

connections

CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018 VOL. XLIII NO. 1

Charter Oak State College Foundation Celebrates 40 Years



Dean Rhoden, the R. Wayne Clugston Scholarship recipient, was selected from a pool of 33 applicants. Dean came to the U.S. in 2009 from Jamaica desirous of the American Dream. He earned his Associates' degree and is working towards his Bachelor's while transforming lives of young men in the city of Hartford as a Boy Scout Leader, plus working and caring for a family.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation celebrated its 40th anniversary of helping students meet their educational goals with an evening of scholarship recognition and national speaker Jeff Lanza. The event, held Monday, November 13th at the Back Nine Tavern in New Britain, CT, offered guests a chance to celebrate the milestone, learn about personal online safety, and recognize scholarship recipients.

The evening characterized the Foundation's mission to assist deserving adult students with college costs by awarding scholarships and grants, and encouraging technological initiatives

that enable the College to be a leader in higher education.

Guests included Board members of both the Foundation and the Alumni Association, along with Charter Oak staff and faculty, benefactors, donors, friends of the College and students. A feeling of homecoming was in the air as alumni, professors, students, and advisors connected.

Retired FBI Agent, national speaker, and Connecticut native, Jeff Lanza provided an entertaining and informative presentation on the fundamentals of personal cyber protection and cyber fraud prevention. His presentation was also prerecorded for use in an online presentation that will be made available free to the public through the Foundation's Rankin Chair Technology Fund and through the generous support of our event sponsors: Liberty Bank, Community Partner of the cyber safety presentation; Calculus of Talent, LLC, and the Law Offices of Sheffy, Mazzaccaro, DePaolo & DeNigris, LLP, Corporate Sponsors; and, COSC Alumni Association, Reception Sponsor. A portion of each guest's ticket also contributed to the fundraising efforts and will be used to benefit the Student Crisis Fund Endowment.

The Student Crisis Fund provides students with immediate relief from unexpected financial burdens which, in turn, affords them the opportunity to stay the course, complete their degree, and enhance their



Free Career Development & Mentoring Workshop

Wednesday, March 14, 2018
5:30pm – 7:00pm

At the College and Online
Charter Oak State College
55 Paul Manafort Drive
New Britain, CT

The Charter Oak State College Alumni and Student Associations, in conjunction with the Foundation Leadership, are excited to offer a three-workshop series on Career Development and Mentoring.

Join us for the first career development workshop in the series including an introduction to the COSC Alumni Association Mentoring Program. Charter Oak Foundation Board Executive, Joyce Petrella and Calculus of Talent, will lead a stimulating workshop to help attendees better define their career objectives while offering career growth how-to's. Ask yourself, are you relevant and current for the job market? Are you happy in your chosen field or position? Do you aspire to more? Come, learn, participate – you'll be glad you did!

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One family, seven graduates

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THE PRESIDENT'S TAKE



I would like to use my column in Connections to share a unique story about some of my favorite Charter Oak alumni.

Charter Oak was created to offer adult students an efficient path to degree completion. Its early history consisted of creating processes that permitted adults to bring their learning, from whatever its source of origin, to a Charter Oak degree.

The tools of that learning transfer include credit transfer, testing for credit, and portfolios. Across its history, the College has had individuals who used these non-traditional options to complete a degree for a total cost of less than \$10,000. The York family has achieved an even more remarkable success than that. I will let Mrs. York explain their strategy in her own words:

A Brief Summary of our Non-traditional Approach to Education

The beginning of our non-traditional approach to education began in 1979 when my husband, David, and I decided to teach our oldest child to read. She was only 4 years old, but we wanted her to read well by the time she entered school. Our reasoning was that this should help her to be more proficient in learning other subject matter. We had never heard of home education.

As she finished first grade, we were given a book entitled, "Teach Your Own" by the author and educator, John Holt. It profoundly affected our thinking. Some of his ideas were more radical than we could embrace, but the general idea was sown in our thinking. We eventually home educated all of our 8 children through high school. Our goal was for them to become confident, creative learners and problem solvers for the rest of their lives.

We had always wanted our children to have an accredited college degree, but we couldn't figure out a solution to the enormous debt that they would incur. However, just as our oldest daughter was thinking of getting married, we heard of Charter Oak State College.

We were thrilled! She was able to use testing, classes, and portfolios to earn her degree in 1 ½ years. Our next two daughters had much the same experience. Their advisors and other staff at COSC were amazingly helpful and supportive.

When our first son began his studies at COSC, he was able to take the required credits he needed to be accepted into a distance learning law school. Four years later, he passed the California bar exam and is now working again on his undergraduate degree at COSC.

