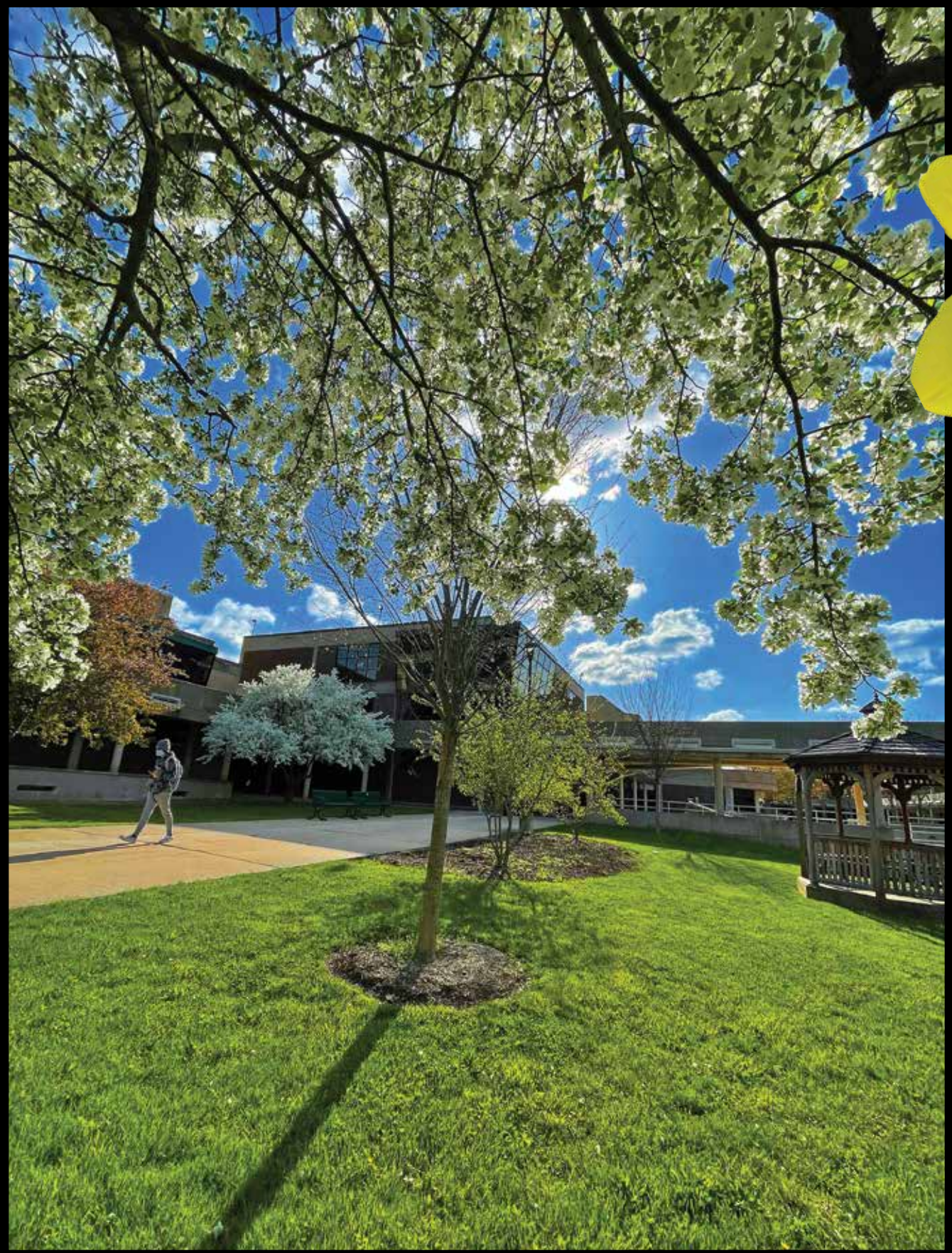


“Our campus will
always be a place.
A community.
A home.”

Michael J. McDonough
PRESIDENT,
RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



2022



Spring on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College.

WELCOME

AND **THANK YOU!**

JUNE 20, 2022



D

Dear Friends & Supporters of RVCC,

First, to all the dads among us: **Happy Father's Day**—a day late, yes, but by no means a dollar short. With your presence today, you're adding to the collective tally in support of Raritan Valley Community College; each golfer, sponsor, auction item, mulligan, raffle ticket, etc.--it all makes a difference. And we are grateful for everything you have done to make the 18th Annual a success.

The RVCC Foundation exists to engage, promote and fundraise in support of the priorities of Raritan Valley Community College. It's no surprise that RVCC students are at the heart of everything we do. We are honored to play a small role in their journeys, a role made possible through your generosity.

Despite the slog of the last 25 months, with all the ups, downs, and patches of chaos, uncertainty, and angst, our campus has remained a place, a community, a home. In fact, we've never been more bullish about this institution or prouder of our students, faculty, and staff. We are equally proud of our affiliation with each of you. And whether you're a long-time supporter, or just meeting us for the first time, we hope you too feel pride in this place, this community, this home. RVCC is more than worthy of it.

On behalf of the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, the RVCC Foundation team, and all of the students, faculty, and staff at Raritan Valley Community College, thank you for helping to make a difference today.

Cheers,

Mike

Michael J. Marion Chief Development Officer & Executive Director
RVCC Foundation & RVCC Alumni Association 74 Lamington Road, Branchburg, NJ 08876-3315
O: 908-648-8567; C: 973-600-2848
rvccfoundation.org / Instagram@rvccfoundation / LinkedIn:MikeMarion

#RVCCPROUD



Daffodils popping out: a welcomed sight on the Courtyard each spring.



When RVCC grads stop by for an unexpected visit, it brings renewed energy to the Foundation's work: Vietnamese-born Hien Ngo, RVCC Class of 2020; Brazilian-born Josiane Costa Lima, RVCC Class of 2021.



Build it and they will come: the afternoon before the first in-person commencement since 2019.

FAST FACTS

Ranked by WalletHub.com, Intelligent.com and Niche.com as the

#1 COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN NEW JERSEY

STUDENT RESIDENCE

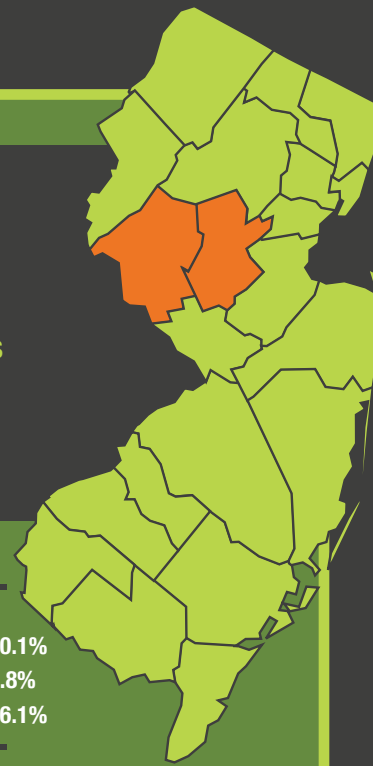
99% IN STATE

56% Somerset

25% Hunterdon

TOP TRANSFER DESTINATIONS

Rutgers New Brunswick
Rutgers Newark
The College Of New Jersey
Kean University
Montclair State University



FAST FACTS data from Fall, 2021

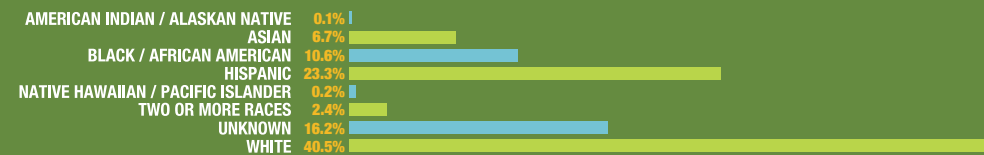
STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Headcount..... 6,688
Credit Hours 59,523
Term Full-time Equivalent (FTE)..... 3,889

FULL-TIME / PART-TIME STATUS

Full-Time 37%
Part-Time 63%

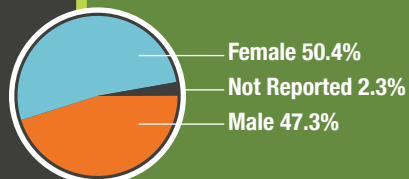
STUDENT ETHNICITY



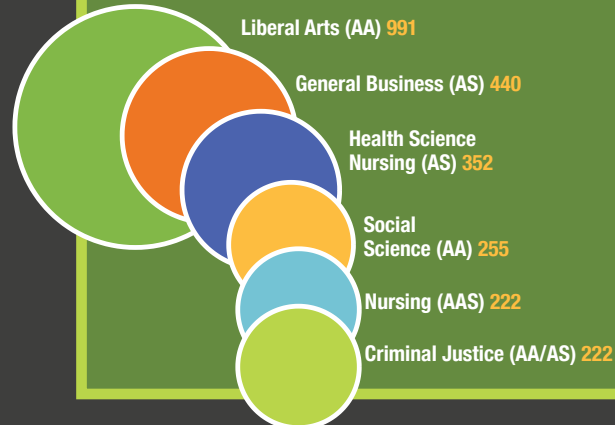
ANNUAL ENROLLMENT 2020-21

Headcount..... 10,243
Term Full-time Equivalent (FTE)..... 4,627

STUDENT GENDER



POPULAR MAJORS



STUDENT STATUS

First Time Student.....20.1%
New Transfer Student.....3.8%
Continuing / re-admit / non-degree76.1%

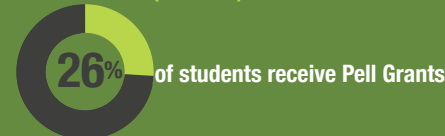
NUMBER OF SECTIONS

Sections Offered1,141
Average Class Size16.7

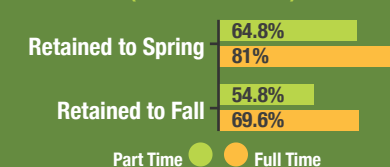
STUDENT AGE



PELL GRANTS (2020-21)



RETENTION (Fall 2020 Cohort)



GRADUATES (2020-21)

1,116 Degrees
63 Certificates



RVCC Leadership



RVCC Foundation Board of Directors

Stacey Kimmins (Chair)
Allan Boomer (Vice Chair)
Rich Berliner
Andrew Borkin (Secretary)
David Bunevich
Anthony V. Cava
Vince Cirianni
Alyssa Darden
Cheryl A. Errico
Sebastian Galvez
Cooper Irving (RVCC Class of 2022)
Parag S. Jategaonkar
Jomil London
Gene C. McCarthy
Jeanne K. Perantoni
Steven A. Reichman
Joel F. Reyes-Guzman
Elissa Santo
Erika Tooman, Esq.
Jimena Torres (RVCC Class of 2023)
John Trojan (Treasurer)
Gary Woodring (Asst. Treasurer)

RVCC Foundation Board Emeritus

Patrick Fittipaldi
Peter S. Johnson
Dr. Richard D. Wellbrock

RVCC Board of Trustees

Caren Bateman, Chair
Roger R. Locandro, Vice Chair (Hunterdon)
Tracy DiFrancesco Zaikov, Vice Chair (Somerset)
Thomas P. Borkowski
Zenon Christodoulou
Paul J. Hirsch
W. Timothy Howes
Roger A. Jinks
Nidhi Makhija
Howard J. Opdyke
Margaret Wolan Sullivan
Helena Swanicke, Treasurer
Juan Torres, Secretary
James A. Von Schilling
Lauren Ciotola, Alumni Representative
John L. McGuire, Trustee Emeritus

RVCC Executive Staff

Michael J. McDonough, President
Deborah E. Preston, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost
John Trojan, Vice President for Finance & Facilities
Jacki Belin, Vice President for Student Affairs and Outreach
Jason Fredericks, Dean of Student Affairs
Michael Marion, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation & RVCC Alumni Association
Robert Pescinski, Executive Director of Technology Services
Cheryl Wallace, Executive Director of Human Resources, Compliance & Security

RVCC Foundation Staff

Mike Marion, Executive Director
Janet Dunne, Development Associate
Stephanie Smullen, Development Associate
Cindy Haddad, Development Assistant

RVCC Foundation Golf Classic Committee

Tom Mitchell, Co-Chair
Lee Sokloski, Co-Chair
Keith Cahill
Cheryl Errico
Brian O'Rourke
Joseph Pavlow
Steve A. Reichman
John Trojan
Paul Vecchione
Barry Walker
Robert P. Wise

Thank You

To our generous sponsors and friends of
the 18th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic



Event Sponsors

TITLE SPONSOR

Structural Concepts Inc.

AFTER THE ROUND SPONSORS

Arbee Associates/Steelcase
Bohler Engineering

PLAYER GIFT SPONSOR

New Jersey Risk Managers and Consultants, Inc.

BREAKFAST SPONSORS

ANS Consultants Inc.
LJS Electrical

GOLF BALL SPONSOR

TD Bank

ON COURSE REFRESHMENT SPONSORS

Allied Universal
Dancker

FAST – Fire and Security Technologies
MKSD Architects

GOLF CART SPONSORS

eDesign Interactive
Fulton Financial Advisors

BEVERAGE CART SPONSOR

Mechanical Preservation Associates

PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN SPONSOR

Integrated Systems & Services, Inc
TriState Capital Bank

BAGPIPER SPONSOR

LB Electric Co.

TEE SIGN SPONSORS

Bio-Shine, Inc.
Black Rock Enterprises LLC
Blejwas Associates
Champion Elevator Corp.
DeSesa Engineering Company, Inc.

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

DiFrancesco, Bateman, Kunzman, Davis,
Lehrer & Flaum, P.C.

