

WINTER 2021

# INVEST IN PEOPLE

CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION  
Advance Futures, Transform The Region.

## Cuyahoga Community College Tri-C® Foundation Mission:

To provide resources for advancing student success at Cuyahoga Community College and to transform the lives of those Tri-C serves.

# Community Colleges as First Responders

“First responder” usually means police, firefighters, paramedics and others first on the scene in an emergency. We are proud that Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) prepares many Northeast Ohio frontline professionals to build a successful career, protecting and serving our communities.

But last year, “first responder” took on a new meaning for Tri-C, as we were called upon to respond to health, economic and social justice challenges. Community colleges must respond quickly to stay relevant, offer the right training and education, and ensure a pathway for our students to achieve a brighter future.

In this issue, we highlight the ways your support makes it possible for Tri-C and the Tri-C Foundation to respond to student and community needs. As we celebrate growing scholarships and technology support for our students, we also are sobered by the need to make sure students are not hungry. Thanks to your help and generosity, we can continue to respond to these urgent student needs.

Thank you for believing in the value of a Tri-C education and for believing in our students. Together, we are creating a brighter future for our students — and our region. ■



Alex Johnson, Ph.D.  
President,  
Cuyahoga Community College



Megan O'Bryan  
Vice President, Development  
President, Tri-C Foundation



Lou Joseph  
Chairperson, Tri-C Foundation  
Board of Directors

## Tri-C Responds: Staying Affordable



Tri-C trains more emergency response professionals than any other institution in Ohio. Today, about 850 students are enrolled in training programs to become police officers, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders. They count on Tri-C for affordable, accessible, quality training that prepares them for high-demand jobs.

Your gift to Tri-C will help ensure students are prepared to serve the residents they've sworn to care for and protect. Please join us in improving access to higher education for tomorrow's generation of community and workforce leaders by visiting [tri-c.edu/give](http://tri-c.edu/give). Help us nurture tomorrow's problem-solvers and leaders. Thank you. ■

**Hunger is on the rise among college students.**  
The Fowlers help Tri-C open a pantry that offers more than a “drive through” food solution. *More on page 2.*



## Alex Johnson Receives AJC Cleveland Leadership Award

AJC Cleveland (American Jewish Committee) awarded the 2020 Richard H. Adler Community Leadership Award to Dr. Alex Johnson, recognizing his service and commitment to Northeast Ohio. The distinction is given to civic leaders who make an exceptional impact on the community and the lives of its residents.

“I am proud to accept, on behalf of Tri-C, the Adler Award from AJC Cleveland, who we join in helping to make Cleveland a city where all are welcome and able to thrive,” Johnson said. “We look forward to our collaboration for years to come.” ■

## Tri-C Responds to Basic Needs for Students: Fowler Family Student Success and Resource Fund

### Hunger is growing on college campuses across the U.S.

Educators were already grappling with this crisis, especially at Tri-C where 43% of our students live in low-income households. In a recent survey, 18% of our students told us they skip meals regularly when they run out of money and 16% worry about having enough to eat. That was before the pandemic, which escalated the urgency. Today, help paying for food is a leading request to our emergency fund for students.

Thanks to a generous gift to the Tri-C Foundation, the College will be proactively prepared to help. The \$1,020,000 commitment from Char and Chuck Fowler is establishing the Fowler Family Student Success and Resource Fund, and creating space for The Pantry — A Tri-C Connect Initiative. The Metropolitan Campus site will stock fresh and frozen foods, dry goods, and essential toiletries in a comfortable and



**Greater Cleveland Food Bank reports a 30% increase in need since the pandemic started.**

**University of Illinois research shows up to 41% of community college students go hungry when their income is stretched.**

accessible setting. Staff will help connect students to other campus resources to find long-term solutions. The pantry will open in Spring 2021.

Through their grant-making, the Fowlers focus on projects that address educational inequity, and seek to benefit individuals without resources who must overcome barriers to succeed in their educational goals. They have made addressing student hunger a high priority this year.

Tri-C student Frida Etchell is assisting in creating the graphic design concepts for the project. She is completing her Associate of Applied Business degree with a concentration in graphic design. Char Fowler commented, “Chuck and I were happy to work with the great team at Tri-C. Cleveland is fortunate to have this caring, quality college in our midst.” ■

## Community Responds to Support Public Safety Students

### Family scholarship drive honors fallen firefighter



T-shirts intended to help a family heal have sparked a legacy that benefits aspiring firefighters at Tri-C. The Brett J. Wilson Fire Academy Scholarship Fund honors the fallen firefighter and Tri-C Fire Academy alumnus who passed away Oct. 30, 2019 while responding to a call.

Gifts from family, friends and colleagues created the fund, which fully supports two cadets as they complete the Tri-C Fire Training Academy. The family chose inspirational

language to describe the scholarship recipients, as “individuals who are born with the heart and determination to serve others in a selfless manner, who possess the innate passion for serving others in times of crisis and the leadership to make a difference in the profession and in their community.”

