

# Contact

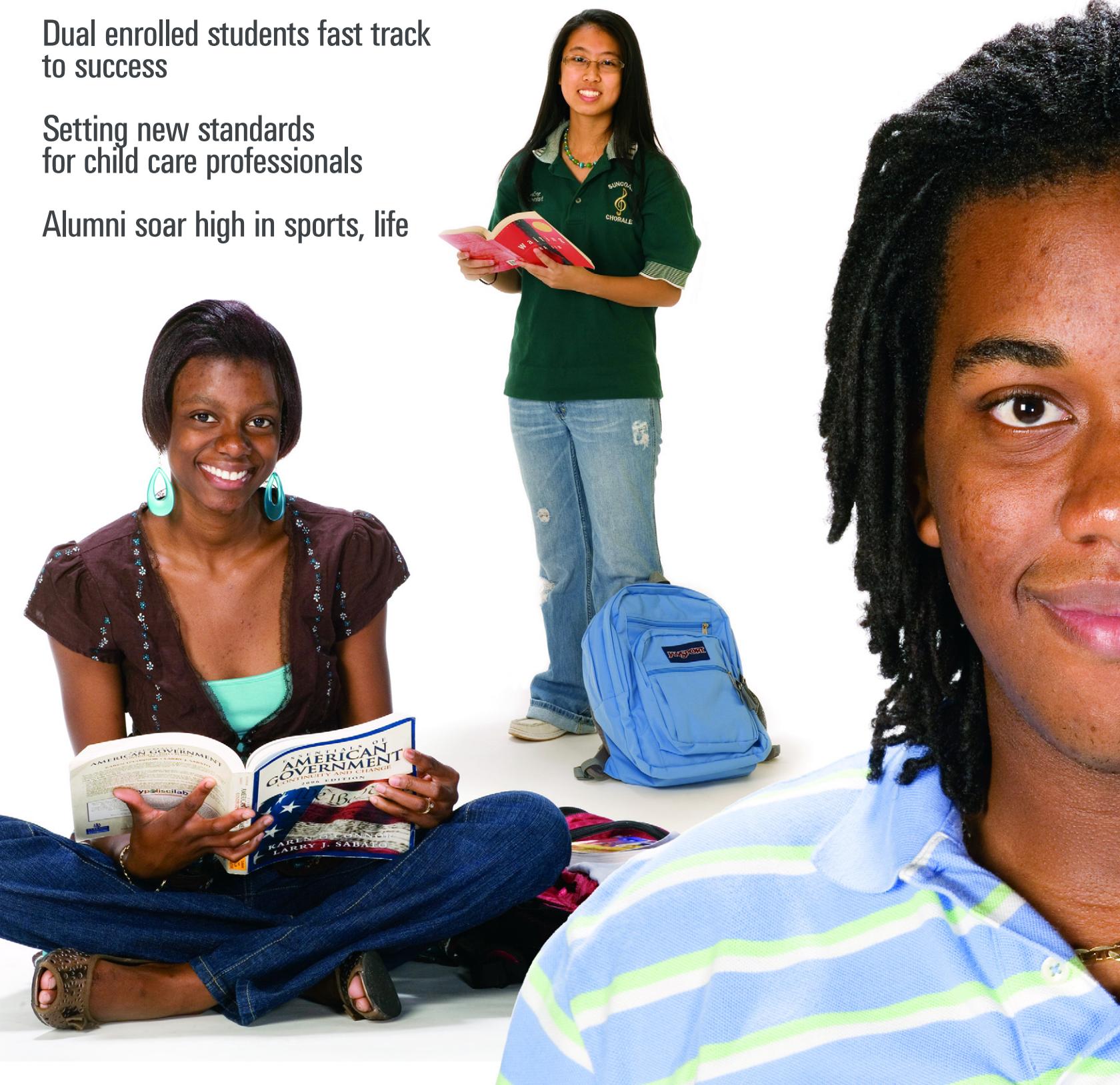
FOR THE FRIENDS  
OF PALM BEACH  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

VOL. 15, No. 2 WINTER 2007-2008

Dual enrolled students fast track  
to success

Setting new standards  
for child care professionals

Alumni soar high in sports, life



# Expect more

**P**alm Beach Community College began the new millennium with a new slogan, "Expect More," a call to our students and community to look beyond preconceived notions or perceived limitations. Success

begins with higher aspirations, higher standards and strong motivation. As the stories in this issue of Contact illustrate, there is no ceiling on achievement when individuals commit themselves to their educational goals.

Interaction with caring, expert professors gives students new knowledge and the confidence to apply it. Beyond our traditional student body, PBCC's impact is felt by the youngest members of our community who benefit from PBCC's groundbreaking work to elevate professional development standards in early child care. The

College serves area high school students participating in life-changing programs such as dual enrollment and Upward Bound. Area residents of all ages benefit from the cultural and



Dennis P. Gallon, Ph.D.  
President

community events that are presented on our campuses and open to all, such as our outstanding artistic performances and our annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast.

Alumni who have achieved international prominence in their professions show the power and the results of expecting more. We celebrate their accomplishments and take great pleasure in sharing their success stories. They are, indeed, inspirational.

PBCC plays a unique catalytic role in this community by providing the learning environment, knowledge and support that are critical to student success. As Florida's first public community college, PBCC has served in this vital capacity for 75 years, a milestone that we will celebrate throughout 2008. It promises to be a momentous year, as we open new buildings on three campuses for natural sciences, biotechnology, humanities and technology instruction. Plans for new programs and new facilities are tied directly to emerging community needs. We invite you to celebrate with us, to support the College's programs and students, and to continue to "Expect More."



## The Mission



*Palm Beach Community College, a richly diverse comprehensive two-year institution with a history of achievement since 1933, is dedicated to serving the educational needs of the residents of Palm Beach County by providing the associate in arts, associate in science and associate in applied science degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.*

[www.pbcc.edu](http://www.pbcc.edu)

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Palm Beach Community College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) to award the associate in arts, associate in science and associate in applied science degrees.

Palm Beach Community College is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation.

of Palm Beach Community College is to provide an accessible and affordable education through a dedicated and knowledgeable faculty and staff, a responsive curriculum and a strong community partnership, which together will enable students to think critically, demonstrate leadership, develop ethical standards and compete effectively in the global workplace.

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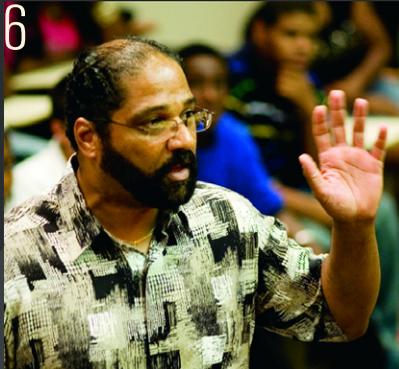
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Expect more...





