

Foundation News

“All the World’s a Stage” at PHCC

With only a year under its belt, the PHCC Patriot Players already have a vast array of performances to its name. The performing-arts troupe was created to provide a creative outlet for students and community members interested in the performing arts, and it has certainly met its goal.

“Having cast members come up to us after a show and tell us that we have changed their lives is so rewarding,” said Jane Leizer, Program Director. “This is a response that tells you all the hard work is worth it.”

The Patriot Players’ performances range from musical reviews, such as the *Night on Broadway* and *Once Upon a Disney* shows. Its larger performances have included “Purlie” and “Fame” and soon it will be unveiling “Shrek: The Musical.”

From an animatronics dragon that stands 20 feet tall to Pinocchio’s nose that actually grows, “it will be like going to Broadway, but all you have to do is drive to the PHCC Walker Theatre,” said Leizer. “Not only is the cast doing a wonderful job, but when you add our 12-piece orchestra it will be an experience you won’t want to miss!”



In addition to the crowd-pleasing performances, the Patriot Players’ program will expand in Fall 2015 to offer an associate degree with a concentration in the performing arts, offering classes in vocal performance, dance, acting, set and costume design and theatre technology. To accompany this new option, the theatre is currently undergoing a major renovation in sound and lighting to provide students state-of-the-art computer-generated lighting and sound equipment with monitors and headsets.

“We have high hopes,” said Leizer. “There is only one other community college in Virginia that offers a concentration in performing arts, so we are hoping to become the top-ranked community college in performing arts in Virginia.”

Advanced tickets for “Shrek: The Musical” go on sale May 2, and are available at the PHCC Switchboard in West Hall or at the Artisan Center (54 West Church Street.)

“Shrek” performances will be on May 30 and 31, June 1 and June 5-7.

Where Are They Now?

A Tailor-Made Recipe for Success

Growing up, school wasn't exactly Nicole Harris' forte. "I wasn't your average student," she admitted. "There were 1,000 better things to do, and college wasn't at the top of my priority list."

But as the Executive Director of the local SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), Harris has realized that without the help of a college degree, she would have never made it to where she is now. And she's extended that concept to her employees, as well.

Harris grew up in Martinsville, graduating from Laurel Park High School and enrolling at Patrick Henry Community College in 1996. "I quickly learned that I wasn't a traditional student; I just wasn't 'getting' it," she said.

So in the same year, Harris quit school and joined the Marine Corps to serve as a fueling technician. "It was sick and crazy, but I loved it! It fixed me," she explained. "I was a drifter, but the Marine Corps taught me that there are rules and you'll go far if you follow them."

After two years in the Marine Corps, armed with a brand-new mindset, Harris re-enrolled at PHCC in the Certified Nursing Program. "We were the 'Magnificent Seven,'" Harris said of her classmates, the first students to complete the CNA Program at PHCC. "I loved it, and actually enjoyed it."

After graduating, she was hired by Blue Ridge Rehab, where she worked for 10 years, helping with in-home care in her spare time. Her care and attention shifted to animals with the urging of her daughter Claudia, born in 1999.

"Claudia just loved animals, she was so drawn to them," Harris said. "I always grew up with animals, but her openness opened my eyes and reunited something in me that I loved."

So in 2008, Harris took the only job available at the SPCA as a kennel cleaner working at minimum wage. "It was my passion," she stated, and she was content doing anything and everything at the SPCA. The former SPCA Executive Director, Leslie Hervey, "saw something in me that I had forgotten. She took me by my shoulders and said, 'You can be anything here you want.'"

Harris, with Hervey's urging, wanted to learn more about animal care, so she shadowed local veterinarians, but her options were limited for a formal education in town. Eventually she discovered the ed2go program through PHCC's Continuing Education and Workforce Development division, which offers three levels of veterinary assistant courses taught online in a six-week format.

After completing the courses, Harris was promoted to Animal Health Care Director at the SPCA, and the doors continued to open for her. Harris soon became the Director of Operations, managing customer service, training of the staff and medical operations. This new position allowed her to dabble in the fundraising aspect of the SPCA, grooming her to assume the position of Executive Director in 2013.

Harris, who had benefitted so tremendously from the ed2go program decided to enroll her staff in similar courses, tailored to their individual positions. "It really 'rockstarred' them," she said. "Our staff are amazing superheroes." So far eight staff members have completed the veterinary assistant training, and others have taken a variety of courses from medical math to fundraising.

And luckily for Harris and her staff, the ed2go program is no longer the only option for veterinary training in town. Patrick Henry will now be offering a Veterinary Assistant program with combined classroom and online instruction.



