



The Lumberjack Link

A publication for Alumni and Friends of Alpena Community College

A Clear Path: ACC Works on Patent to Benefit Disabled

Living with cerebral palsy (CP) can be a messy business. The disorder, caused by abnormal brain development affecting movement, muscle tone, and/or posture, can mean needing help with the basic tasks of life. Eating, drinking, cleaning, and even using writing instruments can result in a mess. Something less obvious to the casual observer, however, is the mess caused by some of the adaptive equipment that enables people with CP to gain mobility.

Imagine if you had to wear the same shoes every day, through every season and couldn't wipe your feet before walking into your home. To compound matters, imagine if you could only take your shoes off when you went to bed. Your floors—and your shoes—would be filthy.

People in wheelchairs don't have an easy, effective way to clean their wheels throughout the day. But because of Andrew Paad, ACC manufacturing technology instructor, and his family, that may soon change.

The origin story of a wheelchair accessory that may become a standard piece of equipment for people with mobility challenges really starts with Dorothy Paad, Andrew's sister, who lives with CP. She uses a wheelchair to get around and needs round-the-clock care in order to attend Northern Michigan University and live as independently as possible. Dorothy and Andrew's father, Eric Paad, couldn't help but notice the dirty trails Dorothy's wheelchair made through the family's home while Dorothy lived there. He figured there had to be a way to clean the wheelchair's tires so his home didn't look like a wagontrain had rolled through. And unlike most people who think, "Somebody ought to do something about that," Eric and his son actually went into action to solve the problem.

The Paads aren't your ordinary family. Eric grew up on a dairy farm in Northeast Michigan and spent 22 years in the Air Force. He holds a degree in professional aeronautics and served many years as a construction manager after leaving the Air Force. When he discovered how difficult it was to find good caregivers for his daughter when she moved out to go to college, he started the nonprofit organization Caregivers Incentive Program, which seeks to end the shortage of

qualified in-home caregivers by educating the public about the crisis, providing financial incentives for people to go into or stay in the caregiving field by offering scholarships and stipends, and providing training for new caregivers.

"My parents both were farmers. They always said that if it's broke, fix it; don't think somebody else will do it, don't just walk by it, fix it," Eric said. "All I'm attempting to do is fix it. With the nonprofit, I'm trying to make the world a better place for people who need care."



ACC Manufacturing Technology instructor Andrew Paad, left, works on a patent prototype with student Peter Huizinga.

Andrew is an Army veteran who also has a degree in professional aeronautics. He is the lead instructor in the manufacturing technology department of ACC and adviser to the Manufacturing Technology Group at the college. An ACC graduate himself, Andrew is an innovative instructor who leads his students to new heights, such as guiding the new Manufacturing Technology Group to become a SkillsUSA Chapter of Excellence.

As Dorothy tells it, the story of how the tire cleaner went from an idea to a physical reality is really a story of family ingenuity. When Eric came up with the initial design for a wheelchair tire cleaner, he came to visit his son, who had recently been hired to teach manufacturing technology at ACC.

(continued on next page)

“Well, Dad had the idea at first—a couple ideas. He told them to Andrew. Then, it was deciding what to try to make. Dad came up with the original idea and showed it to Andrew. Andrew liked it, but had quite a few suggestions on how to improve it,” Dorothy explained.

Eric took those suggestions back to Marquette and worked with the folks at Invent@NMU, an “idea incubator” at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, to guide him through the entrepreneurial process of developing a plan to make his idea a reality. When it came time to finalize the design and fabricate the prototype for his wheelchair tire cleaner, though, Eric turned to his son, Andrew, and the students at Alpena Community College.

“We helped with the initial design,” Andrew said of his students, “but had to change it all after we got the drawings, due to it not being able to be manufactured.” It turned out that the original design from NMU relied on 3D printing and was fairly complicated to put together once printed.

So back to the drawing board the team at ACC went. They modified the design to make it manufacturable and created the first prototype, which they continue to refine and improve. Andrew says students have a wheelchair in the ACC manufacturing lab they use to test the prototype designs on, which helps them discover the real-life circumstances that can interfere with the efficiency and effectiveness of their design. They won’t stop until the design is perfect.

Dorothy is thrilled that her father’s idea for an invention turned into a true family project and that her brother and his program at ACC was involved in such a meaningful way.