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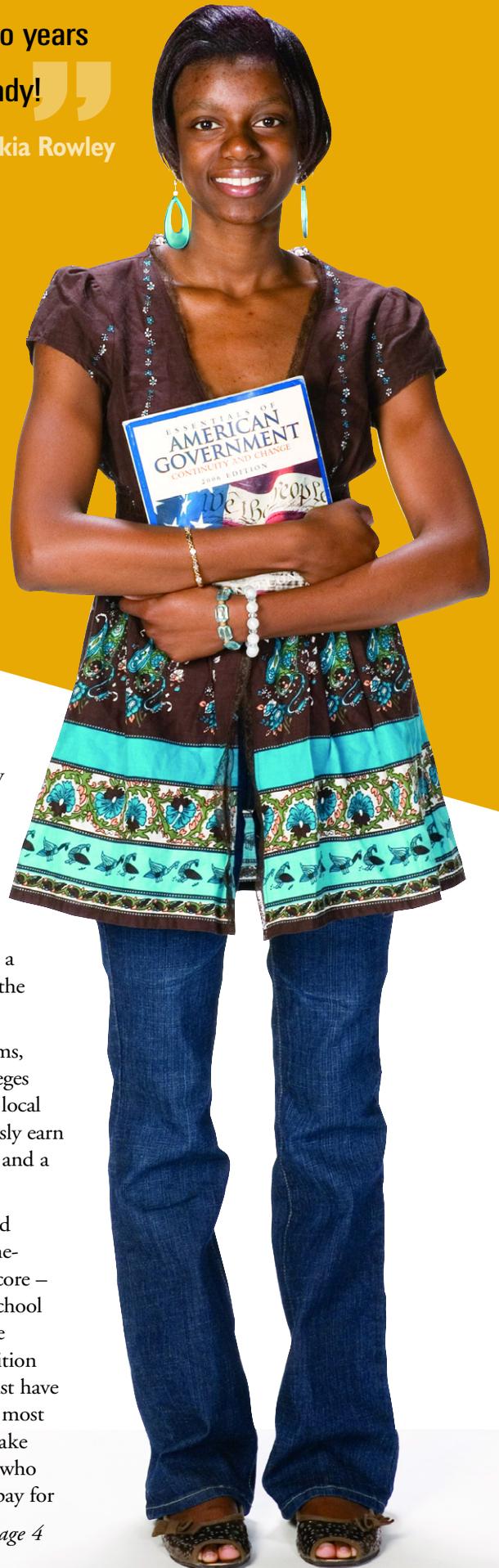
BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

“How many people can really say they graduated from college before high school? It was surreal. I couldn't believe it was happening. I was just proud of myself.”

David Wallace

# ard to college!

“ I have two years  
paid already!”  
Naekia Rowley



**B**efore even graduating from high school, David Wallace had almost completed his college degree.

While the then 17-year-old aspiring pediatrician was working toward his diploma at Glades Central High School, he also was tackling macroeconomics and other college-level classes through dual enrollment at Palm Beach Community College in Belle Glade. By the end of his high school senior year, he had finished 57 of the 60 credit hours required for an associate in arts degree, making him eligible to don a cap and gown and participate in PBCC's spring commencement last May.

“It was a phenomenal experience,” said Wallace of Belle Glade, who graduated fifth in his high school class two weeks later. “How many people can really say they graduated from college before high school? It was surreal. I couldn't believe it was happening. I was just proud of myself.”

After taking his last sociology class and receiving his A.A. degree with a 3.5 grade point average during the summer, Wallace transferred to Morehouse College in Atlanta with enough credits to be classified as a junior. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in biology and plans to go to medical school.

PBCC officials say Wallace is a perfect example of how dual enrollment can work for the right student. “It is a great opportunity for students with discipline, motivation

and drive to get a jump start on their college education,” said Robin Johnson, director of outreach services and recruitment. “They really have to be mature and have excellent time management skills.”

### 20-year mark

The Florida Legislature approved dual enrollment in 1987 to give high school students around the state a free head start on college and reduce the time it takes to earn a degree.

Through the dual enrollment programs, offered by the state's community colleges and universities in coordination with local school districts, students simultaneously earn credit toward high school graduation and a college degree or technical certificate.

Dual enrollment is open to public and private high school students and home-schooled students with a qualifying score – based on the individual college and school district requirements – on the College Placement Test, ACT or SAT. In addition to qualifying test scores, they also must have a 3.0 grade point average to enroll in most college credit courses and a 2.0 to take certificate program courses. Students who take dual enrollment courses do not pay for

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tuition, registration or lab fees. In addition, school districts provide free books and instructional materials to public school students who take dual enrollment courses.

“Dual enrollment is a win-win situation for both students and parents,” said Dr. Sharon Sass, vice president of academic affairs. “It gives high school students a real-world college experience and offers value to parents.”

Susan Lang, PBCC’s manager of dual enrollment, said it’s rare for dual enrollment students to complete as many college credits as Wallace did. In fact, according to a report by the Florida Legislature Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability on the state’s 2001-2002 high school graduates, only 17 percent took dual enrollment classes. Of those who did, they typically took three dual enrollment courses earning nine college credits.

“Not everyone has the discipline to juggle high school coursework with college work, but those who do are to be commended. It gets students ready for college, and it saves families money,” Lang said.

### Competing programs

Dual enrollment has become increasingly popular since its initial approval by lawmakers. However, the number of students taking dual enrollment statewide has dipped over the last two years from 37,000 in 2005 to 32,000 in 2006. PBCC experienced a similar trend with a drop from 1,286 dual enrollment students in spring 2005 to 918 students in spring 2007.

Dr. Pamela Kerouac, policy analyst for the Florida Department of Education Office of Articulation, suggests that there are a number of factors that may have influenced the

## Through dual enrollment programs students simultaneously earn credit toward high school graduation and a college degree or a technical certificate.

drop in enrollment, including state support for student enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which are easily available to students on the high school campus.

In addition, unlike dual enrollment, school districts receive supplemental funding from the state for students enrolled in AP courses who pass the nationally recognized AP exam. While public high schools are required by state statute to weigh dual enrollment courses the same as AP, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education courses when calculating grade point averages, the State University System admission criteria calculates fewer quality points for dual enrollment courses.

“There are a number of colleges that have very successful dual enrollment programs and actively promote dual enrollment with their local school districts. Some institutions do not go the extra mile to promote dual enrollment opportunities. If the information is not made available, students may not be aware that these opportunities exist,” Kerouac said.

### Early admission

Wallace said after his high school guidance counselor clearly explained the program and its benefits, he saw it as a challenge and a great opportunity. In his sophomore year, he began taking at least two dual enrollment courses each term. Then, during his senior year at Glades Central, he was granted early admission to PBCC, which meant during the fall and spring terms he took college courses full-time, receiving credit for high school and college. “I figured maybe I can get out of (undergraduate) school early because I want to go to medical school.”

But he said his commitment to taking college courses required that he reprioritize his high school extracurricular activities, which included the Student Council, president of the National Honor Society, vice president of the NAACP Youth Council, Future Business Leaders of America and band.

“I had to drop some things because I was overloading myself,” he said. “I really think the dual enrollment program is a great opportunity for anyone who has that drive. I don’t advise people to do it if they don’t know how to manage their time. It’s a totally different environment. You have to really do things on the adult level, like the class discussions. The dual enrollment program helps you to become a self motivator. It makes you grow up.”

Naekia Rowley of Belle Glade also completed 51 college credits before graduating from Glades Central High School this year. Like Wallace, she was taking dual enrollment courses on a part-time basis, and during her senior year she was granted early admission to PBCC. She took the final three classes needed for her associate in arts degree at PBCC this summer.

She said she began aggressively taking college courses because she wanted a challenge and to help her family, which has three other children in college, save money. “I have two years paid already,” said Rowley, who is pursuing her bachelor’s degree in nursing at Florida Atlantic University.

Anne Chen, a senior at Suncoast High School in Riviera Beach, who made a perfect score – 800 on the math and verbal sections of the SAT and 780 on the writing section – is taking an English literature course at PBCC this fall. This is her third dual enrollment course, and she learned early on the need to manage her time.

In fall 2006, the Wellington resident took Calculus I at PBCC while also taking seven classes at her high school.

“At first, it was stressful but then you realize as you get older you don’t have time to get everything you want. It makes you realize what life is like beyond high school - outside the bubble you’ve been in. It taught me time management, basically,” Chen said. 





