

All in the Family



Presidential Scholarship recipient Ramona Vercher at Clark College's 2013 Commencement.

Every last Sunday of the month, the Vercher family holds a big dinner for all its many members: Donnie and Louise Vercher, their nine children, 14 grandchildren, and assorted in-laws, relatives, and friends. The family would have plenty to celebrate at their June dinner: Ramona Vercher, the second-youngest of the Vercher children, was named the recipient of the 2013-14 Community College President's Award. The annual scholarship is given to a Clark College graduate who is transferring to a Washington State University Vancouver degree program; it provides full-time tuition for one year, renewable for one additional year, for a total of four semesters.

The whole Vercher family was in attendance at commencement, when the award is announced. As Clark College President Bob Knight described Vercher's achievements, a massive cheer filled the amphitheater when the family realized she had won.

Vercher, who is a resident of Vancouver, graduated with honors, earning an associate degree in business administration. A first-generation college graduate, she plans to major in business administration with a specialization in finance while attending WSU Vancouver.

While at Clark, Vercher served in a number of volunteer roles both on and off campus. She was a work-study tutor at the Student Learning Center helping Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL) students in all subjects. She was also a Classroom Tutor, assisting professors in the classroom, and part of Clark's Homework Help program, where she assisted

individual students. Within the greater community, her volunteer service has included work with the City of Vancouver's Urban Youth and Urban Forestry programs. Additionally, she helps run the charity begun by her family's small business, Daddy D's BBQ, providing Christmas presents to families in need, and works there as a cashier.

"Receiving this scholarship means everything in the world to me," said Ramona Vercher after the ceremony. "I am a first-generation college student, so to have this opportunity to continue my education is the biggest thing that has ever happened to me in my life."

Knight said that people who know Vercher praised her for her strong work ethic. Indeed, Vercher has often begun study sessions at 5 a.m. to fit them around her work and other activities. She and her longtime boyfriend, Dwan James (also a Clark student), have regularly eschewed fun weekend outings for "date nights" of studying.

Vercher attributes her work ethic to the example set by her parents; Donnie regularly works 13 hours a day at his barbecue restaurant, a business he began after breaking his back doing construction work on bridges. "I never graduated high school," said Donnie. "I think [Ramona] sees what her parents went through and wants better."

Indeed, many of the Vercher children are pursuing education. Ramona's brother Sherman recently graduated from Western Oregon University, and two of her sisters received their GED diplomas at Clark's GED and high school completion ceremony on June 22.

Vercher was one of three finalists selected for the award. President Knight announced that the other two finalists, Jennifer Campbell and David Taub, would receive \$1,000 scholarships from the Clark College Foundation to continue their education. Knight said of the three finalists, "They are

all sterling examples of what Clark College is about.”

Vercher plans to continue being an example of both Clark College and her family. “I am going to do big things through this scholarship,” she said. “This definitely won’t be the last you see of me.”

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Now and Then



Left to right, George Welsh and President Bob Knight congratulate Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Professor Michael Greenwood.

Clark College’s alumni association celebrated connections and camaraderie at the annual Alumni Student Dinner on June 4.

Students and alumni gathered to honor Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Professor Michael Greenwood ’61, who taught mathematics at Clark for more than 30 years. He played a role in taking Clark and Washington State University Vancouver global when he taught at Krasnoyarsk State University in Russia on a Fulbright Award.

More than 120 students and alumni exchanged business cards and laughs over dinner, which was partially underwritten by community partner Riverview Community Bank.

The alumni association also gave two, \$2,000 scholarships to Clark students Ashton Kyllo and Natalie Hendren. The awards were given to the students by a previous recipient, Rebecca

Zeff, who is finishing her degree at WSUV and plans to attend medical school following graduation.

George Welsh '67, alumni association president, said that bringing together alumni and students is a great opportunity to support each other.

"The students hear what is happening in our community from alumni, and the alumni are reminded of their own days at Clark, which helped begin many career paths," Welsh said. "Clark is a special place and this event helps all of us stay connected."

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Shantell Martin Draws a Crowd



Shantell Martin's digital drawing performance with Clark College jazz musicians Max Wike, David Floratos and James Powers in the Archer Gallery.

