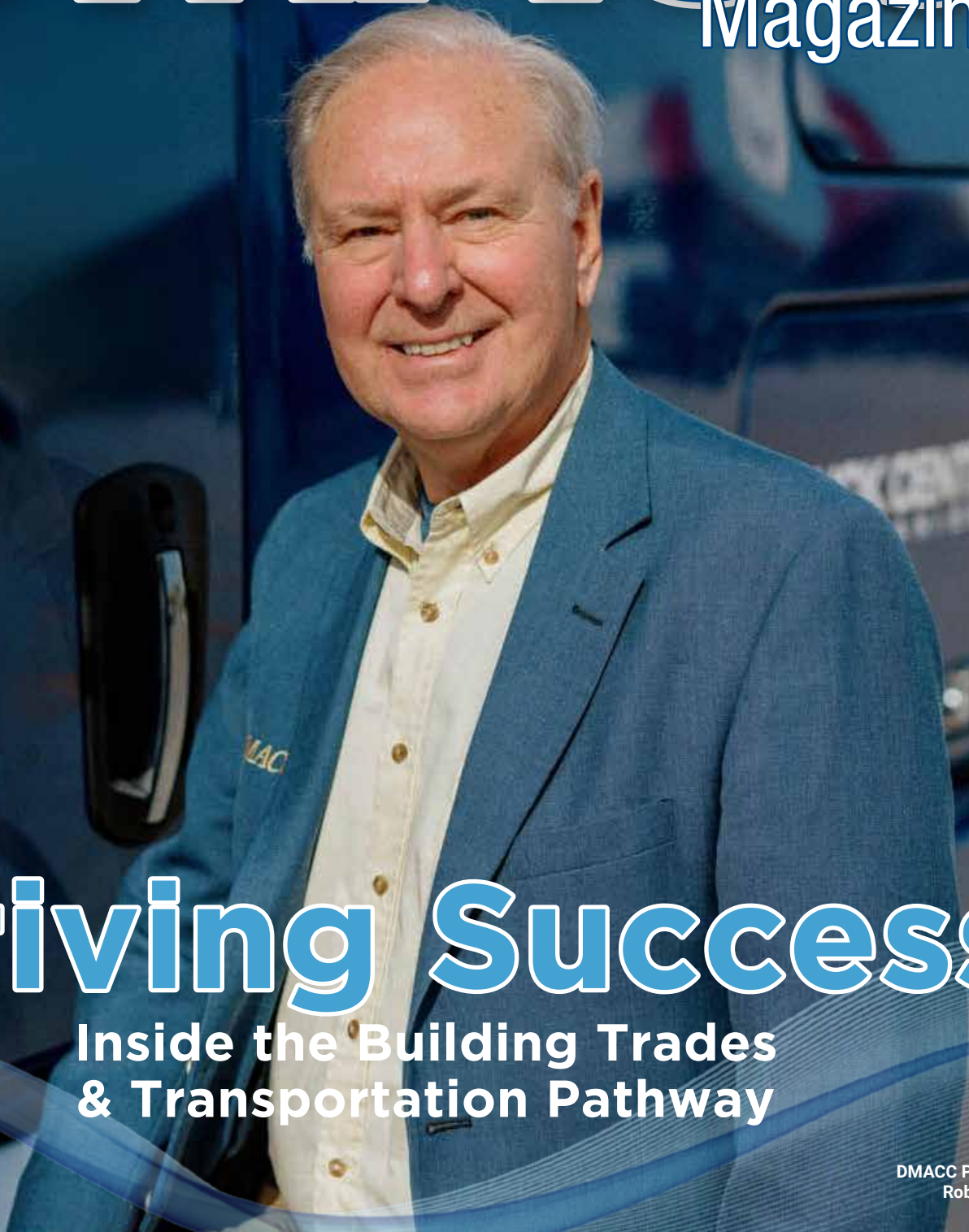


YOUR LINK TO YOUR COLLEGE

DMACC

Magazine



Driving Success

Inside the Building Trades
& Transportation Pathway

DMACC President
Rob Denson

Director's Message



As we roll into the Fall/Winter 2024 issue of *DMACC Magazine*, we are excited to share stories that embody the spirit of "Driving Success"—a theme that reflects both the forward momentum and steadfast commitment of DMACC to empower students and serve our communities.

