

MAY 2022

THE PARAPHRASE

Official Newsletter of The University of Illinois
Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program

Introduction

BY CHIARA AWATRAMANI

In this edition of the newsletter, we will discuss the events coming up as the Spring 2022 semester comes to a close. To start, we will focus on the post-graduation plans of several Seniors who have dedicated countless hours to supporting the CCP program. Then, we will dive into the National Eating Disorder Awareness Walk that occurred on Saturday, April 23 and was attended by many members of the community and the Counseling Center. Lastly, with finals around the corner, we will look into the FinishStrong events that have been held to support students through these last few weeks of the semester.

Upcoming and Notable Events:

- NEDA Walk at the University of Illinois Arboretum that occurred on Saturday, April 23, 2022, at 9 am
- Tuesday @ 7 Burnout and How to Rekindle the Flame: College Edition on April 26, 2022
- FinishStrong Tabling
 - Tuesday, April 26th 12pm-3pm Engineering Quad
 - Wednesday, April 27th 12pm-2pm Lincoln Hall
 - Friday, April 29th 12pm-3pm Illini Union (Anniversary Plaza)
 - Wednesday, May 4th 4pm-7pm ARC
- Daily Mindfulness
 - Monday-Friday 4:15-4:45pm on Zoom
 - Zoom meeting ID: 922 2891 7050 (Password: CCMind)
 - Each day, we'll be focusing on a different area of mindfulness.

This Issue:

Introduction and Events

PAGE 01

Finish Strong

PAGES 02

NEDA Walk

PAGE 03

Senior Spotlight

PAGE 04

Senior Future Plans

PAGE 05-06



Finish Strong, Illinois!

BY GILLIAN VAN NECK

It is just about that time, folks! The end of the Spring 2022 semester is almost at its end, 16 long weeks are coming to a close. While the Counseling Center has been busy facilitating workshops, tabling, and providing personal and group counseling, students have been grinding away at their classes (now both in-person, hybrid, AND online!). In recognition of students' efforts, the Counseling Center has been busy at work creating care packages for stressed out students. The programming effort is called 'Finish Strong' to help motivate students to end the semester on a high note and not give in to impending burnout.

The care packages include hand-written, motivational notes from CCPs, paid CCPs, GAs, and full-time staff members. The packages are then assembled in a week-long endeavor; putting things like tissues, tea bags, a granola bar, and Counseling Center cards all together in little plastic packages is a group effort. The packages are then distributed to students all around campus for a week and a half right before finals begin. Below are the dates, times, and locations students will be able to find the Counseling Center table and volunteers:

- Monday, April 25th 12pm-2:30pm Illinois Street Residence Hall
- Tuesday, April 26th 12pm-3pm Engineering Quad
- Wednesday, April 27th 12pm-2pm Lincoln Hall
- Friday, April 29th 12pm-3pm Illini Union (Anniversary Plaza)
- Wednesday, May 4th 4pm-7pm ARC

Good luck to all for the end of the semester and cheers to summer finally starting!

YOU CAN
DO IT!



NEDA Walk

BY KATIE HOHE AND KYLE SEMPER

The National Eating Disorders Awareness Walk took place on Saturday, April 23 from 9:00-11:00 AM at the University of Illinois Arboretum. It was hosted by the Counseling Center's Eating Disorders Outreach team, and I had the opportunity to interview Kyle to gather more information about the event, as he is a member of this team.

Tell me a little bit about the event. What did you all do throughout the morning?

The National Eating Disorders Awareness Walk is a yearly event hosted by the Counseling Center and the Champaign-Urbana community to help raise funds for eating disorder awareness, treatment, and research. There were speeches by myself, one of the Eating Disorders and other Disturbances Outreach Team Co-Chairs (Michelle LeMay), and the Associate Director of Outreach and Prevention (Deidre Weathersby), and a poem was read by a fellow CCP (Elida Palomino). The Counseling Center and our supporters were able to raise \$2,275. It was a great time and the weather was perfect for families, friends, and pets to get together while showing their support for those with eating disorders. There was music, a mindfulness activity, and participants were able to get a potted plant, temporary tattoos, and enter a raffle at the many tabling stations that we had set up at the Illinois Arboretum. Once that was over, participants walked around the track of Japan House while CCPs and other volunteers held up signs with positive affirmations.

How was the overall participation?

We had great participation. I was glad to see so many people out showing their support, as this was the first in-person walk since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

What is the importance of this walk and the history behind it?

The NEDA Walk began in 2009 with the hopes of increasing the resources spent on researching eating disorders in a way that matches the seriousness and prevalence of the illness. The NEDA Walk has continued in order to help people know that there are people that can help them, and that recovery is possible.



More info can be found here: <https://nedawalk.org/about>

Senior Spotlight

BY EVARISTO RIOS

Recently, we interviewed Isabella Portelli (she/her), a senior a part of the Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program (CCP), about her experience in the CCP program. Portelli's major is psychology with a clinical concentration and a minor in communication. Portelli is heading to DePaul University in Chicago to receive her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Why did you join the CCP program?

I joined the CCP program because I really wanted to make a positive impact on campus within my areas of interest and career path. Mental health is a major point of advocacy for me. CCP was the perfect place I could support and promote mental health for students on campus.

