

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

## 2023-24



**CHESAPEAKE**  
COLLEGE



FOUNDATION

CHESAPEAKE COLLEGE FOUNDATION  
**BY THE NUMBERS**  
*Fiscal Year 2024*

Supporting the education of people from

**FIVE COUNTRIES**

and beyond

More than

**\$624,000**

awarded in student scholarships from Chesapeake College Foundation funds

A difference made in the lives of **305** Chesapeake College Foundation Student Scholars

Over

**\$1,185,000**

in total gifts received

Support for **40** different degrees and work-ready certifications

More than

**\$522,000**

in programmatic support donated to Chesapeake College from the Chesapeake College Foundation

DEAR FRIENDS,

A single word for the 2023–24 Chesapeake College academic year would be **REFLECTION**. This year, the College reflected on **where it's been** (completing a self-study report for re-accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education), **who it is** (implementing a new brand with updated organizational values and logo), and **where it's going** (creating a 2025–29 Strategic Plan). Chesapeake College's new five-year plan is steered by three elements:

- **VIBRANCY:** Offering dynamic programs that provide opportunities for both intellectual and personal growth to the region's citizens.
- **VISIBILITY:** Actively connecting with our community, highlighting our value, and attracting a diverse range of students and partners.
- **VIABILITY:** Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the College through strategic planning, effective resource management, and a culture of continuous improvement.

The Chesapeake College Foundation plays a key role in that viability. Many of the donations given in FY2024 will provide student scholarships. Without these gifts, students couldn't get the training and education they need to launch them further in their higher education journey or into the region's workforce.

Within these pages, we're happy to reflect on the differences we've made and our accomplishments from fiscal year 2024. From starting a new advanced manufacturing program to beginning a legacy endowment in memory of a dear colleague, we hope you enjoy reading about the work we do—it's been our privilege.

With gratitude,

*Linda Friday*



Linda Friday  
*President for 2023–24*  
*Chesapeake College Foundation Board of Directors*

*Clifford P. Coppersmith*



Dr. Clifford Coppersmith  
*President*  
*Chesapeake College*





“ The most valuable thing I’ve learned [in this program] is the ability to adapt to a changing workforce environment. ”

## RETOOLING FOR SUCCESS

As the demand for smart technology increases in the manufacturing industry, the demand for skilled workers is surging, and Chesapeake College is stepping up to meet the challenge. The Advanced Manufacturing Program (AMP) bridges the gap between education and industry, helping students gain the skills and knowledge needed in this evolving field.

**Frank Williams**, the College’s new AMP coordinator and instructor, explained that his courses are designed to provide training for those looking to start a career, or upskill those already working in manufacturing. But one of the biggest challenges is helping people understand what it is.

“The word manufacturing could mean a lot of things,” says Frank, explaining that any business that makes something—from a bakery to a machine shop—is manufacturing. “It’s hard to get people to connect manufacturing classes to what they might want to do for a job.”

And the jobs are out there. With innovations like artificial intelligence (AI), smart technology, robotics, and automations becoming more frequent, employers are clamoring for candidates with the skills and knowledge. “I have received at least 20 emails from employers in our five counties looking for people,” says Frank.

Even with the variety of industries and specializations, Frank explains that many of the core principles taught in his classroom are universal. This gives students a baseline mechanical aptitude that they can apply to various manufacturing environments, and completers earn a certified credential.

“It’s a very good program,” says **Justin Bodman**, an AMP student and Chesapeake College Foundation scholarship recipient. “It’s kept me engaged, I’ve learned a lot, and the certifications at the end give you a huge advantage.”

Frank advises his students to think about their entire career path, recognizing that their goals may change over time. “You can start out on the production line if that works for your life right now,” he says. “But five years from now, you might need more money, so you get a little bit more training. There’s always a way to tailor as you go.”

Justin agrees. “The most valuable thing I’ve learned [in this program] is the ability to adapt to a changing workforce environment.”

“We want to produce graduates that businesses want to hire, and students who can leverage skills to get promoted and earn more,” says Frank.



