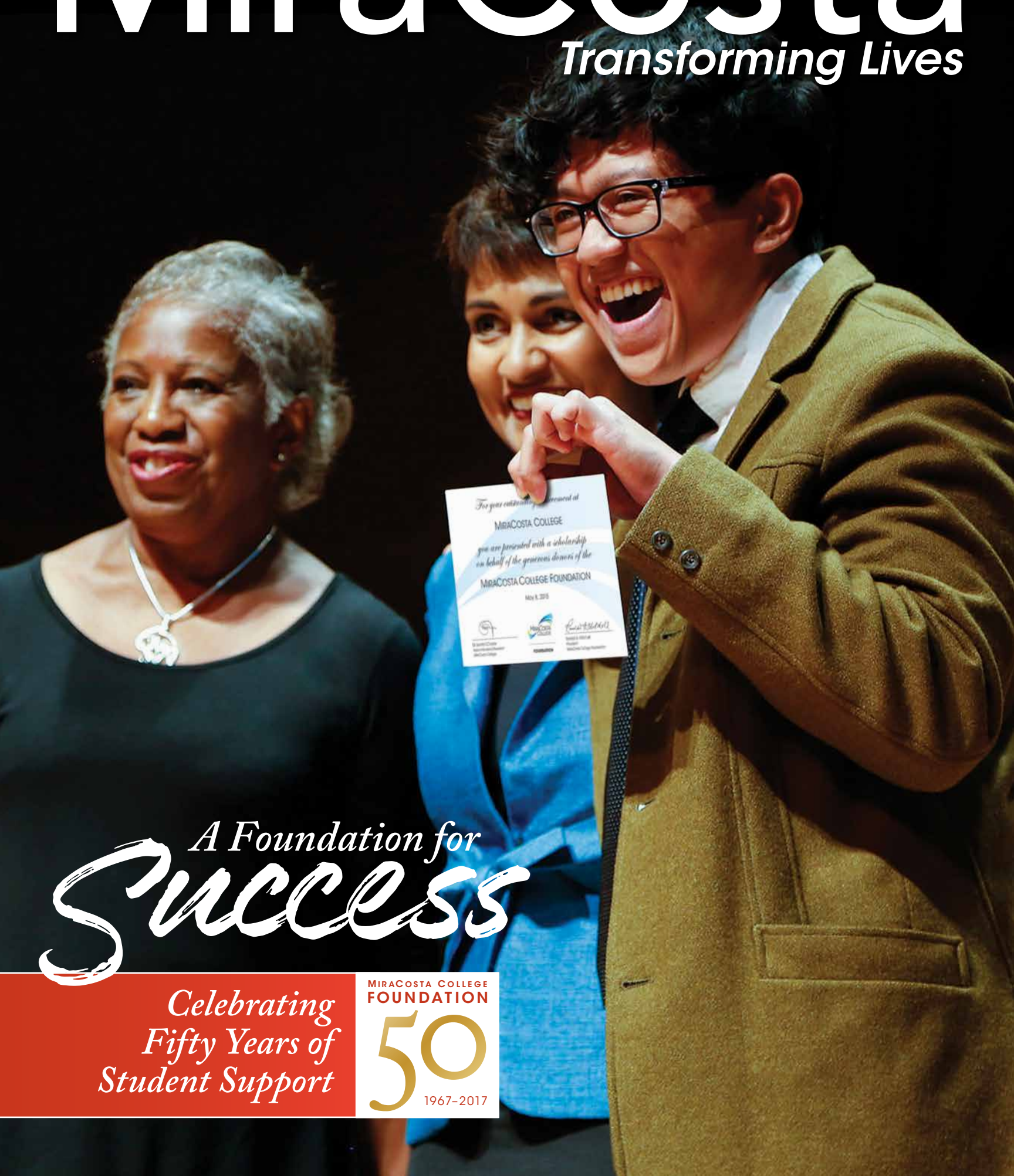


MiraCosta

Transforming Lives



For your continued commitment to
MIRACOSTA COLLEGE
you are presented with a scholarship
on behalf of the generous donors of the
MIRACOSTA COLLEGE FOUNDATION
May 8, 2015

A Foundation for
Success

*Celebrating
Fifty Years of
Student Support*

MIRACOSTA COLLEGE
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1967-2017

FRIENDS OF MIRACOSTA COLLEGE:



At MiraCosta College, our mission is to offer new, affordable opportunities to our students in a welcoming environment. To help our students achieve their dreams, the college is excited to announce three new initiatives that can pay tuition, cover expenses and help students attain bachelor's degrees locally.

