Communitas

MVCC Faculty/Staff Newsletter

Week of January 23, 2012

Career Focus hits Oneida County households

MVCC launches a new enrollment management tool this week with the inaugural issue of Career Focus, a magazine produced by the Marketing and Communications Office in conjunction with the Career Focus Consortium. Some 75,000 Oneida County households are receiving the magazine via direct mail this week.

The 16-page, four-color magazine has general-interest articles about health careers, 3D animation, and engineering, plus in-depth profiles of MVCC students and programs. There are also articles about MVCC's services for students and keys to success for traditional and adult students.

The magazine's purpose is to to get prospective students of all ages thinking about broader career possibilities and to inform people about specific ways that MVCC can connect students to career success. For efficiency, mailings are targeted by neighborhood based on enrollment trends in that locale; copies will also be distributed on campus and in area high schools. Additional copies are available from Marketing.

The magazine will publish twice annually to coincide with peak recruiting periods. With each issue, the story lineup will be informed by strategic goals and the college's enrollment plan.

To suggest specific stories or advertising ideas, contact the Marketing department or a member of the academic dean team.

Cash on hand now in Payne Hall lobby

There is easier access to your cash on the Utica Campus as a third ATM has been installed in the lobby of Payne Hall.

The original ATM on the Utica Campus is located in the MV Commons in the Alumni College Center and is operated by HSBC bank. With the introduction of Zest in the lobby of the Academic Building, an ATM was installed last fall where the old phone booths had been located outside of the Security Office.

Now, students and employees can access cash in the lobby of Payne Hall. The ATMs in the Academic Building and Payne Hall are independently owned. On the Rome Campus, there is an ATM located in the Atrium of the Plumley Complex.

"The idea behind putting an ATM in Payne hall was to make it more convenient for the students and staff members to have access to cash," said Brian Molinaro, MVCC Controller. "Instead of going across campus to the other building in inclement weather when they need cash, they can just use the machine in the (Payne Hall) lobby."

There is a transaction fee of $2.50 charged for the ATMs in Payne Hall and the Academic Building. The fee for the ATM in the Alumni College Center is $3.00. Each transaction is limited to $200 and no more than one transaction can be done daily. These machines are for cash withdrawals only.

"When we were considering adding an ATM to the lobby, there was no real reason not to do this. It had been mentioned several times that this would be a real convenience," said Molinaro.

CASHING OUT - A student uses the newly installed ATM which is located in the lobby of Payne Hall. This ATM is the third to be installed on the Utica Campus with a fourth being in the Atrium of the Plumley Complex on the Rome Campus.

Honoring Employees for Years of Service

Larry Migliori has the eye for art and has been instrumental in the development of art instruction at MVCC. He was recently honored for his dedication to the College's program over the past 25 years. As the Director of Art Infusion through the Innovation Team, Migliori has been working to expand MVCC's Art Endowment. Larry joined MVCC on January 12, 1987. ▲

You may know him from the Slush Ducks basketball team or from one of his witty comments, but Jim Myers has been an icon at MVCC. Working in the Office of Institutional Assessment, Jim was recognized for 30 years of service. He joined the MVCC community on January 17, 1982. ▲

Phone-A-Thon connects students with alumni

The College's bi-annual Phone-A-Thon will kick off its second leg on Sunday, Jan. 29, as students reach out to touch alumni, parents and friends of MVCC. The conference room located in the Office of Institutional Advancement, on the second floor of Payne Hall, is buzzing with activity as students prepare to make connections.

The fall Phone-A-Thon was held Oct. 16 through Dec. 8, with the spring event being held for six weeks. The students helped raise nearly $34,000 which will make exceeding last year's total of $54,000 an attainable goal.

"We inform those we call of any activities occurring on the campus and we even keep them abreast of their instructors who are still here," said Natalie Alberry, a nursing student who has been working on the Phone-A-Thon.

The Phone-A-Thons have resulted in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars and has been the first step in cultivating long term relationships with alumni. The key to the Phone-A-Thon is having current students make contact. The Office of Institutional Advancement hires 40 students for the event with 12 working each night, Sunday through Thursday. The students will make more than 25,000 phone calls.

The students also provide some of the details of what is new at MVCC, academically and institutionally. According to Marie Kohl, Coordinator of Annual Fund & Alumni Relations, there are many alumni who look forward to these telephone calls and receiving updates from the students.

According to Alberry, alumni request literature and inquire about some of the information they have received through the mail. The callers have been helping to promote the College's major gift campaign.

"This is helping us to reconnect with our alumni," said Kohl. "We get questions such as who is the College's president? Is their favorite instructor still at the College? … This is a good

opportunity for the students to earn some extra money while learning about the College and learning about our alumni."