The fund was further boosted by the first Brett J. Wilson Memorial Climb, Oct. 24, 2020 at the Rocky River Nature Center stairs. Tri-C Fire Training Academy cadets (pictured) and area firefighters joined Brett's mother Barb Wilson and his Columbia Township Fire Department mentor Will Krupa, fundraiser organizers. ■



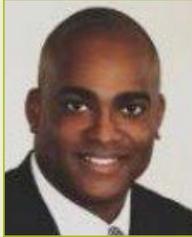
## Bridging the Technology Gap for Students

Despite enhancements to Tri-C's online learning and support services that now run 24/7, we know many students still don't have reliable technology and internet access. Today's persistent digital divide continues to create barriers to online learning. In Cleveland, 30% of households — or 53,000 homes — have no broadband internet, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Since spring 2020, the Tri-C Foundation's generous donors have helped Tri-C to provide more than 1,000 laptops, PCs, Wi-Fi “hot spots” and financial assistance so students can learn off-campus. The latest Student Laptop Program launched in the Fall 2020 semester. Donations to the Tri-C Foundation have allowed the College to offer new laptops to eligible students for just \$240, discounted by more than half. This is the latest

(continued on page 3)

## Tri-C Foundation Board Welcomes New Members in 2020



**Terrell Dillard**

*President*

*Jan-Pro NE Ohio and ZayMat Distributors*



**William Lacey**

*President and CEO*

*GE Lighting - a Savant Company*



**Theresa L. Polachek**

*Vice President, Corporate Communications  
Swagelok*

### Bridging the Technology Gap

*(continued from page 2)*

program that would not be possible without generous charitable gifts from our community of donors. We are committed to continuing our efforts to bridge the technology gap so our students have the access to learn. If you wish to help, visit [tri-c.edu/give](http://tri-c.edu/give). ■

## Scholarships ‘Fortify’ Nurse to Follow Career Dreams

Veronique Ramirez wanted to be a nurse, but she wasn’t sure she could. Thanks to support, scholarships, and people believing in her, she earned her associate degree at Tri-C and became an RN in 2017. Her early doubts have faded as she continues to pursue her education and career.



“Once I got in the nursing program at Tri-C, I was fortified,” she exclaimed. “I started looking at scholarships, and I found a mentor in (faculty member) Deniece Jukiewicz,” she said. “All the support made me feel like, if I focused and buckled down, I could do this.”

Multiple scholarships helped Ramirez complete the program. An Access Scholarship helped her transition from another education program. She received three awards from the Choose Ohio First program, plus funds through the Bernie Moreno Companies Scholarship, Hispanic Endowed Scholarship, a federal nursing grant, the Tri-C Foundation Nursing and Health Careers Scholarship, and the Frances Franklin Memorial Scholarship.

“If it wasn’t for the scholarships, the mentoring and the support, I would have been overwhelmed,” she said.

After graduating from Tri-C, she received a full scholarship through Northeast Ohio chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) to earn her BSN online through the University of Alabama.

Now Ramirez is enrolled in Ohio University’s DNP program while working as a trauma nurse at MetroHealth. The Warrensville Heights resident volunteers as a foster child mentor at Bellefaire. She is still involved in NAHN as chapter secretary and a mentor to two RN-to-BSN students. “I want to do my part to help others because so many people helped me,” she explained. “I feel like I was meant for this. My mom and grandmother wanted to go into nursing but never had the opportunity. I want to succeed for them, and in their memory.” ■

## Gillespie Scholarship for Respiratory Therapy

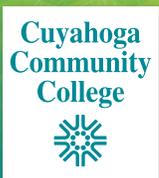
The Dr. David Gillespie Memorial Scholarship Fund helps those studying to become respiratory care therapists -- a critical need in hospitals, home care, skilled nursing facilities, education and management in Northeast Ohio. These are medical-team members who deliver essential care and treatment for COVID-19 patients in respiratory distress. The fund was established in memory of David Gillespie, MD, who founded and served as the first medical director of the Respiratory Care Program at Tri-C. ■





Cuyahoga Community College Foundation  
 700 Carnegie Ave.  
 Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2878

Non Profit Org.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 CLEVELAND, OH  
 PERMIT #3675



# Tri-C Initiatives *Honored*

Tri-C recently received regional and national recognition for several programs and initiatives.

**The 2020 NorthCoast 99**, presented by Employers Resource Council, is an annual recognition that honors 99 great Northeast Ohio workplaces for top talent. ***This is Tri-C's 14th year honored.***

**The 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award**, from INSIGHT into Diversity magazine, recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

**The Greater Cleveland Partnership Commission on Economic Inclusion**, honoring the College's commitment to making inclusion a priority in all aspects of the organization with its "Best in Class for Board Diversity" designation.

**The Tri-C Nursing Excellence and Equity in Community College STEM Award** by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and the Siemens Foundation. This award honors programs building career pathways for diverse populations (Tri-C nursing program).

This issue of *Invest in People* is generously provided by Consolidated Solutions.



[www.tri-c.edu/give](http://www.tri-c.edu/give) • 216-987-4868