The MiraCosta Promise offers qualified students a free year of college as well as financial help to cover textbooks and educational supplies. Funded by private and grant sources, the MiraCosta Promise is supported by the college, the MiraCosta Foundation, and generous donors throughout the district.

Expanding on streamlining the process for students to transfer to a public university, MiraCosta College is now offering more than associate's degrees. Starting fall 2017, MiraCosta College will offer a new bachelor's degree in biomanufacturing. For students already pursuing an associate's degree in business or nursing, they can continue their studies at MiraCosta and achieve a bachelor's degree thanks to agreements with Point Loma Nazarene University.

In this edition of *Transforming Lives* you will discover how the college is making quality higher education more accessible to our community. But we could not do it without you. By approving Measure MM last November, we will soon transform our campuses and modernize our instruction technology so that we can continue to prepare our students for high-skill jobs in a demanding regional economy.

Please enjoy learning about our college and the success of its students and alumni in this issue. In this edition, read about two alumni who have built their future from a foundation gained at MiraCosta.

Paripon "Pari" Thitathan leveraged his education and assistance from the Small Business Development Center to open the Thai Burger Company food truck, home of the original rice burger.

While growing up in Albania, Dr. Alketa Wojcik never dreamt of attending college until she embarked on a groundbreaking MiraCosta College program that allowed her to study in Oceanside. Alketa is devoted to providing education opportunities as vice president of student services.

Discover their stories and how your generous support impacts the lives of our students.

Sunny

Dr. Sunny Cooke
Superintendent/President
MiraCosta College

MiraCosta PROMISE



The free community college movement is coming to MiraCosta College in the fall of 2017! The MiraCosta Promise will be funded through a variety of current resources and private donations to the

MiraCosta College Foundation.

The MiraCosta Promise program provides for a full year of tuition-free college, along with funding for textbooks and other instructional supplies. Promise students must remain continuously enrolled with a minimum of 12 units in the fall and spring semesters and

maintain a GPA of 2.0. Meeting with a counselor and attending orientation are among the requirements aimed at guaranteeing academic success.

The MiraCosta Promise is open to seniors who graduate this spring from any accredited high school within MiraCosta Community College District boundaries, are residents of California, who file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a Dream Act application by May 11, 2017, and qualify for a Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver.

For additional information
and how you can help, visit
miracosta.edu/promise

The award-winning *MiraCosta, Transforming Lives* is published by the MiraCosta College Office of Advancement. We greatly appreciate the participation of those who allowed us to tell their stories.



On the Cover

MiraCosta alum Reden Magtira is presented a scholarship award from MiraCosta College's Superintendent/President Sunny Cooke (center) and Foundation Board Member Raye Clendening.

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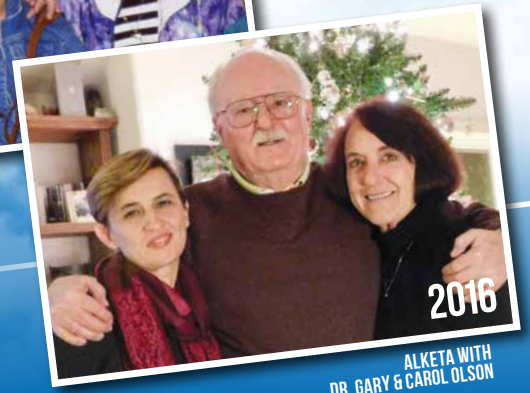
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FROM ALBANIA TO AMERICA

A LIFE FOREVER CHANGED THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION



Talk about a change of fortune.

