

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Shelli Merrill Awarded \$8,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates



Santa Rosa, CA—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Shelli Merrill of Santa Rosa, California, for the NBCC Minority Fellowship Program-Youth (MFP-Y). As an NBCC MFP-Y Fellow, Merrill will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her service to underserved minority populations, with a specific focus on transition-age youth (ages 16–25).

The NBCC MFP-Y is made possible by a grant awarded to NBCC by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2014. The Foundation is contracted by NBCC to administer the NBCC MFP-Y, as well as training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the number of available culturally competent behavioral health professionals.

The NBCC MFP will distribute \$8,000 education awards to Merrill and the 29 other master's-level counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Merrill is a graduate of the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles, and is currently pursuing a master's in the marriage and family therapy program at San Francisco State University, in California. Merrill loves working with transition-aged youth because they strive for truth and something real. Her internship experience working with at-risk youth at Sunny Hills Services and now Lomi Psychotherapy Clinic informed her of this population and their needs. A long-term goal that Merrill has is to create a summer filmmaking workshop for at-risk youth and transition-aged youth. She believes that for their mental and emotional health, it is necessary for youth to feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves and that they can contribute to something meaningful. She would like to help foster their belief that they have the ability to become competent at a task and accomplish something great while working pro-socially with others. She expects that the workshop will decrease depression and anxiety levels, increase pro-social behaviors, and help mitigate behavioral disorders. She hopes to work together with local non-profits and filmmakers to bring this workshop into reality.

The NBCC Foundation has also awarded 23 \$20,000 [doctoral fellowships](#) through the Minority Fellowship Program and 34 master's-level fellowships of up to \$11,000 through the [MFP-Addictions Counselors](#) (MFP-AC). The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MFP-Y application period in fall 2018. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit <http://www.nbccf.org/Programs/Fellows>.

#### ABOUT THE NBCC FOUNDATION

The NBCC Foundation is the nonprofit affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), based in Greensboro, North Carolina. NBCC is the nation's premier professional certification board devoted to credentialing counselors who meet standards for the general and specialty practices of professional counseling. Currently, there are more than 64,000 board-certified counselors in the United States and more than 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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