

# connections

Moraine Valley Community College Foundation

FALL  
2011



## From the College President

During my two decades as president of Moraine Valley Community College, I have had the pleasure of meeting thousands of alumni. I see alumni when I am in the community, across the country, or even at commencement as they proudly watch their own children graduate from the same institution as they did.

Although our alumni come from different backgrounds and go on to many different endeavors in life, they all share a commonality: Moraine Valley changed their lives. The college helped them pursue a rewarding career, better their family situation, start a business... the list is endless.

As a member of our alumni, I invite you to come to campus. Whether it's been a few years or a few decades, you will marvel at what you see. The campus has expanded considerably, with more plans for growth in the future. I encourage you to bring your family to the Fine and Performing Arts Center, visit the library, join the fitness center, or enroll in classes for skills upgrade or personal enrichment. You are always welcome at Moraine Valley.

Sincerely,  
*Dr. Vernon O. Crawley*

## From the Foundation President

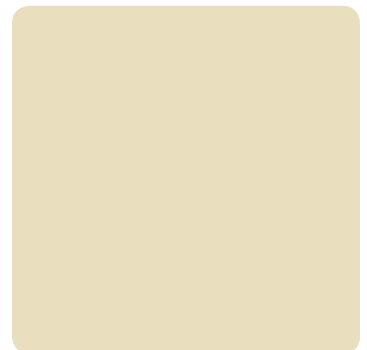
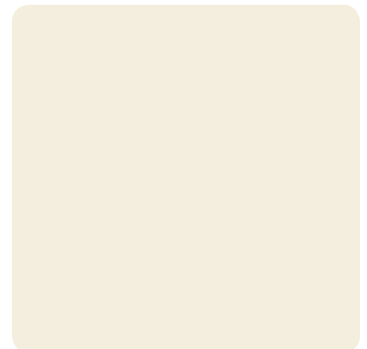
On behalf of the Foundation board, it is my pleasure to not only welcome students back to campus this fall but also congratulate everyone who graduated last spring. Each student's achievement represents many, many hours of hard work and effort. For the members of the Class of 2011, graduation is a time to look back on your college experience and savor the satisfaction of attaining an important educational goal while also looking forward to a brighter future. Moraine Valley is truly a place that is committed to "changing lives for a changing world," and we wish each and every graduate much success!



As I end my term as Foundation president, I—like the graduates—am also looking both forward and back. I am grateful for the many individual, corporate and foundation donors who have partnered with the Moraine Valley Community College Foundation to provide financial gifts to fund student scholarships, emergency assistance and other programs. This support has been critical during these most difficult economic times.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with my fellow Foundation board members and staff in our efforts to provide monies and support for college programs and services that benefit so many community members. The college is fortunate to have such committed and generous supporters, and I look forward to continued opportunities to help Moraine Valley students and strengthen our local communities.

*Dave Heide*



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[morainevalley.edu/Foundation/keepintouch.htm](http://morainevalley.edu/Foundation/keepintouch.htm)

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Enterprising Graduate Runs Local Business

**E**ric Woodall always was an outgoing person, but he credits his days as a Moraine Valley student for turning his gift of gab into one of the tools he uses to make a living today.

“I had a teacher who got me involved with the Speech Team, and I really liked it,” Woodall said. “He told me I was very talented, and that inspired me. I never had to write a script. I basically improvised with just talking points on note cards.” Woodall also received praise from the other students, something that motivated him to push himself harder. “One day the teacher tells me that I have the ability to persuade people and was I ready to accept the responsibility that comes with it? That had a huge impact on me. That class and the Speech Team molded my ability to sell,” he said.

Selling is what he loves. After Moraine Valley, he worked in the family business, but then became a finance manager for a local automobile dealership. “One of the highlights for me was selling a car to Denis Savard (former Chicago Blackhawks player and head coach) and Scotty Bowman (former NHL head coach and now senior advisor of hockey operations for the Blackhawks),” said Woodall, who played hockey in high school.

