



# Center for Community Engagement & Social Research

Monthly Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2024 EDITION



# Central Community!

Dear Central Family,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research (CCESR) has been working hard on collecting the many events and projects that center around community engagement and applied research. Our commitment to integrating teaching, research, and service through community engagement has flourished! We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has collaborated with us, including students, faculty, and community partners. Your dedication has played a pivotal role in addressing the most pressing needs of our community. As always, we look forward to continued collaboration and making a positive impact through community service. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to the shared vision of CCESR.

Sincerely,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research Team:

- Beth Merenstein, Executive Director
- Ed Vargas, O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy & Practical Politics
- Christian Reyes, Assistant Director and Community Partner Liaison
- F. Kamilah Hastings, Assistant
- Diana Velasco, Faculty Liaison
- James Robinson, University Assistant (Student Liaison)
- Shealin R. Callahan, Community Engagement Student Ambassador
- Trevor Rowe, University Assistant (Internship Liaison)
- Megan Lott, Social Media and Marketing

# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## MLK DAY OF SERVICE 2024

CCESR would like to thank all of you that participated in this year's MLK Day of Service activities after the MLK Breakfast on **Friday, January 19th, 2024!**

Our center intends to continue to provide opportunities for our faculty, staff, and students to build upon our relationship with our partners in the Greater New Britain Area through service-learning and community-centered programming. Here is a brief overview of our volunteers' impact this year:

- Central's volunteers completed **100 MLK-themed literacy kits** to be provided to New Britain students between grades 5 and 6!
- Central's volunteers crafted **100 self-care kits** for teens in foster care.
- Central volunteers went to the Friendship Service Center in New Britain, working alongside some of the neighborhood residents supported by the shelter to **work on their Community Closet**.
- Central volunteers joined residents of the Graham Apartments Senior Housing in New Britain for various activities in their community room, including a **guided painting of MLK** led by Amore to Paint LLC in New Britain, bingo, dominos, and assorted puzzles!

If you attended, please fill out our [MLK Day of Service Volunteer Experience Feedback Survey](#) ([click here](#)).



# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Central Connecticut State University **Community Health Education Clinic** opened for business on Jan. 24!

The clinic offers free health screenings to Greater New Britain residents and members of the campus community **every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to noon** on a walk-in basis. Students and faculty from Central's Nursing program will conduct the screenings.



## TRANSCENDING APPLE PIE AND MOTHERHOOD: WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

Central student, Joseph Mumley, with the help from Brian Matzke, Jillian Maynard, Juan Coronado, and the support from CCSR, created a [StoryMap](#) (using ArcGIS StoryMaps) focused on Connecticut women in the military from World War II through the war in Iraq. It was created based on oral histories from Central's Veterans History Project.

The StoryMap highlights the many uses of the VHP's oral history collection so that others may incorporate it into their own learning.



# News and Announcements

## CAMPUS COMPACT ENGAGED SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

The Engaged Scholars Initiative (ESI) is a one-year, cohort-based leadership & professional development program that supports faculty and staff in strengthening their community-engaged scholarship.

Through bi-weekly virtual meetings, twice yearly in-person retreats, and collaborative scholarly work, ESI participants come together to strengthen their own critical community-engaged scholarship and lead change within their institutions and communities.

For more information, [go here!](#)



**Campus Compact**

## NEW LGBTQ CENTER COORDINATOR

The Office of Equity and Inclusion recently announced the new full-time, permanent LGBTQ Center Coordinator, **Dr. Donique McIntosh**.

Dr. McIntosh joins us with a wealth of knowledge and experience having served in a variety of equity and inclusion roles where she worked primarily with students. Dr. McIntosh is excited to join us at Central and work with the students, faculty, and staff to help create a welcoming environment for all.

Huge shout out to Jessica Greenebaum and Jean Alicandro for stepping in and helping keep open the LGBTQ Center, alongside Graduate Assistant Mary Lipka. Their dedication to students was evident as they helped ease this transition.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Donique!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Join United Way and their partners for **Read Across America Day**. Volunteers will read aloud to a classroom of students. Read Across America Day is one way that United Way, highlights the importance of building early literacy and language skills for every child, so that all children read proficiently by the start of fourth grade. This year we will be reading “Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free” by Alice Faye Duncan. [Register Here!](#)



Please support the Central Department of Art & Design’s outreach exhibit, “Bridges” at The Gallery 66 in downtown New Britain! Join us to celebrate the exhibiting students’ work at the **Opening Reception and Awards Ceremony on March 7th from 6-8pm**.

The Gallery 66 is located at 66 West Main Street, New Britain, CT.

## READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY – MARCH 7, 2024

Join us as we celebrate reading and diversity on **Read Across America Day!**

### GET INVOLVED

Join United Way and our partners for **Read Across America Day**. Volunteers will read aloud to a classroom .of students in Hartford, East Hartford or New Britain the morning of March 7, 2024.



### WHY THIS PROGRAM MATTERS

**Read Across America Day** is one way that United Way, along with our partners, highlights the importance of building early literacy and language skills for every child, so that all children can enter kindergarten prepared and read proficiently by the start of fourth grade.

## Upcoming Events

### Central Night at the Museum March 21, 2024

4:00pm-4:15pm Meet’n’Greet arrival time in Stanley Works Center

4:15pm-4:30pm Welcome and Overview of the NBMAA by Emily Dunnack, Director of Learning and Engagement

4:30pm-6:00pm Self-Guided Tours (guides will be provided)



They Said **WHAT?**  
Understanding Free Speech Rights on a College Campus

a discussion for Central faculty/staff to better understand first amendment issues, rights, and responsibilities on a public college campus

**TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024**  
**CONNECTICUT ROOM**  
**(MEMORIAL HALL)**  
**12:15 - 1:15 PM**

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY | 175 YEARS

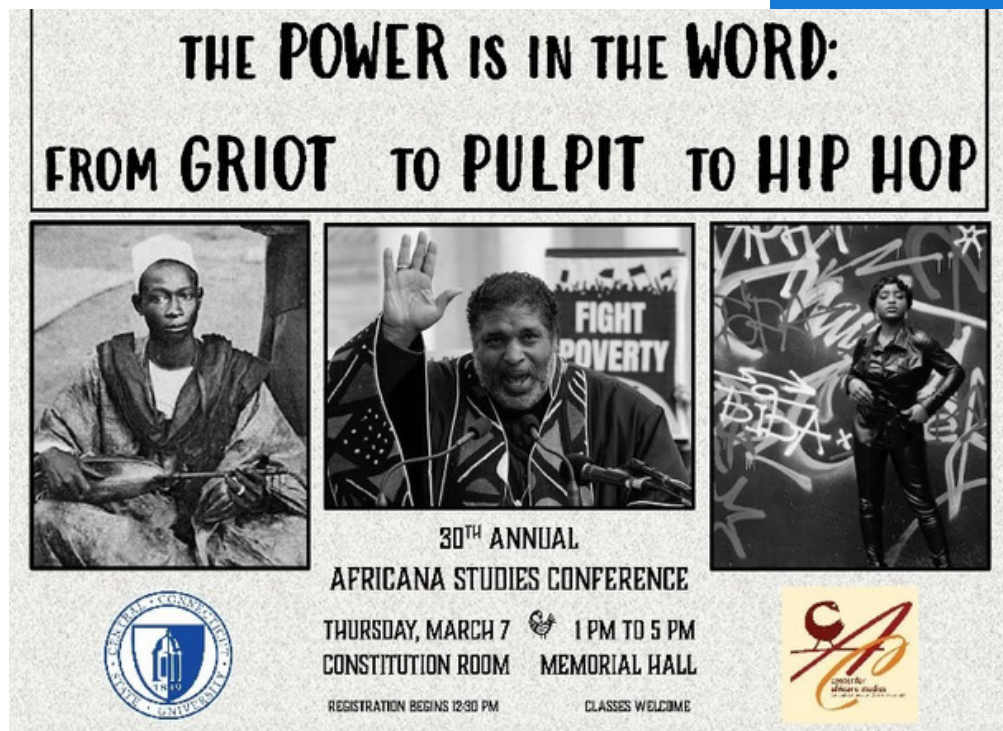
The Task Force on Free Speech invites you to participate on **Tuesday, March 5 from 12:15 - 1:15 PM** in Memorial Hall for an engaging discussion focused on the topic of free speech within the context of a public college campus.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

This year's conference theme is **"The Power is in the Word: From Griot to Pulpit to Hip Hop."**

Registration begins at 12:30 p.m. The conference will take place in the Constitution Room at Memorial Hall.

For more information, contact Anthropology Chair Evelyn Phillips at [Phillipse@ccsu.edu](mailto:Phillipse@ccsu.edu).



**THE POWER IS IN THE WORD:  
FROM GRIOT TO PULPIT TO HIP HOP**

**30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
AFRICANA STUDIES CONFERENCE**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 7 1 PM TO 5 PM**  
**CONSTITUTION ROOM MEMORIAL HALL**

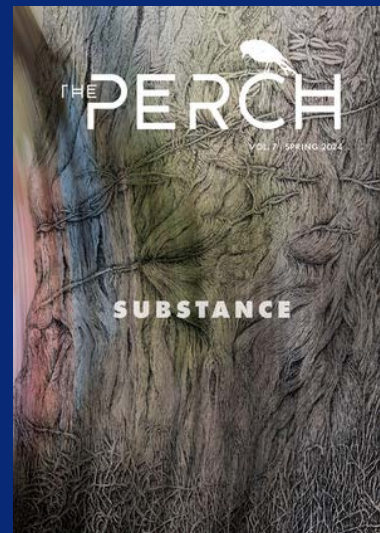
REGISTRATION BEGINS 12:30 PM CLASSES WELCOME

Graphic/Information Design students Jake Baptista '23, undergraduate Matthew Edwards, and Information Design MA candidate Samantha Zod, will have their works published in *The PERCH*, a literary journal published by Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health and Wesleyan University.

Central Alumni Jake Baptista design the chapter spreads for "Before", "During", "After", and "Scholarly Reflections" a peer-reviewed section of the journal. Substance Abuse.

A **launch party** will take place on **March 28** in the College of Letters, Wesleyan University, both live and virtual, at 4 pm.

For more information contact: [jcriscola@ccsu.edu](mailto:jcriscola@ccsu.edu)



## COFFEE HOUR

Our faculty liaison, Diana Velasco, and our Faculty Fellow, Dr. Diana Cohen will be hosting a coffee hour on **March 7th 1pm-2pm** in Davidson 115.

They will discuss our newest endeavor, the Community Engaged Faculty Program. Participants can ask questions about the cohort and gain insight on what the cohort has to offer, all while enjoying some refreshments!

# News & Announcements

## COME VISIT US!

CCESR has found its new home in **Davidson 115**.

Feel free to stop by and chat for a bit!

As we settle into the new space, you will see the many ways it transforms. We hope to make this a safe and welcoming space for students, faculty, administration, community partners, and more!

Stay tuned for information about an upcoming Open House!



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STIPEND (CEELS)

CCESR's Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS) provides stipends for unpaid internships or research roles without standard wages. We offer financial support for experiential learning opportunities that might otherwise be unpaid.

### Student Internship Information

Eligible students would receive \$18/hour with a maximum of \$3,000 (this averages to 20hrs/week for an 8-week program). Applications open and close in the following months. More details of deadline will be given near the end of current semester:

- Summer application: March 22, 2024 - May 24, 2024
- Fall application: July 26, 2024 - September 9, 2024
- Spring application: December 6, 2024 - February 7, 2024

Click [HERE](#) to apply!



## COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLAR PROGRAM

The cohort aims to strengthen relationships between Central and local community partners. Our members share a passion for community engaged scholarship and experiential learning. Undergraduate involvement will be the centerpiece of the Cohort's mission, bringing invaluable hands-on learning experiences to our students.

The inaugural cohort will work as a team to help foster new community partnerships. They will enhance their understanding of how community engagement promotes mutually-beneficial exchanges of knowledge and resources.

This program is an opportunity for faculty to design or enhance a course with a prominent service-learning component, or to conduct research that aligns with the needs of the community partner.

The application can be found on our website and attached in this email!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



Diana Velasco  
d.velasco@ccsu.edu



Diana Cohen  
cohendit@ccsu.edu

## COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STIPEND



CCESR is currently in the works of offering stipends to faculty and staff to participate in community engaged professional development. This stipend has a maximum of \$3,000 per academic year that can be used towards attending an academic conference, workshop, training, or webinar.

### Primary goals of the stipend:

- Promote community engaged practices/opportunities in the classroom and in research projects.
- Allow faculty and staff to expand their professional portfolio as it relates to community engagement.
- Open the opportunity to teach community engaged courses at the university.

Stay tuned for more information!

# Community Engagement Around Campus

## CAROL A. AMMON COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

On February 7th, the **United Against Hate Symposium** brought together state, local, and federal law enforcement personnel; staff from the U.S. State's Attorney's Office; civil rights coordinators; criminal and civil attorneys; and members of the Connecticut State Police Hate Crimes Task Force, among others.

Panelists addressed current legislation, statutes, and Connecticut-specific sentencing enhancements for hate crimes.

Central's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Center spearheaded the event, with sponsorship from CCEsr and the Office of Equity and Inclusion.



## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Well over 100 volunteers attended **VITA training** at Central on Saturday, January 6th.

From high school students to retirees from Central accounting and finance majors and Central graduates to UCONN and community college students, from multiple parents and their children, Central's Vance Academic Center was filled with an energy to learn.

Thank you to every single volunteer for assisting in such a great cause!



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Six students were inducted into the **Student Cabinet of the Connecticut Educators Rising program**, including Central Connecticut State University student Sherrod Cuttino, who will serve as representative at large in the college-level Aspiring Educators program.

The Educators Rising program enables high school students to take courses related to education careers and to serve in internships in local schools. Participants also can earn university credit by taking courses at their schools taught by certified university teachers.



## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY

Central celebrated Engineer's Week from February 20-24, 2024.

**Engineers Week**  
Feb 18-24, 2024  
DISCOVER  
WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

**Central's Engineers Week**  
**February 20-24, 2023**

6th Engineering Design Challenge  
Applied Innovation Hub - 313  
Saturday February 24 - 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Food and Prizes will be provided**

Central's School of Engineering, Science, and Technology is hosting the 6th Engineering Design Challenge for all CCSU SEST, Community College and High School Students.

The goal of the challenge is for students to use interdisciplinary coursework, design, creativity, and team work to solve an engineering problem.

Each year a series of speakers are invited to share their experiences and knowledge with our students. Over the years, the speakers have provided an insight to what it means to be a practicing Engineer in different industries across the country.

To learn more about Central's Engineers Week, [click here!](#)

# Community Engagement Around Campus

## ATHLETICS

Basketball players, football players, and cheerleaders were all part of the game this past Monday. For the second year in a row, Central hosted an event for the **“Beautiful Lives Project”** which gives people of all abilities a chance to participate in activities that are not always available to them. This year, more than 60 people from the Beautiful Lives Project went to the Detrick Gymnasium on the Central campus to take part in the event.

To learn more about the Beautiful Lives Project, [click here!](#)



## COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES (CAFAP)

CAFAP’s mission is to strengthen foster, adoptive and kinship care families through support, training and advocacy with the aim of nurturing child safety, well-being and stability in partnership with child welfare professionals and the entire community.

