



## ART AND NEW MEDIA STUDENTS DESIGNING SUCCESS



Design Crew students work together to create promotional items for the Kalamazoo Valley Blues Association.

Students enrolled in Design Crew (CRN:22394) at Kalamazoo Valley's Center for New Media in downtown Kalamazoo are working directly with clients in the nonprofit sector to create

custom-made artwork that they will use to promote their businesses. Design Crew is a merit-based pilot program that has been offered during the fall and winter semesters this

year. It's an alternate course option for advanced design students from all ANM concentrations to consider. Students must apply for acceptance into this service learning course by submitting a letter of intent and a portfolio with eight to 10 pieces of work. Successful completion of ANM 141, ANM 142, ANM 143, ANM 245, and ANM 254 or instructor permission is required.

This semester, the class is designing a visual identity system with an emphasis on promotion for the Kalamazoo Valley Blues Festival. Media created by students includes posters, flyers, tickets, t-shirts, buttons and a website. Last semester's Design Crew created a breast-feeding advocacy campaign for the Family Health Center. Tom Hamann, director of the Center for New Media, and graphic arts instructor Mark DeYoung continue to reach out and make connections with nonprofit agencies to offer Design Crew services for their long-term creative campaign needs.

"Students meet face-to-face with clients, ask questions, and collect information about their organization's

marketing and promotional needs," Hamann said. In follow-up sessions, the students share their ideas and design concepts and are given feedback from the client to help fine-tune their work. "Students really take ownership," Hamann said. "They take on the responsibility and the challenge. It's as if they're running their own design firm, a real world experience." Faculty members provide input and guidance on individual projects, but the client always has the final word. In the end, the creative files are supplied to the client or to the vendor who the client hires to manufacture the final product. "These are real clients," Hamann said. "This is real work. These are real projects that students can take forward and add to their portfolios."

Graphic design major Kelly Hart said the class is like nothing she's experience before. "It's a lot of fun. We have a lot of creative freedom, but it's stressful. I've never lost sleep over a project like this before," she said. "It has helped me realize this is what I want to do with my life."

(Continued on page 2)

## HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED FOR 50 YEARS

Nearing its 50th anniversary, Kalamazoo Valley Community College has always welcomed its students with this advice – each of you can make a difference; every one of you should try.

The KVCC Foundation, in its 36th year, has helped thousands of "difference-makers" expand personal horizons, extend careers, and serve their communities.

The foundation's prime fund-raising initiative is its annual Opportunities for Education (OFE) dinner.

This year's edition on May 19 will feature a flesh-and-blood version of "Wonder Woman." She's Robyn Benincasa, the female epitome of "brains and brawn" who has accomplished legendary feats as an Olympic-caliber athlete in "extreme" sports, businesswoman and motivational speaker.

Following in the footsteps of such notables as Justice Alan Page, swimmer Diana Nyad, Jim "The Rookie" Morris, Gov. Howard Dean, and last year's presenter Walter Bond, she will keynote the 12th annual event at the Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites beginning at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$160 for individuals, \$1,600 for tables of eight, and \$75 for students.


The OFE's 11-year track record is \$409,223, which has funded its established 71 scholarships. But more is needed. In a typical year, only about 40 percent of the thousands of students who apply receive some level of aid.

With an endowment of \$14.5 million, the foundation embraces an even broader mission, including the purchase of instructional aids and the construction of new facilities.

One example is financing the exhibit about Kalamazoo Valley Community College's 50 years of history that will open at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum in September. That will launch events and celebrations leading to September of 2018, marking the half-century anniversary of the college's pioneer class. But it's the scholarships that open doors and opportunities to enrollees that are still the foundation's major priority, one that has been fostered by 85 community leaders who have volunteered their time and talents since 1980 to make dreams of a better life come true.

The \$160 OFE ticket could be your best investment in your community -- and yourself. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to [www.kvcc.edu/foundation](http://www.kvcc.edu/foundation).

PLEASE JOIN US!



