

ASHLEY DUARTE

Ashley Duarte and her family were one of the first families to live in Tierra Vida, a growing community surrounding the Collegium building. Ashley is a 17-year-old who recently started her senior year at Chiawana High School. Ashley shared that it's been a blessing for her to grow up and work in this community, where there is an immense amount of support for youth and parents alike.

Ashley was a part of the first cycle of students who came through the Evening Youth Readiness program in the Collegium Café. She excelled in her ability to learn the drinks quickly, daily operation procedures, and really took on a leadership role. She was later brought on to work as a shift lead for the second cycle of students, to work alongside them and help them gain some job skills. Ashley, also still steps in to fill days off for other employees.

Ashley says that one of her favorite parts about working in the Café is the welcoming ambiance that the Collegium has. She says, "as soon as you walk in, there is a feeling of hospitality and friendliness, and you get a sense that you belong. I got the chance to make some really meaningful connections and relationships with people that I wouldn't have gotten anywhere else." Ashley, enjoyed contributing to that safe and friendly space for others and learned a lot about being a barista. She will be ready for the workforce when she graduates this year.



SHAUNEE HOOPER

Working at the Center for Sharing has been a blessing in so many ways and I am so fortunate that they came into my life at the time that they did.

Before I got here, I was a mess. I had relationship problems and was in and out of jail. I had lost my apartment and my car was no longer running. I had a drug problem and then I found out I was pregnant. I ended up going to drug court and doing a year of treatment. I ended up getting a sponsor in NA, which was very good for me. She helped me think positive and helped me realize I can do better with my life. I was slowly doing better but I still needed help to get on the right path.



I gave birth to my daughter in November 2016 and by January, I was searching for a job non-stop, without much luck. Through WorkSource's Work Readiness Program I was placed into Center for Sharing's work readiness program at the Collegium Café in Pasco. I was super excited to get a job even though it was temporary, I would learning the necessary job skills for future employment.

The first day working in the Café was a very different experience than at any other place of work. We would start our day with a daily huddle. Everyone got a chance to check in for the day and share how they are coming into work for the day. This helped me feel like they actually care about me and the things I'm going through matter. We have voluntary chapel at 9 am everyday Monday through Friday for 30 minutes to reflect and get closer to our team and God. We read a short message out of a book, reflect, and pray just to help get our day started. I felt like the more I was getting closer to God the happier I was with my life. Because of my growth and dedication to getting my life on track, I was offered a 6-month extension to stay at the Café and continue to work on myself and gaining job skills.

I regularly participate in trauma and human development classes. I am learning to move on from my past and to be responsible. I am learning how to accept what is and to deal with the pain and challenges I do face day to day. They have supported me though my drug court and attended my graduation.

By giving me the opportunity to work at the Café and live in Tierra Vida community I'm able to live a comfortable life where I can afford to pay my bills and raise my baby in a safe home. They push me to have goals and I have decided to go back to college. In fact they offered me a second 6-month extension so that I can pursue my dreams of obtaining an education.

CARLA BARRAGAN

Growing up in Mexico, Carla was exposed to many hardships, ones that a child should never have to see or be a part of.

One thing that became clear very quickly, was that moving to Washington State was not the paradise they thought it was going to be. Many issues between her parents came to the surface, and it quickly effected their marriage, children, and Carla specifically.

It's never easy coming to a new town, let alone a new country. New language, new friends, new home; in addition to her issues at home. Carla found herself feeling alone...

hurt...silenced. It was as if her voice was taken and never given back. She couldn't reach out for the help she needed, because she couldn't communicate that she needed help. Her family habitually hid their problems which in turn caused her to feel the need to hide hers. Carla felt alone.

Carla had heard about the Center for Sharing's (CFS) work readiness program through the Collegium Café. Through the encouragement of the staff and the empowering leadership at CFS, Carla began to learn many things in addition to serving customers good food, on time. The safe, accepting, atmosphere that Carla was exposed to allowed her to slowly learn that she had a voice and it was okay to ask questions. Carla began dreaming about what the future could look like for her.

Through the help of CFS staff, Carla completed her CNA certification, graduated for the work readiness program and went straight to working full time as a CNA. Carla is now supporting herself independently and has a confidence to pursue her dreams.



DAISY REED

“If I didn’t have the support I received through the Servant Leadership Program and from my parents, I think my story would have ended in tragedy”

Sharing Daisy’s story allows us to highlight many of the Center for Sharing’s servant led communities. Daisy was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. when she was three. Her parents found work here in agriculture.

During this time in her and her parent’s life, there was never really time for real conversation. Work was everything for her family. No one asked Daisy about her dreams and hopes for the future. What would she want to do? Who does she want to be? Everything was about just getting by.

