

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

curren**t**s

Fall 2019

DRIVING SUCCESS

A can-do attitude and program support drove one student's success in Information Technology.



A PUBLICATION OF THE

Kirkwood
FOUNDATION



Dear friends,

I can't believe fall is already upon us. In the blink of an eye, we're well into the semester and will soon be bracing for winter. Time always seems to move faster when you're focused on a task, and the college has been hard at work on some very important projects that will have major implications for the future of Kirkwood.

First and foremost, the college will be hosting an accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) this fall. This process certifies that a college or university meets a high level of instructional quality and overall

excellence. Approval by the HLC will guarantee that Kirkwood credentials continue to carry the high value that they have always had. Preparations for this visit have been ongoing to ensure that remains the case.

At the same time, we have been working on updating our emergency management practices and procedures so that Kirkwood continues to be a safe learning environment for our students. This new approach will encompass every one of our campuses and modernize how we look at the security concerns facing organizations today.

Finally, the institution is constantly moving forward to address the educational and workforce challenges confronting our region. It's no small task, and one where the solutions and results may not always be apparent without set goals and benchmarks.

Over the past few months, the college has been developing a new strategic plan, which will be our roadmap for the future. It will help shape decision-making across the organization as well as the allocation of resources to make the greatest impact possible. Every administrator, faculty, and staff member has had a chance to be involved in this process, and their input has been crucial in developing our blueprint for the years to come.

All of the things I mentioned above will directly affect our students in positive ways. In the end, whether it's the value of a degree, a safe learning environment, or overall sound decision-making, it's all part of Kirkwood's larger purpose to promote student success. If done right, we will continue to hear more great stories like the ones you will read in this magazine.

Thank you for your support of Kirkwood Community College.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lori Sundberg
President

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MAKE AN IMPACT

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

5 DECADES	3 GENERATIONS
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200,000+

ALUMNI

Visit www.kirkwood.edu/gift19 to make a positive impact on the next generation of future Kirkwood alumni.

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

Cover photo, Mason Hamann.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 4 – 6 Go For Broke Barrel Racing Finals**
Iowa Equestrian Center
All Day
- BEGINS
Sept. 15 **Art Exhibit**
“More Friends Than the Mountains”
Jason Everett, artist
ENDS
Nov. 15 Iowa Hall Gallery
- 9 Kirkwood Volleyball vs. Iowa Central Community College**
Johnson Hall
6:30 p.m.
- 11 Kirkwood Volleyball vs. North Dakota State College of Science**
Johnson Hall
6 p.m.
- 13 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball Kirkwood/Mt. Mercy Jamboree**
Johnson Hall
Games from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 21 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. Mt. Mercy University**
Johnson Hall
6 p.m.
- 25 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. William Penn University**
Johnson Hall
6 p.m.
- 30 Kirkwood Volleyball vs. Hawkeye Community College**
Johnson Hall
6:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 1 – 2 Spooktacular Weekend Open Show**
Iowa Equestrian Center
All Day
- BEGINS
Sept. 15 **Art Exhibit**
“More Friends Than the Mountains”
Jason Everett, artist
ENDS
Nov. 15 Iowa Hall Gallery
- 6 World Culinary Tour Dinner featuring Georgia***
The Class Act Restaurant
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center
5 – 9 p.m.
- 7 – 9 Musical**
Sweeney Todd: A Musical Thriller
Ballantyne Auditorium
Nov. 7 – 9, 7:30 p.m. | Nov. 10, 2 p.m.
- 8 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. John Wood Community College**
Johnson Hall
7:30 p.m.