Northfield Bank
PepsiCo
Provident Bank
Suplee Clooney & Company
United Business Systems
Wiss & Company, LLP

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Follett Higher Education Group
Hunterdon Healthcare
PhillyCom, Inc.
SSP Architects
Trane
Van Cleef Engineering Associates, LLC

CUM LAUDE

Bedrock Concrete Corp.
Carl Lombardi Construction
Champion Elevator Corp.
Jack Ciattarelli
Gourmet Dining LLC
Hiland Construction Services
International Planning Alliance, LLC
Interface, Inc.
Thomas & Elizabeth Mitchell
Steven A. Reichman
Gary Woodring
Paul Vecchione

INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS

Alpine Business Systems
Bio-Shine, Inc.
Somerset County Business Partnership
Robert P. Wise

MUCH GRATITUDE TO

RVCC Golf Committee
Event Volunteers

HOW TO WIN A Scramble

By Bob Carney



“The breakfast of champions is not a cereal,” a great man once wrote, “it’s the opposition.”

There you go.

To etch your name on the RVCC Foundation Golf Classic trophy (if we ever get around to getting one), you’re going to need a little of that sauce. That macho stuff. That high-fiving, ass-slappin’, whoop-woopin’, you-da-mannin’, testoster-one-drinking’, two-a-dayin’, WILL to WIN. You know what I’m talkin’ about!

And of course you’ll need a woman.

“Whoa! Whoa!” I can hear you saying. “Dude, you’ve lost me. A woman?!”

I know, you’ve read 15 articles pretending to tell you how to win a scramble and nobody’s mentioned this. All those theories: *Get a Great Putter. Get a Big Hitter. Get Four Great Putters. Get Guys You Like. Get Off to a Great Start. Drink Early. Buy Lots of Mulligans.* And so on.

No mention of a woman.

Of course not! If you knew the true secret to winning a scramble tourney would you share it with the world? Oh sure, right after you passed around the formula for a non-alcoholic beer that tasted like beer.

As a member of a team that has won more than its share of scrambles, and is therefore willing to part with the secret, trust me. As a person who knows MVP doesn’t mean “male valuable player”, trust me again.

You need a woman.

Preferably, a woman named Julie, who stands about 5’8”, would drink Windex if she thought it would make us more competitive, and—here’s the kicker—can hit a golf ball 200 yards as straight as a Gerrit Cole fastball. (If a Julie is not available, we recommend a Steady Betty, who putts like Ben Crenshaw and leads the field in strokes gained being upbeat).

The key words: Red tees, 200 yards, straight. See 200 yards from most red tees translates to 300 yards from the whites. And 300 yards is a good, workable drive on almost any hole in practically every scramble. Julie’s drives are often a little longer than 200 yards.

Once you’ve got a Julie all sorts of good things happen, such as, you’re hitting 5-irons into par 5s. Even on the really long par 5s, where you’re hitting a 4-iron or one of those hybrid thingies, you’re way ahead of the pack.

Four eagles equates to eight birdies is the math we live by. At which point all the toys are falling from the trees.

Let me reiterate: Having a Julie or a Betty takes the pressure off your long game. It takes the pressure off your short game. It frees up your putting. And it allows you to focus on those tricky skill shots: The Hated Half Wedge or the Hole-in-One.

So there’s your secret. Bring a Julie. Or a Betty. It’s why Hootie Johnson had four daughters.

You’re welcome.

A Place Called Raritan Valley Community College

May 14, 2022

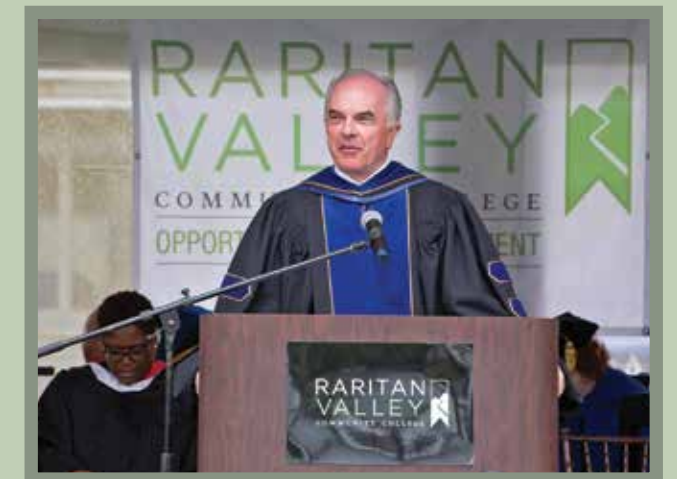
It was a beautiful day in neighborhood and community was visible everywhere.

The first commencement at Raritan Valley Community College in three years.

Associate degrees and certificates awarded to more than 1,200 graduates, with some 84 alumni from the classes of 2020 and 2021 also participating in the celebration.

The return to “in person” for the culminating event of the academic year was worth acknowledgment, and President Michael McDonough reminded us all of the importance of “place” in what we do—with a sea of faces adding ample punctuation.

Students whose journeys began across the globe, and across town. Faculty, who keep those journeys enriched and advancing forward. And friends and families there to witness both a finish line and starting line, all in one. It was a day to feel pride in that place—and in those for whom that place is a perpetual difference maker.



#RVCCPROUD

2021



A LOOK BACK AT THE 17th ANNUAL RVCC FOUNDATION GOLF CLASSIC

CHERRY VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB
SKILLMAN, NEW JERSEY
JUNE 21, 2021

17TH ANNUAL RAISES OVER \$117,000

The RVCC Foundation raised over \$117,000 at the 17th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic, held June 21, 2021 at the *Cherry Valley Country Club* in Skillman.

The RVCC Foundation Golf Classic is the non-profit's largest fundraising event of the year—and 2021 was a year when so many RVCC students and their families were impacted by COVID-19. Thanks to the generosity of 55 corporate sponsors, including Title Sponsor, *Arbee Associates/Steelcase*, as well as individuals and community partners, the 17th Annual was another six-figure fundraising event. Net proceeds raised from the golf outing and auctions support student scholarships, RVCC's education programming, and other institutional priorities.

In total, 107 enthusiastic golfers—from many local businesses—participated in the event, which included a 50/50 raffle, a silent auction and a live auction. The highlight of the day were the remarks from RVCC 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 had transformed their lives, enabling them to continue along their paths and ever-closer to attaining their educational goals.



2021



NEWS

You Can Use



Christian Rodriguez, Adam Armahizer



RVCC Automotive Technology students Nicholas Pearce, Sebastian Rosario and Logan Meade with the “new” Mercedes

ALUMNI RISING

We’re excited to report an upcoming “re-launch” of the RVCC Alumni Association. We’ve learned much in our quest to reconstruct our alumni database, which traces back to 1968 and an era when records weren’t always maintained, and certainly not preserved “digitally.” By our count, we have some 21,000 email addresses for RVCC alumni and we’ll be refining that number throughout our relaunch (and beyond). In the meantime, you can look forward to regular communications and on-campus reunion events in the future. **Greg DeSanctis**, Director, RVCC Honors College, has added RVCC Alumni Association outreach to his responsibilities. The RVCC Foundation will be support Greg, as it assumes responsibility for all RVCC Alumni Association outreach, programming, and engagement. Stay tuned!

GETTING OUT THE VOTE!

And they DID! Vote that is. This enterprising duo put their campaign “on wheels” (literally) and pushed to impressive results: getting the next Student Government Association (SGA) President, **Christian Rodriguez**, elected for the 2022-23 Academic Year! Although Christian’s Vice Presidential running mate, **Adam Armahizer**, didn’t “carry the day,” together they were a ‘can’t miss’ campaign force on the campus of RVCC!

MERCEDES-BENZ AND RVCC

RVCC’s Automotive Technology program at the Workforce Training Center has recently partnered with **Mercedes-Benz** and RVCC is now a “MB Campus”—a distinction that allows us to offer more specific training on Mercedes vehicles. In addition, students in the program are able to pursue a Mercedes-Benz focused career and can access the same training they would be completing if they were working at a Mercedes-Benz dealership. The company also provided RVCC with their manufacturer-specific diagnostic tool and a 2019 Mercedes-Benz, which enables students to study and learn on the vehicles that they are going to be working on everyday if they choose to pursue a career with Mercedes-Benz. Special props to **Kathy Fable**, President & CEO of Quinn Fable Advertising, for making the introduction.

HOLIDAY VIBE

RVCC freshman music major and soprano **Victoria Mango** performed a stirring rendition of Ava Maria at a December performance at “Sunrise of Bridgewater” for some 30 residents of the assisted living facility. In addition, Victoria was joined by fellow freshman tenor, **Felipe Primero**, and mezzo-soprano **Katie Strong**, all members of the RVCC Chorale group, who were accompanied by Dr. **John Sichel**, Associate Professor of Music and Dr. **Anna**



RVCC Chorale at Sunrise of Bridgewater



RVCC President Michael McDonough, Sangeetha Punnam, NJCCC President, Aaron Fichtner.



Keiserman, Assistant Professor of Music (who provided the piano accompaniment). In addition to Ava Maria, the group performed a rousing collection of Christmas carols to the delight of Sunrise residents.

TWO FROM RVCC NAMED TO ALL-STATE ACADEMIC TEAM

Raritan Valley Community College students **Connie Looi** of Hillsborough and **Sangeetha Punnam** of Bridgewater are among the 38 New Jersey community college students who are being honored by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges for being named to the *2022 New Jersey All-State Academic Team*.

The students—who are being celebrated for their outstanding academic achievements and exceptional service to their communities and colleges as members of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community colleges—were honored at the New Jersey Community College Scholars Celebration, held April 28 at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

“These students truly exemplify the true power of community colleges. The New Jersey All-State Academic Team members have worked incredibly hard to become the state’s very best community college students. They have remarkable stories and serve as an inspiration to all,” said NJCCC President **Aaron Fichtner**, Ph.D.

In addition, RVCC student Sangeetha Punnam was selected to the 2022 All-USA Academic Team, sponsored by Cengage, Phi Theta Kappa, and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). She is one of 20 of the nation’s top community college students to receive this honor.

Ms. Looi and Ms. Punnam also were among eight New Jersey community college students recognized by Phi Theta Kappa and the Coca-Cola Foundation with scholarships as part of the USA All-State Academic Team competition. As part of this honor, Looi received a Coca-Cola Gold Scholarship and Punnam received a New Century Transfer Pathway Scholarship.

ADJUNCT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Congratulations to **Michael Griffith** (Communications & Languages), **Keilani Abdullah** (Humanities, Social Science, & Education), and **Joseph Caramela** (Business & Public Service), on being named as the 2022 recipients of the Adjunct Excellent in Teaching Awards. These awards are the gift of Dr. **Susan Primmer** and Dr. **Robert Harris**, long-time supporters of RVCC, whose generosity provides for \$1,000 to each recipient. Special thanks to Dr. Primmer and Dr. Harris for your leadership in making these awards possible. Thanks as well to our panel of reviewers for your care in the selection process—and to Michael, Keilani, and Joseph: we are grateful for your teaching excellence and for making a difference in the lives of RVCC students.

NEWS

You Can Use



MENTORSHIP MILESTONE

Another milestone achieved for the **Sanofi** Corporate Mentorship Program at Raritan Valley Community College.

At the program's 5th Annual "closing ceremony" last month, 10 student mentees and their Sanofi mentors gathered on campus with RVCC program leaders **Shay Wadher**, **Nazneen Merchant**, **Michelle Amparbin**, **Alicia Hermo-Weaver** and Sanofi CSR leaders **Diana Blankman Roberts** and **Sharon Katz** to reflect on a year of impact and transformation.

Considering the goodwill the program fosters, the relationships it forges, and the trajectories it fortifies, this unique collaboration between Sanofi and RVCC represents corporate social responsibility at its finest. The remarks of each mentee-mentor pair provided all of the testimony needed. With so much shared affirmation and such promise for the journeys ahead, this ceremony is less of a 'closing' and more of a launchpad for the future.



Mark Den Hollander, Yash Goyal, and Agustina Gonzalez, with their RVCC faculty advisors, Ellen Brain, Izabela Zieba and Emilie Stander, the RVCC Honors Program co-chairs Greg DeSanctis and Loretta Fois.



Tiana Mayfield

HONORS CAPSTONES

Congrats to the 2021-22 Honors Program Capstone presenters: **Mark Den Hollander**, **Yash Goyal**, **Agustina Gonzalez**, **Morgan Kania**, **Jessica DeSanto**, **Christopher Bimble**, **Henry Freligh**, **Selma Mehmedagic**, **Tiana Mayfield**, and **Aleena Akram**. These presentations are always a highlight ending fall and spring semesters and this year's topics covered offered quite a range: *Breathing and Mindfulness in Sport*, *Genetics of Breast Cancer*, *Handmade Clarinet and Saxophone Reeds*, *Assessing the Ecological Health of Two Sides*

of the Six Mile Run Trail in Somerset NJ, *The Negative Representation of Muslims in Media*, *The Business of Being Kafkaesque*, *Deer Overpopulation*, and *The Importance of Classical Literature*.

COSMETOLOGY STUDENT GOES NATIONAL!

RVCC Cosmetology student **Emma McJury** of Franklin Park has been selected as a member of the *Beacon Class of 2022*, one of the beauty industry's most prestigious programs for students, sponsored by the Professional Beauty Association (PBA). Her participation enabled her to take part in the PBA's International Salon + Spa Expo event, held April 2-3 in Long Beach, CA. She also attended the North American Hairstyling Awards (NAHA) as part of the program.

The PBA event featured two days of industry professionals educating new cosmetologists on relevant topics in the beauty industry. Presentations



Emma McJury



Tamara Jones, RVCC Class of 2022, with Darren McManus

focused on such topics as goal setting, personal finance, and how to be successful in the industry.

Reflecting on her participation in the Beacon program, McJury said, "This experience allowed me to network and build connections I couldn't make anywhere else. Being part of Beacon is incredibly special. I recommend every student in the Beauty Professions program apply because it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I am so inspired and excited to begin my career and want to thank RVCC for letting me represent them at this prestigious event."

ARTISTS IN THE HOUSE

The Raritan Valley Community College Art Gallery was once again the center of the local art world, thanks to the talents of RVCC Arts & Design students.

