

IYA

MCC's Democracy House saved her life. Now, 7 years later, Iya Bekondo '08 has created a foundation to help others battling kidney disease.

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Campus News

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Sports Update

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY COLLEGE *Now*

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Department of Marketing Communications
Center 4
Middlesex County College
2600 Woodbridge Ave.
Edison, NJ 08837
e-mail: alumni@middlesexcc.edu



The Technical Services Center was renamed Billy Johnson Hall, in a ceremony that included the presentation of the L’Hommedieu Award to Betty Wold Johnson. Before the ceremony, from left, Mrs. Johnson spoke with Thomas Tighe, vice chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees; College President Joann La Perla-Morales; and Hank Bauer, secretary of the Board.

Dual Ceremony: Johnson Family Acknowledged

A building at Middlesex County College has been named for Billy Johnson, a benefactor of education, and the late great-grandson of Robert Wood Johnson. The building, formerly the Technical Services Center, houses the Department of Engineering Technologies, classrooms, engineering labs, faculty offices, and several administrative offices.

The honor is to recognize Betty Wold Johnson family’s support for Middlesex County College. In 2009, the family donated \$1 million from the Willard T. C. Johnson Foundation; half of that was issued as a challenge. The MCC Foundation had to raise \$500,000 from other donors, which was matched by the Johnson Foundation – so the effect of the gift was \$1.5 million.

Mrs. Johnson’s contributions to the College have included personal gifts as well as funding through the foundation. This support has been instrumental in allowing thousands of students to attend Middlesex.

College President Joann La Perla-Morales thanked Mrs. Johnson for her longstanding support of the College.

“In these challenging economic times, philanthropic support is needed more than ever before,” Dr. La Perla-Morales said. “It is not an exaggeration to say that the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation, under the leadership of its chairman, Mrs. Betty Wold Johnson, has been our single most generous donor. The Johnson Learning Center, the Johnson Commons, the newly funded Center

for Veterans Services, and now Billy Johnson Hall, attest to the support the College has received over the years.

Middlesex County College boasts more than 50,000 alumni and, Mrs. Johnson, every one of those alumni and their families have been touched in some way by your generosity.”

In addition, during the ceremony Mrs. Johnson was named the 2011 L’Hommedieu Award winner at MCC. The L’Hommedieu Award is named for Paige D. L’Hommedieu, the

founding chairman of the College’s Board of Trustees, a humanitarian who worked tirelessly on behalf of his fellow citizens. It is presented annually by the College to an individual who exemplifies those characteristics. The award was presented by Thomas Tighe, vice chairman of the College board.

“It is no exaggeration to say that her philanthropy has enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands – perhaps millions – of Americans,” Mr. Tighe said.

Mrs. Johnson, who lives in Hopewell, is the widow of Robert Wood Johnson III and mother of Robert Wood Johnson IV, known as Woody, who owns the New York Jets football team.

“We are honored to have you here today to receive the L’Hommedieu Award for service to the community,” Mr. Tighe said. “Thank you for all you have done to support Middlesex County College. Your gifts have enriched the lives of countless students, and of generations yet to come.”

“It is no exaggeration to say that her philanthropy has enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands – perhaps millions – of Americans.”

Thomas Tighe, vice chairman of the College Board

Outstanding Professors Receive Faculty Awards

Two outstanding professors at MCC were recently honored: Maya Aloni, in the History and Social Science Department, was selected as the 2012 Faculty Scholar; and Claire Condie, of the Natural Sciences Department, received the 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award.

Dr. Aloni, who teaches psychology, has published numerous journal articles and has led presentations at conferences and on campus. She integrates this scholarship into the classroom, committee work, and as the advisor to Psi Beta, the national honor society in psychology. Along with other scholars, Dr. Aloni published five research articles in prestigious journals

including the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology and Psychological Science. Her research is focused on human relationships, social cognition and other social psychological concepts.

Christine Harrington, director of the College's Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the chairperson of the selection committee, was familiar with Dr. Aloni's work before she came to Middlesex in 2010.

"Several years ago, one of my students was writing a research paper and used a journal article Maya wrote on the psychology of love," Dr. Harrington said. "It was a very impressive article and very helpful to the student."

She said Dr. Aloni's research is very positive for the College, the department and for the students.

"She uses her scholarly work in the classroom," Dr. Harrington said. "Her scholarly work makes her a better teacher."

Professor Condie, a faculty member in the Natural Sciences Department, inspires her students to learn.

She is extremely committed to their success and engages in numerous activities to support student learning. She created a geoscience laboratory and a rain garden near Main Hall to provide students with an opportunity to go back billions of years in time to understand New Jersey's geological history, pollution and sustainability.

"She is a fabulous teacher," Dr. Harrington said. "She is highly regarded by her peers and by students. Her commitment to student success is inspirational."



From left: Karen Hays, vice president for academic and student affairs; Claire Condie, the Excellence in Teaching award winner; Maya Aloni, the Faculty Scholar award winner; and College President Joann La Perla-Morales.

Cool Creativity

Students in the Garde Manger class at the College displayed their artistic side as they learned the fundamentals of ice carving. In this course, taught by Chef Walter Leffler, the students used chain saws to mold blocks of ice and then chisels to create the details. The class is part of the Culinary Arts degree and certificate program. Here, Cristina Jordan puts the finishing touches on her creation.



Center for Veterans Services Provides Help and a Home

Military veterans coming to college face unique problems. If they are returning from serving overseas, those issues are compounded.

That's why Middlesex County College has started the Center for Veterans Services, a one-stop center that will provide aid, as well as act as a place for returning veterans to feel at home.

The center opened with a brief ceremony attended by faculty, administrators, staff and College Board members. The audience included Doug Breen, Middlesex County veterans coordinator; Bob Rosania, president of the College's Veterans and Service Members Association; State Senator Linda Greenstein, Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo and Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula.

"Veterans face numerous problems when they re-integrate into civilian life," said Dave Brimmer, the Center's director. "There's a lot of red tape between them and the benefits they've earned: educational, financial and medical. In addition, they may be working through hidden readjustment issues – with conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and the like. Others may have less formidable issues to deal with, but are still

transitioning from one phase of their life to another."

