

Notes from the Valley...

...an update from the Raritan Valley Community College Foundation

Fall 2021

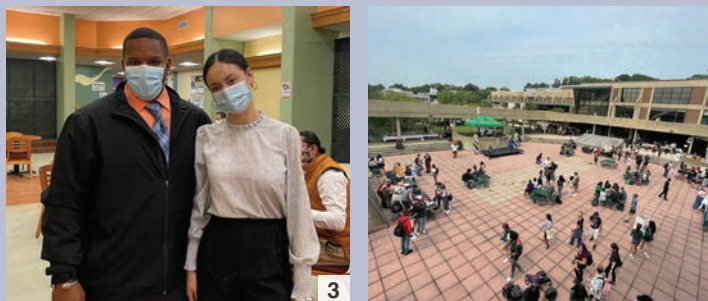


LIFE ON **CAMPUS**

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NEWSFRONT • THE LAST WORD**

LIFE BACK ON CAMPUS

The fall re-opening of the campus of **Raritan Valley Community College** for in-person instruction reminds us of the best of New Jersey and the promise of education, access, and lives transformed.



There's nothing quite like seeing the campus persevering through the pandemic and coming to life with the arrival of a new academic year! There are great things ahead for Raritan Valley Community College and for all of those committed to its success!

Welcome back students, faculty, and staff and best of luck for the 2021-22 Academic Year!

Photo Cover: (L-to-R) Shawn Kavanaugh, Film major, Class of 2022; Mrudula Murari, Computer Science major, Class of 2023; Radha Ramdeen, Liberal Arts major, Class of 2023. **Photo 1:** (L-to-R) Greg DeSanctis, Director of Honors Programs & Alumni Outreach; Jason Fredericks, Dean of Student Affairs; Gina Kuijlaars, Mental Health Counselor, Advising and Counseling. **Photo 2:** (L-to-R) Izabela Zieba, Assistant Professor, English; Jennifer Pearce-Morris, Associate Professor, Sociology; Karen Gaffney, Professor, English. **Photo 3:** RVCC students Ka'Sheer Cassett and Brianna Alvarran

THE EPIC JOURNEY OF EMERSON VILLARAN CALLES



Emerson Villaran Calles (RVCC Class of 2016; RU Class of 2019) is the embodiment of persistence. Some twenty years ago, Emerson and his mom walked, took buses, traveling day and night through Central America to get to the U.S. They were fleeing El Salvador, devastated by an earthquake in 2001, and were seeking a better life. He was all of four-years-old.

“When we crossed the Rio Bravo River I was completely naked. As we got to US soil, we were detained. I remember waiting in a cell with my mom. I was given a pair of girl’s leggings and a girl’s T-shirt. Immigration officials saw that we had TPS (Temporary Protected Status) and let us go. My mom and I took a greyhound from Texas to New Jersey and that’s where I was reunited with my family.”

His journey has been fraught with all the challenges you’d expect for an immigrant. Along the way, he has held down multiple jobs, cobbled together limited scholarship support, and literally worked his way through both RVCC Honors

College and Rutgers, graduating with a BS in Chemistry in 2019.

But he remains humble, and grateful. In El Salvador, Emerson recalls using an outhouse, a wood-burning stove, and walking on unpaved streets. “The contrast of what my life could have been and is now, is unfathomable.”

With his chemistry degree in hand, he remained focused on his goal to land somewhere in the fragrance and cosmetics chemistry. In August he started working at International Flavors & Fragrances, at Bell Works in Holmdel, NJ. “I went from the dirt streets of El Salvador to now working at one of the largest fragrance houses in the world,” says Emerson. “I’m really living a dream right now.”

2021-22 RVCC DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONOREES

We’re pleased to provide just a sneak peek at this year’s honorees, each of whom will be highlighted at the RVCC Foundation’s Annual Scholarship Dinner on April 21.



Mary Jo Loughlin, RVCC Class of 1990, Associate Degree, Nursing. Mary Jo received her BSN from Gwynedd Mercy College, Masters from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and

her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from Thomas Edison State University (December 2021). She has enjoyed a distinguished 33-year nursing career and is currently Chief Nursing Director at Hunterdon Medical Center.





Joel Reyes Guzman, RVCC Class of 2014, Associate Degree, Engineering Science; after graduating from RV, Joel went on to receive his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical

Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic and is now a propulsion engineer at Boeing. Joel currently serves on the RVCC Foundation board of directors, and has also established a scholarship at RVCC for Bound Brook High School students.



