

TRI-C®

# TIMES

## SUSTAINABLE EXCELLENCE

Commitment to 'green' building earns honors for College (P20)



## A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH



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**BUILDING BIOMEDICAL CAREERS**

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**FOX 8'S WAYNE DAWSON  
'GREW UP' AT TRI-C**

P28:  
**CAMPUSES HOST  
COVID-19 TESTING**



## ADVANCE FUTURES, TRANSFORM THE REGION

In celebration of National Community College Month, Tri-C alumni, students, employees, retirees and friends will join together for one day to celebrate and support the College.

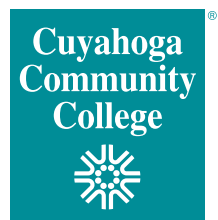
This past year has been like no other, and our community has responded in unprecedented ways to help address our students' greatest needs and challenges. Together, we have weathered the storm — and that's something to celebrate!

Join us April 8 for the fifth annual celebration of Tri-C Day. You can help by following us on social media to hear inspiring student stories and by giving online to benefit scholarships and services for Tri-C students.

With your support, we will continue to advance futures and transform the region.



[www.tri-c.edu/tricday2021](http://www.tri-c.edu/tricday2021)



# PRESIDENT'S Message

## TO OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Future job outlooks shine a bright light on the importance of STEM. Employment in occupations related to STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — are projected to increase 8% by 2029, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

That anticipated growth rate more than doubles federal expectations for non-STEM professionals. These are high-paying jobs, too, with median salaries approaching \$90,000 a year.

That's why STEM is, in many ways, regarded as the focus of our nation's economic future. It's also why STEM is a major focus of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) today.

This issue of *Tri-C Times* highlights how the College is working to stay at the forefront of STEM education and training. Our cover story explores Tri-C's longtime involvement in a National Institutes of Health program that has yielded remarkable student success outcomes.

Other STEM stories outline biology professor Beth Vaidya's research work, efforts by IT student Samuel Paredes to launch a cybersecurity program for young Clevelanders, and the College's critical role with the Workforce Connect Healthcare Sector Partnership.



**THIS ISSUE ILLUSTRATES THE BREADTH OF STEM AT TRI-C AND THE COLLEGE'S ROLE IN SHAPING A VIBRANT FUTURE FOR NORTHEAST OHIO IN CRITICAL FIELDS.**

Tri-C's impact on the community can be seen in numerous other ways, too — particularly as it relates to helping others as they navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic distress.

Read about how the College hosted a grocery giveaway event that provided food and supplies to more than 900 families. Another story shares how Tri-C helped slow the spread of COVID-19 through a program that brought coronavirus testing to more than 4,000 people.

In addition, you'll learn how Tri-C provided Fox 8's Wayne Dawson the boost he needed to launch an award-winning career and how the College has embraced the concept of "green" building.

The past year has been a difficult one filled with challenges. The words and photographs on the following pages, however, offer hope for better days ahead.

We are proud to share these accomplishments with you, and we are proud to serve this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.  
President

# IN THIS ISSUE:

# 14



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# SP

**FOLLOW TRI-C**    

*Tri-C Times* is published by Cuyahoga Community College's Integrated Communications department for its friends and constituents. Feedback and story ideas are welcome. Send correspondence to *Tri-C Times*, 2500 E. 22nd St., Cleveland, OH 44115; call 216-987-4322; or email [editorial@tri-c.edu](mailto:editorial@tri-c.edu).

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Cuyahoga Community College has been recognized as one of the nation's "Best Community Colleges" by Intelligent.com. Tri-C ranked fifth on the research site's list of top two-year schools across the country while also claiming first in the northeast region. Evaluations were based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation and post-graduate employment. No other Ohio school earned recognition.



**EQUITY IN OUTCOMES**

Tri-C joined a select group of institutions across the country in the Equity Transfer Initiative, a program to increase bachelor's degree attainment for underrepresented populations. Three dozen colleges and universities in 13 states are involved. The effort seeks to increase transfer rates between two-year and four-year schools for African American, Hispanic and first-generation learners. Tri-C is partnering with Lorain County Community College and Cleveland State University, with a goal of placing at least 300 students in two years.

**SPRING 2021**

**DRIVING JOB GROWTH**

A job hub bringing Tri-C programming to the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) will help the agency recruit new employees, upskill current workers and enhance leadership teams. The training partnership aims to increase workforce sustainability in the transportation industry while creating employment pipelines that lead residents toward RTA jobs with family-sustaining wages. The effort began in February as part of Tri-C's Institute for Community Engagement and Development.



A photograph of a male scientist with glasses and a dark sweater, leaning over a laboratory bench. He is looking through the eyepiece of a white and blue microscope. The bench is cluttered with various pieces of laboratory glassware, including a blue rack holding several vials, some containing yellow and green liquids. There are also petri dishes and other containers scattered on the surface. The background shows a bright, modern laboratory with large windows and blue cabinetry. The overall color palette is dominated by blues and greys.

# SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY



**THE PATH TO ADVANCED BIOMEDICAL DEGREES AND CAREERS STARTS AT TRI-C THROUGH A GRANT-FUNDED RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**

# SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Kevin Jaworski spends his days poring over lab work and analyzing data as he completes his master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. Hours disappear writing up research and preparing presentations.

It's the life of someone building a future in the sciences — and it couldn't be further from where the 43-year-old stood just a few years ago.

At that time, he was trying to make it as a musician. His talents on the guitar brought concert bookings and tours that led across the United States into Canada and overseas to Europe and Japan.



STORY BY [Jarrod Zickefoose](#)

PHOTOS BY [Cody York](#)

“It was fun, and it was my main deal for a while,” Jaworski said. “But as I got older, I was starting to think long-term, and my perspective started to change. I felt like I needed a career at that point.”

