



affiliate
ə'filēət/
noun:
a person or organization
officially attached to a larger
body

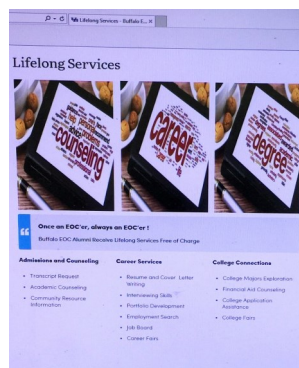
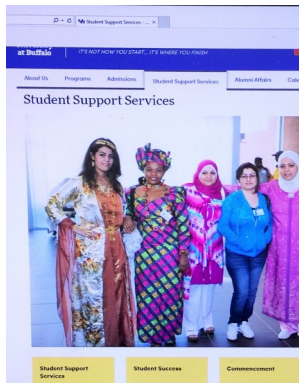
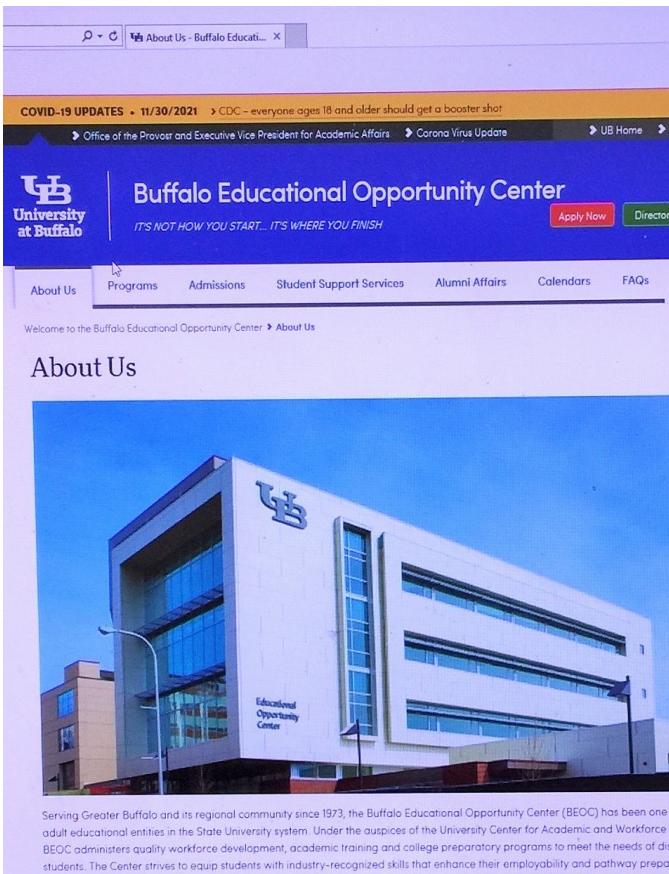
The **AFFILIATE**

BEOC Alumni Newsletter

The New BEOC Website Wows

The Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center showcased its new website sporting a bold new look! Click below to see BEOC's institutional profile, updated program information, admissions application procedure, student support services, videos, photo galleries, FAQ's, calendars, hyperlinks and of course the *Alumni Affairs* tab!

<http://www.buffalo.edu/eoc.html>

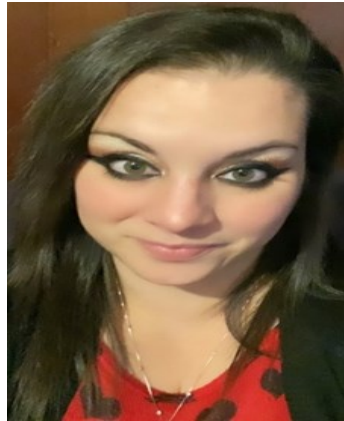


Inside this Issue

- New BEOC Website.....Cover
- BEOC 2021 Distinguished Alumni Honoree2
- 2021 Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Alumni Honoree.....3
- Alumni Show Their Community Spirit.....4
- Be In The Know About Buffalo....4
- Class Updates.....5
- Alumni Success Cards5
- Alumni Ambassadors Rock and Roll.....6
- Partnership with SUNY Empire College: Alumna Shares Her Experience6
- Center Updates7
- Alumna Memorial Tribute.....7
- Message from the Executive Director.....8



