GCC Foundation Announces Retirement of Dorothy Parrill

One familiar voice will no longer be at the other end of the telephone if you call the GCC Foundation with a question about giving a gift or the balance of an endowment fund, following the March 31 retirement of Dorothy (Dottie) Parrill. After 14 years of support to the Foundation and GCC students, Dorothy is retiring and we have welcomed Tom Doherty to her position as Accounting/Database Coordinator.

There are two facets about Dorothy that deserve recognition: the employee that she is and her amazing work product, and the human being that she is, her amazing capacity for kindness and caring.

As a worker, her systems were so clear, her recordkeeping so precise, and her methods so logical, that Tom was able, after a short training, to competently understand and manage the complex workload.

But more important is to recognize Dorothy, the human being. She is a warm, caring, kind, compassionate person who set a high bar. Do you know how people sometimes jostle to stand next to celebrities or sports heroes to benefit from the reflected glory? Well, we all stand next to Dorothy to benefit from the reflected grace. We all feel better just being around her. The work that she and her husband Lloyd do for their congregation, their community, their family, and friends is not in need of recognition. The GCC Foundation is a better place because of her work and the world is a better place because of her heart. We are lucky to have had her with us these years and wish her well in her retirement.

Join the GCC Alumni Association

- Find old friends from your GCC days.
- Connect with GCC alumni in your new hometown.
- Network to enhance your career.
- Join us online: http://www.gcc.mass.edu/alumni
- Sign up for AlumNet, a social networking site for GCC alumni.
- Follow us on Twitter @GCCommcollege
- Become a fan on Facebook http://www.facebook.com/greenfieldcc

It’s Easy to be GREEN

As part of our ongoing effort to help sustain the health of the planet, Greenfield Community College has been going green in terms of increasingly popular course offerings on sustainability and renewable energy and in helping to diminish the use of paper in favor of using email. To this end, we are asking readers of The Catalyst to give us their opinion on how they would prefer to receive the newsletter—either in print by mail, or as an email. Please let us know your preference by sending an email to Andrea Carlson at andrcarlson@gcc.mass.edu.

Save the Date


Friday, March 30 at 7 pm
Join GCC President Bob Pura and a group of faculty, staff and students for game night! See the Springfield Armor, the official NBA D League affiliate of the New Jersey Nets, play the Sioux Falls Skyforce of the Minnesota Timberwolves at the MassMutual Center, 360 Matthew Street, Springfield. Enjoy Baseline VIP Club courtside seating, dinner, free hat and much more! Details and seating, dinner, free hat and more—do not miss out!

Diane Esser Got Her Start at GCC, Now Helps GCC Give Others Their Start

In 1971, Diane Esser was 23 years old, working part-time as a laboratory technician at Franklin Medical Center, and a divorced single mother of a five-year-old. She had always expected to go to college right after high school, but life diverted her for a while. In 1971, GCC gave Diane the opportunity to follow her dream of college, to start on the path toward a professional career. Diane took that opportunity and ran with it. From GCC, Diane transferred to the University of Massachusetts where she finished her bachelor’s degree. She then went on to Boston University to study for a law degree. Diane has practiced law in Franklin County since 1979 and currently focuses her practice on family law. In addition to her work as an attorney, Diane has been active in many professional associations including the Franklin County Bar Association, the Massachusetts Bar Association, and the Massachusetts Bar Foundation. She has served on the Board of NECWIT.
I had the opportunity to walk up the same steps at Ellis Island that my father walked as a child coming to America. It was a significant and powerful experience for me. At the top of these stairs, you enter the Great Hall. To your left, you see The Statue of Liberty and to the left, the four other entrances. One can only imagine what it was like for those who walked those steps in search of a better life for themselves, their families, and their community.

Many in our community find themselves on the fringes of road and bridges that have been washed away and closed by Tropical Storm Irene. Far too many in our nation feel the same hopelessness that is the outcome. Hopelessness is the byproduct of a world in which the dreams of hard work and education for a better and fairer future are not all that they used to be. Many today feel that the words “American Dream” no longer mean the same thing they once meant.

