

WINTER EDITION ■ JANUARY 2020 ■ VOL 13 ■ NO 3

# The Blazer Bulletin

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRALIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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CENTRALIA COLLEGE  
**FOUNDATION**



**CENTRALIA**  
BLAZERS





## Letter From Centralia College Foundation

Anyone familiar with the Roald Dahl book *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* may remember the line by Wonka as the excited participants prepare to embark on their tour of the factory, “We have so much time and so little to do. Strike that, reverse it.”

This is very applicable at the Centralia College Foundation as we rush through the first quarter of 2020. We have so many projects

going on that keeping track of them is becoming a task of its own.

Among our many, exciting activities we have:

- We are hearing from former students who are signing up for our newly minted alumni association.
- We are working diligently to secure scholarships for all of the new students who are currently applying for the 2020-21 academic year.
- Our very generous donors have set up a record number of endowed scholarships this year.
- We just secured enough donations to fund a forestry simulator for the Southwest Washington Flexible Training Center (SWFT Center) to open this fall.
- Staff is transitioning to new software that will make our record keeping easier in the

future. However, right now it's a headache!

- Check out the upcoming events hosted by the foundation on page 5 and join us for the fun.
- Add to this, our ongoing fundraising for the final needs of the SWFT Center, the choosing of a Distinguished Alumnus, and the college staff recognitions sponsored by the foundation and you see what I mean.

It's wonderful, inspiring and rewarding work to get to engage with all our donors, students, and staff, but if you see a look of confusion on our faces at times – you know we are just thinking about what we need to do next.

Thank you!

**Christine Fossett**  
Executive Director



## Centralia College names new director of Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy

William Westmoreland has been named the executive director of the Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy at Centralia College. Westmoreland replaces Barbara Hins-Turner, who retired in June after 14 years of service.

Westmoreland has more than 15 years of experience in program development, system integration, and community engagement. Most recently, he was the vice president of product for Launchpad, a Los Angeles-based company that provides

customer relations software to a number of industries, including workforce development programs, community colleges, youth programs, and human services agencies. His work there included program implementation, product development, and business development. Prior to Launchpad, Westmoreland was a workforce systems manager for Workforce Southwest Washington, a nonprofit group dedicated to workforce investment in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties.

“William brings significant

experience to his role,” said Joyce Hammer, vice president of instruction at Centralia College. “He’s developed workforce programs in the energy sector, and has experience in manufacturing, software development, higher education, economic development, and human services in the technology sector. He’s a great resource for Washington State, Centralia College, and our partners in the energy industry.”

For Westmoreland, he’s already working to position the Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy for greater visibility and impact locally, regionally, and nationally.

“My goals are to increase awareness of the Center of Excellence, update the programs we offer and align those programs to best practices across the country, and continue to build partnerships that promote the learning and working opportunities for our communities,” he said. “I’m really excited to be building on a long history of cooperation, partnership, and economic growth that’s already been established.”

In 2004-05, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges selected ten Washington State Centers of Excellence to drive economic development for the state’s leading industries. At Centralia College, the Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy provides strategic coordination for the energy industry’s skilled workforce in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Utah.

# Donation establishes the Vondean Thompson Memorial Scholarship at CC



A new scholarship honors longtime musician and community leader Vondean Thompson.

Thompson was the founder of the Centralia College Performing Arts Society in the 1970s and went on to organize the Pacific Northwest Youth Orchestra, which is now known as the Pacific Northwest Chamber Orchestra. She worked to bring string instruction to local schools and, in 1986, was elected to the Centralia City Council. She served three terms, including one year as mayor.

The Vondean Thompson Memorial Scholarship was established with a \$300,000 donation by her husband, Robert Thompson. It will be offered to first- and

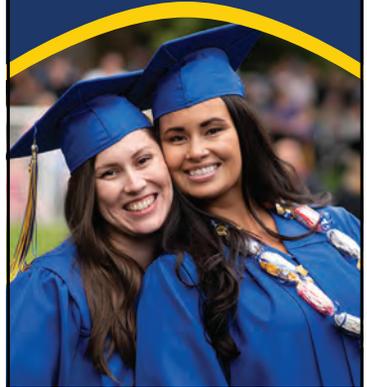
second-year music students at Centralia College. Up to \$1,000 will be awarded each year, starting in the 2020-21 academic year. The foundation is currently accepting applications for this and all CCF scholarships online via the college and foundation websites. Deadline to apply is March 1.