The center is funded by a grant from the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation. It is for three years at \$135,000 per year – a total of \$405,000.

College President Joann La Perla-Morales said the College is very pleased to be able to extend services to veterans.

"We have always welcomed our veterans and the center will allow us to expand our services to provide more comprehensive programs for them," she said. "We are very grateful to the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation for making this happen."

George J. Lisicki, a member of the College's Board of

Trustees and former commander-in-chief of the national Veterans of Foreign Wars, spoke during the ceremony. He said the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are different than those of the Vietnam era, when he served. Then, most were drafted right out of high school; the newer veterans were all volunteers, and many have homes and families.

"We as a nation need to take care of our veterans," he said. "I want to thank each and every one of them for serving their country."

Mr. Brimmer said the focus of the center is on assisting with the transition from the military to the campus, and making sure student veterans use the educational benefits to which they are entitled, both at Middlesex and at a four-year school if they transfer.

He added that the center would also serve as a liaison between veterans and College departments, and he hopes it will be a place for veterans to relax between classes; this will also allow them to socialize with each other.

"We want to be a one-stop shop for veterans on campus," he said. "The more contact we have with them, the more we can meet their needs."

There are approximately 225 veterans enrolled as students at Middlesex.

Mr. Brimmer was a sergeant with eight years of Army service and three combat tours in Iraq. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from The College of New Jersey. His assistant, Paul Lazaro, is a corporal in the New Jersey Army National Guard and has two tours in Iraq. He holds two Associate Degrees from Middlesex County College and is currently in the National Security Studies Program at New Jersey City University, which holds classes at Middlesex.

"We want to be a one-stop shop for veterans on campus. The more contact we have with them, the more we can meet their needs."

David Brimmer, Director of the Center for Veterans Services



From left, Middlesex County College President Joann La Perla-Morales discusses the new Center for Veterans Services with Dave Brimmer, center coordinator; Paul Lazaro, assistant coordinator; and George Lisicki, former commander-in-chief of the national Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a member of the College's Board of Trustees.

A Hall of Fame of Baseball Authors

MCC hosted a night of baseball literature in March as four authors gathered to discuss their work. About 50 members of the community – mostly baseball fans – heard each speak on his area of expertise and then answer questions from the audience. In addition, one Edison resident, Moe Resner, showed a DVD he created that included footage he shot on the last day the New York Giants played in the Polo Grounds in September of 1957. The authors included Lawrence Hogan, senior professor of history at Union County College and the nation's foremost historical expert on African American baseball before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947. He was principal author of "Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball," and he has written "The Forgotten History of America's Negro Leagues," which is scheduled for release in December. Rubil Morales, professor of history at Bergen Community College, wrote the book "Farewell to the Last Golden Era: The Yankees, the Pirates and the 1960 Baseball Season." He is also author of the soon-

to-be-published "New York Versus New York 1962: The Birth of the Yankees-Mets Rivalry." Gene Racz and Frank Russo authored the book "Bury My Heart at Cooperstown," brief stories of how numerous baseball players lived and died and where they are buried.



From left, Moe Resner, Lawrence Hogan, Gene Racz, Frank Russo and Rubil Morales.

EXPRESS YOURSELF: The Tri-State Writers' Workshop

Saturday, October 27, 2012

Crabiel Hall, Middlesex County College

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Join accomplished, professional writers as they explore their creative world and give you tips on how to be a better writer. These experts will work with you in a very positive, supportive environment designed to stoke your creativity. Do you want to create novels, plays or poetry? Or is your goal to just craft better memos for the boss? We can help with both.

Express Yourself is back for its fourth year. This one-day workshop will help you clarify your thoughts and help you put them on paper. Workshops include poetry, essays, playwriting, and short stories as well as on how to get your work published. Most of the presenters are faculty at Middlesex County College and published authors.

We are creating a detailed list of workshops. They will be added to the website as they become available.

Visit www.middlesexcc.edu/express



The Center for Veterans Services recently held a clothes and food drive to benefit military veterans in the area. Sorting through the clothes are David Brimmer (left), the coordinator of the Center, and Paul Lazaro, the assistant. They collected more than 100 articles of clothing and 40 pounds of canned goods from the College community, which were donated to the Salvation Army's Care House Emergency Shelter for Veterans in Perth Amboy.

Damian Gonzalez, a graphic designer in the Office of Marketing Communications, recently won two awards for his creation of the College's annual report. He won a gold Hermes Creative Award and an Award of Excellence from APEX. Hermes is an international competition for creative professionals involved in the concept, writing and design of traditional materials and programs, and emerging technologies. Entries come from corporate marketing and communication departments, advertising agencies, PR firms, graphic design shops, production companies, web and digital creators and freelancers. The awards are administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. APEX is administered by Communications Concepts, which honors best practices in print, web and e-publishing. Mr. Gonzalez is shown with College President Joann La Perla-Morales.



10 Minutes That Can Save a Life

Forty-two people – from the College and the community – were screened for oral cancer at the College's Dental Hygiene Clinic in April. Middlesex dental students assisted dentists and oral surgeons as they did a quick checkup. Here, Judith Sy of the Marketing Communications Department is checked by Dr. Syed Hussain, a dentist currently in residence at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Dental student Bijal Jhaveri observes.



President is Named Distinguished Alumna at Her Alma Mater

Middlesex President Joann La Perla-Morales received the 2012 Distinguished Alumna Award from her alma mater, the State University of New York College at Oneonta. Dr. La Perla-Morales, who graduated in 1968, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in education with a concentration in Spanish. She then attended Columbia University for her master's degree and doctorate.

In her speech accepting the award, Dr. La Perla-Morales spoke on the value of education.

"For many people of my parent's generation, the dream of a college degree was only realized through their children," she said. "As one of those children, I am forever indebted to my parents, especially my father, who instilled in me the value of school. I am also indebted to the fine public state university system of New York that welcomed me and provided me with opportunities and possibilities. Like many of our students today, it is through education that otherwise closed doors are opened."

Dr. La Perla-Morales became the sixth president in



From left: Joann La Perla-Morales, SUNY Oneonta President Nancy Kleniewski, and Karen Brown, president of the Oneonta Alumni Association Board of Directors.