# LOVING HARD AND PROTECTING PEOPLE

When most people consider a post-retirement job, they may imagine something easier and less stressful than their past career. But for **Rhonda Thomas**, the inaugural director of the Chesapeake College public safety department, “cushy” wasn’t her style.

In 2018, just a few months after retiring from the Easton Police Department as a first sergeant, Rhonda joined Chesapeake College. She immediately set to work creating a safer, more secure environment for students and staff.

**Lisa Phillips**, assistant director of public safety at Chesapeake College and close friend of Rhonda’s, says that Rhonda transformed Chesapeake College’s public safety department from a loose collection of security officers into a tightly-knit team of armed, trained professionals.

“She came in here with a set standard,” says Lisa, “She established that all officers would be armed and have training for active assailant situations.” This transformation is perhaps Rhonda’s greatest legacy. “She made everybody on campus feel a lot safer.”

Rhonda’s wife **Crystal Huffman** spoke of her tenacity and support for her team. One major project was the renovation of the campus’ public safety offices into a modern command center. “Rhonda actually drew out the plans and took them to the College’s president,” says Crystal. “He was on board immediately, and they started redoing that entire building.”

After a noble fight with cancer, Rhonda passed away on October 20, 2023. Her memorial service was held on campus in the Todd Performing Arts Center, with a eulogy given by **Dr. David Harper**, vice president of workforce and academic programs.

“If we ever needed a reminder that the world is not as it should be—that our loved-ones are infinitely precious, that our routines are insignificant by comparison—death offers us that reminder,” said Dr. Harper in his remarks at the service. “Rhonda, in her line of work, certainly knew the world was not as it should be. The choice she made was to do something about it. To work daily to make her community a safer place.”

In honor of her commitment to the College, the Chesapeake College Foundation created the Rhonda F. Thomas Memorial Fund, a non-scholarship endowment that will provide additional funds for the public safety department. These funds will be used to purchase new equipment, support officer training, and facilitate attendance at conferences and continuing education. The fund celebrates Rhonda’s commitment to public safety work, with an ambitious goal of reaching \$20,000 in endowed funding.

“She definitely put her heart and soul into this College and created a department that is at a much higher level than what it was when she started,” says Lisa. Rhonda’s relentless dedication and innovative changes not only safeguarded the campus but also fostered a sense of unity and preparedness.

“For her, the biggest thing in life was to protect people and protect property,” says Crystal. “When she loved you and let you into her world, she loved hard—not just at her job, but in life.”







## BUILDING A SHORE LIFE AND LEGACY

When **Winslow Womack** went on a blind date with **Helen Etter** at the age of 28, he had no idea the encounter would lead to a lifetime together—66 beautiful years. “Helen was a sweet woman. In our years together we never exchanged a harsh word. She really cared about people, and Helen had a way of communicating with others. She always wanted to help,” says Mr. Womack.

But Mr. Womack’s sweet wife was also a tough cookie, spending her childhood between Towson, Maryland and the rustic boys and girls summer camps her family owned in St. Michaels. The 1930s and 40s camp life was pastoral though, not posh like the children’s camps of today. It was there Mrs. Womack gained a lifelong love of sailing, the outdoors, and “roughing it” on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

While the camps closed after Mrs. Womack’s father passed, and most of the land was sold off, Mrs. Womack and her sisters retained plots to continue the summer tradition for their families. The Womacks set up camp first in a pitched tent, then in an outbuilding, and finally in a house Mr. Womack built himself. While he worked during the week on the Western Shore in the aerospace sector, Mrs. Womack enjoyed rural living with their five kids every summer. “The county didn’t bring electricity down our lane until 1965,” he says.

The family moved full-time to Easton in 1970, and Mr. Womack continued working his job at Goddard Space Center—an early adopter of Eastern Shore living with a Western Shore commute. In 1987, Mr. Womack retired to pursue his interests, including sailing, boat building, and spending time at their house in St. Michaels.

In 2013, a chance encounter at the Easton Lowe’s brought the Womacks a new passion—supporting nursing education at Chesapeake College. “I was checking out and the young woman behind the register didn’t seem to know what she was doing. She admitted it was her first day on the job,” says Mr. Womack. “I learned that she had quit the nursing program at the College because she ran out of money. When I got home, Helen and I talked about how there was no reason we couldn’t do something to help.”

And so began the Helen Etter Womack Endowed Nursing Scholarship fund. Over the years, the Womacks added to their endowed fund, willing the principal to grow to provide support indefinitely for students pursuing a nursing degree at Chesapeake College. Providing this support seemed like a natural fit for one of Mrs. Womack’s other interests besides her beloved sailing—mental health care. In addition to being a board member for Crossroads Community, Inc. for many years, she was also the past president of the Talbot County Mental Health Association, and served on the Governor’s Task Force for infants, children, and youth.

Mrs. Womack passed away in December of 2023 at the age of 96. And while the absence of her presence is felt profoundly by those who loved her dearly, her name and legacy of helping will live on through the endowed scholarship she and Mr. Womack established—all from a chance encounter at the Easton Lowe’s.

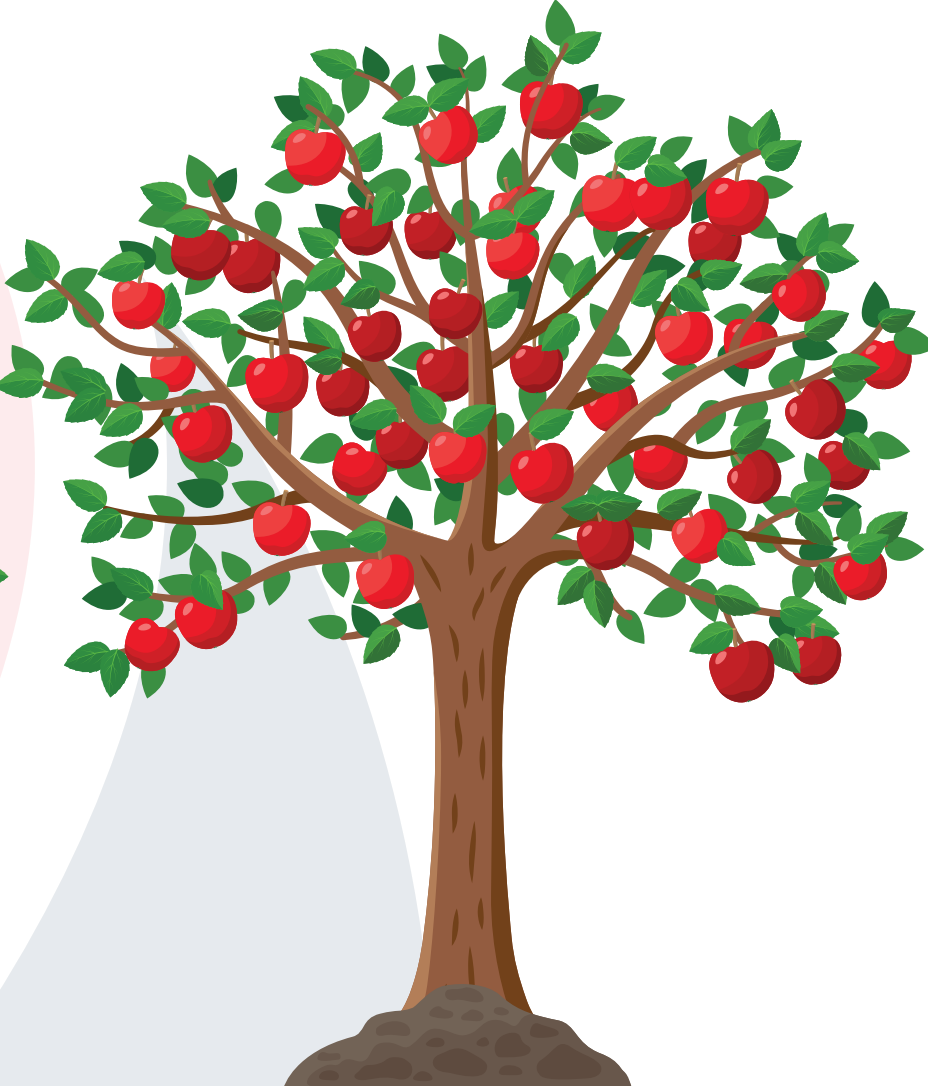
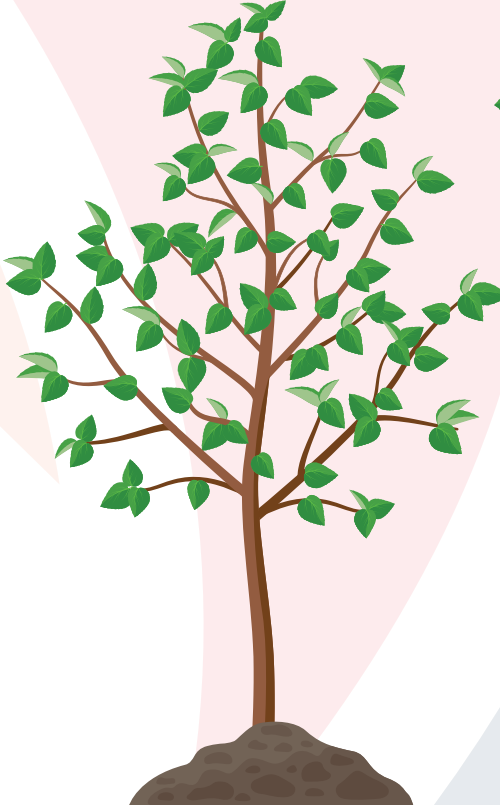
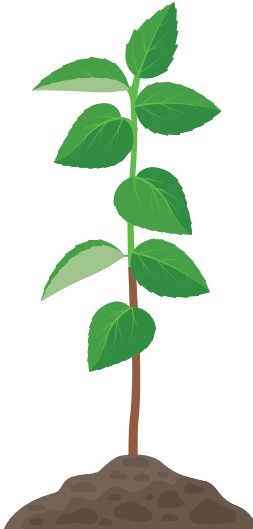
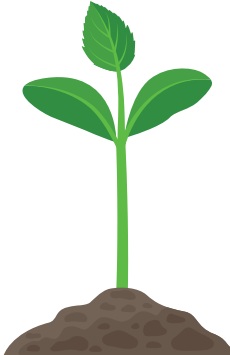
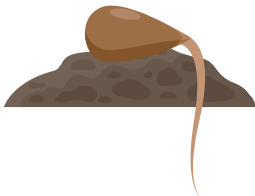
“When I got home, Helen and I talked about how there was no reason we couldn’t do something to help.”