Dr. Alketa Wojcik, MiraCosta College's vice president of student services grew up in Albania with no hope of attending a university when she suddenly found herself offered the opportunity of a lifetime. Thanks to a groundbreaking MiraCosta College program, Wojcik travelled 6,500 miles to California where she embarked on a higher education journey that changed her life forever.

Today, Wojcik is a MiraCosta College Foundation benefactor aiming to give students the same kind of opportunities she was afforded.

"I would not be where I am today if it were not for the MiraCosta College Foundation," said Wojcik. "I've been very fortunate to be put in a position to help others achieve their educational dreams."

Wojcik grew up in a communist backwater racked by corruption and

lacking even the most basic necessities. She lived with eleven other relatives in a two-bedroom home, where she often studied by candlelight because electricity in the capital of Tirana was spotty at best.

"We had very little food with rations for a kilo of meat a week for the entire family," Wojcik said. "We didn't even have a refrigerator. But I guess if you don't have food, you don't need a refrigerator."

It was through a chance meeting with former Vista schools Superintendent Dr. Gary Olson, who was then directing a Point Loma Nazarene University educational program, that she found her ticket to America. Olson, who was presenting a series of workshops in Albania, was staying with Wojcik's aunt for two weeks. Wojcik, who had just started to learn English, began practicing the language with Olson. He was impressed and after returning home to San Diego, approached MiraCosta about starting a new endeavor that would bring foreign students from developing countries to the college. In response, the college created the Making a Difference Program, and Dr. Wojcik was the first to take part.

"Never in my dreams did I think I would ever have a college education, let alone a college education in America," she said.

That was in 1994. Dr. Wojcik stayed with the Olson family and worked as a student ambassador at

MiraCosta College, where she met her future husband. The MiraCosta College Foundation covered the cost of tuition, books and fees. After earning an associate degree in business administration, Wojcik secured a bachelor's degree in business from California State University, San Marcos. Finding her passion was in education, she switched gears and completed a master's in educational leadership from San Diego State University and then a doctorate in educational leadership from UC San Diego.

In 1999, she returned to MiraCosta as a student services coordinator. That was followed by four years as associate dean of student services at the San Elijo Campus, then dean of behavioral sciences, history and community education, and the site administrator for the Community Learning Center; and next dean of admission and student support. Wojcik then took over as vice president of student services on July 1, 2016, succeeding the retiring Dr. Richard Robertson.

Through it all, Dr. Wojcik said she is thankful every day for the opportunities she has had.

"Higher education changes your life. Speaking from my personal experience, I can't even imagine where I would be without a higher education, and specifically without MiraCosta College and its foundation that works hard to help students achieve their dreams." ■



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A Half Century of Building a *Legacy*





Maria Aguilar, former foster youth, now at UC San Diego studying biochemistry

Mcdonald's was introducing its first Big Mac at a franchise in Pittsburgh, the Summer of Love was turning heads in San Francisco, and the MiraCosta College Foundation was forming as a nonprofit in Oceanside to ensure that no student would be denied access to higher education because of financial need.

That was back in 1967. Fifty years later, the Big Mac has seen much better days and the Summer of Love is a distant memory, but the MiraCosta College Foundation has grown into a vital organization that contributes nearly \$500,000 annually in educational scholarships for students and nearly \$470,000 yearly to support an array of campus programs.

“The MiraCosta College Foundation has been able to impact the lives of thousands of students who may otherwise not have had the opportunity to attend college had it not been for the generous support of so many benefactors over the past 50 years,” said Michael Brennan, the MiraCosta College Foundation’s interim executive director. “We have a lot to be thankful for, and we look forward to our mission of transforming lives for the next 50 years.”

The MiraCosta College Foundation was formed in the latter part of 1966 with the help of former MiraCosta College Board of Trustees president and local businessman Elmer Glaser. Just a few months later, the foundation secured its status as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. But the foundation had





limited resources and could finance but a few programs at the time, so it set out to search for individuals and organizations to help out when regular funding was not available.

“Back then we didn’t have much money. We just kind of existed,” said Martha Gresham, a retired microbiologist who today sits on the foundation’s board of directors. That changed when the foundation hired an executive director and professional staff. Today, the nonprofit raises more than \$1.3 million annually.

