



## thINCubator provides foundation for young entrepreneur startups

There is a grassroots effort underway to revitalize the economic environment of the Mohawk Valley through the development and nurturing of young entrepreneurs. As part of this effort, a group of business, economic development, education leaders and elected officials has been working to create the thINCubator (short for “the home for Innovative New Companies”), a new business incubator and student accelerator in downtown Utica.

Located at 106 Genesee St. in the Bagg’s Square West district of Utica, the thINCubator will provide teams of mentors for these young entrepreneurs with the foundation and support to get their business plans off the ground. Area groups have stepped forward to help make this initiative a success by providing funding as the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. announced during the ribbon cutting ceremony last week that it will be providing an \$84,000 grant for these future business leaders.

“thINCubator provides people, programs, and a place to accelerate the ideas of entrepreneurs,” says John Liddy, Entrepreneur in Residence at Mohawk Valley Community College and Founding Director of thINCubator. Modeled after other successful accelerators, thINCubator has secured support from dozens of community mentors. Mentors will work with six student teams during a 14-week program, helping students refine and pitch their business ideas. A second cohort of teams will start this summer.

Among the inaugural teams are a cyber-services firm led by two MVCC students, a husband-and-wife team of SUNY IT alumni with a device that promotes medication adherence, and an MVCC student-led team with a mobile app for local buyer loyalty. These entrepreneurs will work closely with thINCubator mentors led by Liddy. Liddy is a nationally recognized expert in using higher education as a catalyst for local economic development.

“The sandbox concept of thINCubator is meant to create a hotbed of new business ideas and a network of new connections across the local economy,” Liddy says. “The goal of thINCubator is to establish a stronger startup ecosystem of entrepreneurs who will help revitalize our economy and put more Mohawk Valley residents to work in rewarding careers.”

“We want to amplify our collective impact on the local economy,” says MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D. “We know the colleges’ role in providing a trained workforce across the country in communities just like ours. Colleges, particularly community colleges, are helping to create the workforce by supporting startup ecosystems. ... For an ecosystem to fully develop, entrepreneurs must be at the heart of it. Entrepreneurs



will give it the renewable energy it needs to flourish and the thINCubator gives us an opportunity to grow roots.”

The program aligns with entrepreneurship-boosting goals of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council and enjoys administrative support from MVCC and other local colleges and universities. Significant financial support is provided by the MVCC Foundation, Empire State Development Council, Workforce Development Institute, Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc., and the Coleman Foundation.

Participating entrepreneurs have access to business and entrepreneurship courses taught by MVCC, as well as mentorship from experts in business law, information technology, finance, and other relevant fields. They receive startup perks such as Rackspace Web and IT support, and work toward pitching their businesses to venture capitalists.

“The business climate is picking up steam, for both existing businesses and new ventures, and thINCubator will be a place where they can come together and maximize their connections,” added Dr. VanWagoner. “The sandbox concept is enjoying strong support from the business and non-profit sectors, as they recognize its potential to create even more economic momentum and good jobs for people in our region.”

thINCubator’s launch builds on recent successes such as MVCC’s Young Entrepreneurs Academy, new entrepreneurship degree and certificate programs at MVCC, the establishment of the Quad C at SUNYIT’s campus, Mohawk Valley EDGE’s EDGEducation series, and significant efforts from the private sector to redevelop business-friendly corridors in and around Utica.

To learn more about the thINCubator, call Liddy at 560-6622, or e-mail [john@johnliddy.com](mailto:john@johnliddy.com).

# Honoring Employees for Years of Service

After attending Onondaga Community College, graduating summa cum laude from Le Moyne College, and receiving her Master's and Ph.D. degrees from Syracuse University, where she was both a teaching assistant and a research assistant, Sarah Coleman set a goal of teaching at every college and university within a 50 mile radius of Syracuse.

Dr. Coleman made it to almost every school, teaching at Hobart, Le Moyne, OCC, SUNY IT, Syracuse University School of Social Work MSW program in both Syracuse and Utica, and finally MVCC. Little did she know when she first started at MVCC that she would spend the next 25 years here, commuting every day from Syracuse. She was recently recognized by President Randall VanWagoner, Vice President Maryrose Eannace, and Dean Marianne Buttenschon for her 25 years of service at MVCC.

