

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



NORWALK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NORWALK COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION



 **Norwalk Community College**



**Norwalk Community College** aspires to create a culture of inclusion and excellence through **intellectual inquiry, open dialogue, multi-cultural awareness, and lifelong learning. By embracing the diverse needs of our students,** faculty, staff, and community, the college will **strive to provide an environment** in which individuals are **empowered to achieve their highest potential.** — NCC Vision Statement

MESSAGE FROM  
NORWALK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The moment a student walks through the doors of NCC, they become an integral part of our community. By enrolling, they have made the decision to welcome us into their lives and make NCC a part of their future.

For the past 60 years, NCC has been encouraging our students to challenge themselves and give back to the community that has supported them throughout their journey. This year, more than ever, I witnessed NCC's power in supporting students from various backgrounds and encouraging them to persevere through life's challenges.

When NCC first opened in 1961, it held classes in Norwalk's Brien McMahon High School, utilizing over 30 classrooms to accommodate our students. Sharing a facility with an already existing high school was no easy task, yet the students overcame obstacles that might have prevented them from achieving their goal of a college degree.

As we continued to deal with the COVID pandemic, we knew the plan to support our students would change. As with the class of 1961, we had to get creative in our outreach; from online and distance learning to holding campus events virtually, our community had to overcome many obstacles to support our students. In spite of the limitations on how we could interact, the NCC spirit continued to shine, especially during our 60th Anniversary.

Earlier in the year, I met with students to find out how they would like to celebrate the anniversary year. Many students expressed interest in reconnecting in-person with folks they were unable to commune with during the pandemic. Because COVID interrupted so many of life's milestones, our students were unable to participate in long awaited events such as their high school proms. Together with the Student Activities Office,

NCC created our first ever semi-formal event, held at the Norwalk Inn. Students, faculty, and staff were given the opportunity to "dress to impress" while enjoying each other's company away from the stress of classwork.

In honor of our 60th Anniversary, NCC held the #60DaysOfService campaign, which challenged our faculty, staff, and students to complete 600 hours of community service with neighboring partners and organizations. We also worked to continue community support through some of the more difficult times. When news broke of the unrest in Ukraine, NCC's Committee for Diversity and Inclusion immediately worked on ways to support our Ukrainian community and all those affected. NCC made it its mission to provide a refuge for our impacted students through efforts to educate students on the crisis, invite community members to share their stories, and offer ongoing support to our students.

NCC has supported students in and out of the classroom for the past 60 years by giving them the tools necessary to succeed through education and personal enrichment. And today, NCC's influence has spread further than just our city. Welcoming students from over 50 countries who speak over 70 languages, we have furthered our mission to embrace diversity and inspire excellence.

I am so proud of the work NCC has done over these 60 years and look forward to the continuing success of our students for many years to come!



**Cheryl C. De Vonish, J.D.**

*Chief Executive Officer,  
Norwalk Community College*



*Cheryl De Vonish, J.D.*

MESSAGE FROM  
THE NCC FOUNDATION

At the Foundation, we often work with NCC students understanding that we may never see the full impact it has on their journey. It is always a welcome surprise when alumni reach out with a “thank you,” and share their achievements with us.

One day last spring, we had an unexpected visit from Michael L. when he appeared in the Foundation doorway and shared that he had just graduated from UCONN and he wanted to thank us for changing the course of his life. We quickly assumed Michael was a grateful scholarship recipient. Instead, he shared that he and his parents were suddenly unemployed during the earliest months of COVID in 2020, just days from his NCC graduation. His family had no way to pay their rent, and he reached out to the Foundation for help. Michael received immediate emergency relief in the form of one month of rent paid directly to his landlord. Grateful and exuberant, he came back to NCC to share his accomplishments with us. And while it is nice to know that one rent check made such a difference to him, it is also a very stark reminder that one rent check is sometimes the difference between a drop out and a bachelor’s degree.

Norwalk Community College Foundation donors and funders transformed the lives of hundreds of Michaels last year. In the pages that follow, we are pleased to share with you a few stories of our impressive NCC students, so you get a chance to see the impact of the work your generosity makes possible.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the Foundation responded to student needs by funding critical areas of support in line with the strategic priorities of the College. Our support this year included funding the UPLIFT program for men of color at NCC, expanding scholarship eligibility to reach

more students in need, funding emergency assistance, Summer Bridge enrichment for key gateway courses, and paid internships. We were delighted to partner with FactSet and Bridgewater Associates to build networking and job skills for our students through mentorships and paid internships.

Our investments are directed towards the areas of greatest student need, prioritizing initiatives that increase persistence, retention, and graduation rates.

With your generous support, we are able to support NCC students in innovative and impactful ways. We are proud of the grit and persistence of our students. We are also grateful for all of you, our supporters, who have made it possible. Please know that your gifts make a tremendous difference for NCC students. We appreciate each and every one of you!

**Carrie L. Bernier, J.D.**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer,  
Norwalk Community College Foundation*

**George A. Reilly**  
*Chair, Board of Directors,  
Norwalk Community College Foundation*



*Carrie Bernier, J.D.*



*George Reilly*



NORWALK

COMMUNITY

COLLEGE

# NCC CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



In 1961, Dr. Harry Becker arrived in Norwalk with a vision of creating a “college for the people.” While he worked tirelessly to build a well-functioning and accredited community college, Dr. Becker’s main priority was creating the highest level of educational programming in the state. As a result of his efforts, Norwalk Community College became the first public, two-year college established in Connecticut. Sixty years later, NCC honors Dr. Becker’s legacy by continuing to offer high-quality education for its students.

NCC recognized the College’s 60th Anniversary with a kick-off event in the fall. Staff and faculty enjoyed a 1960’s-themed celebration with groovy music and decorations, and food reminiscent of the era. Attendees shared memories and stories from their earlier years at NCC. Historic images from NCC’s past 60 years were on display including photos of students, staff, faculty, facilities, yearbook pages, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia.

Serving as the first official event for all community members to celebrate the 60th Anniversary, NCC hosted its 2021 Fall Festival and Fresh Check Day in October. In collaboration with Counseling Services and Student Activities, the celebration included music, food, and educational activities and booths supporting mental health. The event had yoga classes, coloring stations, therapy dogs, rock painting, and many other activities for students to de-stress and enjoy the weather.

Throughout the months of November and December, NCC held the #60DaysOfService challenge, which tasked students, faculty, and staff to complete a total of 600 community service hours. On-campus service opportunities were provided for those interested in taking part in the challenge, but the NCC community was encouraged to extend their hand to outside organizations. The challenge was created to provide an opportunity for NCC students, faculty, and staff to give back to their community and pay forward the service that NCC provides for them. The challenge was a huge success, as the NCC community worked throughout the holiday months and volunteered over 700 hours of service at the College and various Connecticut organizations.

On April 29, NCC held its first ever semi-formal event to celebrate the end of the academic year and NCC’s anniversary. Hosted by Student Activities and held at the nearby Norwalk Inn, the event was open to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who wanted to join in the celebration. The event also honored the work our clubs and organizations have done throughout the year; the Handmade Creations Club was awarded Club of the Year while Kiran Somaya, Director of the Career Development and Experiential Learning Center, won Club Advisor of the Year.



*CSCU President Terrence Cheng (left) and NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish (right) at the 2021 Fall Festival*



*Student volunteers at Fresh Check Day*



*Wellness Counselor Wendy Mendes at the 60th Anniversary kick-off event*

Jessica Vargas, Interim Director of Student Activities hopes the semi-formal becomes an annual event for NCC. “After a difficult year, students wanted to be with their friends and have fun. Some students may not have had the opportunity to attend a high school prom or formal event like this before. We want them to feel a sense of community outside of a classroom setting.”

Wrapping up the academic year and 60th Anniversary celebrations, the 2022 Commencement ceremony welcomed and honored 60 NCC alumni who embody the mission and values of the College. These alumni were chosen by nomination from faculty and staff for their academic and professional success after leaving NCC. The goal in highlighting these 60 alumni was not only to honor their achievements but to show the graduating class the success one can achieve after NCC. Among the names of honored alumni were the current Mayor, Harry Rilling, and First Lady of Norwalk, Lucia Rilling (class of 2014); President and CEO of Family Centers, Robert Arnold (class of 1972); and Director of Institutional Research at NCC, Rachael DiPietro (class of 2012).

Since its opening in 1961, NCC has served over 25,000 students and awarded over 27,000 credentials towards degrees or certificates. These students have also continued their education, with over 1,000 students transferring to a four-year institution to complete their bachelor’s degree within the past three years alone. NCC credits its students for these 60 years of ongoing success and their commitment to the community.



