

4th BEST
TWO-YEAR COLLEGE
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Career Impact

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

Meet WITC's
New President,
John Will

WITC students'
Careers Take Flight
with Composite
Manufacturers

From Hope to
Happiness

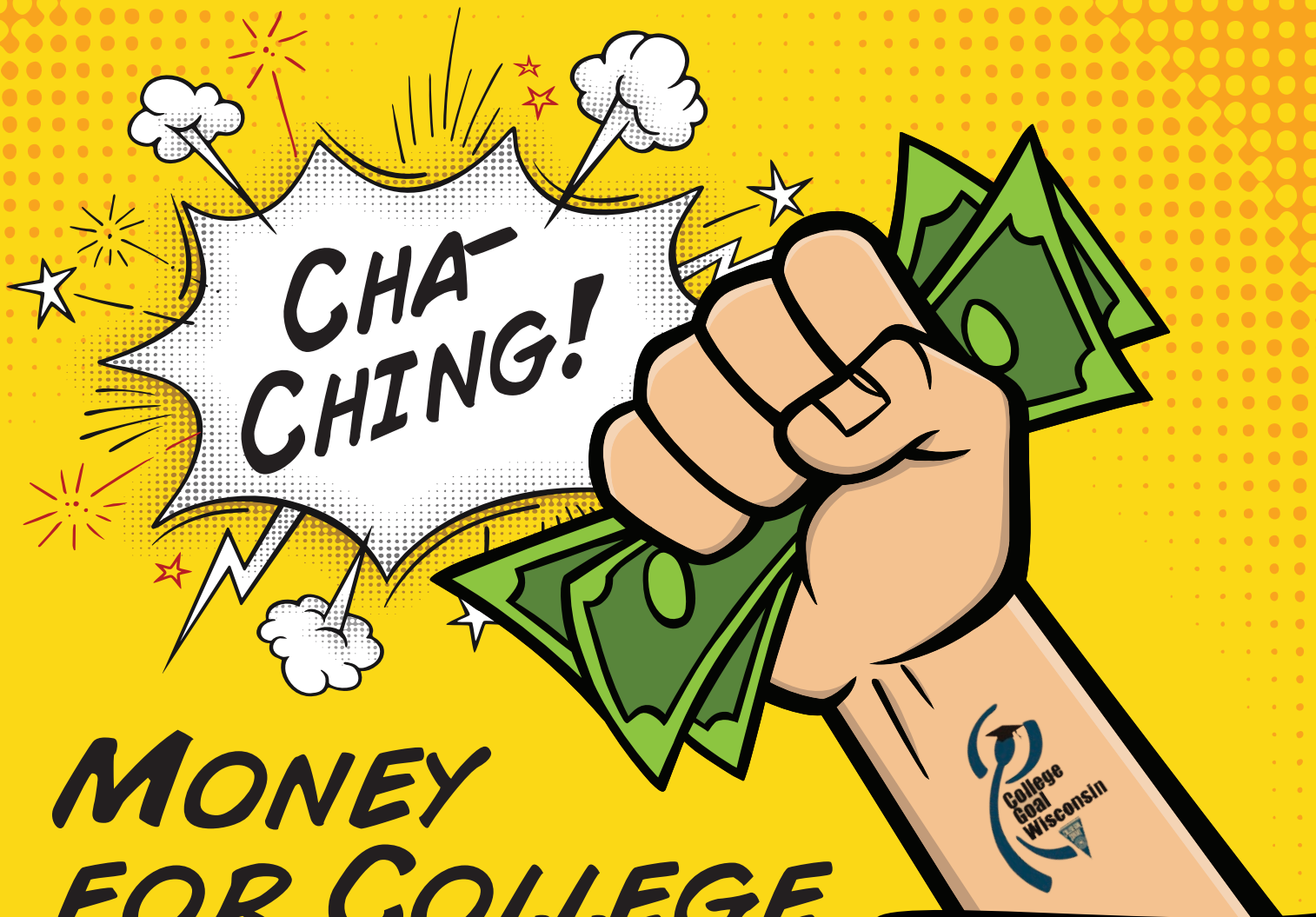
Patsy Brilla helps her patients gain back their independence while finding her own confidence



WISCONSIN
INDIANHEAD
TECHNICAL
COLLEGE

Experience. Success.

AshlandNewRichmondRiceLakeSuperiorHaywardLadysmith



MONEY FOR COLLEGE

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a form every student needs to complete if they plan to attend college in the fall of 2015. It opens the door to potential cash for college. Complete the FAFSA form with assistance from financial aid experts at one of these sessions. This is the first and most important step to qualify for financial aid. These events are free and open to all. It makes no difference where you plan to attend college.

Students should attend with a parent or guardian, if possible. If parents are unable to attend, students may attend alone. Independent students may bring their own income and asset information.

You will need the following items to refer to in order to file your 2015-16 FAFSA:

If you are considered a dependent student for financial aid purposes, you will also need these same items for your parent(s):

- 2014 Federal Tax Return and W2s, or income estimates. *You don't have to wait until after you file your taxes. You are allowed to use estimates*
- 2014 Untaxed Income Records such as child support or veteran's non education benefits
- Information on savings, investments, business assets and farm assets (if applicable)
- Driver's License (if you have one)
- Social Security Number
- Alien Registration Card or Permanent Resident Card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Date of birth and month and year of parents' marriage, divorce or separation

COLLEGE GOAL WISCONSIN

Wed., Feb. 25, 2015

UW-Barron County
Ritzinger Hall
1800 College Drive
Rice Lake, WI 54868
Starts at 6 p.m.

