



SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOUNDATION

Friday, March 28, 2025

The Foundation Newsletter

Student Spotlight

Shermagne Gutierrez's Path to Resilience and Success



A single mother of twins, Shermagne Marie Gutierrez returned to Skyline College to attend the Barbering and Esthetics program after overcoming a serious injury that forced her to rethink her career. With a background in film and a love for beauty and wellness, she found a new passion in medical esthetics, where she hopes to work in cosmetic plastic surgery as a registered nurse, helping others to look and feel their best.

When Shermagne received a scholarship from the San Mateo County Community Colleges Foundation, it made all the difference in her ability to stay in school and pursue her goals. Like many students balancing school, work, and parenting, Shermagne often found herself stretched thin. "There's no way I would have made it without the financial support." It relieved so much stress—covering bills, rent, and the

nearly \$2,000 esthetics kit required for her program.

"As a single mom, I was struggling, and the Grove Scholarship gave me the chance to focus on my education. To the donors who make this possible—thank you," she says. "Your support has helped me get one step closer to my dream career. More than that, it has shown me that there are people who believe in my potential and want to see me succeed."

[Read More about Shermagne's Career Path](#)

Donor Impact

The Morehouse Family Legacy



Steve Morehouse has College of San Mateo (CSM) in his blood. He received his associate degree from CSM and had an impactful 35-year career as a counselor and the Dean of Counseling. His mother worked part-time there for a few years at the Evening College Office, the Student Activities Office, and the Office of Admissions and Records. Both of his daughters attended CSM. His eldest, Kelly, earned an associate degree after doing a study abroad program in Florence, and his other daughter, Jill, participated in the High School Concurrent Enrollment Program and attended summer sessions, which helped her to graduate early from her four-year institution. Even his wife, Cathleen, taught an aerobic dance class at CSM for one or two semesters!

When Steve recently retired, it felt important to “pay it forward,” both to honor the role CSM has played in their family and for its impact on the local community. To do this, Steve and Cathleen established the Morehouse Family Scholarship Fund, intending to fund it annually with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from Steve’s IRA. Eventually, they want to accomplish their goal of an endowed scholarship fund, so it will make a perpetual impact on the institution and the students to which he devoted his career.

The Foundation is in the process of awarding the inaugural Morehouse Family scholarship. It will support a CSM student planning to transfer and enroll in one of the public universities in the Bay Area for potential careers in the social science and healthcare fields.

Steve and Cathleen are excited to return to campus on May 9 for CSM's Scholarship Awards Ceremony to meet the recipient in person. It will be an honor to have him back on campus, and his former colleagues, students, and mentees cannot wait to see him.

Alumni Spotlight

From Cañada College Financial Aid Dept. to Monterra Credit Union



Gustavo Castillo grew up in East Palo Alto and graduated from Cañada College in 2016 with a degree in Communication Studies. While at Cañada, he was a student ambassador and worked in the financial aid office, taking advantage of every opportunity, including an SMCCC Foundation scholarship. When asked about it, Gustavo said, “Without the opportunities provided by Cañada and the District, I don’t think I would have pursued higher education.”

Since he left Cañada, Gustavo earned a B.A. in Communication & Mass Media Studies from San Francisco State and figured out his “why.” He joined Monterra Credit Union in June 2020 and now manages the Community Relations department, promoting financial literacy,

supporting local initiatives, and empowering individuals and businesses to thrive in the community where he was raised.

In his spare time, Gustavo sits on the board of El Concilio of San Mateo County and supports its mission of increasing education, employment, and access to quality-of-life services to underserved communities in San Mateo County. He is paying it forward!

[Join the SMCCCD Alumni Network](#)

Faculty & Staff Spotlight

Luis Padilla – From Marine to Skyline Student to Sparkpoint Director

After high school, Luis enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, completed a tour in Iraq, and transitioned out of the military six years later to pursue a college education. When he left the military, Luis did not know how to use the G.I. Bill, and the institutions he attended did not have a dedicated office for student veterans at that time. That experience sparked him to ask himself, “If I ran a veteran center on a college campus, how would I run it?”



While pursuing his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, Luis envisioned a positive and transformative space for veterans. He was excited when he was selected as the Program Services Coordinator for the Veterans Resource & Opportunity Center (VROC) at College of San Mateo (CSM) in 2017. "I felt privileged that I could use my military experience and my passion for student affairs to develop the best possible veterans' program for our students and contribute to our vibrant CSM community.

Now the Director of Sparkpoint and Crisis Relief Programs, he is touching even more lives. Sparkpoint provides food and personal care products, financial education, and assistance with housing, tax preparation, and obtaining government services.

He is an inspiration to many and will soon receive his doctorate from San Francisco State University!

"After my doctorate education, I want to continue to improve and reimagine what the community college experience can look like, whether it's with my continued advocacy for our veteran population or by innovating programming that meets the basic needs of students to successfully complete college. I've been lucky enough to find my 'why.' I truly believe that CSM is an amazing place that has made a transformative impact on my life as a student and veteran. My hope is to continue that legacy with our future generations."

Support Students by Giving to the Finish Line Fund

Foundation Spotlight

Skyline President's Breakfast Success



The Foundation Board and staff are excited to share the recent success of the 24th annual Skyline President's Breakfast on March 20, 2025. Over two hundred and twenty people attended the event to celebrate risk-taking and innovation among the Skyline faculty, staff, and students. One such project is the RIDE Conference, funded in 2024. As student Miguel Hernandez Duenas shared with the audience, his involvement with the RIDE Conference enabled him to develop leadership skills he did not know he possessed. He cannot wait to put his newfound talent to use when pursuing a finance career after he graduates.

The event would not have been possible without the tireless work of the volunteer Skyline President's Council under the leadership of Matt DeVincenzi and Mary Prem. The event exceeded expectations, raising over \$100,000 for the [President's Innovation Fund](#). With the Foundation covering the fundraising costs, 100% of the funds raised will support innovative projects over the next year.

The Foundation wants to thank the sponsors and donors for their incredible generosity and Dr. Newin Orante, Interim Skyline President, and the President's Council members for their ongoing commitment to Skyline College. None of this would be possible without them.

[See a Video of the Event](#)

Upcoming Events

Join us for upcoming events that honor student achievement and generosity

ECO ELEGANCE

A UNIQUE FASHION SHOW AT CAÑADA COLLEGE

Special VIP Access

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025

11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

DOORS OPEN AT 11:00 AM

Showcasing luxurious student-made garments using sustainable sources. Honoring the 55th Anniversary of Earth Day.



of our community:

Eco Elegance – April 22 |

Showcasing the Cañada College Fashion Department and its student-made sustainable fashion while honoring the 55th anniversary of Earth Day. [VIP Tickets \(\\$75 each\) are available now.](#)

Scholarship Awards Ceremonies |

Celebrating scholarship recipients and donor impact

May 1, 4:00 pm, Skyline College

May 9, 6:00 pm, College of San Mateo

May 16, 2:00 pm, Cañada College

[Learn More About These Events](#)

Follow on Social Media

Stay connected with the Foundation! Follow us for updates and impact stories.



Have news or stories to share?

Do you have an update, success story, or event you'd like to highlight in our Foundation newsletter? We'd love to feature it!

Email us at foundation@smccd.edu to submit your news or event details.

Thank you for reading and for being part of our mission to support students and transform lives.



**SAN MATEO COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGES
FOUNDATION**

San Mateo County Community Colleges Foundation | 3401 CSM Drive | San Mateo, CA 94402 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!