

Foundation Awards Employer of the Year Award at Annual Breakfast

2020 and 2021 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year Award Winners Announced

The Charter Oak State College Foundation held its annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast in person on Thursday, November 18, 2021 at the TPC River Highlands Club House in Cromwell, CT. The event recognizes the economic and personal importance of employment opportunities that arise for the College's graduates.

"Charter Oak State College is dedicated to preparing our adult students for their next job. We sponsor an employers' breakfast to celebrate the supervisors and the companies that support our students. This event is a labor of love for us," said Ed Klonoski, *President*, Charter Oak State College.

The event highlighted the awarding of the **Foundation's Golden Acorn Employer of the Year Award** and winners for both 2020 and 2021 were recognized at the event as COVID-19 restrictions had made the in-person event impossible for the 2020 winner.

2021 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year winners include:

Stephen Clark, *Newington Police Chief*; nominated by Henry Rodriguez, COSC student; and **Svitlanna Czernee, Nadia Marynovych, and Kristen Bodenstein, *The Goddard School of Westport***; nominated by Nicole Vezina, COSC student.



Chief Stephen Clark shaking hands with Rebeka Scalia, COSC Foundation President (*foreground*); Sergeant Henry Rodriguez and Susan Lewis, Director at Balchem Corporation and COSC Foundation Board Member.



From left to right: Sergeant Henry Rodriguez, Carol Hall, and Stephen Clark, Newington Police Chief. Chief Stephen Clark accepting his award with Henry Rodriguez and Carol Hall, Executive Director, COSC Foundation, stated, "I am grateful for this award, for Henry nominating me, and for the Foundation's selection. The Police Department operates as a first responder to emergency calls, and as you can imagine at the onset of the pandemic, we were called to an extraordinary number of medical emergencies. Being recognized in this manner – and appreciated – is a very humbling experience. Thank you."

2020 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year winner was **Russ Arnold, *Director of Public Works/Town Engineer for the Town of Farmington***; nominated by David Parent, 2021 COSC graduate.

Employer nominees were received from a wide range of industries and services across Connecticut and other states. Nominations were submitted by Charter Oak State College students and alumni in the fields of Public Safety, Early Childhood Education, Nursing and Health Care, Business, Paralegal, and Information Systems Studies representing many of the certificate and degree programs offered by the College.

Held annually, Charter Oak alumni and students are encouraged to bring their boss to breakfast – for free, and to nominate their boss for the Golden Acorn Employer of the Year Award. Founder of the Employer Appreciation Breakfast, Dave Calibey, Charter Oak State College Foundation Board Member and Big Think Principal explains, "We recognize that it is the employer that helps our adult students earn a living and expand their career opportunities – and for that the student (and we) are grateful. This year the Foundation honored the employers from both 2020 and 2021."

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THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



What's Next for Charter Oak?

This extended pandemic has been a real challenge to higher education, but I am pleased to report that Charter Oak is holding its own. In fact, I think we are doing a little better than that. Our enrollments have been stable, and we have increased our "savings." So we are ready to make some investments in our future.

Perhaps most importantly, the institution passed the academic torch from Dr. Shirley Adams to our new Provost Dr. David Ferreira. Shirley led our academic unit for nearly 20 years, and she moved us from having no residency requirements to our current cornerstone and capstone courses. She created the majors and the master's degrees we are offering. She was directly responsible for our transition into the online college we are today. Finding someone to fill her shoes was a real challenge, but I think we have done that.

Dave is continuing the program growth that is so important to our students and to our success. We just received Board of Regents approval for a new Bachelor of Social Work that will allow CT Community College associate grads to finish their degree with us at the same tuition they were paying at the Community College. We think this degree is going to be as popular as our RN/ADN to BSN bachelor's, which follows the same pattern. And on that front, we currently enroll 242 Tuition Match students. The Community College Tuition Match number continues to grow even as total community college enrollment drops.

We have also decided to move aggressively into the micro-credential market. We are building credentials that are smaller than a bachelor's or master's, but have real workplace power. In each case, we are trying to make these new programs "stackable"

to our bachelor's or master's degree programs. We think adults are looking for these faster credentialing opportunities, and we have purchased Credly as our badging platform. Dave is leading the CSCU micro-credentialing working group to ensure we collaborate as a system in defining and executing a micro-credentialing strategy in alignment with industry expectations outlined by CT Governor Ned Lamont's Workforce Council.

