

ACC News You Should Know



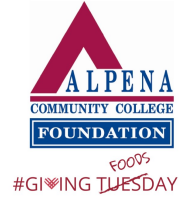
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The Art of Giving



Denelle Shultz and Musa Kabbah

Sometimes it takes extraordinary circumstances to uncover a hidden talent. In Denelle Shultz's ('93) case, it was the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown and boredom of the evenings cooped up inside that prompted her to finally express her pent-up artistic energy and learn to paint.

Denelle's husband, Steve ('92), got her a watercolor kit for Christmas last year, but it wasn't until she was working from home during this spring's COVID stay-at-home order that she finally felt the need to release all the inspiration coursing inside her. After watching a few instructional videos and completing a few paintings from the projects suggested on the site where her husband got the watercolor kit, Denelle felt confident enough to try creating an original painting. The results were impressive!

After getting positive feedback from friends and family, Denelle began to feel more confident in her talent. When she saw the ACC Foundation was holding a contest for artists to submit work to appear on the cover of the foundation's Thanksgiving Card, Denelle thought of her Grandpa Herbie's farm, a place awash in autumn colors as October dawned across Northeast Michigan. Deciding to take a chance, Denelle waited until the night before the deadline for artwork to be submitted before she sat down and combined different parts of Grandpa Herbie's farm to create the perfect autumn landscape. From start to finish, the project took Denelle about three hours to do.

When she dropped off the painting at the ACC Foundation office that Monday morning it was due, Denelle said a little prayer. She had determined that if she won the contest, and the \$250 honorarium that went with it, she would use the money in a way that was in the spirit of Thanksgiving.

Denelle and her husband, Steve, have been hosting an international student in their home the past three years. Musa Kabbah is a young man from Voinjama, Liberia who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical systems technology from ACC. It is Musa's hope to bring home his degree and the knowledge he has gained here in Alpena to improve the power grid in Liberia, where access to reliable electricity in much of the country is shaky at best.

Musa's family back home in Voinjama knows firsthand the difference electricity can make to someone's life. With incredibly weak and unreliable electrical service, the Kabbahs, like their neighbors, used to have to time everything—work, school, housework, cooking, etc.—to be done by the time the sun went down. Access to electricity in that region of Liberia is so poor that most don't even have the luxury of being able to turn on a light after hearing a noise in the night.

For Christmas last year, the Shultz family's gift to Musa was money sent to the Kabbahs to have an electrician travel over 240 miles from Monrovia, the nation's capital, to Voinjama to set up and connect a solar panel, generator, and refrigerator for the family. With this equipment, the family can power their home and their small textile and clothing store nearby. In addition, they began to sell cold water, a luxury in Voinjama in the warm season, which sees temperatures consistently in the mid-eighties. Sales from the water business have been so good that the Kabbahs could afford to plant and harvest a crop on their ancestral land, which resulted in them being

able to employ over 30 people.

Denelle and Steve believe so much in the Kabbahs and the difference they are making in their community that the Shultzes decided that if Denelle won the ACC Thanksgiving card contest, they would donate the \$250 prize money to the Kabbahs for them to use to purchase merchandise for their clothing and textile store, which they had been forced to shut down when COVID hit and the demands of their farm were more pressing. The Shultzes also decided that, if Denelle won the prize money, they would also personally match the award, making their total gift to the Kabbahs \$500.



The prayer Denelle sent up that morning in October was answered when an envelope from the ACC Foundation arrived in her mailbox a couple weeks later. Her painting of Grandpa Herbie's farm was printed on a small stack of Foundation Thanksgiving cards. The check was soon cashed and wired to Liberia, along with the Shultzes' match.

This Thanksgiving, remember the difference you can make in the world by giving. What may seem like a small contribution to you can make a tremendous difference to others. Visit the ACC Foundation page on the ACC website to learn more about how you can give to help students like Musa.

COVID Class Complications



From wearing a mask while shopping to working from home, almost everyone has had to adjust the way they do some things because of the novel coronavirus pandemic. But it's not just people who have had to change in order to protect themselves and others. Colleges and universities have been especially hard-hit by COVID-19 and have had to come up with creative strategies to meet the challenge of how to safely deliver an education to their students.

ACC realized early in the pandemic's spread to Michigan that huge changes were needed to honor the level of educational excellence they traditionally deliver, while making sure students, staff, and faculty weren't being asked to choose between their health and their education. Countless meetings, phone calls, and classroom configuration plans were carried out by a dedicated group at ACC that included Director of Facilities Management Dr. Nicholas Brege; then-Vice President of Instruction Deborah Bayer; Assistant to the Dean of Students and VP of Instruction Jackie Witter; Director of Learning Technology Sarah Burt; and ACC instructor Dr. Amber McLarney-Vesotski.

With campus buildings closed to the public throughout much of the spring and summer, ACC was scrubbed and sanitized by its maintenance and janitorial staff while the ACC Office of Information Technology laid the infrastructure to ready the college for the technology it would need to carry out its mission to educate students, pandemic or not. Bayer worked tirelessly with instructors to design a variety of course delivery options to fit the needs and comfort levels of both students and faculty, with any planned in-person classes being designed so that, if at all possible, they could be delivered entirely online in the event of a second campus closure. At the start of fall semester, students could choose classes to be delivered in several different ways, including:

- A largely student-paced online format.
- A remote format with all students meeting live with their instructor at set dates and times via chat and video conferencing platforms.
- More traditional on-campus classes, though with social distancing and mask-wearing.

