

# Notes from the Valley...

*...an update from the RVCC Foundation and RVCC Alumni Association*

*Fall 2025*



## STARS OF THE COLLEGE SHOW!

After decades of engaging with the higher education sector, the Lumina Foundation has asserted that “It’s time for community colleges to be the star of the college show.” We could not agree more. In fact, the students at Raritan Valley Community College are quite comfortable on the big stage!



# LIFE ON **CAMPUS**





**A *community*** committed to learning, growth, and transformation. A culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. An institution whose impact is recognized locally, regionally, and nationally. A place called **Raritan Valley Community College.**







## STATE HONORS.

Raritan Valley Community College students **Jonathan Avelar Flores** of Phillipsburg and **Amodh Naik** of Bridgewater have been named to the **2025 New Jersey All-State Academic Team**, it was announced by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC). They join a group of 35 students from the state's 18 community colleges who are being honored.

All of the honorees are members of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community college students, and were nominated by their college leaders for their academic performance, leadership, and contributions to both their campus and community.

In addition, **Amodh Naik** has received a prestigious **Coca-Cola Gold Scholarship**, which is awarded by the **Coca-Cola Foundation** in partnership with Phi Theta Kappa. Naik is one of six New Jersey community college students receiving competitive scholarships recognizing academic achievement, leadership, and engagement in college and community service. Recipients were nominated by their college administrators.

Students selected to the 2025 All-State Academic Team represent a broad range of academic disciplines, including biology (pre-medicine), business administration, education, engineering, healthcare, liberal arts, physics, psychology, and the sciences. The group includes students who plan to transfer to four-year institutions and those entering the workforce after graduation.

## RVCC Foundation FALL 2025 Scholarship Awarding:

# \$442,065

in scholarships awarded

# 196

*RVCC student recipients*



## KESSELMAN FELLOW NAMED.

RVCC student **Manuela Bulgaro** has been named the **Engage NJ Kesselman Fellow for the Advancement of Democracy** for the 2025-2026 academic year, it was announced by **The Pray Family Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement at RVCC**.

In that role, Bulgaro, a second-year Honors College student majoring in Social Sciences, is co-developing the project, *The Republic We Keep, A Podcast on American Systems, Voices, & Values*.

*The Republic We Keep* is a student-led civic podcast created by Bulgaro and **Aiden Annis**, a Rutgers University sophomore who is majoring in Electrical Engineering and minoring in Political Science. The Fellowship includes a \$1,000 honorarium to support the project during the academic year.

“Former Engage NJ board chair and president of Stockton University, **Dr. Harvey Kesselman**, continues even now in retirement to be an advocate for the advancement of human rights. RVCC’s Kesselman Fellows seek to walk a similar path with their project called, *The Republic We Keep*. And so, when I look to the future state of justice and opportunity here in New Jersey, I am confident that Manuela and Aiden will be

the future we want to see for our citizenry,” said Dr. Saul Petersen, Executive Director, Engage NJ.

In addition to the honorarium, the Fellowship provides professional pathway coaching and the chance to participate in a series of skills development opportunities focusing on such areas as consensus-building, public speaking, and professional communication, designed to meet students’ self-identified needs. Bulgaro and Annis also will have the opportunity to work with other student Fellows nationwide.

Through honest and thoughtful conversations, *The Republic We Keep* podcast created by Bulgaro and Annis focuses on how American systems—such as healthcare, education, justice, and immigration—impact people’s lives and explores what it takes to build a more informed and engaged generation of citizens. To learn more about the podcast, visit [therepublicwekeep.com/](http://therepublicwekeep.com/).



## NOW OPEN.

The **RV Trail** is now, officially, open for business—the business of hiking! With the cross-walks installed last month, the 2.5-mile loop provides users with a nice trek around the circumference of the College’s 250 acres. Final touches (in the coming months) include “welcome” signage at three public access points, additional “educational pods” along the trail, more benches, and a map. The RV Trail is open dawn-to-dusk, 365 days of the year!



## THE BIG PARADE: A CELEBRATION OF RVCC.

Raritan Valley Community College and **Somerset Patriots**, the New York Yankees Double-A Baseball affiliate, teamed up for a special night at **TD Bank Ballpark** in Bridgewater.

The evening featured an ascending institution and a hot, muggy night for baseball. A popular community venue with 3,431 patrons. A two-hour rain delay, followed by a rainbow. A gathering of students, faculty, staff and alumni of Raritan Valley Community College, and several of its valued partners. Generosity of time, energy and philanthropy gave rise to a new scholarship at RVCC. There was also "The Big Parade," a ceremonial first pitch by a Region XIX RVCC Coach of the Year, a dance performance and a National Anthem, both featuring students and alumni of Raritan Valley Community College.

Huge gratitude to **Deirdre Blaus**, **Kathleen Roberts**, **Christina Reilly** and **RWJ University Hospital – Somerset**; **Bill Haas**, **Elise Wagner**, **Ryan Livingston**, and **Alissa Farrier** of **Labcorp**; **Lindsay Bevan** and **Polly Owens** of **Insmed Incorporated**; and **Andrew Manno** of **J.S. Henderson Foundation**; as well as these stellar on-field ambassadors: **Dan Van Tran**, **Justin Britten**, **James Von Schilling**, **Arianna McLean**, **Cedric Thomas**, **Kevin Ryan**, **John Trojan**, and **Mike McDonough**.



*Justin Britten (Class of 2025), Jim Von Schilling perform the National Anthem*



**JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL CELEBRATION OF  
RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**TUESDAY, JULY 8TH, 2025**

GATES OPEN AT 5:30  
THE BIG PARADE AT 5:45  
GAME AT 6:35

SOMERSET PATRIOTS (NYY)  
VS. NH FISHER CATS (TOR)

GET YOUR SPECIAL  
RVCC TICKET AND  
ON-FIELD ACCESS TO  
BE IN THE BIG PARADE

THEN HEAD TO  
TD BANK BALLPARK  
BRIDGEWATER, NJ  
ON JULY 8, 2025!!

**WWW.RARITANVAL.EDU/PATRIOTS**

**RARITAN VALLEY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**



# RVCC PROUD



The evening was more than a celebration of an esteemed educational institution; it was about partners and relationships, family and friends. It also was an opportunity for the general public to get to know a little bit more about the offerings of the best community in New Jersey: Raritan Valley Community College. And all of it was worth celebrating.



## STUDENT ARTWORK DISPLAYED.

The artwork of RVCC Arts & Design students was on display November 14-December 4 in the RVCC Art Gallery, as part of the **22nd Annual RVCC Juried Student Art Exhibition**. The show was coordinated by Arts & Design Co-Chair, Associate Professor and Art Gallery Director **Darren McManus**. The exhibit featured student artwork completed for visual art, graphic design, or interior design classes during the past year. Selected work spanned a variety of media, including ceramics, painting, drawing, sculpture, graphic design, digital and multimedia, photography, illustration, interior design, video, and printmaking. Each student was permitted to submit up to three pieces of artwork for consideration. Guest juror **Otis Kriegel**, a New York City-based public artist and author, evaluated all the entries and made the final selections for the exhibition, and determined the “Best in Show” award winners. Overall Best in Show honors went to digital and mixed media artist, **Erica Yoo**, for her **OCD Archives** (set of 4 fully-designed CD) from her Fall 2025 Digital Artmaking course. A portion of Erica’s work is featured with this article.

## COLLEGE OF THE COMMUNITY.

An autumn Saturday morning in Flemington and an opportunity to partner with a valued member of the “home team” for Raritan Valley Community College: Hunterdon County. It was also a chance to celebrate RVCC and some of its accomplishments, while sharing a special promotion with representatives from 15 of the County’s towns, boroughs, cities, and townships who were gathered for their Shared Services Forum meeting.

Along with RVCC colleagues Peaches Bocalan and Rodney Altemose, we presented the College as a “vibrant and essential community resource.” By doing so, we brought to life the “Community Engagement & Partnership” theme in RVCC’s recently released STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2030.

