



tech

QUARTERLY

The Magazine of Forsyth Technical
Community College

Volume 2, Number 2 Spring/Summer 2009

the new grad school

Why Your Community College Is A Natural For Your Next Degree

IN THIS ISSUE:

YOU, ENTREPRENEUR | *What's the Big Idea?*

KID STUFF | *Yes, It Is Brain Science*

A REAL MASK MASTER | *Life of a Respiratory Therapist*

PERSONAL ENRICHMENT | *8 Ways to Branch Out*

ForsythTech

More Than You Know

Be a Part of Our Foundation – Literally.



Forsyth Tech will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. To mark that half-century of growth and service to the community, we intend to complete the Alumni Oval, the inviting and central gathering place on the Main Campus. Your help is needed to bring this rendering to reality.

You are invited to buy a brick – or several bricks – to honor or remember someone you know whose life has been enriched by Forsyth Tech – an alumnus or alumna, an instructor, a board member – or someone who is graduating this spring.

Buying a brick is an affordable – and permanent – way to celebrate an individual. It's also a way to show your support for a college that transforms the lives of hundreds of your neighbors, colleagues, friends and families every single year.

Bricks are priced at \$35 for individuals and \$100 for commercial businesses, and may be inscribed with up to three lines of words. To order a brick, visit www.forsythtech.edu/alumni or contact Shari Covitz, 336.734.7520 or scovitz@forsythtech.edu.

The
Foundation
of Forsyth Tech



From the President

Dr. Gary M. Green

Back to School

Around the country, community colleges are being hailed as “the new graduate school.” In fact, there are many good reasons why people with bachelor’s and master’s degrees go on to get further formal education at community colleges. Besides being convenient and affordable, community colleges are often the best source for exactly the knowledge and skills that people need to be more valuable in their current jobs or more attractive to prospective employers.

Our cover story focuses on what are called “baccalaureate reverse transfer students” in degree and certificate programs at Forsyth Tech. It should be noted that not everyone who needs post-graduate education aspires to an associate’s degree or professional certification. You’ll find many of these well-educated folks in short career-oriented classes in our Division of Corporate and Continuing Education, as well as in classes that support hobbies and avocations. We welcome reverse transfer students to classrooms throughout the college, and appreciate the maturity and perspective they bring.

I like to think of Forsyth Tech as a place where people keep going back to school throughout their lives. And I would be hard put to think of any institution that has so much to offer anyone who wants to know more about something, for any reason. In this issue, you’ll see how Forsyth Tech is an excellent resource for:

> People who want to start their own businesses. See ***You, Entrepreneur: Research & Develop Your Business Idea Here.***

> People who need a second chance to prove their potential. See ***Who Goes Here?/ Joshua Roddy.***

> People who want to learn a new skill or subject, just for the delight of it. See ***Gr8 Explorations: Follow Your Bliss with Personal Enrichment Classes.***

I invite you to look into all Forsyth Tech has to offer. I predict that you’ll be pleasantly surprised – and that you’ll be tempted to sign up for a “back-to-school” experience of your own. ☺

The Crossroads of the Community

The article in this issue of Tech Quarterly on four generations of women in one family who are simultaneously enrolled at Forsyth Tech highlights a truth about what the community college has become. From our roots in the 1960s, when the school was essentially an industrial and trades training ground, Forsyth Tech has become an Early College for motivated high school students, starting in ninth grade, and a graduate school for college graduates and MBAs. And everything in between, as our billboards express the range of programs offered today.

What this means is that Forsyth Tech classrooms, labs, shops and online sessions tend to be a unique and wonderful mix of people – not just diversity of race and ethnicity, but of age, educational background and life experience. The goal is to make the wealth of options and opportunities here accessible to everyone in Forsyth and Stokes counties, at any stage of life. And that goal is substantially met through low tuition and financial aid.

First, however, people have to be aware of all Forsyth Tech has to offer. Showcasing the college’s people and programs is the purpose of Tech Quarterly. Because of necessary cutbacks at the state level, our magazine is not ‘quarterly’ in this recessionary year. We have combined Spring and Summer in this issue.

Contents

- 1 > From the President
- 2 > The Honor Roll
- 5 > Inspiration Express
- 8 > The New Graduate School
- 12 > Gr8 Explorations
- 16 > Who Works Here?
- 17 > Who Goes Here?
- 18 > The Small Business Center
- 22 > Set for Success
- 24 > Bringing Up Baby in the Information Age
- 28 > Tech Side Story
- 30 > Alumni Spotlight
- 34 > Technically Speaking

Forsyth Tech is proud to be part of the North Carolina Community College System, with 58 institutions serving more than 800,000 students annually. North Carolina Community Colleges are creating success in our state by:

- Offering hope for a better future through vocational training and education
- Providing opportunity by making higher education available to all citizens
- Generating jobs by creating a skilled workforce for business and industry

Forsyth Tech welcomes diversity and is dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, please contact Michelle Bratton, Coordinator, Disabilities Services Office, at 336.734.7155 or mbratton@forsythtech.edu.

This Year's Top Model?

When the *Herald-Dispatch* of Huntington, West Virginia, was looking for an excellent example of how a community college can spur economic growth, the search ended at Forsyth Tech. In two lengthy articles published earlier this year, reporter Bill Rosenberger told how Forsyth Tech has become visible and accessible to a large range of people looking for affordable education, and has focused its messaging on workforce development. Local people quoted in the articles included Sallye Liner, president of Forsyth Medical Center; Gayle Anderson, president of the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce; Alice Sineath, Chair of Accounting and Business Administration at Forsyth Tech; Warren Hodges, Chair of the departments of Paralegal Technology and Real Estate; Allied Health student Isaiah Richardson; and President Gary M. Green.

Rising to New Roles

Melanie Nuckols has been named Dean of Financial Services, and Jewel Cherry has been promoted to the position of Dean of Enrollment and Student Services.



In her new position, Melanie is responsible for the business office, payroll, purchasing, and financial aid and auxiliary services, including the college bookstore and cafeteria. A CPA, she joined Forsyth Tech in 2006 as a grants accountant for the college's Foundation, and was an adjunct accounting instructor. She previously served as a grants accounting specialist for Wake Forest University Health Sciences and before that was an auditor with the West Virginia Legislative Post Audit Division. She earned her MBA from High Point University and her B.S. degree in Business Administration from Concord College in Athens, West Virginia.



Jewel Cherry has worked at Forsyth Tech since 1997, and served as interim Dean of Enrollment and Student Services since June 2008. She had previously been Director of the Student Success Center, and program coordinator and instructor in the Business Information Technologies Division. Before joining Forsyth Tech,

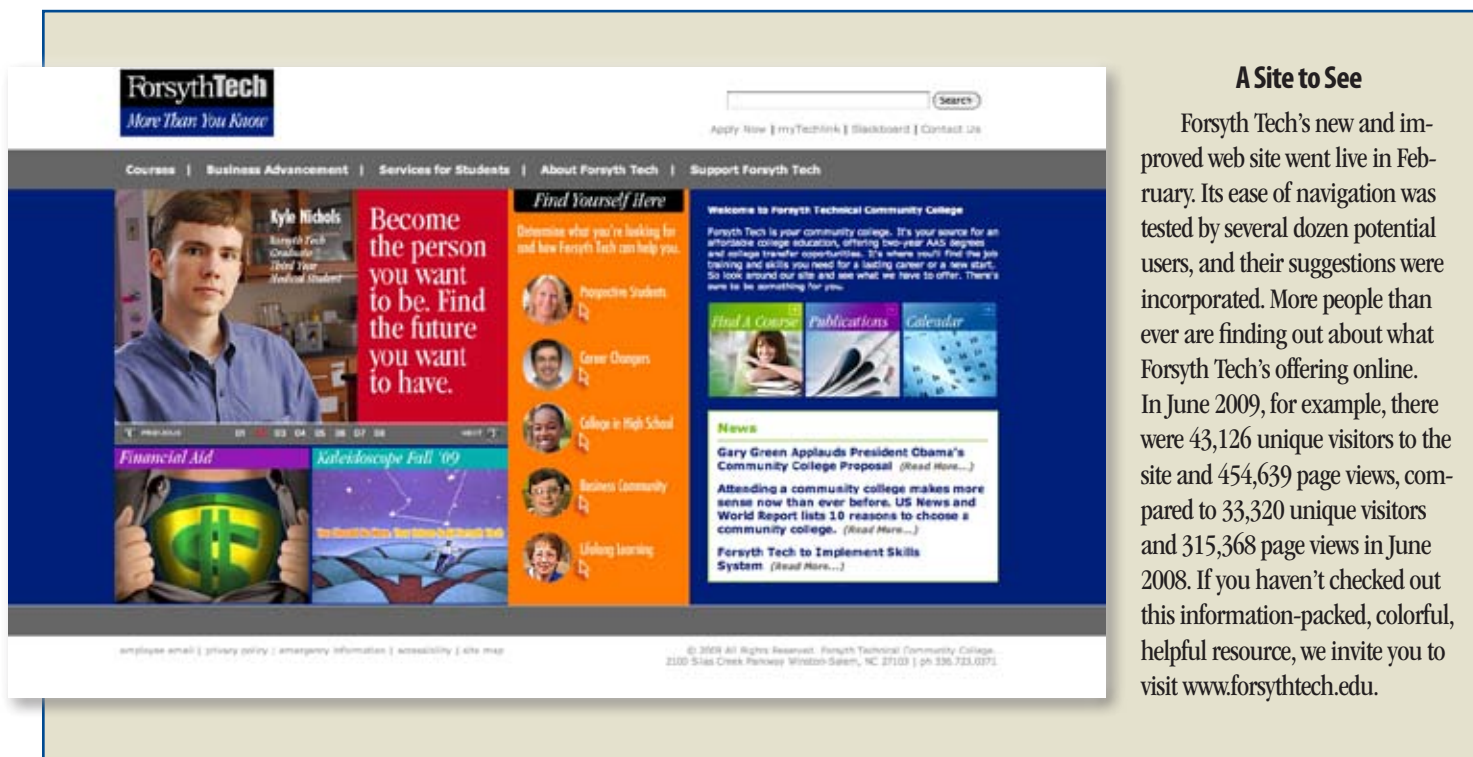
Jewel was an instructor at Mitchell Community College in Statesville, where she also served as interim registrar, admissions counselor and coordinator for student activities. She earned her MBA and her B.A. in Political Science from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and her Educational Specialist degree in Higher Education Administration from the Cratis D. Williams Graduate School at Appalachian State University.

Expand And Deliver

Forsyth Tech is expanding yet again to better serve those who need us. Beginning in fall 2009, courses will be offered at two new locations – the Sertoma 4-H Center in Stokes County and the Employment Security Commission offices on Hanes Mill Road in Winston-Salem. The Sertoma 4-H Center, located in Westfield, is used primarily as a summer camp for children and as a corporate retreat, and provides excellent facilities for Forsyth Tech classes such as carpentry and welding. The Employment Security Commission location will be a Workforce Development Training Center created in partnership with the local Workforce Development Board and will offer a variety of JobsNOW training programs.

A Site to See

Forsyth Tech's new and improved web site went live in February. Its ease of navigation was tested by several dozen potential users, and their suggestions were incorporated. More people than ever are finding out about what Forsyth Tech's offering online. In June 2009, for example, there were 43,126 unique visitors to the site and 454,639 page views, compared to 33,320 unique visitors and 315,368 page views in June 2008. If you haven't checked out this information-packed, colorful, helpful resource, we invite you to visit www.forsythtech.edu.



Allied Health Has a Generous New Ally

The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has made a grant of \$145,000 to the Forsyth Tech Foundation to be used for nursing and allied health scholarships during the 2009-2010 academic year. The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation, which is based in Atlanta, was established in 1946 by Conkey Pate Whitehead as a memorial to his mother.



