

REFLECTIONS

Muskegon Community College Magazine

For Alumni, Retirees & Friends of MCC

Winter 2020

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Letter from the President



As 2020 is here, it is humbling to look back on the almost 100 years of Muskegon Community College and see that the institution has met or exceeded the pace to provide a learning environment for a new generation of students as well as work with leaders in the business community to support the workforce in West Michigan and beyond. Moreover, in the early 20th century, enrollment into higher education institutions began to rise dramatically as more individuals realized the opportunities a college education would bring. Established in 1926, MCC grew in enrollment to 2,000 in the 1960s to the 7,000 students the college now serves annually. Thanks to all of you, we now have the infrastructure to support these outstanding students, of which we are all so proud.

Over the last year, we completed the last of seven new and renovated buildings in our campus community. Most recently, the Muskegon Community College Ottawa

Center opened in Grand Haven, welcoming its first students in the Fall Semester. This new building cements our commitment to better serve the over 1,200 Ottawa residents attending MCC annually.

The new Art and Music building also opened before the Fall Semester. This beautiful state of the art facility will host the next generation of visual artists and musicians who will contribute to such a key component of art in our culture on campus and in the community. The entire MCC community, including internationally respected artists Operatic Soloist Gwenneth Bean, award winning Jazz Guitarist Cecil Alexander, and visual artist Ken Foster may be rightfully proud of their legacy.

In chronological order, the MCC Science Center, Sturru Technology Center, Lakeshore Fitness Center, Health and Wellness Center, Automotive Center and the aforementioned Art and Music Building and Ottawa Center represent over \$55 million

in investment in our community. A mix of major gifts, grants, community support, and the support of all of you facilitated this effort.

“You” includes so many within the institution and community who give their time and talent to MCC. An important part of our community is the Foundation for Muskegon Community College Board of Directors. Please help me welcome our new FMCC Board members:

Diana Casey, Muskegon Community College Faculty
Brennen Gorman, Attorney at Brower Vander Veen PLC
Renee Johnson, Financial Services Professional at New York Met Life
Mike Verstraete, Vice President of Finance at Best Financial Credit Union

Dale K. Nesbary, Ph.D.
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Muskegon Community College

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President’s Blog
Dale Nesbary, Ph.D.

presidentblog.muskegoncc.edu



News and updates from
all MCC athletic teams

twitter.com/jayhawkathletic

At MCC, A History of Supporting Veterans

by Anna Gustafason

These are the people who have molded our world.

The ones who have lived, and created, the history that now unfolds amidst the pages of our textbooks and newspapers, on our television and movie theater screens. Who can tell us what it means to see the final days of World War II, to topple regimes that have killed millions upon millions of people. Who have known the places embedded in our country's collective memory, places with names like Iwo Jima and Normandy, Okinawa and Saigon, Fallujah and Kandahar.

These are the people who packed the bleachers in the Bartels-Rode Gymnasium for Muskegon Community College's annual Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11, 2019—and it is their lives that have inspired the school to each year honor their military service over the past seven decades, from World War II, Korea and Vietnam through Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The Veterans Day ceremony is so important because it gives us a chance to say, 'Thank you for your service,' and it's also informational," U.S. Army Sgt. Jerry Conrad, who served in Korea during the Vietnam War and has been the Master of Ceremonies at the college's Veterans Day event for the past five years, said in an interview following the ceremony.

"Not enough people know what's going on in the military," Conrad continued. "If you ask a high school student what they think of the Marine Corps, they'll say, 'the Marine Corps? What's that?' Do you know what's going



Jerry Conrad

on in Iraq? How many people died in Korea? The ceremony helps the public understand the impact the military has on the country and on the people who served their country."

Muskegon Community College launched its first Veterans Day ceremony in 2012 as an effort to reach veterans who may not be able to attend the City of Muskegon's event at Veterans Memorial Park, as well as to further support the former military members who attend and graduate from MCC, a school that is consistently named a "Veteran-Friendly School" by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. This year was particularly momentous, event organizers and participants explained, because it marked the 100th anniversary of Veterans Day. A national holiday that began as Armistice Day in 1919 to commemorate the end of World War I—which killed about nine million troops and was known as "the war to end all wars"—Veterans Day has evolved into a day honoring veterans of all wars.

The ceremony is one well-attended by people of all walks of life, from veterans and their families to high school students, educators, and legislators, among many others. It is a ceremony that is both poignant and powerful, one in which veterans can speak freely about their experiences, who can remember friends who died in combat, who can look out at a crowd filled with people who understand: those who have known war around our world. It is an event where people come to not only say 'thank you,' but to sit and listen to the stories of the men and women who have flown missions above the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, who have stormed the beaches of Normandy, who have given their youth to battles in Germany and France and Vietnam and Iraq.

"In the last five to six years, we've been attempting to provide additional services in conjunction with our student veteran organization," Eli Fox, the manager of student success and veterans affairs at MCC, said in an interview after the ceremony. "We've run different programs on campus for veterans, such as the Veterans Day program; we've had PTSD support groups for military veterans—we do all this because the college wants to see our military veterans transition from service to civilian life and civilian life to school life. Those are two pretty major transitions for people, and they really are dealing with a lot of changes all at once."

Plus, Fox said, it's a chance for the community to show their support for student veterans—and veterans throughout the region.



Saluting the Flag Veterans Day Ceremony

"I know a lot of veterans appreciate that and compare the reaction now to the reaction they got during the Vietnam era, when there wasn't very much support," she said. "I think it's noticed the community is supportive, but there are still a lot of Americans who have the privilege to forget we've been at war for 16 years because such a small percentage of Americans serve in the military. When the opportunity arises to learn about the military, military culture and the incredible diversity and skills that veterans bring to the workforce, we should take them."

This year's event included veterans from MCC and the greater Muskegon and West Michigan area, as well as community members, including a presentation, and retiring, of colors by local American Legion Posts 9 and 297; patriotic music by the Grand Haven High School Chamber Orchestra and MCC's College Singers; a 21-rifle salute by the County Council of VFW; and remarks by Conrad, MCC President Dale Nesbary, MCC Alumni & Donor Relations Manager Rachel Stewart, U.S. Army Spc. and MCC student Andrew Worcester—who served as a medic in Afghanistan, U.S. Army Major Derik Van Baale—an Iraq War veteran and a suicide prevention coordinator at the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, and U.S. Army Spc. Justin Pelham, who graduated from MCC in 2013 and now works at the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce.

