



Taking You Where You Want To Go

THE bridge

2018

SPOON RIVER COLLEGE

Transfer Education

How much money could you save by choosing Spoon River College?

Healthcare Careers

It's an in-demand job field. Find out where you could fit in!

Spoon River College Outreach

Learn how SRC values partnerships in our communities.

Adult Education

It's never too late to go back to school and earn your GED!



Message from the President, Curt Oldfield

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition of *The Bridge* from Spoon River College. Our goals include providing high-quality, affordable, accessible education. Throughout this publication, you will be able to see examples of the work being done at your community college to achieve these goals and make our communities stronger.

First, you will see in this publication Spoon River College's commitment to student success. Work is being done every day, by our faculty and staff, to create an environment for our students to succeed inside and outside of the classroom. Tutoring and academic services are provided to assist students, free of charge. Faculty are continually working to ensure students are mastering course material while providing learning opportunities that students will utilize far into the future. Spoon River College has an open door for people wanting to improve their lives, and the faculty and staff are here to help students be successful in that academic journey.



Second, Spoon River College faculty and staff work to achieve our mission of providing innovative learning opportunities that enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. Programs are providing pre-baccalaureate education consisting of liberal arts, sciences, and pre-professional courses designed to prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. We are providing career programs to prepare students for employment or to upgrade their skills. We provide high school equivalency and Adult Basic Education courses that are essential in preparing students for collegiate study and in meeting individual educational goals.

We also provide community education including non-credit, continuing education, vocational skills, and lifelong learning. We work with local employers to provide workforce training and retraining to meet the needs of employers and employees. We also work cooperatively with economic development organizations in the district to support their efforts.

Finally, at Spoon River College, we strive to help students see the importance of citizenship and community service. Our student government, student honor society, and student organizations provide community service opportunities for students to give back to their community. In addition to the



community service from our students, our faculty and staff have provided over 2,400 hours of volunteer time in our communities. We believe strongly in supporting the communities that support us.

I hope you enjoy reading this publication. If we can help you, your family, or your friends with achieving academic needs, please contact us or visit www.src.edu, because Spoon River College is... *taking you where you want to go.*



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Mission

Spoon River College provides innovative learning opportunities that enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve.

Vision

Spoon River College will strengthen its communities by providing a broad range of educational programs, cultural activities, and economic development opportunities in an environment dedicated to success.

For more information about Spoon River College graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed our programs, and other information, please visit our website at (www.src.edu/academics/Pages/gainful-employment.aspx).

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Two is better than one, right? SRC is proud to have valuable partnerships throughout our communities!



Drew Swise, 2017 Spoon River College graduate

The Transfer Story:

How SRC can save you thousands of dollars.

The top thing we hear from students who graduate with their Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree and transfer to a four-year institution? “I’m so glad I completed my first two years at Spoon River College!”

Drew Swise is no exception. She graduated from Spoon River College with her Associate in Science degree in May of 2017... completely debt-free.

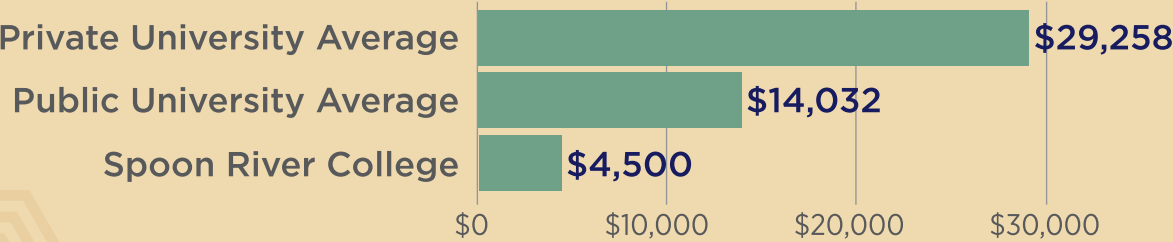
In November of 2017, Swise joined a Twitter discussion among peers about the cost of education. “Best decision of my life,” she tweeted, referring to her decision to attend Spoon River College for two years.

