

A remarkable journey



Evans Kaame

This year's recipient of the Community College President's Award in Honor of Val Ogden is Evans Kaame, a student who has been through much and traveled far to pursue his educational dreams.

About Evans Kaame

Evans Kaame was born and raised in a small community in northwestern Kenya. After his father died, the family was thrown into hardship and poverty. "I watched my younger siblings crying as my mom left early in the morning and came home at 9 p.m.," he recalled. "We didn't know if we were going to eat at night or not."

When Kaame was in his early teens, he decided to leave home and live on the streets to ease the burden on his mother and siblings. "The street was a new life with so many barriers ... but because tragedies happen in life, I had to do this," he said. "I had no other option. I fought cold nights in the street ... being on drugs and breaking into people's homes. I had to survive. I had no choice."

In 2009, the course of Kaame's life changed once again, when a charity called New Hope Children entered him into its program providing housing and education to street children. At New Hope, Kaame's academic potential became realized. He graduated from high school in 2016 at the top of his class. However, his challenges were not yet over: He could not afford to enroll in college in Kenya.

New Hope's founder, Rachael Swanson, lives in Vancouver and graduated from Clark College. She encouraged Kaame to apply to Clark, and in 2018, after securing a student visa and scholarship funding from Clark College Foundation, Kaame enrolled at Clark as an international student.

Kaame has thrived at Clark College. This past academic year, he has served as student government president. He has run on the college's track-and-field and cross-country teams. He has volunteered with multiple local organizations, as well as at Clark College's Penguin Pantry and as a Peer Mentor for international students. And he has earned a Grade Point Average of more than 3.9 while doing so.

After graduating from Clark College with his transfer Associate in Arts degree, Kaame intends to continue his studies, focusing on business administration, political science, and comparative religious studies. He hopes to one day create a global initiative focused on leadership and management.

About the Community College President's Award

The Community College President's Award in honor of Val Ogden is given each year to a student who has completed their studies at Clark College and is transferring to Washington State University Vancouver. They receive full tuition and fees

for two years while they finish their bachelor's degree at WSU Vancouver. The award is traditionally announced during that year's Commencement ceremony.

Clark's Career Launch putting students to work



An open house for Clark College's Automotive Technologies in 2019 showcased the college's partnership with Dick Hannah Automotive.

The State of Washington has recognized Clark College for its outstanding work in Career Launch programs that support student learning and employment. Two Clark College automotive programs have been endorsed by the state's Career Launch Initiative. That good news was announced

April 1.

The **Hannah initiative for Technician Education** (HiTECC) supporting area Honda/Acura, Audi, and the Dick Hannah dealerships and the **Toyota Technician & Education Network** (T-TEN) supporting area Toyota/Lexus have been accepted into the state network of Career Launch programs.

“We have forged dealer partnerships that have helped make our programs successful. Our ‘Earn and Learn’ model really complements those dealers who have a desire to ‘grow their own’ technician,” said Tonia Haney, head of Clark College Automotive Technologies. “Students completing these programs will have the experience and certifications to start their career. Most importantly, our graduates will have a job in a dealership that is invested in helping them grow into a successful technician.”

Opportunities to expand



Kristin Kepner completed the automotive program in 2017 and is

currently working at Toyota of Portland.

This endorsement allows Clark College to apply for additional state grants to invest in equipment and technology. It also helps the programs expand to increase the number of the students and automotive dealership partners.

Both programs train technicians to work in the automotive industry. Clark's students enrolled in a Dealer Ready program participate in paid internships, receive factory certified training, and graduate with credentials from highly respected automotive industry organizations including the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

Students learn current automotive technology by working in a 14,000-square-foot facility on state-of-the-art simulators and late-model vehicles donated by local industry.

"Because of our collaboration with Clark College and the T-TEN program, we are able to strengthen our dealership's core, position our company for the future, and put our people in a position to win," said Dan Morton, Shop Manager and Diagnostic Specialist at Kuni Lexus of Portland.

High-Demand Jobs



Governor Jay Inslee meets Clark College Mechatronics students February 20, 2020 at a meeting at SEH America with Career Launch and community partners in Southwest Washington. Clark's graduates are in high demand by dealerships and experience an accelerated path to better pay and benefits. Clark College is certified by the Automotive Service Excellence Education Foundation and has been training automotive technicians for more than 40 years.

Clark now has three programs that are Career Launch endorsed. Clark's Mechatronics program was certified last fall, working with business partner SEH-America. With Career Launch support, additional high-tech companies in Clark County plan to launch similar partnerships this fall.