Those who spoke focused on the power of honoring those who served, on remembering what they have gone through and those they shared their lives with during their months and years of service. They spoke of the battles that killed their friends and left them to tend to the wounded and ride side-by-side with those who just died, of the bombs that seriously injured them, of the wars that waged inside their heads after returning home. They spoke of post-traumatic stress disorder, of the courage it can take to ask for help with mental health.

"I've seen bravery firsthand on many missions, but most memorably on Aug. 8, 2012 in Asadabad, Kunar Province Afghanistan," Worcester said during the ceremony. "This day we encountered two suicide bombers

who attacked our soldiers, leaving four of our brothers KIA [killed in action] and many others wounded."

"These are memories that will never leave me," Worcester said.

It is crucial, and deeply powerful, for veterans like Worcester to feel welcome at their school and in their community, said Van Baale, who works on suicide prevention with veterans in Muskegon, Grand Haven, Ludington, Grand Rapids, and beyond.

"I've done work with Muskegon Community College in my role with the VA, and they do a great job promoting their student veterans, as does Muskegon as a whole," Van Baale said. "Muskegon does a really good job of being a veteran-friendly community."

"Not every place is like Muskegon," Van Baale continued. "Here, you can walk around and feel comfortable when you wear your veteran hat, and people aren't staring at you. It's a culture Muskegon has."

That culture includes an understanding of the mental health crises confronting veterans. In a 2013 study of 30,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and 30,000 veterans of other wars, 13.5 percent of the veterans screened positive for PTSD, and other studies report the rate to be as high as 30 percent. More than 500,000 U.S. troops who served in Afghanistan and Iraq have been diagnosed with PTSD.

Individuals suffering from PTSD too have high rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide attempts. An average of 17 U.S. veterans kill themselves every day, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' data from 2017, the most recent figures available. In 2017, 6,139 veterans died by suicide, a rate that is 1.5 times higher than non-veteran adults.

"The military changes you," Conrad said. "I'll walk outside when it's dark and cold, and instantly I'm back in Korea, at the DMZ [demilitarized zone]. It's just a momentary thing, but it's something that will stick with us forever."

Conrad noted that he doesn't have PTSD—he has "survivor's guilt"—but he and his fellow veterans know that many of those returning



Andrew Worcester

from war face mental health battles that can end in marriages breaking up, homelessness and suicide, among other issues. As individuals face mental health crises, Conrad emphasized he's relieved veterans increasingly have support from the general public.

"There's way more support for veterans now than in the past," he said. "Us guys coming back in the '60s, people were yelling at us and calling us baby killers. There's none of that anymore, not that I know of. There are discounts, free food for veterans. People are really respecting what the military people have gone through."

Conrad too emphasized that the military had an overwhelmingly positive impact on his life.

"Before the military, I was just a street punk getting the worst grades in class and going nowhere," he said. "The military turned me around. It taught me respect for myself, loyalty, teamwork; I could go on and on."

Each year, the MCC ceremony features student and community speakers who honor veterans, and, this year, as a special nod to the Veterans' Day 100th anniversary, the college provided "challenge coins" to every single veteran who attended the event.

Pelham, who was seriously injured by an improvised explosive device while serving in Iraq in 2006, said his spirits were buoyed while recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center by fellow members of the military giving him what are known as "challenge coins," or medallions that denote one's service.

"The military has a rich history of traditions, and one of those traditions is the giving of a challenge coin," Pelham said during the ceremony. "In my own personal experience, as a wounded veteran lying in the hospital at Walter Reed, I was given challenge coins by those who were higher ranked than me as a sign of honor and respect."

Fox emphasized that the college wanted to provide the commemorative coins to honor the 100th anniversary and further strengthen the bond between MCC and local veterans.

This relationship—the one between the college and both former and current military members is a longstanding one. Officially opening eight years after World War I ended, in 1926, the college has gone on to provide an education to thousands of veterans. Following World War II, the G.I. Bill allowed for a mass influx of veterans to be able to afford college—enrollment at MCC skyrocketed from 97 students in 1944 to 576 in 1946.

"After the war, classes were happening all over the place: the Hackley building, in the basement of the library, in the [Lakeshore] Museum, in garages," said Donald Goodman, a retired MCC instructor who served during the Korean War and has co-authored "When We All Went to War," a book about MCC (then known as Muskegon Junior College) students



Justin Pelham

who fought in World War II. The book was co-authored by Jack Rice, a veteran of both World War II and Korea and a retired MCC history instructor who passed away in 2010.

Goodman and Rice, who also authored "A Diamond in the Rough," a comprehensive history of MCC, spent years researching the book on MCC students in World War II, doing everything from extensive interviews with veterans to combing through years of Muskegon Chronicle archives. It was, Goodman explained, an attempt to remember the lives of people both living and long gone—people like Pvt. Floyd Vanderwiell, who attended MCC from 1940-41 and was killed in combat on Nov. 21, 1944 in France. A scholar, a poet and a parodist, Vanderwiell had worked in the periodical room of Hackley Library and was a librarian at Shepherd Field. He was sent to Harvard to study Japanese, but ultimately was sent to France with ground troops. Vanderwiell was the 16th MCC student to die in World War II.

Twenty-five Muskegon Community College students died during World War II, and Goodman and Rice honor each one of them in their book, shedding light on the lives they lived before their deaths: ones as students, poets, math whizzes, Muskegon High School graduates, and much more.

The authors too honor the students who return with tenderness, writing of their joy to be home—the dances that were had, the ecstasy over the GI bill—as well as the disappointments and the frustration—the slow-coming GI checks, the culture clash between the students who had just graduated from high school and had never been to war and the men, now years past high school, returning from war.

"My colleagues went about the business of teaching, living quiet, understated lives," Goodman wrote of the World War II veterans in a 2012 addendum to "When We All Went to War." "They ate cafeteria lemon pie at my table—These were the common, everyday heroes who would have laughed at the word 'Hero,' but people who absolutely saved the world we live in from a hell we dare not imagine. There is no way we can honor them. The best we can do is remember."



Ottawa Center

Opened on September 11, 2019, the new Muskegon Community College Ottawa Center features 6,550 square feet. The Center contains two partitioned smart technology classrooms that can be opened to seat up to 100 people, a computer lab, a flexible use room, a student lounge, administrative

office and an adjoining 80-space parking lot. Classes officially began at the start of the Fall Semester. Located at 16777 Lincoln Street, the center is in close proximity to Grand Haven High School serving as a central location to all of Ottawa County.



