

# connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER/FALL 2015 VOL. XL NO. 2



## Charter Oak Holds 2015 Commencement Ceremony on May 31st – Theme was “Re-invention”

With proud families in tow and a full house, 541 members of the Class of 2015 received degrees during Charter Oak State College's 41st commencement ceremony held on Sunday, May 31, in Welte Auditorium at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT. Two hundred graduates were in attendance representing 14 states. A live webcast of the ceremony was hosted on CharterOak.edu for graduates unable to attend in person.

Charter Oak President, Ed Klonoski addressed the graduates. The commencement speaker was columnist and Connecticut radio personality Colin McEnroe, and the student speaker was April Cox.

In his remarks, President Klonoski congratulated the graduates on their achievement. “Most of you have arrived at this moment along a non-traditional path, often after a number of false starts, and over far more than the usual number of years. You represent a wide range of ages, but none of you thought it was too late to finish your degree.”

He congratulated the graduates for finding a way to persist through life's interruptions and re-inventing themselves on their way to their college degree.

He added “Deep in your hearts, I think all of you did this hard work over these long years to become a better version of yourself. Your college degree



Connecticut radio host Colin McEnroe addresses the graduates.

is certainly going to return value in your career and I think your act of re-invention is going to pay dividends in parts of your life other than your job.”

Commencement speaker and Honorary Doctorate recipient Colin McEnroe spoke of lifelong learning beyond formal education. He spoke of preparing a daily radio show and being lucky enough to have always had jobs that involve learning about others as well as life lessons learned along the way. He added, “Don't be afraid of being fired and don't stop thinking, new possibilities always emerge”.

Dr. Shirley Adams, Provost of Charter Oak State College shared some interesting facts about the Class of 2015, including that 64% were women; graduates ranged in age from 16 to 70+ with the average age being 38; graduates hailed from 40 states and 6 countries with 14 states represented at commencement; 44% earned honors; 460 graduated with a Bachelor's degree,

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# THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



Each year I compose this message for Connections immediately after our graduation ceremony. That means I am both glowing from all the positive energy associated with this event and tired. But this year we followed our graduation ceremony with an equally moving dedication ceremony. On June 4th, we dedicated our new Doris G. Cassiday Academic Wing. Many of you reading

this will recognize that Doris Cassiday was one of our longest serving advisors, and you may have heard that Doris passed away in January.

But as amazing as 30 years of employment is, Doris has done much more for this College. She worked on behalf of the College since before its creation 42 years ago. She was part of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) effort that created the College. After the legislature established us in 1973, she served as the first chairwoman of the Board for Academic Awards, and she was the first president of the College's Foundation. Along the way, Doris has served Charter Oak as Founder, First Board Chair, First Foundation President, and student advisor for 30 years. That is a record of service that is simply unique in American higher education. And these accomplishments are just the ones associated with Charter Oak; she has done more.

We have honored her with the Doris Cassiday Award and an honorary doctorate and the state honored her as Mother of the Year. But none of these honors really does justice to the contributions Doris made to this institution, its mission, and its students. Presidents have come and gone, but Doris has been steadfast.

In her final days, Doris donated \$20,000 to the Charter Oak State College Foundation earmarked for the Shea Lecture endowment fund. The fund honors our founding president, and it was only fitting that our founding mother contributed to it.

I tell you this story for two reasons. First, Charter Oak was blessed to have Doris Cassiday's love and support for its entire history, and second, to demonstrate the power of a legacy gift to your alma mater. When I told the staff and faculty about Doris' gift, they responded by matching it with another \$2,000. The Foundation was so pleased that they asked the College to offer Doris a naming opportunity, and we were happy to name the Advising Wing of the building after her.

Many of you were helped to your degree by the generosity of our Foundation, and it would be wonderful to hear from you that you are planning to leave the College a gift, called a legacy gift in philanthropic language. Doris always led by example and once again she shows us the way to build an organization. I have followed her lead and I hope that you will as well. ([www.CharterOak.edu/Foundation](http://www.CharterOak.edu/Foundation))

And before I sign off, I have one more piece of significant news. The Board of Regents has finally approved our Master's degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership. The staff, under Provost Shirley Adams' leadership, is hard at work planning the launch of that degree during 2016. If you'd like to get on our list for details as they become available visit [www.CharterOak.edu/Masters](http://www.CharterOak.edu/Masters).