“ It makes you realize what life is like beyond high school - outside the bubble you’ve been in.”

Anne Chen

# Students blossom in Upward

BY TONI WOLF

↑ Francky Pierre-Paul, left, jokes with students from PBCC's Black Student Union.

→ Kemar Henry and Kim Hailes dissect worms in biology class with science instructor Terrence Narinesingh.

“It’s hard where I’m from  
living in a gang world,  
being afraid, not having a father.  
It’s not a perfect life.”

“Upward Bound is the light  
that guides me, the nurturer  
of my dreams, my pathway  
to success.”

Rap music lyrics  
by Upward Bound  
students

“Upward Bound means  
to go up and stay up, even to make up  
if necessary. When things are down,  
we look up!”

# Bound!

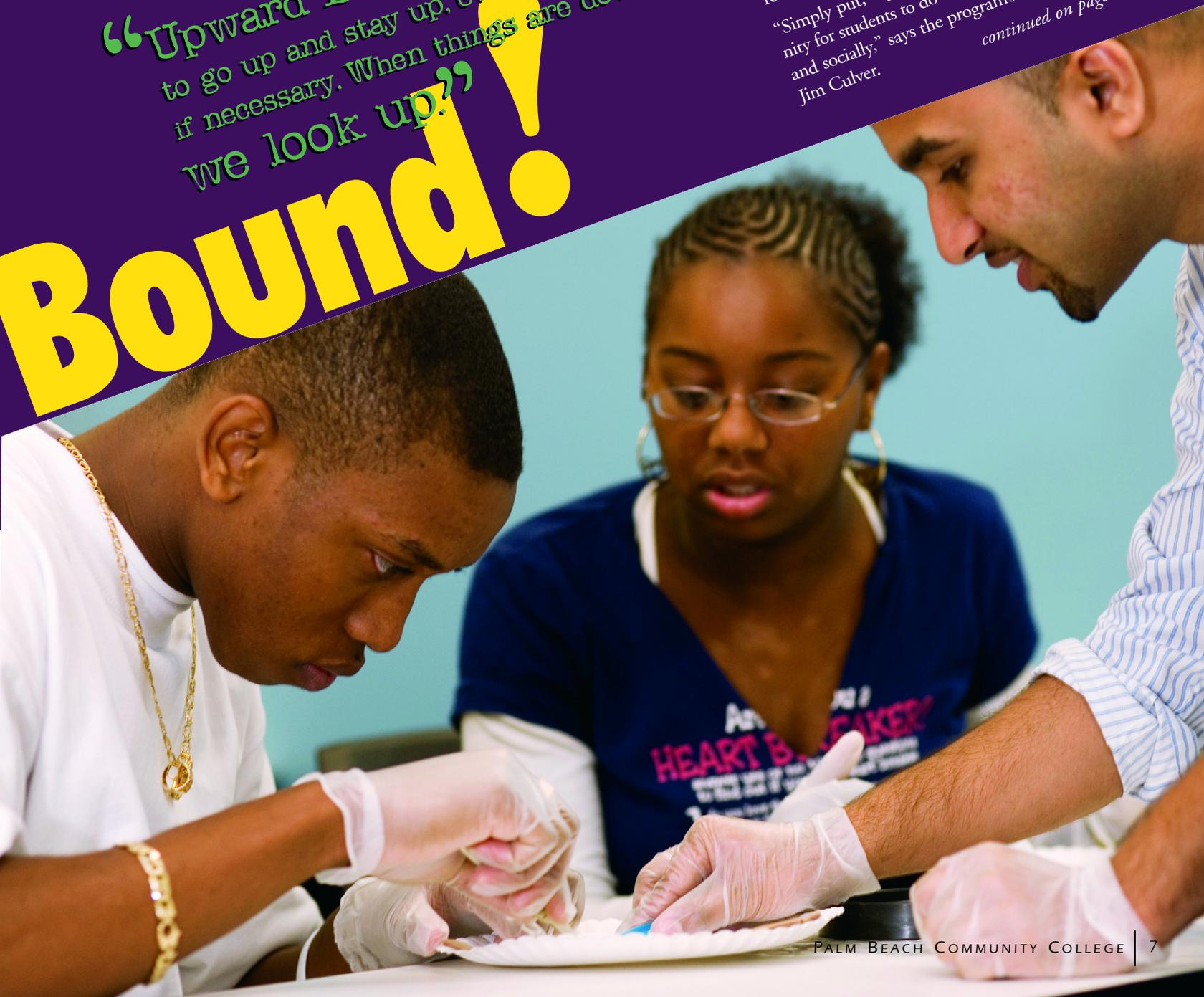
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he students’ poems and rap songs for PBCC’s Upward Bound annual reception are hopeful and enthusiastic. The 50 low income or first generation high school students who participated in PBCC’s Upward Bound program during the summer say it’s not only an opportunity, it’s a blessing.

Upward Bound was created by the 1964 federal Economic Opportunity Act and was part of the Great Society’s “War on Poverty.” Recently PBCC received a five-year, \$1.25 million grant to continue the program it started eight years ago. The primary emphasis is preparing students for college, but in reality, the approach is much more holistic.

“Simply put, Upward Bound is an opportunity for students to do their best academically and socially,” says the program’s director, Jim Culver.

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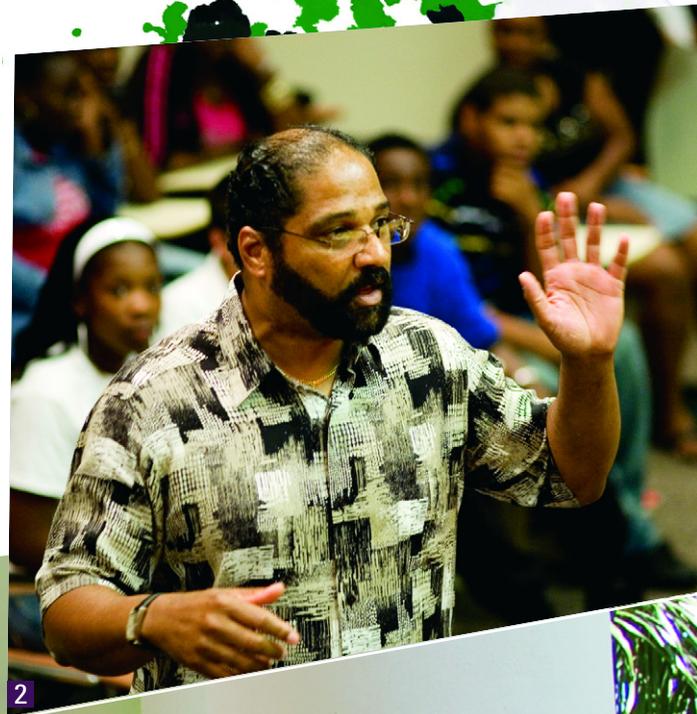
During the six-week summer session when students visit other colleges and universities and live together in dormitories at Northwood University, they belong to a community, and it shows in their joyful camaraderie.

“Sometimes they are reclusive at first, but after a few days, they blossom,” says Silvana Orloff, the post-secondary advisor. “Before, they had no sense of direction, but now they have a sense of direction and a purpose.” Orloff monitors the students during the school year when they meet twice a month for academic assistance. They attend morning classes during the summer as well, studying reading, English, math, science and computers.

That extra help pays off, says Lorinda Ferguson, the summer’s head resident and a PBCC Upward Bound graduate.

She recently earned a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice and plans to attend law school. The summer dormitory experience helped, too. “I was better prepared for leaving home during the first year of college,” Ferguson said. “When it was time for me to deal with five girls in the same room, I had a step up.”

