



Lives Transformed



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SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Vicki Montesano Director of Training and Clinical Practice

Dr. Vicki Montesano, Felton's Director of [Training and Clinical Practice](#), grew up in Seven Hills, Ohio, just south of Cleveland. One of two daughters, Vicki and her sister were taught to value hard work and loyalty to employers and work places. Vicki considers her sister a dear friend.



After high school, Kent State University became Vicki's academic home. As an undergraduate, she majored in English with a writing minor. She initially intended to become a photojournalist and envisioned working for Time or another magazine and providing coverage in war zones.

Instead of pursuing international journalism, Vicki continued her studies at Kent State, earning a master of education degree in school

counseling, an education specialist degree in community counseling, and a doctor of philosophy degree in counselor education. Vicki's dissertation topic was on implementation of evidence-based and best practices.

She loves to travel and has visited many of our United States, as well as the Caribbean, Europe, Egypt, Israel and Jordan.

After years at the BeST (Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment) Center in Ohio, it was Felton's programs, creativity, Al Gilbert's leadership and the passionate dedication of Felton staff that inspired Vicki to come west this year. "I truly appreciate the range of services that Felton provides and the recognition that no matter how old, life is valuable and worth recognition. I especially love the older adult programs, because I believe that society as a whole does not recognize the importance of our elderly. They are our history."

Vicki's husband is an engineer who has always encouraged her to pursue her passions. She counts her family as her biggest cheerleaders in every life adventure and achievement.

"My son is in Arizona and often tells me that he is proud of me. When I walked onstage in a very classy doctoral procession, he yelled out 'Yeah, Mom!', as the violins were playing. My adviser, who was hooding me, tried really hard not to laugh. My daughter is a lot like me. Right now, she is a probation officer at a drug court in Akron, Ohio. She is very compassionate and cares deeply about individuals who are in need," Vicki shares with pride.

Compassionate care for those in need is what fuels Vicki's daily focus. Her personal motto is "carpe diem"- seize the day, one that aligns well with Felton's mission.

PREP and BEAM GRADUATION

January 19, 2017, was a heart warming evening of celebration for the ten most recent graduates of Felton's San Mateo PREP (Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis) and BEAM (Bipolar Disorder Early Assessment and Management) programs that serve youth

and adults under the age of 35. Graduation ceremonies are held several times throughout the year at sites in Alameda, Monterey, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties.

"You've done a lot in my life," said Ernest Li, a successful BEAM graduate, radiating joy as he spoke with PREP and BEAM Program Director Adriana Furuzawa, before receiving his graduation certificate.

"Tonight celebrates phenomenal milestones for both students and their families," Felton President and CEO Al Gilbert noted with enthusiasm.

Bruce Adams, San Mateo PREP and BEAM Program Manager, began the ceremony by commending the brave students who, despite the odds, completed the programs.

One shared that before PREP, he was



Graduate Ernest Li and Bruce Adams



"heading into darkness." Another said Felton's programs and staff "guided with direction and purpose."

A majority of the graduates completed high school, and now work part-time jobs, while attending college-something one student "didn't expect would ever happen."

The presentation of certificates and one-word plaques describing the graduates was heartfelt and revealing. "Courage,"

"Gracious," and "Determination," were just a few of the attributes written.

Family members shed tears of joy as they expressed appreciation for the life-transformative impact of the programs to Felton staff members, who dabbed away their own joyful tears.

Data indicates that approximately one in five adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness in a given year. One in 25 adults in the U.S. experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.¹

Although rare, the spectrum of mental illness can set in as early as 12 years old. One half of all mental illness begins by age 14 and 75% of those who suffer with the disease experience symptoms by age 24.

- The most common forms of mental illness include:
- Anxiety and Panic Disorders
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Substance Abuse and Addiction

More than half of the adults in the U.S. suffering from mental illness are living undiagnosed.

Overwhelming evidence indicates that early intervention during the first signs of mental illness

offers huge benefits. When caught early, it may be possible to delay or prevent the onset of chronic and disabling forms of psychosis and reduce the likelihood of hospitalization.

PREP FEATURED IN PsychU

Felton's PREP program is featured in a [PsychU article](#) this month entitled: Felton Institute PREP: An Evidence-Based Approach to Helping People with Serious Mental Illness. PsychU is a free online community and resource library for the mental health field.

FELTON DCCS OPEN HOUSE



Please join us on February 16th!

On February 16, 2017, [Felton's Deaf Community Counseling Services](#) (DCCS) will host an Open House at our new Fremont location from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with a short program at 5:00 p.m. The address is 39500 Stevenson Place, Suite 203, Fremont, CA 94539, just across the way from the California School for the Deaf.

Lily Mei, Mayor of Fremont, and Al Gilbert, Felton's President and CEO, will speak. Please RSVP by e-mailing dccs@felton.org. Felton DCCS also has offices in San Francisco and San Leandro.

"BREAKFAST FOR THE BROKE" Last Friday of the Month

Understanding that it's often tough to stretch funds through the end of the month, the staff at the [Senior Full Service Wellness Program](#) (SFSWP) at 280 Turk Street in San Francisco decided to treat clients to breakfast at the end of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The next breakfast will be held on Thursday, February 23rd.

Those attending can look forward to pancakes with syrup, bacon, scrambled eggs, milk and coffee. Felton staff from other divisions are



always welcome.

SFSWP is a collaborative partnership with other community-based programs that supports older adults in need of intensive case management. The program includes a workforce component.

"Nothing says comfort food better than hot buttery maple syrup on fresh pancakes," says a Felton SFSWP staff member.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER: Kitty Felton's Commitment and Yours



Dr. Katharine "Kitty" Felton


To learn more about our programs, please visit felton.org. Thank you.

During the month of February, it's common to see hearts and celebrations of Valentine's Day. The word "valentine" is derived from the Latin word "valentia" which means "strength" or "capacity."

[Dr. Katharine "Kitty" Felton](#) had a huge heart for children, men, and women who needed innovative, life-transformative services. During her 39 years of leadership, she amazed those around her with her strength and capacity for meeting needs in the wake of catastrophic events, like the 1906 "Great Earthquake."

Felton Institute is proud to continue Dr. Felton's legacy of visionary leadership during challenging times. We hope that the impact of our programs touches your heart and inspires you to partner with us through collaboration, volunteering, or investment. If you'd like to make a much needed and much appreciated donation, please click the buttons below.

Your generous donations transform lives. Thank you!

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