The 2022 RVCC STUDENT ART EXHIBITION showcased a diverse range of work from some 30 artists and spanned the following disciplines: Ceramics, Digital Artmaking, Graphic Design, Painting, Photography, Video and Game Art.

Congratulations and thanks to all of the featured RVCC student artists—and their Arts & Design faculty—with special props to Professor **Darren McManus** for his leadership in coordinating the 2022 exhibition.



Derek Weber

TOP AUTHOR AWARDEE

Huge congratulations to Dr. **Derek Weber**, Professor of Biology and Microbiology, winner of this year's "Top Author Award" by Top Hat, an active learning platform used by colleges and universities. Weber of Flemington, was honored for his work creating an affordable, clinically relevant, digital lab manual in microbiology.

Seeing a need for a manual that helps allied health students draw connections between basic microbiology and their future careers, Weber decided to create his own digital lab manual using the Top Hat platform. The manual, which can be updated and adapted by instructors on-demand, includes such features as animations, videos, and integrated assessments that engage students at each step along their learning path. The response has been extremely positive, with increased levels of student engagement and application, as well as improved grades.

A faculty member at RVCC since 2008, Dr. Weber's current scholarly work focuses on the use of instructional technology and the implementation of authentic, clinically relevant material into the microbiology curriculum. His work has been recognized with multiple recognitions and awards, including the Award for Innovative Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Technology at the International Teaching and Learning Conference.

NEWS

You Can Use



Yash Goyal

NEWMAN CIVIC SCHOLAR HONOREE

We've said it before and we'll say it again and again: RVCC students ROCK! And thank you Campus Compact for recognizing that! Raritan Valley Community College celebrates the distinguished Mr. **Yash Goyal**, who has added being named a *2022-2023 Newman Civic Fellow* to his growing list of honors. We also celebrate the nationally recognized Service Learning Program at RVCC, which partners with some 250 community organizations, schools, and non-profits to provide exceptional service learning opportunities for RVCC students.

GAME ON!

STANDING O for the jammers of Raritan Valley Community College—including veteran game creators, RVCC alumni, RVCC Game Development students and community members—who helped rock the *2022 The Global Game Jam*.

The late January event, for which Raritan Valley Community College was one of the host sites, drew nearly 29,000 participants worldwide from 680 virtual and in-person locales in more than 100 countries. In total, the RVCC jammers built seven games using the event's theme, "Duality!"

And YES, RVCC has the goods: the College offers two degrees for students interested in game design and development: an Associate of Science in Game Art and an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Game Development. Very RVCC PROUD.

NO TYPICAL SATURDAY

CHEERS to the **RVCC Rotaract Club** for its Saturday service earlier this spring. Student volunteers and friends packed some 30,000 meals for local organizations and another 20,000 for Ukraine relief, in a huge effort on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College. Thanks to the students of the RVCC Rotaract Club for their energy, leadership, and service!

IMPACT WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

You don't have to go to Georgetown to get a Georgetown education. Thanks to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, we now have some things to learn about "The Colleges Where Low-Income Students Get the Highest ROI." Some 3,400 higher education institutions were the focus of the Center's analysis of US Department of Education College Scorecard data.

For the Raritan Valley Community College faithful (or for those with a rooting interest), here's some key takeaways from the Georgetown analysis: RVCC has the BEST ROI among all of New Jersey's Community Colleges, is

in the TOP 5% of ALL community colleges, and is in the TOP 16% OF ALL HIGHER ED INSTITUTIONS (both two-year & four-year schools).

Said another way: for the segment of the college-going population that needs us the most—low-income students, whose families earn \$30,000 or less per year and make up more than one-third of all college students—RVCC truly is the BEST OF NEW JERSEY.

OPHTHALMIC SCIENCE STUDENT WINS NATIONAL COLLEGE BOWL

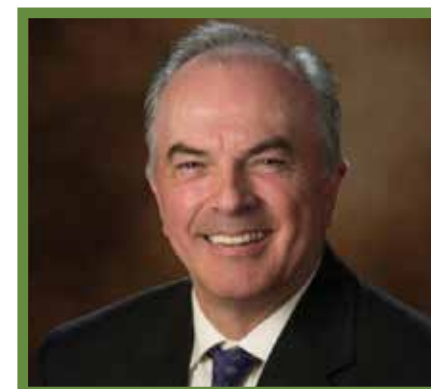
Raritan Valley Community College Ophthalmic Science student **Judy Quinones** of Bridgewater was named the winner of a nationwide College Bowl contest at Vision Expo East, held March 31-April 3 at the Javits Center, New York City. Vision Expo East is an annual event for ophthalmic professionals focusing on eyewear, education, and fashion.

Quinones, a May 2022 grad with an Applied Science Degree in Ophthalmic Science, also works in the optical industry as an apprentice optician. Quinones not only won the contest, but also shattered the record for the highest point total. The College Bowl trophy will be on display in the RVCC Optical Clinic for the next year.

The National Federation of Opticianry Schools (NFOS) College Bowl, which is sponsored by EssilorLuxottica—a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of ophthalmic lenses, frames and sunglasses—is an annual competition between representatives of opticianry programs that are affiliated with the National Federation of Opticianry Schools.



Judy Quinones



Michael McDonough

SERVING STUDENTS RELEGATED TO THE MARGINS

"Opportunity and talent are everywhere. They are not the exclusive property of one group or the other. The more inclusive your student population is, the better an institution you will become. It's as simple as that," said **Michael McDonough**, President, Raritan Valley Community College, in a January profile in Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine. Proud to have an outspoken leader in the higher education space also leading Raritan Valley Community College, and its diverse, inspiring, and resilient students.

ENGINEERING GRADS OUT AND ABOUT

Raritan Valley Community College Engineering students **Luke Ingenito** and **Henry Frelich** recently presented their "Rotating Head Support" and "Weight Room Energy Absorber" engineering projects on behalf of their teammates at the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Mid-Atlantic Conference. The conference was held April 22-23 at New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark.



RVCC Rotaract Club



NEWS

You Can Use



Luke Ingenito



Henry Freligh

Ingenito, a resident of Clinton, is an RVCC 2020 graduate who is currently a senior Industrial Engineering major at Rutgers University. He represented an interdisciplinary collaboration of three RVCC Engineering and Graphic Design teams that worked over 18 months to develop a wheelchair-mounted rotating head support for a local disabled child. The students' head support design overcame the limitation of commercial fixed head supports and allowed the child to rotate his head sufficiently to more frequently activate mechanical switches, located near his head, and

thereby interact with educational software. The Graphic Design students also developed ideas for a more "kid-friendly" aesthetic for the head support and created complete product "visual identities" and branding campaigns.

Freligh, a resident of Glen Gardner who is a Chemical Engineering (Class of 2022) at RVCC, presented a fully functional prototype device to absorb and dissipate the impact energy of a falling "Deadlift" barbell in the campus weight room. The prototype eliminated the loud "booming" noise generated previously by the falling barbell. The noise had been disruptive to College offices located directly below the weight room. The students used a torsion bar to absorb and store the impact energy and shock absorbers to dissipate the energy.



photo l-to-r: Jeanne Perantoni (RVCC Foundation board member), Sebastian Galvez, Mike Marion

TOP 40

Congrats to the HOME TEAM: the Somerset County Business Partnership had its annual end-of-year meeting and among the honorees were the County's "Top 40 Under 40"—which featured Raritan Valley Community College grad and RVCC Foundation board member, **Sebastian Galvez**, and RVCC Workforce Training Center's **Aubrey Flanagan**. Rising stars with the recognition to boot!

MEDICAL ASSISTANT STUDENT RECEIVES SERVICE LEARNING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Samantha Edge of Somerville has been named the recipient of the Raritan Valley Community College Service Learning Leadership Award. Edge is a student in the College's Medical Assistant Certificate program.

The annual award honors students for their outstanding leadership and personal development attained through their service learning project and reflection activity. The award focuses on projects showing a high level of initiative in all areas of planning, including identifying the community need,



Samantha Edge

developing the service, and putting that plan into action.

Edge has proven her dedication to service, demonstrating her passion and leadership skills through her activities. During the fall 2021 semester, while enrolled in the Administrative Medical Assisting Principles course, Edge worked with All Women's Healthcare in Flemington to develop materials for its Centering Pregnancy Program. Edge worked with the Practice Manager and collaboratively planned a project that would promote an innovative way to conduct prenatal care in a group setting. Because of COVID, Edge was not able to find a compatible in-person placement, so she went above and beyond to design a remote project with a local women's center. She demonstrated professional communication with healthcare staff, was receptive to feedback about the materials she designed, and was creative in both her vision and execution of the project.

Reflecting on her service, Edge said, "I chose this project with All Women's Healthcare because of how much I believe in the Centering Pregnancy Program. The program helps women by giving them a close relationship with fellow expecting mothers and their providers. Not only can these women see their physicians at their scheduled visits, but they also form bonds that give them support when they may not have it otherwise."



Mary Jo Loughlin

2021-22 RVCC DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

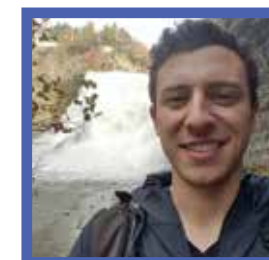
We're proud to promote our Distinguished Alumni for the 2021-22 Academic Year—and proud of what they've accomplished after their RVCC student days:

Mary Jo Loughlin, RVCC Class of 1990, Associate Degree, Nursing; she 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). Mary Jo has enjoyed a distinguished 33-year nursing career and is currently Chief Nursing Director at Hunterdon Medical Center.



Joel Reyes-Guzman

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

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.

NEWS

You Can Use



RVCC Digital Media/Film Studies student Terrance George (Class of 2022) and Jennifer Clock (Coordinator, RVCC Student Resource Center).

HELPING HANDS

A belated shoutout to “Helping Hands” for their generous support of RVCC students through the RVCC Resource Center & Food Pantry (and their donation of reconditioned laptops and new Chromebooks). This philanthropically-minded network of local families seeks to assist RVCC students along their journeys, especially those students with financial challenges.

“Helping Hands looks forward to continuing our support of RVCC students so that they can complete their education and make a meaningful difference with their lives.”

-Niranjan & Vasanthi Rao, Helping Hands, Somerset County

PTK: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

As the 2021-22 Academic Year was winding down, another induction ceremony and celebration was held, ushering 42 new members into Phi Theta Kappa on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College.

The RVCC Foundation applauds the leadership of the 2021-22 officer team of **Yash Goyal, Isabel Dutta, Delmy Cruz, Brianna Estevez, Connie Looi, and Sangeetha Punnam**, for their awarding-winning year—among other accolades, their “Top Officer Team” in the Middle States region spoke volumes. Their “Making A Difference” initiative took “Top College Project” honors and brought the voice of students together with administrative leaders from across RVCC. The RVCC Foundation is honored to play a small role in support of PTK, helping ease barriers to membership for those with financial challenges, ensuring that the leadership opportunities of PTK are as inclusive for RVCC students as possible.



#RVCCPROUD

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE[®]



OFFICIAL PARTNER OF
**RARITAN VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

© 2022. PEPSI and the Pepsi Globe are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc.



Megan Demspey

OER and RVCC's MEGAN DEMPSEY

If you haven't heard of "OER" or the resulting cost savings achieved for RVCC students, you're not alone. Fortunately, RVCC has its own resident expert in "Open Educational Resources" (aka, OER) in the person of **Megan Dempsey**, Professor, Instructional Services Librarian, and Chair of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Steering Committee. The following interview provides excellent context on OER broadly and specifically the benefits of its integration at RVCC.

RVCC Foundation: *What are open educational resources and why are they important in higher education?*

Megan: Open educational resources, or OER, are teaching and learning materials that are freely available and offered under an open license. Unlike traditional college textbooks, which are under copyright that restricts how they can be used, OER can be revised and remixed to create course materials that are more engaging, more diverse, and more relevant to students. Because they are free digital materials, students can save hundreds of dollars on the cost of their education when faculty choose to use OER instead of a costly publisher textbook.

And why would faculty choose OER over a commercial publisher's textbook?

Faculty often see first-hand that their students are struggling to pay for college, or to pay for other life necessities like housing, transportation, even food. Surveys of students, including here at RVCC, have shown that students frequently skip buying a textbook because of the cost or wait several weeks into the semester when they can afford it, even when they know that will affect their performance in class. Faculty see the effects when students start to fall behind early in the semester. Many students compensate by sharing textbooks with friends or using reserve copies in the library. But when faculty choose OER, students have access to the textbook for free from the first day of class and they can keep those digital textbooks forever. E-textbooks from commercial publishers may be cheaper than the print versions, but students lose access to them when the semester ends, so it's like they're only renting their education instead of owning the education they've paid for.

Why were you interested in bringing an OER initiative to RVCC?

Actually, one of RVCC's first OER adoptions was for the Business Law I and II classes and that project to adopt an open textbook was led by Professors Melanie Morris and Brian Donnelly years before we formally started an OER initiative. Melanie had been telling me about the advantages of open textbooks for some time and I had the opportunity at a conference to learn more about how librarians were leading these initiatives on campuses across the country. And it made sense. Every semester during the first couple of weeks, the RVCC Library's busiest area is our textbook reserves, where students can check out a textbook to make copies or just use it in the library for a few hours. I knew that students rarely purchased their books during the first weeks, that many of them were ordering them online from cheaper alternatives or waiting for financial aid to come through, or they were deciding if they would bother buying the book at all, and that their success in college was going to be affected. As a librarian, I am uniquely positioned to interact with a lot of faculty across campus, and thinking about what resources are best for students is something librarians do all the time. That summer, I began offering workshops for faculty to educate them about the textbook affordability crisis and OER, and several faculty

**\$2.5million
in savings**

150%

members were very interested in making this change to help their struggling students.

What do you mean by the “textbook affordability crisis”?

