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Office of University Communications

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Lauren Quesenberry ('09) is Case Manager for Transitional Housing Program

While studying English and psychology at Gardner-Webb University, Lauren Quesenberry ('09) aspired to do more than talk about social justice principles.

“As I pursued these courses, I was overwhelmed with the vast disconnect between academic discourse and activism,” Quesenberry shared. “I began to ask questions and seek opportunities to serve at the local domestic violence shelter, a pregnancy center, and other agencies.”

She also had many lengthy discussions with her professors who helped her decide to pursue a graduate degree in women’s studies at Loyola University in Chicago, Ill. As a graduate student, Quesenberry continued to look for ways to serve people in the community.

“I found myself leading creative writing groups and shadowing case managers,” she related. “I later interned at a women’s transitional housing organization and was offered a position.”

She obtained her master’s degree and received her certification as a qualified mental health professional. She’s moved to Washington, D.C., and works as a case manager at Calvary Women’s Services, a transitional housing program in Washington, D.C. She assists 14 women from various backgrounds of domestic violence, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependency and chronic homelessness.

“I facilitate two support groups onsite, which include but are not limited to, topics of grief and loss, codependency, body-mind connection and creative writing,” she explained. “I provide daily shelter duties such as answering phones, responding to emails and faxes, and taking care of general items having to do with overall care for the women we serve.”

Her studies at Gardner-Webb and interactions with professors provided a foundation for her work.



Photo courtesy of Hi Uan Kang Haaga



Photo courtesy of Hi Uan Kang Haaga

“I wrote press releases on social justice issues and took courses on women’s literature and crisis intervention counseling,” she offered. “I was so grateful for the many professors I had who encouraged me, challenged me and really forced me to ask some difficult questions. I think that a professor has a unique opportunity to blow the doors off their students’ house – so to speak – just by asking questions or posing scenarios and that is what I found at Gardner-Webb.”

The Gardner-Webb professor rumored among students to be the most “challenging and amazing” in the English Department, Dr. June Hobbs, became Quesenberry’s most trusted confidant. “Dr. Hobbs was and still is my ‘mother.’ She became my mentor, my support person, and someone I greatly admired,” Quesenberry described. “She went above and beyond her professional duties. She challenged me personally and academically. She encouraged my writing, when I had been discouraged and provided an unconditionally safe environment for both my mind and my heart. To this day, we keep in touch via phone and visits. You don’t find that at just any university.”