Nicole Harris, Executive Director of the SPCA, with Chelsea

2014 Distinguished Alumni

For their achievements and contributions to their careers and communities, these nine alumni are well-deserving of this year's Distinguished Alumni Award.



G. Edward Cassidy

G. Edward Cassidy earned his associate degree from PHCC in administration of justice in 1994. He continued his education at Old Dominion University, earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2000, and his master's in criminal justice/sociology in 2005 from Longwood University. Cassidy is the Captain of the Criminal Investigations Division and Uniform Division with the

Martinsville City Police Department.

Rebecca Forestier graduated from PHCC in 2006 with an associate degree in arts and science. A year later, she earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in human services counseling from Old Dominion University. Forestier is currently the Associate Executive Director at the Martinsville-Henry County YMCA.

Timothy Hall attended PHCC in 1978 to study general studies. He continued his education, earning a bachelor's degree in communications from James Madison University in 1981 and a master's in business administration from Averett University in 2007. He then graduated from the Senior Executive Institute at the Darden School of Business, University of Virginia in 2008, and in 2009 graduated from the LEAD Virginia program at the Weldon Cooper Center of the University of Virginia. Hall is currently the Henry County Administrator.

William H. Martin, Jr. earned his associate degree from PHCC in 1978. He continued his



William H. Martin, Jr.

education at Averett University, graduating in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in education, and in 2008 he graduated from Cambridge College with a master's in interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis on history. Martin earned a National Board Certification in 2012 in Adolescent Education – History. He has been a teacher for the Henry County Public Schools for 33 years.

Cristy G. Reynolds graduated from PHCC with an associate degree in 2000. She then earned her bachelor's degree in human services counseling/psychology in 2002 and a master's in occupational and technical education/business and industry training in 2005, both from Old Dominion University. Reynolds is currently an Adjunct Professor and the Coordinator of Integrated Advising, Testing and Career Center at PHCC.

Vanessa J. Riddle earned her associate degree from PHCC in business with education curriculum in 1977. She then attended James Madison University, graduating in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in special education. For 12 years,

Riddle has been a special education teacher at the Galileo Magnet High School in Danville, Va., where she was recognized as teacher of the year in 2011.

Christy P. Spencer earned her associate degree in business administration from PHCC in 1997. She then graduated from Old Dominion University in 1998 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, and in 2002



Rebecca Forestier



Cristy G. Reynolds



Timothy Hall



Vanessa J. Riddle

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graduated from Virginia Tech with a master's in education. Spencer returned to Old Dominion University to participate in the Leadership and Management Development Certificate Program in 2004, as well as for Post-Master's Coursework in 2005 and 2006. She completed PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education) Training through Martinsville's Department of Social Services, the Nonprofit Management Program: Program Evaluation for Funding and Sustainability through Duke University and



Christy P. Spencer

the Master Advisor Certificate Program through Old Dominion University. Spencer is now the Middle College Instructor/Great Expectations Campus Coach at PHCC.

Cindy Summit graduated from PHCC in 2012 with an associate degree in general studies. She is currently enrolled at Averett University in the Graduate and Professional Studies Program



Cindy Summit

through New College Institute and is scheduled to graduate in 2015. Since 1991, Summit has been the President and Co-owner of S&K Office Products, Inc.

Kathy D. Whittle-Davis graduated from PHCC in 2009 with a human services career studies certificate and has received an Achieve Global Genuine Leadership and Customer Service Instructor Certification. Prior to attending PHCC, she graduated from Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, N.C., with a bachelor's degree in English. She now serves at PHCC as the Project TARE Program Coordinator and Adjunct Professor.



Kathy D. Whittle-Davis

2014 Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner

The awards dinner will be held Friday, May 23 at Chatmoss Country Club. Tickets may be purchased from Letitia Pulliam at 276-656-0250 or lpulliam@patrickhenry.edu. Individual tickets are \$30, Patron Tables of eight are \$225 per table and Benefactor Tables of eight are \$500 per table. Reservations are requested by May 15.

Proceeds will benefit the students and programs of Patrick Henry Community College.

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The Patrick Henry Community College Foundation is a not-for profit organization that is fiscally and organizationally separate from the college. Its goal is to enhance community awareness of Patrick Henry Community College; to secure contributions, bequests and donations; and to account for, manage and help appreciate monies or property submitted to the Foundation.

Our goal is to help students gain access to affordable, quality education. Help us make that dream a reality by contributing to the PHCC Foundation.

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