

Script for NFOA Bridge Mini Bodcast Featuring Dwayne Anthony, CIS

Bumper music lead in...

KB: Welcome to this 10-minute episode of the NFOA Bridge mini bodcast. N-F-O-A is the acronym for Not for Ourselves Alone, Washburn's motto. And the virtual bridge is located right here on Teaching Tuesdays, connecting Washburn with the Topeka community and beyond through community-engaged learning also known as CEL.

I'm Karen Barron, Community-Engaged Learning Coordinator for the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning and host of this series. Today, our featured guest(s) is Dwayne Anthony, Field Director for Communities in Schools Mid-America. Welcome, Dwayne, and thank you for being here.

DA:: Thanks so much for having me, Karen. I appreciate the opportunity.

Great. First, please give us a brief overview of what services Communities in Schools, CIS, provides for the Topeka and surrounding communities, your overall goals and mission.

DA: Awesome. Communities in Schools Mid-America is a wonderful non-profit organization that partners with school districts, and what we try to do is take care of students and families in ways that sometimes get overlooked. Some of our biggest works are dealing with basic needs. We try to make sure that needs like clothing and food and hygiene and school supplies. Those things don't get in the way of students being successful in school. We also plan programming with our schools that sometimes benefits the entire school body with different academic behavior or attendance incentives, different programming in that way, as well as we have a caseload of students that we work with usually around 55-65 students that we specifically work on with goals in those same arenas academic behavior and attendance and try to just promote success and give the student an advocate that so often some of our students are needing. We are in Topeka, we have five schools or five sites that we are active in, Highland Park, Topeka High, Topeka West, State Street Elementary as well as Ross Elementary. I'm also as a Field Director, I also have a school in Lawrence and two in Iowa for my particular area. In a nutshell, that's really what we do, we really try to connect students and families with all the resources and things available in the community that can benefit them and allow students to keep first things, just go to school and concentrate on academics and maybe not so many of the other things going on that many of us are dealing with.

KB: Okay, yes. Thank you for that overview of the services and the scope that really you know reaches quite an area with the services that you provide for communities in schools. Lots of schools involved there. I know that CIS has partnered with faculty members in the past here at Washburn, notably the partnership between State Street School and Jason Miller's Anthropology class a couple of years ago, but I'm just curious especially in this particular pandemic time we're all emerging from, what is your vision for future partnerships with Washburn faculty and staff? What do you hope a partnership would look like?

DA (your response) You know, just that open communication. You know, I think this is important what you're doing, and I appreciate you, Karen. Because now it shows what Communities in Schools does and then that just allows for a lot of great brainstorming and ideas. For example, when I was a student support coordinator, I had some faculty from Washburn come and mentor students. It maybe was like thirty minutes to an hour where they just spoke to students on various topics. One I think was like legal, like pursuing legal degrees and was giving students information that was interested in that field. At other times, just any way that we can make that connection and keep that pipeline open for whatever Washburn may have going on that benefits students and families as well as maybe we have students that just need to see what Washburn does or what's available to them after high school. So, I think the sky's the limit, and I just really see it as being just a relationship that we can always tap into and say, hey, you know, we have this going on at Washburn, we'd love to have the students or families aware of this or take part in this, and then vice-versa where I'm able to possibly reach and say hey, is there someone who can speak to our students about this, or is there someone that, you know just that relationship I think is so important and has been beneficial in the past and will continue to be despite COVID.

KB: Well, I totally agree with you. I think open communication is key and you know the reciprocity between our campus and community objectives and goals are also so important and I love how open you are, and I hope you will reach out with any ideas that you have, any you know brainstorming that you'd like to do because I think that is exactly where we begin with forming partnerships is listening to each other and just coming up with with ideas that will mutually benefit both, and I love that idea of collaborating and working together. So, I really look forward to talking with you further and to helping set up any relationships between Washburn and CIS, so thank you so much for sharing your vision of potential partnerships with Communities in Schools and Washburn faculty and students. It has been a real pleasure talking with you, and we look forward to partnering with you.

DA: Karen, you're so awesome. I appreciate the back and forth we've had even before this meeting, and I look forward to partnering with you as well. Thank you for including us and please know I'm just an email, a call, you know I'm available. So, thank you, thank you, thank you, and God bless. I hope you have a great rest of your day.

Okay. Thank you so much, Dwayne. It's been a great pleasure.

For more information on this bodcast, or how you can get involved with Community-Engaged Learning at Washburn, please see the CEL Pillar on the Center for Teaching Excellence webpage, and contact me, Karen Barron, Coordinator of CEL for CTTEL. See you next week on the NFOA bridge.

And to Tom Morgan for composing our bumper music and the Washburn jazz band for recording it, featuring Craig Treinen on sax, Thanks!

Bumper music fade out