Three of our last four children have graduated from COSC using various methods including testing. All of them are using their undergraduate degrees as a springboard for their graduate degrees. One is working on a Speech Pathology degree, one on Counseling, and one on a Seminary degree. The last of our children is planning for a June 2019 graduation from COSC.

My own story is a more classic Charter Oak story. I left college after 4 years and 133 credit hours without having earned a degree, to marry and raise a family. Through COSC, I was able to obtain a waiver for the Oral Communications course, test out of 9 general education credits, and complete the Cornerstone and Capstone courses last year. I was able to use enough credits from my previous schooling to completely fulfill my concentration credits. We have been so grateful to have Charter Oak State College in helping our family achieve our educational goals!

York Family Graduates:

Charissa York Glazner – 2004	Alicia York – 2012
Erin York Burgoyne – 2005	Joel York – 2012
Danielle York Miller – 2006	Ethan York – 2016
	Brenda York – 2017

This commitment to education is as outstanding as any we have ever encountered. And it demonstrates the mission Charter Oak was created to undertake.

Ed Klonoski, President



"Foundation Celebrates 40 Years" continued from pg. 1

economic state. Endowing the Student Crisis Fund allows the Foundation a means to permanently and sustainably fund Student Crisis Awards; keeping the mission of the Foundation alive.

As the Foundation celebrated 40 years of giving to the students of Charter Oak, they were able to recognize a few of the recent scholarship recipients. 🌱

Matthew Polesel, one of two recipients of the 2017 Mark Carr Scholarship, is shown here with Nicolin Carr, widow of Mark Carr a former New Britain Fire Chief with a passion for continuous learning. Matthew exemplified striving for a higher level of competence through training and continuous education in the public safety field.

"Free Career Development & Mentoring Workshop"

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The complimentary workshop is open to all Students and Alumni and will include light food and beverages. 🌱

Please RSVP to:

alumni@charteroak.edu or call Carol Hall at 860.515.3889 with your name, preferred email, graduation year, or enrollment status. **Registration closes Friday, March 9th.**

Remote access will be available and the dial-in information will be distributed with confirmation emails.

Hello Charter Oak Alumni

John C. Thomas, *President, Alumni Association Board*

This issue of Connections contains the list of our current Board Members, highlights from 2017, and an opportunity (or two) for you, our Alum.

Over the past few months collectively we have:

- 🌿 held an election of Board Officers
- 🌿 served as ambassadors for our admissions department
- 🌿 enjoyed a summer social hour and evening of baseball at the new Yard Goats Stadium in Hartford, CT
- 🌿 emphasized our commitment to degree completion with a new Graduate Degree Scholarship Program
- 🌿 sponsored the COSC Foundation Fall Celebration and Student Crisis Fund
- 🌿 provided a Holiday Happy Hour at the Thomas Hooker Brewery and,
- 🌿 formed new Committees to better serve you, our fellow Alumni

Not bad for an All-Volunteer Board!

The Alumni Association can accomplish nothing without the engagement of former Charter Oak State College students, and with this in mind, we ask each of YOU, our Alumni, to take a moment to respond to the survey posted on our website at www.charteroak.edu/alumni/. For me the appreciation of Charter Oak was enough for me to get involved ... What about you?

The Executive Board Members are looking forward to 2018 with great energy and excitement, and we hope you are too. We invite you to be active participants and join the alumni association for yearly dues of \$15, or a lifetime membership for \$150.

Also, we look forward to being in touch with a lot of you this year. So, please stay connected by updating your email address with the Alumni office. You can connect with me directly at john.c.thomas6@gmail.com or Carol Hall chall@charteroak.edu, or 860.515.3889.

I hope to see everyone at the upcoming activities, and look forward to your feedback from the survey. 🌿

Alumni Association Board

John Thomas, President
S. Lamont McEvitt, Vice President
Steve Foerster, Secretary
Chris May, Treasurer
Cecilia Kozlowski, Co-Treasurer

Board of Directors

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Alumni Association Holiday Happy Hour!

A Holiday Happy Hour was held on December 5, 2017 at the Thomas Hooker Brewery in Bloomfield, CT. Folks gathered to network, socialize, sample beer on tap, and most importantly, dig in and enjoy the BBQ provided by Bear's Smokehouse.

The Alumni Association Board was happy to host this event and helped to defer the cost, keeping registration fees low, and inviting Charter Oak Students, Staff, Faculty, and of course, our Alums.