January of 2005. She has initiated new academic programs, restructured and increased student services, and developed an honors program for high achieving students. In concert with Raritan Bay Medical Center, Dr. La Perla-Morales developed a new Associate in Science degree in Nursing. During her tenure, enrollment has increased and the campus had added new buildings and facilities, including a LEED Certified classroom/conference center building, Crabiell Hall, which opened in January 2011.

An active member of the civic community, she holds many key positions in state and local organizations. She serves on the boards of the New Jersey State Ethics Commission, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the New Jersey Presidents' Council, the New Jersey Chapter of the American Council on Education – Office of Women in Higher Education, and Raritan Bay Medical Center. She also serves on the board of New Brunswick Tomorrow and its Education Task Force. She is a board member of the Edison Arts Society, and MIPH (Making It Possible to end Homelessness). She is also a member of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Committee on Substantive Change.

Her writings have been widely published in academic journals and she has been recognized as an outstanding academic by many professional and community associations.

Dr. La Perla-Morales has been honored by the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Edison Arts Society, MIPH, the Executive Women of New Jersey, the Girl Scouts of Delaware/Raritan and Kappa Delta Pi. She received the Contribution to the Community Award from Greater Media in 2010.



Quality Work from Quality Grads

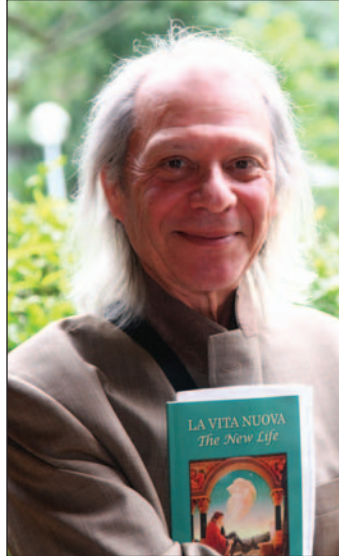
Seven members of the Malouf Ford service team in North Brunswick are graduates of the Middlesex automotive technology program. Gerry Nucifora, the service director, says he knows MCC graduates will be qualified and do a good job. "I hire them because I trust Harry Parker, the instructor," Mr. Nucifora said. "He prepares them well, and he stays involved after they start working here to make sure they know the business. They are very qualified, have good attitudes and a passion for the work. They do a very good job." From left: Mr. Parker; John Sawyer; Adam Thompson; Mr. Nucifora; Matt Staffin, a student who interned at Malouf; Marlon Smith; Danny Sobreiro; and Thom Sabol, chair of Engineering Technologies at the College. Not pictured: Dan Hatter and Jorge Castro.

Prof Pens Breakthrough Dante Translation

Professor Emanuel di Pasquale, poet-in-residence at Middlesex, has translated Dante's classic work "The New Life." The translation, co-authored by Bruno Alemanni, a retired writer and editor, was published in July.

"The New Life," written in the 13th century, was Dante's first book. He compiled love poems he had written for a young woman named Beatrice, and introduced them with prose and described the circumstances of their creation.

"The book is about the mystery of love," Professor di Pasquale said. "Human love, which is a sign of the divinity in the human. What makes us divine, in other words, is our ability to love each other – love in all its forms: Love of children, love of family, love of father and mother, brother and sister; love of all humanity eventually."



The translation is aimed at American readers, but does not sacrifice Dante's literary style.

The poet Joseph Kennedy calls this work "a fresh new version."

"As I dipped into their slim volume I found myself unexpectedly hooked," he said. "The text is full of self-contained poems, sonnets rendered into distinguished modern verse. And what's intriguing: Dante gives us detailed accounts of how he wrote them. I don't know another book that takes us into a poet's workshop like this. 'La Vita' ('The New Life') is an impressive prelude to 'The Divine Comedy,' essential reading for a fuller knowledge of Dante, and actually a pleasure all the way through."

Professor di Pasquale's colleague, Daniel Zimmerman, professor of English at Middlesex, also says this work breaks new ground.

"In his new translation of 'La Vita,' Emanuel di Pasquale has captured the commonplace, matter-of-fact spirit with which Dante engages the materials that love and language provide him," Dr. Zimmerman said.

Professor di Pasquale was born in Ragusa, Sicily, but has lived in the United States since 1957. He has several other translations of Italian authors published and 16 books of his own poetry, the most recent being "Siciliana" (2009) and "Harvest" (2011). He has also written a children's book, "Cartwheel to the Moon" (2003).

English Professor Awarded Playwriting Grant

Middlesex Professor Benjamin Marshall was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

The Council announced the award of 2012 Individual Artist Fellowship grants to 22 New Jersey artists selected from more than 300 applicants in the categories of crafts, sculpture, photography, playwriting and poetry. These highly competitive grants are based on independent reviews of work samples submitted and the anonymous process is focused solely on artistic quality. The grants help artists to produce new work and advance their careers and their impact on society.



"I love to use language to tell stories and to hide stories," he says. "People reveal things when they talk and also when they are silent."

Professor Marshall says teaching is like being on stage.

"I always try to engage my students in some ways, so I'm always asking questions. Sometimes they don't like that – they'd rather be lectured to – but I find it helps them learn when they are challenged. Especially in my English composition classes, I bombard them with a lot of material and find that something is relevant for almost everyone. What I look for is the moment when everything clicks and the student 'gets it.' That is very satisfying."

IYA: “MCC Saved My Life”

7 Years after a lifesaving kidney transplant, Iya Bekondo has started a foundation to support low-income patients and promote organ donation.

She's changed much during the past seven years: no longer reed thin, a little more confidence, a little more outgoing. There's a healthy glow about her. But some of her features are the same: there is still that great laugh; still the sparkle in her eyes.

It was that spirit that got her through the last decade. That, plus friends and support from Democracy House at Middlesex County College.

Iya Bekondo, 29, a native of Cameroon, battled kidney disease since she was 7 years old. Harsh diet and medication kept the problem at bay for a time, but she knew a kidney transplant was the only solution that would save her life. She came to the United States in 2000 and started at Middlesex in 2002. She joined Democracy House, the College's service learning program, and was tutoring children at Amandla Crossing, a transitional sanctuary for homeless families.