“I am happy that Andrew is a part of it, because I love my brother. We are so different, but I love him so much. He’s the best big brother ever!”

With a patent pending, the tire cleaner is on its way to helping those who use wheelchairs have the simple dignity of being able to do the equivalent of wiping their feet when they enter their home. Once ready to be manufactured, any money made from sales will go to the Caregivers Incentive Project.

“When this invention of mine makes a dollar, I want that dollar to go benefit this nonprofit that I started. So, all the proceeds will go to this bigger picture of making the world a better place.”



Dorothy Paad and her father, Eric Paad.

ACC Uses CARES Act Funding to Improve Access

The COVID-19 pandemic demanded the closure this spring of ACC’s campuses and, with it, an abrupt change in the college’s instructional delivery methods. As a result, laptop computers for ACC staff, faculty, and students went from being an important tool to an absolute necessity. For many students, however, it’s an absolute necessity they cannot afford.

To begin to address this problem, ACC acted quickly to use CARES Act funding to purchase 200 Microsoft Surface Pro 7 laptops and protective cases for students who need to borrow one during the semester. Students pay a nominal insurance fee in exchange and computers are returned to ACC’s Office of Information Technology at the end of the semester. In addition, another 40 Microsoft Surface 3 laptops were purchased using the same

funding source to be used primarily by faculty teaching remotely, as well as staff working remotely.

According to ACC Director of Administrative Information Systems Jeffrey D. Blumenthal, most of the new laptops arrived around the first week of October and will be available for wide distribution to students for the spring 2021 semester.



Ashley Nowicki uses a new Microsoft Surface Pro 7 computer funded by the CARES Act.

As technology becomes more and more interwoven with education and how it’s delivered, the need for additional laptops and tablets will grow. With your help, the ACC Foundation is committed to assisting the college and its students to acquire the technology they both need to make a high-quality education possible. To ensure every ACC student has access to the technology needed to complete their education, please consider a generous gift to the ACC Foundation.

Van Lare Hall Renovation Rolling Along

Many of us emerge from winter determined to get into shape for the warmer weather ahead, devising self-improvement regimens designed to make us look and function better. Van Lare Hall is no different as it prepares to enter an intensive winter and spring renovation schedule to stay on track for its big reveal next June.

Built in 1957, Alpena Community College's flagship campus building has been in the midst of an extensive remodeling project that will result in the creation of the Fitzpatrick Hall of Health Sciences—a state-of-the-art nursing education center—along with updated restrooms, improved fire suppression and HVAC systems, energy-efficient windows and doors, as well as seven multi-purpose classrooms, a new admissions area, and administrative offices. Van Lare Hall's simple mid-century modern architectural lines will be preserved, while a soaring new entrance and 2,188 square-foot student and community space overlooking the Thunder Bay River will modernize the building and transform it into an appealing gathering place.

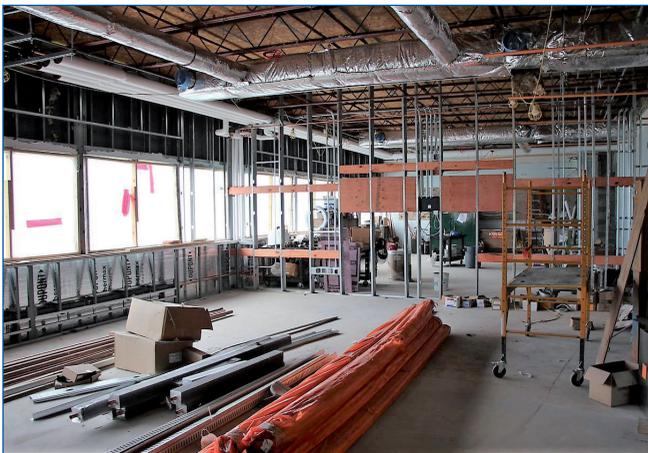
After a robust fundraising campaign, the Van Lare Hall renovation broke ground nearly a year ago. Like almost everything in life, the pandemic brought construction progress to a crawl. The statewide shutdown this spring caused some confusion about whether the project could proceed under the governor's executive order, but the renovation was ultimately deemed essential to meet the growing demand for frontline nurses to battle the effects of the pandemic. However, while construction was given the green light to proceed, COVID-19 caused other issues that impacted the project.