- 9 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. Kansas City Kansas Community College**
Johnson Hall
3 p.m.
- 15 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. McHenry County College**
Johnson Hall
7:30 p.m.
- 16 Concert**
Kirkwood Instrumental Jazz Ensembles
Ballantyne Auditorium
7:30 p.m.
- 19 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. Illinois Central College**
Johnson Hall
3 p.m.
- 20 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. Loras JV**
Johnson Hall
6 p.m.
- 22 Concert**
Chamber Singers and Jazz Transit
Ballantyne Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

DECEMBER

- 4 World Culinary Tour Dinner featuring Piedmont, Italy***
The Class Act Restaurant
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center
5 – 9 p.m.
- 7 Kirkwood Women’s Basketball vs. Iowa Lakes Community College**
Johnson Hall
1 p.m.
- 7 Kirkwood Men’s Basketball vs. Iowa Lakes Community College**
Johnson Hall
3 p.m.
- 7 Concert**
Kirkwood Concert Band
Ballantyne Auditorium
7:30 p.m.
- 11 Kirkwood Men’s Basketball vs. Southeastern Community College**
Johnson Hall
7 p.m.
- 12 Kirkwood Men’s Basketball vs. Central Community College – Columbus**
Johnson Hall
6 p.m.

For a full listing of college events, visit www.kirkwood.edu/events

* To register for one of the Passport Dinners, visit www.thehotelatkirkwood.com/events

ENDOWED FACULTY CHAIRS: PROMOTING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IN OUR FACULTY

Endowed faculty chairs provide an opportunity for selected faculty to undertake professional development projects in their disciplines or in instructional pedagogy through writing, preparing, and presenting a special lecture, conducting research, or pursuing other opportunities. The emphasis is on personal and professional growth and is separate from assigned duties, routine work, or service to the department.

The goals for the Endowed Faculty Chair program are to:

- Encourage faculty to pursue educational challenges with creativity and innovation.
- Promote academic quality by supporting faculty commitment to educational and pedagogical excellence.
- Bring community leaders and faculty together in a commitment to excellence in education.

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95% of Kirkwood Alumni **REMAIN IN IOWA TO LIVE AND WORK.**

STUDENT FEATURE

MASON HAMANN

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ASK PROGRAMS LIFT STUDENT TO SUCCESS

The joy of learning lights up Mason Hamann's face when he's asked about his impressive success in Kirkwood's Information Technology (IT) program.

His can-do attitude and ongoing support from mentors, faculty, and Kirkwood's Learning Services department have enabled Mason to overcome difficulties he's experienced as a student with autism spectrum disorder.

His determination to earn his degree paid off this spring when Mason, 26, became an IT graduate and also made the Dean's List.

Mason started at Kirkwood in 2015. Although he wanted to go to Kirkwood and work at the same time, he decided to put college on hold and focus on his job at the Wilson Avenue Hy-Vee in Cedar Rapids. It was during this time that Mason worked with his REM Iowa Host Home Mentor and began exploring classes at Kirkwood.

"I was nervous when I first came to Kirkwood," Mason recalls. "But Learning Services has helped me a lot. I've felt support from the start."

Mason took keyboarding, writing, and IT classes. His experience helping a housemate with a computer virus triggered his interest, Mason said. Then he took Network Security Basics at Kirkwood.

"It kind of verified what I wanted to do," he explains. "Cybersecurity is what I want to get into."

"No matter how hard some classes are, I want to keep going," he says. "School helps you get to your dream."

With small classes and helpful teachers, Mason is now comfortable asking questions and sometimes asking for help.

"I used to have too much pride and wanted to do it all on my own," he recalls. "But if you need help, you have to reach out. I ask classmates. If that doesn't work I ask my tutors and teachers."

Brenda Steinke, Kirkwood's department coordinator for Business and IT, has mentored Mason.

"Our department's goal is to help a student be successful, whatever form that takes," she says. "We want them to reach their goal. Mason has a deep desire to learn."

All students in the Business and IT programs can work with a faculty advisor and/or the department coordinator to plan courses and establish career goals.

"Together, we encourage them to come in and talk about whatever goals they have," Brenda explains. "We want them to know we care about them."

Learning Services' ASK Program has been a key resource for Mason.

A support program for students with autism spectrum disorder, ASK staff work with students to create personalized plans that integrate Kirkwood's resources.

An educational coach helps students develop academic and social goals, learning self-advocacy, as well as professional relationship, job, and daily living skills.

Elissa Teets, ASK educational coach in Kirkwood's Learning Services, has nothing but praise for Mason.

"Mason is a student who is reliable, determined, and dedicated to his program, which is a big part of what I feel makes him a successful student," Elissa says.

Students need determination to learn well, Brenda adds. One IT faculty member calls it "grit," she notes, and Mason has it.