Kyle Mack, RVCC Class of 2011, Associate of Science degree in Pre-Medical Science; after RV Kyle went on to receive a B.S. in Chemistry from Montclair State University and a

Ph.D. in Chemistry from Cornell University. He is currently a Senior Scientist at Genentech and is a member of the NSF-funded Center for Computer-Assisted Synthesis.

A 75TH ANNIVERSARY AND A NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN WORKFORCE TRAINING



Special thanks to Hunterdon County-based Stem Brothers, Inc., for stepping up in the company's 75th Anniversary year to create a new scholarship for students furthering their education in either the Environmental Control Technology or Commercial Energy Management Technology programs. Says **J.D. Stem, II**, Vice President, "We are thrilled to support RVCC and the rising stars in the HVAC program!"

INAUGURAL ROBESON, FIELD, AND EMERGING HEROES SCHOLARSHIPS

Last year's "RV LIVES" fundraising campaign led to the establishment of several new scholarships at the College, including the **Emerging Heroes Nursing Scholarship**, the **Paul Robeson Scholarship**, and the **Evelyn S. Field Scholarship**.

Support of RVCC students remains a critical need. We know from the College's data that life in the pandemic continues to challenge: 44% of RVCC students described their personal financial situation as worse than it was before the pandemic; for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students it's even worse at 56% and 52% respectively.

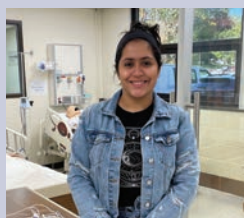
We also know that community colleges are historically under-supported by the philanthropic sector: just 2% of all "giving" to higher education lands in institutions like Raritan Valley Community College (despite community colleges serving some 45% of all college-going students).

EMERGING HEROES SCHOLARSHIPS



Jeanne Gabrielle Riano, is a Warren Hills grad, Somerville resident, and a first-year nursing student at RVCC with a goal of becoming a registered nurse so that

she can “make a difference” in health care. “During my high school career, I was involved in many volunteer opportunities such as the National Honor Society, where we raised over \$10,000 for cancer research and collected food for local food shelters. I also held an officer position for a national service club called ‘GlamourGals’ where we visited local nursing homes and spent quality time with the residents. Both experiences have shown me that strong leadership is key to success and that is why I aspire to learn to be a great leader to those around me.”



Ana Iraheta, second-year Nursing Student at RVCC, resides in Flemington, and is a grad of Hunterdon Central. “My dream is to become a nurse.

Throughout my childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, I have always had the dream of helping out people in need, people from different regions of the world. I want to be able to go into work every day knowing that the knowledge I have acquired will help me impact people around the world in a positive way. This scholarship will also help me show mothers out there that it is possible to be a mom and graduate with a college education. My other dream is to be able to show my daughter that the American dream is possible to achieve.”

EVELYN S. FIELD SCHOLARSHIP

Devin Mozoul is a first-year student from Essex County, a grad of Columbia High School in Maplewood, and a criminal justice

major at RVCC. He is also an eight-year volunteer at Saint Leo’s Roman Catholic Food Pantry in Irvington, responsible for unloading vans, sorting food items, and maintaining a clean and organized pantry area. Devin enjoys swimming, basketball, and loves to travel, and especially enjoys “spending time with my 95-year-old great-grandmother because she is a source of great wisdom and knowledge.”

PAUL ROBESON SCHOLARSHIPS

Willie Vick is a North Plainfield High School grad and business administration major whose commitment to serving the community is exemplary. Among his volunteer activities are Hope Worldwide (which is an organization that supports community-based services to the poor and needy); serving retired, disabled, and homeless veterans of the VA Hospital; collecting food items for the annual Thanksgiving canned food drive; and helping plan the Kappa League annual MLK Day of Service Sock Drive. “My parents have helped me in my awareness of racial injustice and to be involved more in the community.”



Justin Jones is a first-year RVCC student and business administration major. Says Justin: “I was born and raised in Somerville, New Jersey and like Paul Robeson,

I’m a grad of Somerville High. My parents and many family members were also raised in Somerville and we have all enjoyed the very diverse community the town has to offer. Although Paul Robeson lived in a much more hostile time, he still had an exemplary way of proving to racists how great a person can be regardless of their skin color. He excelled in all aspects of his life and fought injustices all over the world with dignity.”

