

*The*  
**Bridge**

LUZERNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

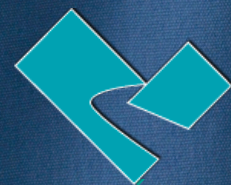
ALUMNI & FRIENDS

SPRING 2024

**50 Years  
of Nursing  
Excellence**

*Plus*

**2022-2023  
Annual Report  
of Gifts**



**LUZERNE**  
County Community College



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*About the cover: LCCC recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the College's Nursing Program.*

# LCCC...A Special Place

As I approach my fiftieth year, my thoughts turn to the incredible strength of LCCC. Our impact on so many people who live here in our community, working in professions that began with their enrollment at the college, raising families who now have children and grandchildren who attend the college and contribute in so many ways to the success of this place we call home.

I often refer to LCCC as a "special place." Our services are a tribute to our outstanding faculty and staff who help students one at a time and derive great pride in their service.

Our most recent evaluation from Middle States Accreditation concluded in their report that LCCC received commendation on each of the seven standards. This quality evaluation is a great accomplishment among colleges and universities and is the "Gold Standard" of Middle States.

This outstanding evaluation reflects the dedication of our faculty and staff. I did not need these results to substantiate what I see every day. LCCC is deeply committed to the goal of ensuring student success.

LCCC has built a college in these past many years focused on how we can help each person with their needs to accomplish their educational goals.

During the past year, the college has completed the goal of a Food Pantry and Clothes Closet at our Main Campus and each of our Centers.

Recently, the college reached the milestone of serving more than 10,000 students in our Early College program. In addition to having the opportunity to earn college credit and begin their college education, the program also instills self confidence for many high school juniors and seniors in the ability to go to college. Many students are first generation college students.

Our athletic programs have returned, and our athletic conference has resumed intercollege completion since the pandemic. Our men's and women's teams will be in full competition.



*Thomas P. Leary,  
LCCC President*

Our basketball team has instilled a great spirit on campus.

Our college Foundation continues to expand scholarship opportunities helping hundreds of students to afford the dream of a college education.

The college dedicated our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Center in our Campus Center. This center confirms our continued efforts to celebrate a major strength of our college as we truly represent the word "community" in our name.

I am most vividly reminded of our success at college graduation. In serving as President for the past seventeen years, I have the great honor and privilege to hand each graduate their diploma. It is truly an evening of celebrating each person's journey and their goal of a college degree. As I travel throughout our community, I hear the stories of how LCCC has changed their life.

I could not have imagined a more rewarding and enriched experience than my service at LCCC. The students truly inspire me, and their life stories are truly the legacy of this great college.





# GAME ON

## LCCC Launches Esports Program

become members will be able to compete in such popular games as Call of Duty and Fortnite.

There are also no fees to participate. Students selected will need access to the games for practice either at the arena or from their homes. Most of the competitions will be held after classes between 5 and 8 p.m.

LCCC offers all the equipment a student would need, but they can also bring their own controllers if they prefer. Once LCCC officially forms a team, the students will play against teams from Allegheny County Community College, Beaver County Community College, Montgomery County Community College, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, and Harrisburg Area Community College.

There could also be other opportunities to unofficially compete with four-year schools in the area. Davis said Marywood University and Kings College have expressed interest in collaborating with LCCC by doing scrimmages, practices, and other events.

Besides playing, there are other opportunities for students to get involved with the team. Davis said there will be a need for students who can help manage the players, serve as shoutcasters and even help with streaming the events.

"This definitely teaches collaboration because there are different jobs with the team besides just being a player," Davis said. "Students can learn what it's like to be a player, what it's like to manage a sports team, pretty much all the different parts of a professional sports team."

When not in use by the players, the new arena is used to expose the campus community to esports. Davis regularly schedules esports free play days so students, faculty, and staff can learn more about online gaming.

Besides the new arena, LCCC offers an esports coaching diploma for those who want to add to their credentials as a professional gamer. The program teaches the foundations of coaching and the unique aspects of what an esports coach does. Students can complete the diploma program in a year and can work in careers such as esports coach and collegiate administration.

The dimmed lights and the red glow from the keyboards create the perfect atmosphere for competition.

As the screens come to life among the carefully arranged terminals, their human counterparts are ready. With headphones on, student athletes participating in Luzerne County Community College's Esports program are ready take on any challenger.

This game play atmosphere is what LCCC students will experience as part of the College's Esports team. The newly built state-of-the-art Trailblazer Esports Arena will provide the students will an opportunity to compete on a college-level sports team in an official gaming competition setting.

