

## **Jelisa Clarke – Krista Sepp Nomination – Horizon Award**

February 2013

Jelisa first came to us by way of a grant for a summer CYC Assistant in 2008. At this time, she was in her 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Fanshawe College Child & Youth Worker program and had been highly recommended by the college placement coordinator for this role. She was outgoing, good natured, enthusiastic, and excited to begin work in the CYC field. Her role was to support the CYC's who were running the summer program for the children in the residential treatment programs. This basically included whatever they needed assistance with- organization of materials, research, set up, planning - whatever tasks they needed help with to ensure that each week of summer programming went off without a hitch. Little did we know what a gem we had in Jelisa!! She jumped in with both feet!! Her creativity was unstoppable, and her abundant positivity contagious. She not only agreed to help with the organizing, but was able to offer suggestions, find new places to visit, share her own experiences, and seek out new ways to approach planning. Jelisa arrived every day with a smile and a willingness to work hard. From her first week, she shared that she loved being at Vanier. She loved the work of the CYC's, and you could see she was just itching to roll up her sleeves and work directly with clients. Although she did not have a role on the floor with the kids, they would not or could not stay away from her! Her laugh, her smile, and her innate love of play made her a magnet for the kids. We knew then that she would be an amazing CYC and encouraged her to come back to us for a formal school placement. We were not wrong, in fact we are so lucky. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> year CYW student at Vanier, she continued to display all those qualities and more.

As soon as she graduated, Jelisa was hired on as a Relief CYC staff at Vanier. By the end of 2011, Jelisa was in a CYC – Residential contract position. She has continued in various contracts since then. We have seen her continue to grow and become an integral part of our residential CYC team, and the larger agency!!!

Professional development activities that Jelisa participated in over the past year include: Trauma Training; Creating Therapeutic Alliances training; Creating Healthy Sexual Environments in Residential Settings; Walking With the Wounded; and Leaky Brakes (working with children with Tourette's Syndrome).

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Lizz Black, Tara Lawrance, and Robyn Driscoll – fulltime Residential CYC's at Vanier nominated Jelisa as the 2013 Vanier nominee for the Krista Sepp Horizon award. Here is what they wrote in their nomination letter:

### **ENTHUSIASM**

**Jelisa always gets the kids moving and excited about any activities or programming. She is the Hand-in-Hand (a residential treatment program) Team cheerleader! Jelisa has a way of getting her co-workers motivated and excited to take part in activities that they don't always look forward ie: FAN (Family Activity Night).** Her enthusiasm is contagious for her co-workers and the children. She is always the first person to volunteer to organize and plan a group activity.

She has found a way to share her excitement with everyone around her and making them feel excited as well. She demonstrates her enthusiasm with her warm, open smiles and bubbly personality. Jelisa has organized and planned a dance party for the children from all three residential programs. She also took a lead in organizing the Hand-in-Hand families' Christmas party – enjoyed by more than 35 family members! Her passion for these two special events during the holiday season is what helped to inspire others to thoroughly enjoy their time and to make them a great success for the children and their families!

### **EMPATHY**

Jelisa has a very caring heart. She has experience a great deal of tragedy in her life in the last year or so. She has pulled on her own experiences in a positive way while working with staff and clients. She shows compassion and understanding towards everyone around her. She has the ability to understand others' feelings and meets them where they are at emotionally to best support in that moment. Jelisa has been able to develop supportive therapeutic relationships with the children that make them feel safe and comfortable in sharing their stories with her.

### **CREATIVITY**

Jelisa is just a very creative person! Whether it is in the moment when working with an individual child, or planning for some future group program, Jelisa is able to think outside of the box and to present her ideas in a non-threatening, open-to-feedback way. She is continuously seeking out new and fresh ways of presenting her ideas to both co-workers and the children.

Jelisa is bursting with positive and fun ideas for activities to do with the kids but is respectful of others' opinions and input. She has organized many activities both in the residence and the community. She is able to seek out community resources to find events and activities for our children. Jelisa plans summer programming in a way to include the various interests and skills of the children. She keeps them engaged!

### **INITIATIVE**

Jelisa is quick to think on the spot and seek out tasks that need to be completed during any given shift. She is often found to be one step ahead of co-workers. She is also quick to volunteer for leading group activities.

Jelisa successfully co-organized the Hand-in-Hand camping trip for 2012. She also did an amazing job organizing the Hand-in-Hand dance for the children that was held during FAN (Family Activity Night). She even had a parent of one of the children act as the DJ for the group! Talk about boosting a father's confidence level and the pride of a son! She organized the Hand-in-Hand Christmas celebration and effectively delegated tasks for this event.

Jelisa is willing to come in early, stay late, and put as much of her own time into the job that is needed. She is always willing and able to volunteer for tasks within the cottage and is eager to learn new things in and around the agency. Jelisa has expressed and displayed a constant desire to grow as a person, a CYC, and as part of the residential team!