

FOUNDATION FOCUS

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE FOUNDATION NEWS

WINTER | 2023

Transforming Lives

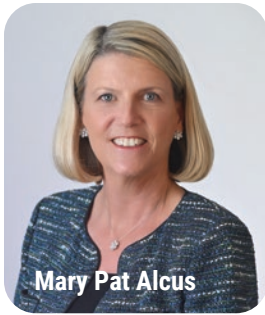
New College Plan Focuses on Access, Completion, and Post-Completion Success [P.12](#)

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Mary Pat Alcus

Looking back, I always knew I would attend college.

It was something my parents instilled in my siblings and me from a young age. Since becoming involved with the Montgomery College Foundation—first as a donor and then as a director—I have learned that planning to attend college or pursuing job training after high school is not a given for many in our community. I also learned that the annual median earnings with an associate's degree are 37% higher than they are for a high school graduate, and

bachelor's degree holders earn almost 63% more in a year than those with only a high school diploma. It's also important to know that three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require education and training beyond a high school diploma.

Thankfully, there is a program in 14 area high schools (selected because they have the highest number of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals) specifically created to address this issue. In partnership with Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools and The Universities at Shady Grove (USG), the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program offers underrepresented students a seamless and supportive pathway to a bachelor's degree.

ACES student success coordinators start working with students in 11th grade, advising them on academic preparation and career readiness. Most of the students are first generation, low income, and/or minorities. The coaching staff and peer support then follows students as they matriculate to MC for an associate's degree, then to USG, where they complete a bachelor's degree.

Jorge Torres, whom you can read about on page 19, was introduced to the ACES program while attending Clarksburg High School. He is now in his second year of dental school at the University of Maryland. My husband, Darren, and I feel privileged to have been able to provide Jorge with the scholarship support he needed while at MC and at the University of Maryland College Park at USG, where he graduated summa cum laude.

For many students, scholarships are a determining factor in whether they complete a college degree. For many students, an additional \$500-\$1,000 makes all the difference.

Please consider joining me in contributing to an ACES scholarship, or speak with a member of the Foundation staff about setting up a named scholarship fund that will empower students to succeed for years to come.



**Spring 2023 cohort. 31% of ACES students who received Free and Reduced Meals earned an associate's or bachelor's degree within four years, compared to 18.6% from a matched non-ACES group.*

- 99% of ACES participants graduated from high school
- 89% of ACES participants applied to at least one college or university

Montgomery College ACES students identified as:

- 84% first generation to college*
- 76% from a low-income household*
- 86% Black or Hispanic/Latino*

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Established in 1982, the Montgomery College Foundation is a 501(c)(3) institutionally related foundation and charitable organization governed by business, alumni, philanthropic, and community leaders. The Foundation's mission is to provide critical financial and nonfinancial resources in advancing the Montgomery College mission to transform student lives and enrich the diverse communities it serves.

On the Cover: MC graduate Jorge Torres in the dental lab at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. Photo by Hilary Schwab. Design by Joe Weyman.



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Student Board Directors

The Foundation welcomed new student representatives, Joshua Hayes and Esmeralda Quenum, to the Montgomery College Foundation Board of Directors (2023) for a term lasting through the current academic year.



Esmeralda Quenum is a biological science major and member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, Nvolve Scholars, and the Renaissance Scholar Honors program. Additionally, she serves as a STEM ambassador, exemplifying her passion for science and education. She has received the Montgomery College Leadership Badge and the Respect and Hard Work Badge from Sibley Memorial Hospital, a member of Johns Hopkins Medicine. She volunteers extensively with hospitals, making a positive impact on the lives of others. She is fluent in both French and English.

Joshua Hayes is a computer science and information systems major. He was elected president of the Student Government Association at Germantown, demonstrating his exceptional leadership qualities and commitment to representing his peers. He has served as a member of the Student Activities Board, MC Serves, the Renaissance Scholars Program, and the Presidential Scholars Program. Additionally, he is on the dean's list. He has a background in music education from Northwestern State University. Upon completion of his associate's degree, he plans to transfer to a four-year university to pursue his bachelor's degree in computer science.



Seasonal Events: *Scholarship Recognition Luncheon and Commencement*



The annual **Scholarship Recognition Luncheon** in December brought together students and donors to celebrate another successful academic year. The 2022-2023 Foundation's student directors, **Swechchha Shrestha** and **Kethaka Yattogoda**, emceed the event, introducing speakers **Will Jawando**, Montgomery County councilman and chair of the council's Education and Culture Committee, **Jermaine F. Williams**, MC president, and **Cliff White**, donor.

Jawando and Williams both shared personal experiences as scholarship recipients. Jawando grew up in a low-income household but earned a bachelor's and a law degree with scholarship assistance. Dr. Williams, a first-generation college student, applauded donors in the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, speaking of them as "people who believe in a magnificent future."

Cliff White, a longtime donor with his wife, **Debbie**, spoke about the joy of supporting MC students and their resilience through the COVID pandemic. "Debbie and I get back so much more than we give," he said, "We are so proud of you. We are wowed by your perseverance." The couple have supported more than 40 students through their Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) scholarship.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Seasonal Events: *Scholarship Recognition Luncheon and Commencement (continued)*



During the **Montgomery College Commencement** approximately 1,100 of the more than 3,000 graduates of the class of 2023 walked the stage at the Rockville Campus Athletic Field on May 19. The graduating class represented 102 countries, and more than 260 were high school students who earned an associate's degree

through the College's Dual Enrollment programs.