“We all feel strongly about supporting a vital educational resource that is having a tremendous impact,” added Gresham, who attended MiraCosta College when it went by the name of Oceanside-Carlsbad Junior College and was situated on the campus of Oceanside High School.

While MiraCosta College offers access to the most affordable, quality higher education in the country, costs can quickly rise nonetheless. A full-time student can spend more than \$3,000 annually on tuition, fees, books and parking, a cost that is beyond the reach of many. Nationally, approximately half of community college students living on their own are earning less than \$20,000 annually, and the MiraCosta College Foundation often makes the difference in whether a student can afford to pursue his or her education.

“Scholarships have allowed me to focus on my academic classes and have helped me out immensely. With scholarships I’ve been able to do a lot of things: pay for classes, pay for food, pay for gas... pretty much for anything I need to survive as a college student,” said MiraCosta College graduate Reden Magtira, featured on our cover.

David Broad, the president of MiraCosta College Board of Trustees, said he became involved with the foundation after meeting a former student who was escaping an abusive relationship and could stay in school only because of a \$500 scholarship. She now has a career as a registered nurse.

“That small gift from the foundation had a dramatic effect on this woman’s life, and it has had a similar impact on the lives of thousands of other students,” Broad said. “I just wanted to be a part of that.”



*Jeff Jaureguy (also inset above),
recipient of multiple scholarships
and studying to earn his
Ph.D. in biology*

Other beneficiaries include Jeff Jaureguy, a recipient of an Osher Scholarship, a Winski Scholarship, and a Bridges to the Future grant, all of which are helping him reach his goal of securing a Ph.D. in biology and a postdoctoral program focusing on conservation and sustainability. And Thomas Sudnick, a former Navy engineer who thrived at MiraCosta with the help of two Osher scholarships and the Kendra Keating Scholarship before landing a job with the West Springfield Police Department in his home state of Massachusetts. And Maria Aguilar, a former foster youth, who went to UC San Diego to study biochemistry, thanks in large part to receiving more than \$3,000 in MiraCosta College Foundation scholarships while attending the Oceanside Campus.

