundraising. “At some point in time I envision the libraries & LRS being involved in some capacity with fundraisers and/or community events,” he says. “As I tour many of the libraries, I’m learning of their participation in various food banks and other giving back to the community endeavors and I’d definitely like to see them continue.”

Jakub recalled a project at a previous institution called Food for Fines. “Anyone who had [library] fines could bring in some nonperishable kind of food and knock off some off their overdue fines,” he said. The donations were then given to local food banks.

He is excited to work with the various staff members at each of the campus libraries. “They are truly a gifted, dedicated, and ingenious-enterprising group of people. I couldn’t be more proud or honored to be a part of them,” he says. Jakub is also looking to the future of libraries and how students interact with learning materials.

“As I gaze into my crystal ball I foresee a time in the next 20 years or so wherein education and its administration is still being conducted both in the virtual medium as well as in the Face to Face reality. I say this mostly because, as we have seen historically, technology and its various nuances always outpaces what society is truly willing and able to do. Learning, as we have seen over the last number of decades, is something that people attain at different levels and abilities,” he says.

“In short it is not a one stop shop. Rather, learning is achieved by people at all different levels and by a myriad of different means.”
CCAC North sees rise in enrollment

Andrew Cardone
The Voice Editor

As it always was before and still is, to afford a decent job and pay check; receiving a college education is imperative.

The only issue is as continued education goes, the monetary requirements tend to be a bit substantial. With this in mind, potential college students tend to shy away from their continued education “for the fifth consecutive year nationwide, according to figures released by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center” in 2015. The opposite, however rings true for CCAC North as it is continuing on a successful increase in enrollment.

CCAC as a whole couldn’t avoid the decrease in enrollment status. The college as a whole has dropped 3.99% of its enrollment status. However, North campus seems to be on the rise at 9.4%, amounting to an increase of over 400 students, according to Sue McCleary, Director of Registration for CCAC North and West Hills.

With this increase in students, the profits are easily visible. With more money coming into the campuses, more money goes into the student life budget and programing budget. With more money in the budgets, the ultimate outcome means more fun student life programs, such as mixers, and multicultural events like the end of the year banquet or stress free days. The clubs that run are also run through the student life budget.

When asked why North Campus seems to be special, Campus President Gretchen Mullin-Sawicki credits not only the academic programs but also the robust Student Ambassador program in the Office of Student Life. “When you enter the doors of the West Hills Center and begin to walk around, you may find signs or posters about the National Technical Honor Society. At first glance you may not know what it’s for or why, but after some research and questioning I discovered that it is a prestigious group working to better the achievement and success for those in the career and technical field. The National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) serves roughly over 100,000 active members and nearly a million since its inception. Each year there are roughly $250,000 in scholarships awarded. The NTHS is partnered with dozens of companies giving its members endless opportunities. The NTHS serves to promote and advocate for students’ achievements in technical fields. The chapter at CCAC’s West Hills Center is one of several throughout the United States which have sprung up since its inception in 1984. It recognizes hard-working students in various technical fields and vocational education programs. To become a member, students must achieve and maintain a 3.0 GPA. Invitations to the group are offered from the organization’s advisor, Katie Johnstone in Student Life. Once invited, members are asked to pay a $30 membership fee. With membership comes access to a number of scholarships and broader employment opportunities, assistance with résumé building, and interview experience. New members also receive a membership recognition certificate of an official NTHS diploma seal, membership pin and card, graduation tassel, and window decal.

The National Technical Honor Society is the longest tenured club at the West Hills Center. The chapter has been recognized since the center opened 10 years ago.
The Voice

that arise from gang culture, as well as the such problems presented are the issues presented in black communities. Some superhero persona is framed by Mariah Dillard, who ends up serving a Jessica Jones, in the world while combatting negative with understanding himself and his place extraordinary powers, as he struggles man, purposefully mutated with has been bringing to the platform.

‘Luke Cage’ continues Netflix partnership

NICHOLAS CAPRA
THE VOICE STAFF

Luke Cage, one of the newer original shows on Netflix, follows the trend of intelligent and witty programming Marvel has been bringing to the platform. The show follows a young man, purposefully mutated with extraordinary powers, as he struggles with understanding himself and his place in the world while combating negative influences inside of Harlem’s community. Mike Colter plays the title character, reprising a role he played in Jessica Jones, also on Netflix. Alfre Woodard plays Mariah Dillard, who ends up serving as how close knit and respected certain social institutions are, such as family and community.