This issue highlights initiatives that showcase our dedication to supporting student achievement and meeting workforce needs in critical sectors.

We are thrilled to feature updates on the **Building Trades & Transportation Pathway**, which provides hands-on training and comprehensive education for those entering a number of vital industries.

Whether it's through programs focused on electrical trades, construction management, or automotive technology, DMACC remains a leader in creating pathways to success for our students.

A key focus is on the DMACC Transportation Institute, which is undergoing a significant expansion to triple its capacity. This project is critical in addressing the growing

demand for skilled professionals in the trucking industry. With thousands of annual job openings in the transportation field statewide, the new facility will enable us to prepare more students for high-demand careers and support our business partners in Iowa.

I am continually inspired by the generosity of our donors and the enthusiasm of our community. Your support allows us to provide scholarships, enhance educational facilities, and ensure students have access to top-tier resources.

Together, we are building a legacy of learning and success—one that drives not just individual growth but the prosperity of our entire region.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. I invite you to explore this issue and learn more about the exciting advancements at DMACC.

Sincerely,

Tara K. Connolly
Executive Director
DMACC Foundation

DMACC Magazine

FALL/WINTER 2024 IN THIS ISSUE

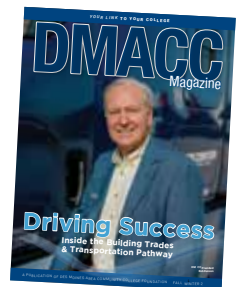
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ABOUT DMACC MAGAZINE

DMACC Magazine is a publication of the DMACC Foundation & Alumni Association. We welcome your questions or story ideas. Please email foundation@dmacc.edu.



Find Us Online

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- **WEB:** foundation.dmacc.edu
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- **X:** @DMACCFoundation



Thank you to the Ankeny Campus Student Activities Office for sponsoring a portion of the costs to produce *DMACC Magazine*. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Meet Our Leadership

As the preferred giving channel for all DMACC initiatives, the DMACC Foundation works cooperatively with individual donors, local businesses, and support organizations to ensure funding is available for student scholarships, facility and program enhancements, and more. We thank these Board members for their vision and service:

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The DMACC Alumni Association conferred alumni awards through the DMACC Foundation on October 15. DMACC President Rob Denson (left) and DMACC Foundation Associate Director Breck Hunt (right) congratulated the recipients: Izaah JB Knox (second from left, left to right), Kimberly Brix, Clint Dudley, Holly Current, Matthew Stephenson, Meghanne Knight and Bradley Snowgren. Award winner Justin Phongsavanh is not pictured.

Notable Alumni Named at Annual Celebration

On October 15, the DMACC Alumni Association and Foundation hosted the 2024 Alumni Awards Banquet and Recognition Ceremony at the Iowa Culinary Institute.

This year, several distinguished alumni were honored across three award categories for their outstanding contributions and achievements.

Outstanding Alumni Award

- **Kimberly S. Brix**, Lead Engineering Technician, Snyder & Associates, Inc.
- **Holly K. Current**, Vice President/Owner/Funeral Director, Hamilton's Funeral Home
- **Clint Dudley**, Owner, Shade Tree Auto
- **Bradley Snowgren**, High School Principal, Perry High School
- **Matthew W. Stephenson**, Director of Learning and Development, Casey's

Alumni Early Achievement Award

- **Meghanne E. Knight**, Equipment Maintenance Specialist, Eurofins Nutritional Analysis Center
- **Justin Phongsavanh**, Seated Javelin Thrower, USA National Team, U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committees

Impact Award

- **Izaah JB Knox**, Executive Director, Urban Dreams, Iowa State Senator, Senate District 17

Congratulations to all of this year's honorees. You make us proud!

Learn more about each honoree
 at dmacc.edu/alumni



Semi-tractor provided by
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Building Trades & Transportation Pathway

Expanding Opportunities

As the demand for skilled professionals in transportation, construction, and building trades continues to grow, DMACC's Building Trades & Transportation Pathway is helping to fill that need with a wide array of programs designed for hands-on learners.

