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The

# Blazer Bulletin

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRALIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION



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## Foundation Notes

Greetings, Centralia College Foundation Supporters!

We are happy to send you this edition of the Blazer Bulletin as we start a new year. We are working on a lot of exciting projects right now that I am happy to show you on the following pages.

This certainly was a year full of turmoil with everyone making ongoing adjustments. Lately, I have spent time counting my blessings and feeling very grateful for the wonderful people in my life and the happiness they bring me.

In this edition, you will read about recent gifts we have received for student programs. We have been given a violin previously owned by a local violist. There is a focus on the

Teacher Education program, a retirement announcement, and the foundation's recipient of the 2020 Trailblazer Award.

I also have several requests for you this edition.

It is time for a committee of representatives from the foundation, the college, and community to meet and choose the recipient for the Distinguished Alumni Award. We have a solid list of nominees, but we know there are other alumni who have not come to our attention yet. Will you take a few minutes and nominate the graduates of Centralia College who you believe have represented the college well in their lives? Please send as much information as you can about these graduates. I want to bring as much detail to the committee as possible. You can send it in an email to me at christine.fossett@centralia.edu or send by mail using the address on the back page.

I think everyone is trying to shop as locally as possible for the holidays this year. But, if you are shopping online, Amazon will make a small donation to the charity of your choice with your purchase. You simply sign up for Amazon Smile one time and designate the foundation as the designee. Then, login

at smile.amazon.com to make your purchases. The foundation will then receive a donation from those purchases. There is no cost to you – the donation comes from Amazon.

My final request is actually on page 13 and I will let you read about it there.

On behalf of the foundation board and staff, thank you for your support. We wish you a healthy and happy new year filled with wonderful people.

**Christine Fossett  
Executive Director**



This edition we are identifying CC Alumni with a little logo. My apologies if we missed anyone. Please let us know with an email or phone call.

# Longtime orchestra member donates violin to Centralia College

Early on, Jean Wheeler's relationship to the violin was complicated. Her mother cleaned houses to pay for her lessons and 8-year-old Jean dutifully attended those lessons. But, her grumpy violin teacher didn't make it easy for her. He cut off her fingernails and would snort when she made mistakes. She says she endured the lessons until high school, when she found a new way of playing.

A shy person by nature, Jean connected with her high school orchestra teacher and he instilled in her a deep appreciation for playing with an orchestra. At home, she played in trios with her sisters – one sister played the piano and the other played the clarinet. But, in the orchestra, she felt at home and was able to come out of her shell.

Jean went on to play in orchestras across the northwest. She worked as a kindergarten and primary school teacher for 48 years, but her family moved a lot for her husband's work. Nearly everywhere they went, she could find an orchestra and an immediate connection to new friends and musicians.

"Everywhere we went, there was an orchestra that needed a violin," she recalled. "In some of the small towns, I was the only violin around, so it was easy for me to find opportunities to play."

It was no different when the couple moved to Napavine in 2001. At that time, Jean played with musicians through her church and with Centralia College's community orchestra. When the Pacific Northwest Chamber Orchestra formed in 2003, Jean was right there. She has been playing with the PNCO ever since. In addition, she served as concertmistress and tuned the orchestra ahead of performances for many years.

Earlier this month, Jean announced her retirement from the PNCO. The arthritis in her hands makes her playing days unpredictable and, frankly, she's ready to let the next

generation take her chair in the orchestra. She also announced a desire to donate her beloved violin to Centralia College. It will be available for future music majors to borrow if they don't own a violin of their own.

Jean hopes the violin will help other musicians find the lifelong love of music she's enjoyed for so many years.

"I'm so grateful to my mother for cleaning houses and paying for my lessons," she said. "Without her, I would have missed out on such a big part of my life. I've just loved it so much. I've had wonderful and interesting experiences, and it's been so much fun. Music did that for me. I just hope we can get back to having concerts again soon."

*You can provide new equipment or instruments for the performing arts with a contribution on the foundation's website [foundation.centralia.edu](http://foundation.centralia.edu) and choose the CAST option.*



# Graduates of CC's Teacher Education program are filling local jobs

When Centralia College started its bachelor's degree in Teacher Education three years ago, superintendents, principals and college administration hoped graduates would fill critical vacancies at local schools. Now, we know for sure – graduates are sticking around.

Of the 54 students who have finished CC's two-year bachelor's degree program so far, at least 48 have earned their teacher certification and most have opted to stay in Lewis County.

"Almost 80 percent of our graduates are teaching in Lewis County. Some are teaching in Thurston County and we have a couple outliers teaching further away," said Connie Smejkal, dean of Business, Teacher Education, and Early Learning programs. "The majority of our students lived locally when they were in the program and stayed local for work."