**Enjoy the summer,**

**Ed Klonoski, President**

## Remembering Richard H. Calder

The Charter Oak State College family is sad to share that **Richard H. Calder**, one of our core faculty members has passed away. Richard was a member of the Distance Learning committee, a member of our teaching faculty, and a spirited participator in our annual commencement ceremonies. Richard passed away on Friday, April 24, 2015 after a two year battle with cancer.

Shirley Adams, *Provost*, Charter Oak State College said, "Richard was a true gentleman. He loved Charter Oak, he loved teaching, and he loved sharing his expertise with and learning from his colleagues. We will miss

him and we will miss his British/New Zealand accent."

In addition to teaching upper level management courses online at Charter Oak, Richard's obituary notes that he was an aeronautical engineer, and spent his career traveling the world with Rolls-Royce, living in England, Canada, the USA, and Brazil before settling in Chester, CT in 1977. He is described as "the epitome of selflessness, strength, kindness, warmth, curiosity, and courage."

The Distance Learning Committee would like to keep Richard's legacy going by fundraising \$500 toward the

purchase of a plaque in his memory that will hang in the main conference room at the College. If you would like to contribute, donations can be made online at [www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm](http://www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm). Please indicate the donation is directed to the annual fund in memory of Richard Calder.

Or, a check can be sent payable to the Charter Oak State College Foundation to the attention of Angela Chapman, Charter Oak State College Foundation, 55 Paul Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053.

# Summer Greetings from Your Alumni Association!

## We are excited to welcome a new group of graduates to the ranks of Charter Oak Alumni.

This is the largest graduating class ever at 541. Graduation on May 31 was also the largest ever and it was wonderful to meet so many of our newest alumni and their families.

For those who graduated a few weeks ago or within the past few years we hope you will take advantage of the Alumni Association and that you will lend your talents to your alma mater. In particular, we hope you will become our best source of referrals and tell your friends, family, and coworkers about the quality affordable and flexible degree you earned at Charter Oak.

If you know of a company who you think could benefit from a visit or a webinar, please let us know. We are especially interested in health care, technology, and public safety fields so if you are in any of those fields and interested in talking with us about how you might be able to help with recruiting efforts at your workplace, please contact:

**Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations** at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) or 860-515-3863.

Another way you can help is through our soon-to-be-unveiled mentoring program. This program will pair Charter Oak Alumni with current students. It's a program in which all of our alums – regardless of where you live – can participate. If any of you have been part of a mentoring program at work or through a leadership group, you know first-hand the benefits of having a trusted mentor.

A mentoring program doesn't replace the outstanding academic advising we offer at Charter Oak. Rather, a mentor will be a person who can give students some helpful suggestions for succeeding in their online courses, time management, and juggling work, school, and family. It will also be a great networking opportunity for the mentor and mentee.

There will be more information coming in the next few months about the mentoring program. In the meantime, please make sure you have updated your contact information with the college. We might not have your most current email which is important for contacting you. Also, if you would like to join the Alumni Association, dues are a mere \$15 a year which helps

defray the costs of events and allows us to offer scholarships to Charter Oak graduates pursuing graduate studies. Please visit: [www.charteroak.edu/alumni/](http://www.charteroak.edu/alumni/) for payment information for the Alumni Association and to update your contact information.

Finally, we are trying to start chapters of the Alumni Association in Florida and Texas. If you live in those states and would like to get involved, please let us know.

As always, if you have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact **Alumni Association Board president, Chris May** at [jhchris280@yahoo.com](mailto:jhchris280@yahoo.com) or **Nancy Taylor** at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu). Please send us your ideas and your updates – we always like hearing about the accomplishments of our impressive alumni! And don't forget – YOU are our best ambassadors for the College. **Have a great summer!** 🌿

*"2015 Commencement: Re-Invention" continued from pg. 1*

81 graduated with an Associate's degree; several students had perfect 4.0 grade point averages, many graduates used multiple methods to earn college credit as noted during the Doris G. Cassidy awards, and a number of graduates are already attending graduate school in areas such as business, law, medicine, and health care administration.