“The pandemic also caused supply chain delivery issues, which made some of the materials arrive later than we needed them to,” said ACC Director of Facilities Dr. Nicholas Brege.

With construction beginning to pick back up speed at Van Lare Hall, Brege is hopeful ACC will be able to welcome students back to Van Lare Hall as scheduled.

“Our current projected completion for the project is June 2021, allowing us to remain on track for reopening classes for the Fall 2021 semester.”

ACC faculty and staff are eager to show off Van Lare Hall's new look and functionality to visitors once construction is complete. Donors to the Healthy Futures Start Here campaign will be the first to tour the new facility.



Van Lare Hall Renovation Photos

Top: Inside the new central entrance of VLH, looking out.

Second: State-of-the-art nursing labs are taking shape inside VLH.

Third: The student lounge/reception room at VLH will have a spectacular view of the river.

Bottom: The new design of VLH will offer visitors and students alike a tranquil new gathering space.

Dutcher Leads Next Generation of Scholarship Donors



Harley Dutcher

Perhaps because Harley Dutcher ('12 AS) is still a student herself, she values scholarship—both learning at a high level and the monetary award to pay for it—more than most.

Having graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in biomolecular science from the University of Michigan in 2014, Harley is currently a doctoral student in psychology and women's studies at Michigan. Her journey in higher education began, however, at Alpena Community College, an institution she credits with helping her explore what she was capable of.

“ACC with the instructors who were there, like Ms. Hautau and Mr. Sumerix—I really grew a lot. I was studying with folks who really encouraged me and I kind of became an adult...I had a great experience at ACC. It was smaller and I could really kind of explore and grow into myself in the educational sense.”

If there was any doubt about her ability to flourish at U of M after graduating from ACC, Harley quickly proved she belonged in Ann Arbor. Even upper-level science courses at Michigan were a place she felt at home because of ACC.

“I enjoyed taking chemistry classes at Michigan. I felt like ACC prepared me completely to meet Michigan's expectations.”

Harley believes so much in education that she decided to follow the example set by her family by creating a scholarship at ACC, an educational institution still near and dear to her heart. Her paternal grandmother, the late Margot Dorn-Dutcher, who had high regard for formal education, established a scholarship with the ACC Foundation through a generous bequest when she passed away in 2015. Harley's mother oversees a scholarship honoring her own mother, Shelby Alexander.

“This is a great way for me to show that I really think ACC is a wonderful place to begin or continue or go back or wherever you are on your educational trajectory—and I wanted to show that—so I decided I wanted to do a scholarship,” Harley said.

Harley reached out to Brenda Herman, Executive Director of the ACC Foundation, who advised her to look at the other scholarships offered at ACC to get an idea of what kind of scholastic award Harley wanted to do. Ultimately, she chose to not honor herself or a specific person in the name or criteria for her scholarship, but instead celebrate the many facets of humanity by creating the ACC Diversity Scholarship, which awards \$200 annually to a student who is committed to a culture of diversity and inclusivity at ACC.

Currently, almost 90% of ACC students rely on financial aid to help pay for their education, demonstrating the urgent need for scholarships like the one Harley is providing. Her gift to the ACC Foundation shows that you're never too young to start positively impacting the lives of students in our region. Harley's donation is a commitment to the future of Northeast Michigan, which benefits from an educated population and workforce.

If you're interested in learning more about opportunities for scholarship support at Alpena Community College, contact ACC Foundation Executive Director Brenda Herman at hermanb@alpenacc.edu or by calling 989-358-7297

Mail to:

Alpena Community College Foundation
665 Johnson Street, Alpena, Michigan 49707

For more information, contact:

Brenda Herman
ACC Foundation Executive Director
989-358-7297, hermanb@alpenacc.edu

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A receipt will be sent to you acknowledging your donation.



