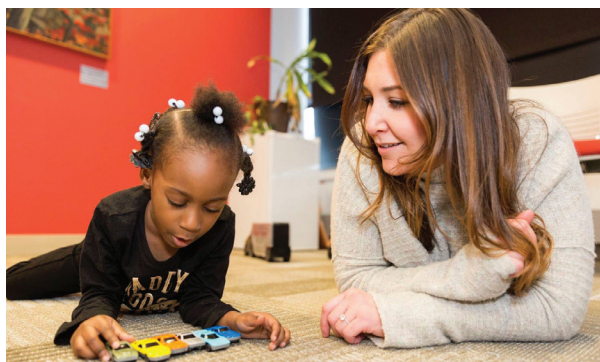


“Sidekicks” helps young patients and future physicians



Through the Sidekicks program, CMSRU student Lauren Treene serves as a valuable advocate, resource and friend to DaShay Washington and her family while learning firsthand about the needs and challenges of real patients and caregivers.

Having a child with a severe, chronic illness can overwhelm any family. Camden kids and parents are especially at risk, due to the added financial and social challenges they often face.

But Cooper Medical School of Rowan University is helping through an innovative community-service program that is teaching future physicians about the needs and challenges of real patients and caregivers.

The Sidekicks program pairs medical-student volunteers with pediatric patients from Camden who have life-threatening or chronic health conditions. The students attend medical appointments with the family and stay in touch between doctor visits, and help families navigate the healthcare system and provide emotional support.

“Without them, I would probably be a stress box!” says Tiffany Porter, a single mom whose daughter DaShay Washington has sickle-cell anemia.

“It’s really hard,” says Tiffany, describing her 4-year-old’s frequent pain and hospital stays—plus the daily challenges of juggling her job and caring for her other child. But DaShay’s Sidekicks, CMSRU students Lauren Treene and Christine Collins, ease some of that burden.

The Sidekicks assist with insurance

paperwork, obtaining government benefits and arranging transportation to medical appointments, among other tasks.

Sidekicks work with patients ages 1 to 18 and gear their interaction to the patient’s age and interests. Sidekick Krysta Frye helped her 18-year-old patient apply to a medical technician program and continues to be a support and mentor through her college transition.

The student-patient connection is a key benefit of Sidekicks, explains Rafat Ahmed, MD, the program’s faculty advisor since Sidekicks’ 2013 inception.

Overcoming barriers

“The relationship and mentoring flows both ways between the students and the patients,” says the assistant professor of pediatrics at CMSRU and chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Cooper University Health Care.

“Sidekicks exposes medical students to the complex issues of life-threatening illness affecting patients and caregivers, early in their education,” Dr. Ahmed remarks. “It helps them develop skills necessary to communicate effectively with children and families with this kind of illness.”

Students get to be an active advocate for their patient, to understand the various social challenges families can face in caring for their child and to increase their empathy as a future physician, Dr. Ahmed adds.

This advocacy takes many forms, as Sidekicks students Sakshi Gandhi and Chelsea O’Koren can attest to. They feel that it’s “the little things that make the biggest difference,” such as making sure their patient gets the first appointment of the day so her mother can make an important meeting

at work or looking up phone numbers for echocardiograms and insurance issues so the family doesn’t have to.

Working with DaShay and Tiffany has been eye-opening, and as a result, the aspiring doctor has “learned to be more patient and understanding of all the different things that can go wrong when someone has a chronic condition, and how frustrating it can be.”

Creating a community

Another important goal of Sidekicks is to bring families together—for fun and socialization, as well as mutual support.

Last year, the students launched support-group meetings, where families can share their experiences and advice with each other. The Sidekicks hold special events throughout the year, including a Halloween party, December holiday celebration, and a spring trip to Adventure Aquarium in Camden.

Going forward, the students hope to continue to foster this growing community, as well as expand their ability to help out the families in any way they can. The students are exploring ways to ease the financial burden of transportation and medication that many of these families encounter. Small gestures such as these have the potential to make a big difference in how well these patients are able to manage their health conditions.

“The smiles and caring make a big impact on kids and parents,” notes Dr. Ahmed. “They see a face that says ‘We care for you.’” **RA**

Support from generous donors has provided funding for relationship-building events between patients and Sidekicks as well as books, games and other activities to keep patients engaged during their hospitalizations and medical appointments. To support Sidekicks visit giving.rufoundation.org (enter “CMSRU Sidekicks” under “Designation Instructions”) or contact Felicia Gordon-Riehman, Director of Development, at 856-361-2845 or riezman@rowan.edu.

