



THE Link

Fall 2022

The Lakeland Community College Alumni & Friends Magazine



Welcome to the fall 2022 edition of The Link. As we enter the season for giving thanks and taking time for thoughtful reflection, I can't help but think back 40 years ago to the fall of 1982 when I walked through the doors of Lakeland Community College for the first time. I would have never imagined the impact Lakeland would have on my life. My younger self would have never believed that in the year 2022, my Lakeland journey would be far from over.

My Lakeland story is like so many others. As a student, Lakeland challenged me and prepared me for a career that has been both successful and fulfilling. Four decades later, the value of my degree from Lakeland continues to impact my life and the life of my family.

In 2019, I was inducted into the Lakeland Alumni Hall of Fame joining a distinguished group of Lakeland alumni. In addition, I am honored to be a part of The Lakeland Foundation's board of directors, serving as the alumni representative, positioning me to contribute to the success and well-being of Lakeland Community College and The Lakeland Foundation.

My love for Lakeland runs deep and my role on The Lakeland Foundation board presents me with a unique opportunity to give back to the college by taking a fresh look at ongoing challenges and creating successful strategies which will impact the future of Lakeland Community College and The Lakeland Foundation.

Our alumni are a precious asset and play an invaluable role in the success of Lakeland Community College and its students. Our college is a life-changing resource for everyone it touches. Please join me in supporting Lakeland Community College and The Lakeland Foundation. As your alumni representative, I am always happy to hear from you. If you have a suggestion or just want to say hi, please contact me at mdt2@case.edu. I look forward to hearing from you!

Wishing you a bountiful autumn!

*Michael D. Thomas '85
Director, University Technology
Case Western Reserve University
The Lakeland Foundation board of directors, Alumni Representative*

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Program Spotlight

Respiratory therapy program receives prestigious award

The Lakeland Community College Respiratory Therapy Program is among only 23 programs in the nation that have been recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) to receive the President's Award for Credentialing Success. This is the highest achievable award given by the commission and is presented as part of CoARC's continued efforts to value the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential as a standard of professional achievement. According to CoARC, the success of Lakeland's Respiratory Therapy program is measured by inspiring its graduates to

achieve their highest educational and professional goals.

“This award reflects the hard work and dedication of our students and graduates, we couldn't be more proud of them!” said Catherine Kenny, Ph.D., RRT, program director and professor for respiratory therapy at Lakeland. “No one achieves this type of award without a team effort. For that, David Goswick, our director of clinical education, and I would like to thank our clinical partners.

Our students spend time in some of the best hospital facilities in the country and work under the guidance of registered respiratory therapists who are committed to student success as evidenced in excellent patient care. This award reflects student experiences at those

“This is the highest achievable award given by the commission...”



sites, and the education that students receive throughout their tenure at Lakeland. We are so thankful for our extended team and our graduates.”

Dr. Kenny has been at Lakeland since 1983 serving as director of clinical education and then program director since 1992. Prior to Lakeland she served in roles including research, diagnostics and clinical education.

She earned her doctorate degree at Kent State University and both master's and bachelor's degrees in education from Cleveland State University. She earned her graduate certificate from the University of Chicago in respiratory therapy.

CoARC accredits degree-granting programs in respiratory care throughout the country that have undergone a rigorous process of voluntary peer review and have met or exceeded the minimum accreditation



standards as set by the professional association. The CoARC board used objective criteria based on key accreditation metrics to select programs for the recognition. Among these were maintaining an RRT credentialing success of 100% or above among Lakeland's respiratory therapy graduates for the past three years.



Lakeland
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Lakeland receives National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense designation

Lakeland Community College has been designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) through academic year 2027. Institutions that receive a CAE-CD designation have met the rigorous requirements set forth by the sponsor of the program, the National Security Agency (NSA). The NSA awards CAE-CD designations to institutions that commit to producing cybersecurity professionals that will reduce vulnerabilities in our national infrastructure.

One of three cybersecurity designations available through the NSA, the cyber defense designation specifically indicates that Lakeland is helping reduce threats to our national infrastructure by promoting higher education and research in cyber defense as well as providing a pipeline of qualified

cybersecurity professionals. At the time of writing, Lakeland Community College is one of 384 colleges and universities in the country who have received the CAE designation.