Francky Pierre-Paul, a senior at Forest Hill High School, was a “class clown” who never considered his future before he entered Upward Bound two years ago. “The program has changed me a lot,” he explained. “I absolutely love it. I love the teachers, and Mr. Jimmy is great – he’s there for you. Now I go to school with a smile on my face.”

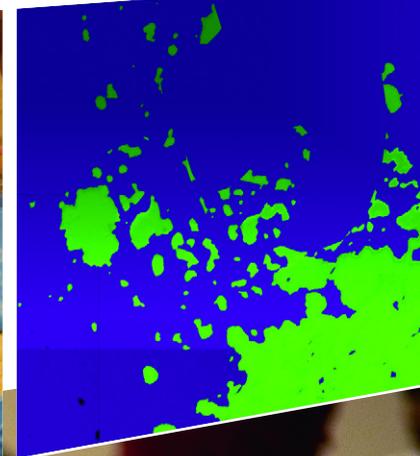


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#### Upward Bound Summer 2007

- 1 Melissa Cruz and Brandon Porter were among 40 Upward Bound students who visited the University of Central Florida.
- 2 Director James Culver addresses the students.
- 3 Alex Bolyard performs his original rap poem.
- 4 Sandy Voltaire and Naima Cuevas enjoy their first taste of dorm life.
- 5 The Upward Bound group reacts to student recitals.





are consequences to their actions, but we let them know that we were kids once, too.”

When Antonelya Williams, a senior transferring from Palm Beach Lakes to Jupiter High School, entered her second year with the program, she was determined to “do something positive and constructive with my life.” In a matter of a few weeks in the summer, her aunt, cousin and grandmother passed away, but Williams returned shortly afterward to Upward Bound.

“Being down won’t bring them back,” she said philosophically. “I’m holding my head up high regardless of the circumstances because I believe I can go to college someday and be somebody. The other students have been very supportive.”

PBCC’s Upward Bound family has had a 98 percent high school completion rate since it began, having served over 500

Joshua Jean-Noel, a senior at Accel Alternative High School, didn’t talk much before Upward Bound. “Now I have friends, and we’re trying to understand each other. Mr. Jimmy makes it all one big family.”

There’s no doubt that Culver (“Mr. Jimmy”) has earned the students’ respect (they say he’s strict), and he’s not above acting, well, goofy. He likes to joke that they’re raising his blood pressure and often calls for his pills.

“I want to make a difference in these kids’ lives,” he said. “You don’t have forever, and my time is now. We teach them that there

*continued on page 10*

The Upward Bound staff is, from left, Silvana Orloff, Cynthia Trager (seated), Katia Lorissaint and James Culver.



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students so far. Of the 65 percent who attend college, 71 percent have graduated.

“Later on you will see the transformation in their lives,” Orloff told parents during a student recital.

“I believe that if they pay attention, they will come out a huge success,” Ferguson said. “Eventually they’ll understand what the program does, like I did.”

“We’re making memories here,” Culver said. “Long after we’re gone, they’ll remember Upward Bound and the impact we had socially and academically on their lives. That’s why we say PBCC Upward Bound is about turning people’s lives around!”

### **Innovative methods engage Upward Bound youth**

A water balloon fight in an unforeseen torrential downpour provides one of many hilarious moments in PBCC’s Upward Bound program where fun is a necessary part of the curriculum. Although four hours a day of academics in the summer-time wouldn’t appeal to most teenagers, the Upward Bound students want to be there. The students from Palm Beach

Lakes, Forest Hill and John I. Leonard high schools come from low-income families in which neither parent has earned a bachelor’s degree. Although they have the requisite 2.0 grade point average, they’re struggling academically.

“We have to reach them where they are,” said Culver. “Our classes have to engage their senses and must be interactive.”

The instructors for Upward Bound are able to create learning opportunities “students wouldn’t have otherwise,” said Terrence Narinesingh, science teacher at John I. Leonard. “We have learning



groups, hands-on lab activities and games like ‘Who wants to be a scientist?’ The teacher acts as a guide. I want them to learn to think for themselves.”

In English class on a given day, students pair off to write stories and read them aloud. “Miss Ghetto-locks and the Three Hoodmen” is a tongue-in-cheek parody of the familiar fairy tale, except that the young girl is searching for her “Binderella” by having boys try on sneakers. Once she finds her true love, he becomes her thug and she is his “thugette.” The teacher never bats an eyelash and praises the pair for their creative dialog. In reading class, students play Hangman with SAT vocabulary words as just one activity designed to keep them engaged.

Math teacher Denise Young asks students to apply mathematical concepts to real life. Rather than solving “story problems,” students create their own. For example, if an amusement park closes in two hours, what are the best rides to squeeze into that time frame? Young’s Honors Geometry students measured where to stand and what angles to hold your arms when playing basketball. They created hip-hop dances that demonstrated turns and angles. They’ve measured volume, trees, lampposts and more.

“Upward Bound gives me more academic freedom to teach them,” Young said.

That approach makes a big difference during the school year, said Kencia Mele, a senior at Palm Beach Lakes High School. Mele was elected Upward Bound class president by her peers. “I’m not as panicky as I would have been in school when I realize that I’ll know some of the material.”

Five peer counselors monitor students in class to be sure they’re alert and behaving properly, but they also help students with homework and personal problems. The peer counselors have earned at least an associate’s degree and act as role models, said peer counselor Chadli Charlot who attends Marywood University in Pennsylvania and also attended PBCC. “We can give them a heads up on college and advice on time management, too,” he said.

Guest speakers, often from PBCC, tell the students about financial aid, admissions, student organizations and student life. “Without the support of the staff and faculty at PBCC, we wouldn’t have been as successful,” Culver said. “That’s paramount.”

Head resident and Upward Bound graduate Lorinda Ferguson said coming back is “a great feeling. We try to encourage the students and keep them focused and on the right track.”



As part of their yearlong experience, students visited campuses around Florida such as the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach and Florida International University in Miami.



# Institute Builds National Model for Training Child Care Professionals

BY GWENN ADAMS

**P**alm Beach Community College is setting the standard for educating the youngest among us.

Children under 5 years of age have the most potential for brain development, yet those providing their education and care outside the home are among the lowest paid workers in our economy. These workers, in many cases, need only be at least 18 and tuberculosis-free to teach our future.

“We know child care practitioners want to do great things for children, but the right tools have to be in place. What we’re doing here on a county level at PBCC’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education is more than most states are doing on a statewide scale,” said Roanne Moreno, Ed.D., institute director. “We’ve heard the governor’s desires to have more well-trained child care employees, but the problem is how to get there. What we are doing here will get us there.”

Among the governor’s goals is having lead teachers with four-year college degrees. Other teachers and child care providers also will be expected to continue their professional growth.

“Children who enter kindergarten without the opportunity to develop critical skills in early childhood are at a great disadvantage,” said Gov. Charlie Crist. “It is important that we continue to enhance and coordinate all of our services so that we provide each of Florida’s youngest citizens with the resources they need to be prepared for kindergarten and future success.”

PBCC provides those resources to child care practitioners through access to a comprehensive training system that takes them from the most basic training to college graduate with financial aid and incentives along the way.

## Blueprint for growth

The first step was to develop a set of core competencies that provide a blueprint for individual professional growth as well as guidelines for training and education programs. Those core knowledge areas are:

- Child development and learning
- Building family and community relationships
- Observing, documenting and assessing to support young children and their families
- Teaching and learning
- Professionalism and leadership
- Health, safety and nutrition
- Program management and administration

These core competencies are used to focus the training to desired outcomes.