ROWAN UNIVERSITY *President's Forum*



More than 225 of Rowan University's friends gathered at the William G. Rohrer Business Hall to celebrate Rowan's growth and accomplishments during the annual President's Forum reception on May 18th. As the institution transforms higher education, the investment of generous alumni and friends is vital for continued success.



1. President Ali Houshmand, Ronda Abbruzzese, Michael Ciesielka, Ken Abbruzzese, Farah Houshmand
2. Patrick Manion, Gerri Mazzeo
3. Ryan Blackiston '16, Kristina Brenner
4. President Houshmand, Farah Houshmand, Luanne Funari, Edward Remster
5. Tyrone Payton '14, Sherise Payton, Farah Houshmand, President Houshmand
6. Deneen Hendrick, Inocencia Rodriguez, Tabbetha Dobbins
7. President Houshmand
8. President Houshmand, Gerald Shreiber, Farah Houshmand

A room to collaborate provides room to grow

Joe Miskel and Patricia Basolis Miskel from the Class of 1987 are in their third year of a \$25,000 pledge to sponsor one of the newly innovated and highly sought-out student collaboration rooms in Business Hall.

"The concept of collaboration is what life is all about," said Joe. "We wanted to sponsor a room to get great minds together to problem solve and share ideas."

Joe is a member of the Rohrer College of Business Dean's Executive Board and a hardworking change-agent who strives to challenge conventional wisdom, and Patricia is a successful real-estate agent who builds relationships and collaborates on a daily basis.

"Collaboration is something we deal with every single day on many levels," said Patricia. "Without cultivating relationships, what do you have?"

Glassboro is where it all started for the Miskels' relationship. The couple met during their sophomore year and both attribute their college memories and experiences in helping them advance to where they are today, personally and professionally.

"For me, it's where I got my start and met the love of my life," added Joe. "It's one of the biggest reasons I wanted to give back."

During their time as students, the Miskels noted there was nothing like a collaboration room available except spaces comparable to "dusty old closets."

And even those were hard to come by.

"The idea of a collaboration room really appealed to us because you're offering a state-of-the-art space where students are more inclined to get with their peers and produce great work," said Patricia. "Outcomes are determined by the level of collaboration among groups. It really is all about relationships—while you're a student, while you're in the work force, it doesn't matter—and that collaboration fosters a healthy environment of learning and growth."

In 2016, the Miskels attended the grand opening of Business Hall and couldn't help but become emotional at the inclusion of their names listed on the artistically rendered donor wall.

"We both immediately thought, 'We wish

our fathers could see this,'" said Patricia.

"We were just two middle class kids that went to Glassboro

State and worked our way through on our own. We never thought people like us would be able to give back to a place that holds so much meaning to us and our lives, and if we can do it, anyone can do it."

Joe and Patricia still live close to the University and have three children. Their strong value of education, business innovation and relationships played a significant role in their desire to sponsor a collaboration room for business students.

"To be able to support collaboration in this way, we think, is such a wonderful cause," the Miskels concluded. "It's a beautiful space with cutting-edge technology and could maybe even be the beginning of a groundbreaking idea. There's just no reason not to get together." **RA**



Autism Speaks supports Navigating New Beginnings initiative

In April 2018, Autism Speaks extended their six year long relationship with Rowan University with support for a unique transitioning program for new students with learning disabilities known as The College Compass Program—Navigating New Beginnings, and salary for a part-time Residential Life Coach.

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. The organization strives to advance research relevant to causes and treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related conditions both through direct funding and collaboration.

"Autism Speaks has supported a multitude of funding and support over the years as we have worked toward the betterment of resources for those with autism spectrum disorder on campus and in the region," said John Woodruff, Director of the Academic Success Center & Disability Resources.

Woodruff noted his office hosted their second annual College Prep Transition Conference this past March, offered to high school students with disabilities and their parents, and also began an Autism Spectrum Task Force on campus that meets quarterly to discuss best practices, research and programming for students with ASD.

"The support we've received from Autism Speaks over the years is what really sparked our capability as an institution to recognize the importance of doing everything we can to help those with disabilities, ASD and more."

The College Compass Program is specifically designed to provide a

smooth transition to college and campus life for residential and commuter students with disabilities. Students are given the opportunity to come to campus a week before classes start with the chance to move in early, participate in personalized tours and workshops and receive unlimited support from staff within the Academic Success Center & Disability Resources during move-in weekend and welcome week activities.

The program also provides students with an entire year of academic coaching, a parent/student welcome mixer, on and off campus events, workshops for parents and individualized meal plans.