A FINAL GIFT

After 32 years, the Steven A. Cox Charity Classic—once the largest single-day amateur charity golf event in the country—has ended its epic run. The last fundraising tourney was held on October 4, at Beaver Brook Country Club in Hunterdon County. And while the journey is over for this storied event, it did yield one more scholarship from the Steven A. Cox Foundation.



This year's recipient of the **Steven A. Cox Science Scholarship at Raritan Valley Community College** was awarded to **Pankti Patel**, a Somerset County resident and second-year student at RVCC. Pankti chose Biology as her major "because science—especially the science of life—fascinates me." She aspires to become a Physician Assistant someday. "I also want to pursue a PhD in biology."

READY TO SERVE

Oreoluwa Kpade-Johnson has plans. And they're quite simple: "My major inspiration for wanting to become a medical doctor is the joy I have found in helping others." The Science & Math/Pre-Med/Pre-Pharma major is in his second year at Raritan Valley Community College with hopes of graduating next May.

Born in Lagos State, Nigeria, Oreoluwa came to the US in 2017 with his parents and two sisters.

His family's decision to immigrate was in response to political unrest and sub-par governance in Nigeria. In fact, Oreoluwa appreciates the "organization" in the United States. "In jobs, schools, hospitals, etc., everybody knows what to do professionally without being told, which is fascinating and not always the case in Nigeria," he notes.



Oreoluwa, who is 20 and a resident of Somerset County, is this year's recipient of the **Scholarship for Fundamental Fairness Honoring the Life of John J. Grossi, Jr.**, a scholarship award for 'underrepresented minority students of any and all genders.' His journey and his plans were inspiring enough for the scholarship's benefactor, **Dr. Lori Rayner-Grossi**, a Clinton-based psychologist, to increase her support to "full ride" status. Says Dr. Rayner-Grossi, "I am happy to help make things happen for him—I feel grateful to be able to assist and my life is richer for it."

Oreoluwa is active at RVCC, including outside of the classroom. He is in the Pre-Medical Club, the National Society for Leadership & Success, and Phi Theta Kappa. He has also made the Dean's List and President's List every semester at RVCC.

His focus and determination are home-grown. "My one and only God-sent mentor is my mother. She is an active listener and advises me. I am so fortunate to have a strong family."

*Interested in changing a student's life through scholarship support? Please contact **Stephanie Smullen** (stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu) at the RVCC Foundation.*

FROM THE HEART

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IN HONOR OF FAMILY

The Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism



Philanthropy is not science or art, but it is a matter of heart and mind. We're honored to have **Dr. Paul Hirsch**, a longstanding supporter of RVCC, offering a personal narrative behind his 25-year involvement in the **Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism**—a library named in honor of his beloved parents. We are also grateful to Dr. Hirsch's son, **Jeremy Hirsch**, for offering his own remembrance of grandparents Morris and Dorothy.

Dr. Hirsch's vision was to build a research library recognizing The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism as an important educational resource for students and the greater RVCC community. This commitment to education is evidenced further by the annual essay contest open to all RVCC

students. This contest focuses on the name and mission of the research library focusing on The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism.

Notably, the Research Library's book collection has grown from 170 titles in 1997 to 1,317 titles in 2020. Thousands of books have been circulated to students, faculty, K-12 teachers, and the community-at-large.



Dr. Paul Hirsch – A Grateful Son

THE BELOVED MORRIS AND DOROTHY

My parents were both born to immigrants, both the youngest in large families, both born at home. My father was born in Memphis, Tennessee. His name at birth was Morris Hirsch, but he was called “Tennie” by his friends for the rest of his life. He had three brothers and one sister.

My mother was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where the tenements teemed with immigrants of many nationalities. Her name at birth was Dora Wolitzer, but she called herself Dorothy, or, mostly, Dottie, from childhood. She had 5 older brothers.

Both families moved to the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, where they met, at a party, while students at Eastern District High School.

After graduation, my mother worked for Woolworth’s for \$7.25 a week, and my father went into the floor-covering business, which was something of a family tradition. He was a salesman for a wholesale carpet company, and worked for the same company for his entire adult life. For many years, when I was young, he also worked several additional jobs. During World War II, after his full day’s work selling carpet, he worked a night shift at a defense factory. He also worked a variety of additional jobs on weekends.



VALUES

I was brought up in a home where “hate” was literally not allowed. My father did not tolerate the very word “hate,” much less the concept. Even when used in a relatively benign or somewhat meaningless way (“I hate spinach”), he would gently correct: ‘Say you don’t like spinach. Don’t say hate.’