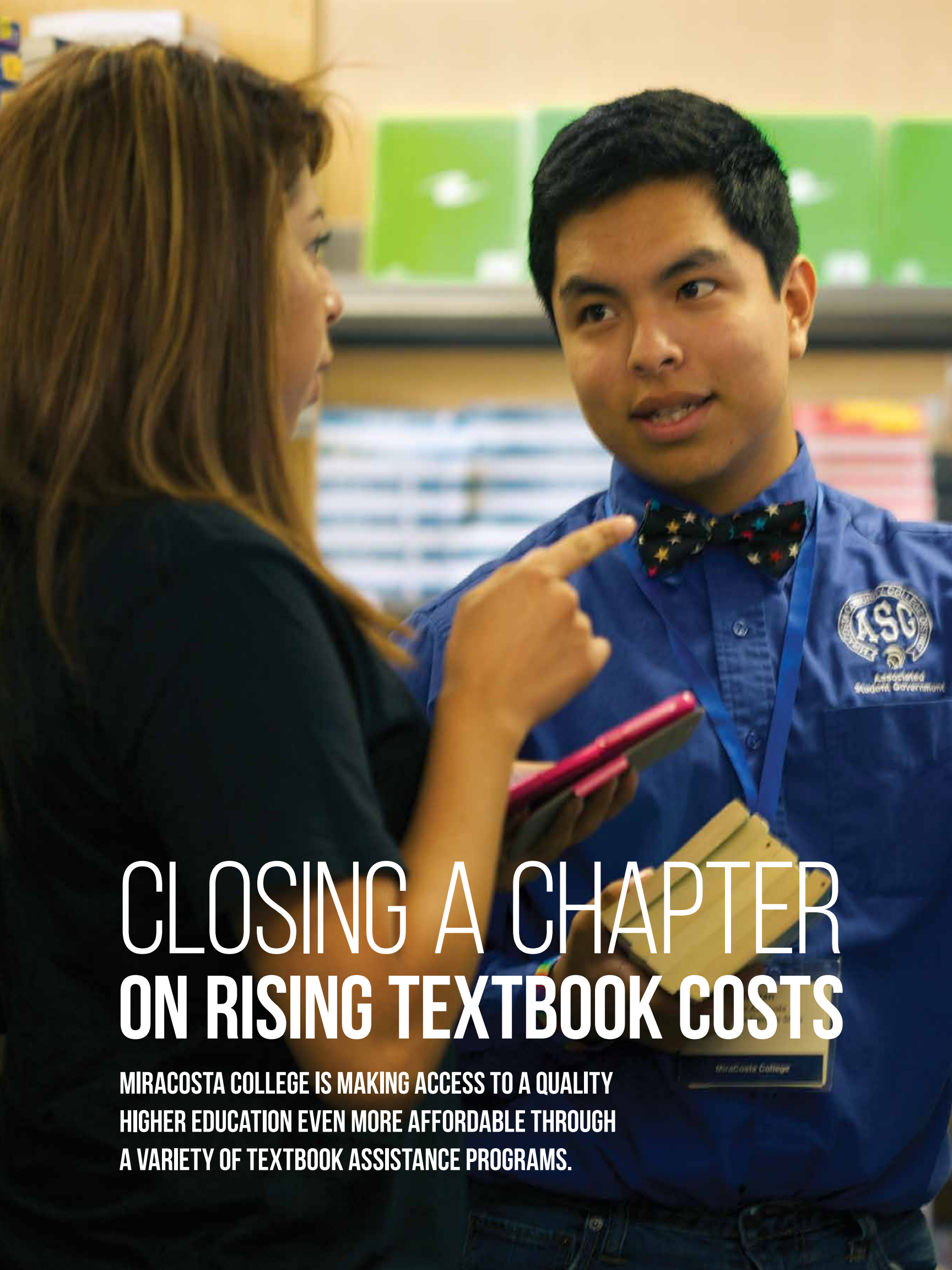
“I’m so grateful,” said Aguilar, who benefitted from one of the foundation’s priorities, MiraCosta College’s Resources and Assistance for Former Foster Youth (RAFFY), a program that has aided countless students in overcoming the odds by providing financial assistance and workshops on subjects ranging from time management to personal finances. “I don’t have a family that can help me out financially, so the scholarships have been vital.”

The MiraCosta College Foundation is also committed to serving the more than 1,800 active-duty military personnel, veterans and their families who attend the college or are enrolled in its job-training programs. And the foundation took the lead role in fundraising for a STEM Learning Center to provide students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics a home to collaborate, attend workshops and otherwise focus on their work.

MiraCosta College Foundation President Stephen “Hap” L’Heureux, a Carlsbad estate attorney, has provided a \$75,000 endowed scholarship fund for students in the new biomanufacturing baccalaureate program, a \$25,000 gift for the Stephen “Hap” L’Heureux Dramatic Arts Endowed Scholarship Fund, and more than \$40,000 to the ongoing Campaign for Opportunity Scholarships.


“I’ve been fortunate enough to have a lot of opportunities in my life and it just seems right to do what I can to help others share in the same kind of opportunities,” he said. ■





CLOSING A CHAPTER ON RISING TEXTBOOK COSTS

MIRACOSTA COLLEGE IS MAKING ACCESS TO A QUALITY
HIGHER EDUCATION EVEN MORE AFFORDABLE THROUGH
A VARIETY OF TEXTBOOK ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.



With textbook costs rising by nearly 75 percent in the past decade and two-thirds of college students saying they've passed on some books because of unaffordable prices, MiraCosta College has implemented a growing menu of options geared toward finding a solution.

Last fall, MiraCosta was awarded a \$50,000 grant to convert 50 courses in mathematics, oceanography, sociology, international languages and child development to a low-cost/no-cost textbook format by next year. Once all 50 sections have been converted, students will be saving an estimated \$250,000 each semester.

MiraCosta also offers a variety of grants and textbook loan programs to help financially struggling students cope. Students can also participate in the bookstore's used book, buy-back, and rental programs.

"We are committed to reducing the financial burden on our students brought on by the rapidly escalating cost of textbooks," said David Broad, president of the MiraCosta College Board of Trustees.