That might not be the case in India where the dream for some of the students continue to thrive and grow. Such as in all of GCC classes, there were many who dropped out of school and restarted in new directions. Those who were Veterans who came to GCC after serving their country. I met others in that class who chose GCC as a first choice because of its affordability and found a community of teachers and learners who said, “It really is a good thing to be an engaged and passionate learner.” Some had dropped out of high school, earned a GED, and then graduated with a degree. Many who graduated that day were employed or continuing their education while they were employed or continuing their education. Some came to our community from villages and communities around the world in search of the dreams that come hard work and opportunity. And in that class, just like all of the GCC classes before, vast majorities were the first in their families to attend a college.

They are all off to colleges such as Amherst, Mt. Holyoke, Smith, Umass, MassArt, Rhode Island School of Design, Westfield State University, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts or they are working at the jobs of their choice. Forty-five percent (45%) of GCC graduates over the past five years have transferred on to the degrees of their choice and 70% of those who graduated in one of our professional/career programs are employed or continuing their education within a year of graduation.

So, it is from the melting pot of our community, that each walked across the stage on its way to becoming attorneys, engineers, web designers, nurses, doctors and CNAs; bankers, entrepreneurs and small business managers; police officers, fire fighters and EMTs; photovoltaic installers, engineers working on wind farms and solar energy; entrepreneurs; and designers of tomorrow’s green technologies; teachers, lawyers, and community leaders.

GCC graduates discovered their voice and developed the courage to express it. Most important, each learned that life is hard work. That the job, no matter their age – is that the skill set that will serve them best. GCC alumni understand that learning is not something that you do as a student in preparation for life – learning is a way of life. Within each of our graduates, we find our community’s collective hope for tomorrow.

Yes, the pathway in our community to America’s Dreams does pass through the doors of Greenfield Community College. The ability of GCC to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for their success is the result of all of the students, faculty, and communities that have come to GCC. Those who work in the public schools and hospitals, local banks and businesses, the safety net of human service providers, our elected leaders and all who contribute to our Foundation in support of the students. Those who are employed or continuing their education while they are employed or continuing their education.

It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. Here in the most rural and northern part of the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts, our community works together to make good on the promises of a nation.

The fund will be used to support students as they enter GCC, but there might as well.

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GCC Exploring Child Care Center
Student success is at the core of the proposed GCC campus-based child care center. GCC’s Certificate and Degree Programs in Education that focus on Early Childhood and a child care center will increase the number of students who will go on to graduate. GCC’s Certificate and Degree Programs in Education that focus on Early Childhood and a child care center greatly facilitates and complements that academic activity.

The specific needs of students to have quality, affordable child care options available while they are pursuing their academic and personal goals.

And of the GCC Education Program to have a quality, accessible laboratory school available for student teaching and student learning experiences. GCC is able to keep the doors to opportunity open to all because of the many who work together in the community to sustain and support this community.

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GCC Exploring Child Care Center

Student success is at the core of the proposed GCC campus-based child care center.

GCC President Bob Pura, who observed that the group of alumni Diane refers to are “the backbone of our community.”

Their willingness to give back now, with their time and donations, and the opportunity to support the college that enabled that student, he said, “is the benchmark of support for those being served today — the right people at the table now is moving forward to ensure that we will serve this community and students’ child care needs for years to come.”

GCC Exploring Child Care Center
Student success is at the core of the proposed GCC campus-based child care center.
had the opportunity to walk up the same steps at Ellis Island that my father walked as a child coming to America. No matter how hard and powerful an experience for me. At the top of these stairs, you enter the Great Room. To your right you see The Statue of Liberty and to the left, the U.S. immigration authorities. One can only imagine what it was like for those who walked those steps in search of a better life for themselves and their children.

Many in our community cherish the fears and frustrations of roads and bridges that have been washed away and closed by Tropical Storm Irene. Far too many in our nation know the fears and frustrations that are inevitable as the year of opportunities is closing. It is as if a gate with a “Do Not Enter” sign is placed across that stairway of aspiration at Ellis Island. Hopespin is the outcome.