They believed in the necessity (not just the “goodness of,” but the necessity), of charitable giving, and always supported their community and religious charities. They did not have the financial means to be considered “philanthropists,” but always gave slightly beyond their means. In addition, my mother, following the tradition of her own mother, (and of many poor immigrant Jewish families of the time), always kept a “charity box” in our home, and put loose change or a dollar or two in it regularly, and especially on Friday evenings before the Shabbos meal.

ON EDUCATION

My parents revered education! They denied themselves, to put their children through college, and then through medical school, without loans of any type. They denied themselves many material things – I now see in retrospect – but didn’t deny much to me, especially if it related to education. My parents supported me, and then my brother, throughout college and then medical school, and did so with a full heart. They never asked us to take loans (I don’t know whether such loans were even available then). My father never took a vacation (I now realize), until we were both finished with school.

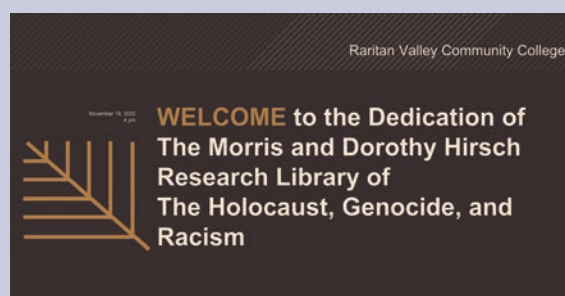
INSPIRATION OF A LIFETIME

After my mother died, in 1995, I was eager to find a way to memorialize her and my father (who had died in 1978). I believed that RVCC would be an ideal place for a memorial, and mentioned this to then-President **Cary Israel**. He recommended establishing a Holocaust and Genocide Library, something that he had been hoping to develop, and which would be an institutional and physical part of the Evelyn S. Field Library. I immediately recognized that this could be an ideal tribute to my parents, while benefiting our College, our students, and the communities that we serve.

With President Israel's support, plans came together quickly, and on September 4, 1996, the **Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of Holocaust and Genocide Studies** was dedicated.

REDEDICATION AND REIMAGINING

In 2020, nearly 24 years after the dedication of the Library of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Jeremy and I were discussing the Library, and how the name seemed incomplete today. In a world where genocide persists and hate is manifested in too many ways—and too often, in deadly ways—we thought the word, “racism,” which exemplifies hate, should be added to the name of the Library.



RVCC President **Michael McDonough** was immediately enthusiastic and we agreed on the new name, **The Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism**. The Library, a part of the College's Evelyn S. Field Library, was rededicated in November 2020, with an enhanced purpose and relevance for our students, including three competitive scholarships to be awarded annually. Under President McDonough's leadership, and the support of **Michelle Edgar**, Program Specialist for the Institute of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Library has been given an enhanced role in the life of the College.



Jeremy Hirsch – The Love of a Grandson THE BELOVED MORRIS AND DOROTHY

Do you have a special memory of when you were growing up with your grandparents?

Unfortunately, my grandfather died when I was young (7), so my memories of him are spotty. A few, however, stick out:

Playing football with him outside the apartment complex we lived in at the time. I didn't realize how sick he was, so I just ran up and back and scored touchdowns, while he watched. I remember him smiling...which confused me at the time because I won 77-0. Of course, now I realize he was probably just enjoying time with me.

He sang in the choir at their temple on Long Island. I remember going to a backdoor—behind where the choir stood—to say hi to him. It felt like he was a VIP and I was “backstage.”

I have a LOT of wonderful memories of my grandmother. I always loved going to her house – while small, it always felt like there was so much to do: there was a piano that I would love to play and make up songs on (I can't play the piano at all, so I would just hit keys that sounded good

would ask how I was doing and what was going on in my life.

When I was in college, she would send me packages of homemade rugelach (pastry). They were a HUGE hit with my friends. When I told her that my friends were eating it all, she started to send TWO packages—one for them and one for me. When people found out I had received a package, they would come by my room asking if my grandmother had sent anything.

Were there values you felt were important to your grandparents?

Family was probably THE most important thing. And being a good person. My grandmother used to say, “Tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are.” It took me a while to understand what she meant, but when I finally got it, it all made perfect sense. I've always remembered her words and have tried to surround myself with good, positive people.

Is there a memory you cherish of your grandparents?