Also, on the workforce development front, we are working with the Governor's Workforce Council to assist with developing various solutions to Connecticut's workforce challenges. The goal here is to produce practical short-term online training that is built to industry specifications and delivered to those that need it at a price they can afford. Once these folks are employed, their employers would encourage their employees to continue with Charter Oak to pursue our certificate or degree programs.

These projects are on Dave's short list, but he has several that will take a little longer. We are planning to convert our Alternate Route to Certification program into a Master's in Education with teaching certification. He is also working to create two IT programs: Google IT User Support Specialist that can stack into a bachelor's degree in Software Development, Quality Assurance, and Testing. Both are partnerships between the College and Industry.

So things are humming here at Charter Oak. Our team has worked hard to keep us safe during the pandemic, and we are ready to break out and grow ourselves now that the worst finally seems to be over. Feel free to send a message to David at dferreira@charteroak.edu.

Ed Klonoski, President

"Foundation Recognizes Employers" cont. from pg. 1

Carol Hall, *Executive Director of the Charter Oak State College Foundation*, noted "that many of the 2021 nominations included appreciation to individuals from organizations that worked to maintain a sense of normalcy during the pandemic year, including front line workers. To choose just one was almost impossible, so we chose two!"

Svitlanna Czernee, Nadia Marynovych, and Kristen Bodenstein from The Goddard School of Westport are all 2021 winners of the Golden Acorn Employer award. According to Nicole Vezina, COSC student, "These incredible women have supported my educational and professional journey since I started. Supporting me through the pandemic to help fulfill my requirements to complete my associate degree and

certificate in early childcare education. They made it possible for me to meet my student teaching requirements when it seemed impossible with schools closed all around us. These women have gone out of their way to ensure that my education was and is a priority. My sincere gratitude and thank you!"

The Employer Appreciation Breakfast brings our students, alumni, and business leaders together to celebrate employers that support higher education and to raise funds for degree completion. This year, proceeds from the event will support Higher Education Equity through a new Charter Oak State College scholarship program, **Parents Intent on Improving**



From left to right: Nadia Marynovych (Director), Nicole Vezina (Teacher/Student), Svitlanna Czernee (Assistant Director), and Kristen Bodenstein (Owner) from The Goddard School of Westport.

Tomorrow (PiiT). The PiiT program is an intentional resource aimed at removing barriers to higher education degree completion with the intent of helping to ease economic and racial disparity for our student parents of color.



Glenn Davis, COSC Foundation Treasurer and First Vice President, Community Development/CRA Officer at Liberty Bank, and EAB Chair (center); Dawn Ferry, VP, Manager of Learning & Development, Liberty Bank (left); Susan Lewis, Director at Balchem Corporation and COSC Foundation Board Member (right).

Liberty Bank provided the initial resources for the PiIT program and recently awarded an additional \$4,000 to the program. Glenn Davis, COSC Foundation Treasurer and First Vice President, Community Development/CRA Officer at Liberty Bank, said "We are excited to announce the BIG news for our parent students – those living at or near poverty – and especially our parents of color. Liberty Bank has extended a matching Challenge. By working together with our teammates, customers, and communities, Liberty Bank continues to reinforce the importance of fostering and maintaining an environment that makes everyone feel welcomed, appreciated, valued, and celebrated. As we work to build the Community Bank of the Future, we are committed to making key investments in organizations, programs, partnerships, and activities focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I)."

Between pledges and donations, the event raised an additional \$4,550; the Employer Appreciation guests, board members, friends of Charter Oak, and the COSC staff met the match Challenge! Donations are still being accepted for the PiIT program at the link provided (<https://bit.ly/PiITFund>).

Anthoinette Agyemang, a Fall 2021 PiIT scholarship recipient, attended the Breakfast and shared her appreciation, "this generosity has given me renewed hope that I will be able to continue my academic career with no financial issues. And now this scholarship will make my dream of getting a degree in Health Information Management a reality. This scholarship will put me on track to graduate in the Spring of 2022 and enable me to provide a better future for my two children."



Anthoinette Agyemang and son Uzziah (center); Gina Lippi (employer), Complete Family Eye Care, (right); Timothy, a guest (left).