Centralia College's bachelor's degree in Teacher Education program was developed in collaboration with Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen. However, demand was so great from the beginning, Centralia College had enough students to have its own cohort every year. In fact, CC had enough interest for two cohort groups in the first year.

"We've been working with our local school districts for several years to make this happen. Since the beginning, we've seen this as an opportunity to develop local teachers, increase the number of teachers with a special education endorsement, and help students earn a teaching certificate and find positions in the area," added Smejkal. "It is also a pathway for paraprofessionals currently working in schools to obtain their bachelor's degree and become certified teachers."



\*The images that accompany this story were taken before the current pandemic. Masks and social distancing are now required indoors and outdoors at all Centralia College locations.

Centralia College offers certification in both elementary education (K-8) and special education. Classes start in September and are offered in the evening with additional learning online. Students complete student-teaching in the second year of the program. This is completed with experienced mentor teachers in local schools. To learn more, visit [bachelors.centralia.edu](http://bachelors.centralia.edu). Applications for September 2021 will open in early 2021.



## TWO NEW SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS



Thank you to Lucy Hannigan Ewing for her generous gift of a scholarship to benefit BAS-TE students for next year.

Lucy attended Centralia College from 1973-75, when she received her associate degree with an elementary education focus. She then transferred to the University of Washington, where she completed her master's degree. While attending Centralia, she also enjoyed working in the Registrar's Office.

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Another new scholarship to benefit BAS-TE students has been set up by TwinStar Credit Union.

*Fun fact - did you know that TwinStar has its roots as a teachers' credit union?*

Thanks to TwinStar for their support!



# Veterinarian, Welding, and Nursing Students Benefit

College programs and students supported by generous CC alumni

## **CC Grad Helps Others Interested in Veterinary Careers**

Dr. Dan Haskins, with support from his wife, Linda, established an endowed scholarship to be awarded starting with this academic year. Dan was Centralia College's 2019 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient. He was acknowledged for his years of outstanding service to his profession and community. Dan was part of Centralia College's class of 1973 and he has done veterinary and humanitarian work in Washington State, Haiti, Brazil, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kenya. Here is a little bit more about Dan's journey.

The oldest of five siblings, Dan always dreamed of becoming a veterinarian while growing up on a small farm in Rochester. Family financial constraints made Centralia College the logical, affordable place to begin his pursuit of a degree in veterinary medicine. Linda played a vital role in achieving this goal. They were married in 1973 and Linda worked to support them while Dan pursued an Associate of Science degree. Dan graduated from the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1978 and joined a mixed animal

practice in Stanwood, where he worked his entire 43-year career.

Dan's journey began with the solid educational start he received at Centralia College. Dan and Linda established an endowed scholarship for two reasons - they believe every student should be able to pursue their dream regardless of financial circumstances and those dreams must be built on a solid foundation beginning with a degree from Centralia College.

This scholarship will benefit students with an interest in pursuing a future degree in veterinary medicine or acquiring certification as a licensed veterinary technician.





## CC Grad and Welding Instructor Leaves Legacy for Students

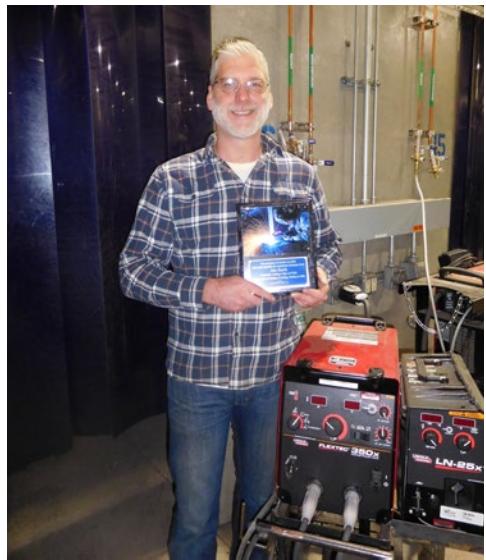
Jim Smith graduated from Centralia College in 1966 and went on to teach welding at the college until his retirement in 2006. When he passed away last year, he left donations to the welding, diesel, STEM, and electronics programs to purchase equipment vital to instruction. Several of the departments are waiting to make their purchases until students are back on campus in full numbers. However, because welding is already offering hands-on instruction, new welders were recently purchased with Jim's gift.



## CC alumna continues her long commitment of giving back

CC alumna Judy Greeley Hendrickson has been a strong supporter of Centralia College and its programs. She donated the first Steinway piano to the music department and the water feature in front of Washington Hall. She is interested in students pursuing artistic endeavors and has provided a scholarship since 2008. With the support of her husband Richard, she has also donated to the Trailblazer Food Pantry.

When instruction moved online due to the pandemic, Judy jumped right in and purchased practice kits for the first-year nursing students so that they could practice at home before coming to campus for testing. To add to her support of our future nurses,



Current welding professor Zach Peters is shown with the new welders and the plaque acknowledging the gift from Jim Smith.