"Mason has such a positive attitude and so much enthusiasm," Brenda says. "We tell students, 'Don't give up.' And that's what I've seen with Mason. He has grit."



STUDENTS GIVE BACK

KIRKWOOD STUDENTS ARE GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IN BIG WAYS!

- **IN 2018 / 19' STUDENT LIFE'S ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE AMOUNTED TO 1,400 POUNDS OF NON-PERISHABLE GOODS.**

The five-year total is now up to 7,000+ pounds of food donated! Donations are split between the Kirkwood Food Pantry and the Linn Community Food Drive.

- **THE 2018 / 19' DANCE MARATHON RAISED MORE THAN \$13,000!**

The funds were donated to Children's Miracle Network and the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital.



92% OF STUDENTS BELIEVE THEIR TIME AT KIRKWOOD PREPARED THEM WELL FOR THEIR CAREER.



ALUMNA FEATURE



Sherry Steine Ross has found her passion and works in it every day – a combination hard to come by. She credits Kirkwood, tenacity, a good head for business – and paying attention to signs that led her down the right path.

The Cedar Rapids native started full time in Kirkwood's Accounting program right after high school. For nearly two years, she worked full time and was a full-time student. When that became overwhelming, she quit school and focused on work.

Five years later, Sherry was ready to return to Kirkwood.

"When I went back, I had a better appreciation for it," she explains. "I honed my skills at Kirkwood in my 20s. The cost was affordable, I could choose more electives, and it offered a smaller program, smaller class sizes, and teachers who worked with nontraditional students like me."

SHERRY ROSS

KIRKWOOD ALUM FINDS PASSION, FULFILLMENT IN HER BUSINESS

In 1997, Sherry graduated with an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. She graduated from Mount Mercy College in 1999 in Psychology and Business and then completed her Masters' Degree in Business Administration at the University of Iowa.

Sherry worked in sales in the cell phone business for three years. In 2002, she established Mobility Wireless and Data, a telecommunications company. She focused on business support services. After five years, she had nine employees, including her sister, Lorette Vanourny.

A client kept telling Lorette, a major dog lover, that they should start training service dogs. The sisters didn't pursue the notion until they found a 6-month-old Chihuahua sitting on the office's front step. They never found the owner so they adopted the pup, now named Deacon.

That was February 2014. Sherry and Lorette are now co-founders of Deafinitely Dogs!, a service dog training nonprofit promoting independence for those with disabilities by pairing them with highly trained dogs. They first learned to train hearing notification dogs, which alert deaf or hard-of-hearing owners to doorbells, alarms, and other sounds. From there it's expanded to offer service dogs for clients with autism, diabetes, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and more.

Lorette trains the dogs; Sherry does public speaking to raise awareness of their unique business. Many customers reach them through Facebook or word of mouth. From there, Sherry and

Lorette assess the applicant's needs and what sort of dog fits best.

"The dog actually picks their person," Sherry notes. "You see that connection right away if it's the right bond. We care just as much about the dogs as the applicants."

Sherry recalls a veteran suffering from PTSD. His nightmares triggered fear and extreme anxiety. The dog Deafinitely Dogs! matched him with now sleeps with him, recognizes the signs of a PTSD episode, and gently wakes the veteran. That bond has led to healing, and today that veteran is living his new normal with the help of his four-legged companion.

Deafinitely Dogs! works closely with top-notch breeders, primarily choosing golden retrievers, Labrador retrievers, and doodles. The goal is to enable the person they serve to live independently, with companionship and love. The client is also trained on caring for the dog.

In July, Deafinitely Dogs! quadrupled its training space in a new facility by the Eastern Iowa Airport.

Sherry credits Kirkwood with helping her take that first step to find her passion.

"Kirkwood gave me the ability to start small, with one class, and not be overwhelmed," she explains. "It led me to develop good foundation skills and got me comfortable enough to go on from there."

As the Deafinitely Dogs! brochure says, "Miracles happen every day." For a person with a disability, a highly trained assistance dog from Deafinitely Dogs! is that miracle.