“I loved the work I was doing there,” she said. “I was reading to the very young kids and teaching the older ones how to read. I had hoped to be doing it all through my college career.”

But her condition was getting worse; dialysis treatments forced her to take the fall of 2003 off from school. She was missed – the other Democracy House students wanted to know why she wasn't around.

“They called me and came to visit,” she said. “I told them about my kidney problems and how I needed a transplant to live.”

There was a problem, though. She had no insurance, and as a foreign student, she was ineligible for any programs to help cover the costs.

However, surgeons at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital were willing to do the surgery for free. Her sister, Sharon Romero-Smith, a nurse there, had connections.

But they wouldn't proceed without assurances that Ms. Bekondo could pay for the anti-rejection drugs she would need. The cost for a couple of years' worth: \$30,000.

“There was no way we could handle anything close to that,” Ms. Bekondo said. “I was so depressed.”

Democracy House is in the business of helping the community. Here is a need close to home, the students figured.

They were undaunted and the Iya Project was born.

On May 20, 2004, the group sponsored a golf outing, raising over \$5,000. A benefit concert at the Crossroads Restaurant in Garwood raised a couple of thousand more. A serve-a-thon, in which students performed a community service project in exchange for donations, raised \$2,400. Gifts from the College community poured in – over \$6,600.



Iya Bekondo chats with Jessica Gulutz, the current Democracy House coordinator, about the group's recent projects.



Patrick Donohue was the founder and director of Democracy House.

“It’s one of the most amazing things I’ve seen in my professional career,” he said. “It validates what students can do when you empower them. When you give them the space and support to make a difference, they can do amazing things. I always refer to Democracy House as an organization of diverse students who unite to serve the unmet needs of the community. Well, here was a chance to turn their efforts inward, and save a life of someone in their own program. They nailed it!”

Professor Donohue is now the director of the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement at The College of New Jersey.

“When I talk with students there, I always use the Iya Project as an example of what students can do,” he said. “They can change the world in profound ways.”

Meanwhile, Ms. Bekondo’s church, First Presbyterian in Metuchen, was raising money. In all, about half of the \$30,000 was raised by the College; half from the church.

“Much like the people in Democracy House, we felt it was important to take care of one of our own,” said Rev. James F. Thomas, who was the interim associate pastor. “When one member of the body of Christ is suffering, we all are suffering; when one member is rejoicing, we all are.”

Rev. Thomas is now the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Iselin. He remembers Ms. Bekondo and her family with fondness.

“She is a lovely young woman and this was a very difficult time for her,” he said. “She was working and going to school and dealing with her health issues. We are all so happy she has recovered.”

Ms. Bekondo credits Democracy House and the church with keeping her alive.

“It was amazing,” she says. “They reached out to me and they saved my life. I’m here today only because of them.”

The surgery was performed on August 6, 2005. Her mother Rose was the donor and the operation was a success.

It was a quick recovery. Within six months she had fully recovered and has been healthy ever since. She graduated from Middlesex in January of 2008 with a degree in biology; she transferred to Kean University and graduated from there with a degree in biotechnology; and she is now in a graduate program at New Jersey Institute of Technology studying pharmaceutical systems management. She is planning to graduate with a master’s degree next spring and is planning for a career in the pharmaceutical industry.

In the meantime, she got married, and is looking to move on with her life.

But she hasn’t forgotten.

Ms. Bekondo started her own nonprofit organization, also called the Iya Project, to raise funds to help those in similar straights. It will help low-income kidney patients at Robert Wood University Hospital with basic expenses.

“We’re also promoting awareness of kidney disease and organ donation,” she said. “We want people to have their kidneys checked whenever they have blood work done during a physical exam. You might not have symptoms, but there still could be a problem. And organ donation can give people a new lease on life. I’m very interested in promoting that, especially in my community, the African immigrant community, which is still skeptical about organ donation.”

To learn more about her foundation, visit www.TheIyaProject.org.

“I don’t think there’s any way I can express my gratitude to those who helped me when I needed it most – Democracy House and the church,” she said. “They saved my life. The only way I can thank them is by helping someone else.”



At the 2004 Iya Project Golf Outing, John Hogan (left) and Tim Dengler, of the law firm Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer, give Iya Bekondo a few pointers on how to play golf. Above left, Pat Donohue, then director of Democracy House, smashes a drive.

Student Wins Essay Contest, Lauding “The Great Gaspar”

By most measures, Jennifer Resti is not the model student a professor would like to see walking into math class.

“I hate math,” she says.

She hated math the first day she took Algebra I with John Gaspar. And then a transformation happened.

“When I began his class I was absolutely terrified,” she said. “But the very first session we had I knew this time it would be very different.”

And it was. Ms. Resti became inspired, and, while she is still not a big fan of mathematics, she is a fan of John Gaspar. So much so that she wrote an essay that was accepted as one of the top 10 in the Community College Week/National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development contest. There were more than 800 entries. She called it “The Great Gaspar.”

“On the first day of class, he said, ‘we are going to question everything,’” Ms. Resti said. “He made everything simplified and he was always available to help.”

Professor Gaspar taught at Colonia High School for

34 years before starting full time at MCC in 2002. He says Ms. Resti’s writing touched him.

“I’m humbled by her essay,” he said. “I was really taken off guard. Sometimes as educators, we need a pat on the back. It really energizes you.”

Ms. Resti took Algebra I and Algebra II with Professor Gaspar. An education major, she plans to

graduate in January of 2013 and transfer to Rutgers. She’d like to get a master’s degree and teach fourth and fifth graders in Perth Amboy, where she grew up.

“I sincerely hope I can emulate him in several ways when I become a teacher,” Ms. Resti said. “First is his ‘question everything’ philosophy. Second, I learned the importance of creating a learning environment in which there are no stupid questions.”

In her essay, she wrote: “Professor Gaspar motivated me to complete the course; he also provided me with a great deal of motivation to understand that math is not something I am doomed to fail. It’s a lesson I will be forever grateful for learning.”



Professor John Gaspar with Jennifer Resti



Forty-two students from MCC geology and oceanography classes taught by Professor Claire Condie volunteered to clean the Laurence Harbor Waterfront Park in April. The program was organized by Clean Ocean Action, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of marine waters off the New Jersey and New York coasts. From left: Ashley Pereira and Nicolette Waksmundzki remove a discarded tire.