Lakeland professor Nicholas DiTirro, Ph.D. spearheaded Lakeland's efforts to apply for the CAE-CD designation, providing information and resources to the National Center for Academic Excellence.

"The CAE-CD designation puts Lakeland Community College, our information technology and computer sciences (IT&CS) department and especially our students into a very elite group of colleges and universities," says DiTirro. "The demand for cybersecurity professionals is high, this designation shows our commitment to educating those professionals and providing much-needed additions to the workforce."

RELATED LINKS:
[More about Lakeland's IT&CS programs](#)

Ohio's first all-female color guard members are Lakeland affiliates

The Lakeland Community College Veterans Center and local chapter of the Student Veterans of America have

collaborated with the national organization Team Red, White & Blue to form Ohio's first all-female American Legion color guard. The color guard is a unit charged with the protection and presentation of our nation's flag, the colors.

It is an honor to be the bearer or protector of the colors, which is why the term honor guard is often used in place of color guard. The presentation of the colors and the color guard are steeped in military tradition and history. Today it is mainly used in ceremonies that honor our nation and military.

This all-female color guard is comprised of six members, all of whom are veterans affiliated with Lakeland Community College. The members include Lakeland students, alumni,

faculty and staff, and are veterans of multiple branches of the U.S. military.

"To be the first all-female American Legion color guard in the state of Ohio, knowing that there have been fewer than 10 in the nation, is something really special," says S. Rhonda Osagie-Erese, manager of Lakeland's Veteran's Center. "There will never be another first. Female veterans are now starting to gain recognition."

On Friday, July 1, the color guard had the honor of presenting the colors during the pregame show at the Lake County Captain's game at Classic Park in Eastlake.

Speaking on the importance of this first for Ohio, Osagie-Erese continues, "Our brothers in arms have emulated the discipline and bravery it takes to protect the freedoms we enjoy – and so have women. Women too have sacrificed, died, and bravely fought for our way of life since the Civil War. This color guard stands for all the women who served, yet were never regarded as veterans. We see the female veterans of Ohio and worldwide and we honor them."

We see the female veterans of Ohio and worldwide and we honor them.



Lakeland Civic Band Director Performs at Gettysburg

Frank Cosenza, director of the Lakeland Civic Band, took part in a solemn and moving ceremony in Gettysburg National Cemetery Aug. 18. Cosenza performed taps, the bugle call for "lights out," at the Soldiers' National Monument as part of "One Hundred Nights of Taps, Gettysburg."

In its sixth year, "One Hundred Nights of Taps, Gettysburg" honors the fallen laid to rest at Gettysburg National Cemetery. Beginning on Memorial Day, taps is played nightly through Labor Day. The program was conceived by Wendy Allen and patterned after a similar program, "Sounding The Last Post," in Belgium. The Gettysburg program is co-

sponsored by The Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania and Gettysburg National Military Park.

Cosenza became aware of this opportunity through two different organizations, TAPS FOR VETERANS and 100 Nights of Taps.

"It was an honor for me to take part in a ceremony honoring those that gave their life in the Civil War," said Cosenza. "The thought of standing a few feet from where Abraham Lincoln gave his Gettysburg address was humbling, and the audience I played for was respectful and appreciative."



Rise and thrive grant leads to wellness initiative at Lakeland

RELATED LINKS:
[Lakeland's Wellness Program](#)

Lakeland Community College recently received a Rise and Thrive grant awarded by the State of Ohio through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. With the funds, Dr. Ken Browner, psychologist in Lakeland's Counseling and Advising Center, worked with Lakeland's Mental Health Task Force to create an expansive program called Wellness at Lakeland.

Throughout the process of designing the program, Lakeland worked closely with its community partner for the project, the Lake County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board. The program is designed to promote and enhance physical, emotional, financial, relationship and mental wellness for Lakeland's students.

“We all need to devote attention to our wellness and self-care.”

“Throughout the pandemic, I think we have learned that mental health is not just a concern for certain people who have serious depression, anxiety or other diagnoses, said Dr. Browner.” “Rather, we all need to devote attention to our wellness and self-care. Lakeland offers a range of resources that contribute to student wellness, whether through the Athletic Fitness Center, Lakeland Cares Cupboard, HIVE makerspace, academic offerings, counseling, or our many other student support offices. This grant gave us the opportunity to build on our strengths while adding capacity and building awareness of Wellness at Lakeland.”

