

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

currents

Spring 2021

PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

On-the-job experience
and Kirkwood education
helped propel entrepreneur
Carter Kramer's career.



A PUBLICATION OF THE **Kirkwood**
FOUNDATION



Dear friends,

As you all know, it's been a difficult year for everyone. Despite our desire to be past this health crisis by now, it seems we still have some time yet to go. However, with the first round of vaccinations already taking place, it does look like we have a light at the end of the tunnel. That's welcome news for us all after a year of negative stories dominating the headlines.

In spite of the impact of the pandemic and derecho, we can be incredibly proud of all that was accomplished

over the past year on Kirkwood's campuses. After meeting the challenge of rapidly moving to online instruction in the spring and summer, we offered even more learning formats for the fall to make sure we met the needs of everyone who wanted to further their education. Students could take classes in person, online at any time, online at a specific time, or a hybrid mix of in-person and online instruction. With the different types of class formats, along with a set of firmly established COVID-19 protocols, we were able to help keep campus safe and minimize exposure for students, faculty, and staff.

In addition, we were able to help those students experiencing pandemic-related financial challenges with much-needed funds to help them with the cost of college and paying bills. Many of these students were able to be helped because of the selflessness of our very generous donors. It's that kind of community spirit that will help us through the final stretch of the virus and into the future.

It is probably no surprise that cost is the No. 1 barrier for people to get an education. That's why the work of the Kirkwood Foundation is so important. The funds they raise from our donors help support scholarships so a student's financial burden is lessened. Each scholarship opens a door and gives a chance for someone to get a college degree. It's a chance for a student to achieve their dreams. Every single donor plays an important role. As a donor myself, it's very exciting to be a part of their success.

The stories you'll read in this magazine are amazing. But they're just a small sample size of the much larger whole. Each one demonstrates the huge impact this college has on our community.

Please enjoy, stay safe, and thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lori Sundberg
President

Honoring Our Kirkwood Retirees..... **3**

STUDENT FEATURE:
Lydia Walker..... **4**

ALUMNUS FEATURE:
Carter Kramer **6**

From the Desk of Jody Donaldson **9**

DONOR FEATURE:
Pam Hanson Scholarship..... **10**

MAKE A GIFT

You're only a Kirkwood student for a couple years, but you're a Kirkwood alumna or alumnus forever.

5
DECADES

3
GENERATIONS

200,000+
ALUMNI

Visit www.kirkwood.edu/foundation/give to make a positive impact on the next generation of Kirkwood alumni.

Gifts at every level have a direct impact on Kirkwood students and enable us the opportunity to provide an exceptional learning experience.



43% of Kirkwood graduates FINISH THEIR DEGREES DEBT FREE!

HONORING OUR KIRKWOOD RETIREES

We offer our sincere congratulations to the year-end retirees below. Their life's work has made a profound and lasting impact. Students, faculty, and colleagues will have wonderful memories of them as their role model, mentor, and friend. We thank them for making a difference.

Retiree	Years of Service	Department
Cathy Coleman	35	The Hotel
John Henik	35	Academic Affairs
Michelle Cherrier	33	CETS
Christopher Croy	30	Facilities
Steven Juhl	30	Ag Science
Peggy DeJong	22	Business & IT
Brenda Hampton	22	Secondary Programs
Cindy Cochran	20	IC Campus
Lisa Williams	20	English
Victor Schmidt	19	Industrial Tech
Lori Bascom	18	IT Services
Thomas Ernster	17	English
Mike McLaughlin	17	CETS
Elizabeth McCarthy	15	Business & IT
Bill Lamb	13	Academic Affairs
Mike Rose	13	SKEM
Pat Beaty	12	Secondary Programs
Jerry Reisinger	12	Ag Science
Jane Ann Rix	11	Global Learning
Ernie Decious	10	Facilities
Barry Schwartz	10	Facilities

The Kirkwood Foundation's "Honoring Kirkwood Retirees by Extending their Legacy" initiative celebrates retirees' while helping those who are so dear to their heart — Kirkwood students. The Kirkwood Foundation will make a donation in the retiree's honor to the fund of their choice. We then offer their colleagues and the greater Kirkwood Community the opportunity to honor their service to Kirkwood by making additional donations in their name. If you have fond memories of a Kirkwood retiree as your teacher, role model, mentor, or friend, we encourage you to consider a donation in their honor at www.kirkwood.edu/foundation/give.

STUDENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT UNDERWAY

The Student Center is in the midst of a major renovation project, slated to be completed in 2022. The project includes a complete renovation of all three floors of Iowa Hall and Mansfield Center and additions to the north and south of the building. The new Student Center will transform the student experience through improved service and support; diverse spaces for peer interaction; improved amenities and conveniences; and better space for study, relaxation, and entertainment.

If you are interested in learning more about the Student Center renovation project, visit www.kirkwood.edu/renovations.



KIRKWOOD SUPPORT

BUOYS DETERMINED STUDENT TOWARD HER A.A.

Adversity hardens some people's resolve and focuses their determination, makes them stronger. Lydia Walker is the epitome of that; she has overcome enormous obstacles that may have stopped others.

Living in a small western Iowa town, Lydia found herself in a destructive marriage she needed to escape. Three of her six children were still at home, one of them with special needs. Two years ago she moved to Cedar Rapids with them "and everything I could pack in my car," Lydia recalls. "We started over. Then I was faced with the challenge of 'what am I going to do?'"

She weighed working minimum-wage jobs versus finding something with more security and a future. Going back to school after 30 years at age 45 was intimidating, but she knew the alternative went nowhere. She had been a mom at age 15, dropped out of high school, and completed her General Educational Development (GED) degree when she was in her 20s.

She had always been interested in computers and knew she wanted to

work in a computer-related field, so she chose networking; Kirkwood fit the bill.

"I decided 'let me see where that will take me,'" Lydia adds. "I do not start things to quit. I'm in. But I was very nervous about how I would fit in. I tried to think of it as an adventure."

One of her teenaged sons was good with technology and building computers; they helped each other. Now in her third full-time semester at Kirkwood in Network and Systems Administration, Lydia is confident and focused on completing her A.A. degree and, ultimately, her B.A. degree. She hopes to work in cyber security for a nonprofit.

"It's a form of giving back," Lydia explains. "There have been so many people on my journey who helped me, so many acts of kindness along the way. It just seemed like it was meant for me to get things done. Providence had a hand in everything."

Kirkwood's support was key. In fall of 2020, Lydia received a free laptop through the Kirkwood Foundation's Laptop Assistance Program, made

possible by lead donor Solutions Management Group (SMG) and other generous donations. Without that, Lydia and her kids would have been sharing computers in close quarters — not a good option, especially with COVID-19.

Lydia's also grateful for scholarship support for tuition through Kirkwood's Project START program — Supported Training and Retraining — and WebLive classes via Zoom, as well as technology available through Kirkwood's library. The library provided her with a mobile hotspot, which boosted her unstable Internet access at home. And the TRIO program gave her the use of their rooms to study and attend her WebLive classes. The TRIO program provides individualized guidance and support to first-generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities.

"My Kirkwood experiences have been great," Lydia says. "I just want people to know Kirkwood has great programs available to anyone who needs them. They have helped me become successful."



350+ SCHOLARSHIPS and
\$3+ MILLION in scholarships
awarded annually.



KIRKWOOD AWARDED **\$350,000** IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Kirkwood Community College has been awarded a total of \$350,000 in two grants from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) to support new apprenticeship and training programs aimed at addressing the negative economic impact of COVID-19. The programs are targeted toward Iowans who have been adversely affected by the virus.

According to Kirkwood Vice President of Continuing Education and Training Services Kim Becicka, the apprenticeship programs are a major benefit to employers, employees, and the community as a whole.

