Vol. 1: Fall 2022 Newsletter

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Center for Violence Prevention

UNI
University of Northern Iowa
The mission of the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention (PATCVP) is to build the capacity of institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, victim service agencies, law enforcement and the criminal justice system to systematically implement best practice violence prevention and evaluation strategies in collaboration with state, family and community partners.

In conjunction with its 10-year anniversary, UNI's Center for Violence Prevention was renamed the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention, in honor of the alumna's decades of work on behalf of survivors of abuse. Patricia, '86, and her husband, O. Jay Tomson, announced a $2 million gift to the center in support of its mission to build the capacity of Iowa’s schools, victim service agencies, law enforcement and other institutions to systematically implement best practices in bystander-based prevention education. The endowed gift will provide operational support as well as sustained funding for the Tomson Scholars Program, which since 2016 has funded student internships with violence prevention organizations and agencies providing direct services to survivors of abuse.

Our goal in sustaining our mission is by developing partnerships and collaborations with school, community, and state-wide partners to conduct sustainable bullying and gender violence prevention initiatives.
A special note from the new director Alysa Mozak

"I am grateful for my co-director, Dr. Michael Fleming, to our graduate assistants, Sarah, Gideon, and Saja, to our schools who support their students in creating safer cultures, to our MVP mentors and advisors across the state, and to our many supporters. I am grateful to the network of people around the state working to support violence prevention in Iowa. PATCVP remains committed to supporting gender violence prevention initiatives across the state of Iowa.

Thank you!"
One of our signature gender violence prevention programs is Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). MVP is based on a peer leadership model that focuses on the role of the “bystander” to interrupt problem behaviors. The MVP model utilizes trained student leaders (MVP mentors) and supportive adults to guide discussions and problem-solving activities around scenarios that depict harassment, bullying and other forms of gender violence.

STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Grant (Department of Justice):

We continue to grow the MVP program in secondary schools across Iowa through the STOP grant, which is a grant funded by the Department of Justice in partnership with the PATCVP, the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. We would like to welcome new STOP grant recipients: Ankeny Centennial High School, Prairie High School in Cedar Rapids, and MidCity School and the Davenport School District!

We recently received a no cost extension on the STOP grant through March 2023, and we anticipate onboarding two new cohorts of schools into the MVP model. Applications are open for our spring 2023 school cohort. With this grant, we have trained over 30 secondary schools in Iowa with a strategic violence prevention model, the MVP program model, and in Youth Mental Health First Aid.
MVP Student Leadership Summits Fall 2022

MVP Student Leadership Summits are designed to harness the collective, positive energy and leadership of student mentors from multiple school districts together for a day of inspiration, learning and team building. Our summits bring together between 200-450 high school MVP mentors and their faculty/staff advisors. We are hosting two summits this fall; one on November 30th from 10-2p in Ankeny, and one on December 8th from 10-2p in Cedar Falls. We anticipate serving 12 schools at these regional summits. Topics will include: using inclusive language, facilitation skills, building community, mental health and wellness, positive peer relationship building skills, and using social media for positive peer relationship building, among others.

UNI Campus MVP Workshop

On Saturday November 5, the PATCVP hosted a campus MVP workshop with modules on social norms, sexual harassment, consent and dating violence, and racial discrimination. 29 students from UNI's Women and Gender Studies Graduate program, School of Education’s Social Emotional Learning minor program, and SigEp fraternity attended.
**Iowa BEST Summit**

In October, the PATCVP had the opportunity to provide two breakout sessions at the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health's Behavioral, Equitable, Social-Emotional, Trauma-Informed Health in Schools (BEST) Summit for teachers across Iowa.

One of our sessions was on our new social-emotional learning curriculum, MVP 2.0 and the other was on our MVP model, which included 3 secondary school’s staff and MVP students from Perry High, Indianola High and Cedar Rapids Kennedy High sharing their experiences on the MVP model.

**Systems of Support Conference**

On Friday November 18, our director spoke at UNI's College for Behavioral Sciences, Educational Opportunity Center and Center for Urban Education's System of Support annual conference with the theme of “A Future without Violence: Creating Healthy and Safe Families and Communities” about school systems response to violence prevention using the MVP program. We were joined by the MVP team from Cedar Falls High School who presented about their experiences using the MVP model.