Student speaker, April Cox, of Barrington, Rhode Island, said of her academic accomplishment, "My goal was to finish my Bachelor's as quickly as possible in order to realize my dream of getting into an MBA program. I needed the flexibility and guidance Charter Oak

provided". She spoke of completing unfinished business and setting her mind on finishing her degree before her youngest son. She told her fellow graduates to be grateful, love who they are, to not be limited in what they do next. She closed by encouraging her classmates to be active alumni and share their gifts and to remember "Don't stop now!"

Awards for Outstanding Academic Performance were presented to Peter Courtway, Max Russell, Michele Millard and Emanuel King. 🌿

**Congratulations to the Class of 2015!**

## connections

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 CharterOak<sup>SM</sup>  
STATE COLLEGE

Degrees Without Boundaries

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

Helen Diecidue, Editor

State of Connecticut  
Dannel P. Malloy, Governor

Board of Regents  
Dr. Gregory W. Gray, President

Charter Oak State College  
Ed Klonoski, President



April Cox, Senior Manager of Enterprise Product Innovation with CVS Health

**Connections recently spoke with April Cox a 2015 graduate. April graduated this year with a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership. She is a Senior Manager of Enterprise Product Innovation with CVS Health focusing on pilots and programs that assist with improving medication adherence.**

### **What are some of the challenges people are having taking their medications?**

There can be complex regimens to follow. For those with multiple conditions and a high number of meds it can be very confusing and the instructions can be complicated. For instance, one medication may interact with another or cause unpleasant side-effects that can cause someone to stop taking the medication. In some cultures taking medications can even be seen as a sign of weakness.

### **Is cost ever a factor?**

Absolutely – it is one of the leading factors. It can be what makes people take less of a dosage or perhaps not refill right away causing gaps in their therapy.

### **How do you address this?**

We start with research. CVS Health

has partnered with Harvard, Brigham & Women's, and the University of Pennsylvania to research a number of things related to adherence. An insight paper on adherence was published that includes ten years of research. It talks about what barriers there are and ways we are working to influence medication adherence. Products and services we are rolling out are based on this research. It helps us to pilot things that might work and to pick the best of those things from our research and roll them out to the public. It's what I love about my new role here.

### **What is your role?**

I work with a team of people and am accountable for a portfolio of projects designed to improve medication adherence. Our team is tasked with executing new product ideas and working across the company to bring a new idea to market. I've been very fortunate to work on a large number of these pilots and some that are scaling up and rolling out.

### **What does the acronym CVS stand for?**

CVS started with the launch of its first store in Lowell, MA, and it stands for consumer value store. Now we are rebranded as CVS Health which has four arms – CVS/Pharmacy, the Pharmacy Benefit Management (CVS/caremark), CVS/MinuteClinic, and CVS/specialty for specialty medications. Our purpose at CVS is helping people on their path to better health. We've stopped selling cigarettes in our stores. And all the things we are doing in this incredible program here are helping to make people healthier.

### **What is a CVS MinuteClinic?**

MinuteClinics are walk-in clinics staffed with Nurse Practitioners and located

within many CVS Pharmacy locations. They offer treatment for acute illnesses and wellness services. It is much more affordable than a trip to an urgent care. If you are not feeling well with a cold, flu, cough, or fever they can help. Even if you're just looking to save time for that camp physical. I love the fact that they can help monitor chronic diseases and even offer weight loss programs. I don't think many people know how many things MinuteClinics provide.

### **Are they in all of the CVS locations?**

They are strategically located geographically and are rolling out more and more of them. There are currently more than 900 clinics in 30 states. The great thing is you don't need to make an appointment. You can log in to the kiosk in the store and it will tell you how long the wait is or go online and grab a time slot for your flu shots.

### **What is it like working at the headquarters?**

Well, it starts with plenty of steps on my pedometer walking from the parking lot into the office. We have a large campus! Then there are many meetings that are enterprise wide and people connect via teleconference. I am also very lucky to be able to telecommute occasionally. We also have great Colleague Resource Groups that sponsor the occasional event like the Fit Club's Farmer's Market or Women's Success Network lunch meeting. If you walk through our cafeteria you will see CVS's focus on health. They removed many unhealthy choices and subsidize the salad bar. There are signs for Fit meals at each station. We still have treats but they are smaller in size. It really shows CVS's commitment to employees health and wellness.