Whether students are passionate about working with vehicles, building structures, or maintaining essential systems like HVAC and electrical wiring, this Pathway provides an education tailored to meet the needs of both students and industry partners.

A cornerstone of the Pathway is the DMACC Transportation Institute, which is undergoing a significant expansion to better serve students and meet the growing demand for trained drivers.

A Vision for the Future: DMACC Transportation Institute Expansion

The DMACC Transportation Institute, which opened in 1988, has been instrumental in training thousands of transportation professionals over the past three decades. However, as demand for truck drivers skyrockets—statewide, there are more than 6,000 job openings per year—it's become clear that the current facility is not sufficient to accommodate the growing number of students interested in pursuing a career in trucking.

With enrollment surging by 63% in just the past two years, the Institute is now at capacity, serving 250 students annually. The current facility, which has only three working skills ranges due to concrete damage occurring over time,

is no longer able to meet the needs of its growing student population. The planned \$9 million expansion aims to remedy this by constructing a new facility with state-of-the-art classroom, lab, and garage spaces, as well as increasing the usable training range area.

This expansion will allow the Institute to triple its capacity, offering practical training opportunities to more students than ever before. Derrick Walker, Director of Manufacturing, Engineering, Trades, & Transportation (METT) at DMACC, says this program growth is vital.

“With the new building, we’ll be able to train three times the number of students, meeting the ever-growing demand for safe, qualified drivers who play a crucial role in keeping goods and services moving across the country,” Walker says.

The expansion will not only serve students but also businesses, as the additional space will enable DMACC to offer Third Party CDL Skills testing in partnership with the Iowa Department of Transportation. This will provide a critical service to businesses in need of trained drivers across Iowa and beyond.

Building Trades & Transportation: A Broad Range of Career Options

The Transportation Institute is just one part of the broader Building Trades & Transportation Pathway, which offers a multitude of degree and certificate programs designed to provide students with hands-on experience and industry-specific training. The Pathway is an ideal choice for those who prefer working with their hands and want to enter fields where demand for skilled labor continues to rise.

Students in the Building Trades & Transportation Pathway can choose from a variety of programs that align with their passions, including:

- **ASEP – General Motors** – A two-year program that prepares students for work as GM dealership technicians.
- **Auto Collision Technology** – Prepares students for careers in the auto collision industry.
- **Automotive Mechanics Technology** – Comprehensive training for employment in the high-tech automotive service industry.
- **Construction Management** – A five-semester program that combines coursework in management and hands-on construction skills.
- **Diesel Technology** – Focuses on diesel engine repair and maintenance for trucks and heavy construction equipment.
- **Electrical Trades** – Prepares students for entry-level positions in residential, commercial, and industrial wiring.
- **Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Technology** – Teaches students the theory and practical skills required for systems in residential and light commercial structures.

Each program in the Pathway offers students a blend of classroom learning and hands-on training, ensuring they are well-prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation. The diversity of programs within the Pathway reflects DMACC’s commitment to providing students with the skills they need to succeed in a variety of in-demand careers.

Driving Student Success

Walker says that DMACC’s commitment to the Transportation Institute’s expansion is another way that DMACC is continuing to meet the needs of students.

“Being able to change students’ lives by providing them with career paths they may not have considered before is one of the most rewarding aspects of this work,” he says. “With



Derrick Walker

just three weeks of training, students can enter a field where they can make anywhere between \$70,000 and \$100,000 a year, depending on the path they choose.”

This expansion, combined with the comprehensive offerings of the Building Trades & Transportation Pathway, will help DMACC continue to be a leader in hands-on education, preparing students for rewarding careers in industries that are critical to the functioning of our economy.

As the transportation, construction, and skilled trades industries continue to grow, DMACC remains committed to providing the training necessary to support that growth.

“By investing in state-of-the-art facilities and expanding our capacity to train the next generation of professionals, we are empowering students to succeed, one career at a time,” Walker says.