The cost of college textbooks has risen nearly 150% in the past 20 years, far outpacing the rate of inflation. As I mentioned, students are making choices between buying textbooks and paying their rent or car insurance. RVCC established a Resource Center and Food Pantry because many of our students struggle to pay for necessities. A nationwide survey in 2021 found that among students who experienced food insecurity during the pandemic, 85% of them skipped buying a textbook even though they were concerned that doing so would negatively affect their grade. A required textbook plus the access code students need to do their homework can cost \$150 - \$250 in some classes, which puts incredible strain on already tight budgets.

So, what do these free OER look like? How do students use them?

Some OER look just like a typical online textbook. For example, all of the Introduction to Business courses at RVCC use an open textbook, Fundamentals of Business, from Virginia Tech Publishing, which is a 370-page textbook that looks like any other, but is fully customizable, for example, if faculty want to revise or reorganize it, and it is completely free. Other OER might be primary sources that are in the public domain, interactive tutorials, even TedTalks or videos that the faculty members create themselves. These types of OER can be remixed and curated to create a comprehensive set of resources that replace a traditional textbook, as Lisa Mahajan-Cusack, an adjunct faculty member, did for Introduction to Public Relations. In other cases, like the Business Law classes I mentioned, students can not only read the digital version of the textbook online, but they can also purchase a print version of it from the college bookstore for about \$15. That's quite a difference from the \$300 textbook that was required 10 years ago.

What do students have to say about OER?

What students frequently say they appreciate the most is that they didn't have to pay for a textbook. But they also like the convenience and accessibility of the OER materials. Because they are digital, students can – and do – access them from all different devices anytime they need to. Students with work and family obligations outside of school

comment that they rely on being able to read their course materials anytime without having to carry a textbook around. They have also told us that the materials chosen by their professors are more interesting and engaging than textbooks they've used in other classes. We've surveyed more than 600 students about their experience in an OER course, and 95% of them said they would take another OER course or recommend it to a friend.

What has been the impact of OER at RVCC?

In four years, we have saved RVCC students \$2.5 million in textbook costs. Currently, we offer 67 courses where one or more faculty members teach the course as a “z-course” or zero-textbook cost course. Many of these adopted OER or other free-to-student materials as part of our OER Faculty Grant program. Thanks to generous donations to the RVCC Foundation since 2018—including from an exceptionally generous anonymous donor—we have offered grants to faculty members to do the work of researching available OER, selecting the most appropriate materials for their students, and redesigning their courses with the new textbook or OER. Traditionally, textbook publishers will provide faculty members with a lot of additional materials, like slides, homework questions, quizzes and tests. When someone adopts OER, they lose all of that extra publisher material, so we honor the work of adopting and creating new materials through the faculty grant program. However, once our faculty gained a fuller understanding of how the cost of textbooks was affecting students, how much high quality OER exists, and how much more academic freedom they had when they could choose from a wide variety of openly licensed educational content, faculty began converting courses outside of the grant program or working to consciously reduce the cost of their course materials. So we also have a growing list of courses that we consider “low-cost,” for which the course materials cost \$45 or less. When students are building their schedule, they can search for zero-cost and low-cost courses and make the most appropriate decisions based on their specific needs.

Has this work gone beyond just replacing textbooks?

Yes! Our faculty have started getting students involved in creating educational content and working on OER publishing projects. Students in Professor Melanie Lenahan's biology class wrote science communication articles that were published with open licenses on the website SciWor-

thy. Education students working with Professor Kathy Suk created educational videos which can be used in future semesters of the course to supplement content in their open textbook. Professor Christine Pipitone, who has adopted OER for all of her English Composition courses, will be working with her students this summer to find additional materials and have students create course content that will be openly licensed and available for all English faculty to adopt. We also have faculty publishing their own OER textbooks now. Professor Lynne Kowski created an OER textbook for Statistics I, replacing the commercial textbook for that course in all sections, and Professor Melanie Morris will be undertaking a full re-write of the open textbook used in Business Law to make it more coherent and useful for students and to add interactive elements for engagement. Both of these resources will be shared to an OER repository where they can be found and used by faculty at other institutions.

What's next for OER at RVCC?

We are continuing to explore ways to make a college education more affordable by reducing the cost of course materials. Of our top 20 highest enrolled courses, 40% of them offer a zero-cost or low-cost option, but we need to expand some of these offerings to more faculty and more disciplines. A student who can be flexible with their schedule can potentially take 51 credits of a Liberal Arts degree without paying for a textbook. But we know that many of our students have schedule constraints because of other obligations, so we need to make OER offerings as robust and widespread as possible. I make it a point to stay aware of new OER that get published and let faculty know about them, and to have conversations with faculty about what their needs are and what types of materials will help their students learn. I think the opportunity for RVCC faculty to publish OER textbooks is tremendous and will help us continue to expand OER options. I would love to see RVCC offer a “z-degree,” where a student can complete an entire degree program with zero textbook costs. We're on our way, but there is still work to do.

Megan Dempsey is a Professor and Instructional Services Librarian at Raritan Valley Community College, chair of the OER Steering Committee, and OER Ambassador for the NJ academic library consortia, VALE. Megan has been an advocate for the use of open

educational resources to improve student success and increase equity in higher education at RVCC and throughout New Jersey. She has brought in more than \$100,000 in faculty grant funding and leads an OER initiative that has saved RVCC students more than \$2 million since 2018. Her OER research has twice been published in International Journal of Open Educational Resources (IJOER). As a NJ OER Ambassador, Megan co-created an online certification course for NJ librarians and library staff and works with academic libraries around the state to help grow their campus OER initiatives.

Megan has been an RVCC faculty librarian since 2007, coordinating the library's reference and information literacy instruction program and serving a term as Library Chair. She has received two faculty research grants to support her work in information literacy and was awarded a faculty sabbatical to research the impact of OER on RVCC student performance. Megan has presented extensively on improving students' research competencies through active learning at local and regional library conferences. She has published on library-related issues in Journal of Academic Librarianship, Communications in Information Literacy, and Library Hi Tech and has presented at local and national higher education conferences including Innovations, Faculty of the Future, and Engaging Learners in the 21st Century.

RVCC FAMILIES

#RVCCPROUD

Raritan Valley Community College has rich history that spans some 53 years. Central to the College's storyline and to the community in which we exist are families, Raritan Valley families. Commencing with this year's annual report, we plan to regularly feature "RV Families"—families that have multiple members educated, trained, or otherwise involved at RVCC. We look forward to sharing more about RVCC's proud heritage of families—RV families—each with multiple family members who benefited from their time at RVCC, like these six families...

The Gerko Family (dad, mom, daughter)

Joseph is Branch Manager and Assistant Vice President, Northfield Bank. He graduated from RVCC in December 1988, with an AAS in Accounting, and then went on to get a Bachelors (BS) at Kean College in Accounting.

Donna, graduated 1996 with an AAS in Business Admin-



Photo (l-to-r): Joe, Amanda, Donna

istration, and is now a sales associate at Home Depot in Flemington.

Amanda, graduated May 2020 with Criminal Justice AS degree, and went on to graduate from Rutgers University with minor in criminal justice and social work. She has been accepted into the Graduate Program at the Rutgers School of Social Work and starts this fall. Amanda wants to work in social work to help people in need and has aspirations to work as a counselor at the high school level. She is a currently a consultant at family success center in Flemington.

Says Joseph, "Raritan Valley Community College provid-

ed an educational foundation for us to pursue our various paths. It was a very affordable choice and is recognized as a top-rated educational institution. We are all very grateful for our accomplishments which all started at locally, at RVCC. I would recommend to all parents that their children start their educational and career journeys at RVCC."

The Kpade-Johnson Family (brother and two sisters)

Oreoluwa (RVCC Class of 2022) is blazing a trail for his younger sisters, Anuoluwapo and Ifeoluwa. Having just graduated from RVCC with a pre-med/pre-pharm degree, Oreoluwa is transferring to the Saint Peters University Honors programs to complete a Baccalaureate degree in Biochemistry, with a goal to become a physician/surgeon in sport medicine or dermatology "with the sole aim of making a positive impact in the healthcare industry. Also, through Philanthropy, I would love to expand basic healthcare provisions to countries that lack fundamental health care amenities like Nigeria, Colombia, Ecuador etc.," says Oreoluwa.

Anuoluwapo, who anticipates graduating from RVCC with the Class of 2023 or 2024, is majoring in Nursing wants to become a Registered Nurse. After earning her undergraduate degree in her next educational goal is to earn my Master of Science in nursing and become a nurse practitioner to improve sick patients' wellbeing and recovery.

Ifeoluwa is Franklin High School student (Class of 2023), who plans to attend RVCC and hopes to graduate in 2025! Says Oreoluwa, "I am most appreciative of the unrelentless support from most if not all of the professors I had at RVCC. Taking the first steps in rigorous academic courses can lead to failure but through the faculty's encouragement, academic resources, and the willingness to meet outside of class hours helped me build a foundation and solidify my success and helped me thrive at RVCC."



Foreground to background: Oreoluwa, Anuoluwapo, Ifeoluwa

Adds Anuoluwapo, "I really appreciate RVCC. It is a good place to begin your college academic career if you're not prepared to be in a 4-year college environment. I appreciate the small class sizes and how you're able to share your opinions in class and be heard."

The Moschella Family (brother, sister, and dad)

Thomas anticipates a Fall '23 gradation with a degree in Business Administration, and is grateful to "be able to get a world class education close to home."

Sarah anticipates a spring '24 graduation, currently in the RV CC Education P-12 program—and working at the Children's Campus (Childcare Center) at RVCC, with much success. Sarah is planning to enroll in the Centenary/RVCC partnership program for education majors. She especially



Photo (l-to-r): Sarah, Wayne, Thomas

appreciates RVCC's incredible Education program "offering excellent opportunities" for her future.

Wayne (dad) is the Lab Coordinator for RVCC Workforce Automotive lab. He appreciates "the opportunity to share my own industrial journey with the RVCC Automotive program has been a very rewarding experience."

The Ngo Family (sisters)

Hien graduated in 2020 with an Associate of Science degree in Pre-Pharmacy, and is currently a student at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy (EMSOP) of Rutgers University. Her goal—after graduation and working for a few years as a pharmacist, is to obtain a PhD in research with a focus on different herbal medications and disease prevention. Hien plans to stay in the field of pharmacy, including for a hospital or insurance company. She is especially interested in a low-health literacy population. "Because I struggled with language barriers when I moved to America," says Hien. "I want to help other people who are in similar situations so they can avoid any health-related problems, have better access to health care and live a better quality of life."

Eventually Hien would like to volunteer for a national or international health organization that assists people who are in need. "If I can, I would also like to create an organization to help immigrants or people who do not have access to healthcare, so they can control and maintain their health. I would also like to spend more time with my family in daily activities or traveling to enjoy life, explore the world, and celebrate every moment that we have together."

"Throughout my time at RVCC as a student, student worker, and as a member of different organizations, I improved both academically and personally—and gained more self-confidence to continue my journey in the field of pharmacy. RVCC gave me a feeling of family, who always protected, supported, and guided me along my journey."

Luong graduated in 2021 with a Cosmetology Certificate of Professional Competency, and currently works as a nail technician in Somerset. She plans to go back to college to complete her associate's degree and looks forward to eventually traveling and visiting new places to learn about differ-



Photo (l-to-r): Hien, Luong

#RVCCPROUD

ent cultures, traditions—and trying different cuisines. Says Luong, “I’m grateful for all the opportunities that I received at RVCC. Moreover, I want to say thank you to all the amazing, kind, and supportive staff, faculty and friends who I have met and who have helped me throughout my journey at RVCC. I greatly appreciate it.”

The McVerry Family (sister and brother)

Anna graduated with an Associate’s Degree in Business in 2020 (2018-2020) and then transferred to Rutgers University, graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in Finance in May 2022. She is currently working for Affinity Credit Union in their Fraud Division.

Patrick spent his freshman year (2019-2020) at RVCC and then transferred to TCNJ, where he is currently a rising Senior pursuing a degree in Communications. This summer will be spent in an internship with Coca-Cola.



Photo: Patrick, Anna

Says dad (Patrick, who is president and general manager of the Somerset Patriots), “I was thrilled that Anna and Patrick chose to go to Raritan Valley Community College—not only because of the huge cost savings compared to 4-year colleges, but also because RVCC provided both kids with a quality education and prepared them for the next step.

The Rodden Family (mother, daughter)

Samantha graduated from RVCC in May 2015, with an

Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts, emphasis in Theatre. After graduating, Samantha continued on to Drew University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre, the attained certified in TEFL (double certification in teaching English as a second language) and traveled to different countries (England, Scotland, Germany, Russia, Spain, Japan and Korea). After returning home, Samantha became an archery instructor (group and private lessons), and currently is working on a book editor certification, with hopes of becoming a voice actor for video games and to travel the world.



Photo (l-to-r): Sharon, Samantha

Says Samantha of her RVCC years: “My favorite part of RVCC was the friendships I made and the sense of community that brought us all together.”

Mom Sharon graduated May 2022 with an Associate of Fine Arts in Dance, and then continued on to get certified as a Pilates instructor. She is currently teaching functional exercise and movement to Seniors 50 and over, and hopes to expand her teaching experiences to include Pilates for Seniors and others.

“I most appreciated the Dance program at RVCC, which is one of the most exceptional experiences I’ve ever had,” notes Sharon. “The teachers are remarkable in talent as well as their ability to teach, and the program offers students fabulous technique classes in Modern, Ballet, and Jazz. Other classes that explored aspects of dance and movement included choreography, Eurhythmics, Dance Composition and Improvisation, World History of Dance and Contemporary Dance History. Performance opportunities are extensive, and I got to watch many of my classmates become dance teachers and performers in their own right. I can’t speak highly enough of the program and its teachers.”

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Proudly Supporting the RVCC Foundation

BOHLER //
BOHLERENGINEERING.COM



ALIGNING STARS

On the evening of the day in which Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed as the first black woman to sit on the United States Supreme Court, a special event was unfolding as part of the Paul Robeson Institute for Ethics, Leadership, and Social Justice on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College.