Buffalo EOC 2021 Alumni Honoree



Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient

MS. MANDY FERRINI '09

Ms. Mandy Ferrini is an incredible representation of the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center's mission of self-empowerment and lifelong learning. Ms. Ferrini was a single parent coping with her son's need for open-heart surgery while delaying her own reconstructive surgery from a serious work injury. She is a domestic violence survivor and an entrepreneur who lost her business due to arson. Through it all, Ms. Ferrini not only persevered but thrived.

Ms. Ferrini enrolled in the Dental Assistant Program when she was vulnerable and unsure about what her next steps would be. Despite her challenges, she successfully completed her academic program, earned her certification as a Dental Assistant and accepted positions at Baker Victory Dental and WNY Dental. Her desire to continue to grow led to her enrolling at D'Youville College where she earned her BA degree in Sociology in 2014. In recognition of her achievements as a non-traditional student, she was selected to receive the "Older and Wiser Learner (OWL) Award."

In 2017, Ms. Ferrini earned a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Medaille College and was inducted into the American Counseling Association Honor Society. Upon graduation, she accepted a Marketing Specialist position at United HealthCare where she worked until the COVID-19 Pandemic forced her layoff. Ms. Ferrini's tenaciousness once again overshadowed this obstacle and she and a partner re-opened *Pizza Bella & More*, an iconic restaurant in the Buffalo Riverside neighborhood. There, Ms. Ferrini supplied lunches to students learning remotely from the Charter School for Applied Technology, and purchased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for neighborhood residents. In July 2020, *Pizza Bella & More* fell victim to an arson fire, but Ms. Ferrini and her partner forged ahead and opened another restaurant, re-naming it *Bella's Parkside Tavern*.

Ms. Ferrini stated, "My life has a theme; every time I accomplish something from adversity, I need to accomplish more."

Buffalo EOC 2021 Alumni Honoree



Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award Recipient

MS. BERNARDA ARIAS '14

Ms. Bernarda Arias was born in the Dominican Republic. She came to the United States at a young age and lived in New York City until she moved to Buffalo in 1998 to pursue her college degree. After arriving in Buffalo, Ms. Arias accepted a position at a non-profit organization where she was employed for 7 years. When she was laid off she changed her career aspirations and enrolled at the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center where she earned certification in Medical Billing and Coding. Ms. Arias credits the BEOC with helping her to see the career opportunities available to her in the field of Allied Health. Her passion led her to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from SUNY Buffalo State College. Ms. Arias is a qualified Human Resource professional with over 15 years of experience working at Fisher-Price/Mattel, Southwest Key Program, Inc. and ultimately at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Ms. Arias is currently the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Administrator at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. In this role, she is in charge of planning special events throughout the year, which focus on celebrating diverse cultures, religions, and holidays such as Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. She also coordinates many faith-based events (e.g., celebrating Islam, Festival of Lights, etc.) and luncheons that focus on educating Roswell personnel and the surrounding community about different religions and beliefs. Her duties also include assisting in any Center harassment and discrimination issues that may arise.

Ms. Arias stated that one of the best aspects of her position in the Diversity Office is giving back to the community. *"I learn more about myself and I meet interesting people who give me new insights on life. But the most important thing is that I am making a difference; even doing small things can have a big impact on others."* It is with this perspective that Bernarda facilitates community outreach events between Roswell and the BEOC. Ms. Arias also connects with other community organizations including the Pride Center of Buffalo, Native American Community Services, the Buffalo Employment and Training Center, the Hispanic Heritage Council and the Buffalo Urban League to educate them about employment opportunities at Roswell Park.