President's Message



Dr. Don MacMaster
ACC President

In the December 10, 2019 issue of *Bridge Michigan* magazine, reporters Ron French and Mike Wilkinson accessed a Georgetown University analysis of federal data ranking 4,500 post-secondary institutions of higher education on return on investment over 10, 20, 30, and 40 years after graduation. Their report concluded that community colleges provide as much return as many four-year universities and that ACC delivers long-term value compared to other Michigan community colleges, private colleges, and public universities. Some highlights from the report:

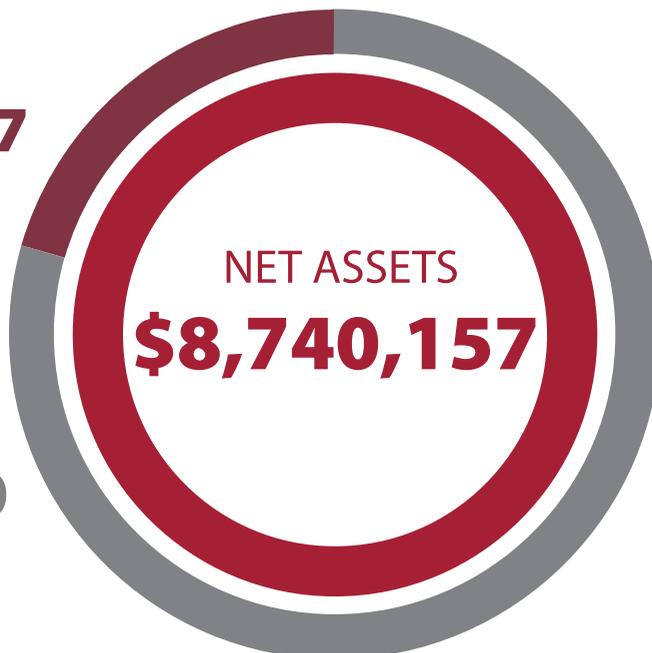
- After 40 years, ACC graduates earn an average \$740,000 return on investment, 5th among Michigan community colleges and the only small rural community college ranked among the top 15 Michigan community colleges.
- Average return on investment for ACC graduates after 30 years (\$580,000) exceeds Northern Michigan University (\$558,000), Olivet College (\$578,000), Aquinas College (\$577,000), Adrian College (\$556,000), and Davenport College (\$472,000).
- After 20 years, average return on investment for ACC graduates (\$385,000) exceeds Eastern Michigan University, (\$383,000), Saginaw Valley State University (\$382,000), Lake Superior State University (\$368,000), and Northern Michigan University (\$339,000).
- After 20 years, average return on investment for ACC graduates exceeds Oakland Community College, Henry Ford College, Grand Rapids Community College, and Washtenaw Community College.
- After 10 years, average return on investment for ACC graduates (\$148,000) exceeds all 25 private universities in Michigan except for Kettering University (\$153,000).
- After 10 years, average return on investment for ACC graduates (\$148,000) exceeds all public universities except Michigan Technological University (\$185,000) and U-M Ann Arbor (\$176,000).

The Georgetown study debunks the argument that college is a poor investment. Additionally, the data shows that investing in a degree or credential from ACC pays off with increased earnings over a lifetime of employment. Over the long run, credentials, certificates, and degrees matter. As we like to say, "Discover the value of an ACC education."

Foundation at a Glance - FY20

Unrestricted funds
\$1,815,277

Restricted funds
\$6,924,880



193
Students received
scholarships

425 scholarships awarded

Total Scholarship
Dollars Awarded
\$260,455



698 donors



\$1,249,760

Program support provided to the College



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ACC Foundation Board Adds New Members

From the humble beginnings of raising \$30,000 in its first year of existence to accumulating over \$8.7 million in net assets today, the ACC Foundation has been instrumental to the success of thousands of ACC students. Established in 1982 to make the gift of education a possibility for everyone who seeks it, the Alpena Community College Foundation financially supports the college and its students through scholarships, program improvements, technological advancements, staff development, and capital expansion projects. The benefits of higher education made possible by the ACC Foundation are reflected in the individual stories of graduates in our community who have been able to climb out of poverty, as well as in a skilled workforce and the number of business owners who proudly identify as Lumberjacks for Life.

Governed by an independent volunteer board of trustees, the ACC Foundation recently added four new members to its board: retired Alcona Health Center CEO Christine Baumgardner, ACC instructor Timothy Kuehnlein, Jr., Calcite Credit Union CFO Matthew Mertz, and Besser Company President Ryan Suszek.

The Foundation's financial support comes from the generosity of individuals, businesses, and organizations that believe in the mission of Alpena Community College. Discover the impact your donation to the ACC Foundation will make by visiting discover.alpenacc.edu/foundation.



Christine Baumgardner



Timothy Kuehnlein, Jr.



Matthew Mertz



Ryan Suszek