In her tenure at MVCC, Dr. Coleman has been involved in a number of new initiatives. She was one of the first instructors to teach a new course called Freshman Seminar on an experimental basis. Eventually this course evolved into our current College Seminar, and was also the vehicle for the delivery of diversity education.

About the same time that College Seminar was being institutionalized, MVCC also sought to establish student competencies. Dr. Coleman chaired this committee which administered a survey to all instructors and every member of program advisory boards in order to determine the skills MVCC graduates should have in the employment market place. As a result, four competencies were identified and steps taken to embed instructional opportunities in these competencies within MVCC curricula.

Freshman/College seminar became the course responsible for addressing the competency, "the ability to work well with others". At the same time, the population of Utica was rapidly changing due to the influx of immigrants from around the world, and the college mission statement morphed into one which stressed "the ability to work with diverse populations." And then Middle States showed up for its five year review and took MVCC to task for not adequately addressing the goals espoused in the mission statement, especially the diversity goal.

Former President Michael Schafer challenged the college community to develop a plan to address diversity and global view, and on one of her long drives back to Syracuse, Dr. Coleman came up with the idea of a DGV initiative that would require students to complete a number of tasks. She and Professor Emerita Beverly Quist then worked together to present a formal plan to the college community, which was reviewed by President Schafer and referred back to Coleman and Quist for further work. The pair revised and developed a workable plan, a DGV committee was established and Coleman and Quist co-chaired it until Coleman was asked to chair a Middle States work committee.

Some time later, Quist stepped down as chair, Dr. Sandra Engel took over chair, but not for long, as she was asked to act as VP of instruction when then-VP Dan Larsen resigned. Having completed her work for the Middle States visit, Dr. Coleman stepped back into the role of chair of DGV. The DGV committee was made up of a wonderful group of individuals dedicated to promoting the DGV agenda. And the committee did it! DGV is now an integral part of education at MVCC and has received national recognition for its innovative approach to teaching diversity and global view.

Dr. Coleman has also chaired a number of search committees, and served on innumerable other searches. She has also developed new courses including the Sociology of Religion and Research Methods, consulted on the Sociology of Deaf Culture,



as well as developing new programs including Public Policy and a certificate in Forensic Photography (which we no longer offer due to course scheduling difficulties.) She was also one of the first non-computer instructors to require the use of computers in a course. As the recipient of a National Science Foundation Scholarship to attend a summer workshop at Harvard University, Dr. Coleman was able to use this experience and the software obtained in her Marriage and Family course. For most of her students it was their very first experience with computers. (She still possesses a Hollerith card and an MS-DOS disk!) She continues to use Blackboard supplements in all her courses even though now most of her students know as much, if not more, about computers than she does. Finally, as one of the "early innovators" at MVCC, Sarah was also one of the first to participate in the Learning Community program. This was a unique opportunity the help students form lasting bonds of support for each other within a learning environment.

Aside from academics Sarah has also served the college in other ways. She has participated as a food server in every "Midnight Breakfast" for students, she was advisor for the now defunct "Hackey Sack club", and twice she accompanied students in the CJ club to NYC for a ride-along with the NYPD. She also provided housing for a student for a semester when housing that the student could afford was not available.

Although Dr. Coleman was never able to complete her goal of teaching at every college and university within 50 miles of Syracuse, she has not regretted it. Her experience at MVCC has been a most rewarding career choice. Sarah's initial college experience at OCC taught her the value of community colleges and she has been thankful over the years that she has had the opportunity to share this belief with her students at MVCC. Dr. Coleman has now moved to Utica and lives within walking distance from campus. No more long, dangerous drives in the winter from Syracuse, and she can always find a place to park! And she has even learned to like tomato pie!!!!

**Submit information for Communitas  
to [rhaubert@mvcc.edu](mailto:rhaubert@mvcc.edu)**

# George shares passion for yoga

As the Director of Child Care Services at the College, Jeri George is all about changing and molding lives. Changing the lives of toddlers, the lives of the students whose children she is responsible for, and for the past decade her own life, George has earned the certification for Hatha Yoga.