He found it at Cuyahoga Community College through a National Institutes of Health (NIH) program, where Jaworski is one of many success stories built over the past two decades.

The NIH’s Bridges to the Baccalaureate Research Training Program serves two primary purposes: It gives community college students in biomedical fields critical research experience, and it puts them on a path toward advanced degrees and careers as researchers.

The federal grant program focuses on groups who are underrepresented in biomedical research, including first-generation college students and those from low-income households.



The Bridges program establishes partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions, creating a pipeline that carries students from an associate degree through to a bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and beyond. Tri-C partners with Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University.

Since 1998, when the College received its first Bridges grant from NIH, more than 250 students have participated. Seventy percent went on to four-year schools. Twenty-nine of those students achieved a master’s degree. Six earned doctorates.

“We have been very successful, and I think that is one of the reasons we are able to keep renewing the grant,” said Geza Varhegyi, an associate professor of biology at Tri-C who oversees the Bridges program.

Last year, the grant was renewed for \$2.5 million over five years. Tri-C is one of only four community colleges in the country to be awarded Bridges money. Grants are more frequently awarded to four-year colleges that partner with local two-year schools.

Participating students get 60% of their tuition paid for at Tri-C and their four-year school, plus a stipend of about \$800 per month. The grant can cover about 15 students at a time, providing financial support as they build solid academic and research credentials.

“These are students who might otherwise not have the chance to get their foot in the door and do research, especially at a two-year college,” Varhegyi said.

**“WE HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL, AND I THINK THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS WE ARE ABLE TO KEEP RENEWING THE GRANT.”**

— Geza Varhegyi, Associate Professor, Biology







## 'THIS LOOKS PERFECT'

Jacqueline Krehel was heading to class at Tri-C's Western Campus when she saw a huge sign advertising the Bridges program: "I was like, 'Oh, my goodness. This looks perfect,'" she said.

Krehel knew from a young age that she wanted to work in a medical field. The 22-year-old is studying psychology, and Bridges offered exactly the right fit.

"Bridges streamlined things for me. It put me at a four-year university. It made things so much easier," she said.

**"BRIDGES STREAMLINED THINGS FOR ME. IT PUT ME AT A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY. IT MADE THINGS SO MUCH EASIER."**

— Jacqueline Krehel, Tri-C Graduate, CSU Student

Krehel earned her Associate of Arts from Tri-C in 2019 and is working on a bachelor's degree in psychology at CSU. Her current research project looks at eating disorders as well as attention and emotion regulation.

Using a computer to connect with her subjects, she offers prompts and then measures physiological responses using eye tracking to gauge what attracts attention.

"I thought that doing research at Tri-C was going to be somewhat limited, not being a four-year institution," said Krehel, who plans to pursue a Ph.D. and would like to work in research for the U.S. Department of Defense. "It would have been nearly impossible without Bridges."

## LEADING THE WAY

Few people at the College are as enthusiastic about the Bridges program as Ormond Brathwaite, associate dean of STEM at Western Campus in Parma. He co-authored the original grant proposal in 1998.

Because of the focus on students underrepresented in biomedical fields, Bridges dovetails with Tri-C's mission to promote individual development and improve the quality of life in a multicultural community. It meshes a social function within the hardcore research and rigorous academics.

"We wanted to be part of the national voice and set models for other community colleges to follow," Brathwaite said.

The program allows Tri-C students to get a head start on their lab and research experience, providing opportunities many don't see until late in their baccalaureate degree studies or even graduate school, Brathwaite said.

Students are paired with mentors at CWRU or CSU who work with them to formulate research questions and design projects. The mentors assist with project logistics as well as with writing, ethics, data integrity and other aspects of the work.

Tri-C also offers courses that prepare students to professionally manage their research. At the conclusion of a project, students often report findings locally, regionally and even nationally.

**"WE WANTED TO BE PART OF THE NATIONAL VOICE AND SET MODELS FOR OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO FOLLOW."**

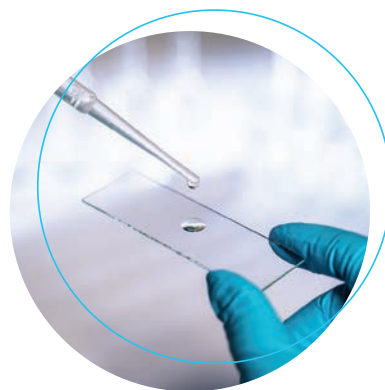
— Ormond Brathwaite, Associate Dean, STEM



Bridges has opened doors for Tri-C students to present at the New England Science Symposium at Harvard University and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students.

Program participants must maintain a 2.8 overall GPA, with a 3.0 GPA in science courses.

"We are looking for scholars," Brathwaite said. "This is a place where you are going to work, and you are going to succeed. Don't be afraid of the work."



## FINDING MEANING

While he was working nights playing music, Jaworski sold pop-culture pins online as a day job. One activity provided him with money, the other with meaning. He said the Bridges program gave him both.

“It’s really important to be clear on what’s important to you, and that can honestly be scary,” Jaworski said. “I know mental health is important to me. Helping people is important to me. I know that education is important to me. I didn’t know that stuff before.”

“This is what I was looking for. I could see all these threads that were already there in my life. It was just a matter of putting them all together.”

Jaworski earned an Associate of Arts degree from Tri-C in 2017 and a bachelor’s degree from CSU in 2019. He currently is wrapping up a study at CSU about substance abuse and the ways shame can impede progress. He hopes to publish a manuscript based on the research.

His goal is to work at a private practice, and he is close to securing an internship at one this fall. Jaworski said he doubts he would have found his way into research without the Bridges program.

“There’s a part of me that’s just interested in learning, in academics, and I had never scratched that itch,” he said. “I feel like I really lucked out.”