Visual artist Shantell Martin's free-form drawings and live-animation performances have been featured in such vaunted venues as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the *New York Times*, the enormous screens at Shibuya and Harajuku crossings in Tokyo—and, for more than a week, at Clark College.

Martin visited Clark as part of the college's Artist Residency program, which hosts an artist-in-residence once a year as part of the larger Clark Art Talks program. She is probably the most prominent artist yet to participate in the residency.

“We read about her in the *New York Times* and contacted her, even though we didn’t think she would do an artist’s residency at Clark College,” said art professor Carson Legree. “Her visit was amazing.”

During her residency from April 26 to May 7, Martin visited numerous classes including Drawing, 2-D Design, 3-D Design, Graphic Design Exploration, Watercolor, Photography, Ceramics, and Creativity and Concept. She also gave a slideshow lecture as part of the Clark Art Talks series on May 7 and provided digital animation during a performance with three Clark jazz students in Archer Gallery on May 8. She created large-scale drawings that hung in the lobby of Foster Arts Center during much of her stay.

“Her classroom visits were filled with personal autobiography and a celebration of individuality,” said art professor Senseny Stokes. “She worked with hundreds of our students, who were inspired by her work and personal history—and charmed by her approachable, laid-back manor.”



Clark College artist-in-residence Shantell Martin displays her work in the Frost Arts lobby.

Martin, who has said in interviews that much of her artistic perspective is informed by growing up as the only interracial child in her otherwise white family in London, has made a name for herself with her playful line drawings that reflect a celebration of independence. She also frequently provides live animation or light shows to accompany music in settings ranging from museums to the mega-clubs of Japan and Russia. She has been featured on CNN, *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, and the television show *Gossip Girl*. Martin has collaborated with celebrity photographers and brands alike; her notable work

includes a project with celebrity photographer Nigel Barker, where she created digital sets for a 10-page *Tatler Asia* editorial with supermodel Christina Garcia. In February 2012, she was one of four artists commissioned by Nike iD to make a piece of work and a limited-edition shoe to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Nike Cortez.

“We didn’t think there was much of a chance that an artist with this much commercial success or international acclaim would do a residency here at Clark College, but we were honored and thrilled when she accepted our invitation,” said Stokes, who called Martins’ collaboration with the jazz students “one of the coolest things that ever happened at Clark College.”

“I’ve had a really nice time coming in every day, just drawing and coming into classes, meeting students and teachers,” said Martin in a video interview. “It’s kind of nice to come in and do the drawing and the stuff that I’m comfortable with, but also have the chance to experiment alongside young students here.”

Clark Art Talks is an ASCC-sponsored program that includes an evening lecture series, classroom workshops, and the annual Artist Residency. Organized by the Art Department, it is now completing its fourth year at the college and its second year as an official ASCC program.

See photos from Shantell Martin’s stay at Clark.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Friendship Blooms Anew



Portland Taiko drummers perform.

Friendship, like all living things, requires regular tending to keep it thriving. And Clark College's 2013 Sakura Festival did just that, strengthening the bonds of friendship that led to Clark receiving a gift of 100 shirofugen cherry trees from John Kageyama, president of America Kotobuki.



Clark College President
Robert K. Knight, John
Kageyama, President of
America Kotobuki
Electronics, Inc., and Tim
Leavitt, Mayor of Vancouver.

Kageyama was present at the opening ceremony for the festival, held April 18. He expressed joy in seeing the trees he had donated in 1990 now mature and blossoming. "At the time, I didn't realized how beautiful these trees would grow," he said during his speech to the crowd that gathered under gray but rainless clouds.

Other dignitaries who spoke during the ceremony included Clark College President Bob Knight; Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt; Tatsuo Ito, Executive Vice President of SEH America Inc.; and Toshiharu Okuda of the Kyoto Prefecture Assembly. Joyo, Vancouver's sister city in Japan, is located within Kyoto Prefecture.



Maho Muto, *in red*

kimono, was the first recipient of the Dr. Kanagawa scholarship.

The ceremony took place next to the Royce E. Pollard Japanese Friendship Garden, yet another gift of friendship cementing the ties between Vancouver and Japan. The garden was a gift to the city of Vancouver from Dr. Chihiro Kanagawa. During its dedication at the 2012 Sakura Festival, President Knight announced the Dr. Kanagawa Scholarship providing full tuition and fees to Clark College for one academic year to an international student from Japan.

