

Notes from the Valley...

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

Notes from the Valley (issue #1)

Welcome to our first edition of “Notes from the Valley.” Our plan is to publish information and updates on our activities, our generous donors, and our brilliant students and faculty at least twice a year. It is our pleasure to share what inspires us every day, at the RVCC Foundation: *your* generosity, *your* engagement, *your* commitment. Whether you’re a donor, a friend, a student, an alumnus, or a member of the RVCC faculty and staff, it is our honor to support this exceptional community. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with any of your questions, ideas, or feedback:

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RV LIVES is NOW!



RVCC Class of '21: Samantha Daley

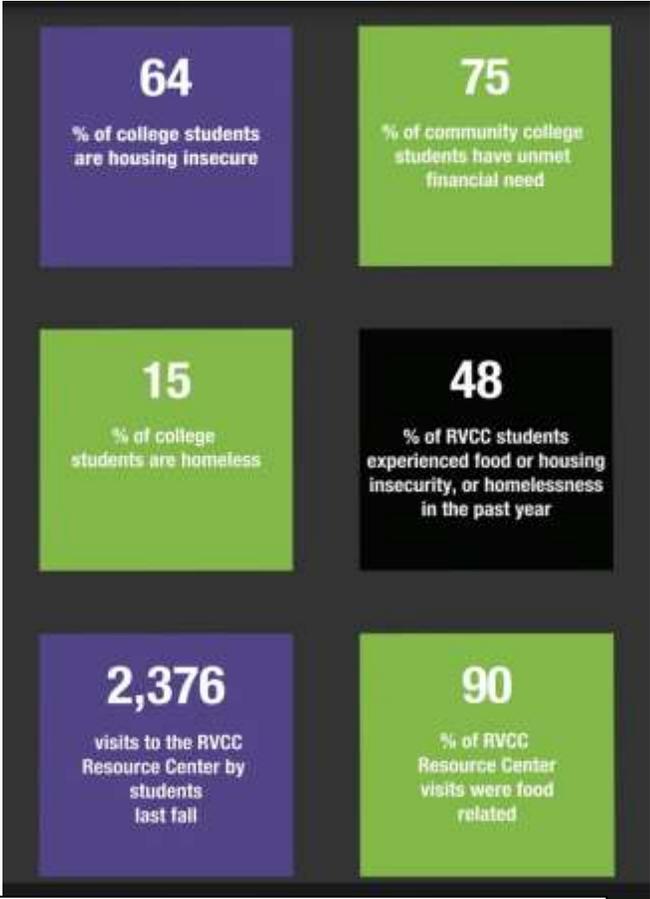
RV LIVES: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the students of Raritan Valley Community College, the RVCC Foundation has embarked on a virtual campaign to raise **\$100,000** by December 30 and welcomes participation from across the RV community—including current supporters, new donors, corporate friends, and other institutional partners. The **RV LIVES** campaign is 100% dedicated to supporting our students in this unprecedented pandemic era...

We know our students have been severely challenged: many have lost work and struggle to afford tuition, rent, food, and other basic living expenses. Some are dealing with health-related direct hits to their families. This critical fundraising effort seeks to provide relief and resources for our students, to help them through the disruptions of COVID-19, and to keep them on track toward attaining their educational goals. Please take a moment and visit www.raritanval.edu/rvlives to find out more or **make a donation** in support of our students—our **RV LIVES**.

The campaign uses “data” and bold graphics to drive the need home. All of the college’s social media channels have been deployed to create both awareness and donations toward the goal.



FACTS MATTER: Which is why they’re so much on display in the **RV LIVES** campaign. The reality for college students has changed dramatically. The true cost of attaining a degree or certificate far exceeds the expense of tuition, books and fees. We are now raising funds to address critical needs like food, technology, and life’s other emergencies...



1.5
% of all US higher ed philanthropy directed to community colleges

1,000,000
annual \$ value of community service hours donated by RVCC students to local organizations

Given how much RVCC students “give back” to local organizations, we’re counting on those organizations to step up to support our students in their time of greatest need...

Perhaps the most astounding fact is how small a percentage of higher education’s “philanthropic pie” is offered to the country’s community colleges. Despite serving some 45% of all college students, only 1.5% of the nation’s donations to post-secondary education is directed to community colleges.

The 16th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic raises \$147,000.