Vice President Hays Honored Twice

Karen Hays, vice president for academic and student affairs at the College, received two awards. She was named Central Jersey Woman of the Year and she received a Spirit Award from the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

The Woman of the Year award was sponsored by Magic 98.3/Greater Media, and it honored 10 central Jersey women in areas such as Mentor of the Year, Woman in the Workplace, New Business, Contribution to the Community, and Rising Star, in addition to the Woman of the Year honor.

Dr. Hays joined Middlesex County College in 2005 and has had a profound impact on the growth and success of the College. She oversees four divisions and 46 departments, and played a leadership role in developing 15 new degree and certificate programs, including the nursing program, which is in collaboration with Raritan Bay Medical Center. She was also integral in the creation of the Biotechnology program, which now includes a state-of-the-art biotechnology lab. She led efforts to examine and adjust the College's general education program to align it with statewide goals. She initiated a reorganization of both the academic and student services areas.

Dr. Hays led the development of the College's Honors Program; the Learning Center, which provides a centralized location for tutoring students and providing support services in developmental English, reading and math; and the new Student Government Association. She initiated and developed the First Year Experience office, which provides a revamped and more personalized orientation process for new students. She also developed the Summer Bridge Program, which allows students whose test scores indicate they need to take remedial classes in the fall to take an intensive summer program, that, if passed, permits them to go directly into credit classes.

One major initiative that Dr. Hays spearheaded was the Assessment program. This requires academic and service areas to examine what they are doing and how it is benefiting students. She has presented workshops on assessment at professional conferences.

She also received a Spirit Award from the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the state association representing the 19 community colleges.

She received the Woman of the Year award at the Central Jersey Women in Business dinner, and a Spirit Award from the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

Dr. Hays, one of 14 community college administrators honored, was recognized for her work on the Big Ideas Project, the collective effort of all 19 New Jersey community colleges to improve student success.

Dr. Hays worked with Dr. Eileen Abel, senior vice president for academic affairs at Raritan Valley Community College, to develop a plan to revamp developmental education statewide. They looked at trends and best practices nationally and developed the paper to improve student success in developmental courses.

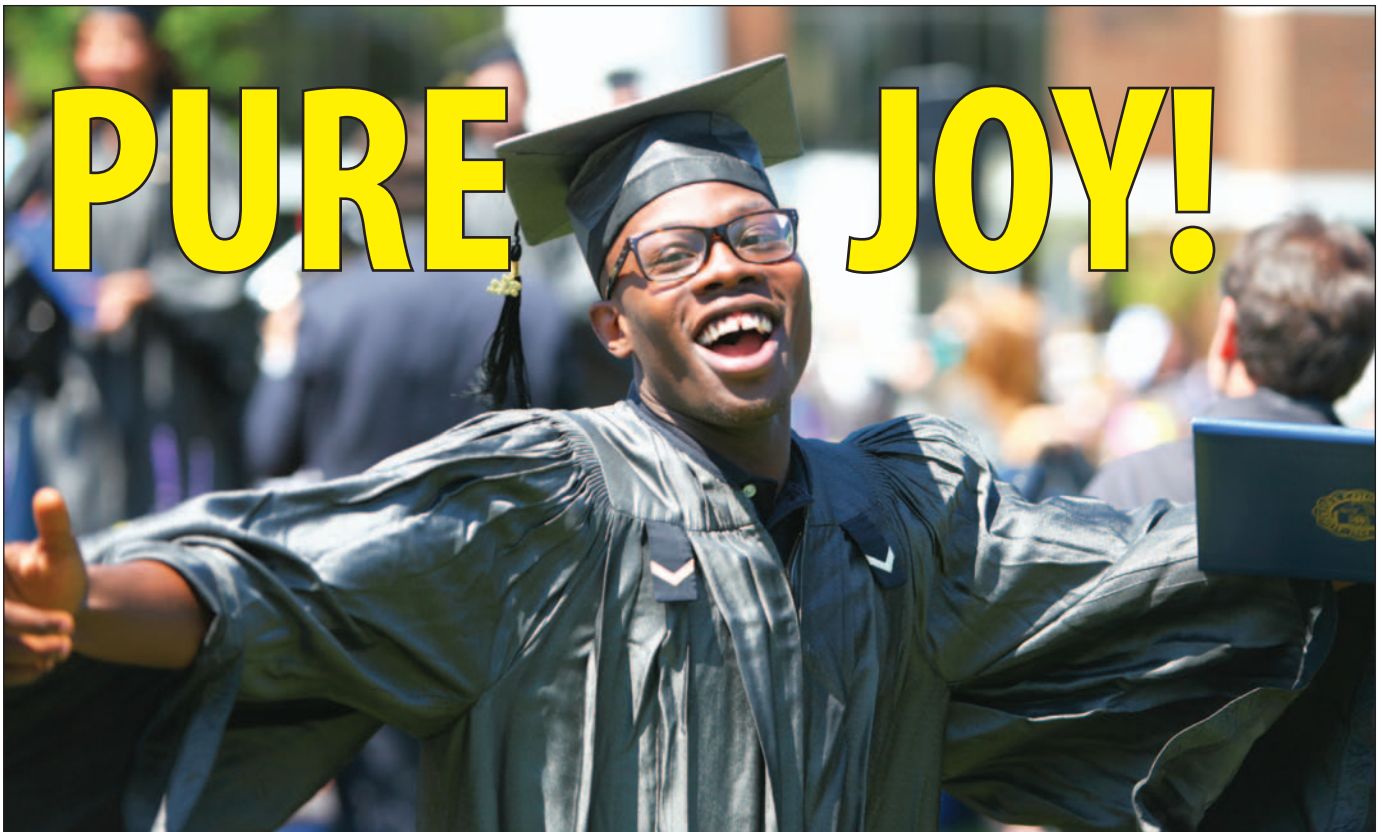
"We hope this will allow students to transfer into college-credit courses quicker and in greater numbers, increasing their opportunities for graduation," Dr. Hays said.

Helen Albright, the council's vice chair, lauded the awardees.