Maho Muto, the first recipient of the scholarship, also spoke during the ceremony. Clad in a traditional kimono, she expressed her thanks for the opportunity to study at Clark. "I feel like I have a big, big family in Vancouver, Washington," she said. "You have made me so happy to have the opportunity to study here and I am thankful for so many people's support."

Before the ceremony, Yukiko Vossen performed on the *koto*, the national instrument of Japan, with flute accompaniment. The ceremony ended with a performance by the Clark College Women's Choral Ensemble under the direction of music professor April Duvic. President Knight concluded his remarks by saying, "As we celebrate the beauty of our flowering cherry trees, let us also take a moment to celebrate the friendships that have brought us here today. May they too continue to bloom and flourish for years to come."

After the formal ceremony, guests walked to Gaiser Student Center to enjoy cultural displays and activities hosted by Vancouver Rotary, the Clark College Japanese Club, International Programs, and the Anime and Manga Club. Onstage entertainment included a demonstration of a formal Japanese tea ceremony and a lively performance by the Portland Taiko drummers.



Michiyo Okuhara, Japanese professor, *second from the left*, with her students.

Newly tenured Japanese professor Michiyo Okuhara, who serves on the Sakura Committee, circulated among her students and among the children from Child & Family Studies who were attending the festival. “For our program, it’s a wonderful way to have community members come to Clark and get to appreciate the friendship we have with Japan,” she said. “I’m from Japan, and so when people understand Japanese culture, it’s wonderful for me both on a personal level and as a Japanese teacher.”

See more photos from the event on Clark’s Flickr site.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Check It Out



Ray Korpi signs the READ poster he is featured on, *left*, while Michelle Bagley, Dean of Libraries, eLearning, Tutoring and Faculty Development and Dr. Tim Cook, Vice President of Instruction look on.

The Clark College Libraries (Cannell Library and the Information Commons at CTC) participated in Washington Libraries Snapshot Day on April 17. This statewide project seeks to illustrate the importance of libraries for Washington’s citizens by collecting statistics, stories and photographs during National Library Week.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling of 10 READ posters featuring members of the Clark College community and their favorite books.

Clark College student Samantha McClure was selected as the student model through a contest the Libraries ran during winter quarter. Current Clark students were invited to enter the contest by filling out a form with the title of their favorite book and why they chose the book. Students submitted entries either in person at one of the libraries or posting it on the Clark College Libraries Facebook page. Samantha chose *No Man's Land* by Ruth Fowler because, she said, "it presents a fascinating alternative for female reality in our modern day era where so much of human experience is represented in a very singular way."

Other college community members featured in campaign were President Bob Knight and Oswald; Student Life Program Coordinator Sami Lelo; Athletics Director Charles Guthrie; Maintenance Mechanic Billie Garner; Physics Professor Dick Shamrell; Satellite Campus Building Administrator Randy Blakely; Dean of BEECH Ray Korpi; Diversity Center Staff Sirius Bonner, Rosalba Pitkin and Felis Peralta; and Security Officer Damon Grady.

The posters were on exhibit at Cannell and the iCommons through the month of April. Additional copies are posted around Clark's main campus.

☒ Wednesday's 2,200 visitors to the Libraries were asked to envision the library of 2020. Suggestions included: "free coffee," "more books," "24-hour library," "more computers," "more study space," and "books downloaded into our brains."

See photos from the day on the Libraries' Facebook page and on Clark's Flickr site.

A Winning Loss



Jaimee Keck shows off one of her favorite yoga poses, an activity she got interested in after joining the Biggest Loser Challenge

The results are in from the Clark College Fitness Center's first "Biggest Loser" challenge, and the winner is: Clark student Jaimee Keck, who lost 41 pounds over the course of the 10-week event. "While I am happy to have won the competition, I am also proud of everyone who competed for making an effort to improve their health," she said.

Fitness Center Manager Gareth Studer said he came up with the idea for the challenge by seeing similar events, in which participants register to be part of a weight-loss contest, held at other colleges and recreation centers. "We never dreamed it would have as much interest as it did," he said. "We were thinking 20 people [would sign up], max. Just two weeks of posting the event, we were already over 50 applicants."

