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**THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN AMERICA, EDUCATORS HAVE DEVELOPED A MYRIAD OF APPROACHES, THEORIES AND CONCEPTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES.**

Such concepts, when integrated into a curriculum, may redesign teaching methods, the approach to subject matter, or the use of evaluating tools. Renowned educators like **Maria Montessori** and **Jean Piaget**

through education. New programs that advocate strong student preparation for clearly defined careers are drawing significant attention from educators and students alike. They are called “applied degree programs.”

“Like traditional degree programs, applied degree programs focus learning on concepts and theories,” explains **Dr. Deborah Dahlen Zelechowski**, vice president for education at Robert Morris College. “Unlike the traditional model, the

this?” has an immediate answer in the applied education classroom. “At Robert Morris College, students in all programs have continuous opportunities for practical application from day one,” she explained. “They are taught in an interactive environment that requires the involvement of each student. Practitioner faculty are at the top of their fields and have contacts among a vital network of professionals who can help create project and internship opportunities, giving students actual experience with their future careers. Students develop portfolios of real-life projects that illustrate their skills to prospective employers, building an appreciation for the opportunities to test the concepts and theories they have learned.”

Connections with cultural organizations established by the College also expose students to additional influencing and educating opportunities. Museums, orchestra, theaters and dance companies — as well as civic and social service organizations — offer voluntary involvement and cultural enrichment, adding to the education of the “whole student.”

The applied education approach to learning and teaching is understandable, particularly in a business, graphic design or health science related environment.

## Applied Education

**THE HANDS-ON APPROACH TO LEARNING**

*“Practitioner faculty are at the top of their fields and have contacts among a vital network of professionals who can help create project and internship opportunities, giving students actual experience with their future careers. Students develop portfolios of real-life projects that illustrate their skills to prospective employers, building an appreciation for the opportunities to test the concepts and theories they have learned.”*

**DR. DEBORAH DAHLEN  
ZELECHOWSKI**

were so influential that entire educational systems have been based upon their methods. They, along with many other theorists, have influenced what may be described as “standard” educational practices, making the system a constantly evolving entity, ever utilizing the best to produce the best.

Higher education, much like the economy, research, technology, and the society in which it exists, continually evolves in an effort to meet the needs of students and the world they will enter as contributing members. In recent years, a sharper focus has been concentrated on student development

applied approach places emphasis on the practical application of the concept being learned. In an applied environment, students do not simply learn by reading textbook-based examples and formulating hypothetical results. Practitioner faculty, that is, individuals who are professionals in their milieu (CPAs teaching accounting, advertising executives teaching marketing) provide an active context to experiment with the concepts and theories that results in active learning, knowledge-in-action or intelligence-in-action.”

According to Dahlen, the age-old student lament of “how or when will I ever use

The idea of a marketing instructor explaining the finer points of a marketing plan shows immediate application when an actual, local business is used as the subject of the plan. At Robert Morris College, a web design class prepared a Web site for use by Chicago's State Street Council, working with the organization in a consultant-client relationship. The

students learned more than just the technological intricacies of Web design — they developed customer relations skills, communications and negotiating techniques — all abilities that cannot be honed in the traditional classroom, but on the job.

But what of the general education classes, courses in the fine arts? How

does the pragmatism of applied academics relate to drama, poetry, studio art? To a number of faculty members, particularly those whose expertise is obvious beyond the classroom, the applied methodology not only provides practical use of the subject matter for students, it helps the instructors continually refine and redefine their crafts.

*The following profiles of Robert Morris College instructors — practitioners of a different vein — illustrate how teaching with expertise in a field that is one's life's passion, results in an invaluable experience for the student, and immeasurable rewards for the professor as well:*



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*"Sometimes I think (my students) are teaching me. They teach me from a novice's viewpoint and an open heart. It's the best thing; it keeps me going."*

GERARD WOZEK,  
HUMANITIES INSTRUCTOR AND POET

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### **Gerard Wozek**

It is easy to see why Gerard Wozek teaches poetry, feature writing and screen writing. To begin with, he has just published his first book of poems titled *Dervish*, a tome which received a first place award from the Gival Press. It is a very personal work, "spiritual," he says, "almost what I would call metaphysical." In the past, he devoted much time to feature stories as a freelancer for the Chicago Tribune: "I wrote features on everything from house siding to portraits of some very remarkable people," he says. He has also had two of his own plays produced in Chicago, both of them based on his poetry. But his work in the classroom seems to have become the center of his universe, where, much like a dervish, he spins out his poetry while taking in the openness, inspiration and raw impressions of his students.

