



## Poets Et Al at Benjamin L. Hooks Job Corps Center

By Theresa M. Okwumabua, PhD

Poets Et Al meets weekly at the BLHJCC to promote students’ emotional well-being and help them deal with negative emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety, depression). The approach was initiated at the request of a group of students who used creative writing to help them deal with their problems and emotions. The students were aware of others who also used creative outlets in a similar way and felt that coming together on a regular basis would be beneficial to their success at Job Corps and in life. Having witnessed many of their peers struggling with different issues and responding in sometimes health- and life-compromising ways, they felt that many of these students could also benefit from participation in a creative writing group.

Poets Et Al has been conducted on a continuous basis at the BLHJCC for more than 5 years now. While the group was originally composed of creative writers, it has expanded to include individuals with other creative interests (e.g., music, dance, art) and a range of backgrounds and trades. The only criteria for participation in the group is that participants come to each session prepared to share a personally developed creative product.

Each session begins with the facilitator selecting a poem or other form of written or spoken media to serve as a catalyst for discussion. For example, we might write spontaneously from a theme (e.g., “Positive memories and feelings”) or an incomplete phrase (e.g., “If you knew me...”, “When I’m feeling...”). Then, an interactive process helps the participants to develop on emotional, cognitive, and social levels. The focus is on the person's reaction to the literature, never losing sight of the primary objective—the psychological health and well-being of each participant. Via reading and responding to classic and contemporary poems, participants often deepen into paradox, possibility and potential. Developing original poems and creative products that at once speak to the unique and the universal is also part of the therapeutic power of creative expression.

While most sessions are facilitated by the Center Mental Health Consultant, often with a Psychology Intern as a co-facilitator, from time to time, guests from the local community come and share their creations with participants. The atmosphere during all sessions is gentle, non-threatening and supportive—a place where participants feel safe and are invited to share feelings openly and honestly.

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## Poets Et Al at BLHJCC (continued)

To showcase and share their creations with a broader audience, members of one Poets Et Al group held a Spoken Word Luncheon and Fest. Several members of another group submitted their poems for a National Civil Rights Museum competition. One member of this group won a prize for his poem, entitled, “Freedom Is What Freedom Isn’t.” Members of another group spread their wings and contributed to the development of the “Poets Et Al Creative Collection,” a book with more than 50 poems created by members of the group.

Recently, the Poets Et Al. group was invited to venture out, beyond the Dr. B. L. Hooks Job Corps Center, to perform at the 26th Annual Memphis “Beat the Odds” Awards (MBTO) Program. MBTO’s mission is to honor and recognize local youth who, despite facing some incredible odds in their young lives, are achieving, finding success, and beating the odds. Ten Poets Et Al participants responded to the challenge. As they began preparing for the performance, the group decided to focus their presentation on the life circumstance of the awards recipients. After learning about the honorees’ life circumstance, accomplishments, and community service experiences, the Poets Et Al participants created a short piece about each recipient, which they presented during the awards program. The audience’s standing ovation after the performance spoke volumes about their high-caliber performance. Furthermore, later processing of the experience revealed that while the Poets Et Al participants are still enjoying this successful moment, their emotional connection to the success of the recipients despite the adversity that they face created a lasting impact, inspiring Job Corps youth.



## Myths and Facts about Naloxone/Narcan

By Christy Hicks, LADC, LCSW

Naloxone is not a new medication; it has been used for many years by EMS and hospital staff to reverse opioid overdoses. Naloxone/Narcan recently has been placed in the hands of non-medical staff, called third-party carriers, to assist in decreasing the number of overdose deaths. Thanks to the increased availability, the CDC reports more than 10,000 overdose reversals with naloxone by non-medical bystanders. However, there are still plenty of myths and misconceptions surrounding this medication.

**Myth #1:** Naloxone will prevent drug users from calling 911 or seeking medical assistance.

**Fact:** Naloxone has a short duration of action; therefore, medical follow up after an overdose is key.

**Myth #2:** The availability of naloxone encourages drug use.

**Fact:** Reversing an opioid overdose using naloxone gives a person a second chance at life. Following a successful overdose reversal, a person can access treatment that they may not have considered before.