**UNI School of Education Student Teaching Program**

The PATCVP continues to have a curriculum partnership with the School of Education’s Student Teaching program. On November 9, we spoke to 29 student teachers about bullying prevention in Iowa and the MVP program.
On October 27, the PATCVP, along with the Women and Gender Studies Department, Department of Geography, Department of Art, Department of Political Science, Department of Languages & Literatures, Department of Philosophy & World Religions, and Department of Communication & Media, hosted a panel of women from Afghanistan. The discussion focused on the legal status of women during the era of the Taliban rule and the subsequent period when the United States played an instrumental role in the transition toward a democratic Afghanistan. Panelists discussed their individual experiences regarding the cultural factors that affected the legal status of women.

One of PATCVP's previous graduate assistants and Tomson scholar, Hasina Jalal, was a panelist. On Friday October 28, a luncheon with the panelists was hosted with several Cedar Valley community partners. Both events were well received with over 200 attendees.
On November 4th, two PATCVP graduate assistants attended the Friends of the Family fundraiser event. The event was called "Night in Italy", and it included both a silent and a live auction. The goal was to raise money to support the organization's mission with providing housing and victim services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. This was an opportunity for our GAs to experience how fundraising for non-profit organizations works and to meet some of the staff of FoF, as well as other community members.
Cedar Falls High School has been implementing MVP since 2016. Susan Langan, a school counselor, is the team's MVP sponsor. Cedar Falls High School has 118 peer mentors who go into sophomore health classes to implement the program four times a semester. This year their focus was on gossiping, healthy relationships/relationship abuse, consent, and suicide prevention.
I am from the Kingdom of Bahrain. The availability of a violence prevention track under UNI's Women and Gender Studies program and the possibility of working with the PATCVP actually motivated me to apply to UNI. I am particularly interested in gender violence prevention and the prevention of violence in intimate relationships, both of which are specifically addressed by the center.

Fun fact about me: I am trilingual; I speak English, Arabic, and German!

Saja is a UNI Women's and Gender Studies graduate student, researching murals of Palestinian women and their role in public memory. Working at the PATCVP I get the opportunity to learn about various methods on violence prevention and earn a couple of certificates in the field. The PATCVP is a great resource center for students interested in public health and social justice.

Fun fact about me: I recently finished watching Grey's Anatomy, so I'm officially a surgeon!
Gideon Bawuah (he/ him)

Gideon is a UNI Women's and Gender Studies graduate student, concentrating on violence prevention and wellbeing.

“Working with PATCVP gives me the opportunity to work with and tap into the rich knowledge of our violence prevention experts in this field. It provides me with hands-on experience about violence prevention and intervention strategies and the opportunity of working and learning from other victim service agencies and their approach towards helping in the field of violence prevention in our society today. The experiences gained from the center and other agencies will help me in the future to help address issues of violence against women and children and also changing negative social norms in Ghana.”
Through a generous donation to the Patricia Tomson Center for Violence Prevention (PATCVP) from O. Jay and Patricia Tomson, the PATCVP offers financial support for eligible students in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences who are undertaking internships in agencies, non-profit organizations, associations, or government agencies that have a focus on interpersonal violence such as child maltreatment, sexual, domestic, and family violence.

Focus areas may include related policy development, partnership/coalition development, criminal justice issues, education etc.

We funded six UNI students this semester, granting $14,300 in funds to support these students.

Congratulations to our Fall 2022 Tomson Scholars:

- Ieshia C.-MSW Program
  Internship site: Hope Connection Counseling

- Kinsey Lester-MSW Program
  Internship site: Allen Child Protection Center

- Raeann Meling-Social Work Program
  Internship site: House of Hope

- Kaleah Davis-Family Services
  Internship site: Family and Children’s Council

- Autumn Stowe-MSW Program
  Internship site: Cedar Valley Angels

- Samantha Owens-MSW Program
  Internship site: Prairie Creek School/Tanger
We would like to honor and recognize an award in which Pat and O. Jay Tomson received in November for the Distinguished Alumni Awards at UNI. They are recipients of the Purple and Gold Award, the most prestigious award for lifetime giving that the UNI Foundation bestows on behalf of the university. In their 40-year giving history with UNI, the Tomson’s have supported various UNI programs and they established the Tomson Scholars with our center in 2016. Most notably, the Tomson’s recognized the importance of the work our center does through a transformational gift of $2.5 million which was endowed to our center last fiscal year.

Joan Oeltjen Violence Prevention Internship Scholarship

This scholarship is intended to be used for supporting tuition and/or living expenses for an intern focusing on violence prevention who is a declared major in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Our fall 2022 Oeltjen scholar is Kaleah Davis.

UNI Distinguished Awards Celebration

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