In the end, 24 contestants finished the challenge, which ran through winter quarter. Each contestant was assigned a team at the beginning of the quarter, led by a certified Clark College personal trainer coach. Each team met once a week for a one-hour session; their progress was tracked through weekly weigh-ins posted on a reader board. On average, each contestant lost 12 pounds by the end of the quarter.

“A lot of people want to work out and lose weight but have no idea how to get started and stay motivated,” said Studer. “The Biggest Loser program is designed to help with those two things. Our personal trainers work in group settings to design exercise programs and give direction as to how to safely and effectively lose weight.”

Studer said the Fitness Center is planning to host another Biggest Loser challenge during the 2014 winter quarter.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Forty and Fabulous



On March 29, Clark College’s Mature Learning program celebrated its 40th anniversary by doing what it does best: providing diverse learning opportunities and a warm and welcoming community for seniors in Southwest Washington.

Guests who attended the half-day event, which was held at Clark College at Columbia Tech Center, were able to attend free “mini-classes” taught by favorite instructors from the program on topics as diverse as t’ai chi, the genetics of

human evolution, drawing, and Benjamin Franklin's time in Paris, to name just a few.



Mature Learning Program Manager Tracy Reilly Kelly, keynote speaker Dr. Larry Sherman, and Associate Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education Kevin Kussman

The half-day event also featured a guest lecture from OHSU neuroscientist Dr. Larry Sherman, who spoke about his work figuring out how to, as he said, “fix a damaged brain—from trauma, stroke, Alzheimer disease or aging.” He said that the purpose of his work is to keep the brain active for as long as possible, which is a major aim of the Mature Learning program as well.

“We truly do revere and respect our mature learners at Clark College,” said Clark College President Bob Knight during the opening event. “Not only are you students, you’re advocates for the college. We want to have a thriving program for you.”

Over its history, the Mature Learning program has grown to be one of the core offerings that Clark College provides, said Kevin Kussman, Associate Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education. “More than ever we need to work to make sure people stay active and connected to their community,” he said during his speech to event attendees.

It’s worked for Garda Hoffman and Elizabeth Gold, who became close friends after meeting in a Mature Learning classroom. “I’ve made a great many friends via this program,” said Hofmann. “It is stimulating. It fills a great need in the community for older people.”

Though Mature Learning students may not have homework, “these are real college classes,” said Mature Learning volunteer and student Margaret Zuke. All instructors are either college professors or experts in their field.

✖ “There’s nothing better than having such an engaged group of students,” said Steve Carlson. Once a Clark College student himself, then Clark faculty in 1977-78 before going on to teach at Portland State University, Carlson is now a geology instructor with Mature Learning and is planning a trip for students to Mount Hood and Crater Lake.

A light lunch was served, followed by the presentation of the Mature Learning Volunteer of the Year Award to Dr. Cleo Pass for her 12 years of work with the Mature Learning program. Dr. Pass, who will be teaching a course at CTC on Sherlock Holmes in spring, said that the “overwhelming” award was a “thank you for doing something I thoroughly enjoy doing with the people I enjoy working with.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

A Regional Resource

✖ *Left to right, Associate Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education Kevin Kussman, Vice President of Student Affairs Bill Belden and Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tim Cook meet with the residents of White Salmon to discuss potential course offerings in a satellite location.*

As the economy of the Columbia River Gorge has developed, so have its needs for a more highly trained workforce. Recently members of two Gorge school districts reached out to Clark College to help meet those needs.

Representatives from Clark College recently attended two public meetings in the Columbia River Gorge to hear public input and gauge interest in offering college-level classes to the communities of Klickitat and Skamania counties. The public meetings were hosted by the Stevenson-Carson School District and the White Salmon Valley School District. Held at the Wind River Education Center in Carson and at the Columbia High School Library in White Salmon during February and March, the meetings were well attended by a cross-section of prospective students, business leaders, educators and economic development advocates.

More than 200 people attended the meeting in Carson, indicating the interest was there for college-level classes. Although there was a smaller number in attendance in White Salmon, the participants there clearly stated the need for educational programming to train for workforce needs, particularly for the growing high-tech sector in the Gorge. What Clark College officials still need to determine is how many and what types of classes to offer.