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2021 Nominees | Golden Acorn Employer of the Year

- Rodney Barco, *Hartford Fire Department*
- Rolanda Booker, *Northend Elementary School*
- Sara Castle, *Imagine Nation*
- Diane Clare-Kearney, *Director of Equity and Adult Education, Manchester*
- Stephen Clark, *Chief of Police, Newington Police Department*
- Maureen Croteau, *University of Connecticut*
- Svitlana Czernee, *Nadia Marynovych*, and *Kristen Bodenstein, The Goddard School of Westport*
- Adeli DeArce, *LULAC Head Start Inc.*
- Renee DeHart, *Samford University, McWhorter School of Pharmacy*
- Kevin Ferrarotti, *EMS Hartford Hospital*
- Maria Garza, *East Coast Migrant Head Start Project*
- Matthew Geary, *Superintendent, Manchester Public Schools*
- Anita Gennaro, *Meriden Public Schools*
- Jack Gilligan, *Southfield Children Center*
- Gail Haynes, *Pension Real Estate Association (PREA)*
- Linda Hickey, *Population Health*
- Regina Hurlburt, *Housatonic Childcare Center*
- David Jones, *Goodwill of Western and Northern Connecticut*
- Gina Lippi, *Complete Family Eye Care*
- Dennis Littky, *College Unbound*
- Young Liu, *Wethersfield Family Dental, Dentist*
- Lisa Matulewicz, *Baby Bee's Play and Learn Center*
- Diane Pappacoda, *Community Dining Room*
- Ann Parisi, *Yale New Haven Health/ Bridgeport Hospital*
- Cynthia Pirro, *Easter Seals*
- Eric Protulis, *Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)*
- Marta Saklawska, *Creative Starts*
- Valerie Santos, *Duncaster*
- Rebeka Scalia, *Charter Oak State College Foundation*
- Jeffrey Segal, *CIG Partners Wealth Management*
- Kim Sherman, *The Goddard School of Fairfield*
- Dave Stuyanski, *Frito Lay*
- Ezra Taito, *Frito Lay*
- Michael Tweedie, *MOSAIC LLC*
- Danielle Wilcox, *Hartford HealthCare/ Backus Hospital*

Conversations With

NEW! Last year, the Charter Oak State College Alumni Association began a new complimentary lunchtime series of professional and personal development discussions. Titled, “*Conversations With,*” alumni of Charter Oak volunteered to share their knowledge, business experience, and insight via a virtual platform consisting of a twenty-minute presentation followed by a Q&A segment. The audience and presenters were from across the nation and the topics were a combination of personal and professional development.

John Thomas, Alumni Association President, stated “Any workshop or training that provides personal improvement or development tips is most definitely “professional development” as well. It is important to continuously learn and develop. However, it is equally important to share our expertise and insight with others. The Association is happy to provide this opportunity as part of our mission to create a connected Charter Oak community.” The goal is to make a positive impact on career growth while also providing a unique benefit to our alumni. The idea was “born” from a conversation between

Carol Hall (Associate Director of Development) and Charter Oak graduate, Damon DePaolo.

Damon is a Charter Oak Graduate, Lifetime Alumni Member, and the Director of Cyber Talent and Education Management for the Office of Cyber Security at MassMutual. He understood that many Charter Oak graduates have workforce experience, are taking courses to transition to a new career, and might need help defining their qualifications. He wanted to give back to his alma mater. The inaugural *Conversation*, held in August of 2021, was designed and presented by Damon. Attendees were provided with tips on how to interpret job postings through the lens of transferable skills. He helped Charter Oak graduates and students see themselves as “A Unique Valuable Asset.”

Other presenters and topics since the inaugural *Conversation* have included, Leadership Tips, by Emilee Tucker; Sane Scheduling, by Holly Howery; Medicare Coverage by Traci O'Brien; and Career Exploration in Corporate Real Estate along with multi-generational workplace strategy, by David Persons. **Read more about our presenters below.**



Damon DePaolo, Class of 2020, earned a Bachelor of Science with a concentration in Information Systems Studies at Charter Oak. He has worked in information technology for the past 21 years, doing everything from programming to project management to research and development, most recently spending the past few years in CyberSecurity. As the Director of Cyber Talent and Education Management at MassMutual, he credits his career advancement to Charter Oak, “because earning his degree gave him the confidence he needed to feel qualified to take on his new role.” Outside of work, Damon is a volunteer as a Board Trustee for the Connecticut River Conservancy, and an Assistant Scoutmaster.



