Open your eyes to disabilities awareness

By Samantha Kaspar
Contributing Writer

October is Disability Awareness Month and Governors State works hard to accommodate students with all sorts of disabilities.

“We work with students on a case to case basis,” said Robin Sweeny, Director of Disability Services. “Accommodations can be anything from rearranging furniture in a classroom to working with an instructor to accommodate absences due to illness.”

Sweeney is the first, and often ongoing, point of contact for students with disabilities, who average around 100 to 130 students per semester. She arranges for interpreters, furniture changes, special accommodations for test taking and much more. For many, she is also an empathetic ear who tries to understand what each person is going through.

And each person’s issues and needs are different. Janinemarie Jacoby’s experience has been a difficult one. At the age of 27, Jacoby began suffering from flu like symptoms that kept getting worse and worse. “I thought I was dying,” she said. “I couldn’t walk, couldn’t eat. I was losing my hair.”

After two years, Jacoby was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus, an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks itself. “It attacked my heart, and my lungs,” said Jacoby “I used to be a model and a singer, and it spoiled my dreams.”

In 2007, Jacoby returned to school at Joliet Junior College where she says she got an extreme amount of help. “They’re not a state school, so they had a lot of money for a disability center, counseling, paid note takers. They supported you in every way.”

Student film examines life for women after prison

By Samantha Kaspar
Contributing Writer

Criminal Justice students at Governors State got to take a close look at what life is like for women after prison while producing their documentary “Throwaways.”

The students came up with the idea for their required student service-learning project, and the film documents the lives of several women in the local area who have served time in prison.

“I really encouraged the students to see the women as everyday people.” said Criminal Justice instructor Caron Jacobson.

“I was very nervous for my first interview,” said Criminal Justice student, Brittani Barnett. “I expected to see the typical stereotype and I didn’t see it. I saw someone who looks like me.”

Barnett says that the experience was eye opening for her, and she now knows much more than she expected to learn. “I felt bad that our system has treated these women the way that it has,” she said. “People automatically assume that they get what they deserve, but unless you’re in their shoes and you know everything there is to know, you can’t understand.”

Jacobson said that the most interesting thing about making the film was the exchange of email and phone numbers she saw between the students and the women at the end of the project. “A lot of them were surprised we were so supportive of them. They expected us to judge them and we didn’t,” said Barnett, who remains in contact with one of the women.

The film will be shown in the Center for Performing Arts on Oct. 17 at 6 p.m. Admission is free, but students are asked to give a donation in the form of a gift card for groceries, gas, clothing, etc. for the women coming out of prison. “A lot of people don’t care about certain issues until it’s in their face,” said Barnett. “I hope the film will open people’s eyes.”
Do you like to write?

If you have an interest in writing, journalism, or design, the Phoenix has a place for you!

The Phoenix Student Newspaper is looking for student contributors to help in making the Phoenix a success.

If you are interested, please contact the Phoenix office at 708-534-4517 or phoenix@govst.edu.

Rock your vote: become informed

As we all know, there is a Presidential election coming up in November. It is difficult to escape talk of the election right now. It has been all over television and newspapers for months. Even Facebook has become a popular avenue for people to voice their political opinions.

Here at GSU, it is no different. Anyone who has been on campus these days, or read this very newspaper, is aware of the school’s Rock the Vote campaign.

The Rock the Vote campaign is an important cause, because voting is a responsibility we all must take seriously as Americans. We are all fortunate to live in a country where we are guaranteed freedom of speech and can voice our opinions. If we don’t like how our elected leaders are doing their jobs, we can vote for someone else we think will do a better job. The right to vote is our voice. It is our chance to tell the people in power what we think of the job they’re doing, good or bad.

However, to simply become a registered voter and cast a ballot is not enough. We all must take it upon ourselves to become informed voters. But what does that mean? Do we become informed voters by watching the news and reading newspapers? By watching the debates and paying attention to what the candidates are saying? To an extent, these things help us to become informed, but they can also be misleading. TV stations and newspapers can have biases. If we come to rely solely on one news source, our own judgment can become clouded by their biases.

Likewise, relying on debates and candidate’s quotes can cloud our judgment as well. Sometimes a candidate says what we want to hear, but they’re only saying what they’re saying to pander for votes.