Woodall began contemplating opening his own business. “The car business was changing, and I decided that if I was ever going to take a chance to get out on my own, now was the time,” he said. Woodall left the car industry and opened a franchise sandwich restaurant in October 2010 in Tinley Park. Business is great, he says, and it’s the perfect opportunity for him to use his gift of gab. “My Jersey Mike’s is ranked number 3 in the country for customer satisfaction. I attribute that to the fact that we use an open-kitchen concept, and people can watch you cut the meats from the deli case or grill the meat right there,” he said.

“Moraine Valley really did change my life. If it weren’t for this college, I wouldn’t have had the foundation for my public speaking abilities and be where I am today,” he said.



*Eric Woodall says Moraine Valley inspired him to pursue a career in sales. He now owns a local Jersey Mike's sandwich restaurant.*

It also could be attributed to the fact that Woodall’s outgoing personality keeps his customers coming back and that he stays involved in the community. He has coached youth football and hockey, and coordinates fundraisers through his restaurant for local and national charities. He stays active on the field playing softball and flag football, and smiles when he reminisces about the year Dennis McKinnon (wide receiver for the 1985 Chicago Bears) played on his flag team after retiring from the NFL.

Woodall is happy he decided to open his own business and grateful for the foundation he received at Moraine Valley. He knew he wanted to go to college after high school, but he also knew he wasn’t ready for a four-year school. “I liked the fact that I could go to school and work at the same time. I loved it at Moraine. I could take classes at my convenience. The class schedules worked to fit my schedule, not the other way around,” he said.



With Moraine Valley's Education Center at Blue Island and the Southwest Education Center in Tinley Park, it's easier and more convenient than ever before for local residents to take advantage of college programs and services. Both centers are full-service facilities with classrooms, science and computer labs, study rooms, and cyber café lounges.

The two education centers offer day, evening, and Saturday classes to fit busy lifestyles and meet a wide variety of educational needs and interests:

- Training to re-enter the workforce or develop skills for career advancement
- College transfer and career courses
- GED preparation and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes
- Noncredit classes for personal growth and lifelong learning.

## Blue Island & Southwest Education Centers Offer Day, Evening and Saturday Classes

In its first year of operation, the Southwest Center, 17900 S. 94th Ave., Tinley Park, served over 1,000 students and hosted a number of activities, from open houses and sustainability tours to adult information sessions and a blood drive. The Education Center at Blue Island, located at 12940 Western Ave., expanded in October with more courses, more classrooms, and more study spaces.

**To tour the facilities or obtain more information, visit [morainevalley.edu/blueisland](http://morainevalley.edu/blueisland) or [morainevalley.edu/swec](http://morainevalley.edu/swec).**

## Foundation receives scholarship pledge from Standard Bank and Trust Company

The Moraine Valley Community College Foundation has received a \$50,000 pledge to create the Standard Bank & Trust Company Scholarship Fund. The fund will provide four annual \$2,500 scholarships to one graduating student each from Brother Rice High School, Leo High School, Marist High School, and Mount Carmel High School over the next five years. Scholarship recipients can apply the funds toward tuition, fees and books at Moraine Valley during the fall and spring semesters.

"Standard Bank has been a longtime supporter of our community and of the college, and we are very pleased that the bank and its leaders have chosen to make such a substantial commitment to our students and the students from our communities' high schools," said Sue Linn, executive director of the Foundation. Standard Bank And Trust Company was founded in 1947 and its headquarters is based in Hickory Hills, the heart of Moraine Valley's district. For more than 60 years, Standard Bank has been supporting local organizations and remains committed to investing in the communities they serve. It is a locally owned and managed neighborhood bank with more than \$2.2 billion in assets. Standard Bank and Trust Co. is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Equal Housing Lender and Member of the FDIC.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with the Moraine Valley Community College Foundation," said Mohammed Abunada, assistant vice president of Private Banking and Wealth Management at the bank. "Both Standard Bank and Moraine Valley have been in the community for a long time. Our visions are very similar regarding enriching lives. We know that assisting students to fulfill their educational goals makes a lasting, positive impact on the community."

The Moraine Valley Foundation provides philanthropic financial support for the college and its students. Through fundraising events and donor gifts, the Foundation helps support numerous student scholarships, academic programs, Fine and Performing Arts Center programming, capital improvements to the campus, technology enhancements, and other special initiatives.