The Board gathered prior to the social to finalize 2017 and begin planning the New Year. A great surprise to the evening was long-time Board Member and new Board Secretary, Steve Foerster attending in person, all the way from Virginia!

John Thomas, current Board President, was recognized as a life-time member and presented with a Thomas Hooker

Pint Glass as a thank you for his commitment to the Alumni Association. One other life-time member on hand also received the commemorative token of appreciation, Angela Klonoski, wife of President Ed Klonoski.

President Klonoski introduced the Alumni to a new Ambassador Program designed to make sharing the Charter Oak degree completion opportunity with friends, colleagues, and others simple and rewarding to Alum. Also, the Board introduced a survey – outlining new opportunities for involvement and requesting feedback regarding social activities.



A good night was had by all - a happy Holiday gathering of Charter Oak Alumni, Students, Staff, and guests.

New friendships were forged that evening, which seemed to end too soon, as folks departed into the cold night wishing each other well and happy holidays, leaving behind fond memories and a desire to get together again soon. 🌿



Connections recently caught up with Stacey Bottone, Class of '03

What led you to Charter Oak State College? As a non-traditional student caring for my young family and working full time, I wanted to continue my education but had tried going back to college on-ground in the evenings for a few semesters. It was extremely challenging to manage this and be out of the home for so many hours between work and school. I did some research and found out that Charter Oak offered online Associate and Bachelor degrees that would fit my work schedule and allow more time with my family. I enrolled in 2001, and graduated with my Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Business Administration, in 2003. It was one of the best life decisions I ever made!

What higher education experience did you have prior to enrolling at Charter Oak? Prior to enrolling at Charter Oak, I was working on my Associate degree at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson, CT. Charter Oak accepted my credits from QVCC and I completed my Bachelor's degree two years later. After graduating from Charter Oak, I went on to earn my MBA from Salve Regina University in 2005, and then a Master of Science in Health Information Management from Kaplan University in 2016. Both of these programs were also 100% online. Charter Oak's program definitely prepared me for being successful in these graduate programs years later.

Has your degree from Charter Oak helped with securing jobs and progression in those jobs? My degree from Charter Oak absolutely assisted with my career progression. I worked directly in healthcare at medical group practices and hospital settings from 1994-2010. After earning my Bachelor's degree in 2003, I was immediately promoted to Coordinator and Supervisory roles. After earning my MBA, I was then promoted to Practice Manager and Hospital Administrator positions.

In 2008, I had my first experience with teaching in higher education as an adjunct instructor and absolutely loved it. I realized this was my calling. In 2010, I made the career change of leaving the hospital setting and began teaching full time as a Lead Faculty member for a large for-profit university in their Online Division. Again, I was able to take my experiences learned through being a student and the excellent support received during my time at Charter Oak to apply to my new career and their students. In 2012, I had the wonderful opportunity of being hired as an online adjunct instructor here at Charter Oak in the Healthcare Administration and Management programs. I am thrilled to say I am still an active online adjunct faculty member in these programs. I have also had the privilege of being a full-time faculty member at Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT since 2014. I share my fond experiences with my students in our Business Office Technology Medical Associate degree program concerning all that Charter Oak has to offer if they wish to pursue their Bachelor's degree after completing their Associate degree or Medical Certificates from MCC!

Do you feel your degree from Charter Oak truly affected your life and career? My experience with Charter Oak personally and professionally has been profound. I would never have had the opportunity to continue my education if I did not have the option to complete my degree online. The support that I received from both Academics and Student Services has been exemplary. I enjoyed

my experience so much, I am back as a student finishing up my coursework for the Certificate in Health Information Management that is CAHIIM accredited. This will allow me to sit for the Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) exam this May offered through the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). Charter Oak is one of only a very small handful of online colleges and universities nationwide that is CAHIIM (Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management) accredited. This is a huge feather in Charter Oak's cap! I will be graduating this spring for a second time, which speaks volumes to what this institution stands for and the excellent education they provide.

Personally, is there anything you'd like to share? I reside in Connecticut with my husband, our 21-year-old son, and three rescues – all Labs! I am very excited to share that our son is a recent graduate of Quinebaug Valley Community College and is now a current student at Charter Oak pursuing his Bachelor of Science degree in Cyber Security! He is really enjoying the program and is noting similar experiences with excellent support from the advising team and his instructors as well as the program in general. I cannot say enough wonderful things about Charter Oak. I will be forever indebted for the doors my education here has opened. 🌱

connections

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


CharterOak™
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
Mark E. Ojakian, President
Charter Oak State College
Ed Klonoski, President

alumni spotlight

1989 *Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray* was appointed President of the Chicago Theological Seminary effective February 2018. Dr. Ray is the 13th president in the seminary's 164-year history.