Companies interested in growing their workforce pipeline through on-the-job training can contact Becky Weinger at 319-398-1057 or Becky.Weinger@kirkwood.edu.

Learn more about Kirkwood's workforce development grants at <http://kirkwoodonlinenews.org/kirkwood-awarded-350000-in-workforce-development-grants>.

ALUMNUS FEATURE



For Carter Kramer, it was never about the degree.

Like many high school graduates, he wasn't sure of his next step. From Monticello High School in 2000 — in a class of 74 — he went to the University of Iowa, considering a Biology major.

That vision vanished when he walked into a lecture hall of 400 students.

"It freaked me out," Carter recalls. "I just thought, 'I don't want to do this for four years.'"

More education, yes. But huge classes and the cost of a four-year degree? His pragmatic side kicked in; he started over with general education classes at Kirkwood.

KIRKWOOD EXPERIENCE

HELPED ENTREPRENEUR FIND HIS PATH

"I liked it a lot," he says. "It was so much more engaging. Classes were much more comfortable."

Still, Carter never locked himself in on one narrow path. In 2002, his sister suggested he join her in Phoenix to check out the city. The opportunity beckoned. He agreed, got his real estate license, and worked for two guys who were establishing their own real estate business.

"I learned a lot — all aspects of small business and business development — much more than just being an agent," Carter says.

By 2007, with the market more unsteady, Carter returned to Iowa and Kirkwood. Then he got hired handling business development for a start-up telecommunications service company. Three years later, the business had 14 employees. Carter had found his path.

That experience led him to start his own company in 2010. Today, Carter is president/CEO of CellSite Solutions, a Cedar Rapids business that is thriving — despite COVID-19 and a derecho.

CellSite is now a national leader in used telecom equipment, products, and services, managing projects that involve new, used, or refurbished equipment, with business in 30 states. Clients range

from municipalities and counties to railroad communications systems and telecommunication networks.

The early work of networking with other vendors and clients in the field was key.

"It definitely helped us to grow," Carter notes. "Ours is more of a partnership than just a vendor-client relationship."

In its first year, the company had \$648,000 in revenue. Revenues hit \$3 million in 2012. Today, with 65 employees, CellSite has \$22 million in revenues.

"The business has really taken shape," Carter says. "Interstate commerce is our main focus, and we bring that into Cedar Rapids."

Looking back, Carter is grateful he learned not only in classes, but also through work.

"I got a tremendous education from the workforce area of my life — all sides of it," he says. "I learned you have to build a good foundation no matter what business you're in. With CellSite Solutions, my vision was to build a good working environment."

He credits its success — with more expansion and hiring in the works — to his employees.

"I've learned a whole lot more from them than they have from me," he says.

His family and Kirkwood taught him to appreciate working hard and valuing your co-workers and employees.

“At Kirkwood, being able to ask questions and know I could talk with a professor at any moment really helped me build confidence,” Carter says.

And now, with Kirkwood’s great training in the trades, he envisions a partnership to hire Kirkwood graduates and work with Kirkwood’s training programs.

“I am a big proponent of Kirkwood,” Carter adds. “It’s pioneered some of the hands-on skills training that is so needed.”

From his family, Carter learned to respect work and commitment. His father started his own business building dairy parlors; Carter watched what made him succeed and absorbed his good work ethic. His mother, a stay-at-home mom, went back to school for her Nursing degree. And he remembers asking his grandmother why she liked teaching elementary school.

“She said, ‘If you love what you do you never have to work a day in your life,’” Carter recalls. That perspective stuck with him.

“I never want to wake up dreading to go to work,” he adds. “Do it right, with integrity. Take care of the people with you and what you do.”



CREATING A BETTER FUTURE IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK

Do you want to make a significant gift that will help educate Kirkwood students for generations to come?

- ◆ You can do it today — with a legacy gift through your will.
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- ◆ Can be changed as needed.
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- ◆ Easy to arrange. A simple paragraph added to your will is all it takes.