*Rebecca Wilson, class of 1997 (center), was one of 60 alumni honored at the 2022 Commencement. Rebecca is District Coordinator for College & Career Readiness and School Counselor Services at Stamford Public Schools, as well as adjunct professor at NCC. Seated with her is (left) Dr. Thomas McBryde, Jr., Deputy Superintendent of Excellence, Equity, and Inclusion for Norwalk Public Schools, and (right) Dr. Monette Ferguson, Executive Director, Alliance for Community Empowerment.*



*A slide show of 60 alumni was displayed on the digital monitors during the Commencement ceremony.*



*Students celebrated at the semi-formal event held in the spring.*



**NCC has supported students** in and out of the classroom **for the past 60 years** by giving them **the tools necessary to succeed through education and personal enrichment** ... I am so **proud of the work NCC has done** ... and **look forward to the continuing success of our students for many years to come!** — NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish

# OPPORTUNITIES IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Career Development and Experiential Learning Center at NCC works to bridge the gap between a student's interests in the classroom and how that translates into a career. "Companies are always looking for talented individuals to join their team," says Kiran Somaya, Director of Career Development and Experiential Learning Center. "Our job at the Center is to look at students' overall interests and work to find them positions that fit their talent." Throughout the year, the Career Development and Experiential Learning Center created several career events for current NCC students and alumni to network with businesses and gain valuable skills for job searching.

Following COVID's devastating and long-lasting impact on the job market, networking and career events are more important than ever. The Center worked to bring together businesses seeking staff and students who needed work and experience. These career events were helpful not only for students who needed a job, but for employers who have felt the effects of a troubled job market.

In March, a Career Expo was held for students and alumni with over 40 participating organizations from banking, allied health, architectural engineering, and non-profits, to food management across multiple sectors and fields of interest. The event spread across the West Campus atrium and cafeteria, "This was the first job fair that I ever attended," said Jessica Joseph, a Liberal Arts & Sciences student at NCC. "Everyone was so nice, and the companies were so interesting to talk to... I felt so confident going in and learning more about the amazing opportunities that are nearby."

The event offered businesses the opportunity to meet with students and speak about their company and its needs; students were also encouraged to bring resumes as they



*Community Workforce Readiness Day provided opportunities for attendees to sharpen their interview skills.*



*Career Development & Experiential Learning Center Director Kiran Somaya (right) advises a student.*

spoke with potential employers and discussed their skills. More than 130 students attended the Career Expo and over 50 were offered follow-up interviews with employers after the event. Seventeen students reported to have subsequently received job offers.

Partnering with the Greater Norwalk Chamber and the Norwalk Leadership

Institute, NCC also held a free Community Workforce Readiness Day in April that was open to NCC students and alumni as well as members of the public. As part of the Center's mission to serve the greater Norwalk community, the event featured a series of workshops focusing on resume building, interviewing skills, dressing for success, and networking skills, each designed to help participants sharpen important job skills and gain the confidence needed to make a career change or enter the workforce.

Speaking about the event, NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish said, "The goal is to provide our community members with the tools and resources to obtain a competitive edge when entering or returning to the job market." With the help of the Career Center, community members are empowered with all the necessary tools to stand out in the job market and gain the confidence needed when applying.

At the Nursing and Allied Health career event held in May, students and alumni took advantage of the opportunity to meet with local major hospitals and healthcare providers from across the state. On-site interviews and networking opportunities were held by Stamford Health System, Hartford Healthcare, Yale New-Haven Health, Nuvance Health, and allied health institutions including Family and Children's Agency, DaVita, The Greens at Greenwich, Ortho Connecticut, and Bridges by Epoch. Students were given the ability to meet, interview, and even be hired on the spot if the organizations felt the student was the right fit for the position. The event was incredibly successful with more than 55 students attending. Fifteen students reported to have been offered positions of employment.

The Career Development and Experiential Learning Center plans workshops and hosts events throughout the academic year to help motivated students and alumni overcome barriers they might encounter in the job search process. The Center builds relationships with local corporate and industry partners to ensure NCC students have every opportunity to achieve gainful employment in fields and industries related to their coursework and interests.



Students met with representatives of area hospitals at the Nursing and Allied Health event.

## A New Paid Internship at FactSet

This year, a new door opened for computer science students at NCC. FactSet, a data and software solutions company with its global headquarters in Norwalk, historically required a minimum of a bachelor's degree for entry level employment. However, when an NCCF Board Director introduced FactSet CEO Phil Snow to the NCC Foundation in the fall, an enthusiastic partnership was forged. This connection resulted in the first NCC paid internships at FactSet, from January to May.

In June of 2022, the NCC Foundation expanded the relationship with FactSet by nominating Phil Snow to join its Board of Directors. Of the new internship opportunity, Phil Snow said, "FactSet is proud to partner with Norwalk Community College to support its students as they pursue their career goals. We have been impressed with the caliber of students who participated in our new internship program, which aims to provide NCC students with hands-on work experience and the opportunity to build new skills. FactSet is committed to making a positive impact on the communities in which we operate, and we look forward to expanding our relationship with NCC by partnering with faculty to design curriculums that best prepare students for careers in technology."

The program will scale next year to include more interns. The Foundation and College were excited to learn from FactSet that the internship program was a success, and that they intend to expand the workforce training opportunities for the 2022-23 academic year to include NCC business and finance majors.

Internships have long been a fruitful path to full-time employment for bachelor's degree students. These positions were



NCC student and FactSet intern Damian Winnik in his home office

often beyond the reach of even the highest-achieving NCC students graduating with associate degrees. High-paying summer internships, a crucial factor in securing one's first professional job, have traditionally resulted from well-heeled networks of friends and family acquaintances or college career centers with deep and longstanding relationships. With vision and a commitment to establishing high-paying internship opportunities with the promise of employment for successful candidates, FactSet's team worked diligently with the NCC Foundation, NCC's Dean of Academic Affairs Tony Pepper, and NCC's Computer Science Department Chair Tom Duffy to break new ground. The resulting partnership has demonstrated the strength of the Foundation's community

relationships and the agility of the College and Foundation to carve new pathways of opportunity for students.

In January, two students began their internships at FactSet in software engineering opportunities. Damian Winnik was one of the interns. Of the program, he stated, "Due to everything I experienced at FactSet, I would say my time there was career defining. I have so much to work on, but the time with the team has only motivated me to strive for more. Even with unlimited choices, I couldn't have asked for a better space to work and learn."





**Lexi Kleinman**  
*From NCC to Yale University*

At 28 years old, Alexandra (Lexi) Kleinman may not be the typical college student government president. She is representative of a growing trend of adults returning to school, or, like Lexi, seeking higher education for the first time as a way to improve or change their circumstances. “The pandemic happened, and when I lost my job like so many others, I thought it would be temporary, so I decided to sign up for online classes. I was planning on staying for maybe a semester, just to keep busy, but I fell in love with school and learning,” she said. “Before I started at NCC, my life was kind of small, and I had very limited opportunities in terms of what my life could look like. Two years later and I am leaving NCC with infinite possibilities.”

Kleinman, who graduated from NCC in May with an associate degree in General Studies, was recently accepted into the Eli Whitney Program at Yale University, for

the fall of 2022. The program welcomes non-traditional students with exceptional backgrounds and aspirations. “I’ve always enjoyed learning new things, but I never stepped outside of what I thought I’d enjoy learning. I was able to take the risk of signing up for a class that wasn’t just going to be challenging to me intellectually, but also emotionally. Taking those chances transformed who I am and the ways I interact with the world around me.”

Taking a full-load of classes while working full-time, Lexi was able to earn her degree in two years, thanks to summer and winter classes; she said since she couldn’t take time off from work, she spread her class load throughout the year. “The aid that I got from the NCC Foundation helped me devote more time to my studies. I don’t know if the donors know how much of an impact this has had on my life, the fact that I don’t have to pay for those classes. It saves so many paychecks.”

She said that NCC staff and faculty have been extremely supportive of her personal and professional goals. This has been especially meaningful to her. As she prepares to transfer to Yale University, she answered the question, “What comes next?” by saying that while she doesn’t know where her career will land, “what makes me happy every day has been learning and helping others to learn, especially tutoring and working with other students. I don’t know exactly what’s next, but I never want to stop working with others in a learning environment.”

**Hanane Mahla**  
*From ESL to Summa Cum Laude*

When Hanane Mahla first came to the United States from Morocco in 2007, she spoke very little English. She moved here to join her husband, and had her first child, a son, within the first year. Hanane knew she needed to learn English, but found it challenging without having family in this country. However, she took free ESL courses at the Norwalk Library, read a lot, watched television to pick



up more of the language, and started working at a minimum-wage job. Her English had been improving but after her daughter was born she wanted to expand her language skills. So in 2017, after 10 years in America, she enrolled in ESL classes at NCC.