**Learn more about all 10
DMACC Academic Pathways at
dmacc.edu/pathways**



Rusty Green and Mike Schatzke



Generosity is Driving Dreams

At 40 years old, Wasittha Thammawiroon, a non-traditional student from Thailand, has embarked on an inspiring journey into automotive technology—one fueled by community, passion, and the support of scholarships.

A long-time motorcycle enthusiast, Wasittha has always dreamed of becoming a motorcycle mechanic. Unfortunately, a lack of specific training programs in Des Moines stalled her pursuit of the dream career. Instead of giving up, she recently pivoted her focus to DMACC's Automotive Technology program, seeing it as a pathway to gain the skills she needed to pursue her passion.

"I ride motorcycles, and I want to be a motorcycle mechanic," Wasittha says. "But I couldn't find any motorcycle mechanic programs around Des Moines, so I decided to look into automotive technology instead."

Now in her second year of study, she has acquired a broad range of skills, from basic engine repair to advanced electronic systems, thanks to the comprehensive curriculum at DMACC.

Empowering Students with Scholarships

A significant part of her success in the program has come from the support she received through the Cars & Coffee Des Moines Scholarship. This scholarship, specifically aimed at students in the Automotive Technology program, helps cover essential costs like tuition, books, and tools.

"Tools are expensive," Wasittha says. "The scholarship from Cars & Coffee allowed me to get higher-quality tools that are guaranteed for life. That's a huge help because now I have everything I need, and I know it will last."

The Cars & Coffee Des Moines Scholarship is more than just financial aid; it is a reflection of the inclusive and supportive spirit of the Cars & Coffee events themselves. Rusty Green, who co-founded Cars & Coffee Des Moines with Mike Schatzke, envisioned the event as a welcoming space for car enthusiasts of all backgrounds.

"We wanted it to be something different than other car shows," Rusty says. "Our gatherings are about the stories

behind the cars and the people who drive them, not just the car itself."

Building a Community of Support

This philosophy of inclusivity and community extends to the scholarship that Rusty and Mike established at DMACC. Rusty's commitment to nurturing the next generation of automotive innovators led to the creation of the scholarship, which he hopes will inspire students who, like Wasittha, have a passion for automotive technology.

"I want the scholarship to go to a creative mind that's not inhibited by today's constraints," Rusty says. "It's about finding the next Chip Foose, Bob Lutz, or even Henry Ford. I believe that person could be right here at DMACC."

Wasittha's story is a perfect example of the scholarship's impact. Her experience at DMACC has brought her closer to her dream of working on motorcycles, and the community she found through Cars & Coffee has only strengthened her resolve.

"I stumbled on a Cars & Coffee event by accident, and I was amazed by the variety of cars and the welcoming atmosphere," she says. "I've been trying to volunteer with them ever since because they've done so much to help me with my education."

Looking Toward the Future

Through her hard work, dedication, and the support of the Cars & Coffee Des Moines Scholarship, Wasittha is well on her way to achieving her goals.

And while her journey may have started with a love for motorcycles, the skills and connections she's gaining at DMACC are setting her up for success in any automotive field she chooses to pursue, which makes her a perfect recipient of the Cars & Coffee Des Moines Scholarship.

Wasittha's journey has displayed the inclusivity, creativity, and passion that are deeply embedded in both Cars & Coffee and DMACC.

"If Cars & Coffee can offer the opportunity to find the student that relates to both the kid with the Datsun and the guy with the Porsche, my job is done," Rusty says.



Wasittha Thammawiroon

**“I’ve always
been into cars,
loved taking auto
classes in high
school, and just
knew that’s what
I wanted to do.”**

—Graham Small
*Student,
Auto Mechanics
Technology*

Giving Back to the Next Generation

As President and CEO of Thys Automotive Family, Joel Thys knows firsthand the importance of a solid educational foundation.

His journey from a DMACC student in the late 1980s to a successful leader in the automotive industry is a testament to the impact that targeted training and education can have on an individual's career.

Joel's connection to DMACC began in January 1987 when he enrolled in the GM Automotive Service Educational Program (ASEP), a new initiative at the time designed to train students on the emerging computer technologies in vehicles.