Interested?

Contact Jody Pellerin, vice president of advancement, at 319-398-5409 or Jody.Pellerin@kirkwood.edu.

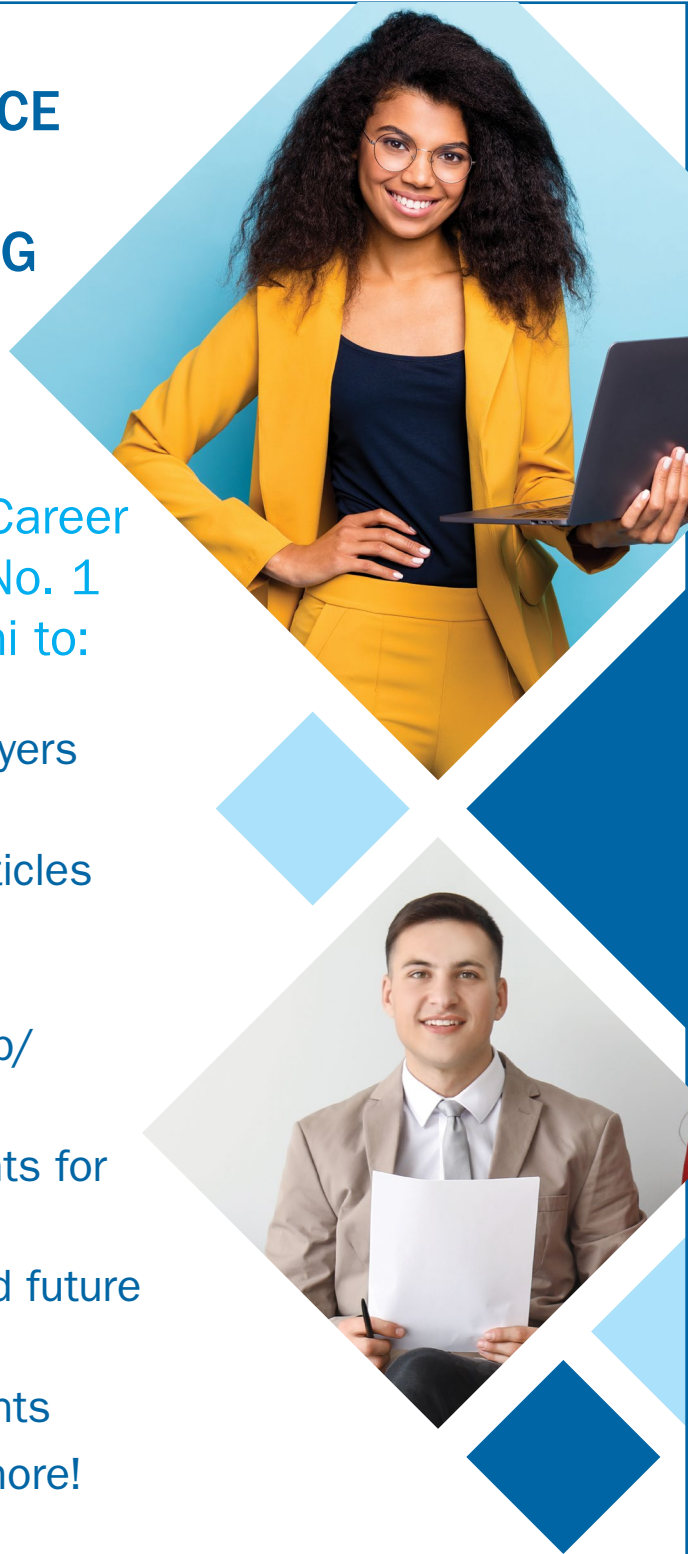
KIRKWOOD'S ALUMNI OFFICE AND CAREER SERVICES HAVE PARTNERED TO BRING A NEW RESOURCE TO OUR KIRKWOOD ALUMNI!