Holly Howery is a three-time graduate of Charter Oak State College; 2014, 2017, and most recently in 2020 with an MS in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership. She is also a lifetime member of the Association, holds the position of Secretary, and serves as a Regent for the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education. Holly is the founder of Howery Coaching and Consulting Firm, specializing in health, wellness, and transitions/change. Her firm offers individual, group, and team coaching. Her *Conversation* included tips to Sane Scheduling by using values-based decision making.



Emilee Tucker, Class of 2016 and 2019, is a Learning and Development Specialist at Hartford HealthCare. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration and her Master’s degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership. She provided attendees with Tips to Improving Leadership Skills during her *Conversation*.



Traci O'Brien is a 2021 honors graduate of Charter Oak State College, earning a Bachelor of Science in Health Care Administration. She is also the newest Alumni Association Board Member. Traci, along with her husband, owns Senior Insurance Consultants, an insurance agency dedicated to helping the Medicare Community. Their agency expanded to over 5 states and 45 agents in just four short years and provides free services to seniors and their families. While assisting seniors is her profession, it is also her passion. Seeing the need of her clients compelled her to create a non-profit dedicated to granting wishes for underprivileged seniors in Connecticut called Senior Wishes. Traci provided attendees with the facts about the Medicare enrollment process and coverage during her *Conversation*.



David Persons, a 2018 and 2020 graduate of Charter Oak State College, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a MS in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership and is the Regional Development Project Manager for Lincoln Property Company in Orlando, Florida. He is also an established corporate real estate professional with over 20 years of experience leading multiple types of projects and real estate strategy projects throughout the Americas. He has executed build-to-suit, industrial, manufacturing, data centers, office, retail, mixed-use, and high-rise projects. David has a comprehensive understanding of real estate operations and facilities management, which facilitate project design and implementation. He is adept in leading multidisciplinary teams for all types of projects. He provided a *Conversation* on corporate real estate careers and multi-generational workplace strategy.

Are you interested in sharing your knowledge with the Charter Oak Community? Email alumni@charteroak.edu with your contact information, topic, and a brief outline of your presentation. These 30 – 45-minute talks, including 15 minutes of Q&A, take place one to two times a month at 12:00 pm (Eastern).

Suggested/requested topics include:

- Health and Well-being
- Mindfulness
- Personal Development
- Professional / Career Development
- Leadership Tips
- Organization and Time Management Strategies
- Tips to Working in a Virtual World

Board of Directors, Alumni Association

- John Thomas, President
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 Lisa Wilson, Director (20-22)
 Carol Hall, Associate Director and Staff Liaison, COSC

"Foundation Recognizes Employers" cont. from pg. 3



Maureen Hogan, Director, Early Childhood Education/Child Studies Programs, and a 2020 nominee of Employer of the Year, shown here (left) with many of the Early Childhood attendees and their bosses.



2020 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year winner, Russ Arnold, (left) Director of Public Works/Town Engineer, Town of Farmington and Charter Oak Alum, David Parent (right). Shown here receiving the much-delayed award at the Farmington Town Hall.



2021 Nominee Maria Garza (left) of East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (Raleigh, North Carolina) with COSC Student Jenny Guzman, (center) and Liberty Bank's Dawn Ferry (right).



Nancy Taylor, COSC Assistant Director of Corporate Relations (left) with Valerie Santos, VP of Human Resources at Duncaster.



Standing, COSC Graduate and Alumni Board Member, Mervin Alexander with his leadership team from Waste Management, (left to right) Takisha Delgado, Paul Foody, Judy Hemphill.

CharterOak STATE COLLEGE **connections**

WINTER/SPRING 2022 • Volume XLIX, Number 1

Issued semi-annually for alumni and friends of Charter Oak State College.

Charter Oak State College complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action.