Ms. Arias is a strong advocate of young women. Through her sorority, Sigma Lambda Upsilon/Señoritas Latinas Unidas, she became the co-founder of the L.A.D.Y.S. (Leadership, Advancement and Development of our Young Sisters) program that focuses on reaching young women who aspire to enroll in a college/university. Ms. Arias has also received community recognition as the recipient of the 2018 Mary B. Talbert Civic and Cultural Club *Unsung Heroes Award* and the 2018 Hispanic Coalition of NY *40 under 40 Rising Star*.

Alumni Show Their Community Spirit



Pictured Above: Bernarda Arias '14 Sitting Front Row Fourth From Left

Bernarda Arias, Class of 2014, organizes Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Fruit Belt Neighborhood Clean-Up (June, 2021)



BEOC Alumni Cheer for the Buffalo Bills for a playoff run!
...We still BILLIEVE!

BE IN THE KNOW ABOUT BUFFALO!

...City of Good Neighbors...

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/>

Buffalo Animal Shelter

[https://www.buffalony.gov/521/
Adopt-a-Pet](https://www.buffalony.gov/521/Adopt-a-Pet)

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

[https://www.shpbeds.org/
chapter/ny-buffalo](https://www.shpbeds.org/chapter/ny-buffalo)

**Urgent Need
for 2022**

**Backlog of 210 Requests
for Beds for Children**

Build, assemble and deliver
quality beds to
children who don't own
one in our area

[https://www.wgrz.com/
article/life/holidays/210-
western-new-york-kids-do-not-
have-a-bed-to-sleep-in-this-
christmas-how-you-can-help-
sleep-in-heavenly-peace/71-
734d7878-c634-4620-9221-
9e5f22334a90](https://www.wgrz.com/article/life/holidays/210-western-new-york-kids-do-not-have-a-bed-to-sleep-in-this-christmas-how-you-can-help-sleep-in-heavenly-peace/71-734d7878-c634-4620-9221-9e5f22334a90)



"The Buffalo EOC was my launchpad for higher education and professional development. I am forever grateful for taking that first step on my career path at the Buffalo EOC."

LaShawn Chinn
 Alumni 1996, Pharmacy Technician Program
 Hilbert College, MA in Public Administration
 SUNY Empire, BS in Business Management
 2012 Arthur O. Eve Community Service Award Honoree



CONGRATULATIONS LaShawn!

**IT'S NOT HOW YOU START... IT'S WHERE YOU FINISH.
 THE BUFFALO EOC IS WAITING FOR YOU!**



"The Buffalo EOC faculty and staff helped create independence in me."

Paula Love
 Alumni 2004, Registered Medical Assistant
 Completion Coach, Buffalo State College
 Masters Higher Education and Student Affairs
 Administration, Buffalo State College -
 May 2021
 2019 Arthur O. Eve Education and Community
 Service Award Honoree



CONGRATULATIONS Paula!

**IT'S NOT HOW YOU START... IT'S WHERE YOU FINISH.
 THE BUFFALO EOC IS WAITING FOR YOU!**



"The Buffalo EOC inspired me to think beyond doing what I was told to do, instead to think about what I 'could' do."

DONALD PAULK
 Alumni 1974, College Preparation Program
 Masters Degree Social Work, Buffalo State College
 Former Resident Coordinator WNY Veteran Housing Coalition
 United States Marine Corps Veteran
 3rd Vice Commander American Legion Jesse Clipper
 Post No.430
 2019 BEOC Distinguished Alumni Award Honoree



CONGRATULATIONS Donald!

**IT'S NOT HOW YOU START... IT'S WHERE YOU FINISH.
 THE BUFFALO EOC IS WAITING FOR YOU!**



"The Buffalo EOC gave me the confidence to seek more opportunities offered by the United States."

AHMED SALEH
 Alumni 1998, English as a Second Language
 Owner of Mandella Markets, Buffalo, NY
 2020 Honoree Arthur O. Eve Education and
 Community Service Award



CONGRATULATIONS Ahmed!