*continued on pg. 11*

## Alumni Spring Social: Another Fun Evening!

The largest gathering ever for the Alumni Association Spring Social Event took place on Friday, May 1 as 55 Charter Oak Alumni, their spouses, and staff members gathered at the Gelston House restaurant in East Haddam, CT for another lively evening of dinner and theatre. As the photos show, everyone had a fabulous time. After a wonderful dinner filled with good food and lively conversation, everyone walked next door to the historic Goodspeed Opera House to see **Guys and Dolls**.

As the Charter Oak Alumni left the theatre singing "Luck Be a Lady," they all agreed they were sorry to see the evening end and couldn't wait for next year's Spring Social.

We will soon begin the planning for next year's Spring Social event so please contact **Nancy Taylor**, *Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations* at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) if you have suggestions for the Spring Social Event or other activities you would like to see the Alumni Association consider.



L-R: Ed Drapp (Class of 2007) and Debra Drapp; Nancy Taylor (Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations); Laura Tordenti (Vice President of Student Affairs, CCSU) and Lou Testa (Laura's husband).



L-R: Chief Patrick Ridenhour (Class of 2007); Chief Gregory Sneed (Class of 2009) and Helen Sneed; Kari Miller and Sgt. Ken Miller (Class of 2013).



L-R: Carol Alter (Class of 1989) and David Alter; Nancy Taylor (Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations).



L-R: Nancy Taylor (Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations); Mike Guillet and Lila Guillet (Assistant to the Provost & Academic Dean; Class of 2005); Mario Petrella and Joyce Petrella (Foundation Board).

# alumni spotlight

## 1979

**Robert Gandt** of Port Orange, FL credits his History degree from Charter Oak and love of flying with validating his career as a writer and historian. He earned his B.A. in History while working as a pilot for then struggling Pan Am airline knowing he might become jobless. His plan to attend law school afterwards was changed when his first book, *Seasons of Storms*, was published on the day he graduated from Charter Oak. He has since earned a living as a writer, historian, novelist, and screenwriter. Bob's screen credits include the CBS series *Pensacola: Wings of Gold*, adapted from his book *Bogeys and Bandits* (Viking). His seventh novel, *The President's Pilot*, was published last year. He currently lives in a flying community in Florida where he continues to write, fly aerobatic planes, and speak at symposiums and seminars. [www.gandt.com](http://www.gandt.com)

## 2004

**Steve Zimcosky** of Cleveland, OH has written a new book: *Old Man From the Hill (Lessons in Qigong and Tai Chi)*. The story of a young boy who is sent to spend the summer with his grandparents in the small town of Smock, Pennsylvania due to health reasons. A chance encounter with an old Chinese man leads him to learn the ancient Chinese health exercises of Qigong and Tai Chi. As he learns these exercises he finds his health and life changing for the better and the encounter is the beginning of a life-long friendship. For every paperback

copy of *The Old Man From the Hill (Lessons in Qigong and Tai Chi)* sold between July 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015, Steve will donate 25 cents from each sale to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. You can learn about Qigong and Tai Chi and help with a wonderful cause. The books are available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble. More info is available at: <http://theoldmanfromthehill.com/2015/06/18/announcement/>

## 2007

**John Horvath** recently joined the Rockport, MA police department as Chief of Police. He was previously the police chief at the University of Massachusetts for three years and prior to that spent fifteen years with the Hartford, Connecticut police department. Horvath holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Charter Oak State College and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Boston University.

## 2008

**Jeff Mulholland** of San Antonio, TX has a new job. He is the Director of Operations for Pressable, a web hosting provider that focuses on specialized tools for WordPress, a popular website management platform. The company was founded 4 years ago and is based at Geekdom, a collaborative tech workspace in San Antonio where entrepreneurs, technologists, developers, makers, and creatives help each other build businesses and other cool things together.

Every now and then we receive a note or call from an alum that makes our day. This is definitely at the top of the list. We thank Mr. Hall for sharing.