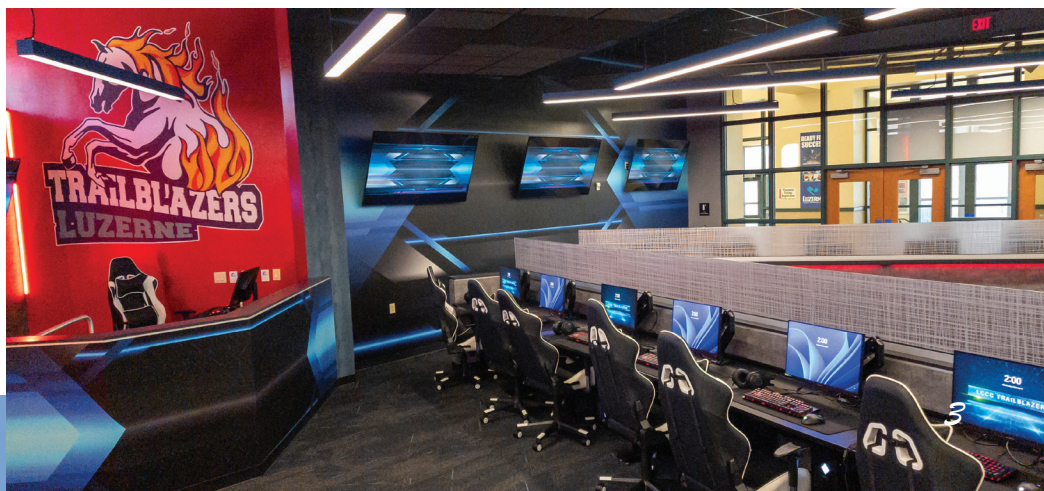
"Our Esports program will enhance the learning environment for our students by teaching such valuable skills as teamwork, leadership, and problem solving," said LCCC President Thomas P. Leary. "Programs like our Esports enable us to give our students real-life experiences that enhance their classroom education." The tournaments are run through the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports (NJCAA), which serves 300 colleges and universities.

"We're currently recruiting team members," said Kyle Davis, Student Life and Esports manager. "We did a test run in Spring 2023 and officially launched the program this past fall. Gaming has been popular among the younger generation for a long time. Participating in esports not only gives students a chance to learn what it's like being a member of a team, but it also teaches spatial awareness, problem solving, and decision making."

During the Fall semester, Davis said there were several students who signed up but just not enough for an official team. Those students were able to still participate but not in an official team. For that semester, LCCC offered Overwatch 2, Valorant, League of Legends, and Rocket League for game competition play.

"We now sponsor 24 games that we can play on our equipment," Davis said. "We also opened up the eligibility from full-time only students to students who are taking six credits or more."

Just like last semester, Davis is getting interested students and is hopeful a full team will be formed shortly. Students who





# MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup Continues Scholarship Support

For five years, MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup has generously supported the Luzerne County Community College Student Scholarship Program. Scholarships in Applied Technology including Automotive Technology and Diesel Truck Technology are distributed to qualified applicants each academic year to allow students to achieve their academic and career goals with less of a financial burden. In addition, MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup is a long-time partner offering internships and career opportunities to Luzerne County Community College students and graduates.

MileOne Autogroup represents 65 franchises with 24 automotive brands along with 47 Service Centers in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina as part of the Hall, Heritage, Herb Gordon, Annapolis and MotorWorld divisions. The MileOne Autogroup model provides for all of the automotive needs of its customers conveniently, on their own terms. MileOne Autogroup is the largest automotive sales and service delivery network in the Mid-Atlantic area. For more information on MileOne, visit [www.mileone.com](http://www.mileone.com).



*Pictured from left to right: Henry Hess, Service Director, MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup, Thomas P. Leary, President, Luzerne County Community College; April Gulla, LCCC student and MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup Scholarship recipient; Rick Osick, Division President, MotorWorld | MileOne Autogroup; Rebecca Brominski, Executive Director, LCCC Foundation; Jason Sherrill, LCCC Faculty, Automotive Technology.*

# NEPA Chapter of Cross State Credit Union Association Donates to Peter J. Lello Student Food Bank

The Luzerne County Community College Peter J. Lello Student Food Bank was the recipient of a generous donation from the NEPA Chapter of Cross State Credit Union Association. The Association supports local NEPA non-profits through various fundraising initiatives throughout the year. In addition, the Association supports the LCCC Peter J. Lello Student Food Bank with several food drives to help fight hunger and food insecurities among college students. The NEPA Chapter of Cross State Credit Union Association seeks to provide financial awareness and financial security through all services as well as supporting non-profits.



*Pictured from left to right: Rebecca Brominski, Executive Director, LCCC Foundation; Deborah Mozal, COO, Choice One Community Federal Credit Union and Treasurer, NEPA Chapter of Cross State Credit Union Association; Thomas P. Leary, President, LCCC; JoAnne Yuhus, Assistant Director, LCCC Foundation.*



## Showcasing Area Artists



The Schulman Gallery of Luzerne County Community College proudly continues its mission to increase cultural and artistic appreciation throughout the region by providing a professional gallery setting to exhibit and highlight artworks of Luzerne County Community College students, faculty, and alumni, and serve the community as a venue for established and emerging artists, community organizations, and regional high school visual arts competitions and juried exhibitions.

This past summer, the Schulman Gallery presented the prestigious Michael Molnar Tribute Art Exhibition which featured 14 original paintings by the late esteemed artist and educator Michael Molnar which were obtained on loan from private collectors, as well as 48 artworks created by artists that he had inspired as an educator and mentor. Michael Molnar was an Assistant Professor in the Commercial Arts Department of Luzerne County Community College for more than 30 years who garnered numerous awards nationally and internationally for his artworks which have been exhibited in many renowned galleries including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Schulman Gallery's autumn programming initiated with the art exhibition Autumn's Palette: A Celebration Of The Season which featured a spectacular array of autumn-themed artworks in a variety of media created exclusively by members of two vital regional arts organizations: the Wyoming Valley Art League and the Hazleton Art League. The artwork categories included painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, mixed media, sculpture, embroidery, and poetry.

