



The Foundation Catalyst

News from the HCC Foundation, Alumni and Friends

Executive Director & Director of Development's Message

The theme for this issue of *The Catalyst* is **Resilience**. We have all exhibited the trait as we share the common experience of the pandemic. But you have not yet heard the one-of-a-kind stories in this newsletter, stories of our students, faculty and staff, and alumni pivoting, reevaluating, reprioritizing, and working together to survive and thrive.

Our mascot, the hawk, has been a fitting symbol for HCC during the past year. Hawks are good communicators, sending signals to their fellow birds about potential danger, and are fiercely loyal, protecting each other from predators. They are much like our COVID Campus Point People, who quickly leapt into action to keep staff and students safe when a positive case was identified. Hawks are highly social, like our Student Government Associations and student clubs who immediately began holding virtual meetings and events to make sure their fellow students stayed connected. They are collaborative, working together to hunt and to raise their families, like our faculty who shared best practices and helped each other create innovative ways to keep our students learning.

Inside you will read about our innovative Everyday Entrepreneur Venture Fund and the alumni business owners who are making every dime of their funding received through the program count. You'll read about our food security program, Food 2 Finish, and what a difference it made for hundreds of students this year. And you'll hear from our scholarship students about the effect Foundation funding had on their academic careers this and every year.

As always, we encourage you to reach out to either of us or call the Foundation office at 813.253.7114. Thank you for your support of our Hawks.

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EVENTS

The HCC Foundation and Presenting Sponsor Reno Building would like to thank all our sponsors and golfers for a very successful **2021 Golf Classic!** It was our great privilege to welcome more than 100 golfers for a beautiful day at Tampa Palms Golf and Country Club on Monday, April 26, for an event that raised more than \$55,000 for HCC athletes.

The **annual Hawks, Line, and Sinker Fishing Tournament** will be held on Friday, October 1, 2021 at Westshore Yacht Club. Proceeds will support HCC workforce student scholarships in programs including Automotive Service Technology, Auto Collision Repair, Welding Technology, Diesel Technology, and the Police and Fire Academies.

The **HCC Presidential Showcase** is scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Armature Works. Showcase is HCC's premier annual event, honoring the achievements of our students, alumni, and donors. Join us for this festive night of food and fun in celebration of our 2021 theme: *Pathways to Innovation!*

For more information on all our HCC Foundation signature events, please visit our website at hccfoundation.com/events. To make sure you are on our mailing list, contact Denise Godfrey at dgodfrey3@hccfl.edu.

Feeding Students' Hunger for a Better Life

In 2017, the HCC Foundation in partnership with HCC faculty and staff identified a significant need for support of our students beyond the classroom. Students often tell us that trouble with transportation, the need to care for children and aging parents, hunger, and even homelessness keep them from success and completion of their degree or certificate. Students want to obtain a higher level of education to help them out of these problems, but the cycle of poverty is very difficult to break. The HCC Foundation made the issue of hunger an immediate priority, and helped implement faculty and staff solutions. The result was Food 2 Finish, a comprehensive program to fight hunger and promote wellness which is supported by generous donors to the Foundation.

During the pandemic, our students needed solutions more than ever, but we had to change our delivery methods to make sure everyone stayed safe. We paused the traditional food pantry model and now distribute emergency food packs with ready to eat items in our libraries. We also started holding "Pop-Up Pantries" on all five campuses, COVID-safe events where students pick up a bag of nonperishable food items to help get them through the week. During this time of greater than normal need, visits from Feeding Tampa Bay's mobile fresh food pantry "Groceries on the Go" were added to the offerings of Food 2 Finish, and we also gave students the opportunity to learn about and sign up for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits for further support. This fall alone, we served nearly 1,000 people, in spite of the challenges of getting food to students because of COVID.

Learn more at [food2finish.org](https://www.food2finish.org).

In the fall of 2020 alone, Food 2 Finish assisted:



211 people on the SouthShore campus

538 people on the Dale Mabry campus

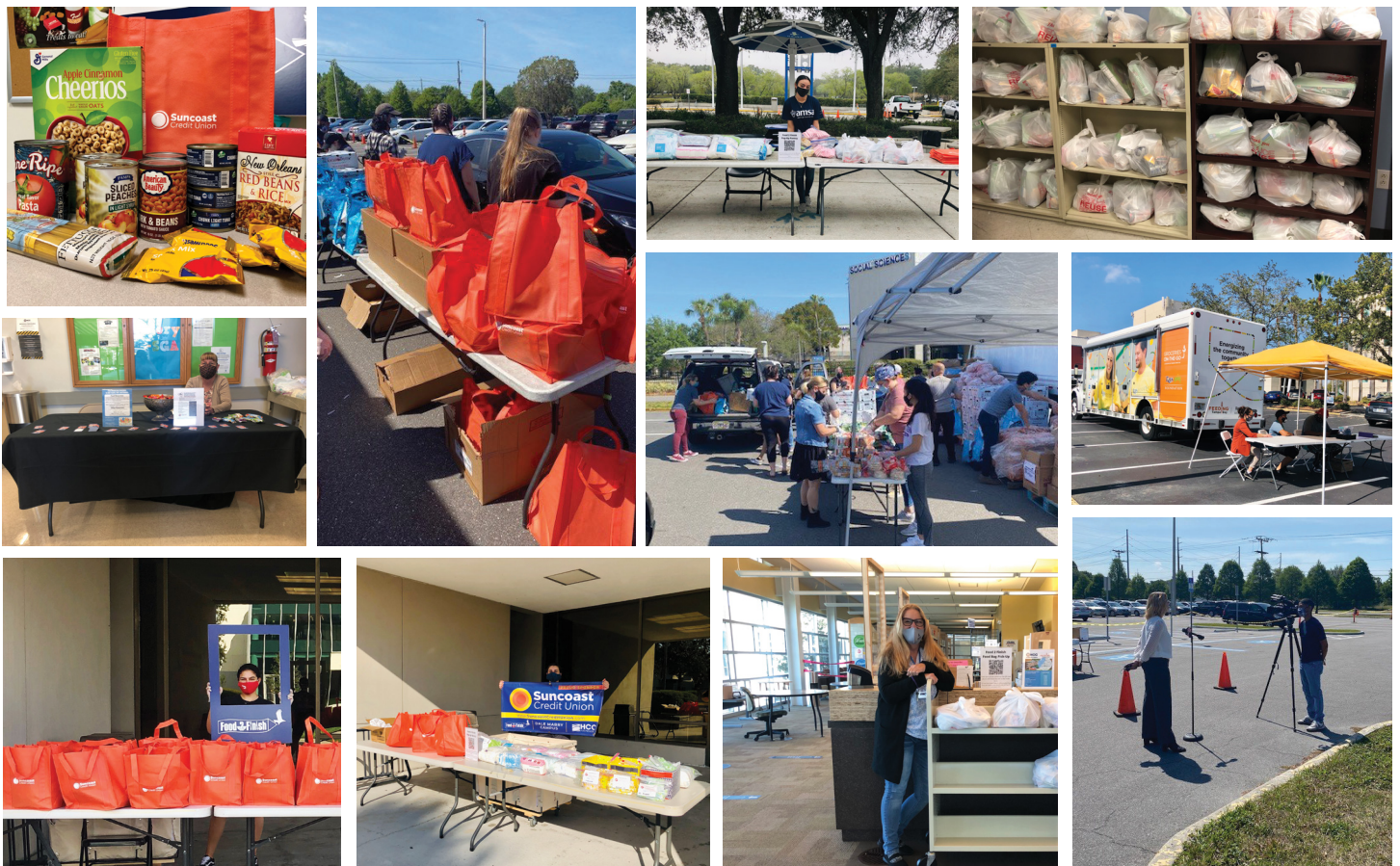
116 people on the Brandon campus

78 people on the Ybor campus

28 people on the Plant City campus*

971 total

* Food insecure people at Plant City are mainly served through United Food Bank



Pivot and Partner: The Arts Persist at HCC



Of all the many programs at HCC, few were harder hit by the pandemic than the arts. Stories of how our faculty and staff pivoted and partnered are inspiring and unique. A few are featured here.