Lori Smith is among the beneficiaries.

"I chose to attend MiraCosta because of what it stood for, and because of its contributions, I was able to continue my educational journey. I graduated on the President's List, became a member of Phi Theta Kappa, and transferred to Cal State San Marcos, where I am now a senior set to graduate in May," Smith said. "The textbook assistance programs were critical to keeping me in school. I wouldn't have been able to continue my education otherwise."

Smith graduated from MiraCosta College in 2005. She remains on track for a career as a college or university counselor. She benefitted from the textbook loan program and was the recipient of an A.R.M.S. Coastal Community Foundation Book Grant.

MiraCosta, meanwhile, is expanding opportunities for students to tap into what is known as Open Educational Resources, or OERs, which are free to use and range from free online textbooks to course readings. Among the initiatives is a Child Development Certificate program that, beginning in fall 2017, can be completed without a student having to pay for any textbooks, thanks to online and other free resources that maintain the same high standard of learning, according to Penny Skemp, the child development department chair. Other departments utilizing the free or low-cost option include sociology and computer studies.

A recent study by Student PIRGs (Public Interest Research Groups) found that textbook costs have increased by 73 percent since 2006. A 2014 report found that nearly half of college students said textbook prices impacted what courses and how many courses they took.

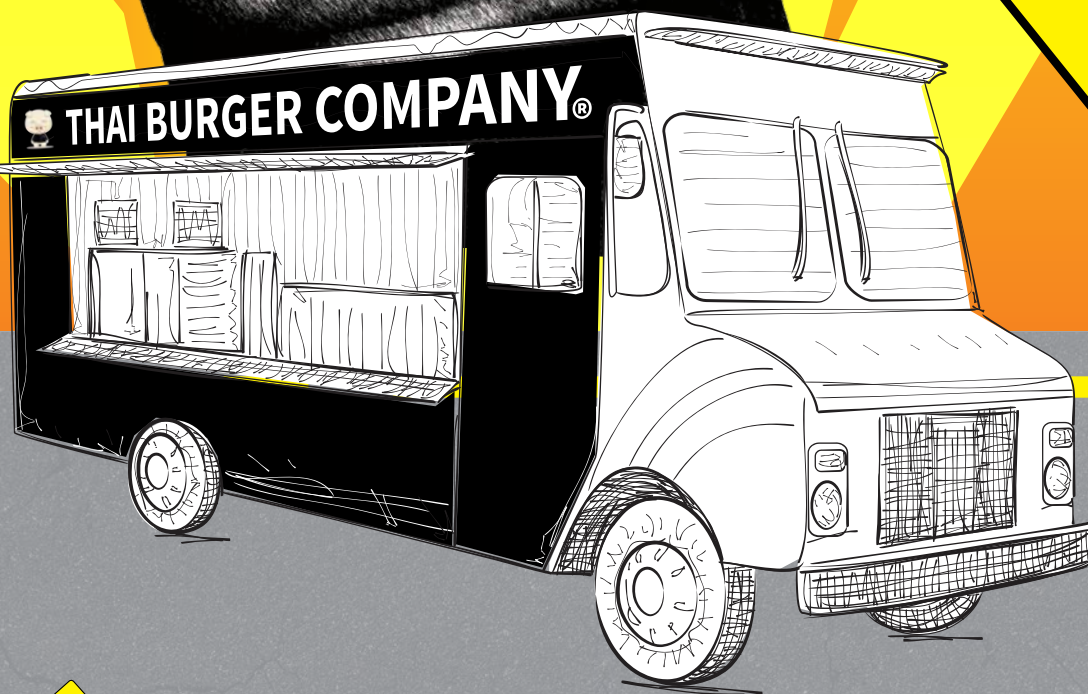
Textbook costs vary, but the National Association of College Stores reported students spent an average of \$563 annually on textbooks in the 2014-15 academic year.

A new state law requires colleges by Jan. 1, 2018, to "clearly highlight" on the course schedule what classes "exclusively use digital course materials that are free of charge to students and may have a low-cost option for print versions." ■



FOR
THIS LOCAL
BUSINESSMAN

ALL
ROADS
LEAD TO
MIRACOSTA
COLLEGE



P

aripon “Pari” Thitathan’s road to the Thai Burger Company, home of the original rice burgers, was a meandering one. But one thing has remained constant—MiraCosta College, which Thitathan said has been there for him every step of the way.