The ESL faculty encouraged her to have her transcripts from the Accounting degree she earned in Morocco transferred to NCC, and she did. She decided to take a business class. When she finished all of her ESL classes, she enrolled in classes and declared a major, as her professors urged her to do.

Hanane took her first class with Professor Romeo, and she thoroughly enjoyed it. Studying at NCC what she had studied in Morocco brought her happiness. She loved learning new things and recalling what she had already learned. Her professor was supportive and encouraging and she did well in her first class, passing with an A. “That is how my journey began,” she said.

NCC helped Hanane achieve her goals by making education accessible. “It is a good education at a good cost. The support you receive from professors and staff, and from the different services—the Career Center, Advising, Tutoring, and more—is so important. This is what I really love about education here at NCC,” she said. “They really make you believe in yourself! Not everyone walks into this building believing in their abilities. The faculty help you discover what you can do.”

Last fall, Professor Roe suggested she take a part-time Accounting internship at the NCC Foundation. She did need an internship during her last semester to give her work experience in her field of study, and it proved to be a perfect fit. “Upon graduation, I was hired by the Foundation to work part-time as a bookkeeper,” Hanane said. “My next step

is enrolling in Western Connecticut State University to earn my bachelor’s degree. I know if I did not enroll at NCC, my children might never have witnessed me walking across a stage to accept a college degree, and heard my name called—*Hanane Mahla, Summa Cum Laude, Accounting.*”



### **Porschia Turner** *No One Does This Alone*

Porschia Turner, NCC ’11, UCONN ’13, has climbed the corporate ladder at People’s United Bank from teller to vice president. While proud of her hard work, determination, and accomplishments, she’s adamant that she didn’t get there by herself.

When Porschia was preparing to graduate from high school, she knew she would go to college, but didn’t know how she would pay for it. “I wanted to go to Hampton University, an Historically Black College (HBCU), but I looked around me, and no one had money. It was kind of a gut punch,” she says. Porschia had been told all her life that “you have to go to college.” She was 17, working two jobs, and it just didn’t seem possible. But she was determined and made her plans known

to everyone she knew: “I am going to NCC to earn credits and save money so can I pay my own way.”

Porschia found help: her grandmother agreed to pay for her NCC tuition and books; a colleague helped her get a full-time job at a local People’s United Bank branch; and a cousin alerted her to a low-income home-ownership program that enabled her to buy instead of rent. She credits her early exposure to banking and personal finance with increasing her understanding of how to improve her economic circumstance; seeing how other people managed their money helped her access educational and social resources that advanced her own opportunities. “I didn’t really know at the time that I was ‘networking,’ but I made sure that everyone knew my goals and intentions,” Porschia said. “You never know who may be able to help you achieve your goals. Planting that seed, it’s amazing how others can help you make it grow.”

Porschia took some time off from school when her daughter was born, but returned to NCC determined to graduate and transfer to a four-year school. “I received a letter that promoted FESP (Family Economic Security Program), a new program at NCC funded by the Foundation,” Porschia remembers, which was designed to help single parents with wraparound financial, academic, personal, and professional coaching. “I applied on a whim,” she said, “and it ended up being such an empowering program, not just for the financial support but for all of the different workshops offered that brought so many new connections. I made so many friends—women and men who had similar experiences and were struggling on my same journey.” After FESP, upon her graduation from NCC, Porschia also received a transfer scholarship

from the Foundation to attend the University of Connecticut.

This summer, Porschia saw her daughter off to college, to an HBCU, and for Porschia, “It is full circle! I made the decision to be a parent, and to strive to succeed, and I am so proud of the young woman I have raised and the life I have been able to give her.”

With her empty-nest free time, Porschia is coming back to NCC this fall, taking a Continuing Education class in design, to enrich her interior design interests. She is joining the NCC Foundation’s Marketing Committee and has volunteered to provide mentorship and advice for current Foundation scholars in coaching programs.

*“The opportunities at NCC were transformational for me personally, professionally, and economically. I would love to bring that networking power back to current students through my role as a proud NCC Alumna and Norwalk resident.”*

— Porschia Turner



## Rachael and Adam DiPietro A Family Affair

Rachael and Adam DiPietro's journey at NCC was anything but easy. Through full-time jobs, raising children, and facing unexpected obstacles, they found themselves navigating some of life's toughest challenges while balancing their own educational and professional careers.

Rachael embarked on her academic path at Muhlenberg College in 2002 and faced the same struggles that so many first-year students experience. Although her parents were both college graduates and gave her the tools to succeed, she found the experience too difficult and eventually failed out of college. Rachael was disappointed but felt it

was necessary to continue her education.

In 2008, Rachael registered at NCC intent on obtaining an associate degree, but this posed challenges as well. While adjusting to a new environment, she was now managing classes and a full-time job. During her first semester, Rachael failed her classes, but this time she was not going to be deterred from completing her education. She took some time off and in 2010, Rachael enrolled in NCC's Legal Assistant Certificate Program, focusing on a shorter, certificate-based program rather than an associate degree.

"This was my second chance, and even though I messed up, I wouldn't let that define me," says Rachael. "Fortunately, some faculty at NCC encouraged me to become more active in the campus community and take

advantage of all the supportive resources here." She joined the Student Government Association and took on work-study positions. Rachael found confidence through new friendships, new experiences, and a sense of meaning unique at a community college. She finally began excelling in her classes and was able to transfer to Trinity College in Hartford. With the Foundation's LEAP and PTK scholarships, she was able to complete her bachelor's degree debt-free and went on to earn her master's degree at Teacher's College, Columbia University.

After completing her education, Rachael came back to NCC in an AmeriCorps VISTA Program in 2014 where she helped to create NCC's Food Pantry, a free resource for students to alleviate the barriers and challenges of food insecurity. Rachael stated, "it was so important for me to give back to a community that changed my life." She continued to work at NCC, first as a Research Specialist, then as the Title V Coordinator, and currently, as the Director of Institutional Research.

Adam's journey at NCC proved to be a much different experience than Rachael's. After Rachael began working at NCC, Adam felt it was time for a change in his professional career. He was working as a custom cabinet maker for many years but was laid off due to the economy and in 2017, he began developmental courses at NCC to broaden his skillset and pursue a new career path.

The first in his family to attend college, Adam was immediately successful at NCC and found his passion in the healthcare field. While attending classes and working towards completing his nursing degree prerequisites, Adam was a stay-at-home dad caring for their daughter Ava, born in 2018.

In Fall 2019, the DiPietros found themselves all at NCC: Adam started his work in

the Nursing program, Rachael started her new job as the Title V Coordinator, and Ava was enrolled in the Child Development Lab School (CDLS).

"Running into each other in the hallways while we both pursued our dreams was an amazing feeling. We were together every day," Adam says. "It gave me motivation to continue in my pursuit to help those in need and I knew I found the right path."

In March of 2021, Rachael gave birth to the couple's twin boys Jackson and Noah; however, one son was born with a congenital heart defect and required open heart surgery at five days old. While balancing work, classes, and caring for their children, the DiPietros were spending most of their free time in the ICU.

"We had such a positive support system. When we dropped Ava off at the CDLS, we knew she was in the best hands. It took an immense amount of pressure off us during such a difficult time," says Rachael. Adam witnessed first-hand the difference a nurse can make in a patient's life, and during the nursing pinning ceremony, spoke about the impact the NICU nurses had not only in his work but his family's life as well.

The DiPietros' time at NCC has had a lasting impact beyond just education; the college community has supported them as they work to create the life they want for their family. "NCC will always be home to us," the couple says. "We found a place that not only supported our dreams but also uplifted us during some of the best and worst times of our lives."





# CENTER FOR SCIENCE, HEALTH & WELLNESS **TURNS 10**

While NCC celebrated a milestone anniversary last year, its Center for Science, Health & Wellness (CSHW) celebrated one as well. Last year marked the 10th anniversary of the CSHW, which offers modern, experiential teaching technology, and the highest level of affordable and accessible allied health instruction in Fairfield County.

NCC proudly honors the many outstanding achievements of the CSHW over the past decade. When the Center opened in 2011, it was hailed as a state-of-the-art facility that would provide outstanding healthcare education and training to prepare NCC students for careers in nursing, exercise science, physical therapy, respiratory care, and veterinary technology.

The \$38 million project was an early example of a public-private partnership that benefitted from the support and stewardship of the NCC Foundation and its ability to harness Fairfield County's philanthropic leadership from individuals, corporations, and foundations, to bring the project to fruition. The NCC Foundation spearheaded the campaign and raised nearly \$20 million for equipment, fixtures, program enhancements, and scholarships—the largest single amount raised by a Connecticut community college foundation in the history of the system.