As easy as it would be to write a show that punders to fans or a specific group, Marvel puts in the effort to make a statement and capture the essence of a community, blemishes and all. This level of care and tact could be seen as a constant in Marvel’s expanse into Netflix, which holds a demographic mostly untapped by other studios. With Daredevil, Jessica Jones, and now Luke Cage, as well as several announced shows that will release later this year, Marvel has extended a rather deep root into this medium that is paying off rather well with positive criticism across the board.

Iron Fist, who in the comics is one of Luke Cage’s closest friends, is set for a March 17 release on Netflix. Another show intended for release later this year is said to combine all the Netflix based heroes into their own team, thus solidifying Netflix as its own nook in the Marvel universe. Judging by the bar Luke Cage and other shows have set in quality, the future looks bright for both Netflix and Marvel studios.

Nostalgia brings back the past

EMMALINE LATTNER-LANE
THE VOICE EDITOR

Nostalgia is the psychological need to live in one’s past, returning to familiar times and people in search of comfort. Everyone feels nostalgia, no matter what age they might be.

Nostalgia seems to be almost a trend in the lives of the millenial generation. It is prominently seen in certain aspects of video games and films. Video games are more of a “modern couture” set from the nostalgia from classic video games still immensely present in pop culture. You can find merchandise of classic video game consoles, like a Nintendo 64 or GameBoy, almost anywhere.

Recently the newest game of the Pokemon franchise was released. Pokemon Sun and Moon are the two most recent games to be added to the franchise, featuring classic characters remade alongside new characters to keep the fans’ thirst for new Pokemon and the craving for the nostalgia that is the classic Pokemon games fresh.

Nintendo is a very prominent company in the concept of nostalgia, consistently making and remastering old video games such as Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Legend of Zelda. Not to mention the ever-present newest Pokemon game that fans are excited and abuzz about. The classic adventures of the Super Mario Bros. have spawned many spin-off games. Mario and his crew have been found competing in the summer and winter Olympic games, being turned into paper figures, and racing at high speeds across the Mushroom Kingdom.

Movies to ruin your Valentine’s Day

JOSH JANSEN
THE VOICE STAFF

If you’ve like most men and are terrible with dating, or just trying to get rid of the person you’re dating that just isn’t the signal consider watching these fun filled movies with them this Valentine’s Day. If you watch these films trying to show your romantic side and they don’t run away screaming, you might need a more direct approach.

1. The Shining is a great film to really set the mood of romance. It starts off as a loving tale of a father who is looking for a fresh start for him and his family by taking a job as a caretaker for a hotel that closes down for the winter. He and his family are told that they’re going to be snowed in for months at The Overlook Hotel and he’s warned of the many tragedies that happened years before. After a while cabin fever sets in and the main character Jack Torrance slowly loses his mind, little that he had at the beginning, and ends up attempting to murder his entire family. If you want to show your loving hubby this film all you have to do is get rid of them is say that this film really reminds me of you.

2. Another wonderful movie that might make your significant other question what the heck they’re doing with you is Fight Club. It’s a great film in general, though it’s filled to the brim with blood and gore and artistically filmed sex scenes. Sure to offend the lighthearted, and the weak-stomached all around Fight Club is a good movie that makes the loved one you’re watching it with cover their eyes and call you crazy for liking “Such a dark and disturbing movie”.

3. If violence and murder isn’t your thing, why don’t you check out Bee Movie. Bee Movie is one of the only things Jerry Seinfeld did after he was done with Seinfeld. Its incredibly odd that his only motion picture is a children’s movie that is completely obscure. It highlights the love between a Bee named Barry and an actual grown adult. If the love in your life doesn’t see the romance in that they’re not the person for you.

4. The Wolf of Wall Street is a different kind of love story all together. Rather than focusing on the importance of loving another person, it’s about the thing that love is really about: money and having as much as you possibly can. It follows a biographical look at the life of Jordan Belford, someone who manipulated Wall Street to make billions upon billions of dollars and ends up cheating on his wife and mistresses with the true love of his life. Leonardo DiCaprio gives the performance of a lifetime in this film that will make you cry with laughter.

5. The final movie on this list is another about people searching for their true love, finding it and then looking for more of it. Trainspotting is a gritty and serious look at a group of friends love for their drug of choice. heroin. If you want to scare yourself and the person you’re watching it with then choose Trainspotting to romance your way into another date.
The bowling team took off to Las Vegas between semester break the CCAC in 1967. This is also the NHL's 100th year which began in 1917 with only six teams.