Mr. Write

When those in the academic world use the phrase "publish or perish," they generally mean professors, but at Forsyth Tech a student has joined the published ranks as well. Jonathan Michels, a radiologic technology student, had an article in the June/July issue of *Scanner*, a magazine published by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists for their 131,000 members. The article, "Why Student Technologists Are Important," explains why having student technologists work in real-world facilities is advantageous for both the students and the organizations who employ them. Jonathan graduated from Forsyth Tech in July.

Two On The Fast Track

Forsyth Tech's new Fast Track program got off to a great start this year as its first two participants graduated in May, completing all the courses required for an Associate degree in just one academic year. Developed by Sybil Rinehardt, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and Bernie Yevin, Dean of Business Technologies, the Fast Track program allows students to take a total of 22 College Transfer General Education courses in four eight-week sessions. Two students signed up for the Fast Track program in fall 2008, and both have now earned their Associate degree. One of those graduates, Kyle Harvey, is the son of Dr. Robin L. Harvey, Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences at Forsyth Tech. Kyle graduated with high academic honors and will be attending Appalachian State this fall in the Heltzer's Honor program, pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice. The other Fast Track graduate is Mary Grace Etienne, who plans to attend either UNC-Chapel Hill or NC State and hopes to eventually earn a Master's degree in Psychology.

Helping Newcomers Navigate the Community

The International Center of Forsyth Tech has been established at the Forsyth County Main Library on West 5th Street. The center provides education, support and resources for people with roots in other countries and cultures. Among the services offered are GED classes, English as a Second Language, workshops in topics such as homeownership and workers' rights, and referrals to community resources including legal services, health services and schools.



Save The Date!

Make sure you note these upcoming events on your calendar:

Sept. 24 – A ribbon cutting at Bob Greene Hall to officially open the new expansion. This culminates a 16-month project that will add 20,000 square feet of space, including 12 faculty offices and 15 new classrooms, allowing us to offer more classes in the ever-growing Nursing and Allied Health programs.

Oct. 2 -11 – The Dixie Classic Fair is back for the 127th year. Go for the rides and pig races, and be sure and drop by the Forsyth Tech booth to say hello (and then go have a piece of that delicious fudge that's always nearby).

Forsyth Tech's recruiting campaigns for 2008-2009 have won national and international awards. Our familiar series of billboards won a gold award in the 2008 National Council for Marketing and Public Relations Paragon Awards competition. Our integrated 2008 recruitment campaign, which included radio and television spots and the viewbook as well as the outdoor boards, won a silver award in the same national competition. The recruitment campaign also won an award of distinction in the 15th



annual Communicator Awards, an international competition. Our recruiting materials were all designed and produced in collaboration with our marketing partner, The Bloom Agency of Winston-Salem.



Support from a Shooting Star

Chris Paul's CP3 Foundation has made a \$5,000 grant to the James A. Rousseau II Minority Male Mentoring Program. The donation honors Debbie Taylor (left, front), Program Coordinator of Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and her husband, Charlie, who are volunteers at the annual Chris Paul Weekend in Winston-Salem. Also pictured here are the NBA star's parents, Robin and Charles Paul, and Forsyth Tech President Gary M. Green. The mentoring program aims to improve the retention and graduation rates of minority male students.

Serving Those Who Serve Us

The Dental Assisting program recently held a free clinic for those in the military reserves, providing these brave men and women dental services valued at over \$10,000. The clinic was organized by Jerry Arehart, Program Coordinator of Dental Assisting and himself a Navy reservist, and drew 38 volunteers, including 4 dentists, 2 dental advisory board members, several faculty members and many students from the Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs. A total of 15 reservists were treated, and the services they received including cleanings, x-rays, fillings and even a few extractions. "Reservists don't get dental insurance from the government," said Janette Whisenhunt, Department Chair of Dental Assisting, "and most of them do not have dental insurance. Everyone who got treatment was very appreciative and grateful." She also said that she was proud so many students were willing to donate their time to help out, and hopes it will become an ongoing event. "We were honored to serve those that serve us," she said, "and we look forward to doing this again next year."



In these disjointed times, when we read about multibillion dollar rescue packages, executive compensation hundreds of times the salaries of the average employee and million-dollar bonuses, it's refreshing to hear about people for whom a few hundred dollars can make a beautiful difference. A scholarship for study at Forsyth Tech can, and frequently does, change the trajectory of a life. And as these stories illustrate, scholarships are often awarded to people who know what they want to accomplish, who have the life experience to be disciplined in their pursuit of higher education, and who are overwhelmingly appreciative and grateful for the needed assistance they are receiving.

inspiration express

Meet Four of Our Scholarship Recipients

Naomi Gingerich's conservative Mennonite family in Ohio did not believe in educating children past the eighth grade. After all, if they were going to work on the family farm or do other physical work in the community, why spend a lot of time in school? Only her eldest brother, whose childhood illness had left him unsuited for physical labor, was allowed to attend high school and college.

As a teenager, Naomi satisfied her thirst for knowledge by reading voraciously and, later, by traveling. She also taught in a one-room Amish school. She married and, in time, had three children. Although she and her husband had left their conservative faith when they were in their 20s, she figured that her busy life would make it impossible for her ever to realize her dream of higher education.

But that life took a different turn when her family moved to North Carolina and she found herself living just minutes from Forsyth Tech. After a few weeks of classes, Naomi passed the GED exam with honors. She was so moved when she walked across the stage to receive her diploma at Wait Chapel on the Wake Forest University campus in the summer of 2008 that she wrote a thank-you letter the next morning and included an essay she had posted on her blog. In it, she talked about her great



Naomi Gingerich

feeling of accomplishment and the excitement of the ceremony: "... I looked around at my fellow graduates and I saw that same feeling of accomplishment in their faces that I felt in my heart. We were from all walks of life, all nationalities and all ages. When it came time to walk across the stage and receive our diplomas, it sounded more like a wild football game than a formal service. Loud cheering, whistles and shouts of congratulation bounced around the towering walls of the historic chapel. ..."

That was just the first step in Naomi's dream. As a GED graduate with good grades, she was invited to apply for a scholarship for college classes at Forsyth Tech. She was awarded \$480, enough to enable her to enroll in two classes. At the age of 47, she began her college career as an English major in January. She is, she said, "loving every minute of it."

With three teenage children to be educated, Naomi said, her scholarship meant "the difference

between me going to school or not going to school."

Perhaps more important, she said, "Just knowing that I had that scholarship gave me the courage to sign up for classes." Everyone in the GED program had been "super encouraging," she said, and the

(continued)

scholarship continued that support.

Naomi hopes to transfer to a four-year school when she finishes her associate's degree. Meanwhile, her husband, who owns a tree service and does not really "need" a degree, has started work on his GED. And back in Ohio, her elderly parents have accepted her desire for a different sort of life, and "they are . . . even excited about me going back to school now," she said.

As Naomi wrote in her thankful essay after she received her GED and won her scholarship: "Some things in life are made more dear for the waiting."



Donna Black

Donna Black has no doubt about it: "Without that scholarship, I would not have been able to finish my degree." That's the first great thing about the \$1,000 scholarship Donna received from the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation: It made it possible for her to graduate from Forsyth Tech in December 2008 with an associate's degree in business administration.

That is not, however, as Donna is quick to tell anyone who asks, the only great thing about the scholarship. "It also made a big difference in the lives of my children. It made it possible for me to provide the extra things for them that open more possibilities for their future."

Her life before she decided to enroll at Forsyth Tech was "a constant struggle for about 10 years," she said. She was a single mother with two children, and her income from her low-level job in a law firm in Winston-Salem was stretched too thin to provide many "extras." She knew she "needed something more." A two-year degree in business administration seemed like a good first step.

She also knew that starting college in hopes of improving her future would mean even more expenses in the short run. At first, however, it never occurred to her to apply for scholarships. "I just thought that was for people finishing high school. I didn't think of anybody giving a scholarship to somebody who was 40."

Then one day notices about scholarship opportunities posted on a wall on campus caught her eye, and she started reading. "I figured, what did I have to lose? All they could do was turn me down."

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation didn't turn her down, however. Instead, it awarded her one of its scholarships designed to reward students at two-year colleges who excel both in academics and in community service. All those years when Donna had been struggling financially, she also had been pitching in as a volunteer for a variety of good causes, such as her children's school, her church, Crisis Control and the YMCA. "I'd just been involved in a lot of projects to help people," she said. "I didn't have a lot to contribute financially, but I knew there were things that I could do. Even though I might be considered less fortunate by many, there are others less fortunate than I."

Receiving the scholarship was, she said, "a very honoring situation." It also helped make her feel that she had turned a corner, and that life did not have to be a struggle. "I had been doing for others, and now someone was doing for me," she said.

Her education has begun to pay off already: She still works with the same law firm, Pharr Law PLLC in Winston-Salem, but now she is the office administrator. She got a good raise, and her work is more challenging and more enjoyable. She's taking a few semesters off from her education to shepherd her children through high school and into college. After that, she's thinking about heading back to Forsyth Tech for human resources certification, and possibly pursuing a four-year degree somewhere.

"I am so grateful, and I'd like to say that everyone should believe that they are able to change things, and that it can happen, no matter that you're 40," Donna said.



Sammy Holsinger

Legally, Sammy Holsinger has been blind from birth. That reality, however, has not inhibited her vision for the future. Far from it.

Sammy has a personal vision of what she wants to do in life, and she has a community vision of how she can help make the world a better place. She's been pursuing both goals with the help of the Frank L. Blum scholarship that paid for her tuition and books as she makes her way toward a degree in computer-assisted design and architectural technology at Forsyth Tech.

Sammy already had a college degree – she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in 2004 – when she decided to enroll at Forsyth Tech. She had moved to Winston-Salem to be with her fiancé, and she found that spending her days at home alone trying to write fiction wasn't as much fun as she might have thought. Then, too, there was the problem of making a living: Her limited vision made her "a hazard to myself and others" when she tried some types of low-skill jobs ("I still have scars from hot french-fry oil") and too slow for others. She very much wanted to be able to stop receiving disability benefits.

Her "significant other" was taking programming courses at Forsyth Tech, so she decided to sign up for a class herself. But not just any class: She had an idea for an environmentally friendly house that she wanted to build, but she hadn't a clue how to draw the plans. She enrolled in a class to learn how to use computer-assisted drawing programs in hopes that she could rough her idea out enough so that she could take it to a "real architect."

To Sammy's delighted surprise, she turned out to be good at those computer drawing and architectural programs. She can zoom in enough on the computer to be able to see walls and lines and dimensions clearly, she said, and she loves moving things around on the screen. That talent and interest gave rise to her new personal goal. She aspires to be a "green" architectural designer. Her next goal after her associate's degree from Forsyth Tech is obtaining the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accreditation. With this, she said, she would like to land a job as the person in an architectural firm who advises clients who want "green" buildings.

Her teachers at Forsyth Tech have been very encouraging, she said, and one day one of them forwarded her an e-mail saying that someone was trying to get in touch with a "Mr. Sammy Holsinger" about a possible scholarship. The Frank L. Blum Construction Co. in Winston-Salem was asking scholarship applicants to write an essay about why they would be a good candidate and how their interests tied in with the business. Since she was trained as a writer and the Blum company is heavily involved in LEED projects, Sammy found that an easy assignment.

The scholarship proved especially important when her fiancé found himself temporarily out of a job. "I would not have been able to go to college at all spring semester without it," she said. "The scholarship also is making it possible for me to save some money for my LEED accreditation process."

Then there's her long-range vision. Someday, Sammy wants to build a whole community with buildings that are both easy on the budget and harmonious with the environment. "We have to live on this planet, and there are a lot of us. We are running out of resources. I believe we can help ourselves and do the right thing for the environment," she said.

Ready to help a deserving student?

Providing scholarships is a primary purpose of The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, the nonprofit fundraising arm of the college. Your gift to Forsyth Tech through the Foundation makes a real difference in how many students will have the chance they need to succeed, and how many are able to stay in school while typically meeting family responsibilities and holding jobs.

