

THE

gateway center

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION
Issue 2, Fall 2005

Skirball Foundation Gives Challenge Grant

The Skirball Foundation recently awarded a challenge grant of \$250,000 to Westchester Community College Foundation to establish the Skirball-Gateway Scholarship Endowment. Philanthropist Jack H. Skirball, a former rabbi who became an award-winning film producer, created the Skirball Foundation through a bequest. Based in New York, the foundation provides support for education and other causes.

As a challenge grant, this generous gift must be matched within three years by private donations totaling \$250,000. The grant will serve as a second challenge match for the Gateway Campus Campaign, which has already met the challenge grant of \$25,000 given by the Leon Lowenstein Foundation. New donors who wish to give to scholarship funds will be asked to use their gifts as part of the Skirball-Gateway match.

Martin Blackman, president of the Skirball Foundation, says, "The Skirball Foundation is pleased to support this dynamic program to meet

the special educational, linguistic and cultural needs of the college's foreign-born students. The Foundation wishes to provide an incentive for others to contribute to the endowment of the program by making its grant a challenge grant."

Scholarships provided by the Skirball-Gateway Scholarship Endowment will be available for English Language Institute (ELI) courses as well as for students who are interested in pursuing a degree program at Westchester Community College. The Skirball Foundation expressed a deep interest in the students who will receive scholarships, and will receive profiles and descriptions of the activities and accomplishments of the Skirball-Gateway Scholarship recipients each year.

"We are profoundly grateful for the challenge grant from the Skirball Foundation," stated President Joseph N. Hankin. "The Skirball-Gateway Scholarship Endowment will provide a significant and lasting legacy of funds to allow students to gain the education they need for success."

Campus Campaign Set for September Launch

At a gala outdoor celebration, the Gateway Campaign will be extended to include employees of the College. All administrators, faculty, staff members and volunteers are invited to the "Campus Campaign Kickoff" on September 22nd.

The event, featuring multinational food, flags and music, will be held from 4-6 p.m. on the site where the Gateway Center will one day stand.

Gifts to the campus campaign will help to create a legacy for the future by providing scholarships for students through an endowed fund. A 49-member committee has been working for months to plan the outreach to their peers. Several people will also bring homemade foods reflecting their heritage to the September 22nd event.

Dr. Joseph N. Hankin, president of the college is scheduled to address the staff members, along with



Campus steering committee members Frances Dearing, Julia Daniels, Greta Cohan, and John Ahern discuss the Campaign

campaign co-chairs Ellie Urstadt and David Swope and campus representatives. Information about the Gateway Center will be available to guests, and raffles will be held for prizes donated by local businesses, thanks to the committee's hard work.

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of all nations

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personas de todas las
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aller Nationen

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Legacy of Grandparents' Courage Lives On

From the moment Deborah and Gary Raizes of Scarsdale heard about the college's plans for the Gateway Center, there was no doubt in their minds that they would make a substantial gift to help turn the dream into a reality. Deborah, a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, explained that all their grandparents came to this country to escape the pogroms and ghettos of Russia and Eastern Europe, fleeing from religious persecution and economic injustice.

"Their courage in leaving their homes, even as oppressed as they were, and coming to a new country with no support or family continues to amaze us," Deborah remembers. "We have heard their stories



Deborah and Gary Raizes

and can only begin to understand how difficult it must have been to start over in a strange place, having to learn a new language and adapt to a new culture. It helps us to empathize with the issues immigrants to our country must be facing now."

Gary Raizes is a prominent cardiologist; Deborah Raizes is a community leader who has been active

for years in many local organizations, particularly those related to education. "Since I have been on the Board at Westchester Community College, I have had more opportunity to see how the college has the ability to impact people's lives and realize what an asset it is to the county," said Deborah. "I simply see The Gateway Center as a continuation of the mission of the college.

"The Gateway Center will make it easier for those unfamiliar with the college to navigate the system," she continued. Deborah hopes that with so many services under one roof, a more welcoming atmosphere will encourage newcomers to this country to take advantage of what is offered at Westchester Community College in a friendly and supportive environment. "We hope to make it easier for people to adapt to a new country, a new language and to take advantage of a potentially great educational opportunity who might otherwise find the system too daunting."

When asked what she hoped their gift would accomplish, Deborah replied, "We simply hope that our gift will allow those who might need help in adapting to their new lives and opportunities to take full advantage of the possibilities."

