

The Blazer Bulletin

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CENTRALIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION



CCF Gala 2023 – pg. 4-5

College News Roundup – pg. 8-9

Bob Peters Retires – pg. 10-11



Foundation News

Summer has arrived and as we complete the fiscal year, it's a good time to reflect on what

been accomplished in the last number of months, but it has been so busy, I don't think I can recall many of them and I want to save space on this page for you to meet Alexis Besio, our newest foundation staff member. Alexis brings organization, enthusiasm, a mountain of experience in working with customers of all sorts, and a marketing idea for every foundation need. You will see us out-and-about in a variety of new areas this next year.

Christine Fossett

**Associate Vice President of Advancement,
Executive Director, Foundation**



Welcome, Alexis Besio!

Alexis describes herself as a non-profit groupie. A passion for public service blossomed as a Congressional page and then as an aide to her Congressman.

After studying political science and languages at the University of Redlands she began designing investment strategies for higher educational institutions as an Endowment Management Associate at Commonfund which led to a degree in philanthropic planning at DePaul University. She transferred that skillset to the private sector by supporting individuals with their estate planning needs. Before coming to the Centralia College Foundation, she was a corporate regional manager for more than ten years. The aspect of her career she enjoys most is watching individuals and organizations grow into their full potential.

Outside of work you can find her roller skating or baking. She played roller derby as an Orange County Roller Girl for 5 years before moving to Washington and vows to never hang up her skates. Her oven is constantly cranking out cookies for care packages to send to her two sons who are stationed at Pearl Harbor and studying at the Naval Academy. She and her husband have called Centralia home for 7 years and have recently added another pit bull, Waldo, to their family.

Her favorite quote is, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", spoken by Nelson Mandela. While at the Centralia College Foundation she hopes to enrich our community and beyond through a commitment to education, diversity, and having a whole lot of fun.



Congratulations

2024 Legacy Award Winner Larry McGee

The Centralia College Foundation selected Larry McGee for its 2024 Legacy Award. The award honors his dedication, commitment, and contribution to the mission of Centralia College, particularly his work launching the college's bachelor's degree programs.

"Larry McGee's work created the momentum the college needed to launch what has been a really successful bachelor's degree program," said Christine Fossett, executive director of the CC Foundation. "His ongoing support of the college and for early learning programs have changed the education landscape of Lewis County."

In 2011, Larry McGee was the executive director of the Chehalis Renaissance Team (now Experience Chehalis). He had a list of projects with 85 items on it. He was ticking them off when Centralia College President Jim Walton (retired) called him out of the blue.

"I had no idea what he wanted, but I went to meet him anyway," McGee said. "He wanted me to start a bachelor's degree program in business. I had never worked on a college campus before. I knew nothing about it and I initially turned him down, but he didn't give up."

After a trip to Columbia Basin College, where he learned about the importance of bachelor's degrees to the college and the community, McGee changed his mind and agreed to spearhead Centralia College's first bachelor's degree.

It was a grueling 10-month project with complicated proposals to the state, the

college's accreditors, and the Department of Education, plus recruiting students, hiring faculty, developing education plans and courses, and much more. But, it paid off in September 2012, when CC welcomed the first cohort of students into the Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management program.

McGee intended to stay at Centralia College for just 18 months, long enough to get the bachelor's degree off the ground. He was asked to stay a bit longer and to help launch the college's second bachelor's degree in Diesel Technology.

"I stayed for two and a half years total," he said. "It was the best time of my working life. I loved my time at the college."

Centralia College now has five bachelor's degrees and McGee has moved on to other projects. He's a founding member and current chair for the new Discover! Children's Museum planned for downtown Centralia. He's also on the board for the United Learning Center, the multi-agency complex that will be home to the new children's museum. The project has just broken ground. McGee is as busy as ever, but Centralia College always has a soft spot in his heart.

"The faculty here is not driven by research and research grants," he said. "They're here to educate students. They show a great deal of concern for the students. A lot of students have tough situations and there's a great deal of care here. Sincere care and concern."

