

# BC3 workers open hearts, checkbooks

March 16, 2017

(Butler, PA) James Hrabosky says he donates to the Butler County Community College Education Foundation Inc. because he believes in the “pay it forward” concept.

Maggie Slater, to feel as if she is “part of the bigger picture.”

And Kathleen Sommers? Because “BC3’s vision is creating opportunities, and changing lives for a better future.”

Hrabosky, vice president for administration and finance; Slater, web content editor; and Sommers, director of information technology; are among scores of BC3 workers who donated to the 2017 employee campaign, creating new scholarships, supporting scholarships they created or bolstering the foundation’s unrestricted funds.

The BC3 Education Foundation annually awards 120 named scholarships totaling \$200,000.

“I see first-hand the impact the foundation can make in terms of assisting many low-income and first-generation students who want to go college and will do so given the opportunity,” Hrabosky says.

Collegians like he was, a “first-generation student who came from a lower-income household.”

His grandfather, William Hrabosky, “made it a point” to purchase college textbooks for his grandson each semester.

“My parents had little to contribute to my education so I had to borrow money to finish my degree,” Hrabosky says. “In fact, I completed my degree at night my junior and senior years because I starting working at a bank.”

His family honored his grandfather, William Hrabosky, by endowing to the foundation the William Hrabosky Book Scholarship, awarded to a nontraditional student.

Hrabosky has donated to the foundation each year since he began employment at BC3 in 2006.

“We know that approximately 70 percent of our students qualify for Pell grants, which means they come from lower socio-economic backgrounds,” Hrabosky says. “Finding additional sources of financial aid such as scholarships assists these students in overcoming financial obstacles.

“Studies from other community colleges show statistically significant effects on persistence, retention and graduation rates for those students who received additional financial aid.”

## “I’m more than just an employee”

Like Hrabosky and others, Slater was among those who March 16 attended a luncheon of chicken salad, french fries, rolls and dessert in the Lawson Board Room for employees who donated to the campaign.

“I like to give each year,” says Slater, who has donated since becoming a BC3 employee in September 2008. “It’s important for me to show my support to BC3 and to the BC3 Education Foundation and its efforts.”

While helping students, BC3 and the foundation rank as the top reasons Slater says she gives, “Another aspect for me is establishing and keeping relationships with people at BC3. By donating, I feel like I’m more than just an employee. I’m part of the bigger picture.”

## Scholarships help to make BC3 “vision a reality”

Sommers, who has worked at BC3 for “42 wonderful years” and has donated to the campaign every year since it began, supports an accounting scholarship she and her sister established to recognize their father’s many years as an accountant and a CPA.

Recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award relate at the annual Oak Hills Dinner in October “how attending BC3 transformed their lives,” Sommers says.

“Many of the distinguished alumni state that a scholarship was the only reason they were able to afford to go to college. BC3’s vision is creating opportunities, and changing lives for a better future. Scholarships help to make that vision a reality.”

## \$153K only part of the giving

BC3 employees donated \$153,500 to the foundation in annual campaigns from 2008-13, and in 2017, says Michelle Jamieson, associate director of the BC3 Education Foundation.

The annual campaign was not held from 2014-2016, usurped by a Pioneer Proud Campaign in which four of five BC3 employees donated.

BC3, President Nick Neupauer says, “is a giving community. This is evidenced not only by the various boards and community events our staff participates in, but also with the commitment to our own foundation. From an 82 percent internal giving rate in the Pioneer Proud Campaign to thrashing a \$5.5 million goal, our faculty, staff and boards continue to amaze me.”

More than 900 donors, external and internal to BC3, gave to the Pioneer Proud Campaign, which raised \$6.85 million – a 24 percent increase over its goal. It was the most successful fundraising effort in school history.

BC3 employees, Jamieson says, play a vital role in the success of students.

“Employees who support BC3 make it possible to impact the lives of BC3 students in greater ways.”

Students appreciate the extra financial boost, says Ruth Purcell, foundation executive director.

“Even though BC3 tuition is very affordable, students still have costs of living,” Purcell says. “We hear from so many students who tell us that their scholarship truly made the difference in their ability to attend BC3. And of course, the recognition that receiving a scholarship means for the hard work and dedication that students have already shown in their academic work is meaningful for students and their families.”

“Every gift, no matter the amount, is important ...”

Sandra Barlett, a secretary in the nursing and allied health division who has worked for BC3 for 11½ years, says she gave to 2017 campaign because today’s students need an education to “move on financially in the world.

“I was blessed to have monetary support from my parents to continue on my educational journey,” Barlett says. “It is my hope that my gifts enable me to continue enhancing the image and effort of our students.”

Her gift, she says, also demonstrates to others “what this college means to me and my commitment to the college. Every gift, no matter the amount, is important for the future of our students.”

“It is an honor to give”

Laurie Eytel and Bill Foley are new to BC3; Eytel a secretary in Lifelong Learning and Foley, interim coordinator of communications in the Communications and Marketing Department. Eytel began at BC3 in November 2016 and Foley, in January 2017.

“I believe in giving back to my community,” Eytel says. “Also, in being a new employee, I wish to be involved more with campus activities.”

Foley created two scholarships, one recognizing his late wife, the other, his late grandfather.

“Both were writers, as am I, and this was the perfect way to lend a hand to students and to honor memories,” Foley says.

As a BC3 employee, “it is an honor to give to the annual campaign,” says Gloria Sabatelli, coordinator of educational technology.

## “Make a lasting difference”

Sabatelli has donated to the campaign every year since becoming a full-time employee in August 2005.

“The work that the Education Foundation does is so important and enriches the BC3 experience for students, faculty, employees and the community,” Sabatelli says. “I have seen the difference that the BC3 Education Foundation makes for BC3.”

It’s a difference that starts with BC3’s employees.

“I’m looking to make a lasting difference in our community,” Barlett says. “This campaign allows me to provide students with scholarships. This gives students a chance to be or do something great that may change their lives. It’s easy to get inspired with a cause you truly care about and it’s rewarding to see a great impact by supporting student education.”