Huge thanks to Hunterdon Administrator, Brad Myhre, and Deputy Director of the Board of Commissioners, Shaun Van Doren (RVCC Class of 1991). We appreciated the opportunity to share our story and discuss our shared interests.



RVCC’s Mike Marion, Peaches Bocalan, and Rodney Altemose



## A WIN FOR THE HOME TEAM.

Raritan Valley Community College is fortunate to have the support of two engaged partners in **Somerset County** and **Hunterdon County**, and dynamic corporations like **Labcorp**, **Triad Tool**, and **L & Z Tool & Engineering, Inc.** All are huge believers in the RVCC mission and in our graduates —who, as RVCC alumni, are now adding value and helping drive the local and regional economy. This confluence of synergy, goodwill, and productivity has been captured in a new video, aptly named, *“Thriving in Somerset County.”*

We actually think it’s quite good, but don’t take our word for it; the video, produced by **eDesign Interactive**, was recently announced as a **“Davey Award”** winner (*the Davey Awards is a premier international creative awards program focused exclusively on honoring outstanding work from small agencies, independent creators and in-house teams. Inspired by the story of David vs. Goliath, the awards recognize big ideas that come to life without big budgets.*) You can view the video here: [www.raritanval.edu/thriving/RV/SomersetCounty](http://www.raritanval.edu/thriving/RV/SomersetCounty).



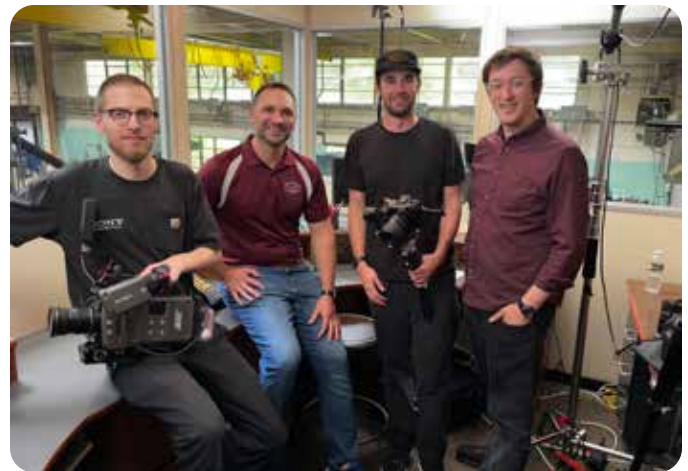
*Luke La Marca, Zach Cohen (Class of 2022), Mike Marion*



*Tatiana Muse (Class of 2025), Elise Wagner of Labcorp, and Samantha Maxcy (Class of 2025)*



*Triad's Fred Carden on the set of “Thriving in Somerset County”*



*e-Design film crew, led by BC Wallin (far right), with L&Z's Luke La Marca (2nd from left)*





## THE PLACE TO BE.

There's nothing like a massive expansion of the RVCC Workforce Training Center and the related new talent pipelines that promise to help with hiring needs of local employers to catch the attention of local leadership. In fact, our partners from **Somerset** and **Hunterdon** Counties deserve acknowledgement for their generous support of the expansion, as does of the RVCC Board of Trustees

Huge thanks to Somerset County administrator **Colleen Mahr**, Commissioners **Melonie Marano** and **Elizabeth Graner**, economic development manager **Jessica Paolini**, and Director of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board, **Paul Grzella**—pictured with RVCC Workforce Training Center Executive Director, **Conrad Mercurius** (photo 1); also stopping by for a sneak peek: Hunterdon County administrator, **Brad Myhre** with Colleen Mahr (photo 2), and (photo 3) RVCC Trustees **Caren Bateman**, **Michael Goldberg**, **Margaret Sullivan**, **Helena Swanicke**, and **Juan Torres**.



## THE BIG CATCH UP.

From Kabul to Dickens to cutting a ribbon to addressing student hunger, there is a lot of ground covered in EPISODE SEVEN of the "1st & 10" podcast. Introduced by RVCC student **Uzma Aloko**, and co-hosted by Raritan Valley Community College President **Michael McDonough** and RVCC Foundation Executive Director **Mike Marion**, this conversation bridges 11 months and many great achievements for Raritan Valley Community College! Listen here: [www.raritanval.edu/1STandTEN-podcastepisode7-the-big-catch-up](http://www.raritanval.edu/1STandTEN-podcastepisode7-the-big-catch-up)







(standing, L-to-R) Cheryl Wallace, Rikita Singh, Jason Fredericks, Alexa Offenhauer, Christine Chynoweth, Takecia Saylor, Michael Goldberg; (seated, L-to-R) Drue Stapleton, Tierra Hall-Edward, Karen Bearce

## PRESENCE AT NJ PATHWAYS.

Members of the RVCC leadership team were present last summer at the 2nd Annual New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit. With its “*Innovate, Educate, Elevate*” and “*Unlocking Opportunity*” themes, the event brought together educators, policy makers, industry and governmental leaders, and other champions and creative thinkers in the community college sector, to share collective progress aligned with the ambitious NJ Pathways initiative. On day one of the conference, two RVCC Automotive Technology students—**Ethan Tassio** and **Ben Myshka**, both Class of 2025—brought acclaim to the much-heralded program as part of a panel session entitled, “*Electric Vehicle Internship and Faculty Development Pilot.*”

As the audience soon learned, Ethan and Ben are inspiring examples of the transformative role community colleges play in shaping the experience and journeys of students. And more specifically, the role RVCC has played in their lives, how their RVCC education has enriched their skills, built their confidence, and the opened doors to career advancement. In short, how that education has unlocked opportunities. Props to both Ethan and Ben for sharing their respective journeys and their appreciation of RVCC.



*Ethan and Ben*



# RVCC PROUD



## TWENTY-ONE AND SO MUCH MORE.

Special thanks to all who contributed to the success of the *21st Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic*! This relationship-building and fundraising event brought in some \$153,000 in support of Raritan Valley Community College. The tourney also featured our largest field of golfers in over a decade, thanks to the extra capacity afforded at Somerset County Park Commission's **Neshanic Valley Golf Course**. For those who missed out, mark your calendar for **June 15, 2026**, when we'll stage a command performance, at Neshanic Valley Golf Course.



# \$2.3 Million

Total dollars raised throughout the 21 year history of the RVCC Foundation Golf Classic





*Somerset County Business Partnership Government & Community Affairs Roundtable members at the Workforce Training Center*

## GUESTS WELCOME.

Some 30 visitors from the **Somerset County Business Partnership's** Government and Community Affairs Roundtable were hosted recently at the **Raritan Valley Community College** Workforce Training Center. Facilitated by SCBP's **Chris Edwards**, the event included guests from 25 organizations enjoying some quality community access, with a guided tour of the 60,000+ square-foot facility, led by RVCC's **Conrad Mercurius**. There was also some context setting from **Mike Marion** on the challenges facing the community college sector, such as the need for growing private philanthropic support for RVCC. Attendees came early and stayed late, with plenty of Q&A—always a great sign.



*Conrad Mercurius discussing "advanced manufacturing" with guests*



*Mike Marion describing the importance of private philanthropy in sustaining community colleges*



## 2025-26 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD HONOREES

*We are pleased to announce the recipients of this year's RVCC Distinguished Alumni Awards:*



### **Stephanie Spies - Class of 2014**

Stephanie graduated from the RVCC Honors College in 2014 with an Associate of Science in Business Administration. She then transferred to William Paterson University, where she double-majored in accounting and financial planning. Stephanie began her career as a financial planner at Modera Wealth Management in 2017 and is now a Senior Financial Advisor and Principal at the firm. Her position involves educating her clients about retirement planning, tax planning, estate planning, risk management, and investments. In addition to her work with Modera, Stephanie works as an adjunct professor at William Paterson University, educating the next generation of financial planners. Outside of work, Stephanie has served on various committees both inside and outside of her profession, including her role as board treasurer of The Princess Program STEM, a California-based nonprofit that seeks to encourage young girls to enter STEM-related fields. In its first year, The Princess Program STEM has reached over 2,000 young girls across the country through various STEM-related activities. Stephanie gives back to RVCC whenever she can, frequently serving as a panelist for career exploration and mentorship events focused on educating RVCC's business students.