Four graduates earned Montgomery College Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Awards: **Nathaniel Y. Lim**, a general studies STEM major; **Simon A. Alvarado Jr.**, who completed a two-year apprenticeship program as an automotive technician;

Hollis Xavier Zimmerman, a radio broadcast media production major and member of Phi Theta Kappa; and **Richa Carmel D'Mello**, a computer science major and member of Phi Theta Kappa. Each graduated with a 4.0 grade point average.

(Left to right) Montgomery College Trustees Omar A. Lazo and Annice Cody with Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Award recipients: Richa C. D'Mello, Hollis X. Zimmerman, Nathaniel Y. Lim, and Simon A. Alvarado Jr.

Outstanding People



Kimmy Duong



Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg



C. Richard Mattingly



The Honorable Craig L. Rice

Four individuals received honorary degrees at the 2023 Commencement ceremony for their outstanding contributions to the College and the community: **Kimmy Duong**, an accomplished tech entrepreneur, philanthropist, and refugee from Vietnam; **Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg**, a social practice artist who champions human dignity through topics she explores, including homelessness, gun safety, drug addiction, and politics; **C. Richard Mattingly**, founder and president of The Luv U Project, a 501(c)(3) public charity that focuses on mental health treatments; and **the Honorable Craig L. Rice**, former member of the Montgomery County Council who strengthened MC's STEM education by backing renovation and building projects at all three campuses.



HONORARY DEGREES

Each year, Montgomery College honors several individuals who have provided great service over time to the College, the county, and community at large in the areas of education, philanthropy, and community service with an honorary degree at commencement.



In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened by the passing of **Sally Rudney**, former Montgomery College Foundation board of directors member, on September 19, 2023.

Sally joined the board in 2013 and served until 2017. She was a stalwart supporter, friend of the College, and devoted advocate for our students. In recognition of her service on behalf of the College and her dedication to the betterment of

our overall community, Sally was presented with an honorary degree in 2013. She will long be remembered for the positive impact she made on the lives of many in our community.

Strategic Plan Guides Foundation Work



“In a culture and economy where we face entrenched challenges, Montgomery College is a source of solutions.”

.....

Bold. That’s the first word that comes to mind when you read the College’s Strategic Plan: Montgomery College students will be able to enroll, complete their degrees, and find meaningful work in their fields. That’s what is promised in the new strategic plan. Built around the pillars of “access, completion and post-completion success,” the College’s commitment has been updated to address the changing needs of today’s college students.

In one of the most vibrant, diverse, and thriving communities in the nation, Montgomery College is a dynamic institution dedicated to serving society, building futures, and transforming lives. In a culture and an economy where we face complex questions, Montgomery College is a wellspring of answers. In a society where we face entrenched challenges, Montgomery College is a source of solutions.

The MC Board of Trustees adopted a strategic vision with ambitious aspirations for the future. And the Montgomery College Foundation is quietly launching a campaign to support these aspirations. (You’ll hear more in 2024!) Our goals are to expand access to the transformational educational experiences that we offer,

to increase every student’s potential for success in college and in life, and to ensure a vibrant future for our community.

The Montgomery College Foundation Board of Directors is excited to partner with the College to bring the bold commitments outlined in the Strategic Plan to fruition. We ask for your partnership and engagement as well to make this happen.

We have strategic goals to turn opportunity into impact.

Please join us as we work further to uplift our community and our world in the ways that matter most—educating ambitious, engaged, and productive citizens, and in doing so, reducing poverty, increasing economic mobility, and advancing social justice.

We want to hear from you.

Did you receive a scholarship that impacted your education and your life? Did you receive emergency funding that kept you in College and helped you succeed? Or are you a donor who has a story to share about the impact of your gift on a student’s life?

Please email us at MCstory@montgomerycollege.edu and tell us your story. We look forward to receiving your MC success stories and sharing them with others.

The Gift of Observation

By Katie Kumkumian

Marlene Gaunaurd's gift of observation has helped her make significant life choices. While a freshman at Catholic University, she attended a Sunday night mixer where she noticed a young man across the room. He was wearing a (freshman) beanie. "Bill actually wasn't a freshman," she says. "He was there to meet people. And he was much more interesting than the freshman boys in my classes."

Four years later, Marlene and Guillermo "Bill" Gaunaurd got married.

After college, Gaunaurd began working in Washington, D.C. and pursued a master's degree in public health at American University by taking night classes. Following a 34-year career with Indian Health Services, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, she enrolled at Montgomery College and enjoyed classes in art history, Middle Eastern history, sociology, and religion, to name a few. On campus, she observed some of her fellow students with children in tow.

"Some had babies or young children with them, and I found myself wondering how they can manage it all while taking college courses," she says.

She also noticed students who did not have the books they needed.

Gaunaurd never forgot those students. When Bill died, she worked with her financial advisor, Ann Schnorrenberg, to establish an estate gift that would make a difference to students at Montgomery College. Then she contacted the Montgomery College Foundation.