*(From left): Mohammed Abunada, assistant vice president, and Michael Helsdingen, senior vice president of Standard Bank and Trust, Dr. Vernon Crawley, president of Moraine Valley, David Spedale, executive vice president of Standard Bank and Trust, and Sue Linn, executive director of the Moraine Valley Foundation. The representatives from Standard Bank and Trust presented the college with a check for \$50,000 for scholarships.*

## Innovation of the Year Award

# Dreamkeepers

The **Dreamkeepers Student Emergency Financial Assistance Program**, developed by the Moraine Valley Foundation, was the recipient of the college's 2011 Innovation Award. Presented annually, these awards recognize faculty and staff members who have developed new programs or services that promote student learning and success.

Dreamkeepers provides a safety net for students who experience sudden and unanticipated financial emergencies such as a family illness, job loss or an expensive car breakdown. When an emergency strikes, adult students with little discretionary income may have to choose between staying in school and dropping out to address the situation. Dreamkeepers emergency financial assistance grants help students to bridge the financial gap, so they can stay in school and reach their educational goals.

Since the program's inception in 2008, 117 students have received grants averaging \$374. The success of the program is reflected in the retention rates of the grant recipients: 80 percent who have received awards completed the semester and 70 percent re-enrolled the following semester.

### { Help When It's Needed Most }

*Russell thought his abdominal pain was caused by a pulled muscle. Because he was uninsured, he sought care at various free clinics. Seven months later, the pain became so debilitating that he was admitted to the emergency room where he was referred to a specialist. A Dreamkeepers grant helped Russell with his medical expenses—including that needed visit to the specialist. Russell now has a clean bill of health and is moving ahead in his studies.*

Dreamkeepers grants also have been used to help students in the following ways:

- To provide groceries and transportation struggling to pay unexpected medical expenses;
- To replace a computer for a student who was burned out of an apartment;
- To provide a deposit on new housing for a student who had been severely beaten by roommates;
- To purchase new glasses for a student whose insurance benefits were terminated through job loss.

Whether the funds are used to pay for a medical emergency or put food on a family's table, these short-term emergency financial grants have a significant effect on the lives of the students who receive them.

# Challenge Grant

Donate Now to Obtain  
50 Percent More Funds

When you donate to the Dreamkeepers program now, you can help dramatically increase the funds available for student emergency financial assistance grants. The Moraine Valley Foundation has accepted a challenge grant that began on July 1. Scholarship America has pledged to provide an additional \$1 for every \$2 raised for the Dreamkeepers Emergency Financial Assistance Program.

During the challenge grant, your tax-deductible \$1,000 donation would provide two emergency grants of \$500 each and an additional \$500 of funding from Scholarship America.