### **Jenna Douglas - Class of 2017**

Jenna graduated summa cum laude from RVCC's Honors College in 2017 with an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts–Social Science. While at RVCC, Jenna was actively involved with both the Phi Theta Kappa honor society and Rotaract; received the Nota Bene Academic Achievement Award; served as a Student Ambassador; and also participated in the Asha Project in Nepal, where she helped distribute school supplies to students in remote villages. Jenna then transferred to Georgetown University, graduating magna cum laude. While there, Jenna served as a leader in Georgetown's Alternative Breaks Program, coordinating community-based service experiences focused on social justice education and student engagement. After graduating, Jenna worked on Capitol Hill as an education public policy and advocacy intern, informing Congressional staff about educational disparities. Jenna continued serving the Washington, DC community as both a mentor and English-language instructor for ELL learners. Next, Jenna joined the Aspen Institute Education & Society Program, where she designed and delivered strategic learning experiences that equipped K-12 leaders with the necessary tools to advance equity and improve student outcomes. Jenna's career then led her to becoming a Strategy & Transformation Consultant at Deloitte Consulting, where she supported institution-wide transformations for colleges and universities. In 2023, Jenna was selected as a Fulbright Scholar, serving as an English Teaching Assistant in La Rioja, Spain.



# RVCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## Leilani Rose - Class of 2019

Leilani graduated from RVCC in 2019 with an Associate of Science degree in Digital Media/Film Studies. While at RVCC, Leilani served as President of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, leading the chapter to win multiple regional awards. For her efforts, she was honored with the College's Distinguished Club President Award. Leilani then pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Individualized Studies at the University of New Hampshire College of Professional Studies. A first-generation college graduate, Leilani began her professional career with First Street Foundation and helped launch the first publicly available flood risk data platform in the United States, now known as Risk Factor. Leilani transitioned into healthcare advertising, where her work earned recognition by PM360's Greatest Creators. Leilani is currently the co-owner of Envision Health and Fitness and founder of Elume, focusing on bringing health and wellness to her local community. Leilani has spent years serving her community as both an EMT and volunteer firefighter and holds certifications in Yoga Teacher Training and as a Certified Nutrition Coach. Additionally, she helped run the Spreading Smiles initiative at Chabad of Hunterdon, delivering care packages weekly to sick and elderly community members. Leilani is also an active member of the Jewish Business Network of Hunterdon.



**TO JOIN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION,  
PLEASE SCAN THE CODE BELOW  
AND SUBMIT THE FORM.**



***Look for more information on our Distinguished Alumni honorees in the social media streams of Raritan Valley Community College and the RVCC Foundation, and in the Annual Report of the RVCC Foundation (published in June 2025).***

**Visit us at: [raritanval.edu/community-resources/rvcc-alumni-association](https://raritanval.edu/community-resources/rvcc-alumni-association)**



# RVCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## DESIGN GOES HUGE.

Thank you, **Ethan Clark** (RVCC Class of 2019), for helping make the “**Fox NFL Kickoff**” so visually compelling (and thanks, too, for making all of us—and especially RVCC Arts & Design Professor **Darren McManus**—proud at Raritan Valley Community College!).

Clark, who majored in Visual Arts at the College, recently began working as a 3D artist for FOX Sports. His projects have included helping to create the set for Season 11 of Fox NFL Kickoff.

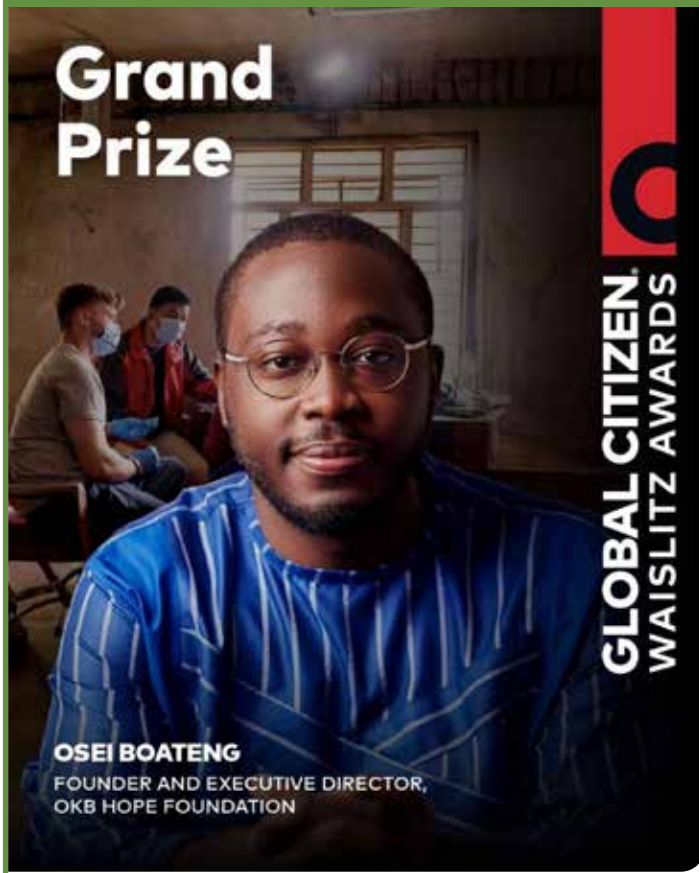
Clark was part of the team that handled the primary modeling and texturing of the broadcast’s set, using computer graphics (CG). Working with Pixotope, a type of virtual production software, and Unreal Engine, a game engine used for creating interactive 3D graphics and immersive virtual experiences, Clark and his teammates created everything that appears in the set—besides the actual people and the desk.

After graduating from RVCC with an AFA in Visual Arts, Clark transferred to **Gnomon School of VFX, Games, and Animation** in North Hollywood, CA, where he earned his BFA and studied 3D/CG, specializing in modeling, texturing, lighting, look development, compositing, and generalist work. Said Ethan, “I love to share my story as I believe it’s great to pass experiences along to the next generation of students and to help show them what they’re capable of.”





# RVCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## ANSWERING THE CALL.

It was more recognition for the brilliant work and impact of **Osei Kwadwo Boateng** (RVCC Class of 2016) and the **OKB Hope Foundation**, the organization he founded and leads. Osei was awarded the GRAND PRIZE by the **Global Citizen Waislitz Awards** in recognition of his social impact work with those experiencing extreme poverty. Osei is a healthcare entrepreneur from Ghana whose mission is driven by personal loss. After losing his grandmother and aunt to preventable conditions due to poor access to care, he committed his life to transforming healthcare for underserved communities. He founded the OKB Hope Foundation to provide primary and preventive care through health vans equipped with medical supplies and staffed by experienced healthcare providers. Under his leadership, the foundation has served over 10,000 individuals in 80 rural communities and delivered mental health education and resources to over 3,000 students.



## NEW TRUSTEE REP.

The August RVCC Board of Trustee meeting celebrated a transition: formal acknowledgment was extended to RVCC Alumni Trustee representative **Nick Gallo** (RVCC Class of 2024), for his service last academic year—and congratulations was offered to **Victor Komosinski** (RVCC Class of 2025) as he was sworn in as this year's Alumni Trustee rep. Congrats to both these RVCC grads and current Rutgers University students!





# RVCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW NAMED.

RVCC graduate **Lila Seroy** of Whitehouse Station has been named a **Newman Civic Fellow** by **Campus Compact**, a national coalition of colleges and universities working to advance the public purposes of higher education.

