

BREAKING NEWS

Coral Reef Academy Las Vegas, Nevada

Dr. Karen Nelson Joins Coral Reef As New Clinical Director

Contact:

Rodney Rice
702-233-0444

www.coralreefacademy.com

April 3, 2009

Dr. Karen Nelson will be stepping in as the new Clinical Director when Lu Vaughn departs and will have time to transition appropriately. It is only fitting then that this update focuses on who Dr. Karen Nelson is as a professional and a person. My primary goal being that you deserve to know her as she will be in charge of our clinical services and most importantly she will be leading our collective initiative throughout your son's journey to recovery.

Education background and licensure:

Karen graduated with a B.A. degree from the Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas in 1988. After a 2 year stint with the US Peace Corps, she returned to the University of Houston, Texas where she completed her Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. She currently holds a license as a Psychologist in the state of Texas.

Work Experience:

Dr. Nelson worked as the Assistant Director for Outreach at the University of Houston's Counseling and Psychological Services Center. Her work included students presenting a wide range of issues including drug and alcohol abuse and addiction, sexual abuse, depression and anxiety disorders. She has worked with individuals mandated to rehabilitation and therapy by the courts as well individuals on disciplinary action by campus police or authorities.

She was also the designated counselor at the University to work with NCAA student athletes who tested positive for drugs or were identified with possible drug and/or alcohol problems.

Karen has extensive experience working the 12 Step Model of recovery, which she found successful with many individuals she worked with.

She has also used the SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) model for those who are resistant to 12 Step models. Albeit it being a lesser known approach to recovery, the SMART model works to empower individuals to become self-reliant as well as imparting to them tools to make the necessary changes in their lives.

She has had extensive experience in working with individuals, groups and families. As a psychologist at a large urban university, she worked with a wide range of clients presenting issues with drug and alcohol abuse and addiction, sexual abuse mood disorders as well as assessment and treatment of ADD/ADHD and learning disorders.

During her years of clinical work, she has supervised and taught Master's and Doctoral level therapists at various stages of training.

In the course of her career, Dr. Nelson has contributed to her field of expertise through presentations and publications as listed below.

Publications and Professional Presentations:

Hughes, R. & Nelson, K. L. (1994). Workshop on Workshops: Presentation at the Professional Counselor Foundation, Galveston, TX

Nelson, K. L. (2007). Beyond the Hospital: Mental Illness amongst Samoa's University Students. Poster presentation at American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA

Nelson, K. L. (2005). Mental Health in Samoa: an illness to be treated in L. R. Vaa & E. K. Kruse (Eds.), *Creating Opportunity, Realizing Potential* (pp. 104 - 108). Apia Samoa: USP.

Nelson, K. L. (2004). Trends in Student Mental Health: Presentation at American College Personnel Association, Philadelphia, PA.

Nelson, K. L. (2003). Group Therapy Revisited. Presentation at University of Texas, El Paso, TX

Redford, J. & Nelson, K. L. (1994). Multi-dimensional Interventions: Redefining Counseling. Presentation at the Texas Psychological Association Annual Conference, Houston, TX

Life in Samoa:

Karen first found her way to Samoa over 20 years ago as a Peace Corps Volunteer where she spent two years teaching secondary Math and Science in the villages of Samoa. After her contract with the US Peace Corps, she returned to College and studied for her Master's and Ph.D. degrees.

Karen has now returned to Samoa to live with her Samoan husband, three children and her retired parents. Prior to joining Coral Reef Academy, she was lecturing at the National University of Samoa, and has been building a body of research on mental health issues in the country. Clinically, Karen has engaged in a number of activities including personality, learning disability and intelligence assessment for the hospitals and court systems; supervision of therapists in Samoa; therapy services for various organizations in the country. She has offered expertise and training to various non-profit organizations in the country engaging in support services for the Samoan community.

Karen's community work includes being on the Board of Directors for Fa'ataua Le Ola, Samoa's 24 hour suicide hotline and the Samoa Swimming Federation. She is also on a regional board for student sports, and is currently on a Committee for writing the Physical Education curriculum for primary students.

I am confident that localizing this position via Dr. Nelson's appointment has significant positive returns for our students and families in that she is a native of USA currently residing in Samoa with her loved ones. Dr. Nelson has provided that crucial bridge in linking and strengthening ties between USA cutting edge clinical experience with the warmth, hospitable, healing, acceptance and family/community oriented values that the Samoan culture has to offer.