“Vondean was a wonderful woman who led a fully engaged life,” said Robert Thompson. “She was a fine pianist and had a lifelong love of music.”

Donations to the memorial scholarship can be made online via PayPal at [foundation.centralia.edu](http://foundation.centralia.edu) or checks can be mailed to the Centralia College Foundation, 600 Centralia College Blvd., Centralia, WA 98531. Please note on the memo line that the donation is to the Vondean Thompson Memorial Scholarship.

Vondean Thompson passed away Jan. 10, 2018, from a brain tumor. She was 79.

*Give the Gift of Education and Save on Your Taxes*



If you are 70 1/2 or older the IRS requires you to take a required minimum distribution from your IRA, 401k, or 457(b) retirement account. This distribution is taxed. For some people this distribution may be unnecessary at times.

**You can donate all or a portion of your distribution directly to benefit a student's education. This saves you from paying the tax and provides an impactful donation to help a student improve their life.**



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## Alumni Spotlight

# Raegan Nelson



***I graduated from Centralia College as part of the Running Start program with two associate degrees – an Associate of Science and an Associate in Biology- graduating as Scholar of the Year in 2014. I received a full ride scholarship from Central Washington University, where I graduated summa cum laude as a President’s Scholar with my Bachelor of Science degree in cellular and molecular biology and psychology minor.***

I’m now in the third year of my PhD program in biomedical sciences at the University of South Dakota. I work in an influenza lab studying immunology and microbiology. I recently published my (first) first-author paper titled Contribution of Host Immune Responses Against Influenza D Virus Infection Toward Secondary Bacterial Infection in a Mouse Model. I continue to pursue my aspirations of becoming an academic professor.

In my free time, I serve as secretary for our Biomedical

Graduate School Organization, serve on the Health Affairs and Medical Informatics Committee as the student representative for the Biomedical Sciences division, and love volunteering each Wednesday at my local AWANA program. I also love speaking to incoming undergraduates and potential graduate students, much like I did while a Running Start student at CC for prospective high school students.

Since being in the midwest, I’ve met my fiance, a farmer-turned-accountant from Nebraska, and we are getting married in early December. After I graduate, I hope to find an academic position to help encourage and teach minds like CC did for me.

Centralia College allowed me to jump start my college career while still in high school. The wonderful professors there challenged me to be successful and prepared me for the bachelor’s degree I obtained in 2017, and for the graduate studies I’m currently in. I can’t thank CC enough for the amazing opportunities they provided me.

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***Join Raegan as part of the Centralia College Alumni Association. Keep up on CC news, events, and other alumni, and show your Blazer Pride! Join online at [centraliacollegealumni.org/join](http://centraliacollegealumni.org/join).***



## Donor Profile:

# Laura Spoor



It was a personal tragedy that sparked Laura Spoor to support an endowment in the name of her late husband, Matthew Swena. But, she doesn't want his sudden death to be the story. She wants students to be inspired by who her husband was and provide support to those students in achieving their educational goals.

"Matthew was so civic-minded. He loved people. I remember him coming home from events with students and he was absolutely beaming," recalled Spoor. "He loved making connections to people and he saw Centralia College as such a vital part of the community. He loved it so much."

Matthew Swena never attended CC. Neither did Spoor. But, Matthew was a tireless community volunteer and advocate for education. He was the manager of Express Personnel in Centralia, Olympia, and Aberdeen, and the couple made Centralia their home. Matthew was active in the annual Business Week events on CC's campus and was involved in a number of civic groups, including the Rotary Club, United Way, and the Centralia Masonic Lodge.

"I used to tell him that he liked to do old man things," said Spoor. "He was so young, but he'd get up at 6 a.m. to have coffee with the Rotarians. He was always going, always helping, always involved, and he loved Centralia."

When Matthew died during a routine surgery in March 2018, his coworkers at Express Personnel Services established a memorial scholarship in his name. To ensure it become a permanent scholarship, it needed to be endowed, and that required a large donation. In December, Spoor provided that donation.

"He did so much in his short life," she said. "The scholarship won't replace all he could have done if he'd had more time, but it will help others carry on his legacy."