Seroy, a Business major who graduated from RVCC in May, is currently a student at **Stanford University**. She joins a group of student civic leaders from 38 states; Washington, DC; and Mexico who comprise the 2025-2026 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows.

The Newman Civic Fellowship is a yearlong program that recognizes students who stand out for their leadership potential and commitment to creating positive change in communities. The fellowship is named for the late Frank Newman, one of Campus Compact's founders, who was a tireless advocate for civic engagement in higher education. In the spirit of Dr. Newman's leadership, each fellow is nominated by their campus president or chancellor, who is invited to select one exemplary community-committed student from their campus each year.



"It is an honor to welcome this group of accomplished and dedicated students to the Newman Civic Fellowship," said Campus Compact President Bobbie Laur. "As higher education faces unprecedented challenges, these students exemplify the power and possibility of civic and community engagement on campus. As they emerge as the leaders of tomorrow, we are proud that this fellowship will be part of their story. From a variety of institutions and with diverse backgrounds and experiences, these fellows represent a bright future for public problem solving."

Through the fellowship, Campus Compact provides the students with learning and networking opportunities that help to nurture their development as civic leaders. Programming emphasizes personal, professional, and civic growth that can empower them to collaborate effectively across disciplines and create large-scale positive change.

The cornerstone of the fellowship is the Annual Convening of Newman Civic Fellows, which offers intensive in-person skill-building and networking over three days. The fellowship also provides fellows with pathways to apply for exclusive opportunities, including mini-grants to help fund community projects, scholarships, and post-graduate opportunities.

The Pray Family Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement at Raritan Valley Community College is providing a generous stipend to support Seroy's participation in the fellowship.

"We are extremely honored that Lila Seroy has been recognized nationally and named a Newman Civic Fellow. Lila has been a dedicated student leader at Raritan Valley Community College, and she exemplifies an unwavering commitment to advocacy, community empowerment, and education for disadvantaged youth through her work at Visions and Pathways, a local nonprofit that supports at-risk and homeless youth," said RVCC President **Dr. Michael J. McDonough**.



# FROM THE **HEART**

## AN EVENING OF *Generosity & Gratitude*



### CELEBRATING GENEROSITY AND GRATITUDE.

There were little moments—and big news—as the RVCC community came together to raise funds (and donate food products) to address food insecurity on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College. Some 80 guests attended last month's "*An Evening of Generosity & Gratitude*" event, which required a donation of \$30—in **ShopRite** gift cards, grab-and-go food items, or as a financial contribution. And each \$30 earned a 2X match from the Board of Directors of the RVCC Foundation—initiated by vice chair, **Dan Van Tran**—for every attendee. In total, some \$68,000 was raised—thanks in large part to a \$50,000 anonymous gift to the **RVCC Resource Center & Food Pantry**, which was announced as part of the celebration. The event was also a ceremonial kickoff for the last stretch of the RVCC Foundation's end-of-year fundraising campaign, which seeks to bring in more support for RVCC students facing food insecurity. You can help the effort here: [www.raritanval.edu/hunger](http://www.raritanval.edu/hunger).



40% of all U.S college students  
are dealing with food insecurity

**7,500** student visits in 2024 to  
the RVCC Resource Center & Food Pantry

# FROM THE HEART

## NEW LIFE FOR A LEGACY.



Last summer, friends and trustees of the **J.S. Henderson Memorial Adult Scholarship Fund** met for one last annual dinner. The event was an opportunity to reflect back on 39 years of providing scholarships to 99 grateful beneficiaries—and agree on an important decision: to keep the scholarship going in perpetuity, its management and stewardship was transferred to the RVCC Foundation, along with a new endowed fund to ensure the scholarship's permanent vitality. The board's \$129,228 donation has established the "*J.S. Henderson Memorial Adult Scholarship at Raritan Valley Community College.*"

"On behalf of the J.S. Henderson Memorial Adult Scholarship Fund Board of Trustees, we're pleased to make this commitment to the RVCC Foundation to ensure the legacy of Jessamine Henderson—and her longtime advocacy of providing opportunities to adults for continuing their education—carries on in perpetuity," said **Dr. Andrew J. Manno**, President of the J.S. Henderson Memorial Adult Scholarship Fund Board of Trustees.

The RVCC scholarship, designed for adults age 25 or older, is geared toward those looking to begin their higher education, return to school to continue their education, explore a new career path, or gain additional training.

"Raritan Valley Community College is extremely grateful for this incredible stewardship opportunity. We thank the J.S. Henderson Foundation Trustees, along with Board President Dr. Andrew Manno, for the honor of keeping Jessamine's legacy going in perpetuity and for all the lives it will touch in the years ahead," said Mike Marion, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation and RVCC Alumni Association.

## HONORING COMMITMENT.



AFCU's **Heather Hurilla** and **Andrea Alfaro**, with RVCC's **Caroline Seibert** (middle)

To be an employee of Raritan Valley Community College is to be valued. There's actually a working committee dedicated to fostering a sense of community—and appreciation. The big event is the Annual Service Program. Now in its 20th year, the lunch gathering celebrates employees who have reached "milestone" years of service at RVCC.

At last week's event, 40 employees were so honored; collectively, they represented more than 500 years of combined service—and experience. Included among the milestones: an individual with 50 years of employment at Raritan Valley Community College.

We thank our friends at **Affinity Federal Credit Union**—event sponsor—for their appreciation of the importance of RVCC employee contributions to the mission of the College. Thanks as well to our host venue, **Raritan Valley Country Club**, and special gratitude to RVCC's **Cheryl Wallace**, **Caroline Seibert**, and the "Rewards and Recognition" committee members—all of whom have made this annual celebration worthy of its loyal honorees.





# FROM THE HEART



Members of Insmed Incorporated's Global Day of Good team, with RVCC's **Tierra Hall-Edward** (far left) and **Rikita Singh** (2nd from right)

## WAY MORE THAN GOOD.

Last month, the Raritan Valley Community College campus hosted **Insmed Incorporated** as part of its “Global Day of Good”—an annual day of giving in which 1,200 Insmed employees participated across the United States, Europe, and Japan. The company's efforts on our campus consisted of building furniture for The Warehouse and assembling Holiday Care Packages for Make-A-Wish, Winter Warm Kits for Zufall Health, Secret Agent Kits for Students 2 Science, and Child Comfort and Snack Bags for the RVCC Food Pantry and Children's Campus.

In short, an impressive employee-driven operation in which everyone wins.

But there's so much more. Insmed was also on the Raritan Valley Community College campus recently as part of its mentorship program, which is now in its second year. Beyond the invaluable scholarship support for six RVCC students, Insmed employee mentors also provide students with guidance, advice, and counsel throughout the academic year. And this past summer, the Company “presented” its support on field at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater.

At last month's RVCC Foundation-hosted “An Evening of Generosity & Gratitude” event on campus—benefitting student users of the RVCC Food Pantry, the company donated two hundred ShopRite Gift Cards to add to the fundraising tally.

Huge thanks are owed to the leadership of Insmed for its commitment to community impact, with a special shoutout to **Claire Mulhearn**, **Lindsay Bevan**, and **Mandy Fahey**. Because when you “do the math” on all of this invested human capital and financial support, it adds up to way more than good.

GLOBAL DAY  
OF GOOD

NOVEMBER 13, 2025

# FROM THE HEART

## COMMUNITY POWER.



For five RVCC students enrolled in an Independent Study class with **Professor of Theatre Dennis Russo**, their experience took on a much greater meaning.

The students, **Arielle (Ari) Bowie**, **Kelly Deo**, **Asher Lindsey**, **Nazar Turchyn**, and **Fallon Billy**, participated in a workshop theatre experience with adult artists in the **Matheny Arts Access Program**, which “empowers individuals with disabilities to create art without boundaries.”

After several weeks rehearsing together, the RVCC students joined Matheny artists Cheryl Chapin, Chet Cheesman, Paul Santo, Karen Yates, and Amy Myers for “A Summer Drama Event” at the Matheny Adult Day Program in Hillsborough.