You are invited to visit  
**The Bronson Healthy Living Campus**  
Tours | Demonstrations | Refreshments  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016**  
2 - 5PM

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College**  
Food Innovation Center 224 East Crosstown Parkway  
- Make wildflower seed packets  
- Plant lettuce plugs

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College**  
Culinary/Allied Health Building 418 East Walnut Street  
- Refreshments  
- Healthy "My Plate" workshops and plate painting  
- Community kitchen demonstrations

**Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**  
Integrated Health Services/Arcadia Pharmacy 615 East Crosstown Parkway  
- Gallery art exhibit  
- Meet the artists  
- Activities for children

**1:30-2:30 PM Kalamazoo Valley Museum** 230 North Rose Street  
- Tasting Kalamazoo History: Favorite Dishes and Recipes from Our Rich  
Midwestern Heritage

*Shuttle buses will run approximately every 15 minutes between all buildings. The Bronson Healthy Living Campus is a community collaboration including Bronson Healthcare, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.*

# MELODY WOODS AND DR. ALLAN LAREAU

## Spread the Healthy Living Message

Kalamazoo Valley's Community Outreach Coordinator, Melody Woods, is working to help community members on the path to healthy living through Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Healthy Neighborhoods initiative. "We're combining food literacy and physical activity in a program that involves children and their caregivers," Woods said. Participants learn that cooking, nutrition, and physical activity are skills that are just as important as math and reading. "I have seen first-hand the impact of poor health," Woods said. "Since problems do not begin in adulthood, why not teach our children healthy behaviors now?"

This fall, Woods launched the Healthy Choices Matter food literacy program in the Edison Neighborhood for 2nd through 6th grade students. The class is a fun way for children to learn about food through hands-on learning and physical activity. Each 90-minute session covers a topic that increases students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards a healthy lifestyle. "Our students are learning about the relationship between food choices and disease prevention and then they can apply this knowledge at home,"

Woods said. "They return to class with such excitement when they relate the meal they made to the dish we prepared together in class." Woods said students even report forgoing their favorite beverages at the grocery store because they've learned about sugar content. "It's working," Woods said. "I really want to keep helping families make positive changes in their lives and I'm happy with the way our program has been received. The response has been great!"

Past sessions have included presentations by an intriguing list of guest instructors like Hether Frayer, the Fresh Food Fairy; Dr. Allan LaReau, a well-known retired Kalamazoo pediatrician; Kalamazoo Valley's Director of Culinary Education, John Korycki, who was formerly the executive chef at Zazios Italian restaurant, and many others.

Dr. LaReau, who retired in August after 38 years in practice, said he's impressed with Woods' personal story and the efforts she's making to have a positive impact on area children's lives. He attended a Healthy Choices Matter class and helped children cook and assemble a healthy meal. "My wife and

I are food people," LaReau said. "My wife is a geriatric practitioner and we both have an interest in food, exercise and healthy living."

LaReau and his wife Rita have established the Gretchen LaReau Memorial Fund in memory of their daughter who died of cancer 23 years ago. "We created a donor-advised fund to honor her memory and support worthy causes," LaReau said.

Woods received funding from the Gretchen LaReau Memorial Fund for educational materials, chef hats and aprons for children participating in the Healthy Choices Matter classes. "We're happy to support Melody's efforts," LaReau said. Local fiber artist Eriz Hughey designed the chef hats and aprons that students wore while cooking. "They were a huge hit with the children and we thought it was so much more meaningful than ordering something online," he said.

LaReau said he's encouraged by Woods' success and hopeful that the healthy foods focus will be expanded



Dr. Allan LaReau and Melody Woods

throughout the community. "There's so much that needs to be done," LaReau said. "We need to get kids making healthy choices in and out of the kitchen. We want to help make sure this spreads to the whole community."

Woods is working to expand the program and partner with other community agencies. This summer she will be helping kids from the City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation summer camp program learn about healthy food choices in the community kitchen of Kalamazoo Valley's new Culinary and Allied Health building. Additional outreach programs are also in the planning stages which will broaden the positive impact throughout the community.

For more information about the Healthy Choices Matter program, contact Woods at [mwoods@kvcc.edu](mailto:mwoods@kvcc.edu) or 269.353.1290.

## ART AND NEW MEDIA STUDENTS DESIGNING SUCCESS



Artwork created by Design Crew students for the KVBA.