All of them! But mostly just an overall feeling of being loved.

“The library is there to help people learn, to teach them about the things we—as a society—did wrong and the things we did right.”

What qualities do you remember about your grandparents?

They were warm, kind, generous and loving. My grandmother always seemed to have words of wisdom—sometimes in Yiddish—that she would impart to me.

together); there was a pool table in the basement; there was a pile of old MAD magazines that I loved to read through. Even when I was older, I would enjoy staying over and she would always make me challah French toast for breakfast – it was the best! We would sit together and she

How do you think your grandparents would feel about the library being established in their name?

I feel like they were very humble and would be more proud of—and interested in talking about—their children and grandchildren. But I also believe they would be happy that our family

is continuing to try to help people, and teach this and future generations, and make a positive difference in our community.

Why is it important that you are now also involved in the mission of the library?

The library is there to help people learn, to teach them about the things we—as a society—did wrong and the things we did right. To teach them about the horrors of the past so that no one ever doubts or forgets them. Education was so important to my grandparents, and they—and my parents—passed that down to me. It's vitally important to keep the past alive and learn about it—even when some of that knowledge is difficult to absorb—because it helps us make a better future for ourselves and our children.

To paraphrase my grandmother, “Tell me what your present is and I’ll tell you what your future is.”



NOW ON DISPLAY

At the Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism



The Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism is hosting an International Exhibit from the Montreal Holocaust Museum. The exhibit, “**And in 1948, I Came to Canada - The Holocaust in Six Dates,**” is open for both in person and virtual tours. The exhibit just recently opened on October 18 and will be open to RVCC students and the wider community, with free admission, into mid-January 2022. The six dates highlighted in the exhibit are: **1933** (Nazi rise to power and anti-Jewish laws), **1939** (Beginning of the war and creation of ghettos), **1941** (Invasion of the USSR and mass murders by mobile killing units), **1942** (Deportation to killing centers), **1943** (Resistance in its various forms) and **1945** (Liberation and the post-war period).

The exhibit also consists of pictures of artifact objects and thirty minutes of Montreal-based Holocaust survivor video testimonies from the Museum's collection. Appropriate for audiences of all ages, the exhibit will also be accompanied by a pedagogical guide for teachers, designed for students grade six and up. School groups & community groups are welcome to book group tours.

For additional information on the Exhibit, the Library or the Institute, please contact **Michelle Edgar** at 908-526-1200 (ext. 8735) or email michelle.edgar@aritanval.edu.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Since 1981, the **Institute for Holocaust & Genocide Studies**—a collaboration between RVCC and the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties—has offered educational programs for educators, students, and the community. Through its unique programming, the Institute promotes historical awareness, cultural understanding, and addresses the implications of societal norms. The Institute offers educational seminars, workshops, and presentations for students and teachers about the lessons learned from the Holocaust and genocides that continue today. During the pandemic, the Institute has used technology—including webinars—to expand its outreach to include the broader community.



A GENEROUS COMMUNITY

Over the years, more than \$450,000 has been raised in support of the Institute for Holocaust & Genocide Studies and The Morris and Dorothy Hirsch Research Library of The Holocaust, Genocide, and Racism. And with this generous support, there is substantive impact. In short, the Library has been transformed. In addition to a nearly tenfold increase in its book collection, the Library is also a physical oasis of peace and serenity, offering educational enrichment on the lessons of the Holocaust and the genocides of present day for countless educators, students, and engaged members of the community. The Institute's innovative programs and outreach are also bringing new attention and awareness to an expanding number of people, both locally and well beyond. Given the persistent turmoil in the world, our community could not be better served.

*Whether born from a desire to impact the lives of others, or a need to celebrate those whose impact has been felt in our own lives, philanthropy is a gift of heart and mind. To learn more about how you can support the Institute, the Library, or the College more generally, please contact **Mike Marion** at 908-648-8567 or michael.marion@raritanval.edu.*

Opposite Page: Photo 1: (L-to-R) Cole Chapkowski, Lab Tech; Daniel Meldrim, Lab Tech; Hardik Dumasia, Instructor of Advanced Manufacturing; Stefan Przedworski, Instructor of Advanced Manufacturing, are standing in front of the Haas Mini-Mill, a Computer Numerical Control Machine ("CNC Machine")—lovingly named "Glados"—which can produce machine parts to within 0.0001 inches and is capable of cutting steel and titanium. **Photo 2:** On hand to receive the check were first-year RVCC nursing student and 2021-22 recipient of the Somerset Hills AAUW Scholarship, Caitlin Colquhoun (seated on right), and Mike Marion, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation.

