



MU Academy prepares professionals to lead Positive Youth Development

As a youth trainer and consultant from sunny Monterey, California, Tritia Moneypenny is not the first person you would expect to meet on the MU campus over winter break. But in January 2016, Tritia traveled to MU for the first time to attend the Youth Development Academy (YDA), a course for professionals in positive youth development.

What motivated Tritia to attend the Academy was fifteen years of experience and passion working with youth. She earned her bachelor's degree in marine biology in 2001 from the University of California-Santa Cruz, and worked with the Monterey Bay Aquarium for 11 years as an education specialist and teen program lead.

Later, Tritia took assignments as a speaker coach with TEDxMonterey and a consultant with the PURSUIT Youth Expo, a program of the Community of Caring Monterey Peninsula. Currently, she works with the iLead+Design community action studio, and as an independent consultant for schools and youth programs.

Tritia saw the Academy as an opportunity to take a course in-person during her final semester of online graduate studies. While all of her other courses had met exclusively online, the Academy gave her the chance to visit MU, meet some of her online course professors for the first time, and participate side-by-side with practitioners and students attending YDA.

Through learning how topics like Ages & Stages, Experiential Learning, and Youth-Adult Partnerships can all fit together to create stronger programs, Tritia and other participants applied the science of youth development toward meeting the developmental needs of all youth.

Tritia says the five-day course was a valuable and timely experience as she completes her graduate capstone project. Back home in Monterey, she is consulting with York School administrators on improvements to the school's service-learning program.

"I am bringing the lessons gleaned from YDA and my coursework back to York School," says Tritia. "After graduation, I aim to better understand how Positive Youth Development can be applied in academic settings and systems." Ultimately, Tritia's goal is to help young people use team building approaches in solving social and economic problems in their communities.

The next MU Youth Development Academy is May 16-20, 2016. Students and professionals may complete the course for-credit or non-credit. The Academy is a partnership between the University of Missouri Extension 4-H Center for Youth Development, MU Department of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology, MU Department of Agricultural Education and Leadership, and Mizzou Online. To learn more, visit: <http://4h.missouri.edu/YDA/main>



Tritia Moneypenny participates in team building activities with participants of the Youth Development Academy. The program teaches professionals how to apply the science of youth development to programs, organizations, campuses and community settings.



Moneypenny meets with MU faculty at an Academy networking reception. The five-day program brings together youth development researchers, professionals, and students to learn from each other.

Story by Phil Leslie and Steve Hennes. Photos by MU Extension Cooperative Media Group.