Research Builds Groundwork for Gateway Programs

From the beginning, Westchester Community College has sought input into the development of the Gateway Center programs from community-based organizations, county offices serving immigrants, and businesses. Funded by a Federal appropriation sponsored by Congresswoman Nita Lowey, the college engaged Genevieve Metzger Brown to research critical information about existing resources and models for college-based programs as part of the planning process.

Finding information about where to find services for foreign-born residents can present a challenge. Through the Gateway website and services in the Center, the college plans to gather key resource information and make it easily accessible. Currently, county offices, the public library and the United Way all work to distribute information on different organizations, but there is no centralized source. In fact, many immigrants rely on personal networks and word-of-mouth for information, thus missing the chance for services that could help to remove barriers for employment and education.

Research also indicates a need for space and opportunities for collaboration among various community-based organizations. The Gateway Center will provide conference space for meetings, and encourage synergy and cooperation.

Another component of the research entails observing models of existing programs at community colleges for foreign-born students. Six administrators from Westchester Community College, along with Gateway consulting architect Scott Page and Gateway design architects from the Polshek Partnership, recently visited LaGuardia Community College to learn more about its innovative programs for entering students and immigrants. By observing best practices, including the development of "academies" to create a personalized environment and support system; a "one-stop" facility to provide an efficient way for students to register, apply for financial aid and pay for courses; and a language immersion program, the team came away with productive ideas to consider for the Gateway Center.

Gift from the Heart Supports Gateway

Tere Wisell serves as director of admissions for Westchester Community College. With her recent gift to the Gateway Campaign, she wrote the following letter.



Tere Wisell

I was born in Camaguey, Cuba. My mother and father left Cuba and Castro's regime and brought my sister and me to this country in 1963 as young children. Like most immigrants, we left behind our family and all our possessions. I

watched my parents adjust to a new country, new culture and a language other than their own native tongue. Through difficult times, my parents assured us that we would persevere. Castro had taken our possessions, but not our education nor our will to succeed.

As a community college administrator, I strive every day to provide access to higher education to anyone determined to improve his or her life through education and training. The Gateway Center and its programs will play a critical role in providing this access. In addition, it will serve as a physical microcosm of Westchester County and

the world. Students from all ethnic and national origins will learn from each other while improving their level of education and preparing to be contributing citizens of the county.

From the moment I heard about the Gateway Center idea, I knew that I wanted to be involved. The project struck a very personal chord for me. Growing up, my siblings and I heard from my father and mother that Castro had taken everything from us *except* our education and our will to succeed! You can understand then, that the Gateway project brings me full circle. I feel very grateful to be able to be part of a project that will assist others who find themselves in a new country, trying to make it their new home.

My gift, along with the gifts of others, will help to make the Gateway Center and its programs a reality. I am hopeful that *all* members of the college family will make a gift, regardless of the amount, to show our unanimous support of this project.

Many years ago, I was part of the college's Hitachi committee which focused on meeting the needs of immigrant populations in Westchester County. The Gateway Center is a natural and grand expansion of that project. I have followed the work of the Foundation as they began to plan for the Gateway campaign and feel privileged to offer any assistance that I can to this ambitious project!

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Faculty, Staff and Administrators
(listed alphabetically)

Linda & Paul Champanier
Dr. Iris M. Cook
Prof. Susan Cremins
Julia Daniels and Bob Trullinger
Frances Dearing
John & Stacey Fellas
Pamela Geraghty
Drs. Joseph & Carole Hankin
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Elaine S. Klein, Ph.D.
Raymond Mignona
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Kathleen C. Pressler, Curriculum
Chair, Human Services
Linda Roberti
Carol & Raymond Tillman
Carol Callahan Ward
Prof. David Wedlick
Weigand Family
Teresita & John Wisell

Italian Language Professor Praises Gateway Plan

Professor Carlo Sclafani, head of the Modern Languages Department, has been teaching Italian at Westchester Community College for over thirty years while working tirelessly to promote Italian culture and provide scholarships for students of the Italian language.

"I immigrated to the United States from Italy in the 1950s with my family. Settling in a new country and learning a new language and culture were a major undertaking for all of us, especially for my parents, who had little educational experience in Italy.

"The Gateway Center will enrich the lives of our immigrant students by giving them the opportunity to be exposed to and to learn about

the American culture. It will give students the opportunity to develop to the best of their abilities, to mature as individuals, and to prepare for their future and for their career. I hope my campaign gift will help in meeting the financial needs related to the construction of the building and/or scholarship aid."



Professor Carlo Sclafani

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Elinor Urstadt, Co-Chair
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Vice President External
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Executive Director

Give Today!