Motivating and equipping child care workers for professional growth is essential. Most child care practitioners would like to increase their skills, but many simply can’t afford it. The Seeking Excellence in Education and Knowledge (SEEK) Scholarship solves that problem.

Administered by the institute and funded by Children’s Services Council, the scholarships are available for classes, workshops and conferences that are directly related to career development in early childhood education. The scholarships even cover PBCC application fees and testing center fees, books and GED test reimbursement. These scholarships are based not on income but on employment as a family child care provider, director or teacher in a home, center or school that provides subsidized child care and has a rate agreement with Family Central, Inc.



## Incentives to advance

When child care practitioners increase their training, they also can increase their income without passing that cost on to their employer or the families they serve. The Education Incentive Award, a part of the SEEK program, provides monetary awards to providers as they achieve specific educational goals. These one-time awards can range from \$200 for completing the GED to \$400 for an A.S. in early childhood education.

Beyond that one-time award, annual salary supplements are available to those who have already completed certain levels of training and stay with the same child care center for at least one year. The WAGES Florida Project can pay from \$200 annually for Child Development Associate credentials to \$3,000 annually for those earning bachelor of arts or science degrees in early childhood education. These incentives not only help to ensure that practitioners are better educated, they also help ensure continuity of care for children.

“It’s like the proverbial carrot being dangled to get them to go to the next level, but it also helps with the turnover at child care facilities. The national average is 40 percent, but for those enrolled in our programs the turnover is only 13 percent,” said Debra Mazzota, professional development coordinator at the institute.

Support for those moving up the career ladder comes from the institute’s career advisors. These advisors, or coaches, address the need for professional development that benefits both the individual and the center. “We take academic advising on the road to help them move through their career pathway. It’s difficult for practitioners to get away from the center so we go to them to talk about everything from GEDs to English as a second language to moving on to the bachelor’s degree,” Mazzota said. “By ensuring a quality education for the child care provider we are ensuring a quality education for our future.”



**“We are the only county-level registry in the country. The state of Florida is looking to us to develop a statewide registry.”**

**Roanne Moreno, Ed.D.**  
PBCC’s Institute of Excellence  
in Early Care and Education

## Tracking change

Another way the institute enhances quality education is through the Early Childhood Registry for practitioners and trainers. The voluntary registration supports evaluations and educational planning and also informs parents on the professional development of their child’s caregiver. Membership in the registry, funded by Children’s Services Council and administered by the institute, means the trainer or practitioner has met specific criteria established by a task force of early childhood professionals.



The registry ensures that trainers are not teaching above their level of education and experience and that all training meets quality standards. All approved training is listed on an online calendar. The registry formally tracks the education, training and work experience of all member practitioners. These practitioners receive information on upcoming trainings and special events so they can continue to move up the career ladder.

“We are the only county-level registry in the country. The state of Florida is looking to us to develop a statewide registry,” Dr. Moreno noted.

There are also bragging rights in the institute’s work toward a transfer agreement with Florida Atlantic University for an undergraduate degree in early childhood education/early childhood special education. There are already five courses offered at FAU as it continues to build the program. Many students from the institute are just waiting for the program to be fully developed and approved so the credits they have earned can be transferred toward their bachelor’s degree.

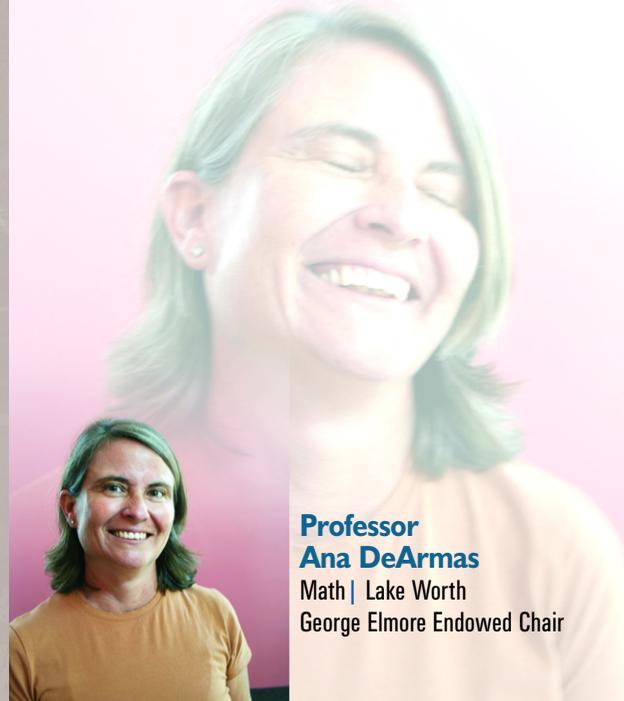
Institute leaders are sharing the professional development model through presentations at state and national education conferences. By advancing the knowledge and skills of child care professionals, their efforts are developing minds, young and old.



# faculty spotlight

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

Palm Beach Community College recognizes and supports outstanding faculty through awards and endowed faculty chairs. Here are this year's recipients of outstanding teaching honors.



**Professor Ana DeArmas**  
Math | Lake Worth  
George Elmore Endowed Chair



**Professor Alireza Fazelpour**  
Computer Science | Boca Raton  
Tom Pledger Endowed Chair

2007

## Gimbelstob Professors and Instructors of the Year

The Gimbelstob Professors and Instructors of the Year were chosen by their peers after nominations were submitted by students, faculty and staff. The PBCC awards, which include a monetary gift and a gold medal, are named in honor of Herb and Elaine Gimelstob, a Boca Raton couple whose generosity helped establish the Gimelstob Faculty Award Endowment.



**Professor Raishell Adams**  
Strategies for College Success | Palm Beach Gardens



**Professor Thomas Reid**  
Respiratory care | Palm Beach Gardens



**Professor Jeanne Boone**  
Nutrition | Boca Raton

# Endowed chairs

The endowed chairs reward both full-time teaching faculty and program instructors for outstanding teaching and service to the college, students and the community. Endowed chairs receive financial support for a creative activity. The activity must directly benefit the students while enhancing an academic program and support student success in the areas of student engagement, technology, financial aid, alumni awareness and diversity.



**Professor Nancy Levin, J.D.**  
Speech Communication | Palm Beach Gardens



**Professor Steven Konopacki, Ph.D.**  
English | Lake Worth

## Stewart Distinguished Teaching Awards

The Stewart Distinguished Teaching Awards were established in 2006 with a grant from the Douglas and Virginia Stewart Foundation. The recipients, who each received \$5,000, were chosen for their outstanding teaching methods to promote student engagement, retention and success.



**Professor Steve Brahle**  
English | Lake Worth  
Bank of America Endowed Chair



**Professor Tony Siassi**  
Math | Belle Glade



**Professor Roger Ramsammy, Ph.D.**  
Biology | Lake Worth



**Adjunct Professor Diana Wolverson**  
Nursing | Lake Worth



**Instructor Terry Delp**  
Cosmetology | Lake Worth



**Instructor Stephen Horlick**  
Automotive | Lake Worth



**Instructor Ronald Nocenti**  
Automotive | Lake Worth

# Foundation

## Donor support helps student start over

BY TONI WOLF

The scholarships that PBCC graduate Donna McKeehan received made all the difference in the world. So did a nurturing faculty.

McKeehan had been a homemaker for 16 years and was home schooling her four children when she and her husband divorced. A friend had attended PBCC's Crossroads program for displaced homemakers and suggested she go, too.

"The Crossroads program helped me to explore what I needed to do to support my children," McKeehan recalled. "A two-year degree seemed very reasonable."