"Since its inauguration in 1993, the Community College Spirit Award has been an honor bestowed to those who embody the community college spirit – perseverance, dedication and excellence," she said. "Our awardees have been hard at work this year providing statewide leadership and energy."



Dr. Karen Hays with Dan Henrickson, general manager of Greater Media, which sponsored the Women in Business Program.



A total of 1458 degrees and certificates were awarded in May at the 45th annual Commencement exercises witnessed by more than 3,000 guests. The event was held on the Quad, in the middle of campus, under beautiful, sunny skies.

Valedictorian Jessica Soto delivered the class welcome, sharing her experiences and aspirations. Ms. Soto was the co-president of the College chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges.

“For many of us, community college may not have been our first choice, but it turned out to be the right choice,” she said. “It is the place we all needed in order to grow. I grew more during the time I spent at Middlesex than I thought possible. For me, Phi Theta Kappa was a big part of that growth. I can remember some amazing moments that I will always cherish: hanging cranes for the Tsunami fundraiser, screaming at the top of my lungs during the breast cancer walk on campus, and watching my incredibly talented classmates break dancing in the quad during the Student Activities Fair. And mostly, I remember the friends I have made.”

She asked her classmates to join her in making continuing education for themselves and others a priority.

“Maybe I’m a little biased but I absolutely think we have the best graduating class ever,” she said. “And because you are the best class ever, I’m going to ask two things of you. First, remember that education is a lifelong process. Some of you may be transferring to a four-year institution, others may be going right into a career.

Whatever your plans, make lifelong learning part of them.

“Second, I would like to make a call for a commitment to education, to help someone else along the way. I ask everyone here today to commit to helping at least one other student. Maybe it is by encouraging someone to stay in school. Perhaps it is by tutoring. Or maybe, if you have the means in the future, it is by helping them financially, donating money to assist in scholarships.”

Karen Hays, vice president for academic and student affairs, presided. Greetings were delivered by Joann La Perla-Morales, College president; Dorothy K. Power, chairman of the Board of Trustees; Christopher Rafano, Freeholder director; and Charles Tomaro, Freeholder liaison to the College.

Arthur T. Peterson of the Department of Accounting, Business and Legal Studies led the academic procession as grand marshal.

Dr. La Perla-Morales conferred degrees and certificates to the graduates, who were introduced by Dean Marilyn Laskowski-Sachnoff and Dean David Edwards. Dr. Hays presented the candidates for graduation and conferred the Frank M. Chambers Award for Academic Excellence to nine graduates, in recognition of their earning a 4.0 grade point average. Ms. Soto is a Chambers Award winner and she is joined by the salutatorian, Charles Hahn, and Sylvania Adamczyk, Diana Castano, Megan Giles, Robert L. Kenney III, Michelle Kniep, Jodi Beth Silverman and Anthony V. Zecca.



Sunny Smiles

Bright sun met bright smiles on Commencement day as graduates beamed with pride over their achievement. In the photo at right, valedictorian Jessica Soto, salutatorian Charles Hahn and College President Joann La Perla-Morales. Below, four of the Chambers winners, from left: Jodi Beth Silverman, Robert L. Kenney III, Megan Giles and Diana Castano.



Nursing Director Named 'Fellow' of National League for Nursing

Michelle L. Foley, director of the joint nursing program of Middlesex County College and Raritan Bay Medical Center, has been inducted into the National League for Nursing's Academy of Nursing Education, with the credential of "Fellow." She joins the academy's 117 fellows representing nursing schools and programs throughout the United States.

Professor Foley retired at the end of June from the program but will continue to stay active in the profession.

"The National League for Nursing relies on these accomplished individuals as allies in our efforts to prepare the numbers of excellent nurse educators we need if we are to eliminate the shortage of nurses plaguing America's health care institutions," said Beverly A. Malone, chief executive officer of the National League for Nursing. "Nurse faculty and colleagues from other fields who contribute to excellence in nursing education and to the preparation of a nursing workforce that meets the needs of our ever-changing health care environment deserve this public recognition and the gratitude of all who are eager to elevate the status of the profession."

Nursing Fellows provide visionary leadership in nursing education and in the Academy of Nursing Education, and they support the vision of the NLN to promote standards of excellence in nursing education that will increase the number of graduates from all types of nursing programs. Fellows serve as important role models and resources for new educators and for those who aspire to become nurse educators.

As a newly named Fellow, Professor Foley has been lauded for her innovative teaching and learning strategies;

nursing education research; faculty development; academic leadership; and promotion of public policy that advances nursing education.

She served for four years as the president of the New Jersey League for Nursing (NJLN), two years as president-elect, and she is now the treasurer, a position that will run through 2013. As president, Professor Foley energized the board, created an annual board retreat, worked to clarify the NJLN vision, update its strategic plan, delineate its goals, define measurable and time-sensitive objectives, and increase board member accountability for outcomes. She speaks with clarity on issues, promotes open communication, and has led with drive, commitment, enthusiasm and humor.

In 2010 she won a national award for leadership from the National League for Nursing. Tracey Siegel, a faculty member in the nursing department, nominated Professor Foley for that honor.

"Michelle was very inclusive," Professor Siegel said. "She feels strongly that all levels of nursing need to be at the table when we talk about the future of the profession. She is very supportive of all nursing education programs whether they are baccalaureate degree, associate degree or LPN programs."

She also said Professor Foley's excellent leadership skills were demonstrated as president of the New Jersey League for Nursing.

"During her tenure as president, she made great strides in increasing the visibility of the NJLN in the state," Professor Siegel said.

Professor Foley has also participated in two medical mission trips to Ghana, West Africa in 2010 and 2011.



A Devilishly Good Time

MCC was one of the top five colleges and universities honored in January at a dinner and New Jersey Devils hockey game sponsored by New Jersey Blood Services. The College was cited for organizing blood drives that netted 256 pints of blood. From left: Marie Forrestal, director of recruitment, New Jersey Blood Services; Jessica Gulutz, coordinator of the College's Democracy House; Steve Rudolf, Democracy House student; Jessica Soto, president of the College's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges; Judi DiMaio, manager of health and safety; College President Joann La Perla-Morales; and Jeffrey Jacob, chief of strategy & corporate planning, New York Blood Center. The other colleges honored were Rutgers University, Kean, Seton Hall and NJIT.



