

Holyoke Community College Launches Program for Adults And Parent Learners

HOLYOKE, MA | **HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE** | December 16, 2024 - The grand opening celebration for the new Marieb Adult Learner Success Center and Parent Learning Center at Holyoke Community College began with the reading of a quote from the late Elaine Marieb, whose \$1 million posthumous donation made them both possible:

“Education lifts people up into a new life stage and enhances their quality of life,” read Anne Morales Medina, HCC associate director of recruitment and enrollment management at the Dec. 11 event. “I can’t tell you how much my degrees added to my life – beyond gaining knowledge, they gave me the self-confidence that enabled me to say, yes, I can do that.”

Marieb had been an adult learner herself, starting college in 1960 as a married mother with two young children and completing her bachelor’s degree from Westfield State at the age of 28. She later added a master’s degree from Mount Holyoke College, a PhD from the University of Massachusetts, and a nursing degree from Holyoke Community College, where she taught biology for 24 years before becoming a world-renowned, best-selling author of anatomy and physiology textbooks. She died in December 2018.

The \$1 million ceremonial check HCC received from the Elaine Nicpon Marieb Foundation in 2019 now sits on the windowsill of the Marieb Adult Learner Success Center, a HCC new support program for students 24 years and older. On the memo line, it says explicitly what the money was meant for: “supporting adult students at HCC.”

“Elaine believed in the power of adult learners and student parents to overcome the unique challenges and barriers they face,” said Medina, who oversees the new Marieb program and nearby Parent Learning Center.

The Marieb Adult Learner Success Center itself is a small lounge and study area with adjoining staff offices. The nearby Parent Learning Center is a much larger space that contains a special desk with an attached and secure play or napping area for small children, a pack and play, changing station, computer nooks, large screen TV, conference table, art easel, learning corner with children’s books and toys, and a sitting area.

“We are a space dedicated to HCC’s adult learner and student-parent community,” said Medina, “where students who are 24 or older, or any student parent, can receive admissions counseling, holistic advising, and career counseling, and attend workshops. The Parent Learning

Center is a space where student parents can bring their children and study without feeling like they are being a distraction to others.”

Medina said the program already has 200 HCC students enrolled since getting underway earlier this year.

“We have many students that are parents,” said Sharale Mathis, vice president of academic and student affairs. “Our job as a community college is to support every student that walks through the door with everything they walk through the door with. Through this generous donation and the launch of the Marieb Adult Learner Success Center and this Parent Learning Center, I hope our adult students and student parents know that we see you, we value you, and we support you.”

The Dec. 11 grand opening celebration included a ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony inside the Parent Learning Center.

“This is truly a major moment for us as an institution,” said President George Timmons. “As I always say, we are unapologetic about removing barriers to student success, and this is just another example of how we treat and support the whole student.”

President Timmons concluded his remarks by thanking Elaine Marieb for the continuous support she provided for HCC both during her life and beyond.

“Every student who walks through these doors and is successful is testimony to her legacy and commitment,” he said.



President George Timmons helps celebrate the grand opening of the Marieb Adult Learner Success Center and Parent Learning Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.