Moraine Valley Matters

Alumni and Friends Newsletter

Moraine Valley Community College Alumni Newsletter - June 2025

At the 2025 Moraine Valley Alumni Hall of Fame induction, these Distinguished Alumni members were named as new inductees to the Alumni Hall of Fame.

Moraine Valley Alumni Office accepting nominations for Alumni Hall of Fame

Deadline is June 30

The Moraine Valley Community College Alumni Office is accepting nominations for its 2026 Alumni Hall of Fame through June 30.

The Hall of Fame recognizes alumni who have made an impact in their professional and personal lives. New inductees are chosen by the Hall of Fame Selection Committee, which comprises college faculty, staff and alumni; awardees are notified by August 1.

“Each year, we are proud to honor a new class of Hall of Fame inductees to acknowledge the amazing contributions our alumni have made in our community,” said Patti Mehallick, director of Alumni and Annual Programs, who oversees the Hall of Fame. “We strongly encourage anyone who knows a successful Moraine Valley alumnus to complete a nomination application.”

Nominations can be made by a coworker, former colleague, family member or friend. Individuals may not nominate themselves. Nominees must have attended Moraine Valley Community College 10 or more years ago and received a degree or certificate or completed a minimum of 30 credit hours at the college.

For additional details on nomination qualifications for the Alumni Hall of Fame and the nomination process, visit morainevalley.edu/alumni/hall-of-fame.

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Foundation Gala raises funds for Health Sciences Programs

The Foundation celebrated the college's Health Sciences Programs at the Gateways Gala Strengthening Health Education event held on Friday, April 11, at Moraine Valley in Palos Hills. It was an evening to remember, featuring guest emcee Michelle Relerford co-anchor for NBC 5 News Today, entertainment by Tony and the Tunas, delicious food and live and silent auctions.

The Foundation would like to thank our donors for their generous support. Everyone who attended the gala, sponsored the event, purchased raffle tickets or bid on auction items contributing to our goal of spreading the joy to health sciences students and the community.

See the photos below for some highlights from the 2025 Gala.

Heads *and Tails is always a favorite game at the gala; the winner received a Goat Hop dinner at Cabra, Duck Duck Goat and Girl and the Goat.*

Current Moraine Valley student volunteers helped to make the gala a big success.

Foundation Board member Cristy Gallegos (second from left) and her friends strike a pose in the photo booth.

Rita Kealy and Beth Keilbasinski helped with the paddle drop game.

Some of the bidding got very competitive, which added to the fun of the evening.

The Moraine Valley Culinary Arts program action station served mouth-watering short rib risotto and seared ahi tuna.

Delicious food was served in every corner of the room with favorites for everyone, especially the desserts prepared by Moraine Valley Culinary faculty chef Jeanne Kraus and Baking and Pastry students.

Dr. Pamela J. Haney, president of Moraine Valley, and Dr. Walter Fronczek, who was elected to the college's Board of Trustees at the end of April, enjoy the evening.

Guest emcee for the evening, Michelle Releford of NBC 5, was welcomed by Dr. Kiana Battle, Moraine Valley's vice president for Institutional Advancement and executive assistant to the president.

Alumni Spotlight:

Art Therapist Eric Spruth a globally recognized advocate for those with special needs

Moraine Valley graduate and Alumni Hall of Fame inductee, Eric Spruth has been an Art Therapist for the Illinois Department of Correction at the Cook County Jail for more than 33 years. His experience goes beyond the local area as he has spanned the globe helping others through art therapy.

A 1986 Moraine Valley graduate with a degree in fine art and philosophy, Spruth said "Becoming a college student was not something I was encouraged to consider. I was self-motived to achieve much more than I was encouraged to experience."

Having attended high school as a student with a learning disability, Spruth's classroom was separated from other students, confined to a remote area in the school. He experienced learning in a regular classroom for the first time at Moraine Valley. "For me it was a whole new threshold in life," he says. "In high school only my disabilities were recognized, none of my abilities."

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Moraine Valley Juried Community Art Exhibition on display in gallery

An array of works from the annual Moraine Valley Community College Juried Community Art Exhibition are on display through July 31 in the Fine and Performing Arts Center's (FPAC) Robert F. DeCaprio Art Gallery and atrium, 9000 W. College Parkway in Palos Hills.