Since graduating from SRC, Swise has transferred to Bradley University where she is studying finance. She will be doing an internship this summer and will graduate with her bachelor’s degree in May of 2019.

“One of my big dreams is building my own home, and I have been saving for it since high school,” said Swise. “Choosing SRC for my first two years of college has allowed me to save more toward that dream and other things I will need in my future.”

To find information about transfer education and how you can plan to complete your first two years of college at Spoon River College, go to src.edu. Under the **Student Services** menu, visit **Transfer Out**. You may also contact an SRC advisor at 1-800-degrees or by emailing advisor@src.edu.

COMPARE: 1 year of tuition & fees



Sources:
<https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/tuition-and-fees>
<http://www.collegeillinois.org/PlansAndPricing/CollegeTuitionCostandFees.html>
<https://www.src.edu/admissions/Pages/tuition.aspx>



Parris Grace... an inspiration to students everywhere.

After 31 years of working for the same company doing a job she loved and was good at, Parris Grace faced a life-changing moment; a divorce that left her depressed and unable to cope.

“It’s hard to be good at customer service when you’re sad all the time,” said Grace, who sought professional help for her depression. It’s a decision that helped her heal and ultimately led to her new vocation.

“As I was going through this time of healing, I heard my heart say it was time to get on the other side of my role as a patient, and I started exploring employment options in the healthcare field,” Grace said.

She began taking certified nursing assistant (CNA) classes, as well as a phlebotomy class. After working as a CNA for a year, she returned to college to become a certified medical assistant, which led to a position with DuPage Medical Group. While there, she began taking classes as a pharmaceutical technician.

“I felt the information from that class would be useful in my position as a medical assistant,” said Grace. As she became more knowledgeable, patients often mistakenly referred to her as a nurse, which turned out to be the nudge that persuaded her to pursue a nursing degree.

Grace is now taking her prerequisites for the nursing program at Spoon River College in Macomb and appreciates the support she gets from the instructors and staff.

“I was raised to believe that I didn’t have to go to college, and that I would grow up, get married, have children and raise a family. I did that for more than 20 years, until my divorce,” Grace said. “And now, because of education, I get to take this challenging time and turn it into an opportunity to re-invent my life. It’s such a joy to meet my goals and be able to say ‘I did it!’”

FACULTY PROFILES

Kristy Boggs

Her path to becoming a teacher came about because the opportunity happened to present itself, but Kristy Boggs says she quickly fell in love with teaching. “I love interacting with students and explaining things, and I thrive in small, face-to-face classes. I also love when students ask questions that relate to the material we are covering, questions that extend the basic ideas in class to apply to real life things they have experienced or witnessed.”

Boggs chose biology because she loves animals and being outdoors and has utilized “outdoor classrooms” in the past, but for the last five years Boggs has stayed in the classroom to teach anatomy and physiology.

“My job now is teaching students about all the amazing ways the human body functions so they can be prepared for careers in the health field.”

She still gets her “outdoor fix” with her husband and three sons on their farm, where she loves to clear brush. “I joke that once I get it all cleared, we’ll have to buy more land so I have more to clear.”

Boggs shares more than just her knowledge with her students. She also shares lots of advice.

On getting frustrated when trying to learn something new: “When you’re in a hole, stop digging. You have to take a break and clear your mind in order to think.”

On chasing the perfect GPA: “Don’t be a slave to your GPA. Education is supposed to challenge you, while easy A’s do nothing for you. Failure and struggle are the best teachers. Push yourself, take on challenges, and give yourself a break when you are less than perfect. Our purpose as teachers is that you be better and more knowledgeable thinkers at the end of the semester than you were at the beginning.”

On beating information overload: “Look for patterns. Biology may seem like a lot of overwhelming information at first, but once you see the patterns, you realize it is not so much after all. You can repeat the same basic ideas in different scenarios.”

On multitasking: “There is no such thing as good multitasking. The human brain can effectively focus on only one thing at a time.”

Boggs has a Bachelor and Master of Science degree, and is the 2013 and 2017 ICCTA Award



winner for teaching excellence. And if she could have one superpower? “The ability to arrive instantly anywhere. I hate traveling and I’m like the kid whining ‘Are we there yet?’”