Autumn concluded with the dramatic and well received Making Our Marks: Gestures Of Light And Color Art Exhibition which featured a lavish display of exquisite pastel artworks created by four accomplished artists-Doris Cresko, Tobi Grossman, Barbara Jones, and Shirley Trieval.

This year, 2024, marks the eighteenth anniversary of the inception of the Schulman Gallery at Luzerne County Community College and begins with the LCCC 2024 Faculty & Alumni Art Exhibition. This current exhibition features a selection of over 60 artworks recently created by LCCC faculty and LCCC graduates in a variety of media in the following categories: photography, painting, illustration, mixed-media, digital art, and 3-dimensional art.

The spring semester will continue with the Schulman Gallery hosting the 42nd Annual Suzanne Maria Rossetti Memorial Juried Art Show Winner's Exhibit. The exhibition which is sponsored by Sue and Joe Hand will run from March 03, 2024 through April 10, 2024 and feature artworks by students in grades 7 through 12 in the Back Mountain, Tunkhannock, and Northwest Areas. An awards ceremony will be presented in the James T. Atherton Gymnasium and the opening reception will include guided tours of the LCCC Art Department classrooms and studios.

The 2024 spring semester concludes with the LCCC 2024 Communication Arts Student Art Exhibition which will run from May 03, 2024 through June 03, 2024. The exhibition will highlight original artworks in a variety of media and categories created by students currently enrolled in the Communication Arts Program of Luzerne County Community College and the opening reception will include portfolio presentations and the presentation of President's Choice Awards in the Gallery.



# Foundation 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship Celebration



Luzerne County Community College Foundation celebrated 40 years of scholarship assistance to students at a dinner at Mohegan Pennsylvania recently. The 40th Anniversary Scholarship Celebration welcomed nearly 400 donors, scholarship recipients, students, staff, board mem-



bers, and friends of the College to the event. Rebecca Brominski, Executive Director of the Institutional Advancement and Foundation, said the celebration raised \$110,000 for LCCC scholarships and student assistance initiatives. Since its inception in 1982, the Foundation and those who contributed to the endowment over the years made college for many students feasible and affordable. Over the past 40 years, the LCCC Foundation awarded more than 8,000 scholarships totaling about \$6 million.



*Rebecca Brominski thanks donors for their contributions to student scholarships and initiatives*

“Today we celebrate with you, we celebrate your hopes and your dreams,” Brominski told students during the dinner program.

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“Today we celebrate with you, we celebrate your hopes and your dreams,” Brominski told students during the dinner program.

Brominski introduced award winner and LCCC President Thomas P. Leary, noting that Leary had for 40 years worked to make education available to all. Leary, looked back on over four decades of service to the college and how much the College has done for our students.

Leary stated that LCCC is unique in that eight of ten graduates remain right here in northeastern Pennsylvania. “They are living in our communities, they are raising families, and they’re giving back,” he said. “So this is a perfect blend of giving and commitment. One person can make the difference in someone else’s life. We know the difference that our scholarship donors make in our students lives.”

“In the past 56 years, the community has accepted Luzerne County Community College as an outstanding institute of higher education. We’ve been able to appeal to supporters and friends to make certain that this college continues to flourish.”

Attorney Catherine O’Donnell, Chair of the LCCC Board of Trustees, said that the scholarships granted enable students not only to meet their tuition needs, but also other needs, including books, bus passes, food pantries and other essentials needed to complete their education.

Former Foundation Board member Thomas Scappaticci thanked the Foundation team and the boards past and present for their astounding work over the past 40 years.





*Leonard Shimko '69 took home the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation 40th Anniversary Award. Thomas P. Leary, President, LCCC earned the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation Legacy Award. FNCB Bank received the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation Community Champion Award.*

Scholarship recipient speaker Shawn Terry rounded up the remarks of the program. Terry is a Culinary Arts student and recipient of the Joseph A. and Erma Pagliante/Grotto Pizza Endowed Scholarship, Friedman Hospitality Group Scholarship, James P. Malkames Endowed Scholarship, and the Edelstein Endowed Financial Scholarship. "A scholarship isn't just a financial tool," he stated.



*Scholarship recipient speaker Shawn Terry*

"A scholarship is a relationship that has character. It helps us grow in the world right now, where humanity is needed most. Where we can look at these donors and see how they are investing in our lives even through sometimes the recipients and donors may never meet. I want to thank all the donors

here for sacrificing for us. Not only for those who are starting their careers, but also for older students, like myself, who are starting new careers."

In addition to thanking the scholarship donors, Brominski acknowledged the ongoing support of the Askam United Methodist Church which helped feed 40 LCCC students and their families this past Thanksgiving.

This year, the Foundation honored three recipients as part of the 2023 Community Awards presentation.

FNCB Bank received the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation Community Champion Award. Leonard Shimko '69 took home the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation 40th Anniversary

Award. And finally, Thomas P. Leary, President, LCCC was awarded the 2023 Luzerne County Community College Foundation Legacy Award.

The evening was capped with dancing with music provided by the band Into the Spin. For more information on being part of the LCCC family of donors, please reach out to the Foundation department at [foundation@luzerne.edu](mailto:foundation@luzerne.edu).



