

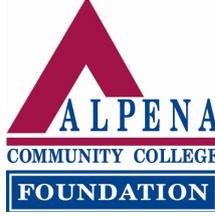
ACC News You Should Know



Getting Sassy at ACC



Nursing Family Bonds



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Dreams Alive



Newton Retires as
TRI0 Director

Getting Sassy at ACC



Sassy Ruehle

We are used to hearing about the new lease on life Alpena Community College gives students, but we are less used to hearing how ACC students help others to live.

Meet Sassy and her friends Peter and Andrew. They teach us all how to help our fellow man—and dog.

Sassy, a chihuahua-mix, arrived at the Huron Humane Society, Inc. (HHS) in rough shape. Just six weeks old at the time, her owners claimed she had been stepped on by her mother and was now too much for them to handle when it came to care. A visit to a veterinarian told a different story: Sassy was diagnosed with a congenital birth defect that left her hip joints unattached to her pelvis and her knees in her front legs disjuncted. Her condition was grave.

Sassy, however, didn't seem to realize she was different. She pulled herself around with her front legs and used her paralyzed back legs like a rudder. While at least one veterinarian recommended euthanizing her, ACC alumna and current Michigan State University student Kaitlyn Tree-MacNeil wanted a second opinion. Kaitlyn, a part-time employee at HHS and full-time student at MSU, used her connections to get Sassy an appointment at MSU veterinary hospital. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit. The appointment would be indefinitely delayed as veterinary care providers navigated best health practices and emergency orders from the governor.

In the meantime, Sassy needed a way to get around and Kaitlyn knew just the person to help. Andrew Paad, instructor of manufacturing technologies/millwright at ACC, is an animal lover who enjoys presenting challenges to his students. He eagerly offered to help create a custom-fitted wheelchair for Sassy, with whom he quickly fell in love upon meeting her at HHS, which sits on ACC property just down the street from Andrew's classrooms at Besser Technical Center.

Peter Huizinga, a manufacturing technology major at ACC and animal lover himself, jumped right in as a member of the Manufacturing Technology Group to help and spent part of his spring break volunteering to help build the wheelchair for Sassy.

Sassy, Kaitlyn, and HHS President Cindy Johnson visited ACC right before the college was closed to the public in response to the pandemic to get Sassy fitted for her new wheels. That day, ACC auto service/repair instructor Dustin Ruehle just happened to be visiting ACC with his family for another kind of wheelchair fitting. Six-year-old Kya Ruehle is paralyzed from the waist down and battles Lennox Gastaut Syndrome, a complicated and rare form of childhood-onset epilepsy. Auto lab students had been refurbishing Kya's electric wheelchair as a class project and she was there that day to test out her improved ride. Dustin had learned about Sassy from Andrew when the latter instructor visited the auto lab in search of special-sized bolts for the wheelchair he was building Sassy. When Andrew mentioned that Sassy would be coming in to test her wheelchair the same day Kya would be there, Dustin knew the two special little girls had to meet.

"That day, after my daughter test-drove her new equipment, we visited Andrew's lab to meet Sassy and watch her test out her new wheelchair too."

Sassy's supporters from HHS and ACC watched as Andrew and his student Peter patiently and methodically made adjustments to the wheelchair and harness holding Sassy in place so that the puppy's twisted back legs were lifted off the ground and her front paws didn't have too much weight to support.

Seeing the tiny puppy struggle to figure out how to move in the strange new contraption touched Dustin and his family.

"Having a daughter who is disabled from the waist down and is fighting a miserable battle with Lennox Gastaut Syndrome, our family has over six years of background caring for a special needs individual. I understood the pain the dog was contending with and my heart immediately went out to her when I heard they were having a hard time finding the right home for her."

The seed was planted for Sassy to join the Ruehle family and Dustin filled out an application to adopt the puppy. HHS, however, wanted to get a better idea of Sassy's long-term prognosis before sending her to live in her forever home, so they put off choosing the perfect home for Sassy until after her scheduled veterinary appointment at MSU, which at that point had not yet been canceled. As the pandemic's local impact unfolded, however, and gubernatorial executive orders shut down non-essential veterinary care, HHS knew it wasn't in Sassy's best interest for her to be in foster care when she could be living in her forever

home. After going through all the adoption applications for Sassy, the Ruehles emerged as the very best choice for the puppy.

According to Dustin, Sassy and Kya are the best of friends and the puppy has settled right into the Ruehle home.

