



# NURSING STUDENTS HAVE NEW OPTIONS



Loveleen Sahni, nursing student enrolled in Valley's program

A new bachelor's degree completion plan for nursing students has been reached between Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Western Michigan University. The agreement formalizes the relationship between the associate degree in nursing program at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and the bachelor's in nursing program at WMU, one of many long-standing relationships between the two institutions. Kalamazoo Valley is WMU's largest source of transfer students, with more than 500 students transferring from the college to the University each year.

Under the new four-year plan, dual-enrolled nursing students will take summer classes at WMU while earning their associate degree from Kalamazoo Valley Community College. After graduating from Kalamazoo Valley and attaining their registered nurse (R.N.) certification, students will finish their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) at WMU in just one year. The four-year timespan is much shorter than the traditional path for nursing students.

"This agreement signifies in a real way that it's all about students and their aspirations," said WMU President John M. Dunn at the signing ceremony in August. "It's about trying to find pathways to allow students to be successful."

"It's a milestone in the relationship between these two institutions," said Dr. Dennis Bertch, executive vice president for instructional and student success services at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. "We're working together to produce highly educated nurses to positively impact health outcomes in our communities."

Bertch said the agreement provides Kalamazoo Valley nursing students and graduates with an alternative, yet flexible pathway to complete their B.S.N., thus meeting the ongoing employment opportunities available in the greater Kalamazoo community. Bertch said the partnership exemplifies

both institutions' goals of providing a highly educated nursing workforce that will positively impact health care outcomes in the community.

For many years, area nurses have attended Kalamazoo Valley, attained their R.N. certification, and joined the workforce for a number of years before going back to school for their B.S.N. In today's competitive health care market, most providers are looking for nurses who already hold bachelor's degrees. Registered nurses are often encouraged to go back to school for their bachelor's degree within only a few years of joining the workforce.

"We know that there is a shortage of prepared nurses across the state of Michigan," said Dr. Earlie M. Washington, dean of the WMU College of Health and Human Services. "WMU and KVCC are working diligently to address that shortage. This plan will help produce more well-prepared nurses to meet the health care needs of West Michigan and beyond."

Bertch said he looks forward to future opportunities to collaborate with other programs of study at WMU. "Over the last couple of years, Kalamazoo Valley has initiated a more structured process to better define articulation requirements for students transitioning to four-year universities," Bertch said. "WMU has been instrumental in this collaborative effort as we see this

as a win-win for KVCC and WMU students. When one considers that about 50 percent of KVCC students transfer to WMU, it's imperative that we make every effort to jointly meet their educational needs with minimal impediments along their journey."

Students may apply to enroll at Kalamazoo Valley Community College at any time. The fall semester always begins in September, winter semester begins in January and summer semester begins in May. An online application is found at [www.kvcc.edu/admissions](http://www.kvcc.edu/admissions). Contact the Admissions, Records and Registration Office at 269.488.4281 or email [arr@kvcc.edu](mailto:arr@kvcc.edu) for assistance in applying to the college.

Applications for the fall nursing program are accepted during the first two weeks of April and are available in February through the second week in April. Applications for the winter nursing program are accepted during the last two weeks of September and are available in August and September. Applications are available at the Texas Township Campus Nursing Office (posted outside of Room 7426) or online at [www.kvcc.edu/academics/nursing/applicationentrylevel.php](http://www.kvcc.edu/academics/nursing/applicationentrylevel.php). The application period may be extended or reopened if needed to fill the class.

# GREEN WALL SERVES AS A SIGNATURE SUSTAINABILITY FEATURE

Students in the Kalamazoo Valley Community College culinary arts and allied health programs take their classes at the Culinary/Allied Health Building, where a new green wall stands front and center as a living, thriving symbol of sustainability and healthy living on the Bronson Healthy Living Campus. Measuring 30 feet high by 10 feet 8 inches wide, the 324-square-foot green wall was constructed with the LiveWall® system from LiveWall, LLC, the green wall subsidiary of Hortech, Inc., in Spring Lake, MI.

"The scope of the green wall, extending the full three-story height of the building, and its prominent position at the main entrance to the building serve to remind our students that they are preparing for careers focused on protecting and improving the health and well-being of our citizens and the sustainability of our communities," said Mike Collins, executive vice president for enrollment and campus operations, Kalamazoo Valley Community College. "The green wall is not an appendage to

the building but an essential element. It doesn't stand alone but connects to, and functions in relation with, other sustainable landscape features."