Wellness for Employees

Lakeland's Wellness Committee and Human Resources Department offer programming and resources for employee wellness, including annual



Wellness Days; the Lakeland Health Clinic operated by University Hospitals; 24/7 access to the IMPACT employee assistance program via telephone, mobile app with chat functionality; and Lakeland’s web portal. The Rise and Thrive initiative has sparked ongoing discussion about ways to build on and mirror the newer student-focused projects with additional resources and opportunities for employee wellness, including a dedicated employee health and wellness channel on Lakeland’s myLakeland portal.

Future plans

While the grant provides temporary funding for the wellness initiative, Dr. Browner and the Mental Health Task Force plan to incorporate wellness and self-care into future offerings, with the understanding that healthy life skills can influence the success of students both in the academic realm and beyond their time at Lakeland.



WELLNESS@LAKELAND



WHAT THE PROGRAM INCLUDES

Student Engagement

- **Student Wellness Challenge** – Students participate by completing an online wellness interest form, or posting pictures of themselves engaging in wellness activities on or off campus. The challenge ran through Sept. 16, 2022, and participants entered for the chance to win a Fitbit®, Apple AirPods® or a Yeti® water bottle, awarded by random selection.
- **Student Wellness Ambassadors** – Students have been hired with funds from the grant to promote wellness, staff the new Wellness Zones, and connect with students who have submitted a wellness interest form.
- **Stress Relief Kits** – Kits purchased in part by grant funds are being distributed by the Lakeland's Library during midterms and finals each semester.

Resource Enhancement

- **Wellness Zones** – These are designated areas of the college where students can find a quiet space to relax, unwind or check out an iPad® loaded with mental wellness and meditation apps. Indoor relaxation zones are found in the library and in the former reception area of Lakeland's Counseling and Advising Center. Outdoor relaxation zones are located in the courtyard and next to the "Mind Ladders" sculpture outside of Lakeland's Breakers Dining Room.

Curriculum Development

- **Skills for Self-Care and Resilience** – A new one credit-hour course was developed by Lakeland's Counseling and Advising Center that helps students implement strategies for self-care, mental health and perseverance. The class was offered tuition-free for students enrolled during the 2022 summer session and 2022 fall semester.
- **The Wellness Course Menu** – This brochure offers an extensive list of Lakeland classes that include elements for emotional and mental wellness, financial wellness, intellectual and creative wellness, nutritional wellness, occupational and social wellness, and physical wellness.

2022

**Lakeland
Alumni Hall
of Fame
Inductees**



Dr. Teresa Cowan-Christen earned her Associate of Arts degree from Lakeland in 1999 and her Bachelor of Arts degree in clinical psychology with a minor in criminal justice from Cleveland State University in 2001. She also earned a Master of Arts in clinical psychology from the University of Hartford in 2003 and her Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) from the University of Hartford in 2012. Teresa has developed services and volunteered for many different programs to enrich her community at a local, state and national level. Having been a past active-duty military spouse, she founded an equine assisted services program called Horses, Humans and Healing (H3) which provides learning and psychotherapy services to those who have served or who are currently serving in the U.S. military, first responders, their families, and caregivers. While an active-duty family, she was chosen by military leadership to be a volunteer Key Spouse to help other military families in their squadron. Teresa also served on a national military task force helping to develop national standards for individuals and programs in cultural competency to better serve veterans, military members and their families while providing equine assisted learning and psychotherapy services. She helped develop and supported a national equine assisted services program attain a large federal grant which supported EAL AND EAP programs that has helped many veterans throughout the entire USA for the past four years. Teresa has also worked for the Lone Survivor Foundation at healing retreat weekends in Texas and volunteered for Midwest Battle Buddies who provide and train dogs as service animals for wounded military members. Teresa is a past President of the Wichita Area Psychological Association and has been the Chair of the Military Task Force of the Kansas Psychological Association. She has volunteered to help child and adult survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking and recent refugees. In the past she has been trained in American Red Cross Disaster response and has assisted during catastrophes such as flooding, tornado and fire. She has also provided training on a variety of mental health topics and presented at national conferences helping other professionals provide services for first responders, veterans and current military personnel. Currently, Dr. Cowan-Christen maintains a private practice, Welcome Wellness LLC, located in Wichita, Kansas. She continues to serve her community by providing some pro bono mental health services, volunteers for various animal organizations and rescues, is part of the American Legion Women's auxiliary, The Wichita Veterans Coalition, the Elizabeth Dole

Foundation for military caregivers and many local, state and national associations. She also helps mentor other professionals and is in the process of helping a local police detective develop and facilitate a support group/program for female police officers from different local, county and state agencies in Kansas.