So, knowing that these problems exist, how does one know that they have really been informed with the truth? An informed voter really is not informed, if the information they’ve been told is either biased, or a flat out lie. It is because of the potential to be lied to that so many people are wary about believing anything a politician says, which in my opinion is one of the reasons for voter apathy. Why bother voting when you don’t know who to believe anyway?

This is where we, as responsible voters, must take it upon ourselves to find the truth. As college students, we have all had to do research at one point or another. As voters, that is exactly what we must do: research. Think about the issues that matter most to you, and research how the candidates have voted on those issues. Look at their actions. What have they done regarding a particular issue? Actions always speak louder than words. Don’t wait to hear what a particular candidate has to say on a subject. Find out for yourself what actions they’ve taken (or not taken) on the issues that are important to you.

The Presidential election in November is, without a doubt, an extremely important election that will determine our President for the next four years. However, there will be positions on the ballot other than President, such as Senator and State Representative, which are also important. It is important to become educated on these candidates as well, as they will also be in positions of power. It is easy to lose sight of that fact because the media focuses mainly on the Presidential candidates, but as informed voters we must become educated on all candidates that we may consider voting for. Towns and cities often make sample ballots available for citizens prior to elections, so make sure to obtain one for your town and see who you will have to vote for in November.

The right to vote is a right that should not be taken lightly. While politics are not usually a favorite topic of discussion for most people, it is a very important topic that we all must discuss and participate in to make sure our best interests are being represented. We can complain about the job our elected officials do all we want, but voting is our only chance to really use our voices to make a statement about how well we think our politicians are doing their jobs.
Letters to the editor

Vote NO on Section 5.1

To the Editor:

Congratulations to everyone at GSU that participated in the GSU registration drive and welcome to all the new voters.

One issue you will be asked to consider this November is a constitutional amendment requiring the approval by 3/5 of the General Assembly for any action taken by any governmental body that increases a pension benefit for even one person. I recommend that you vote 'NO' on this amendment for the following reasons.

Why transfer local decision making to Springfield? Decisions about teachers, policemen, firefighters, librarians, university and community college employees should be made in the local communities. Why require the approval of the General Assembly? If you don't agree, there are over 7000 local entities affected! Implementation will present a daunting task to the local officials, and will cost us more in the future. Vote 'NO' on the proposed amendment for the following reasons.

The amendment is written in language that is very confusing and difficult to understand. It introduces terms like "emolument increase" and "beneficial determination." The final clause in the amendment is so convoluted that even lawyers disagree as to its meaning. When lawyers disagree, can law suits be far behind? We the taxpayers will be paying for the defense of this amendment in those lawsuits. The language in our constitution should be clear and direct instead of confusing. If you don't understand the language in this amendment, you should vote 'NO.'

Everyone gets angry when they read about pension abuses. Unfortunately, transferring responsibility to Springfield will not end such abuses. The General Assembly has a poor record where abuses are concerned. They have routinely rewarded favored friends, such as lobbyists, former lawmakers, the Mayor of Chicago, union leaders, at least one University of Illinois administrator and others with special laws sweetening their pensions. The proposed amendment doesn't prevent them from continuing this practice.

So why was this amendment drafted and passed with minimal deliberation? Illinois has serious financial problems. The legislature created most of the mess. This amendment, designed by Speaker Madigan, is an attempt to solve the pension problems. Putting it on the ballot has cost the taxpayers of Illinois over 70 million dollars. The citizens of Illinois want the legislature to develop serious solutions for Illinois' serious financial situation rather than wasting money on amendments that only appear to address the problem.

Send a message to Springfield. We want you to solve the pension problems. Don't grandstand with expensive amendments that will not save one penny of our tax dollars, and will cost us more in the future. Vote 'NO' on the Proposed Amendment to Add Section 5.1 to Article XIII of the Illinois Constitution.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Don't forget to vote on November 6.

Jane Wells, President
GSU Chapter of the State Universities Annuitants Association

Panel encourages women to get involved

By Corrie Gray
Associate Editor

In line with recent efforts to encourage civil engagement, GSU presented "Women in Political Discourse," a panel discussion addressing the role of women as it pertains to power, gender, and politics in the 21st Century.

The esteemed panel included former U.S. congress woman and state senator Debbie Halvorson, Assistant Professor of Media Communication Debbie James, Associate Professor of Political and Justice Studies Donald Culverson, University Lecturer Tammara Winn, and panel organizer and moderator Arness Krause, Adjunct Professor of Communications.