Magic and Mirth

The College Gala mixed magic with fun as the College raised scholarship support for students. Wells Fargo received the Corporate Honoree Award, Joanne Fillweber '82 was named Alumna of the Year for Business, Professional and Community Achievements, and Professor Xenia Balabkins received the Spirit of Middlesex award. From left: Ms. Fillweber; Patrick Madama, vice president for advancement; College President Joann La Perla-Morales; William Egbert, president of the College's Alumni Association; Rose Cofone, associate director of the Foundation; Brian Daugherty, chairman of the Foundation Board of Trustees and senior regional director of Wells Fargo; Karen Hays, vice president for academic and student affairs; Professor Balabkins; and Genette Falk, co-chair of the Gala.

MCC Foundation Receives Corporate & Foundation Support

J&J: A Dedicated Corporate Neighbor

Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies awarded the MCC Foundation a grant totaling \$219,000, which was received in June. Of that amount, J&J designated \$150,000 to support the Johnson & Johnson Health

Technologies Scholarships, which will provide greatly needed assistance for health technologies majors, including students pursuing degrees in nursing, dental hygiene, or to fulfill careers as medical lab technicians or in respiratory care. J&J designated the remaining \$69,000 to support the New Brunswick Summer Bridge Program that allows New Brunswick high school graduates to take developmental education courses during the summer so they can start credit classes in the fall at MCC.

J&J's support has been the impetus that has made this program possible, creating positive change in the lives of students involved.

Northfield Bank Foundation Renews Scholarship Support

The Northfield Bank Foundation renewed its support in the amount of \$5,000 to give five \$1,000 scholarships to MCC students during the 2012-2013 academic year. Northfield Bank Foundation Scholarships will be available to students from townships where Northfield Bank has branches in Middlesex County.

Robert Sydney Needham Foundation Offers \$5,000 Scholarship

Trustees of the Robert Sydney Needham Foundation renewed support to the MCC Foundation to offer the Robert Sydney Needham Memorial Scholarship to one MCC student. The recipient of this generous \$5,000 scholarship must fulfill criteria as listed on the MCC scholarship webpage.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY COLLEGE

WIN PRIZES

2nd Annual
Casino Night

Scholarship Fundraiser

October 18, 2012
5:30 p.m.

The Rosewood in Edison
\$75 ticket – starts you with \$50 in chips & includes:
Cocktail hour, one beverage, buffet and Viennese table

GAMING TABLES

FULL BUFFET CASH BAR

* Must be *
21 years of age

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit us on the web at mcc-foundation.org
or call 732.906.2564

SUCCESS STARTS HERE

AlumNotes

Peter J. Parenti '68 is an attorney at law and principal at Wealth Counsel and The Advisors Forum.

Jonathan Chionchio '70 received the NAOC Leadership Service Award. He is founder and owner of USA Environmental, Inc. of Oldsmar, FL.

James Vallely '74 is an Emmy award-winning writer, producer, actor and director.

Denise D. Avrutik '76 is NE education manager, Colgate Oral Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Todd Edelman '92 is director of business development at Forsgate Country Club.

Michael Kane '97 is baseball coach at North Hunterdon High School.

Lauren Owens '02 is chef de cuisine at the Huntley Tavern in Summit.

Jonathan Rosario '07 is assistant vice president and commercial lending officer, Middlesex region, TD Bank.

Kristin Nemeth '08 is specialty restaurant chef at Tbones Restaurant at the Bridgewater Marriott.

Tia Montalto '10 was named the 2012 Outstanding Senior in the Department of Engineering Technology at NJIT.

Alexandria Dionne '11 joined the research science department at Chromocell, Inc.

Lacey Plichta '06 is a second grade teacher at Princeton Charter School.

Obituaries

Richard H. Bowen, Jr. '02 on September 7, 2011.

You're Invited

**Middlesex County College Alumni
Association Art Exhibit**

Join us at a reception for the artists

Thursday, October 4, 6:30-8 p.m.

College Gallery

Top Floor of the College Center

**The exhibit will continue
throughout the month of October.**

What have you been up to? Let us know: alumni@middlesexcc.edu

Joe Bevilacqua '80 (Joe Bev) is a veteran radio theater producer and voice actor. He also works on stage and is the winner of the 2012 New York TANYs Award for Excellence in Acting. He has performed at the Improv, Caroline's on Broadway, Catch a Rising Star, the Comic Strip, opened for Uncle Floyd, and worked with Al Franken, Shelley Berman, Louis Black and Rick Overton.

Mr. Bevilacqua has also emceed shows featuring Jerry Seinfeld, Bill Mahr and Gilbert Gottfried. He has been regularly heard on National Public Radio and Sirius-XM Radio and has produced hundreds of hours of audiobooks. He has won many other awards including a New York Festivals Best Documentary for "Lady Bird Johnson: Legacy of a First Lady."

Joe Bev currently hosts and produces three radio hours for Internet radio powerhouse Cult radio-A-Go-Go! The Joe Bev 3-Hour Block includes The Comedy-O-Rama Hour, The Jazz-O-Rama Hour and The Joe Bev Experience, every Saturday starting at 1 p.m. online at www.cultradioagogo.com. Learn more about him and his Waterlogg Productions at www.waterlogg.com.

Visit his website at JoeBev.com.



Joe Bevilacqua

Bring Your Appetite!

The Alumni Association annual food tasting raised \$3700 for scholarships. About 20 restaurants brought samples of their best dishes and the College community and public brought their appetites and enjoyed. Here, English Professor Melissa Edwards and her son Ellison enjoy food from Bahama Breeze.



Left photo, from left: Veronica Clinton, director of development and alumni relations; Mat Spano; and College President Joann La Perla-Morales. Center: Michele Sutera



with Dorothy Bitetto '69, an alumni board member. Right: Tara Marlowe, her daughter Julia, and Lacey Plichta '06, the Association treasurer.



Alumni Association Presents Awards to Distinguished Alumni

The MCC Alumni Association recently presented awards to several notable alumni.

Mathew Spano was named Alumnus of the Year for service to Middlesex County College. Dr. Spano, a professor of English at the College, is a 1988 graduate.

Veronica Clinton, director of development and alumni relations at Middlesex, presented the award.