Sat., Feb. 28, 2015

WITC-New Richmond
1019 South Knowles Ave.
New Richmond, WI 54017
Starts at 2 p.m.

collegegoalwi.org

Career Impact is published for the community, alumni and friends of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

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WITC is part of the Wisconsin Technical College System, with four campus locations (Ashland, New Richmond, Rice Lake and Superior), two outreach centers (Hayward and Ladysmith), a learning center in Spooner, and an administrative office in Shell Lake.

Visit our Web site at witic.edu.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Learning is our passion. As Northwest Wisconsin's leader in technical education, WITC creates dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal effectiveness. We are committed to making each and every experience with us meaningful and professional.



WITC is ranked the fourth best two-year college in the nation by Washington Monthly magazine.



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CAREERS 18 TAKING FLIGHT





By Jena Vogtman

Meet **John Will**

WITC's New President

personal and professional life that kept repeating the importance of WITC's role in the community. He says it made the decision to come back to WITC easy.

Will has been active in multiple committees and boards including the WITC Foundation, the Greater Wisconsin Opportunities Fund, Indianhead Community Action Agency, and the Wisconsin Community Development Legacy Fund. Will has a bachelor of business administration degree in accounting and economics from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a master of science in education degree from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He is enrolled at UW-Stout in pursuit of a doctorate in Career and Technical Education.

part of the equation," Will explains. "We need to offer top-notch support services for individuals prior to stepping into the classroom, and once they are in the classroom, we need to make sure they can continue to be successful. WITC needs to build upon its efforts in these areas and continue to innovate."

Despite the challenges, he believes WITC is poised to help the local workforce make that transition.

"The rate of change in most industries is significant, and I believe this means that the workforce will need retraining or other supplemental education for employers to be competitive. I think technical education will continue to evolve to be a primary solution to this problem," Will says. "Students

John Will, who became Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College's eighth president this September, doesn't exactly describe himself as the most interesting man in the world. Rather, he says he's a "typical Wisconsin guy," a fisherman in all seasons, a hunter, a maple syrup producer (managing two jars last season), a traveler who likes to escape for an occasional week in the winter and if there's Packers game on, he's probably watching from somewhere.

Will met his wife of 17 years, Kim, while attending high school in Ladysmith (she went to Bruce). They have two girls, Anna, 12, Josephine, 9, and a boy, Benjamin, 4. Together they have a busy family life of campfires, swimming, sports and pets, including a cat, a guinea pig and a bearded dragon.

Will, who has previously held various positions at WITC between 2005 and 2011, says when he left the college to work for Springsted, and most recently Impact Seven as chief operating officer, there were constant reminders in his

"Every time I talked to a person seeking a career change, a high school student pondering their options after graduation, or a business or community that needed skilled workers, I found myself wanting to talk to them about WITC," says Will. "I've lived in the area my entire life, and it's clear that WITC has a connection to the continuing vitality of Northwest Wisconsin in many, many ways."

He says he sees WITC's talented and committed employees, as well as the ability to respond to business and industry local workforce needs, as two of the college's greatest strengths. He's been meeting with key stakeholders to maintain strong relationships that he says are the foundation to long-term success. Formal strategic goals for the college will come next summer. While there are great strengths, there are also great challenges, such as closing the skills gap as skilled employees retire and more careers require some education beyond high school.

"It won't be good enough for WITC to offer great programs as we look to the future, even though that will always be

understand that they get a competitive return on their financial and time investment at a school like WITC, and employers know that technical college graduates are employees with the specific skills they need. That should translate into a greater willingness to seek out technical education over time."

When asked about his leadership style, he indicated he feels strong leaders adapt their style of management and leadership to what is needed to make progress.

"Regardless of my perceived style, I want to interact with others how I hope they will interact with me," he says. "Openly and honestly, and with our mutual best interest in mind."



2014 WITC Foundation Special Events Results

Over **\$32,000** Raised for Scholarships!

The WITC Foundation continues to provide important financial assistance to students. Each year, the foundation awards hundreds of scholarships and is the key resource for emergency student grants and loans. As the cost of education continues to climb, scholarships and other available student assistance play a critical role in the success of WITC's students.

The tremendous success of the WITC Foundation's summer 2014 events could not have been possible without the support and generosity of both individuals, businesses and the community.



Ashland

The 15th annual Golf for Scholarships event was held June 26, at the Chequamegon Bay Golf Course in Ashland. The event raised \$8,668 for ten \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships.

New Richmond

The 19th annual Fun-Driver Golf Benefit, held June 23 at Bristol Ridge Golf Course in Somerset, raised \$7,400. Approximately \$6,000 will be designated for scholarships ranging from \$250 to \$1,000. Some of the funds will be used to supplement several established endowments to increase them to another endowment level.