In a beautiful alignment of stars, the “31st Annual Paul Robeson Youth Achievement Awards” program showcased outstanding, high-achieving African American students from 15 New Jersey middle and high schools from Somerset and Hunterdon Counties who took the stage to be honored for their accomplishments in scholarship, arts, athletics, and community service. Huge praise to RVCC’s **Rhonda Stewart** (Program Specialist at the Robeson Institute), the force behind this year’s awards, and **Jason Fredericks** (Dean of Student Affairs) for his support and leadership.

The evening included a special announcement about the *Paul Robeson Scholarships and Evelyn S. Field Scholarships* now available for African American students attending RVCC. With a new academic year ahead, there’s great anticipation to see the breadth of student applicants for these new scholarships.

Earlier in the week, a portrait of Paul Robeson (“Paul Robeson - Renaissance Man”) was unveiled at the Institute by Jason and Rhonda, who were joined at the unveiling by **Beverly Spruill**, the mother of the artist who created the



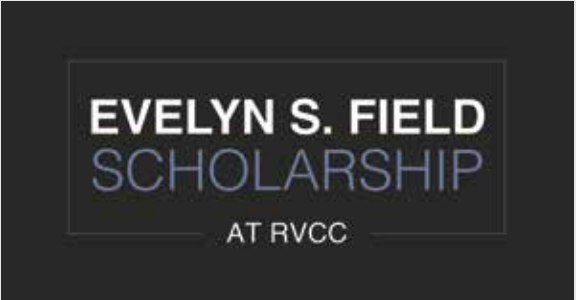
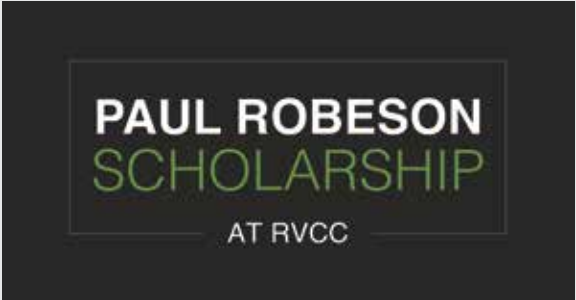
Beverly Spruill, Jason Fredericks, Rhonda Stewart



Beverly and Veronica Spruill

portrait, **Veronica Spruill**. Funded from a “Promoting Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments” grant from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the painting aligns with creating life-affirming spaces on campus, helping to make students feel welcome and represented. The artwork will be on permanent display in the Paul Robeson Resource Room in RVCC’s *Evelyn S. Field Library*.

As the Youth Achievement Awards ceremony concluded, Veronica, the accomplished artist and Beverly, a long-time friend of *Evelyn Field* (namesake of RVCC’s library) and a longtime advisory board member for the Robeson Institute, shared a mother-daughter moment together, just a few hours after Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed as the first black woman to sit on the United States Supreme Court.



We’re proud to celebrate the recently established **Paul Robeson Scholarship** at RVCC and the **Evelyn S. Field Scholarship** at RVCC.

In addition to Mr. Robeson’s status as an international icon, actor, bass baritone, athlete, humanitarian, and most significantly, tireless civil rights activist, he was also a “local kid”: he grew up in Somerville, NJ, just five miles from the land on which the RVCC campus now sits.

As for our inaugural recipient of the Paul Robeson Scholarship, he—like Mr. Robeson (a 1915 grad of the Somerville High School)—is also a local kid. **Justin Jones** is a first-year business administration major at RVCC. He offered this perspective as part of his scholarship essay:

“I was born and raised in Somerville 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.”

Indeed, Justin. And congratulations.

The **Evelyn S. Field Scholarship** at RVCC honors a distinguished educator, women’s and civil rights activist and founding member of the Raritan Valley Community College Board of Trustees—and namesake of the College’s library. **Devin Mozoul**, the inaugural recipient of the scholarship, 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 loves to travel and enjoys “spending time with my 95-year-old great-grandmother because she is a source of great wisdom and knowledge.”



RVCC Giving Day

Achieves Record-Setting Fundraising Total

Transformed by an unprecedented \$50,000 “match challenge,” Raritan Valley Community College had a record-setting “Giving Day” on March 24 and raised **\$135,716** for student clubs and athletic teams, as well as a range of critical institutional programs. Last year, RVCC Giving Day

dents also support the *Frank S. and Patricia F. Russo Scholarship at RVCC*, which is now in its fourth year.

“We are simply floored by this epic generosity from



the Russos,” said **Michael J. McDonough**, President, Raritan Valley Community College. “We could not be more honored or more grateful for their support.”

Added **Stacey Kimmins**, Chair of the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, “The phenomenal success of this year’s Giving Day is directly attributable to the Russos; their gift was the catalyst for so many new Giving Day milestones, including our record fundraising total.”

In addition to some 22 student clubs and athletic teams, this year’s RVCC Giving Day campaign featured nine areas of interest for donors, including the Resource Center and Food Pantry, the Servicing Learning Program, Honors

College, and Workforce Training Center, as well as direct support of students through the new Paul Robeson and Evelyn S. Field scholarships, and the



Emerging Heroes Nursing Scholarships, which netted \$6,350.

In total, RVCC students raised \$21,945 on Giving Day, a 272% increase over last year. This year’s winners of the “*Patrick J. Fittipaldi Impact Award*”—which celebrates student success in support of RVCC Giving Day—went to the RVCC Men’s Basketball team for most dollars raised (\$5,850) and the Black Student Alliance and Rotaract clubs for attracting the most donors (each with 44). All three will receive \$1,000 awards for their efforts.

“Thanks to the leadership of Frank and Pat Russo, we’ve reached heights that were previously unimaginable for Giving Day,” said **Mike Marion**, Executive Director of the RVCC Foundation. “The word ‘transformational’ gets tossed around a lot, but there isn’t a more apt way to describe the generosity of the Russos.”

RVCC students and members of the RVCC Black Student Alliance, which took top honors in the “Most Donors” category for RVCC Giving Day 2022, at “Fittipaldi Impact Award” \$1,000 check presentation ceremony (left-to-right): Christian Volpe, Jordan LeShalom Caldwell, Vanessa Wilkerson, Tamara Jones, James Benjamin.



Spreading The Word

Huge THANKS to community partners **Chris Edwards** and **Daniel Fahrer**, (“Coffee with Dan”) of the **Somerset County Business Partnership**; **Andy Kim** (“Let’s Talk”) of **WDVR FM 89.7**, and the board of **Rotary International - Branchburg Chapter**, for the interviews and forums for “spreading the word” about Raritan Valley Community College and RVCC Giving Day 2022.

And deep gratitude to RVCC supporters Frank and Pat Russo for their exceptional leadership and generosity so evident in their \$50,000 RVCC Giving Day “match challenge.”

We are only as strong as the community that surrounds us, and this past March 24, that community stepped up in a big way.



Mike Marion, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation, with Dan Fahrer, Director of Business Services at the Somerset County Business Partnership—and host of the “Coffee with Dan” podcast—with Fiamma Camargo, Owner, Bliss Coffee Lounge (where “Coffee with Dan” is recorded) in Somerville NJ. Special thanks to Dan for devoting an hour for a discussion with Mike about Raritan Valley Community College, the RVCC Foundation, and “RVCC Giving Day 2022.”



President Mike McDonough drops in on the Giving Day 2022 morning crew (l-to-r): Donna Stolzer, Daniela Kubick, Janet Dunne, Linda Laba.



First Giving Day 2022 Instagram selfie: Daniela Kubick, Janet Dunne, Cindy Haddad.

raised \$51,510, and in 2020, the event raised \$23,635.

RVCC Giving Day 2022 also set new records for most gifts received, highest number of \$1,000-plus gifts, and total dollars raised by students. The 24-hour, online fundraising event also experienced record levels of participation by faculty and staff, the College’s Board of Trustees and the RVCC Foundation’s Board of Directors. In total, 494 donors from the College and larger community supported RVCC Giving Day 2022, an increase of 200% over 2021.

“Wow! We’re so proud to be part of this great success,” said **Frank Russo**, who, along with his wife **Patricia**, were the benefactors behind the “Match Challenge.” Added Patricia, “We knew the College was more than worthy, and it’s gratifying to see the community respond so generously.” The longtime Far Hills resi-

NOW OPEN

THE GIBSON GREENHOUSE

at Raritan Valley Community College



RVCC supporters Jill & Jim Gibson, flanked by students and faculty of RVCC, in front of the “The Gibson Greenhouse”—the newest addition to campus.

Thanks to generous financial support from **Jim & Jill Gibson** and constructed with the assistance of RVCC’s Facilities staff, this new extension of the “classroom” has kept students busy this semester: nurturing plants for sustainable food production and food pantry distribution, as well overseeing endangered plant restoration and native species plantings.

The spring also provided an opportunity for members of the community to jumpstart their summer gardens with a range of organic plant offerings from The Gibson Greenhouse: tomatoes, eggplant, basil, watermelon, squash, broccoli, okra, beets, and other plants, were all available for \$2-5 each (covering the cost of production), with the proceeds helping to sustain future “growth” and greenhouse initiatives of RVCC students.

Special shoutout to the Gibsons for their epic generosity. Said Jill Gibson, “Thanks to YOU all for making great things happen in the greenhouse and generally in your field of ecology. Very gratifying to see and hear about the important things you all are doing.” Added Jim, “Our environment needs your help, for sure, so keep up the great work.”

Thanks, as well, to Professor **Jay Kelly** for his determination and leadership in seeing the greenhouse through—from concept to construction to the current yield available to the community.



RVCC Professor Jay Kelly with Mr. Kurt Padavano, in front of the greenhouse at the Padavano home.

Thanks to Mendham resident, **Mr. Kurt Padavano**, who was reconfiguring a section of his home greenhouse and decided his Zip Grow vertical “Education Rack” would no longer fit in the new design. While contemplating what to do with his “like new” equipment, Mr. Padavano came across an article in the “Vertical Farming Daily” newsletter that referenced a new greenhouse project at RVCC. That article included Professor Kelly’s work and he decided to reach out. Flash forward a few months and the donation to the RVCC greenhouse (aka, The Gibson Greenhouse) was made, and now hydroponics is thriving part of the Greenhouse’s output.



Shannen Higgins, an environmental science major at RVCC and intern at The Gibson Greenhouse, in front of the vibrant hydroponic output of the Zip Grow vertical “Education Rack” donated by aforementioned Mr. Padavano. “The Gibson Greenhouse is such an important extension of the classroom—it literally brings the things we learn to life,” said Ms. Higgins, a 2nd-year student from Oldwick. “It’s also a very therapeutic space.”



Looking east from the 74 Lamington Road property

3,271

MILES FROM GLASGOW



As UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) was convening in the fall of 2021—with some 120 world leaders and over 40,000 registered participants—the *2021 Sustainable Campus Index* of the **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education** released its annual findings, and Raritan Valley Community College ranked #6 in the country among all community colleges—and 6th among ALL higher ed institutions for its management of water as a resource.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. In 2009, RVCC was the first community college in the country to sign an environmental stewardship agreement with the EPA. In 2011, RVCC became the first college in New Jersey to have a "River Friendly" certified campus. In 2017, we became the first community college in the country to be carbon neutral for on-site emissions and for emissions from grid electricity.

We have rain gardens, green roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, and electric car charging stations. Solar arrays abound; the RVCC Foundation's new home at 74 Lamington Road gets its electricity from the sun (thanks to one of those arrays).

RVCC's 240-acre campus has natural beauty—diverse with native grasses and pollinator-friendly plantings that attract bee and butterfly populations. In fact, we've earned "Bee Campus USA" and "Colossal Monarch Waystation" distinctions. Our landscapes provide perspective and respite for anyone seeking it.

"RVCC's commitment to environmental sustainability and to minimizing our carbon footprint are laudable," says **Susan Doward**, Sustainability & Energy Coordinator, RVCC Facilities. "We are truly leaders in the sustainability space in higher education and there is much about which the RVCC community can be proud."

RVCC's Center for Environmental Studies is also unique in the community college sector and a model for its research, which is recognized across the state. From the Center's water quality work to its work on endangered species, coastal preservation, and forest ecology and conservation, the research experiences for students are beyond exceptional. How else to explain why grads return to campus well after their RVCC years to help the Center continue its impact and deliver on its mission?

It's certainly a campus worthy of their return. Take it from the bees and butterflies.



RVCC

Workforce Training Center is now LEED Certified



RVCC's two-story, 33,370 square foot Workforce Training Center, which opened in 2017, is now recognized as LEED certified.

"LEED," which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. It is also an international symbol of excellence.

LEED projects earn points across nine measurements for building excellence—from integrative design to human health, to material use. The Workforce Training Center's environmentally friendly design and construction earned 48 LEED points, including perfect scores for alternative and public transportation, reduced water use, storm-water design, and green power.



The building features high-efficiency condensing boilers, low-emitting materials, LED lighting, and a rainwater harvesting system for toilet water. In addition, RVCC signed a power purchase agreement to fully power the Workforce Training Center with up to 386 megawatt hours (MWh) per year of low-cost electricity from a new solar array, constructed in the adjacent retention basin. RVCC now has three solar arrays, with some 17% of the campus' electricity coming from solar power.

"The Workforce Training Center proves that any type of structure can incorporate sustainable construction materials and methods to provide a space that is functional and environmentally responsible," said **Brian O'Rourke**, RVCC's executive director of Facilities & Grounds and a LEED accredited professional.

LEED certification ensures electricity cost savings, lower carbon emissions and healthier environments where people live, work, learn, play and worship. In the United States alone, buildings account for almost 40% of national CO2 emissions, but LEED-certified buildings have 34% lower CO2 emissions, consume 25% less energy and 11% less water, and have diverted more than 80 million tons of waste from landfills, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

RVCC worked with **M&E Engineers** and **SSP Architectural Group** on the LEED certification process.

