An Evening with Music Sensation Sparsh Shah

Friday, May 29, Services to Students with Disabilities held a live musical event through Zoom featuring Sparsh Shah. Shah (a.k.a. “Purhythm”) is a 17-year-old singing sensation, songwriter, rapper, and an inspirational speaker. He was born with an incurable disease called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which makes his bones extremely fragile/brittle, causing even a hard handshake to break them. Shah appeared on several television shows such as World’s Greatest Motivators, Little Big Shots USA; George to the Rescue (Nominated for NY Emmy Award); the TODAY Show; and the Maury Show. The event was both entertaining and uplifting as Shah spoke about his musical career and the path he hopes to take in the future including his college plans and release of his first album. He also performed his rendition of Eminem’s ‘Not Afraid’ and two other songs, one of which was an original. Go to his YouTube channel at Sparsh Shah to listen to the many covers and original songs he has posted there.
Interview with Dr. Winifred Scott

On April 27, Dr. Winifred Scott, Associate Professor, Department of Accounting and Finance, sat down with SSD to talk about living with Parkinson’s disease as part of the department’s activities in recognition of Parkinson’s Awareness Month. Parkinson’s disease is a neurologically degenerating disease that attacks basic movement impairing or restricting average movement that people often take for granted (Parkinson.org). According to the National Parkinson’s Foundation, nearly 1 million people in the U.S. are living with Parkinson’s disease, with between 50,000 and 60,000 new cases diagnosed each year. Christina Williams, SSD student employee, interviewed Dr. Scott discussing her life’s journey to include her career path, experience living with Parkinson’s, and how it affects her daily routine. Dr. Scott gave participants advice on how to maintain healthy eating habits and how these habits can help avoid future health problems. Dr. Scott so inspired those listening that they implored her to write an autobiography. At the conclusion of the interview participants asked Dr. Scott questions. One participant was so moved by Dr. Scott’s story stating, “Dr. Scott’s brilliance is only overshadowed by her courage and her unconditional loving heart.”

Women’s Health Panel

In celebration of Women’s Health Week, on May 11, 2020, SSD held the Women’s Health Panel, geared towards women enrolled in services, which number nearly 70% of those served, to provide important information about maintaining their well-being during the pandemic. The esteemed panelists included Dr. Richelle Marracino, MD, CSUSB Student Health Center Medical Chief of Staff, Dr. Dorothy Chen-Maynard, R.D., Ph.D., FAND, Associate Professor, Department of Health Science and Human Ecology, and Director, Didactic Program in Dietetic, Coordinator, Nutrition and Food Sciences Program, and Ariana Lamb, Campus Advocate and VOICE Peer Educator, who provided great insight and knowledge on women’s health within their fields of expertise. Topics ranged from reproductive health, nutrition, relationship dynamics, and how to stay healthy and fit during the Governor’s stay-at-home orders. Participants asked questions throughout the event. One participant remarked, “I just want to say that this workshop was great. I learned a few new things that I did not realize I was actually doing. It was good information.”
Essential Skills for Finding, Getting, and Keeping a Job

On April 15, 2020, WorkAbility IV hosted their first virtual workshop entitled “Essential Skills for Finding, Getting, and Keeping a Job.” The workshop was co-presented by Leigh Connell, WA-IV Lead Program Coordinator, and Jessica Chavez, MPA, Internship Coordinator for the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration. Students received valuable guidance on when and how to search for jobs prior to graduation and about the recruitment process. Tips were also provided on how to organize documents, log applications by date, and use the STAR method to respond to interview questions. Students practiced answering interview questions with professionals from different CSUSB departments using virtual breakout rooms. Students also played a Kahoot! game and answered questions about soft skills and how important they are to employers.

