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June 2017

## Supporters pack house for GED recognition ceremony



*More than 100 families gathered on June 1 at the Fourth Street campus to celebrate GED certificate recipients this year at CCC.*



## DID YOU KNOW?

CCC serves about 7,500 learners annually.

CCC generates

Flagstaff, Ariz. - All of them, for one reason or another, did not complete high school. Their challenges were as unique as they are, but they managed to overcome them, and now, they can all say that they successfully completed the requirements for a high-school education. They received their GEDs.

Ten people were recognized on June 1 during a GED Recognition Ceremony at Coconino Community College's Fourth Street Campus. The

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Economic Impact - \$167 million in annual economic growth.

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event marked the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive GED ceremony at CCC. More than 100 family and friends packed the lecture hall where the ceremony was being held to show their support.

Flagstaff Mayor Coral Evans gave the keynote address. She told the new graduates that she also received her GED. She lived in Flagstaff's public housing with her twin brother and her single mother.

"It was not easy for us," Evans said, facing the graduates.

After she received her GED, Evans started teaching others to get their GEDs. She and her brother both continued their education. Her brother is now a physician, and she is the first female African American mayor of Flagstaff.

She challenged the graduates to continue their education.

"Get in the habit of graduating," Evans said. "Make this your first step ... Where do you go from here? Anywhere you want to. It's up to you."

She also said, "This education, you've earned. That's yours. Nobody can take it from you."

CCC President Colleen A. Smith, PhD, encouraged the new graduates to be mentors to others, to help them succeed in life.

"You've reached a great and wonderful landmark, and you should be extremely proud," President Smith said.

Debra Goldenstein, CCC Adult Education Instructor, said that, this year, 125 students took at least one of the four tests required to receive a GED. Of those students, 60 students passed all sections, which was nearly twice as many as the year before, despite new, more stringent requirements instituted in 2014.

"You are now more prepared than ever to face your future," Goldenstein told the graduates.

Prior to the conferring certificates to the graduates, eight students in the CCC Adult Education program were inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society.

Two of the graduates took the opportunity to thank their families when they were given a chance to speak to the audience. Greg Cross, CCC's Adult Education Director, handed each of the graduates a rose and a certificate. At the end of the ceremony, the new graduates moved their cap tassels to the left to signify their accomplishment.

The event was rounded off with a reception, complete with cake congratulating the new graduates.

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CCC TRiO students get chance to 'dream big'

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**CORE VALUES:**

- People
- Quality
- Ethics
- Community
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- Sustainability
- Learning and Growth

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*TRiO students and faculty at one of three colleges visited on the trip.*

Flagstaff, Ariz. - Their journey took them through three states over five days in May.

The purpose: Open up their horizons to the possibilities of education.

Eight Coconino Community College students took a tour of three universities and got a glimpse of the wider world during a field trip to Nevada, Utah and Colorado. They visited Fort Lewis College, Dixie State University and the University of Nevada Las Vegas. The trip was organized by CCC's TRiO Student Support Services.

"The trip was unbelievable, like a dream," said TRiO student Michael Walbridge. "It felt like, 'What did I do to deserve this beautiful trip?'"

Walbridge added: "It was a beautiful experience to be able to travel with a group of friends. When I got back, I was actually a little sad because I got used to this tight group."

Jessica Laessig, CCC's TRiO Project Director, said, "One of the main goals is to expose students to other colleges they may not have considered a possibility. It helps students from underprivileged backgrounds get this access."

She also said that the trip provided cultural opportunities as well. The field trip gave the students that chance to look beyond just Flagstaff and see what's out there.

"It let them dream big," Laessig said.

Becky Pineda, TRiO Retention Specialist Sr., said that the students also visited Zion National Park, Monument Valley, two museums and even a Broadway show.

"Watching these students connect throughout this trip, it was amazing how quickly they connected," Pineda said.

She added that it was also inspiring to watch the students expand their educational horizons and realize the possibilities they can explore.

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Student Paul Bearchell, who is President of the CCC TRiO Club and a mentor in the TRiO Mentoring Program, said that his favorite part of the trip was building camaraderie with his fellow students.

"It really tightened that friendship bond that we had, and I think it was really enjoyable," Bearchell said. "We had fun the entire time. The team really bonded well."

For Walbridge, who is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, of the colleges visited, UNLV appealed to him the most. He visited the psychology building (because he plans to study psychology) and he enjoyed the architecture, sports program and the gym facilities. Also, there's a great Marine Corps Ball in Vegas, he said with a smile.

"But they all had their major pluses," Walbridge added.

He plans to apply.

"I'm going to try," he said. "But I have to get my associate first."

His ultimate dream is to get a bachelor degree and, with hope, head onto graduate school to continue studying psychology.

Laessig said that more trips are planned for the future. Additionally, TRiO Student Support Services is planning Student Leadership Retreats and Summer Bridge activities for incoming freshmen.

The Student Support Services (SSS) program provides support services to low-income students, first-generation college students, and disabled students enrolled in post-secondary education programs. Eligible students may receive, among other services, personal and academic career counseling, career guidance, instruction, mentoring and tutoring. The goal of the SSS program is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants and help students make the transition from one level of higher education to the next.

The trip, which covered all travel, lodging, meals and other expenses, was made possible with funds from a five-year, \$1 million grant to CCC from the U.S. Department of Education to support TRiO programs throughout the country.

*Alec Bodemer contributed to this report.*

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## Student spotlights

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### Designing her future at CCC

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Flagstaff, Ariz. - Her dream was graphic design, but it had been years since she'd been at school.

Suzanne Dison, who graduated in May with an associate degree and is now off to NAU, has a story that is filled with more than three years of dedication and remarkable academic success while at Coconino Community College.

Dison began her most recent academic career at CCC in the summer of 2014. It had been a long time since she had been back to school, but she knew she wanted to go back. With Suzanne living in Flagstaff, CCC seemed like a great place to start a new academic legacy.

Her chosen field of study when beginning at CCC was graphic design.

"I love graphic design and that's what I wanted to do," said Dison.

Dison parents did not receive higher education, making her a first-generation college student. This made her eligible to be a part of CCC's TRiO program, which is geared toward putting first-generation, low income, and disabled students on a proper path to academic success. After being admitted into the TRiO program, Dison said, "The rest has been a dream come true."

Shortly after her entry into Coconino Community College, Suzanne was awarded the CCC TRiO program's "I Will Succeed" Grant which is given to a select number of top-performing TRiO students each year. This was the first of many scholarships that Dison has earned throughout her time at CCC.

In the fall of 2015, she received the Betty Steyskal Life-Long Learning Scholarship through the CCC Foundation. This scholarship is given to female students who maintain at least a 2.0 GPA or higher with an apparent financial need. Dison wrote a successful essay for this scholarship and was chosen to receive it.

"I was on my way after that. I was kind of hooked on scholarships," said Dison.

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After her receiving the Betty Steyskal Scholarship, Dison went on to receive yet another scholarship for the next two consecutive semesters.

She was awarded the Donald Boston Scholarship for the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 academic semesters.

Receiving these scholarships was a "breath of fresh air" for Dison because she was able to know in advance that she would have scholarship funding to keep her in school for the foreseeable future.

For the entire 2016 academic year, she received the Arizona Business and Professional Women's Foundation Scholarship. The foundation is based in Phoenix.

Dison has excelled as a student at CCC since she entered college in 2014. She maintained a 3.5 accumulative grade point average into 2017. This allowed her to become a member of CCC's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

At NAU, Dison will work to earn her bachelor's degree in Graphics and Web Design.

"The scholarships that I have been afforded here at Coconino Community College have been just crucial," said Dison.

For more information regarding the Coconino Community College Foundation, please visit [coconinofoundation.org](http://coconinofoundation.org).

- Alec Bodemer

## Alum hits workforce debt free thanks to scholarships



*CCC alum Adam Bradley moved onto NAU and graduated with a bachelor's degree nearly debt free.*

Flagstaff, Ariz. - Adam Bradley got married in 2010. He had a high school diploma, but a high school education didn't serve the goal he had:

To work with computers.

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"I was running into issues finding a job," Bradley added.

So, he decided to enroll at Coconino Community College in 2011, and now, a graduate of Northern Arizona University, he has reached his goal. He did it without going into debt -- which he is grateful for -- thanks to the help of several scholarships he received on his educational journey.

Before enrolling at CCC, Bradley hadn't been a very good high school student, so he had to catch up on math and English skills. He took general studies courses. Through the course of his studies, he excelled, received top grades and ultimately became a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society while at CCC.

"I originally didn't have any kind of plan to transition to NAU," Bradley said, adding that he expected to get an associate degree and then head out into the workforce. But, while his time at CCC was winding down, his advisor, who worked in the CCC2NAU program designed to help transition CCC students to the university, counseled him that he should transfer to the business program at NAU.

"I was worried about the cost," Bradley said. "NAU was even more expensive a place to study."

Just like he had done at CCC, Bradley began searching out and applying for scholarships that would help him study at NAU. He was successful, and his academic achievements were noticed as a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma Honors Society at NAU.

Now, he is a Business Analyst Associate at NAU's Office of Sponsored Projects. He works closely with management to help integrate data into the business model to help determine how software can support the business process. The work fits his goals.

His desire to seek scholarships was based in fear.

"I got a lot of motivation to stay out of debt," he said. "But I wanted to learn."

He looked and asked for help.

"I realized, after receiving some scholarships, there are people at CCC and at NAU who help to find those opportunities and there are a lot of those opportunities out there," Bradley said. "But I had to put in the work."

He also said that he is grateful for the scholarships he received.

"I don't think I'd be where I am now," Bradley said. "The thought of taking out loans probably would have stopped me from going to school."

He and his wife had a son, who turned 1 on July 4. He can focus on supporting his family, instead of paying a lender.

Bradley encourages people considering higher education to explore scholarship opportunities.

"I do like to let people know if they are considering school there are a lot of scholarship opportunities out there," he said. "Knowing people believe in you and want to support you, it helps so much and you want to earn it. It drives you to want to earn it."

He added: "If you get scholarships, you'll be happy you did."

## Around CCC

### More than 50 attend CCC Alumni Picnic

The smell of grilling brats and hotdogs filled the summer sky at Coconino Community College's Lone Tree Campus. The sounds of conversations and children laughing rode the quiet breeze.

More than 50 alums, family, friends and CCC employees attended the annual CCC Alumni & Friends Cookout on Thursday, May 31. Many new alums mixed with graduates from previous years to reminisce about the CCC experience and catch up on lives.

The event was hosted by the CCC Office of Institutional Advancement.

"This family friendly event is a great way to catch up with fellow graduates as well as the latest happenings at the College," said Rachel Edelstein, Alumni and Donor Relations Coordinator. "We love to stay in touch with alumni and learn about what they have been up to lately."



*CCC alum Victor Varela (1996) poses for the camera at the Alumni Picnic.*

Guests were treated to hotdogs, brats, chips, side dishes, soft drinks and plenty of sweets. Games for the children included a Treasure Hunt.

Violet Welker, 8, daughter of CCC Graphic Design Specialist Sr. Trevor Welker, found the chest of pirate booty at the end of the instructions on the treasure map.

"I followed the map," Violet said of her strategy. "It was a little easy."

She added that she liked searching for the treasure by herself, without the help of her parents. Her haul included candy, a Frisbee, some Star Wars coins and more. She also made a new friend.

For the latest news on CCC alumni happenings, visit <http://www.coconinofoundation.org/alumni.html>

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### CCC scholarship students speak at Raymond meeting



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*CCC student and scholarship recipient Jonathan Cody tells his story to the Raymond Educational Foundation during their annual meeting.*

Flagstaff, Ariz. - Coconino Community College student Jonathan Cody wasn't diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome until he was in high school. His classmates bullied and ridiculed him, and many people believed he wouldn't graduate high school.

They were wrong, and now Cody is in his second year at CCC and is on his way to seeking a four-year degree with the help of a CCC2NAU scholarship from the Raymond Educational Foundation.

"College is extremely important to my future," Cody stated in a letter when he began searching for scholarships. "My goal is to improve my life by being able to become self-sufficient and have a productive life."

Cody made a presentation to an audience of about 40 people during the annual Raymond Educational Foundation Annual Meeting on June 5 in Flagstaff. Cody and Paul Bearchell, another CCC2NAU student, were emphatic in their gratitude to the Raymond Foundation for the financial assistance.

In Bearchell's scholarship application letter, he stated, "After what has seemed a very short time from graduating high school and not thinking I could ever succeed in a college class, I have gone further than I thought was possible. I continue to surprise myself."

Bearchell, who survived having cancer as a child, wants to offer financial help struggling families with children diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. Therefore, he's seeking a Business degree at NAU after he graduates from CCC.

"I will continue to work hard to better myself so that I can eventually help those in need," he said.

Cody's ultimate goal, he told the Raymond Foundation board members, is to earn a four-year degree in Journalism and then try to make his way into the filmmaking industry.

"This has been a dream of mine since I was a child," Cody said. "And to be able to achieve this goal would complete me and enable me to live my life to the fullest."

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The Raymond Educational Foundation was established in 1952 by Dr. R.O. Raymond. Dr. Raymond was a physician and humanitarian who came to Flagstaff in the early 1900s. The Foundation was made to provide financial assistance for county residents who want to further their education.

Since its inception, the Raymond Educational Foundation has distributed more than \$5 million. Each year, the Foundation distributes between \$130,000 and \$150,000 in scholarships to residents of Coconino County. For the 2018 academic year, The CCC Foundation will receive \$46,200 from the Raymond Educational Foundation to distribute as scholarships to CCC students.

Each year, eight Raymond Educational Foundation scholarships of \$1,650 are distributed to CCC students. Also each year, six scholarships are awarded to students enrolled in the CCC2NAU program. In the final two years at NAU, the scholarships awarded each year amount to \$2,500, or about one quarter of NAU's annual tuition.

For more information about the Raymond Educational Foundation, visit [www.raymondeducationalfoundation.org](http://www.raymondeducationalfoundation.org), or visit the CCC Foundation at [www.coconinofoundation.org](http://www.coconinofoundation.org).

## Upcoming ...

### Faculty of the Year selected



*CCC Instructors Kristine Ketel and Ken Myers have been selected as the 2017-18 Faculty of the Year.*

Flagstaff, Ariz. - The newest members of the Faculty of the Year ranks have been announced.

Kristine Ketel received the nod for Part-Time Faculty of the Year 2017-18. Ken Myers is the Full-Time Faculty of the Year 2017-18.

Stay tuned for a full story in a future edition of *CocoNotions*.

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## Have a CCC news story or idea?

News and stories abound on the campuses of Coconino Community College.

- Stories of student success
- Stories of faculty and staff who make a difference
- Stories of innovative programs that foster learning
- The latest news and events going on at CCC

The list goes on.

News and story ideas are always welcome. Please contact Larry Hendricks, Public Relations Coordinator, at [larry.hendricks@coconino.edu](mailto:larry.hendricks@coconino.edu), or 928.226.4374.

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