GREEN POWER



We can't wait for the ribbon cutting on this beauty: a new greenhouse made possible by several generous donors, and to eventually feature the name of our most generous supporter of Raritan Valley Community College (details forthcoming). Located behind the **Christine Todd Whitman Science Center**, the new greenhouse will provide countless classroom and research opportunities, a range of student-led sustainable agricultural projects, the restoration of endangered plant species, and the propagation of native plants for campus and community projects. All under the careful guidance of the RVCC Center for Environmental Studies, co-directed by Professor **Jay Kelly** and Professor **Emilie Stander**. Green power indeed!

GROWING THE BRAND



Brand builder. Pipeline. Gateway to growth. Neighbor. We are RVCC. Our "Brand Builder" message appeared in the August issue of New Jersey Business magazine, official publication of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association. **Clint Wallace**, who is featured

in the advertisement, has been instrumental in marshalling the support of Sanofi, where he is senior vice president of Human Resources. Thank you, Clint, for your leadership, partnership, generous support, and for being RVCC Proud.

WORKFORCE TRAINING ADVANCEMENTS

The Advanced Manufacturing Program at RVCC provides training that can lead to direct employment with local and regional manufacturers or can fine tune skills of those already employed at area companies.



Thanks to some innovative and generous donors, the RVCC Foundation has increased scholarship support across the Workforce Training tracks, including new scholarships in Advanced Manufacturing, Cosmetology, and HVAC/ Environmental Control.

If you would like to learn more, please contact **Mike Marion** at 908-648-8567 or michael.marion@raritanval.edu.

RVCC IN THE HOUSE!



American Association of University Women – Somerset Hills Branch celebrated its 75th Anniversary on October 12 at Basking Ridge Country Club and RVCC was part of the ceremony. Specifically, RVCC Foundation received a \$5,000 check for the "Somerset Hills AAUW Scholarship"—one of the longest running scholarships at the College. Established in 1998, funds assist mature women who are returning to school to pursue a career or obtain a degree.

712 DAYS IS ENOUGH

The **RVCC Foundation Golf Classic** is back—after 712 days no less! And thanks to an enormously generous community, being back has never felt better. The RVCC Foundation raised over \$117,000 at the 17th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic held on June 21, 2021, at the Cherry Valley Country Club in Skillman. And while that's a big number, so is 712, as in the length of our pandemic-induced hiatus (the 16th Annual was held all the way back in July of 2019!). The RVCC Foundation Golf Classic is our largest fundraising event of the year, and funds raised support of student scholarships, RVCC's education programming, and other institutional priorities.



"My thanks and hearty applause," says RVCC President **Mike McDonough**. "The Foundation staff, the Foundation Directors, our stellar volunteers, our corporate sponsors, our 107 golfers, and our individual donors all deserve our thanks for an exceptional return of this annual fundraiser."

Special props as well to our two outstanding student speakers: **Ka'Sheer Cassett** (Class of '22) and **Rebecca Geary** (Class of '21), who shared their experiences at the College and how scholarship support has transformed their lives, enabling them to succeed.

*For more information about becoming involved with the 18th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic (June 20, 2022) contact **Janet Dunne**, 908-648-8355 or janet.dunne@raritanval.edu.*

GIVING DAY



Hot off last year's epic RVCC Giving Day success, the RVCC Foundation is asking you put a hold on **Thursday, March 24, 2022**. There are definitely big shoes to fill: Giving Day 2020 raised \$51,510—far exceeding previous Giving Day fundraising high of \$23,635 set in 2020.

*If you would like to be part of the volunteer team working to make Giving Day 2022 the best ever, please contact **Janet Dunne**, 908-648-8355 or janet.dunne@raritanval.edu.*

HELP WANTED: THE RVCC PLANETARIUM AND OBSERVATORY

The RVCC Planetarium opened in May 1990 and has served the College and the community ever since. Each year the Planetarium provides programs to more than 15,000 school children, as well as 6,000 public attendees. Presentations include such topics as the changing seasonal sky, Moon phases, tours of the solar system, and exploration of our Milky Way Galaxy and the Universe. RVCC Astronomy classes are offered for credit students and meet regularly in the Planetarium and Observatory. Other College programs that use the facility include Physics, Computer Science, Service Learning, Advising & Counseling, and the Astronomy Club, which is available to all RVCC students.