Dance professor Christina Acosta said "The limitations of distancing challenged choreography in new ways. And the students miss feeling the energy of the audience. They say 'it is hard dancing to a mostly empty house. The livestream audience isn't the same feeling.'"

"But I am very grateful for the HCC leaders who supported our return to the physical classroom. In dance, we talk about life being one great big improvisation. To me, that is what the year has been. There has been no partnering and a year of not practicing this skill set can be damaging to dancers' progress. So we improvised with rhythm sticks. Each dancer would touch another dancer's body with the stick to motivate body part initiation."



Assistant Professor of Theatre Suzy Devore talked about the partnerships that made producing live theatre possible: "Through a partnership with The Farm Theater, we produced *Skin Hunger, Touch Starved*, a new play written for HCC by Amy Gispers van Wijk about a world that requires social distancing forever. The cast of six actresses

rehearsed and performed with over 6 feet of distance between them and never faced each other. This spring, we did five short plays by Tennessee Williams and Christopher Durang with a cast of nine actors who took rapid COVID tests pre-performance. The tests were made possible through a partnership with our Health Sciences department under the guidance of Leif Penrose. Livestreaming was made possible by another partner, Nerissa Lamison and her students from HCC's Radio and TV Department."



Kathryn Pantelis and Mark Switzer are the dynamic team behind the HCC Dale Mabry Student Government Association Guitar Series. Kathy wrote: "*The Beat Goes On...*"



We needed to keep music and music education alive at HCC, and keep connected with the community." So Mark and Kathy created a Facebook guitar series "Safer at Home with a Guitar," featuring 12 guitarists from all around the world. Chinese guitarist and GFA award winner TY Zhang recorded his video while remaining socially distant in California, while Maestro Pepe Romero sent his from quarantine at his home in Granada, Spain.



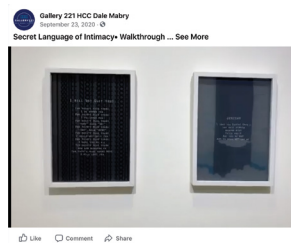
With social gatherings still restricted, the Guitar Series launched a YouTube series called "Virtual Guitar Classroom" in January which featured composers and pieces

and even how guitars are made. "The Guitar Classroom is a phenomenal experience that impacts old and young guitarists all over the world. I feel honored to participate, as it gives me the opportunity to enrich students with the insights I have gained over the years" said guitarist Sam Ortiz.

Amanda Poss, HCC Gallery Director, summed it up: "So much of what we do revolves around connections and building community. These 'routine' occurrences were difficult to conceptualize in a virtual environment. However, artists are fundamentally creative problem-solvers. Virtual events, art tutorial videos, photo tours, and even social media created crucial pathways through which we could stay connected. I think art's



unique ability to help us see the world in a new light, to learn about people and circumstances both similar and dissimilar to ourselves, became even more vital than ever during the pandemic. We just had to dig deep and remain open to new possibilities in order to do that."



For more about the arts at HCC, links to the guitar series videos, arts social media and more, visit hccfoundation.com/arts.

A Spirit of Determination and Hope: Scholarship Students Speak



Perseverance and resilience are hallmarks of our students' characters, and never were they more on display than this year. The pandemic and resulting economic crisis hit HCC students particularly hard, and they were more in need than ever of funds from the Foundation. As just one example, in fall 2020, a record of more than 850 students applied for scholarships, but the Foundation had only enough funds to provide scholarships for 300. All the statistics point to the job market continuing to be difficult for our new graduates to break into as we recover from the crisis, and they face a world that looks far different than the one they expected to enter.

But as you can hear in their words, they are determined to make their dreams come true, with your help.

The scholarship I was awarded is more appreciated than I can express. My mother recently suffered a stroke and lost part of her vision. Thankfully, the HCC Foundation has given me the opportunity to continue on in my program without more of a financial burden. I plan to continue my education after HCC and become a nurse practitioner. I really enjoy helping people and making a difference throughout the community.

– Kasara

I initially started college when I was 24 years old. I was a single mom of one, working full-time and attending HCC full-time. But life got the best of me and I ended up having to stop school after two semesters. I tried to continue, but it was very hard for a single mom of two to find help. Fast forward, my children are almost grown and I am finally able to focus on my education and finish my degree. My husband and I are trying to put our older two kids through college and this scholarship will help lighten the load.

– Amanda

We have all taken a hard hit from the effects of COVID-19, so extra support is needed. After spring break of 2020, I needed a job, seeing that I was unable to earn funds from work-study after the college closed. Fortunately, I was able to start working at the local food bank. I love this job and the experience it has brought. Helping and giving back to my community is a joy to me. Being the first person in my family to go to college has brought along much financial and emotional pressure. I have had to balance my schedule with working two jobs, being a full-time student, and being a leader in my campus's Student Government Association. But I strongly believe that hard work pays off, as well as treating others with kindness. Once again, I would like to thank you for this opportunity and investment in my future.

– Jasmine

I do not have family support, being that I am an unaccompanied (homeless) youth, so this scholarship will make a huge difference in establishing financial security for my education. I am a full-time student and I also work, which can be very stressful without loved ones to help motivate and guide me along the way. I'm nineteen years old and this scholarship has provided me with assistance to ease my stress. I am extremely grateful to have been chosen for this opportunity.

– Tianna

Receiving this scholarship is going to help me tremendously. I will finally be able to purchase a laptop and internet service, something that has been much needed since the temporary closure of my local library. My professional goal is to have a career in the field of Behavioral and Community Sciences, to help people with mental health disorders and develop solutions to make communities better. I know my career will entail working in communities and helping others live a better quality of life.

– Knowliesha

Students like these deserve our help and support. Visit hccfoundation.com/scholarships to learn more.

Pandemic Pause Becomes Opportunity for HCC Entrepreneurs

In 2018, HCC was one of only four community colleges in the nation selected to be part of the Everyday Entrepreneur Venture Fund (EEVF). With EEVF funds, the HCC Foundation provides InLab@HCC entrepreneurship program alumni with capital for their startup businesses, with a focus on minority and Veteran-led companies. Grants of smaller amounts are made through the HCC Foundation, and larger, no-interest loans, guaranteed with EEVF funds, are made through an innovative partnership with Suncoast Credit Union. There have now been 21 businesses funded through the EEVF program.

Trying to launch a startup during a pandemic was not something any of our EEVF recipients imagined having to do, but like all our Hawks, they rose to the challenge.

Owen Robertson, recipient of a grant for his nonprofit, LAB Theater Project, recently wrote: "On March 11, (the pandemic) became very personal for me. You see, on January 20, I signed a lease for my theater company with help from HCC and EEVF, and on March 11, the theaters in Tampa shut down, not just one or two, but all of them. Our dream, my dream, seemed to be over."

"But in May, I came up with a plan to open our 45-seat space to 10 in-person seats while also livestreaming productions with three actors or fewer. On July 9, LAB Theater Project was the first professional live theater that performed to an audience, an amazing seven-person audience that came and celebrated live theater enduring, as it has done for centuries. COVID has reignited the passion for my art form. Instead of diminishing my spark, it fanned it and forced me to innovate and survive."