The Penguins wanted to recognize the fifty years of Penguin's hockey this season. They have honored the past Stanley Cup Champion winning teams and put together a movie titled “Pittsburgh Is Home: The Story of the Penguins” telling the story of the Pittsburgh Penguins through the last 50 years.

This season however the Penguins are out to prove they can win another championship and be the first team to repeat since the Detroit Red Wings did so in ’97 and ’98. This season has shown signs of promise. The Penguins are 28-11-5 through 44 games (as of January 18th).

The Pens recently had an overtime win against the red hot Washington Capitals on January 16th the Caps were on a 9 game win streak headed into Pittsburgh who were looking to snap their own 3 game losing streak. This game saw an explosion of goals by both clubs ending in an 8-7 Penguins win.

The Penguins are 3rd place in the Metropolitan division with 61 points sitting just 3 points back of Washington and Columbus who are tied with 64. The Penguins have had no problem finding the back of the net this season. The same can be said for quite a few teams around the league.

This season the Penguins have tallied 158 goals through 44 games. The Penguins have been six, 5 goal games three, 6 goal games and two 7 and 8 goal games. The high scoring is largely in part to star players playing at their best. Captain, Sidney Crosby is having another breakout year. Despite missing the first eight games Crosby has managed to take over the league lead in goals with 27 as of January 18th.

Crosby is only 7 points away from 1,000 career points. Malkin has 54 points on the season through 47 games and Phil Kessel has tallied 46.

There is a lot of hockey left this season as the Penguins try once again to get a spot in the Playoffs and battle for Lord Stanley’s Cup. There are a lot fans can look forward before we get there though. The 2017 NHL All-Star game was just played in Los Angeles this year with Sidney Crosby representing the Penguins. Crosby awarded Captain of the Metropolitan division team as he won the fan vote.

Fans will also get to see the Penguins play in their 4th Outdoor game on February 25th at Heinz field against cross state rival the Philadelphia Flyers. This is part of The NHL’s Stadium Series event which began in January 2014.

Notably the bowling team will head into the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference Championships on February 17, 2017 at Richland Lanes in Johnstown, PA, and the Regional 20 National Junior College Athletic Association nationals game on February 24, 2017 in Buffalo, New York.

The Voice

Penguins make nest in Pittsburgh

ROBERT MILLER
THE VOICE STAFF

The Pittsburgh Penguins are just over halfway through the 2016-17 season having played 49 out 82 games to end January. The Penguins are 3rd place in their conference coming into the 2016-2017 Spring schedule. Athletic Director Chuck Bell is determined to focus the team on the next competitions and more specifically defeating Westminster community college at their next meeting.

The loss also meant the Steelers fell to 1-8 record against the Patriots under Tom Brady.

In Pittsburgh, anything less than a Super Bowl title is considered a failure. So where does this season rank amongst others that the Steelers have played?

Coming into the 2016 season, ESPN’s power panel (a group of more than 80 writers, editors, and TV personalities) ranked the Steelers the sixth best overall team in the NFL. They also trailed only the Patriots in the AFC as the second best team in their conference coming into the season.

Through the first five games, minus a blowout loss in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh was rolling. Posting a 4-1 record all in the absence of Martavis Bryant and Le’Veon Bell, who were dealing with drug related suspensions. Fulfilling expectations, the Steelers were looking like the team many predicted to make a run at Super Bowl LI in Houston.

Then came a four game losing streak which included impressive wins against the New York Giants and Baltimore Ravens. A Christmas Day showdown with the Ravens had added pressure: Losing the game for the Steelers would allow the Ravens to take control of the AFC North.

The game was clearly a highlight to the season as the Steelers not only punched a ticket into the playoffs, but did so in a crushing fashion. Against a divisional rival where there is always much tension, to say the least, but the Steelers claimed the AFC North and were poised to be a threat in the playoffs.

Now winners of seven straight, the Steelers would go on to beat the Miami Dolphins and Kansas City Chiefs before facing what has been their kryptonite in recent years and continues to be: Tom Brady and the New England Patriots.

After falling to the Patriots Steeler Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, who will be turning 35 in March, caused a stir in the sports world by implying he was looking into retirement. “I’m going to take this off season to evaluate, to consider all options, to consider health and family and things like that and just kind of take some time away to evaluate next season – if there’s going to be a next season,” he told The Fan 93.7 FM.