I recently had an opportunity to read the latest Connections, and resolved to write the letter that I've been meaning to write for literally three decades. Better late than never, I guess. In late 1977, I withdrew from the college I was attending in Virginia a month and a half before graduation, to run a theatre company and pursue a career in theatre and academia. Within a couple of years, my quest had taken me to Hartford, where I found myself in a quandary. While I was in need of very few undergraduate credits to get my degree, that was in and of itself a major obstacle. Unless I returned to Virginia and my former college (not really an option financially or logistically), attendance at a new college would require roughly another two years of full time undergraduate work, as they would not transfer anything other than my core curriculum credits. That was definitely not an option. In the meantime, all that was keeping me from the graduate program at UConn-Storrs was the lack of my Bachelor's. Simply put, I was stuck.

Then Fate dealt me a surprising card. While riding on a bus in Hartford, a chance conversation with a random stranger occurred. The gentleman told me of his wife's enrollment at Charter Oak State College, and explained that Charter Oak would likely accept and apply the credits I already had towards a degree. I contacted the college the next day, and spoke with a wonderfully kind and informative

woman. (I so wish I remembered her name but, alas, it has been lost to the passage of time.) A long story short, after taking a few tests and a few classes at a local community college, I was able to obtain my Bachelor's from Charter Oak. I completed a Master's at UConn, and went on to teach theatre on the university and college level for 11 years, picking up a MFA from the University of New Orleans, and continuing to work in professional theatre along the way.

After 11 years of teaching, I left both theatre and academia and wrote for a few years (*Rape in America: A Reference Handbook*, ABC-CLIO), then I began my current career in law enforcement. In that career, I've worked myself up from being a civilian volunteer in Oklahoma City to serving as Chief of Police of four departments.

None of the above would have happened had it not been for a chance encounter on a bus in Hartford, leading me to Charter Oak State College. I have no doubt that if it had not been for Charter Oak and the wonderful advisers I dealt with there, I would have never attended graduate school, and never had the careers I have had.

I'm sorry this is over 30 years late, but I wanted you to know.

Sincerely,

**Robert L. Hall, BS in Applied Arts, '80** 🌱

# happenings

**Approval of our first Master's degree** has cleared a major hurdle at the Board of Regents level and is currently with NEASC for final approval. It's not official quite yet, but the College's Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership is well on its way! Call us if you'd like to be put on a contact list when we're ready to officially launch the program or go to [www.CharterOak.edu/Masters](http://www.CharterOak.edu/Masters)



**The College hit an all-time high enrollment record** this year with a 38% increase in 2015 summer vs. summer 2014 enrollments. This is the largest bump in the history of the college. Much of the increase derives from the recent successful Go Back to Get Ahead campaign aimed at encouraging eligible Connecticut residents to finish previously started degrees.



**Our Admissions team attended HIMSS '15** at McCormick Place in Chicago, IL on April 12-16 this year for the first time to attract and meet Health Information Management prospects for the HIM program. It was a very large venue and the team made some valuable contacts. Please spread the word about this popular Bachelor's degree if you work in the healthcare IT profession!



**Our Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) office reports that almost 600 new credits** have been evaluated and approved by academic faculty for college credit recognition. This is valuable for adults who have acquired knowledge that can be applied towards college credit without taking a course containing that same information. Go to [www.CharterOak.edu/prior-learning-assessment/ccap](http://www.CharterOak.edu/prior-learning-assessment/ccap) to learn more about PLA and the programs evaluated for credit. Spread the word to your colleagues that may be looking for ways to shorten their time to graduation!



**Admissions counselor Shawn Holliday reports that CCAP (CT Credit Assessment Program) approval** has been granted to the Massachusetts Police Academy. Academy graduates can now earn up to 30 college level credits from Charter Oak or other accredited colleges towards a Bachelor's degree from material learned during police academy training.

## STAY CONNECTED THROUGH connections

We'd like to hear from you about promotions, graduate degrees, awards, marriages, births, and other significant successes in your life. We'll publish your news in the next edition of *Connections*. Please use the form below or drop us a note. Send to: Alumni News, Charter Oak State College, 55 Paul J. Manafort Drive, New Britain, CT 06053-2150 or email [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu).