The event featured monologues and scenes written by the Matheny actors that were performed by RVCC students; short scenes presented together by Matheny actors and RVCC students, written by Russo; and group acting exercises.

“I’ve never really worked with people with disabilities,” says Theatre major Kelly Deo. “I’ve learned so much about them. They’ve surprised me in so many ways. They’re the ones writing the material [that we’re performing]. They’re endlessly creative,” she continues.

“This collaboration with Matheny Arts Access is celebrated as a Theatre endeavor, but to me it’s bigger than that—it’s a Human endeavor that just happens to exercise our creative muscle,” says Russo. “Sitting next to disabled actors and writers and working on a scene together; that’s a different

level of interaction. It’s much deeper.”

The partnership between Matheny and RVCC began in 2015, but the groups had not worked together since before the pandemic, and Russo was happy to resume the relationship. “This collaboration has been one of the highlights of my time teaching at RVCC,” he says.

Adds **Heather Williams, Program Director of Matheny Arts Access**: “The RVCC partnership was always such a highlight for our aspiring actors and playwrights. It gave them a sense of college life and increased their community engagement.”

Theatre major Asher Lindsey says working with the Matheny artists has helped him as a performer and a writer. “It shows me how theatre can impact everyone in a community and the arts are a way to bring people together.”

## SCORE TWO FOR THE HOME TEAM.



**Aneldys Perez Urena** (left) of New Brunswick and **Michelle Ugarte** of Manville, both Class of 2026, and both recipients of the **Labcorp Scholarship in Medical Laboratory Technology** at Raritan Valley Community College. Says **Siddra Dar**, MLT Program Director at RVCC, “Aneldys and Michelle are both excited to play critical roles in clinical diagnostics as laboratory professionals when they graduate next May.”

Huge thanks to **Bill Haas**, **Elise Wagner**, and the entire team at **Labcorp**—your leadership and generous support are making a difference at Raritan Valley Community College.



# FROM THE HEART

## CELEBRATING LEGENDS.



*Naysha Benavides Arroyo, Komal Saleem, Bill Raftery, Esmeralda Ochoa-Lopez, Mike Marion*

The **37th Annual Cento Amici Dinner & Auction** was highlighted by a conversation between two legends: honoree **Bill Raftery**, Hall of Fame college basketball broadcaster, and **Bobby Hurley**, Hall of Fame basketball coach at St. Anthony High School in Jersey City.

Another highlight was having three Raritan Valley Community College students—**Esmeralda J. Ochoa-Lopez**, **Naysha Benavides Arroyo**, and **Komal Saleem**, all Cento Amici scholarship recipients—present at the celebration. Esmeralda's thoughtful message of gratitude was also featured prominently in the printed dinner program. Raritan Valley Community College Women's Basketball and Volleyball Coach, **Phil Herro**—a multi-year, "Coach of the Year"—also attended.

Huge thanks to the entire **Cento Amici** organization, but especially dinner host, **Robert Zito**, and event sponsor, **David Nader**. Their generosity and leadership is making a difference, and it was evident at the 37th Annual event. Esmeralda said it best: "Receiving this scholarship means so much more than just financial support. It represents a story of hard work, family, and resilience. It reminds me that behind every student's success story is a community that believes in the power of education."

## A TOAST TO PATRONS OF GOOD.



The **American Association of University Women (AAUW)** is a national non-profit that advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

The AAUW's Somerset Hills Branch is a gem: discerning, righteous, engaged, committed, resourceful, and generous. Their annual used book sale is legendary. The funds raised are plowed right back into the community—from local libraries and local charities, to scholarships at a certain local community college.

In fact, for 24 years Raritan Valley Community College students have benefitted from the generosity of the AAUW Somerset Hills. Their commitment is to female students who've endured unanticipated challenges and have found their way back to education as a means to a better life.

It is an admirable commitment. It is why we always attend their annual awards celebration to speak about the College and the impact of their support. RVCC student recipients often share their gratitude as well. And every year, these patrons of good present a check in support of the next group of persevering women who are ready to reboot their lives, and their journeys, at Raritan Valley Community College.



## RECORD YEAR.

It was an incredible, record-setting year for the **RVCC Foundation**, surpassing the \$2 million mark for the first time in the College's history. The funds raised in 2024-2025—\$2,014,187—is \$971,431 higher than the previous year's total.

Among the highlights of the year was a record-setting "Giving Day," during which \$203,655 was raised over 24-hours for scholarships, student clubs, athletic teams, and a range of centers, institutes, and critical programs at RVCC. Energized by the return of a \$50,000 "match challenge," which was fueled by the generosity of **Jim and Jill Gibson** of Basking Ridge and **The Caruso Family Foundation**—and inspired the largest single Giving Day gift ever: a \$50,000 contribution from Lori Grossi of Clinton.

The year's fundraising tally also was aided by the incredible generosity of **Frank and Pat Russo**, whose longstanding scholarship at RVCC is among the most generous. The Russos' \$375,000 gift—the largest scholarship commitment in the College's history—provides five full scholarships for RVCC students in each of the next 10 years. Also adding large, six-figure gifts were **Johnson & Johnson** in support of the nascent NJBioFutures, and J.S. Henderson Foundation, whose board chose the RVCC Foundation to assume full management and stewardship of the **J.S. Henderson Memorial Adult Scholarship**—to be exclusively available to students at Raritan Valley Community College in perpetuity. Also notable in the year's fundraising success: \$153,000 in proceeds from the 21st Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic, which was held at **Neshanic Valley Golf Club**.

"Our record fundraising success this year is a direct testament to the generosity of our expanding donor community, and their willingness to step up," said Mike Marion, Executive Director, RVCC Foundation and RVCC Alumni Association. "We had 306 new donors add to the incredible support of our longstanding benefactors. It is so encouraging that more and more people are recognizing the value and importance of this exceptional institution and are choosing to be part of it."



## STUDENT SAVINGS GROWS THROUGH OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.



Raritan Valley Community College continues to help students reduce their educational costs by providing free instructional materials in a growing number of classes. Since 2018, the use of free **Open Educational Resources** (OER) has saved RVCC students \$6,162,077.07.

OER are free online resources that can be downloaded, edited, and shared. In addition to the cost savings, students benefit by using course materials that can easily be customized by their professors.

The College currently offers 70 distinct courses for which students can register to take the class with no-textbook costs. The number of sections that have no-textbook cost has increased each semester, as faculty adopt the OER that their colleagues have developed for those courses. When students register for classes, they can see if a course has a zero-textbook cost or a low-textbook cost of less than \$45. They also can search for “no-cost” and “low-cost” courses as they are building their schedule.

Many RVCC faculty members are doing their part to assist students by embracing the use of OER in their classrooms. The College’s faculty have published five OER textbooks that can be adopted by others, with four more in development. Two of those are for English Composition I and English Composition II

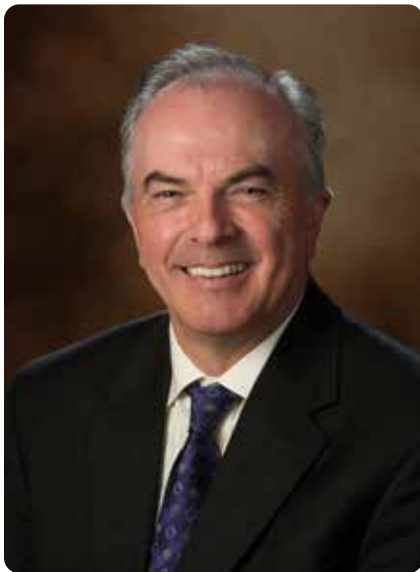
classes, which will offer savings for all RVCC students who are required to take these courses for their major. The English Department has been making significant revisions and updates to its English Composition courses, which include a department-wide decision to use OER beginning in fall 2026.