All Americans at Raritan Valley Community College

#RVCCPROUD

We celebrate these exceptional student athletes at RVCC!

Kaili Fitzpatrick: RVCC All-American, Women's Volleyball

Ahmad Robinson: RVCC All-American, Men's Basketball



KAILI FITZPATRICK, WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

FIRSTS IN RVCC HISTORY:

- Region XIX Player of the Year
- NJCAA Division III First Team All-American
- NJCAA Division III Championship All-Tournament Team

OTHER ACCOLADES:

- First Team All Garden State Athletic Conference - second year in a row
- Garden State Athletic Conference Player of the Year - second year in a row
- First Team All-Region

STATISTICS:

- 7th in the country in kills with 349
- 7th in the country with points 413.5
- 7th in the country in points per set 4.8



AHMAD ROBINSON, MEN'S BASKETBALL

- 3rd Team NJCAA Division 2 All-American
- Region XIX Player of the Year
- Garden State Athletic Conference Player of the Year

INDIVIDUAL STATS:

- 20.1 points per game (18th in NJCAA)
- 7 rebounds per game
- 6.8 assists per game (5th in NJCAA)
- 3.4 steals per game (3rd in NJCAA)

Sports Beat

RVCC Athletics



CHAMPS!

The 2021 Raritan Valley Community College Women's Volleyball Team won the *Region XIX Championship* with 3-1 victory over Atlantic Cape and earned yet another trip to the Division III National Championship Tournament in Rochester, Minnesota!

While they lost to Finger Lakes Community College in the first-round of the National Tourney, the Lions rebounded with clutch back-to-back wins against Rockland Community College and Brookhaven College.

They finished the 2021 season ranked 9TH IN THE NATION—the highest ranking in program history!

RVCC's **Kaili Fitzpatrick** was one of only twelve players named to the All-Tournament Team. The Lions finished 24-6 overall and 17-1 in Region XIX play.

Hearty congratulations to these accomplished women and student athletes, as well RVCC Athletics, and Coach **Phil Herro**! Well done!

#RVCCPROUD



SPRING CALLING

While it no longer lays claim to being "America's Pastime," the sport of baseball still signals the arrival of spring and the hopes and dreams of the summer ahead. This is true at Raritan Valley Community College too, with both Men's and Women's teams battling opponents and the fickle New Jersey weather—which this season featured far too many windy, cold, and wet days.

For the RV Lions and their first-year coaches, **Joe Pavlow** (interim coach, Men's Baseball, as well as *Director of RVCC Athletics*) and **Sara Gebert** (Softball), they persevered, if not to the heights they had hoped for when the season began in March. But for baseball fans, it was still a wonderful thing to have these teams competing "out back" on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College.

As we transition to summer with a new academic year ahead, a special thanks goes to all the student athletes for bringing the competitive spirit to RVCC. Thank you as well for bringing your fundraising chops to *RVCC Giving Day 2022*—the teams of RVCC Athletics rose to record heights and we're grateful for your efforts.

Finally, congratulations on all of your successes and triumphs, both in classrooms, labs and on the fields, courts and diamonds at Raritan Valley Community College. And best of luck with those hopes and dreams ahead.

Points of Pride:

Celebrating the Reach of RVCC

Raritan Valley Community College: an educational powerhouse with a proud history of impact!



LEARN BETTER

Education is in the midst of a transformation. The experiences students, educators and administrators have had over the past year has only accelerated and amplified trends within learning environments.

We are here to inspire and support these transitions through space, technology and the intersection between.

A FUNDAMENTALLY BETTER LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Supporting your
return to learning:

- Furniture
- Architecture
- Technology
- Research

arbee | Steelcase

www.arbee.net

www.steelcase.com

Realtime - Honest - Transparent - Communication

**Champion
Elevator**
Where Dedication Meets Vertical Transportation

Repairs
Modernization
Preventive Maintenance
A.O.C. & Violation Removal Specialists
Qualified QEI and Category 1 / Category 5 Testing

Donald Gelestino
President and CEO

New Jersey
908.996.7800

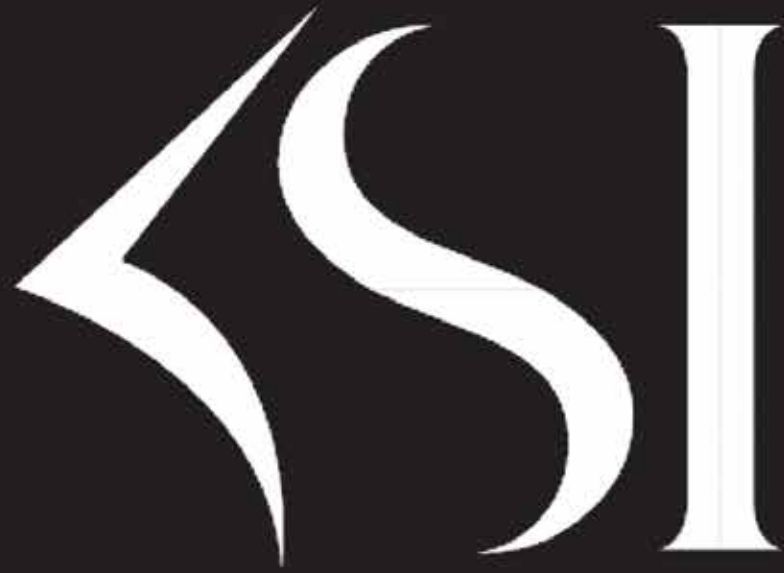
New York
212.292.4430

Connecticut
203.350.3550

Westchester
914.287.7353

Nassau & Suffolk
516.307.0907

info@Champion-Elevator.com • Champion-Elevator.com



Phone: 732.938.2666

www.ksi-pe.com

CONSULTING ENGINEERS, LLC

Offers a Full Range of

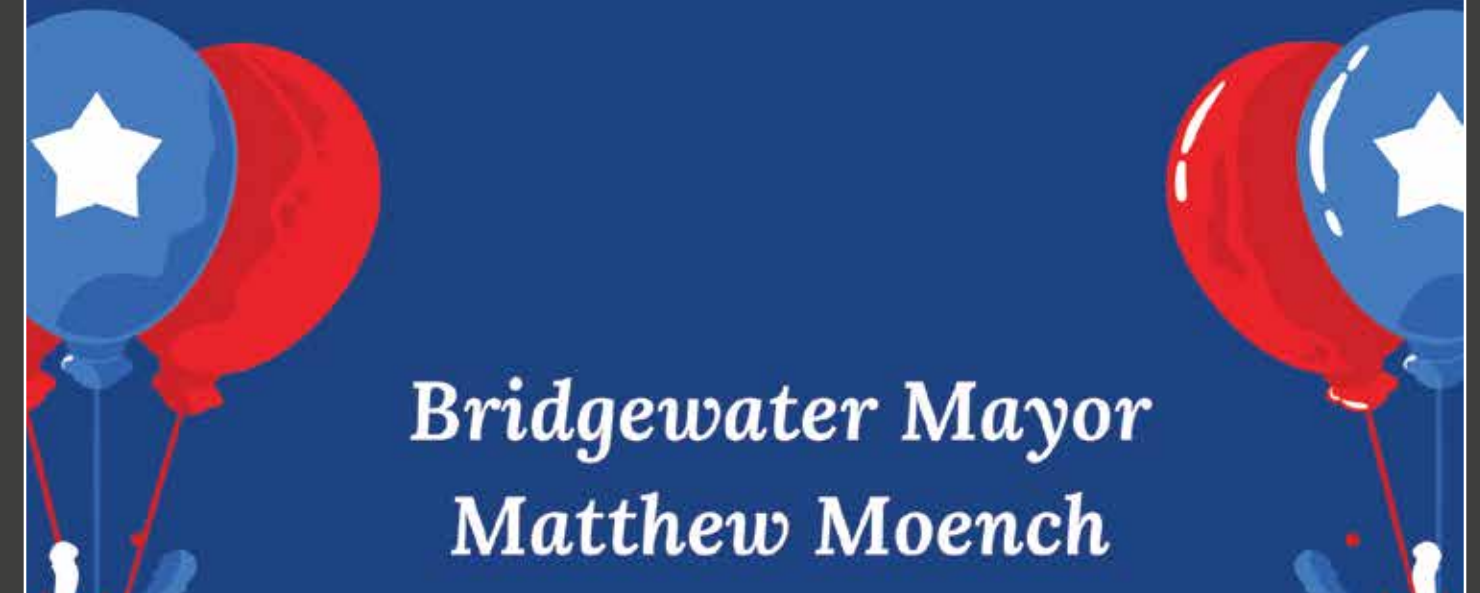
Professional Engineering Services

- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Protection Services
- Structural Analysis and Design
- Condition Assessment Reports
- Renovations, Additions & Restorations of Existing Structures
- Feasibility Studies
- Historical Preservation



**Thank you for all that you do to
support the students of
Raritan Valley Community College.**

**Congratulations
on another successful
golf classic!**



**Bridgewater Mayor
Matthew Moench**



This isn't just insurance. It's NJM.

NJM Insurance Group
is proud to support
**Raritan Valley
Community College Foundation's
18th Annual Golf Classic**

njm.com | 1-800-232-6600

NJM Insurance
Group

EST. 1913

AUTO | HOME | RENTERS | BUSINESS

**WE'RE
HERE.**
For you.

NORTHFIELD BANK IS PROUD TO SUPPORT
THE RVCC FOUNDATION!

Northfield
Bank



“MIXED EMOTIONS”

SPRING 2022 PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT CLASS EXHIBITION SHOWCASE

RVCC Division of Liberal & Fine Arts

Portfolio Development serves as the capstone course for our AFA degree students within the Arts & Design department. Comprised of a mixture of Fine Art and Graphic Design majors, the class concludes with a thematic exhibition conceived and organized by the students. The spring 2022 Portfolio Development class had 18 students and their exhibition was titled, “Mixed Emotion.” We’re proud to showcase the work of five students from the spring 2022 class.



Elisa Gislao
Birds on a Bathtub
watercolor on paper, 17 x 23 in., 2022

I created this piece for “Mixed Emotions” to show a conflict of feelings. The old, abandoned bathroom appears eerie and the gaze of the birds imply that you’re possibly witnessing something you’re not supposed to see. Yet, bluebirds symbolize joy and hope, so it could be a good thing that they (as symbolic representations of nature) are reclaiming this man-made environment for themselves.



Genevieve Bouchonville
Mixed Emotions Self Portraits
digital photographs, 19 x 13 in., 2022

For my work in “Mixed Emotions,” I focused on representing the complexity of emotion that everyone has experienced from time to time rather than a singular one like anger or sadness. I was excited to stage and take these photos because I had never created self-portraits before and I really enjoyed experimenting with different colored lighting and makeup.



Julianna Zamorski
Cheers to the Ones We've Lost
acrylic on canvas, 24 x 18 in., 2022

We are often flooded with mixed emotions as we try to cope with the loss of a loved one. I created this painting for our class exhibition to serve as a dedication to my grandparents who have recently passed. It depicts a glass from their very own set composed in a symbolic gesture of raising a glass to their memory.



Skell Longfield
Overwhelmed
acrylic & stickers on canvas, 24 x 18 in., 2022

For our class exhibition’s theme of “Mixed Emotions,” I wanted to visually represent the physical duress that can accompany the feeling of being overwhelmed. I chose to paint a curled-up figure digging into its own skull, from which an array of colorful stickers pour out and overtake the canvas.



Sarianne White
Turmoil
digital illustration, 24 x 18 in., 2022

I created this piece for the “Mixed Emotions” exhibition to visually depict the feelings associated with inner emotional conflict. I chose to use abstract forms along with blue and yellow in order to represent the interconnected web of emotions that are always felt but rarely understood as being clearly black and white.

SPRING 2022 PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT CLASS EXHIBITION PARTICIPANTS

Esteban Arias, Bridget Beacht, Genevieve Bouchonville, Savannah Cito, Jessie Crowell, Christina Dean, Skylar Eelman, Ethan Frank, Elisa Gislao, Natalie Gusev, Skell Longfield, Sean MacLennan, Casey Morin, Hannah Otto, Danett Rocha-Davilla, Olivia Sims, Sarianne White, Julianna Zamorski

In Support of Students \$331,086

SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AWARDED IN FY21

573 applications received between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021

340 applications received between July 1, 2021 and May 25, 2022

The RVCC Foundation typically provides scholarship support for more than 230 students each full academic year.

16

...the Number of New Scholarships
Established in Fiscal Years 2021 & 2022

Education Foundation of Bridgewater Raritan Scholarship

An award is made to an eligible incoming RVCC student from Bridgewater-Raritan High School. Student candidates must be entering RVCC in their first year.

Emerging Heroes Nursing Scholarship

Created in response to the need for trained healthcare workers during the pandemic, this scholarship is awarded to students majoring in Nursing or Nursing-PNAD.

Evelyn S. Field Scholarship

In honor of a distinguished educator, women's and civil rights activist and founding member of the Raritan Valley Community College Board of Trustees, this scholarship is available to matriculating African American high school graduates who attend RVCC as freshmen.

Friends of RVCC Scholarship

This scholarship is available to all students: US citizens, international students, or undocumented students (who do not qualify for financial aid); US citizens do need to be financial aid eligible. Recipients must be enrolled in and plan to complete an Associate's degree (can be either traditional academic program or a Workforce Training program).

Jake Irwin Honors College Scholarship

In memory of RVCC student Jake Irwin, this award is made to eligible RVCC students enrolled in the Honors College. Preference is given to a student struggling with depression, anxiety, a co-occurring disorder and/or who bowled on their high school bowling team.

Joel F. Reyes-Guzman Scholarship

Created by a member of the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, this award is made to a Bound Brook High School graduate.

Kevin Rosero Memorial Scholarship

Honor the memory of RVCC graduate Kevin Rosero, this award is made to a second year RVCC student who has demonstrable student leadership skills and examples of civic or community service.