While McKeehan was earning her associate in science degree in PBCC's legal assisting program in Palm Beach Gardens, she was facing the personal turmoil that comes with a divorce and her children's adjustment to attending a public school. Speech Professor Nancy Levin took a personal interest in McKeehan and awarded her a scholarship the professor had established. McKeehan also received scholarships from the Singles Dance Club of the Palm Beaches, the Count and Countess deHoernle, the Nivel Scholarship, the Glynn-Stone Sophomore Scholarship and awards from the Paralegal Association and American Business Woman. Crossroads helped her purchase textbooks. The PBCC Foundation coordinates the scholarships McKeehan received and solicits support for the Crossroads program as well.

English Professor Virginia Brooks advised McKeehan to sign up for the Honors program, and McKeehan's legal professors Barbara Scheffer and Roxanne Axelrod encouraged her as well. An Honors graduate, McKeehan earned her degree in 2006 with a 3.93 grade point average. She also was

named the legal assisting program's "Student of the Year."

"The scholarships and the supportive, encouraging people in my path helped me to finish the program more quickly than I could have done on my own," McKeehan said.

"Crossroads helped me establish a dream, and early in my college career, Professors Levin and Brooks established a larger vision. The legal assisting program became an extended unit of support."

The scholarships also allowed McKeehan to keep her house and provide stability for her children. PBCC helped her to find a legal assisting position in commercial real estate a year ago. Helping to facilitate multi-million dollar real estate transactions is something she "never dreamed of being a part of," and she will begin working on a bachelor's degree in legal studies at Florida Gulf Coast University this fall. She might even become an attorney herself someday, and if she does, she said, she'll establish her own scholarship because she knows what a world of difference it can make.



Crossroads helped me establish a dream, and early in my college career, Professors Levin and Brooks established a larger vision. The legal assisting program became an extended unit of support.



*We want to hear from you!*

Visit the PBCC Alumni site for history and information and to register:  
[www.pbcc.edu/alumni.xml](http://www.pbcc.edu/alumni.xml)

## Attorneys' group builds endowment for terminal degrees

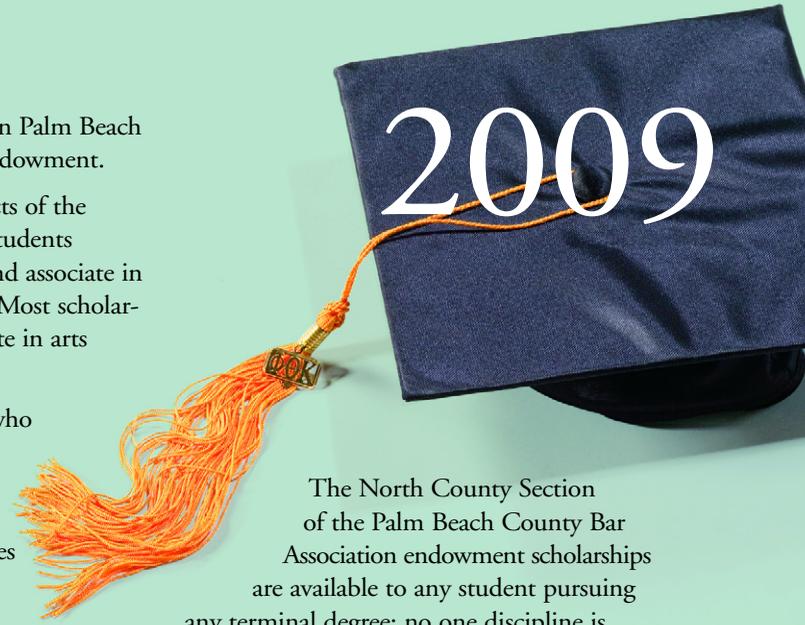
The North County Section of the Palm Beach County Bar Association established an endowed scholarship this year for students pursuing terminal degrees at PBCC in Palm Beach Gardens. The \$46,733 endowed fund will be made available to those students in 2009. The organization has awarded scholarships to PBCC students in the past, but this is the first time members have contributed to an endowment.

"We decided to take a big-picture approach rather than issuing scholarships piecemeal as we've done in the past," said Colleen Nelson, Jupiter attorney and family law mediator. Nelson worked with association members Michael Slavin, a Palm Beach Gardens copyright and patent attorney, and Scott

Zappolo, a litigation attorney in Palm Beach Gardens, to establish a local endowment.

One of the most unusual aspects of the endowment is its support for students pursuing associate in science and associate in applied science career degrees. Most scholarships are designated for associate in arts transfer degrees.

"We wanted to help students who supply a work force for our clients," Nelson explained. "I liked the idea of helping those who don't receive Bright Futures scholarships and older students who are returning to college. That was a need that's not being filled, and I felt really strongly about it."



The North County Section of the Palm Beach County Bar Association endowment scholarships are available to any student pursuing any terminal degree; no one discipline is singled out, Nelson said.

## Esteemed professor was vital part of College for over half its history

Painter, sculptor and photographer Gene Arant was one of PBCC's most beloved professors. Arant passed away on Aug. 10, 2007. The Arant family is in the process of establishing a scholarship in his name so that former students can honor him with their contributions. The scholarship will be maintained by the PBCC Foundation.

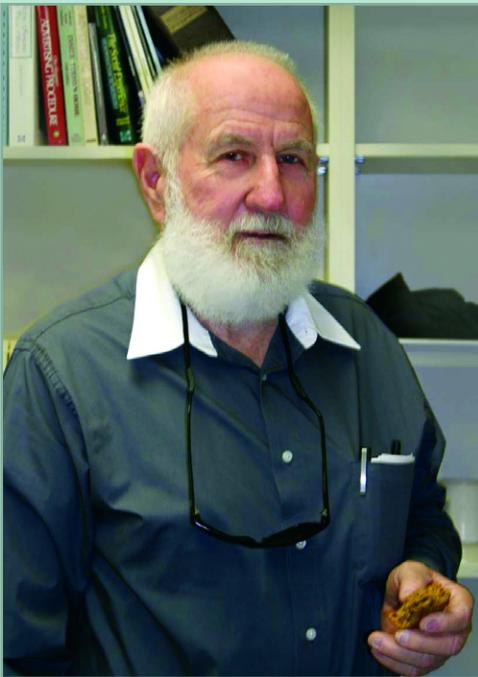
Dubbed a "Renaissance man" by many who knew him, Arant went the extra mile for his students, staying late to help them and building a strong photography program with advanced classes. A master color printer, he embraced digital photography when it came along. He loved teaching so much, he continued to teach after his retirement and was leading summer photography classes in Costa Rica. He taught at PBCC full time for 32 years and part-time for seven more. When Arant started in 1968, the College was only 35 years old. PBCC turns 75 in 2008.

Arant grew up in the Everglades and taught landscape photography there for 16 years for the Palm Beach Photographic Centre. The classes were so popular, they attracted people from all over the world.

"He was truly what a teacher should be," said former student Fatima NeJame, the Centre's director. "He was a very caring, selfless individual."

"He was so sincere and honest," said Tom McCartney, friend and former teaching colleague at PBCC. "He did everything he could for his students."

To make a contribution in Gene Arant's name, go to [www.pbcc.edu/makeagift.xml](http://www.pbcc.edu/makeagift.xml) or call the PBCC Foundation at 561-868-3450.



### Gene Arant

During his 32 years as a full-time professor in photography and seven years as an adjunct professor, Eugene Odas Arant was a true Renaissance man who made a difference in so many students' lives. He loved to teach life lessons and show how to create art using both sides of the brain. He always had a cookie or sweets to go along with his gentle demeanor.