Disclosing Your Disability in the Workplace

Determining when and how to disclose one’s disability to an employer can be daunting. To equip students to share personal information about their disability, on May 12, WorkAbility IV hosted a workshop for students with disabilities entitled, “Disclosing Your Disability in the Workplace.” Topics addressed included: what it means to disclose; how disclosure affects employment; and rights and responsibilities related to disclosing a disability while pursuing or during employment. Dr. Stacie Pham, Psy.D., a Licensed Psychologist from Counseling and Psychological Services, presented the information to 30 students through Zoom. Dr. Conrad Shayo, Professor, Department of Information and Decision Sciences, Christeena Johnston, SSD’s Finance and Administration Coordinator, Rodrigo Mercado, Student Employment Analyst, and Oscar Fonseca, PDC Career Counselor, facilitated conversations with students who were divided up into small breakout rooms to practice impact statements such as “My disability impacts my ability to………. and this is important for you to know because………..
Understanding Students with Visual Disabilities

By Rosie Garza, PDC SSD Physical / Visual Counselor

If you look around our campus and pay attention, you may notice a wide variety of different students with visual disabilities. Some may use canes, and some may have travel aids or have a trained guide dog. Regardless of the visual barrier, they can still achieve the same education as other students do. There are a variety of tools and assistance available to help them with their educational journey.

What are Visual Disabilities?
“Visual impairment (vision impairment, vision disability) is defined as a decreased ability to see to a degree that causes problems not fixable by usual means, such as glasses or medication. Visual impairment can be due to disease, trauma, or congenital or degenerative conditions” (“Vision Disability,” Disabled World 2018).

Causes of Visual Disabilities
Many conditions can cause visual impairments including:

- Age-Related Macular Degeneration
- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- Genetic Condition
- Injuries or Trauma

How does having a visual disability affect the student?
There are many ways that visual disabilities affect our students. Below are some of the challenges that our students with visual disabilities may experience (“Visual Impairments,” ProjectIDEAL).

- Students with visual disabilities must learn additional compensatory skills and techniques to be able to acquire the same education as their non-impaired counterparts. Compensatory skills include reading and writing tools students with visual disabilities can use to access the curriculum, including braille, large print, and tactile graphics or symbols.
- Students with visual disabilities can have sensitivity to light or glare. This can cause fatigue.
- Students tend to have lower motivation to explore the environment and initiate social interaction.
- Students with visual disabilities may have fewer opportunities for interaction with other students. Feelings of separateness in the learning environment may have an impact on learning.

What are some ways you can help students with visual disabilities?

- Ask the student with visual disabilities if they need help before helping them out.
- Be descriptive when describing the environment or a visual picture for the student. For example, when giving directions, say “left,” or “right.”
- Identify yourself when you approach.
- Provide notes or documents in an electronic text format so that they can use assistive technology to access the information.
- Provide appropriate written or verbal descriptions for the pictures, diagrams, films, or videos that will be used in the lecture.
- Be considerate of their guide dogs. Do not distract the dog. This includes petting and calling the dog. These kinds of distractions disturb the guide dog from helping and working with the student with the visual disability. Disturbance can place the student in danger.

As you can see from the above, there are many issues and circumstances that can prove to be barriers for our students with visual disabilities, but at the same time there are a number of things that we can do as a campus community to make the lives of all our students better. Our office is committed to removing barriers and helping our students with disabilities be successful and graduate in a timely manner! If you have any questions about how we can assist you in improving your teaching effectiveness with students with disabilities please contact us.

On the evening of April 10, 2020, 35 SSD and WorkAbility IV students, alumni, family members and staff participated in SSD’s Movie Night. Christeena Johnston, SSD’s Finance and Administrative Coordinator, and Alexandra Butler, student employee, co-hosted the viewing party, which included time for participants to catch up with one another, view the documentary “Crip Camp,” chat throughout, and win a prize. “Crip Camp; A Disability Revolution” is an inspirational Netflix documentary that follows the lives of individuals that attended Camp Jened, a summer camp for teenagers with disabilities. The documentary tells the story of how the experience transformed their lives and galvanized their resolve to create the disability movement resulting in the passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA. One alumnus stated, “It was hard to watch at first due to the graphic nature of how those with disabilities were treated in America, yet it showed me that no matter what if we band together through determination things can be changed for the better.”

SSD Hosts Viewing of Revolutionary Documentary

Are You Graduating?
Please Join Us to Celebrate

Services to Students with Disabilities
Virtual Graduation Celebration
Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Join us to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the class of 2020

To RSVP, call the SSD office at (909) 537-5238 or send an email to ssd@csusb.edu. You must RSVP in order to receive the Zoom link for the event.

Please R.S.V.P by June 8, 2020

Undergraduate students with a cumulative GPA of 3.1 or higher and graduate students with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher are eligible for the Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society. Please contact Susan Schaefer by email at susan.schaefer@csusb.edu to apply.