“Clark has explored the option of offering for-credit classes in the Gorge before, but we know that demands change with changing economic times,” said Clark College President Bob Knight. “We really needed to hear that the interest was there for a model that we could fiscally maintain and one that would be sustainable for the workforce needs of these communities.”



Columbia High School
principal Troy Whittle gives
Clark College insight into

the high school population
in White Salmon.

Clark College is already offering adult basic education and ESL classes through the WorkSource offices in Stevenson and White Salmon and will continue those classes. The proposed expansion would bring general education offerings to the region—classes that would have broad appeal and that also could be taken by Running Start students.

“White Salmon Valley School District is excited about developing partnerships with Clark College and Stevenson-Carson School District for expanding college-level course opportunities that will better meet the growing needs of our students, adult learners, and communities,” said Dr. Jerry A. Lewis, Superintendent of White Salmon Valley School District.

Clark College may begin offering a limited number of classes this summer; the formal kickoff is scheduled for fall quarter in September. Classes in Skamania County will be offered at the Wind River Education Center, formerly the middle school for the Stevenson-Carson school district. A location for White Salmon classes is being discussed.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Redefining Possible



Despite losing his legs at age 5, Spencer West recently climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro.

When Spencer West was 5 years old, he lost his legs to a rare

genetic disease. "My family was told I would never sit up by myself, I would never be able to walk on my own, I would never have a normal life," he said.

Yet West went on to disprove those grim predictions. Not only can he sit upright—he turned cartwheels in cheerleading competitions when he was in high school. Not only can he walk on his own—in 2012 he climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro on his hands. And while it's true that West is not leading what many would consider a normal life, that's because "normal" lives don't generally include traveling the world on behalf of a global nonprofit, sharing the stage with the Dalai Lama, or being featured in major news media across the world.

West shared his story with a crowded Gaiser Student Center on March 7. He had been invited to speak by the Associated Students of Clark College. West, a motivational speaker who works for the global charity Me to We, raised a half million dollars through his mountain climb last year for clean-water projects in drought-stricken Kenya. He said he wanted to share some of the lessons he learned through that experience with students at Clark.

One of those lessons was the importance of asking for help. West didn't climb Mt. Kilimanjaro himself—two of his good friends came with him and helped keep him going as he climbed 17,200 feet primarily on his own hands. In turn, he was able to help them when, near the summit, they became weakened by altitude sickness; West, it turned out, was one of those uncommon individuals not affected by altitude sickness, so he had the energy to encourage his friends during the final ascent.

The audience in Gaiser Student Center was clearly captured by West's story. When he played video of himself and his friends pushing through their exhaustion to finally reach the mountain's summit, the room erupted into loud cheers and applause, and several audience members could be seen wiping

away tears.

West finished his speech by describing the manmade stacks of rock called “cairns” that other climbers had left along the trail to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro—a way for climbers to tell each other that they were going the right way, and that someone had made it this far already. “We all have a capacity to be a cairn for other people,” he said. “We all need to be the cairn for ourselves, for our friends, for our family, and for the world.”

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

A Dramatic Lesson



On the evening of February 21, the Clark College Theatre Department opened its doors to students and community members for the dress rehearsal of the winter quarter musical, “RENT.” Forty of those community members were students from the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Washington, brought on a trip organized by Clark College Admissions and Student Recruitment.

RENT—a Tony Award-winning musical that covers issues of sexuality, drug use, and AIDS—can be challenging for younger audiences. Youth were required to have permission slips signed by parents in order to attend the show. Afterward, they had a chance to participate in a panel discussion with all of the actors, where the youth asked questions about some of the subjects that they witnessed in the play, how actors prepared for their role and how each person decided which character they wanted to be.

Clark College Theatre instructor Gene Biby, who directed RENT, worked with Admissions and Recruitment to make the event a success. He arranged the panel of actors and facilitated the question-and-answer session.

"We received nothing but positive feedback from both students and chaperones of the Boys and Girls Club and hope to arrange similar visits with the theater department in the future," said Student Recruitment Specialist Narek Daniyelyan. "Big thanks to the wonderful staff of the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Washington, who continuously partner with Clark College and share the advantages of attending Clark with their students. Special thanks to all of the actors who were willing to stay late to talk to the youth of our community."

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley