Somewhere at 19,000 feet on a Mountain in Ecuador...

By Mary McClinton, ’82

While some Greenfield Community College faculty and students think of Spring Break as a “break” from learning and teaching, Outdoor Leadership Program Coordinator Austin Paulson and seven OLP students will use that time for an intense exercise in learning by doing. Austin and seven of this year’s 20 OLP students will travel to Ecuador from March 12 to 20 and tentatively view the course as an unlimited exploration and re-examining of high altitude climbing. The OLP students will develop high altitude climbing skills such as glacier travel and crampon and ice axe use, as well as experience and discuss socially and environmentally responsible recreation practices. To help pay for the expedition, the OLP students have developed a fundraising project—called “Get Outdoors, Greet Our Stars”—throughout the semester. The students will also donate ten percent of the money raised to purchase seeds for a project that supports women who work with children in Kilimanjaro.

In addition to his work at GCC, Paulson directs an international adventure travel and recreation business, Peak Expeditions. The March expedition opportunity provides an opportunity for OLP students to understand the relationships Paulson has developed with business partners in Ecuador. Paulson said, “These students will have a unique opportunity to meet guides and business owners in Ecuador with whom I have had business relationships for 15 years. They will see why we are staying at these hotels and working with these outfitters. Peak Expeditions provides the students with a strong model of a sustainable business practice that includes professional and cross-cultural partnerships. This expedition is as much about learning skills in international outdoor program management as it is in learning technical mountaineering skills.”

Two of the OLP students who will travel to Ecuador have traveled internationally but had no prior mountaineering experience before starting the OLP fall. Maria Shamley, 22, and the oldest student at the expedition, lives in Greenfield and grew up in Arizona. She said, “I never imagined I would do something like this expedition. What I’m learning in the OLP is that I can do anything I set my mind to. This expedition will be both a physical and mental challenge for all of us.”

Monique Garafano, 23, currently lives in Greenfield and is from Lefton. She said, “I used to think the kind of mountainous areas were only for people with lots of experience and knowledge. Now I know that’s not true. Austin, the instructors we have in the OLP and the other outdoor professionals we’ve not are excited to share their knowledge and support our learning. This expedition is a strong example of support.”

Prior to the Expedition, Paulson will give a lecture on March 4th at GCC titled “High Mountain Travel: Trends and Sustainability in Eco-Tourism Around the World.” For information about the Outdoor Leadership Program, contact Austin Paulson at 413-775-1296 or visit www.peakexpeditions.com. For information about Peak Expeditions, visit www.peakexpeditions.com.

Who will be the next GCC Distinguished Alum?

Nominations due February 25

Each spring, one Greenfield Community College Alum is honored with the Distinguished Alumn Award. “We know that GCC changes the lives of its students forever,” says Regina C. Curtis, ’86, President of the GCC Alumni Association. “But what we also know is that GCC students go on to change the lives of their communities, and we’re looking for those alumni now to recognize their achievements.” Please consider nominating an alum who has:

• Been prominent in their profession
• Contributed to their community in an important and exemplary way

Nomination forms can be found online at www.gcc.mass.edu/alumni. For more information, contact Regina Curtis at scrurty@gcc.mass.edu or 413-775-1246.

Instant Scholarships Available!

MassGREEN Weatherization Installer 12-week Course
Franklin County Tech School
March 1 – May 19, 2011
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 4:30-7:30PM
Contact Alex, 413-775-1660 or floratosa@gcc.mass.edu

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ACCOUNTING
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• Certified Bookkeeper (CB)

Monique Garafano

Monique Garafano isn’t a student and a bookkeeper, she’s the first Greenfield Community College student to meet the rigorous standards required to become nationally certified as a Certified Bookkeeper (CB). GCC’s Business Division developed an accounting curriculum offering Accounting Systems and Procedure, the course content for students graduating with an Associate of Science in Accounting who need to complete the course to qualify for the Certified Bookkeeper Examination offered by the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers. Monique took the course and passed the exam on its six-week accounting professional designation. This means she is now considered a full-time business owner, a role she left especially comfortable at GCC with its small class sizes and faculty who really get to know each individual. Monique was promptly selected for membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. Monique will work as an intern for a local accounting firm owned by a GCC alum and in June will graduate with an Associate in Science in Accounting. After GCC, Monique will continue working as a freelance bookkeeper. While she was a student, Monique decided she wanted to learn more about accounting. Monique considered other colleges, but left especially comfortable at GCC with its small class sizes and faculty who really get to know each individual. Monique was promptly selected for membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. Monique will work as an intern for a local accounting firm owned by a GCC alum and in June will graduate with an Associate in Science in Accounting. After GCC, Monique will continue working as a freelance bookkeeper and is considering continuing her education at the University of Massachusetts or Western State College. Monique said, “Tom Fredrick is a great instructor, and the certification program helped bring together all of the information I’ve learned in school and at work. Along with the accounting classes, marketing classes were incredibly beneficial. This professional designation will help me be more competitive in job searches and have increased earnings compared to bookkeepers who aren’t certified.”

For information about GCC’s Accounting Program, contact Tom Fredrick at 775-1840 or tom.fredrick@gcc.mass.edu. For information about the Certified Bookkeeper (CB) designation, see gcc.mass.edu/alumni.

First GCC Student to Receive Certified Bookkeeper (CB) Designation

By Mary McClinton, ’82

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Free Income Tax Assistance Available

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) is a free tax preparation service available at Greenfield Community College beginning Monday, February 14, 2011. IRS certified and trained students will prepare personal income tax returns with electronic filing, on a first come, first serve basis. Small businesses and rental property property owner’s returns are not eligible.

The VITA Office is located in the East Building, Room 128 on the Main Campus. Hours of operation are:
• Monday: 12 Noon – 2:30 p.m.
• Tuesday: 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
• Thursday: 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m
More information at 413-775-1465.

GCC businesses are Peak Expeditions, Mountain Travel: Trends and Sustainability in Eco-Tourism Around the World, and working with these outfitters. This expedition is a strong example of support.”

For information about GCC’s Accounting Program, contact Tom Fredrick at 775-1840 or tom.fredrick@gcc.mass.edu. For information about the Certified Bookkeeper (CB) designation, see gcc.mass.edu/alumni.

Please Join Us

Financing Your College Education
Wednesday, February 9, 6:00PM
Max Building – Room N331, North Wing
Learn more about options for making college more affordable.
For more information, contact regina@gcc.mass.edu.

Alumni Association Meeting
Thursday, February 24, 6:00PM
Downtown Campus, 379 Main Street
For information, call 413-775-1466.

Go online now to join the GCC Alumni Association and sign up for AlumniNet, GCC’s online community! Visit gcc.mass.edu/alumni