Star of the Month:
Brandon Him—Paying It Forward

When you're the beneficiary of a good deed and you repay it to others instead of to the original benefactor, you're said to be “paying it forward.” That concept has been a driving motivator in the life of this month's Star of the Month, recent Lone Star College-Tomball vocational nursing graduate Brandon Him.

When the 20-year-old, Long Beach, California native was a newborn, he almost didn't make it. “By the grace of God—using the doctors, nurses and the rest of the medical staff—my death was averted. I want to give back to others what was given to me.”

So, in spring 2011, Brandon enrolled at LSC-Tomball because it offered a variety of classes that fit his schedule, and by the end of the first semester, he became very comfortable with the atmosphere on campus: the hard working but friendly students, the small classes, and the personable professors providing an ideal learning environment.

While rewarding, Brandon found nursing school a test of will, physically and mentally. “The program requires devotion, and sometimes balance can be hard to find. But it was definitely a one-of-a-kind experience that will forever stay with me.”

Brandon passed that test with flying colors, garnering top academic achievement honors in his class. This year, he hopes to get into the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) to Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) transition program with the ultimate goal of becoming a nurse practitioner.

When asked what advice he has for people contemplating nursing as a career, Brandon is candid. “It all depends on motivation. If it's solely for money, then the community deserves better. You must have the compassion, the desire, the patience and, most important, the ability to look beyond yourself and put others first.”
Michael O’Hara—Drawing Out the Inner Artist

Some might call it “the luck of the Irish.” In the case of award-winning, Lone Star College-Tomball art student Michael O’Hara, “fate” might better describe his first-place finish in the recent Da Vinci Gallery (Tomball, Texas) student art competition. As far back as high school, the 50-something construction worker/artist remembers having a penchant for art. Unfortunately, like most people, the real world took precedence over the art world, and the sketch pad was replaced by the construction site. With his two children grown, Michael found he had time for himself once again, so he enrolled in art classes at LSC-Tomball. When his painting professor, Earl Staley, encouraged him to enter a painting in the Da Vinci competition, Michael was doubtful; the painting was just the third he’d created. As for fate, Michael believes that everyone possesses an inner artist. “There’s an artist buried in all of us—it just needs to be drawn out. The hard part is getting your vision from the mind to the canvas.”

Honors Presentation Day—Setting the Record Straight

On December 7, 2012, several of Lone Star College-Tomball’s best and brightest gathered together to show their fellow students what honors classes are all about as they presented their honors projects. The variety of topics—“How special effects have affected plot in film,” “Literature of the American South,” and “The impact of Alexander the Great on art” to name just a few—was as diverse as the students who presented them:

- Austin Baron
- Katelyn Blasch
- Marilyn Comer
- Lauren Culbert
- Matthew Cunningham
- Jared Fanning
- Abigail Ferguson
- Shaylene Foster
- Lauren Galley
- Larry Gerhardt
- Rama Gerg
- Krista Havens
- Courtney Hitt
- Meaghan Kelly
- Sarah Kinchen
- Mark Kingniyan
- Robin Leatherwood
- Alex Loeppke
- Conner Lyons
- Jared Nelson
- Valecia Plumbar
- Andrew Robinson
- Hunter Simonsen
- Chloe Stagner

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Kudos to Clark Friesen, Lone Star College-Tomball professor of speech communication and faculty service-learning coordinator, for recently being named vice chair-elect of the National Communication Association (NCA) Experiential Learning Division. Among other things, he will be in charge of planning the division’s conference program including short courses, preconference activities, and regular sessions for the 2014 conference in Chicago, Illinois. Clark will then chair the committee for the next year and participate as a voting member of NCA’s legislative assembly.

LSC-Tomball Excellence Awards—Honoring Commitment

Each academic year, the Lone Star College System Excellence Awards are given to a few outstanding faculty and professional support staff at each campus who consistently go above and beyond job duties, exemplifying the professional excellence of an LSCS employee. The following Lone Star College-Tomball employees will receive their awards at the LSC-Tomball Employee Awards Ceremony on April 5, 2013.

Faculty Winners

Left to right:
- Margaret Jelinek Lewis, Professor of Psychology
- Mindy Coleman, Professor of Mathematics
- Catherine Olson, Professor of English
- Bo Rollins, Professor of English

Adjunct Faculty Winners

Left to right:
- Melissa Brega, Developmental Studies, English
- Shirlene Peel, Biology
- Martha Newsome, Biology
- Lisa Lundstedt, English

Since spring 2005, the Lone Star College-Tomball Professional Support Staff Association (PSSA) has been awarding students working toward an associate degree or certificate at LSC-Tomball a $500 scholarship for tuition, fees and books. This year, Karan Kaur was the lucky recipient, having maintained a GPA of 2.5 or higher, completed at least 12 hours of classes, and participated in community service or student organizations (S.T.A.R.S., Diversity Club and Student Activities Board). Karan has completed four semesters at LSC-Tomball, and has plans to attend the University of Houston and study law, ultimately practicing family law. She cites the camaraderie she’s found with her peers and the faculty’s genuine interest in the students as the keys to unlocking her potential.

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Two LSC-Tomball Employees among 2012 LSCS Academy Graduates

Two of Lone Star College-Tomball’s finest joined the prestigious ranks of Lone Star College System Academy graduates December 7, 2012—Vivian Rogers, Extended Learning Center program coordinator, and Alanna Tynes, professor of biology. The ceremony was held at the LSC-System Office conference center in the Star of Texas Ballroom, and featured recognition of the graduating class by each college president.

Above: LSC-Tomball President Dr. Susan Karr and academy graduate Vivian Rogers.

Below: Academy graduate Alanna Tynes with Dr. Susan Karr.

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Professional & Support Staff Winners

Left to right:
• Lynda Bancroft, Manager—Division Operations, Health, Kinesiology, Natural Sciences & Technology Division
• Shannon Marino, Program Manager—Student Life
• Gail Jolley, Coordinator I—Counseling & Disabilities, Assistive Technology Lab
• Jeanne Walker, Staff Assistant II—Health, Kinesiology, Natural Sciences & Technology Division

Jackie Thomas—Doctoral Degree Complete

Bravo to Jackie C. Thomas Jr., Lone Star College-Tomball assistant professor of education, on the recent receipt of his Ph.D. in educational psychology and individual differences from the University of Houston. Jackie’s dissertation topic was “Evaluating background, contextual and motivational factors that influence the persistence and attrition of college students.” Jackie also holds a Master of Science degree in higher education from Florida State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in consumer science and merchandising from the University of Houston.

Maggie Mendoza—La Voz del LSCS

Community outreach is important to Lone Star College System, which is why LSCS asked Maggie Mendoza, LSC-Tomball part-time advisor, to explain the facts, advantages and benefits of enrolling at Lone Star College to the Spanish-speaking segment of the local Hispanic community on La Voz del Pueblo (The People’s Voice), a program hosted by Uninvision's Renzo Heredia and broadcast December 23rd on all of its Houston radio stations.

With preparation from LSC-Montgomery Continuing Education Program Director Martha Neely, Maggie discussed the ease of applying to Lone Star College, the Best Start program, and starting at Lone Star College and then transferring to a four-year college or university, among other topics over the 30-plus-minute discussion.
Mini Grants Nurture Big Ideas

Each year, the Lone Star College Foundation mini grant program provides grants ($500–$2,500) to assist employees at each of the colleges and the system office to develop and implement projects not normally funded through the regular budgetary process—in other words, seed money to test new, imaginative, out-of-the-box ideas prior to rollout and formal funding. And while there are no official parameters for the projects, there are expectations that they promote the goals and objectives of LSCS and the colleges.

LSC-Tomball recipients of 2012–2013 mini grants are as diverse as their programs:

Mark Hammerbacher—Help students who fall within 10 percent of a placement score to improve their skills enough to attain the next placement level, thereby reducing the time and cost needed to complete their developmental education.