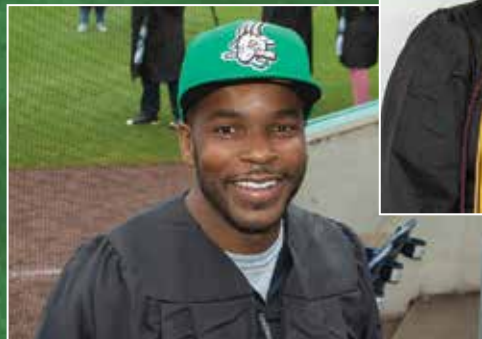


An Outdoor Celebration for the 2020 and 2021 Graduates!

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person commencement ceremonies for two years, however; that did not sit well with Wanda Warshauer, *Director of Academic Advising* at Charter Oak State College. She worked with her team and came up with a plan to celebrate, in-person, safely, and with some of the higher education traditions we are accustomed to.

Graduates proceeded across the field to the traditional sounds of pomp and circumstance, and then enjoyed traditional ballpark eats, and a baseball game at the Yard Goats Stadium in Hartford, CT. The event included Charter Oak Graduates and their families, Volunteer Board Members, Staff, and Oaklee - who made his mascot debut and was all smiles for the camera!





Provost Reception – Welcoming Dr. David Ferreira



David Ferreira, Provost, COSC with Oaklee.

Charter Oak State College and the COSC Foundation held an outdoor reception in October of 2021 to welcome new Provost, Dr. David Ferreira.

Board Members, Community Members, and leadership from the College were in attendance as the sun set over the hill at the Back Nine Tavern Country Club in Southington, CT.



Michael Moriarty, Chief Financial Officer, Charter Oak.



Linda Perfetto, Director, RN/ADN to BSN Program.



Linda Wilder, Director, Prior Learning Assessment and Oaklee.



(Left to right) Kayla Bennet, MSN, Nursing Professional Development Specialist, Griffin Health, Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Outreach with Oaklee, and Amanda Bell, DNP, Nursing Administration and Nursing Professional Practice and Operations, Griffin Health.



(Left to right) David Ferreira, Kevin Pallache of Legal Shield, Carol Hall, Ed Klonoski, David Calibey (COSC Foundation Board Member), and Christopher Conway.



Loretta Rivers, UConn Fellow, Fall 2021 (left) with Brandee Stefano, Administrative Assistant, Charter Oak (right).



(Left to right) Susan Calibey, Susan Lewis, Foundation Board Member, and Christopher Conway, West Hartford Chamber of Commerce.



Event attendees enjoy the festivities.

Get
Unlimited
Consultation
on Personal
Legal Matters



As a Charter Oak State College Alum, you are eligible to receive a 15%+ discount on your LegalShield/IDShield benefit!

- Need a Will prepared or updated?
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You and your family can have access to experienced attorneys in your area for as low as \$24.95/month!

Learn more or enroll at: <https://legalshield.com/info/coscaa>

Charter Oak Alumni Insurance Program

Did you know the Charter Oak State College Alumni Association now sponsors an Alumni Insurance Program as a service to our graduates? The program offers a variety of attractively-priced insurance products, most of which are available to alumni, students, faculty and staff, as well as spouses, parents, children, and siblings.



LIFE INSURANCE



ADVISORY SERVICES



AUTO/HOME INSURANCE



REAL ESTATE BENEFITS



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LONG TERM DISABILITY
INSURANCE



PET INSURANCE

For more information visit COSC.MeyerAndAssoc.com
or contact our program administrator (Meyer and Associates)
at 800-635-7801.

Alumni Association Survey – Input needed!

The COSC Alumni Association has provided a variety of opportunities for Alumni to connect via social events, such as: music in the park, holiday socials, and virtual bingo. Last year, the Board also began a Professional and Personal Development Series, *Conversations With*, providing a platform for alumni to share wisdom and grow professionally.

We'd like to know your thoughts. What have you enjoyed? What do you want more of? What can we do better?

Please answer the brief 5 question survey at

www.CharterOak.edu/Alumni

The survey also has a comments section.

Thank you!

We appreciate and value your input!

STAY CONNECTED!

We always like to hear from our alumni about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. Email updates to share to chall@charteroak.edu.

Save the Dates - The Charter Oak Alumni and Student Association(s)
Invite YOU to an Evening of FUN!



GYBO Get Your Bingo On

"Lucky YOU Bingo"

Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 6:30pm

\$10 per person includes 4 Games and 1 Lucky Spin on the Shamrock Spinner!
Additional cards are available for \$10 per set (4 games).
Prizes, laughter, and virtual fun for everyone! **Two winners per game!**
First Bingo Called (and the second!) will both receive prizes!