Andrea (Andie) Musial earned her Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees from Lakeland in 2003. She graduated from Fairport Harding High School in 2003, as well. Andie continued her education earning her Bachelor of Science degree from Notre Dame College in 2005, her Master of Arts in human physiology from Kent State University in 2008 and her Ph.D. in biological science-neuroscience from Kent State in 2012. Andie is a professor of biology at Lakeland Community College and serves as the co-adviser to Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society for which she has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Distinguished Excellence Award for Advisors in 2022. Andie received the Lakeland Excellence in Education award in 2019. Among her many accomplishments, she is a member of the American Academy of Advancement of Science and a 2022 graduate of Leadership Lake County. Andie has volunteered for a variety of charitable causes including Big Brothers Big Sisters and United Way of Lake County. She also is a founding member of Project NICU in Cleveland and helped raise over \$112,000 for NE Ohio preemie families currently admitted in the NICU to offset medical costs, parking costs and financial burdens created during their NICU stay.



Deborah Vitantonio earned her Associate of Applied Science degree from Lakeland in 1981, Bachelor of Science in nursing in 1996 from Case Western Reserve University, Master of Science in nursing from Ursuline College in 2004, and Doctor of Nursing Practice from Ursuline College in 2017. Debbie is a professor of nursing at Lakeland, the lead faculty for the evening and weekend nursing program, and co-coordinator of the nursing learning lab. She has made numerous scholarly presentations for the Ohio League of Nursing and others. Debbie's certifications and professional organizations include Ohio Education Association, Ohio League for Nursing, National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, National League for

Nursing, Ohio Consortium of Nursing Learning Labs, Ohio League for Nursing – Continuing Education Committee – August 2017 – August 2021, Sigma Theta Tau National Honor Society of Nursing, Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland (Past), and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse – American Nurse Credentialing Center Certification, May 2005 – May 2010. Debbie was a nominee for Lakeland’s Excellence in Teaching Award in 2014. She has volunteered for several charitable causes including Alzheimer’s, United Way, voter registration and Wickliffe Schools Alumni Association.



Michael Zuren earned his Associate of Applied Business degree from Lakeland in 1988 and his bachelor’s degree in 1990 from Dyke College. He continued his education earning his Master of Business Administration from Lake Erie College in 1992 and his Ph.D. from Capella University in 2013.

Michael currently serves at the Lake County, Ohio Treasurer. He also served as Eastlake Councilman from 2016-2021. He has published eight books covering topics including real estate and credit. Michael has received numerous awards including the United Way Community Impact Award Local County Government 2021-2022, and the Ohio Ministry Network 2021 Driver of the Year Award. Michael founded the Free Kids Lunch program, Summer Feeding program, and Lake County Birthday Club for those with special needs. He partners with Asa Cox for the “Best Christmas Ever” events. He volunteers with the Salvation Army, Lake County senior centers, and Coats for Kids among many others. In addition, Michael volunteers with Ohio Paws with Purpose that distributes dog and cat food to local families to ensure they can keep their family pets during hardship



GIVING TUESDAY

Save the Date!

Giving Tuesday is November 29.

Your gift will benefit The Lakeland Foundation's Greatest Need Fund that supports emerging priorities and innovative projects that help students succeed. Your gift will make a difference in Lakeland students' lives! Follow [this link](#) to make a gift Nov. 29 or avoid the rush and make a gift today.

Renovation Grant

On Oct. 7, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that Lakeland Community College has been awarded a \$4.2 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to renovate the Industrial Skills Training Center for Advanced Manufacturing located on Lakeland's campus.

The grant aims to boost manufacturing workforce training efforts and provide individuals with skills needed to fill a multitude of manufacturing jobs across northeast Ohio. Renovating Lakeland's Industrial Skills Training Center for Advanced Manufacturing will give students access to state-of-the-art resources and innovative training techniques to prepare them for the workforce.

