

# Alumni & Friends

SUMMER 2008

## New Hispanics for Higher Education Program

A dedicated group of Mesa Community College students is reaching out to the Hispanic community through a new program called Hispanics for Higher Education. The goal of the program is to promote the choice of higher education among local Hispanic youth.

At MCC, statistics show that from 2003-07, the share of Hispanic students increased from 15 percent to 18 percent. For MCC student Pricilla Ramos, the program provides an opportunity to help mentor other Hispanic students. Ramos, an education major who graduated from MCC in May and will continue her education at Arizona State University this fall, said Soria and other MCC staff have helped her pursue her educational goals.



MCC student Pricilla Ramos visits with Isabella Soria during a recent trip to Redbird Elementary School in Mesa

"I just want to give back," Ramos said. "My experience at MCC has been great. As a first-generation college student, I've found people to help me, so I'd like to help others have a good college experience."

One of the group's first activities took place recently at Redbird Elementary School in Mesa, where they chatted with students and handed out MCC materials.

"The younger we can reach them, the better," Ramos said. "It's good to start introducing them to college early."

The program currently has seven members, six of whom will receive a tuition waiver once they reach a specific number of service hours for the project. Hispanics for Higher Education is funded through a Maricopa Grant.

MCC students will be attending college fairs, visiting local K-12 schools, acting as mentors, making outbound phone calls to prospective Hispanic students, and making personal contact with MCC's Vidas y Valores past participants.

"They are a bright and energetic group of young people interested in making a difference in their community," said Sherrie Soria, coordinator of student services at MCC.

The program addresses the changing demographics in Mesa and surrounding cities over the past few years, which indicates a growing Latino population. According to U.S. census data from 2006, Hispanics 15 years and older are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree than non-Hispanic whites.

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## Studio 180° Offers Summer Camp for Teens

Digital video production meets video game technology as Mesa Community College's Studio 180° presents Machinima, a teen summer camp July 21-24, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm at the Southern and Dobson campus. This structured, hands-on experience is designed for teens ages 13-16 that enjoy playing video games and want to learn how to create their own game-based videos.



Students will learn video game production techniques using multi-media, state-of-the-art programs and equipment in a team setting and receive a video game modeling application and 4 GB flash drive for use during and after the course. The course fee is \$285. Class size is limited so register early at (480) 461-6100. For more information visit <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d07/camp/MCCSummerCamp2008.pdf>

## 2007-08 Graduation Statistics

Total number of graduates (Unofficial) .....	2,988	Female students .....	1,782
Financial Aid distributed .....	\$36,410,143	Male students .....	1,206
Scholarships awarded.....	\$3,933,346	Students participating in commencement exercises .....	394



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## Red Mountain campus Breaks Ground for new Learning Center



Alexander Cheroske and family "dig in" to the ground breaking for the new Learning Center at the Red Mountain campus.

The 42,000 square foot Learning Center will support sciences and performing arts.



More than 100 MCC employees, students and community members came together April 28th to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Red Mountain Campus' new state-of-the-art Learning Center. The 42,000 square foot Learning Center will support the sciences and performing arts and is joined together by a series of support spaces to benefit the entire the campus that include:

- State-of-the-art research labs
- Terrarium habitat for indigenous Sonoran Desert creatures
- Study areas, tutoring resources and faculty offices
- Performance space for theater, dance and music students.

Employees from the architectural firm, SmithGroup, and the contractor, Johnson Carlier, also joined in the festivities.



The Alumni Association's Arizona Legends event featured entertainment by Arizona's Official State Historian, Marshall Trimble (center picture with his guitar), as well as a private viewing of the Mesa Historical Museum's newest exhibit, "Thanks for Tuning In: Wallace and Ladmo Show."

## MCC's Theatre Outback Celebrates 30th anniversary



(from left) Lyn Dutton, Theatre Director; Sue Anne Lucius, Music Department Chair; Tina Rangel, Dance Director; Sarah Capawana, Art Department Chair.

Since opening its doors in 1978, Mesa Community College's Theatre Outback has been an important venue for the college's performing arts programs and a community landmark. The theatre's 30th anniversary celebration kicked off in January with tours, performances, and a fine arts display. The production was a collaborative effort by MCC's art, dance, music and theatre departments. The 250-seat theatre, built with an original price tag of about \$1.1 million, derived its name from the lack of buildings on the southern part of the campus at that time, making the area "out back" in regard to the main campus.