Her directions to the Foundation were straightforward: "I want to help students get books."

The Marlene J. and Guillermo C. Gaunaurd Endowed Scholarship and Marlene J. and Guillermo C. Gaunaurd Endowed Fund will support Montgomery



Marlene Gaunaurd's ability to see the struggles of others led her to make an estate gift that will benefit MC students in need.

College students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, particularly those struggling to support families while pursuing a college degree. It will provide scholarships, textbooks, and emergency assistance.

With her estate plans now in place, Gaunaurd says she can devote more attention to her new favorite activities at her retirement community. She is learning to play bridge and participating in exercise classes. And she loves to enjoy meals with new friends.

For more information about the Montgomery College Foundation's planned giving program, please contact Noah Saposnik, senior campaign director at 240-567-4108 or noah.saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu.

Scholarship Offers Fast Track from Training to the Workforce



Some investments, like the Robert I. Schattner (RIS) Foundation's Job Training and Certification Scholarship, are the right gift at the right moment to transform the lives of students.

The Robert I. Schattner Foundation's financial commitment to students pursuing career training through the Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) programs at Montgomery College ensures that financial need does not prevent them from preparing for high demand jobs relatively quickly.

Each eligible student can receive up to \$4,000 for a full scholarship, along with career navigation and support for certification exam fees, required books,

and/or emergency assistance. The 50 to 60 students selected for this new WDCE scholarship will complete their training and be ready to work by June 30, 2024.

The Robert I. Schattner Foundation is a private charitable foundation established in 1992 by Dr. Robert I. Schattner, inventor of Chloraseptic and a line of products known as Sporicidin. Dr. Schattner died in 2017 at the age of 92.

"We truly appreciate this partnership, which enables students to move

immediately from college training programs to well-paying jobs with the least number of social and economic barriers," says RIS President and Chairman Sidney Bresler.

The Robert I. Schattner Foundation's investment fills a gap for WDCE students pursuing certifications and training in career fields that take a relatively short amount of time to access. The student who earns a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), for example, can be on the road within three months. The certified nursing assistant or geriatric nursing assistant can begin working in healthcare facilities after three months of classroom and clinical training hours. A phlebotomy technician can be drawing blood and preparing samples for testing after 60 hours of training and a clinical internship. Other aspiring workers can pursue careers in early childhood education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or as pharmacy technicians, HVAC technicians, or IT professionals—in less than a year.

Funds also support a program coordinator and a workforce scholarship specialist who will provide specialized services to students, collect data, and report outcomes. It will also pay for nursing equipment for skills labs at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, and the new East County Education Center, among other MC locations.

Above: Robert I. Schattner, inventor of Chloraseptic and a line of products known as Sporicidin, created a charitable foundation in 1992. The foundation supports workforce development programs at MC for students pursuing certifications and training in career fields that take a relatively short amount of time to access.

Driving Force: Parents Honor a Son's Love of Automobiles with Endowed Scholarship

By Joan Woods



Matthew J. Williquette simply loved cars. His parents, Debra and Keith, remember how eager he was to drive. Even before getting his learner's permit, he would sit in the family's Ford pickup parked in the driveway just waiting for his turn behind the wheel.

Matthew wanted to get the earliest appointment at the Maryland Motor Vehicle Association office on the first day he was eligible to get a learner's permit. His parents remember the modifications and experiments he made on the family's Toyota Scion. "Matthew loved vehicles of any kind—four wheelers, snowmobiles, jet skis, anything that had an engine," says Debra.

In recognition of their son's love of cars, Debra and Keith established the Matthew J. Williquette Memorial Endowed Scholarship in 2013. Recently, they created a bequest gift (a designation for Montgomery College in their will) to further support the endowment and provide opportunities for future students who share Matthew's enthusiasm for automobiles. The scholarship is targeted to credit (degree-seeking) students with financial need enrolled in MC's automotive training program.

Justin Iwanicki, a 45-year-old student from Waldorf, Maryland, received a Williquette scholarship during the 2023

summer session. He lives in Prince George's County but says MC had the closest automotive program to earn a "credential that would be very valuable." Iwanicki is halfway through the program; he needs 12 credits to finish his associate's degree.

"This scholarship has allowed me to stay in school full time," Iwanicki says. "I am so appreciative of the donor. I am looking forward to a well-paying job in auto repair when I finish my classes at the end of next year."

Before he died, Matthew was pursuing an associate's degree in automotive technology at the Homer S. Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education at Montgomery College. His mother talks fondly of his excitement as he learned new skills and then took ASE certification tests.

"We're so blessed with everything we have. I want to be able to help someone get an education," Debra says. "I trust that Montgomery College is giving these scholarships to people with the greatest need, especially if they have a love for something that Matt loved." ■

Matthew Williquette's affinity for automobiles led him to MC's automotive technology program at the Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education.

