



# GREENFIELD

## Community College

One College Drive  
Greenfield, Massachusetts 01301  
On the Web at [gcc.mass.edu](http://gcc.mass.edu)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

## Student comes full circle with career choice

By Natalia Muñoz



Robyn LaFerriere

Robyn LaFerriere knew she wanted to become a nurse since her early 20s. Now 50, she is two semesters from achieving that dream as a graduate of Greenfield Community College.

"When I first started, I thought, 'What am I doing here with all these kids?' But it didn't take long to find community," she said. "Overall, I have found GCC to be an open and accepting school working towards inclusion of the students regardless of their difference. So far, the greatest experience I have had is the combining of a large mix of age groups and cultures which creates a situation where multiple perspectives are blended, providing greater diversity in thinking and learning. A beautiful thing in my world."

LaFerriere works part time as a massage therapist at The Underground health spa ([www.theundergrounddayspa.com](http://www.theundergrounddayspa.com)) in Northampton, while studying full time.

She entered the health care profession when she was about 23 as an emergency medical technician in Springfield. It was then that she was drawn to nursing.

Throughout hospitals emergency rooms in the Pioneer Valley, she was inspired by the nurses, who, she said, "always struck me as practical, direct, and efficient care givers helping people through some very difficult times. That's what I wanted to be."

When her father became ill, LaFerriere was taken aback by the limitations of services Medicare covered for people who wanted to stay at home. She then empowered herself to manage her father's caregiving situation.

"As a response to that, I put together a team of independent personal care providers, accessed what I could through the local elderly service providers, and provided 24 hours a day, one-on-one services at a lower cost than what a nursing home could offer," she said. "When it came time for hospice care, I was reintroduced to the art and science of nursing. The skill, dedication, and compassion of the hospice nurses and CNA's working with my dad and me in preparing us for his death was life-changing."

It is this creativity and devotion that has earned LaFerriere high praise.

"She's able to put all the pieces together," said Cheri Ducharme, GCC's Associate Degree Nursing Coordinator. "She's intuitive."

Michael Archbald, owner and manager of Collective Home Care in South Deerfield, said LaFerriere personifies "what care giving really means - caring, compassionate."

During her father's illness, LaFerriere was appalled by the

inequities in health care based on income.

"When I needed a break, I would go to Northampton, walk around, and talk with the folks living on the streets. As we became acquainted, they would tell me their stories about the treatment they received from the health care system," she said. "Many of the folks I met were living with untreated physical and/or mental illness. Granted, some lived that way by choice, but the majority went untreated because of their lack of insurance, money, or a compliant nature, which led to their marginalized status within the health care system and society."

For her, health care is as much about taking care of someone as social justice.

"I do not have any illusions about changing the system but my focus will be on working with marginalized communities," she said.

In the meantime, as a massage therapist, she continues to probe what ails a client and goes to the source of the pain.

"In traditional western medicine, the primary approach would be to treat and correct the symptoms rather than treating the whole person. This is a fine approach for acute care, but I was looking for something more. Massage therapy certainly treats particular symptoms with success but I find that the most interesting aspect of massage therapy and what drew me to the practice is the work surrounding the integration of the whole person."

For LaFerriere, providing health care is also a healing lesson.

"What I hope clients remember about their time with me is that their experience was relaxing and healing, that their needs were addressed, and that they left with a better sense of self in their bodies."

## State's Early Childhood Education Board to meet first time ever in Western Mass April 14

On April 14th from 1-4 p.m., just in time to celebrate "The Week of the Young Child (April 19-25th) Greenfield Community College will host the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's New Commissioner and Governing Board in the Sloan Theater on the main campus.

This is the first time this group has met in Western Massachusetts and only the second time it has met outside of Boston. It is a chance for our students and educators to learn more about the governance of the field and have an opportunity to ask

questions or offer ideas or concerns of their own. In addition, having the Commissioner and Board members actually experience how large and diverse our area is and learn more about the unique challenges, as well as the unique opportunities, inherent in our communities will certainly inform any future conversations or decision making, we hope!