Some 126 golfers descended on Stanton Ridge Golf & Country Club in support of student scholarships, faculty programs, and other priorities of Raritan Valley Community College. As always, the event was led by an outstanding core of volunteers, who ensure guests receive the very best service (and ample “would you like to buy another raffle ticket? How about the cork pull?” reminders) and a friendly smile. Special thanks to the *Classic’s Golf Committee* which helped to secure eight new sponsors for the 16th Annual, and an additional 31 sponsors participating at a higher sponsorship level than previous years.



Even though the *Classic* is the Foundation’s largest fundraiser of the year, postponing the 2020 event was never in question. “Health and safety first” noted the Foundation’s Janet Dunne, in response to the spring arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. For all golfers, sponsors, partners, and friends of Raritan Valley Community College, please note that the new date for the 17th Annual is **June 21, 2021**. To find out more about the 17th Annual, please contact **Janet Dunne, Development Associate**, janet.dunne@raritanval.edu; O: 908-648-8355.



Lions Spread Good Cheer

Last season’s nationally ranked (#10) RVCC Lions paid a visit to the RVCC Board of Trustees meeting in December, as well as the RVCC Foundation’s end of year holiday reception. Joined by coach Phil Herro and Athletic Director George Eversmann, the success of the Women’s Volleyball team was a vibrant reminder of the importance college athletics to the vitality of the RV community.



New Scholarships Added for RVCC Students

For so many of Raritan Valley Community College students, scholarship support awarded through the RVCC Foundation is a lifeline and key element to persisting and getting ever closer to attaining their life goals. Over the past 18 months, a wide range of new scholarships were established, totaling over \$100,000. This sum helped bring the total amount of scholarship funds offered in the 19-20 academic year to \$423,000. Your generosity is truly having an impact, and we’re grateful!

Newest SCHOLARSHIPS (and total funds donated):

- 1 Corinthians 16:14 Scholarship (\$14,400)
- Dr. Catherine Hebson McVicker Scholarship (\$24,557)
- Education Foundation of Bridgewater Raritan Scholarship (\$1,500)
- Edwin Reichman Scholarship (\$1,750)
- Frank S. and Patricia F. Russo Foundation Scholarship (\$57,200)
- Pay It Forward Scholarship in Cosmetology/Esthetics (\$1,000)
- Zach Bunsu Memorial Scholarship (\$22,421)
- Jake Irwin Honors College Scholarship (\$6,660)
- Black Male Mentor Scholarship (\$2,000)
- Scholarship for Fundamental Fairness (\$11,150)

Scholarships can be true difference makers, especially today with so many economic challenges confronting students. And every dollar can help so we invite you to join us in supporting our students. For additional information on scholarships at RVCC, please contact: [Stephanie Smullen, stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu](mailto:stephanie.smullen@raritanval.edu); O: 908-648-8286



RVCC Foundation Scholarship Dinner (April, 2019)



RVCC Foundation Board of Directors voted unanimously to recognize director emeritus, **Pat Fittipaldi**. In consideration of his enormous influence on major developments of the college through his leadership as a Somerset County Freeholder, Raritan Valley Community College Trustee, and Raritan Valley Community College Foundation Board member, as well as his lifelong commitment to service and decades-long support of Raritan Valley Community College, the RVCC Foundation board established the “Patrick J. Fittipaldi IMPACT Award,” which will celebrate student fundraising success for the College’s annual Giving Day event.

Donor Love.

*We always appreciate hearing from our donors, especially ones as generous and committed as **Mr. George Case**. George has been supporting RVCC for some 14 years, funding a wide range of areas, including OER (open educational resources), Environmental Studies, and Advanced Manufacturing. In this email he's thanking Conrad Mercurius, Program Coordinator, Advanced Manufacturing, for his exceptional work with students, including the manufacture and donation of 3,000 face shields to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Colombian Surgical Society in South America.*

From: George Case

Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 11:15 AM

To: Mercurius, Conrad

Cc: Marion, Michael

Subject: RE: Thank You (From the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program)

Conrad, thank you for the update. It is nice to see the excellent/ remarkable outcomes you and your students are achieving. You are "the man" and have my 100% backing. Providing your students with up-to-date and marketable job skills will serve them well for the rest of their lives. It is also great for them to see their production being put to good use at RV and in the local medical community. Keep your shoulder to the wheel and keep pushing, George



Jessica Ray, recently-minted Staff Scientist at the RVCC Center for Environmental Studies, pausing in 2019 at her virtual "office." A 2014 RVCC grad who went on to earn a degree from Rutgers University in Ecology, Evolution and National Resources, Jess received both an endorsement—and job security—thanks to a five-year gift pledge to cover her salary by **Mr. George Case**. "Jessica Ray possesses a rare combination of tech-savviness, intellectual acumen and problem-solving skills, field biology experience and intuition, scientific and personal integrity and a gritty work ethic—all of which are invaluable to the work we do at the Center for Environmental Studies," said Dr. Jay Kelly, the Center's co-director.