Green walls transform ordinary wall surfaces into planted vertical gardens. That transformation from commonplace wall into vertical landscape adds a living, organic element to a building. Through the natural process of evapotranspiration, green wall plants release water vapor that cools the air, helping to naturally cool the buildings on which they are installed.

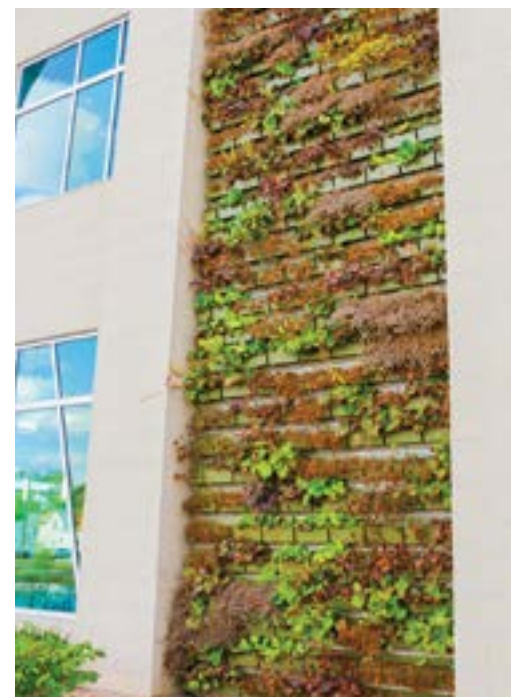
"The overall design goal for the Bronson Healthy Living Campus is to express and promote health, sustainable food, the environment and community," said Rick Wordell, senior principal and design director, Eckert Wordell, part of the Arcadia Collaborative architecture team. "The green wall symbolizes this goal and represents the meaning and purpose of the Culinary/Allied Health Building and the overall campus project." D & D Building, Inc., of Wyoming, MI,

erected the structure of the green wall in September 2015. It features 30 eight-inch and 255 16-inch LiveWall planter modules attached to an aluminum rail and mounting track system, which is affixed to the outside wall to secure the planters and integrated irrigation components. Hortech grew 500 plants over the winter in the LiveWall planter inserts so that the plants would be hearty and ready for installation into the modular planters on the wall in May 2016.

Based on the east-northeast orientation and exposure of the wall, as well as the requirement of plants that can survive winter, the horticultural experts at LiveWall suggested a mix of six different plants, including Blue Wonder Catmint, Purple Bergenia, two varieties of Geraniums, and two types of Coral Bells. The wall design creates distinct blocks of color with flowers that bloom at varied times during the growing season.

"The green wall plant selection and placement produce a vertical landscape

that is more naturalistic than formal," said Collins. "That is in keeping with the design goals for the campus and complements other sustainable landscape features on the campus."



Green wall at Kalamazoo Valley's Culinary/Allied Health Building

# RETURNING TO COLLEGE BEST DECISION I EVER MADE

When winter semester starts on Monday, January 9, students at Valley will find themselves a part of a vibrant and diverse community. In addition to students from Kalamazoo County, Brazil, China, and Battle Creek, classes will be filled with first timers, early college students and those returning to college for a second or third time.

Camille White, enrolled in the Sustainable Food Systems program, is a “non-traditional” student who re-enrolled in college a year ago. “When I woke up one morning dreading my retail management job, I knew it was time to make a change,” White said. “I quit that job, drove over to Valley, made an appointment with a counselor and my life changed dramatically.”

As a result of the career counseling and strengths assessment in the Student Success Center, Camille learned that the career she was most suited for a culinary services instructor. The next step was enrolling in the program last year and now as winter semester approaches, she is on the track for achieving her goal. “I’m learning about things I love, working in a fantastic teaching kitchen every day and benefitting from learning with classmates who have a wide variety of life experiences and skills.”

To those who are anxious about making a change, she says, “don’t put it off, take the leap, the benefits of returning to college far outweigh the risks.” The Winter 2017 semester at Kalamazoo Valley Community College begins on January 9 and students

can register for classes beginning at 8 a.m. on October 10. The registration process is a tiered schedule based on each student’s completed credit hours, not including in-progress courses. Students can find out when they can register by visiting [www.kvcc.edu/register](http://www.kvcc.edu/register) or logging on to [www.kvcc.edu](http://www.kvcc.edu) and accessing the MyValley link.

Students who have accumulated a minimum of 48 credit hours may register on Monday, Oct. 10 beginning at 8 a.m. Registration for students with a minimum of 36 credit hours begins at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 11. For students with a minimum of 24 credit hours, registration begins at 8 a.m. on Oct. 12. Students with 12 credit hours may register at 8 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 13 and on Friday, Oct. 14, registration is open to everyone.



Camille White, culinary student

For more information, visit [kvcc.edu/register](http://kvcc.edu/register) or call 269.488-4100.

# STUDENT OPTIONS EXPAND AT THE KALAMAZOO VALLEY UNIVERSITY CENTER

A second four-year university officially joined the Kalamazoo Valley Community College University Center September 26 when Kalamazoo Valley Community College President Marilyn Schlack and Sister Peg Albert, OP, PhD, President of Siena Heights University, signed a Memorandum of Understanding which enables students to complete four-year degrees at Kalamazoo Valley.

Siena Heights joins Davenport University who signed on as a University Center partner in 2015. This new initiative, which combines the degree completion opportunities

of four-year schools with the local convenience and services offered at Kalamazoo Valley, simplifies the degree completion process for its students. “The economic development of the region has been shown to be related to the proportion of residents with advanced educational degrees. The University Center expands post-secondary education options for students in southwest Michigan,” said Schlack. “Kalamazoo Valley will continue to cooperate with other four-year colleges and universities to provide students a variety of options that are not readily available in today’s market.”

“We are pleased to be collaborating with Kalamazoo Valley Community College in offering four-year degree completion options on the Community College campus,” said Albert. “We are excited to be on their campus to be able to offer more educational opportunities to their students as well as to the Kalamazoo area community.”

After completing an associate degree, students will be able to seamlessly continue their education in the same buildings with the same services with which they have grown accustomed. Students seeking a four-year degree

at Siena Heights will be able to choose from a number of programs including: Bachelor of Applied Science Degree (B.A.S.), Community and Human Services (B.A.) and Multidisciplinary Studies (B.A.).

Classes are scheduled to begin in January 2017. More information about the University Center is available at [www.kvcc.edu/universitycenter](http://www.kvcc.edu/universitycenter).



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT Anna Brigham-Wright

When Anna Brigham-Wright enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley’s dental hygiene program in 1968, the single mother was looking for a better way to support her three young children. She knew that she’d never be fulfilled or financially secure if she continued to work in factory jobs. Brigham’s neighbor Anna Whitten urged her to enroll in college. Whitten, a well-known community activist and social justice advocate, served on the college’s Board of Trustees from 1968 until her death in 2016. “Anna was my neighbor and she said, ‘Why don’t you come out here and go to school?’ She helped me to get started. I did have some support and encouragement,” Brigham-Wright said. In addition to Whitten’s encouragement, Brigham-

Wright’s mother often helped out by babysitting.

Brigham-Wright was worried about going to college, but her aptitude test score was outstanding. “I walked into Dean Kocher’s office and I was just a nervous wreck, but they were all rooting for me,” Brigham-Wright recalls. She was elated to learn she scored the twelfth highest spot among the pool of 150 dental hygiene program applicants.

Once she was accepted, Brigham-Wright embraced the challenge. As a high school student, she loved science classes, but she got married right out of high school instead of going to college, like many young women in the 1960s. Brigham’s two sons were hemophiliacs who often required medical care. “I had to be practical,” she said. “There was no telling when I might have to take them to the hospital. I knew I had to be there for my boys.” She chose the dental hygiene field because she knew she could work around her children’s needs. “I spent a lot of time studying in the E.R. when the boys would have bleeds,” Brigham-Wright recalled.