To accommodate the number of students opting for in-person instruction, Director of Facilities Management Nicholas Brege and the Office of Information Technology (OIT) team devised a classroom overflow plan that had students in one course spread out over two classrooms, with video cameras and large-screen TVs providing interaction between the two rooms. This allowed for proper social distancing while

giving students the opportunity to interact in real time with their instructors, who could travel back and forth between the rooms during class.

ACC's all-remote or online course delivery system contingency plan was put into action when, on November 18, Governor Whitmer's emergency order barring in-person classes on college campuses went into effect. ACC transitioned to online and remote classes fairly seamlessly, thanks to advance planning, investing in vital technology, and hard work by the ACC Office of Information Technology.

Students seem to appreciate the flexibility ACC offered in course delivery throughout the pandemic, with online classes being appealing to many for reasons other than health and safety.

"I've been happy to have the options," said ACC student Ashley Nowicki, who had two in-person classes at ACC and two classes that met remotely prior to the November 18 campus closure. "While I prefer attending class in-person, I am grateful ACC has set in place options that will make it easier for us to continue now that the pandemic forced another closure of campus. I feel more prepared than when we suddenly went all online in the spring."

Whatever the future brings, ACC's proactive approach to ensuring students get the highest-quality education possible will continue.

Ambient Art: Besser Block Machine Plaque Cornerstone of Campus



On Jesse Besser's 80th birthday—May 21, 1962—a plaque was laid on the site where the first of his namesake Besser Blocks rolled off the machine he and his father built for the purpose back in 1904. That place—a beautiful stretch of land beside the Thunder Bay River on the far edge of the City of Alpena—would later be donated by Besser to become the campus of Alpena Community College.

Now next to Van Lare Hall, which is undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation to house a state-of-the-art nursing education center, the plaque laid back in 1962 to honor Jesse Besser on his 80th birthday serves as the anchor for the History of Industry sculpture garden celebrating Alpena's industrial foundation.

While the bronze plaque itself is no great artistic masterpiece, it serves as an important reminder of the man who is responsible for much of the industrial growth that powered Alpena through the twentieth century. The plaque also fits in perfectly with the other pieces in the ringed sculpture garden, which commemorates the industrial evolution of Alpena and the surrounding area.

Embedded in a boulder twelve feet high and thirteen feet wide, the plaque reads:

This plaque marks the site of where the first Besser Block Machine was built in 1904.

In 1882 Mr. Besser came to Montmorency County from Buffalo, New York with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Besser. The Bessers moved to Alpena in 1898 where Jesse completed his formal education and began his working career. In 1904 at the age of 22, Jesse Besser assumed the duties of design engineer, and with his father helped design and build their first concrete block machine. Mr. Besser was known for his great community spirit, leadership in business, religious and educational endeavors, and as a friend to everyone who knew him. The plaque is erected to honor Mr. Besser's 80th birthday anniversary May 21, 1962.

The individual pieces within the History of Industry sculpture garden will be the subject of a series of articles in Campus Crosscut highlighting the ambient learning exhibits around campus. The sculpture garden, to the left of Van Lare Hall as you face the building, is open twenty-four hours a day to the public.

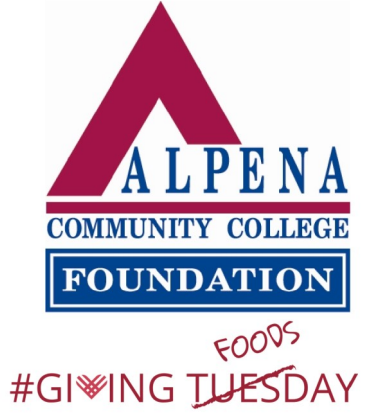
December 1: Giving Foodsday



It's hard to feed your mind if you haven't fed your stomach first.

With close to 90% of students at ACC receiving some form of financial aid to attend classes, it's no wonder that food insecurity is

a problem on campus. If you're unfamiliar with the term, "food insecurity" is defined as reducing food intake or skipping meals because of your inability to afford or access enough food to subsist. When the ACC Foundation became aware several years ago of the pressing need students had for food, the ACC Student Food Pantry was created. It is housed inside Besser Technical Center and maintained through support by generous donors, who know students cannot concentrate on their studies without food in their stomachs.



In recognition of the tremendous financial stress COVID-19 has created for many students, the ACC Foundation decided to make Giving Tuesday this year into Giving FOODSday. On December 1, you're asked to throw a lifeline to students by donating funds to restock the ACC Student Food Pantry and provide food baskets to help students through the COVID-19 crisis and winter break, when access to campus will be severely limited.

You can securely donate funds to Giving Foodsday online via the [ACC Facebook page](#) and [on the ACC website](#).

Giving Tuesday is a global initiative started to harness the season of giving for good. Held on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Giving Tuesday has helped shed light on the important work that nonprofits like the ACC Foundation do in their communities and encourages people to be a force for good by donating to charity on that day.

If you know of an ACC student in need of food, have them call ACC Student Food Pantry coordinator Lisa Blumenthal at 989-358-7296 or email blumentl@alpenacc.edu.

If you'd like more information about supporting the ACC Student Food Pantry, call ACC Foundation Executive Director Brenda Herman at 989-358-7297 or email hermanb@alpenacc.edu.

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