One Special Day: Giving Day 2020

Giving Day 2020 was held on Thursday, March 19th and raised over \$23,000 for college programs, athletics, and student clubs. This year’s Giving Day was the second most successful Giving Day in the college’s history—despite the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic near the end of the campaign. Over \$3,500 was raised for the student emergency fund. A total of 19 different clubs and athletic teams participated.

2020 was also the first year that Giving Day featured a promotional video—which was created and directed by an RVCC student (**Gabrielle Taylor**, pictured center/right, wearing glasses)—and featured many RVCC students as well (also pictured, right). “Gabby,” also served as one of two student representatives on the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors in the 2019-20 academic year. She is now enrolled in the film program at *Montclair State University*.



Giving Day 2020 was also the first year for the “**Patrick J. Fittipaldi IMPACT Award**” which rewards the top two student organizations in fundraising success on Giving Day. This year’s recipients were the RVCC Women’s Basketball and Women’s Volleyball teams—both of which received an additional \$1,000!

About Giving Day: Every year, on or about the first day of spring, the RVCC community comes together to “give back” to the college via a 24-hour online fundraising campaign. Please make a note for Giving Day 2021: **Thursday, March 19, 2021!**



Best-In-Class Corporate Model: Sanofi

In the world of corporate social responsibility, few companies embody the full breadth of engagement like that of Sanofi US. In fact, the company's commitment to RVCC is nothing short of exemplary. Sanofi is a global biopharmaceutical company focused on human health, preventing illness with vaccines and providing innovative treatments to fight pain and ease suffering. The proximity of Sanofi's Bridgewater offices, its willingness to explore a range of partnership opportunities, and its generous philanthropic support through the corporate social responsibility team present a powerful—and replicable—model for companies of all sizes.



"We recognize the value of RVCC, and we appreciate its role in the community in which our employees live and work," says **Diana Blankman Roberts**, who heads the company's U.S. Corporate Social Responsibility efforts and was recently named as one of the *2020 Top 25 Leading Women Entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs of New Jersey*. "The Sanofi US Corporate Mentorship Program alone provides a powerful return on the human capital we invest—and it's because of the quality of students we get to know and the passion of the RVCC staff who manage the program."

Adds **Clint Wallace**, Head, NA Human Resources at Sanofi, "Our employee colleagues love this program because it reconnects them with an earlier part of their own journeys, and it reminds



them just how important it is to be caring, generous, and supportive." Mr. Wallace also serves as vice-chair of the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors and was commencement speaker at RVCC's 2019 graduation ceremony.

In addition to the company's substantial support of the mentorship program, which includes scholarships for each mentee, it has also invested in RVCC's Nursing Simulation Lab, Nursing and Galileo/STEM scholarships, and has promoted the college's various fundraising initiatives via Sanofi's intranet site for employees across North America.

FAST FACTS: Sanofi US Corporate Mentorship Program at RVCC:

- 45 students have participated since the program began in 2017
- Of the participating students, there's a 95% transfer acceptance record
- Over 330 RVCC students have formally applied to be considered in the program
- Some \$68,500 dollars in scholarships have been awarded
- 20 students received internship invitations (including 4 with Sanofi)
- Every year mentees receive over 22 hours of extensive professional & personal development training within the year-long program
- Every year mentees in the program meet with their mentor approximately 30 times in person, with countless email, Zoom and phone interactions
- Mentees all graduate from the program with their professional brand created which includes resume, LinkedIn and more

"We are grateful to have such an exceptional company so involved at RVCC. Their leadership and generosity are best-in-class. Their team is also fun to work with; just great people doing great work. It doesn't get any better than that!"
--*Alicia Hermo-Weaver, MA, GCDF*, RVCC Coordinator of Internships & Cooperative Education

"I am very excited to be part of this program! It is definitely a great opportunity for me to grow and to learn what it is like to be in a professional environment. I hope to gain many new experiences and an insight into what it is like to work in a STEM-related field, especially at a place like Sanofi. I know this amazing program will help me not only at RVCC but wherever I chose to go afterward as well. I look forward to collaborating and learning from my mentor as well as getting to know everyone else!" --**Jessica Rincon**, RVCC Class of '21; Biology Major

TALK OF THE TOWN: RVCC takes its message directly to the people!