“Those of us that worked on the English Composition I and II Pressbooks were excited that the platform allowed us to use and remix existing content and write and create our own. We now have customized digital textbooks for both courses that align with our course outcomes and communicate our pedagogical priorities,” says **Jessica Darkenwald-DeCola**, Associate Professor of English. “We are in the process of piloting the English Composition I book this fall, and we will pilot the English Composition II book in the spring. An added benefit of OER and Pressbooks is that we’ll be able to continually revise, refine, and add to the textbooks in response to student feedback and our experiences teaching with the books,” she continues.

OER is also being used in English as a Second Language classes. “Despite years of searching, I could never find a writing textbook that fully met the needs of my intermediate multilingual writing students. As a result, I created my own materials, but they were disorganized across separate documents and platforms. Creating an OER textbook allowed me to bring all these materials together; I was able to write one interactive textbook tailored to the unique needs and preferences of my writing students,” adds **Lindsey Hageman**, Instructor of English as a Second Language, who created an OER textbook for students in the Advanced English Reading & Writing III class.

When surveyed, 65% of RVCC students reported that using OER improved their ability to complete assignments; 55% said it increased their satisfaction of the learning experience; and 50% reported that it increased their interest in the subject or assigned readings. In addition, 95% of students surveyed said they would take another OER course or recommend an OER course to a friend. Students said they appreciate being able to access their course materials anytime and at any place they need them, and they find the OER easy to use.

## RVCC PRESIDENT NAMED TO NJBIZ 2025 EDUCATION POWER LIST.



### EDUCATION POWER LIST

RVCC President **Dr. Michael J. McDonough** has been selected as part of **NJBIZ's 2025 Education Power List**. The recognition of McDonough, who took over as president at Raritan Valley Community College in 2014, is in acknowledgment of the many accomplishments he has helped achieve. Today, RVCC enrolls approximately 6,800 students, a total McDonough has helped build steadily through aggressive marketing and outreach after the impacts of the pandemic.

This year, the school adopted a new, five-year strategic plan, "Leading Change, Inspiring Possibility." Commenting on the outline, McDonough noted colleges must not only accept change but embrace it amid an evolving learning landscape. The plan focuses on enhancing "academic, community, and corporate partnerships; an investment in resources to keep pace with a changing workforce; and an obligation to deliver an affordable, accessible education."

In February, RVCC was an integral part of the launch of **NJBioFutures**, a public-private workforce development partnership that will serve the state's expanding cell and gene therapy sector—to which **Johnson & Johnson** contributed \$1 million as founding sponsor. RVCC is also a leader in the area of operational sustainability, recognized at both the national and state levels for

its stellar environmental practices. For the 2025 fiscal year, the RVCC Foundation also set a new fundraising record, surpassing the \$2 million mark for the first time in the College's history. McDonough is also active in the community college sector, serving as chair of the Executive Committee of the **New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development**, and chair of the Academic Issues Committee; he is a board member for **Engage NJ**.

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## NEW DATA SCIENCE OFFERING.



Students interested in pursuing a degree focusing on the growing area of Data Science will have a new opportunity at RVCC with the Computer Science program's Data Science Option.

The Data Science Option will prepare students to transfer into bachelor's degree programs at four-year colleges and universities in a variety of areas, including Computer Science, Data Science, Business, Economics, and related fields and subsequently enroll in higher level Data Science courses. The new Option follows the guidelines set by the Association of Computer Machinery (ACM).

"We are excited to offer the new Data Science Option for Raritan Valley Community College's Computer Science program, which will educate students in an area that in the past was mainly taught only at four-year colleges and in master's degree programs. At RVCC, students pursuing their associate degree will now be



introduced to this rapidly expanding field, which has an expected average future job growth of more than 17%,” said **Sarah Imbriglio**, RVCC Dean of STEM.

The Data Science track focuses on an Introduction to Data Science using the R programming language and Data Management using the Python programming language and its libraries. Students pursuing the Option will strengthen their practical knowledge by working with real-life data in hands-on applications and projects.

In addition, those interested in learning more about Data Science who are not Computer Science students—such as people interested in fields like marketing, finance, business, healthcare, and technology—may enroll in the program’s Data Science and Data Management courses.

The Data Science Option includes courses focusing on such subjects as Data Science, Statistics, Data Structures, Analytical Physics, Data Management, Computer Architecture and Assembly Language, Linear Algebra, and Calculus, as well as classes in the humanities, social science, English composition, and Computer Science electives.

## GIVE AND GET.



*RVCC Engine Performance II and Automotive Cooperative Education I students with the new donation from Toyota.*

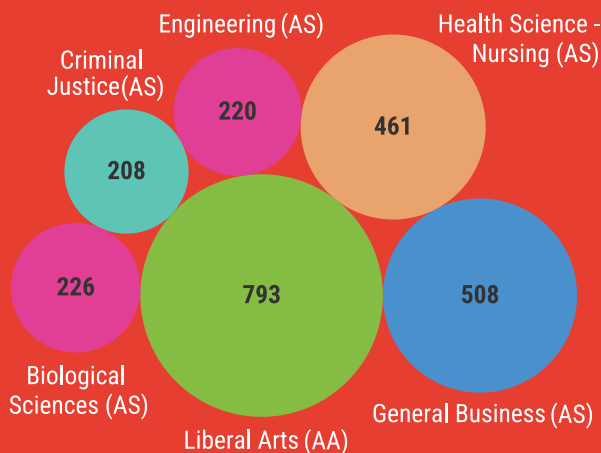
A special shoutout to **Tom Senneca**, Field Technical Specialist and Team Support Leader for the **New York Region of Toyota North America**. A recently donated 2024 Toyota Corolla SE represents more than an upgrade to training in the Automotive Technology program at Raritan Valley Community College, it also helps expand the Toyota-RVCC partnership as it develops RVCC students through the Toyota Technician Education College Support (TECS) program.

“One of the hardest items for automotive education programs is to obtain new vehicles in order to teach the newest technologies and how to repair the newest vehicles,” says **Sara Heller**, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Automotive Technology program at Raritan Valley Community College. “That’s why we’re so grateful to our partners at Toyota for this donation.”

For students interested in a career with Toyota or Lexus, completing TECS makes them that much more qualified for opportunities at Toyota or Lexus dealerships across the region. Adds Tom Senneca, “TECS is designed to supplement your existing curriculum and help students interested in a career with Toyota or Lexus gain a head start in their training.”

*In short, everyone wins.*

## Fall 2025 Popular Majors at RVCC





## HEY, WE'RE NUMBER ONE (AGAIN!).

Raritan Valley Community College continues to set the standard for managing a complex physical operation, sustainably! The College was once again ranked as the “TOP US COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY ACHIEVEMENTS” in the 2025 Sustainable Campus Index.

A publication from the **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)**, the Sustainable Campus Index recognizes top-performing sustainable colleges and universities overall and in 13 impact areas, as measured through the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS®).

Some fun facts: It's the 11th year in a row Raritan Valley Community College has been similarly recognized. RVCC has cut its campus energy emissions by 58% since 2005. The College is **River Friendly**, as well as a **Bee Campus USA** affiliate and **Monarch Watch** certified. RVCC has three solar installations, a greenhouse, 12 new publicly available electric car charging stations, a green roof and a green wall, numerous pollinator gardens, a rain garden, three rainwater harvesting systems, and three buildings built to LEED standards.

“The College’s commitment to sustainability is one of the central themes of its new, five-year Strategic Plan, which calls on RVCC to ‘lead with sustainability by embedding environmentally responsible practices within educational experiences and every aspect of campus operations,’” RVCC President **Michael McDonough** said.

“All of us at AASHE are delighted to highlight Raritan Valley Community College in the 2025 Sustainable Campus Index,” said AASHE’s Executive Director, **Meghan Fay Zahniser**. “Your innovative and high-impact initiative demonstrates what is possible when colleges and universities embrace sustainability as a core value. By modeling bold action, your institution inspires peers across higher education and strengthens the collective progress we are making toward addressing global sustainability challenges.”



