GEAR UP WYOMING Welcomes New Staff

Chrissie Henschler is the new Professional Development and Public Relations Coordinator for GEAR UP Wyoming. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and in Communication. She is currently working toward her Master of Arts in Communication. During college, Chrissie interned with the University of Wyoming Communication and Journalism Department.

Chrissie was born in Alaska and moved to Wisconsin when she was 12 years old. Six years later, she moved to Laramie to attend college. She enjoys outdoor activities and spending time with family and friends.

In her own words, Chrissie says, “I think GEAR UP is an amazing program, and I am excited to be a part of it!”

Bekah Taylor is GEAR UP Wyoming’s new Senior Student Programming Coordinator. She’s no stranger to the GEAR UP program, having worked with staff and students on outdoor safety and canoeing during the 2013 Camp GEAR UP.

Bekah received her Bachelor of Science from Southern Utah University (Cedar City, Utah) with a double major in Outdoor Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and Psychology. In December, she will graduate with a Master of Science in Natural Science Education from the University of Wyoming.

Bekah is excited to join GEAR UP and says, “It’s very important to me to be able to provide all students with inclusive and accessible programming and support.”

continued on page 2

Interview with Isabella Buongiorno

Isabella Buongiorno, a former GEAR UP participant and current University of Wyoming student, received training on grassroots advocacy, social media advocacy, and leadership skills during the recent GEAR UP Alumni Leadership Academy (GUALA) in Washington, D.C. She was one of 30 participants selected from a nationwide pool of applicants and the only participant chosen from Wyoming.

GUALA is a 12-month leadership development program for alumni of the federal GEAR UP program. The selected alumni leaders work to create positive change in education policy for their younger peers.

GUWY: How did you learn about the GEAR UP Program?

Isabella: In 7th grade, GEAR UP counselors came into my Geography class and talked to us about the program. I remember being very excited to join.

GUWY: Did your experience in GEAR UP play a part in your decision to apply to GUALA? If so, what experiences led you to apply and why?

Isabella: My experience definitely contributed to my decision. I have had the most amazing experiences with GEAR UP, and the program has helped me immensely throughout my academic career. The GEAR UP mentors were always supportive and willing to answer any questions. I learned most of my résumé building, interviewing, and

continued on page 2
Ted Haskell is the new GEAR UP Wyoming Accountant. He received his bachelor’s degree in Accounting from the University of Portland (Portland, Oregon) in 1993.

Before joining GEAR UP, Ted worked for five years at the University of Wyoming where he became familiar with federal grant accounting and reporting. Ted is originally from Seattle, Washington, but has lived in Laramie for the past 12 years. He has two sons (ages 5 and 8) and likes to spend his free time running, biking, hiking, skiing, backpacking, and traveling.

Kathleen Eberhart is a GEAR UP Wyoming Office Associate. She spends part of her time working for GEAR UP and part of her time working for the Wyoming College Access Challenge Grant. She helps wherever she is needed, including with data entry and accounting.

Kathleen is a Wyoming native and has worked on the University of Wyoming campus for over ten years. She has three grandchildren and likes to spend her free time at their mountain cabin snowshoeing and hiking.

Shannon Hoskins is the new Student Programming Coordinator for GEAR UP Wyoming. She is a native of Laramie and received her Bachelor of Arts in Communication with a minor in Marketing Communication from the University of Wyoming.

Shannon comes to GEAR UP with a variety of campus work experience which will be beneficial with her work with students. She says, “I am so excited to work for GEAR UP. I know the importance of education and cannot wait to help students throughout their journey.”

“Personal stories are what make advocating more powerful, especially in the case of GEAR UP.”

GUWY: What was GUALA like for you?

Isabella: GUALA really tested my ability to go outside of my comfort zone. Consequently, it was a fantastic growth opportunity for me. For instance, some of the training emphasized how to tell your own personal story, and as someone who dislikes talking about herself, that was particularly challenging. But personal stories are what make advocating more powerful, especially in the case of GEAR UP.

GUWY: What was your favorite part of the experience?

Isabella: Getting to know all of my fellow GUALA classmates. I felt like I had a chance to get to know all of them in that training week. We really created an amazing bond, and they have so much to offer, both to GEAR UP and beyond. They gave me some great ideas to share with Wyoming and inspired me with their passion.