Shamrock Spinner door prizes will be valued at \$25 or more!
Registered guests receive 1 chance on the Shamrock Spinner.
Additional chances are \$25 for 5.

6:30pm - Meet & Greet ~ show us your lucky beverage or snack!
7:00pm - 8:00pm ~ 4 Games of Bingo & the Shamrock Spinner!

To register and purchase your Bingo Cards, scan the QR Code by Sunday, March 13, 2022.



Charter Oak STATE COLLEGE Foundation invites you to

SAVE THE DATE

BIG 80's

OUTDOOR DINNER • DANCE

Saturday • June 25
Farmington Club
Pavilion and Tent

A Fundraiser to
CREATE BRIGHTER FUTURES
One Degree at a Time

There are opportunities to sponsor, purchase at all tables or auction items, or donate at home and receive prominent recognition. Details and More Information can be found at <https://www.charteroakstatecollege.edu/fundraising>.

80's Dinner Dance & Fundraiser
Saturday, June 25, 2022

Help Create Brighter Futures

1. Register to attend and plan your 80s outfit (*optional but encouraged*)
2. Donate an auction Item
3. Place an ad in the Program Book
4. Become a sponsor and receive prominent recognition
5. Visit the link below for details!

<https://bit.ly/80sDinnerDance>

Help Us Bring About
BRIGHTER FUTURES
ONE DEGREE AT A TIME

You can help create **BRIGHTER FUTURES**

Charter Oak State College students are determined to create better lives for themselves and their families. But with full time jobs, family responsibilities or tight budgets, life continues to create obstacles to their success, making degree completion difficult for many students.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation supports these students by providing scholarships and emergency assistance to help them reach their higher educational goals.

But the need is greater than our resources. **We need your help today more than ever.** We could only grant assistance to 20% of those requesting it last year.

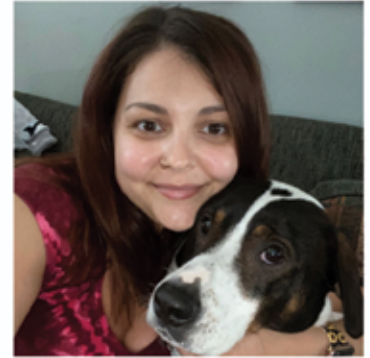


Your financial support **CHANGES LIVES**



Anthoinette, immigrated to the U.S. with a hope of getting a degree in Health Information Management. "My kids now have a good chance of seeing their mother fulfill her dreams and give them a better future. Thank you for coming through for me when I was close to giving up again!"

MaKenna, in appreciation wrote, "This money will help so much with defraying costs and lowering how much I will need in student loans. I cannot begin to express how grateful I am to receive this scholarship. Thank you again."



Read their complete stories and more at youtu.be/8VRUz75FHiM

You can
BRIGHTEN the **FUTURE**

Give **NOW** to help Charter Oak students!

Donate Online bit.ly/BrighterFutures2022

Join a Donor Circle

Be recognized in *Connections*, the Summer/Fall Newsletter, based on your donations from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

- President's Circle \$750 and up
- Charter Circle \$250 - \$499
- Acorn Circle \$99 and under
- Supporter Circle \$500 - \$749
- Sustainer Circle \$100 - \$249



Join a Donor Circle by giving a little each month. For example join the Sustainer Circle with a monthly gift of \$10

Contributions to the Charter Oak State Foundation College Annual Appeal are applied to the unrestricted fund and are tax deductible.

Creating **BRIGHTER FUTURES** | Charter Oak State College Foundation 2021-2022 Annual Appeal

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ One Time Monthly Annual

My gift will be matched by My Company | My Spouse's Company | Company Name _____

Please make checks payable to COSC Foundation Annual Appeal

Charter Oak State College Foundation, a 501(c)(3) | 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053 p: (860) 515-3889

CharterOak *Foundation* invites you to
STATE COLLEGE

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BIG
80's

OUTDOOR
DINNER•DANCE

Saturday • June 25
Farmington Club
Pavilion and Tent

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Details and More Information can be found at <https://www.charteroak.edu/foundation/events.php>