This fall season marks the 10th anniversary for the Kirkwood Alumni & Friends program! In 2009, under the guidance of the Kirkwood Foundation, the Alumni Leadership team was formed, the program initiatives were designed, and ideas were turned into amazing outcomes. It has been a wonderful 10 years of renewing personal connections and engaging with our alumni from across the States. We appreciate the impact of our alumni who continue to provide significant support to the college through their contributions of time, talent, and financial gifts.

For those who may remember, there is valuable history of an alumni association and dedicated volunteers who put a lot of effort into running a prominent alumni program. Unfortunately, at some point, the program took a pause and the momentum quieted.

When a focus on alumni rebooted in 2009, we were determined to conduct the program with careful thought and consideration by providing information and events designed to appeal to what alumni would desire most. We are pleased to provide college updates and current stories through our semiannual newsletter **Currents**. We offer three annual events: Celebration of Success, Alumni Veteran Dinner, and an All-Alumni Social. Throughout the year, we sprinkle in special affinity opportunities such as alumni athletic games, program reunions, and alumni job fairs. If you have not joined us yet, we look forward to having you attend a future event; all are welcome.

We are pleased to share that the Kirkwood Foundation offers a nationally recognized scholarship program that supports current credit students in achieving their educational goals. One of those scholarships is our Alumni Scholarship, funded by alumni donors who give throughout the year. The **Alumni Scholarship** is designated to support children of Kirkwood alumni and is a perfect way to recognize and assist generations of Kirkwood Eagles.

Please join us for an event, drop us a note to share your Kirkwood story, or let us know your interest in being involved with the college. We look forward to connecting with you!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jody Donaldson', written in a cursive style.

Jody Donaldson
Scholarship & Alumni Officer

Alumni Leadership Council

Cassandra Brower '16
[Iowa State University, Student](#)

Steven Crane '96
[Farmers & Merchants Savings Bank](#)

Jackie Dennis '95
[U.S. Probation Northern District of Iowa](#)

Jeff Driscoll '86, '92
[Primus Construction](#)

Holly Feldmann '11
[Kirkwood Community College](#)

Shawn Gallagher (Chair Elect) '86
[LADCO, Inc](#)

Deborah Gertsen (Chair) '83
[Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust](#)

Teri Gibson '80
[TrueNorth Companies](#)

Stephen Hanisch '10
[Kirkwood Community College](#)

Nicole Hasenbank '93
[U.S. Bank](#)

Lisa Huggins '95
[Neighbor Insurance](#)

Carissa Johnson '10
[Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival](#)

Dawn Jones '93
[Wylde1 Marketing & Communication Strategic Solutions](#)

Denise Kassis '17
[University of Northern Iowa, Student](#)

Mary Klinger (Past Chair) '88, '14
[St. Luke's Health Care Foundation](#)

Tina Kubovec '16
[UnityPoint Health](#)

Brad Marcus '90
[U.S. Bank](#)

Kristin McVay '05
[UnityPoint Health](#)

Jason Pasker '01
[Farmers State Bank](#)

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 Veteran Affairs](#)

Chris Wheeler '86
[Point Builders LLC](#)



Kirkwood is home to students from **ALL CORNERS OF IOWA**, more than **40 STATES** nationwide, and close to **60 COUNTRIES** around the world.

ROB HAJEK

ANNUAL KIRKWOOD DONOR ENCOURAGES GIVING BACK

Alumni Rob Hajek and his wife, Julie, feel a strong connection to Kirkwood Community College, and they continue to give back each year.

The amount they give to the Kirkwood Foundation varies, but that ongoing support makes it a real paying-it-forward gift that can make a real difference.

“We’re just trying to do our part to help,” Rob says. “It’s more of a don’t-forget-where-you-come-from kind of thing.”

After high school graduation in 1985, the Solon native worked for a couple of years in construction. When he injured his back, Rob decided to try some classes at Kirkwood as a nontraditional student.

“I had no idea what I wanted to study,” Rob recalls. “Logistically, Kirkwood was close and it was a good way to check out some classes to find my path.”

He finished his 2-year degree in Liberal Arts at Kirkwood and transferred to the University of Iowa, graduating with his Business degree in 1992.