In short, it is a unique resource for both the community at large and home team! Which is all the more reason we need to rally. The truth is, this little jewel needs our help. The Planetarium's All Dome projection system (the "SkySkan Digital Sky 2") was installed in October, 2008. For a legit planetarium, that's light years ago! Technology has morphed exponentially, with vastly more powerful computers and brighter video projectors—the kind of technology needed to get the RVCC Planetarium current and competitive with the four other planetariums in New Jersey (all of which have had recent upgrades to their projection systems!).

This rally requires our collective support and we need to dig deep to keep the planetarium in the game. According to **Amie Gallagher**, Planetarium Director, an estimated \$265,000 is required for a proper technology upgrade. We all know the RVCC Planetarium and Observatory is worthy, now is your chance to help.

*For more information or to get involved, please contact **Mike Marion** at 908-648-8567 or michael.marion@raritanval.edu.*

OTHER STARS

RVCC Foundation's Newest Board Members

RVCC Foundation is pleased to announce three new board members, all of whom are part of the Foundation's "Emerging Class." The Emerging Class provides board opportunities for current RVCC students and recent alumni. The newest members of the Emerging Class, formally introduced at the Foundation's July meeting, are:

Jimena Torres, of North Plainfield, is an RVCC Student (Class of 2023) majoring in Engineering Science;

Cooper Irving, of North Plainfield, is an RVCC Student (Class of 2023) majoring in Engineering Science;

Jomil London, of Somerset, is Project Manager at Nutra-Med Packaging, Inc., and a Summa Cum Laude RVCC grad, Rutgers biomedical engineering grad, who is now enrolled in Rutgers Law School.

ADVANCING THE MISSION

The RVCC Foundation Board of Directors held its annual retreat October 22 on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College. A review of the College's new 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan provided context for "the one thing" idea-generation session. Wonderful contributions were advanced by all, including our newest "Emerging Class" board members: current RVCC students Jimena Torres, Cooper Irving, and recent alumna, Jomil London.

While challenges persist for the community college sector and the students it serves, there are also unlimited possibilities: new opportunities to explore, partners to discover, and relationships to expand. With a full embrace of the future from so dedicated a group as the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, we are indeed excited for what's next.



Photo 1: (L-to-R) Jimena Torres, Stacey Kimmins (RVCC Foundation Board Chair), Cooper Irving, Jomil London

COME VISIT US

Soon, the RVCC Foundation will have two new addresses!! Our new website, which has just opened, can be accessed at rvccfoundation.org. The site provides a more comprehensive view on why your support matters—now more than ever—as well as variety of ways to engage with Raritan Valley Community College and the RVCC Foundation!



Early in the new year, the RVCC Foundation's new office location will be **74 Lamington Road**! Yes, the RVCC Foundation will be “bringing life to the western edge of campus” and we look forward to welcoming you to our new home—which actually dates back to 1735 (and was originally purchased in 1980 to be the residence of the president of Somerset County College). Once we are settled in, we’ll open the house with our own open house!

REMEMBERING

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KEVIN ROSERO

On September 16, the RVCC community held a special memorial service honoring the life of one of its own. **Kevin Rosero**, whose life ended tragically earlier this year, was a beloved and passionate student leader, who also served as the Alumni Representative to the RVCC Board of Trustees for the Class of 2016. He was also an officer in the Orgullo Latino Club (OLC) and contributed to many of the campus educational and cultural programs and events during his time at RVCC. After graduating from Raritan Valley, Kevin went on to receive his bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and was on his way to becoming an immigration lawyer to fulfill his passion of helping people who needed it the most.

Many within the RVCC community remember Kevin's warmth, friendliness, and welcoming smile. And while his positive presence will be missed, his legacy will live on at the College thanks to a new scholarship that has been established in name. "Given Kevin's impact," said **Mike Marion**, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation, "the need to pay it forward was a natural response." Initiated by one of Kevin's friends and mentors at RVCC, **Khushwant Pall** (RVCC Class of 2014)—who provided the first gift in support of the scholarship—the annual award will be available in time for the 2022-23 Academic Year and will recognize leadership and civic responsibility, both hallmarks of Kevin. "We were so fortunate to have had Kevin with us," said Mr. Pall, a branch manager at Wells Fargo, "and while it was far too brief, the promise of his life will now live on through student recipients of the **Kevin Rosero Memorial Scholarship**."

