Bunker Hill Community College celebrates its 40th Anniversary.
This booklet began as a tribute to 40 alumni who would represent the thousands of students who have passed through Bunker Hill Community College over the 40 years since the College was established in 1973. The idea was to celebrate their successful lives and careers. We asked them about themselves, what further degrees they had earned, what jobs they had found. And they told us.

But they kept changing the subject. They wanted to talk about the College. One said: “At first teachers and staff members believed in me more than I believed in myself.” Others described professors who helped build their self-confidence, pushed them to pursue a bachelor’s degree or got them interested in a whole new field. The College wanted to praise its alumni, but the alumni wanted to praise the College. They praised it for supporting them, inspiring them and changing their lives. Our tribute to them became their tribute to Bunker Hill Community College. Their alma mater is proud and grateful.
BHCC’s radiology program offered great internships at major teaching hospitals. I was sent to New England Medical Center for my internship and 38 years later I am still there." - Michael Foley

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Susan Dole ’76
Senior Academic Advisor, Retired, Bunker Hill Community College
Dole began her academic career at BHCC and recently retired after 34 years of service. She holds a bachelor’s and a master’s degree from Tufts University and a doctorate from the University of Massachusetts Boston. Advisors and faculty encouragement made Dole’s two-year degree achievable. She believed so much in the mission of BHCC and the value it brought to every student that she joined the College as a full-time employee and enjoyed a long career at BHCC. Dole continues to teach as an adjunct faculty member.

“No matter where I’ve been or what I’ve done in my personal and professional life, all roads lead back to Charlestown and to Bunker Hill Community College.” - Susan Dole

Brian Perrin ’86
Attorney at Law and Lieutenant Detective, Winthrop Police Department
Perrin graduated with honors from BHCC in the criminal justice program and went on to obtain a bachelor’s degree at Salem State University and a Juris Doctorate at Massachusetts School of Law, graduating cum laude and Law Review. In addition to serving with the Winthrop Police Department, Perrin maintains a successful private law practice. He credits his successes to the mentoring he received from BHCC professors, who encouraged him to further his education and seek a law degree.

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Ernst Guerrier ’88  
Attorney at Law, Acculaw  
Originally from Haiti, Guerrier arrived at BHCC uncertain of his future. The supportive culture of the College helped him decide on a career path after a life-changing class in political science. He went on to Suffolk University for his bachelor’s degree and J.D., then added a year at Boston University to study tax law. He currently operates his own legal practice and also teaches at both Suffolk University and Boston University. The most memorable aspect of BHCC, says Guerrier, was the camaraderie of the student body. Everyone, he says, wanted to help.

“I met a professor who said, ‘Look, you can do this.’ Everyone wanted to help you. Everyone wanted you to succeed. Failure wasn’t mentioned.” - Ernst Guerrier

Ed Fraine ’87  
Director, Business Development, Sodexo  
Hands-on training with culinary professionals along with classroom training gave Fraine the building blocks for a career in the food service industry. From courses in restaurant management, food safety, and food production, he learned the skills necessary to become a successful executive with Sodexo. Fraine says that BHCC gave him a thorough understanding of what was required to become a manager in the food industry. Fraine had a vision of a successful career, and the faculty at BHCC helped make that vision a reality.

“BHCC made all the difference in the world when it came to learning how and why people do what they do. My time at BHCC set the course for helping me move forward in my field.” – Robert Merner

Robert Merner ’95  
Superintendent/Chief of the Bureau of Investigative Services, Boston Police Department  
Merner started out as a detective in a homicide unit. To advance in law enforcement, he knew he would need more education. BHCC set the course for him. He found strong advocates in the faculty as well as advisors who helped him more forward in his field. He went on to earn his bachelor’s degree from Western New England University and his master’s degree from Boston University in criminal justice. He has enjoyed being an adjunct professor at BHCC for the last seven years.