In February, Governor Jay Inslee visited SEH-America to meet with Clark students and the Career Launch partners to learn more about the program and hear from students.

Students have the benefit of working a part-time job in the automotive industry. The company pays the student's tuition while they attend Clark to earn their certificate or degree. The partnership relies on the college's ability to work with employers ensuring curriculum is relevant to the local industry. It's a partnership that maximizes student success.

"This is a great opportunity for Clark students," said Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill, Interim President of Clark College. "Working strategically with our industry partners, we can help develop the talent pipeline that will allow local companies to grow and will provide outstanding opportunities for our students to succeed."

Clark College named Best for Vets



Clark College employees serve cake at the opening of the Veterans Resource Center in 2014.

Clark College has been named a 2020 Best for Vets college in the Career and Technical College category by *Military Times*.

For 10 years, *Military Times* has conducted an extensive, editorially independent, objective study evaluating the many factors that help make colleges and universities a good fit for service members, military veterans, and their families. The final rankings for 2020 can be found here. More details about the rankings can be found on militarytimes.com.

“This is the third year in a row that Clark College has been recognized as a Best for Vets college,” said Clark College Veterans Resource Center Interim Manager Dave Daly. “I think it speaks to the systems we’ve built to support our student veterans and ensure that they are successful in their transition from military to academic life.”

Opened in 2014, the Veterans Resource Center offers student veterans a wide range of services and resources, from free tutoring to help accessing GI Bill benefits. The space includes couches for socializing with fellow veterans, computer labs, shelves and racks of free textbooks and clothing, and staff who can help connect student veterans with resources or just listen to their experiences without judgment. Additionally, the center has partnered with Clark College Dental Hygiene and the American Legion Post 176 to provide subsidized dental care to student veterans.

Currently, 304 Clark College students identify as veterans.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Clark College celebrates ten years at Columbia Tech

Business and community leaders joined Clark College on Monday, October 14 for a Vancouver Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting to celebrate a milestone. Clark College first opened Columbia Tech Center in east Clark County in fall 2009.

Responding to feedback from employers and residents in East Vancouver, the college refreshed its offerings at Columbia Tech Center to be a hub for business and technical education.

“Columbia Tech Center is today a bustling campus on the east

side with a wide range of programs available to our students. We are grateful for the community's support over the years and renew our commitment to serving the community in a way that best meets their needs."

Clark College Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill



ASCC President Evans Kaame and Clark College Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill

The college has worked to create a series of course offerings this fall that will allow students to pursue career-oriented higher education in subjects that include business, information technology, computer support, and project management—all without having to travel to the college's main campus near downtown Vancouver. Most classes are scheduled to run just two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), allowing students to plan their studies around work and/or life obligations.

We are committed to offering business classes at Columbia Tech to provide our students viable pathways forward to earning the new skills that they need to be successful—whether that be a single course, a certificate or a degree.”

Professor Adnan Hamideh, Division Chair, Clark College Business Administration Department

Hamideh is also preparing to create a business degree path for office administration, he said. The school already offers accounting, marketing, management and business administration. About 7,000 full-time students take business classes at Clark College he said.

Additionally, Clark College Economic and Community Development, which provides non-credit continuing education and customized training, has relocated to the Columbia Tech Center location.

Last month, ECD moved its business classes from a leased space in downtown Vancouver to the Columbia Tech Center, said Kevin Witte, vice president of the program. The move was in part a way to help the college save money, but it also moved students

closer to some of the city's larger employers, including WaferTech.

Witte said participating employers include Boeing Co, and they request specific skills for students to learn, which the college incorporates into its training.



Business leaders take a tour of Clark College's Mechatronics program at Clark College Columbia Tech Center. Business and community leaders toured the college's nationally recognized Mechatronics lab. The engineering program focuses on both electrical and mechanical systems. It is a foundational training program for advanced manufacturing.

Graduates earn an average of \$88,000 as mechatronics engineers and 100 percent of Clark's graduates are finding jobs in their chosen field.

The college has also expanded the range of class offerings serving Running Start students, a popular state program that allows high school students to earn college credit, tuition-free, while still in high school. The expanded offerings provide more opportunities for families with children attending high schools in the eastern portion of the college's service district, which covers Camas, Washougal, and parts of the Columbia Gorge.

ASCC President Evans Kaame spoke to the business leaders and elected officials thanking them for their support of Clark College students over the years.