Rice Lake

On May 18, the WITC-Rice Lake Fishing Tournament returned to beautiful Long Lake. Registration was held at Dave's Outboard with the top fish awards, raffles and dinner taking place at Greener's Reel 'Em Inn. The event netted \$9,089, which was used to fund nine \$1,000 scholarships.

Taking place July 24, the WITC-Rice Lake 'Vegas' Golf Scramble took place at Turtleback Golf course in Rice Lake and raised \$10,109 to fund approximately 14 scholarships and aid with student assistance.

Superior

Hosted by the WITC-Superior Alumni Association and WITC Foundation, the 22nd annual golf tournament was held August 1 at Nemadji Golf Course in Superior. The five-person scramble raised \$7,743.07.

- A total of \$1,975 from the total profit will go toward designated scholarships (NWB, William Downs Jr. Memorial Scholarship, and the Northern Wisconsin Building Trades Council Scholarship)
- \$1,000 to the Superior Institutional Fund – which helps fund projects focused on Student Success
- \$4,768.07 Superior Alumni Development Project – which funds two WITC-Superior Alumni Association scholarships, Student Emergency grants, and other Student Success projects

**For more information about the
WITC Foundation, visit
witic.edu/foundation.**



A special thanks to all of those who participated or supported a WITC Foundation golfing or fishing event this summer. We hope to see you next year.



Patsy Brilla helps her patients gain back their independence while finding her own confidence

Story and Photos by Melissa Kramolis

From Hope to Happiness

"I'm very blessed, very blessed," says Patsy Brilla of her life as a mother, grandmother and certified occupational therapy assistant. For the past decade, Brilla has been helping her patients develop, recover, and improve the skills they need for daily living by providing the therapy necessary to get them back on their feet or gain back their independence.

"I can really make a difference in somebody's life," says Brilla. "People want to be independent, they don't want to have someone doing everything for them."

Brilla chose to work in a nursing home setting and has been directly involved in helping her patient's gain back that independence since she graduated from the occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program at WITC-Ashland in 2004 with high honors.

"At first it was hard because I didn't want to see people die," says Brilla. "I would ask myself if I did everything I could to make that person's life better and if I can walk away at the end of the day and say, "yes," then that's all I need."



Brilla credits WITC for helping find her passion and the skills she needed to be successful in her career.

“WITC gave me confidence,” says Brilla. “We are all in our safe little box and it helped me to get out of that comfort zone so I could move and explore other things and without WITC, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Brilla, who got married and had a baby in her teens, dropped out of high

anybody to go to school, everybody has the ability to learn if you have the right push behind you and the right support group,” says Brilla.

AT WITC, Brilla learned the skills necessary to be successful in her career including compassion, flexibility, responsibility and proficiency with documentation, which she credits to OTA Instructor Mari Jo Ulrich.

“Mari Jo is an excellent teacher,” says Brilla. “I wasn’t the traditional



“Learning was addictive and in the right atmosphere, you wanted to learn,” says Brilla. **“Everybody at WITC was amazingly helpful, they would do anything for you because they want you to succeed,”** adds Brilla. “I left there with confidence which I never had before.”

school so she could care for her family.

“Somebody who doesn’t finish school doesn’t have a lot of self-esteem, and WITC really helped me gain that.”

With encouragement from her family, Brilla, who was a 39-year-old stay-at-home mom at the time, took the first step toward furthering her education and passed the HSED exam at WITC-Ashland.

“Once I got my HSED, WITC staff were great coaches and they encouraged me to apply for a scholarship and I got it,” says Brilla. “That was my golden ticket that started my future.”

Brilla went on to explore what career options were right for her by taking advantage of the career assessments at WITC.

“Everything led right to where I am,” says Brilla. “The glove just fit perfectly.”

For the first time in her life, Brilla became a college student and graduated from the OTA program at WITC-Ashland three years later.

“They make it very accessible for

student, I was older and she didn’t teach traditionally,” explains Brilla. “Occupational therapy isn’t structured, everyone’s life is different and so she really prepared me for thinking that way. We had to constantly think outside of the box.”

Without the encouragement from WITC-Ashland staff to continue her education after getting her HSED, Brilla says she wouldn’t be where she is today. WITC gave her so much more than a degree.

Since graduating from WITC 10 years ago, Brilla first worked as a COTA at Northern Lights Services, Inc. in Washburn, Wisconsin, and at Golden LivingCenter – Court Manor in Ashland. She is currently employed as a certified occupational therapy assistant at Ashland Health and Rehabilitation Center where she has been providing quality therapeutic activities to her patients since 2007.

“I love it,” says Brilla. “My patients offer so much and they have so much knowledge.”

Brilla has also been on the OTA Advisory Council at WITC since

2006. The college-wide committee made up of OTA professionals throughout the district is dedicated to supporting the program, solving problems, and finding ways to make the program even better.

WITC enriched Patsy Brilla’s life and for that, she is forever thankful. Brilla says it best when asked for a piece of advice for upcoming students and graduates.

“Trying to juggle daily life challenges of school, family, jobs and the unexpected can become overwhelming. Not one day have I ever regretted my choice to further my education and I will be forever grateful to WITC for guiding me to a profession where I can make a difference in someone’s life. I don’t believe without them, I would be where I am today. With WITC’s supportive staff and self-determination; you will succeed and anything is possible.” ■

For more information about the occupational therapy assistant program, [visit **visit witc.edu/programs**](http://visit.witc.edu/programs).