Transforming Lives

New College Plan Focuses on Access, Completion, and Post-Completion Success

Story by Katie Kumkumian, Joan Woods, and Jill Fitzgerald

THE MC OF 2023 is a far different institution than it was when the doors opened in 1946. That year, the most in-demand job was factory worker. Today it is software developer. Scientists barely understood DNA. Today, whole industries are built on DNA technology. And in 1946, Montgomery College served only white students, most of whom grew up in Montgomery County. Since 1956, MC has welcomed students of all races. Today, they hail from more than 150 countries, and the majority of MC students identify as minority. Strategic plans have helped the College navigate changes, adapt to new times, and serve students. Such plans serve as the north star for the institution, guiding planning, budgeting, and decision-making. On July 1, 2023, the College's Board of Trustees adopted a refreshed strategic plan for the next five years.

Devised with input from students, employees, community leaders, and employers, the plan highlights a bold set of transformational aspirations that will guide the College today and the years ahead. Its three main components: access, completion, and post-completion success are highlighted in the student and alumni stories here.

A common thread in these stories is the importance of financial support in gaining confidence to continue, in transferring to a four-year school, in landing good jobs, and in building careers that lift up a family and a community. These are also stories of gratitude to benefactors who open the doors to a world of possibilities.

Access

Access is not simply opening the doors of the institution to those interested in attending. Instead, it is deliberate work in the community to create a college-going culture across the county, especially in those areas where going to college has historically been the exception instead of the expectation.

“Creating opportunities that are equitably available will unlock the potential for all of those the College serves.”

–Dr. Michael Brintnall, chair,
Montgomery College Board of Trustees

Completion

Completion is not just about earning degrees. The College must ensure that all credentials that the College offers provide experiences of economic, social, and community impact.

Post-Completion Success

Post-Completion Success is our institutional ability to transform lives. When students leave MC, whether they are transferring to another school or entering the workforce, they need to have mastered skills that will ensure success on their journey and allow them to earn a family sustaining wage.



Access

BESLIN ARYEH graduated from Gaithersburg High School last May. By spring 2024, just a year later, she will complete a nursing degree, graduate from Montgomery College, and begin work as a registered nurse.

“I have always wanted to be in the medical field,” Aryeh says, “and nursing is a profession where I get to spend the most time with patients. I admire the self-sacrifice and compassion that nurses need to have to properly care for people.”

While she was still in high school, Aryeh’s family learned about the Early College program. They were concerned about how to afford

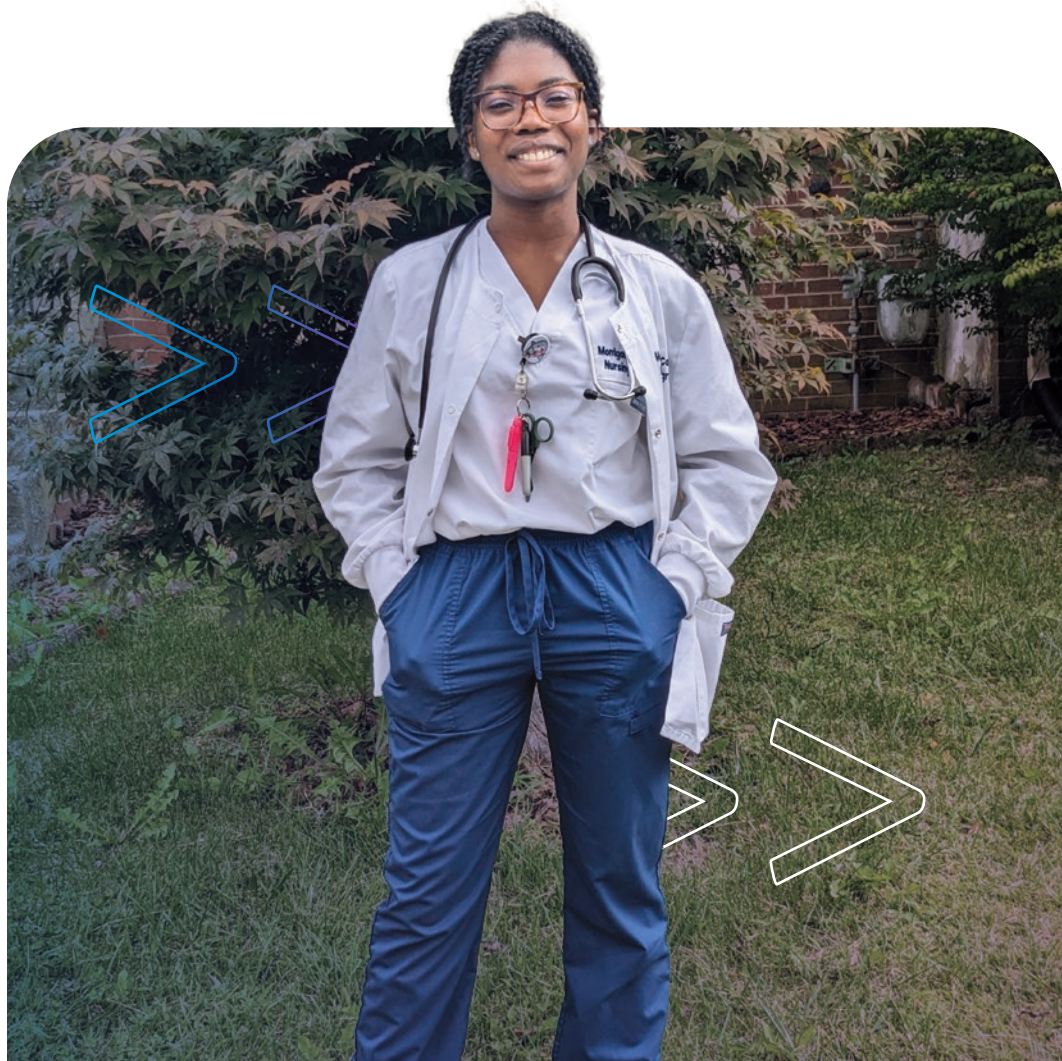
tuition for both their high schoolers. Learning that Montgomery County Public Schools covers tuition and textbooks for high school students in the Early College program was a game changer. “This track saves so much time and money.”