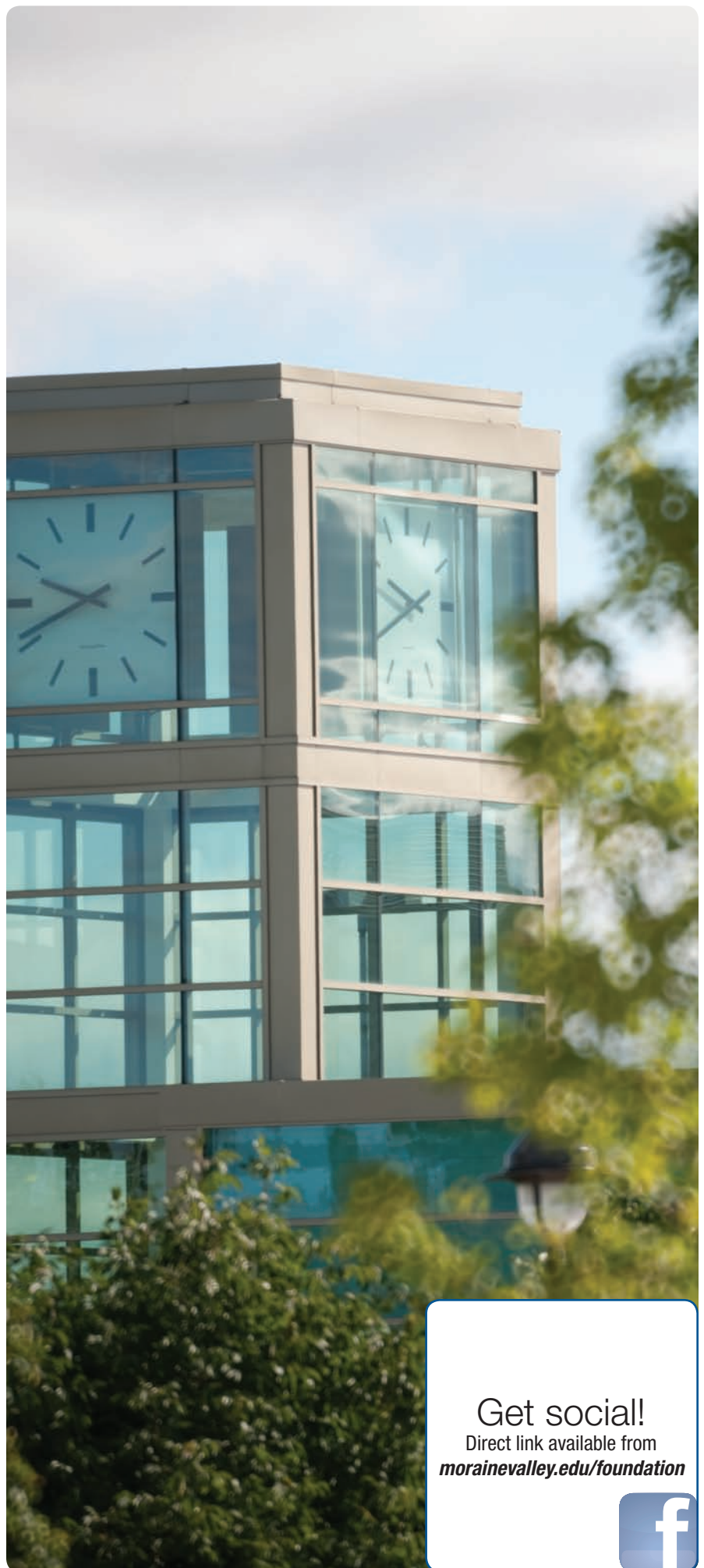
## Two ways to donate:

### **DONATE ONLINE:**

Go to [www.morainevalley.edu/foundation/making.htm](http://www.morainevalley.edu/foundation/making.htm) and click on the “Donate Now” button. Select “Dreamkeepers Emergency Financial Assistance” from the dropdown menu.

### **MAIL A CHECK:**

Send your check payable to *MVCCF Dreamkeepers* to the Moraine Valley Foundation, 9000 W. College Parkway, Palos Hills, IL 60465.



Get social!

Direct link available from  
[morainevalley.edu/foundation](http://morainevalley.edu/foundation)



# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

Working on a loading dock after graduating from high school, he took his first class at Moraine Valley to please his mother. That decision marked an important first step to a better future for a “direction-less” young student. Taking one class at a time—many at night—he built the foundation for a career as a respected professional and leader in his field.

**Patrick O’Connor**, the winner of the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus Award, currently serves as the chief of the Moraine Valley police department and as president of the Illinois Association of Chiefs. Elected by his peers to this leadership position, he is the first community college chief to serve as president. As the state representative to the International Chiefs of Police Association, he also serves as a legislative liaison to the U.S. Congress.

Chief O’Connor is a former chief of police of the Village of Worth and served 24 years with the Village of LaGrange, where he served as Acting Chief of Police, and retired as Operations Commander. However, the accomplished police professional traces his first job in law enforcement to a part-time position in Moraine Valley’s public safety department.

The Moraine Valley police chief grew up in a family of five children. His father worked two jobs to cover the costs of a Catholic education for his children, and, by the time O’Connor was a freshman in high school, he was working after school to help. His family had no money to pay for a college education, so he took a job on a loading dock piling 100-pound bags. As he explains, “Thinking back to where I was before I enrolled at Moraine Valley, I was 18, working on a dock, and had no clue as to where I was going or what I wanted to do.”