*Scholarship recipients met with and dined with their donors at this year's 40th anniversary dinner.*



# Calendar

# 2024

Luzerne County Community College Alumni Association

## CASH BINGO

Sunday, April 21, 2024

### 20 GAMES! + SPECIALS!

RAFFLES, FOOD & MORE!  
Door Prizes • 50/50 • FUN  
BINGO Caller - DJ Rob Sax

LCCC CAMPUS CENTER • 521 Trailblazer Drive, Nanticoke PA 18634  
Doors Open at 11:30 AM • Game time 1:00 PM • \$25/person • Limited Seating  
No tickets will be sold at door. Sponsorships Available!  
Call 570.740.0734 or blauer@luzerne.edu • www.luzerne.edu/alumni

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Golf Tournament

May 20, 2024

Blue Ridge Trail Golf Club

Noon Shotgun

Visit [www.luzerne.edu/alumni](http://www.luzerne.edu/alumni) for more information and to register!



## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Dental Health Alumni Day

May 10, 2024

Featuring Tom Viola R.P.h., C.C.P.

Speaking on the topic of Pharmacology

8:00 am – 4:00 pm,

Main Campus Nanticoke

6 CEU's through PDHA

Visit [www.luzerne.edu/alumni](http://www.luzerne.edu/alumni) for more information and to register!





# 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Flea Market & Collectible Show

June 1, 2024 (Rain date 6/2/24),  
8:00 am – 1:00 pm



# 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Craft Festival

October 19, 2024, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm



Both events feature unique vendors selling a variety of items. The Flea Market is held outdoors and boasts tons of bargains, collectibles, crafts and much more! The Craft Festival is a juried show and features over 125 handmade items. Both shows feature the Hi-Lites Car Club, raffles, and food vendors. Mark your calendar to join us on our Nanticoke campus!

We are looking for a wide variety of vendors and food trucks for each event.

Visit [www.luzerne.edu/alumni](http://www.luzerne.edu/alumni) for more information on how to become a participant!



**LUZERNE** ALUMNI  
County Community College & FRIENDS

## Sail Aboard the Norwegian Joy Bermuda Cruise

June 23-30, 2024

\$1899 PP (Deluxe Ocean View Balcony Stateroom)

\$1499 PP (Interior Stateroom)

\*Based on Double Occupancy

\*\*\*\*BONUS\*\*\*\*

INTERIOR - CHOOSE 2 AMENITIES  
BALCONY - CHOOSE 4 AMENITIES

AMENITIES:

- BEVERAGE PACKAGE (1st and 2nd guest - does not include gratuities - \$152.60)
- ULTIMATE DINING PACKAGE (1st & 2nd Guest - 2 Meals - does not include gratuities \$17.80)
- \$50 USD SHORE EXCURSION CREDIT (per cabin)
- Internet Package (250 FREE minutes)



### What's Included:

Roundtrip Motor Coach Transportation from LCCC to NY Ship Terminal  
7 Nights Bermuda Cruise aboard the Norwegian Joy, LCCC Alumni & Friends  
Cocktail Party, All Meals & Entertainment on Board, Port Tax & Government Fees.

A \$250 per person deposit is due to confirm your reservation. Payment in full is due February 15, 2024 and is Non-Refundable.  
Travel Insurance is Highly Recommended.

601 Market Street  
Kingston, PA 18704  
(570) 288-9311

**TRAVELWORLD**  
www.asktravelworld.com

435 Greenridge Street  
Scranton, PA 18509  
(570) 342-5790



# Luzerne Love Stories

## John and Marie



Here is the Luzerne Love Story of John M Castagna '74 and Marie Christine Broski '76, as told by John.

"Friday evening coffee houses were a thing at LCCC back in the '70s. People like me would bring a guitar and do a few songs. Lots of students, groups of friends, would attend, listen some, but mostly get together with each other. The tables were always decorated with wine bottle candles (students would burn candles in the bottle, so the wax drips down all over them). LCCC made sure there was coffee to drink as well as other soft drinks.

My sister Marie brought some of her friends to the coffee house event one day. I remember playing Badfinger and Elton John that night. My sister's friends' group was pretty loud and happy, and at some point, I walked over to get a few names and phone numbers for myself. Very cool, right? One of the girls I was verrrry smooth with was someone named Shirley, another was Marie Broski. I drove both of them home afterwards.

On Saturday morning I checked my phone number note. I remembered Marie's smile and laugh best of all, and the fact that she'd squeezed my hand on the drive home. I took a chance and called her. Marie answered. We saw each other that day. And I never thought to call anyone else ever again.

We currently live in Drums, Pennsylvania and just celebrated our 46th anniversary this past October."



# Michael and Bonnie

Michael Pajka '75 and R. Bonnie Porter met in 1975 through mutual friends in the student center on the Nanticoke campus. They would often see each other each day at lunch and became good friends. Finally at the end of the semester, Michael approached Bonnie and asked her on a date.

Life and timing entered into the picture. Michael graduated with a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management that year and Bonnie had plans to attend Mansfield State University right out of high school, but lack of financial aid led her to LCCC, where her mother, Cora Porter, was a nursing professor. After Michael graduated, Bonnie transferred to Mansfield to pursue her Education degree. They dated long distance for four and a half years. Both finished their education goals, and finally married in September of 1979.