“It’s vital for students and aspiring journalists to have teachers and mentors like those I found at BHCC. What I learned from them has stayed with me throughout my career.” - Greg McQuade

Claudia Carvajal Guillen ’99  
Coordinator, Medical Assistant Program, Middlesex Community College  
Guillen never forgot the kind words she heard – thankfully in Spanish – when she arrived at BHCC. “This wonderful woman said, ‘We are going to do this and I am going to help you,’” says Guillen, who is from Venezuela. Her current position is a way to repay the care she received at BHCC. Guillen earned her patient care certificate, then went on to earn her bachelor’s degree in nursing at the University of Massachusetts Boston.
Cynthia Massiah ‘00  
Tax Examiner, Massachusetts Department of Revenue  
A single mother with three children, Massiah needed the freedom and flexibility offered by BHCC to support her family while attending classes. She co-founded the African American Cultural Society at BHCC and appreciated the College’s wide diversity and warm community. Her professors offered encouragement and strategies on how to move forward. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Northeastern University in criminal justice and now plans to graduate from Eastern Nazarene College with a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy.

Vanessa Matta ‘00  
Senior Software Developer, The Conference Exchange  
The Student International Club eased Matta’s entry into the U.S. from Brazil. She felt at home in the College’s multicultural environment and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Northeastern University in computer science. She says that BHCC exposes students to a wide variety of ways to learn and she took full advantage by immersing herself in activities and student groups. BHCC became a second home for Matta, a safe place to explore new ideas and develop talents.

Sami Noujaim ‘00  
Principal Investigator, Molecular Cardiology Research Institute, Tufts Medical Center  
BHCC helped Noujaim acclimate to the U.S. when he arrived in Boston from Lebanon, providing him with a solid foundation for his career, helping him develop leadership skills through Alpha Kappa Mu and honoring him with the President’s Leadership Award at graduation. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Brandeis University in 2002 and a doctorate in pharmacology from SUNY Upstate Medical University in 2007. In 2012 he completed a post-doctoral fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology at the University of Michigan. Noujaim directs his laboratory and teaches medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Megon Barrow ‘01  
Therapeutic/Family Support Mentor  
BHCC gave Barrow, who is from the Caribbean, confidence as a learner. BHCC staff and faculty helped her adapt to life in the U.S. Teachers who believed in her abilities transformed how she thought about herself, says Barrow, who went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Northeastern University in psychology and management information systems. She hopes to encourage others to become professors and independent therapists.

“I offer a portion of my favorite quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson: ‘Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day.’” - Cindy Massiah
“BHCC was an opportunity to get an education, it was a way out of poverty, a way into corporate America. It saved my life.” – Reinier Moquete

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Cathy Guild Jones ’02
Executive Assistant, The TJX Companies, Inc.

“Knowing I was in a place where people cared about me meant a great deal, and gave me the support and motivation I needed to finish.”
- Alberto Pina

Alberto Pina ’03
Student Information System Support Representative, Boston Public Schools

The International Center was instrumental in helping this Cape Verdean student adjust to the U.S. and to BHCC, where he honed his ability to focus. He received a bachelor’s degree in management information systems from the University of Massachusetts Boston and is currently a candidate for the master of science degree in computer information systems from Boston University. Pina is also executive editor and owner of an online news and advertising company.

Rajae Bouganza ’02
Senior Manager, the Boston Globe

BHCC’s cultural diversity made Bouganza, a native of Morocco, feel at home. She arrived with limited English speaking skills, but with the help of faculty, acclimated rapidly, serving as co-president of the Arab Club and working in the Library during her tenure. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Emerson College in communications.

Jason Kiss ’03
Clinician, BHcare

Kiss earned an associate degree at BHCC, but perhaps more important, discovered his true talents at the College. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Massachusetts, then went on to earn his doctorate in clinical psychology in 2009.

“I came in empty and I left whole. A teacher said to me, ‘Do you know how bright you are?’ I had never felt that way. BHCC helped me recognize who I was and what I was able to become.”
- Cathy Guild Jones

Gertrude Mageza ’04
GI Coordinator, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Faculty members, says Mageza, get students involved not just in their education but also in working with their peers and helping others. This distinction enabled the mother and full-time student from South Africa to connect and assimilate with ease. She received a bachelor’s degree in 2007 from Northeastern University, where she is studying for her master’s degree.