*More stories from the Foundation, next page*

## Knowledge starts with pedal power!



**Petr Kout** didn't let a little distance stop him from getting a degree.

For two years, he biked 16 miles round trip from Jupiter to his classes at PBCC in Palm Beach Gardens. "It takes me 40 minutes one way," said Kout, a 25-year-old Czech

Republic native who came to Palm Beach County in 2005 to live with his sister and pursue a college education.

With no money for a car, the Honors student, who maintained a 4.0 grade point average, said he simply did what he had to do to reach his goal. He graduated last May with an associate in arts degree and was accepted to Columbia University in New York. He plans to pursue either astronomy or biophysics. Like many PBCC students, Petr is the first in his family to attend college – a first generation student!

Kout has accomplished his goals in part through a scholarship he received from the PBCC Foundation. If not for these scholarships, students like Petr Kout would face severe difficulty in realizing their dream of pursuing an education.



Last year the PBCC Foundation awarded \$789,000 in scholarships to more than 700 students. Established in 1973, the Foundation provides financial assistance for student scholarships, educational programs and additional facilities. It offers an opportunity for anyone in our community to participate in the lives of students like Petr. Donations range in size from a few dollars to many thousands of dollars. Together these gifts impact individual lives and our community more dramatically than they ever could alone.

*Won't you help make the dream come true for another student?*

*Did you know many companies sponsor matching gifts made by employees? These programs are a great way for companies to support education. Please send matching gift forms to:*

**PBCC FOUNDATION MS 20**  
**4200 Congress Avenue**  
**Lake Worth, FL 33461**  
**561-868-3450**

2007

**End of Year Alumni Appeal**

*It's not too late to make a difference!*

Please fill out this form and mail in to the Foundation office or make a gift online at:

[www.pbcc.edu/makeagift.xml](http://www.pbcc.edu/makeagift.xml)

Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ believe

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME

in PBCC and want to participate in the 2007 End of Year

Alumni Appeal and wish to pledge a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please allocate my pledge to:

- Greatest Need
- First Generation in College Scholarship
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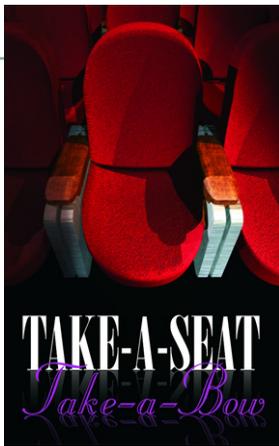
PLEASE SPECIFY

Please accept my pledge through the following method:

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(please call **561-868-3450** for transfer information)

*All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*

With cultural grant funding decreasing from every source, PBCC's three theaters have launched a "Take a Seat, Take a Bow" fund raising campaign. The Duncan Theatre in Lake Worth, the Eissey Campus Theatre in Palm Beach Gardens and the Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center in Belle Glade offer a rich variety of professional performances as well as outreach programs for school children.



The campaign asks donors to "buy" a seat in the theater; an engraved brass plaque is permanently attached to the back of the chair for a \$1,000 contribution. The funds will be used for programming, outreach and facility/equipment improvements.

Donations to the Eissey Campus Theatre will go directly into the theater's Endowment Fund at the PBCC Foundation. The interest from the theater's Endowment Fund is used for hospitality for visiting artists, volunteer recog-

nitition events, theater workshops, promotional materials, equipment and furniture replacement/upgrades and enhancements to programming.

These donations to the PBCC Foundation are matched 66 percent by the State of Florida!

PBCC Foundation	561-868-3450
Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center	561-993-1160
Duncan Theatre	561-868-3309
Eissey Campus Theatre	561-207-5900

## FYI PBCC



## Giovanni to speak at King celebration

**Nikki Giovanni**  
renowned poet, writer,  
commentator, activist  
and educator

**A**claimed author and poet Nikki Giovanni will be the keynote speaker at Palm Beach Community College's 9th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast, themed "Making Dreams a Reality."

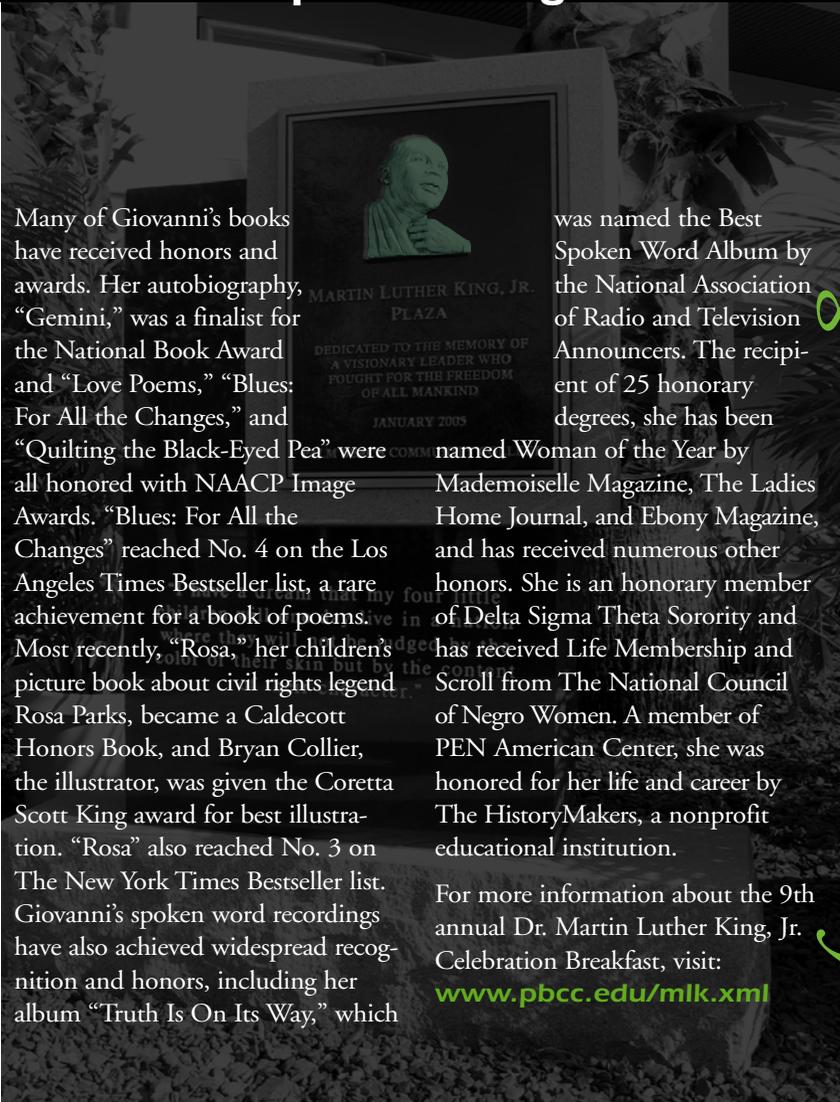
Giovanni, the author of some 30 books for both adults and children, is a Distinguished Professor of English at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. She made headlines this past spring for her moving convocation speech following a deadly shooting rampage at the university.

Many of Giovanni's books have received honors and awards. Her autobiography, "Gemini," was a finalist for the National Book Award and "Love Poems," "Blues: For All the Changes," and "Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea" were all honored with NAACP Image Awards. "Blues: For All the Changes" reached No. 4 on the Los Angeles Times Bestseller list, a rare achievement for a book of poems. Most recently, "Rosa," her children's picture book about civil rights legend Rosa Parks, became a Caldecott Honors Book, and Bryan Collier, the illustrator, was given the Coretta Scott King award for best illustration. "Rosa" also reached No. 3 on The New York Times Bestseller list. Giovanni's spoken word recordings have also achieved widespread recognition and honors, including her album "Truth Is On Its Way," which

was named the Best Spoken Word Album by the National Association of Radio and Television Announcers. The recipient of 25 honorary degrees, she has been named Woman of the Year by Mademoiselle Magazine, The Ladies Home Journal, and Ebony Magazine, and has received numerous other honors. She is an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and has received Life Membership and Scroll from The National Council of Negro Women. A member of PEN American Center, she was honored for her life and career by The HistoryMakers, a nonprofit educational institution.