Judy Greeley Hendrickson

she just purchased two adult nursing simulators for the program, which has made it easier to get all of the students the practice they need.

"These tools really are making a tremendous difference," said Ellen Hinderlie, director of Nursing. "Without the new simulation mannequins, we would not be able to have enough clinical time for our first- and second-year students to be successful this quarter, and the modular trainers are making it possible for students to learn and practice new skills from the safety (and comfort) of their homes instead of risking exposure to COVID-19!! They have all been a God-send!"



A first-year nursing student practices at home with her modular trainer.



Nursing instructors pose with the new adult nursing simulator purchased by Judy Greeley Hendrickson. Also in the photo is the new baby simulator.

# Cashier Georgia McKinley retires after 40 years of service



One of CC's longest-serving classified staff members, Georgia McKinley, the cashier, retired at the end of October. Georgia held the same position on campus for 40 years and said the job was perfect for her, allowing her to connect with students and manage paperwork.

What you may not know is that Georgia practically grew up at CC. Her dad was the college's carpenter starting in the '60s. All three of her siblings worked at CC at one time or another and Georgia was a student worker when she was a CC student. After she graduated, she held a couple bookkeeping jobs locally, but applied at CC when the cashier position opened up.

In her 40 years at CC, she had just four computers. Her first one, Old Betsy, "was a green monster with an electric arm you had to pull." She had four offices – two in Hanson, one in the Transitional Services Building, and now in the TransAlta Commons. She also recalled the old days of printing and sticking labels on every student

receipt, which was then sent to someone else to manually enter into the college's system.

She said she looks forward to spending time with her family, especially her mom, who is 89. Thank you, Georgia!





## Student Makes Shift to Chemistry

Ashley Ly is the recipient of the William A. Batie Science Scholarship for this academic year. Thanks to Ashley for sharing her story and to William A. Batie for establishing a scholarship to benefit students focusing on the sciences.

*I am honored to be the recipient of the William A. Batie Science Scholarship. I cannot fully express how grateful and appreciative I am to be receiving the funds to continue my education. I usually hold up two jobs to contribute to my family needs and to pay for academic-related necessities, but thanks to your generous support, I can continue working only one part-time job and focus more on my studies.*

*My family and I moved to Centralia about two summers ago. Before moving here, I had just graduated high school and was enrolled to begin studying at a California university. With the move, I had to withdraw and, to be completely honest, I felt lost academically. I had set up a whole lifelong plan for myself and thought I knew what I wanted to do and where I wanted to be in a few years, but I knew that I would make the best of the change. I soon started the winter quarter at Centralia College*

*wanting to study business administration thinking that I would find something I enjoyed about it. I ended up taking an Introduction to Chemistry course and completely fell in love with chemistry. I thought I hated chemistry and I would cringe at the thought of it, but it was because of my bad experiences in high school. This was when I realized I absolutely wanted to obtain a degree in chemistry. More specifically, I aspire to become a pharmaceutical scientist focusing on research and development because of my love of working in the lab.*

*Prior to this, I never would have thought that I would be a recipient for any scholarship, which is why it is still surreal to me. Once again, thank you for your continuous generosity to many students and for investing in me and my education. I am extremely appreciative of you and could not thank you enough.*

Ashley's letter has been edited for content and length.



Haley Simmons is the recipient of the Cristi Heitschmidt Memorial Scholarship for this academic year. We appreciate Haley sharing her story. Thank you to all who donated to this scholarship in Cristi's memory. Her impact on Centralia College and its students is celebrated with this scholarship.

*Thank you so much for choosing me as a recipient of your scholarship. This scholarship takes such a huge burden off of myself and my family for the years that I will be attending Centralia College. Your scholarship has bestowed in me an excitement for the next step in my journey of furthering my education, and for that, I am extremely grateful.*

*I started off my education at Rochester Primary School, where my mom teaches first grade. In third grade, I transferred to R. E. Bennett in Chehalis. I was now in the district that my dad teaches in. I continued my education in the Chehalis School District until I graduated in 2018. I was a member of the volleyball and golf teams for four years.*

*Our golf team was league champion my sophomore year and I ended my career Second Team All-League. I graduated as valedictorian with a 4.0 GPA and honors in STEM and humanities. I also volunteered in many youth sports camps and school activities.*

*At first, I was only planning on attending Centralia College for two years to get my associate degree, but now I am staying for the full four years to be a part of the education program. Teaching has been passed down to me from my great-grandfather, grandfather, mom, and dad, so it is definitely in my blood. I want to earn my degree in elementary education and hopefully come back to teach at the school that once taught me. Being able to give back to kids and have that special bond with them is something I want to do for the rest of my life, and your scholarship will help me do that. Thank you so much for your kindness!*

Haley's letter was edited for content and space.