Brigham-Wright excelled in college and in 1972 she was the first black woman to graduate from the program. At the time, she thought nothing of it. “I was just doing what I had to do,” Brigham-Wright said. Still, she encountered some resistance when she started her job search. At one interview, she was greeted by the entire office staff. “They didn’t expect to see this brown face come walking in,” Brigham-Wright said. After that experience, she contacted Kalamazoo Valley instructor Dan Kavanaugh, who ran a dental office in Galesburg. She worked for him for five years and eventually remarried and moved to Detroit, where she worked in a periodontal office for 28 years. Brigham-Wright’s other Kalamazoo area jobs included working at the Family Health Center and at the State Hospital.

Brigham-Wright said the dental hygiene field was perfect for her when she was a young mother and it remained a source of joy until her retirement in 2010. Even after retirement, she continued work part-time until April 2016 when she had back surgery. “I still plan on going

back,” she said. “I’m an educator, but I don’t work in the classroom. I love working person-to-person. Every place that I’ve worked, I’ve had some people follow me for periodontal treatment.”

Brigham-Wright trained patients and her colleagues. “It’s important for dental hygienists to keep up with continuing education,” she said. “There’s always something you can learn. I used to love going to different programs because I always got something out of it.”

Brigham-Wright, 73, has fond memories of Kalamazoo Valley. She recently returned to campus from her home in Detroit for her nephew Scott Williams’ retirement celebration. “Places like Valley provide such good programs,” she said. “You can go to school for two or three years and make good money. I’m not an advocate for eight or nine years of college. I think your children need you. There are a lot of two and three-year programs that are lucrative for a person who has children. It certainly benefitted me.”

# BRONSON HEALTHCARE GROUP HIRES CIS STUDENTS

An exciting partnership between Kalamazoo Valley and Bronson Healthcare has enabled students to go to work at the Bronson IT Helpdesk while completing their college studies.

Last fall, members of Kalamazoo Valley’s Computer Information Systems (CIS) department met with Bronson IT staff about forming a partnership for Bronson to use Kalamazoo Valley CIS students to work at its IT Helpdesk as IT Customer Service Analysts while finishing their degrees and moving on to pursue four-year degrees. All students are hired as Bronson employees, are paid and receive benefits.

In addition to meeting the job requirements for the position, prerequisites for the Bronson Information Technology position include: a written recommendation from a current or recent instructor, maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA, prior to and during employment, currently enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley’s IT program, and completion of at least three relevant courses prior to application. Students must also remain actively enrolled for degree completion, have a long-term desire to complete a bachelor’s degree in Information Technology, and the ability to work at least 24 hours a week, including some weekends and holidays.

“CIS faculty reached out to students who we felt met those requirements and sent in their resumes,” explained Kalamazoo Valley CIS instructor Christine Gearig. “Each candidate went through Bronson’s interview process. In January, five CIS students were hired and started working the IT Helpdesk.”

Those students are Jacob Rinker, Tyler Buell, Dennis Pylar, Max Squires and Shadoe Case. “Students work at the IT Helpdesk answering calls for IT Support and they are also paired with a mentor in an area of their interest so they can learn other jobs in the IT area,” Gearig said. “Bronson works around the students’ class schedules so they can finish their degrees.”

“This is a really exciting partnership with Bronson for our students,” said Dean of Business and Industrial Trades for Kalamazoo Valley, Tom Buszek. “It has already changed the lives of several students who were working at basic part-time, minimum wage jobs completely unrelated to CIS, and are now making excellent wages and gaining valuable experience in their career field.”

CIS student Tyler Buell started at Bronson in mid-January. “It’s been a fantastic opportunity for me to get my foot in the door and to really apply some of the education I have received from Kalamazoo Valley,” he said. “I am gaining a great deal of knowledge and experience troubleshooting and fixing issues throughout the organization. My experience at Bronson has been very positive as my co-workers and the Bronson staff are very friendly and fun to work with. I am grateful to have the chance to work for a great organization while also having the opportunity to learn a lot about the way a hospital IT department functions. I am also looking forward to shadowing some other IT departments in the hospital to get an idea of what department I may want to work at in the future.”

There are several programs of study available at Kalamazoo Valley Community College for students who are interested in Computer Information Systems. Database Specialist, Help Desk, Network Manager, PC Support Technician, and Web Developer Certificates of Achievement are available, as well as Associate of Applied Science degrees in IT Support Technician and Software Developer.

## JOB OUTLOOK

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of computer support specialists is projected to grow 12 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. More support services will be needed as organizations upgrade their computer equipment and software.