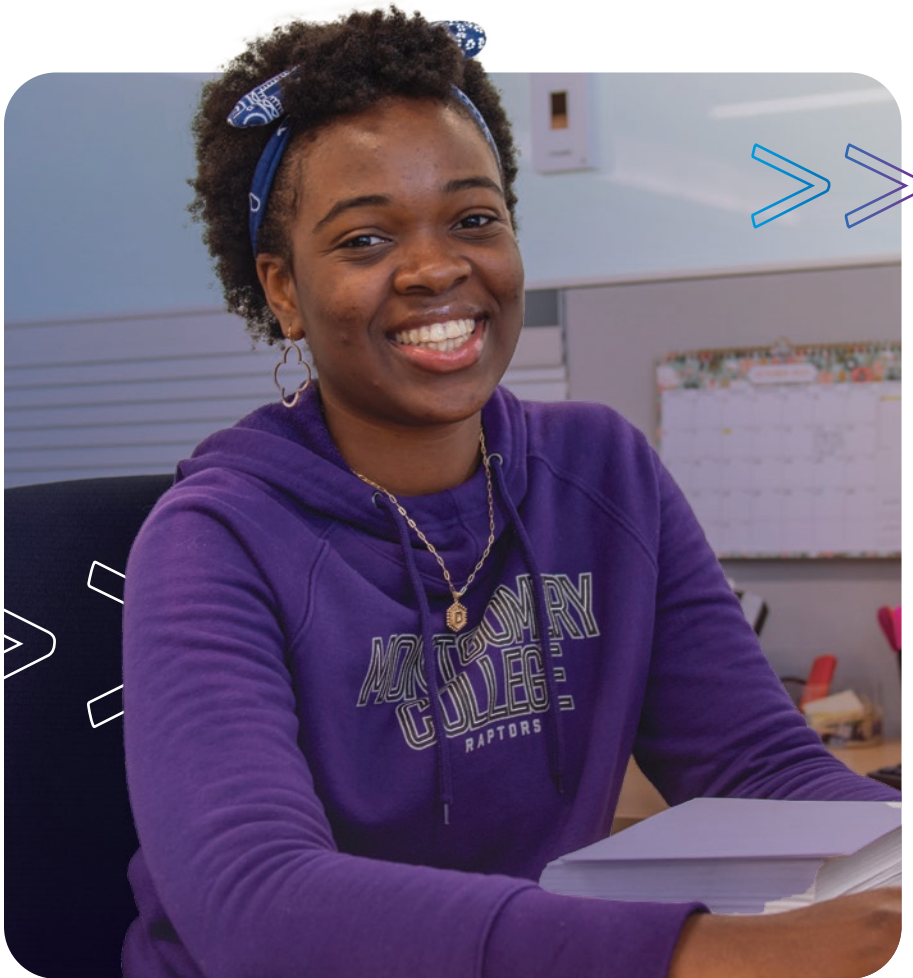
In addition to the financial savings, Aryeh liked the idea of getting a jump start on a nursing career. But when she completed high school, she was no

longer eligible for tuition coverage and she was again worried about how to pay. Fortunately, she received an Arthur P. and Miriam G. Becker Scholarship, which paved her way forward.

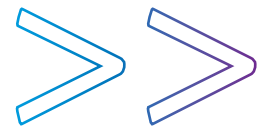
“If I could speak with the Becker family, I would tell them how their scholarship eases the financial burden on my parents and will help me move forward with my academic goals. I am eternally grateful for this scholarship,” says Aryeh.

▶▶ **Beslin Aryeh plans to graduate in May 2024 and to immediately begin working as a registered nurse in Montgomery County while pursuing a bachelor’s degree. She will have the opportunity to meet Becker family members at the Scholarship Luncheon in March.**





▶▶ **Denisia Akagah, a Renaissance Scholar, is currently pursuing a degree in bioengineering and working as a student assistant in the Montgomery College Foundation's Development Office. She plans to transfer to Johns Hopkins University to complete her bachelor's in biomedical engineering.**



"I began thinking about returning to the United States to attend college when I was in middle school," says bioengineering major **DENISIA JOCKTANE AKAGAH**. "By the time I graduated from high school, I knew I was going to make it happen."

Born in the United States, Akagah moved with her mother to Gabon in Central Africa at age four. Later, she made the difficult decision to move away from her mother to join her older siblings, a brother and sister, and an aunt living in the U.S. Both siblings had attended Montgomery College before transferring to complete bachelor's degrees, and so she followed their lead.