Wozek believes that there is no longer any separation between his personal

efforts as a poet and his work as an instructor. He brings his work into the classroom, but he takes out just as much. "Sometimes, I think they are teaching me," he says of the Robert Morris College students in his humanities classes. "They teach me from a novice's viewpoint and an open heart. It's the best thing; it keeps me going."

The students are not so inexperienced that they are unconcerned as to whether or not their instructor is accomplished in his or her field. "It is important to continue to work on my craft so I can continue to give back to them for the inspiration they give me. And yes, it matters to them that their instructor is published. It adds to my credibility." Still, many of the students are unfamiliar with the understanding and motivation of poetry. Many have never written a poem, but just as many complete the class with the discovery of a previously unknown talent. "Everyone has a voice. It has to be

encouraged to come out," Wozek explains. In the process, several hidden jewels have been discovered. "There is a lot of poetry out there; life is so much more than work. Poetry adds to our sense of culture and our sense of our literary heritage. At the end of the class, I think we all have a richer appreciation for it."

### **Konrad Hack**

Forget the stereotype of the messy, disorganized painter when encountering Konrad Hack in his studio. This prolific artist/instructor/photographer can locate any of hundreds of art-books, photos or canvases at a second's notice to make or prove a point. And don't look for paint-encrusted brushes, crumpled drop cloths or spattered rugs — even his drawing table is perfectly organized. Konrad Hack teaches art to college students, but it is only one component of a life that includes almost anything

*"It's a challenge and I spend some concerted effort trying to figure out my approach, because each class has its own needs. They have not had too many cultural opportunities before, so to include a live performance in the syllabus can get them turned on to a theatrical event."*

## ALAN CHAMBERS, HUMANITIES INSTRUCTOR AND THEATER GURU



art-oriented that he feels will enlarge his world and expand his knowledge.

Hack became interested in drawing as a child, completed a degree at the Art Institute while working at WGN studios, and even found a way to turn his tour of duty in Viet Nam into a creative experience. "I became a combat artist and it was my job to go out into the field and document the history of the 19th Division. I carried a camera, a sketchbook, an M-16 and a .45," he explains. "I spent a lot of time in the Mekong Delta and even ventured into Cambodia." The result is a collection of paintings of soldiers in combat in the Asian jungles.

His national reputation as an artist is readily understandable when one observes the beauty, realism, composition, and impact of his work. He depicts animals in their natural habitats, streams, forests, waterfalls, and battle scenes from American history. And he goes wherever he has to in order to get the right inspiration or find the right setting. As a member of the Air Force Art Program, he has flown in the belly of a fuel transport to photograph a stealth bomber as it sidles up and takes on fuel in mid-air. The program has sent him to England, Italy, Germany and many other places in an effort to capture military history.

All this is just part of what he brings to his students in the classroom. "They know I've done work for NASA, that my paintings hang in the Pentagon, in the Smithsonian and in museums. I also tell them about the people I know and how they have helped me along the way. The artistic techniques cannot stand alone — students need to know how to observe life, to learn to see things and put them in the proper perspective. There is so much more to being an artist than just knowing how to handle a brush."

Hack's attention to historic detail makes him a favorite in military circles. He will research the minutest details of a Civil War uniform to get the painting just right. "It's all part of what goes into the effort," he says. "In art, students have to work on the compilation of a portfolio. I try to teach what is important in working toward that goal. Knowing how to create art on a computer is only part of the experience — if I'm looking to hire someone, don't send me a computer person who doesn't know how to be an artist. It is a lifework and I want to pass things on. I had great teachers as a student. I want to be one, too."

### Amy Rafa



Amy Rafa aspires to the big time. She hopes her experiences in college and community theater along with a Master in Fine Arts, will provide a solid base for launching a career in acting — that, combined with a little luck and being at the right place at the right time.

Presently, she is beefing up her resume as an adjunct professor at Robert Morris College, teaching Introduction to Drama and Introduction to Interpersonal Communication. For Rafa, the classroom is another opportunity to hone her skills in the realm of theater.