Dr. Andrew Kirk

Dr. Andrew Kirk never intended to become a communications teacher. When he was five, he wanted to be a train engineer because he thought there was “nothing cooler!” In high school his interest switched to the architectural field, but he says “taking a physics class quickly squashed that dream.”

As he worked on his Master of Communication degree at Marquette University (he earned his B.S. in Advertising from Bradley University), he leaned towards a career in the admissions side of higher education.

Serving as the assistant coach for the speech team at Kishwaukee College led him to explore teaching and coaching, and once he became a graduate teaching assistant at Southern Illinois University while working on his Doctorate in Speech Communication, he knew he had found his sweet spot.

The moral of Kirk’s story is in the advice he gives to his students. “Academically and professionally, find a field that will keep you interested for the rest of your life. It may take some exploration and some trial and error, but it’s worth it in the grand scheme of things.”

Kirk was the 2017 H. Truman Standard Award recipient for teaching excellence, and he is known for his sense of humor in the classroom, positive life advice, “taking the scary out of public speaking,” and the respect he shows students. Said one of those students, “Dr. Kirk is someone I want to be like.”

He’s also known for his fear of spiders and his love for his three dachshunds Beverly, Gladys, and Wellington. What some may not know about Kirk, an admitted Superman loyalist, is that his doctoral dissertation was about Superman, and if he could have one superpower, Kirk said it would be the ability to fly.

“And that’s odd, since the only thing I fear more than spiders is heights!”

Kirk recently established a speech and debate team, citing his love for it along with the benefits to students.

“Students who are part of a speech and debate team will gain life-long communication skills—including how to think critically and have confidence in their ability to speak



in public. It can truly benefit a student’s life in some rather extraordinary ways. Just ask Oprah!”



Healthcare Careers:

Exploring jobs in demand.

The need for qualified healthcare workers continues to rise to meet the ever-increasing need in health services, particularly in the areas of medical coding, transcription, and records.

Within Spoon River College's Healthcare Career Programs is Health Information Management: one degree with multiple options, multiple employment opportunities in multiple environments, and skills that go wherever you go, no matter where you go. If you...

- enjoy working with numbers and are detail-oriented
- are drawn to the healthcare field but not as a nurse
- have good analytical and communication skills
- and like having options

... then the Health Information Management (HIM) program might be for you.

"Graduates of this program can have many different job titles and duties and can work in a variety of health-related settings. Think insurance offices, mental health facilities, hospitals, business offices, nursing homes, chiropractic offices, medical clinics, both private and public facilities, and more," said Melissa Miller, coordinator of allied health at Spoon River College. "They are like the 'security guards' of patient information and health records."

The Associate in Applied Science degree in HIM can take two years to complete, but those wanting a faster track can choose from one or more of the certificate programs that can be completed in one year. Those include Medical Coding, Medical Insurance/Billing, Medical Records, Medical Transcription, Medical Unit Secretary, Medical Assistant, and Phlebotomy Technician.

The majority of the jobs require no direct contact with patients, with the exception of medical assistants and phlebotomy technicians.

"Regardless of which track a student follows, our healthcare career programs can get a student career-ready in two years or less," said Miller. "Another option is to complete one of the certificates, find employment in that field, and then work while completing the entire degree. It's a great way to get a feel for the work."



Melissa Miller teaches AH 135 Medical Assisting via IVS system, which connects SRC classrooms in all four locations: Canton, Havana, Macomb, and Rushville.

"The healthcare field will only keep expanding, as will the record-keeping and the technology that is used for that record-keeping. That continued growth makes it a stable area of employment, not just in our area, but everywhere. Having the skills and credentialing will help you stand out to prospective employers."



HEALTHCARE CAREERS STUDENT PROFILE

Mother-Daughter Team

*What happens when a mom and daughter attend college at the same time, in the same program?
An amazing study partnership is formed, of course!*



Theisa Cagle didn't sit in the audience and watch her daughter Alaina graduate from Spoon River College. Instead she was up on the stage right behind Alaina, receiving her own degree. Both graduated in 2016 with an Associate in Applied Science degree in Health Information Management, and certificates in Medical Assistant, Medical Records, Medical Insurance/Billing, and Medical Transcription.