"Because you care, students at Clark have opportunities to succeed. Our students are better prepared to go out and do great things."

ASCC President Evans Kaame



ASCC President Evans Kaame and Vancouver Chamber of Commerce staff

Supporting Social Justice Leadership at Clark



Chippi Bello, *far right top*, with the cohort of Social Justice Leaders from Washington State.



Left to right:
Hanan Al-Zubaidy,
Kayla Escott, and
Chippi Bello

Congratulations to Hanan Al-Zubaidy, Chippi Bello, and Kayla Escott, Clark College's three representatives at the Social

Justice Leadership Institute this year. They have demonstrated a commitment to making our college a more inclusive and social justice-minded place.

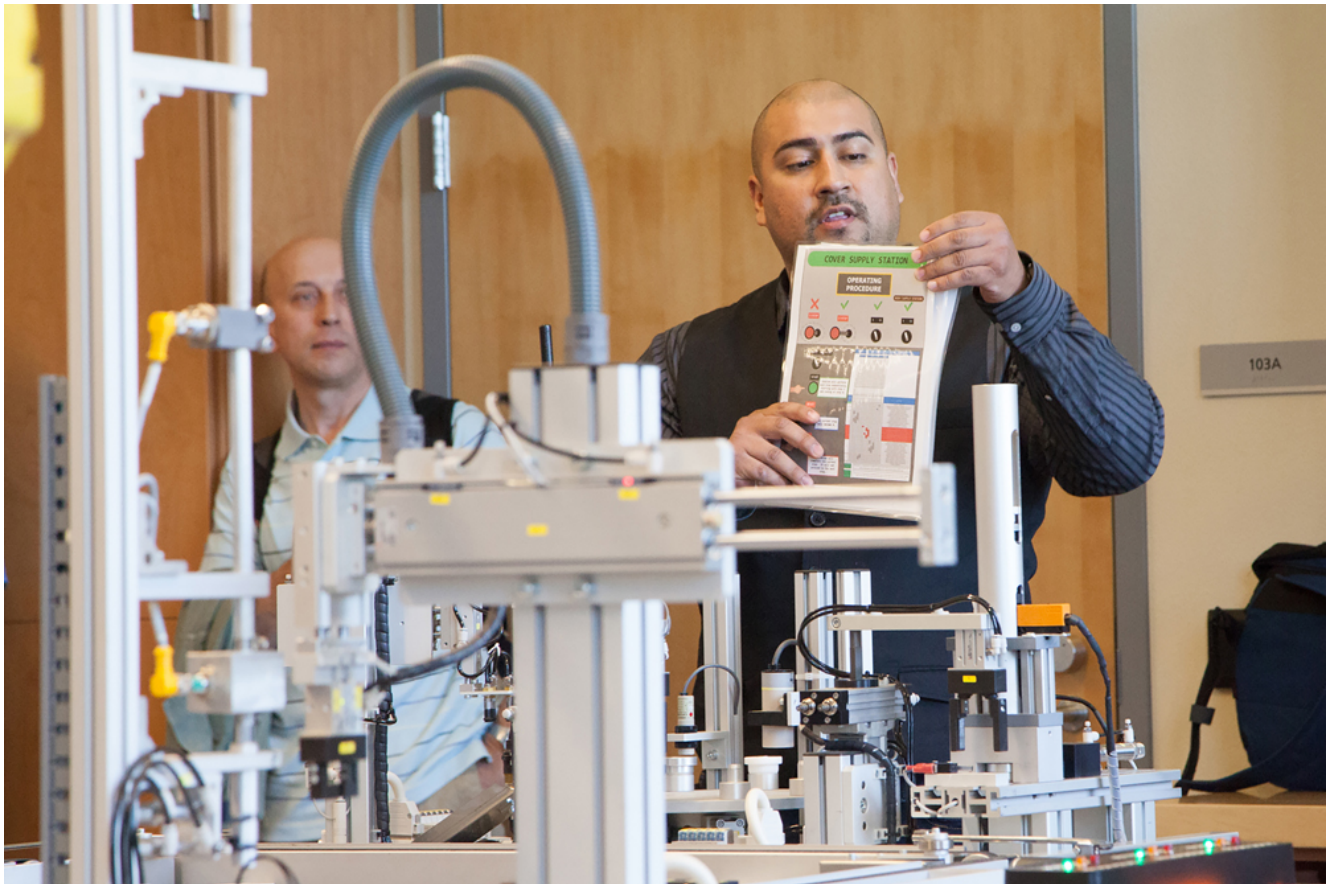
This is a yearlong program to foster leadership identity among historically underrepresented groups. It allows leaders to develop a network of colleagues system wide. It also helps develop a pipeline of employees able to move into higher leadership positions.

Clark's representatives attended at three-day retreat in August to kick off the program. They'll attend five workshops during the academic year and will graduate from the program in June. As part of the curriculum, they'll attend the Faculty and Staff of Color Conference (FSOCC) to be held in Spokane next month.

Clark College Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion supports this program. It helps to develop and implement comprehensive professional development to improve employee intercultural and multicultural competencies as part of the college's strategic goals.

Images provided by Chippi Bello.

Making a match: Clark students and manufacturers



Mechatronics lab at Clark College

Clark College and ESD 112 are now hosting Washington's newest Center of Excellence, a hub for connecting the region's students and employers through job training and coordination. The local office is known as the Center of Excellence for Semiconductors & Electronic Manufacturing.

It's the 11th office of its type in the state. The centers were created by the state Board for Community and Technical Colleges in 2004. They're intended to serve as liaisons between local schools and industries, providing career opportunities for students and helping industries maintain skilled workforces.

"This is a great opportunity for students at Clark College," says Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill, Interim President of Clark College. "Working strategically with our industry partners, we can help develop the talent pipeline within advanced manufacturing that will allow local manufacturers to grow and will provide outstanding opportunities for our students to

succeed.”

Each center is built around an industry that plays a major role in the local economy, such as a clean energy center at Centralia College and a marine manufacturing and technology center at Skagit Valley College.

The new Clark County center focuses on semiconductors and electronics, due to the presence of several big electronics companies in the area, including silicon-wafer manufacturer SEH America, a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Shin-Etsu Handotai Ltd.

“We have an electronic and semiconductor hub here in Southwest Washington that we’d like to support,” said Mohammed Maraee, the new center’s associate director. Maraee lives in Vancouver and previously worked for the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center and has taught business administration at Portland Community College.

The Clark County center operates under the leadership of an existing center at Everett Community College that focuses on aerospace and advanced manufacturing. It has a primary office at the main Educational Service District 112 building and a satellite office at Clark College, Maraee said.

Clark College is well positioned to support the new center, with programs like computer technology, welding, and mechatronics that provide graduates with the skills needed for today’s jobs in advanced manufacturing. The college has also announced that the first building in its future satellite location in Ridgefield, Clark College at Boschma Farms, will be dedicated to advanced manufacturing.

The new center is funded by \$300,000 allocated by the state legislature in the 2019-21 budget. Its partners include Clark College, local K-12 schools, and the Southwest Washington High Technology Council.

The council is made up of representatives from several high-tech companies that are either headquartered or have a significant presence in Clark County, including SEH America, nLIGHT, WaferTech, and Silicon Forest Electronics. The group was at the center of the legislative effort to secure funding for the new center.

The group is chaired by Ben Bagherpour, vice president of site services and government affairs at SEH America, who also serves as a member of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

“The [High Technology Council] is pleased to now have a single point of contact that we can reach out to,” Bagherpour said in a statement. “The associate director will be our point person to understand high-tech manufacturing companies’ workforce and education needs and to work with the K-12 and higher education systems to develop and align programs to meet these needs.”

SEH America has been involved in previous local pipeline efforts aimed at addressing concerns about attracting and retaining a skilled technical workforce. Last year, the company launched a pilot program called Career Launch, offering participants paid part-time apprenticeships at SEH paired with tuition assistance for students at Clark College.

The program is expanding for the 2019-2020 school year, Bagherpour said, and will now include similar opportunities at some of the other council companies. It will also be incorporated into the new center and further developed along with future programs as the center continues to grow.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

CTC location is “open for business” this fall



Business students at Clark College have opportunities to participate in career-oriented activities like the college's Entrepreneur Club.

As Clark County's demographics and economics change, Clark College is ready to adapt to serve its community's needs. Responding to feedback from employers and residents in East Vancouver, the college is transforming its facility at Columbia Tech Center into a hub for business and technical education.



The college has worked to create a series of course offerings this fall that will allow students to pursue career-oriented higher education in subjects that include business, information technology, computer support, and supervisory management—all without having to travel to the college’s main campus near downtown Vancouver. Most classes are scheduled to run just two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), allowing students to plan their studies around work and/or life obligations.

