

FIC-MCC social work career building program accepting applications through May 15

Queen Creek Sun Times Staff
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Family Involvement Center and the Mesa Community College Social Work Program are accepting applications for the FIC-MCC Parent Peer Support Social Work Scholarship Stipend Program through May 15, 2023. The program seeks participants who are in recovery from opioid use or addiction wishing to launch a career helping others with similar life experiences. | Source: Mesa Community College

Family Involvement Center (FIC) and the Mesa Community College Social Work Program are accepting applications for the FIC-MCC Parent Peer Support Social Work Scholarship Stipend Program through May 15. The program seeks participants who are in recovery from opioid use or addiction wishing to launch a career helping others with similar life experiences.

Initially launched in fall 2020, the program, created as part of a four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

to FIC, is designed specifically to develop careers for individuals based on their life experiences so they may help others dealing with similar circumstances.

"More than 36 parents have successfully completed or are in the process of completing the program thus far – transforming their struggles into strengths and a new career," said Dori DiPietro, director of the MCC Social Work program. "We hope these future Parent Peer Support Specialists will find their new careers rewarding and continue their education at MCC."

FIC provides support services and resources to ensure participant success during the two-year training program.

A recent graduate of the program shared: "I love that the entire idea behind the program is purely to support people and to provide them an opportunity to do something meaningful. They believe that even a person who has scraped the bottom of their bottom is worth an amazing opportunity - so much so that they ensure this person has the tools to be successful. And that is such a beautiful thing."

Participants selected for the program receive a year of college tuition covering the cost of Live Online social work courses at MCC, a computer to access classes and a monthly stipend to cover the cost of internet service and other expenses to remove barriers to participating in the program. After completing the first year of classes, which includes work experience through an internship at FIC, participants are eligible to apply for a paid position in an FIC apprenticeship program, continuing education guidance and job placement assistance.

"Life experiences – which are typically categorized as shameful – serve as a strength in this program," said Jane Kallal, FIC executive director. "This is the most rewarding work – reducing the stigma surrounding recovery – encouraging those struggling through the process to see new possibilities while building careers in child welfare."

Ideal program participants are parents who have lived experiences with the child welfare system, who have earned a high school or general education diploma, have lived in Arizona for at least 12 months and can commit to completing course expectations, attending twice weekly online classes and completing homework. Social work is the nation's No. 1 helping profession and the MCC Social Work Program is the top contributor of quality social work students to schools of social work in Arizona.

Visit mesacc.edu/social-work to learn more and apply to participate in this innovative, community-driven, career-building opportunity.