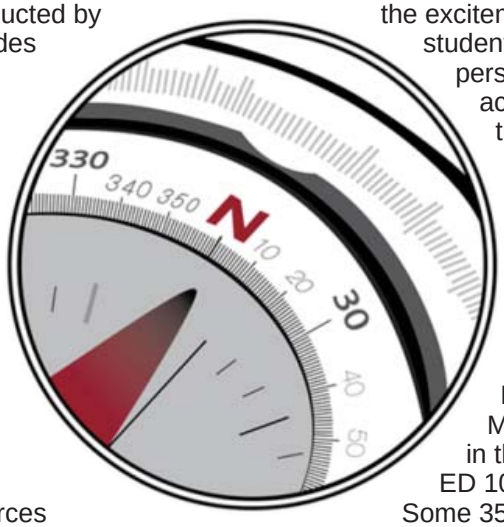
"We get a lot of nice comments and they are really a nice bunch of people," said Alberry, who already holds an Associate of Applied Science in Medial Assisting from MVCC. "They are sincerely interested in what is occurring here at the College."

With more than 36,000 alumni on record, Kohl is always looking to expand the contact list. She can be reached by calling 792-5340. The funds raised through the two Phone-A-Thons are applied to MVCC students' greatest needs unless a donor directs money to a specific scholarship.

Submit information for Communitas to rhaubert@mvcc.edu

MVCC plays to its 'Strengths'

StrengthsQuest is a program that helps people build on their innate strengths. It has reached more than 1,250 students, faculty, and staff since it was introduced at MVCC two years ago. Founded on psychology research conducted by the Gallup Organization over five-plus decades with tens of thousands of people worldwide, StrengthsQuest emphasizes individuals' significant and distinctive personal strengths. It is based on the principle that by mindfully repeating positive thoughts and actions, the brain can develop patterns of strength and success.



StrengthsQuest participants begin by taking the Gallup StrengthsFinder, an online inventory that takes about 15 minutes to complete. Upon completion participants receive a document listing their five top strengths among 34 strength themes such as "communication," "relator," "maximizer," "adaptive," and "futuristic." StrengthsQuest also provides deeper resources for understanding and honing strengths, as well as for working with others' complementary mixes of strengths. The program takes a positive approach, guiding people through the process of building on their best attributes rather than correcting perceived weaknesses.

DeWeerth

"StrengthsQuest has transformed my approach to working with the advising team. Each team member has unique strengths that they are developing and mobilizing to increase their performance with projects, programs, and students," says Jennifer DeWeerth, Assistant Dean of Student Enrollment and Advisement. "I value all the more the strengths that my colleagues bring to our shared work. We talk about strengths every day not just among ourselves, but also with students, helping them create action plans that use their strengths to become successful in college."

MVCC uses StrengthsQuest in the classroom and in academic advising and intervention with students. "Students love discovering their strengths. In a few short hours they go from thinking they have no strengths to resonating and identifying with their top strengths," says DeWeerth.

In her HS101 Introduction to Human Services class, Associate Professor Cheryl Plescia teaches StrengthsQuest as a tool for students to better access course content and successfully complete assignments. "My experience since beginning this is astounding," says Plescia. "I think for many of our students, they have had many challenges and at times there was only a focus on what was wrong. We talk about how they have talents and need to put in effort in those talent areas for it to become a strength. For me as an educator, it is a humbling experience seeing the light in their eyes and the excitement they show." Recounting the story of a student who used StrengthsQuest to overcome personal challenges that were affecting his academic progress, Plescia highlights how the student applied his StrengthsQuest learning: "He told me he had started slipping backwards in school, but he remembered his work on strengths and started reviewing it again. He decided right then that he had a tool to help him overcome his current problem and he was again feeling motivated."

Plescia and faculty colleagues Janice Bell, Bill Hysell, and David Katz are among MVCC's pioneers in using StrengthsQuest in their teaching, and the tool is used in many ED 100, ED 102, EN 099 and EN 101 classes. Some 350 students are currently enrolled in one of these classes. MVCC's Resident Advisor staff, Student Congress, and Phi Theta Kappa are also using StrengthsQuest, and it is a central part of the Pathways to Academic Recovery intervention program for students who need new tools to succeed in the classroom.

The number of MVCC employees who have taken StrengthsFinder has increased substantially in the past six months. To date, about half the college's faculty and staff have participated in one or more Strengths-related activities including the StrengthsFinder assessment, a New Employee Orientation or New Faculty Institute training on StrengthsQuest, a guest presenter on StrengthsQuest, or other employee enrichment offering. Like other employee enrichment activities, StrengthsQuest is voluntary for faculty and staff.

Maio

"We are seeing many more requests for individual training for offices, such as the Library, CCED, and Rome Student Services," says Jim Maio, Interim Assistant Dean for Student Support and Director of Career, Transfer, and Job Placement Services. "Our hope is that as more faculty and staff learn to use these tools and as more students are taught how to use the tool, we can leverage this mutual understanding to improve student completion college-wide." Maio provides StrengthsQuest tools or training on request; he can be reached at x5401 or jmaio@mvcc.edu for more information.