Both are now employed as medical assistants: Alaina works at McDonough District Hospital Convenient Care and Theisa is at McDonough Medical Group Family Medicine. A typical day for Theisa and Alaina includes doing patient intakes and medical histories, giving injections, medications, and preparing samples for the lab, along with assorted office duties. Says Alaina, "I get to do all the fun stuff!"

Q: Who was your favorite teacher while at SRC?

Theisa - "Liz Patterson, who always took the time to help every student understand math."

Alaina - "Krista Winters. I didn't love microbiology, but the relationships Krista builds with her students make the subject well worth the effort required."

Q: Who were you most inspired by while at SRC?

Theisa - "It's a toss-up between my advisor Rob Kirkham and my daughter Alaina, who pushed me on when I wanted to give up."

Alaina - "My little sister. I always wanted to be the best role model I could possibly be for her."

Q: What do you like most about being a medical assistant?

Theisa - "The patients! They make my world go round! I love them and I love being on a team that helps care for them."

Alaina - "I like the one-on-one patient interaction, and being able to help and care for them."

Q: Where did you do your internship?

Theisa: I did my internship at Graham Medical Group in Canton.

Alaina: I interned at Professional EyeCare Center and worked there for a year and a half before joining McDonough District Hospital.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

Theisa (who worked in a meat-packing plant for 10 years) - "Don't be afraid to try something new, and don't wait 16 years to go to college."

Alaina - "There is more to life than what you see now. Always use mistakes and bitter situations as a chance to learn and build, not as an excuse to fail."


Q: What was the best thing about attending college with your mom/daughter?

Theisa: I couldn't have done it without Alaina. She pushed me through times I wanted to give up. I loved that we could study together and quiz each other.

Alaina: I absolutely loved attending college with my mom. I never felt alone or left to fail. I knew that at the end of the day I always had someone to help me and to push me further than I ever thought I could go. She was my saving grace in college.



Snapper Villas on-campus housing
Multi-Purpose Building fitness center
Nursing department simulation manikins
Snapper busses
Macomb Outreach Center
meeting & conference rooms
Scholarship recipients
Athletics



When you support the SRC Foundation, you build a bridge.

Ready to help build your own bridge
for local students? Contact the
SRC Foundation to learn how you can
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Visit <http://www.src.edu/foundation>,
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SPOON RIVER COLLEGE

Programs

Scholarships

Facilities

FOUNDATION

Spoon River College and SRC Foundation Scholarships Available for the 2018-2019 Academic Year

Spoon River College scholarship applications are currently being accepted for students who will be attending Spoon River College during the 2018-19 academic year. Applications will be accepted until March 15, 2018, and the required forms are available at www.src.edu/scholarships.

Applicants must complete the scholarship application, complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and submit their transcripts. This process is required for all scholarships.

In addition to Foundation scholarships, the college offers academic and performing grants as well. These scholarships may require contact with specific faculty members or coaches. Scholarships for high school students wishing to take dual credit classes are also available at various times throughout the year, as are scholarships for career and technical students.

“The best part about our process is that a student need only apply once to be considered for all SRC Foundation scholarships,” said Colin Davis, executive director for the SRC Foundation.

“The application is a one-stop-shop for any student who may fit the criteria for one or more scholarships.”

As prospective applicants are required to have completed a current FAFSA before being eligible, they can also receive other types of financial aid in addition to scholarships.

“Many students are pleasantly surprised to find that they can receive both a scholarship and other sources of revenue such as Pell Grants or Work Study,” said Missy Wilkinson, dean of student services.

This year the Foundation will be providing over 100 scholarships to students of all ages, traditional and non-traditional, new or returning, full or part-time, and in a variety of academic pursuits.

For more information, contact Colin Davis at colin.davis@src.edu or contact any Spoon River College advisor at (309) 647-4645.



