



Staff Newsletter of Thomas Edison State College • June 2011

New Hire Ambassador Program

Making new employees feel welcomed



Heather Brooks

“The goal is for new hires to feel welcomed, well informed and part of the communities at both the College and the Library.”

- Heather Brooks
Associate Director
Office of Human Resources

Thomas Edison State College recently implemented the New Hire Ambassador Program to assist new employees in the early months of their employment with the College and the New Jersey State Library (NJSL).

The New Hire Ambassador Program matches each new employee with a more experienced employee for a period of up to six months, with two main goals: to provide the new employee with a point of contact for general questions regarding daily operational issues; and to help the new employee integrate with the College and the Library by providing access to someone who is familiar with the culture and expectations.

“We were more than excited about the New Hire Ambassador Program,” said **Heather Brooks**, associate director, Office of Human Resources. “The program was created as a first step in enhancing our onboarding program for new hires. We have a long-range plan that encompasses many segments that will be introduced during the year.”

The criteria to serve as an ambassador includes a strong sense of professionalism, interpersonal skills and a broad understanding of and commitment to Thomas Edison State College and the New Jersey State

Library’s culture and vision. Training and guidance, which includes a checklist of items to review with the new employee, is provided to those who wish to act as an ambassador.

“The goal is for new hires to feel welcomed, well informed and part of the communities at both the College and Library,” Brooks added. “We are very excited, but not surprised, that we have so many employees willing to volunteer to be ambassadors at both institutions. I am looking forward to the positive feedback and results from both new hires and long-term employees!”

Coordinated by the Office of Human Resources, the program already has 12 volunteers. Ambassadors from Thomas Edison State College are: **Dave Anderson**, assistant vice president, Learner Services; **Debbie Lutz**, secretarial assistant, Office of the Vice President and Provost; **Alicia Malone**, assistant dean, School of Business and Management; **Maureen Marcus**, assistant to the Vice President for Planning and Research; **Estelle Reeves**, administrative assistant, Heavin School of Arts and Sciences; **Ryanne Screws**, assistant to the Dean, School of Applied Science and Technology; **Todd Siben**, senior program advisor, Office of Learner Services; **Carol Smith**, secretarial

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Focus On: Susan Fischer

Better clear the aisles because, in addition to her usual feats in the School of Business and Management, **Susan Fischer** may even throw in a back handspring or two. The administrative assistant by day is also a cheerleading coach who has prepared more than 2,000 novice-to-advanced cheerleaders from five to 18 years of age to compete for national titles.

"My first love was cheerleading. I was introduced to the sport when I became a cheerleader in the late 70s for Freehold Pop Warner," noted Fischer, who was also a cheerleader in the Freehold Township, N.J., public school district and, more recently, for Brookdale Community College. "I began coaching cheerleaders at the age of 16 and, by the time I was 21, served on the Freehold Pop Warner Board of Directors as cheer director." In the interim, Fischer coached children at St. Rose of Lima School in Freehold and established a cheer program for Freehold Borough Recreation. She is currently affiliated with the World Cup All Stars and competes nationally with her team, the Milkyways, who recently won four national championships and placed second in two others.



Susan Fischer
administrative assistant in the
School of Business and
Management

A full-time College staff member since 2005, Fischer began as a temporary employee, filling in for a staff in Human Resources on medical leave and, later, in the graduate programs area.

"Every day in my current position in the School of Business and Management is a different day," noted Fischer, who is also a member of the College's Brightest Lights committee. "One minute I am creating letters of agreement and the next I am setting up meetings and arranging travel. The daily tasks change constantly and, along the way, I have had the opportunity to work with different departments and many College staff members. I currently report to the School's Dean **Dr. Susan Gilbert** and

also work with two outstanding assistant deans, **Alicia Malone** and **Camilla King-Lewis**."

"Susan Fischer has not only helped enormously in my orientation to the College, she is clearly the cheerleader in the School of Business and Management," noted Gilbert. "Susan has a lot to do with our internal culture of morale and support – which is unequaled in my experience – and she is great at what she does."

Fischer is now channeling her inner champion to achieve a new milestone.

"I am currently earning my Thomas Edison State College degree. Years of my work life were spent at some great companies, including Six Flags Great Adventure and McGraw-Hill Companies, where I gathered very useful professional experience. My decision to return to school did not come easily, and for a time it was only a dream. However, with a little help from my family and encouragement from my friends and coworkers, it is now a reality." In spite of an often frenetic schedule, Fischer puts her family first. She and husband Michael have been married for

nine years and enjoy the beach, concerts, movies and family gatherings.

