Middlesex Alumni Dial for Dollars

What’s loyal, supportive and scattered all over the world? Middlesex alumni, of course! As part of the MCC Foundation’s Annual Fund Campaign, Middlesex launched its first Alumni Phonathon in November. Over a three-night period, more than 2,000 MCC graduates and former students were called and asked to pledge their support. Making the calls were more than 65 MCC alums, current students and staff. Some alumni were called as part of the Phonathon, while others received letters in the mail asking for their support. Every dollar raised through the Alumni Phonathon will be matched by the Nathan and Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation and the Commonwealth sponsored through the Alumni Phonathon.

“Phonathon is a fantastic way to kick off our alumni campaign,” said Dennis Malvers, Associate Dean of External Affairs and Alumni Relations. “The funds we raise will be matched and soliciting local businesses to donate food and prizes for the event.

“We wanted the Phonathon to be upbeat and festive,” said Malvers. “We blew whistles every time we got a new pledge. We gave out prizes for volunteers who got the most pledges or raised the most money each night. There was a lot of fabulous food … it was great fun.”

When Malvers began planning the Phonathon, finding an on-campus location with 18 to 20 telephone lines was the challenge. MCC’s Chief Technology Officer, Darrow Neves, suggested they use MCC’s Softphone computer software and make their calls from a Lowell campus computer lab.

“It was great,” said Malvers, “we were just like the telemarketers. Basically, you sit at a computer with a headset on, type in the telephone number, click on ‘dial’ and talk,” he explained. “When the conversation is over, the computer prompts you to hang up and you disconnect. We’re one of the first community colleges in the state to use Softphone technology as a fundraising tool.”

With a successful Phonathon to the alumni committee’s credit, Malvers hopes the group will stick together and plan future events. “Our committee was formed last year to come up with ideas that capture our donors’ spirits and interests. One of the main ideas that evolved was the annual Phonathon. It’s a great event that helps raise money for the college.”

Six alumni were chosen to lead the Phonathon campaign. They are: Jim Grenier, Michele King Hutcheon, William Chemelli, Theresa Mello-Kopka, Tooch Van, and Dennis Malvers.

Five members of MCC’s Annual Fund Alumni Campaign Committee served as captains of the recent Alumni Phonathon. Below they share why they became involved in efforts to generate alumni support for Middlesex.

Tami Dristiliaris ’83 Program of Study: Nursing

A practicing attorney, Dristiliaris went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Atlantic Union College and her law degree from Suffolk University Law School.

“I received an excellent education at Middlesex that prepared me very well for my nursing career. I want to help give back what MCC has given to me.”

Jim Grenier ’94 Program of Study: Fine & Performing Arts

A sales consultant, Grenier also teaches business at Middlesex.

“The Annual Fund Campaign is a good opportunity for the college to increase funding in some critical areas.”

Kenneth Rand ’77 & ’78 Programs of Study: General Science and Nursing

Rand enjoyed a 27-year career as a Registered Nurse. He is also retired from the U.S. Army Reserve.

“Alumni are an integral part of a school’s ability to expand programs and offer more to the community. The Phonathon reminds our classmates that MCC needs us.”

Tooch Van ’99 Program of Study: Liberal Arts & Sciences

A native of Cambodia, Van was MCC’s 2002 Commencement speaker. After Middlesex, he earned his bachelor’s degree in international studies at Trinity College and a master’s degree at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He currently works at MCC as an International Student Advisor.

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