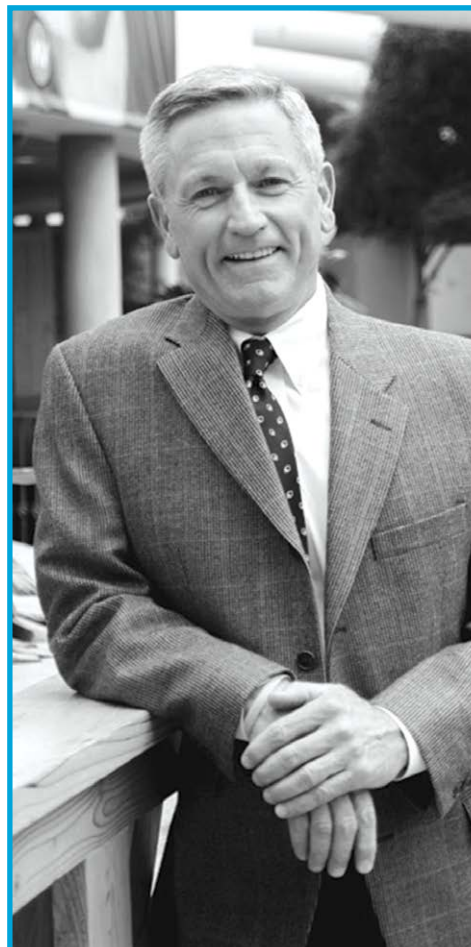
(Continued from page 1) Graphic design major Zach Sklener, a Breckenridge native, plans to go on to earn a bachelor of arts degree after he leaves Kalamazoo Valley. "I don't think there's any other school around that's providing real-world experience like this," he said. "Working with clients has been really helpful. It's given us a feel for how things run out there in the world." The class has also toured design firms in Grand Rapids to learn about who they hire and how they operate.

Allison McKenna, a graphic design and web design and development major, said she has enjoyed collaborating with her classmates. Students are working together in three or four-person teams to

design the creative concepts for the Kalamazoo Valley Blues Association (KVBA). "We all kind of throw ideas off each other," McKenna said. "It's definitely a collaboration as well as a competition." She explained that the KVBA will choose the winning team's designs to use. "This is a unique opportunity that we wouldn't be able to get anywhere else," she said.

McKenna's classmate Edwin Anderson, also a graphic design major, said feedback from the KVBA has been helpful. "It's definitely an interesting experience," he said. "Nothing's better than seeing them happy with what we did," he said.

DeYoung said Design Crew assignments have an emphasis on participatory design and community involvement. "These students are doing good work in the community and applying their knowledge and skills in real-world experiences," he said. "The community wins and we win by better preparing our students." DeYoung said art classes can be really practical or really conceptual. "Here, we put students in both situations. They come up with a solution and then they have to follow through. It's a really nice combination."



### STAFF SPOTLIGHT Roger Miller

is awarded annually to recognize a financial aid professional who has provided significant and outstanding service over an extended period of time.

The award is determined by nominations, elections, and an awards committee. Miller served as state president of the MSFAA in 1990 and has been active with the organization for more than 30 years. "Roger has been a voice of reason during the ever-changing landscape of financial aid changes," said nominator Paul Doane, associate director of financial aid compliance at Grand Rapids Community College.

Miller, who has worked for Kalamazoo Valley since 1973 and in the Financial Aid department since 1977, said he enjoys his work because it's "very active and ever-changing – highly regulated and technical."

"I like working with our students and their parents," Miller said. "It's great to be in a position to be able to help them. It's fulfilling."

Roger Miller, Director of Financial Aid at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, received a prestigious award from the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association during the organization's Winter Training Conference.

Miller received the Henry Dykema Distinguished Service Award, which is the MSFAA's highest award. It

# AVOIDING A MIDLIFE CRISIS

Kalamazoo Valley Community College will hold its 77th commencement ceremony on May 1 at 4 p.m. at Western Michigan University's Miller Auditorium. The student speaker will be Lynsey Wall and the faculty speaker will be biology instructor Verne Mills. Nearly 500 students are eligible to walk in the ceremony, including Jacqueline Luttrell, who will receive an associate of arts degree in multimedia and video.

A Covert native and Kalamazoo resident, Luttrell never expected to go back to college as a 50-year-old, but even after she graduates in May, she intends to come back to pursue a second degree. She has 20 years of car sales experience and decided in November 2013 to start taking photography classes. "I had finished a series of orientations at Public Media Network to direct Monday Night Live with Keith Rowe," Luttrell said. "That really inspired me. I wanted to learn more about all the different forms of technology I was using."

At that same time, Luttrell had also begun to hone her photography skills documenting her son Darin L. Luttrell's amateur Mixed Martial Arts fights. "So many people had started asking me to take photos that I knew it was time to start doing something different," she said. Her son has since moved up to professional MMA fighter status and

Luttrell is about to graduate. She spent a semester in the Design Crew advanced design class at the Center for New Media and was also an intern in the college's marketing department. Luttrell plans to return in the fall to complete a degree in Animation.

"Don't have a midlife crisis! Change it. It's simple," Luttrell says to other nontraditional students. To anyone considering enrolling in college, Luttrell says, "Do it! It will change your life!"