“Mat cares deeply about his students, works hard to make sure they succeed, and is an expert in his field, particularly haiku poetry,” she said. “He is also the founding co-director of the honors program; he teaches honors classes, helps develop courses, and recruits students.”

Dr. Spano is an editor of the College literary journal and he is also an advisor to MCC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges.

Michele Sutera was named Recent Alumna of the Year. The award honors alumni who have graduated from the College within the past 10 years. Ms. Sutera '08 is a graduate of the Dietetic Technology program. Each year, the association hosts a restaurant food tasting to raise funds for an alumni scholarship program. Ms. Sutera buys tickets and gives them to culinary students so they can attend and network with the restaurant owners. Last year, one of the students was hired by a participating restaurant.

Middlesex student Tara Marlowe received the 2012 Alumni Association scholarship for academic excellence. Ms. Marlowe, a Liberal Arts major, has an excellent grade point average, participated in the College's honors program, and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa. She is a volunteer at the Greater Brunswick Charter School and works with an organization that assists women survivors of war with educational needs, job training and obtaining medical care.

MCC Wrestler Takes National Championship; Team Finishes Third Among Non-Scholarship Programs; Ninth Overall

Wrestler John McArdle won the National Championship in the 184-pound weight class this year. He defeated Austin Morehead from Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, Oregon at the championships held in Rochester, MN. McArdle, who had three pins leading up to the finals, won the championship bout on a 9-8 decision. He was named an All-American and was also named Outstanding Wrestler of the National Tournament.

Sam Emburgia came in seventh in the 141-pound class and Billy Bonnette finished sixth in the 157-pound class. They were also named All-Americans.

Overall, Middlesex was ninth out of 46 schools participating and third among schools not offering wrestling scholarships.

The wrestlers qualified for the National Championship tournament by their performance in the districts. Nassau Community College and Gloucester County College also sent wrestlers to the nationals. Nassau came in fifth and Gloucester came in 12th.

“Wrestling is very strong in this area,” said Bob Wisniewski, the Middlesex athletic director. “I’m very happy with their success. The program is continuing to get stronger and the coaching staff is doing an excellent

job.” The coaches are head coach Mike Malinconico and assistants Dan Corio and David Saraiva.

Former Middlesex and Rutgers wrestling coach John Sacchi attended both tournaments as the athletic administrator.



John McArdle

College to Start Women’s Volleyball Program

Women’s volleyball will be offered at Middlesex County College, starting this fall.

“Volleyball is growing in popularity all over the state,” said Bob Wisniewski, the athletic director. “We’ll be the fifth community college in New Jersey to offer volleyball, and I suspect that number will increase in the near future.” The others are Atlantic Cape Community College, Bergen, Passaic and Union County College.

Mr. Wisniewski said he is seeking to increase the number of women athletes at the College. “Volleyball is a great sport,” he said. “I coached volleyball in high school for 10 to 12 years, and the quality of play has gotten better and better.”

Here, Racheal Wernoch spikes the ball as Victoria Valenta watches.



Athletes in Action

PINK DAY

"Pink Day," a program in which the Middlesex County College and Ocean County College basketball teams supported Breast Cancer Awareness, was held in February. The men's and women's teams from both schools wore pink warmup t-shirts and wristbands and members of the Middlesex women's team and softball squad held a bake sale and collected donations for cancer research. The program was part of "Pink Zone," a national effort to raise awareness and funds, organized by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. Before the women's game, Gabriela Jurick, a cancer survivor and the physical education coordinator at Middlesex, officiated at a ceremonial tipoff. From left: Liz Lawler, from Ocean County College; Carey Monkowski, assistant athletic director at Middlesex; Ms. Jurick; Middlesex County College President Joann La Perla-Morales; and Cristina Jordan from Middlesex.



From left: Derek Walker, one of the founding parents of the New Jersey Hawks program; Bob Wisniewski, athletic director at Middlesex; Ray Dodd, Hawks head basketball coach; Chris Tarver, Middlesex head coach; and Bob Edmonds, Middlesex assistant athletic director and athletic trainer.

Learning to Play Great "D"

The men's basketball team was honored by the New Jersey Hawks, an athletic program for young adults with developmental disabilities. The MCC team ran a workshop during the season, in which they taught dribbling, passing and shooting skills. In May, the Hawks returned to campus to present awards to the MCC squad: autographed team photos. The MCC team also conducted a brief clinic and ran a scrimmage. Here, New Jersey Hawks player Eric Dodd works on his defense with Middlesex center Magdy Assawi.





Cristina Jordan



Emmanuel Omowole



National Champion John McArdle
(in blue)



Anthony Tagliaboschi



Sean Youngman

Winter & Spring Wrap-Up: Strong Seasons

The **men's basketball** squad finished fifth in the Region and lost in the opening round of the tournament to Atlantic Cape Community College. Myles Rueben was named to the Second Team All-Region XIX.

Women's basketball was seeded fourth in the Regional tournament but lost in the opening round. Cristina Jordan was named to the Second Team All-Region XIX. She also received a scholarship to Cheney University in Pennsylvania.

The **wrestling** team had an outstanding season, finishing second in the Garden State Athletic Conference and ninth in the nation (see page 20).

The **baseball** team started off slow but turned it around later in the season. Matt Cesare was named to the All-Region XIX and Garden State Athletic Conference Teams.

The **softball** squad had their best season in 10 years. Five players were named to the All-Region XIX team: Kristen Mickley, Rebecca Hilliard, Nicole Gibbons, Cindy Pydeski and Morgan Widener.

The **golf** team saw four players qualify for the regional tournament. Anthony Lentini qualified for nationals and Pat Purcell was an alternate. They were named to the All Region XIX team.

Track and Field had 11 athletes qualify for the national tournament. Danielle King finished second in the javelin throw and was an NJCAA All-American.



Morgan Widener



Rebecca Hilliard slides under the tag.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Institutional Advancement

2600 Woodbridge Ave.
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Golfers supported the College at the 30th annual golf classic, sponsored by the MCC Foundation in May. Co-chairs James Sausmer and Brian Legg joined forces to raise more than \$25,000. Here, Professor Ron Foley follows through on a practice shot. For more Foundation news, see page 17.

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