Your gift to the Gateway Center campaign is important to make the dream a reality. We encourage gifts to match the Skirball-Gateway Challenge, and gifts for capital construction are critical right now. For more information, please contact:

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ESL Student Now Sits at the Teacher's Desk

When he came to the United States from Peru in 1993, Luis Zarate had a difficult time adjusting to life here. At the age of nineteen, he arrived with little knowledge of English. His uncle knew of Westchester Community College's reputation for serving ESL



Professor Zarate in the classroom

(English as a Second Language) students, so he brought his nephew to the Valhalla campus and enrolled him in a basic language course.

From there, Luis progressed and his growing English skills led

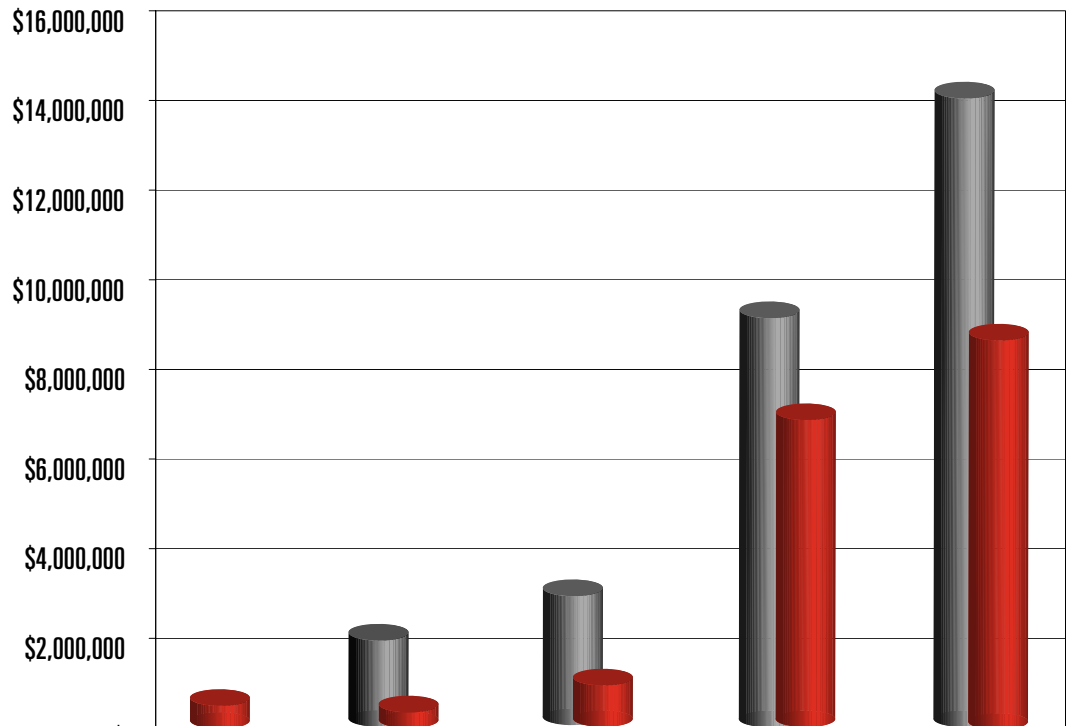
him to Iona College, where he took business and Spanish courses, eventually earning a Bachelor's degree in Spanish. Shortly after, he secured his current position as a client relationship management associate at the Tremont Capital Management financial services firm. While continuing to work full-

time, his life took a new turn when he decided that he wanted to help others with limited English skills. Once a student, Luis has now come full circle as he teaches three ESL courses at Westchester Community College.

"I know what it's like to be in a new country and to be unable to communicate," he says. "I try to be friendly and work with my students to build their confidence. Unless you have confidence in your abilities to speak and write in the language, you won't be able to communicate."

"My favorite student was a woman in her sixties who couldn't speak a word of English. She was 'adopted' by the class and became like a grandmother to all of us," he says. "I was able to teach her basic conversational phrases. One evening, she told us all that she had cancer and was going back to Mexico for treatment. I hadn't heard from her in a while, but then she sent me a greeting card in commemoration of Teacher's Day (a Mexican tradition). She told me that she was doing fine and she wanted to thank me for all that I had done for her. I was proud that it was partially written in English."

GATEWAY CAMPAIGN PROGRESS



	Planned Gifts	Gateway Programs	Scholarships	Gateway Construction	Total
■ Goal		\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$9,500,000	\$14,500,000
■ Committed	\$530,285	\$366,833	\$980,158	\$7,048,236	\$8,925,512