# ENDOWING THE FUTURE

The Chesapeake College Foundation was established as a 501c3 in 1977. A big part of the Foundation's work is to manage donor-endowed funds, including endowments that provide scholarships to students. Here's how one of the Foundation's more than 74 endowed funds grew from a small seed to a strong tree, providing support for years to come.

The minimum amount to establish a Chesapeake College Foundation endowed fund is \$20,000. To establish an endowed fund—in your name or in memory of someone you love—please reach out to Executive Director **Amber McGinnis** at [amcginnis@chesapeake.edu](mailto:amcginnis@chesapeake.edu).



## 1991

From 1991 to 1993, several gifts were made to this endowed fund, resulting in \$20,113 in initial "principal" or "corpus." Principal funds are invested, dictated by the Foundation's Investment Policy Statement, and an annual investment income disbursement is determined by the Foundation's board of directors.

## 1994

The fund provided its first scholarship to students, after earning investment income on its gifts. Criteria for awarding endowed scholarship funds are set by the donor (e.g., specified major or program, residency, GPA minimum).

## 1997

From 1994 to 1997, the donor gifted another \$19,887, bringing the total principal/corpus to \$40,000. The additional gift was invested and has contributed to the continued income growth of the endowed fund.

## 2024

From 1997 to 2024, through bear and bull markets, this endowed fund's corpus earned more than \$84,306 in investment income. The fund also awarded more than \$61,321 in scholarships to Chesapeake College students during this time period.