"All the new computers were coming on the cars, and we needed to get everybody trained up to start working on these computer-operated vehicles," Joel says.

The Importance of Giving Back

After graduating in August 1988, Joel continued working in the automotive industry, eventually leading him to his current role at Thys Automotive Family.

Now, Joel and his wife, Dawn, are giving back to the institution that helped propel his career by establishing the Dawn & Joel Thys Endowed Scholarship, aimed at supporting students in DMACC's Auto Mechanics Technology program.

Recognizing the significant role DMACC played in his career, Joel and Dawn established the scholarship to support students pursuing a degree in Auto Mechanics Technology. The scholarship is intended to help students who demonstrate academic merit and a commitment to the field.

"Giving back has been really important to us because we've been successful, and we want to help others be successful as well," says Joel, who is particularly passionate about supporting students who may not have had the strongest support systems growing up, especially first-generation college students.

"We're just glad that we can help people who want to further their education but don't know how they're going to pay for it," Joel adds.

Scholarships Making a Difference

The impact of such scholarships is evident in the experiences of current students like Graham Small, who is also enrolled in DMACC's Auto Mechanics Technology program. Growing up in the Storm Lake area, Graham was inspired by his uncle, who ran an independent auto shop,



Joel and Dawn Thys

and his older brother, a dedicated car enthusiast.

"I've always been into cars, loved taking auto classes in high school, and just knew that's what I wanted to do," Graham says, noting that he chose DMACC based on strong recommendations from people he knew and the quality of the program. He says that his instructors have been key to his positive experience.

"They're really knowledgeable, and the equipment and facilities are top-notch," he says, adding that scholarships like the one funded by Joel and Dawn make a huge difference in allowing him focus more on his studies. "I don't have to take as many work shifts, so I have more time for homework and support for buying better tools."

Ensuring a Bright Future

For Joel, the decision to give back through an endowed scholarship is deeply personal.

"It's what keeps us going," he says. "We're always wanting to give back and help others, and these endowed scholarships are what those are for."

Through their generosity, Joel and Dawn are ensuring that the next generation of automotive professionals has the opportunity to receive the same high-quality education that helped shape Joel's life in the auto industry.

"Our vision is for these scholarships to empower students to pursue their passions and build their futures with confidence," Joel says.



An Electric Partnership

Midland Power Cooperative Delivers Support for DMACC's Electric Utility Technology Program

Midland Power Cooperative, a rural-based electric utility company, has a strong connection with DMACC's Electric Utility Technology program, recognizing it as a vital resource for developing skilled workers in the electrical utility industry. The cooperative's involvement with DMACC is centered around its commitment to nurturing local talent and supporting education that directly benefits the community it serves.

Bill McKim, CEO of Midland Power Cooperative, says his

organization's partnership with the DMACC is aimed at addressing a critical workforce need.

"There's a nationwide shortage of utility line workers—around 10,000 to 12,000 unfilled positions. With the growing demand in the energy sector, having a pipeline of skilled workers trained in programs like DMACC's is crucial," McKim says.

Meeting Workforce Needs

The Electric Utility Technology program at DMACC provides the hands-on experience and technical knowledge required to excel in this field, making graduates highly desirable for employers like Midland Power.

But the partnership between Midland Power and DMACC extends beyond recruitment.

In 2024, Midland Power introduced a \$2,000 annual scholarship for students in the Electric Utility Technology program. The scholarship can be applied to tuition, books, and supplies, with a preference for students who are members of the cooperative or whose families are members. McKim sees this scholarship as an investment in the future of rural Iowa.

“We’re excited about investing in programs that promote and grow education, especially when those graduates are likely to stay in Iowa, make their lives here, and contribute to our communities,” he says.

Midland Power values the practical, targeted curriculum that DMACC offers. McKim praises the college’s emphasis on safety and skill development, which are critical in the utility industry.

“The training provided at DMACC is top-notch, especially in terms of safety, which is a huge issue for us. It’s a skilled position, and DMACC’s program does an excellent job preparing students for the challenges they’ll face,” McKim says.

A Win-Win Partnership

Having a strong partnership with DMACC is particularly beneficial for Midland Power, given the college’s proximity to the cooperative’s service territory.