College academic and administrative teams partnered with Norwalk, Greenwich, and Stamford Hospitals to design the state-of-the-art 17-bed hospital simulation unit that includes two nursing labs. The Center also houses the Pitney Bowes Wellness Center, the Exercise Science Laboratory, and updated allied health and science labs. In 2015, the Center became one of the first in the state to include a sim-woman computerized patient mannequin that delivers a baby. Named Victoria, the mannequin exhibits



*NCC's Center for Science, Health & Wellness*



*Nursing students caring for "pregnant" sim-woman Victoria*

pre-programmed contractions and can demonstrate single and multiple births. The addition of Victoria to the NCC Allied Health and Nursing programs gives students a more tangible experience when learning about childbirth and neonatal care.

Norwalk Community College educates more nurses, respiratory therapists, medical assistants, and certified nursing assistants than any other institution in Fairfield County. More than 2,300 NCC graduates from the six CSHW programs have joined the ranks of our local healthcare institutions. Of these, more than 60% were first-time college students, more than half were students of color, and nearly 70% were women.

During the pandemic, the CSHW led the way as NCC responded to the great need for personal protective equipment. NCC's Hospital Simulation Unit loaned three ventilators to area hospitals, along with 15,000 medical gloves, 919 masks, and 130 gowns.

With the critical shortage of healthcare workers, the CSHW is addressing the need and rising to the challenge to ensure that students are well-trained to work in our local hospitals and medical facilities.



*Carrie Bernier gives a tour of the CSHW facilities during the 10th Anniversary celebration.*

## Dedicated Supporters: The Goodnow Family

The Goodnow family has a legacy of philanthropy that supports Norwalk Community College students, especially students in programs at the Center for Science, Health & Wellness. Nonagenarian Ned Goodnow has made funding education at NCC a personal priority in his charitable giving for over 25 years, and is steadfast in his belief that “supporting NCC is a great way to help traditional students as well as older students to receive an education and increase their economic opportunities.” His son Carl agrees, comparing higher education to a road race: “Let’s invest in students. Let’s remove the roadblocks, the impediments, the high hurdles to achieving the goal of an education. Let’s do what we can to make this journey a 100-yard dash to success, not a marathon.”

At the 10th Anniversary celebration of the CSHW in May, Ann S. Mandel, past president of the NCC Foundation Board of Directors and the chairperson of the capital campaign to build the CSHW, bestowed the Center for Science, Health & Wellness Health Care Legacy Award upon her longtime friends Ned and Carl Goodnow. The award recognized their commitment, dedication, and historic contributions that leave a legacy of excellence in supporting the education of healthcare professionals in Fairfield County. This award honored their extraordinary philanthropy and leadership over the past decade that continue to drive support for the allied health programs at Norwalk Community College. The Goodnow family was honored in recognition of their contributions to the building itself, as Carl Goodnow lead the construction of the Center, and also for their long-standing devotion to NCC and the students who



*NCC CEO Cheryl De Vonish (left) with Ned Goodnow (right) and Carl Goodnow (standing, center)*

enroll here. Beyond the incredible success of the building project, the Goodnow family’s personal contributions to the campaign also encouraged participation from other major funders, ensuring the facilities would be outfitted with the best equipment and technologies and remain a meaningful educational facility for decades to come.



*Past NCCF Board President Ann S. Mandel presented the CSHW Health Care Legacy Award to Ned and Carl Goodnow at the CSHW 10th Anniversary event.*

**The NCC Foundation** is dedicated to maintaining the **high-quality, state-of-the-art facilities** of our **Center for Science, Health & Wellness** so that we can **continue to deliver competent and compassionate caregivers** to our community. **With local healthcare institutions experiencing critical shortages of workers,** we are so proud to **train our students to serve the community while they are able to earn a sustainable, living wage.** — Carrie Bernier, NCC Foundation President and CEO

# UPLIFT PROGRAM IN ITS FIRST YEAR OF SUCCESS



Since its official launch in February of 2021, the UPLIFT program has focused on reducing the education equity gap for men of color, specifically African-American and Latino males, who have much lower rates of completing college than their Caucasian peers.

The mission of the UPLIFT program works hand-in-hand with NCC's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. "Many students of color have to overcome racial disparity and discrimination...[they] may experience bias and assumptions about their intelligence and academic capabilities [which] can also lead to alienation, isolation, marginalization, and loneliness," said Denise Rawles-Smith, former Program Coordinator of the UPLIFT program. "Educators today have the power to create cultures of inclusion and offer a safe learning environment for every student."

Within the program, students are given unique guidance and support in five key ways: meetings with a success coach throughout the semester; paid internships in their field of interest; routine progress reports from professors; weekly/bi-weekly meetings with assigned mentors; and training workshops and events in areas such as time management, leadership, and finance.

NCC Accounting Professor and UPLIFT mentor, Dr. James Page, says that it's important to show these students that they are valued within their community even before they come to NCC. "The sooner we speak to them and educate them on the opportunities that exist beyond their current situation, the sooner we can prepare them for success and for their future."

For UPLIFT, mentors are an incredibly important part of the success of its students

and the program itself. These mentors, assigned to students based on their major and career interests, are current NCC faculty, staff, alumni, or community members who are committed to supporting the students through their own professional experiences. Working with someone with a similar background or interest can develop interpersonal trust and an effective mentoring relationship. At UPLIFT's launch in 2021, there were a total of 19 mentors within the program. By Fall 2022, a total of 24 mentors had signed up to join and offer their experience and knowledge to support the students.

UPLIFT has worked to create opportunities for students throughout their academic, personal, and professional development at NCC. In the 2021-2022 academic year, six NCC students were placed in paid internships throughout NCC and NCC Foundation business offices, giving students the ability to learn important life skills such as professional attire standards, communication, and leaderships skills as well as hard skills like building spreadsheets, project research, meeting deadlines, and customer service. Students were also able to schedule their work hours around their classes, keeping them on campus and providing them with supplemental income to support themselves and/or their families.

During the students' second year with UPLIFT, the program assists in assigning them to internships in businesses within the surrounding community in a field related to their professional interest. The goal of this is to increase professional development and encourage students to engage in community outreach and networking skills.

The UPLIFT program has not only supported its students through their professional journey, but in the work they are currently

doing in the classroom as well. In the Spring of 2022, the average cumulative GPA of UPLIFT students outperformed all men of color and non-men of color who were not part of the program. Additionally, there has been an 84% course completion rate for UPLIFT students, compared to the 74% course completion rate for men of color that are not part of the program.

Data has also shown that students who are part of UPLIFT have remained in good standing with the College; only 8% of UPLIFT students were either on academic probation or suspension compared to 25% of non-UPLIFT men of color for the Spring semester. These numbers indicate that with ongoing mentorship and academic support, men of color can succeed in greater numbers.

Additionally, with the support of the program, 59% of UPLIFT students had significant academic success attaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher compared to only 33% of non-UPLIFT men of color at NCC and 39% of total non-UPLIFT students. Additionally, only 5% of UPLIFT students had a GPA of 2.0 or less, compared to 37% of the non-UPLIFT men of color and 32% total non-UPLIFT. This continued support has created wider opportunities for success for men of color, as four UPLIFT students have graduated from NCC in the Spring of 2021, and nine out of the 12 students eligible to graduate walked across the stage at the Spring 2022 Commencement.

The 2021 New England Board of Higher Education study found that students of color (Black and Hispanic) represented 33.5% of Connecticut's student population but only 9.9% of the state's faculty were Black and/or Hispanic. The study also suggested that men of color are more likely to pursue a college degree if their courses are taught by professors of color. From Fall 2021 to Spring

2022, there has been a 66% increase in student enrollment within the UPLIFT program; clearly students want to be part of a program that is invested in their personal, academic, and professional success.

With ongoing guidance from NCC faculty and staff, UPLIFT students are given a support system to help them succeed in every aspect of their lives. Although UPLIFT is a young program, it is incredibly promising to see how much positive change it has created in students' lives in such a short amount of time. "When we value each other, our students, and our colleagues," says Dr. James Page, "it creates an environment that makes students want to thrive."

The NCC Foundation and external community funders are encouraged by the program's growth and impact. Increasing equity for students of color is a strategic goal for both the College and the Foundation. As the UPLIFT program grows, its impact will continue to improve the outcomes for NCC's male students of color.



*UPLIFT mentor Dr. James Page (left) and former UPLIFT Program Coordinator Denise Rawles-Smith (right)*

## **UPLIFT Internship: Career Experience and So Much More**

Jose Mandujano will often describe himself as a sponge, explaining to anyone who asks that he is willing to absorb everything around him if it will get him closer to his goal of a college degree. Foundation staff can attest to that, as Jose embraced his role as their office intern wholeheartedly and absorbed every bit of knowledge and advice they could offer him last year.

Jose's parents are perfect examples of hardworking immigrants coming to America to advance their family's prospects. As the oldest sibling, although admittedly not a strong student in high school, Jose enrolled at NCC after graduating from Norwalk High School to set a good example for his three younger siblings. His first attempt didn't take, and Jose joined his father working for an irrigation business. He returned to NCC during the pandemic, but found that online classes didn't suit him. When he rejoined campus in the Fall of 2021, Jose joined UPLIFT, and to help with finances and acquire business skills, he accepted a paid internship in the Foundation office.

After "soaking up" some knowledge while working closely with our CFO Kris Yeager, the two developed a strong bond, which led to their UPLIFT mentoring relationship. Through UPLIFT resources like tutoring and advising, Jose was empowered to resolve some academic issues he had. His academic record has improved dramatically and he is slated to graduate in 2023 with a GPA over 3.5.

Over the course of two semesters, Jose became an advocate for others in UPLIFT, and often brought new students to the program. He is a frequent speaker at UPLIFT



*Jose Mandujano (left) with his mentor Kris Yeager, NCC Foundation CFO (right)*

events, and is never shy about offering praise for the program.

When asked what he has gotten from UPLIFT, Jose is adamant—if an opportunity was offered, he took it. He recently spoke to some UPLIFT funders, saying, "I know in my heart that none of my success would have been possible without the help of NCC, UPLIFT, and the Foundation staff. Thank you all so much for everything that this program has taught me; I will be forever grateful. Thank you for advocating for me, believing in me, and sparking my curiosity and passion for my education. I hope to make Norwalk Community College proud, and I hope I will be successful so one day I may become one of the fortunate donors who helps others like I was helped. I will be forever indebted to this school."

**The mission of the Norwalk Community College Foundation** is three-fold: 1) **to raise funds for NCC programs and scholarships;** 2) **to invest, administer, and distribute funds** so that students of all ages continue to **benefit from challenging opportunities for self-improvement and intellectual growth;** and 3) to inspire and engage our community **to share talents and resources.** — NCCF Mission Statement

# NCC FOUNDATION 2021-2022 LEADERSHIP

## Board of Directors Officers

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Rucci Law Group

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The Nielsen Company

G.M. O'Connell, Wilton  
Tango Modem, LLC

Warren Peña, Norwalk  
Modus Park Advisors, LLC



Front (left to right): Gerald Nielsen, Laura Sterner, Vincent Murphy, Livia Barndollar, George Reilly, Deborah McLean, Warren Peña. Back (left to right): Robert Granata, Erin Catapano, Kenneth Bernheim, Susan Weinberger, Philip Snow, Carrie Bernier. Not pictured: Joseph Zimmel, Laura Erickson, Jon Gold, Tara Arnold, Noradeen Farlekas, Vasso Gyftopoulos, Jacqueline Labatt-Simon, G.M. O'Connell, Ester Ramirez-Cepeda.

Ester Ramirez-Cepeda, MD, FAAP,  
Stamford  
Summer Pediatrics

Frederick Philip Snow, Fairfield  
FactSet Research Systems

Laura Ann Sterner, New Canaan  
Point 72

Susan G. Weinberger, EdD, Norwalk  
Mentor Consulting Group

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Carrie L. Bernier, JD  
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Community College Foundation

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Tanisha Tyson, RN  
NCC Faculty Representative

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Melissa Gallaher-Smith  
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Hanane Mahla  
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Eileen McNamara  
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Kris Yeager  
Chief Financial Officer

Agnieszka Zyskowska  
Scholarship Manager

# 2021-2022 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Norwalk Community College Foundation Fiscal Year 2021-2022

(Ended 6/30/22)

The Norwalk Community College Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1965. Over \$3 million was distributed in fiscal year 2021-2022 for scholarships, stipends, programmatic support, and college advancement initiatives.

### Statement of Financial Position

#### Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 5,870,738
Investments	26,579,054
Other Assets	56,075

**Total Assets \$ 32,505,867**

#### Liabilities

Grants Payable	\$ 1,464,103
Other Liabilities	62,447
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 1,526,550</b>

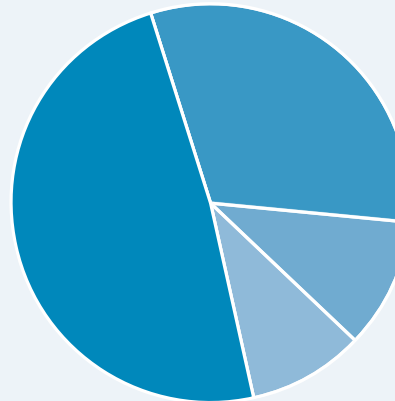
#### Net Assets

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$ 2,413,984
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	28,565,333
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 30,979,317</b>

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 32,505,867**

The Foundation's financial statements were audited by Mayer Hoffman McCann PC. The complete audited financial statements are available on the NCCF website; highlights are shown below.

### \$3.2 Million in Support for Norwalk Community College in 2021-2022



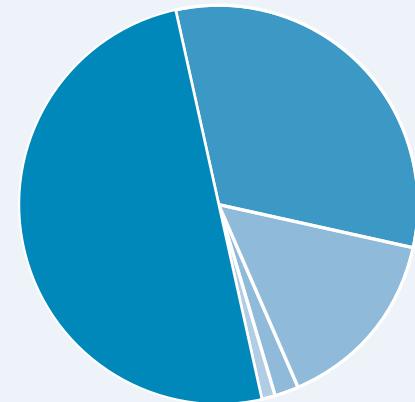
College Advancement	\$ 1,579,739
Scholarships	1,017,767
Development	343,780
Stewardship	299,901
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,241,187</b>

### Investment Policy and Asset Mix

Norwalk Community College Foundation's investment policy states: The primary emphasis of the investment policy is to safeguard and preserve the purchasing power of principal of the NCCF Endowment and to provide a payout to be approved annually by the Finance Committee and the Board. Additionally, a real rate of return on the portfolio is desired. These investment objectives must be achieved within acceptable risk parameters.

The endowment investment return was -13.0% in 2021-22 and the five year average annual investment return was 5.0%.

### Endowment Asset Allocation



US Equities	50%
Fixed Income	32%
International Equities	15%
Cash	2%
Alternatives	1%



## Norwalk Community College Fiscal Year 2021-2022

(Ended 6/30/22)

### Funding Sources

Norwalk Community College received funding through six major sources: the General Fund, tuition and fees, auxiliary services, the Educational Extension Fund, private funds, and federal funds.

The General Fund appropriations are authorized by the State of Connecticut Legislature. Tuition and fees are established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education.

Auxiliary services and the Educational Extension Fund are self-supporting. The revenue from auxiliary services is primarily generated by Child Development Laboratory School fees and bookstore commissions. The Educational Extension Fund revenue is composed of non-credit program fees and summer and winter session fees.

Private and federal funds consist mainly of grants and student financial aid. The Norwalk Community College Foundation actively seeks private grant funding for scholarships, student success initiatives, faculty development, and program support.

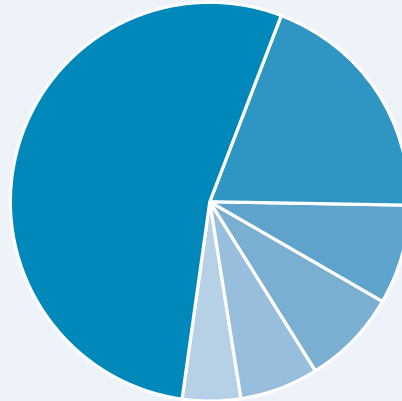
### Tuition

The Board of Regents sets tuition and fees at reasonable levels to promote access to education. In the 2021-2022 academic year, Connecticut residents paid \$599 for a three-credit course, and full-time Connecticut students paid \$2,238 for 12 credits or more. Annual tuition was approximately \$4,476.

Tuition was waived for qualified veterans and seniors aged 62 and older.

### Operations Budget

Norwalk Community College's funding sources provided a \$55.2 million operating budget for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Spending categories are shown below.