"Michael and his children, Megan and Ryan, and our granddaughter, Natalie, are my life," she said. "We spend a lot of time together, and I am very close with both my immediate and extended families. We enjoy crabbing, water parks and rollercoasters, and are avid baseball, football and college basketball fans. Baseball-wise, we are a house divided – I am a Yankees fan, my husband is a Braves fan and my stepson, Ryan, is a diehard Mets fan." The family's getaway is spent at their timeshare in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

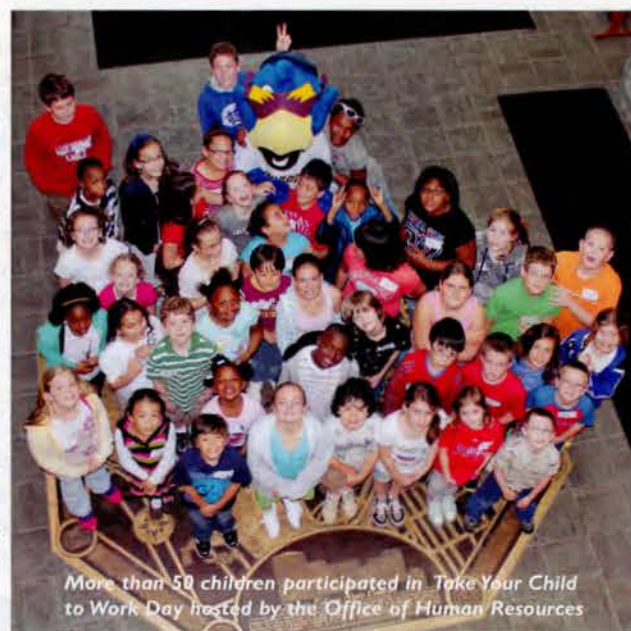
College Gets Kids to Work

The sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews of Thomas Edison State College staff enjoyed an opportunity to see the College through grown up eyes on April 28, for "Take Your Child to Work Day."

Director of Community Affairs and Government Relations **Robin Walton** kicked off the day with a welcome and presentation. The day progressed with Careers Bingo and the New Jersey State Museum's Planetarium show "Passport to the Universe." Participants, pictured in the photo to the right, gathered with Boomer, the Trenton Thunder Baseball team's mascot,

prior to their pizza party.

"Both my son, Leroy (pictured in the center of the second row wearing white shirt with red stripes) and I felt that this was a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and learn new things," said **Alisha Pendleton**, associate director in the Office of Financial Aid. "The program, hosted by the Office of Human Resources, was well structured and allowed the children to engage in fun while learning. A heart felt 'thank you' to the College's staff for your commitment to our children and to lifelong learning! We are looking forward to next year's Take Your Child to Work Day."



More than 50 children participated in Take Your Child to Work Day hosted by the Office of Human Resources

Ambassador Program

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assistant, Collegiate Credit Assessment Center; and **Connie South**, associate fellow, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. Library ambassadors are: Jose Cardona, principal industrial assistant, NJSL; Andrew O'Rahilly, program assistant, Talking Book and Braille Center; and Michele Stricker, deputy director, NJSL.

The Office of Human Resources will assess the program on an annual basis and make changes as necessary. Each new employee will be asked to complete a short assessment form at the conclusion of participation in the program. In addition, ambassadors will be invited to meet with the Office of Human Resources to review their experiences and exchange ideas for improving the program.



Dr. Adrian C. Zappala (left) and Mentor Mark Kassop during the Lunch and Learn on Middle States Work Group Five, which focused on the general education recommendations and initiatives that the College will pursue in the near future.

Congratulations

Jennifer Guerrero, associate director of the Annual Fund and Donor Relations, and her husband, Medardo, are the proud parents of a baby boy, Medardo Jr. Born on April 6, Medardo Jr. weighed 5 pounds.

Li-yun Young, program assistant, Office of Alumni Affairs, and her husband, Josh, welcomed daughter Joelle Leah Young into their family on May 6. Joelle Leah, who weighed 6 pounds, 14 ounces, joins big brother Luke.

Staff Activities



Terri Tallon-Hamill

Terri Tallon-Hamill, executive assistant to the president, Office of the President, has been appointed to the Burlington County Advisory Council on Women. Members of the council are selected and appointed by the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders to address health and social service issues that affect women and families in Burlington County. The council is responsible for educating women on health issues, developing career information sessions, honoring outstanding women, incorporating women's history into county school curriculum and promoting legislative discussions.

Dr. Adrian C. Zappala, assistant dean, Educational Leadership, Heaviness School of Arts and Sciences, delivered a presentation entitled "The Technological Competence of Educational Leaders: A Review of Best Practices in School Leader Preparation" at the 2011 Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference in Nashville, Tenn., in March.