## 2025 & BEYOND

More than 30 years after this scholarship fund's initial gift, this endowment is healthy, thriving, and will continue to support Chesapeake College students in perpetuity. Endowed funds are a lasting testament to the generosity of a donor, creating a legacy that keeps on giving.



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The 2024 fiscal year was a financially positive one for the Chesapeake College Foundation. Our investment income was \$992,203—an increase over 2023 and 2022 performance. Contributions (gifts given to the Foundation) were also strong at \$1,185,698, thanks in large part to an extraordinary estate gift from a long-time Caroline County donor. Three new endowed funds were created this year, all three in memory of someone dear.

This year, the Foundation Board—together with our advisors—worked to update the Foundation’s investment policy. This important document provides the framework within which funds may be invested to increase the financial resources available to Chesapeake College. Our main investment objective? To preserve and grow the Foundation’s assets by balancing income generation and preservation of capital/capital growth. Since 1977, we’ve been in it for the “long-game,” and we look forward to continuing that legacy well into the future.

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>			
Contributions	\$830,994	\$354,704	\$1,185,698
Special events, net	\$12,939	\$8,238	\$21,177
Investment income, net of expenses	\$57,396	\$934,807	\$992,203
Net assets released from restrictions	\$515,305	(\$515,305)	
<b>Total revenues and other support</b>	<b>\$1,416,634</b>	<b>\$782,444</b>	<b>\$2,199,078</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program services	\$522,806		\$522,806
General and administrative	\$111,322		\$111,322
Fundraising	\$90,733		\$90,733
<b>Total expenses*</b>	<b>\$724,861</b>		<b>\$724,861</b>
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>\$691,773</b>	<b>\$782,444</b>	<b>\$1,474,217</b>
<b>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$723,437</b>	<b>\$7,626,658</b>	<b>\$8,350,095</b>
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$1,415,210</b>	<b>\$8,409,102</b>	<b>\$9,824,312</b>

\*A portion of total expenses include donated services from Chesapeake College.

2023			2022		
Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
\$331,560	\$410,271	\$741,831	\$234,729	\$1,123,054	\$1,357,783
\$52,580	\$641,802	\$694,382	(\$53,980)	(\$961,869)	(\$1,015,849)
\$640,781	(\$640,781)		\$832,699	(\$832,699)	
<b>\$1,024,921</b>	<b>\$411,292</b>	<b>\$1,436,213</b>	<b>\$1,013,448</b>	<b>(\$671,514)</b>	<b>\$341,934</b>
\$709,144		\$709,144	\$821,544		\$821,544
\$89,186		\$89,186	\$99,676		\$99,676
\$95,105		\$95,105	\$59,596		\$59,596
<b>\$893,435</b>		<b>\$893,435</b>	<b>\$980,816</b>		<b>\$980,816</b>
<b>\$131,486</b>	<b>\$411,292</b>	<b>\$542,778</b>	<b>\$32,632</b>	<b>(\$671,514)</b>	<b>(\$638,882)</b>
<b>\$591,951</b>	<b>\$7,215,366</b>	<b>\$7,807,317</b>	<b>\$559,319</b>	<b>\$7,886,880</b>	<b>\$8,446,199</b>
<b>\$723,437</b>	<b>\$7,626,658</b>	<b>\$8,350,095</b>	<b>\$591,951</b>	<b>\$7,215,366</b>	<b>\$7,807,317</b>

Complete financial statements are available at [www.chesapeake.edu/annualreport](http://www.chesapeake.edu/annualreport).



# A COMMUNITY OF INTERNAL GIVING

The Chesapeake College Foundation's Annual Internal Giving (AIG) campaign channels the generosity of faculty and staff into tangible benefits for students. Each year, faculty and staff are able to bring innovative projects to life through funds donated to the Chesapeake College Foundation by their colleagues.

## Bringing Innovations in Sustainability

A project made possible by AIG was the purchase of a tower garden for agriculture students. **Nicole Barth**, assistant professor and program coordinator of the Agriculture and Environmental Science Program, explained that this innovative approach to sustainable farming has become an educational tool that brings hands-on learning directly into the classroom.