They have been married for 44 years but together for 48 and owe it all to LCCC! Michael is a financial planner and Bonnie returned to LCCC and is an assistant professor of English. They have three grown children: Corey, Adam, and Holly, and three grandchildren, Fiona, Cora, and Alexander.

Bonnie added, "Our life together has been blessed by God, and I cannot imagine my life without my best friend".







LUZERN  
LEIC



# REACH NEW HEIGHTS

If there was ever an example of someone who pursues their dreams, then meet Connor Harding '16. Harding attended Luzerne County Community College once he graduated Hanover Area High School in 2014. He was looking for a college that was close to home, within his budget, and where he could figure out just exactly what direction he wanted to take professionally. "Since I hadn't yet had a clear vision of where I wanted to aim my future," Harding said, "General Studies made the most sense for me at the time."

Aside from attending classes, Harding met several fellow musicians at LCCC's Main Campus and started to build social connections that way. "Soon after attending LCCC, I began playing guitar, harmonica and singing in a band with another student, Frank Marcinkowski, who today I still consider to be one of my closest friends," Harding said. "Our band was called Cruise Control, and we got our start playing a few songs in the LCCC cafeteria in exchange for free lunch vouchers." His band played over 500 live shows all across the valley for most of Harding's time through college.

After graduating from LCCC in 2016, Harding transferred to Wilkes University, where he majored in Business. "I remained there for a year until it occurred to me that a university degree was not a requirement for being a business owner," he said. "I dropped out, and switched paths." For the remainder of his higher education Harding attended Bloomsburg University, and graduated in Fall of 2021 with a BS in Environmental Science.

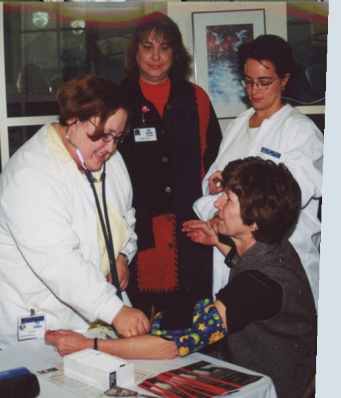
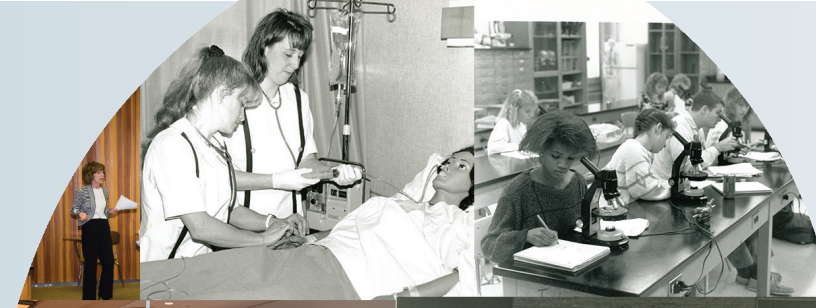
"Since completing school, I have made it a point to merge work and travel," he said. "Some of the positions I have worked include fishing and moose hunting guide in Northern Quebec, Mountain Operations/Snowmaker at Stowe Mountain Resort in Vermont, and Environmental Safety Assessor for Air Force base housing in SC and AK. My current long-term goal is to become a Field Biologist."

Harding currently lives in Loveland, Colorado and works as a Biological Field Technician for an environmental/engineering company called GEI based out of Denver. His duties include electro-fishing, water sampling and identification of macroinvertebrates within streams and rivers near mining areas around the Rocky Mountain region.



Left: Connor Harding climbing mountain in Vedauwoo, WY







# NURSING

## Excellence

One of LCCC's most popular and successful degree programs reached a milestone in 2023. Luzerne County Community College's Nursing program turned 50 this past year with several special events culminating with an All-Class Reunion.

LCCC held its first classes in the Nursing program in the Fall of 1973 after receiving formal approval from the Pennsylvania State Board of Nurse Examiners. Admission to the first class was limited to sixty-one applicants. In May of 1975, the first graduation and pinning ceremony was held. The program moved from Building 3 to the new Nursing/Dental Building 9 in 1977. Shortly after, the Nursing Program received full accreditation by the National League for Nursing. Classes expanded to Elk Lake in 1988, and an evening Nursing class schedule was added to the Main Campus to meet a nursing shortage in the area. In 2001, the program expanded to Northumberland County with a facility located in Kulpmont. LCCC added a bridge program for LPN to RN's in 2005. By 2011, the Nursing department, along with all the other health sciences programs, moved to its new location in the Francis S. and Mary Gill Carrozza, R.N. Health Sciences Center in downtown Nanticoke. The Nursing program is also renamed to the Mary Gill Carrozza R.N. School of Nursing. The Nursing Program's satellite campus in Kulpmont relocated to the Northumberland Regional Center in 2018. By 2023, Luzerne County Community College's Nursing Program reached its 50th year and graduated 4,818 students since its inception.