Photos, paintings, drawings, sculptures and other works from artists in the community were judged by Nikkole Huss, interdisciplinary artist, art department program lead, professor of art, director of the Ferguson Art Gallery and curator of the art collection at Concordia University Chicago. The following awards were presented during a reception on May 31:

First place – Ben de Jong, of Orland Park, for oil on canvas, "Legacy"

Second place – Greg Klitz, of Mokena, for fired clay, “The Final Reach”

Third place – David Krolikowski, of Chicago, for oil on canvas, “Invalidated"

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Register now for the Moraine Valley Golf Outing

Registration is now open for the Moraine Valley Foundation's 44th annual Golf Outing at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club on Wednesday, Sept. 17. The event is sponsored by Live Right Senior Care. Multiple sponsorship opportunities are available.

Enjoy a day of 18 holes of golf, course games and networking. The Moraine Valley Foundation has a new contest for Best Dressed Foursome this year! All proceeds from the Golf Outing fund scholarships for our un-fore-gettable Moraine Valley students.

Register Now

Student creates Business scholarship

Moraine Valley Business student, Ben Ketza, attended the 2025 Business Networking Dinner held on campus in April, and was so inspired by the event that he donated $500 to start a scholarship. Ketza, 21, was in his final semester at the college pursuing a degree in Business and also was the treasurer of the new business student organization, the NEXTGEN Business Leaders Club.

An entrepreneur, Ketza runs his own business as an Amazon seller, among other successful business ventures. He has spoken to club members about how to start an Amazon businesses. At the dinner, Ketza asked Moraine Valley Foundation Director Patti Mehallick how scholarships are funded. "I explained all scholarships are from donations given as a gift by generous donors," said Mehallick. Joking with Ben, she added, "Someday when you are rich and famous, remember the college and start your own scholarship." Without hesitation, Ketza reached in his pocket and, with a grin, handed his donation to a stunned Mehallick. "I was shocked and asked him repeatedly if he was sure because that is a lot of money especially for a student. It was the first time a current student has made a personal donation to create a scholarship," Mehallick added.

The Ben Ketza Entrepreneur Scholarship is open to Business, Finance, Accounting and Marketing majors who are members of the NEXTGEN Business Leaders Club with a GPA of at least and financial need.

Scholarships

Movie in the Moonlight

Moraine Valley Community College is hosting its popular Movie in the Moonlight series this summer. The college will show three movies on a 16-foot inflatable screen at the Gateway, between Buildings F and M, on campus, 9000 W. College Parkway, Palos Hills. Admission is free.

Upcoming movies include “Minecraft” on Saturday, July 26, at 8:15 p.m., and the new, live-action “Lilo & Stitch” will play on Saturday, Aug. 16, at 8 p.m.

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Moraine Valley receives My Library Is... grant

The Moraine Valley Community College Library is one of 24 projects selected to receive a My Library Is… Grant from the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS). Moraine Valley received $5,000, the maximum amount awarded, for its project, “My Library Is… Connecting Communities and Cultures,” and was one of only two community college recipients.

My Library Is… grants provide an opportunity for libraries to focus on projects that help tell their institution’s unique story and increase visibility and support for libraries in general. The initiative was developed by RAILS to help Illinois libraries tell their stories and prove their value.

The Moraine Valley Library applied for grant funding to create a foreign language collection. Tish Hayes, information literacy librarian in the college’s Learning Resource Center, who submitted the grant application shared, “I think this speaks directly to the community here at Moraine Valley. Instead of just collecting a bunch of different languages, we’re really focusing on two of our communities here that we know are large components of our community outside of the college. Focusing it [the collection] on Spanish and Arabic, I think, is really key.”

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Moraine Valley students, alumni and employees share why the college is their "Best Decision Ever"

Moraine Valley Community College participated in the national Community College Month (#CCMonth) campaign, coordinated by the Association of Community College Trustees, during April. The annual campaign celebrates the value of the nearly 1,200 community colleges in the country and showcases their role in offering educational opportunities.

This year's campaign theme "Best Decision Ever," encouraged students, alumni, faculty, staff and community members to share how their community college positively impacted them.

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Read the Moraine Valley student newspaper

To catch up on the latest news and events for our current Moraine Valley students, be sure to read The Glacier. This publication that recently won several national awards for being an outstanding student publication.

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REMEMBER WHEN? This photo of the Moraine Valley Alumni Association was taken in 1992. Seated, left to right, are Marilyn Drnaso, Joann Wright, Brenda Barrett and Greg Starr. Standing, left to right, are Michael Wuchitech, John Huiner and Fred Wilton.

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