The time to win is now and it can be done with the talent that surrounds this team. A young secondary featuring Artie Burns and Sean Davis adds promise. Ryan Shazier, just was noticed for his accolades on the field by being selected to his first Pro Bowl. Le’Veon Bell and Antonio Brown lead an offense that can be one of the most feared in the NFL. A very important playmaker will be returning to the lineup providing the passing of drug tests in Martavis Bryant.

Despite what occurred in the final game of the season it doesn’t goouth from here. Predictions don’t mean anything, but heading into next season the Steelers are listed as having the third best odds in the NFL to hoist the Lombardi. A few changes need to be made, but the Pittsburgh Steelers are the team to trust in making those decisions.

The Voice

Steelers season ends without Superbowl bid

JAY BATCH
THE VOICE STAFF

At the end of January, in what seems to be a scripted event, the Steelers saw their season end in a lopsided loss to the Patriots.

The loss also meant the Penguins fell to 1-8 record against the Patriots under Tom Brady.

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The Voice

Sports

Bowling in Vegas

ALLISON ROUP
THE VOICE EDITOR

While other students enjoyed their semester break the CCAC bowling team took off to Las Vegas Nevada to compete in a nationwide bowling competition. As an all gender inclusive team CCAC bowled against the all-male teams of the competition. Students that participated in the Las Vegas trip included Amiee Gmuer, Lindsey Nickel, Cami Nickel, Danielle Romitz, Bruno Staniszewski, and Mickey Shane.

With Las Vegas behind them the CCAC North bowling team looks forward to the 2016-2017 Spring schedule. Athletic Director Chuck Bell is determined to focus the team on the next competitions and more specifically defeating Westminster community college at their next meeting.

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Standardized tests are failing students

All around the country, people have been protesting standardized testing. A standardized test requires all test-takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of questions, in the same way. These tests are scored in a consistent manner to compare the overall performance of individual students or groups of students.

It’s about time that we recognize reality: Standardized tests don’t work.

According to Thomas Armstrong, writer for ‘institute4learning.com’ and author of 16 books, says standardized testing is absolutely worthless for multiple reasons.

Armstrong states that students know that their scores may affect their future, therefore, they do whatever it takes to pass them, including cheating and taking performance-enhancing drugs.

The author claims that even teachers are cheating by teaching their students material that is going to be on the tests when they should already have general knowledge on the subject in which the test is centralized.

The teachers know that the student test scores affect their salaries and job security.

He goes on to say, “Standardized tests don’t provide any feedback on how to perform better. The results aren’t even given back to the teachers and students until months later, and there are no instructions provided by test companies on how to improve these test scores.”

“Standardized tests don’t value creativity. A student who writes a more creative answer in the margins of such a test, doesn’t realize that a wrong response.” says Armstrong.

He continues by saying that standardized testing does not value diversity. “There are a wide range of differences in the people who take standardized tests: they have different cultural backgrounds, different levels of proficiency in the English language, different learning and thinking styles, different family backgrounds, and different past experiences.”

In accordance to Armstrong’s article, there are plenty of reasons to be concerned with standardized tests. They create a stressful environment for students, they exist only for administrative, financial, and political purposes, they create “winners” and “losers”, and they favor students with socio-economic advantages.

There are plenty of other reasons that support Armstrong’s claim on the topic. Wrapping up his article he says, “Finally, my most important reason that standardized tests are worthless: During the time that a child is taking a test, he/she could be doing something far more valuable: actually learning something new and interesting!”

To sign the petition against standardized testing, visit: http://petitions.moveon.org/stp/stop-standardized-tests-2

Message from the Campus President

GRETCHEN MULLIN-SAWICKI
CAMPUS PRESIDENT,
CCAC NORTH & WEST HILLS

Education is not easy. Giving up is much easier: Hit the snooze button, sleep in, stop going to classes, hang out with friends, stay in your low-paying job. But, is this what you came to CCAC? To fail? No!

You imagined yourselves with better job opportunities, new careers, ability to earn more money. But, you didn’t truly realize or experience all the sacrifices you would have to make: the studying, the missed sleep, the missed parties, time with friends and even with family. And, this is where you need to really develop your grit: your staying power and commitment to your goals and to your better futures.

Grit is the internal substance that keeps you going, keeps you from giving up, keeps your goals on the horizon and your futures’ bright. So what is grit and can you build it?