Julie also started at Kirkwood with a Liberal Arts degree and then received her Business degree from Iowa, graduating in 1991.

Today, as the successful owner of Home Repair Team Inc. in North Liberty and a member of the Cedar Rapids Homebuilders Association, Rob sees the many benefits Kirkwood students bring to his industry.

“Kirkwood’s a great place to start. It’s not as overwhelming as a 4-year school; 4-year schools aren’t for everybody,” Rob notes. “And with today’s job market, a 2-year degree can take you much further than it used to.”

Rob and Julie have three teenagers, are involved with local schools, and give to both Kirkwood and the University of Iowa. They support academic scholarships; Rob saw firsthand how those can help.

“I know what it meant to me 30 years ago and how hard kids work for that,” he adds. “So, you get yourself established and realize what helped you get to the point in your life when you can give back.”

Kirkwood’s quality programs and comfortable environment are big assets, Rob points out.

“We are strong believers in working hard, doing what you love, and supporting things locally,” he adds. “We’re really lucky to have Kirkwood here in our community.”



Thanks to our donors, Kirkwood has one of the largest scholarship programs in the country, **AWARDING OVER \$3 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS EVERY YEAR.**

thank you



FlexFORWARD PROGRAM

OPEN FOR REGISTRATIONS



Kirkwood has a new educational program format for adults called FlexFORWARD. Classes are open for registration now, and the new format began this fall.

FlexFORWARD is based on a competency-based education (CBE) model. Students in a CBE format can move through their program faster, depending on how quickly they can demonstrate their knowledge of the required course content. This means students save both time and money. The new format also features online classes that start every few weeks, which gives students the flexibility they need to succeed.

According to Kirkwood Associate Dean of Distance Learning Dave Hunt, FlexFORWARD is designed to fit into the busy lifestyle of an adult student.

“Today’s adult student has a lot to juggle in their daily lives,” says Dave. “It’s really a balance of work, kids, home life, and everything else they have going on. FlexFORWARD addresses many of the hurdles to getting an education that people face. It makes getting a college degree, or coming back to finish one, realistic and achievable for adults with busy lives.”

In addition to the self-paced, flexible nature of the program, FlexFORWARD students have access to financial aid, scholarships, and a personal success coach. Many courses even include their materials at no charge. Students will also be able to take advantage of the academic resources and tools that the college offers to all students.

“It’s all about helping adult students get to the next level in their careers,” says Dave. “Everyone knows that your earning

potential increases with a college degree. For one reason or another, getting a college education has just been an unattainable dream for some people. This program makes that dream a reality. It’s a game changer for those adults, their careers, and their families. It’s also good for our regional workforce because businesses will be getting workers that are more qualified. It’s a win for everybody, which is very exciting.”

The first academic program accepting students in the FlexFORWARD format is Business Administration: Management. More CBE programs are set to be added at a later date.

More information can be found at www.kirkwood.edu /accelerated.

Approximately **17%** of students enrolled in fall 2018 were aged **27 – 55+**.





AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY RENOVATION COMPLETE

Students, staff, and community members celebrated the completion of renovations on the Automotive Technology space with an open house on Thursday, Sept. 12.

RENOVATION HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Enhanced lab space, including an increase in the number of automotive service bays
- Updated classrooms, with enough space to fit a vehicle for training
- The addition of a chassis dynamometer and transmission dynamometer, allowing for the measurement of horsepower torque, wheel speed, and engine systems

The Automotive Technology program provides skills and knowledge for students who want to work in the automotive technology field. The program is Master™-certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), and the instructors are certified Master Technicians by the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).



i Kirkwood Auto Tech has had **9 SKILLS USA STATE CHAMPIONS.**



TRIBUTE TO HEROES DINNER RECAP

For our sixth year of the Veteran Alumni Dinner, guests were invited to blend our festivities with the Freedom Festival's Tribute to Heroes Dinner. During a special V.I.P. reception for our veteran alumni, keynote speaker and three time Super Bowl champion Chad Hennings shared a personal message and took the time to shake hands and be available for photos. This annual event is our way of expressing gratitude for our veteran alumni and the service they have provided, along with our appreciation for being Kirkwood alums.



Kirkwood FOUNDATION

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