Career Pathways

Embedded short-term technical diplomas can improve careers and business

Backed by a \$23.1 million, four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, INTERFACE is a statewide project with participation from all 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System to develop, improve and expand adult educational training pathways to careers in information technology related occupations in business, information technology, healthcare, logistics, automation, and manufacturing.

BRIGHT OUTLOOK CAREER*

- IT network and computer systems administration careers are expected to grow 8-14 percent between 2012 and 2022
- Projected job openings (2012-2022): 100,500
- Annual WI salary range: \$40,600 - \$96,600

**Information from O*NET OnLine (onetonline.org)*

- **New pathways for current and future careers**
- Current IT specialists and students now have the option to earn embedded credentials within WITC's IT-computer systems administration specialist program.
- **Embedded credentials give IT specialist employees and students the option to:**
 - Earn program credentials in core skills with short-term specialized training
 - Help meet employer needs or jumpstart a student's career while building their resume
 - Use earned embedded diploma course credits toward a two-year associate degree
- **The IT network technician embedded technical diploma can be used toward these two-year degrees:**
 - IT-computer systems administration specialist
 - IT-network specialist
 - Industrial automation, controls and networking



For additional information, visit <http://advancewisconsin.org/advance-wisconsin/it>.



Watching Over Mam

Story By Elizabeth Whitchurch
Photos By Deb Gregerson

Who's watching over mom? Expertly and caringly: the RNs, CNAs, administrators and OTAs who learned so well at WITC.

*Y*ou can almost hear it. Touch it. The kindness that is. At Hudson's Christian Community Home Services (CCHS), there are four living locations under one roof, and at each, the atmosphere pulses gently with loving kindness, with an underlying current of concern and a strong element of efficient organization. And at the heart of the facility, just a beat away from the residents, are trained, educated, caring people with diplomas from WITC.

The Registered Nurses

With his family firmly entrenched in banking, Tom Youngberg felt an obligation to follow the financial path presented to him. With a four-year degree in political science and history, he simply didn't have the strong calling to finance. So after five years of effort, he pursued a 24-year career in printing. But the printing business is tumultuous, with many buy-outs and new names, so when a layoff came in 2009 at the age of 52, Youngberg decided it was time for a career change.



"I attended a WITC open house/information night, and asked the staff if nursing was a crazy idea," Youngberg says. "They assured me it wasn't, so I started taking general studies courses in January 2010.

"It was a perfect fit for me. Tuition was reasonable, and it was close to home," he says. Though Youngberg was on a waiting list for the nursing program, some of his university credits transferred and he took prerequisites until he started the core program in January 2011.

“Even though I was the oldest in the class,” Youngberg says, “I got a lot of support from my younger classmates. It wasn’t long and I felt very comfortable. I actually brought some expertise from my previous jobs – working with people, customer service, meeting deadlines – that carries over into nursing.”

The Student Success Center played a part in Youngberg’s return to college, as well. “I needed a little brush up on my math skills, and they were there to help me.”

A May 2013 grad, Youngberg was immediately hired as an RN at Christian Community Homes of Hudson, where he had also worked as a certified nursing assistant – also WITC training. “It’s such a joy to work with the residents and their families. Often because I’m from Hudson, they’ll recognize me, or I’ll see a family member relax because they see a friendly face.”

Sarilyn Lewis, another WITC-educated registered nurse, graduated with her associate degree – nursing (ADN) in 2001. The Hammond resident continued her education with three years at UW-Green Bay and one at



Tom Youngberg, right, keeps a close eye on residents’ vital signs.

UW-River Falls in the vet program before she changed her mind. She chose WITC’s associate degree-nursing program and graduated in two years.

“I feel very qualified with my WITC education,” she says. “Eventually I want to pursue a bachelor’s and master’s degree, but I received good training. They prepared me for the job, and I liked the rotations. It’s a tough, but doable program, and I’d recommend it to others.”

The Business Office

When Debi Mager applied for the business office manager position at Christian Community Home (CCH), she didn’t have specific experience in the medical field, but she had accounting experience, a tax preparation certification, and a two-year degree in accounting from WITC. “I felt prepared to do the job,” Mager says. “My education gave me the foundation to learn medical billing, so I thought, ‘Why not?’”

Well, Mager not only got the job, she was promoted a year later to her current position as Director of Financial Services at CCH for both the Hudson and Osceola locations. “Having been here over a year, I can definitely see how some things we did in class make sense,” Mager says, speaking of her WITC accounting classes.

Mager’s responsibilities are numerous at CCH. Within her scope, she oversees all of the Hudson and Osceola billing/receivables, accounts payable, payroll, and collections. She also helps new residents with the often complicated Medicaid application and renewals. “I help take stress out of the financial aspect for those without family,” she explains.



Sarilyn Lewis, RN



Debi Mager, Director of Financial Services

"I meet with families and I get to know them one-on-one. Building strong connections with people is important in this position. I've always felt social work was my calling ... and this position has a lot of social work." She enjoys this job because so many aspects enhance her strong interest in human services.

As a single mom raising two kids, Mager was laid off from her job in 2010. The job market hadn't recovered yet, and she realized she wanted a degree. She considered the UW system, but decided it took too long and cost too much. "WITC was a perfect fit," Mager says. "I learned what I needed and was quickly back into the job market."

As a non-traditional student, she was a bit uncomfortable about being in classes and relearning how to study. She says the WITC staff rallies around students to help them be successful, as they did with her. "You need to give it (learning/college) time and effort; you have to do your part," she says. "So many people are there to help you. You aren't doing it on your own. You certainly don't have to spend \$25,000 a year to get the college experience," she says.

"WITC was a great opportunity for me, and my skill and confidence levels increased. It was a growing experience," Mager says. "I enjoyed my time at WITC – you get out what you put in." There were a lot of things she learned because she got involved: Student Ambassador, tutor, Business Professionals of America, Student Senate, and tax preparation for low income people.

"Everything I learned at WITC, I can take and use down the road."

The Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)

Dozens are scheduled to cover a 24-7 schedule, and many of CCHS's CNAs are graduates of the WITC program. Each story is as unique as the people they care for. Nancy Frye and Ashley Cain both work across the entire CCHS Hudson complex, including WinterGreen, Pine Ridge, Pine Ridge Gardens and CCH. Both happen to be medication aids, too, which requires additional training before they can administer residents' meds.

Frye, who resides in Hudson, received her CNA training from WITC in February 2011. Her energy and positive attitude radiate from her as she prepares to talk about her work. Frye feels it's a "career you grow with. People who go into this career need to know it is for the people – not the money.

"I love talking with the residents and putting smiles on their faces and making their day. My favorite part is sitting and learning from them. It's such a rewarding career," she says.

"My education and experience are useful with my mom, who has been in a wheelchair due to muscular dystrophy since I was 17. My mom was my inspiration to go into health care and to help people. Each day I like to make the most of the day happy and joyful."

Enter Cain, another WITC-trained CNA at the same CCHS Hudson location. Ashley treks from Stillwater, Minn., to CCHS to care for the people. "I've known since I was little girl this is what I wanted to do," she says with a contagious smile. The distinctive flower she wears in hair seems to bob in



Mary Ellen Smith, right, a WITC-educated occupational therapy assistant, works with a resident who is learning how to walk after a serious illness.

agreement. "I've always been comfy with older people – in high school, I'd hang out with them just for fun."

After high school, she filled five years with odd jobs before she realized she wanted to pursue care training. She chose WITC-New Richmond because her grandmother lived there and her brother had graduated from WITC's motorcycle, marine and outdoor power product program.

"I love my job, and I make a difference too. We're like a big family – we are their family in many cases," Cain says. "Often family members tell me they're relieved when they see me at the desk."

The CNAs, male and female, strive to develop relationships, often becoming a type of family for the resident. I love yous, hugs, a kind, listening ear, an arm to lean on are frequently seen and heard. And for many residents, it's the CNA's smile that opens ... and closes ... each day.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)

But often in a complex like this, there are services behind the scenes. One such service at CCHS is occupational therapy, where people "learn the skills for the job of living." Here WITC graduate Mary Ellen Smith cares for mom as an OT assistant. Mary Ellen is employed by RehabCare and works by a contract agreement at Hudson's CCHS.

Smith was considered a non-traditional student at WITC, since she'd attended UW-River Falls for a year, suffered her mother's death, and then worked for several years before deciding to attend WITC. A friend recommended the occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program at WITC, and Mary Ellen took a look at it. The popular OTA program had a waiting list, so she did her general studies requirements first. Smith liked the small class sizes and the fact that

instructors knew her name. "I wasn't just a number," she says.

"I love what I do. When I look back I've never regretted my decision. I enjoy helping people gain independence. And I love to see people go home able to do things they couldn't do when they started – sometimes it's as simple as curling the back of their hair. That makes me happy. Every patient has left a piece of themselves with me," she says.

"You need the right personality to be an OTA," Smith says. "Lots of patience, and you need to think outside the box. Every disability is different, so you need to adapt and think what will work for each person. Sometimes a resident shows me something I didn't know and I learn from them."

And that's who's watching mom so expertly and caringly: the RNs, CNAs, administrators and OTAs who learned so well at WITC. ■



Christian Community Homes and Services, Inc.,

sponsored by the Hudson United Methodist Church, is a Medicare and Medicaid certified rehabilitation and skilled nursing facility providing skilled and intermediate nursing care for the elderly and disabled, first began its operation in 1981. It later added another facility in Osceola in 2011. The non-profit organization serves residents of the campus and the extended community in a loving and caring environment. The staff is dedicated to helping meet their physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs, and to encourage a sense of dignity and individuality.

Included in the Hudson complex are WinterGreen, where residents may live independently or contract for assisted living services, Pine Ridge Assisted Living, for those who require daily living managed assistance, Pine Ridge Gardens, for those with memory care needs and Christian Community Home, for residents who require long-term care services or rehabilitation. The Hudson complex also includes the Red Oak Center, which provides exercise equipment and services for fitness and rehabilitation. CCH of Osceola offers a skilled nursing facility and memory care center.