Jacqueline Luttrell, Multimedia and Video



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT  
Nicole Wilkins

Gobles native Nicole Wilkins has been employed full time since she was 17 years old, including working in a grocery store deli and jobs in customer service, inside sales, payroll and technical support. She earned associate degrees in general marketing and business administration from Kalamazoo Valley in 2013 and is now lead employment specialist for the PATH (Partnership, Accountability, Training and Hope) program at the Michigan Works! office in Kalamazoo.

In addition to working full time, Wilkins is completing the coursework for a bachelor's degree

in business administration from Davenport University. Wilkins said her parents Mary and David Wilkins have supported and encouraged her throughout her studies and her steady career advancement. "They have actually set the precedent for me wanting to achieve more in life and to not settle for less. I strive to offer that same support and positive influence to my daughter and they continue to do the same for her as they have for me," she said.

Wilkins' daughter Grace is five years old. "She has been the driving force behind me continuing my education. I want to show her that you can do anything you put your mind to, no matter how difficult or trying times can be. I want to be a positive role model for her," Wilkins said.

Wilkins has a positive impact on many others, especially through her work. She provides case management services for PATH participants. She assists clients with identifying barriers they may have in obtaining employment and helps to develop a plan to address these barriers. PATH offers assistance in job search and work experience as well as support services. "The ultimate goal of PATH is for our customers to gain self-sustaining employment to be able to independently support themselves and their family," Wilkins explained.

# CAREER ACADEMY COLLABORATES

## To Remove Barriers to Employment for Students

For the first time in her life, Debbie Kline says she has hope for the future. The 30-year-old St. Joseph County native just completed training in the Momentum program offered by Urban Alliance in the Edison neighborhood and the Production Technician Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. She was one of 12 students enrolled in a pilot program designed to remove barriers to employment for adults who have criminal backgrounds, lack a G.E.D. or high school diploma or have other employment barriers. Other program partners include The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and the Kalamazoo Literacy Council.

Funding for the training was provided to Urban Alliance and Kalamazoo Valley Community College through The Workforce Innovation Grant awarded to the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Kline graduated from the Momentum PTA on March 22 and already has two job offers. "It's a life program," Kline said. "They've given us so much training, even down to our personalities. I've never been so blessed to meet and know people so

dedicated to seeing that we have a chance to be successful. They're giving people hope."

The students spent six weeks in the Momentum program before starting classes at Kalamazoo Valley. Through Momentum, they received intensive employment readiness training and academic tutoring. They completed 100 hours of classroom training and 100 hours of volunteer work experience. The Momentum program provides eligible unemployed and underemployed people with job and life-skill training to secure and maintain new employment.

Of those who enrolled in Momentum in 2015 40% were homeless, 98% were unemployed, 95% were ex-offenders and 83% tested positive for illegal drug use. In the same year, 100% of Momentum graduates were drug-free and 89% were able to gain employment with an average starting wage of \$11.94 per hour. Of those employed, 90% were with the same employer beyond 90 days.

Kalamazoo Valley's Production Technician Academy is a competency-based training program designed



Family and friends cheer for the Momentum PTA graduates during their graduation ceremony.

to prepare graduates for successful, long-term careers in manufacturing. The program combines lecture, demonstration, and laboratory exercises to facilitate learning. Safe work practices are stressed and consistently practiced. The curriculum is constantly adjusted to keep up with changes in technology.

"I have every confidence that these graduates are going to go on to do great things and I'd like to acknowledge their great courage," said Brian Parsons, Director of Momentum, who introduced each graduate during the graduation ceremony.

Elizabeth Lyons, Director of Career Academies for Kalamazoo Valley, called the effort "an extraordinary collaboration" and said, "It's been a privilege to be a part of it." Lyons said it was amazing to witness the academy

students working together as a team, maturing and blossoming. "This has taught us that it takes collaboration to transform a community," Lyons said. "We've come together to transform lives."

Kline said her parole officer recommended that she attend Momentum and the PTA. "It's been a long time since I spent nine hours a day in a classroom," Kline said, "But I've learned to come in every day with a positive attitude. I know I've been offered a blessing. I've learned to look at everything that happens as a lesson rather than a setback or an obstacle. We have all begun to retrain our brains. This is a life program, not a job program."

(Continued on page 4)

# WINNING ON AND OFF THE COURT

Maureen Brown has learned a lot from her dad, long-time basketball coach Ron Welch. The youngest of five children, she had many opportunities to hone her craft of basketball and practice with siblings, friends, and other coaches. The interest turned into a passion for Brown, and she coached side-by-side for the last ten years with Welch for the Kalamazoo Valley Lady Cougars.

"There have been many things I have learned from my dad both on and off the court," said Brown. "The biggest things I have learned are how important it is to build relationships, not just within the school but also out in the community, with opposing schools, and also with game workers and officials."

The Lady Cougars recently finished the 2015-16 season ranked 8th in the nation by the NJCAA with a 29-2 overall record. Coach Welch retired after leading the team to 451 wins and 12 conference championships over 20 years. He took the Lady Cougars to six national championships, earned numerous coach of the year awards, and will be inducted in the NJCAA Women's Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in July.

Assistant coach Brown was the obvious choice to take over this year as head coach and move the team forward.

"Coach Welch built this program into

a nationally recognized program so there isn't much to change," said Brown. "My coaching style is a little different in the aspect of intensity, but that mostly comes during practices."

The first thing Brown did was meet with the returners to continue building the relationships they started when they were freshmen. "I am so blessed to have those seven stick with me during my first season as head coach," she said.

Brown knows first hand that the job isn't just about basketball. It's about helping young women achieve their academic goals so they can be successful in life when basketball is over for them.

"It's also about life skills. It can be a difficult transition to come to college and I've always considered it part of my job to help ease that transition – to help young people become adults who understand accountability and responsibility," said Coach Brown.

Coach Welch will continue with Kalamazoo Valley as an adjunct professor in the Wellness & Physical Education Department. He will also remain involved in the summer kids' camps.

To find out more about their winning season and other athletics at Kalamazoo Valley, visit <http://kvcccougars.com/>.

Lady Cougars' head coach Maureen Brown discusses strategy with her players during an intense game.



# CAREER ACADEMY COLLABORATES

## To Remove Barriers to Employment for Students

(Continued from page 3)

Kline agreed that the group is extremely supportive. "We hold each other accountable," she said. "We're going to have victory and we're going to have it together."

Nora Thomas, 30, from Kalamazoo, came to Momentum PTA after being laid off from an assembly job she'd held for three years. "My probation officer thought it would be a good program for me," she said. "I've learned to ask questions to get the information I need and I've learned that I'm not alone in the struggles. It's helped me to become more open. I feel more confident." Thomas had worked a string of temporary jobs, but is now looking for a long-term career.

Graduate John Tyson, Jr. said he was living in the streets, but knew he could do better. "I came from nothing," he said. "I turned to the streets and I thought I felt love there, but that wasn't me. I had no vision. I was lost."

Tyson said he plans to keep making positive changes. "Words can't explain what this program means to me," he said. "This has definitely opened my mind. I've had a small taste of success and now I want more." Although he's not sure what he'll do next, Tyson loves cooking and would like to gain more culinary skills.

Julie Kumeff of Portage has struggled to find meaningful employment for almost a decade. She was talking to a counselor after a car accident last winter and learned about Momentum. "I was happy that they called me," she said. "It turned out to

be more than I ever expected. Before I was even through with Momentum, I felt different about how I presented myself."

Kumeff is confident that she's now a qualified job applicant with plenty of options. "Before I was constantly trying to figure out what I could do differently. I spent so much time just trying to find something. Now I think I'll be able to explore my career options," she said.

Lyons said the pilot program may be expanded to include other areas of study. She said a main goal of this academy and all of Kalamazoo Valley's Career Academies, is to make sure graduates are employed and making a living wage. She's pleased with the success of the first Momentum PTA academy and is anxious to see what the graduates will do next. "To see it come to fruition has been an honor," she said.

Craig Jbara, Vice President for Strategic Business and Community Development for Kalamazoo Valley, supports continuation of this partnership as well as expansion into other employment areas. "We were extremely happy to participate in this initiative and hope that it will be a springboard for other programs. We want to leverage this success and really make a difference in the community," he said.

The next Momentum PTA training is set to begin on May 9. For more information about the collaboration, contact Lyons at 269.353.1289 or [alyons@kvcc.edu](mailto:alyons@kvcc.edu) or Brian Parsons at 269.873.2804 or [bparsons@uainc.org](mailto:bparsons@uainc.org).

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## SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Presented by the Career and Employment Services Department, 6 to 8p.m. on May 4 at Kalamazoo Valley's Texas Township Campus

- Panel discussions with area employers
- Details about Kalamazoo Valley Community College programs
- Career advancement tips

For more information, contact Tracey Quada, [tquada@kvcc.edu](mailto:tquada@kvcc.edu) or 269.488.4676.

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