To make a contribution, use your credit card to make a secure online donation at www.forsythtech.edu/foundation/online-form. Or send a check, payable to Forsyth Tech Foundation, to The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, 2100 Silas Creek Parkway, Winston-Salem, NC 27103-5197.

For information about endowing a scholarship, which will provide scholarship funds in perpetuity, call Dr. Sharon "Shari" B. Covitz, Executive Director of The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, 336.734.7520, or e-mail scovitz@forsythtech.edu.



Oscar Alonzo

When Oscar Alonzo was a teenager in California, graduating from high school did not seem to be particularly important. But the birth of his daughter a few years ago changed the way he looked at a lot of things.

"I wanted to be a good example. I knew I wanted my children to go to college, and I wanted to show them by example," he said.

Oscar had moved to Winston-Salem not long after dropping out of high school. He had relatives here, and he thought the job prospects might be better than in California, where "times were tough." Then he married and became a father, and just having a job no longer seemed good enough.

The first step was to take care of that lack of a high school diploma. That brought him to Forsyth Tech, where he earned his GED in 2005. After that, it seemed natural to move right ahead into Forsyth Tech's associate's degree program in business administration. Now, close to completing that degree, he's doing research to figure out which four-year degree program in the University of North Carolina system might be right for him. He also might take a few more classes at Forsyth Tech. "It's really easy to transfer credits from here, and that's a really good thing," Oscar said.

Going to school while helping to raise a family has not always been easy. Now 28, he stays plenty busy as an account manager for a soft-drink company. And twins arrived in the family a little more than a year ago, giving him three young children to lead by example. "It's all a challenge, but it's fun," Oscar says.

His life was made easier when he received the \$300 Tom Staley Memorial Scholarship. "With three kids, and with childcare being so expensive, getting a scholarship for any amount is a blessing," he said. "The financial help means a lot."

"But the good deed means even more," he said. "It makes me feel the good in people. It's so wonderful for the Foundation and others to be willing to help someone they don't even know. Being given that scholarship inspires me to work harder. And it makes me want to give back. I want to succeed and get to the point where I can help others in the same sort of way."

THE NEW GRADUATE SCHOOL

Why Forsyth Tech Is a Natural for Your Next Degree

It's no secret that Forsyth Tech serves a varied population – secondary school students who want a jump on college credits, college-bound high school graduates who prefer to do the first two years at a community college, people of all ages who need training for specific jobs and careers, and many more.

What is less often credited is that Forsyth Tech enrolls quite a few people who already have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree or even a doctorate.

The so-called baccalaureate reverse transfer student is not a new phenomenon, according to Jewel Cherry, Dean of Enrollment and Student Services.

"Reverse transfer students have been enrolling at Forsyth Tech since the '60s," she said, "but it's happening more and more as a result of the economy. As more soft-skill jobs disappear, we've seen more people with majors in things like history and English come to us for skills-based training."

Liberal arts majors looking to change careers are not the only reverse transfer students by any means, she said. Some come to be better able to perform the job they are in, since the knowledge base in many fields changes quickly. Others come to learn a particular skill that has become important for success in their chosen career. And still others look at gaining another degree and another set of skills more as personal development.

For all these reasons, community colleges are becoming what some call the new graduate school. People who are looking for advanced education often find that the community college offers exactly what they're looking for, conveniently and affordably.

Forsyth Tech, like most community colleges, does not collect information about students' prior degrees. Across the country, some community colleges estimate that baccalaureate reverse transfer students make up 25 percent to 30 percent of enrollment in credit programs. The American Association of Community College Trustees reports that in many areas of the country more students with bachelor's degrees are enrolled in community colleges than there are students with associate's degrees enrolled in four-year colleges.

And, just as diversity of age, ethnicity and employment background contribute to the character and value of classes at Forsyth Tech, so does the presence of people who have already been through college.



"They already know how to be college students," said Jewel Cherry. "Their maturity and self-discipline make them good role models for traditional community college students."

Sharpening the Saw

Walter Wilson is the international logistics manager at Furnitureland South in Jamestown. He was taking a three-hour class in *Introduction to Transportation* on Monday evenings after work, and another logistics course, *Transportation Logistics*, taught by Program Coordinator Rick Yokeley, online. "It's much tougher than I expected," he admitted.

"I'm learning so much, and I'm surprised that it is immediately applicable," he said. "I thought I was pretty well versed in logistics, but the field is far more advanced than when I came through."

When Walter got his degree in Business Administration and Economics from High Point College (now High Point University) back in the '70s,

Walter Wilson is taking courses to become even more valuable to his employer, Furnitureland South.



Tana Henault is earning credits toward becoming a certified public accountant.

he expected to work for one company his entire career. In fact, he followed a path that has become more the norm, working for four different companies over a period of 15 years. With current economic conditions, he sees the likelihood of more jobs disappearing in his industry.

Getting a certification in transportation logistics will make him more valuable in his current job, he said.

"I'm dependent on others to do things I could learn to do myself," he said, especially matters involving documentation of overseas shipments.

"Things are bad all around," he commented. "More education can make you more attractive in this job market. And, when you compare the cost of going to graduate school with the cost of earning certifications at Forsyth Tech, you'd have to be an idiot not to take advantage of it."

Walter is in his 50s, but many reverse transfers are recent college graduates, like Tana Henault, who is 27. She earned her B.S. degree in accounting at Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire in 2003 and works for a local certified public accounting firm. She's taking courses at Forsyth Tech to fulfill the credit hour requirement of becoming a CPA herself.

"Online works best for me, because I live in Archdale and work in Winston-Salem, and I have a husband and a 4-year-old daughter," Tana said. All three of her courses this semester are online.

Even with family and work responsibilities, she is able to move forward with her plan of becoming a CPA, which she said would bring her a higher salary, more opportunities and more trust from clients.

"The credits have to be college credits, and this is a good alternative to getting them from a university," she said. "The price is way better."



Jewel Cherry, Dean of Enrollment and Student Services, sees an upswing in reverse transfer students.



Amanda Jennings majored in Marketing, but she says sonography suits her better.

“More education can make you more attractive in this job market.”

Starting Over

Amanda Jennings graduated from Radford University with a degree in business and a concentration in marketing in 1991, and has worked in marketing jobs most of the years since then.

“After all these years, I never found my niche,” she said. “I’ve always felt that I made a mistake.”

She was 17 when she started college, and she got her degree in three and a half years. She said that she didn’t know what she wanted to do with her life at that young age.

Now Amanda, whose three children are all school age, has figured out she wants a career in the healthcare field. She’s pursuing a degree in Cardiovascular Sonography. One of the criteria for admission to the program is to either have a bachelor’s degree or a two-year degree in an allied health field.

“I can get credit for the B.S. degree I have and start a new career,” Amanda said.

Amanda has always been interested in the medical field, and it took her a little while to figure out which program to go for. She decided she didn’t want to become a nurse, but she looked into the possibility of becoming a physician’s assistant.

“To get a master’s degree in that, I would have to take about two years worth of prerequisites, then take the GRE and keep my fingers crossed that I would get into the P.A. program at Wake Forest, which is highly selective. If I got in, by the time I finished, it would have taken about four years and cost about \$50,000,” she said. “This program,

including the one prerequisite I took in anatomy and physiology, with books and everything, won’t even come to \$3,000.”

Cardiac sonographers perform ultrasound tests on the heart, and as in so many health technologies, hospitals are increasingly requiring that sonographers be registered. The program at Forsyth Tech leads to that professional status.

“The program is much harder than any of us anticipated, but I think this is going to be a really good fit for me,” Amanda said. “Forsyth Tech has given me that second chance I needed.”

Unlike Amanda, Ron Weathers doesn’t have the luxury of working in one career while training for another. Ron was caught in the 2007 round of downsizing at Hanesbrands.

“I’ve worked since I was 16, and I never lost a job before. I’m anxious to get back to work,” said Ron.

Ron has a bachelor’s degree in computer science and a master’s degree in business administration. He made the move from information technology to customer service management seamlessly in the mid-’90s, going in as a business analyst with knowledge of all the systems used to support customer service.

Since he’s been laid off, Ron has taken several Ed2Go online courses through Forsyth Tech to upgrade his IT skills. He also enrolled last fall in the Healthcare Management program at Forsyth Tech. So far, he’s taken one on-campus course and is currently taking two online courses. He will probably take some classes on campus, as he prefers to learn by listening and participating in a class. Meanwhile, the job search continues. Ron



hasn’t seen many opportunities for his skill set in either information technology or customer service, especially for a man in his 50s.

“When I read the classified ads, the jobs are mostly in healthcare,” he said. And, he noted, “They can’t ship those overseas.”

Keeping Options Open

Not all highly educated transfer students fall into clear categories. For example, there’s Mishi Jackson, M.D. In pursuing a degree in Interior Design, she’s not switching out of the medical field, nor is she necessarily opting for a design career.

The wife of a chemist and the mother of two young children, Mishi is working part time, evenings and weekends, at an urgent care walk-in clinic. She’s taking two courses a semester at Forsyth Tech, a pace at which it will take her four years to earn the associate’s degree.

She wanted to be a doctor all her life, but she acknowledges that the field has changed, and will change more during her working years.

“Thirty years ago, I would have hung out my shingle when I finished my residency,” she said. “But today there are so many options for primary care physicians. Right now, I am an employee, which I enjoy because of the flexibility. If national healthcare comes, I would be an employee all my life. I would like to own my own business someday, even if it’s not as a physician.”

One possible avenue Mishi sees is becoming an interior designer for healthcare facilities – where she says the interiors are typically drab.

“I don’t think it has to be that way,” she said. “That’s a market I could find myself in.”

Mishi finds that studying design gives scope for the artistic side of her nature and offers a freedom not found in medicine, where things need to be precise. Like many people, she doesn’t see those facets of herself as an “either/or” choice.


“I love people, and I love taking care of their problems. I can’t see giving that up,” she said. “I don’t know if I’ll use this degree. I’ll have to see where this road takes me.”

Who says a physician can't have more than one specialty? Dr. Mishi Jackson explores her creative side in the Interior Design program.



Gr8 Explorations

Follow Your Bliss with Personal Enrichment Classes

The Division of Corporate and Continuing Education is a treasure trove of fascinating, offbeat, often unexpected short courses, offering the kinds of knowledge and skills that keep life interesting. The mix is different every year. The courses are taught at literally hundreds of locations in Forsyth and Stokes counties. The instructors are passionate about their subjects. The tuition fees are modest. What's not to love? Here's a sampling of some current and upcoming personal enrichment classes. 

Kudzu Basket Weaving

I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore

At first, the neighbors gave Pamela Buchanan funny looks when she asked if she could cut kudzu on their property. But after more than a dozen years, they're used to it. They know she needs the vine for the classes she teaches.

A native of Kansas — where kudzu is not grown — Pamela got hung up on the vine, so to speak, when she took a workshop in Asheville in making kudzu baskets and paper. The instructor, Nancy Basket, had learned these arts from her Cherokee grandmother.

"I was fascinated. They're not like other baskets. They're not structured, and they don't have a pattern," Pamela said.

The classes she teaches for Forsyth Tech are just three hours long, time enough for participants to turn out a one-of-a-kind original piece of art. This summer, the class was to be held twice, at South Fork Recreation Center.

As most people know, the kudzu plant was brought from Asia to the South in the 1930s to control soil erosion. Though only the mature bark-covered vines are used to make baskets, all parts of the plant have their uses. The tuber roots can be made into soaps and lotions. The fermented leaves can be made into paper — a long stinky process, according to Pamela. And various parts of the plant are edible.

"I make tempura-battered leaves," Pamela said. "My husband doesn't care for them, but my neighbor loves them."



Tchaikovsky

Roll Over Beethoven!

Do you swoon to the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy? Are you stirred by the 1812 Overture? If so, you're like millions of people the world over who recognize and love music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Dr. Mark Biggam, who teaches the evening course on the 19th-century Romantic Russian composer, said Tchaikovsky is a good jumping-off point for people who want to learn about classical music. "You can study one of his symphonies, and then you know what a symphony is," he said. Like Mozart, who was his inspiration, Tchaikovsky combined classical form with memorable melodies and intense emotion to create works with timeless appeal.