Congratulations

The Centralia College Foundation selected Kelly Erickson and Rachel Bryant-Anderson to receive the 2024 Exceptional Faculty Awards. They were chosen for their commitment to and excellence in their subject areas, and participation in campus activities.

Both were formally honored at the Centralia College Night of Celebration on June 20.



Kelly Erickson

Kelly Erickson started teaching writing classes at Centralia College in 2013 part-time. She was eventually hired full-time and earned tenure in 2021. She got involved in the campus Writing Center almost immediately upon starting at CC and now serves as the Writing Center coordinator. The Writing Center provides free writing help to all students and hosts several online workshops each quarter to help students master the skills needed for academic writing.

"I love working with students and seeing all of the dedication that they bring to the learning experience," Erickson said. "I also love witnessing that moment when they realize all of their hard work has allowed them to achieve a goal or develop a new skill."

Her favorite classes to teach are Composition I and II and Writing in the Workplace. In addition to her work in the Writing Center, she serves on CC's Instructional Council and on a tenure committee. She is chair of the English department.

2024 Exceptional Faculty Award Winners



Rachel Bryant-Anderson

Rachel Bryant-Anderson intended to go into social work before she took a position as a teaching assistant in graduate school. It was there she discovered her love of teaching and changed her focus to education. She began teaching sociology classes at CC in 2019. She was hired on full-time in 2022 and is currently going through the tenure process.

“One thing that’s special about this campus is the relationships,” Bryant-Anderson said. “Because of the size and culture, I’m able to get to know faculty and staff from across the campus in a way that I’ve never experienced elsewhere. I feel confident that this community will give me guidance and help when I need it, and I know that when I have a student who needs something, we’ll come together as a team to get that need met.”

Since starting at CC, Bryant-Anderson has launched several new sociology classes and helped develop the bachelor’s degree in Behavioral Healthcare. She serves on the campus’ Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council and Instructional Council, and is co-chair of the Sustainability Committee.



Congratulations

2024 Legacy Award Winner

Tim Browning

The 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award winner is Tim Browning. Browning has served Centralia for more than 40 years, both in city government and in service clubs, including the Centralia Rotary and Twin Cities Rotary clubs.

"Tim Browning has been a leader in Centralia for a long time. There's very little in this city he hasn't had some influence on," said Christine Fossett, executive director of the Centralia College Foundation. "He got his start at Centralia College and it's exciting to honor him with the Distinguished Alumni Award."

Browning was third in his class at Centralia High School in 1960. He immediately enrolled at Centralia College after high school.

"I didn't know what my ultimate goal was, but I knew I needed an education. Centralia College was a great opportunity. More than

two-thirds of my high school class enrolled at CC. It made sense for me."

Browning found he especially enjoyed history. He was recruited for the debate team and discovered a passion for competition. He graduated as valedictorian in the spring of 1962.

"Intercollegiate Debate was the driving focus of my life then," he said. "We competed in tournaments in Washington and Oregon. We competed at Junior College Nationals in Stockton, Calif., my first year, and at Hutchison, Kan., my sophomore year. Our competitive success earned me a scholarship to Pacific Lutheran University and I transferred there in the fall of 1962."

At PLU, Browning earned his bachelor's degree in Speech

and Business, and continued with debate team. He earned his master's degree in Speech and History from the University of New Mexico in 1966. While a graduate assistant and then faculty member, he was responsible for forensics and debate. In 1967, he accepted a faculty teaching and coaching position at Furman University in Greenville, S.C. He returned to the Southwest in 1969 to accept teaching and coaching position at the University of Arizona, where he stayed until 1983, when he returned to Centralia to take over his father's business, Browning's Office Supply in Centralia, later known as Browning's of Washington.

At the same time, he began a career in city politics. In 1984, he joined the Centralia Planning Commission. He was chair from 1987-91. In 1992, he transitioned to the Board of Adjustment, for which he served as chair from 1993-97. From there, he made a run for city council. He served on the Centralia City Council from 1997-2012, including more than a decade as mayor (1999-2010).

"I always felt this town was my home, a place where you could be an individual," he said. "You can make a difference here, for your community and for your family."