*For anyone interested in supporting this new scholarship, please contact **Stephanie Smullen** (stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu) at the RVCC Foundation.*



Kevin Rosero, at Graduation from Rutgers University, May 2019

THE LAST WORD FROM OUR DONORS

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“While it was late in life that I learned of my adoption by caring and loving parents and knowing I benefited from their love, I soon believed it was only natural for me to help others in life. Raritan Valley Community College is one several educational institutions I have selected to help those students in need of financial assistance to change their life direction.” **John Falcone**, *Berlin, MD; benefactor, Phebe and John Falcone Scholarship at RVCC*



“Color it Forward has been honored to provide scholarships to RVCC students for the past two years. We view our financial support of local cosmetology and esthetician students as an investment into the beauty industry as a whole. In addition to our focus on community service through our annual Pay it Forward Scholarship, we hope to inspire students to use the training, education, and experience they receive to help their communities thrive in every way possible.” **Michelle Gill**, *Executive Director, Color It Forward, Inc., Hunterdon County*

“As we commemorate our 75th year in business, we wanted to do something special to celebrate our milestone by giving back to the local communities that have been so supportive of our family business for so many years. When approached about creating a scholarship for RVCC’s HVAC program, we couldn’t have been more thrilled and excited to contribute to the growth and success of tomorrow’s next technical leaders in the HVAC field. We’re very proud of RVCC’s Workforce Training Center and honored to be a part of an institution that recognizes the need to develop skilled tradesmen and tradeswomen and their importance to our local economy as they become tomorrow’s next generation of productive workers and business leaders!” **J.D. Stem, II**, *Vice President, Stem Brothers, Inc., Milford, NJ*

“When the pandemic struck over a year-and-a-half ago, we decided to knit together a group of friends and neighbors to support the community we live in. As we began discussing ways to help people who might be disadvantaged, we realized that helping students stay engaged in classes would be a cause we could support, and “Helping Hands” took shape. As parents of a child who was immensely helped by her stint at RVCC, we reached out to the College, and the RVCC Foundation welcomed the support of Helping Hands. We started by providing 25 laptop computers procured from local corporations to the RVCC Resource Center to give away to students. We then provided 8 Chromebooks to students in good academic standing with financial need. The response from recipients has been overwhelmingly positive and several students have indicated that having a laptop or Chromebook was a ‘difference maker’ in their ability to stay on track at RVCC. Helping Hands looks forward to continuing our support of RVCC students so that they can complete their education and make a meaningful difference in their lives.” **Niranjan & Vasanthi Rao**, *Helping Hands, Somerset County*



“As a graduate of RVCC, I know what it takes academically and financially to be a student and to make it to graduation. When my beloved sister passed away in 2008, I wanted so much to have her remembered as the kindest and most generous person she was. And so I decided (with her blessing I’m sure) to establish the Mary T. Zanetti Scholarship. Over the years I have known and still know many of the recipients of this scholarship and what it meant to them to be able to graduate and go on to successful lives. We may never know how their lives turn out but we will always know what a difference we can make by reaching out and helping those in need.” **Elisabeth McConville**, *RVCC Class of 1995, Bridgewater*



“Cento Amici’s mission is to support need-based scholarships in New Jersey and helping RVCC assist outstanding young students in central New Jersey is consistent with our goals. The students we have met through this partnership have been exemplary and we look forward to watching their success over time. We know they will help others in their families and their communities and make a positive impact on the lives they touch.”

David Nader, *Cento Amici liaison to RVCC, Hunterdon County*

“RVCC is a place that is called home to many, including me. It was where I truly found myself and was inspired to become a leader. As president of Student Government Association, as a founding member of Enactus, and as the Class of 214 Alumni Representative to the Board of Trustees, I gained skills that I still use every day. I highly recommend businesses and individuals engage with the College through the RVCC Foundation and support the emerging leaders of tomorrow. Your generosity can be a difference maker. I know this first hand, and I am truly proud to be an alumnus and supporter of this great institution.” **Khushwant Pall**, *RVCC Class of 2014*





*A beacon of hope and opportunity on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College,
the Ray Bateman Center for Student Life & Leadership.*

Notes from the Valley is published by RVCC Foundation to share what inspires us every day: your generosity, your engagement, your commitment. Whether you're a donor, a friend, a student, an alumnus, or a member of the RVCC faculty and staff, it is our honor to support such an exceptional community. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any of your questions, feedback, ideas or support:

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