For one of this year’s MLK Day of Service activities, CCSR partnered with CAFAP on a self-care kit building activity for teens in foster care. The team at CAFAP, including: Krystal Hernandez - Outreach Coordinator, Sheyla Ortiz-Caraballo - CAFAP New Britain Liaison, Leslie Reyes - CAFAP Norwalk Liaison, and Joseph Montalvo - CAFAP Board President, joined 46 of Central’s volunteers on-campus after the MLK Breakfast, during which they crafted a total of 100 self-care kits! The kits included an assortment of hygiene supplies, blankets, coloring books/colored pencils, stress balls, fidget toys, journals, water bottles, and a handwritten motivational letter from a volunteer. CAFAP was instrumental in this effort, from the development of the idea to the distribution of the bags to teens in the foster care system in need.

To learn more about CAFAP and find more ways to get involved [click here!](#)



## CCESR'S INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MAP

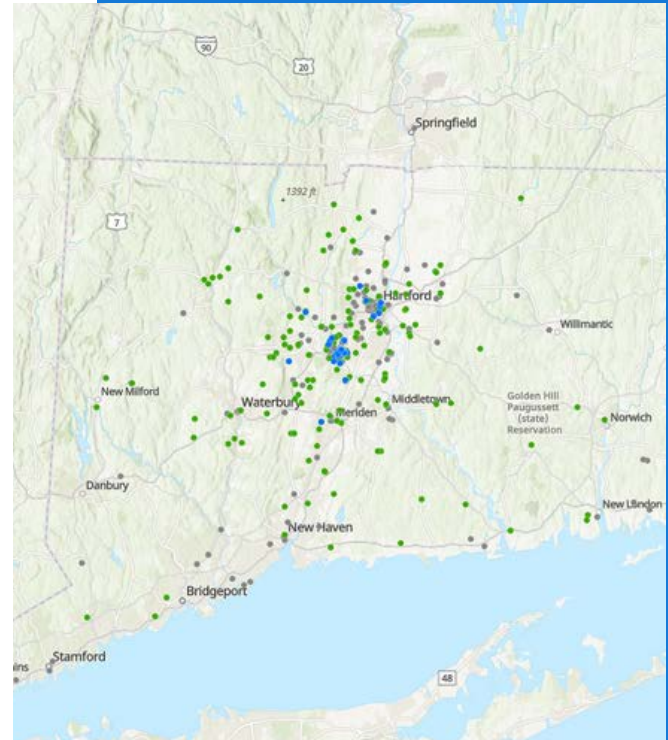
CCESR has created an interactive map as a way to visualize the impact Central has had on the community and provide ideas for future projects.

On the map, you can view community partners Central has worked with, where students have completed internships/field placements, and the locations/descriptions of past community engagement or public service events.

If you have been involved in a CE event/project, fill out this [Microsoft Form](#) to have it added to the map and Collaboratory!

Click [HERE](#) to view the map!

For further questions on Collaboratory, please contact Diana Velasco at [d.velasco@ccsu.edu](mailto:d.velasco@ccsu.edu).



## CONTACT OUR TEAM

For more information on working with CCESR, do not hesitate to contact us or visit our [website](#)!

- Executive Director, Beth Merenstein, [merensteinb@ccsu.edu](mailto:merensteinb@ccsu.edu)
- Assistant Director, Christian Reyes, [creyes@ccsu.edu](mailto:creyes@ccsu.edu)
- Assistant, F. Kamilah Hastings, [hastings@ccsu.edu](mailto:hastings@ccsu.edu)
- Faculty Liaison, Diana Velasco, [d.velasco@ccsu.edu](mailto:d.velasco@ccsu.edu)
- Student Liaison, James Robinson, [james.d.robinson@ccsu.edu](mailto:james.d.robinson@ccsu.edu)
- Internship Liaison, Trevor Rowe, [t.rowe@ccsu.edu](mailto:t.rowe@ccsu.edu)