Buell should graduate from Kalamazoo Valley by the summer of 2017 with a Computer Support Technician degree. He plans to transfer to Western Michigan University.

In June, Bronson staff contacted Gearig and her colleagues again for more potential IT Helpdesk job applicants. “We are seeing some great momentum with the students who we hired late last year and we are starting to see some of them build relationships into new areas of our IT teams. We are looking to hire some more students.”

Katie Dickens, Director – IT Business Information Systems Bronson Healthcare Group, said, “Information Technology positions are currently hard to fill, so it’s important to have relationships with community partners, such as Kalamazoo Valley Community College, to recruit talented individuals. We offer long-term career and learning opportunities for students, which allow them to not only apply what they are learning in their classes, but to form lasting relationships with colleagues that can often lead to advanced career opportunities later on.”

Through this partnership, Bronson has been able to employ more than

## AVERAGE SALARIES

Computer Network Support Specialist  
Average Salary: \$45,300\*

Computer Systems Analysts  
Average Salary: \$63,300\*

Computer User Support Specialist  
Average Salary: \$42,500\*

Network and Computer Systems Administrators  
Average Salary: \$56,500\*

Web Developers  
Average Salary: \$45,300\*

\*Salary information for Kalamazoo/Portage, MI in 2015 comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics Survey.

10 individuals since the program was instituted in fall of 2015. Of those, four have already received promotion opportunities. “We have seen great success in partnering with Kalamazoo Valley Community College and we look forward to the long-term benefits of this career-building program,” Dickens said.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT Max Squires

Ann Arbor native Max Squires first came to Kalamazoo to study criminal justice at Western Michigan University. It wasn’t until he enrolled at Kalamazoo Valley Community College that he really became focused on the future. Once he decided that criminal justice wasn’t the right career choice for him, he listened to his friends who told him that technology seemed to be his niche.

Today, he’s a Computer Information Systems student at Kalamazoo Valley who works part-time at the Bronson Hospital IT Helpdesk. Squires was one of the initial five Kalamazoo Valley computer tech students who was invited to apply for a Helpdesk position at Bronson. “I’m working for them in an actual job getting paid while getting on-the-job training,” he said. “I’m a homegrown employee, if you will.”

When he started in the CIS program, Squires thought he might apply for an internship, but he never imagined getting paid for learning his trade while still in school. He plans to transfer to WMU after he graduates from Valley and considers Bronson’s tuition reimbursement plan added incentive to complete his degree.

Squires and his fellow Helpdesk employees are providing “level one” support, helping customers - mostly doctors, nurses and other hospital employees - with phone, email, and other technology issues related to the network. “It’s a pretty fantastic place to work,” Squires said. “They’re flexible with scheduling and they’re very inclusive. Education is their number one priority.”

Squires said he enjoys troubleshooting and working at the hospital. “It’s really rewarding and I like knowing that I’m part of something much bigger,” he said.



Side Long Glance by Janet Lucking, Best of Show 2014

# ALUMNI+ ART SHOW

It’s time to get ready for Kalamazoo Valley’s Sixth Annual Alumni+ Art Show on Friday, April 7 at 5:30 p.m.

This juried art show is the opportunity for Kalamazoo Valley alumni to showcase their works. There is no artist entry fee. Each year this show is held at Kalamazoo Valley’s Center for New Media in conjunction with Art Hop. Works submitted will be considered for six awards, which will be presented to artists the night of the show. Show judges are area professionals who come from a variety of disciplines and whose expertise enable them to deliver expert, but impartial, determinations. Previous judges have been impressed by the variety and quality of work.

An alumni artist can enter the show if they: 1) have successfully completed at least one class at Kalamazoo Valley, and 2) are not currently enrolled in any class at the time of the show (winter 2017). You need not have been an art student. Previous show entrants have come from a variety of backgrounds including law enforcement, accounting, and medical coding.

Please consider being a part of the 2017 Alumni+ Art Show. As you prepare your work or create something new, visit <https://www.kvcc.edu/alumni/artshow/> for show details and links to the Call for Entry Form, Show Guidelines, and Exhibition Loan Agreement.

Submissions are due by Feb. 24, 2017. Art can be turned in to Cindy Parks at the CNM reception desk.