Prior to the pandemic, Raritan Valley Community College President **Michael McDonough** was the featured speaker at a series of “New Perspective on Higher Education” dinners held at area restaurants designed to bring RVCC’s story and the inequities of funding for community colleges



directly to the home team—prospects and RVCC donors of Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. The informal setting allowed for ample networking among guests and the president and included a presentation with “Q & A”.

“These sessions were highly fruitful,” says **Stacey Kimmins**, Board Chair, RVCC Foundation. “The president has an incredible grasp of what’s really going on in the higher ed landscape—and how much more challenging it is for community college’s like RVCC.” Adds **Bill Haas**, Senior Vice

President at LabCorp, “the dinner was enlightening, and LabCorp is even more committed to our mutually beneficial projects.” **Joan Poole** of Hunterdon County, also appreciated the session. “Dr. McDonough’s presentation was well done and future-focused which is the best way to have a strategic discussion.”

In the wake of the New Perspective Dinner series some \$70,000 in donations flowed to the RVCC Foundation as a direct result of introductions and engagement attributable to taking the college’s message *“directly to the people!”*

PANDEMIC POSTSCRIPT: ‘the big rethink’ & ‘Coffee with Dan.’

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, taking the RVCC message “directly to the people” is not without its challenges. A convenient work around is sharing the message, *virtually*. President McDonough took advantage of



two such

opportunities, courtesy of the **Somerset County Business Partnership’s** Zoom interview series, “Coffee with Dan” and “the big rethink,” courtesy of **Panasonic**. These lively sessions covered a range of topics—from what sets RVCC

apart to the challenges of making the pivot to online instruction to transforming higher ed for a new era! Both interviews are just a click away: [Coffee with Dan](#) and [the big rethink](#).



**Somerset County
Business Partnership**

Persevering Through the Pandemic: RVCC Students and Staff Persist as a New Academic Year Unfolds...

Despite the strangest of conditions, the RVCC community rose to the challenge and then some, even receiving praise from the Governor for the manufacture of PPE for our frontline healthcare workers...



*Our exceptional RVCC faculty, staff, and students set the standard for responding to a public health crisis. And a special "shout out" to the RVCC Facilities team and campus-wide "Re-Open RVCC Taskforce." **Standing Ovation to ALL!!***

RVCC Student Journeys...and Related Destinations.



The Workforce Training Center at Raritan Valley Community College

RVCC's broad offering of more than 90 Associate Degrees and Certificates includes a state-of-the-art **Workforce Training Center** where students focus on technical in-demand fields of study, including Automotive Technology, CNC Production, Advanced Manufacturing, Cosmetology, and HVAC and Commercial Energy Management. Our [Workforce Training Center](#) grads are in jobs at local, regional, and global employers—from *Zeus Manufacturing, Betar, and Nobel Biocare*, to *Trane, Daikin, Siemens, and Johnson Controls International*.

Raritan Valley Community College

grads are well represented at some of the best colleges and universities within New Jersey (*Rutgers, Montclair State, Rowan, NJIT, Seton Hall, etc.*) and beyond (*NYU, Yale, Harvard, Cornell, University of North Carolina, Syracuse University, Georgetown, University of Pennsylvania, etc.*). Our grads also value the education they received at our college and are proud to feature RVCC on their resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

Exciting News: We have established a partnership with LabCorp to create a new associate of applied science (AAS) degree program in **Medical Laboratory Technology** at Raritan Valley Community College, with the first cohort to graduate in summer, 2023. RVCC will develop the curriculum for the Medical Laboratory Technology AAS program and oversee program approval at the College and state level, as well as external NAACLS accreditation.



"We recognize the value of RVCC as a community partner, and we're excited to be collaborating with the college to create meaningful opportunities for its students leading to potential career options at LabCorp." – **Mary Williamson, PhD, MT (ASCP), Vice President, LabCorp**

RVCC Foundation Board: New “Emerging Class” and RVCC Students join Board of Directors, and New Leadership Appointments Announced.



Eleven new community members join the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors (pictured, L-to-R): **Alyssa Darden** (RVCC Class of '19), **John Giotis** (educator), **Cheryl Errico** (Affinity Federal Credit Union), **Joel Reyes-Guzman** (Boeing), **Elissa Santo** (Atlantic Precision Technology), **Nicholas Matarazzo** (RWJBarnabas Health), **David Bunevich** (ERS Charitable Fund), **Sebastian Galvez** (Janssen); not pictured: **Rich Berliner** (Fifth Gen Media), **Samantha Carhuaricra** (RVCC Class of '21), **Brianna Allardice** (RVCC Class of '21).