Fortunately, O’Connor responded to his mother’s constant urging to go to school, and he decided to enroll at the college. “I started my college educa-

tion one class at a time,” he says, “but that didn’t matter. I was supported and engaged as if I were a full-time student.” Even more importantly, at Moraine Valley, he notes, “I met an instructor who believed in me and guided me into my life’s work.” A part-time job in the college’s public safety department helped him pay for his education and sparked his interest in public service. As a student at Moraine Valley, he earned an Emergency Medical Technician Certificate (1976), an Associate in Applied Science degree in law enforcement (1977), and an Associate in Arts transfer degree (1985).

O’Connor also has an impressive record of involvement and service in local communities. In his early career, he volunteered to work with troubled teens in LaGrange’s Cops and Kids basketball and park district programs and developed the village’s first community policing program, which provided after-school tutoring and sports programs for minority teens. He served on the BEDS Homeless Shelter Advisory Board for the Western Suburbs and as president of the Palos Youth Baseball Board. Chief O’Connor coached football and track for eight years and served as a youth mentor and advisor for St. Laurence High School and volunteered his time to establish the Queen of Peace High School girls’ track team’s first pole vaulting program. He is an advisor to the Fight Crime and Invest in Kids program for at risk children. As the president of the South Suburban Chiefs, he helped initiate the South Suburban Dependents Scholarship program.

In a statement that accompanied O’Connor’s nomination form, the Chief explains that “community colleges, unlike large universities, allow ‘direction-less’ students to explore their options while teaching them how to succeed. My career is an example of the determination that most community college students have and the dedication shown by their teachers.



Putting a  
“Direction-less”  
Student on a  
Pathway to Success

“Moraine Valley allowed me to learn my profession and achieve as a student. It also has allowed me to return as an instructor and a mentor for those who will follow me.”



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# Fine and Performing Arts Center

*Moraine Valley invites you to a season filled with music, dance, theater, and art for all ages.*

### Here are just a few performances:

“I Hate Rabbits” starring James Galea, Australia’s #1 magician – Nov. 19

Natalie MacMaster: Christmas in Cape Breton – Dec. 10

The Trash and Recycle Show with Steve Trash: Rockin’ Eco Hero – Jan. 21 (young audiences)

Second City: Laugh Out Loud Tour – Jan. 28

Jim Witter’s Piano Men II, featuring hits of Billy Joel and Elton John – Feb. 11

Ragamala Dance – March 17

Glenn Miller Orchestra – March 25

Juan Siddi Flamenco Theatre Company – April 14

Cathie Ryan, Celtic music – April 21

*And much more! See full season online.*

[morainevalley.edu/fpac](http://morainevalley.edu/fpac)

## Contact us

Connections is published by the Moraine Valley Foundation for alumni and friends of Moraine Valley Community College. Send inquiries, comments and addresses to the Foundation Office at [alumni@morainevalley.edu](mailto:alumni@morainevalley.edu) or (708) 974-5551.

# You're invited....

## to take advantage of Moraine Valley's many resources

- Classes for two-year associate's degree or new careers
- Excellent entertainment at the Fine and Performing Arts Center
- The vast resources of the library
- Memberships in the Health Fitness Center
- Resources and assistance for businesses

**And more!**

## Plan a Campus Visit to Suit Your Needs

One of the best ways to learn how you and your family can benefit from the educational programs and services available at Moraine Valley is to schedule a campus visit. You—or your school or community group—can schedule a tour tailored to suit your needs and your available time, from 30 minutes to several hours. Groups of all sizes are welcome, and on-campus dining can be arranged. Tour options include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exploring plant and animal life in the Nature Study Area
- Taking a behind-the-scenes look at the theaters in the Fine and Performing Arts Center
- Discovering the latest in computer technology in one of the 40+ computer labs
- Experiencing allied health and science labs firsthand
- Learning about exercise and nutrition in the Health Fitness Center
- Accessing the services available in the library

For more information on scheduling a tour, call the Foundation office at (708) 974-5551.



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