# CAREER EXPLORATION & EARLY COLLEGE PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS



Welding instructor Erick Martin assists student at 2015 event

A robot, CPR mannequin, farm animals and a restored '48 Chevy pickup will be among the hundreds of interactive exhibits under one roof as part of an experiential career investigation event November 1 and 2 for area eighth and ninth graders.

MiCareerQuest Southwest, sponsored by Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency (KRESA), invites students from all nine Kalamazoo County school districts to talk with experts in a variety of fields while learning to operate and work with the actual tools, equipment and technology. Over 6,000 students are expected to attend the two-day event. More than 50 local businesses, industries and post-secondary partners – including Kalamazoo Valley Community College – will fill the Kalamazoo County Expo Center to showcase careers in the following career pathways:

- Arts & Communication
- Business, Technology & Human Services
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Health Sciences & Natural Sciences

Kalamazoo Valley will be front and center with information and interactive displays in a variety of growing fields, including automotive technology, welding, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Emergency Medical

Technology, dental hygiene and respiratory care as well as some of its Career Academies.

“We are able to expose students to types of careers that they might not be exposed to anywhere else,” David Brock, an instructor in the Engineering, Design & Manufacturing Technology (EDMT) department at Kalamazoo Valley Community College said. “Very few middle or high schools offer industrial arts anymore but there is a growing need for people in the skilled trades.”

Brock and 10 members of the EDMT department will bring a welding simulator and CNC machinery for students to learn hands-on. Students will be able to use the machinery – competing against one another for precision and accuracy as well as designing their own small parts to take home from the event.

The College's Career Academies, which include the Wind Turbine Technician Academy and the Mechatronic Technician Academy, will also have a presence at the event bringing a robotic arm that students can manipulate and wind turbine safety gear to try on, according to Ben Ash, program coordinator for the Groves Campus.

Career Academies, Ash explained, are

skill-focused, employer-driven training programs that prepare students for in-demand jobs in growing and diversified industries.

Students aren't the only ones who are able to experience MiCareerQuest Southwest. Parents are invited to attend November 1 from 5-8 p.m. to learn more about the Early/Middle College (EMC) program.

The EMC program allows students to earn a free associate degree or certificate by completing a fifth year of high school. Students delay high school graduation for one year while they take college courses at Kalamazoo Valley. Tuition and fees are paid by the local school district.

EMC expands on dual enrollment, and builds upon classes already offered through Education for Employment (EFE) and Education for the Arts (EFA). Students take courses at Kalamazoo Valley campuses, but may also take Kalamazoo Valley courses on their high school campus (in certain school districts), or through EFE and EFA. Programs are available in the following areas for the 2016-2017 school year:

Transfer Degrees (62-63 credits)

- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Science

Associate of Applied Science (62-72 credits)

- Accounting
- Administrative Assistant
- Culinary Arts & Sustainable Food Systems
- Graphic Design
- IT Support Technician
- Machine Tool Technology

Certificates (30-32 credits)

- Graphic Design
- Machinist

Certificates of Achievement (10-18 credits)

- Auto Brakes
- PC Support Technician
- Welding

On the evening of November 1, Dr. Deborah Coates, Kalamazoo Valley's dean of instruction, Early/Middle College, will present information about the program and answer questions from families who may be interested in participating in EMC.

EMC, Coates explained, is designed to help students get a head start on whatever they decide to do after graduating from high school, whether that's going into the workforce or continuing on with their education. “Education is evolving and this is part of it. Early/Middle College prepares students for the world and makes sure they have as many options as possible,” Coates said. “Early/Middle College is a great opportunity – academically and economically – for students in Kalamazoo County.”

For more information about MiCareerQuest Southwest, visit [www.micareerquestsw.org](http://www.micareerquestsw.org).

For more details about EMC, visit [www.kvcc.edu/earlycollege](http://www.kvcc.edu/earlycollege).



Student at Kalamazoo Valley's Groves Campus during a Career Academies exploration event

## Kalamazoo Valley Community College

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NOVEMBER 10  
10 - 10:45 AM | READING  
2:15 - 3 PM | CRAFT TALK

TEXAS TOWNSHIP STUDENT COMMONS  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

KV Focus is a publication of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Questions about the publication may be directed to the college marketing department at 269.488.4821.

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Kalamazoo**VALLEY**<sup>™</sup>  
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