First Impression

WITC instructor quickly knew Matthew Harrington had the qualities to succeed

Story and Photo by Deborah Anderson



Matthew Harrington's start as a college student at WITC-Rice Lake coincided with Hugh Harris' first year teaching finance-business administration at the college. Harris remembers Harrington saying that his goal was to be an investment advisor. As Harris got to know his student's positive personality, intelligence and self-motivation, he could see that Harrington had the qualities and drive necessary to achieve that goal.

Harrington grew up in Sussex in southern England, graduating from a secondary school, Tendring Technology College, in 1999. He was accepted to a university, but decided to take a "gap year," a time when British and European students might work or travel the globe before starting college. That year, on a trip to Florida, he met a girl from Wisconsin and decided to pursue the relationship, moving to Rice Lake in 2000.

But Harrington didn't put his education on the back burner. He looked into

colleges in the area, and because he was a visitor to this country and couldn't get financial aid, he decided it would be more affordable to attend Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

"People should know that WITC is an absolute hidden gem," Harrington says. "It is a terrific value and has instructors like Hugh Harris who go above and beyond for their students."

Harrington and the group of 2002 finance graduates developed a close bond in their two years together, Harris says. They put together an "Unofficial WITC Yearbook," a partly humorous collection of their observations about their instructors and each other. Harrington was described as a good dresser, his favorite saying "Cheers!" and his future as "the person most likely to become president of Wall Street." And most remembered him for "that bloody accent."

In addition to his studies and coaching soccer at the Rice Lake middle and high

schools, Harrington also secured an internship at the Edward Jones branch office in Rice Lake. After graduating and passing the Series 7 exam from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Harrington got his license and was hired there as an investment representative.

Over the next few years, he moved on to become a financial advisor with H&R Block Financial Advisors, which was subsequently acquired by Ameriprise Financial Services. Harrington is now partner and associate vice-president of Knooihuizen, Harrington & Associates, a branch office of Ameriprise. Their office in Lake Elmo, Minnesota, serves more than 600 clients in Minnesota, as well as 20 other states.

"WITC can provide the pathway to a career as a financial advisor, but it takes a special character to become a success – being driven and goal oriented, as well as a love of working with people," Harris says. "But in return, they can make a good living and have a measure of freedom."

“WITC can provide the pathway to a career as a financial advisor, but it takes a special character to become a success – being driven and goal oriented, as well as a love of working with people. But in return, they can make a good living and have a measure of freedom.”

– *WITC Instructor
Hugh Harris*

Harrington says helping people is what he likes most about his job.

“Every person is unique,” he says. “They and their families have unique needs. It is only by getting to know them that a solution to their financial needs can be made. It takes a while to build trust before they hand over management of their assets. We can make a powerful difference in their lives.”

In 2013, Harrington was named to the Ameriprise Circle of Success, which is awarded to the top 20 percent in the company. He followed that up by being named as one of 2014’s Top Wealth Managers in the Twin Cities by Twin Cities Business Magazine.

Harrington married the girl from Rice Lake but, unfortunately, they later divorced. He is now happily planning a wedding for December with his fiancée, Elizabeth. A large family contingency from England will be coming and staying at his house for two weeks.

He has remained close to his family, even with an ocean separating them. “I get to see

them in the flesh roughly every 18 months. And Skype is an absolute Godsend, even trying to schedule around a six-hour time difference.”

Harrington is also active in British Expats in the USA, a group of roughly 100 couples around the Twin Cities that get together for events. “It is purely social – just enough to get our ‘fix’ of life back home,” he says. “On Saturday mornings, I’ve been known to run over to ‘The Local,’ an Irish pub and official home of the London Arsenal Soccer Team Supporters Club, to watch them play. What’s wrong with Guinness for breakfast?”

In just a few short years, Harrington has parlayed his education and skills, along with a desire to put others first, into recognition as a top financial advisor and is a prime example that a combination of education, skills, and a desire to put others first, can yield great rewards. ■

For more information about any of WITC’s business programs, visit witc.edu/programs.



In just a few short years, Matthew Harrington has parlayed his WITC education and skills into recognition as a top financial advisor.

How COOL is that?!

WITC's HVAC/R program partners with Australian company to bring new training opportunity to students

Story and Photos By Jena Vogtman

There's something bananas, mushrooms, wine and cruise ships have in common. They all use precise heating, ventilation and air conditioning/refrigeration (HVAC/R) controls to keep the temperatures spot on to prevent quick ripening, increase yield, correctly process and create the perfect comfort level for the environment, respectively. The systems that control these spaces are often complex, leaving business owners repetitively paying more to the systems' companies to work on and show them how to use the systems properly.

Therefore, teaching local HVAC/R professionals how to use company specific controls is not something most companies with Direct Digital Control Systems, and other similar products, like to do.