“MiraCosta College has taught me everything,” said Thitathan, who owns the Thai Burger Company food truck and restaurant with his wife, Bongkod Wongpan. “MiraCosta taught me how to write effectively, and if not for that, I wouldn’t be able to write out a business plan and get a business loan. MiraCosta’s Small Business Development Center taught me how to run a business. Mathematics, critical thinking, you name it. I’ve applied all the lessons from all the classes I took at MiraCosta College over the years to help me and my wife succeed in this business.”

“...THE SCHOLARSHIP
DEFINITELY HELPED US
WITH OUR NEEDS,
WHICH IS MORE
THAN WHAT I
COULD EVER
ASK
FOR.”



Thitathan first enrolled at the Oceanside Campus while still a student at Ivy High School in Fallbrook and then enrolled full time after earning his high school diploma at 16.

He left MiraCosta College a short time later, though—“the discipline just wasn’t there”—opting instead for full-time work at automotive and retail establishments. After another college try a few years later, Thitathan again put his education on hold, this time to help his family start a restaurant, Papaya Bay Banning. When two of the three restaurants shut down and the family went bankrupt, Thitathan found work in a variety of blue-collar jobs before again enrolling at MiraCosta College in 2011. This time, he thrived, making the President’s List three times, becoming a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and securing the Genentech-Osher scholarship, which provided a \$500 award, renewable each semester.

“I was literally dragged by my wife and Diane Danielewicz of the MiraCosta Scholarship Office to apply for the scholarship. I almost fell off my bed when I saw the email that

I was chosen!” he said. “My wife and I work hard to make ends meet and the scholarship definitely helped us with our needs, which is more than what I could ever ask for.”

Thitathan saw his fortunes change once more when he brought some home-cooked food to his MiraCosta communications class.

“Everybody loved it,” he said. “That led me and my wife to decide to open our own place, the Thai Burger Company, and we’ve been pouring our resources into the business ever since.”

Thitathan’s Thai Burger Company food truck draws huge crowds on Thursday nights at the Oceanside Sunset Market, and is generating a following at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and Naval Base San Diego. He and his wife also recently opened a full-service restaurant in Pacific Beach.

“It’s a lot of hard work,” he said. “You really have to put in the time and the effort to stand out, but we’re determined to succeed, and we’re going on five years now. I have high hopes for the future.” ■



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A DRIVING FORCE AT MIRACOSTA COLLEGE

MARTHA GRESHAM

It all began in 1949 when Martha Gresham enrolled at MiraCosta College, known at that time as Oceanside-Carlsbad Junior College. Here she met her late husband, Marshall, and began her lifelong journey as a scientist and advocate for higher education.

Martha obtained her bachelor's degree in science from San Diego State University, interned at Quintard Hospital in San Diego and spent most of her career as a medical technologist at Scripps Hospital in La Jolla, and eventually as a bioanalyst at Scripps Encinitas.

This mother of four not only worked in the health industry, but returned to her roots to serve MiraCosta College when then foundation president and old high school acquaintance, Jim Gaiser, invited her to sit on the MiraCosta Foundation board, where she has served for over 30 years.

"Education is a great interest to me, and what I believe is best to support," said Martha, who in 2001 with her husband, established an irrevocable charitable remainder unitrust with the college, the first of its kind at MiraCosta. Martha and Marshall's contribution will create an unrestricted endowed fund that will go towards supporting scholarships, program activities, and other high-priority needs.

Just as MiraCosta College greatly influenced Martha and Marshall's lives, they too will affect future students at MiraCosta College with their legacy gift.



A **charitable remainder unitrust** provides you with a lifetime of income and financial security, with the ability to make a charitable gift of the remaining principal to one or more of the causes you care about at the end of the trust term.

There are many ways you can support MiraCosta College through a planned gift. For more information contact Elaine Dodge, 760.795.6652, or visit miracostalegacy.org.