"The tower garden is an amazing addition to our program," Professor Barth says. "It allows students to grow a variety of plants in a vertical, hydroponic system, providing fresh produce year-round. This project not only teaches students about sustainable agriculture, but also demonstrates how we can grow food efficiently in smaller spaces."

This hands-on experience is invaluable, especially for those who might not have a background in agriculture. "It's a way to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application," says Professor Barth.

The AIG program does more than fund individual projects. By engaging faculty and staff as both donors and beneficiaries, the program reinforces the importance of internal support and collaboration.



## Inspiring Future Female Leaders

**Cheyenne Roache**, Chesapeake College director of student engagement and development, received AIG funding that allowed her to take ten students to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

"We have a campus that is predominantly female, and providing these leadership opportunities is crucial," says Cheyenne. She credits the AIG program for allowing her to offer this experience to even more students. "The AIG program has been a game-changer for us. Last year, we took five students, and this year, thanks to the AIG program, we're able to double that number to ten."

"Being a first generation student, and the first to go to college, this event has fueled wisdom and curiosity to do more in the world," said liberal arts and sciences major **Kim Bartolon-Rodriguez**, who attended the conference in May. She added that speeches from women who received awards were inspiring and empowering.

**Tye Queen**, another attendee and member of the women's basketball team, echoed that statement. "One of my biggest takeaways from this conference was realizing how much power there is in being a woman. It was amazing to hear everyone's stories and how they overcame different challenges in order to be successful."

Not only are these students making a difference on campus, but they are using the skills gained through networking and making connections at the conference to explore other ways to advocate for causes that are personally important. "These experiences are shaping the leaders of tomorrow," says Cheyenne.



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Zulema Delacruz Martinez, '24

Associate of Arts in Business Administration  
Community Interpreter Certification  
Greensboro, MD  
Supported by the Barnes & Noble Book Scholarship,  
J.C. Gibson Memorial Scholarship

“What stood out to me [about Chesapeake College] was that it was flexible and it was affordable. Chesapeake College introduced me to staff members who truly care about students like me.

“From receiving a student-employment position on campus, to working closely with the other College departments, to expanding my own personal abilities, the TRiO [student program] provided a wealth of support that I had not been privilege to prior to arriving at Chesapeake College. Above all else, TRiO gave me a family of people who have guided me, supported me, and who have given me countless hours of their time to help me succeed in my college career.

“While at Chesapeake, I discovered so many things about myself. I discovered that I am a leader and others wish to follow my leadership. I have been pushed to be greater. Para hacer realidad un gran sueno, el primero requisito es un gran capacidad de sonar, el segundo es la persistencia. Translation: To make a great dream a reality, the first requirement is a great capacity to dream, the second is persistence.”

*Excerpted from Zulema's speech at Chesapeake College's 2024 Commencement, as the recipient of the prestigious John T. Harrison Award. Zulema is now pursuing her bachelor's degree in business administration at Towson University with the eventual goal to have a career in higher education or to lead a non-profit.*



## Justin Medrano

Commercial Driver's License – Class A (CDL)  
Chestertown, MD  
Supported by the Corr Scholarship, from the Mid-Shore Community Foundation

“I've worked for my father's moving company driving box trucks for 10+ years. After my time at Chesapeake College, I plan on building my experience as a tractor trailer driver on the Eastern Shore. I want to work with local farmers, hauling grain and crops.

“The support from my instructors, their patience and training techniques, surprised me. My learning experience has been excellent and the institutional scholarship staff surprised me with their kindness and attentiveness.

“These scholarships opened the door for my success as a full-time student at Chesapeake College. Without financial assistance, I would not have been able to pursue this program at this time. It showed me that I am more than capable and gave me the confidence to know that even though I am in my 30s, I can still further my education.

“I would tell people [who are thinking of going for a CDL] to pursue your passion wholeheartedly and do not be afraid to ask for help.”



## Peyton Lee, '24

Associate of Arts in Business Administration  
Leesburg, VA  
Supported by the Delmarva Power Athletic Scholarship

“I came to Chesapeake College because it allowed me to pursue a degree and play baseball. From here, I will attend Wilmington University to continue my college baseball career.