<b>2008-09 Performances</b>	Dec 4 -7 Dracula
Oct 9 - 12 Death in a Landslide	Dec TBD La Pastoral
Oct 29 - Nov 1 Musical Theatre	Dec 12 Broadway Bound
Nov 6 -7 Dance Performance	Jan 29 - 30 (RM) Baby with the Bath Water

Feb 26 - 28, March 1 Oedipus Rex	April 30 - May 1 - 3 Brighton Beach Memoirs
March 11 - 14 Musical Theatre	May 6 Director's Showcase
March 26-27 Dance Performance	May 8 Broadway Bound
April 2 - 5 Baby with the Bath Water	



MCC Alumni and Friends:

As the 2007-08 academic year comes to an end, I want to express my sincere thanks for your warm welcome, encouragement, and support. I want to take this opportunity to provide you with a college update and share with you some of my thoughts.

These first few months as MCC's president have confirmed and strengthened my belief that MCC is truly a great institution. Our community, faculty and staff care deeply about MCC and being engaged community partners for the benefit of our students. I have sensed a collective excitement and desire for building a better and brighter future.

Looking toward the future, I believe strongly that we must relentlessly pursue student success, employee success, and external community success. This pursuit requires us to embrace a vision of distinction. We must distinguish our College by defining who we are, what we are about, and how we serve students and community. Ultimately, we want MCC to become an even more dynamic teaching and learning community.

Over the past few months, alumni and community representatives have worked with faculty and staff to analyze our college's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We will use the data to collectively create action plans and strategies that will serve to strengthen MCC and prepare us for a healthy, vibrant future. Our plans will include opportunities for alumni to become involved in reaching out to and supporting the next generation of MCC students.

I believe in MCC and care deeply about its future. I know that you do, too. This is our strength. This is our hope. Thank you for your commitment to MCC and to student success!

Sincerely,

Dr. Shouan Pan  
President

## Math Professor finds opportunity in retirement

What does opportunity mean to a retired MCC math professor? For Rick Meyer it means providing schools to educate impoverished and middle class children in Cambodia who cannot afford the daily fee for public school.

His interest in this endeavor was sparked several years ago on a trip to Phnom Penh when he volunteered to tutor math at a school nearby his hotel. He was told they didn't teach math and was eventually referred to a school in the squatter village of Railway B to help teachers with the correct pronunciation of English.

"Within days, the children of Railway B Community owned me," Meyer said. "They called me Teacher Rick and had completely stolen my heart."

Residents of squatter communities find scraps of wood, sheet metal, plastic and cardboard to build their homes. The children have one set of clothing including a pair of flip flop shoes while younger brothers and sisters have no clothes or shoes. By the time he had made his next visit to Cambodia and returned to Railway B Community, the school had closed.

"The volunteer organization had stopped their funding," Meyer said. "So, I reached into my pocket, pulled out the necessary cash and reopened the school."

Upon his return to the United States he formed a non-profit corporation called the Aogaah Foundation, which means opportunity in Khmer, the native language of Cambodia. Meyer has subsequently rented a building and renovated it himself by dividing it into two classrooms, adding a bathroom and burying a pipe to contain an open sewage ditch. The new school is called Village 15-Village 16 School and currently enrolls approximately 150 students with hopes to enroll 400 students next year.

"We were overrun with students," Meyer said. "We had set the maximum class size at 25 and we had many times that many wanting to register. Parents from neighboring villages were pounding on our door."

Students attend school one hour a day, six days a week and study Khmer, math, science and social studies with a quiz every Friday. It is Aogaah's goal to prepare students for employment by providing a six-year program that teaches them to read and write Khmer and use a calculator to solve trade math problems.

"The need is overwhelming," Meyer said. "These are impoverished people without opportunity. Our students often come to school hungry. But they come, always so eager to learn."



Retired math professor Rick Meyer hopes to enroll 400 students next year in the school he opened in Cambodia.

## AmeriCorps program hits One Million Dollar Mark

Since September 2002, the AmeriCorps program at Mesa Community College has successfully assisted more than 800 students complete more than 600,000 hours of service to the community and subsequently earn more than \$1 million in educational awards. Participants have served in community schools, parks and recreation systems, retirement homes, after school programs and more. The MCC AmeriCorps program is facilitated through the Center for Service-Learning and is a service based initiative funded by The Corporation for National and Community Service since 1994.