The All-Class Reunion to Celebrate 50 Years of Nursing Excellence was held recently under a tent outside and throughout the Francis S. and Mary Gill Carrozza, R.N. Health Sciences Center. Nearly 150 nursing graduates and their families turned out for the milestone anniversary program. The event, of which alumni from almost every year was represented, started with a welcome from Susan Koronkiewicz, Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences and a reading of the Florence Nightingale Pledge by nursing student, Julie Yachimovicz '24.





Loree Gerich, a Professor of Nursing who recently retired from LCCC, spoke about her years of teaching and how honored she has been to be part of the LCCC staff. Other faculty members of the Nursing program also spoke of the tremendous quality of the students throughout the years.

Pennsylvania State Representative Alec Ryncavage read a proclamation honoring the Nursing program before presenting it to Luzerne County Community College's President Thomas Leary.

Dan Marriggi, '81, Chief Nurse Anesthetist, retired from Beth Israel Lahey Health in Milton, Massachusetts recalled his time at LCCC and how the decision to become a nurse through the College changed his life tremendously. "Nursing was my calling, and this program is the cornerstone of my success," Marriggi stated.

The Health Sciences department showcased each program on all floors throughout the event. The event included a book signing from Devon J. Buckley '11, MSN, RN, LCCC Nursing Faculty and author of the book, Firebug.

Sponsors of the celebration event included Geisinger and The Meadows by EEI.

A digital slideshow was shown on the monitors and 1st floor lounge depicting LCCC's Nursing program over the past 50 years. Along with demonstrations from each of the different programs, many attendees visited the nursing memorabilia and the hall of graduates nursing photos.



*Several retired faculty members attended the festivities.*



*Norman Honeywell poses with LCCC alumni*



*Pennsylvania State Representative Alec Ryncavage read a proclamation*



*Julie Yachimovicz '24 reads the Florence Nightingale Pledge*



*Nursing uniforms over the years*



# My Nursing Story

## Laura Fowler '94

Laura Fowler, '94 recalls an instructor making the biggest impression in helping her to transform into an RN. "On the first day of class, Mrs. Gavenonis said, 'Nursing is common sense.' That phrase stayed with me throughout my educational endeavors to help me survive and succeed in Nursing."

Fowler, who grew up in Nanticoke, started in elementary school and finished college, all on Kosciuszko Street in Nanticoke. Her mother worked in a dress factory and her dad was disabled.

"I came from a family of 6 children," she said. "College was not an option when I graduated high school." Fowler start her first job in 1984 as a book-keeper for minimum wage at \$3.35/hour. Fast forward eight years to 1992; she became determined to return to college and become a registered nurse. "LCCC was my only opportunity to obtain my degree to achieve my dream," she stated. "I graduated two years later.

After graduation, Fowler immediately enrolled in an RN-BSN/MSN program at the University of Virginia to be able to achieve her next dream to return to LCCC as a nursing faculty member. "LCCC provided me with the foundation to succeed. I was awarded my MSN in 1997 and I finally had an opportunity to join LCCC's Nursing Faculty." Fowler's daughter Alycia is a 2022 graduate of Luzerne County Community College's Nursing Program. "Alycia was born just before I started the nursing program. She was two years old when she attending my nursing pinning ceremony in 1994. 28 years later, she once again attended a nursing pinning ceremony at Luzerne County Community College, but it was her pinning ceremony," she said. "I was so proud to be able to pin her! She is employed as a Registered Nursing in the ER and is pursuing her BSN."





# My Nursing Story

## Dr. Mary F. Bosek '14

Dr. Mary F. Bosek DNP, RN-BC, '14 holds multiple degrees from LCCC including an Associates in Photography and Applied Science 2012 Certificate in Graphic Design and a 2014 Associates in Nursing. She is employed VA Medical Center as a Nurse Manager.

Bosek reflects that she became a nurse because her parents told her not to. "Both my parents are RNs (Stanley and Theresa Buckley - Nursing 1980 who both taught in the Nursing program)," she said. "Looking back, I think they were trying to save me from a life that would require a form of resilience you only ever understand when you're a nurse," she said.

"I always wanted to grow up and be just like them - selfless saviors, heroes, educated professionals trusted to provide for those in need. I'll never forget the day I told my father I wanted to go to nursing school - he laughed - like actually laughed. He said 'Being a nurse is not just about having a job. It's not something you can decide you want to do one day and then change your mind the next - it's a profession, a lifestyle'. Boy, was he right!"

Bosek said there have been days she questioned her decision specifically, when losing a patient. "Whether it be in an acute care setting like ICU or in the long-term care arena - losing someone has never been and never will be easy," she said. "Being a nurse is one of the highest honors. It's the nurse, collaborating with various disciplinaries to ensure patient care is specific and optimal. It's the nurse, walking a patient in the hall after their surgery, rooting them on, telling them 'It's ok, you got this!' It's the nurse, holding a patient's hand while they talk about a past or present traumatic experience, crying right along with them. It's the nurse, hugging someone who just became a mother for the very first time, or the very last time. It's the nurse, speaking with the family before, during, and after a patient passes away, reassuring them that their loved one did not die alone. It's the nurse - it's always the nurse - going above and beyond to care for those in a way only a nurse can. Such beauty there is in all of that - I couldn't imagine doing anything else. What an honor it is to be a nurse."

Mary resides in Wilkes-Barre with her husband Matt and two young children Ethan and Ellie.



*Bosek's parents  
Stanley and  
Theresa Buckley -  
LCCC Nursing grads  
1980*





# My Nursing Story

## Mark Ercolani '83

Mark Ercolani graduated from LCCC with a Nursing degree in 1983. He is a Certified Flight Registered Nurse (CFRN)-Geisinger Life Flight, Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN) with Geisinger Health System for more than 41 years. Ercolani is also LCCC's EMS Program Director of the past 10 years.

"The Nursing Program at LCCC provided the foundation for my career in healthcare," Ercolani said. "The program instilled confidence in my abilities to provide care and enhanced my critical thinking skills. In my career I was fortunate to provide care to nursing faculty and family members. The relief on their faces knowing a LCCC graduate was providing care during these difficult and uncertain times was immeasurable."

Ercolani felt Dorothy Powers had the greatest influence on his nursing career. "Mrs. Powers provided the foundation for my future learning in nursing and throughout my career," Ercolani. "Empathy, compassion, and advocating for my patients has been a cornerstone of my career in healthcare. This was instilled in me early in the program."

He recalls the most frightening memory during his studies was during clinical at Wilkes-Barre Mercy. "A fellow student and I arrived five minutes late from lunch. Mrs. Gavenonis was waiting for us when the elevator door opened. We were never late again!"

Ercolani's wife, Kathy Ercolani '85 NP, MSN is also a graduate of the LCCC Nursing program. "I have dedicated four decades of my life in critical care medicine finishing out my career as a Flight Nurse."





# My Nursing Story

## Len Romanowski '76

Len Romanowski is a CRNA (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist) with Professional Anesthesia Providers, P.C. providing anesthesia care for all types of surgical procedures.

"My journey into health care and the Nursing Program was confirmed by how my life was progressing at that point. Right after high school graduation my Dad died from a cardiac arrest. It seemed to me, at that point, that I wanted to enter the health care world to help other people with health issues. After I did that I heard about nurse anesthesia and thought that would be a great career. Helping people be pain free and comfortable during surgery sounded awesome!

There have been so many people that had an impact on my life while I studied at LCCC. Dr. Leona Castor was a truly powerful human. The impact was immeasurable for so many people. All of the nursing department had provided me with great guidance! Ms. Rasmovich Robine, Ms. Lori Galatko Gerich, Mrs. Cora Porter and Ms. Joanne Chipago provided me the wisdom (AND CONFIDENCE) to more education after Nursing School at LCCC.

Many friends were mostly all in the nursing curriculum. The one that stands out the most is Mike Wilchinski! He and I started in the Nursing class in 1974 and then began our nursing careers together by working at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We then continued our anesthesia education together and then, after a several years of working in different hospitals, we joined forces again and provided anesthesia by working together for the past 20 years!

I have achieved many goals both personally and professionally throughout my anesthesia career and I have been blessed with receiving awards along the way. In 1993 I had an article published in Fertility and Sterility concerning Brachial Plexus injuries in laparoscopic surgery. There was very little literature at that point and laparoscopic surgery was just on the rise and unfortunately brachial plexus injuries were occurring due to the lack of knowledge of proper positioning for these procedures. Anesthesia public speaking and education was also a passion for me and that took me to being invited to speak at local, state and national meetings. I also worked with Janssen Pharmaceutica and had multiple actual case studies published with them that were then mailed to anesthesia providers throughout the US."

Len recently retired and he and his wife Beth Romanowski '86 are enjoying visiting family and traveling.







# Pasco L. Schiavo Student Learning Commons dedicated at Hazleton Center

Students at the Luzerne County Community College Hazleton Center have an upgraded location to study and relax as well as a new space for tutoring help and collaborative learning. LCCC recently held a ribbon cutting for the new Pasco L. Schiavo Student Learning Commons in the center's second floor. The new space is courtesy of a donation from the Pasco L. Schiavo Memorial Fund of the Luzerne Foundation. Linda Schiavo, sister of the late Attorney Pasco Schiavo, formally cut the ribbon on the renovated space. The area is named after Attorney Schiavo known for legal and real estate work, as well as philanthropic support of community-minded organizations.



*(Above) Thomas P. Leary speaks before the crowd at in the newly renovated Pasco L. Schiavo Student Learning Commons*  
*(Left) Hazleton Center Director, Kimberly Whalen, thanks the Pasco L. Schiavo Memorial Fund of the Luzerne Foundation for its contribution to the students and the Center.*



# ALUMNI AND FOUNDATION HONOR ROLL

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## LCCC ALUMNI & FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT OF GIFTS 2022-2023

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## In-Kind Gifts

*Luzerne County Community College gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, businesses and organizations who donated gifts in-kind reported to the Foundation during fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023).*

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## 40th Anniversary Donor of the Month surprise visits

As we celebrated our 40th anniversary, LCCC highlighted some of our donors who contributed to our success.