“The environment of the school is awesome, and the best part of my experience has been being a part of the Skipjack baseball team.

“Scholarships were the only reason I was able to stay at school and continue my dreams. I am completely on my own for college, so this allowed me to continue doing what I love. [Had I not received this

scholarship] I would not have been able to play baseball—I would have had to work to pay for my schooling.

“I would tell others pursuing their dreams that the teachers are awesome at Chesapeake College and make sure to study!”



## Mariah Ayala, '24

Associate of Science in Nursing  
Feddersburg, MD  
Supported by the Auxiliary of Memorial Hospital at Easton Scholarship

“My first job working with the geriatric population made me realize how much happiness it brings me helping and caring for people. So I decided to further my education, so I can help save more lives. After this, I plan on working as a registered nurse at a hospital and pursuing my bachelor's degree in nursing.

“How supportive and compassionate the professors were about helping their students surprised me. Also, the amount of support Chesapeake College gives its students financially and academically.

“Receiving these scholarships decreased my stress significantly. Working almost full time and going to school full time is stressful. These scholarships allowed me to focus on my education and not have to worry about working extra hours just to pay for my tuition. I will always be forever grateful for the support.

“[If you're thinking about studying nursing] I would tell people they should go for it. It will be challenging, but it will all be worth it in the end.”



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Erin Grigsby

Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapy Assistant  
Centreville, MD

Supported by Barnes & Noble Book Scholarship, Auxiliary of Memorial Hospital at Easton Scholarship

“An internship opened my eyes to how great this career could be. Being there to help others get through their injuries and illnesses made me realize how much I enjoyed helping people. After Chesapeake, I plan to become a licensed and practicing physical therapist assistant.

“Chesapeake College is great with working with their distance learning students. Being a student in the PTA program [a joint program with Anne Arundel Community College], you have to travel over the bridge for your classes, but the staff at financial aid, business office, and bookstore have been so helpful.

“I’m so grateful for these scholarships, as it allowed me to focus on my studies full time and become the class president for the 2025 PTA program. They took off some financial burden as my parents have to support three kids in college.

“For others considering PTA, this career is so rewarding, and if you are someone that enjoys helping others without the pressure of having too much debt, then this program is the right place for you.”



## Leondrea Nichols

Associate of Arts in Business Administration  
Ridgely, MD

Supported by the J.C. Gibson Memorial Scholarship

“I’ve always been good with math and numbers, and I found that accounting was a good career that suited my strengths and skills. After earning my associate, I plan on transferring to earn my bachelor’s degree and focusing on a career in accounting.

“Something that surprised me is the amount of events that are held on campus. I think the best part of my experience here at Chesapeake College is being involved and helping to organize some of the bigger events.

“This scholarship helped me with funds and allowed me to have more focus and motivation towards my education.

“[For those considering a career in accounting] it can be a tough career to study, but once you find your rhythm and figure out what works best, it gives you a new appreciation for finance and how businesses operate behind the scenes.”



## Taylor Rupp

Associate of Science in Biological Sciences  
St. Michaels, MD

Supported by the Nash-Lednum Endowed Scholarship

“I was inspired to study biology mainly because of my love for the environment and the Earth, as well as a tremendous amount of my childhood being spent outdoors. I plan to transfer to a four-year school, perhaps on a merchant marine ship studying the marine effects or an internship elsewhere to get my foot in the door.

“I was surprised by how nice the campus is and the teachers have all been very helpful and kind. It is important to reach out and connect with your peers; who knows, you might just meet someone very interesting.

“Scholarships helped me tremendously—they allowed my main focus to be doing well at school as I didn’t have to work a full-time job. It really showed me that the community was looking out for their fellow future generations, and it gave me a feeling of strength like I had a whole crowd watching my back and cheering me on!

“[For those considering biology], be prepared for the hard work, and try to think outside the box for a lot of the tasks in biology, as a lot of it requires substantial thinking and problem solving.”

# 2023–24 CHESAPEAKE COLLEGE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## EMERITUS

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**CHESAPEAKE**  
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