## PROFESSOR CO-LEADS PROJECT ON OPEN SCIENCE RESOURCES.



**Dr. Melanie Lenahan**, Professor of Biology, is joining Karen Cangialosi (RIOS Institute), Sam Donovan (BioQUEST Curriculum Consortium), Carlos Goller (North Carolina State University), and Carrie Diaz (Bates College) as a co-lead on a new project: *“Developing Resources for an Undergraduate Open Science–Open Pedagogy Program.”*

The project aims to create openly licensed, adaptable materials that faculty can use to build a comprehensive undergraduate open science education program. As a co-lead, Dr. Lenahan will develop assignments and courses that incorporate alternative grading, open pedagogy, and science education reform.

By educating undergraduate students, the project team seeks to prepare future scientists to work within more open, collaborative, and inclusive frameworks. And for students who go on to other careers, understanding the value of open science will also serve them well as informed members of the public.

This funded initiative is part of the **Open Research Community Accelerator (ORCA)**, which supports the adoption of open science through collaborations that drive systems-level change. With support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, ORCA has launched the Open Scholarship Catalytic Awards Program, which funds small projects that promote transparency, reproducibility, community engagement, and other open-sharing practices at traditionally under-resourced U.S. institutions.

## PILLAR IN THE COMMUNITY.



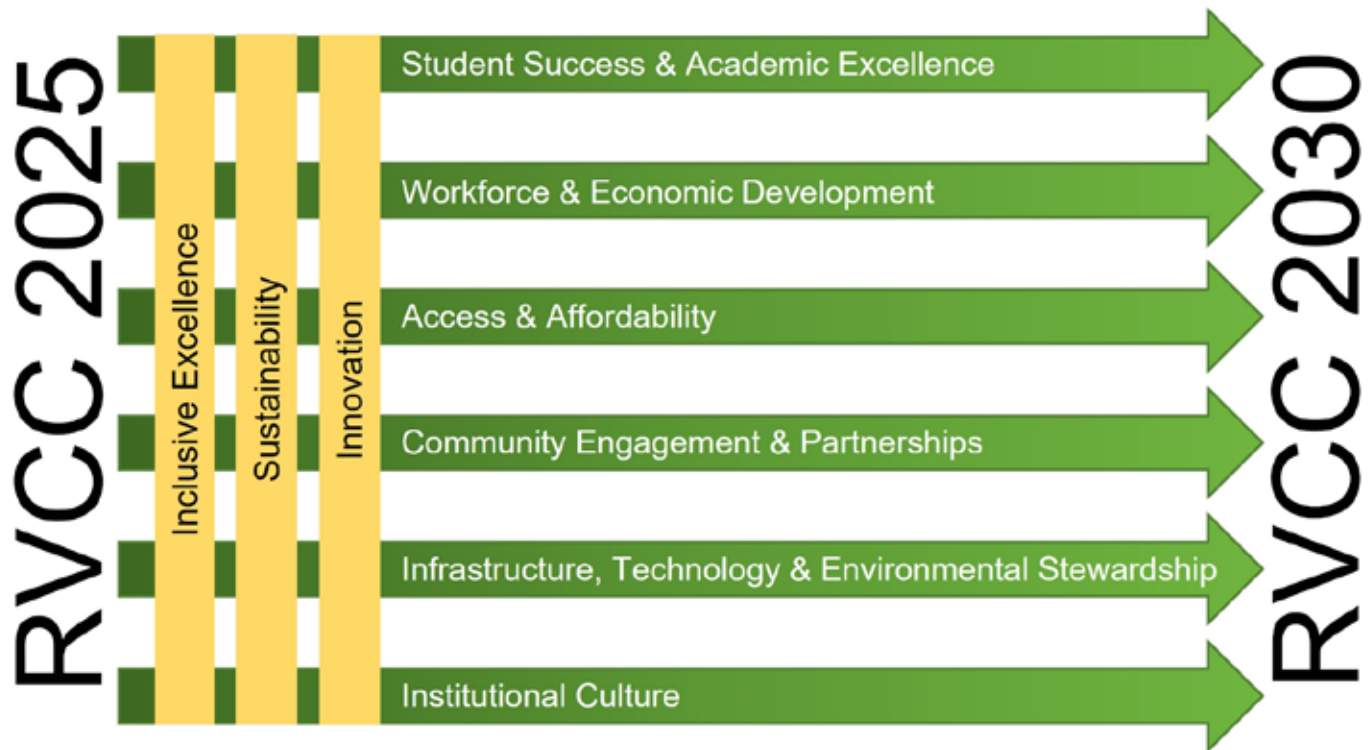
Now in its 9th year—and having engaged nearly 100 students at Raritan Valley Community College—the **Sanofi** Corporate Mentorship program stands in a class of its own. The fall kick-off event for the 2025–26 Academic Year once again highlighted the potential born from strong relationships: between mentors and mentees, program leaders and philanthropic partners, corporate entities and higher education.

There’s no adequate way to thank RVCC’s **Alicia Hermo-Weaver**, who conceived and continues to direct the program (with support from **Nazneen Merchant**), or the dedicated leadership at Sanofi—especially **Diana Blankman Roberts** and Sharon Katz—and especially the many mentors whose service to the journey of RVCC students is, in a word, priceless.

This year’s kickoff also served as a reunion, as two RVCC alums—**Andrew Beach** and **Ka’Sheer Cassett**—both program veterans now working at Sanofi, returned to share encouraging words. Ka’Sheer also noted his first public speaking experience four years earlier as the “Voice of the Student” at the 17th Annual RVCC Foundation Golf Classic—an appearance he crushed like a TaylorMade Qi35 Driver off the tee!

To this year’s student mentees: congratulations on the gift of your new relationships. And to the generous mentors of Sanofi: our deepest gratitude for being true pillars of the community.

**sanofi**



## NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RVCC.

With approval from the RVCC Board of Trustees, the College has launched a new strategic plan, “**2025-2030 Strategic Plan: Leading Change, Inspiring Possibility**,” focusing on six themes: Student Success & Academic Excellence; Workforce & Economic Development; Access & Affordability; Community Engagement & Partnership; Infrastructure, Technology & Environmental Stewardship; and Institutional Culture.

“As many students move away from traditional academic pathways and require additional support systems and essential career skills—while conventional funding sources decline—it’s vital the College not only accepts change, but also embraces it. Raritan Valley Community College’s new Strategic Plan focuses on our commitment to student success through the enhancement of academic, community, and corporate partnerships; an investment in resources to keep pace with a changing workforce; and an obligation to deliver an affordable, accessible education to help transform our inspiring students’ lives,” said RVCC President **Michael J. McDonough**.

In fall 2024, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed representing all constituencies of the RVCC community, including students and the Board of Trustees. The committee then hosted numerous focus groups and requested electronic survey feedback to discover relevant themes that represent the College’s collective goals for the future. Presentations were then made to the College community and at Board of Trustees Strategy and Vision Committee meetings throughout the spring 2025 semester, in conjunction with the Strategic Planning Committee’s biweekly gatherings, to develop plan details based on constituent comments and to provide updates. Additional feedback was collected during and after each presentation, resulting in the final Strategic Plan presented and approved in May 2025.



## MILESTONE ACHIEVED.



This fall there was an amazing ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration of the 22,000 square foot expansion at the RVCC Workforce Training Center. Thanks to all of the construction partners and the RVCC Facilities team for persevering through the difficult work such an expansion requires. Huge thanks as well to **Somerset County, Hunterdon County, the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Council of County Colleges, and Johnson & Johnson.**

“Investing in higher education, like our outstanding Raritan Valley Community College and its state-of-the-art Workforce Training Center, is essential for developing a productive and resilient economy,” said Somerset County Commissioner Director **Shanel Y. Robinson**. “By partnering with regional businesses on skillset needs, RVCC is creating a talent pipeline, providing students with valuable real-world experience in biomanufacturing, mechatronics, welding, and robotics, that will lead to employment.”

