



MCC's *'Transforming Lives, Empowering People'* campaign supports students

By Shelly Springborn

Nearly \$4 million has been raised to support Montcalm Community College's *"Transforming Lives, Empowering People"* campaign.

"We are so grateful to all of our supporters for their campaign pledges," said Lisa Lund, Executive Director of the MCC Foundation. "This campaign brought together our community for the common goal of supporting students in achieving their educational dreams."

According to a recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics, 41 percent of all undergraduate students in the United States are enrolled at community colleges. Inspired by our community of learners, more than 125,000 learners have passed through MCC's doors since the college was established in 1965, making MCC a critical component of our community's long-term success.

The focus of the college's strategic plan is to continue this legacy by increasing enrollment, improving student success and access, enhancing our facilities and placing a renewed emphasis on engaging our community. MCC's *"Transforming Lives, Empowering People"* campaign supported this.

At the heart of the campaign was the renovation of the Kenneth J. Smith Instructional Building on MCC's Sidney campus. The building was named after the college's first instructor of biological sciences – Kenneth J. Smith, who joined MCC in 1965.

The newly remodeled Smith Building reopened this spring. It houses more than half of MCC's Sidney campus instructional space. The top level is home to The Center for STEM Learning and the lower level is The Center for Nursing & Health Careers.

The building features specialized classrooms, advanced labs and inviting student spaces to give students top-class STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) learning experiences. Home to the college's nursing, allied health and science offerings, the facility boasts high-tech science and nursing simulation tools, lab equipment, inviting student spaces and leading-edge technology, all aimed at delivering coursework in areas such as nursing, anatomy and physiology, biology, chemistry, mathematics, sciences and more.

In addition to the building renovation, the *“Transforming Lives, Empowering People”* campaign included five additional initiatives to support students – through scholarships, curriculum enhancements and the MCC Express Conductor Program.

Three scholarship initiatives included:

- First-generation scholarships to benefit students who are the first in their family to go to college.
- Mid-career scholarships to benefit middle-income students who do not qualify for financial aid, but also do not have the means to pay cash for college.
- Program-specific scholarships to benefit students in specific program pathways.

“Through the campaign, the college has received significant support for scholarships,” Lund said. “Scholarships are a component that are near and dear to many people’s hearts because they want to have a direct impact for students.

“This funding plays a vital role in enhancing the educational opportunities for a variety of students by helping alleviate some of the financial burden of attending college, which allows them to focus more on achieving their education,” she added.

The MCC Express Conductor Program supports MCC’s overall student success initiatives by pairing students with a mentor to help them during every step of their journey while at MCC.

MCC Interim President Connie Stewart said the college is realizing increased student success and retention rates since the program was implemented nearly two years ago.

“From the first point of contact to the time they enter classes, and throughout their time at MCC, students have one person they are connecting with who can assist them every step of the way,” Stewart said. “What we are finding is that students are much more likely to be engaged and seek help early on.”

Lund said the campaign will soon be coming to close.

“We do have some building naming opportunities still available, and opportunities to support scholarships, curriculum development and the MCC Express Program,” Lund said. “There are many ways in which contributions may be made, including cash gifts, pledges, gifts of stock, planned giving and others.” ■

For more information:

Visit montcalm.edu/MCCF

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