February Break programs for kids & teens

The warm weather is right around the corner, and soon kids will be out of school for the February break. Mohawk Valley Community College's Center for Corporate and Community Education will keep them busy with a series of classes and programs designed to be informative, fun and interesting for kids and teenagers. These programs include:

Cracking the Communication Code: Ever wonder what people did 100 years ago? In this class, learn about the history of telecommunications and discover the importance coding and decoding communications had on current technology. Ages 11-14. The session is February 21-24, 9 a.m. - noon at Perry Jr. High in New Hartford. Registration cost is $79.

A Taste of Chinese: This four-day camp is your chance to get a taste of Mandarin Chinese. You will learn the basics of vocabulary, grammar, literacy, and conversation as well as the cultural background of this ancient society. Ages 8-12. The session is February 21-24, 9 a.m. - noon at Perry Jr. High in New Hartford. Registration cost is $69.

MVCC Faces: Katie Ksiadz

When it comes to keeping all of the Cultural Series events running like clockwork, Katie Ksiadz is the new timekeeper in the Information Technology Building. Ksiadz (pronounced Shuntz) is MVCC's new Events Coordinator working out of the Box Office.

Her responsibilities in this role will be to assist in coordinating Cultural Series events and rental groups, serving on the Cultural Series Event Counsel and DGV Counsel, along with assisting in coordination of staffing and supervise event staff. She will also be working to expand the Cultural Series and Hawk Point initiative.

This is not a new role for Ksiadz, having served as a Resident Assistant in college which helped her gain insight into what students are looking for from their college experience.

As for coordinating major events with lots of elements, Ksiadz worked for the Turning Stone Resort and Casino where she was the main supervisor and planner for weddings, earning two Team Spirit Member Awards for Outstanding Service. "I developed and enhanced my professional skills from working with high profile entertainers, to butler service training, to coordinating approximately 65 weddings in a year," said Ksiadz. "Having worked in retail and sales management taught me how to become organized, detailed, and persistent in order to get the job done."

An avid Buffalo Bills fan, Ksiadz has been with the College for just over two months and hit the ground running. "I hope to surpass expectations of the students and community by building on the Cultural Series and outside rentals. I also hope to bring new clients to MVCC, and increase attendance at all events," said Ksiadz.

This New Hartford resident who enjoys Zumba, dance, and scrapbooking holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management and Marketing.

When not at work, she is arranging to volunteer at the Food Bank of CNY and Steven Swan Humane Society. She also enjoys family outings with her parents, Jack and Peggy, her sister Jill and her eight-year old pit bull Diesel.

GENESIS HONOREES - MVCC was well represented at the annual Genesis Group banquet with two individual awards, organizational award and an induction. From left are: – Steve Frisbee, Rosa Cardona, Carlos Pulquerio, Patti Antanavige, Jim Smrtic, Denise DiGiorgio

MVCC honored at Genesis banquet

For the past several years, the Genesis Group of the Mohawk Valley Region has presented the Mohawk Valley Education Distinguished Service Awards to educators and programs at its annual banquet.

This year, MVCC had three individuals and one organization honored during the "Celebration of Education." Patti Antanavige from the Office of Returning Adult Learners and James Smrtic, Professor of Psychology were among the class of 2011 honorees for their work with educating the region's workforce.

For educational programs, MVCC's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society – Lambda Beta Chapter was recognized for its work on both the local and state levels. PTK's volunteer work has left a positive mark on the community.

Longtime College employee and Genesis member Denise DiGiorgio was inducted into the Genesis Group's Education Hall of Distinction.

Green Tips!
The Sierra Club recommends planting shrubs, bushes, and vines a foot from your house to insulate with air pockets. Low shrubs on the windy side can help snow from getting too close to your house.

CCED to offer money-saving workshops

CCED has designed a series of workshops to help save money through energy efficiency, make smart investments, and even take free vacations.

Managing Your Energy Costs: This seminar will show how to locate and seal the small air leaks in your home and to work in a lead safe manner. With the cost of energy rising, it's important to know how to control the amount of energy you are using and reduce your energy costs. Class will take place on Tuesday, January 31 from 6-9 p.m. on the Utica Campus. Cost is $25.

How Not to Get Scammed: This informative, user-friendly "nuts and bolts" course will help empower you to effectively price bonds and learn about the various types of bonds and investments available. It will include a breakdown of the different types of mutual funds and how to analyze and decipher financial data from the prospectus on a mutual fund; How to "stretch" your IRA to your children and use TOD (Transfer on Death) to avoid probate will be discussed, along with learning how to read The Wall Street Journal and Morningstar Mutual Fund Report. This course may be worth its weight in gold! Classes will take place on Wednesdays, March 21 – April 18 from 7-9 p.m. on the Rome Campus. Cost is $59.