GUWY: What are two things you learned from attending?

Isabella: I learned that networking is based off of a give-and-take relationship, not just searching out someone for your own gains. The unfortunate reality for low income students is that most of the time, we have little or no access to networking opportunities. GUALA gave us a lot of these opportunities, from having dinner with interns to an ice cream social with Senate and House office staff.

Another was the “message triangle” – three components any good message should have – facts, emotion, and validation. It was tough at the beginning to share my GEAR UP story. I did not know what to share, what would be applicable to my success in the program. This triangle really set up a workable framework for me to decide what was and was not relevant for my GEAR UP success story.

GUWY: What do you do in your role as a GUALA Leader?

Isabella: My year of leadership emphasizes four leadership skills: peer outreach, social media activism, public speaking,
and issue advocacy. One of my responsibilities is to help ensure that future students will be able to have the same opportunities as I did. This entails advocating for the continuation of the GEAR UP program by keeping the community and lawmakers informed about its positive impact. Another is to keep the GEAR UP community engaged, whether by speaking to current students and alumni about how to give back or by increasing awareness of how the GEAR UP program works.

GUWY: What are some specific duties you have as a GUALA Leader?

Isabella: As an alumni leader, I serve all of GEAR UP Wyoming by helping organize events, communicating the impact of GEAR UP to our congressional members and the community, speaking to GEAR UP students about not only my story, but also issue advocacy, increasing awareness of GEAR UP services, and mobilizing fellow alumni to get involved and give back to the program.

More specifically, I plan to arrange for local GEAR UP programs to meet with their congressional members and put “a face to the name”, so to speak. I know for most people lawmakers seem unapproachable and unknown – I want to change that!

I will also communicate with the community and lawmakers about GEAR UP and show its impact, by showcasing GEAR UP stories, creating helpful media, and motivating alumni and current students to become involved in the process.

GUWY: What events have you found particularly enlightening and why?

Isabella: Being in Washington D.C. was really a whole new world for me. I never knew anything about the inner workings of GEAR UP – how it’s funded, the role of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), the relationship with the Department of Education, what other programs are doing – so it was a eye opening experience for me. Seeing how hard people (both at NCCEP and those affiliated) work to give GEAR UP students better opportunities is really inspiring and humbling. I finally connected what I saw “on the ground” and what it takes to get that accomplished on Capitol Hill, and that’s one of the big motivations for what I am doing right now – I know how hard they work to give us this program, and I want to work hard to give back.

GEAR UP Summer Academies

Each of Wyoming’s seven community colleges hosted summer academies for their GEAR UP students. They explored college resources, college academic life, financial aid options, and career opportunities.

Students from Casper College visited Sheridan College (Sheridan, Wyoming), Northwest College (Powell, Wyoming), Rocky Mountain College (Billings, Montana), and Montana State University – Billings (Billings, Montana) where they explored a variety of majors and financial aid options. They also visited Pictograph Cave State Park and Zoo Montana where they learned about careers working with animals, the importance of internships and volunteerism, and scholarship opportunities.

Central Wyoming College students explored career opportunities in South Dakota. They toured South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (Rapid City, South Dakota).
Summer Academies, continued from page 3

Dakota) and Black Hills State University (Spearfish, South Dakota). They also visited a variety of historical sites including Mount Rushmore, Custer State Park, and Big Thunder Gold Mine.

Eastern Wyoming College held a GEAR UP Camp on their main campus in Torrington. During the camp, students explored careers in subjects such as art, welding technology, computer aided drafting/engineering, math, and mass media. The camp also helped strengthen the students’ college comfort levels by focusing on college preparation.

SOAR, Laramie County Community College’s summer academy, was a conference-style event with keynote speakers and breakout sessions. The wide variety of topics allowed students to attend the sessions that best fit their interests. GEAR UP families also had a surprise visit from U.S. Senator John Barrasso. He spoke with families about his own family’s educational background and the Hathaway Scholarship.

Northern Wyoming Community College District held their 2014 Summer Academy in South Dakota. Students participated in college tours at Black Hills State University (Spearfish, South Dakota) and South Dakota School of Mines (Rapid City, South Dakota). They also were able to visit Mount Rushmore, Reptile Gardens, and Devil’s Tower.

Northwest College students explored career opportunities in science and the arts. They visited the Yellowstone Art Museum and the Museum of the Rockies. Students also toured Montana State University – Billings (Billings, Montana) and Montana State University (Bozeman, Montana). These colleges offered both insights into a traditional university community and a college centered on trades.

Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) held their summer academy in locations throughout Colorado and Wyoming. Students participated in activities at the WWCC campus, toured the University of Northern Colorado, visited the Daniels Fund Corporate offices in Denver, toured Mile High Stadium and Colorado Sports Hall of Fame to learn about careers in the sports industry, participated in an activity at the Fossil Creek Reservoir in Ft. Collins, learned about financial aid in Laramie, and toured the Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne.
GEAR UP students from the Northern Wyoming Community College District visited the geology museum at Black Hills State University and visited the campus of the South Dakota School of Mines.

Laramie County Community College students experienced a “Questions Web” activity and interacted with U.S. Senator John Barrasso.

Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) students participated in “Reality Town” at WWCC where they had to budget their money to pay their bills throughout the “town”. They also visited the Daniel’s Fund Corporate Office in Denver.

Northwest College GEAR UP students explored the Yellowstone Art Museum and the Museum of the Rockies.
GEAR UP at the University of Wyoming started the fall semester with “Kick Off” on September 6-7, 2014. Former GEAR UP students who are just starting college were paired with peer mentors who will help them throughout their first year at the University. During Kick Off, the mentors and mentees met each other and experience activities to help them to develop rapport. This year, Kick Off took place in the Snowy Range Mountains at Table in the Wilderness and included activities such as a low ropes course, a climbing wall, and canoeing on Mirror Lake.

GEAR UP Wyoming provides services to college freshmen who were served by GEAR UP during high school or junior high school. The University of Wyoming and each of Wyoming's seven community colleges offer these students services such as peer mentoring, tutoring, FAFSA assistance, scholarship information, and introductory level college courses which focus on college success. These opportunities help students feel invested on the college campus and increase the likelihood of students continuing from year one to year two of college.
GEAR UP in Washington, D.C.

The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) serves as GEAR UP’s voice in Washington, D.C. through its public policy and advocacy work. NCCEP’s public policy team works closely with the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, Congress, and education associations to promote academic achievement as well as access to and success in higher education for low-income students.

During the 2014 NCCEP/GEAR UP Conference, GEAR UP WYOmING visited the offices of Senator Barrasso, Senator Enzi, and Representative Lummis.

Seeing the impact of GEAR UP in their local communities, federal lawmakers have increased or sustained GEAR UP’s funding, now at $302 million annually.

Sample ACT® Prep Questions

1. When \(x=3\) and \(y=5\), by how much does the value of \(3x^2-2y\) exceed the value of \(2x^2-3y\)?
   - A. 4
   - B. 14
   - C. 15
   - D. 20
   - E. 50

2. A DVD player with a list price of $100 is marked down 30%. If John gets an employee discount of 20% off the sale price, how much does John pay for the DVD player?
   - A. $86.00
   - B. $77.60
   - C. $56.00
   - D. $50.00
   - E. $44.00

ACT® College Entrance Exam – 2014 Test Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>(Late Fee Required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2014</td>
<td>August 8, 2014</td>
<td>August 9-22 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ACT® is an important college entrance exam. Scores can affect college entrance and scholarships.

All Wyoming eleventh-grade students will take the ACT® in April at their schools. Students who want to take the test again can visit the following ACT® website to register for the test and to locate testing centers: www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html

GEAR UP WYOMING students may contact their GEAR UP coordinator to obtain an ACT test fee waiver. (GEAR UP WYOMING cannot pay for or waive late fees.) Also, GEAR UP WYOMING students have free access to ACT® preparation programs.
“GEAR UP Wyoming has been the most rewarding professional experience of my life. There is such amazing staff across the state that are making a difference in students’ lives every day. I am privileged to have worked with such an amazing program for the past six years.”

Next month, Judy Trujillo will be retiring from GEAR UP Wyoming. Judy has been GEAR UP Wyoming’s grant manager since 2009. Her enthusiasm and professionalism has been a tremendous asset to GEAR UP. She will be greatly missed.

Judy Trujillo holding her new granddaughter.