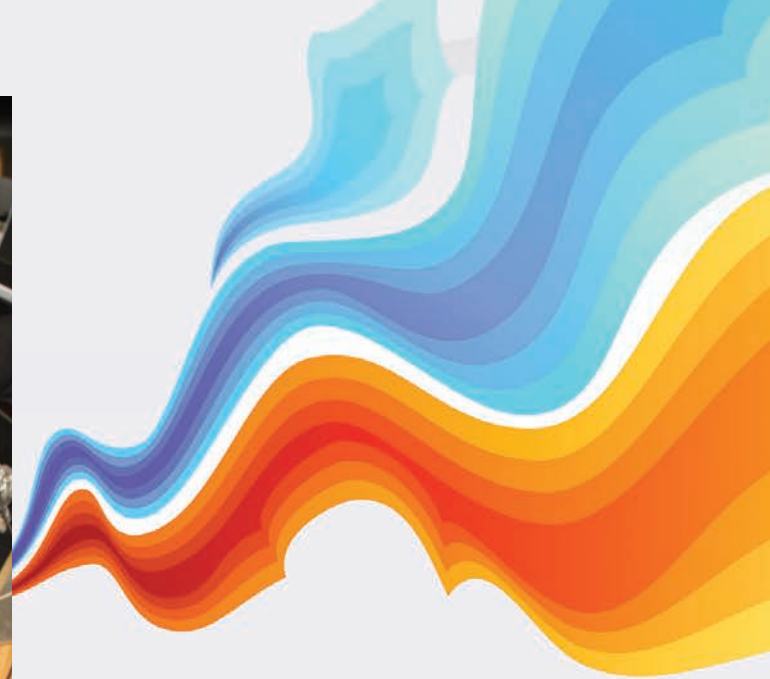
"There're so few people wanting to teach controls. Everyone is keeping it quiet like it's a secret, where as we've taken the opposite step. If someone can teach controls and get it out there, it's OK," says Stephen Miranda, CEO of Innotech Controls based out of Brisbane, Australia.

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College instructor Frank Vidas reached out to Miranda to bring his HVAC/R program to the next level and open more doors for students.

"This is the first technical college in the United States where Innotech is involved," says Vidas. "For us as a college, it's tough to gain this type of insight without paying a fortune for it."



Pictured from left: CEO of Innotech Controls Stephen Miranda, WITC HVAC/R Instructor Frank Vidas and Innotech System Trainear Walter Colaico.



The course teaches students a fundamental understanding of control processes and application of Direct Digital Control in the HVAC/R sector, giving them the foundation to enter the field of Building Management System (BMS) controls, servicing and engineering.

“This is a bit of Innotech giving back to the wider community,” says Stephen Miranda, the CEO of Innotech Controls. “The thing that we do is not only deliver a training course, we also give the colleges a collection of new equipment to train with, current software and back-up and a trainer forum that they can subscribe to.”

The comprehensive and accredited course was developed by Innotech in conjunction with several national and international institutes. It includes Direct Digital Controls terminology, basic theory, programming, commissioning and fault finding.

“Equipment wise, just the controls alone are \$10,000,” says Innotech System Trainer Walter Colaiaco. “It’s also very simple, right up to hands-on programming. I’ve built assessments too. We can customize the course to suite.”

While the new equipment is now ready for this semester, second year students this past spring already took part in the first ever eight-week HVAC/R and BMS Controls course at WITC.

Vidas and both Innotech leaders agree there needs to be more people trained in controls, as there is currently a skills gap and companies have been searching competitively for employees.

“We have a distributor in the U.S. and 20 dealers across the country,” says Miranda. “One of the things that WITC is about is putting people into jobs. We’ve been there 30 years and we still have a problem getting staff. We have a two-year program to get our employees up to standard to let them loose. You train people and then they get offered \$5 more and then they leave.”

“The biggest thing we see is a lack of skills, a lack of training. We try to partner with institutions like WITC and teach them just the basics of the controls and to try to help them further their careers,” says Colaiaco.

With the donated training and modern equipment, students will be a step ahead when they leave WITC.

“When you look at it, it’s almost too good to be true, but this is one of those scenarios where it is good and it is true,” says Vidas. ■

For more information about the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning/ Refrigeration (HVAC/R) program, visit witc.edu/programs.

CAREERS TAKING FLIGHT

WITC students
work side-by-side
with Composite
Manufacturers



Story by Jena Vogtman and Jim Biros
Photo by Jeff Frey

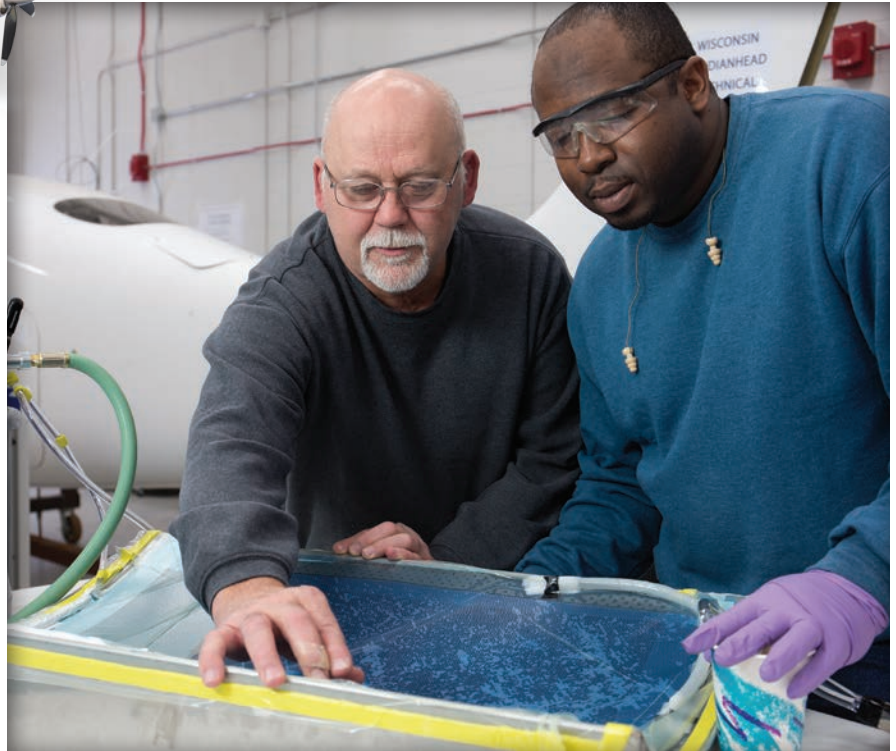
Although they are still months away from graduation, students in Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College's composite technology program are already seeing their careers take flight. Several students in the program have recently been selected to take part in internships for businesses throughout the Twin Ports.