# Foundation Friends Tribute

## **Jim Smith** 1942-2019

Former Centralia College student and longtime welding and drafting instructor, James A. Smith, 77, of Centralia passed away September 7, 2019. He was born Feb. 13, 1942, to James E. and Dorothy M. (Anders) Smith in Centralia.

Jim lived on Seminary Hill his entire life. He graduated from Centralia High School in 1960 and joined the United States Air Force. Upon discharge, Jim enrolled at Centralia College and later at Western Washington University.

Jim began a teaching career in St. Helens, Ore. After the death of his father, he returned to Centralia. Jim was employed by Pacific Power (now TransAlta) as a mechanic and then promoted to plant training supervisor. He was later hired by Centralia College as an instructor of welding and drafting, retiring in 2006 to pursue his many interests, which included singing, playing multiple instruments, writing both music and poetry, building and riding motorcycles, creating unique mechanical projects and performing with the Old Time Fiddlers. With his friend, Dale Fye, Jim recently restored a rare 1906 12 HP Field and Brundage,

one cylinder engine that had been in his family for over 60 years and began showing it at antique engine events in Washington and Oregon.

Jim is missed and fondly remembered by the staff and many students whose lives he enriched at Centralia College.



## **Patti Morton** 1935-2019

Shortly after our feature on Centralia College alumna in the summer

issue, Patricia Anne Morton, 84, passed away on Oct. 16, 2019, at her home in Washington, D.C. She was born May 30, 1935, at St. Luke's Hospital in Centralia to Russell and Clara (Haase) Morton. Patti graduated from high school in Napavine and attended Centralia College. She finished her degree at Western Washington University.

Patti knew that, as the first woman Special Agent, her work was always under scrutiny, but she was a trailblazer in spirit as well as a lifetime Centralia College Blazer. She hoped by working hard, being adaptable and doing her best with what was available to her, she would make it easier for the women who would follow.

We are grateful for her inspiration and her lifelong dedication to the students of Centralia College.

# Donor Notes

Thanks to the help of Jim Rang, Modern Machinery, we recently received a \$5,000 gift for diesel and engine repair scholarships from the George and Phyllis Washington Foundation.

Jack and Luellen Charneski have set up an endowment for a new pre-medical scholarship.

Mary Webster has been diligently donating each month with a goal of providing a new endowed scholarship for students in the next few years.

Fred Mueller, a Centralia College instructor of data processing, computer programming and director of the college's program at Garrett Heyns Educational Center for 31 years created an endowed scholarship for vocational students in memory of his wife, Sharon.

David & Marcia Utei, have donated toward an emergency scholarship for students.

Bob Thompson established a new music scholarship in memory of his wife, Vondean.

Laura Spoor and Express Employment Professionals staff have created a new endowed scholarship in memory of

*More on page 9*

# Images from the 2019 Gala Event



**Top Left:**  
Guests enjoy pre-event mingling while the band plays.

**Middle Left:**  
Dr. Bob Mohrbacher, Centralia College president, test drives the forestry simulator while Dan Whalen, of Klein Educational Systems, offers input.



**Bottom Left:**  
A table of fun-loving supporters of the Centralia College Foundation. Photo courtesy of Julie McQuarrie.



**Top Right:**  
Meri Hamre from Title Guaranty of Chehalis raises her paddle to help fund a forestry simulator.



**Bottom Right:**  
Guests enjoy the band and silent auction prior to the event.

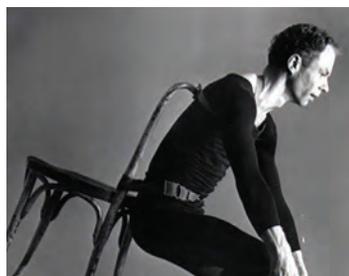


# Upcoming Events

Check our website for the most up-to-date information on foundation events.

## **Foundation Night at the Olympic Club** **March 24 • 5 p.m.-Close** **Downtown Centralia**

Join us for dinner, drinks, a movie, and all of the McMenamín's activities. Fifty percent of the proceeds benefit CC scholarships.



## **Merce Cunningham** **Movie Screening** **April 3**

Save the date for a screening of this new movie about Centralia's own world-renowned modern dance choreographer. This event is in planning and details to come soon online.

## **Foundation Night at the Theater - Into the Woods** **May 9 • 6 p.m. Reception/7** **p.m. Show, Corbet Theater**

Join us for this delightful take on stories from the brothers Grimm. Invitations will arrive in the mail in early April - keep your eyes open.