**“THERE’S A PART OF ME THAT’S JUST INTERESTED IN LEARNING, IN ACADEMICS, AND I HAD NEVER SCRATCHED THAT ITCH. I FEEL LIKE I REALLY LUCKED OUT.”**

— Kevin Jaworski, Tri-C Graduate, CSU Student



# A HEALTHY JOB MARKET

**TENS OF THOUSANDS OF POSITIONS WILL OPEN AT NORTHEAST OHIO MEDICAL CENTERS OVER THE NEXT DECADE. TRI-C IS WORKING WITH THE WORKFORCE CONNECT HEALTHCARE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP TO FILL THOSE SPOTS.**

STORY BY **John Horton**

Health care is hiring in Northeast Ohio ... and we're not talking a few jobs here and there. Tens of thousands of positions need to be filled over the next few years, according to employment studies.

So where will hospitals and medical centers find these workers? That's a question being answered by the Workforce Connect Healthcare Sector Partnership and Cuyahoga Community College.

The partnership brings together the region's largest health care providers to address shared staffing issues, with Tri-C selected to serve as the project intermediary.

But this isn't just about helping hospitals with hiring. It's about helping Cuyahoga County households — particularly in neighborhoods with high unemployment — by increasing access to stable jobs with family-sustaining wages.

"The employment pathways we're creating will reach deep into the community and connect with those who need them most," said Tri-C's Sue Krejci, executive director of the partnership. "There are so many opportunities available to build a career in the health care field."

The health care industry currently employs about 300,000 people in Greater Cleveland. Projections show that number swelling by 85,000 — or almost 30% — over the next decade to meet staffing demands.

In addition, a report by Team NEO examining employment postings over an eight-month period showed that nearly one out of five available positions are connected to the health care field. The Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals Health System ranked first and third in openings.

These jobs cover a wide variety of positions, ranging from the front lines of patient care to behind-the-scenes and entry-level roles in food service and maintenance.

"Each job is critical to a hospital delivering the best patient care and functioning at the highest level," Krejci said. "The system needs every role filled with skilled, trained and dedicated individuals who want to contribute to the health of the community."



### To open doors into the health care field, the partnership is working to:

- Create a workforce pilot program for entry-level positions, with a focus on supporting professional development and encouraging future advancement.
- Increase youth exposure to in-demand health care careers through internships and programs with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and other school systems. The outreach could help introduce teens to lesser-known opportunities in areas such as phlebotomy and sterile processing.
- Coordinate with regional training providers like Tri-C to align academic and workforce programs with industry employment needs so that people are prepared for the most in-demand jobs.

The partnership includes six area hospital systems: Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, The MetroHealth System, Southwest General, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and the VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System.

In addition, more than two dozen community agencies and organizations are involved in the partnership's ongoing discussions and planning.

Tri-C's long and successful history of working with Northeast Ohio's expansive health care sector resulted in its selection as intermediary in 2019. The College hired Krejci last year to lead the effort.

The partnership has brought a shift from competition to collaboration to address common needs in the health care industry, Krejci said.

"We have health care providers with positions to fill and people looking for employment," she said. "Our goal with the Workforce Connect Healthcare Sector Partnership is to build the bridges that connect those two realities."

**"THE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS WE'RE CREATING WILL REACH DEEP INTO THE COMMUNITY AND CONNECT WITH THOSE WHO NEED THEM MOST."**

— Sue Krejci, Executive Director, Workforce Connect Healthcare Sector Partnership

# BRAIN POWER



“I WANT STUDENTS TO LEAVE MY COURSES  
KNOWING THEY CAN DO HARD THINGS.  
I WANT THEM TO BE CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITIES  
AND PROUD OF WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED.”

— Beth Vaidya, Professor, Biology



## PROFESSOR **BETH VAIDYA** USES HER BACKGROUND IN NEUROSCIENCE TO ENRICH STUDENT LEARNING AT TRI-C

A neural computer operates within our skulls, accumulating information that drives daily decision-making. The brain powers success and achievement — but it can also open doors to darker places.

The workings of this complex command center have captivated Beth Vaidya since childhood. It led her into the field of neuroscience, spurred research projects and resulted in a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Today, that desire to search inside the brain for answers guides her work teaching biology at Cuyahoga Community College's Westshore Campus.

About 800 students enroll in anatomy and physiology courses at Tri-C each year, most intending to enter health career programs like nursing, sonography or dental hygiene. But many don't yet have the tools they need to learn difficult information. Vaidya's goal is to give them that foundation.

"I want students to leave my courses knowing they can do hard things," she said. "I want them to be confident in their abilities and proud of what they've accomplished."

Vaidya often uses games like Taboo or Pictionary to teach tough concepts — but she's also resourceful enough to create her own when the opportunity presents itself. Last fall, students in Vaidya's molecular biology lab played a virtual game with her son, Naveen, who was hospitalized with Type 1 diabetes.

"He described his symptoms, and they had to guess the diagnosis," she said. "I formed a close bond with those students. Some of them still email me to ask how he's doing."

STORY BY **Beth Cieslik**

PHOTOS BY **Victoria Stanbridge**

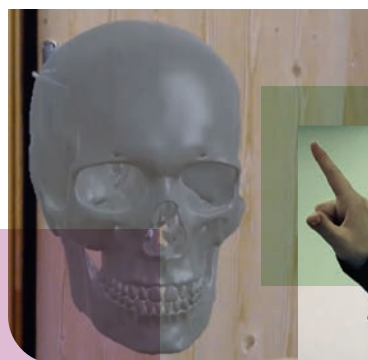


More than anything else, Vaidya enjoys researching, testing and implementing new technologies to help students succeed.

Her ingenuity had a particularly significant impact in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when she shared virtual labs she'd created herself with anatomy and physiology faculty across the College as they struggled to adapt to online instruction.

She continued producing new virtual labs from home, setting up a laboratory in her basement and filming herself and her children as they performed experiments for students to watch and analyze.

"My initial goal was to provide free resources for students, since the cost of textbooks is a barrier," she said. "I'm glad I was able to help my colleagues, too."



Vaidya also promotes cutting-edge technology like the Anatomage table, which allows students to "dissect" virtual cadavers, and the Microsoft HoloLens, a head-mounted device that projects 3D digital content into the real world so that users can manipulate and interact with it.

It was her interest in the HoloLens and how it could help students grasp anatomical concepts that led Vaidya and fellow Westshore biology professor Erica Stevenson to apply for a Faculty Innovation Grant from Tri-C in 2019.

The resulting study, "The Effectiveness of an Augmented Reality Head-Mounted Display in Learning Skull Anatomy at a Community College," was published in June 2020.

Vaidya and Stevenson recruited 32 Westshore students to participate in the study. Randomly assigned to one of two groups, they took a baseline quiz to test their knowledge before using either the HoloLens or an unmarked white plastic model and textbook to learn the anatomy of the human skull. Both groups then took a post-quiz to measure their learning.

The results were unexpected: There was virtually no difference in learning outcomes between students who used the HoloLens and those who used the traditional plastic model.





Artistic Excellence



Two Tri-C art professors — Stephanie Craig and Andrea LeBlond — earned 2021 Individual Excellence Awards from the Ohio Arts Council. The award recognizes an artist’s body of work and how it exemplifies a specific discipline while advancing the larger artistic community. Craig and LeBlond were recognized in the craft category. They were among 75 honorees across the state selected through an open panel review process. This is Craig’s third Individual Excellence Award and LeBlond’s second.

In Memoriam



A scholarship fund honors the legacy of the late Jeffrey Tuma, an assistant professor of philosophy who brightened the lives of Tri-C students for nearly three decades. Tuma’s work to help students will continue through the

Jeffrey Tuma Student Emergency Fund. The Cuyahoga Community College Foundation established the fund after his death in January. Visit [tri-c.edu/give](https://tri-c.edu/give) to donate. The College has also dedicated its ongoing “We the People” campus conversation series to Tuma, who was posthumously honored with a 2021 Dale P Parnell Distinguished Faculty award from the American Association of Community Colleges.



Vaidya had worried that the HoloLens would be difficult to master within the 20-minute timeframe allotted — and she didn’t realize how much fun students would have with it.

“There were shouts of joy and amazement which, as you might imagine, did not occur with the plastic skulls,” she said.

The campus has since invested in a full set of HoloLens and an entire room devoted to virtual and augmented reality. Vaidya looks forward to resuming this work once the pandemic is over.

“Our findings are encouraging, but the small sample size means we can’t be sure what differences might exist between demographics,” she said. “I’d like to test its effectiveness on other learning outcomes, too.”

Vaidya returned to the classroom for hands-on labs in fall 2020, but her courses still mainly take place online. Recently tenured, she continues to tap into her research skills to test and refine strategies for efficient, engaging and effective virtual and in-person instruction.

“I like exploring how students learn and discovering new ways to facilitate that for them,” she said.

**“TRI-C ENABLED ME TO BECOME THE BEST TEACHER POSSIBLE, AND I’M STILL LEARNING.”**

— Beth Vaidya

**A Focus on Family**

Vaidya and her husband, Punit, were living in Baltimore in 2011 when they welcomed twins, Naveen and Priya. As young parents with demanding jobs and little support, they relocated to Punit’s Northeast Ohio hometown of Westlake.

A second daughter, Mayuri, soon followed. Vaidya spent the next few years in the most difficult position of her career: stay-at-home mom to three children under age 3.

By 2015, she was ready to re-enter the workforce. Joining Tri-C as a biology instructor, she immediately felt welcome: “When I showed up for orientation pushing a double stroller while wearing a third baby — and no one batted an eye — I knew I’d found the right organization.”

# HACKING FOR GOOD

STORY BY Erik Cassano

PHOTOS BY Victoria Stanbridge

## TRI-C STUDENT SAMUEL PAREDES HAS A PLAN TO HELP FELLOW IT ENTHUSIASTS DEVELOP PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE SKILLS AND GROW A CAREER IN CYBERSECURITY

Samuel Paredes is fascinated by what humans can do with technology. It's why the native of Ipiales, a city in southern Colombia, moved to the United States to study computers and IT systems.

"I've always been interested in every aspect of technology," Paredes said. "Building it, repairing it, finding flaws and problems in systems and fixing them."

Paredes, a 19-year-old resident of Cleveland's Old Brooklyn neighborhood, came to the city in 2017 as a high school exchange student. He found opportunities for IT education that didn't exist in Colombia and decided to stay for college.

He enrolled at Cuyahoga Community College after graduating from Heritage Christian School in 2019. His interest in discovering flaws and fixing IT systems drew him to study cybersecurity at Tri-C. It also opened his eyes to other possibilities.

As Paredes' circle of friends and acquaintances broadened within the local IT community, he began noticing a lot of untapped potential. Though they might eventually pursue a formal education, computer enthusiasts are often self-taught through countless hours working in and on computers.

Some use their skills in careers, some use them to pursue hobbies — and some use them for nefarious purposes, such as hacking.

Paredes knew that as a future cybersecurity specialist, he'd be tasked with stopping hackers. At Tri-C, he decided to get a head start through an initiative aimed at connecting young, talented IT enthusiasts with education and career opportunities in the field.

"I came to realize that the many people I share my time and work with are really good at what they do," he said. "I wanted to help them find a way to take that talent and focus it toward a career, even if they think college isn't for them."

His initiative, Hackers Towards Perception, was a finalist in the Technovation category of the "Accelerate 2021: Citizens Make Change" civic-project funding competition, held by the Cleveland Leadership Center in February.

Though Hackers Towards Perception wasn't awarded funding in the competition, Paredes still wants to bring his idea to life.

"The idea is to make it free and accessible," he said. "It will be a way for young people 16 to 25 to learn about how the internet and computers work, receive mentorship and possibly have the door opened to a career."

Paredes — a Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Scholar at Tri-C — is on pace to graduate from the College this spring with an Associate of Arts degree. He plans to attend Baldwin Wallace University in the fall to study cybersecurity, with projected graduation in 2023.



He hopes to someday own and operate his own cybersecurity company, perhaps staffed by Hackers Towards Perception alumni. Paredes said he is grateful to Tri-C for helping him expand his horizons and see what is possible in the IT field, both for him and for others.

"Tri-C helped set the stage for what I want to do next," Paredes said. "The instructors can help take you to the next level with their advice and feedback and the connections they have with other colleges and companies. They really give you a sense of what you can accomplish with hard work."

**"IT WILL BE A WAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 16 TO 25 TO LEARN ABOUT HOW THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS WORK, RECEIVE MENTORSHIP AND POSSIBLY HAVE THE DOOR OPENED TO A CAREER."**

— Samuel Paredes, Tri-C Student

# TEAL AND GREEN



## WITH EIGHT LEED-CERTIFIED BUILDINGS AND ANOTHER IN THE APPROVAL PROCESS, TRI-C IS STRENGTHENING ITS COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Teal is the top color at Cuyahoga Community College, but green is quickly making its own presence felt.

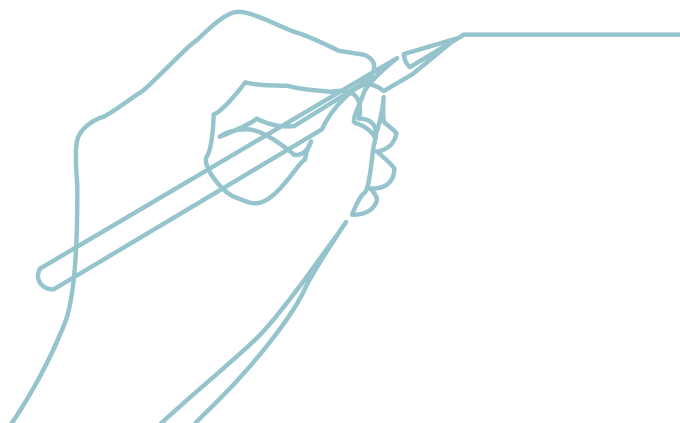
Tri-C's recent wave of new construction highlights its commitment to "green" building — a commitment that has shaped campus planning for well over a decade. The College now has eight structures with LEED certifications, a globally recognized symbol for sustainability achievement. Another is in the review process.

The new buildings minimize impacts on the environment, save the College money through lower utility bills and offer an invigorating academic setting as students utilize the latest technology to train for the jobs of tomorrow.

STORY BY **Erik Cassano**

"As a taxpayer-funded entity, we want to be a good steward of financial resources as well as the environment," said David November, Tri-C's sustainability manager. "We want buildings that can allow us to do that for many decades."

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certifications are issued by the U.S. Green Building Council. New commercial and public construction can be submitted for consideration, which is conducted by analyzing the new building according to a series of criteria attached to a point system.



A total of 110 points is available. A minimum of 40 points is required for basic LEED certification. A 50-point total will earn LEED Silver certification, 60 points for LEED Gold and 80 points for LEED Platinum.

Some criteria are region-specific. Buildings in the Cleveland area receive extra points for responsible management of stormwater runoff in an effort to reduce the amount of ground pollution that drains into Lake Erie.

Stormwater drainage plans were incorporated into projects at the Metropolitan and Westshore campuses — the two closest to the lake. One of the College’s most recent certifications was for the Liberal Arts and Technology building at Westshore.

“Impermeable areas like parking lots flow into retention ponds at Westshore Campus to allow water to naturally drain into the ground,” November said. “At Metro, we took advantage of the permeable sandy soil the campus is built on. The courtyard adjacent to the new Campus Center has permeable areas that allow water to drain into the soil underneath.”

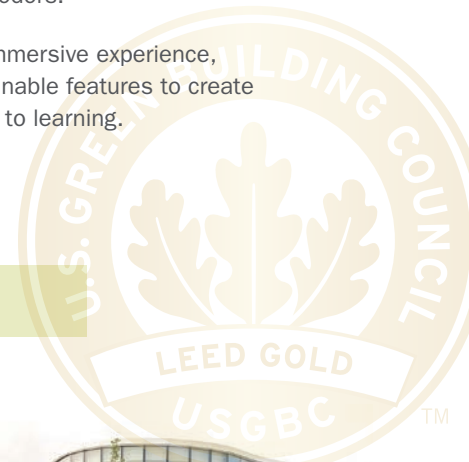
In addition, the Advanced Technology Training Center at Metropolitan Campus has nearby drainage basins for water runoff. Opened in 2011, it was among the first Tri-C buildings to receive LEED certification in 2013.

However, as important as outdoor features like stormwater runoff are, the quality of the indoor environment is the biggest area of focus in Tri-C’s new building designs — and it goes beyond energy savings and reducing waste.

When you walk into new Tri-C buildings, some common themes become apparent. Abundant windows and skylights let in large amounts of natural light. Locally produced artwork and plants occupy prominent positions to enhance the visual aesthetic.

There is also a lack of that “new building” smell due to a reduction in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in carpeting and paint. It makes the air healthier to breathe while ridding it of offensive, distracting odors.

The idea is to create an immersive experience, using the buildings’ sustainable features to create an environment conducive to learning.



“You think about the impact that your surroundings can have on your senses, and we’ve taken that into consideration with our designs,” November said. “We wanted bright interiors that take advantage of natural light, a healthy indoor air quality and interesting artwork that makes it a stimulating, energizing place to learn and work.”

Look closer, and you’ll notice that interior lights are almost exclusively LED fixtures. Restroom fixtures are high-efficiency, limiting the use of water.

Each of these details brings a cost savings for building operations, trimming utility bills by tens of thousands of dollars per year to ease the College’s budget. But November says that’s not the sum total of the impact.

The College’s new buildings were designed with the idea that LEED-certified structures do more than just manage the use of resources. They also create healthy, pleasing environments that increase Tri-C’s value as an educational resource.

“These are public buildings open to everyone, so we wanted to build a space that people want to be in,” November said. “We want to create spaces that are great for learning and welcoming for the community, both now and years into the future.”

**“WE WANTED BRIGHT INTERIORS THAT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURAL LIGHT, A HEALTHY INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND INTERESTING ARTWORK THAT MAKES IT A STIMULATING, ENERGIZING PLACE TO LEARN AND WORK.”**

— David November, Manager, Sustainability



## TRI-C BUILDINGS AND LEED CERTIFICATION



**Brunswick University Center**  
LEED Silver, June 2012



**Eastern Campus Health Careers and Technology**  
LEED Gold, July 2012



**Westshore Campus Health Careers and Sciences**  
LEED Gold, December 2012



**Advanced Technology Training Center**  
LEED Gold, August 2013



**Metropolitan Campus Center**  
LEED Gold, September 2019



**Simulated Scenario Village Administrative Center**  
LEED, December 2020

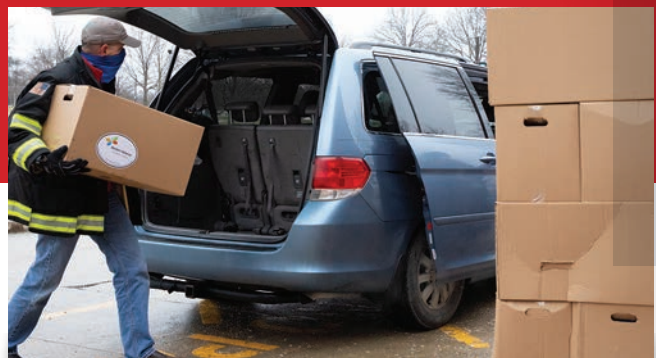


**Westshore Liberal Arts and Technology**  
LEED Silver, January 2021



**Western Campus STEM Center**  
LEED Gold, March 2021

# FEEDING A NEED



**TRI-C PARTNERED WITH THE WESTERN RESERVE AREA AGENCY ON AGING TO DISTRIBUTE MORE THAN 900 BOXES OF FOOD TO HELP FAMILIES FILL THEIR PANTRIES**

Halle Slaughter works two jobs to help make ends meet — and still, the single mother says it’s a struggle at times. She worries about simple things like whether there’s enough food in the pantry.

That’s why she joined the line of cars streaming onto the Western Campus of Cuyahoga Community College earlier this year for the “Great Grocery Giveaway.”

More than 900 boxes of food and supplies were distributed to families during the January event, which was sponsored by the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA). Volunteers started early given the crowd that built before the planned start.

“This food box will help immensely,” said Slaughter, who enrolled at Tri-C last fall to begin working toward a degree in nursing. “It’s one less thing for me to worry about.”

The College partnered with the WRAAA on the distribution as part of an ongoing effort to fill food security gaps in the community that worsened during the pandemic and resulting economic crisis. The WRAAA held similar giveaways in four other counties.

Each box was filled with approximately \$60 worth of groceries and essential supplies. Contents included items such as pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned tuna, peanut butter, jelly, bread and assorted household cleaning items.

Community members joined students in line during the five-hour giveaway event, where more than 75 volunteers from the College loaded cars.

“We come to work every day at Tri-C focused on serving others. It’s ingrained in our College culture,” said Donna Imhoff, president of Western Campus. “This was another way we could make a difference for people.”

**“THIS FOOD BOX WILL HELP IMMENSELY. IT’S ONE LESS THING FOR ME TO WORRY ABOUT.”**

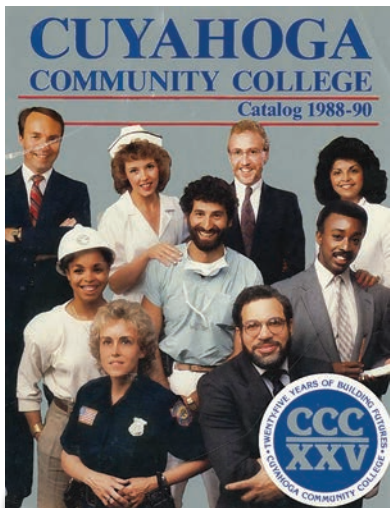
— Halle Slaughter, Tri-C student

STORY BY **John Horton**  
PHOTOS BY **Cody York**



# WAYNE'S WORLD

**FOX 8'S  
WAYNE DAWSON  
HAS BEEN A  
FIXTURE ON  
LOCAL TV  
FOR DECADES,  
AND HE'S PROUD  
TO SAY IT ALL  
STARTED AT TRI-C**



Cleveland is Wayne Dawson's world.

For 42 years — all at WJW Fox 8 — Dawson has covered events that have shaped our lives and dictated our region's future. His career has spanned five Cleveland mayors, eight Ohio governors and eight U.S. Presidents.

Dawson was there for the highest of highs, perched above the Cavaliers' championship parade in 2016, and the lowest of lows, reporting on the Browns' move to Baltimore in 1995. He's interviewed national newsmakers in politics, sports, business and countless other fields.

Since 1999, Dawson has occupied one of the most visible anchor chairs in Cleveland as co-host of the *Fox 8 Morning Show* — the only local news and lifestyle program to compete with national programs on other networks in the 7-9 a.m. weekday time slot.

He is one of Cleveland's most accomplished and recognizable broadcasters. But at his roots, Dawson is just a kid from East Cleveland who discovered a love of journalism at a young age.

"When I was in school, I knew I had an interest in journalism, but I was kind of an underachiever in the classroom who hadn't yet learned how to apply himself," he said. "So when I graduated from Shaw High School in 1974, I wasn't ready to go to a four-year school."

It's why Dawson enrolled at Cuyahoga Community College that fall. What he learned in his 18 months at the Metropolitan Campus would pave the way for his future success.

STORY BY Erik Cassano

PHOTOS BY Cody York





LOOKING BACK

When Dawson arrived at Tri-C, he knew he liked sports and wanted to be a journalist. He found an outlet for both interests while writing for the two Metro Campus student newspapers that existed at the time.

"That was my first experience with journalism," he said. "I'd go to games and meets, talk to the players and coaches and start writing stories. Didn't matter if it was baseball, basketball, track or anything else. I wanted to cover it."

Writing for the student newspapers gave Dawson his first taste of reporting, but it was in the classroom that he learned how to set goals and achieve them.

"It was through the support of the instructors that I really became serious about my education," he said. "I grew up at Tri-C and really started thinking about my future."

Dawson's grades improved. Combined with the clip file he amassed while writing for the student newspapers, he was ready to transfer to Kent State University by the end of 1975 to become a professional sportswriter.

But when he got to Kent, there were no reporter openings at their student newspaper. This sent him in a new direction.

"When I arrived, it was the start of winter quarter and their staff was already full," Dawson said. "I wanted to do some kind of student media, so something inside me wondered if the college radio station had openings. Sure enough, they did. And that's how I made the leap to broadcasting."

Soon after, Dawson began working for Kent's student television station and fell in love with TV broadcasting. He worked for the student TV station for three years.

**"THAT WAS MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH JOURNALISM. I'D GO TO GAMES AND MEETS, TALK TO THE PLAYERS AND COACHES AND START WRITING STORIES. DIDN'T MATTER IF IT WAS BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, TRACK OR ANYTHING ELSE. I WANTED TO COVER IT!"**

— Wayne Dawson, Anchor, WJW Fox 8 News





**TURNING PRO**

After graduating from Kent in 1979, Dawson achieved a rare feat by going straight from college to a large media market.

“They had a reporter training program at Channel 8 at that time,” Dawson said. “I learned early on how important it was to make contacts in the industry, so I sent my tapes to Virgil Dominic, who was the general manager at Channel 8 for years. He liked my tapes, so he called me in, and I ended up in the training program.”

At the time, Cleveland was the country’s eighth-largest media market.

“It was big to get that kind of job right out of the gate,” he said. “I did graphics during the week and went out on assignments with reporters on the weekends. They’d supervise me as I did the story, and the story would go on the air. That was my first professional job.”

It was Dominic who encouraged Dawson to broaden his subject matter as a reporter, advising him to switch from sports to news.

“He said I’d have a longer career in news,” Dawson said. “I’d say he was right.”

In addition to the Cavs championship and Browns departure, he has covered other stories of local and national importance, including several Republican National Conventions, Barack Obama’s first inauguration and the 1998 Space Shuttle *Discovery* mission in which John Glenn became the oldest person to fly in space.

Prior to joining the *Fox 8 Morning Show*, Dawson anchored the weekend newscasts for the station, sitting across the desk from notable co-anchors including Kelly O’Donnell, now of NBC News, and Robin Meade, now of HLN.

Along the way, Dawson has won 11 Emmys and numerous other awards. He is also active in the community outside of his day job, working as a pastor at Grace Tabernacle Baptist Church in Lyndhurst and helping to oversee the Annie L. Dawson Foundation — named after his mother — which assists inner-city kids with scholarships, food and winter clothing. He established the foundation along with his brother, William, who is presiding judge at the East Cleveland Municipal Court.

Dawson has impacted the Northeast Ohio community in many ways, but he always remembers that Tri-C is where he started. An enthusiastic supporter of the College for many years, he now watches as family members follow in his footsteps.

“I have a daughter and two granddaughters enrolled there right now, all in nursing,” he said. “I think it’s fantastic that all of them are getting their starts at Tri-C just like I did. Tri-C really is a jewel in this community.”

“The slogan says it’s where futures begin, and it really is true. I can attest to that.”

**TRI-C ALUMNI NOTES**

**Terry Ledwell**  
Class of 1999



A career journey that began at Tri-C has taken Terry Ledwell to the Berea Fire Department’s top spot. Ledwell was sworn in as fire chief earlier this year following a two-decade rise through the ranks. He joined his hometown department in 1999 after completing his firefighter, paramedic and emergency medical technician training at the College. “I owe a lot of where I am today to Tri-C,” Ledwell said.

**Kelly Cloonan**  
Class of 2007



Human trafficking is a growing crisis on a local, national and worldwide level — and Kelly Cloonan believes health care workers are among those best positioned to fight it. Cloonan is creating a U.S. State Department training program aimed at educating nurses to recognize signs of human trafficking in patients. She is working on the project with a colleague at Chamberlain University, where she is the assistant dean for the Master of Science in Nursing Specialty Tracks.