The RVCC Foundation Board of Directors has established the “Emerging Class” category of new board membership as a way to further diversify board composition and add the voices of recent grads and current students. The Emerging Class consists of two groups: recent alumni who have graduated from RVCC within the last five years, and current RVCC students, who serve for one-year terms. *Pictured at right: **Gabrielle Taylor** (left), RVCC student (Class of '20) and RVCC Foundation Board Member has completed her term and is now in her junior year at Montclair State University (with RVCC Foundation staff member, **Janet Dunne**).*



TRANSITIONS: Applause to former chair, RVCC Foundation Board of Directors, **Steve Reichman**, who has transitioned to “spirited volunteer” while maintaining his enthusiastic support of RVCC. His tireless efforts on behalf of the college and its students are deeply appreciated by board colleagues and Foundation staff alike. *Pictured (L-to-R): **Clint Wallace**, new vice-chair, RVCC Foundation Board; **Steve Reichman**; **Stacey Kimmins**, new chair, RVCC Foundation Board; **Mike Marion**, RVCC Foundation staff.*

The Board of Directors also said farewell to long-time Foundation board member, **Elisabeth McConville**, whose passion and commitment have manifested in so many ways at RVCC. Beyond attaining three degrees at RVCC—with high honors no less—Elisabeth’s impact is widespread and includes her personal generosity in support of The Theatre, the RVCC Foundation Golf Classic, Wine Tastings, and the cherished *Mary T. Zanetti Scholarship* established in honor of her beloved sister. **On behalf of the entire Raritan Valley Community College community: Thank You Elisabeth!!**

The Last Word

Philanthropy is the currency of goodwill and our donors spread ample amounts of it through their collective generosity. The gift of giving is transformative—it enriches the giver and receiver alike. Its effect is also cumulative: each gift adds incremental value and together, they provide the equivalent of a collective embrace for the entire community. We are grateful to all of our donors, difference-makers, friends, and advocates who provide invaluable support to RVCC, some of whom share their perspectives below...

“We are proud to support RVCC, especially this year, when the pandemic and economy have upended the lives of many students and their families. RVCC delivers first in class quality academic and workforce programs to help students succeed, all at an affordable cost. Yet there are still needs unmet for many students. Make a difference this year by helping students meet these challenges and stay in school to graduate and pursue their dreams.” – **Don & Penny Pray**



“Our values influence how we spend our time and money. Since a college atmosphere nurtures growth, I give to RVCC to allow prospective and current students access to the Paul Robeson Center, the Holocaust & Genocide Institute, and the many other resources. A college degree is one of the best investments a person can make to foster a global citizen”. – **Lisa M. Tucker**, Associate Professor, English Department, RVCC



“I give to RVCC because it's a place that provides underserved student populations multiple pathways to achieve their dreams. In addition, RVCC doesn't just improve the lives of its students but it enhances the individual communities and the workforce of companies located in and near Hunterdon and Somerset counties. Finally, I proudly support RVCC because I know its dynamic programs are transforming the lives of its students and they're transforming New Jersey.” – **John Giotis**



“As we rise to meet the challenges of our time, we cannot ignore the essential role of education in understanding the root causes of racial inequality, bigotry, social unrest, poverty, drug addiction and climate change. I support RVCC in the interest of providing opportunities for the education and development of future leaders; those that will inspire us toward change and help us to build a more equitable and just, fair, loving and compassionate world.” – **Lori Grossi**



“RVCC provided me with a quality nursing education that enabled me to enjoy at 38-year career as a registered nurse. Those years were exciting but humbling, happy but sorrowful, and always challenging and satisfying. I fund the Shirley Gilbert Scholarship to help RVCC students complete their education and embark on a career where you do make a difference.”
 – **Shirley Gilbert** (RVCC Class of '72)

The impact of philanthropy at RVCC cannot be overstated and it has never been on greater display—manifested in a variety of initiatives—than through the generosity of **Jim and Jill Gibson**. *Authentic Engineering Experience, the Coastal Conservation Project, Water Quality Laboratory* and student internships, the *Forest Ecology Project, the Campus Sustainability* internships, and countless faculty and student research projects—have all been heavily supported by a 2016, five-year \$500,000 gift to establish the *Gibson Center for Innovation in Science and Technology* at Raritan Valley Community College.