My Brother's Keeper Black Male

Community Service Scholarship

An award is made to an eligible RVCC student who is male and identifies as African American or Black. The student must have an interest in or be engaged in service learning

work (civic engagement work/volunteer work) as a mentor within either a school or the community or be taking or has taken an education course.

Lakeland Bank Scholarship

An award is made to first or second year RVCC students enrolled in a Business Degree program.

Norman Somer Scholarship in the Social Sciences

This award is made to a first or second year RVCC student majoring in the social sciences.

Open Your Eyes Scholarship

This scholarship is open to high school seniors who show an interest in eyecare and the optical industry or current RVCC Ophthalmic Science majors. Preference is given to African American, Hispanic, Asian American, or Native American students.

Paul Robeson Scholarship

In honor of a Somerville High grad and global icon, scholar, athlete, concert artist, and stage and film actor who became famous both for his cultural accomplishments and for his political and civil rights activism, this scholarship is available to matriculating African American high school graduates who attend RVCC as freshmen.

Pay It Forward

This scholarship intended is to offset tuition and fees associated with Raritan Valley Community College Cosmetology/Esthetics Beauty Profession programming. Applicants must complete an essay indicating how they will use the trade of cosmetology to support the local community.

Stem Brothers Scholarship

This scholarship will provide support for a student in the HVAC program at the Workforce Training Center.

Zach Buns Memorial Scholarship

This award in memory of RVCC graduate Zach Buns is awarded to an active member of Cru or another Christian Youth Group.

Scholarship for Fundamental Fairness

Honoring the Life of John J. Grossi, Jr.

This award in memory of John J. Grossi, Jr. a former New Jersey Superior Court judge, is awarded to candidates in their first or second year and is fairly distributed to under-represented minority students of any and all genders.

Remembering Kevin Rosero

Remembrance on the campus of
Raritan Valley Community College.



Last fall, the RVCC community held a special memorial service honoring the life of one of its own. **Kevin Rosero**, whose life ended tragically earlier in the 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—the *Kevin Rosero Memorial Scholarship*—that has been established with start-up funding from the RVCC Foundation. "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 worked closely with Kevin's parents, **Marcelo Rosero** and **Cecilia Tirado**, the inaugural award will made 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.



Prominently located in the campus
Courtyard, a bench honoring Kevin was
installed in the fall.



Khushwant Pall, Marcelo Rosero, Eva
Fontanez, Cecilia Tirado, and Mike Marion

IN PERSON: RVCC Foundation Annual Scholarship Dinner Returns to Campus



April 21, 2022 marked the return of this much anticipated event, which brings student scholarship recipients together with RVCC scholarship benefactors. The event attracted some 120 guests, and featured remarks from Distinguished Alumni Awardees **Mary Jo Loughlin** and **Joel Reyes-Guzman**, students **Jimena Torres** and **Oreoluwa Kpade-Johnson**, and scholarship benefactor **Lori Rayner-Grossi**.



New Jersey Risk Managers & Consultants proudly supports
Raritan Valley Community College Foundation.

Congratulations on your 18th Annual Golf Classic!

We recognize the outstanding efforts and achievements of
the Foundation and wish you much continued success in
all your endeavors.

The Ray Hughes Family
and
the Staff of
New Jersey Risk Managers & Consultants, Inc.
20 West End Avenue
Somerville, New Jersey 08876
908.231.8770



— PROUD — SUPPORTERS

WE ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT
RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE FOUNDATION



Provident.Bank | MEMBER
FDIC

Best Wishes

Raritan Valley Community College
Foundation



SUPLEE, CLOONEY & COMPANY
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

T.L. Groseclose Associates, Inc. is Proud to Support

The Raritan Valley Community College Foundation's
18th Annual Golf Classic

T.L. Groseclose
ASSOCIATES, INC.
SPECIALIZING IN STUDENT INSURANCE SINCE 1983



<http://tlgroseclose.com/> • 186 Tamarack Circle • Skillman NJ, 08558 • (609) 279-1500



Accounting, but **better.**



we proudly support the

**Raritan Valley Community
College Foundation**

100 Campus Drive
Suite 400
Florham Park, NJ, 07932

www.wiss.com
hello@wiss.com
(973) 994-9400

HAVING CELEBRATED OUR 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2017



Our firm is proud to support the

THE RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

**DiFRANCESCO BATEMAN KUNZMAN
DAVIS LEHRER & FLAUM, P.C.**

Attorneys at Law

15 Mountain Boulevard, Warren, NJ 07059

T: (908) 757-7800 F: (908) 757-8039

E-Mail: DBC@newjerseylaw.net

Website: www.newjerseylaw.net

DESIGNING
INSPIRED
PLACES TO
ENGAGE
LEARN
GROW and
SUCCEED



- Architectural Design
- Facility Master Planning
- Sustainable Design
- Construction Services
- Facility Assessments
- Interior Design
- Community Support



WE WILL GET YOU THERE™

P 908.725.7800 WWW.SSPARCHITECTS.COM

M&P Merwin & Paolazzi
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

Peter A. Vardakis, CIC

Senior Account Executive

pvardakis@merwinpaolazzi.com

155 Park Avenue, Suite 201A • P.O.Box 386 • Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071

Tel: (201) 460-8400 Ext. 308 • Fax: (201) 460-9258



Trane is proud to support the

**Raritan Valley
Community College Foundation**

We are dedicated to building sustainable
futures.

Trane
trane.com/commercial
michael.sebastiano@trane.com

© 2021 Trane. All Rights Reserved. All trademarks referenced are the trademarks of their respective owners.

TRANE
TECHNOLOGIES

**Good luck to all the RVCC students on their
future endeavors!**

PhillyCom, Inc.
Technology. Integration. Excellence.
Est. 2011

Sick?
Be Seen today.
Reserve your spot now!

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS:

63 Church St • Flemington
45F Rte 206 South • Raritan



Hunterdon Healthcare

URGENT CARE

HunterdonUrgentCare.com

Van Cleef
ENGINEERING WITH FOCUS

**Offering Higher Education Services
Since 1972**

Athletic Field Design	Facility Engineering
◆	◆
Capital Improvements	Utility Engineering
◆	◆
School Master Planning	Land Surveying
◆	◆
Synthetic Field Design	Water/Wastewater Engineering

With 9 Offices Servicing the Mid-Atlantic Region
1128 Route 31, Lebanon, NJ 08833
(908) 735-9500 • www.vancleefengineering.com



eDesign Interactive
We. Do. Web.
edesigninteractive.com
163 Madison Ave. Suite 220-5, Morristown, NJ 07960



RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOOKSTORE

THE GOLDEN LION BOOKSTORE HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED!

RaritanValShop.com
Raritan Valley CC | (908) 231-8808



SCAN TO SHOP



- ADA SIGNAGE
- ENGRAVING
- AWARDS
- NAME BADGES
- CAST BRONZE
- VINYL LETTERING
- LAMINATIONS
- POST & PANELS
- MAGNETIC SIGNS
- CARVED SIGNS
- SIGN BOXES
- LOGOS • BANNERS

www.namitengraving.com



Pave-Rite, Inc.
ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS SINCE 1952

Robert J. Hering, PE, PP
Vice President of Business Development
Email: rjhering@paverite.com

Office: 732-271-0110
Fax: 732-271-8068
Cell: 732-620-8617

**40 Radel Ave.
Bridgewater, NJ 08807**



(732) 356-4975

HIGHTECHLANDSCAPES.COM

Historic Gift for RVCC Nursing Program

Somerset Hills Community
Health Foundation

The Nursing program at Raritan Valley Community College has received the largest gift in its history from the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation in support of the College’s Nursing students. The \$100,000 donation to the RVCC Foundation was announced yesterday by the Community Foundation of New Jersey.

This epic gift will fund 10 full scholarships—the first full scholarships in the Nursing program’s history—at \$7,500 each, with an additional \$25,000 to be used to help offset textbook and Nursing program expenses for dozens of other Nursing students.

“The importance of this gift to our Nursing program cannot be overstated; it is unprecedented in its size and its impact on our nursing students,” said Dr.

Michael McDonough, President, Raritan Valley Community College. “We are grateful for the leadership and generosity of the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation.”

“We are incredibly grateful to the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation for this important endorsement of our students. And given the challenges of the last two years, this gift is also a timely, triumphant affirmation of their choice to become nurses,” said **Linda J. Romaine**, Chair, RVCC Health Science Education Department. “The fruits of this support will pay dividends to the community for years, as our nursing grads go on to serve countless lives in their careers as health professionals.”



\$100,000

To be eligible for the scholarships, students must be enrolled in the College’s Nursing program and participating in their second year of clinicals during the 2022-2023 academic year. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 credit hours and have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Students also must demonstrate some financial need, which will be determined by completing a FAFSA application.

“Through the Visiting Nurse Association, we know firsthand that nurses not only help people get well, but also fundamentally change lives. Now as a foundation committed to health-care worker availability and employment, and ultimately stronger, healthier communities in Somerset and Morris counties, it is our privilege to support future Raritan Valley nursing students. The future of nursing starts now,” stated **Kathy Cummins**, SHCHF Board Chairperson.

The Raritan Valley Community College Nursing program offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing, which prepares graduates to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) who wish to advance in their careers

RVCC Nursing students file in and assemble for the one of the best traditions of the Academic Year, the Annual Pinning Ceremony for graduating nurses. The ceremony was all the more special this year with the announcement by President Michael McDonough of a \$100,000 gift from the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation.

by becoming a Registered Nurse may enter the LPN-RN (PNAD) Degree option. The program is accredited by the New Jersey Board of Nursing and by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

The courses of study for both options are designed as career programs, although graduates may wish to continue studies for a baccalaureate degree in nursing at a four-year institution. Articulation agreements which enhance the transfer process are in effect with numerous colleges and universities. RVCC Nursing graduates are also employed at major healthcare facilities throughout the tri-state area.

“This is a huge boost for a signature program at RVCC,” said **Mike Marion**, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation. “Gaining the support of the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation is an extraordinary endorsement of our nursing program, and the caliber of our faculty and our students.”

For those seeking additional information about ways to support the College and the work of the RVCC Foundation, or for additional information about the scholarships, contact Mike Marion, Executive Director at 908-648-8567 or michael.marion@raritanval.edu, or visit <https://rvccfoundation.org>.



About the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation

The Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation (SHCHF) is a donor advised fund at the Community Foundation of New Jersey. Created from funds raised by the Visiting Nurse Association of Somerset Hills, a provider of home and community-based healthcare services, SHCHF’s founding coincided with the announcement that the Visiting Nurses Association of Somerset Hills joined with the Atlantic Health System family to form Atlantic Visiting Nurse. SHCHF seeks to fund projects and programs that promote healthier individuals and communities in Morris and Somerset counties. For more information visit www.cfnj.org/somerset-hills.



Voice of a Donor: Lori Rayner-Grossi

Psychologist, EdD

Dr. Rayner-Grossi lives and works in Clinton NJ, where she is a psychologist in private practice, working with children, adolescents and adults. In her spare time, she enjoys biking, swimming, working out, creating art, being in nature and spending time with family, friends and her 7-month-old Brittany pup, “Gunner.” The remarks that follow were delivered at the 16th Annual RVCC Foundation Scholarship Reception on April 21, 2022 at the Event Center on the RVCC campus.

“My name is Lori Rayner-Grossi. I live and work in the Town of Clinton. I am a psychologist in private practice. I have lived in Hunterdon County for almost 25 years and I have become a great fan of RVCC. The quality of education, and the caliber of students and faculty are second to none. The fact that it is essentially my neighborhood college makes me proud. And when my husband passed away in August of 2020, I could think of no better way to honor his life than to create a scholarship in his name.

My husband grew up with parents who placed a high value on education. Next to character, which demanded at the very least, honesty, integrity, and respect for others, they focused all of their attention and resources on the education of their children.

His mother was a registered nurse. And his father, the youngest of eight children born to immigrants, was the only one in his family to complete high school. He did not have the option to attend college after high school, but sometime in his mid-twenties he enrolled in law school and worked his way through to become a general practice attorney in Jersey City. He was successful in his field and later appointed to Superior Court of New Jersey.



My husband, **John J. Grossi, Jr.**, aka: Jay, had a career that followed much the same path as his father's. He practiced law in Jersey City for 15 years and was appointed to the Superior Court Bench at the age of 39. But there was one very big difference between the path taken by Jay and that taken by his father. Jay had the opportunity to attend college right out of high school and law school straight out of college. His education was paid for by his parents. He did not have to start his young adult



life saddled with debt and years of student loan payback. Education he was quick to say, was the greatest gift his parents ever gave him. And he meant it.

You see, my husband was not skilled with his hands. He was not creative. He was terrible at math. And he had no sense of direction.

He would never have succeeded in any of the construction trades, design work, finance, sales, or any profession that required distance driving. And by “distance” I mean around the block!!!

But he had a keen interest in history and the law. He loved words and the nuances of language. He was an avid reader. And he could comb thru cases and write opinions without struggle. He had a very fair and reasoned way of

thinking. And as was expected of him, he was a man of good character.

He loved being a lawyer. And he was an excellent judge. He cared about people and recognized the complexities of human nature. He spoke from the bench in quiet tones, respectfully directing his attention to those who stood before him. He focused as much on their humanity as on the crimes for which they were charged. He counseled defendants to make the most of their time away; to think about how they wanted to live their lives upon release. He urged each and every one of them to get an education, while serving their time.

Jay would tell you that he was not always the best student. He failed math two years in a row and only passed, he said, after his parents “paid” the tutor to help him. He had a teacher tell him he would “never amount to anything”. And when she showed up years later in his courtroom to serve on a jury panel, he was, gracious—and amused.

He would also tell you to choose a course of study that you love. Work hard. Take advantage of everything offered. If you need help, ask for it. And if someone tells you, you can't do something, don't listen. They know not of whom they speak.