STORY BY **John Horton**  
PHOTOS BY **Cody York**



# GETTING RESULTS

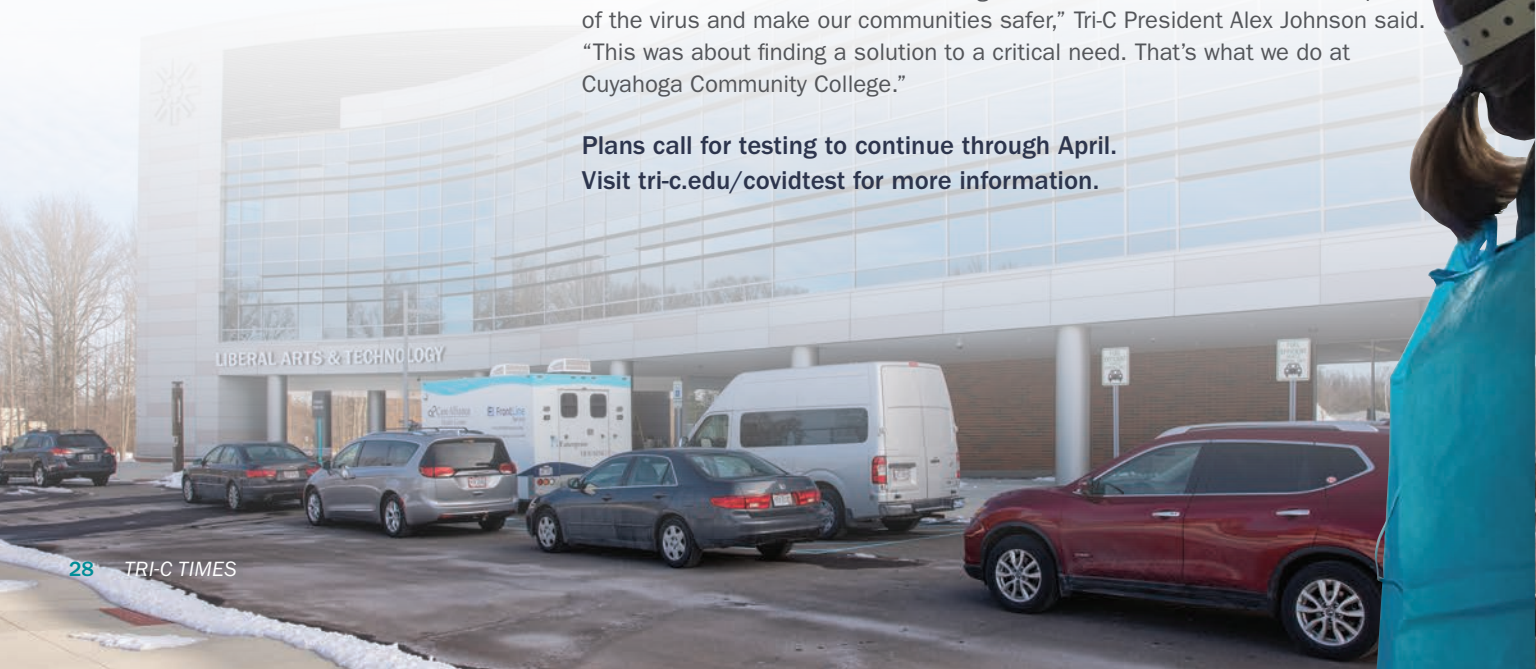
**AS COVID-19 CASE COUNTS SURGED, TRI-C OFFERED TESTING AT ITS CAMPUSES AS A FREE COMMUNITY SERVICE. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TOOK ADVANTAGE.**

One worrisome question gripped thoughts for much of the past year: Do I have COVID-19? More than 4,000 people found their answer at Cuyahoga Community College.

Tri-C partnered with Care Alliance Health Center to provide free community testing at College sites across the community. The service began in August with a weekly offering. As demand grew, extra testing dates filled the calendar.

“We knew accessible COVID-19 testing would be essential to contain the spread of the virus and make our communities safer,” Tri-C President Alex Johnson said. “This was about finding a solution to a critical need. That’s what we do at Cuyahoga Community College.”

**Plans call for testing to continue through April. Visit [tri-c.edu/covidtest](https://tri-c.edu/covidtest) for more information.**





# ONE LAST THING



## LEMONS AND LEMONADE

**THE PETROS FAMILY STUDENT RELIEF FUND DEBUTED AT CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE LAST SUMMER TO HELP STUDENTS OVERCOME FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AND CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK. IT HAS PROVIDED EMERGENCY AID AND TUITION ASSISTANCE TO NEARLY 150 STUDENTS, INCLUDING RAWLE G. CUMMINGS. HERE IS HIS STORY.**



BY **Rawle G. Cummings**

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” It’s the old adage used to encourage optimism and a positive, can-do spirit in the face of adversity or misfortune.

While 2020 brought its share of tragedy and challenges, I was determined to create a positive outcome. In March, I was released by my employer — a situation exacerbated by the growing COVID-19 pandemic.

It was my opportunity to make lemonade out of lemons, and Cuyahoga Community College and its Petros Family Student Relief Fund were a vital part of my comeback story.

I had attended Tri-C after high school, receiving IT training and certification through the Cisco Networking Academy. More than 20 years later, I reached out to my former professor — now dear friend and mentor — Dr. Hamid Abdollahian. He encouraged me to return to Tri-C to advance my current skills and achieve the next level of Cisco certification.

Thanks to the Petros Family fund, I was able to fund my continuing education and professional development. I completed the first training session in fall 2020 and will finish my remaining coursework this spring.

My message to students is that it’s never too late to start at — or, in my case, return to — Tri-C. Education and professional development are the tools that open opportunities for advanced achievement and success.

The greatest investment you can make is an investment in yourself. With the College’s help, I’m working to squeeze out every ounce of my potential.

It’s a lot like making that glass of lemonade, and I intend for my cup to be full.



# **SUMMER** 2021 **CAMPS**

More than 25 camps for ages 4 and up, featuring:

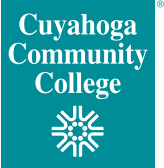
- Culinary
- Game design
- Performing arts
- Coding
- Music
- STEM

*Virtual and in-person camps available*

View camp descriptions and register at  
[tri-c.edu/summercamps](https://tri-c.edu/summercamps)

Cuyahoga  
Community  
College

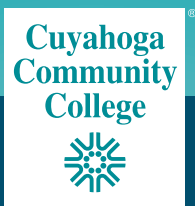




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