Instructional Programs, Library and Academic Support	\$ 29,649,708
Scholarships, Financial Aid	\$ 10,732,206
Student Services	\$ 4,412,250
Campus Facilities Operations	\$ 4,250,394
Institutional Operations	\$ 3,568,513
Auxiliary Operations	\$ 2,537,782
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>\$ 55,150,853</b>



## An Incredible Gift for a Critical Timeline

In January 2022, Norwalk Community College Foundation received a truly transformational \$1 million gift from a donor wishing to remain anonymous, with one unique stipulation attached to the gift: that the funds be fully used within two years to help address the most pressing needs of NCC and its students. To that end, this gift will make possible the enhancement and growth of much needed wrap around and emergency services for students as NCC emerges from COVID-related challenges with a student population that is more vulnerable today than it was pre-pandemic.

“We know that our students are resilient and highly capable, but many of them face increasing challenges with childcare, transportation, housing, access to technology, food insecurity, and mental health. These are all circumstances that must be addressed in conjunction with a full complement of academic support services for our students to be successful,” said Cheryl De Vonish, NCC’s CEO. “We are extremely grateful for this donor’s generosity and understanding of our needs, and we thank the Foundation and Carrie Bernier for their part in making it possible.”

“The last two years have been exceedingly difficult for many of our students,” CSCU President Terrence Cheng said. “Even before the pandemic, too many students, particularly at community colleges, faced external barriers, which made academic success all the more difficult. This generous donation will make a real difference in the lives of some of Norwalk’s most vulnerable students, removing barriers to completion and creating future opportunities. We owe



this anonymous donor a debt of gratitude.”

The \$1 million unrestricted gift gives the Foundation and the College the flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed. It is particularly significant during this period of change and growth for Norwalk Community College to be able to expand existing services and initiatives while facilitating timely and adequate responses to emerging and urgent needs that may arise.

NCC Foundation President and CEO Carrie Bernier noted, “The costs associated with providing these services to students over the course of their academic journey is high, and this generous unrestricted gift will provide much needed seed money to facilitate the holistic student services that CEO De Vonish has long championed. We

hope that other philanthropists—be they individuals, foundations, or corporations—will look at this as an opportunity to join in the vision of this generous donor to create the support needed so students can reach their academic goals.”

When asked about the inspiration for their gift, the donors said, “We are passionate believers in human potential, and we believe that an investment today in Norwalk Community College amplifies the opportunity to improve outcomes for thousands of NCC students. We couldn’t be more excited to provide support to NCC’s vision and strategic priorities and to see the enhancement and expansion of programming enable the realization of the highest potential for its students and community.”

Priorities for use of the funding include targeted programs that support student parents, women, and students of color. It also provides an opportunity to enhance the educational offerings that relate to in-demand jobs in STEM fields, such as coding, artificial intelligence, and engineering. Additional priorities include hiring student navigators, job coaches, and peer mentors to assist with much-needed student engagement initiatives that support retention and guide graduating students as they prepare to enter the workforce.

### New Scholarship Honors CSCU President

Recognizing the needs of local students struggling with the high cost of attaining a college degree, the 460 Foundation made a generous gift of \$100,000 this year to the NCC Foundation, to endow a scholarship in honor of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities President Terrence Cheng. The scholarship will be awarded annually to qualified Norwalk Community College students. A celebratory event was held at NCC's William H. Schwab Center for Information Technology atrium on March 10 to welcome the new president to the CSCU System and to announce the endowed Cheng Family - 460 Foundation Scholarship.

Norwalk Community College CEO Cheryl De Vonish welcomed President Cheng and distinguished guests to the college, noting that, "in so many ways, because he is a first-generation college student who emigrated to the U.S. as a young child, President Cheng embodies the spirit of NCC students and all our community college students. It is a delight to officially welcome President Cheng to this position and to honor and

recognize all of his accomplishments with the Cheng Family - 460 Foundation Scholarship."

Carrie Bernier, President and CEO of the NCC Foundation, noted that "The Foundation is tremendously grateful to the 460 Foundation for this endowed scholarship in honor of President Cheng. Given President Cheng's long career in higher education, his commitment to Connecticut's college students, and his dedication to the community college system, this honor is well-deserved. We are thrilled to steward this scholarship fund as a part of our financial commitment to students at NCC. This gift is a wonderful example of the strength of the Foundation's partnerships with community members and donors who have so generously supported students here for over 60 years. The scholarship's first recipient, Brandon Dass, is an academically gifted young man, and he and his family are proud of his accomplishments and especially excited that he is the first scholar to be awarded by this fund."

Reflecting upon the similarities between Brandon's journey to higher education and his own, President Cheng shared that he was moved by the honor of a named scholarship. "The joy for me, and why I love coming to work every day, is that we are in the human business, the business of trying to make people better, and when we make people better, we make communities better. There is no value you can put on this work. The value is infinite. It means everything. I am grateful to Jon Gold and the 460 Foundation for this incredible endowment that will be here helping students long after we are gone."



From left to right: Jon Gold, Carrie Bernier, Cheryl De Vonish, Terrence Cheng, George Reilly



From left to right: Jon Gold, Brandon Dass, Jennifer Cayea, Emilia Cheng, Terrence Cheng

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

The Norwalk Community College Foundation invests in student success by funding supports to assist students in their classes at NCC, at their next educational institution, and as they begin their careers. The Foundation's financial investments in the College, whether for state-of-the-art equipment, scholarships, or student-centered programs, are only possible because individuals, foundations, and local corporations believe in the power of higher education to transform lives and communities.

The **Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation** granted **\$125,000** in funding to support vocational scholarships, internships, and NCC's student emergency fund. The Frederick DeLuca Foundation invests in organizations that provide youth and adults with the tools to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. This year, the DeLuca Foundation funded over 35 nursing and vocational scholarships, 15 transfer scholarships for NCC graduated RNs to pursue their BSN degrees, and provided emergency aid to NCC students facing unexpected financial need.

The **Carle C. Conway Foundation** awarded **\$67,500** in support of nursing transfer scholarships and scholarships for non-credit English as a Second Language courses. The ESL scholarships transformed the lives of clients at Building 1 Community, the Stamford nonprofit organization, by empowering recent immigrants to learn English and pursue their goals of earning a certificate or degree at NCC.

**Glenn W. Bailey Foundation** awarded **\$60,000** to NCCF for equity education programming and the UPLIFT program for men of color at NCC. The Glenn W. Bailey Foundation fosters pathways to success in globally competitive STEM careers for students in

the U.S., to ensure the United States remains a global thought leader.

An **Anonymous** foundation contributed **\$50,000** to NCCF's Path2Success program and the NCC Food Pantry. Path2Success is a scholarship coaching program that pairs students with a masters-level advisor to improve their academic skills. Students meet with their coach bi-weekly throughout the semester to identify their strengths and build their academic skills.

The **Everett Bulkley Trust** awarded NCCF **\$35,000** to support the philanthropic operations of the Foundation, providing educational opportunities for students and the community.

The **Fairfield County Business Collaborative for Education Equity (BCEE)** committed **\$30,000** to fund the Summer Bridge enrichment program. A key performance indicator of college persistence and graduation is

successful completion of college-level math within the first year of enrollment at community college. Summer Bridge at NCC gives students placed at remedial levels an opportunity to increase their knowledge and enroll in fall classes that earn them credits and set them on the path to graduation. The BCEE is a local impact and funding collaborative that works to reduce and eliminate educational disparities among Fairfield County's most vulnerable pre-K through 12+ students, parents and guardians, as well as teachers and staff.

The **Fairfield County's Community Foundation** provided **\$30,000** to the NCC Foundation for programming at NCC for UPLIFT wraparound support services to improve outcomes for men of color at NCC. FCCF supports NCC work to close the opportunity gap in Fairfield County by eliminating disparities in income, education, employment, housing, and health.



Summer Bridge '22 students and professors



Students have access to 3D printers and other state-of-the-art equipment in the Makerspace.

**Pitney Bowes Foundation** granted **\$25,000** for NCC's Summer Bridge academic enrichment program for newly enrolled students from local high schools. Students who are identified as in need of remediation in math or English attend this academic "boot camp" to help them start their first semester at NCC with the skills and resources they need to succeed. Summer Bridge has been supported by Pitney Bowes Foundation since its inception in 2016.

**First County Bank Foundation** granted **\$10,000** for NCC's English as a Second Language Summer Bridge program. In July 2022, 39 recent high school graduates participated in ESL programming, preparing them to enroll this fall in for-credit classes and begin their journey toward an associate degree.

The **Norwalk Woman's Club** delivered a **\$10,000** gift on the occasion of the 10th

Anniversary of the Center for Science, Health & Wellness, to provide scholarships for healthcare and nursing students.

The **Near & Far Aid Foundation** contributed **\$9,000** for student scholarships. The Near & Far Aid Foundation works to eliminate poverty in Fairfield County by funding programs that seek to create lasting change for individuals and communities.

The **City of Norwalk American Rescue Plan Act of 2021** awarded **\$7,000** for the NCC Food Pantry, to support Norwalk students facing food insecurity due to COVID-related factors.

