

NEWSLETTER

June 2024



Charting Our Future Conference

PSCCN and King County Promise partners attended The Foundation for Tacoma Students' fourth annual Charting Our Future conference. This pivotal event, drawing over 300 educators, policymakers, community leaders, and advocates, aimed to promote a more equitable and effective education system. The theme, "Local Focus, Statewide Impact," highlighted the importance of community-driven initiatives in driving systemic change across Washington.

Team Takeaways:

- **Continuous care:** Dr. Geoffrey Canada emphasized the need for **continuous care** from early childhood through career development and the necessity for

collaborative systems to ensure consistent support.

- **Equitable opportunities:** Adam Harris acknowledged the education system's intentional design to disenfranchise Black and Brown communities.
- **Youth Engagement:** Sessions highlighted the importance of including youth voices in educational change discussions, with youth leaders sharing their experiences and ideas.
- **Setting High Standards:** Dr. Canada stressed the importance of setting high expectations for Black and Brown scholars and holding the education system accountable, pointing out the detrimental effects of tolerating failure.

The insights will guide future initiatives to create a more inclusive & effective education system.

HIGHLIGHTS

- PSCCN Updates
- Postsecondary Opportunities
- Partner Content
- College & Career News



EMPOWERING JOY

ALISA EMEDI

THE CONGOLESE INTEGRATION NETWORK

This month we are sharing the first installment of our Joy Campaign. Promise youth are learning to survive and thrive, despite an education system designed to perpetuate colonialist ideals and support only some students. Gap-gazing at group differences in satellite data can perpetuate deficit thinking and stereotypes about groups in a way that is harmful and dehumanizing (Gutiérrez, 2008). In this series, we aim to highlight ways youth are claiming joy in their academic journeys, and the ways in which navigators are enabling them to stay resilient.

Our first highlight comes from a conversation with Alisa Emedi, Program Director of the Youth and Early Learning Departments at the Congolese Integration Network (CIN), about her role in the lives of Promise youth.

[THE FULL CONVERSATION IS LINKED HERE.](#)

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR JOY

Alisa said her job is “not all cakes and rainbows”. The youth in her program are primarily in high school or transitioning to college, and they have to have a lot of grit to achieve academically. “The schools don’t know what they’re taking on at home.” Many youth come from home situations where there are eight other siblings, one parent, and they have many responsibilities outside school. CIN students are mostly of African descent and see few mentors that understand them on a cultural level.

Yet, Alisa and students at CIN are building joy for themselves and their communities.




JOY #1: PEER SUPPORT

First, youth at CIN support each other. The day-to-day lives of students are hectic, and students feel like they can “suffer through class together.”

Alisa enables these after-school connections by creating a purposeful space and providing transportation. There is a large space with food and snacks, computers, game tables, and comfortable places to talk or study. She designed programming weekly workshops such as coding and professional skill-building, recognizing the technical skills that students need to survive and thrive in today’s economy. Some days, Alisa drives fifteen students to and from their homes. This space and programming gives students functional reasons to keep connecting with each other.

While Alisa works primarily with youth, she also engages with the whole family. Parents want to know where their kids are spending all their time and what they’re doing. CIN also has programs for adults and children, providing opportunities for the rest of the family to receive support and become familiar with the space. Alisa initiated an Afro fitness class for adults and a dance program for kids at CIN, sharing her cultural heritage and joy with the community, creating a common purpose to gather and support each other.



Second, the idea that “when you make it through, you will be so happy” is a thought that carries students through the daily grind. Promise students at CIN must have an explicit plan that aligns their educational pathway with their goals. It can be any kind of academic or professional goal, but the student has to be able to articulate why that’s their plan and take accountability for the steps to get there. Then the joy derived from imagining that accomplishment, coupled with the confidence that their daily actions are effective in bringing them nearer to it, provides them with momentum to keep moving forward.

Alisa and navigator Adolphine (see June highlight) help course correct when a student pursues a plan that does not align with their desired outcome. Few experiences are as disheartening as putting in considerable effort towards a goal, only to find it didn't yield the expected rewards. For example, a student was not on track to graduate on time due to a tough junior year. Because Alisa and Adolphine caught this early, they were able to advise the student on ways to still reach postsecondary on time. By enrolling in a GED program at iGrad, the student was able to start classes in a nursing program without losing any time or money. This experience highlights the potential for transformative impact from supportive guidance.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

A challenge CIN faces is **building relationships with schools and encouraging counselors to refer students to CIN**. Many of the youth served are of African descent or immigrants, who often find it easier to open up to someone from a similar background. This cultural disconnect in public schools makes it difficult to reach all the youth needing support. If you are a counselor or work with students, please consider this your invitation to refer students to CIN.