Taking dual credit classes while in high school and then summer classes after graduating from Farmington High School will make it possible for scholarship recipient Sabrina Wiesbrock to earn her associate's degree after just one year at Spoon River College.

Sabrina plans to pursue a bachelor's degree, and wants to work with troubled juveniles. She currently works at the YMCA after school program and as a tumbling instructor.



SRC Instructor Angie Conklin presents the Bonnie Stine SRCFA Scholarship to Maegan McCoy. McCoy is a 2017 graduate of Lewistown High School, where she was honored with the Student of the Month award and served as FFA vice-president.

Spoon River College Outreach Partnerships



Cook Medical, the City of Canton, and Spoon River College partner to offer free pre-employment training and testing to local job-seekers. To date, over 1,900 individuals have taken advantage of training, and more than 900 have tested for positions at Cook Medical, Cook Polymer Technology, and the Canton Harvester Inn. From left to right: Denise Kirgan, Cook Medical Plant Manager; Canton Mayor Kent McDowell; Andrea Barbknecht, SRC Canton Outreach Center Director; Marcia Harris, Cook Medical Human Resources Director.

The Spoon River College Office of Community Outreach takes pride in the business partnerships we have built throughout the district. Partnerships provide many benefits to the businesses involved, such as...

Collaboration: Many times, our partners have similar goals and objectives, and we can partner on a project that allows each organization to share in the success.

Resource Sharing: When we work with our partners, we can share resources. Resources may include additional contacts or customers, facility access, or even a larger social media presence.

Creativity: Working with our partners can lead to new ideas.

Support: Once you have built a strong partnership, you will also gain support. Your partner understands your business, and you understand their business... so when opportunities arise, it allows the organizations to include each other.

Accountability: You are naturally more accountable when others are involved. All the partners want to see success, so they work hard at meeting the goals of the partnership.

To find out more, visit us online at [www.src.edu/outreach!](http://www.src.edu/outreach)



The Rushville-Industry School District and Spoon River College have always been strong partners. Our Rushville Director, Rob Kirkham, gets many opportunities to go to the school and talk to students. Students also come to the SRC Rushville Center for free field trips and lectures. Rushville-Industry District teachers use SRC for meetings and SRC uses classroom space at the Rushville-Industry High School for programs like our woodworking class.

From left to right: Rob Kirkham, Rushville Center Director; Holly Acheson, high school counselor at Rushville-Industry High School.





Macomb Downtown Development, Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce, Macomb Area Economic Development Corporation, and Spoon River College partnered to offer the 2017 Macomb Business Institute that was held in Macomb on October 13, 2017. An event in 2018 will also be planned.

From left to right: Kim Pierce, Executive Director, Macomb Area Economic Development Corporation; Velvet Powell, SRC Macomb Outreach Center Director; Erin Orwig, SRC Outreach Coordinator; Kathy Waters, President, Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce; Kristin Terry, Downtown Development Director, City of Macomb.



Mason District Hospital, SIU School of Medicine, University of Illinois Extension, Havana High School, the City of Havana, and Spoon River College partnered to offer the Havana Health Career Opportunities program held in August 2016 and August 2017.

From left to right, standing: Darci Bull, Chief Nursing Officer, Mason District Hospital; Ron Hills, Economic Development Coordinator, City of Havana; Chris Troxell, Emergency Department/EMS Director, Mason District Hospital; Angie Smith, Community Health & Wellness, Mason District Hospital.

From left to right, sitting: Laura Hepp Kessel, Assistant Director, Office of Regional Programs, SIU School of Medicine; Mathew Plater, Superintendent of Schools, Havana Community Unit Schools #126; Stephanie Howerter, SRC Havana Center Director.



ALUMNI PROFILE

Erin Wilson Laegeler

"I feel like my time at Spoon River College was a transformative and coming of age moment for me," said Erin Wilson Laegeler of Rushville, who serves as an Assistant Appellate Prosecutor in the Illinois Office of the State's Attorney Appellate Prosecutor.