“Yoga has transformed my life and I see this journey incessantly evolving,” said George, whose devotion to yoga instruction began in 2004.

Staying fit and exercise are nothing new to George, as she has been teaching a variety of group fitness classes for more than 20 years. It was later in life on this journey for fitness that she discovered the joy of serving others as a yoga instructor.

“I believe everyone can practice yoga. I want students to feel welcomed, inspired and a sense of freedom when they are on their mats,” says George, who has been hosting yoga workshops during the Summer Institute and January Institute for the past four years.

Her enjoyment of yoga turned into a passion five years ago when on a retreat with a group of friends. It was during that weekend she decided to pursue the certification in Hatha Yoga, which includes 240 hours of instruction over the five-year journey. As an employee at MVCC, it has afforded her the opportunity to introduce young adults to the practice of yoga.

She has taught multiple PE 158 (Basic Yoga) classes at MVCC and is currently teaching at The Shine Studio during the evenings. George serves on the College’s Wellness Committee and teaches a yoga course Tuesday evenings from 5:15-6:30 p.m. This Tuesday evening class is free to MVCC employees and students.

“The class fills right up and it is about half employees and half students,” said George, as mats are provided for those interested. “The students are those who took the PE 158 course with me and they want to continue to learn the benefits of yoga. Together we will creatively open our mind and bodies to new experiences, to growth.”



George is moving forward with her training to achieve the next level of instructor certification. Over the next five years, she will continue to accumulate instructor hours and work on a research project, but where the first level was on technique and methods, this phase will focus on philosophy and history of the art.

“I am so grateful to the many yogis that have inspired me along the way - Desiree Rumbaugh, Baron Baptiste, and to many local instructors in our community,” concluded George.

# Kids Walk and Educational Expo

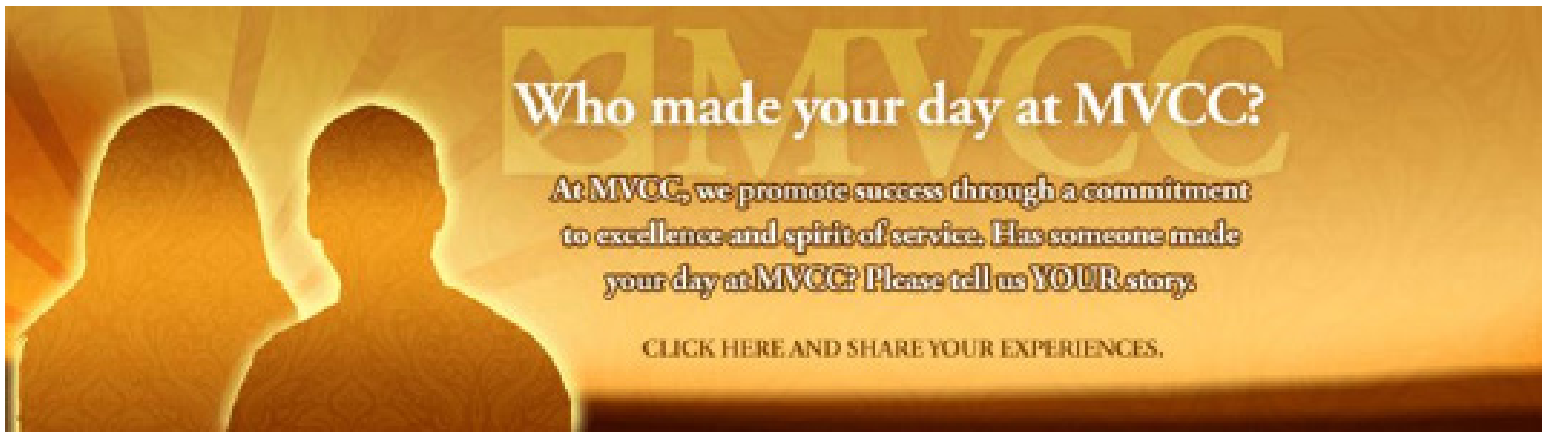
The American Heart Association will hold its 14th Annual Kids Walk and Educational Expo on Sunday, February 9, from noon to 3 p.m. in the Jorgensen Athletic/Event Center on the Utica Campus.

Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., which is free and open to the public. Local vendors will appear on Garden Street and Eat Street (food sampling and garden tips), plus there will be vendors with interactive exhibits related to health, nutrition, and physical activities for kids and parent.

The kids will be greeted by MVCC’s Mo Hawk while other activities will include a Heart Obstacle Course, Child ID Unit, and Fitness/Wellness Screenings.

The schedule of events will be:

- 12:15-12:30 p.m.: Jump Rope Challenge
- 12:30-12:45 p.m.: Zumba Demo
- 12:45-1 p.m.: Center Stage Dance Studio
- 1-1:15 p.m.: CPR Flash Mob
- 1:15-1:30 p.m.: S-Dot Dance
- 1:30-1:45 p.m.: Poster Contest Winners Announced
- 2 p.m.: Welcome, Start and National Anthem
- 2:15-2:30 p.m.: Warm Ups with “Hungry Mungry” Character
- 2:30-2:45 p.m.: 1 Mile Walk
- 3:00 p.m.: Bike Winner Announced/Expo Ends



# MVCC Employees Making a Difference!

The Employee Enrichment Council invites and encourages you to take advantage of “Who Made Your Day at MVCC?” The WMYD project, which has been running since November 2013, is a great way to acknowledge the important work we all do here at MVCC.

Here are the individuals who received “Who Made Your Day at MVCC?” recognitions in the month of January:

Ryan Barsuch  
 Sharon Benedetto  
 Erica Carrock  
 Sandy Cummings  
 Bill Dustin  
 Joe Fiorenza

Jennifer Krohn  
 Jody Marchetta  
 Bob Miller  
 Brian Molinaro  
 Morris Pearson

And here’s some of the great things that were said about them:

“...No matter what’s going on with him, good or bad, he always carry a smile.”

“...He was able to guide us and point us in the right direction. He did it so quickly and with the spirit of helping. It was an issue that seemed insurmountable at first and ended with a simple solution.”

“...My knight in shining armor appeared. He unlocked the car and retrieved my handbag.”

“...stopped what he was doing and immediately and came to

make sure everything was cleaned appropriately.”

“...They were always concerned for our patrons safety, making sure we had enough salt on the sidewalks. Both men were constantly hustling to make sure the facilities were clean, and always double checking that we “had everything we needed.”

“...I greatly appreciate him taking the time to meet with me and the student in order to resolve the situation and helping the student to achieve his educational goals.”

Please feel free to visit <http://www2.mvcc.edu/forms/experience> and tell your story. You can also find this rotator on the MVCC website. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences.

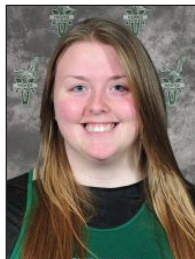
## Two qualify for national championship

With the indoor track season just under way, Mohawk Valley Community College had two athletes qualify the National Junior College Athletic Association’s national championships in New York City.

Stephanie Boucher set a personal best time of 2:22.19 in the 800-meter run to earn this qualification. Boucher is a freshman majoring in Liberal Arts. She graduated from New Hartford High School.

The second athlete who qualified is Nichole Bliss, a Dolgeville native. Bliss three the 20-pound weight a distance of 47 feet, five inches.

The NJCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships will be held at the Armory in New York City the weekend of March 7 and 8.



Bliss



Boucher

## Athlete of the Week

As the 2013-14 indoor track season kicks into high gear, MVCC has already had an athlete qualify for the National Junior College Athletic Association’s national championship.

Stephanie Boucher set a personal best time of 2:22.19 in the 800-meter run to earn this qualification. This performance earned Boucher the MVCC Athlete of the Week honor for the week ending January 26.

Boucher will compete the NJCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships to be held at the Armory in New York City.

Boucher is a freshman who is a Liberal Arts major. She graduated from New Hartford High School.