



**WEST VIRGINIA STATE
COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE**



Allied Health and Nursing Department
Community Behavioral Health Technology
P.O. Box 1000 – Cole Complex
Institute, West Virginia 25112 -1000
(304) 766.4160
Fax (304) 766.5243
E-mail: stringre@wvsctc.edu



November 8, 2008.

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as a very heartfelt recommendation for Ms. Veronica Coetzer for her extraordinary Art Work and Presentation entitled, “Games We Play and the Masks We Hide Behind”.

Ms. Coetzer and her sister Lorraine visited West Virginia State Community and Technical College and West Virginia State University Campus October 10-19, 2008. The event was, “Healing through Creativity”, which was sponsored by WV Community and Technical College - Community Behavioral Health Technology program, and featured many artist and musicians from around the world. The artists displayed and presented their art form in connection to their own healing experience from trauma. The event was a great success and many great works of art were appreciated, however, none as much as Ms. Coetzer’s work.

Ms. Coetzer’s work was displayed in the University’s Davis Fine Arts Gallery and many students, faculty, and the general public visited the gallery and were in awe of her photography. She also gave two presentations while on campus and many of my students attended this usually taboo subject – child sexual abuse. I was fascinated by the intensity of the photographs displayed and the stories that unfolded as you perused them.

Ms. Coetzer engaged the audience, relaxed the audience, and can you believe, had fun with the audience while studying such a distressing subject.

My mission in sponsoring this event was my hope that my students would come to realize how people can heal themselves through art and come to appreciate different art forms and maybe consider art therapy as a career. I had many rave reviews from the students after the presentation, however, this excerpt from one of my student's response papers gladdened my heart and proved what a sensitive, educational, and motivational presenter Ms. Coetzer is:

... Being new to the CBHT program I didn't know exactly what to expect out of the workshops, but was excited to find out. I felt uncomfortable at first and was not letting my mind open to this experience, but after ten minutes or so I was really letting go and listened to every word she was saying. It was a moving experience for me. Veronica took us on a journey of abuse she suffered as a child through her art and presentation. I felt her pain and I began to feel mine as well. This is a very hard subject for me and I often run away from this part of my life and just try to forget, but as part of my healing process I know I have to face my fears. As I listened and looked at her art work I felt a warm sensation all over my body and I knew I had the courage to face my past and begin to heal. I know I am not the only one whose life was shattered because of abuse but I felt I've healed all I was going to. I know now I can heal more and all I need to do is just find a form of healing that I can be comfortable with and express it the best way I know how, then share my experiences with others that need to begin their healing.....So I have learned a great deal thus far in my education in CBHT and its only my first real semester, imagine what I will know when I graduate!

Trish – Behavioral Health Technology Program - 2008 – WVSCCTC

I believe Ms. Coetzer would motivate and educate many more people if given the chance. I highly recommend Ms. Coetzer to the people of South Africa and hope that this is just the beginning of an awakening around the world of a very real and disturbing issue we all need to address.

Respectfully yours,

Renee Stringfellow

Catherine "Renee" Stringfellow LPC, CRC, CPRP,
Associate Professor/Program Director – Community Behavioral Health Technology,
West Virginia State Community and Technical College,
U.S.A.