“My daughter and Sassy immediately fell in love her first day home. Kya already taught Sassy to play tug-of-war and fetch. When it’s time for bed, Sassy HAS to be at the foot of Kya’s bed. If I don’t get Sassy up in bed with her quickly enough, I immediately start catching flak from the both of them! This also may play another life-saving advantage for my daughter. Many dogs eventually start to pick up on seizure activity from their family members. Sassy may one day be able to warn us of a night time seizure if our equipment fails to do so.”

As for Sassy’s physical issues, the Ruehles are committed to helping her live the best life possible.

“Her physical limitations don’t worry me as much as they did when she was a young pup. She has been getting stronger and adapting to her disability. When Michigan State begins accepting non-emergency care once again, we will be taking her down there to see if there is anything more we can do for her.”

Until then, Sassy is tooling around in her custom ACC wheelchair, courtesy of Andrew Paad and his student, Peter. Pressure has been taken off Sassy’s joints and she’s able to explore the world around her, just like any puppy is eager to do. The Ruehles have discovered that Sassy is incredibly resilient, despite her fragile-looking exterior.

“Her biggest issue that could cause injury is dragging her rear legs beneath her. The friction can wear through her fur and into her skin. This is where her wheelchair is very helpful. When she’s not in her wheelchair and approaches concrete, I’ll ask her if she wants me to carry her across the concrete to the grass. When she was younger she’d always want to be carried, but as she’s getting stronger she’ll ignore me and bunny hop across rough surfaces. Her legs are showing no signs of injury so I trust her judgment.”

The Ruehles judgement when it came to Sassy guided them to the perfect dog for their family, where being different is celebrated. Sassy is loved and cared for in a way her former caretakers at the Huron Humane Society only dreamed was possible.

“Finding the perfect family to give Sassy the very best life is heartwarming,” said HHS President Cindy Johnson. “The Ruehles have opened their hearts and home to a special needs little spitfire knowing nothing is guaranteed with her health. HHS is thrilled to have found Sassy a wonderful family and look forward to following all their adventures together.”

Thanks to Andrew Paad and the Manufacturing Technology Group at ACC, Sassy will be able to roll through life alongside Kya.

To donate to the Manufacturing Technology Group—which is responsible with their advisor, Andrew Paad, for designing and making Sassy’s wheelchair—to allow them to continue to fund special projects like Sassy’s wheelchair, contact the Alpena Community College Foundation.

Nursing Family Bonds



Melissa & Michael Fournier

Nursing seems to be all in the family for the Fourniers.

The children of two former ACC instructors, Melissa and Michael Fournier have both achieved the distinction of earning doctorates in nursing after discovering their love of the profession while students at Alpena Community College.

Michael, who is the older sibling by seven years, became interested in healthcare as a profession through his work in the Civil Air Patrol, the civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force. Michael was in the CAP cadet program for teenagers when he enrolled at ACC and began exploring his career options.

“As a cadet, I attended an EMT-B course and was a first responder. I attended ACC a year before entering the program and at the end had all of the prerequisites for the nursing program. My academic counselor at the college suggested that I look into nursing as a bridge to a career in medicine. I entered the LPN program and found my calling. I knew this was what I was meant to do and decided to make nursing my career.”

For Michael’s younger sister Melissa, medicine had long been a goal, but she had been intent on becoming a thoracic surgeon when she enrolled at ACC. She figured that the nursing program would be a natural stepping stone to a career as a surgeon. After a semester in the LPN program at ACC, Melissa realized nursing was what she wanted to do.

“It wasn’t until I saw what nurses actually did in the real world did I realize it was my calling.”

The education the Fourniers received at ACC prepared each sibling well for what laid ahead. Michael now remembers the year he spent earning his LPN certification as, “...one of the most demanding and rewarding years of my life.”

Melissa describes her time as a student at ACC as “fantastic” and adds, “ACC provided an education that prepared me for the demands of the profession.”

Remembering favorite instructors, both siblings fondly mention ACC educators who made a mark on them.

“Judy Beyer was my favorite and toughest instructor. She expected the best out of us and worked hard to teach us what we needed to know to be successful in a high-stress complicated environment,” Michael said.

Melissa cites anatomy instructor John McGill as being fantastic and said Mark Milostan left an indelible mark on her as a student.

“Mark’s dry humor made the class great if you were paying attention.”

For all their similarities in their career interests, Michael and Melissa took very different paths in earning their doctoral degrees. After graduating from ACC’s LPN program, Michael transferred to the University of Michigan and studied to earn a Bachelor of Science in

Nursing (BSN) while working as an LPN in nursing homes and doing in-home care. From there, he entered the workforce as a registered nurse before returning to U of M in 1998 to earn a master's degree to become a nurse practitioner specializing in gerontological nursing. He worked across the spectrum of nursing, practicing in nursing homes, behavioral health, home care, oncology, telemetry, trauma, neurology, education, and has served in progressive managerial roles. In autumn 2019, Michael earned a doctorate in nursing practice from Chamberlain University School of Nursing. He currently manages multiple acute care units in a hospital system in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Not bad for a student his high school counselor deemed not "college material".

Melissa had a job interview with ACC the Monday after receiving her RN pin from the college. In short order, she became the lab coordinator for the ACC nursing program and started what would become a decades-long (and counting) career at ACC. While working at the college, Melissa earned a BSN through Lake Superior State University. From 1999 to 2003 she was a cardiac nurse at what was then Alpena Regional Medical Center before being hired by ACC as an adjunct instructor. Along the way Melissa also worked as a camp nurse, in a doctor's office, and at a long-term care facility. As she worked, Melissa continued her education at Wayne State University and earned a master's degree in community health nursing. It was then that she became a full-time faculty member of ACC's nursing department. In 2014 Melissa was selected to become the director of the nursing program at ACC, where she has guided the education of the next generation of nurses. Not resting on her laurels and serving as an example to her students, Melissa earned a doctorate in nursing practice from Chamberlain University in April of this year.

Both Fournier siblings have great advice for the nurses training to follow in their footsteps. To new nurses, Michael stresses the importance of questioning yourself and others.

"I would say work hard, listen to understand and comprehend, and be yourself. Do not be negatively influenced to do things that are not best practice or policy. Ask questions about your practice, then either answer them with current evidence or answer the question through research and quality improvement. Be involved in decisions that impact your practice--this is the only way to ensure that nurses have a voice in decision making."

Melissa falls back on ACC's excellence in nursing education when considering her students at the college.

"As our slogan says, 'Something so close can take you so far.' This is the truth. The opportunities that ACC has afforded me has given me the chance to impact the health of the world. Every journey begins with just one step and it is never too late to take that step. The program at ACC has the highest standards and is staffed with impeccably gifted instructors whose mission is to create safe and competent nurses."

Michael agrees with his sister about the quality of education ACC provided to launch him into the upper echelon of his profession.

"I am proud to be an alumnus of ACC and see great benefit of the education you get at a community college. It was the stepping stone I needed to begin my lifelong academic journey."

ACC's role in providing the educational foundation for both Fournier siblings, who have both ascended to the highest level of their profession, is proof that students can receive a world-class education right in their own backyard.

Give \$25 to Keep Dreams Alive

The 25th Annual Robert M. Granum Memorial Scramble for Scholarships is once again taking over River's Edge Golf Club and we need your help to make it the best scramble to date!



2019 ACC Scramble for Scholarships

With more students than ever before in need of financial assistance to make their dreams of a better life through higher education possible, the ACC Foundation is launching the Give 25 to Keep Dreams Alive initiative. We ask all who value a practical higher education for area students to donate \$25 to the ACC Foundation to support deserving scholars in need. If you choose to honor the silver anniversary of the scramble by donating \$25, you'll get your name on a banner at the event, signifying your support of ACC students in need.

Golfers, now is the time to secure your spot in the scramble by registering at River's Edge Golf Club or at the ACC Foundation office in the Besser Technical Center at ACC. Registration forms are also available on the ACC website.

Six athletes over 24 years have won the scramble four times: Mike Cadarette, Chris Limback, Dave McDonald, Bill Peterson, Adam Peterson, and Phil Straley. Will one or more of these golfers emerge with a coveted fifth title? Will some of the three-year winners move up to the quadruple champion level? Or will the scramble celebrate its 25th year with a first-time winner? Don't miss your chance to reign supreme! Register today.

Robert M. Granum Memorial Scramble for Scholarships Champions

1996: Jon T. Crow, Larry Hanner, Jim Vivian II, Ron Werner

1997: Bill Benson, Mike Cadarette, Chris Limback, Dave McDonald

1998: Jim Boldrey, Tim Fitzpatrick, Dave Karschnick Sr., Bill Yahne

1999: Bill Benson, Mike Cadarette, Chris Limback, Dave McDonald

2000: Chuck Atwell, Steve Lewis, Charley Rosebush, Paul Sabourin

2001: Mike Cadarette, Chris Limback, Dave McDonald, John Pintar

2002: Mike Cadarette, Chris Limback, Dave McDonald, John Pintar

2003: Tom Grueter, Max Lindsay, Tim Muszynski, Bill Talaski

2004: Tom Bennett, Jerry Hochstetler, Bob Palmbo, Roger Reddinger

2005: Tom Grueter, Max Lindsay, Tim Muszynski, Bill Talaski

2006: Jason Cramer, Derek Seguin, Kyle Wirgau, Travis Wyman

2007: Jim Boldrey, Tim Fitzpatrick, Jim Masters, Al Senchuk
 2008: Eric Krebs, Bob Piper, Dan White, Bill Yahne
 2009: Jim Boldrey, Tim Fitzpatrick, Jim Masters, Al Senchuk
 2010: Angela Bartosh, Tyler Bartosh, Ryan Diethelm, Eric Lindsay
 2011: Chuck Ingle, Tanner Ingle, Al Skiba, Jake Skiba
 2012: Bill Peterson, Erik Peterson, Jerry Skiba, Bill Yahne
 2013: Jerry Skiba, Phil Straley, Adam Peterson, Bill Peterson
 2014: Bob Centala, Harvey Marlatt, Jack McCoy, Todd Skiba
 2015: Dick Boyce, Adam Peterson, Bill Peterson, Phil Straley
 2016: Ken Geyer, Sue Geyer, Bob Piper, Dan White
 2017: Harvey Marlatt, Chris McCoy, Jack McCoy, Brian Natzel
 2018: Bill Peterson, Adam Peterson, Todd Skiba, Phil Straley
 2019: Adam Peterson, Erik Peterson, Todd Skiba, Phil Straley

TRiO Says Goodbye to Longtime Director

If nobody you know well went to college, how would you know how the process worked? If you come from a family barely scraping by, how would you imagine you could realistically afford college? If everyone you've ever known has worked one kind of job, how would you know about other kinds of jobs—or careers—you might be good at?



Bob Newton

Northeast Michigan is one of the poorest regions in the state and is without a four-year institution of higher learning. Little access to the kinds of resources that invite opportunity make it difficult for kids to imagine what is possible. That makes what Robert Newton has done the past 26 years as the director of the TRiO Talent Search Program at ACC all the more vital.

Having just retired after a long career at the college, Bob's positive impact on students across Northeast Lower Michigan began in November of 1994, when he took a job at ACC as the director of a single grant that funded Talent Search services helping to guide disadvantaged students with college-potential in Alpena, Alcona, Posen, Hillman, and Atlanta to higher learning. Over the ensuing 26 years, Bob added a second grant that expanded the reach of services to also include Johannesburg, Rogers City, Onaway, Inland Lakes, Cheboygan, Oscoda, Tawas, Hale, Whittemore-Prescott, West Branch, Mio-Ausable, and Fairview school districts. During Bob's tenure, thousands of disadvantaged students from Northeast Michigan graduated from college and hundreds earned post-graduate degrees, achievements made possible in part by Bob's hard work.

Started as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, the TRiO Talent Search (TTS) Program, of which Bob was director for almost 27 years, helps show disadvantaged kids what's possible by providing academic, career, and financial counseling to students while steering them towards postsecondary education, offering TTS participants help each step of the way. Some of the services ACC's TTS program offers are:

- Summer camps exploring different careers, so students are exposed to different kinds of professions while they learn new skills. (One camp next year will be Go for the Launch, where astronauts will be in Alpena to work with kids on projects that could be used in space.)
- "Interest inventories" to help students discover career directions.
- College field trips to explore various universities
- College application fee waivers
- ACT/SAT fee waivers
- College advising
- Financial aid information
- Financial literacy education
- Study skills support
- Nurturing

Because of Bob's leadership and devotion to helping disadvantaged students unlock the unlimited potential a college degree provides, 90% of ACC's TTS participants have gone on to attend college in each of Bob's 26 years as TRiO Talent Search's director.

With a master's degree in counseling from CMU, Bob's advice to his TTS participants goes beyond which colleges and universities offer a certain program or how to get the most out of financial aid.

"I remind students to manage their time and money or someone else will manage it for them--and it will be for that someone's benefit, not theirs. I also give them the formula for a fulfilled life, G+P=C which stand for their gifts (something they do better than most) plus passion (something they love to do) equals their calling (which is their purpose). If they can do their calling (purpose) they will have happiness and never have to work a day in their life because they would do it anyway. I have been fortunate to have used this formula myself. Even on my worst days it has been AWESOME!"

Bob's plans for retirement include spending time with his wife, seeing his children and grandkids, travelling, and using his skills, experience, and vision to help others achieve success, because, Bob says, "That is who I am."

On behalf of the 1300 students TRiO shepherded this past school year alone, along with the thousands of other kids who went through the TRiO program over the past 26 years, ACC

honors Bob's enthusiastic leadership and passion for his job and thanks him for his service.

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