

One-day HCC campaign raises \$122K for student support programs

HOLYOKE, MA | **HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE** | May 18, 2021 — Led by auto dealer Gary Rome, trustees, dedicated alumni, and friends, Holyoke Community College raised \$122,000 for student support programs last month during its one-day “Together HCC: Drive to Change Lives” campaign.

Organizers had set a goal of 150 donors for the 24-hour, April 27 fund drive. The final tally was 295.



HCC Foundation board member Corey Murphy, left, auto dealer Gary Rome, HCC Student Senate president Carolina Peña, and HCC president Christina Royal hold a donation check from Gary Rome at his Hyundai dealership in Holyoke on May 4.

“It was really inspiring to see all the community support that came together for the ‘Together HCC’ campaign to invest in our students,” said Amanda Sbriscia, HCC vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. “Our goal for the one-day campaign was 150 donors, and by noon we had already exceeded that. By the end of the day, we had almost doubled our goal, and that was in large part thanks to the support of Gary Rome Hyundai.”

Rome, an HCC Foundation board member, had issued a donation challenge of \$10,000 if the campaign met its goals of securing 150 new donors and 1,000 social media posts using the hashtag #TogetherHCC.” He presented a check to HCC officials at his Holyoke dealership on May 4.

“The reason we got involved in this campaign is because we wanted to shine a spotlight on this wonderful institution right here in our backyard, dispel the misconception that community colleges receive all their funding from the state, and highlight how important it is to raise funds to help support our community college.”

One of the donors was HCC alumna Ruby Maddox ’03, co-founder of the Springfield nonprofit Gardening in the Community.

“As a first-generation college student, HCC made it possible for me to get my first undergraduate degree, which led me to getting my graduate degree,” said Maddox, now the study abroad advisor and international internship coordinator at Mount Holyoke College. “My HCC education was accessible, affordable and transformational. I started Gardening in the Community while at HCC, and I learned what it was like to truly make things happen.”

In addition to Gary Rome, Peg Wendlandt ’58 and Gary Wendlandt, Jim Izatt ’59, Dylan Pilon ’12, trustees Robert Gilbert and Charlie Epstein, HCC Foundation board member Mike Roundy, and the HCC Alumni Council all posed match and challenge gifts for the campaign.

Myke Connolly ’04, of Springfield, owner of StandOutTruck.com, donated the use of his mobile billboard,

“Myke literally drove to change lives from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. on April 27 displaying ads promoting our giving day throughout the region and documented his day on social media, creating even more energy and buzz,” said campaign organizer Julie Phillips, HCC’s coordinator of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving.

In addition to his #TogetherHCC donation, Connolly created the StandOutTruck.com Celeste Berger Annual Scholarship at HCC to be awarded this spring to a current HCC student of marketing, business, or entrepreneurship.

“The reason I had to get involved with this is because HCC has done a lot for me,” Connolly said. “Through HCC I was introduced to Mike Kittredge, who started Yankee Candle. He taught me all about business. That’s the beauty of this place. It’s a genuine place where people want to see you succeed. If someone is looking to get a start or start over, this is where you begin.”