Daisy went through hardships based on decisions she was making during her high school years and ended up graduating high-school from Jubilee Leadership Academy back when it was a co-ed program. Jubilee is a boarding school designed specifically to help heal hurting and troubled teens using a servant led, trauma informed approach. This means that love and trust is established before trying to teach them the skills needed to change their lives.

It was at Jubilee that Daisy first heard that she was special, and that God had great plans for her life. It was also there that she met her future husband. Although both Jubilee and Daisy’s mom taught the kids Christian values, after their marriage, Daisy slowly realized that her husband didn’t really share those same values. Daisy found herself living a “ghetto life” filled with poverty, drugs, and violence.

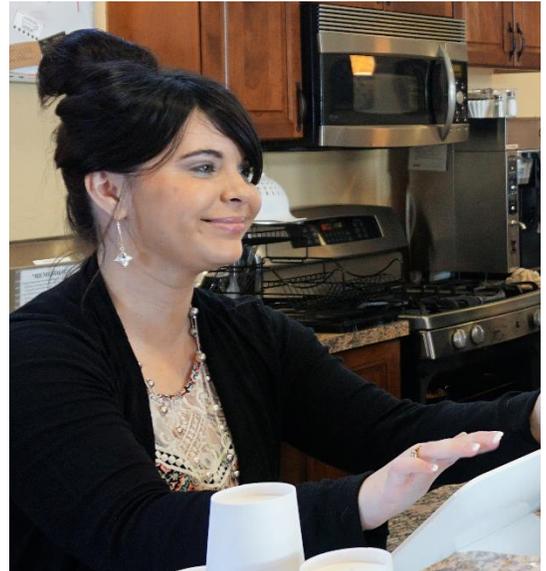
Although Daisy tried hard to make her marriage work, during her third pregnancy, she decided to finally close the doors on that relationship. It was during that time that she entered the work readiness program at The Center for Sharing, and moved into her first apartment separate from her ex-husband joining the Tierra Vida community. This was the first time she began to look to the future and what it holds.

When Daisy started at the Center for Sharing she had little job experience and was trained into an office assistant. Little by little, she found her voice as she took servant leadership classes, attended a nine month intensive business course with Charter College and engaged with co-workers. In time, she was given an opportunity to apprentice for bookkeeping. When CASA, the management company working to develop Tierra Vida, was looking for an on-site bookkeeper, Daisy was given an opportunity to move into that position, where she flourished. She still works there today and is management.



CASSANDRA MILLER

Throughout my life, I have struggled with addiction, emotional issues, and bad relationships. It was not until 2015 that my addiction and bad choices caused me to have a run in with the law and I was entered into the Benton County Adult Drug Court Program. This was an alternative to jail and a way to get my record expunged as long as I could stay clean and fulfill the requirements of the program. This program for me was a curse and a blessing wrapped up into one. A curse because I, at the time, had to sacrifice a lot of my ways of thinking of people, places, and things and a blessing because it brought me to the Center for Sharing (CFS) and the Tierra Vida community.



As soon as I was accepted into the drug court program, I found out I was pregnant. It was not very long that drug court put a no contact order against the baby's father and ordered that I find a sober environment to reside in which ended up being the Union Gospel Mission, where I ended up staying for three months. I was all alone and it was at this point in my life where I started to rely more on God and started to seek his guidance. It was shortly after staying at the mission that I was directed to go to Goodwill and seek employment and after doing so was entered into the Center for Sharing's Work Readiness Program at the Collegium Café.

I remember coming in to my interview not knowing what to expect and worried that I would not be accepted and judged; I was pregnant, trying to apply for a barista job, living at the mission, and in a drug rehabilitation program with a history of addiction. I remember sitting in the boardroom with the leadership of CFS, explaining my story, and feeling relieved because instead of giving me looks of disappointment and ridicule they accepted me and welcomed me. It did not take long for me to feel like a part of their family and to feel supported.

In July 2016, my time at the mission was up due to only being able to stay there for three months. CFS wanted to make sure that I had a safe place to live and helped me be able to afford a one bedroom apartment in the Tierra Vida community.