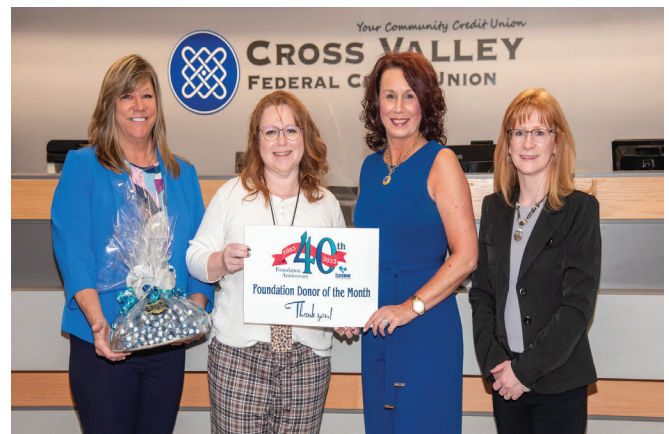
LCCC staff member Lisa Novitski has been a scholarship donor since 2000 establishing a scholarship that honors the memory of several members of her family. Thank you, Lisa for your continued support!



Ed Ackerman, faculty at LCCC, is a long-time supporter of the Foundation's scholarship program and a strong advocate for student success. Thank you, Ed for your continued support!



FNCB has been a long-time supporter of the Foundation and our students supporting scholarships and a variety of student assistance initiatives. Thank you to Jerry Champi, Pat Barrett, Jim Burke and the Team from FNCB!



CVFCU has been a longtime supporter of the Foundation and our students supporting scholarships and a variety of student assistance initiatives. This acknowledgement is extra special in that April is Credit Union Financial Literacy Month. CVFCU celebrates the importance of financial education, and the role credit unions play in helping the community's youngest members and students achieve their financial goals. Thank you!



The Alumni Association has been a longtime supporter of the Foundation and our students supporting scholarships and a variety of student assistance initiatives. Thank you Bonnie Lauer, LCCC Alumni Director, Alumni Association, and the members of the board!





# Advanced Manufacturing One of LCCC's 'Thrive in Five' Programs

The "Thrive in Five" Advanced Manufacturing Program at Luzerne County Community College is an experiential-intensive program that prepares LCCC graduates for meaningful careers in the manufacturing sector. This one-year certificate also provides students the flexibility to gain more advanced skills and knowledge in one or more of the following five high demand technical areas: Electrical Technology, Machining (CNC), Plumbing and HVAC, Industrial Maintenance, or Welding.

The program emphasizes the practical application of theory and skills necessary for successful employment that meet Northeast Pennsylvania employer needs. As such, students hone their skills in LCCC's state-of-the-art manufacturing, tooling, and engineer design laboratories. Additionally, students participate in at least one work-based experience, apprenticeship, or internship. Numerous career opportunities are available to Advanced Manufacturing program graduates. This includes but is not limited to production technicians, industrial repair and maintenance professionals, facility maintenance personnel, building and building envelop managers, automated manufacturing operators, machine tool specialists, heating and plumbing workers, and proto-type designers.

The Advanced Manufacturing program is also designed to be versatile in its delivery and duration. For example, the program can be offered as short-term training, 9-16 weeks, or as a micro credential, 6-9 hours. These "short burst" trainings can be stackable to allow students to earn more than one credential or industry certification and be eligible to enroll in one of LCCC's associate degree program with credits from this program transferring into the associate degree program.

Due to the popularity of the Advanced Manufacturing program, other programs are being redesigned to be similar in format to the Advanced Manufacturing program. Program areas include the Associate of Science (AS) in Computer Information Systems (CIS) that will include programming, cloud computing, and data analytics specialties. The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Electrical Engineering Technology (EET) options will include Automation and Robotics, Electrical Technology, and Controls. The CIS and EET associate degree programs are being dubbed "Thrive in Three" to reflect the three options in each program.



# Give a gift to LCCC online at [luzerne.edu/give](http://luzerne.edu/give)

Heartfelt thanks go out to our alumni, friends and community businesses, faculty and staff who have made gifts to LCCC. Thanks to your philanthropy, LCCC continues to make life better for current and future students by providing scholarships, financial aid, books, technology and other necessities. Nothing touches the lives of LCCC students as much as the Annual Fund.

## Benefits to You

Charitable gifts are generally exempt from taxation for those who itemize deductions on their tax returns. The higher your tax rate, the more you can save when you make a donation to the College.

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Matching gifts allow you to double, or possibly triple, your gift at no additional cost to you, and are credited in full toward leadership gift club membership. Contact your human resource office to see if you work for a matching gift company.

Alumni participation is also one of the criteria used to leverage gifts from private and public foundations as well as corporations. Any gift of any size publicly demonstrates your pride and helps the College continue its tradition of excellence.

## How You Can Help

Several gift options are available to you for making a financial contribution to LCCC. They include: a pledge, an outright contribution by cash, check or charge (Mastercard, Visa or Discover), securities (stocks, bonds or mutual funds) and a planned gift (bequest and charitable trust arrangement) through the Heritage Society. For more information, or to make a gift, contact the Alumni Office at (800) 377-LCCC, ext. 7734 or at 570-740-0734.

## What's *NEW* with YOU

The Bridge is our way of keeping you up-to-date. This is your way to keep us up-to-date. Let us know about changes in your career, family, or place of residence (attach additional sheet if necessary). We may publish your news in an upcoming issue. You may include a recent photo of yourself, too. Thank you!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Year of graduation/program \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (evening) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_  
Names, birth years of children \_\_\_\_\_  
Post LCCC education \_\_\_\_\_  
Program & completion date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name & address of employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Present position and job responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_  
Recent accomplishments/points of interest \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





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# A Look Back...



First Nursing Graduation Class 1975