Your name and address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

My news \_\_\_\_\_

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# COMMENCEMENT 2015

## *Congratulations*





# Graduates!



## Sargeant Ken Miller chosen as D'Amato Award Recipient



Ken Miller accepts the D'Amato Award from Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations prior to the 2015 Commencement brunch.

Congratulations to **Sargeant Ken Miller**, the 2015 recipient of the D'Amato Award. The award announcement was made during the 2015 Commencement brunch. The D'Amato Graduate Studies Award recognizes a Connecticut Charter Oak State College graduate who is

husband and father, he maintained a 4.0 average while also working full time as a police officer. Due to a prior commitment Miller accepted the award via a pre-taped video during the commencement brunch.

For the past fifteen years, Sargeant Miller, a 2013 graduate, has been in

continuing his or her education. The criteria for the award includes academic promise, motivation, and contributions to community life.

Sargeant Miller will graduate in September with honors from Southern New Hampshire University with a degree in Justice Studies with a Homeland/Terrorism certificate. A

law enforcement. For the past five years he's been involved with the Town of Farmington's Community Policing Initiatives and provided the leadership to start a number of successful community based programs, including a Christmas toy drive, and Thanksgiving food drive and road race. He created the Community Emergency Response Team and the Domestic Violence Team for Farmington. He is most proud of the work he does on a regular basis mentoring students in the local middle school.

In reflecting on his time at Charter Oak, Sargeant Miller said, "Charter Oak State College was a wonderful and challenging learning experience that gave me the tools to flourish in my law enforcement career. It has given me the skills and desire to work towards my graduate level education."

Ken Miller exemplifies the spirit of this award and we wish him well in his future studies. 🌱

## Doris G. Cassidy Awards Granted at 2015 Commencement

The Doris G. Cassidy Award is given to those graduates of Charter Oak State College who have achieved excellence in innovative learning and who exemplify the essence of the Charter Oak mission. With this award, the College recognizes individuals who avail themselves fully of a broad range of learning options, earning credits both inside and outside the traditional classroom setting. Options include distance learning, testing, portfolio assessment, contract learning, military service schooling and other non-collegiate sponsored instruction which has been evaluated for credit, as well as classroom instruction.

The Cassidy Award was created in 1998 in the name of Doris Cassidy, a founding member of Charter Oak State College, in recognition of her longstanding commitment to higher education. Doris served the college for over 30 years; as its first Chairwoman upon creation and again as the first Foundation President. She then went on to work directly with students as Assistant Director of Academic Programs

as an academic counselor until retirement earlier this year. Doris Cassidy passed away shortly after retiring but her longstanding commitment and dedication to the college and its students will long be remembered.

### *2015 Doris G. Cassidy Award recipients included:*

April M. Cox, Barrington, RI  
Andrew M. Durham, Portland, TN  
Natali C. Elfenbein, Dallas, TX  
Scott J. Farrell, Brookfield, CT  
LaVonda M. Krout, Williams, IN  
Scott J. vonFischer, Cheshire, CT

**Congratulations to all!**



Cathy White, daughter of Doris Cassidy, recognizes the 2015 Cassidy Award winners.

### You were our student speaker at commencement. What was that like?

I was so honored to be asked to speak at commencement. I'm a very big advocate of Charter Oak. I know my story is similar to many other non-traditional students who took longer to complete their degree. I tried to offer inspiration to reflect on the goals that drove them to complete their degree and think about what they can do to help make a difference – what legacy will we leave? I was speaking from my heart and it was a very rewarding experience.

### What's next for you post graduation?

I am looking forward to getting started with an Executive MBA program. I just finished an interview with the University of Connecticut and will interview with MIT at the end of the month. For me, it's about a love of learning and continuing to grow and improve.

I'd also like to help roll out a mentoring program at the college to help students get through the initial hump of starting an online degree program. I really want to be very engaged as an alum.

### Is there anything else that you would like to share with your fellow alums?

If you or someone you love is having trouble taking your medications, there is help. You can learn more at CVSHealth.com by searching for 'Adherence'. If you receive a call from a CVS Pharmacist who wants to talk about your medications, take it seriously. They are there to counsel and help you. It is worth the time and may just improve your health or save your life. Adherence matters!