“DMACC’s campuses in Boone, Ankeny, and Ames are right in the heart of our service area,” McKim says. “This makes it convenient for us to recruit locally trained talent. It’s perfect.”

The collaboration between Midland Power and DMACC is a testament to the cooperative’s commitment to supporting education and developing a skilled workforce in Iowa.

By offering scholarships and engaging with DMACC’s programs, Midland Power is not only ensuring a steady flow of qualified utility workers but also strengthening the local communities it serves.

“We appreciate DMACC’s willingness to work with us and their dedication to building a great program. We’re excited about the future and wish DMACC continued success,” McKim says.



INSIDE THE SCHOLARSHIPS

Within the Building Trades & Transportation Pathway, a multitude of scholarships have been established to provide crucial support for students navigating their educational journey. These scholarships serve to encourage and enable aspiring trades and transportation professionals to pursue their goals with confidence. Among the array of opportunities, these scholarships stand out, each offering generous support to students within the Pathway.

Cars & Coffee Des Moines Scholarship

The Cars and Coffee Des Moines Scholarship provides a \$2,000 scholarship to a student enrolled in at least six credits in the Auto Mechanics Technology AAS program. The scholarship is applicable to tuition and books only and requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0. The scholarship is disbursed in equal increments, \$1,000 for the fall term and \$1,000 for the spring term, as long as the students continues to meet the requirements of the scholarship.

Midland Power Cooperative Scholarship

The Midland Power Cooperative Scholarship is for students in the Electric Utility Technology program who have a 2.0 GPA or higher. The scholarship can be used for tuition, books, and supplies. Preference will be given to students who are members of the cooperative or whose parents are members of the cooperative. Preference will also be given to students who are from Boone, Calhoun, Dallas, Franklin, Greene, Grundy, Guthrie, Hamilton, Hardin, Humboldt, Kossuth, Marshall, Pocahontas, Polk, Story, Webster, and Wright counties in Iowa.

The Dawn & Joel Thys Endowed Scholarship

The Dawn & Joel Thys Endowed Scholarship provides scholarships to students enrolled in the Auto Mechanics Technology program. The student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and academic merit for eligibility. The scholarship is applicable to tuition only.

SAVE THE DATE!

2025 DMACC CEO GOLF INVITATIONAL
 Wednesday, June 18, 2025
 Lunch, Golf, Cocktail Reception & More!
 Watch for details at foundation.dmacc.edu

A RECORD-SETTING SHOW OF SUPPORT!

The annual DMACC CEO Golf Invitational has always been about more than just a game—it's a celebration of community, generosity, and the shared goal of supporting education. This year, we are thrilled to announce that we have set a new record, raising more than **\$500,000** for student scholarships.

This incredible achievement means so much to our students, providing vital funds for scholarships. It's a lifeline for many, enabling them to overcome financial obstacles and pursue their dreams with confidence. The support from our sponsors and players ensures that we can continue to cultivate a skilled and talented workforce for Iowa's future.



A heartfelt **THANK YOU** goes out to everyone who participated in this year's event. Your generosity and dedication are making a real difference in the lives of countless students.

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What a Day!



Sun & Fun in Support of Scholarships



The DMACC Alumni Association and Foundation welcomed sun and fun in support of student scholarships at the 7th Annual 5K walk/run—AND first-ever Kids Fun Run—on September 28.

Total attendance was 321 and nearly \$13,000 was raised for DMACC student scholarships! Since its launch in 2018, the event has raised more than \$60,000 for DMACC student scholarships.

We are humbled by the contributions of all of our campus departments and volunteers for their support. We could not host this event without them.

Additionally, a special thanks goes out to our event sponsors: GreenState Credit Union, The District at Prairie Trail, Lola's Fine Sauces, Choice Creative Solutions, Ankeny

Dental Professionals, Hazel Creative, Foundation Recovery Systems, Wagging Tails Pet Services, Status Health Partners, Brown's Shoes Ankeny, Fleet Feet Des Moines, Fitness Sports, DLR Group, Excel Lawns and Landscape, Elevate Physical Therapy, Mark and Erica Rasmussen, Scheels and the Ankeny Campus Student Activities Office.