We encourage community educators, parents or community stakeholders and Early Childhood and Liberal Arts in Education Students to attend as well as other

interested students and faculty. This event is being co-sponsored by the Regional Early Education and Care Office, GCC's Educator Department and WLNA (Western Massachusetts Leadership Network in Action - a collaborative effort of area early childhood and school age educators and professionals working together to educate, advocate and support the development of new leaders in the field.)

For additional information contact: Kim S. Audette 775-1270 or [audettek@gcc.mass.edu](mailto:audettek@gcc.mass.edu)

## SAVE THE DATE

### OPEN HOUSE

Greenfield Community College  
MAIN CAMPUS, Thursday, April 16, 2009

Day Program: 8:30 AM- 1:30 PM  
Evening Program: 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM

- See current GCC students in action
  - Nursing Health Fair
  - Musicians and artists
  - Student Leaders
- Visit college classes-be a student for the day
- Learn about the many programs at GCC
  - Transfer Options
  - Career Programs
  - Collaborative Programs
  - Certificates
- Access information you need to make GCC your best choice for learning
  - Application & Acceptance Process
  - Financial Aid
  - Student Support Services
- Meet Faculty and Staff

For more information and a complete look at the day's activities visit [www.gcc.mass.edu](http://www.gcc.mass.edu) or call the Office of Admission at (413) 775-1801.

GCC's ANNUAL SPRING OPEN HOUSE is open to the entire community.

## The Art Student Exhibit

An annual exhibition and celebration featuring the work of current GCC and MassArt students.



Dallas Looman, Untitled

April 16-May 11, 2009

Opening Reception:  
Thursday April 16, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
South Gallery (handicap accessible)

## PLEASE JOIN US

for the next Alumni Association meeting Thursday, April 23 at 5:30 p.m. at the GCC Downtown Center. Everyone is welcome.

Go online now to join the GCC Alumni Association and sign up for AlumNet, GCC's online community! Visit [gcc.mass.edu/alumni](http://gcc.mass.edu/alumni)

Greenfield Community College

## Holocaust Remembrance Day

April 15, 2009, 12 Noon - Lecture Hall

with Tiana Mirapae, "The Legacy of the Holocaust: Children of Survivors"

Mirapae, M.Ed., LCSW, is an integrative psychotherapist and holistic medicine practitioner, with offices in Montague and Hadley. She has been in clinical practice for over 25 years. Tiana is the founder and director of S.O.P.H.I.A., an apprentice program that teaches, mentors, and empowers women (and soon men) on their medicine and spiritual path. For more information on the event, contact (413) 775-1226. Sponsored by the Office of Student Life and The Diversity Committee.

The 19th Annual Striving and Driving for GCC Scholars Golf Tournament, co-sponsored by Greenfield Savings Bank and Cohn and Company, is Monday, May 18 at the Country Club of Greenfield, shotgun start at noon. The Co-Chairs of the event are Terry Boyce and Princy Stotz.



The cost is \$110 per player, which includes Bag Lunch and Barbeque Buffet Dinner. If you want to support the tournament, you can be a Birdie Sponsor for \$1,200 and there are many other opportunities, including a \$150 tee or green sponsor. All the money raised provides scholarships.

To register as a player (\$110) or be a tournament sponsor, send a check to the GCC Foundation, 270 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01301 or call 413-775-1600.

## Thank You to Our Pacesetter Businesses for Supporting GCC!

Anonymous • Bank of Western Massachusetts • Channing Bete Company • Entergy Corporation • Ford Lincoln Mercury of Greenfield • GBI Realty, Inc. • Greenfield Savings Bank • Lunt Silversmiths • The Recorder • Rice Family • The Sandri Companies • Small Corp • WHAI