Browning is a founding member and past president of Twin Cities

Rotary Club and currently past president and member of the Centralia Rotary Club. He's twice been named Rotarian of the Year. He's also a founding member and past president of the Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce. He was president and a board member for Centralia Babe Ruth Baseball for a decade and previously served on the boards for Lewis County Red Cross, Centralia School District Levy Committee, Lewis County United Way, Boy Scouts of America, Centralia Downtown Association, the Centralia Community Foundation, the Industrial Park at TransAlta, and the Lewis County Economic Development Council. He is currently president of the Centralia School Board. He's a seventh generation Centralian and a tireless community servant.

Browning and his son Daniel now own the PostNet International franchises in Centralia and Lacey. He remains close with his CHS and Centralia College classmates, including several previous winners of the Centralia College Foundation's Distinguished Alumni Award.

"I'm honored to be included with such wonderful people," he said of his award. "It's an incredibly important group, who have achieved great success. It's been a privilege to know so many of them."



Centralia College Batting Cages UPDATE

Here are photos of the now complete batting cages. All that is left to do are the finishing touches. Maps of the schools where our athletes have attended and played after graduating from Centralia College is sure to be a highlight and posters of outstanding student athletes will also be included. Our open house showcased the large facility including a VIP room upstairs with prime viewing for soccer matches and events. Attendees were happy with the space and the athletes are anxious to start batting practice in the new facility.

Our Community Our College Our Future

Boost your business by marketing at the new Bob Peters Field at Centralia College

The multi-sport turf field hosts teams from all over the northwest throughout the year. Spectators, family, and community members will see your promotion during men's baseball, women's softball, and men's and women's soccer seasons.

Marketing Opportunities

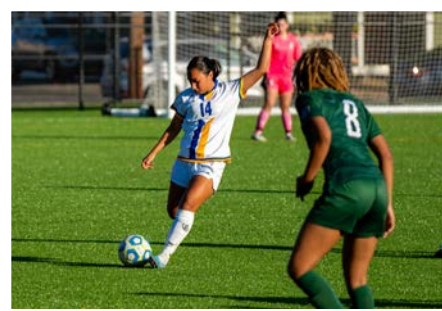
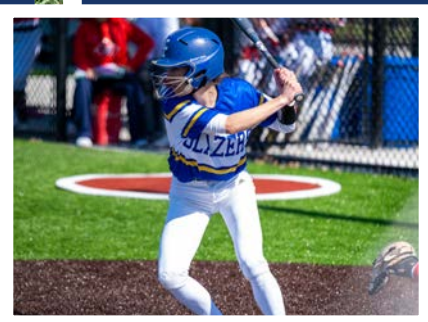
- Outfield Banners
- Scoreboard Signage
- Naming Opportunities

Contact the CC Foundation

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360-623-8451

christine.fossett@centralia.edu



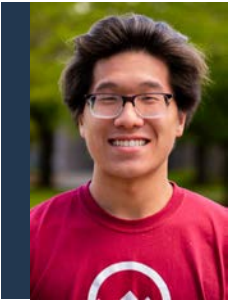
Congratulations

2024 Outstanding Student Award Winners

The Outstanding Students Awards are given annually to students who have overcome obstacles in the pursuit of their degree, achieved their educational goals, and been an active and engaged member of the college community. Students are nominated by faculty and staff, and the winners are chosen by a selection committee.

"It's a very inspiring group of students we are honoring this year," said Robert Cox, CC's vice

president of student services. "We have two high-achieving Running Start students, an adult returning to school focused on a career in healthcare, and two students attending Centralia College through Green Hill School. Though these five individuals have very different stories, they all are hardworking, determined, and committed to serving others. These are the students that inspired faculty and their peers, and made a difference this year."