"Ohio has a proud history of leading the country in manufacturing innovation. We're building on that legacy by making new investments in Lakeland County Community College to train the next generation of Ohio advanced manufacturers," Senator Sherrod Brown stated in a news release. "We know Ohio workers

can compete with anyone in the world, and this will allow more Ohioans to build careers in good-paying jobs."

"Being that Lakeland is a critical provider of education and job training in northeast Ohio, the funds awarded by EDA will have a tremendous impact not only for our students, but for our area employers. Advanced manufacturing jobs are in high demand locally and expanding our training opportunities will prepare more students with the skills needed to fill these positions," shared Dr. Morris W. Beverage Jr., Lakeland Community College president. "Lakeland's mission is to meet the needs of the community; this grant will allow us to do exactly that by building a stronger workforce for northeast Ohio. We are grateful the EDA recognizes and supports these efforts."

"This is great news for Lakeland Community College's Industrial Skills Training Center for Advanced Manufacturing and the entire Northeast Ohio community," congressman Dave Joyce stated in a news release. "One of the most common concerns I hear from local manufacturers is that they



have jobs available but cannot find qualified workers to fill them. It's more important than ever to ensure Ohioans have the necessary skills and training to secure and succeed in these good-paying jobs. This grant will help accomplish just that and ensure manufacturing can continue to play a key role in our regional economy and support communities across the Buckeye State.”

The EDA investment will be matched with \$3.1 million in local funds and is expected to create 300 jobs, retain 243 jobs and generate \$5 million in private investment.

KeyBank Grant

On Monday, Oct. 3, a check presentation was made by KeyBank Foundation to The Lakeland Foundation for a grant in the amount of \$225,000 in support of the college's "Begin the Conversation" initiative (BTC). This transformative gift will allow for 60 first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds and minority populations to have every opportunity to succeed at Lakeland.

BTC is an initiative designed to promote a successful higher education experience for prospective students from low-

income and minority populations by providing tuition, wraparound support, mentoring and job training at no financial cost to the students.

The BTC initiative stemmed from a collaboration of Lake County leaders who came together to address race relations and social justice in Lake County. The Lakeland Foundation worked with the group to launch a scholarship component during the 2021-2022 academic year with an inaugural class of 14 students.

The funding provided by KeyBank will allow for 60 new BTC students to participate in the program, recruiting 20 new participants each year for the next three years.

“We know there are a great deal of students in our communities who would like to continue their education beyond high school but do not have the financial means to do so,” shared Greg Sanders, vice president for institutional advancement & executive director of The Lakeland Foundation. “We appreciate that KeyBank recognizes the importance of this initiative and has awarded us with the funds to expand the program.”

“For decades Lakeland Community College and the Lakeland Foundation has helped transform the lives of thousands of students...”

Students that are a part of the BTC program must complete the Lakeland scholarship application and demonstrate financial need. Once accepted into the program, there are academic requirements that students must meet to maintain their eligibility. BTC students meet monthly with a staff member who serves as a mentor and provides additional support beyond the classroom.

The Lakeland Foundation estimates that 70% of BTC students will graduate, continuing their education as students in good-standing or transferring to a four-year college or university.

“The extra support of the BTC program is an important resource for individuals coming from diverse backgrounds and that are first generation college students,” explains Sanders. “We’ve seen our students have great success in the first year and look forward to welcoming new students into the program.”

The Lakeland Foundation, Lakeland Community College and KeyBank share a long-standing partnership. This most recent gift brings KeyBank’s total contribution to Lakeland to over \$500,000 since 2018.

“For decades Lakeland Community College and the Lakeland Foundation has helped transform the lives of thousands of students throughout Northeast Ohio with their programs,” said Mattie Jones Hollowell, KeyBank’s northeast Ohio corporate responsibility officer. “At Key, we are dedicated to connecting our neighbors to opportunities that allow them to thrive and this financial support is one of the many ways we can accomplish that. We are so proud to support Lakeland’s Begin the Conversation initiative and give students across the region hope for a bright future.”

While eligibility for the BTC grant is designated by KeyBank for students from low-income and minority populations, all Lakeland students have access to financial aid and scholarship opportunities and student support services. For more information about Lakeland’s financial aid programs, visit lakelandcc.edu/financialaid.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Lakeland Foundation board member Nancy Guthrie, KeyBank Foundation, and all those involved with the original “Begin the Conversation” movement that made this life-changing grant possible.



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