Additionally, Clark College Economic and Community Development, which provides non-credit continuing education and customized training, is relocating to the CTC location. CTC is already the home of the college’s popular mechatronics program, which teaches students the skills they need to work in automated manufacturing.

“As more and more employers establish facilities in East Vancouver, they’ve expressed a need for additional training for their employees,” said Associate Vice President of Instruction Genevieve Howard. “We want Clark College at Columbia Tech Center to be the hub for career-oriented education in East Vancouver, while also opening opportunities for students on the eastern side of Clark County to take

advantage of the state's Running Start program.”

Clark College at CTC is located at 18700 SE Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver. Opened in 2009, the location will be celebrating its 10th anniversary on October 14 with an official ribbon-cutting.



Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

All smiles



Every member of Clark College's 2019 dental hygiene graduating class passed all six of their board exams. *Photo courtesy of Kristi Taylor.*

Clark College's dental hygiene program has long had plenty to smile about: its high-quality teaching facilities, its status as the college's first bachelor's degree program, and its important work providing dental hygiene care in the community.

Recently, the program's faculty received news to make their smiles even brighter: Every student in their 2019 graduating class passed all six of their board exams.

The exams are extremely rigorous, and a 100 percent pass rate is remarkable. The exams include:

- The National Board Exam (an 8-hour written exam)
- The Restorative Exam (placement and finishing of amalgam [silver] and composite [white]) fillings
- The Anesthesia Written Exam
- The Anesthesia Clinical Exam (accurately administer the 2 most difficult injections on a patient)

- Hygiene Clinical Exam (thoroughly remove tenacious calculus [tartar] from a patient's teeth with severe periodontitis [gum disease])
- The Ethical Board exam

“These are six different high-stakes exams that test the students’ knowledge and skills,” wrote Dean of Business and Health Sciences Brenda Walstead in an email to the college community. “Thank you to an extremely dedicated and talented group of faculty and staff for working endless hours to prepare the students to pass each of these exams, obtain their licenses, and go to work.”

A night of triumphs



A record 835 students participated in Clark College's 83rd Commencement Ceremony. *Clark College/Nick Bremer*

"Hola, soy Denisse, hoy sere su enfermera," read the elaborate script on the top of Denisse

Zuniga-Ibarra's graduation cap, below a cluster of silk flowers. Or, in

English: *"Hello, I'm Denisse, today I'll be your nurse."*

Zuniga-Ibarra was one of 835 graduates waiting in line to enter Sleep Country Amphitheater for Clark College's 2019 commencement ceremony—and each one, it seemed, had their own story to tell of perseverance and triumph.



Dennise Zuniga-Ibarra, far left, with Estefania Tran and Osmara Robles, all nursing graduates. Clark College/Jenny Shadley

"Graduation, to me, means a new job, a new beginning, making my parents proud and giving back to my community," said Zuniga-Ibarra, who was receiving her Associate in Arts degree in Nursing.

Almost 2,500 degrees and certificates were conferred on graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year—a record number for the college. It included the first graduates of the Clark's new Cuisine Management program, as well as of the college's Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management (BASAM) degree program.



Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management graduates holding a photo collage of their classmate Debbie Terry. *Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

For the BASAM graduates, the event was bittersweet—one member of their cohort, Debbie Terry, died before she could receive her degree. Her classmates held a poster with pictures of her as they waited in the white robes reserved for bachelor's-degree graduates. During the ceremony, Terry's daughter, Melanie Carter, would be the first person to cross the stage, receiving her mother's degree post-humously.



Amanda Rath was one of 126 students earning their high school diploma or GED this year. *Clark College/Hannah Erickson*

Family featured strongly in many graduates' stories. For Amanda Rath, this night wasn't about making her parents proud, but rather, her own four children, aged 3 to 13. All of them would be watching their mother walk across the stage to receive her high school diploma, which she earned through the college's Transitional Studies department.

"I want to provide something more for my children to see in the future—something more than just working at a call center," said the single mother, who works full-time and is already enrolled to begin the pre-nursing program at Clark. "I knew that started with pursuing an education."



Brian Ford Jr. graduated with an Applied Technology degree in Diesel Technology. *Clark College/Nick Bremer*

Like Rath, Brian Ford Jr. had balanced work, life, and school responsibilities. He was graduating with an Associate in Applied Technology degree in Diesel Technology. "It's been a long journey—three years," he said. "I had two kids while I was in school. I worked full-time. But I made it. It's the biggest accomplishment of my life and I'm so happy to get to this day."