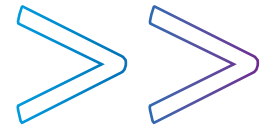
Akagah tested the academic waters by taking three prerequisite classes—English, art, and psychology—and ended the semester with a 4.0 GPA. Her course load this semester includes English, engineering science, chemistry and calculus, plus she works a part-time job to cover living expenses.

In August, she applied for the Renaissance Scholars, an honors program for highly motivated students

who take evening and weekend interdisciplinary courses in small, seminar-style classes. "I had to provide two letters of recommendation before the interview," she says, "and I had no idea what that meant."

Worried about how to pay for classes, she also applied for an Alumni Association Scholarship. "When I received the congratulations email, I was so surprised.... The scholarship covered the cost of my expensive textbooks when I needed it most. It's a relief for me and my family," Akagah says.

Completion



After finishing high school remotely during the height of the pandemic, **MADLINE “MADDY” HISHMEH ’23** welcomed the transition to a college campus with smaller classes and professors she could get to know. At MC, she felt a sense of connection from day one. Her older twin sisters, Allison and Amanda, had attended MC as business majors 10 years earlier, and they helped her navigate the same major.

“My sisters really set the tone for me and future women in my family to finish our education and get good jobs,” Hishmeh says. Her sisters were Hillman Entrepreneurs scholars; Hishmeh opted

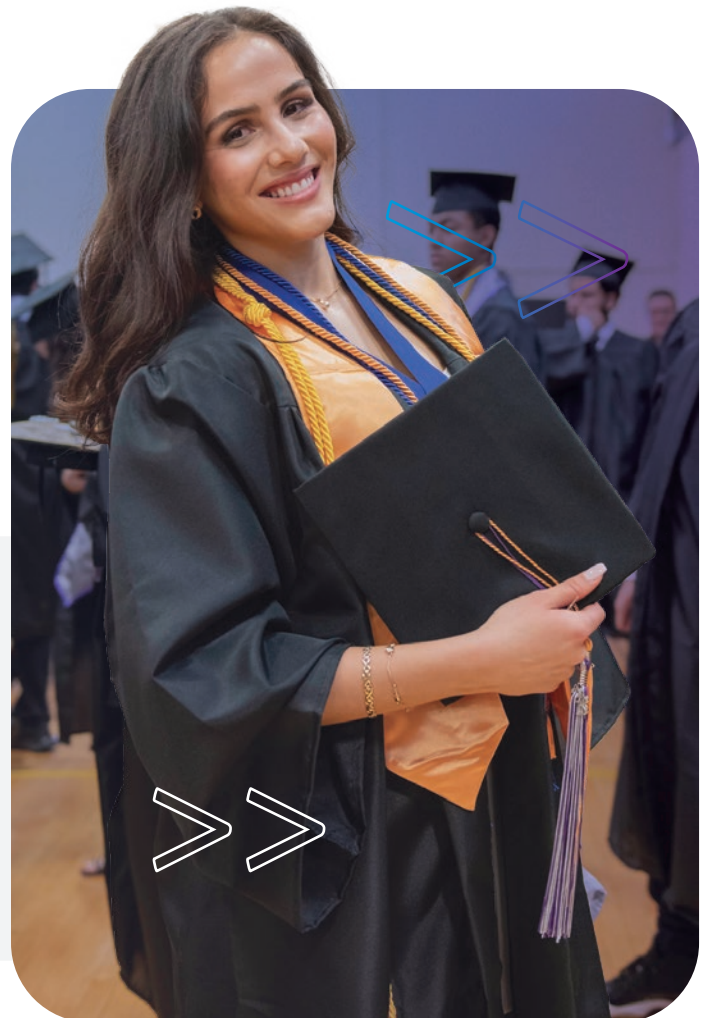
for the Macklin Business Institute (MBI), which provided her hands-on business experience.

“MBI students run the MC Cafés, work on the Enactus Team project

and competition, and spend four hours attending a weekly seminar. It is a lot to manage. Because I had the support of the Macklin scholarship, I didn’t have to worry so much about working three times a week in the Café... I was super thankful to have that. I was able to do my two years without cost. That cuts off so much of the financial pressure,” she says.

► **Madeline Hishmeh graduated in May 2023. She is now studying management at the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business and one day plans to work for a top consulting or accounting firm. She received the Frederick Douglass Scholarship, a prestigious and competitive award for academically talented transfer students from a Maryland community college.**

Macklin Business Institute (MBI) students utilize skills learned in the classroom in MBI’s flagship experience, MC Enactus. Enactus is an international nonprofit organization that challenges students around the world to develop and implement projects to improve the quality of life and standard of living for people in need. In the process, students develop relevant skills for their future education and careers. Enactus USA comprises nearly 500 chapters on college campuses across the country.





- ▶▶ After graduating in May 2023, **Sourou Paroutchia** continues to work in supply chain management in the shipping industry, while pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration and a minor in data analysis at the University of Maryland Global Campus. He plans to pursue an advanced degree in supply chain management in the future.

SOUROU PAROUTCHIA '23, an immigrant from Togo (West Africa), knew how important a degree would be to his family and career. "A college education changes my life in terms of income. I have more chances to get better jobs," he says. More importantly, it would influence his children: "I have a college degree, so there is no reason why my children will not get a college degree," he says.