### Thanks April! 🌱

(NOTE: If you are interested in sharing your success story with your fellow alumni, please contact **Nancy Taylor**, Assistant Director of Corporate Recruitment and Alumni Relations at [nataylor@charteroak.edu](mailto:nataylor@charteroak.edu) or 860-515-3863.

## WIT and CT WAGE Programs Graduate Fourteen



WIT and CT WAGE's proud graduates prepare for Commencement.

The Women in Transition (WIT) and CT WAGE programs, both special programs at Charter Oak State College celebrated victory for its fourteen participating students at Commencement this year. Eleven WIT and three CT WAGE students walked triumphantly through the door of academia accomplishment officially becoming alumni as they participated in the 2015 graduation ceremony held on May 31, 2015.

Both programs were designed to assist low income single parents obtain their degrees to create a better future for themselves, their families, and communities. Through the program students are provided with every tool needed to succeed in reaching their goal of degree completion. These tools include a laptop, internet service, books, academic, career and personal counseling, and personal and professional development workshops. Program Coordinator Delores Bell and Program Assistant Janice Silva work hard to ensure the students take full advantage of the support provided to gain educational success. Graduating student Sheila Waters said about the program "When I was looking at my grades I have to ask myself how in the world did I do this? I was terrible, I never got good grades...but when I look back I realized I didn't have the



support system that I have now. There were times I wanted to quit, but having you in my corner and allowing me to be able to reach out to you when I felt trapped was a big help as well. So thank you for seeing me through to the end."

Twelve students graduated with a Bachelor's degree and three with an Associate's. All of the Associate degree recipients will continue in the program for their four year degree. Among the graduates were a husband and wife team, Paul and Ileana Collazo. Paul graduated with his Associate's and Ileana with her Bachelor's degree.

### Congratulations to all!

The Women in Transition program continues to receive support from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving as they recently received a \$25,000 grant. This support contributes to the program's sustainability and makes it possible to assist single mothers in Hartford county reach degree completion. 🌱

## Women in Transition Walk for Lupus

In their bright yellow tees and excitement in their hearts twelve students from the Women in Transition (WIT) program, and the program's coordinator and assistant walked three miles in the "Walk to End Lupus" held in West Hartford, CT on Sunday, May 17th. The walk aims to heighten awareness of this devastating disease which affects mostly women of childbearing age but has been diagnosed in men and children as well. The women felt it was a good opportunity to support a worthy cause as well as give back to the community.

In addition, some of the student's children also got involved which taught them the importance of getting involved and having a heart for philanthropic endeavors. The WIT team collected over \$300 in donations to support the Lupus Foundation. 🌱



WIT team members Walk to End Lupus

### **Thank you to the current and past supporters of the Women in Transition (WIT) program that benefits underserved and underemployed single Connecticut mothers in their quest for degree completion:**

#### **Current Supporters:**

The Charter Oak State College Foundation  
The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
The Leipold Family Foundation  
The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation  
The Women and Girls' Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation

#### **Past Supporters:**

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*A special thank you to The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for generously providing a total of \$478,000 to support the Women in Transition Program.*

# Charter Oak State College Foundation Hosts Spring Fundraiser



The Charter Oak State College Foundation hosted its annual Spring Fundraiser on Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at the Governor's Residence in Hartford. The fundraiser, **The Power of Women...Believing is Achieving**, was in support of the Women in Transition (WIT) program at Charter Oak State College.

The fundraiser featured keynote speaker and honoree, Marlene M. Ibsen, Chief Executive Officer and President of Travelers Foundation and Vice President, Community Relations, for The Travelers Companies, Inc. Ed Klonoski, President of Charter Oak State College, presented Ms. Ibsen with an award for extraordinary

leadership and commitment to supporting education initiatives that support the community. Ms. Ibsen exemplified the theme for the evening "The Power of Women...Believing is Achieving" with her inspiring keynote address. The Foundation is sincerely thankful for all attendees and donors who continue to support this important program that has proven to significantly improve the lives of single mothers and their children.

President Klonoski also presented Delores Bell, Coordinator of the Women in Transition Program, with a recognition award at the event for her commitment and dedication to the students in the Women in Transition program for the past 10 years. Delores

has successfully coordinated the WIT program since 2005.