Senior Program Advisors **Carla Colburn**, School of Applied Science and Technology, and **Todd Siben**, Liberal Arts and Sciences, attended the Region 2 NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Conference entitled, "Looking Back to Move Forward - Entering NACADA's Fourth Decade!" This conference was held in Charlottesville, Va., April 6-8. Colburn worked as a volunteer at the conference and also served as a proposal reader for the National NACADA Conference that will be held this fall in Denver, Co.

David Hoffiezer, director, Office of Admissions, and **Robert Burton**, assistant director, Office of Military and Veteran Education, participated in the 1st annual South Jersey Law Enforcement Outdoor Challenge, a mini-triathlon, on April 9. Hoffiezer is a volunteer fire fighter for Medford Fire Department Station 252, and the pair ran the event representing the fire department and took 1st place for the fire division. This event raises money in memory of police officers killed in the line of duty. Open to the public, two-person teams challenge themselves in a 3.1 mile run, 10 mile bike, 2 mile canoe and a another 3.1 mile run, for a total of 18.2 miles.



Susan C. Cobb

Susan C. Cobb, PhD, RN, undergraduate program advisor, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, had an article, "Social Presence, Satisfaction and Perceived Learning of RN-to-BSN Students in Web-based Nursing Courses," published in the March/April 2011 issue of *Nursing Education Perspectives*, the peer-reviewed journal of the National League for Nursing. Cobb was also invited to do a poster presentation on the same topic at a research symposium sponsored by Villanova University College of Nursing on March 15.

Jennifer M. Montone, assistant director of Purchasing, Office of Administrative Services, was recently re-elected to the City of Burlington Board of Education for an additional three-year term. Furthermore, Montone was nominated and elected vice president of the Board of Education by her peers for the 2011-2012 year.

Dr. P. Henry van Zyl, vice provost, Directed Independent Adult Learning (DIAL), attended 2010 FIPSE Annual Project Director's Meeting, Washington, D.C., to provide progress report on the College's FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) grant.

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Welcome New Staff



Fred Brand has been appointed director of Corporate and Foundation Relations in the Office of Development. Brand is located on the 5th floor of the Kelsey Building and may be reached at extension 2093.



Dr. Ann M. Mester has been appointed assistant dean in the Heaven School of Arts and Sciences. Mester is located on the 2nd floor of the Townhouses and may be reached at extension 3177.



John Thurber, vice president for Public Affairs, recently presented the Kristin Appelget Civic Engagement Award to area high school students on behalf of the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Foundation presents the awards each year to high school juniors to promote the goal of civic engagement and to acknowledge excellence in community service. **Roxanne Globis**, director of Alumni Affairs, served on the awards selection committee. Flanking Karen Jezierny (front row, center), director of Public Affairs, Princeton University, are (from left) area high school award recipients Arabi Moorthy, Sahana Jayaraman, Kaustav Shah and Kunal Nischal. Kristin Appelget, director of Regional and Community Affairs, Princeton University, is first from left in back row.

Staff Activities

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Additional activities included breakout seminars on recent FIPSE grant requirement changes and a one-on-one session with FIPSE staff. He also represented the College at the semiannual National University Technology Network (NUTN) Mid-Year Board Meeting to discuss recent industry changes in distance-based education practices, formulate strategies for future growth in the online education market and discuss internal board decisions. Van Zyl is an active board member. Van Zyl also attended the Presidents' Forum on Higher Education, which dealt with the Department of Education's new regulations for Higher Education and online learning in particular. Recently, van Zyl presented, Digital Teaching & Professional Development Webinar, which explored the shift in classroom dynamics. Topics featured included: best practices of teachers, school districts and higher education institutions that are embracing technology to improve student learning. The webinar can be viewed at: <http://event.on24.com/r.htm?e=278666&s=1&k=3AC24169DD2F790E1FB4E1FC02278564>.



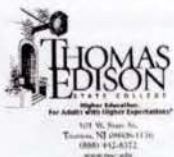
AFT Local 4277 thanks everyone for their donations and participation in the Easter basket project for Children's Home Society of New Jersey. Forty-four treat-filled baskets were provided for local foster families and children.



Dr. Joseph Youngblood II, dean, John S. Watson School of Public Service and Continuing Studies, and **Ana I. Berdecia**, MEd, senior fellow/director, Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, presented the paper, "Closing the Cultural Gap: Transforming Early Childhood Teachers' Thinking about Culture and Language," at the American Educational Research Association annual conference on April 12 in New Orleans.



Pictured at left are some of the participants of the newly implemented Thomas Edison State College/New Jersey State Library **Weight Watcher's At Work** program. Together, 38 employees have lost more than 364 pounds in 11 weeks! All are welcome to join, if interested please contact Office of Human Resources.



Capital Campus is produced by the Office of Communications at Thomas Edison State College. To submit a story idea for the newsletter or for more information, please contact Linda Soltis at extension 2065.