Along with listening to Tchaikovsky's ballets, operas and symphonies, participants in the class will get insight into the life of the man. What's the deal on Nadeyda von Meck, the wealthy patroness who was his pen pal for years, but would only support him on the condition that they could never meet in person? Could it be true that the government poisoned him on account of his homosexuality?

And what instrument is Tchaikovsky credited with adding to the symphony orchestra?

Mark earned his doctorate at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and is still best known in Ohio as a composer. One of his works was premiered in Columbus in May. In Winston-Salem, he is better known as an oboist, and yes, he plays in the annual production of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet, performed by the UNCSCA School of Dance and the Winston-Salem Symphony. He also teaches oboe, and like most classical musicians, he has a day job. He's the parish administrator at St. Anne's Episcopal Church.



Water-Soluble Oil Painting

How Every Color Gets to Be Green

If you think there's nothing new under the sun, consider this: Oil and water do mix. Scientists have altered the chemical structure of oil paints to make paint that can be thinned with water, and cleaned up with ordinary soap and water.

Carolyn Dunnagan is teaching a new class in painting with water-soluble oils at the Georgia Taylor Recreation Center on West Clemmons Road. She's been experimenting with these new oils since the first ones came on the market in 1994, and is very enthusiastic about a couple of brands that have been introduced more recently. The colors are brighter than traditional oils, she said, and the texture is like butter.

Not that she didn't love conventional oil paints, and the buzz she got from the turpentine she used to clean the brushes. But she paid attention to reports of how toxic the paints themselves can be, and to fellow artists who attributed the overload of lead in their bloodstreams to their constant exposure to oil paint. Eco-conscious people are aware of the hazards, she said.

It's not surprising that Carolyn has been introducing the new thing to artists and would-be artists. She's a self-taught painter who spends most of her time studying art, teaching and demonstrating painting techniques, and painting landscapes and seascapes that she exhibits in many venues.

"In first grade, I drew the best chicken," she said. As an adult, other things took precedence. After she had given birth to four children, her husband came home one day with an easel and a set of paints, and told her that's what she should be doing for herself. And all the years her children were growing up, she managed to paint a few pictures each year.

Distraught when her husband died 11 years ago, she found she had to reinvent herself. "I dyed my hair red and became an artist," she said.

Teaching others is a rewarding part of that new life. "When you teach somebody else, you're learning yourself," said Carolyn, "and it's a thrill to see the light bulb come on when you've demonstrated something."



BabySigns 4 U

Look Who Isn't Talking

Gas pains? Hunger pangs? Scared of the shadow on the wall? What if that screaming baby could tell you what is bothering him or her?

Wilda Spalding says your baby can. The two of you just have to develop a communication system that works for both of you.

Wilda and her husband, Barry Geller, who are not only parents but grandparents, team up to teach other parents, expectant parents and grandparents a sign language they can in turn teach to the infants they care for. Although it is based on American Sign Language, baby signing is for hearing parents of infants who are hearing, but have not yet developed verbal skills.

"A baby can start picking it up early on and really have a grip on it by seven or eight months," Wilda said. Ideally, parents can take the course when the child is a newborn, or even while the mother is pregnant.

When a baby can make needs known, and when parents can quickly discern what the baby wants, the tension level in the whole household goes down, and the trust between parent and baby goes up, Wilda said. She sees baby signing as a method for enhancing the basic mental health of a family experiencing the joys and challenges of a newborn.

"It's not forcing the baby into the verbal stage, but by the time the child becomes verbal, understanding and trust have been established," she said. Parents speaking while signing with their baby find it's not an "either/or" but the best of both ways of communication.

Barry Geller arrived at baby signing by way of his prayer life, his wife said.

He first encountered signing at a religious service of the deaf that he found extremely moving. Wilda came to know and feel the power of signing when she was representing the rights of persons with disabilities to the United Nations. As an ambassador, she was one of the creators of the International Year of the Child in 1979, and she has been involved in the advocacy of children's rights ever since.



Mandarin Chinese

It's a Matter of a Pinyin



Manufacturing jobs are going to China; toys, clothes, grocery items and more are coming from China; Chinese babies are being adopted by families in Piedmont North Carolina; and curious tourists are taking vacation trips to China. It's no wonder there's a growing demand for conversational Chinese.

Can people really learn much Mandarin in a short evening course?

It depends on how determined the student is, according to Boon Lee, one of the instructors of Mandarin Chinese at Forsyth Tech. The official language of China uses a large set of characters rather than a small set of letters, which would make it very time-consuming to learn the written language.

Fortunately, there is Pinyin, a modern system for transliterating Mandarin Chinese into the alphabet familiar to speakers of English, minus the letter "v."

Using Pinyin, students in the class learn how to get directions to the airport and the train station, how to read a menu and order a meal, how to locate a hotel and other basic conversational Chinese for travelers. Though the Chinese have many regional dialects, Mandarin is the official language and is taught in all schools.

Boon Lee himself learned Mandarin in elementary school in his native Malaysia. Later, he went to an English school in Malaysia, and became a journalist. On assignment as a reporter, he happened to meet a professor from Singapore, and through an unlikely series of events, received a scholarship to Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa. After earning degrees from Berea College and Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, he became a librarian. He held that position at Winston-Salem State University from 1972 until his recent retirement.

And yes, he's been a tourist in China himself. He spent several months traveling around the country in 2003, putting his Mandarin to good use.

Summer Vegetable Production

Green Acres Is the Place to Be

"Vegetable gardening has become a lost art," said Philip Gillespie.

The classes he is teaching for Forsyth Tech will introduce the mysteries of soil building, pest management, the planting of seeds and bedding plants, and irrigation and water conservation to a new generation of would-be backyard gardeners. The three 3-hour classes that make up the *Summer Vegetable Production* course will be hands-on sessions, on a garden plot.

Like all gardening, vegetable gardening has the merits of fresh air, exercise, relaxation and stress management, Philip said. But growing food has some obvious additional benefits.

"The course is for anybody who has an interest in vegetable gardening, but I really hope to address unemployed people," he said. "The class is designed to give people a marketable skill, to be able to raise food for their own use or to sell at farmers' markets or other places."

He also expects to see some people who have become involved in developing urban community gardens, a movement that has become popular across the nation.

Philip became involved in community development by way of agriculture. A former executive for a computer company in Washington, D.C., he retired 15 years ago and moved to Guilford County, with the idea of operating an old farm owned by his family. He earned a master's degree in agriculture at NC A&T University, and went on to form Thunder Horse, an organization that aims to help create healthy communities through sustainable agriculture. The organization provides consulting and management services for individuals, schools, communities and soup kitchens, and products that include grapevines, figs, berries and herbs in addition to vegetable bedding plants.



History of ACC Basketball

A Front Row View of the Game

Just like a championship season, the course Barry Lawing teaches on the history of the ACC has its thrilling and unforgettable moments. One was when the late Skip Prosser made a guest appearance at the 6 p.m. class in the midst of a 10-game losing streak.

"Like a lot of intense coaches, Skip didn't handle losing well," Barry said. "His shoulders were slumped, and you could tell it was really wearing on him." Prosser hadn't been to the class before, and he seemed to expect a critical reception. He asked how long he had to stay. Once things got going, he saw that it was a friendly crowd, opened up with personal and funny anecdotes, and had the class laughing. His own energy level increased, and the 8 o'clock ending time for the class came and went. Barry took a picture of him, grinning from ear to ear.



Another memorable class was when N.C. State center Tom Burleson engaged Barry in a demonstration of some of his techniques. It happened that a reporter and a photographer from The Associated Press were visiting the class, and they found the sight of the 7'2" Burleson going hand to hand with the 5'8" instructor irresistible. The resulting photograph was picked up by *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and media across the country.

"To say I looked like a midget is an understatement," Barry said.

Players, coaches, sportscasters and authoritative sources from the world of college basketball are guests at every class in the seven-week course, and Barry looks for a different lineup each year. This is a class people get attached to. Three people have taken it all six years it's been offered, and another dozen have taken the class multiple times. The format is loose, and participants have plenty of time to ask questions of the people who are closest to the game.

Surprisingly, perhaps, it's a thoroughly coed experience. Barry estimates that most classes are 60 percent male, 40 percent female. And it never ends on time. People enjoy the sessions too much to want to go home.

Barry is a history instructor on the credit side of Forsyth Tech, too, teaching in the college transfer program. He's written a book (*Demon Deacon Hoops: The History of Wake Forest Basketball in the 20th Century*). And he went to his first basketball game in 1967 at age 9. "I remember that Wake played Clemson and beat them 90 to 80. I've been hooked ever since," he said.

Bird-Watching

Flocking Together for Cheep Thrills

When Rob Rogers was a kid, he saw a pair of binoculars in his grandmother's glassed-in porch. He didn't know what they were. She told him she looked at birds with them. Like most adolescents, Rob liked to collect things. His passion for collecting the sights and sounds of birds started then.

Bird-watching is believed to be the fastest-growing outdoor pastime in America, and the enthusiasm for birding is evident in the people who take Rob's course. The class meets on Saturday mornings, and after some introductory material at the first session, it's time to don the binoculars. Classes go to various birding hot spots around Winston-Salem, including Miller Park, Tanglewood Park, Bethabara Park and the Archie Elledge Wastewater Treatment Plant, a mecca for shorebirds.

It's an introductory course, but many people enjoy it so much they sign up for it each time it's offered. Physicians, auto mechanics, widows, retired couples — there is no typical birder, Rob said.

A part of the course students particularly enjoy is what Rob calls birding by ear. They're amazed when Rob can hear a birdcall and declare, "That's a tufted titmouse."

It was birding by ear that led to Forsyth Tech offering a *Bird-Watching* course. One day Rob, an executive at Hanesbrands in Winston-Salem, was driving from one of the company's locations to another with his colleague John Griffenhagen. The car radio was playing the rock station favored by Rob's teenage children, and Griffenhagen gave him a funny look and asked if that was what he liked to listen to.

Rob popped a CD of birdcalls into the player and said, "This is what I listen to."

"You know what?" Griffenhagen said. "That would make a good class at Forsyth Tech."

And the next day his wife, Sarah Griffenhagen, coordinator of community service programs at Forsyth Tech, called Rob and persuaded him to design and teach a course.

"I set it up to be what I would want to know if I had never done birding," Rob said. "The point is to have fun."





alice sineath

Department Head, Business Administration

She Has Things Sewed Up

Few people realize that Alice Sineath's first degree was in home economics. When Alice headed to Appalachian State, she loved to sew, so she majored in home ec with a concentration in clothing and textiles. Once she had her B.S., her father said, "Now, let's do something practical," so Alice got her master's in business and economics.

She kept sewing, though. She made all her clothes until her son, Philip, was born. Since she and her husband, B.J., weren't blessed with their "little miracle" until they had been married 13 years, that's a lot of sewing. Then Alice morphed into a football mom, a role that continues as Philip plays at Davidson College. B.J. eventually joined Alice in the community college system. Since 1997, he's been the Director of Forsyth Tech's Swisher Center. "For anniversary No. 33 (in 2008), we gave each other matching laptops," Alice said. "How romantic is that?"

When Alice Sineath started teaching business at Forsyth Tech in 1978, the only degrees offered in the business division were in business administration, computer programming and executive secretarial science. Now Alice heads a department that offers nine degrees, and she's become something of an expert at getting new programs started.

Alice's first foray into a new program, and into administration, was in accounting. After she'd taught business for a few years, her dean asked her to tackle an accounting course. Alice had not particularly enjoyed accounting classes while in the master's program in business and economics at Appalachian State University. When she started teaching accounting, however, she discovered that she loved it. She began taking coursework at Guilford College to become a certified public accountant and, in 1986, passed the exam. That same year, Alice became the chairperson of Forsyth Tech's new Accounting Department, which began offering an associate's degree.