When Paroutchia moved to Montgomery County in 2019, he spoke with friends who had attended MC and decided to enroll. He chose to major in business because it would support his work experience and help him when he owns his own business. He then joined the Presidential Scholars Program hoping to network

and build his leadership skills, but he says he gained much more than expected.

During his year in the Presidential Scholars Program, guest speakers and mentors helped him change his perspective: "I was able to see how other people think and how other people see the world, which may be

different from what I see or what I think," he says. "And that's a good experience because it's not good to see the world in only a single way."

Paroutchia says the program also helped him connect with people in similar circumstances. "It helped to network with people who also are struggling with the same problems." The financial aid and scholarships also played an important part of achieving his goal. "Without that assistance, I'm not sure I would have been able to go," he says.

Post-Completion Success

MICHAEL ADCOCK '16 knew he wanted to work in the Montgomery County state's attorney's office when he was in the 10th grade—and immediately started planning. To enhance his resume, he took dual enrollment classes at Montgomery College while still in high school. Upon graduation, Adcock enrolled at the College to pursue a criminal justice degree.

Adcock earned an Alumni Association Scholarship, providing three semesters of tuition money. More valuable, however, was the access he received to an alumni mentor.

The Alumni Association created the mentoring program more than 10 years ago. The program links MC students to area professionals who offer insights and guidance. Alumni mentors are matched with mentees based on the criteria assessed in interest forms. Both student and

alumni participants learn from the experience—and grow as professionals.

Adcock matched with Debra Dwyer '80, then an assistant U.S. attorney who had also served as an assistant state's attorney in Montgomery County for nearly 15 years. Dwyer offered Adcock a wealth of information about being a professional attorney and managing law school interviews. Moreover, the two forged an enduring professional relationship.

In 2017, while he was a student at University of Maryland, Adcock interned with Dwyer, who had been appointed a Montgomery County Circuit Court judge. After graduating cum laude from the University of Maryland, Adcock—like his mentor—applied to American University's Washington College of Law. His application contained a recommendation from Dwyer.

When Adcock graduated from law school, he received a clerkship with the Montgomery County Circuit Court, working for Dwyer and other judges. "Every day in court you learn something new," says Adcock. "It was a valuable experience."

▶▶ **Michael Adcock** now works as a prosecutor in the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office. He credits his success in large part to the experience and encouragement he received from the Alumni Association mentorship program.





▶▶ **Jorge Torres (center)** completed a bachelor's degree in biological science from the University of Maryland at USG. He plans to become a pediatric dentist.

Former MC students Saeid Shadmani, Jorge Torres, and Sheharyar Awan continue studying together at UMD School of Dentistry. At MC, the three worked together at the tutoring center on the Germantown Campus and studied together.

Born to parents who immigrated from Mexico, **JORGE TORRES '18** did not think college was an option for him. As an undocumented student, his plan was to work in construction after graduating high school. While a student worker in the guidance counselors' office at Clarksburg High School, he learned about the ACES program for students like himself: first generation to college, lower income, and often identifying as minority. He applied and hoped for the best.

Within the program, ACES Coach Terré Thomas encouraged Torres to push himself academically through the remainder of high school. She also helped him—and his parents—understand the college application process. The cost of attending college weighed on him—until a Christmas Eve phone call.

“I was at home eating breakfast when the I got the call,” Torres says. “The ACES counselor told me I had been selected to receive the

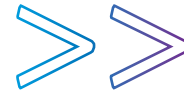
Mary Pat and Darren Alcus ACES Pathway Scholarship, which would cover my college expenses, and my first thought was: ‘I should start studying immediately.’”

The scholarship not only covered tuition at Montgomery College, it continued through his transfer to The Universities at Shady Grove, where he earned a bachelor's degree and graduated with honors. Currently, he is in his second year at University of Maryland Dental School.

“My plan is to keep my grades up and have the option of specializing later on. Dental school is definitely hard, but I will try my best,” he says.

Scholarship donors Darren and Mary Pat Alcus, who keep updated on Torres' progress, are impressed by his determination. “Darren and I feel lucky to be able to provide someone with such promise, such motivation, such drive, and such appreciation, with the opportunity to pursue his dream,” Mary Pat says. “We have no doubt Jorge will achieve his goals, and we are happy that we will have played a part in helping him realize his full promise and potential.”

Post-Completion Success *(cont'd)*



Deciding to forgo college after graduating from St. John's College High School in 2006, **ALEXANDER "SASHA" STONE '13** could not have imagined he would one day hold a doctorate in business administration and management.

After high school, the Rockville native started a career in property management. With his self-taught IT skills, he was becoming more interested in the then-relatively new field of cybersecurity. He knew college credentials would open up opportunities for professional growth so he enrolled at MC.

"I was drawn to Montgomery College for the small class sizes and the one-on-one access I had to my professors," Stone said.

Stone took on a leadership role on the College's Board of Trustees as a student representative while pursuing a dual degree: an associate's degree at Montgomery College and a bachelor's degree at The Universities at Shady Grove.

▶▶ **Alexander Stone** currently works for the Environmental Protection Agency as an IT security manager. Stone has earned five college degrees: the associate's, bachelor's, master's, an M.B.A. and a doctorate.