Board of Trustees Chair Jane Jacobsen addresses the class of 2019. *Clark College/Nick Bremer*

Once the bagpipes started and the lines of robed figures filed into the amphitheater, the moments of triumph continued.

“Keep going,” Trustee

Chair Jane Jacobsen told the graduates in her remarks during the ceremony. “This world needs you.”

Jacobsen also pointed out that this ceremony would be the last one to be presided over by Clark College President Bob Knight, who

announced in January announce that he would be retiring after 13 years as the college’s president. She thanked him for his service.



Student speaker Soukaina Ouahhabi. *Clark College/Nick Bremer*

Student speaker Soukaina Ouahhabi spoke of the challenges she had faced as a non-native English speaker studying computer science who also worked full-time. "Sometimes, I would have to choose which I needed to do most: eat, sleep or do homework," she said. "Because I only had time to do one of them. I'm sure many of you can relate."

Still, Ouahhabi said, she kept her focus on achieving her goals. "My desire to reach my goals was stronger than the struggles I faced and has pushed me to be the strong, smart woman I am today," she said, to a roar of applause from her classmates.



Vita Blanco learns she is the 2019 recipient of the Community College Presidents' Scholarship. *Clark College/Nick Bremer*
There was also applause for the award recipients announced during the ceremony. This included the 2018-2019 Exceptional Faculty Award winners, as well as the 2019-2020 Community College Presidents' Scholarship, which was given to Esmeralda "Vita" Blanco. Another finalist for the scholarship, Anastasiya Kozlovska, received a \$1,000 scholarship as well.



Keynote speaker Julianna Marler with President Bob Knight.
Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Keynote speaker Julianna Marler, who is a Clark College alumna, spoke of her journey from being the daughter of Hungarian immigrants to the first female CEO of the Port of Vancouver USA. “Clark College was a foundation of my business knowledge,” she said, adding that even some of her electives, like psychology, wound up being unexpectedly useful in management. “I wouldn’t have guessed it at the time, but those lessons would turn out to serve me well.”

As Knight concluded the ceremony, he told the graduates, “We are excited to think of the ways in which you will change the world. And we are glad to know that Clark College will always hold a special place in your

hearts.”

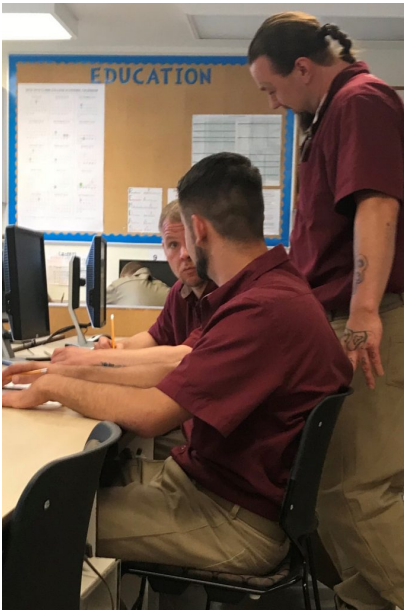
More photos can be viewed on our Flickr page.

Creating new futures at Larch



Antonio Ibarra poses for a picture taken by Clark College instructor Lauren Zavrel to commemorate his passing his GED certification. He was one of 50 Larch Corrections Center inmates to pass his GED in the 2018-2019 academic year. Every year, just a day or two before Clark College’s commencement ceremony, Clark College President Bob Knight and other college leaders attend a smaller ceremony at Larch Corrections Center to celebrate graduates of the college’s GED preparation program there. This year, they will have plenty to celebrate: Not only did the program see a record number of students pass the GED during the 2018-2019 academic year, but

in May its tutoring program became the first prison-based tutoring program to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).



Left to right, Jakkob McCallin, Howard Seaworth, and Timothy Tipton have all earned their GED certification through a program run by Clark College at Larch Corrections Center.

Fifty students passed their GED certification test this academic year—four more than the previous record of 46. For these students, passing their GED not only provides them with an important credential—the equivalent of a high school diploma—but it also gives them a sense of accomplishment and self-worth that can help them pursue better paths in their lives after their release from prison.

Larch inmates who become tutors through Clark College's program also gain marketable skills and work experience. Having the program be certified by the CRLA adds legitimacy to that experience.

According to findings published in the *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, inmates who participated in correctional education programs are 28 percent less likely to commit new crimes, compared to inmates who didn't.

The program was featured on the front page of the June 9 issue

of *The Columbian*.

Photos: Clark College/Kelly Love