I recently heard a book review on a local radio station in which the author made the statement that as the nation enters Dream Week here in the United States, the hope of social and economic mobility is alive and thriving in India. That might not be a direct quote but the delivery of that statement and its impact resonating across the nation seemed like all who were listening knew it to be true and all have accepted it.

Unfortunately, there is a developing foundation on which that statement can stand. Our middle class is in trouble. With a majority of the nation’s wealth limited to a small percent of the population, joblessness still increasing, housing and health care in crisis - and the costs to education seeming out of reach for most, the United States is moving toward a two class system. At a time of increasing creativity and a decreasing middle class, at a time of increasing isolation and decreasing hopes - at a time when our nation does not seem to act on its stated egalitarian values - our community struggles for meaning better.

Greenfield Community College offers hope for our community’s future. GCC alumni and the designers of tomorrow's green technologies; teachers, lawyers and community leaders.

GCC graduates discovered their voice and developed the courage to express it. Most important, each learned how to learn. No matter the job, no matter their age - that is the skill that will serve them best.

GCC alumni understand that learning is not something that you do as a student in preparation for life - learning is a way of life. Within each of our graduates, we find our community’s collective hope for tomorrow.

Yes, the pathway in our community to America’s Dreams does pass through the doors of Greenfield Community College. The ability of GCC to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to succeed is the result of many of our community partners. Those partners include the public schools and hospitals, local banks and businesses, the safety net of human service providers, our elected leaders and all who contribute to our Foundation in support of students. Those partners include the public schools and hospitals, local banks and businesses, the safety net of human service providers, our elected leaders and all who contribute to our Foundation in support of students.

It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. Here in the most rural and northern part of the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts, GCC works together to make good on the promises of a nation. This fall, GCC was proud to serve 2,550 new and returning students. We welcomed each into something much more significant than our college.

GCC is giving your students the tools to better their community as well as themselves.

From the President
Greenfield Community College: The Pathway to America’s Dreams

Diane Esser (continued from cover)

GCC President Bob Pura, observed that the group of alumni Diane refers to are “the backbone of our community. Their willingness to give back now, with their time and donations, is a testament to the college that enabled that student,” he said, “is the bedrock of support for those being served today – the future students who are the future leaders of our community.”

Now, in forty-four years after Diane started classes at GCC, with her help and that of our Foundation, she said, “GCC is giving her a different opportunity, the opportunity to serve as President of the GCC Foundation of Directors. Diane is thrilled to be able to continue supporting the College’s mission.”

I know that you’re not connected to the College on a daily basis, it can be easy to lose track of what really goes on here. Our role in the Foundation is to make sure that everyone in our community keeps the GCC Foundation in mind when they consider making charitable donations. No matter how small or large a gift is, it is essential that we continue to provide access to affordable and excellent higher education. Without the help of our com munity’s philanthropic leaders and all who contribute to the Foundation, our community would not be able to fulfill its mission, the whole community families.

GCC Exploring Child Care Center

GCC Exploring Child Care Center will serve students and the community

GCC Exploring Child Care Center is exploring and moving forward with options to construct a child care center on campus in the near future to serve students and the community. President Robert Pura announced the initiative with the message that the college is “very clear that the need for a child care center is one of our top priorities for our students’ success.”

For nearly 30 years in total of its 50-year history, the college has twice had child care facilities available for the GCC community and that access has made the difference between enrollment or not, and completion or not, for countless students.

GCC also offers Certificates and Degrees Programs in Education that focus on Early Childhood and a child care center greatly facilitates and complements that academic activity.

The specific needs of students to have quality, affordable child care options available while they engage in their academic pursuits, and of the GCC Education Program to have a quality, accessible laboratory school available for student teaching and practicums are critical to the success of GCC. A child care center that would exemplify the best practices in child care education for our student teachers, and provide child care and development services for GCC students who would be unable to attend college without this service, is of paramount importance to the college.

President Pura added that the college will pursue a financing and operating model that ensures the best use of resources, full collaboration with existing child care providers as a lemma and input from GCC faculty, staff and student constituencies. “We have an opportunity to build this one out and build it well,” he said, “We want to be certain that we blend the right people at the table now to move toward an outcome that will serve this community’s and students’ child care needs for years to come.”

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