The Women in Transition (WIT) program was established at Charter Oak State College in 1999 to break the cycle of poverty by helping underserved and low-income mothers earn a college degree. Over the past 15 years, the program has supported more than 190 women and continues to have a 72% retention/graduation rate. This unique initiative provides laptop computers, internet access, textbooks, scholarships, and academic, career, and personal counseling – all of which help to break down the barriers to postsecondary education for disadvantaged and underserved mothers. 🌱



WIT graduates with Dr. Merle Harris, President Emerita, COSC, Board Member, CT Board of Regents for Higher Education, and founder of the WIT Program (center) and Delores Bell, WIT Program Coordinator (right).



L-R: Rebeka Scalia, COSC Foundation Board President; Ed Klonoski, COSC President; Marlene Ibsen, Chief Executive Officer and President of Travelers Foundation and Vice President, Community Relations The Travelers Companies, Inc.



Rebeka Scalia, COSC Foundation Board President.



L-R: Janice Silva, WIT Special Programs Assistant, COSC; Rebecca Tuttle, Advisory Board, Women and Girls Fund of The Main Street Community Foundation; Angela Chapman, Director of Institutional Advancement, COSC; Delores Bell, WIT Program Coordinator, COSC.

# THANK YOU DONORS

The Charter Oak State College Foundation and the College thank our donors for their gracious gifts. Your generosity continues to help countless students transform their lives, often beyond what they ever thought was possible. Whether you are a long-time supporter or a first-time giver, we could not do it without you. The list of donors below includes those who have made a contribution to the Annual Fund or Endowment between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. The names with asterisks have given for the past five years. *To learn more about the Foundation and giving opportunities, please visit the Foundation website at [www.charteroak.edu/foundation](http://www.charteroak.edu/foundation) or contact Angela Chapman by phone (860-515-3889) or email [achapman@charteroak.edu](mailto:achapman@charteroak.edu).*

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\*A special thank you for your loyalty in giving to the Charter Oak State College Foundation annually for the past 5 fiscal years. Thank you for recognizing the consistent need and choosing to make a difference.

## Foundation Distributes \$95,600 in Grants, Scholarships and the WIT Program

Over fifty Charter Oak students benefited from \$30,000 in grants and scholarship awards that were presented during a 12-month period from 2014 through 2015. Fourteen of these Charter Oak Students received a technology grant to financially assist them in the purchase of a prescribed list of technology supporting online learning. The Foundation continues to support the Women in Transition (WIT) program and distributed \$65,600 to support underserved and underemployed single Connecticut mothers in their quest for degree completion.

Scholarships and grants were awarded by the Charter Oak State College Foundation whose Board of Directors include 14 dedicated volunteers representing both working and retired professionals. Non-voting Board members include a Charter Oak student, a Charter Oak alumnus, a Charter Oak faculty member, and the College's president. The Board manages the Foundation's affairs and

business, determining the manner in which funds – both principal and income – are expended based on established policies.

To be eligible for a scholarship distribution, a Charter Oak student must be matriculated and in good standing, must have completed a minimum of one semester following initial matriculation, and must demonstrate financial need. A minimum grade point average is also a guideline for scholarship eligibility.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation provides scholarships and other financial support to remove the financial barriers that often prevent the adult learner from pursuing and completing higher education. We look to the Charter Oak State College Alumni and our friends to help us to make the dream of higher education a reality and the hope of a better future possible. Your contributions will have a lifetime effect on the students and their families. 🌱

### Legacy Giving – You can Influence the Future

The Charter Oak State College Foundation can help you establish a legacy gift to provide for students for generations to come. You are invited to demonstrate a commitment to education by leaving a charitable, tax-deductible bequest to the Charter Oak State College Foundation. Individuals from all walks of life are discovering that one of the most effective ways to make a difference and touch the future is to leave a legacy.

Please contact the Foundation by calling **Angela Chapman** at **860-515-3889** to discuss your bequest, or please consider conveniently making a donation online at [www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm](http://www.charteroak.edu/foundation/give.cfm).

***We need your help and no matter what the size, each gift directly impacts our students.***

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