Wilson Laegeler began her college education by taking dual credit courses at Spoon River College, and she credits a psychology course with putting her on the journey into the justice system. That passion intensified when she interned with the Illinois Innocence Project during her senior year at the University of Illinois Springfield, where the work she did led directly to the 2012 freeing and exoneration of Jonathan Moore, a man wrongly convicted of murder and attempted murder in 2002 in Aurora, Illinois.

After graduating from UIS, Wilson Laegeler went on to the Charlotte School of Law in North Carolina, where she was Valedictorian of the class of 2016.

Wilson Laegeler says her ultimate goal is to become an appellate judge.

Wilson Laegeler and her husband Charles (also an attorney) live near Rushville with their three dogs and one cat. In addition to her service on the Schuyler County United Way Board, Wilson Laegeler enjoys riding four-wheelers and lake time at her family's vacation home in the Ozarks.

GED Prep Program Changes Lives for the Better

Adult education programs, like the one at Spoon River College, provide “a path from low-income jobs and limited opportunities to the middle-class wages and family sustainability,” according to the Illinois Community College Board.

Chad Murphy, director of adult education at Spoon River College, agrees.

“Many people have entered our programs seeking to improve their lives. They understand that in order to get to the next level, whether it’s a certificate, a degree, or employment that allows them to earn a living wage, they must start by increasing their basic skills,” said Murphy.

For those without a high school diploma, the GED preparation program to earn a high school equivalency certificate is the first step to that better life.

“Full-time workers with a high school diploma earn almost \$10,000 more per year than those without a diploma,” Murphy said. “When they continue with either transfer courses or career and technical education and training, their earnings continue to rise.”



Melissa Koke, Adult Education program advisor

Chris and Aspen Miller of Macomb were just two of the 31 students who completed the GED classes in 2016, but they didn’t stop there. After passing their GED exam, they took the next step. Aspen completed the nursing assistant program and is now working at Mosaic in Macomb, while Chris is enrolled in the welding program.

“Passing the GED exam has made our future goals, expectations, and dreams possible,” said Aspen, who already has her eye on a nursing degree in the future.

The adult education programs at Spoon River College serve approximately 300 students per year and are funded through a number of sources, including grants from Career Link, Dollar General Corporation, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Secretary of State’s Adult Volunteer Literacy Program, and Western Illinois Works, Inc.

Nationwide, it is estimated that more than 36 million adults (1.2 million in Illinois) lack basic literacy skills, which limits their ability to advance in education and at work. In the Spoon River College district, with a population of 57,010 who are 16 years of age or older, 5,543 do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, 3,834 feel they do not speak English well, 9,175 live in poverty, and 8,766 receive some type of government public assistance.

“Adult education actually saves governments money by reducing societal healthcare, public assistance, and incarceration costs. Adult education also improves and expands the available workforce by helping motivated but under-educated people achieve gainful employment,” said Murphy.

Both Chris and Aspen Miller utilized the partnership between Spoon River College and Career Link to assist them in continuing their education.



Aspen and Chris Miller at the Spoon River College Macomb Campus.

“I’m proud of myself and my husband for working hard to achieve the life we have pictured for ourselves and our son. It feels like the start of a whole new life,” said Aspen.

Macomb advisor Janet Young echoes that sentiment. “I am so proud of these two. They continue to work hard to build a better life. They are proof it can be done.”

For more information about all of the services and classes offered through the Adult Education Office at Spoon River College, call (309) 649-6229 for Canton and Havana and (309) 833-6017 for Macomb and Rushville, or visit www.src.edu. For information on adult education throughout Illinois, visit (https://www.iccb.org/adult_ed).

Faces of Adult Education

In the Spoon River College district, with a population of 57,010 who are 16 years of age or older, 5,543 do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. These individuals are no longer a part of that statistic.

“I couldn’t be happier with our program and our students’ progress and success. It gives them the confidence they need to believe in themselves,” said Melissa Koke, program advisor, noting that the SRC program has been modeled by others. “John Wood Community College in Quincy implemented some of our practices in their program and are having success with it, and the Regional Office of Education sought guidance from us when they took over the program in the Galesburg area.”