To contribute to an existing scholarship, you can donate on the foundation website at [foundation.centralia.edu](http://foundation.centralia.edu) by just choosing the scholarship of your choice. To set up a scholarship in tribute to someone, please contact the foundation staff for more information.

# SWFT CENTER NEARS COMPLETION



The Southwest Washington Flexible Training Center will be completed in early January 2021 and ready to provide a location for instruction in the trades. This foundation-owned building will serve industry-specific training for the region and college programs. It will be a place for students in the upper K-12 environment to learn more about jobs in the trades and the educational requirements.

Local and regional donations have continued to purchase the equipment needed for the space. The foundation is still seeking sponsors. For more information, call Christine Fossett at 360-623-8451.



The center will feature three classrooms and a large, open industrial area.



## DAVID WHITE RETIRES – AND WE NEED YOUR HELP

Many of you reading this know the name instantly. Others will immediately recognize David's photo. Either way the memories will come flooding back to you.

David has been a fixture at Centralia College for a little while (and by a little while, we mean decades!). He has been a student, staff member, instructor, confidant, friend, and served in many other roles. I think it's safe to say that David has literally changed people's lives and influenced many others.

Current restrictions on gatherings make it hard for us to celebrate David's retirement so we are going to take a different approach. We are capturing memories, photos, and stories from you to create a tribute to celebrate David's contribution to Centralia College.

### **This is where we need your help.**

We need everyone to send memories, photos, and stories about David (funny, serious, tear-jerkers are all welcome.) Please send them via email to [foundation@centralia.edu](mailto:foundation@centralia.edu) or drop them in the mail to the address on the back of this bulletin. Remember to include a way to contact you if we have questions. The more the merrier! We will curate them and share them as we are able. Thank you for your help with this and we hope you have fun recalling your memories of David.

# DONOR PROFILE: BECKY MCGEE, 2020 TRAILBLAZER AWARD RECIPIENT

Since 2008 the Centralia College Foundation president and past president have identified a board member who deserves special recognition. The Trailblazer award was presented this year to Becky McGee. Becky was chosen for her two decades of service to the foundation. She is an active, supportive board member who offers her time, service, and guidance to the board. Becky is passionate about helping students with educational opportunities and is a great advisor for new board members. Congratulations Becky!

*Education has always been important to me. My parents both had master's degrees when very few people even attended college. All of my siblings are well educated, and I actually first worked as an elementary teacher, as my degree is in elementary education. I have been surrounded by successful, educated people, who have had interesting careers and who led financially secure lives with their families. My husband Larry and two of our four children also have master's degrees so the pattern continues.*

*I personally believe that the single most important ingredient for anyone to improve themselves and to open the door wider to their employment options is higher education. Many jobs in our society simply require two to four-year college degrees and there is no indication that trend will stop. I believe that our society has overprioritized the four-year academic degree to such an extent that it has been a detriment to the value of a two-year vocational degree. We need properly educated people to build and maintain all that makes our lives safe and comfortable. The emphasis that Centralia College places on the two-year degree programs is very important to me.*



*When I am not knitting, with grandchildren, traveling, baking, or gardening, I am usually reading both for fun and to learn new ideas and recipes. We must help create a sense of the value of lifelong learning and I know that is a core value of Centralia College.*

*My family, my beliefs, and the values of Centralia College keep me engaged and the 20 years of service on the Centralia College Foundation are an important part of who I am.*

*Becky*

Year Awarded	Awardee	Alumni
2008	Bob Thompson	
2009	Rose Bowman	🎓
2010	Bob O'Neill	🎓
2011	Mark Scheibmeir	
2012	Tom Bradley	
2013	Ralph Olson	
2014	Phyllis Schwiesow	🎓
2015	Christine Fossett	🎓
2016	Jo Ann Buzzard	🎓
2017	Dr. Joe Dolezal	
2018	Julia Johnson	🎓
2019	Joe Enbody	🎓
2020	Becky McGee	

# VIRTUAL GALA SUPPORTS SWFT CENTER

The gala was held online this year and successfully raised funds to support the Southwest Washington Training Center construction. Donors tuned in for a silent auction, live auction, and raise the paddle. It was not nearly as enjoyable as getting together in person, but some donors gathered in small groups and celebrated supporting the foundation.

## Thanks to our gala sponsors and supporters!

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• Jean Sheridan	Inc	John W. Raupp	• Jerry Owens
• Victoria L. Pogorelc	• Michael Roewe	Suzette M. Smith	• Jay Johnson
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• - Centralia College Alumni



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Creating opportunities  
to improve students'  
lives, enable success,  
and strengthen our  
community.

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NEW! Join the new Centralia College Alumni Association at  
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you listed as CC alumni. Email us at [foundation@centralia.edu](mailto:foundation@centralia.edu)

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