Now Alice oversees degree programs in electronic commerce, international business, financial services, healthcare management,

project management, global logistics and logistics management in addition to business administration and accounting.

She works with businesspeople in Forsyth and Stokes counties as she thinks about what courses are needed within existing programs and whether new programs are called for.

"We are responsive to the community we serve," she said. Every curriculum at Forsyth Tech must have an advisory committee, and Alice feels fortunate: "I have excellent advisory committees. Sometimes I wonder why I have been so blessed."

Some programs grow out of changing needs. A few years ago, the banking and finance degree was "dying because it was so narrow," she said. Bernie Yevin, Dean of the Business Information Technologies Division, came up with the idea of a financial services degree that incorporated such fields as financial planning, investments, insurance and real estate along with banking. After wading through "50 miles of red tape," she got the new degree approved on the state level, and now the state's other community colleges can apply to start similar programs of their own.

Other programs, such as the healthcare management degree, were new to Forsyth Tech but in place at other community colleges in North Carolina. "That's a much shorter application process, if the standards are already on the books," Alice said.

With existing programs, too, Alice seeks advice from the people on her committees. Recently, she got keyboarding out of the curriculum because her advisors told her that "all these kids come out of high school knowing Word; they don't need to spend time on keyboarding."

What's next? "We are always thinking ahead," Alice said. She's part of a statewide effort to change the electronic commerce degree to a broader degree in international commerce.

Administrative duties keep her busy, but Alice finds time for what brought her to Forsyth Tech: teaching. "My love is to be in front of a classroom," she said. "I especially love to see somebody in my *Principles of Accounting* class who is there because they have to be, and they fall in love with it and change their major. I love to steal majors!"

Joshua Roddy is more than just a Forsyth Tech student — he's a big-time fan of the school. Asked why he wanted to tell his story in *Tech Quarterly*, Joshua didn't hold back in expressing his feelings. "I wanted to testify for the school, because I really love it, and it's been a great thing for me," he says.

Joshua is a student in Forsyth Tech's Adult High School program, and it has been, in his words, "the perfect program for me. No other program has really suited me better, and it's been nothing but a good experience working with the coordinators and my teachers."

Joshua left school in the ninth grade because, he says, "I just couldn't adapt to the social environment, and I was having trouble concentrating. I couldn't put my full focus toward my schoolwork like I needed to." But he knew it was important to get an education, so he went to Forsyth Tech "to see what they had as far as getting a high school diploma, or

the equivalent. They gave me two options: the GED or a high school diploma. Of course I wanted the high school diploma, so that's what I chose to do — the Adult High School program."

Joshua's parents supported his decision. "My mom is the one who really got behind me and encouraged me to do this program," he says. "My parents have supported me my whole way through school."

Joshua has been in the program for two years now, and the results speak for themselves. "I've learned a lot more in the Adult High School program than I did in public school, and my grades have shot up dramatically. Now that I'm in this, I'm making A's and B's."

For the most part, Joshua has taken online courses, which has allowed him to work at his own pace. "I've been able to work independently," he says. "I have time to comprehend what I'm reading and the work that I'm doing. And that helps me out a whole lot." But taking online courses doesn't mean he's totally on

his own. "If you're having trouble with any of your classes, you can call them or you can come in to do tutoring," he says.

With just a few classes to go, Joshua plans to graduate from Adult High School in the fall of 2009. His next step? "I'm hoping to re-enroll back at Forsyth Tech," he says, "and get a degree."

Joshua isn't entirely sure what his ultimate plans are — he's considering careers as diverse as software engineer and automotive master technician — but he knows the first step is a good education, so he's making the most of his opportunities at Forsyth Tech. "I really want to get the full potential out of my education, so I'm taking my time with my work and getting the full benefit," he says. "I'm really pushing myself to do the best I can."

joshua rodody

Student, Adult High School

Driving Ambition

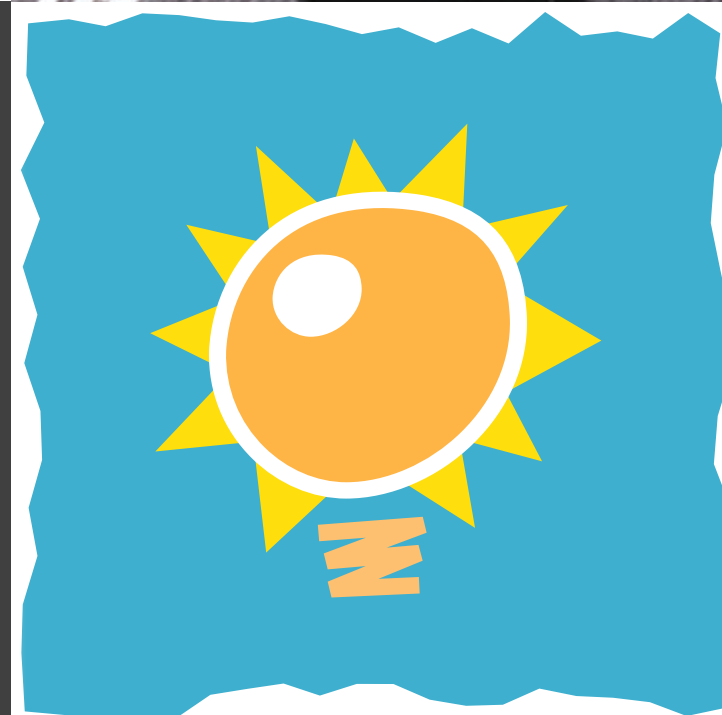
Getting an education isn't Joshua's only goal. He also wants to own a Corvette someday. "The Corvette has been my dream car since I was 16 years old," he says.

Why the Corvette? "I just love everything about it. It's American-made, and it has everything that I'm looking for in a car — the performance and the luxury." As for whether he'd prefer a classic model or a new one, he hasn't decided yet. "I like all Corvettes," he says. "I like the 1970s Stingrays, and I like the new Z06s."

Given the determination and drive he's already shown in Adult High School, we wouldn't be surprised to see Joshua tooling around the campus of Forsyth Tech in a Corvette of his own before too long.



The Small Business Center: Research & Develop Your Idea Here



Who hasn't indulged in wishful thinking about starting your own business? Being your own boss. Nobody to answer to but yourself. Doing what you love, and making money at it. Getting out of somebody else's rat race and being an entrepreneur.

Sounds great, doesn't it? But there is, of course, a long road between having the dream and succeeding with your own business. That road can be filled with pitfalls, and many more would-be entrepreneurs fail than succeed.

The men who provide counseling services at Forsyth Tech's Small Business Center for people who are contemplating taking the plunge into a business of their own say that, in a way, they take as much pride in keeping people from failing as in anything else they do. That's important, they say, because a lot of people who come to them are about to make what could be a very expensive mistake. Those who come to them have done at least one thing right, though: Whether through a referral from the Chamber of Commerce, or because they have taken a class at the Small Business Center, or however they learned about the availability of free, one-on-one counseling, they have come for advice before going too far with their idea. *(continued)*

Economic Downturns = Business Startups



Now more than ever, Sue Marion wants people in Forsyth and Stokes counties to know about the resources available to them at Forsyth Tech's Small Business Center, including the counselors who will work with them for free, one-on-one or in groups. Sue, who is the Vice President of Corporate and Continuing Education, said that the center's main mission is "to help people to be successful in small businesses. We help them up front by giving them the tools they need so they don't fail. Our counselors are people with business expertise, with experience. They are able to help small-business owners with all sorts of things, such as financing and taxes."

The need is great, she said. Nearly half — 48.6 percent — of North Carolina's work force is employed by small businesses. If those businesses fail, more people lose jobs. In these difficult economic times, Sue said, counselors can be invaluable for existing businesses, helping them devise strategies, such as low-cost marketing, that will help them survive.

And the counseling that's available for those who want to start their own businesses should be increasingly in demand, she said. Self-employment tends to fall as the economy grows, and when the economy is in a downturn, more people are likely to consider going into business for themselves. "Someone who's been displaced after 20 years working for the same company may not want to go through that again," Sue said.

"They may think that this is the right time to try it on their own, and using the help that is available at the Small Business Center is one way to ensure that they are successful."

Starting small can be good.



The counselors, Harold Butler, Bill Snow and Bob Farmer, have seen a little of everything over the years. They've talked to people who wanted to open used-car lots and people who wanted to start recording studios. They've dealt with a lot of aspiring wedding planners, daycare operators, lawn-service owners, events organizers, restaurateurs and retailers. There was the man who wanted to run a combination golf driving range and ice cream shop, and the one who wanted to manufacture protective gloves to wear when slicing bagels. The list goes on.

Probably the single biggest pitfall they run into, over and over, is people who want to start a business because they think their idea is wonderful – sort of the “If I build it, they will come” mentality. “People don't think about the clientele,” Farmer said. “They think that because they are in love with an idea, everybody else will be, too. They think that the world is their marketplace, and it isn't. You have to understand that owning your own business is fine, but unless that business meets the needs, wants and desires of somebody else, it's not going to succeed.

“You have to understand that what you like and dislike doesn't matter. What counts is what goods or services people will buy from you – what they like.”

They recalled a woman who came into their offices who loved hats. They tried to tell her, Farmer said, that “your passion for hats is not universal. You need to find a way to pursue your passion without opening an expensive shop on Fourth Street.”

Plunging in too far, too fast, is a common mistake, they said. “Big ideas are a big problem,” Snow said. Planned and managed well, a daycare or lawn service might do just fine, but the counselors worry when they hear some grander notions. One client wanted to start an import-export business, but he had no idea that there are laws and regulations to be dealt with. Another wanted to start manufacturing designer jeans offshore, but she had no background in manufacturing, knew nothing about the legal and tax implications, and hadn't done anything about figuring the cost of her designs.

Starting small can be good, they said. “People come in with an idea of a storefront or whatever that involves quite an investment. We try to convince them that there are ways to do what they want to do in steps, to test the market before making a big investment,” Butler said. Sometimes, people need to scale back; perhaps rather than designing, making and selling a product, they should find someone else to do part of the process. “We try to make people understand that even if they have a good idea, it may not be the best thing to carry it through themselves all the way to market,” Farmer said.

Another major pitfall – or maybe, the root of most pitfalls – is that many people don't spend enough time thinking through what they want to do and how they want to accomplish it. The counselors have even encountered people who asked: “I want to start my own business. What kind of business should it be?”

A lot of people expect the counselors to work up a formal business plan for them. Those people will be disappointed. In the first place, they may not need a formal plan. Even more important, if they do need one – say, to present to a bank's loan officer – they ought to prepare it themselves. “You need to write your own plan so that you know what's in it,” Snow said. “The banker is not evaluating your business plan so much as he is evaluating you – to evaluate the risk of lending you money.”

What the counselors will help prospective entrepreneurs with is something that everyone does need: a personal business plan. And for that, they do have a handy little book. The catch is, it's a book that's mostly composed of questions and blanks, and the prospective business owner must come up with the answers. Even before they give someone the booklet, however, they ask him or her a few basic questions. “Give me a brief idea of the concept you have for your business.” “What have you done so far in terms of planning and research?” “What are your skill sets?” And then, “What are your questions, and why are you here?”

“Once we begin to understand what their expectations are, we can begin to think how we can add value to what they want to do,” Farmer said.


“Typically what happens is that their questions and expectations give rise to other questions that they ought to be asking.”

The booklet is designed to bring the client out of the dream stage and into the real world, into the existing business environment. It walks them through such basic questions as “What business am I in?” and “Who is my ideal customer or client?” It helps them think through and research such things as laws and regulations, whether they will have employees and how many, and how much money it will take to get started. It helps with market research, getting financing, setting prices, and advertising or other ways of reaching that ideal customer.

Part of successful marketing involves location. The counselors tell the story of a person who had a potentially good idea about selling uniforms to medical workers but failed because the store was many miles from a medical center. But location can't solve all problems; the counselors have worked with some people, most of them young, who think that any kind of business they start downtown will succeed, because people will be coming downtown. Wherever it is, a business has to stand as a destination on its own, they said.