The **New Canaan Community Foundation** granted **\$4,500** for scholarships and Summer Bridge academic enrichment programming.

## Bank of America Makes Internships Possible for UPLIFT Students

Bank of America has made a \$1.25 billion, five-year commitment to help nonprofit partners and civic leaders advance racial equity and economic opportunity in Southern Connecticut and in other communities across the country. As a part of that pledge, The **Bank of America Charitable Foundation** granted the Norwalk Community College Foundation \$15,000 for education equity and workforce development initiatives. The funding provides opportunities for NCC UPLIFT students to be placed in paid internships in their fields of study, giving them real-world experience and expanding their professional networks.

One such student is Christmy Edward. Christmy is in his final year at NCC and is a Graphic Design major with ambitions of owning his own studio. He served as an intern for the Art, Architecture + Design department at NCC last year. Professor John Alvord was so impressed with his demeanor and presence that he has invited Christmy back for a second semester. Christmy was praised for what he calls his soft skills—his ability to listen to clients and understand their goals—and he is using his internship to refine the hard skills that support his natural talents.

Through the UPLIFT program, Christmy was connected with a mentor, a young Black professional who works in graphic design for NASA. He says that the relationship has been inspiring, and says that his mentor was able to show him the ropes and give him an idea of what it really is to be a graphic designer. "It's been great to meet other Black men in professional fields and see how they have



Graphic design student Christmy Edward

dealt with the pressure of building themselves up from scratch," he said.

Christmy says that the UPLIFT experiential learning component gives him the space to work on his skills and develop his craft. "As someone early in my career, it has given me the confidence that I can build a life in this professional field. Before UPLIFT I tried to do everything on my own; now I know it's important to utilize all the resources I can and work my network to my advantage," he says.

At the NCC Foundation, this kind of program-focused investment in NCC students is core to the Foundation's mission to promote an educated workforce.

3.44

Average GPA of  
All Scholars

422

Scholarship  
Recipients

### Scholarships Awarded

340 NCC Scholarships

82 Bachelor's Degree Transfer  
Scholarships

### Transfer Scholarships Awarded

42 LEAP

19 RN to BSN

12 DREAM

9 PATH2  
SUCCESS

Graduation Rate of  
**Scholarship vs Non-Scholarship Recipients**

47% VS 22%

### Scholar Facts

First-Generation  
College Students 48%

Employed  
Students 61%

Female Students 62%

Hispanic or Latino  
Students 49%

### Top 5 Majors of Scholarship Recipients

- 1 General Studies
- 2 Nursing
- 3 Liberal Arts & Sciences
- 4 Business Administration
- 5 Accounting

### Transfer Scholars Who Have Earned or Are Earning Their Bachelor's Degrees

LEAP  
93%

RN to BSN  
81%

DREAM  
80%

17-62

Age Range of  
All Scholars

# SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS & PROGRAMS

## Scholarship Funds

Access to Education Scholarship  
 Albert L. Hadley Scholarship  
 America 911 Scholarship  
 Ann Chernow Art Scholarship  
 Ann P. Rogers Scholarship  
 Anne Ireland Memorial Scholarship  
 Anonymous Scholarship  
 Benson Meth Scholarship  
 Beverly Miller Orthwein Scholarship  
 Bigelow Foundation/Briggs Scholarship  
 Calvin Loss Scholarship  
 Carl Mirbach Memorial Scholarship  
 Carle C. Conway Scholarship  
 Carolyn and Gerry McGrath Scholarship  
 Charles J. Trantanella, Jr. Memorial Scholarship  
 Charles M. and Jessica B. Shaeffer Scholarship  
 Charles Royce Merit Scholarship  
 Charlotte Chen Scholarship  
 Cheng Family - 460 Foundation Scholarship  
 Claire L. Helsing Scholarship  
 Crane Scholarship  
 Croaning/Van Dyke Scholarship for Child Development Lab Students  
 Cross Business Scholarship  
 Darlene Ryan Goodwin Scholarship  
 Debbie Klaff Katz Scholarship  
 Donald and Virginia Miller Scholarship  
 Doris Bucky Scholarship  
 Doris L. and Joseph I. Shulman Memorial Scholarship  
 Dr. Harry L. Trambert Memorial Scholarship  
 Dr. John K. Fisher Scholarship  
 Dr. Lia Mondo Scholarship  
 Dr. Mary W. Brackett Scholarship  
 Dream Transfer Scholarship  
 Dugan Family Scholarship  
 Eileen Heckart Scholarship  
 Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust Scholarship  
 Entrepreneurship Scholarship  
 Fernandez Family Scholarship  
 Frank C. Lee Memorial Scholarship  
 Frederick & Elizabeth DeLuca Vocational Scholarship  
 GE Capital Scholarship  
 General Nursing Scholarship  
 General Scholarships/Golden Promise  
 Geneva Walsh Scholarship  
 George C. Turner Memorial Scholarship  
 Goodnow Scholarship  
 GOPIO-CT Scholarship  
 Hammant Memorial Art Scholarship  
 Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation Scholarship  
 Harry H. Hefferan, Jr. and Catherine Hefferan Scholarship  
 Helen C. Whitten Scholarship  
 Hiranandani Scholarship  
 Hobart P. and Alice B. Pardee Scholarship  
 Ilene and Irving G. Calish, Sr. Scholarship  
 James Bissell Memorial Scholarship  
 James E. Deaver Memorial Scholarship  
 James R. McCormack Memorial Scholarship  
 Jamie Earle Memorial Scholarship  
 Jane Corbo Scholarship  
 Jean Svalgard Memorial Women's Scholarship  
 Joan and Ed Barksdale Transfer Scholarship  
 John and Patricia Rayner Scholarship  
 John A. Ball Scholarship  
 John and Catherine Vigilante Scholarship  
 John and Charlotte Suhler Scholarship  
 John E. Schmeltzer Memorial Scholarship  
 John Fiske Boorum Memorial Scholarship  
 John H. Heher Memorial Scholarship  
 Joseph Karpowich Memorial Scholarship  
 Josephine Lindenmayer Gierer Scholarship  
 Jules Lang Scholarship  
 Karen L. Veitch Memorial Scholarship  
 Katherine Hall Browne Memorial Scholarship  
 Katy and Professor John Dolhun Scholarship  
 Kenton Clarke Scholarship  
 Lawrence Cavanagh and Eleanor Riemer Dream Transfer Scholarship  
 Le Bal d'Ecole Scholarship  
 LEAP Transfer Scholarship  
 Leon and Fanny Hirsch Scholarship  
 Leonhardt Scholarship  
 Lewis R. Mintz Scholarship  
 Lifetime Learners Institute Scholarship  
 Mandel Family Scholarship  
 Marcia Jane Le Moults Memorial Scholarship  
 Margaret Jane McAuliffe Scholarship  
 Marion and Justin Glickson Transfer Scholarship

Mark Hattenbach Memorial Scholarship  
 Mary Bauer Nursing Scholarship  
 Matthew LoRusso Scholarship  
 Maurice Godin Law Scholarship  
 Max R. and George J. Lepofsky Scholarship  
 McLean-Kearney Family Scholarship  
 Michael G. Weyer Scholarship  
 Michael Wilens and Carolyn Longacre Scholarship  
 Mickey and Brooke Callanen Scholarship  
 Molly Scholarship  
 Morrise Wagner Transfer Scholarship  
 Nancy Doyle Scholarship  
 Near and Far Aid Scholarship  
 Nicholas Trivisonno Scholarship  
 O'Hara Family Scholarship  
 Olivia Vlahos Scholarship  
 Panwy Foundation, Inc. Service Learning Scholarship  
 Pauline A. Toner Nursing Scholarship  
 President David Levinson LEAP Transfer Scholarship  
 Raindancer Foundation Scholarship  
 Richard and Barbara Whitcomb Foundation Scholarship  
 Richard T. Hansen Memorial Scholarship  
 RN to BSN Transfer Scholarship  
 Robert and Jeannie Kay Armstrong Scholarship  
 Robert Garland Memorial Scholarship  
 Rose S. Becker Memorial Scholarship  
 S.E. Daley Scholarship  
 Sachiko S. Liebergesell Scholarship  
 Stacy M. Israel Scholarship  
 Sylvia Schudy Scholarship  
 The 460 Foundation Scholarship  
 The Harrington Family Scholarship  
 The Jan Malone Scholarship  
 Thomas G. Norko Scholarship  
 Toni Anne Laufer Scholarship  
 UBS Scholarship  
 Virginia and Malcolm Crawford Scholarship  
 Wetmore Family Scholarship  
 William M. Mommaerts Memorial Scholarship  
 William Pitt Scholarship  
 Women in Management Scholarship  
 Workplace Internship Scholarship  
 Zimmel Family Scholarship