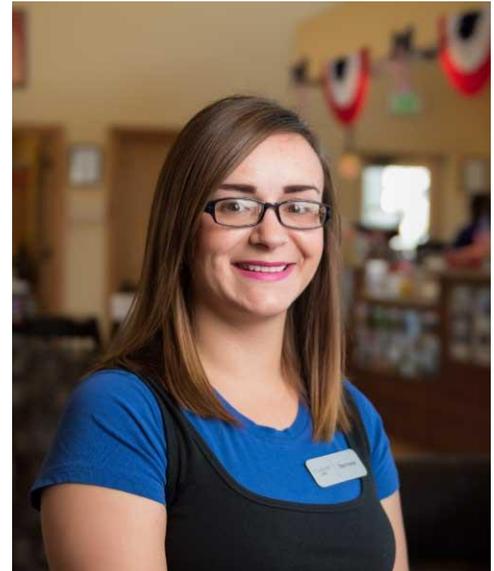
The CFS also offered peer to peer counseling, trauma informed sessions, and a course that better helps you understand who you are as a person. They would also meet with me weekly to see where I was at looking for a job and to give advice when needed. It has been nearly two months since my graduation at CFS, and thanks to their help and support, I am currently working in a full time position at a local hotel.

NEVRESA BEGANOVIC

Nevresa was born and raised in Srebrenica, Bosnia where her father fought in the Bosnian Civil War. As a child, Nevresa was exposed to the horrors of war, right in her backyard, which still impacts her today.

Her family moved to Kennewick, WA in 1998 with the hope that they might find a better life and education, while most of Bosnia was still in rubble, her home included.

Today, she is a single mom and has overcome incredible adversity to not only provide for her daughter but to also complete her Associate of Arts Degree and an Associate of Applied Science in Business Administration.



Nevresa came to the Center for Sharing's work readiness program through Goodwill. After graduation the Center for Sharing offered her a fulltime position as Administrative Assistant.

Nevresa not only wants to impact her field but wants to grow to be an inspiring woman in every area of her life. She wants to be a woman who never lacks compassion and encourages her daughter, as well as other women around her, to be the best that they can be.

Nevresa now serves as a mentor and plays a vital role in the lives of the individuals involved in Center for Sharing's rotating work readiness program as well as in the lives of her co-workers and Center for Sharing community.

CECELIA STETSON

My name is Cecilia Stetson (pictured left). I am twenty-six years old, married, and live in California. Before getting married, I worked at the Center for Sharing. Their program [work readiness program) helped me so much.

When I started working at the Center for Sharing, I was also working on getting my diploma. Cheryl and other Center for Sharing staff believed in me, and would tell me every time they saw me, that I could do it. It was difficult for me to believe because so many were telling me I wouldn't be able to do it. I was also trying to fight an alcohol addiction.

The program, hospitality, and the opportunities I received for personal development played a substantial role in helping me obtain my diploma. It kept me focused and I was able to keep my head in the game. They knew I had a voice and believed in me. The most wonderful thing happened to me when I was accepted into the work readiness program and offered a job. I was trusted, loved, and encouraged. Eventually the Center for Sharing even helped me get out on my own. It was just an amazing feeling to have my own place, a place where I was allowed to be me.

The Center for Sharing helped me find my voice. I started going to college to follow my dream of having my degree. Without Center for Sharing, I would have never thought I could go to college. They made me see that whatever I put my mind to, I can achieve.



JASMINE CASTELLANOS

I started working at the Collegium Café under Adriana Hernandez's management. Adriana and I became good friends. My two years at the Collegium Café were amazing. Glenn Cross, Luke Hollowell, Adriana Hernandez, Daisy Escalera, Walter Chimal, and Cheryl Broetje were great individuals with high ambition to help and empower others.

I didn't have much in life as my mom lived in Oregon and my dad was deported in 2008. I ended up pregnant at 15 and became a mom at 16 years old. I had worked in many different places but never took time to think about a real career I wanted to pursue. The Collegium Café gave me the tools, education, and ambition to progress and to hunger for to strive for; and achieve better in life. They didn't judge or assume I couldn't be or do something in life. They kept high hopes for me.

Glenn encouraged me to go back to school and further my education. I went back to school and obtained my Associate in Applied Science in Business and Administration. Luke Hollowell expressed to me to embrace the flaws and my barriers I struggled with, and thought were holding me back, and to use them to my advantage and teach others that anything can be possible.

One day on the Collegium Café board was a flyer for an employment agency. I was interested and referred to OIC of Washington, an employment and training agency. In just weeks, I was employed as the receptionist assisting migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents.

The Center for Sharing and the Collegium Café continued to encourage and coach me during the process and months after starting, I was given a raise and became an Employment and Training Representative. I assisted individuals with their education and employment goals. I taught and guided individuals and was able to give back to the community.

Please consider giving others the opportunity I was given. I am now working at TerraGraphics Environmental Engineering as the Office Administrator and currently in school to complete my bachelors. I am thankful to the Center for Sharing and Collegium Café Staff and all their effort, support, and blessings rendered to me.