Kim Kenney, 34 years old, wanted to obtain her high school equivalency for two reasons; she wanted better employment options, and she wanted her children to understand the importance of education. “I know all too well that without a high school diploma, low-paying and often dead-end jobs are what you have to choose from,” said Kenney, who is interested in taking business courses and dreams of owning her own business.

The GED prep program consists of four sections (social studies, math, science, and language arts), and can be completed at each individual’s own pace. The program is supplemented with online curriculum, an option that Kenney appreciated. “If I had an extra 20 minutes at home, I was jumping on the computer to

do a lesson. At the same time, I knew I would receive assistance from instructors in class,” said Kenney.

“I completed all the sections and passed the final test in December,” said Kenney. “It was a great feeling and my kids were so proud of me. That meant a lot.”

Melissa Koke, program advisor, says Kenney is a great example for others who need to obtain their GED. “She worked full-time, took care of three kids and a husband, and still managed to find time to attend class and work on it at home.”

Kenney’s philosophy is that “if it’s important enough to you, you’ll find the time to make it happen.”



Mengsi Juan Wang with GED instructor Crystal Keller.

After 15 years of living in Baltimore, Maryland, 44-year-old Mengsi “Juan” Wang wanted to be closer to his brother, an established business owner in Canton. “I like it much better here,” said Wang. “It feels like a safe place to raise my sons and to have a better quality of life.”

The degree Wang already has in his native China is not recognized in the US, which led him to the GED program at Spoon River College.

Wang moved swiftly through the sections, starting with math and scoring 180 on the test. Program Advisor Melissa Koke says “that’s the highest score I’ve seen anyone get.” Wang did it with little effort, and says “language is my biggest challenge.”

Wang would like to continue with college and also thinks it’s important to acquire “hands-on” skills because “they help make a person more self-sufficient.” For now, he’s the main care-giver for his two sons, ages 4 and 9.

“Juan is determined to succeed, motivated by his desire to set a good example for his sons,” said Koke. “He’ll do what he sets his mind to do.”

Wang is quick to smile and lives by this philosophy: “God decides if you make it, but you have to make good decisions and you have to prepare yourself first.”



Whitney Corman of Avon has the distinction of finishing all the sections of the GED prep program in just six weeks. “I do believe that might be a record,” said Melissa Koke, program advisor.

Corman, 27 years old and currently a stay-at-home mom of four, is ready to get back into the workforce. Her motivation to finish quickly? “I wanted to be ready to start taking college courses in the spring semester.”

Corman credits both Koke and GED teacher Mrs. Sue Rusch with helping her complete the program.

“Melissa and Mrs. Rusch are sweet, caring people, and never once did I feel like I was ‘less than’ for not

completing high school,” Corman said. “Melissa even offered to babysit my youngest one day while I took a test. They do everything they can to help students succeed.”

Corman, who says she dropped out of high school “because I was a dumb teenager who thought I knew everything,” has this advice for other teens who may be considering walking away from high school.

“Don’t do it. Find a way to stick with it and finish. If you don’t, someday you’ll wish you had.”

EMPLOYEE PROFILES

Patrick Denecke

Patrick Denecke was raised in western New York but has been advising students on the Macomb Campus for 14 years. He is known for his sense of humor (“I have more fun at work than most people have on their free time!”), and for being an avid sports fan (“I follow the Buffalo Bills like most people follow religion.”). He uses humor to put students at ease, which he believes is essential to creating a comfort zone that encourages learning.

His parents were his role models. “My dad was a blue collar electrician and my mom stayed at home. I’m one of 10 children that they provided a safe, healthy, and entertaining environment for. We were provided with what we needed and worked for what we wanted. It was fun to grow up with humor and chaos all the time, and it helped with becoming adjusted to a crazy world.”

He and his wife Susan have been married for 25 years, and Denecke takes pride in the fact that they were able to send their three sons to college (all earned their bachelor’s degrees), and is grateful for the support of family, friends, and co-workers who helped buffer the devastating loss when one son passed away.

Other random facts about Denecke you may not know:

Q: Favorite thing to do when not working?

A: I have coached youth sports for 20 years and love to see the development of athletes. I also tend a vegetable garden and putz around my yard endlessly.