"I find the classes at RMC are more academically oriented," she says. "We have specific expectations of the students in terms of papers, presentations, etc. But it is up to me to get across to them how the class can be important and demonstrate how what we are discussing can be applied to anyone's profession. Expanding one's horizons through culture can only improve one's options. It is good for students to see that there are so many things they can do. You don't have to be an actor to have a career in the theater."

Recently she gave a class assignment that dealt with taking the three main characters in *Oedipus Rex* and creating modern day equivalents. "One of my students who is a business major made Oedipus the CEO of a company and put the other two characters in corresponding positions. This was perfect." The student not only understood the play, but how the characters related to each other.

The effort Rafa puts forth in preparing for her classes is not unlike what she does in preparing for an audition. "I have to be engaged in the material in order to engage them. My teaching style is more performative and yet I really have to break down the subject to its basic elements in order to reinforce my understanding of it inside and out."

The result is a constant "teacher-student-teacher" role evolution for Rafa. "The variety of people I encounter in the classroom helps me better recognize the parts that I audition for and how I look at the material. My students give me much greater insight into a character and how I look at human nature."

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AMY RAFA, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AND LOCAL ACTRESS

### Alan Chambers

It is easy to visualize Alan Chambers in the director's chair. He knows the art of theater because he has lived it — not necessarily on the stage, although he's done that too, but from almost every other perspective possible, and that experience has given him an ability to communicate works of the theatre that apply to the lives of almost anyone.

"It's all about communication, collaboration and teamwork," he says. "Now tell me of any profession in which you don't need any of these tools?" Chambers teaches *Experiencing Theatre*, a humanities class, to students who are majoring in business or health studies. After classes in accounting, marketing or business procedures, some students are skeptical about how the humanities can fit into their lives, let alone their curricula.

"It's a challenge and I spend some concerted effort trying to figure out my approach, because each class has its own needs. They have not had too many cultural opportunities before, so to include a live performance in the syllabus can get them turned on to a theatrical event. Chambers knows and teaches the ins and outs of a play or musical production because of the experiences he has had in directing, playwriting, lighting, casting, composing, scoring and critiquing theater. He has worked as a talent broker, a casting consultant, a director and an actor throughout a career that began in college. He is active with the Illinois Theatre Association and the Chicago Alliance for Playwrights, just to mention a few organizations, and he spends five hours a day creating and recording public service announcements for radio. "It's what pays the rent and allows me to get involved in local theater," he adds.

All of these experiences affect the direction Chambers takes as an instructor. "Working on projects

outside of the classroom is part of the deal for my students," he continues. "I am a perfect example of that and I do whatever I can to demonstrate it to my students. I have them pull ideas from their business classes to create a marketing plan for a theatrical production. I have them work as a team of two or three to analyze a play. And I always ask them what I can do to make the concepts come across better."

In Chambers' class, it boils down to taking what is in the outside world and putting it within reach of his students. "I've usually taught classes of students who are already turned on to theatre and are thirsting for more," he says. "The skeptics make it interesting. I tell them, 'This is life. This is college. We all need to know how to communicate with and work with one another.' And whether they realize it or not, theater can show them how."

### Gerry Dedera



Gerry Dedera has a tight schedule. When he isn't teaching theatre classes at Robert Morris College, you can often find him in a theatre — and

depending upon the time of year, he may be assuming any number of roles, quite literally. For example, if it's Thursday in November, it must be Madison, Wisconsin, as in the Madison Repertory Theatre where Dedera had a part in the play, *Spinning Into Butter*. But if it's Friday morning, 8:00 a.m., you'll find him teaching Play Production back at RMC and preparing his students for their final performance of one-acts.

"My schedule is always a bit hectic, but it works fabulously for someone involved in theater," he says. "The

College is so supportive of instructors pursuing this type of activity outside of the classroom. It's only natural that we bring a different perspective into our teaching when we spend a good part of the time actually doing what our students are studying." Dedera, a former high school teacher and coach, jumped to the college environment as soon as he could after taking on a single night class. "I wanted to continue performing in local theatre, but my work schedule made that rather difficult. At RMC, my class schedule can adjust to auditioning and rehearsing, allowing me to share those experiences when I bring them into class."

For example, *Spinning Into Butter* is a play written by a Chicago playwright that deals with racial and political correctness in education. Dedera, who has an MFA and has appeared in several local productions, incorporated some of the play into his teaching. "After the performances, we have talkbacks with the audiences. I bring some of that into the classroom and the reactions are quite different from what we get in Madison. Still, it is great for the students to see their instructors in roles other than 'teacher' — I even share experiences from auditioning."

Part of the focus of the humanities courses is to expose the students to live theatre as well as reading and understanding a series of plays. RMC students have been to plays at the Goodman, the Odyssey, and a number of downtown venues. "Reading a play is one thing but the immediacy of live theater on these students is very impacting," continues Dedera. "It is great to see the transformation in them from the beginning of the course to the end. There is a growth of appreciation of what the actors, writers and the entire company are doing. When I hear them say, 'that was the best one we've seen and here's why...' — I mean, it doesn't get any better than that."

**ROBERT MORRIS COLLEGE STRIVES TO DELIVER OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ON A DAILY BASIS. WE PROVIDE THEM WITH THE TOOLS TO BUILD A LIFETIME OF CAREER AND PERSONAL SUCCESS. THEIR FORECAST FOR SUCCESS IS AS BRIGHT AS THAT OF ANY COLLEGE GRADUATE IN THE STATE, BUT OUR REACH GOES WELL BEYOND FULFILLING INDIVIDUAL DREAMS.**

*During the last year, Robert Morris College has had a major economic impact on all of the communities we serve. We have been a bright spot in an economy that had few. The big corporate names that usually drive the American economy are faltering, declaring bankruptcy, collapsing, laying off employees, and struggling with corporate debt. Luckily, institutions like Robert Morris are more than doing their share to keep the country moving forward.*

*We have made a greater contribution to the economic growth of our community than at any other time in our history. We invested 25 million dollars in two new buildings, created more than 70 new full-time positions, over 100 part-time opportunities, and purchased nearly \$4 million of new technology. At the same time, we enriched the lives of many who have, in turn, enriched the lives of others. During this past year we graduated over 2000 students; 40 percent of which came from near-poverty situations and, at graduation, entered the work place with nearly unlimited career potential. Thirty-five hundred new students enrolled at the College this year and began working toward their success. In addition, over 800 elementary and secondary students from the next generation of Robert Morris students came to us for an educational experience. There is no question that we carry the torch of access to higher education in Illinois. It is a torch ignited by affordability and fueled by quality.*

*We continue to be a national leader in educating minorities; challenging other higher education institutions to do more. We are well known for providing high quality, applied education to underserved groups, but not as well known for everything else we do for the country. America is built on the premise that fulfilling individual dreams pays national dividends. The nation needs for us to become the "College of First Choice."*

*Sincerely,*



*Michael P. Violtt, President*

THE COLLEGE SENIOR WALKED INTO THE CLASSROOM ON THE FIRST DAY OF STUDENT TEACHING. TWENTY-SEVEN HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN SAT BEFORE HER, CURIOUS AS THEIR REGULAR TEACHER TOOK A POSITION IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM AND GAVE THE FLOOR TO THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO, THEY SOON LEARNED, WOULD BE TAKING OVER THE CLASS FOR THE NEXT NINE WEEKS.

**HOW** does someone new to any field learn the ropes of a new working environment? Do education classes cover all the problems a student teacher may encounter? Any seasoned educator will admit that there is no such thing as a smooth entrance into the career of teaching. So much depends on attempting different techniques to see what works and what doesn't — and so much also depends upon the support of those experienced in the field; those who have been there and done that.

## **Mentoring in the Classroom and Beyond** BY CAROL BUSTAMENTE

It is the same for almost anyone just starting out in their chosen career. To have a cooperating teacher, a guiding supervisor, or a mentor can mean the difference between sticking with a job or throwing in the towel and looking for something else. A recent article by **Barbara Buchholz** in the *Chicago Tribune* focused on the importance of mentoring in any organization, especially as part of an overall program that stresses the training and nurturing of employees. Mentoring is an important aspect of preparing for the future, the article emphasizes, and eventually companies that don't incorporate mentoring will "wake up to a severe shortage of talent because they will have lost their best people at all levels," said **Jon Katzenbach**, author of *Peak Performance*.

At Robert Morris College, faculty members participated in a training program designed to help develop a mentoring mentality. The trainer explained that mentoring begins when a person strategically affects the professional life of someone else by fostering insight, identifying needed knowledge and expanding

horizons. With this definition in mind, RMC's mentoring mentality is already evident in three areas: teachers mentoring students, senior management mentoring future senior management and teachers mentoring teachers.

The very nature of teaching involves mentoring. In fact, prior to the Industrial Revolution, a young man was mentored through an apprenticeship. He usually apprenticed under his father to become proficient in the same profession: farmer, blacksmith, shoemaker, tanner. The apprenticeship of yesteryear is very much like what "practitioner" teachers share with their students.

Teachers affect student's lives by instructing and mentoring in the medical lab, art studio, computer room or accounting lab. But rarely is the journey to attaining an academic degree smooth sailing. Some students ask a teacher for insight and knowledge in order to steer away from obstacles, instead of dealing with them, and some teachers challenge students to do more than they think they can do.

The RMC Management Institute has taken mentoring to another level with fourteen employees involved in a program geared to cultivate their leadership skills. In a yearlong program that is workshop and apprenticeship based, they are learning how every department in the College functions and learn the strategic perspective behind past, present and future decision-making in those departments. This is purposeful road-paving in a mentoring environment. Their focus is on the future of the College and what leaders can be cultivated so that future RMC students will thrive.

Teachers mentoring teachers is another form just getting off the ground at RMC. The applied degree emphasis is driven by the significant number of teachers who are working in the field they teach. Without the experience of undergraduate student teaching and certification, how do new faculty members learn to teach? Informal mentoring usually occurs just by regularly sitting in with teachers who teach the same subject.

Recently, the College formed a committee of seasoned teachers and curriculum chairs to explore the possibility of building a mentoring program for first time teachers. Much rides on teaching well at all times since the students only take the course once, applied knowledge is cumulative and a gap in applied knowledge means the student is weakened when going onto the next class or when pursuing a career. It is in the best interest of first time teachers to be offered insight, knowledge and experience the finer points of teaching.

Whether mentoring comes in the form of a teacher challenging a student, a senior manager explaining strategy to a junior manager or a seasoned faculty member suggesting a grading software to a novice teacher, mentoring is a way of not just looking ahead, but working now for the benefit of others long into the future.



## Studying Science Where it Happens



**Virginia Turner** knows that European Buckthorn is not good for the environment. She also knows what plants should be preserved in midwestern prairies. Turner is

an ecology education specialist, based at Brookfield Zoo. In addition to these duties, she will be creating an out-of-the-classroom experience for students involved in the general education science core sequence at Robert Morris College.

The environmental science courses will enable students to take concepts learned in the classroom and immediately test them in the field – or the

forest or the riverbank. “This hands-on approach makes an immediate impression on students,” she says. “We will not only learn the nuances of our local environment, but also the techniques for preserving it.”

**Don Haynes**, dean of general studies at RMC, is excited about having an applied approach take place in the science courses. “Most students think that when we talk about preserving the environment, we’re talking about the rain forest,” he says. “The lectures and the field work will relate directly to the local areas – our own back yard.” The plan is to have students spend less time in the classroom and more time in the forest preserves and the natural areas of northern Illinois. The site experiences, which may include restoration work, cleaning up creeks and rivers, planting prairie seedlings or

removing such shrubs as the European Buckthorn, will fulfill the lab requirements for the science core.



The College plans to have opportunities within the environmental studies course available to grammar school students who participate in the Science-

Technology Enrichment Program. “The outings to clean up the river banks or to help preserve endangered plants will also help fulfill some of the community service requirements for students,” added Haynes.

# SPORTS CENTER SPORTS

Most students learn that no sooner do they get high school figured out, it's time to plan for college. Taking the ACT exam is one of the first big, decisive steps toward higher education. Prep courses for ACT and SAT exams are recognized as very helpful to students who want to improve their scores, but many of them come with big pricetags.

## Robert Morris College Helps Athletes Score

Basketball players in Chicago public high schools, may find the time, instruction and encouragement on the court, but additional resources to improve ACT scores are few and far between. However, for the past two years, Robert Morris College has joined with the Chicago Public Schools and the Princeton Review to help athletes with an eye on college improve their chances on the ACT.

Last summer, fifty young men and young women, top players at their high schools, participated in a six week program that included a four hour session at Hoops Gym on west Jackson. Students from Julian, Dunbar, Ferris, Farragut and Marshall high schools have participated. Two hours were spent on the basketball court and two hours were in the Princeton Review ACT Prep Course classroom.

"Basketball is a top priority to a lot of high school students," said **Al Bruehl**, head men's basketball coach at Robert Morris College and CCAC Coach of the Year. "Their ability on the court might land them a scholarship, but if they can improve their test scores as well, they become much more attractive candidates." Bruehl and Assistant Head Coach **Aubrey Volius** provided the instruction for boys' basketball, as well as supervising the program for the girls.

Chicago Public Schools CEO **Arnie Duncan** has been solidly behind the program since it first began in

2000. Having the top players from city schools practicing together was an interesting experience for Bruehl and Volius. "They are wonderful athletes," Bruehl commented. "It would be great to have some of them playing for Robert Morris College."

The two hours with the instructor from the Princeton Review also had a beneficial effect on the players. As with all prep courses, the students learn test taking techniques that will make them smart testers. They take sample tests to learn where their greatest weaknesses are, learn how to budget their time, whether it is better to guess or leave a question blank, and to build up their self confidence and familiarity with the type of exam.

The program mirrors the approach Robert Morris has taken with all its athletes. "We are committed to providing our athletes with a solid college education that will result in a promising career," says Volius. "We have a tutoring program for our players and we have our instructors stay in close contact with the coaching staff so that we know how they are doing academically. If they fall below a C, they don't play."

RMC, the Chicago Public School System, the Princeton Review and Hoops Gym completed their second year of working as partners to help young Chicago athletes.

POINT LOOKOUT, MO. — The Robert Morris College Men's Basketball Team completed the 2001-02 season with a 34-6 record, going all the way to the championship game against top-seeded Evangel University (Mo.) (35-1). Evangel spent the entire regular season ranked number one in the top 25 poll and had a 27 game winning streak.

## RMC EAGLES Make it to NAIA CHAMPIONSHIP Round



The Eagles lost the championship game 84-61 after a stellar season and an outstanding display of team effort and individual achievements in the 2002 NAIA Division II Tournament.

In the final game, Bobby Smith led Robert Morris with 37 points on 11-for-26 shooting from the field, includ-

ing a perfect 14-for-14 from the free throw line. Smith, the national player of the year, also pulled down a team-high 11 rebounds. Senior guard Michael Griffith finished the game with 11 points. Smith and Walter Hamilton were both named to the all-tournament team. Smith broke five tournament records: Most Points - 156, Most Field Goals Attempted - 102, Free Throws Made in a Game - 21, Most Free Throws Made in the Tournament - 53, Most Free Throws Attempted in the Tournament - 59. Michael Griffith tied one record, Most Steals in a Game - 8.

As a team, the Eagles made the most free throws in a tournament, 104 of 128 attempts. They were also recognized for their high tournament tallies of steals, assists and rebounds. After winning the CCAC Championship, which sent them to Missouri for the NAIA playoffs, four players were named CCAC All-Conference: Bobby Smith, Michael Griffith, Walter Hamilton and Tim Williams. In addition to the student athletes earning honors, Men's Basketball Head Coach Al Bruehl was named CCAC Coach of the Year for the 2001-2002 season.

Upon returning to Chicago, the Eagles, Coach Bruehl, Coach Volius and the assistant coaches were saluted by students, faculty and staff at a special pep rally held at the Chicago campus. The team then presented President Michael Violtt with a signed team ball. Way to go Eagles!

IT'S NOT AS IF ROBERT MORRIS COLLEGE CAN'T USE THE CONTRIBUTIONS. OVER 50% OF ITS 6,000+ STUDENTS RECEIVE SOME FORM OF FINANCIAL AID AND MANY MORE USE STUDENT LOANS TO PAY TUITION. AND IT ISN'T AS IF A SIZEABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLLEGE WOULDN'T IMMEDIATELY GO TO GOOD USE: SPACE AT THE DOWNTOWN CHICAGO CAMPUS (A FORMER SEARS FLAGSHIP STORE) IS ALREADY AT A PREMIUM AFTER ONLY THREE YEARS. SINCE THE COLLEGE OUTGREW ITS SPACE AFTER MANY YEARS ON LASALLE STREET, ENROLLMENT HAS BEEN CLIMBING STEADILY EVER SINCE.



Proceeds from golf outings and annual funds go to support the scholarship program, but lately, efforts by RMC administration have been focused on procuring grants and gifts-in-kind for local public schools.

"Over the years, Robert Morris College has been active in many community programs through our different campuses, but we have really developed a strong relationship with Chicago Public Schools," says **Mette Baran**, RMC's director of development. "Right now, we are actively involved with four grammar schools in Chicago, and next year we'll expand that to include a school from the Pilsen neighborhood."

Some of the involvement includes the Science and Technology Enrichment Program (STEP) held at the College every Friday during the school year. Grammar school children spend three hours in science and computer classes at the downtown campus, taking part in a curriculum that enriches their science test scores and develops computer abilities. Over 300 fourth graders from three schools participate, and because of the students' positive experiences through STEP, the schools

have requested that RMC expand the program to include fifth and sixth graders.

"We have professionals in various fields of science conducting the classes," explained Dr. Janet Davis, dean of the School of Health Studies. "There are veterinarians, biologists and botanists who team teach the classes, bringing their actual experiences to the children in the classrooms and labs. The principals are thrilled with their students'

participates in the Chicago-wide "Principal for a Day" program. His regular post is at Julia Ward Howe Grammar School on the city's west side. Determined to make his involvement more than a one-day a year episode, last year he called upon his staff to help develop a program at Howe for the students' parents. With input from a number of faculty and administrators, they created a series of workshops, including sessions on

## Taking Sharing to a New Level

*"It is a perfect example of how a college's service to those in its community is an extension of its mission. It means a lot to us to be involved."*

progress and the children enjoy being on campus."

Robert Morris College recently received grants from the Motorola Foundation and the Chicago Fireworks for Kids Foundation to help defray the costs of STEP. "Our biggest expenses are transportation and lunches," continued Ms. Baran. "So far, we've been able to receive in-kind gifts of food from Domino's, Burger King, Alonti's and nearby restaurants," she said. "But any expenses, such as transportation, are always beyond the budgets of the individual grammar schools. Also, we would love to expand the program, but funding is crucial."

Another connection between RMC and CPS started small a number of years ago and continues to grow. RMC President **Michael Violtt** regularly par-



resume writing, getting to know the computer, accessing the Internet, and parenting skills. Howe has also been the recipient of refurbished computers, courtesy of the College's computer networking program, and is taking part in STEP.

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This spring another school, Mollison — which is located directly south of the College, welcomed Viollt when he visited the school to talk with 7th and 8th graders about their progress, success and dreams for the future. He found the comments of the students encouraging. “They have been motivated by a quality corps of teachers at Mollison,” he says. “And the Educational Talent Search and Higher Education Cooperation Act government programs have taken that inspiration to the next level. They are experiencing individual successes — and that continues to inspire them to aim even higher.”

Viollt was so impressed with what the Mollison students had to say about their work in school, that right on the spot, he offered them another opportunity — this one in the form of a challenge. “I told them that if they finished high school with a 3.0 or better, Robert Morris College would provide them with a college scholarship. That’s a four-year proposition for high school and college. RMC will cover tuition costs over and above anything not covered by financial aid. They have to maintain a 3.0 to keep the scholarship.”

*“I told them that if they finished high school with a 3.0 or better, Robert Morris College would provide them with a college scholarship. That’s a four-year proposition for high school and college.”*

MICHAEL VIOLLT, RMC PRESIDENT

The College is also in the process of setting up a Parent Resource Room and a parent/child literacy program called READ-Chicago (Reading Early Affects Development) at Mollison. The Resource Room officially opened in November, equipped with three new computers, modems and a printer contributed by IBM at the request of Robert Morris College.

The RMC relationship with Chicago schools most certainly extends into high school. Many of the students at Robert Morris College’s downtown campus are CPS graduates. Each year, a number of junior and senior high school students begin accumulating college credit through the College Excel program, in which they attend classes after school. The courses fulfill high school graduation requirements and also give them credits toward a college degree. Additionally, the RMC high school relations staff visit Chicago public high schools, motivating students to apply to college. Many Robert Morris College students are the first in their family to attend college.

Michael Viollt looks upon these efforts as vital to the future of Robert Morris College. “Over the past couple years we have been using the phrase, ‘playing our part’ when we explain the programs we support over and above what is going on within the walls of our College,” he says. “It is a perfect example of how a college’s service to those in its community is an extension of its mission. It means a lot to us to be involved.”

# A L U M

# N G L E

**TRACY BAL MCCOY** completed her bachelor’s degree in operations management at DePaul and is an ingredient buyer for Quaker Oats.

**BRENDA HAMMONDS** started her own home day care business. She hopes to complete her bachelor’s degree in business.

**COLLEEN CALLAHAN** was named controller of Dubuque Data Services and has moved back to her hometown of Dubuque, Iowa with son Dylan.

**LISA CAMPBELL** completed a master’s in Health Administration from Governor’s State University. She is currently employed by Cook County Hospital as a Division Administrator.

**SHUWN HAYES** is a Federal Investigator with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. “I investigate people’s charges of being discriminated against in the workplace as a result of their race, sex, national origin or disability.”

**TEMAKA MOORE** found a job with a financial planner. Originally hired for a secretarial position, she is now a sales assistant and received her series 6 securities license.

**FAY ARULFO** is working at a hospital in Lincoln and is also holding a part time position with a medical lab in Decatur.

**DIANA LUCICH, CMA:** "I have worked for two years at Will County Community Health Center in Joliet. It was a great experience working with kids in the Immunization Department. Since November I have been working at Silver Cross Hospital in Joliet and I enjoy working in the obstetrics office. I am learning a lot! It is good experience putting into practice what I learned at RMC's Springfield campus with Mr. Tregan."

**REGINA ALEX** was working at Farmers Insurance at the time of graduation. She was promoted to Liability/Subrogation Adjuster. Three months later, she took the position of Reimbursement Manager at the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Illinois. She writes: "In this management position I am able to utilize the education I received at RMC from accounting to finance to computing and communications."

**TARA ARNOLD** is employed by Illinois State Police Crime Scene Services in the Forensic Diagramming and Animation Section.

**AMANDA TEMIKA BROWN** works for St. Joseph Parish as an administrative assistant. This past year she married Irin Armour, also a 2000 graduate, who is a PC LAN Technician at Quarrels and Brady law firm.

**JASON HUSS** writes: Since my days at RMC, I have continued to farm with my grandparents as well as pursue a career with Firststar Bank in the LAN services department as an LAN administrator for central Illinois. I recently received an award for Advancement in the Field of Computers from RMC. Special thanks to President Michael Viollt.

**ANDREA JAMISON** has written a self-help book entitled *Against the Waterfall*. It is the first in a series of compilations about the importance of healing, relationships and love.

**SHANNON SARACCO** moved to Atlanta and is working for a law firm specializing in real estate, Jackson & Hardwick. She joined her sister in relocating south and is awaiting the arrival of her parents to the same locale. Shannon also holds a part time job at the local fitness center.

**PAULA SLEDGE-COLEMAN** is currently employed as a staff accountant at Jones Lang LaSalle in the Project and Development Management Group. She has been with the company for four years and is planning to pursue her MBA.

When **DAVID WONG** was without a job for eight months, he decided to volunteer teaching English as a second language. "After much praying, I received a call from the City of Chicago to become an engineer for the BIS Department. I am now a Special Projects Manager after four months with the City of Chicago. Thank you, RMC, for setting my future in the right direction, educating me toward the path to success."

**KATHLEEN "KAT" HOPKINS** is working as a human resource assistant for Refreshment Services Pepsi in Springfield.

**STACY KOKASKA** is working for RMC at the O'Hare Campus as a financial aid advisor. She is working toward her MBA, was recently engaged and will be getting married in August.

**JARITA SHERILL** writes: "I am going on strong in my life, teaching pre-schoolers at the Developmental Institution for children ages three and four."

**ANDREA TURNER** is currently working as a Project Coordinator for Anesthesiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "I am working on my Master's Degree in Public Health and loving it. My three beautiful children, my husband and I are doing wonderfully!"

**NANCY G. VILLASENOR** received her associate's degree in November and is continuing to work toward her bachelor's at Robert Morris College.

*Faculty member Adeline Sangineto and alumnus Jeff Razniewski at one of the Robert Morris College alumni reunions.*