## **Capstone Day** **June 5 • 1-3:30 p.m.** **TransAlta Commons**

This campus event features the inventions, scientific, oratory, nursing and other capstone projects by Centralia College students. The presentations will wow you!



## **Charlie Albright Concert** **November 20**

We are working on plans for a holiday concert with CHARLIE ALBRIGHT! Tickets for this fantastic event will go on sale in the summer and are guaranteed to sell quickly. More information will be in the April Blazer Bulletin and on the CCF website.

## *Donor Notes* *continued from page 7*

Laura's husband Matthew Swena. Laura's love for Matthew endures with this gift for students in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management program.

Dr. Atara MacNamara, associate psychology professor at Centralia College, has established a scholarship to support nursing students.

Bill and Helga Watterson have generously added to the scholarship in their name for a bachelor's degree-seeking student.

A gift was received by Leon Bowman toward the Rose and Leon Bowman Scholarship for a general degree-seeking student.

Pat and Susan Dunn have increased the endowment in honor of Al and Marge Kuder. This will mean additional scholarships for degree-seeking students.

# Levi Sathre: Teaching the Teachers of the Future



Today, Sathre is a student-teacher teaching fifth grade at Adna Elementary School. Sathre is a senior and he'll turn 20 in May, just before his graduation in June.

"I made that choice to do Running Start and it's paid off in the long run," Sathre said. "I was able to get scholarships...those have helped me pay for my now bachelor's degree. It's been awesome."

Looking down the stretch, Sathre will be able to finish college debt-free and with his bachelor's degree in teaching. He thanks the community for playing a role in making it happen.

"There's a lot of good people who donate to the college," Sathre said. "The donors are the seeds and the students are the trees. The community is investing in the lives of students. It's a big deal."

For former Running Start student Levi Sathre, Centralia College was the perfect choice for his entry into the world of teaching.

"When I was getting done with my associate degree, I was searching for colleges. The teaching program here had sparked a lot of interest in me," Sathre said. "I was confident when I signed up for the program here, I'd get good teaching on how to be a teacher."

As the cost of universities goes up, staying home and getting a scholarship made Centralia College an easier choice for Levi.

"Really, the scholarships have

been the bedrock of my success at the college," Sathre said. "It's helped me immensely."

Levi received the Baxter Killian Memorial Scholarship for the 2019-20 academic year. Before jumping into CC's applied bachelor's degree in Teacher Education, Levi was working part-time. Without the scholarship, juggling the requirements of the teaching program would have been more difficult.

"As the requirements for the program became clear, without the scholarship, I'd have to be working full time or overtime," Sathre said. "That, in effect, affects my teaching."

# Bachelor's Degrees at CC

*Centralia College is now accepting applications for its four bachelor's degree programs. Classes will start in September.*

“

*I always planned to get my bachelor's degree. That's why I came to Centralia College. I wanted to stay close to home and earn my degree. I didn't want to move my whole life.*

”



**Maddie Wieland**

*BAS-Diesel Technology*

Recipient of the Garvin and Mabel Johnson Memorial Endowed Scholarship and the WIDCO Endowed Scholarship

## BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE PROGRAMS



**APPLIED  
MANAGEMENT**



**DIESEL  
TECHNOLOGY**



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APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT



**TEACHER  
EDUCATION K-8**



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

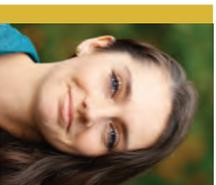
## CENTRALIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION STAFF



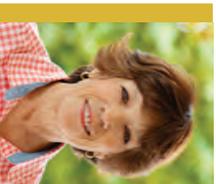
**Christine Fosselt**  
Executive Director



**Tyler Kaut**  
Foundation Specialist



**Kylea Johnson**  
Program Coordinator



**Margie Linn**  
Office Assistant

## Join the Alumni Association

NEW! Join the new Centralia College Alumni Association at  
[centraliacollegealumni.org](http://centraliacollegealumni.org).

### PARENTS OF ALUMNI

**Still getting your kids' mail?** Think they should know about the Alumni Association? Call us at 360-623-8491 OR have them update their own record at [centraliacollegealumni.org/update](http://centraliacollegealumni.org/update).

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