From PTK to PhD

by Rachel Stewart
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

Recognized for their academic achievements, Phi Theta Kappa members at Muskegon Community College join the largest honor society in American higher education. It is no surprise that many MCC and PTK Alumni move on to work toward

continued success in their careers and education. We were thrilled to check in with three MCC graduates who were PTK members during their time at MCC and have now completed their doctorate degrees!



Justin Arnold

Associate in Science and Arts from Muskegon Community College
Bachelor of Science from Grand Valley State University
Master of Science from Ferris State University
Doctor of Philosophy from Western Michigan University
Master of Art from Plymouth State University

"Muskegon Community College impacted my life in a powerful way. I was surrounded by well-meaning people who kept trying to talk me out of getting education and building a career in workforce development. They always told me to do something easier, with a quicker pay off. It was a friend telling me that a factory needed a quality inspector, or a parent telling me about a retail sales opportunity, or an acquaintance offering me a position in real estate. All good offers, but none of them had anything to do with who I was or where I wanted to go. MCC didn't try to shut me down, limit me, or get me to change. Instead, MCC encouraged me, provided me with role models, and helped me figure out how to get where I wanted to go. I was very fortunate to have been a part of MCC."

Hannah Anderson

Pharmacist, Meijer
Doctor of Pharmacy from Ferris State University

"I remember when I got the letter saying I was eligible to join PTK. I was excited to know I had high enough grades to be a part of something so prestigious and special. MCC gave me an affordable beginning, allowing me to take all the introductory courses before transferring to earn my pharmacy degree at a much lower rate than four-year universities. Through MCC, I met people who connected me to my first pharmacy-related job that helped reinforce my career decision."



Mayra Sanchez Gonzalez

Rehabilitation Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Associate in Science and Art from Muskegon Community College
Bachelor of Science from Grand Valley State University
Masters of Education from Texas A&M University
Doctor of Philosophy from Texas A&M University

"As a student, learning about PTK and joining the organization had a significant impact on my career path. My involvement in PTK gave me access to leadership opportunities, which allowed me to gain the confidence and skills to build a strong foundation for future leadership positions. I was also able to meet amazing mentors that encouraged me and supported me throughout my time at MCC. As a first-generation college student and immigrant, having strong mentorship afforded me access to opportunities that I might have not been able to access otherwise, and this was instrumental for my academic attainment. Now, as I reflect on my involvement with PTK, I have the utmost gratitude for the learning opportunities that this organization granted me throughout my time at MCC."



Ten Years of Black Circle Radio

By Rachel Stewart
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

Self-proclaimed "radio disc jockey, vinyl record nut, vintage gear enthusiast, engineer, and someone who likes to play loud rock 'n' roll in his free time" there is not too much Muskegon Community College Alum Mitch Anderson isn't stoked about when talking about his all-vinyl radio program, Black Circle Radio.

Wrapping up its tenth year running, Black Circle Radio started in 2009 when Mitch had moved on to Central Michigan University after his time at MCC where he received his B.A in Broadcast and Cinematic Arts. During his time at CMU, the radio program received recognition as one of the top Original, Collegiate Radio Programs from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

"I began Black Circle Radio because I honestly couldn't take sitting in a radio station and having a computer choose what was being played for me. I got too bored! So I ended up selling one of my guitars and buying my first turntables and mixer setup. From there it was spin, spin, spin, spin, spin!" shares Anderson.

Now airing from Mitch's hometown of Muskegon, BCR is live on Monday Nights on Muskegon 100.9 WFFR-LP and every Wednesday morning from his home studio broadcasting on the online radio station SoR Radio which Mitch Co-Owns with a group of his university professors.

But Black Circle Radio is so much more than playing all-vinyl records on air, it is Community Radio.

"Community Radio is special on many levels. From a brass tacks angle it simply means that it is non-profit operated, has a much lower wattage than commercial stations, and must be non-commercial formatted. Non-commercial formatting in a nutshell means that the DJ's and donor spots that are on the Community Radio Station's frequency cannot tell people to do something" shares Anderson. "To me, Community radio is much more of a conversation with the listener



rather than talking at the listener. We are very lucky here in Muskegon to have three very different community radio stations: 100.9 WFFR-LP, 103.7 WUVS-LP, and 106.1 WUGM-LP."

When speaking with Mitch it is very clear that throughout his time at MCC, CMU and in the industry, Mitch has certainly learned lessons about himself. "My love language is touch. I yearn for a physical connection to what or whom I'm deeply involved with. From my personal standpoint, vinyl and the process that surrounds it checks nearly every "touch" box that music can fill" said Mitch.

Compounded by the knowledge of his own self, it is no surprise that Mitch has worked hard to have the program mission and purpose of Black Circle Radio clearly articulated to the community. MCC Alumni and published poet Danielle Warren shares the following about Black Circle Radio, "Much like their fluidity from one generation to the next, a record spins on, track to track, baring intermittent snaps, crackles, and pops. Vinyl demands intention, perusing the

shelf for one to match your mood; demands touch, pulling it from the sleeve, placing it on the turntable; demands connection, passing it along, one pair of hands to the next. Vinyl demands to be reached for and to reach you- music always does, doesn't it? -carrying you to the first time you heard a record and who was by your side. This program bridges the gap between past and present through music, the people who create it, and those of us who listen. If you're looking for somewhere to go, then by all means, welcome to the sound of your escape."

Take a listen and learn more at blackcirlclradio.com





MCC men's soccer starters at the 2019 NCAA Region XII finals. (Front row, left to right) Ilias Varnavides, Evan Fles, Alex Visscher, Pablo Real-Vazquez and Jeremy Paschal. (Back row) Vianney D. Mpomo Ambeha, Tommy TenCate, Theo Clayton, Riccardo Sandulli, Thomas Cruden and Joe McKenzie.

Men's Soccer Embraces International Relations

By Peter D. Koryzno
MCC Communications Manager

While some Muskegon Community College students may study international relations, this year's Jayhawk men's soccer team has been living it daily.

Head Coach Brent Kowalski brought together players from France, Italy, England, Scotland, South Africa and Cameroon to join with top West Michigan standouts, many with strong soccer backgrounds rooted in their Hispanic heritage, to form his 2019 roster.

Muskegon's "world" team dominated the regular season competition, captured conference and district titles, and qualified for the elite 12-team National Junior College Athletic Association Division I Championships in Tyler, Texas. Making their second consecutive national appearance, the Jayhawks fell to Iowa Western CC and eventual national champion Monroe College out of New York City to finish the year with an impressive 16-5 win-loss record.

A return trip to nationals was the lofty goal set by Kowalski and his coaching staff last November, right after his Jayhawks, with an entirely Michigan-based roster, were soundly defeated twice at the double-elimination 2018 nationals in Daytona Beach.

"Making nationals last year, we noticed the rosters were mainly international," explained Kowalski. "Our players were organized, but some of their players were men. They were 21 and played at a very competitive level and came from a good soccer culture

overseas. We figured it was a great gateway and we really want to win a national title, so we started plugging away at that idea and seeing if it was plausible."

"It really started with trying to make the program the best it can be, not because the local kids aren't good enough, but we are geographically an island," explained Kowalski. "There's not a huge population base here."

Working with agencies who connect foreign-born players with U.S. colleges, Kowalski brought in Jeremy Paschal from France and Theo Clayton, Joe McKenzie and Kieran Moynihan from Great Britain.

Thomas Cruden, a tough, 20-year-old forward from Glasgow, Scotland, transferred to MCC from an Iowa community college. Midfielder Riccardo Sandulli, the team's senior statesman at 23 years of age, came to America from outside Genoa, Italy, looking to improve his chances to play professionally. He transferred to MCC from traditional national soccer power Mercer College in New Jersey.

Three gifted African-born players, Vianney D. Mpomo Ambeha, Dieudonne Rukundo and Jordan Oikto, all refugees now living in Grand Rapids and restricted from leaving the state, brought their talents to MCC.

Kowalski also landed Ilias Varnavides from Johannesburg, South Africa, and Greig Cumming from Dunfermline, Scotland - the same town that produced U.S. industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Varnavides was playing semi-pro with the local Mpumalanga Black Aces, while Cumming had been involved

with Scottish club teams since he was five years old. All the foreign-born players on the team envisioned MCC as a stepping stone to continue their game.

"Regardless of anybody's thought process, the U.S. is still really renowned for the college system and giving players an opportunity to play," explained Kowalski. "So some of those guys who couldn't get pro contracts or thought they would, they want to get an education and still play."

Kowalski admits the lengthy international recruiting process, which lacks a face-to-face interview process, can be very difficult.

"We try to do a lot of different things to make sure the character is right, that the level is right, that the players we want are right," he said. "You have to do everything over video and the phone. You also don't have a lot of time. These kids are getting offers from everybody. We have a small scholarship budget. We are way, way underfunded in the scholarship area and that's just the reality."

Instead, Kowalski pitched Muskegon's natural beauty, his exceptional coaching staff - Josh Watson, Sam Fellcini, Jake Roman and Will Morlock - with its connections to four-year college teams, a quality MCC education, and, most importantly, earning an academic degree. He credits MCC's international admissions staff members Stephanie Briggs and Nicole Decker with making the difference.

"Without them, it's virtually impossible," he said. "There's so much paperwork and so many pieces of red tape you need to know."

Once here, the players from different cultures and different styles of play had to be molded into a team.

"Some cultures, like Italy, are very, very passionate," noted Kowalski. "The way that they play is more defensive orientated. If you take somebody from Germany, Belgium, or the Netherlands, they are very disciplined. If you say, 'Here are the requirements, don't step outside these lines,' more likely than not, they are not going to step outside the lines."

Breaking down stereotypes between the cultures, including the Americans, is also a learning process, added Kowalski. The biggest weapon for doing so is the players' collective love of soccer.

"Of course, there were different styles, but as we were training, like in pre-season, we kind of jelled together as a team," said Varnavides, the South African midfielder. "Soccer is a universal language. It's easy to communicate with just the ball itself."



Head Coach Brent Kowalski

Cumming noted, "As for me, I never played at a high level in Scotland. I only played Boys Club. So coming in here and playing with amazing players from all over the world, it's completely different."

"I love this team because I can play with Scotland guys, South Africa guys," said Sandulli. "Last year, I was with Japanese and Brazilians. I think these things I will keep with me all my life. The experience is amazing. Everybody knows how to play soccer, so maybe the first two weeks was difficult because it was all new. But after that, we found chemistry."

The players live together in two houses in the shadows of Hackley Stadium. Sandulli and Varnavides, handle the cooking chores in their respective houses.

"Last year, I lived in Ottumwa, Iowa, so compared to that Muskegon is like New



Ilias Varnavides.

York City," quipped Cruden. "There's things to do. People are nice. We don't really do much, to be honest with you. We just live normal lives, go to the movies, and go to grocery shop."

"I love it here," added Varnavides. "We get to experience different cultures from all over the world, at home and on the pitch. So I am enjoying it. Each individual brings a different style of play from their country, so you kind of experience it on the field as well."

"I didn't expect us to be as really as close bunch of guys as we are," admitted Cruden. "I made a lot of good friendships that will probably last a lifetime. I thought we'd just turn up and leave after the season. But we've done well. I didn't expect a lot because I didn't have a good experience (in Iowa) last year. But I have had a very good experience here."

What advice would they give to an international student looking to attend and compete for MCC?

"Don't be nervous," answered Cruden. "Be confident and believe in yourself. Always buy into the coach's program. If you don't buy in, then there's no point in you being here. You need to always trust in each other and believe in yourself."

"Don't be scared because this is an amazing journey," added Sandulli.

"Always be open minded because your teammates are from all over the world," concluded Varnavides. "Even like in this culture here, you have to be open minded to understand where everyone is coming from."

And that, in a nutshell, is International Relations 101.



Thomas Cruden

Experience the all-new “A World of Water” exhibit at the John Bartley Science Museum

by Rachel Stewart
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

Now entering year three since the Grand Opening in 2017, the John Bartley Science Museum offers a new and exciting exhibit focused on a vital natural resource: water.

The exhibit features two areas addressing times in Michigan history where water has played a critical role including the Devonian Period before dinosaurs roamed the Earth as well as the Pleistocene Epoch when Michigan was covered in ice.

The hands-on facility also explores “Water in motion” with a mechanical whirlpool and a human-powered whirlpool for visitors to make connections between what they observe in the museum and what they can see in lakes and other large bodies of water.



The location on Muskegon Community College’s main campus has proven advantageous for visitors with proximity so close to the Carr-Fles Planetarium. “The



museum provides a double-header activity for groups scheduling private planetarium shows, and we are definitely seeing an increase in the number of show bookings compared to 3 years ago, before the museum opened. Our private events are usually K-12 field trips, scout troops, church groups, and resource programs for disability support and seniors. During this fall we have scheduled nearly 600 visitors for a museum visit in coordination with private planetarium shows. Dozens more have been walk-in members of the public, often while attending our public shows on Tuesday and Thursday evenings” shares Tamera Owens, Math and Physical Sciences Department Secretary.

What is next after water? “MCC students submit exhibit designs as part of our promotion of STEM-field education. We are developing four different themes to rotate annually. This is Year 3; the previous years focused on Energy, and Electricity and Magnetism. Year 4, Natural Disasters, will run August 2020-June 2021, and is already in the planning and research stage” said Amber Kumpf, Math and Physical Sciences Faculty.

Ideas for future exhibit designs can be submitted before the end of the 2020 Winter Semester. Preference is given to stations that have a hands-on, interactive component for visitors and fit within the museum size and funding parameters.

Contributions to support the John Bartley Science Museum assist with new exhibits and grow John Bartley’s legacy. Contact the Foundation for Muskegon Community College to make a donation at 231-777-0226.

“We are able to make a rich visitor experience while also bringing student proposals and designs to life without a huge financial burden. If you are interested in making a small donation that will have a big impact, the museum would be a great place to focus your funds” shares Kumpf.

The John Bartley Science Museum is located in Room 1073 across from the Carr-Fles Planetarium on Main Campus. It is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00AM-4:00PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00AM-7:00PM and Fridays by appointment. For docent-led tours, please contact the Math and Physical Sciences Department at 231-777-0289.



Respiratory Therapy Program Awarded 10-Year National Reaccreditation



Deb Grube, Chair of the MCC Respiratory Therapy Program, in class with her students.

By Peter D. Koryzno
MCC Communications Manager

The Muskegon Community College Respiratory Therapy (RT) Program has been awarded a 10-year unqualified reaccreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC). The program has remained nationally accredited since its inception more than three decades ago.

“It is impressive to be reaccredited without any citations because typically the visitation team will find something that needs to be addressed,” said Deb Grube, who directs the MCC Respiratory Therapy Program. “It’s a reflection of our dedicated faculty, our students’ exam pass rates, our strong administrative support, our alumni in the workforce, and our exceptional facilities which underwent a nearly half-million dollars in renovations a few years ago.”

More than 80 percent of the registered respiratory therapists working in the greater Grand Rapids/Muskegon are graduates of MCC’s RT Program, noted Grube.

During the reporting period from January 1 to June 30, Muskegon Community College Nursing Program graduates ranked among the nation’s best on the National Council Licensing Examination for the RNs (NCLEX-RN) and the National Council Licensing Examination for PNs (NCLEX-PN). On both exams, MCC graduates had a 100% first time pass rate versus 89% nationwide.

“While there are other schools that have a 100% pass rate, what makes MCC’s accomplishment all the more impressive is that we have a non-competitive enrollment,” said MCC Director of Nursing and Health Programs, Chris Patterson, MSN, RN, CNE. “Any student who meets the requirements to come into the program will get a seat—maybe not right away, but they will be admitted to the program. In other words, students don’t need to have a 4.0 GPA to enter our program and don’t need to reapply for admission if they don’t get in right away.”

MCC students have consistently exceeded the state and national averages for first-time passing of the NCLEX-RN and the NCLEX-PN. MCC students’ success on the NCLEX-PN has consistently been at or around 100%.

“We encourage our students to take the NCLEX-PN exam for a couple of reasons, the first being an opportunity to experience the exam before they take the NCLEX-RN,” said Patterson. “The second reason is that the ability to work as an LPN while finishing the ladder program provides valuable experience that can help them in their roles as Registered Nurses a year later.”

MCC Nursing Program 100% First-Time Pass Rate Ranked Among Nation’s Best

The program has remained fully approved by the Michigan Board of Nursing since its inception. Since 2006, the program has been nationally accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), a national accrediting body for Associate Degree Nursing programs. The program has recently gone through the accreditation process, with results to be announced in March 2020.

The MCC Nursing Program traces its roots back to 1962 with a vocational nursing program. In 1981, a career ladder associate degree nursing program was established to supplant the Hackley School of Nursing Diploma Program and the MCC Practical Nursing Program.

In 2019, the MCC Nursing Program awarded 67 Associate Degrees in Nursing and 70 Practical Nurse Diplomas.

“The MCC Faculty is very proud that we have provided quality nurses who care for members of our community in many different settings over the years,” said Patterson.

For more information on the program, visit www.muskegoncc.edu/nursing or call (231) 777-0281.

By Peter D. Koryzno
MCC Communications Manager





Volunteers Deliver the Lakeshore Fab Lab Experience

by Rachel Stewart
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

After a 34-year career as a family physician in the Muskegon area, Dr. David Dietrick began his retirement embracing a more secluded lifestyle, no longer seeing patients daily or interacting with healthcare administration.

Dietrick has been an on-again, off-again woodworker for more than 50 years. He was in search of a maker space where he could continue to tinker and discovered the Lakeshore Fab Lab in Downtown Muskegon.

"I wandered down here, met (Fab Lab Manager) Chris (Kaminsky), and we went to visit a sign company together," explained Dietrick. "When we got back, there was this big box in here with a CNC machine in it. By the end of the night we had the frame put together."

Today, he is a regular volunteer at the Lakeshore Fab Lab, serving as its CNC and router expert.

"I spent a big portion of my professional life trying to keep kids healthy and safe and well," said the man affectionately known as "Dr. Dave" around the Fab Lab. "Being able to interact with them on a different level has been a lot of fun for me."

A normal day for him at the Fab Lab has translated into a welcome return to interacting with the public.

"I get to see and talk to different kinds of people of all ages," Dietrick responded. "I did that my entire professional life." However, the isolation he encountered during the first few years of retirement quickly grew old for the natural extrovert. "This is a great way to get out of the house because there is always something to do and new things to learn," he noted.

"Volunteers like Dr. Dave are the life blood of the Lakeshore Fab Lab. We welcome people with and without technical skills. All you



need is a willingness to learn and share that knowledge with others" shares Kaminsky.

Dave Stradal, Business Faculty and Director of the Lakeshore Fab Lab and Rooks/Sarnicola Entrepreneurship Institute adds, "Some areas where you might get involved include; help direct grade school groups coming in for tours, assisting instructors during a class, learning a machine and becoming a "resident expert", or perhaps creating and leading your own class (we split revenues!). Whether it's a few hours or a few days each week we are very grateful for volunteers' time at the Fab Lab."