For more information about the 9th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast, visit:  
[www.pbcc.edu/mlk.xml](http://www.pbcc.edu/mlk.xml)

"Making Dreams a Reality..."



**You are invited!** Please R.S.V.P. to 561-868-3115 by Monday, Jan. 14, 2008

# PBCC basketball great slam dunks in WNBA

BY TABATHA B. McDONALD

## Yolanda Griffith,

Olympic gold medalist and All-Star center for the Sacramento Monarchs, says she may retire from the WNBA this year. If she does, she will end an extraordinary career that includes two key years at Palm Beach Community College, where she was a basketball powerhouse.

During her two seasons at PBCC, Griffith led the Lady Panthers to back-to-back state championships in 1989-90 and 90-91 and to the seventh and third spot, respectively, in the nation. A two-time first team All-State and two-time All-Region for the Florida Community College Activities Association, she averaged 26.7 points, 19.7 rebounds and 6.2 steals during her last year at PBCC.

“We had a good team,” Griffith recalled recently. “We never won a (national) championship, but we always won our division.”

Griffith, 37, is one of the most talented athletes and the most famous and accomplished basketball player to ever attend PBCC. “I’ve never seen anybody as good as her,” said PBCC’s former longtime athletic director Hamid Faquire, who has followed Griffith’s career through the years.

“She was a great player and PBCC assisted her in accomplishing what she accomplished,” said Dr. Freddie Bennett, a PBCC professor and former assistant women’s basketball coach.

The 6-foot, 4-inch Griffith was recruited to PBCC in 1989 by then coach Sallie Smith. She was eager to jump back into the game and into school after getting pregnant her first semester at the University of Iowa in 1988 and leaving before ever playing for the Division I school. Iowa had recruited her from George Washington Carver High School in her hometown of Chicago, where she was the youngest of five children. As a senior at Carver, she was named Parade magazine’s All-American.

“I was determined to get back. Whether it was a junior college or not, I was going back to school,” said Griffith, who advises young athletes to get an education first because “you will always have that to fall back on if sports don’t work out for you.”

Although several schools were interested in her, Griffith, at the recommendation of a family friend, chose to move with her daughter, Candace, to Florida and play at PBCC. “If I would have gone back to a four-year university, I would have had to sit out a year. I was missing two credits,” Griffith explained. “At the junior college I would only have to sit out one semester.”

In addition to taking care of her daughter, playing basketball and going to school full-time at PBCC, Griffith worked part time repossessing cars at night for Allen’s Investigative and Recovery Agency in Lake Worth. Although it was a challenge, she said she did what she had to do to put food on the table for her and her daughter. “I got assistance from friends but other than that, it was me and my daughter,” Griffith said.

After leaving PBCC, she played for one year at Florida Atlantic University, then a Division II school, where she still holds records for most points in a game (46) and season (621). She had an opportunity to go to Texas but decided against that. “I was already settled in Florida. I just decided to stay,” she said.

She then played three years in Germany before returning to the United States to become the first pick of the newly formed American Basketball League’s Long Beach Stingrays in 1997. She was the ABL’s MVP runner-up. After the Stingrays folded, she played for the Chicago Condors.

The ABL went under in 1998, and Griffith was tapped as the second overall pick in 1999 for the Women’s National Basketball Association’s Sacramento Monarchs, where she continued to shine during her nine seasons. In her first year in the WNBA, she was named Newcomer of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and Most Valuable Player, averaging 18.8 points per game. “There were so many good players. For me to be selected (MVP), I was thankful. It was a great honor,” she said.



Photo credit:  
Nathaniel S. Butler  
NBAE/Getty Images.

“Every time I play basketball, I try to give it everything I have.”

**Yolanda Griffith**  
Sacramento Monarchs



Photo credit: Rocky Widner/NABE/Getty Images

PBCC's star basketball player, Yolanda "Yo-Yo" Griffith was the 1999 WNBA MVP, a two-time Olympic gold medalist in 2000 and 2004 and the 2005 WNBA playoff MVP.

Griffith's other career highlights include helping lead the Monarchs to their first championship in 2005, where she received the playoff MVP award, and winning Olympic gold medals in 2000 and 2004 as a member of the U.S. women's basketball team. "Every time I play basketball, I try to give it everything I have," Griffith said.

As she possibly closes the curtain on this stage of her career, she looks forward to starting up again in a new direction. "I want to pursue coaching, but I'm not going to rush into it. I need a break," Griffith said. 📺



# Alumni Corner

# Alumni Success Stories

## Expect More.

Palm Beach Community College salutes these graduates and takes pride in their success stories. If you are an alumnus, we would love to share your accomplishments as well.

Please contact us at [crmarket@pbcc.edu](mailto:crmarket@pbcc.edu)

**PBCC at Belle Glade**  
1977 College Drive

**PBCC at Boca Raton**  
3000 Saint Lucie Avenue

**PBCC at Lake Worth**  
4200 Congress Avenue

**PBCC at Palm Beach Gardens**  
3160 PGA Boulevard

**561-967-PBCC**



**DILIP ABAYASEKARA, PH.D.**  
A.A., PBJC, 1975  
B.S., UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
PH.D., VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

**P**resident and CEO of Speaker Services Unlimited in Harrisburg, Pa., Dr. Dilip Abayasekara is a renowned speaker, corporate trainer and speech coach and past world president of Toastmasters International.

The Sri Lanka native credits PBJC with awakening his joy in learning. "I was like a sponge, absorbing everything I could," he recalled. His success led to scholarships, advanced degrees in chemistry and a 12-year career as an industrial chemist. In 1996, he left science to follow his passion—public speaking—an interest first nurtured through PBJC oratorical contests and such professors as the late Watson B. Duncan. The focus of his speeches and training is helping people discover their own genius and find their path of fulfillment.



**YVONNE BULOS ELLIS**  
A.S., BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, PBJC, 1983  
A.A., PBJC, 1985  
B.A., FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

**Y**vonne Ellis, president of Sterling Attorney Search Firm in Richmond, Va., has found her niche in the recruitment and placement of lawyers. Her clients are global law firms and corporate legal departments throughout the eastern United States.

Ellis launched Sterling Careers, Inc. employment agency in West Palm Beach in 1988. She later relocated to Virginia and refined the company's focus to intellectual property, patent, real estate finance and litigation law. Ellis, who says former PBJC president Dr. Edward Eissey inspired her to pursue a business career, also helps law students prepare for job interviews. "The great education I received made me very community-driven," she said. "I enjoy matching the right person to the right job."



**DOMINIC SIMS**  
A.S., LEGAL ASSISTING, PBCC, 1988  
B.S., PALM BEACH ATLANTIC COLLEGE

**A**s chief operating officer of the International Code Council, Dominic Sims champions safe building construction to protect human health, safety and welfare. Based in Birmingham, Ala., the non-profit organization develops national model construction codes for residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. He joined ICC in 2002, after 19 years of service for Palm Beach County, where he served as executive director of planning, zoning and building.

"Attending PBCC was a wonderful experience that helped me to balance family life, work life and an academic life," Sims says. "What I took away from PBCC gave me the foundation for my career development that I carry with me even to this day."

## Contact FOR THE FRIENDS OF PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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College Relations and Marketing  
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