Eventually, the booklet takes the person to the point of being able to think sensibly about “Could I do it?” and “Should I do it?”

The counselors encourage clients to think of their personal business plan as a tool, not something that's done once and then set aside. Business owners need to keep data and refine elements of their plan as they see what's working and what's not. A plan is really a guess, they say, and keeping track of what happens will make the guess better next time.

Really, what the counselors at the Small Business Center are doing all boils down to teaching people to think critically about their own ideas. “What we are doing is mostly educational. We are helping people learn to make better decisions,” Farmer said. If that helps people avoid a devastating failure, that's good. If it helps them live out their entrepreneurial dream, that's even better. 

One Man's Purple Passion

You haven't had sweet potato pie until you've tried purple sweet potato pie. Or, Stokes Purple™ sweet potato pie, to be more precise.

A few years back, Mike Sizemore, a Stokes County farmer, sought counseling help for one of the more unusual ideas ever brought into Forsyth Tech's Small Business Center. It seemed that he and another Stokes County farmer, David Priddy, and their wives, had formed Saura Pride, a partnership to grow several kinds of sweet potatoes. And now they had a product that they thought might bring them real success: a unique sweet potato with purple skin and flesh that was especially nutritious and tasty when grown in Stokes County's soil and climate.

The farmers had come by the purple potato by chance. Though Stokes County, with its small farms and hilly terrain, has never grown the most sweet potatoes in this sweet-potato-producing state, it has often grown the best ones. Stokes County farmers are legendary for taking home blue ribbons from the N.C. State Fair for their sweet potatoes.

Somewhere along the line, someone had given several local farmers a purple sweet potato. That sweet potato proved to grow well in Stokes County. The farmers had it tested at N.C. State University and found that not only was the potato, when grown in Stokes County, high in important nutrients such as antioxidants, but also that, unlike most such foods, the purple sweet potatoes retained their natural nutrients as well as their color when cooked. They'd had it patented, and they were hoping that Stokes Purple could become to sweet potatoes what Vidalia is to sweet onions. They wanted help in figuring out how to make the most of it.

They had come to the right place. In 2004, the Golden Leaf Foundation had given Forsyth Tech a grant to set up a Tobacco Entrepreneurial Transition project. The grant started a counseling position in the Small Business Center to work one-on-one with farmers and others in Forsyth and Stokes counties who had been impacted by the decline in the tobacco industry, and Forsyth Tech kept the position going after the initial year. StokesCORE, a nonprofit community organization that had been started by the Duke Endowment to work for economic development in Stokes County, got involved early on as well.



Hey, it's puree! – Stokes County farmer Mike Sizemore has found multiple uses for purple sweet potatoes.

The counselor at Forsyth Tech helped the farmers come up with a workable business plan. They decided to contract annually with local farmers to grow the sweet potatoes. Then the Saura Pride company would buy all the potatoes the farmers grew at a sufficient price to enable the farmers to keep farming. The company would process all the potatoes into puree, thus adding to the market value. And then it would find customers to buy the frozen puree, either to sell or to use in other products. Buying all the potatoes and turning them into puree ensured a market for all the farmers' crops, those potatoes that are misshapen or small as well as the minority that might have been large and attractive enough to be sold fresh.

So far, so good. In 2008, the company contracted with 10 farmers to grow the purple sweet potatoes, and it expects to have more this year. Bill Cobb, the counselor at Forsyth Tech who helped get the business going, now works as its head of product and market development. The marketing emphasis is on the healthy attributes of the food. The company has developed a prototype of an energy bar made from the purple sweet potatoes.

Whole Foods markets have begun selling the frozen Stokes Purple puree. A company in Elizabethtown makes and sells a Stokes Purple Sweet Potato Butter. A second strategy is aimed at specialty markets, and the company is pitching such products as purple-sweet-potato-decorated cheesecakes to sports teams, such as the East Carolina Pirates and the Phoenix Suns, that have purple as one of their colors.

With StokesCORE, the Stokes Purple company is developing a joint venture to expand upon the sweet potato success and market a variety of locally grown foods under the brand name Land of the Saura. They have visions of developing a high-end brand much like Newman's Own, but for Stokes County.

It all works toward common goals that are important to the county: Farmers can afford to keep farming, even though they don't have a guaranteed market for tobacco anymore. Farmland is spared from development, so that Stokes County's charm is preserved, with all the implications that has for tourism. And a new business has prospects for a bright and growing future.

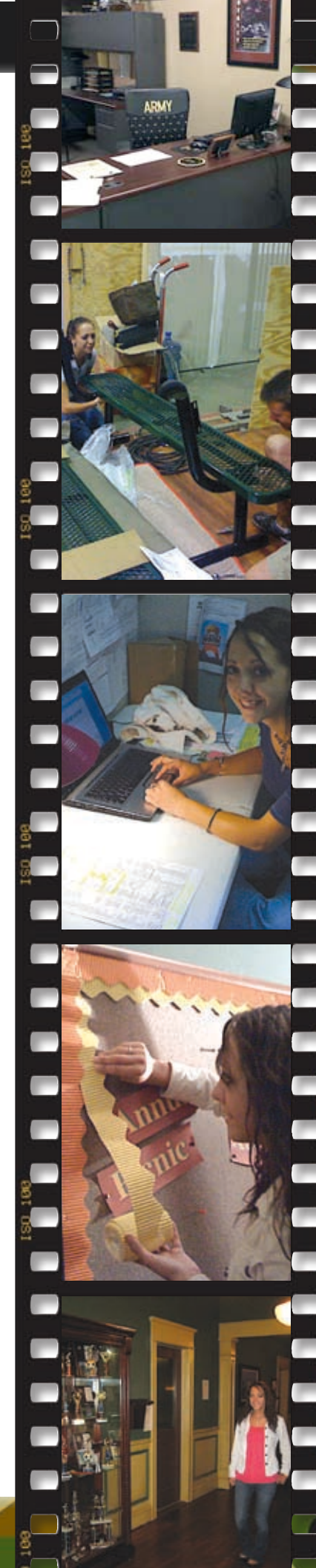


Sweet potato spreads and desserts can be plum wonderful.



set for success

A Forsyth Tech Student
Gets a Taste of Hollywood



allison Petree, a student in the Interior Design program at Forsyth Tech, got a taste of Hollywood this summer, but not in California. She spent a month in Charleston, S.C., interning on the set of the Lifetime network TV series *Army Wives*. The show, its website says, follows “the struggles, dreams and friendships of a diverse group of women . . . on an active Army post.” And this summer, it helped Allison find a dream of her own.

Allison found out about the internship in the Set Decoration department through a family friend. She applied and was accepted with one stipulation – her work had to earn college credit. She approached her instructors at Forsyth Tech, who allowed her to earn credit toward her degree through the college’s cooperative education (or co-op) program.

According to Beth Agnello, coordinator of cooperative education, Allison is just one of 130 Forsyth Tech students in 19 different programs who participated in the program last year. “Co-op gives students an opportunity to apply what they’re learning in the classroom in a real-life work setting,” she says. “Students acquire tremendous job skills, build professional networks and, most importantly, gain confidence that they can be successful in their chosen field.”

That certainly happened in Allison’s case. She got plenty of hands-on training and made a real contribution to the production of the show. Missy Ricker, Set Decorator for *Army Wives*, describes some of the duties that Allison performed: “She assisted me in looking at plans and renderings of upcoming sets, measuring them for carpet and window treatments. She assisted our Buyer with finding items for sets. She assisted our Set Dressers with ‘dressing the sets’ – hanging artwork, wiring sconces, doing pickups of rental furniture, cleaning and preparing our sets, and doing ‘special projects,’ such as creating and decorating bulletin boards to hang in a school hallway set.”

The internship also helped Allison find her true calling. “Before I started, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with my Interior Design degree,” she says, “and now I know I definitely want to be a Set Decorator.” Allison says a Forsyth Tech degree will help her pursue that goal, and Missy agrees. “Allison came in very prepared,” Missy says. “Her studies in Interior Design had already armed her with knowledge of reading plans and elevations, determining square footage, and developed her artistic eye to evaluate placement of artwork and items on the set.”

Following her experience with Allison, Missy hopes future Forsyth Tech students will participate in the internship program. “We would love to continue our relationship with Forsyth Tech,” she says, and Beth Agnello hopes so, too. “We hope that this relationship will grow and that it will lead to more opportunities for our students,” Beth says.

As for Allison, she sums up her internship this way – “The experience was amazing! Working for *Army Wives*, living in Charleston, it was just great. That’s really all I can say.” And now that she’s had a taste of Hollywood close to home, does she plan to head west and make it big in the real Hollywood? “If it happens that I move to California, I’ll go,” she says with a laugh. With this experience and a degree from Forsyth Tech on her side, she’ll be off to great start.

Allison Petree, Forsyth Tech student, interned on the set of the TV show *Army Wives*, where her duties included assembling and moving furniture, recording production notes and even creating a bulletin board for the *Army Wives* “school” set.



An Interview with Ellen Wenner, Early Childhood/Human Services Department Chair

BRINGING UP BABY

in the Information Age

Q Ellen, what's the hot topic in early childhood education?

A There's a lot of buzz about creating a nationalized early childhood system for birth through age 5. Numerous states now have some form of program for prekindergarten children. Here in North Carolina, we have the More at Four program. Many of these programs last all day, and they are usually in public schools. A number of people want to expand these programs at least down to age 3. There are pros and cons. I read a great deal about nationalizing early childcare, and when I go to conferences, I hear both sides.

Q Why wouldn't it be a good idea?

A Some who are against it think that it's expanding government into what can be a profitable private business. Others say that if public schools are "failing" – their word – now, why extend them into birth through 5?

Q What do supporters say to that?

A One of the arguments in favor is to improve the educational qualifications of the staff, to raise the bar. Throughout this country, there is no

consistent education credential for working with all young children. There are those who think that any educator or lead teacher in early childhood – I'm talking about birth through 5 here – should have a bachelor's degree with a concentration in child development. Certainly, the research finds that the quality of care is related to the education level of the provider. Some newer research suggests that it's not just the bachelor's degree itself but the person's experience and attitudes. This is especially true in inclusive settings.

Q What are we finding out about the brain development of young children?

A From birth through age 5 is when that brain is beginning to develop and form. There are critical periods during those years that determine how a child will learn in the future. We frequently look at experiences in the first three years of life. Language is developing, as well as motor skills. It's called building the brain. Quality experiences in childcare are really crucial in building the brain. That early childhood period from birth to 3 should not be seen as just babysitting. It's developing the whole child by offering learning experiences. Some of the new things we have learned about brain development promote early intervention in the early childhood field.

Q We hear a lot about how children need free time. Is there a danger that educational programs for very young children can be too structured and rigid?

A I think that does occur in some early childhood settings, but that would not be the norm. Most quality early childhood programs are based on the belief of learning through play. You may see some programs based on instruction, but that is a rarity, especially in North Carolina. North Carolina has standards and regulations that support play-based learning. Childcare in this state is rated by stars, and to get the top five-star rating, one of the several criteria is to have a quality environment with play-based learning.

Q That brings up the criticism that many of today's children are adversely affected by being deprived of experiences in nature, the sort of thing written about in Richard Louv's book (*Last Child in the Woods*). Is that a concern in early childhood education?

A Absolutely. Children learn through actual experience, hands-on, seeing and touching and smelling things and objects. Even though the computer can give them some factual information, to really learn they have to touch and experience something. The state of North Carolina is very supportive of outdoor play. In fact, it has developed a task force to make sure that childcare providers and families are bringing children outside, and to make sure that they know what

to do with children outside, even if it is a confined space. We include outdoor learning in all our methods courses. It's that important. Animals and nature today are just as important to children today as they were when I was growing up.

Q You mentioned computers. Are all these computerized toys and games good for children?