Trust me, he would be your greatest cheerleader. Honored to be among you all, as I am. Appreciative of the opportunity to play a tiny role in helping to make education more accessible, and filled with a sense of hope and promise for your futures. You are remarkable scholars. Remember that. You are going to make a difference.

I am proud and humbled to meet in person, the inaugural *Scholarship for Fundamental Fairness Honoring the Life of John J. Grossi, Jr.* recipient, **Oreoluwa Kpade-Johnson**. His personal story—his journey from his homeland in Nigeria, in 2017, around the globe to embrace a new culture, enroll in college, establish himself in the work place, volunteer his time to help others and begin a course of study in the sciences and medicine is absolutely extraordinary. I thank you sir, for your inspiration and promise, and for honoring my husband with your commitment to education. I look forward to seeing you continue to rise. And know that each day when the clock reads in repetitive numbers, 1:11, 2:22, 3:33—The Honorable John J. Grossi, Jr will be at your side and cheering you on.



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-Pharm grad (Class of 2022) was born in Lagos State, Nigeria and 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.

Oreoluwa's adjustment to the US has been an eye-opener. “What has surprised me most about America is its diverse ethnicity and culture,” he says. “Most American movies available back home didn't portray America as a land of different cultures. But I've also been struck by the kindness of people. That has been a true blessing.”

For Oreoluwa, who is 21 and a resident of Somerset County, part of that blessing came in the form of a scholarship at RVCC; specifically, the *Scholarship for Fundamental Fairness Honoring the Life of John J. Grossi, Jr.*, which was established to benefit “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**, to increase her support to “full ride” status. Said 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's 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.”

Scholarship support is one of the many options for members of the community interested in engaging at RVCC. Helping to keep our students on track and ever closer to realizing their life goals can be a gift for the giver and receiver alike. For more information, please contact Stephanie Smullen (stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu) or Mike Marion (michael.marion@raritanval.edu).

Annual Report at a Glance

RVCC Foundation Fundraising

Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021)



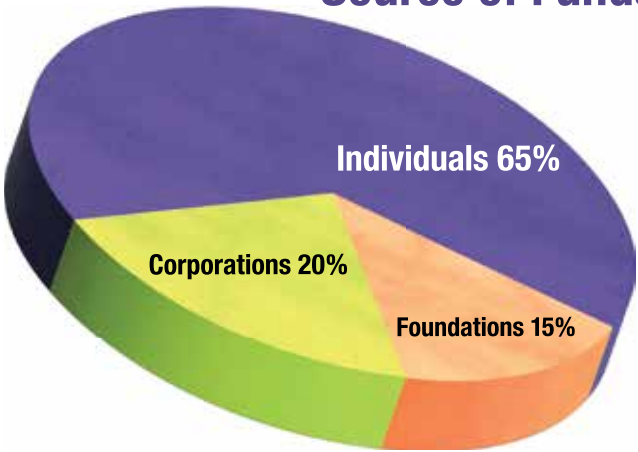
Total Funds Raised: \$1,283,156

Total Gifts: 1,979

Total Donors: 608

New Donors/1st Time Gifts: 265

Source of Funds



INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS (\$10,000 and above)

- Sanofi US Services Inc. \$85,000
- The Frank S. and Patricia F. Russo Family Fund \$61,000
- ERS Charitable Fund, Inc. \$25,000
- Community Foundation of New Jersey \$22,500
- Janssen Pharmaceuticals \$20,000
- Vanguard Charitable \$19,500
- Area VII Physicians Review Organization Inc. \$15,000
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund \$11,985
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital – Somerset \$10,500
- The Blackbaud Giving Fund \$10,100
- The Neuwiesinger Foundation \$10,000
- The Food Bank Network of Somerset County \$10,000

TOP FIVE OUTRIGHT GIFTS or PLEDGE COMMITMENTS of FY2021

- Jim and Jill Gibson \$537,500
- Sanofi US Services \$86,000
- Anonymous \$66,000
- The Frank S. and Patricia F. Russo Family Fund \$61,000
- Frank Bisignano \$25,159



About The RVCC FOUNDATION



We engage, promote and fundraise in support of the priorities of Raritan Valley Community College. Our team leads the cultivation of existing philanthropic relationships, and identifies, activates, and grows new relationships, all to increase overall engagement with, and support of, Raritan Valley Community College. RVCC students are at the heart of everything we do. We invite residents of Somerset and Hunterdon Counties—and beyond—to learn more and to join our efforts on behalf of the best community college of New Jersey: Raritan Valley Community College. Find out more at www.rvccfoundation.org.

Mike Marion, Janet Dunne, Cindy Haddad, Stephanie Smullen.

RVCC FOUNDATION STAFF

Mike Marion - Executive Director & Chief Development Officer
(michael.marion@raritanval.edu) O: 908-648-8567; C: 973-600-2848

Mike joined RVCC in April of 2018, after 11 years at Rutgers University Foundation, where he served as Associate Vice President. Prior to coming to higher education, Mike had a distinguished career in the advertising, marketing, sponsorship management, and event marketing industries, including 17 years at AT&T, where his passion for philanthropy began. He has an MBA from the University of South Carolina and a BS from Eastern Michigan University.

Janet Dunne - Development Associate
(janet.dunne@raritanval.edu) O: 908-648-8355

Janet has been with the RVCC Foundation since 2014. Her main responsibilities include special events, managing the financial and fiscal reporting processes, and maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. Prior to joining RVCC, Janet worked at a consulting firm in Washington D.C. She has a BS from West Chester University.

Stephanie Smullen - Development Associate
(stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu) O: 908-648-8286

Stephanie has been with the foundation since November of 2018. She manages the scholarship program at RVCC and is responsible for corporate and institutional foundation fundraising efforts. Prior to joining RVCC, Stephanie was the Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations at Immaculata High School and held Corporate and Foundation Relations positions at Saint Peter's University Hospital, Stevens Institute of Technology, and Learning Ally. She earned a BA degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Cindy Haddad - Development Assistant
(cindy.haddad@raritanval.edu) O: 908-648-8412

Cindy is the part-time Development Assistant and has been with the Foundation since May 2021 and assists with fundraising events, data entry, scholarships, and any other day-to-day needs. Previously, Cindy worked as an Executive Assistant for BOC Gases for 10 years. She was also a Board Member of the St. Ann School Home School Association.

Note NEW address: RVCC Foundation, 74 Lamington Road, Branchburg, NJ 08876-3315 / RVCC Foundation's federal tax number: 23-7138731

IN OTHER FOUNDATION NEWS



Pat Fittipaldi and George Case

Pat Fittipaldi and George Case, legends of local, forever linked, whose impact at RVCC has been epic and persists to this day, had lunch this spring. One a networker and a behind-the-scenes doer; the other, a generous philanthropist, who was open (thanks to the persistence of our behind-the-scenes doer!) to the opportunities presented at RVCC.

Their bond is both rare and instructive: it reminds us of just how important relationships are to philanthropy and how a network--and a friendship--can drive transformation and impact. And while our philanthropist likes to "fly under the radar," he suggested this lunch meeting to express to his friend just how much he appreciated him, and the introduction to RVCC made so many years ago.

The book they're holding—"Circle of Gratefulness"—was created by **Ronnie Weyl**, the former executive director of the RVCC Foundation, as a tribute to our philanthropist on the occasion of his 80th birthday. But at this lunch at Country Squire in Warren, the tribute was all about the man who brought our philanthropist to the RVCC campus; it was an opportunity for the philanthropist to express his gratefulness and appreciation.

Raquel Mura



Raquel Mura is Head of R&D North America, Global R&D Operations at Sanofi. In this role, she provides strategic and operational leadership to deliver an industry-leading environment for R&D teams in North America to maximize the value of the pipeline and bring transformative drugs with pace to patients.

Raquel joined Sanofi in 2015 and previously held a variety of roles globally with Bristol-Myers Squibb, Novartis, Pfizer and Reckitt Benckiser. A passionate advocate for purpose driven and inclusive leadership, she has led strategy and operations teams across different regions in regulatory and innovation functions, and drove transformation initiatives including integration of business assets, change management and implementation of best-in-class industry capabilities. She is currently Executive Sponsor of the Sanofi R&D NA D&I Working Group and a member of the HBA Gender Parity Collaborative, an award-winning consortium of healthcare and life-sciences companies dedicated to accelerating gender parity and diversity.

Raquel has lived and worked in the USA, Latin America and Europe. She received her Pharm.D. from the University of Sao Paulo, her J.D. from University Mackenzie in Brazil and her MBA from the Washington University in St. Louis in the US.



Clint Wallace

After six productive years on the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, **Clint Wallace** has resigned from the board, as he moves across the industry—from Sanofi to Johnson & Johnson. Clint was generous enough to recommend a successor from Sanofi, **Raquel Mura**, who will officially join the RVCC Foundation board at the first meeting of the new fiscal year on July 29.

In addition, **Stacey Kimmins** has completed her term as Chair, RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, which included navigating the board through the challenges of the pandemic and the highly successful "RV Lives" and Giving Day campaigns. Stepping into the Chair role, effective July 29, will be **Allan Boomer**, and ascending into the Vice Chair role will be **Elissa Santo**. We thank Stacey for her leadership, creativity, and resourcefulness, as we welcome Allan and Elissa into their new roles.

IN OTHER FOUNDATION NEWS (CONTINUED)



Stacey Kimmins (2nd from left) with Emerging Class board members Jimena Torres, Cooper Irving, and Jomil London.

The RVCC Foundation welcomes **Paige Greenfield**, a rising 2nd year Nursing student, to the Foundation board. Page is our 7th RVCC student representative to serve as part of the Foundation's "Emerging Class" cohort, which provides both current students and recent alumni opportunities for board service.



Paige Greenfield, Class of 2023

Paige brings a highly relevant perspective to the board, as evidenced by these words from her board application: "Some of my proudest moments come from experiencing the impact that my work has on others. For example, in my student-worker role as Service Learning Program Coordinator at RVCC, I help students make their first connections with community partners, and a few of them unexpectedly turned into paid positions for those students at the end of the semester." Thank you, Paige, and welcome to the RVCC Foundation Board.



At long last, the RVCC Foundation has officially moved its operations to **74 Lamington Road**, and is now "bringing life to the western edge of campus." The Foundation's new home traces back to 1743 and to generations of the **Brokaw, Wortman, and Little** families, and later, **Marion Howell**, owner and resident from 1923-1980. Once the original "farm house" for the land that much of RVCC now occupies—land that was originally purchased from the Unami group of the Lenni Lenape Indians in 1681—the home is in surprisingly good shape, with ample opportunity to upgrade the landscaping. Once settled in, we hope to make our own history at 74 Lamington Road and look forward to hosting the community in a series of open houses and events.



THE LAST WORD

Rebecca Purnell

(RVCC CLASS OF 2022)

#RVCCPROUD

Each year THE LAST WORD features the remarks of the student commencement speaker at RVCC Graduation Ceremony.



Rebecca, who hails from Hightstown, graduated from RVCC Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Liberal Arts. She has been an active member of the College community, serving as Vice President of the American Sign Language Club and a member of both the Hope Club—where she has helped challenge stigmas surrounding drug addiction—and the Philosophy Club. Her other activities include conducting advocacy work for students with disabilities at RVCC; volunteering for a California-based human rights organization that supports incarcerated and re-entering citizens; and mentoring marginalized youth at Princeton High School. Rebecca's future plans include a career in athletic training.

“Thank You. It is my great honor to be your student commencement speaker today. I would like to begin by asking all of you to think back on where you were in Spring of 2020 (Pause to let them reflect). Where were you when you first realized that COVID would change all of your future plans? After the initial shock, what questions did you have about your health and safety? What went through your head when you found out classes would move to “distance learning,” a term that, at the time, was so ambiguous to us all? And lastly, what fears did you have about how this would impact your education? Were you worried that you would not be here today? Well, congratulations, you've made it.

Like many of you, I am no stranger to adversity. I struggled throughout high school with drug addiction and could not imagine the near future, let alone higher education. Then, in 2014, I suffered a traumatic brain injury and ended up in a coma. My doctors were unsure if I would even survive. When I woke up, it was as a different person, someone diagnosed with anterograde amnesia or permanent clinical short-term memory loss. To be blunt, nobody dared have any expectations of me.

After many years of intensive cognitive, physical, and occupational therapy, I decided the ultimate triumph for me would be to graduate from college—despite the amnesia that brain damage left me with. But how could I achieve this? How would I manage working and attending college while learning to navigate my new life post brain injury? How would I be able to learn a new language or take college level math courses?

After a short time on the RVCC campus, the answer came to me: Find another way. If my memory isn't working properly, find another way. If I can't remember formulas using traditional methods, find another way. And so I did.

But I had lots of help along the way. RVCC provided the most inclusive and supportive community for my journey to success; it is a place where staff, students, and faculty truly embody the shared commitment to “finding another way.” From the academic support at the tutoring center, to the social atmosphere of RVCC's signature college hour, it quickly became clear that this campus would offer me more than an education— It would offer a community where I could chart my own path. In every challenge I faced throughout my education, and there were many, RVCC provided the tools and inspiration to find another way.

It is with great honor that I stand in front of you, fellow graduates. After surviving the worst phase of a global pandemic, I dare say we are indisputably the most tenacious and resilient group of graduates. We found another way. The pandemic made the road to graduation exponentially more difficult, and yet here you all are. Give yourselves a hand. (Incite applause) You, too, continually met hardship with the same attitude and found another way to success. Your adaptation in the face of adversity is remarkable. My hope is that as we move forward in our lives—whether it be to internships, careers, or 4-year colleges—when we are met with challenges, and we will be, we will remember our resilience these past few years and find another way through it.

So, fellow graduates, as you continue on to your next endeavor, let these last few successful years at RVCC serve as proof of your capabilities and extraordinary potential. Use this proof as fuel to push through when you are confronted with what may seem like an impossible obstacle. Remember to find another way. I will leave you with a quote by Audre Lorde: “When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then, it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” Thank you—and congratulations!

RARITAN VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

Annual Report

2022

RARITAN
VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