JOY #2:
AGENCY TO
ACHIEVE



THE WHOLE STUDENT

Creating pockets of joy in the current educational landscape requires daily, intentional dedication for which no one putting in the long hours is adequately funded. Alisa's story offers practices for setting up immigrant and refugee youth for success, and demonstrates the value of efforts that care for the whole student and their families.

A Journey Through Adversity



THE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY OF NWEA OPPORTUNITY YOUTH DURING COVID-19

As the world came to a standstill in early 2020, the lives of countless young people across the Northwest were thrown into disarray. Among them were the opportunity youth – young adults who have disengaged with traditional educational pathways and are not earning a living wage. Of these more than 200k youth in Washington, only 8% are expected to obtain a postsecondary credential (CCER, 2016).

We express gratitude to Northwest Education Access (NWEA), who support OY to pursue educational pathways at the time and pace that work best for the student.

The youth they serve were profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Their stories, filled with struggle, resilience, and occasional triumphs, paint a vivid picture of an unprecedented time. PSCCN partnered with the Strategy, Evaluation, and Learning Team at PSED to do a thematic coding of 153 student responses. The demographics and socioeconomic status of respondents were representative of the state-wide opportunity youth population.

[Click here to read the findings](#)



Get Schooled is extending and expanding our Financial Aid support! Our additional supports are noted below, including a chance for your students to win a \$5K scholarship for proof of completing the FAFSA (or state-based financial aid) this month!

- Access to FREE Financial Aid Advisors: More advisors specializing in financial aid are available on our FREE text line to support students.
- Financial Aid Support Events on YouTube LIVE on June 25th & 29th: FAFSA support events on YouTube live for students and contributors. Register here!
- Financial Aid Resources: A comprehensive library of student-friendly, financial aid-focused articles and videos in both English and Spanish.
- \$5K Scholarship: To further encourage and motivate students, we are offering \$5,000 scholarships to five students who complete their FAFSA or state-based financial aid in the month of June!



Help us recruit the next cohort of Ready WA Student Storytellers!

Attention HS teachers and school counselors! Do you know a student with great stories to tell! 🌟 Ready WA is recruiting for their next cohort of Student Storytellers for the 2024-2025 academic year. Selected students will get to tell their stories in various formats, including blog posts, videos, podcasts, and more! They will be compensated for their time.

[Click here](#) for more information.

The deadline is July 15!

Issue no. 7

☀️ **BIPOC ED COALITION!** ☀️

Attention BIPOC nonprofit leaders: The BIPOC ED Coalition invites you to check out their Sabbatical Leadership Program. Take a break from your vital work to prioritize your health and well-being.

Opportunities include:

☀️ One-Month Sabbaticals: Applications open Fall 2024

☀️ Two-Week Sabbaticals: Applications open April 2024

[Click here](#) for more information!



WSCA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

WSCA invites you to the inaugural WSCA Leadership Conference at the Davenport Grand Hotel in downtown Spokane, WA. Early Bird Registration and Call for Proposals are now open!



When: October 11-12, 2024



Where: Davenport Grand Hotel, Spokane, WA



Who: School counselors and administrators


[Click here](#) for more information!



SUMMER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES!

Join the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) for two enriching in-person sessions at the Rainbow Lodge Retreat Center in North Bend, WA. The sessions are tailored for educators gearing up for the new school year.

Session 1:  August 14-15

 Communication & Collaboration for Equity-Focused Professional Learning Community

Session 2:  August 15-16

 Transformational Advocacy

[Click here](#) for more information!



College and Career News in Washington State

The Seattle Times:

['Won't Get Fooled Again' on FAFSA](#)

[The FAFSA Broke Me](#)

[What Happened When One
Community College Confronted
Housing Insecurity in a New Way](#)

[WA schools superintendent responds
to new 'Parents' Bill of Rights'](#)

[Public school enrollment declining in
WA, across the nation as spending
increases](#)

[2024 graduates look back on a high
school experience like no other](#)

[Re-Evaluating the 'Essay Carveout'](#)

[What the Supreme Court's Affirmative
Action Ban Means for College
Admissions](#)

[This Is Peak College Admissions
Insanity](#)

[Two weeks after fatal shooting of
Garfield High student, no arrests made](#)



Thank you for your continued support.
Contact us at pccn@psed.org