A It depends upon the age. Certainly children 3 years of age and up should have experience with technology – and do. Children 3 and up can use a mouse and a keyboard, play games and read books on computers. It's become an intimate experience for children and caregivers or parents to use computers together, much like reading a book together.

Q What about babies and technology?

A Even for children under 3, computers and telephones are becoming a part of their interactive world. Children really do integrate technology into their learning, so it's very much a part of their experience. I have seen 2-year-olds pick up a cell phone and practice dialing 911. Infants are using remotes to turn things on. That's one of the things very young children like to do – explore with their fingers. They enjoy playing with small, hand-held electronic toys.



Ellen Wenner says the years from birth to age 3 are prime time for brain development.

Q So, it sounds as though you're saying that technology is a part of the world young children live in. They are going to learn it, so we might as well make it be a positive element.

A Yes, and children can have control of their play. Researchers have applied some classic Piagetian experiments, offering children a truck, blocks and an electronic toy. Children will go for the electronic toy first because they can act on that device and get a response from it, it makes sound, and they can manipulate it. They choose the truck next, because they get more response from it than from blocks. When you think about how children learn, these small, hand-held devices are able to develop all three types of knowledge: physical, logical-mathematical and social.

Q Are there any cautions you would give?

A I think the danger in electronic devices is that children are allowed to be too sedentary with them. There have to be limits so that children are not sedentary. Children's brains and bodies are best built through active play.

Q There's been a lot of talk about the mommy wars, about child-care vs. home care, and about stay-at-home moms and those who work criticizing each other. Is that still a valid argument?

A It's a real argument, although I don't think one side blames the other. However, a mother's guilt is real. Those who do stay home feel that they are missing something in the workplace and in their career. Those who don't stay home feel that they are missing something in their child's life. I wouldn't characterize it as a war.

Q There's no universal right answer to this, is there?

A Women today have choices, and they are based more than ever on their family's needs. I have three daughters and seven grandchildren, from 11 years to 5 months. Two of my daughters work, and one stays home and works part time. They are all jealous of the other's situation. Finding quality early childhood care helps relieve some of the working parents' guilt. But there's something that only mommy and daddy can give; that's supported by tons of studies.



A giant toothbrush can be a terrific teaching tool.

Tell me how you really feel – kids find it easy to express their emotions through playing with dolls.



Q We've had generations grow up now in which a lot of young children had mothers who worked outside the home. Is it becoming clear what the effects are?

A A study completed in 2006 looked at that very issue. More than half the children studied were in childcare. The only indicator that showed that children in childcare were at risk was for those in poor-quality, nonlicensed care – sometimes with relatives. It did show that children in high-quality care had better cognitive and social and emotional skills than others.

Q What conclusions would you draw from that?

A We do have a need for play school or preschool, even for those who have a parent who stays home and provides most of the care. The biggest challenge for children starting school can be how to problem-solve within a community of learners. It's not so much what you learn but how you learn that matters.

Q You mentioned that you are a grandmother. There's been a lot written lately about grandparents helping to raise their grandchildren. In fact, President Obama's mother-in-law has moved into the White House to help care for her granddaughters. Is this a new trend?

A I don't think it's new at all, but rather a return to a practice that was common in the 1950s, when we believed in extended families. It would not be unusual for a mother and grandmother in the 1950s to live under one roof and take care of the children together. In the next generations, in the 1970s and '80s, we got away from that. More mothers worked. Young families became more mobile and moved away. We had a collective belief system, and then we moved to a totally different belief system. People wanted to be more independent and more disconnected from the extended family. If anything, the economy today has brought us back more to the old beliefs. It has made us realize that this independence and focus on self is too much pressure. We are getting back to the belief system of focus on family and interdependence.

Q Yet we hear about some grandparents who have basically taken over the role of the parents – not necessarily by choice.

A What I do think is new is the phenomenon of some young people not assuming the responsibility of parenthood – the absent parent pushing the responsibility for his or her child onto the grandparent. In some cases, it's because of the economy; in other cases, it's because of the breakdown in the family. Of course, some grandparents have to work now because of the economy, so that can present more of a dilemma. (F)



The Family That Learns Together



Four generations of one family cross paths at Forsyth Tech

During the fall semester of 2008, Forsyth Tech went from being a “community college” to a “family college,” as four generations of the same family attended classes there at the same time.

The youngest of the bunch is Morgan Sebastian, a freshman at Early College of Forsyth, a four-year high school on the Forsyth Tech campus that offers an accelerated academic program.

Next is Brandy Carlton, Morgan’s stepmother, who’s a full-time student taking the prerequisite courses to enter the associate’s degree Nursing program.

Brandy’s mother-in-law, Joy Carlton, is the third to be represented, and her mother, Ruth Weldy, is the fourth. They both took a class in *Computer Basics* through the college’s Corporate and Continuing Education division.

But it doesn’t end there. Joy was also a Nursing student at Forsyth Tech, graduating in 1979 and embarking on a career at Baptist Hospital that lasted almost 30 years. And her son Ashley Carlton, Brandy’s husband, has an Auto Body certificate from the school. As Joy commented when discussing her family’s involvement with Forsyth Tech, “They should give us a bench or something!”

Each member of the family has something good to say about his or her experience at Forsyth Tech.

As part of the first class to ever attend Early College of Forsyth, Morgan Sebastian is a bit of a pioneer. But the prospect of what she could accomplish at the school made her want to take a chance on something new and different. The Early College curriculum combines high school courses and Forsyth Tech college courses, allowing students to earn college credits tuition free while still in high school. Students who graduate in four years will have accumulated enough credits to enter a four-year college as a

sophomore, and students who stay a fifth year, as Morgan plans to do, will earn an associate’s degree and enter college as a junior.

And there’s another advantage, Brandy says: “She can go to any state-supported school with guaranteed admission because she went to Early College of Forsyth. You don’t have to compete.” For Morgan, that’s what justifies all the hard work. “It’s definitely worth it,” she says. “It gives us an edge over other people trying to get into the same school.”

Morgan’s school experience isn’t totally devoted to academics, however. The school doesn’t have many of the normal high school activities, like band and sports teams, but Morgan says that the school’s principal, Mrs. Frances Cook, “is trying really hard to make it more like a usual high school” through club activities and field trips.

Mrs. Cook also impresses Brandy. “She’s young, and she’s involved with the students,” she says, “getting to know them not just in educational aspects but really being involved in their lives as far as their maturity. And she’s very in touch with the parents. She sends us newsletters, e-mail, and keeps us up to date.”

Of course, it’s a little easier for Brandy to stay up to date than most parents, because she and Morgan commute to Forsyth Tech together. “We ride together in the morning and the afternoon,” she says. “I take her, and then I go to the library and study, go to my class, study some more and wait for her. We’ve passed a couple of times on campus, but she doesn’t really speak to me,” Brandy says, laughing. “I think she thinks I’m nerdy.”

Nerdy or not, Brandy is definitely hardworking. In addition to her on-campus classes, Brandy is taking online courses and has two other children, 6-year-old Ethan and 2-year-old Tanin, who demand a lot of her time. Still, she says this is the time to pursue her degree and find a new


career because “I wasn’t going anywhere in the job I had.” And why nursing? “My mother-in-law has always shed such a wonderful light on the nursing profession, talking about how much she liked it,” she explains.

Brandy chose Forsyth Tech because “they have a great program. I had heard a lot of good things about it before I went.” It’s turned out to be a great choice, she says, for a lot of reasons. “I like the size of the school, and I like that there are a lot of people my age. I don’t feel like I’m walking around a ‘Beverly Hills, 90210’ campus. I feel comfortable with that,” she says. “I have people in my anatomy class who are in their 40s and 50s. You wouldn’t find that at a regular university. So that’s pretty neat.”

She also likes having a lot of options. “They offer a lot of classes at different times, and that helps out a lot,” she says, and so does being able to take classes online. “I think it allows a lot of people to take classes who wouldn’t normally be able to. You know, they’re working crazy shifts, and they wouldn’t be able to go to school if they couldn’t do it online.” As for the quality of the online classes, “I believe you learn just as much. You have your book there to help guide you along, but you have to know the concepts. You have to understand it,” she says.

One of the most surprising things for her was the variety of services available to students. “They offer free tutoring,” she says excitedly. “If you’re having trouble in a class, you just go sign up, and they will assign you a tutor. If you’re not a good note taker, you can have somebody take notes for you. And if you are a good note taker, you can do that for other people and get paid for it.” The dedication of the instructors has also made an impression. “They’re very accommodating. If you need help, they’re not throwing you to the wolves,” she says. “The teachers have open office hours and will help you when you need it.”

Joy Carlton and Ruth Weldy also found the instruction at Forsyth Tech to be top notch. They took a *Computer Basics* class with Paul Sluter and found him to be an excellent teacher. “He was very down to earth and explained it very well,” Joy says. Joy had some experience with computers, but Ruth was a novice and took the class because, as she explains, “Everybody in the family knows about computers, and they wanted me to know something, too.” Her instructor must have been good, because now Ruth does all her banking online and is considering taking even more classes. Joy says that she also learned a few new tricks and is thinking of taking another class.

From great-granddaughter to great-grandmother, these four generations have found new opportunities to grow and succeed at Forsyth Tech. So if you’re looking for anyone in this family, try our campus. Odds are, at least one – and maybe all of them – will be there learning something new. 



Brandy, Morgan, Joy and Ruth kick up their heels on Main Campus, where they all took classes simultaneously in Fall 2008.



Back in 1974, Marc Leonard read an article in *Reader's Digest* about jobs that would be recession-proof over the next quarter century.

Of that list, respiratory care seemed the best fit for his interests and abilities. He enrolled in the two-year associate's degree program in Respiratory Therapy at Forsyth Tech and graduated in 1977.

His feeling that respiratory care would be an excellent career choice for him has proved to be right.

"Respiratory care is for folks who are self-motivated, can think on their own and act on their own. We're the last of the cowboys," he said.

Marc had been a good student at North Forsyth High School, so he was not put off by the difficulty of the curriculum – studies in anatomy, physiology, cardiopulmonary diseases and treatment, and even physics.

"We deal with gases, and the principles of physics tell you what gases will do," he said. "Actually, that was a fun class."

Upon graduation, he got a job at a local hospital, where he was frequently in charge of patients' life support systems. The position paid a princely \$4.54 an hour.

In those days, college degrees weren't required for respiratory care technicians. Many were trained in the hospitals, in 90-day programs. One of the biggest changes Marc has seen in his career is that respiratory therapy has become a licensed profession. Not only did the pay improve, but "now we have more leeway to practice what we know," Marc said.

Technology has also come a long way. "The ventilators back then were made with parts you could get at a local hardware store," he said.

What hasn't changed is that respiratory therapists often have to respond quickly to life-or-death situations. Patients' conditions can change quickly, and the respiratory therapist has to respond immediately, often while other members of the medical team are being rounded up.

The field has provided Marc with a varied career. He helped set up a respiratory therapy program at a Greensboro hospital, worked for 10 years at a small country hospital and then entered the world of in-home care. He was one of the owners of a home-care company that grew to have five locations and nearly 100 employees. In 2004, that company merged with Arcadia, a national provider of home care with a center in Winston-Salem. His duties there for the first few years were getting Arcadia's home-care centers across the country accredited.

a breath of fresh air

Marc Leonard Brings Enthusiasm to Everything He Touches



Living in HOG Heaven

For most of his life, Aidan Leonard, who just turned 2, has been a member of the national Harley Owners Group. The local HOG chapter turned out in full force for Aidan's first birthday party, bearing a teddy bear. And the organization, of which proud grandpa Marc Leonard is assistant director, plans lots of family-oriented events.

"That's the kind of people I want Aidan to be around," Marc said.

Black leather jackets are at least as comfortable and familiar as the white coat Marc wears at work. Biking has been a happy constant in his life. He and his wife, Patsy, whom he married when he was a student at Forsyth Tech, ride together, and have ridden the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway side by side.

When their son Travis was married, he was surrounded by "bikers, bankers and Scotsmen in kilts" (representatives of another of Marc's passions, fly-fishing). And father and son enjoy riding together.