Grit is a predictor of success. Recent research has shown that neither social intelligence (but it is very good to have this, too), good looks, physical health nor IQ determine whether or not you will be a success, but it is predominately about grit: your passion, perseverance and stamina. Sticking with your future and working really hard to make that future a reality is what grit is all about. Grit is willpower; it is reinventing hardship into manageable challenges; it is the internal engine that keeps you going when your physical reality gets tough. The good news is that grit can be developed.

Researchers are still trying to find the best way to develop grit but below are suggestions that will begin to build your grit muscles:

• Join study groups, where members encourage each other to keep going. Go to the Learning Commons on the second floor of the Library to see available study groups or how to start one. Study groups can also be set up at the tutoring center at West Hills. Similar to a work out buddy, an academic buddy does the same thing- they encourage success. They nurture your grit.

• Talk to counselors when you fail at a test; don’t keep things bottled inside. You need to believe that failure is not a permanent condition. Grit grows with encouragement and recognition that set backs are not definitive.

• Meet a student ambassador; they have grit and are willing to help you work on yours. Meet Rob Velella (at North) or Katie Johnston (at West) in order to meet the Student Ambassadors and talk to them about your goals and start- to build your grit networks.

• Tell your instructors, they will help you stay the course, go to their office hours. Soo many times, their offices are empty but they are there waiting for you and your questions. They are grit builders!

• Send yourselves inspirational messages. Words are powerful grit. Have a message sent to your phone each day.

• Keep your eye on your goal: transferring to a 4 year school or getting a job in your field by talking to the experts. Transfer counselors and career services department also help you build grit.

Become gritty and be proud of it! This grittiness will bring you to graduation and the actualization of your futures!

My Christmas Story

MARION COUCH
STUDENT SERVICES, CCAC WEST HILLS

A few days after the term break began, I found myself staring at the Pacific Ocean from the expansive lanai of Sophia Vergara’s beach house. I’d won a contest in which celebrities pledged to raise funds for the cause of their choice. For one write out of many, Sophia Vergara had pledged to improve library resources at CCAC, and I was lucky enough to attend.

It was a magical night for me. The affair was hosted by a generous, stunning woman in an equally stunning setting (though sadly, neither Joe Manganiello nor his Magic Mike XXLcostars were present). The house was packed and the food and music were perfect.

As the announcement was made that our goal had not only been met, but well exceeded, I sat straight up in my bed, completely disoriented for what seemed like minutes but surely was seconds, wondering where I was. When I realized I was in my home, in bed, I thought, “That really seemed real!”

Obviously, I have no idea where Ms. Vergara lives or her views on libraries or fundraising, but for a few brief seconds upon awakening I was there. I then began to think, is this how false memories are created? Am I reacting too quickly to impressions created because a few neurons are firing erratically?

The situation haunted me for days and eventually led me to my 2017 New Year’s resolution, i.e. I resolve to avoid making snap judgments and hurried decisions and instead pause to evaluate the situation or information rather than acting hastily. Of course this will apply largely to issues involving food, drink, and exercise but my hope is that this action will allow me to connect more deeply with the people and issues I’ll face in the New Year.

Opinions wanted.

All members of the CCAC community – including students, faculty, staff, and alumni – are welcome to submit a letter to the editor. Any letter intended for publication must include the writer’s name, contact information, and college affiliation. No anonymous letters will be accepted. All submissions are subject to editing. The Voice reserves the right to refuse publication. Please limit submissions to 500 words.

Email Rob Velella, adviser, at rvelella@ccac.edu

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor represent the opinion of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Voice, its staff, or CCAC. All members of the CCAC community – including students, faculty, staff, and alumni – are welcome to submit a letter to the editor. Any letter intended for publication must include the writer’s name, contact information, and college affiliation. No anonymous letters will be accepted. All submissions are subject to editing. The Voice reserves the right to refuse publication. Please limit submissions to 500 words.

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Deadline is one week before publication.
Voices of CCAC North

What’s your favorite part of Valentine’s Day?

Evan Cambest
“Having a girlfriend.”

Mariann Do
“Being alone.”

Joe Hollern
“Giving gifts and chocolate.”

Ashley Hirsh
“Candy.”

Compiled by Carlis M. Spivey and Allison Roup
The VOICE Editors
The Voice

Comics

ONE SHOTS by JARED SAWL / CCAC North

Did you know...?
All of the comics on this page are created by CCAC students!
Contact rvelella@ccac.edu to join the team.