He landed a position with the Small Business Administration as a government contractor in information technology. While working full time, he completed a master's degree in cybersecurity and an MBA. "My long-term vision was to get into senior management, so I pursued a master of science degree in cybersecurity for the technical aspect of the field and an MBA for the managerial side," he says.

He completed his doctoral degree in 2021—just in time to welcome a baby boy with his wife, Sarah.

To MC cybersecurity students, Stone says: "Certifications let future employers know that you don't just have the academic knowledge, but you are ready to apply what you learned in the classroom in the real world. Pursue some entry-level certifications while in college so you have a good footing when you graduate." ■

Smart Choice

5 Reasons To Start Cybersecurity Training at MC

By Professor David Vargas

1. Value

Private training institutions have increased their tuition to sometimes as much as \$10K per course to take advantage of the increased demand for cyber training, but MC tuition remains affordable.

2. Employment

Cybersecurity skills will lead to good paying jobs in a discipline that will continue to be important for the foreseeable future, especially as cyber threats continue to evolve and become more sophisticated.

3. Relevance

MC's cybersecurity course offerings are always evolving to reflect the needs of employers and industry.

4. Learning Environment

Cybersecurity students at MC are a multicultural group from dozens of countries around the world.

5. Faculty

Instructors are leaders in their field who share their professional knowledge and work experience in the classroom.

- ▶ ▶ **Montgomery College offers an associate of applied science degree program, which prepares entry-level computer technicians with cybersecurity expertise and offers transfer options to four-year institutions. It is designed to address the homeland security industry's need for trained cybersecurity workers.**

WHY I GIVE

“Ensuring Pam’s legacy of caring for others is **Why I Give** to the Montgomery College Foundation.”

BILL HARD

 MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
 FOUNDATION DONOR

Bill and Pamela Hard

Generosity of time and generosity of spirit are foundational values for our family. My wife, Pam, practiced as a nurse for 10 years and then elected to stay at home and raise our three children. In addition to her role as mother, she sought opportunities to care for others through involvement in local schools, our church, and as a hospice volunteer. I established the Pamela R. Hard General Nursing Scholarship in 2016 to honor and recognize her caring and nurturing spirit. My meetings with her scholarship recipients have only reinforced my desire to help the many deserving future nurses who will enter the nursing program at Montgomery College.

Pam passed away in 2020 and left a legacy of caring with everyone she met. I established the Pamela Hard, RN Nursing Lab in 2022 to support the expansion of the nursing program at Montgomery College. The lab will be open for the fall 2023 semester and will allow future nurses access to hands-on training. For the second time, I found a meaningful gift to honor my wife and support individuals who I know will have an impact through their own work.

Ensuring Pam’s legacy of caring for others is Why I Give to the Montgomery College Foundation. I hope you will join me.

BILL HARD

►► **MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE:** Join others like Bill who support Montgomery College as donors by contacting Joyce Matthews at joyce.matthews@montgomerycollege.edu or 240-687-0654.

montgomerycollege.edu/give

Dear Montgomery College Foundation,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for having been chosen to receive a scholarship. My name is Nayelli Reyes and I am currently in my final year of study at Montgomery College. Completing an associate's degree has been a long path due to the coronavirus and realizing that my true passion lies in the medical field. My major is biological science.

Learning about the body and life as a whole under a microscope is truly fascinating to me. From a young age, I knew I wanted to pursue something in the medical field, but I was always afraid of not being good enough. Witnessing my immigrant family's struggles with access to medical care and with the language barrier, which is humiliating for them, I knew I had to be the change the medical care system needs.

"I believe everyone should have access to quality care despite their background or ethnicity."



I am a first-generation college student who fortunately had the opportunity to witness firsthand how immigrants and people of color are treated differently. I say fortunately because my experience has helped me become passionate about wanting to create equal opportunity in medicine. I believe everyone should have access to quality care despite their background or ethnicity.



Nayelli Reyes

I have a long journey ahead of me as I plan on going to medical school. Every day I remind myself why all of this is worth it. My education is very important to me, and I want to be a part of the 5% of surgeons who are Latino, let alone female Latinos. I want to represent my culture and strive for a better system.

Again, I truly appreciate your support and I hope you know that you have genuinely made a difference in my life by allowing me to study what I love most and by breaking the boundary of financial need. I hope to be a student who proudly represents Montgomery College and what it stands for.

*Sincerely,
Your future surgeon
Nayelli Reyes*

Nayelli Reyes '24 lives in Gaithersburg, Maryland. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, the Hispanic Latino Union, Pre-Med Society, and MC Leads.



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MONTGOMERY COLLEGE RANKS IN TOP 10 BEST COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES AND FIRST IN MARYLAND

Montgomery College has been named one of the 10-best community colleges nationwide

by WalletHub in its 2023 ranking of community colleges, released in August. MC came in at #10 out of the nearly 700 ranked colleges. Montgomery College is also ranked as the best community college in Maryland.



WalletHub analyzed data from 668 community colleges around the United States and ranked them based on 19 metrics, including tuition costs, availability of free community college education, transfer rates, and student-loan defaults. All 668 schools are members of the American Association of Community Colleges.

"Community colleges play a large role in increasing educational attainment in their communities and provide affordable, accessible, quality educational opportunities for all." –WalletHub