Many of Marc's oldest friends are his Harley friends. Last summer, a group of eight of them rode to South Dakota for a rally, then continued on to San Francisco for the fun of it.



“That’s something I was good at. This was not my first rodeo,” he said. Now he’s responsible for new business development, finding ways to expand Arcadia’s client base.

One of his initiatives is a program for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) that enables patients to take better care of themselves through nutrition, exercise and other measures. Another is a project with the trucking industry, because over-the-road drivers have a high incidence of sleep apnea, a serious and sometimes fatal condition, which happens to be Marc’s professional specialty.

Truck drivers fit the classic profile of people with sleep apnea, which causes people to snore loudly and to stop breathing momentarily many times during the night. Typically, sufferers, who are often unaware that they have a sleep disorder, are middle-aged overweight men with a sedentary lifestyle.

The program Marc is working on enables trucking companies to have their drivers tested, to provide those with sleep apnea with

equipment that can be used at home or in the cab of the truck to keep the breathing airways unobstructed, and to remotely monitor how the drivers are complying with the treatment.

“My computer will call the truck driver and be able to monitor what time he put the mask on and took it off, whether the mask had a leak and other information,” he said.

Marc worked for a year between his high school graduation and when he decided on his long-term career.

“In my opinion, everybody should work on a farm or behind the counter in a convenience store or do a stint in the military,” he said. “That would make them more appreciative of higher education and the opportunities it affords.”

He’s happy with the way taking some time out from his formal education worked for him and glad he happened to read that *Reader’s Digest* article.

“Respiratory care has put a roof over my head and food on my table for over 30 years,” he said. 

Lessons Learned

Not all of Marc’s education has come from the lab and the classroom. As owner of a company for 10 years plus, he learned:

- > *Right or wrong, make a decision. Indecision will kill you.*
- > *Believe in yourself.*
- > *Give your staff opportunities to grow.*
- > *Learn from your mistakes.*



“Patients sometimes ask ‘Is this oxygen addictive?’”

“Absolutely,” Marc Leonard tells them “You can’t live without it.”



Old School Ties

The clinical areas at Arcadia H.O.M.E. on Jonestown Road become classrooms for the Forsyth Tech respiratory therapy students. Every year, Marc Leonard supervises rotations of students at the center. Here he shows students Laurie Sisk and Brooke Epperson the right way to place a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure mask on a patient.

Marc also serves on the advisory board of the Forsyth Tech program and, along with the other local professionals on the board, keeps the college up to date on trends and needs in the field of respiratory care. “When a student leaves the program, we try to find out why,” he said. More often than not, it’s a money problem. Last year, through Marc’s advocacy, Arcadia set up a \$2,500 emergency scholarship fund for respiratory therapy students through the Foundation of Forsyth Tech.

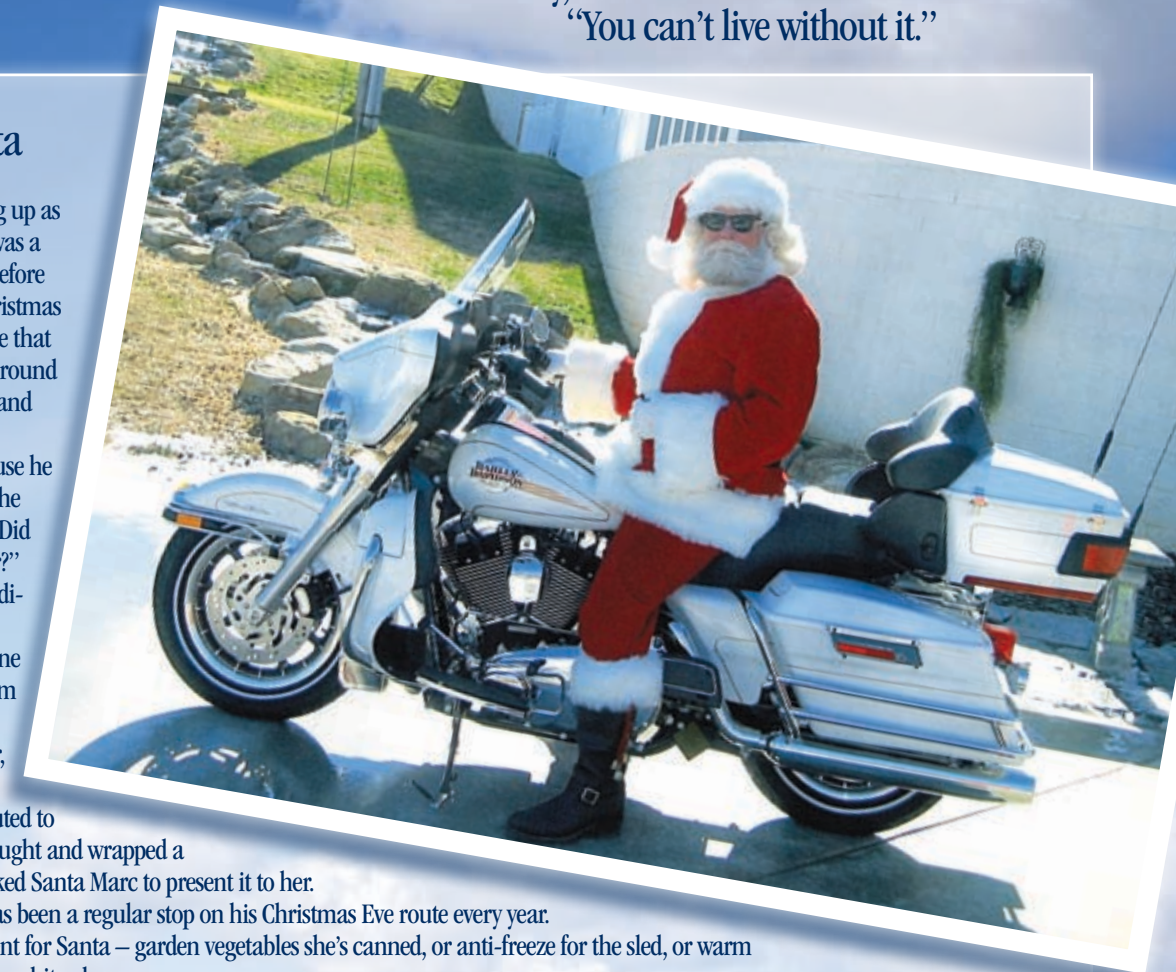
Random Acts of Santa

Marc Leonard started dressing up as Santa Claus when his son Travis was a toddler, and the role suited him. Before long, he was driving out every Christmas Eve and randomly picking a house that was all lit up, with plenty of cars around it. He’d drop in for a surprise visit and distribute candy canes.

One year, a woman in the house he had chosen saw him walking up the driveway and ran out and asked “Did you bring me my vacuum cleaner?”

She was clearly mentally handicapped, and Marc thought he’d gotten himself into a pickle. But one of the woman’s relatives pulled him aside, told him that “Bridget” had asked Santa for a vacuum cleaner, because hers had broken, and cleaning was the way she contributed to the household. The family had bought and wrapped a new vacuum cleaner, and they asked Santa Marc to present it to her.

Since then, Bridget’s house has been a regular stop on his Christmas Eve route every year. And every year Bridget has a present for Santa – garden vegetables she’s canned, or anti-freeze for the sled, or warm mittens to supplement those flimsy white gloves.





Granting an Education:

What a Close-up View of a Government Program Teaches Students about How to Create Change

It's no secret that Forsyth Tech faculty members' work outside the classroom benefits students in surprising ways. Jamie Edwards, coordinator of the Human Services Technology program, is a case in point. His work as a consultant to the mental health agencies in Surry and Stokes counties is giving Forsyth Tech students opportunities to work with research data and programs that are anything but abstruse and academic. Students can have a hand in preventing a persistent problem in these two counties: alcohol-related automobile crashes and fatalities.

Stokes and Surry, because of the high incidence of these types of accidents, were eligible for federal grant money. Edwards was engaged to manage the needs assessment in Surry and became involved with the grant program in Stokes at the implementation stage. Both counties followed the federal Strategic Prevention Framework model, which involves custom tailoring prevention messages to particular populations, based on careful collection of information about community norms and perceptions, when and where alcohol-related accidents occur, patterns of purchasing and using alcohol, and much more.

While Stokes and Surry proved to be quite different in these respects, the prevention programs in both counties are being carried out in nontraditional channels, including such Internet social networking sites as MySpace,

Facebook and YouTube. In Surry County, a documentary was produced, which shows what might happen to a young woman stopped by a police officer for driving erratically after having a drink or two. The documentary was premiered at a downtown cinema in Mount Airy in May and drew an audience of 600.

“This is a new way of looking at prevention in this state,” Edwards said. “Usually people think of things like one-to-one counseling and after-school programs and messages like Just Say No.”


Based on the community information that was gathered, the messages for this program appeal less to fear and more to a better understanding of all the risks involved.

One Forsyth Tech student is slated to start a cooperative education program in Stokes County, visiting doctors’ offices to provide brochures, and setting up a lunch-and-learn program. Students in Edwards’ Addictive Behavior course this fall will be involved in the design of audio and video public service announcements. And in the future, Edwards believes marketing students, graphic design students and others at Forsyth Tech could have a role in gathering information and participating in ongoing prevention measures.

“This is a unique opportunity, bringing community-based research into the classroom, and giving students hands-on experience with data that means something to them and comes from their community,” Edwards said. “When a student drives by one of those billboards in Danbury, he or she will know why it says what it says.”

Maybe most important of all, he said, is the experience students gain with the Strategic Prevention Framework, a model for implementing community change that can be used to address poverty, homelessness, mental health issues or any area where change is needed. It’s also a model that students can put to work in any organizations in which they find themselves – including in their families.

For the communities affected, the most important outcome was building the capacity to deal with the problem on an ongoing basis, Edwards said, and students became part of that capacity.

“We can get hung up on the end product, but the end product isn’t necessarily the end,” he said. “The process that got us here is the real beauty, if we’re talking about transferable skills. What we do in these few years will generate great dividends down the road.” 



What You Don't Know Can Kill You



Some perceptions and misperceptions collected in the needs assessment:

- > The risk of getting caught drinking and driving is low.
- > Alcohol is not as dangerous as other drugs.
- > Alcohol is safe as long as you’re not driving.
- > There are too few law enforcement officers to catch underage drinkers.
- > There may be no penalties for adults who provide alcohol to minors.

Wednesday, October 7, 2009
Bermuda Run West

This October, Chip In To Help Forsyth Tech



A FUNDRAISER TO PROVIDE MONEY TO SUPPORT THE COLLEGE.

Join us as The Forsyth Tech Foundation Golf Tournament celebrates its 10th anniversary. Register to play as an individual, sign up a foursome or become a sponsor. It’s a great way to support the school and work on your short game at the same time. Get complete details at www.SupportForsythTech.com.

And while you’re there, check out our online auction, featuring a wide variety of valuable items. Remember, every bid helps Forsyth Tech, so drive up those prices!

For more information contact Shari Covitz at 336.734.7520 or scovitz@forsythtech.edu.

ForsythTech

More Than You Know

2100 Silas Creek Parkway
Winston-Salem, NC 27103-5197

Non Profit
Organization
US POSTAGE

PAID
Greensboro, NC
Permit #1068

46,000 copies of this document were printed at a cost of \$0.61 per copy.

Focus On Forsyth Tech



Ready for Your Close-Up, Madame Butterfly? Shawn Hill, who works in the Purchasing and Equipment Department at Forsyth Tech, took this photograph one spring day in Dundas, Virginia. Photography has been her hobby for some 20 years, and it took her most of the day to get this shot. Since it's hard to tell where the insect ends and the blossom begins, she named the picture Butter Flower. To have your photographs considered for the cover of the Fall issue of Tech Quarterly, submit them electronically to Dr. Sharon "Shari" B. Covitz, scovitz@forsythtech.edu. 