Margaret Jelinek Lewis, Ava Veselis and Steve Prewitt—Encourage honors students to connect to their community through service-learning, cultural experiences and academic pursuits to allow them to see how they can both learn from and give to the community.

Teresa Hill and Sharon Jones—Help struggling students pass or excel in high school classes, thereby increasing the percentage of students prepared to take college-level classes in the 11th and 12th grades and reducing the number needing developmental classes.

Terra Ruppert—Enable Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) fieldwork students to offer full-time occupational therapy services to homes, providing a unique, non-traditional, unstructured fieldwork environment that will provide students an educational experience unlike any other.

Nicole Finkbeiner—Master’s Degree Complete

Congratulations to Nicole Finkbeiner, Lone Star College-Tomball executive director of college relations, for earning her Master of Arts degree in advertising from Michigan State University. Nicole also holds an Associate of Arts degree in business from Kellogg Community college and a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in marketing from Western Michigan University.

Congratulations LSC-Tomball 2013 Leadership Academy Participants

Reaffirming its commitment to nurture faculty and professional staff members committed to being leaders among their peers and in the community, Lone Star College System introduced the 2013 cohort of its Leadership Academy at the Lone Star College System Board of Trustees meeting December 6, 2012. The...
Transformations

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following four LSC-Tomball employees are fellows in this year’s academy: Janie Filoteo, sociology associate professor; Robbie Rogers, Extended Learning Center program coordinator; Tracy Woods, ADN professor; and Shannon Marino, Student Life program manager. Participants must have worked full time in a faculty or professional/support staff position at Lone Star College for at least one year, and have demonstrated a commitment to professional development and lifelong learning.

Spotlights

V.C. Patel—Teaching is a Passion

It's a long way from India to Texas, and this year Lone Star College-Tomball mathematics and physics professor V.C. Patel will be marking his 20th anniversary at LSC-Tomball and emigration from India.

V.C. holds Bachelor of Science degrees in physics, chemistry and mathematics as well as a Bachelor of Education degree from Vickarm University (Ujjain, India) and a Master of Science degree in mathematics from Indore University (Indore, India). Additionally, he is a two-time National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Faculty Excellence Award recipient and a 2011 Piper Professor Award nominee.

Teaching has always been a passion for V.C. “Teaching is my hobby since childhood… I believe that everyone in this world has a right to learn as much as he/she can, and the one who has some knowledge in any field should share with those who need it; by this way knowledge is multiplied by sharing.”

When not performing his daily, three-hour fitness regime, V.C. can usually be found spending time with his wife of 56 years and playing with his grandchildren.

Sandra Moye—Keeping Events Running Smoothly

Strategize thoroughly, stage meticulously and execute flawlessly. These are the essentials of successful event coordination—just ask Lone Star College-Tomball event coordinator Sandra Moye.

The casualty of company downsizing, Sandra connected with LSC-Tomball through a temporary employment agency seven years ago. In no time, she became the college relations staff assistant and four years later became event coordinator, a position she’s enjoyed ever since. “I like watching it all come together, seeing the final result after all is said and done. I love the details.”

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PSSA Employee of the Month

La Wanda Wheeler—Big Heart in a Little Package

Her laugh is unmissable; her smile is unforgettable; her passion is undeniable. The January 2013 PSSA Employee of the Month, La Wanda Wheeler, is a dynamo when it comes to her job. As Specialist IV in continuing education advising, La Wanda registers new students and helps them navigate the road to their career path.

Some might see the job as relentless, but not La Wanda. “I’m a people person; I love meeting people every day—it’s my passion!”

La Wanda came to Lone Star College System in 2004 at the North Harris campus, and when the opportunity to work closer to home presented itself, the happily married mother of three daughters came to LSC-Tomball in 2009—and has been making a difference.

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The mother of three is equally adept at planning when it comes to her children. Daughter number one will be attending University of Texas, Galveston, studying nursing; daughter number two is just finishing high school and will be taking general education classes at LSC-Tomball; and her son is marching through high school.