Handshake is Kirkwood's new Career Engagement Platform and the No. 1 way for our students and alumni to:

- ▶ Have access to 400,000 employers posting jobs
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- ▶ Research employers and find job/ internship opportunities
- ▶ Recruit current Kirkwood students for positions within your company
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<https://kirkwood.joinhandshake.com>

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE





This past year has definitely altered the way we most enjoy connecting with alumni — through our annual events such as Celebration of Success, Veteran Alumni Dinner, and the Alumni Social to name a few. We tried to remain optimistic and push our dates forward with the chance the pandemic would settle. Unfortunately, that did not happen. With each celebration and gathering, it is important that we truly enjoy one another and the purpose that brings us together. That being said, we eagerly await celebrating our next Celebration of Success in April 2022.

Thank you to those who participated in our recent alumni survey. Hearing your feedback on the way we engage and communicate is important to

us. Our goal is to keep you informed on the happenings of the college, share in our milestones, and create meaningful ways to engage. Your responses will guide us in our future activities, and we are excited for what's to come!

Like us on Facebook! At www.facebook.com/kirkwoodalumni we share and keep you informed of college and alumni news. Watch for our weekly “Feel Good Friday” posts where we celebrate all things Kirkwood.

We were sincerely touched by the response from our alumni who made a gift to the **Kirkwood Transforms Lives Through Education** campaign. This campaign raised funds to support current students by way of the Alumni Scholarship, Area of Greatest Need, and the Emergency Fund. Through our letters and emails, we featured six alumni, each reflecting on how the college impacted their educational experience and future pathway. Each story revealed a significant sense of gratitude for the college. How would your story read? We hope it, too, reads with great pride! We thank you for stepping forward and helping transform the lives of today's students.

We have an exciting new resource for all alumni! HANDSHAKE is a new, FREE tool designed to connect students *and* alumni to jobs and networking opportunities. Users can easily search or post job openings, offer mentorships to students, receive or give career advice, seek networking opportunities, and more. Jump on board today. For more information check out www.kirkwood.edu/careerservices.

Our students are remaining strong and perseverant throughout the pandemic. The college continues to offer courses through online, hybrid, and face-to-face options. The college leadership, faculty, and staff are dedicated to providing a safe and successful learning environment for all.

Wishing you great success and happiness as spring blooms and hopes and dreams are achieved.

Warm regards,

Jody Donaldson
Director of Advancement

Alumni Leadership Council

- Cassandra Brower '16
Iowa State University, Graduate Assistant
- Elizabeth Buch '18
Urban Dreams
- Steven Crane '97
Farmers & Merchants Savings Bank
- Jackie Delaney '09
Kirkwood Community College
- Jeff Driscoll '86, '92
Primus Construction
- Holly Feldmann '11
Kirkwood Community College
- Shawn Gallagher (Chair) '86
The Waldinger Corporation/LADCO, Inc.
- Deborah Gertsen (Past Chair) '83
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Teri Gibson '80
TrueNorth Companies
- Lisa Huggins '95
Neighbor Insurance
- Carissa Johnson (Chair-Elect) '10
Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival
- Nathan Johnson '12
Spotix
- Dawn Jones '93
Business, Marketing & Communications,
Strategy & Solutions
- Denise Kassis '17
University of Northern Iowa, Student
- Tina Kubovec '16
UnityPoint Health
- Pete Larson '72
Retired
- Kristin McVay '05
UnityPoint Health
- Mike Parenteau '94
Pipe Pro, Inc
- Jason Pasker '01
Farmers State Bank
- Raphael Robertson '04
Robertson Marketing & Branding
- Nancy Roth '85
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Tim Ruth '77, '93
McCreedy-Ruth Construction LLC
- Rick Seger '80
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Brian Stoll '18
Illuminate Digital
- Kasi Tenborg '16
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center
- Don Tyne '76
Linn County Veterans Affairs
- Ashlee Vander Hoek '08
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
- Kylie Wise '19
Principal Financial

PAM HANSON SCHOLARSHIP:

HONORING A COMPASSIONATE LEADER



Pam Hanson was someone you couldn't forget.