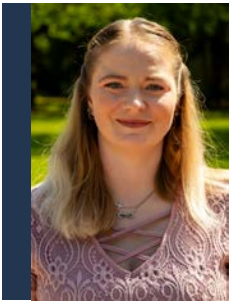


Justin Chung is a Running Start student from WF West High School. He serves as the college's coordinator for student engagement, a campus leadership position, and is an active content creator for student-run social media. He is the captain of his high school tennis team and a Class of 2024 valedictorian. He plays piano and violin, serves as a local lifeguard and public speaking tutor, and is active in his church. He will attend Southern Adventist University in Tennessee next fall. He plans to study biology to become an orthopedic surgeon.

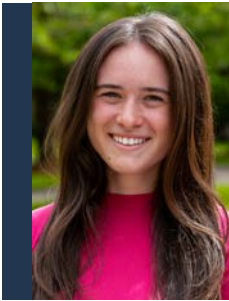


Caya Lenay is in the first cohort of Green Hill School students to earn a bachelor's degree through Centralia College. Lenay has completed nearly every program available at Green Hill, and is cofounder of the Made Men peer mentoring group. He is active in Capitol Classroom, a hands-on civics education program that allows students to provide input and work on legislation at the state level. He has published

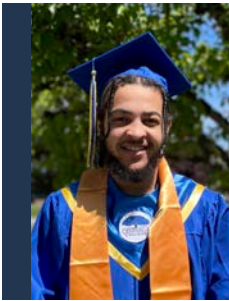
two books about his life and plans to work towards juvenile justice reform when he is released. He is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honors society for two-year college students.



Stephanie Mossow and her family moved to Washington after a hurricane destroyed their home in Louisiana in 2020. Her family started with nothing and has been able to build back up through hard work and dedication. For Mossow, part of that was starting at Centralia College, where she is working towards a career as a registered nurse. She has served as a peer mentor at CC for two years, and said she loves helping other students achieve their goals. 2024 Outstanding Student Award winners



Grace Oien is a Running Start student from WF West High School. She has a 4.0 GPA at CC and at WF West, where she is graduating as valedictorian. On campus, she has served as a speech tutor and helped with the college's Running Start orientations preparing other high school students for the program. A talented golfer, Oien will remain at CC on a golf scholarship this fall. She plans to earn her bachelor's degree in Applied Management.



Mondrell Robertson is in the first cohort of Green Hill School students to earn a bachelor's degree through Centralia College. He is an active member of Made Men and Capitol Classroom, where he advocates for juvenile rehabilitation. Robertson also serves as a personal trainer and tutors other students working towards their associate and bachelor's degrees. He is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the national honors society for two-year college students.

All five students were honored for their achievements at the Centralia College Foundation's Night of Celebration on June 20.

2024 NIGHT OF CELEBRATION

What a great night and so many impressive attendees gathered for a lovely evening together celebrating our Distinguished Alumni, Legacy Award recipient, Outstanding Student award winners, and Exceptional Faculty. This edition has articles on all of them which you will surely want to read, and you can see by these photos that we had a wonderful celebration together.





Conversations with the President

We hosted several smaller dinners for donors and community partners to get to visit with Dr. Mohrbacher regarding changes and upcoming plans for the college. Attendees received information on the newly minted strategic plan and the college's updated master plan. The conversation also included discussions on the currently offered bachelor's programs and new programs that are in the planning process. Guests also viewed displays of plants, fossils, rocks and taxidermy from the arts and science department while they dined in a classroom of the Walton Science Center. If you would like to be added to the upcoming guest list, please contact the Foundation office.



Yes, I definitely want to support the Centralia College Foundation



THANK YOU!

The Centralia College Foundation (CCF) is registered as a charitable organization with the Washington Secretary of State Tax ID #91-1195403

I am please to support your continuing efforts to provide opportunities for deserving students to help them reach their full potential through education at Centralia College.

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift

\$500 \$200 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

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Centralia College Alumni Class of _____

Gift made in the memory of or tribute to _____

- Please Contact me for a tour of the campus
- Please send me information of the Legacy Society and including the Foundation in my estate.

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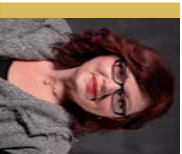
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centraliacollegealumni.org.

**Creating opportunities to improve students' lives, enable success,
and strengthen our community.**

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