## SRP SOLAR ENERGY AWARD



(from left) SRP representative Jerald "Chico" Hunter presents MCC President Shouan Pan and Professor Steve Bass with an award for MCC's participation in the EarthWise Solar Energy Program.

Salt River Project recently awarded Mesa Community College with an award for MCC's participation in the EarthWise Solar Energy Program. MCC currently has two solar projects on campus—one on the new physical science building and one on the social and cultural science building.

The six panels on the social science building were formerly test panels at ASU East. The panels were donated to MCC to avoid shipping charges to send them back to the manufacturer. A grant from SRP helped pay for most of the installation of the panels at MCC.

The panels, which are hooked into a meter, network into the grid of the building and generate electricity. Plans are underway for a project this fall in which SRP is hoping to install a comparison meter that measures the savings in electricity. Steve Bass, an MCC geography professor who heads up MCC's Green Group, plans to use the information in the classroom. According to Bass, these solar projects are "just the beginning" of many environmental initiatives at MCC.



## INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENTS TAKE TOP PRIZE AT HOME SHOW

A panel of industry-recognized interior design judges awarded Mesa Community College students Samantha Chanley and Jennifer Rivero the first place prize of \$5,000 at the Maricopa County Home and Landscape Show's Student Design Competition.



Chanley and Rivero's entry, "Eco-Chic Dining Space," featured the use of eco-friendly materials such as cork, recycled glass tile and bamboo, as well as low-energy lighting options that utilized LED and CFL lamps.

"Every piece in this room has some aspect of sustainability," Rivero said. "Even the paint on the walls is no-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint."

The competition awarded \$10,000 in cash prizes and challenged college students in Maricopa County to take their first steps into launching their careers as interior designers. Judges selected five teams out of about 20 entries, based on presentation of theme, sketch and business suaveness. The top five teams were awarded a materials package by Home Depot Home Services valued at \$700 which included all the materials needed to actually build their room from the ground up for display at the home show. The students constructed walls and installed flooring and lighting fixtures.

Rivero, 41, and Chanley, 38, joked that "it took a village to put up this room." The pair, who began the project in November, said they were grateful for the help provided by brothers, sisters-in-law, husbands, parents and children. They credit their MCC instructors Sally Kroelinger, Janice Jennings and Penny Yascavage with providing them with

knowledge, inspiration and creativity.

Both students plan to pursue interior design as a career after they graduate from MCC and say their education has made them passionate about using eco-friendly materials.

"It's crucial to use sustainable products because so much goes into landfills," Chanley said. "We can make a difference and be nicer to ourselves and our environment."

## MCC Student Awarded Art Scholarship

The College for Creative Studies in Detroit has awarded Mesa Community College art student Scott Everett an \$80,000 scholarship based on his life-like charcoal drawings inspired by family, friends and life experiences.

MCC art instructor Gingher Leyendecker said Everett's talent was apparent when he first arrived at MCC. Leyendecker has watched Everett mature and find his voice by taking several art courses that allowed him to explore his interests.

"The strength of his work is based on the autobiographical aspect of his artwork," Leyendecker said. "We're proud of him and pleased he won this scholarship."

Everett said the announcement of a scholarship was a little surprising. He previously lived in the Detroit area as a child and looks forward to returning to the area to continue his education.

Scott Everett received an \$80,000 scholarship to study at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit



"This will definitely help me with the next chapter of my life," said Everett, who hopes to one day be able to support himself and a family with his art.

Everett's influences include Italian artist Caravaggio and Arizona artist Eugene Grigsby. He said he chose to attend MCC because of the large variety of art classes offered at the college. Everett found Leyendecker's life drawing class particularly helpful.

"She helped me get my form and structure down and that made my drawings more realistic," Everett said.

Everett said he uses art to express his emotions and share his family and culture with others. His advice to other aspiring artists is to pursue his or her unique interest, whatever it may be.

"If you love art, just do it," Everett said. "I thought about studying other things, but art is my passion."

### Pick Your Passion from Several Art Classes Offered at MCC:

Ceramics, Digital Art, Design, Drawing, Life Drawing, Painting, Photography, Portfolio Development, Art History

### Degrees Offered:

Associate of Arts, Fine Art  
Associate in Applied Science, Digital Arts