We also appreciate the efforts of the following student clubs who helped make the Kids Fun Zone a huge success: Aspiring Educators Club; Dental Clubs (including dental assisting and both cohorts of dental hygiene); EMS and Fire Science; Horticulture Club; International Student Club; Nursing Club; Phi Theta Kappa; and Philosophy Club.

For more information or to view results and photos, visit dmacc5k.dmacc.edu

Honoring ICI Excellence

Dr. Greg and Michelle Haessler have been dedicated supporters and advocates of the Iowa Culinary Institute (ICI) at the Des Moines Area Community College Ankeny Campus for more than 30 years.

Their involvement began when a coworker invited them to one of ICI's gourmet dinners. Initially skeptical, they were soon impressed by the quality and have since attended nearly every themed dinner. They also participated in the ICI's French culinary trips, gaining a unique perspective on international cuisine and hospitality.

"The dinners were as good as any place we'd been to, whether in Des Moines or New York or anywhere," Greg says. "We've probably been to more than 200 dinners."

The Haesslers' contributions go beyond attending events, though. They recently arranged an estate gift to the DMACC Foundation, ensuring that future generations of ICI students will continue to thrive. This planned gift reflects their belief in the transformative power of education.

Greg, a retired Vice President and Chief Medical Director at Bankers Life/Principal Financial Group, credits his own success to having access to a high-quality education. He feels compelled to give back.

"You can't take it with you," Greg says simply. "This is a way to use our disposable income meaningfully."

Setting up the planned gift was straightforward for the Haesslers, drawing on their previous philanthropic efforts. Greg explains that including ICI in their trusts was an easy decision, driven by their fondness for fine food and the positive impact the ICI has had on students' lives. Michelle adds that giving back makes them feel good, knowing they are helping others.

"It is satisfying to know you're helping someone else. Someone helped me, so it's important to give back," says Michelle.

Their generous gift will support scholarships and enhance training for the next generation of culinary professionals. Greg emphasizes their desire to ensure the program remains first-class and continues to graduate high quality ICI students.



Michelle and Dr. Greg Haessler

“We know what the Culinary Institute does for its students and this is our way of ensuring it continues to excel.”

Michelle hopes their gift will inspire others to consider planned giving as a way to make a meaningful impact.

“We know what the Culinary Institute does for its students and this is our way of ensuring it continues to excel,” Greg says.

Let your philanthropy pave the way for generations of learners. Together, we will build a legacy of learning and empowerment at DMACC. Contact the DMACC Foundation at 515-964-6229 or foundation@dmacc.edu to discover how you can make a difference in students' lives.

“It’s humbling in a great way and it is encouraging. Receiving scholarship support is awesome and allows me to focus more time on my studies.”

—Zachary Frank
Student, Cybersecurity



Gifts that Leave a Legacy

Establishing a scholarship through the DMACC Foundation is one way you can assist students and leave a legacy to the College. It’s also a very meaningful way to honor family and friends. As a donor, you choose the name of the scholarship as well as the criteria for awarding it.

To learn more about how you can establish a scholarship, visit:
foundation.dmacc.edu

Incredible Travel in '25

Our 2025 travel schedule is INCREDIBLE—and we hope you'll join us for some absolutely fantastic trips! The DMACC Alumni Association partnership with Collette Travel and Tours provides a fantastic opportunity for domestic and international travel with your friends from DMACC.

When you register for a trip as an alum, supporter, or friend of DMACC, a percentage of the trip proceeds goes to support student scholarships at DMACC. That means you travel and DMACC students benefit. Find dates below, and details and pricing at alumni.dmacc.edu!

Upcoming Trips

Canyon Country

March 28-April 4, 2025

Discover Scotland

August 9-18, 2025

Reflections of Italy

April 28-May 7, 2025

Spotlight on the French Riviera

September 4-12, 2025

Canadian Rockies & Glacier National Park

July 18-24, 2025

Discover American Heritage

October 17-24, 2025

Reservations made on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations made after the deposit deadline date are based upon availability. Find full details online.