“Hunterdon County is proud to support RVCC’s Workforce Training Center expansion. This project is a direct investment in the future of our regional workforce, ensuring that students gain hands-on experience and training in high-demand fields, while helping our local employers meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving economy,” said Hunterdon County Commissioner Director **John E. Lanza**.

The expanded space enables the College to offer experiential learning in such rapidly expanding areas as Biomanufacturing and Aseptic Processing, Electric Vehicle Technology, Mechatronics and Robotics, and Welding, bridging the gap between education and industry.

“Today’s milestone at Raritan Valley Community College is a testament to the power of collaboration in building New Jersey’s future workforce,” said **Kimberly Lounds Foster**, Vice President, Advanced Therapies Supply Chain, **Johnson & Johnson**. “Johnson & Johnson is honored to support RVCC in creating opportunities that not only strengthen New Jersey’s leadership in life sciences but also equip students with the skills and experiences they need to thrive. By investing in a robust local science and manufacturing talent pipeline, we are ensuring that the next generation of innovators is prepared to drive health breakthroughs for years to come right here in NJ.”

If you’d like to view a special video from the ribbon cutting, please visit: [www.raritanval.edu/Workforce-Training-Center-Ribbon-Cutting](http://www.raritanval.edu/Workforce-Training-Center-Ribbon-Cutting).



*Somerset County's Shanel Robinson*



# THE LAST WORD GRATITUDE.



"Receiving this scholarship means so much more than just financial support. It represents a story of hard work, family, and resilience. It reminds me that behind every student's success story is a community that believes in the power of education."

**Esmeralda Ochoa**

(2024-25 Recipient of the Cento Amici Scholarship at RVCC)

"The Generosity & Gratitude event was amazing. The atmosphere was electric, for the cause was so worthwhile. The results were astounding! And I had a good time! Thanks to the RVCC Foundation team for making this happen."

**Michael Goldberg**

Trustee, RVCC Board of Trustees



Always grateful for a visit by **Cecilia Tirado**, who stopped by the RVCC Foundation early last fall to add more support behind the scholarship that honors her son, Kevin Rosero. Though husband **Marcelo Rosero** wasn't able to join us, the family's faith and resilience was amply present in Cecilia.

*"It's very enriching for us to be able to keep my beloved son's legacy alive," Cecilia wrote. "We want other young people like my son to study and get ahead in life, and to have a better future and success in their professional lives. That's what my son always did when he was studying at RVCC. He helped so many friends and encouraged them to study and pursue a degree. Doing all this helps us remember our Kevin, and I know that in heaven he is proud of his parents, like we are very proud of him."*

If you would like to honor the Rosero family and support the legacy of the beloved Kevin Rosero, you can do so by contributing to the **Kevin Rosero Memorial Scholarship at RVCC**.

*Mike Marion, Cecilia Tirado*



# THE LAST WORD GRATITUDE.

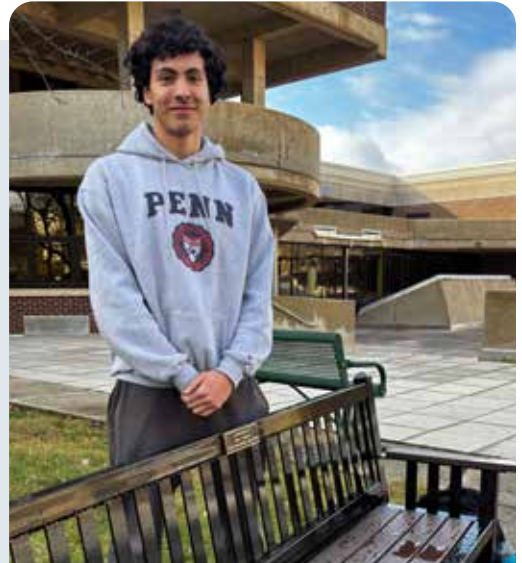
To the Rosero Family,

*I wanted to thank you for the honor of this scholarship, and to also acknowledge Kevin's values and how much I admire what he did and intended to do throughout his life. By no means can I even comprehend the lasting impact that Kevin left on the world, and what he meant to so many different people. But I want to begin with an admiration of his values.*

*Specifically, I saw that Kevin intended on becoming an immigration lawyer. I really resonate with this particular aspiration of his, as immigration can be a brutal process in the United States, depending on one's situation and resources. I come from a first-generation household, where neither of my parents' attended college and both immigrated to the U.S. in their mid-20s (father from Peru, mother from Colombia). I know that their process was particularly difficult, and my mom specifically had a hard-time getting citizenship. She did not speak the language when she came, and had to work extremely hard to eventually find a consistent home for herself.*

*I admire that Kevin wanted to make immigration easier for individuals like my mother, and I thought that was really commendable. I want to study some degree of political science when I eventually transfer from Raritan Valley Community College, and my family has instilled in me values of respect and empathy for immigrants. My dad routinely sends money to immigrants who do not have access to the resources that they need, and I also plan on continuing that family tradition when I grow older as well.*

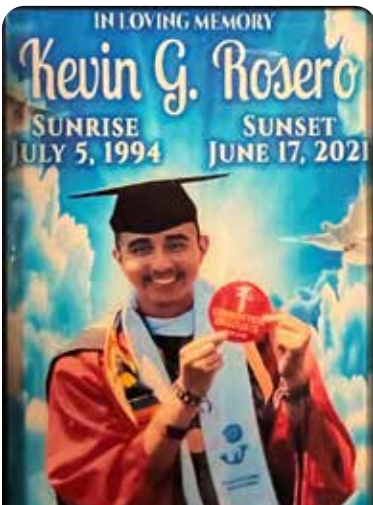
*Kevin's values are ones that I greatly admire and will try to uphold in my life, and I offer my deepest thanks for being awarded the scholarship that bears his name.*



Dan Heredia, behind the bench installed in memory of Kevin, on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College

## Dan Heredia

2025-26 Recipient of the Kevin Rosero Memorial Scholarship



Kevin Rosero, celebrating in 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: **Kevin Rosero** was a thoughtful, caring, and passionate member of the RVCC community, with a bright, steady spirit, and a cheerful heart. He was a member of the Class of 2016 and was the Alumni Rep on the Board of Trustees for the 2016-17 academic year. Kevin wanted to make the world a better place to live for his future children and grandchildren, a place without racism, discrimination, and oppression. Sadly, Kevin passed tragically in June 2021.



# DAY IN THE LIVES





## A few moments from the first half of the 2025-26 Academic Year, on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College...



*Nursing students and grateful recipients of the Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation Scholarship—the most generous offered at RVCC; Leadership team of the Workforce Training Center at RVCC, cutting their own ribbon for the building's massive new space; faculty and staff service being recognized and celebrated; flowers bloom on the Quad; 2025-26 student mentees gather for the kickoff of the Insmed Incorporated Mentorship program at RVCC; study break moment for four students exiting the library; "Electricity One" students in the Environmental Control Technology program at the Workforce Training Center; and perfect "fall ball" practice weather for the RVCC Men's Baseball team and the short part of their 2025-26 season;*





**A BREAKTHROUGH YEAR:** A) Some RVCC Foundation Board members pause after taking on the RV Trail as part of the Board's 2025 Retreat; B) President Mike McDonough celebrating the Foundation's record fundraising year as part of RVCC's fall "All College Day" program; C) Academic Year 2025-26 Student Representatives on the RVCC Foundation Board of Directors: Harshil Shah and Daphne Kunukcu, both Class of 2026; and D) Emma Couchie, Autumn Ananson, and Audrey Maxwell, all interns from the Center for Environmental Studies, applying some stain on the plant boxes at the RVCC Foundation offices.

**Notes from the Valley** is published annually by RVCC Foundation to share what inspires us every day: your generosity, your engagement, your commitment. Whether you're a donor, a friend, a student, an alumnus, or a member of the RVCC faculty and staff, you are essential to this exceptional community, which we are honored to support.

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