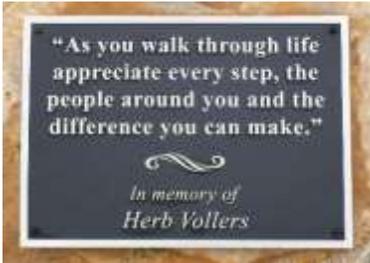


Jim Gibson hosting RVCC student Stryker Shultz and Professor Emilie Stander (left and right respectively) at the Gibson family farm in Basking Ridge.

“We support RVCC because we know that we’re impacting the lives of students and enriching their growth and development—especially those interested in science, technology, and related fields.”

- Jim & Jill Gibson

“We choose to provide financial support to community colleges because we’ve concluded that they generally attract a large



number of the very kind of individual that we’re most interested in helping: those who have encountered some kind of personal setback in life or who, unfortunately, mature late... and yet are determined to use hard work and education to overcome this unfair and untimely circumstance! Frankly,

we believe RVCC and community colleges like it represent a “lifeline” for these individuals!” – **Frank & Patricia Russo**



“As a local Somerville organization, we have seen the growth of RVCC from its early days in the 1970's to the strong educational organization it is today. Our scholarship, being focused on a Somerville High School graduate, is aimed at helping a local resident continue the pathway of higher education and help fulfill their goals in today's world. - Greg Jobin, Somerville Fire Police



“I wanted to make it possible for a student to get a world-class education, with nurturing, and to do it close to home and at a price she could afford! There are many students who for disparate reasons would slip through the cracks of higher education. Anyone can help an established winner who has lived through ideal conditions. RVCC students amaze Bob and me. We are making a modest contribution to give these worthy young people a chance to succeed.”

- Susan I. Primmer, MD & Robert L. Harris, DVM

“Education is a sledgehammer that can dramatically change the course of a person’s life. It can lift people out of poverty and reverse generational curses. The cost of college education has skyrocketed, which has increased the wealth and income gaps in this country. RVCC provides an affordable gateway to life-changing opportunities. When you give to RV, you see your investment pay off in real time through the lives you touch. There is no greater return.”

- Allan Boomer, Managing Partner, Momentum Advisors



“Over the course of my career I have sat on and been asked to sit on many boards. Some were perfunctory, others I “had to” for various reasons. But RVCC is so different. I am constantly moved by the stories I have heard from the students. The sacrifice, the work ethic, the hardships; all for a better life. And what do they ask from us? Very little. Through my association with RVCC, we really do make a difference. A difference in the lives of many, helping to shape their futures so that all of our lives are improved. As a healthcare executive, I have accomplished much BUT nothing is more rewarding, more meaningful than helping someone TRULY in need. Someone who takes so very little and gives so much back. I am honored and humbled to be a small part of RVCC and grateful to be able to support the journeys of so many of its worthy students.”

- Anthony Cava, President & CEO, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset



“Our Foundation is small and so we have to be discerning with our limited funds. But our support of RVCC through the *Steven A. Cox Scholarship* is one of our best bets. In addition to being aligned with our focus on “local” and New Jersey-causes, we also know how accomplished the students are and how much they need our support, especially now.”

- **Mike Forrestall**, *Treasurer, Steven A. Cox Foundation*

“The Food Bank Network of Somerset County has been thrilled to be able to provide scholarships to RVCC students for many years. We view it as an investment, as better education results in increased employment opportunities, which in turn lessen and hopefully eliminates the need for individuals to utilize the services we provide to the community. We also appreciate—and support—the college’s efforts to address hunger on campus through the RVCC Food Pantry. No one in our community should have to suffer from issues related to food insecurity.”

- **Michael Goldberg**, *Board Member, Food Bank Network of Somerset County*

“I am continually amazed by how exceptional RVCC is as a resource for the community, and feel incredibly fortunate to be involved with the college. RVCC’s Workforce Training Center is among the best in the state and has been an invaluable source of talent and innovation. RVCC students are dedicated, passionate and focused; they emerge with both the skills and enthusiasm to hit the ground running.”



- **Elissa Santo**, *Vice President, Atlantic Precision Technology*

“We are supporters of RVCC because we’ve seen its impact first hand: our daughter is a soon-to-be proud graduate and the college was instrumental in launching her on her life’s journey and gaining the confidence she needs to embark on it. As you look across our central New Jersey landscape and take stock of what makes it such a great place to live, we would put RVCC at the top of the list. It is a true gem and we’re honored to be counted among its supporters and champions.”

- **Steve & Betsy Knapp**