As for the future, in the short-term, Sandra wants to go back to school and get a degree; in the long-term, she dreams of starting up her own event planning business.

New Faces

Captain Howell “Mark” Pemberton—LSC-Tomball Police Captain

On January 3, 2013, Mark Pemberton was appointed Police Captain at Lone Star College-Tomball. Captain Pemberton has been a law enforcement officer for more than 25 years, having served two years with the Houston Police Department and 20 years with the Huntsville Police Department, as well as with the Montgomery County Precinct 3 Constables Office as regional Homeland Security coordinator and with an international engineering firm as a security specialist. Captain Pemberton is a certified Master Peace Officer, a Basic Law Enforcement instructor, and a graduate of the Leadership and Command College of Texas.

Recent Events

C-TAC—Better Learning through Technology

One of the responsibilities of the Campus Technology Advisory Council (C-TAC)—a partnership between LSC-Tomball and the Office of Technology Services (OTS)—is to identify innovative ideas that OTS can fund to benefit the college. This academic year, C-TAC identified four proposals for funding:

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The fourth installment of the LSC-Tomball Lecture Series, “The Knowledge Argument: Computational Simulation, Neurology and Rationality,” examined how we process information in our day-to-day lives.

LSC-Tomball philosophy adjunct instructor Will Angelette presented the latest research in the field of cognitive science as it relates to how the human brain interprets what the mind perceives and factors that influence the decision-making process. The series will continue in February with “China in World History: A Return to the Center of Power” by LSC-Tomball professor of history Clifton R. Fox. Additional series topics and dates can be found at LoneStar.edu/cote.
Vocational Nursing Pinning Ceremony

On Thursday, December 6, 2012, the Lone Star College-Tomball Vocational Nursing Class held its pinning ceremony in the Performing Arts Center. The class of 20 listened to the words of fellow classmates Cindy Monroe, Kim Sensat and Melissa Whitley before being presented with ceremonial pins and student awards from Nursing Programs Director Catherine Wampler, associate professor John Vancamp and assistant professor Cynthia Reese. Top academic achievement honors went to Brandon Him (coincidentally, this month’s Star of the Month), with Spirit of Nursing honors going to Kelly Drown and Christina Jackson. The graduation ended with a candlelight ceremony and the recitation of the Nightingale Pledge, led by classmate Shundolyn Williams.

Community Partnerships

GTACC First Friday Lunch

The Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) held their monthly First Friday Networking Luncheon in Lone Star College-Tomball’s Beckendorf Conference Center on January 11. At the lunch, the GTACC installed their 2013 Board of Directors, which included LSC-Tomball Continuing Education Director Sharon Jones. In addition, the Chamber named Jeff Kroemer of Concordia Lutheran High School as the Teacher of the Month. Kroemer is an adjunct faculty member at LSC-Tomball.

Lee Ann Nutt
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has a very mild traffic problem compared to Jakarta, and described the sense of safety the team felt during their visit. The information about the partnership, as well as her fun insights such as, “I just really wanted a cheeseburger,” kept the crowd entertained and engaged during the hour-long presentation.

La Wanda Wheeler
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here ever since.

“I have seen [La Wanda] go out of her way to attend someone who is in desperate need of help and never lose sight that she is helping guide the way for this person to achieve their goals,” said Patty Wiggin of the college relations department, and one of La Wanda’s many supporters.

Alexandra Smith
Continued from Page 2

professor Felicity Short), and will make additional appearances on behalf of LSC-Tomball throughout the year. Congratulations, Alexandra.
Upcoming Events

Robert Anderson’s *I Never Sang for My Father*
February 21–23
7:30 p.m.
Performing Arts Center

2012–2013 Texas Community College Speech &
Theatre Association (TCCSTA) State Play Festival
February 27–March 2, 2013
Performing Arts Center

Texas A&M Singing Cadets
March 3
VIP lunch 12:30 p.m.
Concert 3:00 p.m.
Performing Arts Center

To see the most current events, visit LoneStar.edu/Calendars