## Program Funds

2.8-3.4 Scholarship Coaching  
 Archeology Fund  
 Art Department Equipment  
 Art Department Gallery  
 AV Equipment Fund  
 Bank of America Workforce Development  
 Biology Department  
 Blanche Kent Archaeology  
 Building One Community  
 Career Connections  
 Career Services  
 Charlotte Cowie Human Services Memorial  
 Conway  
 COVID-19 Emergency Fund  
 Center for Science, Health & Wellness  
 Culinary Arts Projects  
 Dr. William H. Schwab Chair in Technology  
 Early Childhood Education  
 Entrepreneurship  
 English as a Second Language  
 Everett Baker Library Development Fund  
 Frank and Anne Cary for Student Success  
 IT Equipment Fund  
 Japanese Studies  
 Jean and Grove Ely Single Parent Emergency Fund  
 Library Fund  
 Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation Technology and Innovation Fund  
 Medical Assistant Certificate Program  
 Lumina String Quartet Residency  
 Nursing/Allied Health Fund  
 Nursing Emergency Fund  
 Path 2.0/Path2Success  
 Physical Therapy  
 REAL (Reaching Excellent Academic Levels) Program  
 SoNo Collection Retail Certificate Program  
 Student Emergency Fund  
 Student Success  
 Summer Bridge English  
 Summer Bridge ESL  
 Summer Bridge Math  
 Summer Bridge General  
 The Food Pantry @NCC  
 Theodore J. Nussbaum Mentoring  
 UPLIFT Program  
 Veterinary Technology Program

*The NCC Foundation is grateful to donors for establishing and supporting these endowment and temporarily-restricted funds.*

# GRATITUDE FROM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



*Melda Barraza-Virgilio*



*Samira Boudarka*

## **Melda Barraza-Virgilio**

“I was working full-time to pay rent, insurance, and other bills. I also had a part-time job to help pay the school fees. But thanks to the scholarships, I can now take time to work on my classes and homework, which has helped improve my performance and grades.

I was referred to the Career Success department, which I did not know about at the time. With the amazing help of Kiran Somaya, I was able to find the exact job I was looking for. I could not be more grateful for having NCC’s resources.”

## **Samira Boudarka**

“It has been very difficult to learn English since I didn’t know it at all when I came here. It took time to learn and understand it. A scholarship enabled me to continue to pursue my education. This was an invaluable gift which will last for a lifetime.

I really appreciate the guidance my professors gave me. I have also enjoyed meeting fellow students. The diversity of the student body is wonderful; it’s interesting for me to become acquainted with people from other countries since I came from Morocco.”

## **Caroline Coelln**

“Nursing was a logical choice for my major. I was a hairstylist for decades, and I’m good with people. I cried when I learned I received a scholarship. It is hard to reinvent myself, and still support my children as they grow into adults. They still need me for help with personal issues, learning support, and general life guidance. This scholarship eased the financial burden and made it possible for me to give my children more of my time and to do so with less stress.”

## **Renato Gjura**

“My major is Construction Technology, and it is something that I love to do. I’ve been working in this field since I was 16 years old. I chose this major because I’m very passionate about giving life to buildings and creating new methods to build, saving time, energy, and cost to the community.

Growing up in a less privileged community has not only posed financial and academic challenges but has also helped me realize the value of a college education. My educational pursuits would not be possible without the generous support from scholarship sponsors like the NCC Foundation.

NCC became my second home. Being there with professors and other students helped me not only learn but make good friends as well. These two years at NCC have been one of the best decisions I ever made.”



*Caroline Coelln*





Renato Gjura

### Santiago Gomez

“I want to help the community by designing and constructing affordable and modern homes for those in the middle and lower classes. I am also hoping to contribute to an equitable community.

The best part about NCC is that it is so diverse, and I am able to meet people who have powerful mindsets with great ideas and bright futures. This allows me to have a better understanding of the world and become a better human being to help out the community in ways that better benefit us all.”



Santiago Gomez

### Janice Jackson

“I was accepted into the NCC-RN Associate program for Fall 2022. I love how nurses are vital in providing passionate and efficient patient-centered care. I am looking to go to the next level in my health care career. I have worked as a CNA and a Medical Assistant and soon as an LPN. I love that help at NCC is specifically geared toward my current needs. My scholarship allows more room for me to focus on my studies and fewer distractions with financial worries or how I will pay for school.”



Janice Jackson

### Haiyan Liu

“In the country I came from, no institution would fund an adult going back to college. But living in this country—where everyone has equal opportunities regardless of age, gender, or race—one can achieve their dreams if they have the motivation.

I started at NCC just as the pandemic was beginning. Even though we did not meet face-to-face, the professors were always patient, respectful, and motivating.”



Haiyan Liu

### Jacob Timchak

“I began at NCC as a General Studies major in part because I suffered from ‘choice paralysis.’ Being able to ‘shop around’ and figure out what I want to do was very helpful this past year. NCC provided me with the time and space to evaluate my goals.

Scholarship support made it possible for me to explore experiences and subjects that I could never have otherwise, creating room for me to grow into something more worldly and creative than I could have dreamed.”



Jacob Timchak

# THE LEGACY SOCIETY

## NEW MEMBERS

### Julie Johnson and Doug Reid: Esteemed New Members of The Legacy Society

A west highland white terrier named Molly will be memorialized forever through the lives of scholarship students in the Veterinary Technician Program at NCC. The Molly Fund was established in 2015 by Julie Johnson and Doug Reid as a scholarship fund for NCC Vet Tech students. Each year, when the Molly Fund awards a student scholarship, Julie and Doug take great pride in learning about the success and goals of the student they are helping.

“I have just fallen in love with these students,” said Julie. “They are resilient, set goals, and work hard to get their education. There is something magical about NCC that I hear time after time in the student stories. Students have found a home at NCC. I love the fact that these students feel like even if they don’t have a stable home of their own, they have found one at NCC.”

Julie was elected to the NCC Foundation Board of Directors in 2012. Doug’s involvement initially started because he wanted to be supportive of Julie’s Board work when he saw how much joy it was bringing her. But Doug also had his own reasons for supporting NCC students. His own education was made possible by scholarships, grants, and loans. Throughout his educational journey, people believed in him and supported him in reaching his goals. Doug shared, “I got a lot of help when I needed it, and now it is my turn to help others.”

During the 50th Anniversary of the NCC Foundation in 2015, Julie and Doug were interested in supporting the Foundation with a larger scholarship commitment. They wanted something that resonated with their

values. Molly was the name of their beloved first dog, and was a source of happiness and great fun for the couple. “When we lost Molly at 14 years old, we wanted to remember her in a wonderful way. We thought the scholarship for Veterinary Technician students would be a way of giving back to help those in need while honoring our memories of her.”

In addition to the obvious connection to a scholarship in the veterinary field, Julie and Doug shared that they were interested in the Vet Tech program because it was a new program at NCC, the field was in high demand, and students were graduating and walking right into jobs in their field. Julie said, “We were interested in supporting students to work in a field that we think is important.” The strong hiring track record for the students, most of whom receive job offers directly from their clinical sites even before taking their licensing exams, was also compelling to them.

In addition to their support of Vet Tech scholarships, Julie and Doug care deeply about mental health and holistic support for students. When Julie reached her nine-year term limit on the NCC Foundation Board, she remained on the Scholarship Committee as a community member. She loves to connect with students and feels great satisfaction when she interviews students for scholarship awards. Doug has also lent his expertise to NCC students. With a corporate background in human resources leadership, “people skills” are important to Doug. He naturally embraced the role of mentor to a student who was an immigrant from Brazil. After years of mentorship, the young man went on to become a high school teacher in Greenwich, and developed his own passion for guiding students.

Helping others is a common theme for Julie and Doug. Julie considers one of her



*Julie Johnson and Doug Reid’s dog “Molly,” for whom the Molly Fund is named*

greatest contributions during her time on the NCC Foundation Board is the establishment of the Bridgewater Scholars Mentorship Program. This unique program pairs a group of professionals at Bridgewater Associates with a group of high-achieving, aspiring business students at NCC. Bridgewater employees provide the students with strategies and tools to achieve their professional and personal goals with a series of targeted workshops including networking, self-advocacy, and creating a personal “elevator speech.”

Joining the Legacy Society—the planned giving program at NCCF—was inspired by Julie and Doug’s commitment to helping those who need help. They both have big hearts for students, and Julie says that the benefit for them contributing through their planned giving is simple and pure—the gift of education is the gift that keeps on giving.

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