How has the CCP program affected your college experience?

CCP was one of the best decisions I made throughout my undergraduate career. It was definitely a positive experience for me because it connected my passions and career interests in the same place. I also feel so grateful that I got to know such amazing people in my cohort. I feel very connected to all of them and learned so much from them as well. CCP has also really supported my upcoming graduate school and even beyond that; I've been taught the foundational skills of someone who works in the mental health care field, and I feel prepared for what comes next.

Do you feel that the CCP program is beneficial for students to be in? If so, why?

I do feel that the CCP program is beneficial for students to be in. It is a big investment and commitment of your time and mental energy, but I do feel that I've made a difference for students here at Illinois. I've gained a great deal of comfort and confidence in my skills as a facilitator, speaker, and even as an individual.

A special thank you to Isabella Portelli for taking the time out of your busy schedule to do this interview. And congratulations to all seniors that will be graduating!





Where to Next?

CCP SENIORS & THEIR FUTURE PLANS

We want to show appreciation for all of the seniors graduating this spring and share a little about each one of them!

Kyle Semper

Hometown: Chicago, IL **Major:** Clinical/Community Psychology Minor: Sociology

Post Graduation Plans: Obtain my Master's in School Counseling

Favorite CCP Memory: Giving the speech about eating disorders at the NEDA Walk. I was very nervous, but it was nice to have such a big role in something that I had been hearing about since my first semester as a full CCP, especially with it being the first time that it was back in person.

Advice for Future CCPs: Even though doing these outreach events and putting yourself out there can be scary, in the end it will all be worth it because of the positive effect that you have on those you interact with, and the growth that you will eventually see in yourself.

Isabella Portelli

Hometown: Stillwater, Minnesota **Major:** Psychology (clinical concentration), minor in communication

Post-graduation plans: DePaul University in Chicago to receive my master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Favorite CCP Memory: My favorite CCP memory was probably my first Tuesday@7 in the Fall. It felt very much like the first time I was making an impact on the campus community and everything I had been preparing for was happening! I think it went really well; a participant actually emailed us later in the week thanking us which warmed my heart. I was also so grateful to have Mark Andre with me through it, a truly amazing co-facilitator. We still have some laughs thinking about our Tuesday@7.

Advice for future CCP: The best advice I can give for upcoming CCPs is to rely and depend on your fellow peers and CCPs. They will make this entire experience exponentially better. Not only have I learned a lot from them, but they've supported me through both the ups and downs in the last three semesters. I hope to continue having them as friends well beyond my time here at UIUC.

Estefania Navarrete

Hometown: Chicago **Major:** Clinical Psychology

Post Graduation Plans: Take a Gap year to explore adulthood

Favorite CCP Memory: My favorite memory in CCP is having the times when we were able to bond and say what we appreciate about one another.

Advice for Future CCPs: When things get hard just know you're never alone and where there is a will there is a way.

Joe Alex Vazquez

Hometown: Humacao, Puerto Rico **Major:** Psychology

Post Graduation Plans: Graduate school at Dominican University to acquire master's (Social Work)

Favorite CCP Memory: First end of year celebration

Advice for Future CCPs: Make time for yourself, take your breaks, and take it day by day.



Daniel Rodriguez

Hometown: Marquette Park, Chicago, IL **Major:** Human Development and Family Studies

Post Graduation Plans: I will be beginning my Master's in Social Work Program this summer. Although I do wish I had some more time to relax after this exhausting senior year, I'm also very excited to jump right into it.

Favorite CCP Memory: There are so many to choose from, but one of my favorites would probably be the AOD screening day, it felt like a real group effort, I think every CCP contributed in some way shape, or form to the event. I won a free shirt and I also got to meet my mentee, Mariana, in person for the first time!

Advice for Future CCPs: Make sure to advocate for yourselves, CCP is a large time commitment but that doesn't mean it should absorb your life. Remember to take time for self-care, you only get to experience college once in your life! Even simple things like getting a full 8 hours of sleep and eating healthy can make a significant impact on your life. My Trauma Outreach GA Jameelah said it best, "you can't pour from a glass that's empty."

Shweta Govilkar

Hometown: Schaumburg, IL **Major:** Developmental Psychology

Post Graduation Plans: I will completing my Master's in Special Education in Chicago via a teaching residency program.

Favorite CCP Memory: Pretending to be the 'funny disrupter' during Joey and Crystal's practice T@7.

Advice for Future CCPs: Stay organized! Whether it's responding to emails or penciling in when you have meetings, your future self with thank you later!

Joslin Peck

Hometown: Sycamore, IL **Major:** Human Development and Family Studies

Post Graduation Plans: Pursuing my Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy at Northwestern University's MS-MFT Program.

Favorite CCP Memory: Spending time outside of class with my cohort and playing We're Not Really Strangers. The bond we made through the class will always hold a special place in my heart!

Advice for Future CCPS: Make the most of out of this awesome opportunity! I'm a firm believer that you get out of something what you put into it and because of that CCP has shaped who I am today.

Thank you to all of the CCPs who continue to make an impact on this program and the community as a whole. For those of you that are graduating and contributing to the rest of the world, make sure you fill out the form below to keep in touch with the program!

Alumni network information: <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/249536>