"More than 100 students have participated in our College Compass Program, 45 percent of whom have ASD," said Woodruff. "We've come a long way in what we can do for these students and it's only going to improve with the addition of a new part-time life coach and the opportunity Autism Speaks has provided to enhance our programs."

Kristen Apen, Executive Director of Autism Speaks' New Jersey Chapter adds, "The College Campus Transition Supports at Rowan University appealed to the Autism Speaks NJ Chapter Grants Committee because we felt students enrolled in this program could greatly benefit from a college experience. Transition into college life can be scary, particularly for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The College Compass program is designed to enhance that transition while providing academic and social support, and we hope to continue fostering our relationship with Rowan in any way that we can." **RA**

Accounting for success

Kevin Basden '03 and his wife, Joselyn, have established an annual scholarship named The Accounting Impact & Merit Scholarship (AIM) at Rowan University.

Following his 2016 feature in Rowan's inaugural 40 under 40 listing, Basden became a Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), one of the largest and most prestigious public accounting firms in the world. As a Partner, Basden holds a position of leadership within the firm's Risk Assurance practice area.

"The growth I've experienced in my career has been one of the driving forces behind my desire to make the accounting profession a more attractive place for those who may not have thought about it otherwise," said Basden.

As Basden reflected on his own journey into accounting, he remembered his upbringing in the Bahamas and how he had imagined New Jersey to be reminiscent of New York City.

"I was initially surprised by the stark difference," says Basden, "but it was a really good surprise. There were people around me at Rowan that I respected that advocated for accounting in a way that got my attention. Promotion of accounting to students when they're making decisions about their futures and careers is so important which is why I thought establishing a scholarship would be a great opportunity."

Basden makes sure to keep Rowan University and its students at the forefront of his professional and personal endeavors. In addition to his scholarship, he serves on the Rohrer College of Business Accounting Advisory Board and mentors students through the College's accounting mentorship program.

"Rowan is important to me and it's even more important to do what I can to be helpful to the school and be relevant," adds Basden. "I am always thinking about ways to utilize my career as a tool to bring ideas and opportunities to the University."

Basden notes that a scholarship is the first time he and his wife have attempted to make a gift of this caliber to Rowan and that PwC has a matching program that will ultimately double their scholarship's impact.

The Accounting Impact & Merit Scholarship will support an undergraduate accounting student with demonstrated financial need and a minimum 3.5 GPA. Preference may be given to an incoming freshman from Camden, NJ; a student with an interest in technology demonstrated through a minor in computer science, MIS, or data analytics; or a student who has demonstrated leadership potential through community service, extra-curricular activities or by overcoming adversity.

The Basdens hope to support accounting students at Rowan University in a way that is consistent with the demands the accounting profession places on schools

to foster environments that are rich with diversity, relevant to the times and focused on technology.

"I feel that I have a responsibility to give back because nobody is self made," said Basden. "I've benefitted from support throughout my life and that's what made volunteerism and philanthropy real for me."

"I saw enormous potential with a scholarship to bring all of my ideas together," Basden concludes. "By putting aside these resources, we can now attract students to the accounting field and then efficiently invest in their futures." **RA**



Committed to making a difference and giving back, Kevin Basden '03 and his wife, Joselyn, have established a scholarship to assist accounting students.

Funding advances osteopathic research at RowanSOM

In 2005, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation (OHF), a non-profit organization whose mission is "to improve the health and quality of life in the community through education, research, and service" made a \$2 million gift to Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine. This gift established an Endowed Chair in Primary Care Research to facilitate the development of leaders in research at the medical school.

RowanSOM has utilized OHF funding to advance translational research studies that have impacted patient care globally. The increased number of research and scholarly activities at the medical school at all levels—medical students, graduate students, fellows and faculty—have focused on two main areas: aging and osteopathic medicine and osteopathic principles and practices.

In 2018, RowanSOM Dean Thomas Cavalieri, D.O. approved two current studies at RowanSOM that were made possible through the continued generosity of the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation:

- Katrina Cooper, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Biology, is leading research in autophagy, a natural regeneration process that occurs at the cellular level in the body, reducing the likelihood of contracting some diseases as well as prolonging lifespan, and factors that repress this process in cells.
- Venkat Venkataraman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Cell Biology and Neuroscience, is studying the role of two proteins (NCALD and S100B) in sleep regulation in both animal models and human participants.