Her buoyant optimism touched everyone in her orbit. She made a difference not only through her inclusive, compassionate leadership over nearly 30 years in Kirkwood's dental programs, but also in her caring support and mentoring of colleagues, students, friends, and family. At the end of each email, she added Life is short — smile often.

Even through 13 years of ongoing, debilitating treatment for breast cancer, Pam rarely missed work and kept strong her upbeat attitude. But in October 2018 she passed away, leaving a void that those around her still feel.

So, what better way to honor Pam than through an endowed scholarship in her name for students in Kirkwood's Dental Assisting program. Thanks to her colleagues Shaunda Clark, Dental Hygiene program director, and Kristee Malmberg, Dental Assisting program director, that remarkable effort planted a seed that quickly grew.

It requires \$15,000 to endow a scholarship. The scholarship in Pam's name drew contributions throughout 2019 from nearly 100 sources, thanks to outreach by the two dental programs working with the Kirkwood Foundation. In

less than a year, the effort raised \$16,345, setting a record for the most funds raised by faculty for a scholarship at Kirkwood.

Contributions came from alumni, current and retired Kirkwood dental faculty, Kirkwood dental advisory committee members, the University of Iowa dental office, local dental offices, current and retired dentists, dental vendors and partners, and Pam's family and friends.

"We're trailblazers," Kristee says, smiling. "We're the first faculty department to raise more than the goal in less than a year. It was so inspirational. I know Pam is looking down from somewhere. She'd be pleased."

Pam's scholarship will perpetuate her legacy, providing key support for Kirkwood Dental Assisting students. The first scholarships will be awarded to students in fall 2021.

Shaunda and Kristee's bond with Pam ran deep. Shaunda and Pam started working together in 1997. Kristee and Pam were classmates in Kirkwood's dental program, graduating in 1977. From there, Pam completed her Master's degree in Dentistry at the University of Iowa's College of Dentistry and worked there. Kristee worked at the Veterans Administration Medical Center. They reconnected working

*In
Memory*



in Iowa City years later and worked to establish a VA Dental Clinic/Kirkwood connection enabling Kirkwood dental students to rotate through clinical experiences.

“She did a lot of work behind the scenes with student involvement,” Kristee recalls. Kristee became an adjunct and then full-time faculty member at Kirkwood. During Pam’s medical leave and retirement, Kristee was interim and then full-time director of the Dental Assisting program.

“Pam was such a compassionate person and always an advocate for the underdog,” Kristee says. “She was always positive.”

Through Pam and those she mentored, Kirkwood’s dental programs have made remarkable connections within the community and gained respect for their training. And, Shaunda added, the two programs work seamlessly together, a partnership that is unique among dental programs.

“Sometimes we have to set aside our personal needs to get things done,” Shaunda says. “Pam taught me how to understand the other side in any endeavor.”

Pam modeled that approach in working with peers as well as students. She also stressed the importance of teaching students how to work to *really* learn key concepts and practices, Shaunda notes, pointing to a sign on her desk that Pam gave her: *The best teachers show you where to look but don’t tell you what to see.*

Professionals in the community respect Kirkwood’s dental programs and hire its graduates because they know the training is solid. That’s something on which Pam, Shaunda, and Kristee agreed.

For more information about starting an endowment please contact the Foundation at 319-398-5442.

130 MAJORS AND PROGRAMS

20+ HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS



SPRING 2021 SEMESTER UPDATE

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Kirkwood joined other colleges in delaying the start of the spring 2021 semester and canceled spring break. Spring semester started January 25 and will end on May 10.

Learn more about Kirkwood Community College COVID-19 policies and updates at www.kirkwood.edu/explore/services/back-to-campus.

Kirkwood

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