

PARA NEWS & VIEWS

LOOK WHO'S GRADUATING!

Catrina Blount is graduating this Spring 2007. She has been a Para for seven years and presently works at P.S. 396/327. She has worked with all grades including inclusion classes. She became a Para because she wanted to become a teacher and change lives.



She has found a lot of support at LIU because of the small classes and the personal relationships with many faculty members. Being in a classroom with 10-12 other students as compared to over 30 at other schools, has made a big difference in Catrina's academic success.

Catrina's advice to Paras is to, "Just do it. No matter how much time it takes, it's really rewarding when you finally accomplish your dreams."

Catrina has already received two job offers including one from the school where she was student teaching. She is

debating whether or not to teach right away or to continue on to the Master's program.

In her interview for student teaching, she wrote, "As a teacher I will shape the lives of children and this is very important to me. I want to instill values that my children will carry with them for life. I want to know I was important to a child's life, as many of my teachers were important in my life."

**CONGRATULATIONS
CATRINA!**

Paraprofessional Support Network

Volume 1, Issue 2

May 2007

Editor: Charlotte Marchant

We would like to get more news about our Paras both past and present. Let us know what you're up to after you graduate and while you're here. Email Charlotte Marchant with any news you want us to include in the Para News & Views. charlotte.marchant@liu.edu

PARA SUPPORT MEETING IN MARCH, WERE YOU THERE? By Madeleine Humphreys

It was held during LIU spring break so, "most of us didn't have classes and had no reason not to attend" as Charlotte Marchant jokingly said!

I was really glad I came because I got to finally meet



Vanessa Sullivan and Cecil Nugent from the DOE CTP. I had talked to them many times over the phone so it

was nice to meet them face to face. We had a lot of fun during the meeting and they patiently answered all questions and concerns that we had about the program and our education.



If you weren't there you also missed out on the wonderful meal we had together. Hope to see you at the next meeting May 22nd, 4:30 p.m. at 9 Hanover Place, 3rd Floor. Please try to attend and RSVP to Charlotte Marchant 718-246-6496.

A Word from the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of Para News & Views. We will be having a summer dinner and meeting for Paras on May 22nd at 4:30 p.m. at 9 Hanover Place, 3rd Floor and I hope to see all of you there. Please make sure to RSVP by calling me at 718-246-6496.

This edition of the newsletter was very exciting to put together. I was able to interview Catrina Blount (congratulations to graduate Catrina!), Candida Fraser, Madeleine Humphreys, and the two Academic Advisors.

Madeleine Humphreys found some time to help me out with this edition of the newsletter and I want to thank her for making that extra effort!

She once said to me, "*Sometimes life gets in the way.*" She has had many challenges facing her since she started at LIU as one of the first Paras in the program in Spring 2002. Like many of us, she has had to deal with death and illness in her family. Sometimes that made studying much more difficult. You can learn more about her in the profile on the next page.

Working with the Paraprofessionals to create a support network is the favorite part of my job!

-Charlotte Marchant

Meet Our Academic Advisors

Marizaldy Mercedes



I love being a counselor. I love advising undergraduate and graduate students. My objective and goal is to always assist, provide information and always, always try meeting the needs of my students to the best of my ability. As

a counselor I'm here not only to register students but to also provide information concerning admission requirements, entrance exams and financial aid. The best part of this job is to see a student graduate and to know that I was part of this individual's educational and career decision goals. As a counselor I was trained to facilitate the academic personal, social and career development of young adults. The biggest challenge for me at this job is time management and keeping up with paperwork.

My advice to LIU students is:

- Always ask questions
- Always, always research
- Get to know the Campus
- Network- Establish a positive relationship with two or three faculty/staff members
- Expand your experience - Become a well-rounded and well informed person. Make an appointment with the department faculty coordinator to discuss your educational interest.

Gabriela Arechiga



I began working in the Teaching and Learning department at Long Island University- Brooklyn in February 2007.

Last year I graduated from New York University with a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling.

I enjoy working as an Academic Advisor in the School of Education because I have the opportunity to meet and help students on a daily basis.