The Lakeshore Fab Lab offers opportunities for volunteers as well as members to engage in 3D printing, laser etching, robotics, metal milling, large format vinyl printing, digital scanning, routing and more.

"The Fab Lab is geared toward STEM education, business community use, and entrepreneurial product development and there have been a significant amount of projects completed here," explained Dietrick. "Ideal volunteers listen to what people want to do in this space and then teach them how to do it."

The Lakeshore Fab Lab is open by appointment on Mondays. It is open to the

public Tuesdays through Fridays from noon to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. For more information about volunteering at the Lakeshore Fab Lab, contact Chris Kaminsky, Fab Lab Manager, at 231/777-0212, email him at Christopher.kaminsky@muskegoncc.edu, or stop in during public hours to look around.



Nascent MCC Welding Invitational Grabs National Attention

By Peter D. Koryzno
MCC Communications Manager

In just its second year, the **Muskegon Community College Welding Invitational** is already earning national attention with a feature article in the September 2019 edition of *The American Welder*.

MCC Welding Instructor Tom Sumerix created the annual competition for regional tech students as a way to highlight the in-demand welding profession as well as the classes being taught in the state-of-the-art Sturris Technology Center in downtown Muskegon.

The magazine article's author, Roline Pascal, praised the MCC event for not only

answering the participants' questions about welding higher education, but for awarding scholarships and sponsoring a competition for scholarships and welding gear.

"They get to show off their welding skills and have fun doing it," Sumerix told the magazine.

Participants at this year's event in May were required to follow a blueprint, to read welding symbols, and to assemble an infinity cube using a gas metal arc welding process.

American Welding Society District 11 Director Phil Temple shared his enthusiasm about the invitational with *The American Welder*.

"These kids didn't just do a competition, they were judged as fabricators," he said. "It is one thing to be a welder, but far more important to be a fabricator. Welding is just one tool or skill required to be successful in making a product."

The magazine also took note of the extensive process involved.

"To create the infinity cube, students were required to measure and cut parts to specified lengths, tack the parts to the correct angles, complete the required welds while maintaining the angles so the cube would be square, and finish the welds so the cube would sit flat as measured by a level."

Temple concluded, "This model of providing a way for students to raise their skill levels is a model that AWS can encourage throughout the nation."

Matthew Lipka of the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center and Zachary Dykman from NCRESA each won an AWS \$1,000 scholarship. Colt Willick of the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center won an MCC \$1,000 scholarship.





ART & MUSIC



NEW DIGS

In 2010, Muskegon Community College identified the art and music programs for upgrades as part of its Facilities Master Plan. After years of planning, the Art and Music Building opened to students on August 26, 2019. The \$9 million renovation project transformed the vacated Applied Technology Building into a state-of-the-art facility supporting the educational pursuits of arts and music. These transformations include:

Music

- Medium Ensemble Room
- Keyboard Lab
- Teaching Suites
- Practice Rooms
- Student Instrument Storage
- Music Library
- College Instrument Storage
- Student Lounge

Art

- 3D Art Studio
- Painting Studio
- Advanced Drawing Studio
- Printmaking Studio
- Ceramics Studio
- Kiln Room
- Woodshop
- Spray Booth
- Lecture/Viewing Classroom
- Faculty Studio
- Student Open Studio
- Matting and Collection Room
- Art Supply Room



Richard Doctor Honored with Distinguished Faculty Award

By Peter D. Koryzno
MCC Communications Manager

Richard Doctor, whose 34-year career at Muskegon Community College included serving as a faculty member, department chair, administrator, and leader in the assessment and accreditation process on campus, was posthumously awarded the MCC Distinguished Faculty Award on Aug. 22.

Presented as part of the MCC Faculty Seminar Days on campus, the award was accepted by his wife, Paula. Doctor, who retired from MCC in 2010, died on Sept 2, 2017.

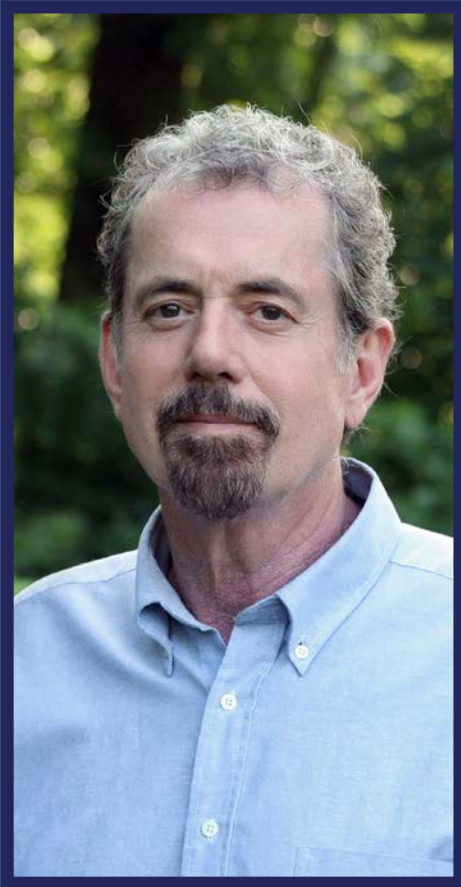


A member of the first Fruitport High School graduating class in 1965, Doctor earned a Bachelor of Art in Literature from Wheaton College and a Master of Arts from the University of Illinois.

In 1976, he began teaching English at MCC, where he influenced generations of students in literature, writing, and philosophy. Eventually named the English Department chair, he became a mentor and leader to his colleagues and department.

Over the years, Doctor took on many administrative roles. His humble spirit, positive work ethic, and persistent nudging moved countless projects forward, resulting in higher levels of student success and accomplishment. He was a kind, funny, hard-working, focused, intellectual and spiritual colleague.

The MCC Faculty Senate, with the approval of the MCC President, selects the recipients for this prestigious honor. Previous MCC Distinguished Faculty Award recipients include Jack W. Rice, Mary Kathryn (Kasey) Hartz, Wilma J. Kyvig, Donald J. Goodman, Robert E. Sheets, Dan Yakes, Carlo Spataro, Bill Jacobks, Timothy N. Trainor, Blair Morrissey and Beth Smith.



MCC Librarian Lisa Anderson reviews an OER webpage.

MCC Among 10 Colleges in Nation Selected for 2019-20 Free Textbook Initiative

by Peter Koryzno, Communications Manager

Muskegon Community College is one of only 10 schools nationally chosen to participate in the 2019-2020 OpenStax Institutional Partnership Program to encourage the use of free, peer-reviewed textbooks on campus.

An initiative of Rice University and supported by philanthropic foundations, OpenStax provides free, high quality, peer-reviewed textbooks and affordable educational technology designed to improve learning outcomes.

MCC was chosen to participate in this strategic partnership with OpenStax after a rigorous application process that included demonstrating a willingness to drive adoption of open educational resources

(OER). Institutional partners will receive individualized consulting from OpenStax and join a cohort of schools advocating widespread use of OER at their schools.

The 2019-2020 cohort consists of 10 institutions: Austin Community College District, College of DuPage, McHenry County College, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Millersville University, Muskegon Community College, North Carolina State University, Portland State University and Prairie View A&M University.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits

no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

“Open educational resources save students money and gives them access to materials wherever, whenever, and however they want,” said Lisa Anderson, an MCC librarian and archivist who is the OER coordinator on campus. “OER helps build a stronger connection to materials by both students, who feel material is tailored to them, and faculty, who are able to increase their academic freedom by adopting, adapting, and/or creating materials that perfectly align with their course goals.”

Meeting Goals to Help Students Succeed

2017-2022 Strategic Plan: Successful Students, Successful Communities

By Tina Dee, MS, CFRM Director of Strategic Initiatives

While December 31, 2019 marks the half-way point of MCC's five-year strategic plan, administrators are praising faculty and staff for completing more than half of the projects outlined in the plan. As of November 1, over 57% of the project objectives are completed.

"Employees are truly dedicated to meeting strategic plan goals so that we can help more students succeed," commented Tina Dee, Director of Strategic Initiatives. "They have completed several objectives that are directly supporting our students and positioning MCC as student success leader."

The strategic plan was developed by 180 campus and community volunteers, representing 52 organizations. The plan identifies five institutional priorities and 25 goals to be met over the five-year implementation period. After the planning process was completed in 2016-17, the Implementation Advisory Team (IAT) worked with employees to develop over 100 measurable objectives to support the institutional goals and Board of Trustees Ends Policies. 49 of the objectives are projects with a defined deadline.

Some of the projects completed during the first two-and-one-half years include:

- Implementation of career services software that helps students find internships and employment
- Adding student planning software that helps students map out their academic plan and review progress toward meeting graduation requirements
- Developing plan to collect each student's educational goal and report progress

- Substantially increasing the number of transfer guides, improving the process of transferring to a 4-year institution
- Opened several new facilities; Health and Wellness center, Carolyn I. and Peter Sturris Technology Center in downtown Muskegon, Automotive Building, Arts and Music Building, and Ottawa Center in Grand Haven
- Added ADA Advocate to technology and construction planning teams
- Improved wayfinding at main campus by renumbering rooms and installing over 900 new signs
- Develop new Academic Planning Guidelines manual

In addition to the objectives with finite due dates, the Implementation Advisory Team measures and reports progress on 63 other ongoing objectives related to enrollment, success rates, student satisfaction, tuition, fundraising, and other institutional key performance indicators.

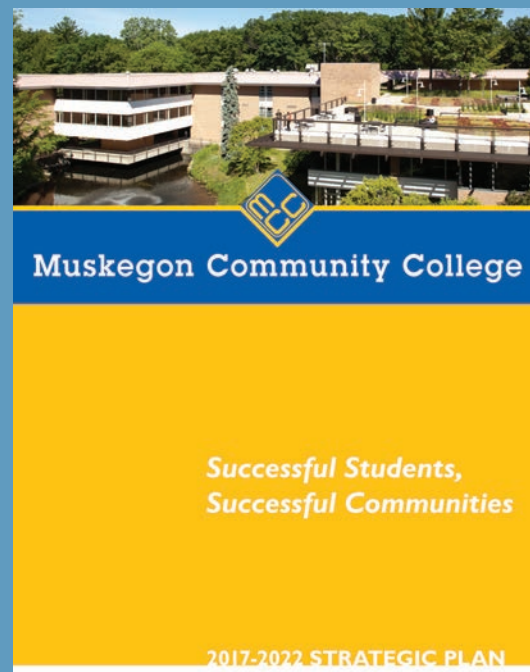
One of the aims of the IAT is to keep the campus and community informed of progress and engaged in the implementation process. To that end, all campus and community members are invited to the annual Community Summit and are provided with quarterly updates, which are also published quarterly at www.muskegoncc.edu/progress.

"Muskegon Community College's Integrated Strategic Plan is an interactive tool allowing for students, staff, faculty, and the community to have continuous input into the college's success. We are able assess institutional progress and

change on the fly if need be," explains Dr. Dale Nesbary, President. "I appreciate the efforts of everyone in this important endeavor."

The IAT is also responsible for coordinating the process of updating the institution's mission, vision, and value statements when needed. After gathering input from campus and community members last summer, MCC's vision statement was updated to "An educated, inclusive community." The team is now updating MCC's values and everyone is invited to provide their input via the online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/mccvalues

For more information about MCC's strategic plan, visit www.muskegoncc.edu/strategicplan or contact Tina Dee at tina.dee@muskegoncc.edu.



Hello Retirees,

What I Have Learned:

Since I have been serving on the Alumni Relations Committee here at Muskegon Community College, I have learned so much. The reason I am even a member of this committee is because I wanted, in some way, to represent retirees—to help keep them informed and to provide opportunities for fellowship (if they want it). As a member of this group, I have also been able to involve myself in selecting the "Distinguished Alumni Award" and the "Alumni Achievement Award" winners each year. I never knew the process of selection or much about these awards previously. These individuals are selected on some pretty serious criteria and winners are invited to attend MCC graduation and to speak at our events. Any of you retirees out there can nominate a graduate for either of these awards! PLEASE contact Rachel Stewart if you have a student in mind—think of a former student who deserves to be recognized. As retirees, we own a lot of input here.

Another "thing" I have learned is that this committee is also involved in the Founders' Day Annual Event (something I never formerly attended); a myriad alumni events; and now the planning of retiree events, including the Holiday Luncheon. This group is comprised of several cohorts, including alumni, alumni award winners, former employees (retirees), current employees (from different facets of the College), and led by Rachel Stewart (a phenomenal young lady). I have learned that these younger people know what they are doing; and my old-school philosophies have some merit, but are being augmented with bright and innovative concepts. I'm OK with that.

I hope that you all have benefited from Rachel's newsletters and/or any of the events where retirees are the focus. I repeat that your ideas and opinions are welcome, and Rachel Stewart is your contact.

Wishing you all an awesome 2020!

Sue Meeuwenberg



Message from Alumni and Donor Relations Manager



2020, can you believe it?!

As we look ahead to a new decade I am energized by the continued growth of Muskegon Community College and our outstanding Alumni Association! Please join us in celebrating your accomplishments and sharing the stories of other Jayhawks as well.

I would also like to thank the members of the Alumni Relations Committee. These individuals volunteer their time and expertise year-round to help guide the association to bring events, publications and other engagements to life!

Alumni Relations Committee

David Wells, Chair
Emily Busch
Cindy DeBoef
Lynda Ferry
Paula Halloran
Joseph Kelsey
Pete Koryzno
Trynette Lottie-Harps
Sue Meeuwenberg
Maxwell Olmstead
Dr. Dale Nesbary
Dr. Pamela Smith

As always, do not hesitate to reach out with updates, ideas or other conversation.

Go Jayhawks!

Rachel Stewart

Social Media at MCC

by Kristina Broughton, Social Media Coordinator

Over the past two years, Muskegon Community College’s social media presence has made quite an impact on the culture and tone within the college, as well as the surrounding Muskegon community. After hiring Social Media Coordinator, Kristina Broughton, an MCC alum, it has been realized that a strategic social media initiative focused on culture, community, and engagement was the missing piece of the puzzle.

Taking a look back to when social media first started at MCC on July 7, 2009, the official Muskegon Community College Facebook page was created. At the time, social media was becoming a tool and resource that could not be ignored by businesses and institutions. Facebook, which was originally intended for college students to connect, became a platform where businesses could promote, share, and connect with their followers. Without a concrete strategy for social media, the push to at least have a social presence led MCC to create official accounts on various other social platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Snapchat. For years, the college used the accounts to share news stories, announcements, promotions, and photos of MCC events which was enough to tread water in the fast-paced changing world of social media.

Fast forward nine years later to 2018, social media was far from what it used to be. The same tactics used before were now obsolete and MCC began to leverage on the option of using social media as a marketing and communications tool for enrollment rather than just a media outlet. As a part of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, the college hired a Social Media Coordinator, Kristina Broughton, who took an unexpected approach to not only drive enrollment through social media marketing,

but shift the culture and change the tone in perception of Muskegon Community College internally as well as within the community.

A strategic social media marketing plan was designed to roadmap a course of action in establishing pride among students, alumni, and community members, with the intention of creating change, excitement, and a more positive tone of MCC culture. Tackling the community college stigma head-on with content that promotes MCC pride, engagement, and grows a sense of culture that gives the MCC community something to be proud of.

MCC social media is now a highlight of the college that fully encompasses what it means to be a Jayhawk. Every week there is a new story, a new event, and new content that encourages students, alums, retirees, and community to stay connected with MCC. The goal is to build relationships through engagement no matter where our followers are in the world. We want to hear your stories, because it may inspire a student. We want to answer your questions, because we appreciate curiosity. And we do our best to promote the good things happening on our campus as well as within our community.

If you are not following MCC on social media, you are missing out on connecting with an amazing community that drives pride and positivity within our local community!

Facebook: @muskegoncc
Instagram: @Muskegon_cc
Twitter: @Muskegoncc
LinkedIn: Muskegon Community College
Snapchat: muskegoncc
YouTube: MuskegonCC



Kristina Broughton



Class Notes

Ronald Rowe '62
Married with two children and is now retired from the State of Michigan.

Greg Terrien '66
Retired from Kendall Electric.

Robert Kruse '70
Retired from the Internal Revenue Service.

Michael A. Cavalier, Jr '76
Retired from HealthWest.

Cheryl Youngquist '78
Now the Director of Operations at Love in Action.

Tony Josephson '91
Now the Senior Director of Human Resources Mergers and Acquisition Support at Stryker Corporation in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Leslie Jolman '93
Now the Assistant Manager for Business Solutions at West Michigan Works!

Ivan Ivanov '95
Now working at Barr Engineering.

David Potter '97
Moved to Los Angeles.

Gail Norquist '98
Now working as a bus driver.

Sean Nelson '99
Now the Assistant Manager at Spins Bowl Lanes Canton.

Cindy Beth Davis-Dykema '02
Married with one child.

Dan Procko '07
Now at Forming Technologies.

Miriam Esquivel '09
Completed Registered Nurse Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Wesleyan University.

Heidi Romero '09
Heidi and her husband Brandon, also an MCC alum, welcomed their daughter Kenzie to their family in June joining their son Corbin.

Joanie Booher '10
Now at Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial.

Jeff Toth '10
Now at Mercy Health at Westshore Family in an ambulatory setting.

Jennifer Pendergrass '11
Now a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer at Spectrum Health Butterworth.

Jared VanDenBerg '11
Now a Financial Adviser with Advance Capital Management. Married with two children.

Trevor Curtice '13
Now a Welding Engineer at Martinrea.

Mikaela Bosch '13
Was married in September. Now at Boys & Girls Club of the Muskegon Lakeshore.

Cameron Bricker '16
Married in August to MCC Alum Winsome Maddock, they met on their very first day at MCC.

Hannah Jones '18
Deans List at Ferris State University. Also working at Pound Buddies.

Rebecca Bolli '19
Now employed at the School of Social Work at Grand Valley State University.

Jennifer Hall '19
Now an Assistant Director at Lil' Munchkin Too

Amber Dowdy '19
Now the Archivist at the USS Silversides Submarine Museum.

Alexis Roelofs '19
Now at Lincoln Developmental Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Ashley Skaio '19
Now an orthopedic unit nurse at Mercy Health.

Update your alumni information online at muskegoncc.edu/alumni-relations/

Shared from MCC Alumni Rosemary Vogel Olsen after the Women's Soccer Team Won the NCAA Region 12 Championship, "Proud parent and alumnus today! Joel Olsen and myself, Class of 1992, Maddie Olsen, Class of 2019, Isabel Olsen, current student. Great day to be a Jayhawk!"





Muskegon Community College

221 South Quarterline ♦ Muskegon, MI 49442



The Jayhawk Pantry's mission is to alleviate food hardship among its students by providing emergency food to MCC students in need.

Donations can be dropped off to room 1071 or schedule a drop off time with Heidi Romero at 231-777-0365.

Learn more at muskegoncc.edu/student-success/Jayhawk-food-pantry