

Commemoration Ceremony

On May 24th, we were joined at Cheshire Prison by our students, their families and friends, as well as Cheshire staff and members of our faculty for a ceremony celebrating our students' completion of the CPE two-year pilot program. Although these students all intend to continue on with the program this Fall, the ceremony allowed us to formally commemorate their unique achievement over the past two years. This event was generously funded by a grant from the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

The ceremony featured an address by Theodore Shaw (Wes '76), civil rights leader and Columbia Law professor, as well as speeches from three CPE students. Following these speeches, each member of the founding student cohort was awarded a completion certificate, designed by CPE student Jason Peters.

Andre Pierce, the first student speaker, suggested that the ceremony would “likely cause John Wesley to smile pleasingly because we are fulfilling his ideals and acting in his generous spirit.”

Antonio Rivera, the second student speaker, declared that “as a student of the CPE, I have found that the greatest gifts are those that can be shared with others; and an education presented by passionate and professional people within an environment that is predominately negative is definitely the greatest gift that a person can receive in our circumstances. Though unparalleled to the gift of life we receive through our creator and parents, education is close to that physical blessing, for a person who is educated receives a new attitude, perception, and mentality, and therefore a new life.”

In his concluding remarks, student speaker Michael Fauci, reflected, “a person I greatly respect and admire once told me that the best advice she ever received was ‘to leave a place better than you found it.’

I took those words to heart, and today I stand before you—we stand before you—with the earned privilege and honor provided, by this astounding opportunity, to say without reservation that through hard work, dedication, a pinch of humor, some sleepless nights, and a little sweat and tears we—with the help of you all—have accomplished just that.”