In addition, Robert Nagele, Ph.D., Professor, Geriatrics & Gerontology, received an \$820,000 grant in 2013 from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation to fund his work, *The Identification of Biomarkers for Mild Cognitive Impairment*. As a result of this study, Dr. Nagele and his team received international recognition for their development of a diagnostic test to detect Alzheimer's disease at an early stage.

The continued growth of the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation endowment has enabled RowanSOM to foster vital research in areas of health care that are relevant today. These discoveries, made possible through OHF funding, will have a long-lasting impact in the practice of medicine that will benefit the health and wellness of us all. **RA**



Invest in what is **important** to you...

Mrs. Jane Gullett Presser '47 dedicated over 30 years to enhancing the quality of elementary education for her students, focusing heavily on the importance of reading, writing and mathematics to cultivate valuable critical and creative skills. A generous supporter of Rowan University for the last 28 years, she has established two charitable gift annuities, a planned gift and an endowed scholarship to support College of Education students who share her deep passion for teaching.

Join Mrs. Jane Gullett Presser '47 in supporting Rowan University

If you are interested in receiving a customized proposal, contact:

Brittany L. Petrella
Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving
Division of University Advancement
856-256-5419 | petrella@rowan.edu

Visit rowan.plannedgiving.org for more information

"My late husband Cliff was instrumental in my decision to give back—which was an easy one, really. It's very important to me that students still want to be teachers and guide our younger generations. I wanted to help others on their journey to become educators because you must always remember, how many people have helped you?"

-Mrs. Jane Gullett Presser '47



Scholarship adds up to long-lasting legacy

Ephraim Fithian, Ph.D. '61 and his wife, Patricia Fithian, M.S. '61, are honoring Ephraim's late mother, Frances, through establishing The Frances Fiorato Fithian '30 Legacy Endowed Scholarship Fund.

After graduating in 1930 with her degree in general elementary education, Frances spent more than 50 years in a classroom.

"My mother lived a tough life," said Fithian. "The idea of college was difficult for many to wrap their minds around because education wasn't really valued for women at the time, but she was valedictorian of her high school class in Hammonton, NJ and that was what really inspired her to pursue higher education."

Frances fought to begin her education as a teacher and earned her first teaching position at her alma mater in Hammonton.

"It was amazing what she did for women who wanted to be teachers," added Fithian. "Her father would brag about her accomplishments even though he initially didn't want her to go to college."

She spent 48 years as a math teacher in Hammonton and after her retirement continued substitute teaching for as long as she could.

Having grown up extraordinarily familiar with the world of education, Ephraim followed in his mother's footsteps and became a math teacher. After earning his bachelor's in general elementary education from then Glassboro State College in 1961, he earned a master's degree in education and a Ph.D. in math from Indiana University.

"I grew up with teaching, and I knew I was interested in math from

an early age," said Fithian. "I was always writing numbers. Math was something that easily excited me."

He met his wife, Patricia, in Glassboro during their junior year; and

she too earned a bachelor's degrees in general elementary education in 1961. She went on to earn her master's in science from Indiana University and spent a majority of her 35-year career teaching math.

"My parents told me I had a teacher's personality from a young age," said Patricia. "I had a small chalkboard easel and was always teaching everyone."

She taught a wide variety of subjects as an elementary and middle school teacher, but grew to really love teaching math.

The Frances Fiorato Fithian '30 Legacy Endowed Scholarship Fund will support an undergraduate student enrolled in the BA in Mathematics—Education concentration program at Rowan University who has achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 for at least two semesters.

"The award is for anyone capable of achieving success as a math educator," concluded Ephraim. "They only need to be passionate and dedicated through their work. People who excel need to be appreciated too. My mother was the perfect example of how much effort it takes to do well." **RA**



To learn more about creating your own giving legacy, visit rowan.edu/home/foundation/where-give or contact John Zabinski at 856-256-4148 or zabinski@rowan.edu.



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students

Gift to RCB funds space
for collaboration

Advancing osteopathic
medicine research

Mathematics education
scholarship adds up to
lasting legacy



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2018!

The University hosted 20,000 guests who came to honor more than 3,600 new Rowan graduates during Commencement Week 2018. Glassboro native and Super Bowl champion Corey Clement, running back for the Philadelphia Eagles, was the keynote speaker during the main ceremony for all graduates on Sunday, May 6. Following his address, Clement was recognized for his service to Glassboro's youth, particularly through the borough's popular Boys & Girls Club, with the presentation of a Rowan University Medal of Excellence for Community Engagement. Above: Rowan Provost Jim Newell, Corey Clement and Rowan President Ali A. Houshmand.