1996 *Nancy Martone* was promoted to Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer at Hospital for Special Care, New Britain, Connecticut. She was most recently Vice President of Human Resources at Hospital for Special Care.

1997 *Michele White* has joined the board of Junior Achievement (JA) Southwest New England. Junior Achievement works to educate students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. She is a Senior Vice President at Voya Financial, Inc., a company with a long standing partnership with JA.

1998 *Don Carlson* is currently the Executive Director of Family Promise in Central Connecticut in New Britain, Connecticut.

Nancy R. Rossi was elected Mayor of West Haven, Connecticut. A certified public accountant, she focused her campaign on financial stability. She is West Haven's 12th mayor and first female mayor.

2000 *Josh F.W. Cook* has been appointed an Associate Professor at the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy and serves

as a Chief of Staff in the California State Legislature.

Dr. Jimmie Johnson is currently the Assistant City Manager in Port Arthur, Texas. As an advocate for life-long learning Dr. Johnson believes that his education and career would not be possible without his degree from Charter Oak State College.

2002 *Kelly Thomas Bee* is now the Program and Event Manager at St. Thomas More, the Catholic Chapel & Center at Yale University.

2010 *Deb DeBisschop* is currently a doctoral student in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University.

Linda Pikul, earned her Master of Science in Nursing through Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT after earning her Bachelor's degree at Charter Oak. She works in the behavioral health field and was recently accepted into a DNP program in Connecticut.

Laura Sherman earned a Master's degree in December 2016 at the University of Hartford in Communications. She resides in Florida and is currently building her own business.

2011 *Gilbert Darrell Hitchens* is currently a graduate student at Amberton University pursuing a Master of Science degree in Human Relations and Business. He is a Locomotive Engineer with Union Pacific Railroad and recently obtained a real estate license in California. He and his wife work together at Keller Williams

L.A. Harbor in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. His future plans include completing his Master's and pursuing real estate full-time upon retirement. Gilbert is a member of the Charter Oak Alumni Association.

2012 *Medora Dally* earned a MA in Organizational Leadership at Lincoln Christian University in Illinois. Upon completion of her Master's she left a corporate position of 18 years to start a consulting businesses called Second Wind Leadership, helping breathe new life into leadership for clients.

2013 *Ken Miller* is the new Chief of Police for Thornton, New Hampshire.

Susan Balla works as a Home Health Aide/Certified Nurse. She serves as a Commissioner for the Commission on Aging in Brookfield, Connecticut and as a lay Minister for the Ministry on Aging Episcopal Church also in Connecticut. Susan earned her Bachelor's degree from Charter Oak State College at the age of 60. She has also earned a diploma in Paralegal, Notary Public, Certificate in Pharmacy Tech, and an Associate's degree in Business Management with Finance in addition to a certificate in Biblical studies.

2016 *Dean Ebdon* and his wife Melissa welcomed a daughter, their first child on Good Friday, April 14, 2017.

Mark Konoske was selected by the City of Burien Police Department, King County, Washington as Interim Chief of Police. Chief Konoske previously served in law enforcement for 27 years in various roles including captain in the City of Shoreline and Metro Transit, commander with the King County Sheriff Office's Internal Investigations Unit, and Patrol Sergeant. Aside from a Bachelor's degree from Charter Oak, he is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and served three years in the US Army. 🌱



**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.

What's Your Charter Oak Story?

For forty years, the **Charter Oak State College Foundation** has been committed to improving lives by providing financial resources to adult students striving to complete their college degrees. Share your story, email it to foundation@charteroak.edu.

Annual Appeal

As an alumni or friend of Charter Oak State College, you know best the determination and grit needed to maintain a job, home life, and college course work. Like yours, every student's unique life experience creates a very personal story of success – that **"I did it"** moment!

As you consider *your* Charter Oak success story, will you also consider giving to help another working towards their degree completion?

40 from 400



As the foundation celebrates **40-Years of Giving** with over 14,000 Charter Oak graduates, this year's Annual Appeal is asking 400 to give \$40 to the unrestricted fund. Will *you* be one?

A Gift of Education Lasts a Lifetime

Your gift will be used to help the next student achieve their dream of earning a college degree, improving their career options, and changing the financial outlook for the lives of themselves, their families, and even generations to come.

Last year, the Foundation gave over \$90,000 to over 100 college students in the form of scholarships, grants, and Prior Learning Assessment credits. Please consider your part in keeping this momentum alive.