**Myth #3:** Naloxone is another drug that can be abused.

**Fact:** Naloxone is safe and effective and has no potential for abuse. In addition, naloxone can not be taken before drug use to avoid an overdose.

**Myth #4:** Naloxone works on methamphetamines and cocaine overdoses.

**Fact:** Naloxone only work on opiates and opioid medications, nothing else.





## Muhlenberg Job Corps Center — Red Cross Partner

Muhlenberg JCC has been recognized as a Premier Blood Partners Program with the American Red Cross. The center provided 104 units of blood in 2018. That total impacted approximately 287 lives.

## Gary Job Corps Center — Nutrition Course

Gary JCC has partnered with Texas A&M University Agrilife Extension in Hays. They are providing a 4-week course in nutrition, meal preparation and education on Wednesdays. The lessons include:

- Week 1 — healthy breakfast and food safety
- Week 2 — healthy lunch, MyPlate.gov and meal planning
- Week 3 — healthy dinner and food resource managing budget



## Tongue Point Job Corps Center — Summerfest

Tongue Point JCC held a Summerfest. The center served healthy options including chicken, vegan dogs, corn, lots of fresh fruit (grapes, watermelon, and strawberries), veggies, and salads. The food services manager, Harley Badger, set up tables and chairs outside so students and staff had the option of eating indoors or outdoors. There were many activities set up for students to have fun and get exercise, as well as a dunk tank for students and staff participation.

## Oneonta Job Corps Center — Local Gym

Oneonta JCC students have the opportunity to visit a local gym once a month and get workout tips from a trainer.



## 2019 Health Observances

### September

- Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® Month  
<https://fruitsandveggies.org/>
- Sexual Health Awareness Month  
[www.ASHAsexualhealth.org](http://www.ASHAsexualhealth.org)
- World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10  
<https://www.iasp.info/wspd2019/>

### October

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month  
<http://www.ncadv.org/>
- National Bullying Prevention Month  
<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/>
- Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 6–12  
<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Raise-Awareness/Awareness-Events/Mental-Illness-Awareness-Week>
- Red Ribbon Week, October 23–31  
<http://www.redribbon.org/>

### November

- American Diabetes Month  
<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/american-diabetes-month/>
- Great American Smokeout  
<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/great-american-smokeout.html>



## News and Resources

**E-cigarette explodes in teen's mouth, blowing up his teeth and breaking his jaw**

<https://www.newsweek.com/e-cigarette-explodes-teen-mouth-break-teeth-jaw-1444936>

**After a School Tragedy...Readiness, Response, Recovery, & Resources**

<https://mhffcnetwork.org/centers/mhffc-network-coordinating-office/after-school-tragedyreadiness-response-recovery-resources>

## Webinars on the Job Corps Web

### Upcoming 2019 Webinars



- HEALs: Motivation, Nutrition and Exercise—September 10
- Caries Management by Risk Assessment in Job Corps—September 11
- CMHC Orientation, Part 1— September 17
- CMHC Orientation, Part 2—September 24
- Mastering the Center Applicant File Review Process—October 8 & 10
- Navigating a Mental Health Crisis—October 16
- Community Connections and Hot Topics for Health and Wellness—November 7
- Expanded TEAP Hours—November 5 & 12

You must login and register at the Job Corps Citrix website at: <http://jcweb.jobcorps.org/EventBoard/EventList.aspx>.

### Past Webinars

- TEAP Specialist Orientation Part 2 — July 30, 2019
- CMHC Orientation Part 2: Medical Separations and Applicant File Review — June 27, 2019
- CMHC Orientation Part 1: Overview of PRH Requirements — June 20, 2019
- How to Recognize & Address Trauma: Job Corps Training — June 19, 2019
- AD/HD Strategies and Supports: Supporting Behavior, Attention, and Impulsivity Manifestations of AD/HD — July 17 and 25, 2019
- TEAP Specialist Orientation Part 1 — July 16, 2019
- Building Stronger Relationships With Our Students: I Have Biases, Do You? — July 10, 2019

Webinars are available for download at: <https://supportservices.jobcorps.gov/health/Pages/Webinars.aspx>.

## Do you have a . . .

Topic idea or a want to highlight your center activity. You can submit your suggestions to:

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