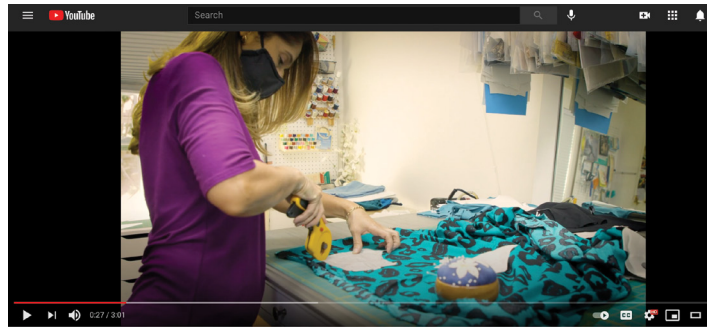


Tatyana Harris, another EEVF recipient, writes: "My company, PECKO Research, was founded in 2018 to educate the minority community about the benefits of pharmaceutical

and medical research and offer minorities opportunities to participate in various local clinical trials. Despite the efforts of research companies, many minorities are unlikely to participate in research, viewing them as untrustworthy. This is where PECKO Research steps in. We offer education to facilitate trust, improve overall participation rates, and improve research diversity."

"The introduction of COVID into our world has actually positively influenced research overall. Minority community member participation is especially profound at present due to interest in supporting their own health and the health of their family and friends. EEVF funding supported us in completing

our website landing page which collects minority and research provider information and added to the development of our database application and website integration."



Marisol Adkins, founder of Sonera Design, a petite-sized clothing design and manufacturing company, directly supported our community's most vulnerable residents. She explains: "I was able to pivot my business by making and selling face masks. I used some of the funding I received from HCC to purchase fabric and elastic to make the masks and sold them on my website. I was also able to help people in the community by volunteering to help LifePath Hospice with their need for facemasks and was able to make around 250 facemasks for them."

Eric Ondina, owner of Undine Creator Cosmetics, which produces cosmetic solutions for makeup artists, also made the crisis into an opportunity. Undine's products are ultra-pigmented, nourishing, and breathable, yet durable, and are applied with an airbrush, perfect in times where distancing is needed. Eric said: "I believe the pause for the pandemic ultimately proved advantageous, since it forced me to extend my timeline, which in turn permitted me to invest more in research, development, and branding. I am much more confident in the integrity of my product now and am gearing up to launch this summer."



For more information on any of these companies, or about the EEVF program, visit hccfl.edu/academics/inlabhcc.



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RETIREES



We are excited to announce the Foundation’s newest project, the HCC Retiree Association! With the Association, we will gather our retirees to socialize at events, keep them up to date on the college’s progress, and let them know what their fellow retirees are up to. There is no fee to be part of the Association.



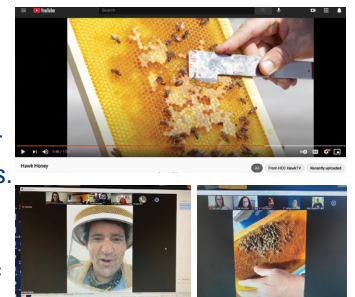
To make sure you are a part of it or if you want to help, contact Denise Godfrey at 813.253.7165 or dgodfrey3@hccfl.edu.

Look for more information in the coming months!

ALUMNI

The Foundation’s Alumni Department recently initiated a “Mentor a Hawk” program on the Dale Mabry campus with The Lydia R. Daniel Honors Program. Honors students and alumni held a virtual meet and greet to introduce themselves and discuss the intrinsic value of mentorship for not only the mentee but the mentor as well. Mentor/mentee relationships build confidence, provide guidance, and lead to networking opportunities. We look forward to expanding the reach of the program next semester!

In December, we kicked off *On The Fly*, a monthly newsletter designed specifically for alumni. It features news from the college and faculty and alumni spotlights, and keeps alumni up to date on their benefits as well as events happening on our campuses. One of the featured events was our partnership with the HCC Sustainability Department, which presented a fascinating virtual tour of the beehives on the roof of one of the buildings at our Ybor City campus.



Want more information about HCC Alumni activities and events? Contact Ann Menchen at amenchen3@hccfl.edu.

Connect with Us!

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