Halvorson started by addressing an article which states that women in elected office get a lot more done than men and she told the audience statistics prove that women in office work at a different pace.

“I would come in early in the morning because I knew that if I were going to make it in this world; I had better know what I was talking about. As women we know and realize that when we open our mouths we better have something to say,” said Halvorson.

Debbie James believes that women are needed in all areas of politics, including media.

“Not only do we need more women in elected office but we need more women in media that are talking effectively about the political process. As women we need to ensure that when we speak our words are backed up with evidence and that we frame the questions that are useful to the people that are listening to us,” said James.

James went on to use the political discourse of MSNBC news anchor Rachel Maddow to drive her point home.

Donald Culverson, the lone male on the panel, described a parallel between right wing efforts and gangster rappers to justify the unfair treatment of women.

“They both set aside visible spaces for women to perform but only when they perform in ways that reinforce the male privilege,” said Culverson.

Tammara Winn expanded on the gender perspectives of women in politics. “In the cultural matrix the ideal candidate is masculine and anything less is considered inferior,” Winn said. “Gender stereotypes about the abilities and traits of political men and woman are clear and well documented but stereotypical perspectives may also serve to shape an individual’s evaluation about a woman’s place in office.”

The Panelist went on to field questions on a multitude of topics ranging from running for political office to the role of technology in today's politics.

In response to a question regarding the involvement of women in politics, Halvorson stated that women must work harder and really get involved in the process.

“We have got to learn to tout our own horns, realize confrontation is not always bad it’s a good thing, and realize that there are barriers out there that are stopping women from doing things,” she said.

Halvorson finds it baffling that many women still don’t believe that politics has anything to do with them.

“If you don't do politics, politics will be done to you,” said Halvorson.

Find Us Online!
gsuphoenix.com
save more with a college grad rebate*

get an extra $500

2013 FIESTA
2013 FUSION

2013 FOCUS
2013 MUSTANG*

2013 ESCAPE
2013 EXPLORER

VanDrunen Ford
183rd & Kedzie • Homewood • 708-798-1668
vandrunenford.com

*program #33468. Proof of student eligibility required: i.e., school ID, class schedule, diploma. Excludes Mustang Boss 302, Mustang Shelby GT500, F150 Raptor. See dealer for complete details.
Learn how sculptures are made at Iron Pour Jamboree

By Melissa Hall
Editor-in-Chief

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is offering visitors the opportunity to learn how metal sculptures are created. On Saturday, October 6, the Park will be hosting its first ever Iron Pour Jamboree from 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Attendees of the event will see how sculptures are created, as well as have the opportunity to create their own art. The event will take place throughout the Park among the 27 works that call the Park home.

Artists and students will join attendees in creating sculptures through the use of scratch molds from 10:30am-2pm. The event will be capped off with the Iron Pour Spectacle from 5-7pm. The event will pay tribute to the Great Chicago Fire using the power of fire and iron.

Tickets for the Iron Pour Jamboree are $25 if purchased in advance and $35 the day of the event. Scratch molds are $20. The Iron Pour Spectacle is free of charge. Tickets for the event can be purchased through the NMSP website, www.govst.edu/sculpture, or by calling (708) 534-4486 or via email at sculpture@govst.edu.
Disabilities awareness 

When she transferred to GSU, Jacoby found she could not receive the same level of service because the state university lacked the funds. “Governors State has really overlooked disabled people,” said Jacoby. “And it’s not Robin Sweeney or the disabilities department. The disability services people are extremely nice and caring, but they have nothing else to give. There’s no funding.”

As a 4.0 Communication’s student, Jacoby survives on her student loans and scholarships. Despite her disabilities, she works hard to do well. “My whole life is on the line to make it,” said Jacoby. “I want to have fun, and I like making friends, but it’s stressful.”

She requires a note taker to help her in class, and this semester when no one volunteered, her professor kept everyone until someone did. “It was humiliating,” said Jacoby. “If you look at me I look fine. Sometimes you can’t see someone’s disabilities and you never know. People judge you by the way you look, and they’ll just never know.”

Jacoby’s major concern is that the university is not prepared to handle the amount of students with disabilities that will be coming in with the admission of freshmen students. “GSU does not have the funds or the equipment in place to support all the new students. They are setting themselves up for major failure when it comes to disabilities.”