Join a Donor Circle

To receive special recognition in our Summer/Fall newsletter, *Connections*, based on your total donations from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

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



Share Your Story
#myCharterOakStory



Donate Online
<https://goo.gl/amLKEE>

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

Charter Oak State College Foundation | Annual Appeal

Name _____ Email _____

Amount Enclosed: \$40 \$100 \$400 Other \$ _____ (please make checks payable to: COSC Foundation)

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

My gift is: In Honor of In Memory of _____

Name of person to notify: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

2018 Foundation Board of Directors Slate

The Charter Oak State College Foundation, comprised of volunteer leadership committed to higher education, worked tirelessly through the year to secure donations and distribute scholarships, technology grants, and other financial support. The generous giving of Charter Oak State College Alumni, family, and friends coupled with corporate and organizational grants, contributed to the overall ability to distribute needed funds.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation, founded on September 15, 1977, reached the milestone mark of \$2 million this year under the fiscal direction of the Foundation Board of Directors. The Foundation has also helped many students become the “first-in-their-family” to graduate, another significant milestone. 🌱

The Charter Oak State College Foundation held elections in August of 2017 and are proud to announce the **2018 Board of Directors:**

Officers

President, Rebeka A. Scalia
TriStar Consulting Services

Vice President, Neal Cunningham
BES-CUT, Inc.

Secretary, Joyce Petrella
Calculus of Talent

Treasurer, Glenn Davis
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State University

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State University Police

Betsy Udal, Udal & Associates

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Lamont McEvvitt, Alumni Association
Representative

Alfred Brissette, Student Association
Representative

Randall Orner, Faculty Representative

Honorary Member, Thomas Desmond,
Chartered Financial Analyst

Executive Director, Ed Klonoski,
Charter Oak State College

happenings

Dr. Maureen Hogan joined the College as our new Early Childhood Education Coordinator. She holds a Ph.D. from Capella University, a Master's in Education from the University of Virginia, a B.A. in Psychology, and an A.A. in Early Childhood Education. She also holds a Connecticut Director credential at the Master level and has over 30 years of experience in the early childhood field. She has taught at Charter Oak since 2011. She is very familiar with accreditation and assessment portfolios and is a welcome addition to our staff. She takes over for Carole Weisberg who retired in 2017.



Our Health Information Management Program Director, Cindy Edgerton, has been selected to serve a two-year volunteer term on the AHIMA Counsel for Excellence in Education's Curricula Workgroup. She will have the opportunity to receive first-hand information from AHIMA and give input on curriculum requirements. AHIMA is the national accreditation body for the Health Information Management degree.



The Alumni Association has created a new \$1,000 Graduate Degree Scholarship.

Applicants must be a graduate of Charter Oak State College pursuing a graduate degree at the College (Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership). The first scholarship recipient will be selected for Fall 2018. Contact chall@charteroak.edu to apply.



Assistant Registrar Adeline Yllanes published her first book in October. Titled, “*Who Are You? I am ~Soy*”, it details her personal journey from Connecticut to Peru for one year as a teenager. Raised in Connecticut, Yllanes travelled back to Lima, Peru where her parents had moved the family from to learn more about her ancestry and gain a deeper appreciation for her life in America.



Dr. Patrice Farquharson, Charter Oak Dean of Faculty, took a reunion trip to Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts in August to join current and past members of the New England Patriots Cheerleading team of which she was a member for a year in 1980. She and 220 other former Patriots cheerleaders from the 1960's, 70's, 80's, 90's, and 2000's were honored at a pre-game program prior to an exhibition game against the New York Giants.



Dr. Kristine Larsen, faculty member and Charter Oak instructor in both Earth Science and Astronomy traveled to Columbia, Missouri on August 21st to be in the viewing path of the total solar eclipse. This was her most recent of many eclipse trips that have included Egypt, China, Australia, and the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Save the Date for the 2018 Shea Lecture
The Art of Wellness

Tuesday **May 1** 2018
at the New Britain Museum of American Art

The Art of Wellness Panel Discussion will include community experts illuminating the pallet of topics on overall wellness and the Social Determinants:

- Mindfulness, Emotional & Spiritual well-being
- Economic Wealth & Financial Prosperity
- Educational Wellness (continuous learning)
- Social Wellness (housing & transportation)

The Shea Lecture is free to all and will be followed by a Dinner Reception with Donor & Alum Appreciation and a tea-cup auction

Proceeds to benefit the Foundation Scholarship Fund which contributes to the overall education and social wellness of our adult students who need financial support to complete their degrees

Interested in helping us celebrate wellness?
Contact Carol, chall@charteroak.edu