"The interns will have an opportunity to apply the skills that they have learned in class on real aircraft parts," said Jeremy Henriksen, manager of SF50 Engineering Operations. "They should broaden their knowledge by being exposed to new materials and processes to bring back to the composites program. They will contribute to Cirrus's success by being ready to use those skills as soon as they start."

Cirrus and AAR Aircraft Maintenance have both taken in WITC's composite technology students.

"While we believe we can do a good job of planning and delivering training of the technical skills our industry needs, ultimately that will not be tested until we have placed students in industry," said Tim Wright, WITC program instructor. "We cannot train the students on the culture and mission of the companies with which we intern them; this they must learn on their own."

The composite technology program, which prepares students to be successful in today's highly competitive world of aviation composite technologies, provides students with a background in composite theory and hands-on



experience in all the stages of the aircraft's life from design to production and repair. However, the composite technology program is not limited to only the aircraft industry. Similar fabrication, inspection and maintenance processes are used in transportation, wind mills, sporting goods and boats, among other products. Careers in the composite technology field nationally average \$37,000.

The opportunity to internship was a chance the students couldn't pass up.

"These are first-rate internships working directly with companies who fully intend on hiring composite program students," said composite technology student Joe Wambach. "This internship will allow me time with engineering and design people, while boosting my level of experience with composite and their manufacturing process."

"It's a great way to get your foot in the door," said Jeremy Pittman, who is interning in the experimental design department at Cirrus.

The internships for all businesses run until December 16, but Wright believes most students will be able to stay on through their winter break.

"I would like to take part in this internship because of the hands-on experience," said Derrick Rouse, who is interning at AAR Aircraft Maintenance. "Having this experience is necessary to excel in having a permanent position at AAR." ■

For more information about WITC's composite technology program, visit witc.edu/programs.

RISING TO THE TOP

Susan Wittkop honored
as WITC-Rice Lake's 2014
Distinguished Alum

Story by Deborah Anderson



Honored as this year's WITC-Rice Lake Distinguished Alum is 1979 graduate Susan Wittkop of Saint Louis Park, Minnesota.

After graduating from WITC-Rice Lake as a certified professional secretary, Wittkop went on to earn a bachelor's degree in business from Augsburg College and then an MBA from St. Thomas University. She graduated from both summa cum laude.

Wittkop is now senior vice president and minority stockholder at Tonka Water in Plymouth, Minnesota.

WITC administrative professional instructor Barb Malom nominated Wittkop for the award.

"Susan is committed to education and WITC, serving as a resource

for student class projects, conducting mock interviews, keynote speaker for a WITC staff in-service, as well as contributing an annual financial donation to the college," says Malom.

Annually since 1992, WITC has presented Distinguished Alumni Awards to outstanding diploma and degree graduates. Alumni selected for the award have distinguished themselves professionally in their careers and have demonstrated extensive service to the college and their community. Selections are made by April and recipients are honored each May. ■

More information about WITC's Distinguished Alumni awards can be found at: witic.edu/alumni/awards.htm.

BE PART OF SOMETHING REWARDING

Alumni organizations meet regularly at each WITC campus. The association sponsors a variety of programs and social activities that keep you connected with former classmates and instructors. Fundraising events support student scholarships and other campus needs. There are no membership dues. Become a member of the Alumni Association Board or share your expertise on an activity throughout the year.

For more information, call 800.243.9482 or visit witic.edu/alumni/association.htm.



ALUMNI

ARE YOU A WITC ALUM?

Then we want to hear from you! Tell us what's new. Go to witic.edu/alumniupdate and send us your information!

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WITC graduates start their careers right after graduation!



91% of WITC graduates
are **EMPLOYED**

- 73% are employed in a job related to their education
- 97% are satisfied or very satisfied with the training they received at WITC and 98% would recommend WITC to a friend or family member

Graduates from WITC earned an average yearly salary of \$35,072, with the majority working in Wisconsin and nearly three-fourths employed in WITC's 11-county district.

**Based on the 2012-2013 WITC Graduate Follow-Up Survey*



WISCONSIN
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TECHNICAL
COLLEGE