Contact information for the Academic Advisors:

Marizaldy Mercedes

718-488-1382

marizaldy.mercedes@liu.edu

Gabriela Arechiga

718-488-1381

gabriela.arechiga@liu.edu



From a Circus Performer to a Teacher Education Student

Madeline has been a Para since 1999. She taught 8th grade and Pre-K. She prefers 8th grade because she enjoys being able to communicate with children that age. "You feel like you can really make a difference in their lives."

In her early twenties, Madeline attended LIU on a swimming scholarship but during her last semester she left to join the circus! She danced in the Ringling Brothers circus, rode on elephants and practiced a trapeze act. Madeleine says, "It was another life-time ago!"

Another lifelong dream besides the circus was to become a teacher. She always loved helping people, especially kids. She always wanted to make a difference somewhere, somehow. And as a single mother with three kids, she has always had to work two jobs to get by. Working as a Para enabled her to return to college through the CTP program and return to LIU.

She says of her experience at LIU, "It has been wonderful. It's really nice getting to meet people



from all different walks of life. It gives you insight into what's really out there." She also said, "LIU has given me a lot more than just an education from books. In the small classes and the way they're taught we're encouraged to speak about our own experiences and apply it to what we're learning. We bring our own experiences into the classroom and we're all learning from each other."

Madeleine's advice to other Paras at LIU is to, "Hang in there. It can be done. Just have faith in yourself. It's never too late." She promised her mother before she died that she'd graduate from college so she's doing it for herself and her mother. She knows it's a very rough road at times especially for those who are single parents, working two jobs and trying to find time to study and make it all happen. She ended by saying, "But now I'm seeing the light at the end of the tunnel!"

Teaching the Arts — Summer Institute

- Teaching the Arts (Grades 1-6)
- Multicultural Art Education: Theory and Practice
- Book Arts in the Classroom
- Clay: Handbuilding for Teachers
- Storytelling & Poetry Performance (Grades 2-7)
- Drama For Learning (Grades 3-7)
- Integrated Theatre Arts (High School)



For more information on the Teaching the Arts — Summer Institute, contact Prof. Kathleen Kesson, 718-488-1388 kathleen.kesson@liu.edu

Where Are They Now?

HISTORY OF THE PARA PROGRAM

The Paraprofessional Program at LIU started in the Spring of 2002 with twelve Paras. Of those twelve, two graduated and are both teaching (see profile on Candida Fraser), four dropped out and one moved to Georgia and teaches there. Five of the original twelve students are still in the program:

Laverne Flowers

Zinara Humphrey

Madeleine Humphreys

Marie Labbees

Edna Magloire

We were able to contact one of the Paras who left the program and got an update. Marilyn Arroyo moved to Georgia with her family and is now teaching high school. We'll have a profile on Marilyn in the next issue of Para News & Views.

The original five Paras all started in the Spring 2002 semester. Give them a high five when you see them for hanging in there even when *"life gets in the way"* and keeping up their goal of getting their teaching credential and college degree!

At this time we have 25 Paras enrolled in the program. Of all the colleges involved with the Department of Education's Career Training Program, we have the smallest number of students. We think this is a good thing. We think it's good because of the individual attention you receive at LIU and you don't get lost in the bureaucracy of a large institution.

What do you think? We'll put your responses in the next issue of Para News & Views.

Candida Fraser - Former Para



Candida Fraser was among the original group of Paras in the program starting in the Spring 2002 semester. Before working as a Para, she volunteered in her granddaughter's school. She started working as a Paraprofessional eight years ago in P.S. 91 and told the principal, "When I get my degree I'll be back. I'm going to teach in your school." After graduating from LIU in May 2005, she went back to P.S. 91 and asked the principal for a teaching job and started teaching that September. She followed through on her promise and dream!

This is Candida's second year teaching. In her first year she taught kindergarten and now she is teaching first grade in a CTT class as the regular ed teacher along with a special ed teacher. She loves teaching and says, "I have been learning at LIU how to incorporate hands-on activities with children which really cuts down on their acting out."

She will be graduating with her Master's in May 2008. Candida feels very comfortable at LIU and has learned to love writing. She said, "LIU gave me the confidence and the tools to get started."

Candida offers this advice to the Paras in the program:

- Continue in the program
- Strive to do your best
- Don't wait until the last minute to take the exams
- The faculty are here to help you