Andrea Florenz, Health Administration and Pre-Law major, also had a life-changing experience that left her in a wheelchair. In October 2005, Florenz was a practicing RN in Stillwater, Minnesota when someone mistook her car at a stop sign and she was shot three times in the shoulder.

“Statistically I’m not supposed to be here,” said Florenz, who is also the business manager for the Phoenix. “The bullet should have shot my heart, but it curved and nicked my spine.”

The incident changed Florenz’s life, and at times she didn’t know how to move on. “I thought it was the worst thing in the world,” she said. “But through therapy and meeting other people with disabilities, I’ve learned there’s still life in the chair. There’s going to be obstacles but they can be overcome.”

Florenz flew back to Illinois and her family in 2007 and continued to overcome some of these obstacles by returning to school in 2010 to get her degree in health administration. She says that her experience at Governors State has been great, and gives a lot of credit to Sweeney.

Agreeing with Jacoby, Florenz believes that although limited in funding, Sweeney puts in a lot of effort on her part and does everything that she can. “The only major issue I had was that some of the bathrooms are not wheelchair accessible,” said Florenz. “When I pointed this out to Robin Sweeney, she couldn’t get the bathrooms remodeled but she made signs to point out where the accessible bathrooms were located. It just made it a little easier.”

But there have been times when she has needed to use the accessible restroom only to find that the stall was being used by someone who could have used one of the empty non-accessible stalls.

Florenz believes that it would be nice for GSU to give in service training to professors on disability awareness. “I’ve found the professors in the health and science building are more understanding and flexible when it comes to accommodating disabilities. Others just don’t have a clue,” she said.

And although she says her experiences with her peers have been wonderful, Florenz says there is always going to be that one in every crowd. “People need to be aware that the chair doesn’t define the person,” she said.

The university views it as process that they are working to improve, and that attention can be brought to the issues, and disabilities can be understood with an open mind.

“It’s an ongoing educational experience,” said Sweeney. “It’s not just seeing, but understanding.”
Congratulations Student Senate!

Pictured above are members of GSU’s Student Senate. Through the Rock the Vote campaign, the Student Senate was able to register well over 200 people to vote. Nice job!

Walk for Recovery has good turnout

By Catherine Zieba
Contributing Writer

Despite the cold and rainy weather, the Addiction Studies Alumni Club Walk for Recovery had a great turnout. The Walk celebrated National Recovery Month and honored those who are recovering, as well as seeking recovery, from addiction. Speakers included GSU’s Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs Terry Allison. Tommy Connolly performed at the event, as well as inspirational spoken word artist Dr. Groove. Vendors gathered in the cafeteria atrium for a resource fair, including the Illinois Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. Participants then chose to walk either a one or two mile trail. Participants warmed up with donuts and coffee donated by Walt’s Food Centers and Starbucks. More information about the Addiction Studies Alumni Club can be found at http://www.govst.edu/alumni/t_alumni.aspx?id=21494.

Check Us Out On the Web!

www.gsuphoenix.com

Published by students for students at GSU
Contact us at phoenix@govst.edu or stop by the newsroom E1500 to pass on news tips or to hear more about opportunities to write for the Phoenix.

Site hosted by College Media Network
More Comics

XKDC: College Laundry Habits

"XKDC" is a webcomic "of romance, sarcasm, math, and language" run by Randall Munroe. To the read the latest, head to xkdc.com

GSU Happenings

Gay/Straight Alliance Bake Sale Thursday October 4 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Hall of Governors

Ways of Making: Sculpture Closing Reception Saturday Oct. 6 4:30 - 7:30 pm Visual Arts Gallery

Fight or Flight Stress Management October 8 Noon - 1 p.m. & 5 - 6 p.m. Center Performing Arts Lobby

The Changing Political Terrain of American Elections Panel Discussion October 8 5 - 7 p.m. Sherman Hall

Graduate Business/Public Administration Open House October 9 6 - 7:30 p.m. E- Lounge

Internet Safety & Cyberbullying Intervention and Prevention Speaker Sarah Migas Wednesday Oct. 10 6 - 7 pm Hall of Honors

Discovering Self Self Empowerment October 10 Noon - 1 p.m. & 5 - 6 p.m. Center Performing Arts Lobby

The National Coming Out Day Forum October 11 3 p.m. Sherman Hall

Crossword

Sudoku

"Phoenix" is a webcomic "of romance, sarcasm, math, and language" run by Randall Munroe. To the read the latest, head to xkdc.com