**IT'S NOT HOW YOU START... IT'S WHERE YOU FINISH.
 THE BUFFALO EOC IS WAITING FOR YOU!**

CLASS UPDATES

***BEOC
 ALUMNI
 SPEAK
 FOR
 THEMSELVES***

Bernarda Arias '14

Promoted to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Administrator; Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Marlyce Godoy James '11

Promoted to Department Head SUNY Erie School of Dental Hygiene. Established a scholarship "Minorities Aspiring to Become Dental Hygienists" Spring 2022.

LaVita Spentz '88

Earned Associates in Social Science, Concentration in Human Services SUNY Erie Class of 2021. Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society . Deans List. National Society of Leadership and Success.

Cynthia Truesdell '93 '08

Renewed her vows celebrating her first year wedding anniversary

Congratulations to all!

Alumni Ambassadors Rock and Roll



BEOC Alumni Ambassadors supported the Center's *Rocking & Enrolling* Open House on September 11, 2021. Whether in person or through recorded videos, Alumni shared their perspectives on the programming and support services that prepared them to earn their high school equivalency diplomas and college degrees and jump start their careers. Information tables, tours and giveaways made for a great event.



Pictured Above: Raphael Mitchell '15

**It's not how you start...it's where you finish.
The Buffalo EOC is waiting for you!**

BEOC PARTNERSHIP

SUNY EMPIRE COLLEGE

Ms. LaShawn Chinn '96 speaks of her experience as a BEOC student and student at SUNY Empire College. Click the link below to watch her video recording.

The Buffalo EOC and SUNY Empire College have developed an exclusive new partnership offering BEOC students and alumni the opportunity to earn an Associates and/or Bachelors degree via online programming. Credit can be earned for real life experience. BEOC students and alumni applicants will receive a \$100.00 scholarship and a waiver of the orientation fee.

**Click Link Below to Open
LaShawn's
Video Recording**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX2dK-8B5zo>

*You CAN
earn your college degree
online from
SUNY Empire College*

*Contact the BEOC College
Connections Office
Oliver Glover
olivergl@buffalo.edu
716.645.1910*

CENTER UPDATES

RETIREMENTS

Mr. Anthony Miller

Admissions Advisor

NEW HIRES

Ms. Jacquelyn Milbrand

Admissions Advisor

Ms. Rashada Stewart

Senior Career Planning and Development Associate

Ms. Quishara Williams

Admissions Assistant

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Meredith Anding Jr.

Member of *Tougaloo Nine*
Associate Professor for EOC

Click Link Below to Read Article

[AP News](#)

Mr. Ahmad Ansar

Career Planning and Placement Counselor

Ms. Marilyn Bryant Harris

Keyboard Specialist/
Office Assistant 1

Ms. Deborah Grenier

Senior Staff Assistant
Administrative Services

Ms. Belzora Lovett

Associate Professor for EOC

Ms. Gwendolyn Pippens

Associate Professor for EOC

Alumna Memorial Tribute

ZOLA LOWERY CROWELL '75

Jan.1, 1949 - Aug. 3, 2021

Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award
Honoree 2015



“EOC gave me the courage to move beyond the falsehood.”

...says Ms. Zola Lowery Crowell upon reflecting how she was placed in special education classes from first through twelfth grade. Elaborating, Ms. Crowell states that she never underwent any formal learning assessment, but one thing she knew for certain was how to live with a stigma. That is, until she came to EOC. *“EOC never let me buy into that label”.*

Ms. Crowell grew up in Andalusia, Alabama and Niagara Falls, New York and lived in Buffalo from 1967-2011. During this period, Zola worked as a US Postal Service Night Distribution Clerk in Buffalo and then briefly in Manhattan, enrolled at Buffalo EOC and earned her High School Equivalency Diploma and then took College Preparation courses, worked at Millard Fillmore Hospital as a Nursing Aide and then as a Secretary in the Open Heart Intensive Care Unit, attended Millard Fillmore and Empire State Colleges and worked for 25 years as an Administrative Assistant at Buffalo Veteran’s Hospital. Ms. Crowell attests: *“Buffalo EOC was my lifeline. Because EOC believed in me, I developed my own resolve to succeed and help others in need.”*