Reinier Moquete ’03
Managing Partner, Advoqt Technology Group

A scholarship to BHCC was Moquete’s chance to realize his dreams. While the support and caring he enjoyed at BHCC made the night classes and full-time day job worth it, the career guidance, planning and academic flexibility made it all possible. After earning associate degrees in both finance and business at BHCC, he received a bachelor’s degree from Pace University.

“I came to BHCC thinking I wasn’t that bright, but found out, clinically, I was smart. I realized that if I was willing to plow through it, I could do anything. Saying BHCC changed my life doesn’t scratch the surface.”
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Nathan Long ’04
General Manager and Owner, Wok N Talk
Transitioning from China to the U.S. with limited English language skills, Long’s life needed direction. Three transformative years later, he not only found his calling, but also a supportive best friend. They both attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where Long earned his bachelor’s degree. One good turn deserves another: Long has encouraged his friend and fellow alumnus to launch his own business.

St. Alusha McKetty ’04
Registered Nurse, Massachusetts General Hospital
Through the Student Government Association at BHCC, McKetty learned to lead – and he hasn’t stopped since he earned his associate degree. The native Jamaican went on to Eastern Nazarene College, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in biology. In 2011 he attained both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in nursing from the MGH Institute of Health Professions and will soon take his nurse practitioner licensure examination. Only one challenge remains for McKetty: swimming in the Atlantic Ocean. He first dipped his toe in during a BHCC leadership conference at Cape Cod and found he prefers the Caribbean.

Jennifer Nolfie ’05
Registered Nurse, Lahey Clinic
The nursing pinning ceremony in 2005 was the pinnacle of Nolfie’s BHCC tenure; her associate degree was a first step toward realizing a lifelong dream of becoming an R.N. Nolfie also built a wealth of self-esteem at BHCC. She began her journey as a single mother, and the positive reinforcement she received, says Nolfie, was critical to staying the course.

Luis Ottonelli ’05
Job Service Representative, Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance
The Argentine native acclimated to College and loved helping other international students do the same. He expresses his passion for community service, nurtured at BHCC, in myriad ways. Ottonelli serves on the board of Oiste, a Latino civic education initiative; he is also an active member of Boston’s Medical Reserve Corps, which hosts health events and flu clinics. Ottonelli is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in management at Boston University.

Eri Allen ’06
Laboratory Assistant, Boston University Medical Campus
BHCC was the critical launch pad for Allen when she began attending classes in her mid-30s. New to Boston, the non-traditional student found the personal connections she needed to begin her career – and make Boston her true home. A native of Japan, Allen later received her bachelor’s degree from Smith College.

"I grew up in Japan and it wasn’t until I got involved in student activities at BHCC that I finally started feeling that Boston was my home.” – Eri Allen

Ruth Deras ’04
Attorney at Law, Law Office of Ralph Carabetta
Deras’s daughter never doubted that her mother would succeed. It was Deras herself who sometimes needed convincing. The single mother, who worked full time and grappled with immigration issues while attending BHCC, received the support she needed from staff and faculty members. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Suffolk University and a J.D. from the Massachusetts School of Law.

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Dafang Duan ‘08
Care Manager, United Health Care
Before she could build her career, Duan, a native of China, acquired vital skills in leadership and public speaking at BHCC. Her newfound prowess served her in good stead as she went on to a career in healthcare after earning a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Curry College.

Hailin Kong ‘09
Enterprise Risk Services Consultant, Deloitte Touche
It’s all behind her now, but once, this accomplished financial professional, a Chinese native, was shy. She transformed herself and her career, helped along through her involvement in mentoring at BHCC. Beginning with an associate degree in accounting here, she next attended Bentley University, where she earned both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in information technology.

Henry Nelson ‘09
Benefits Analyst, Hays Insurance Brokerage of New England
Practice makes perfect. For Nelson, who came to BHCC from Haiti, practice also made for portable communication skills – expertise Nelson deploys daily on the job. The time he invested in the Student Government Association and the Haitian Club translates into self-assured business meetings. Nelson went on to complete coursework in Northeastern University’s Health Management Program.