Q: What is one thing you don’t know how to do that you have always wanted to learn?

A: Fix my riding mower.

Q: Advice to your younger self? A: You don’t have to eat a donut off the tray every time it is offered.

Q: The best life lesson? A: Marry a person who is far smarter than you are. I did, and I’ve passed the message on to my sons.

Q: Best advice you have received?

A: Exercise your free will every chance you get!

Q: Advice for students? A: They have potential if they put in the effort. I am proof. Being a student was not my strong point, but I am proof that with a degree (Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education from Cortland State



University), one can gain employment and support a family. Many others I knew were far more academically inclined but never met their potential.

That, and take each day as it comes.

Hannah Neuendorf

Dual Credit Coordinator Hannah Neuendorf knows from personal experience how dual credit courses can benefit high school students. The Lewistown graduate was able to earn her associate degree in just one year at Spoon River College after taking advantage of dual credit classes, which allow eligible students to take college classes—and receive college credits—while still in high school.

“Taking dual credit classes does take dedication and commitment, but not only did it save me time, it also saved me money,” said Neuendorf.

Neuendorf went on to earn a Bachelor’s degree in 2013 from Illinois College, where she double majored in psychology and sociology. Her willingness to push herself harder than she has to may have to do with advice from her father.

“One of the many pearls of wisdom my dad has given me is ‘Never go into the desert with just one camel,’ so when I had the chance to learn

something new, I took it and learned more than I needed to. It’s been great advice to live by, and it’s advice I would give students,” said Neuendorf.

Neuendorf enjoys working with district high schools and developing new dual credit courses, and “interacting with the students. That’s a cool bonus of my job!”

In her free time, Neuendorf enjoys crafting along with strategizing how to make her number one Bucket List item become a reality—having breakfast at Tiffany & Co. because her all-time favorite movie is *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. “The Tiffany & Co. in New York just opened a restaurant in their store, so now you can literally have breakfast at Tiffany’s, and I’m excited about that!”

And although she knows it’s impossible, she would love to have a conversation with Lucille Ball.



“My grandmother got me hooked on *I Love Lucy* when I was very young, and my obsession with her has grown,” said Neuendorf. “A Lucy Fest is held in her hometown of Jamestown, NY every year, which I have been lucky enough to attend a few times. I LOVED it and would go every year if I could.”

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Transfer Programs

Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) areas of concentration

Agriculture
Art
Biological Science
Business
Chemistry
Communications
Criminal Justice
Drama
Early Childhood Education
Education
Elementary & Special Education
English
General Science

Geographic Information Systems
Health Science
History
Mathematics
Physical Education
Physical Science
Physics
Political Science
Pre-Engineering
Pre-Exercise Science
Psychology
Secondary Education
Sociology

Associate in General Studies General Studies



Career Programs

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degrees

Agricultural Business Management
Computer Information Systems
Diesel & Power Systems Technology
Health Information Management
Logistics & Operations Management
Natural Resources & Conservation
Small Business Management

Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)

Nursing

Certificates

Agricultural Business Management

Agricultural Mechanics
Agricultural Precision Technology
Agricultural Production
Conservation Ecology
Local Food Production
Ornamental Horticulture
Sustainable Food Production

Commercial Driver Training

Basic Commercial Driving
Commercial Driver Training

Computer Information Systems

Computer Forensics
Computer Information Technology
Computer and Network Technician

Computer Information Systems (continued)

Cyber Security
Enterprise Computer Network Specialist
Server Administrator

Diesel & Power Systems Technology

Locomotive Mechanical
Preventive Maintenance
Rail Transportation and Power System Technology

Early Childhood Development

Early Childhood Education

Health Information Management

Medical Assistant
Medical Coding
Medical Insurance/Billing
Medical Records
Medical Transcription
Medical Unit Secretary
Phlebotomy Technician

Logistics & Operations Management

Truck Driver Training

Natural Resources & Conservation

Natural Resources & Conservation

Nursing

Nursing Assistant
Practical Nursing



Small Business Management

Basic Culinary Management
Business Plan Entrepreneurship
Customer Service
Entrepreneurship
Small Office Accounting
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