Zola’s commitment to community has never wavered. She has been active in the Niagara Falls Chapter of the Links, Incorporated; the Association of Black Social Workers; the Harriet Tubman 300’s; the Black Pioneers of the Niagara Frontier; the American Business Women’s Association and the First Shiloh Baptist Church. Presently, she is a member of the Charlotte Crown Jewels Chapter of the Links Incorporated, a venue through which she attended the United Nations Gala and met Secretary General Kofi Annan and Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Embracing what “lifeline” truly means, Zola believes that a person’s past influences their future. Genealogy has become her true passion. She has been recognized by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC for her gift of her genealogical manuscript of her Great-Great Grandmother, Charity Butler, who was born into slavery in the 1850’s. She has also received recognition for her research from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Ms. Zola Lowery Crowell retired after 30 years in the Federal Government.

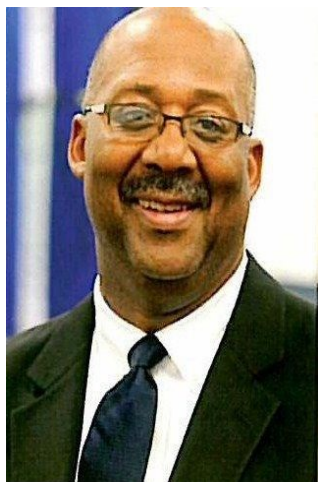
Original Narrative Alumni Affairs 2015

Message from the Buffalo EOC Executive Director

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.”

Winston Churchill

Dear BEOC Alumni,



Julius Gregg Adams, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Happy Valentine’s Day. Although it is a day that originated as a Christian feast day honoring early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine, it has become a significant celebration of romance and love. I hope you will take the time to honor any loved one (family member or friend) who has helped you get ahead, that was instrumental in your success and assisted you, as you became an alumnus of the Buffalo EOC.

Despite the pandemic, the Buffalo EOC continued to experience new beginnings that included hiring new full-time staff and offering new programming. Ms. Rashada Stewart, Senior Career Planning and Associate in the Career Services Office, Ms. Jacquelyn Milbrand, Admissions Advisor, and Ms. Quishara Williams, Admissions Assistant, joined us. If you are interested in returning to enroll in one of our vocational or academic programs, or our college prep program, please contact Ms. Milbrand or Ms. Williams for assistance. They will gladly provide you with guidance.

On March 25th the BEOC will be offering its second Security Guard Training Program. This program is designed to prepare students for the NYS Security Guard licensing exam. Please contact our Admissions Office or access our website (buffalo.edu/eoc) to learn more about this program.

Finally, Ms. Keysor has been asked to work with dental assisting alumni to create a new Dental Assisting Alumni Association. The purpose of the BEOC Dental Assisting Association will be to support a network of former graduates, raise the profile of the Center and connect recent graduates with established professionals in the field of dentistry.

As lifelong learners, I hope you embrace the BEOC’s mission to provide individuals with tuition-free college preparation and the education and training they require to secure post-secondary credentials, and/or enter employment. Stay safe.

Lifelong Services Available to Alumni

Mission of Buffalo EOC

The Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center is committed to producing lifelong learners who are self-directed, empowered and committed to excellence.

Career Services

Job search, resume writing, cover letter writing, interviewing skills, portfolio development, career exploration
716.645.1944

College Connections

College application and financial aid assistance
716.645.1910

Counseling Unit

Connections with community agencies and services
716.645.1939

BUFFALO
SUNY UCAWD



Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center
555 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203
716.645.9555

<http://www.buffalo.edu/eoc.html>

www.facebook.com/buffaloeducational.opportunitycenter

Instagram @buffalo_eoc Twitter@UBEOC

Margot Barrett Keysor
Administrator Alumni Affairs and Student Development Office
716.645.1908 keysor@buffalo.edu