Jae Williams ‘06
Digital Media Producer, Emerson College
At BHCC Williams garnered the support necessary to balance the demands of fatherhood and schoolwork. But it was the mentor network he created that cinched his career. A BHCC administrator recommended that he attend Emerson College, where Williams earned a bachelor’s degree in media production. The same mentor helped him land a position at the Perkins School for the Blind. Williams met Emerson alumni there, who ultimately hired him to work at Emerson.

John Around Him ‘08
English Teacher, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
Born in South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Around Him says he was prepared to attend whatever four-year college would accept him. At BHCC he learned to strive for – and achieve – much more. His first writing course challenged him to pen a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry. Kerry replied to Around Him’s missive, and their meeting at BHCC led to an internship with Kerry. Around Him later transferred to Dartmouth College, where he received a bachelor’s degree.

“Coming from the reservation and a poor community, I was willing to settle for very little. Professors and others at BHCC encouraged me to strive for more.” - John Around Him

“Being a mentor and attending leadership retreats at BHCC gave me experience in leadership and public speaking and built my confidence.” - Dafang Duan

“I enhanced and practiced my communication skills at BHCC. As a result, I feel more confident meeting with co-workers.” - Henry Nelson

Jae Williams ‘06
Patient Care Assistant, Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Nepal’s academic advisors at BHCC didn’t just help her choose classes – they actually celebrated with her when she got an A. The transplant from Nepal, who has the confidence to “talk to anyone” thanks to the English language skills she acquired at BHCC, received a certificate in 2009 and returned for additional coursework in 2009 and 2010.

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Suman Nepal ‘06
Patient Care Assistant, Brigham and Women’s Hospital

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Eli Bojorquez ’10
Patrolman, MBTA Transit Police
Life offers second chances, says Bojorquez. He seized his in the form of a respite at the College after serving in the military for seven years. Working with faculty members who were deeply invested in him was instrumental in his success, says Bojorquez, who was born in Mexico. He’s working on a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice at the University of Massachusetts Boston and plans to enter civil service.

Camilo Linares ’04, ’10
Operating Room Nurse, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Once he mastered English through the ESL program at BHCC, there was no stopping Linares, who moved to the U.S. from Venezuela as a teenager. He went on to earn both a surgical technology certificate and a nursing degree. Now, Linares has come full circle: he mentors a BHCC nursing student.

Mahesh Thapa ’11
Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
From modest beginnings in Nepal have come great things for Thapa, thanks to his diligence—and a little assistance from BHCC. Through the College, Thapa won an internship at Tufts University, where he honed his hands-on laboratory skills. The internship also helped him gain admission to Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Fabiola Similcar ’10
Day Nursing Supervisor, Golden Living Center
Stepping outside herself at a College planning event, Similcar entered a community conversation—and savored every moment. Even more satisfying was her work as an orientation mentor—not only did she learn about other cultures, she also taught new students about her native Haiti. Similcar received her associate degree in nursing and went on to attain a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Curry College in 2013.
Josue Velney ’13  
Fire Fighter, City of Somerville

Velney is grateful for the Veterans Center, which helped him transition to College life after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. Born in Haiti, Velney says the variety of ages, countries of origin and ethnicities at BHCC was both surprising and comforting. He received his associate degree in fire protection and safety and will begin work on a bachelor’s degree in fall 2014.

“I always looked forward to attending classes, and the Veterans Center helped me transition into a college setting. I felt very comfortable there.”
- Josue Velney

Maria Correa ’13  
Student, Mount Holyoke College

Arriving at BHCC as the first female officer to graduate from the Argentine Naval Academy, Correa was accustomed to being in the vanguard. What she needed was a little direction. Correa found it in countless activities that shaped her personal and professional destiny. She served as a student trustee on the BHCC Board of Trustees and was a member of Alpha Kappa Mu, BHCC’s chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, among other honors.

“BHCC transformed me as a person. It helped me to understand what I want and who I am, and helped me learn how to find my way.”
- Maria Correa
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