

NCCC Class of 2020 'chips' in to sweeten day of local heroes

Students at Niagara County Community College are still adjusting to a new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual learning has replaced in-person instruction, and plans for major milestones like commencement are being postponed in order to keep the community safe and healthy.

The typical celebratory feeling surrounding the end of the college semester has a different vibe this year, but NCCC's Class of 2020 is not letting this pandemic dampen its spirits. Graduates are finding new ways to come together and share joy with others through social media posts, virtual concerts, live cooking demonstrations and, most recently, by way of a sweet offering to health care heroes, volunteers and first responders in the area.

In an effort coordinated by NCCC's seniors, 18,000 custom cookies were made and packaged through a partnership with Tops Friendly Markets. The cookies were distributed Monday morning by Niagara County Sheriff deputies to local hospitals, nursing homes, firehouses, EMT services, the Niagara County Health Department and police stations in Niagara County as a small gesture of gratitude.

In the photos, cookies were dropped off at Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston by Niagara County Sheriff's Office deputies, and received by hospital personnel.



Special cookie care packages were sent out on Monday, courtesy of students at Niagara County Community College. (Photos by Mark Williams Jr.)

Student Support

NCCC Senate President Tayllor Clark, who was on hand for the deliveries, expressed her appreciation for those working to keep the community safe and healthy: "It is important for our students to honor their efforts because, without these individuals, there would be countless more people suffering from this illness. These front line individuals are important to our life in society every day, but even more so today."

Some of these cookies will be presented to former students and NCCC alumni, bringing the goodwill full circle.

"NCCC has trained many health care professionals working in the region to combat COVID-19, including Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center," said Dr. Diane Roth, assistant vice president of academic affairs for nursing and allied health. "Our graduates are using skills learned through classroom, lab and clinical experiences to make a difference in our community daily, but the impact of their efforts is especially important now."

NCCC's contribution of cookies is just one of many efforts to support health care workers by

colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. This movement (#SUNYTOGETHER) is led by Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson. It's raising funds for personal protective equipment and medical research to assist with the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition to the encouragement received from SUNY, NCCC is also relying on local leaders for guidance through this pandemic.

"Niagara County has been very supportive in providing leadership during this time. We are thankful to the Niagara County Health Department for providing assistance in identifying essential workers

and the Niagara County Sheriff's deputies who are going above and beyond the call of duty to distribute cookies as a token of our appreciation," NCCC President William J. Murabito said.

Acting NCSO Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti said, "I think it is fantastic that the NCCC graduates are making the most of a difficult situation and thinking of the workers on the front line of this pandemic. As an NCCC alum, I wish them well as they move onto a new stage in their life."

Karri Zwirlein, director of bakery, deli and prepared foods for Tops, said, "Tops philosophy is

'Neighbors Helping Neighbors,' so we were honored and excited when we learned of the opportunity to partner with NCCC to provide the heroes of our community with a special treat and token of our appreciation for their service."

More than 18,000 cookies were set to be distributed to essential employees over the course of the next couple of days.

NCCC said, "This extra boost of sugar and positive vibes is one small way to keep energy and spirits up for what may be the long road ahead."

Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara connects essential workers with CARES Child Care Scholarships

By Niagara Community Action Program Inc.

Niagara Community Action Program Inc., under the Community Child Care Resource and Referral Program, applauds the action of the governor's administration in developing a plan to provide child care to essential workers at no cost. This allocation of funding for child care for essential workers comes to the state from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act"), which has provided New York with \$163.6 million in emergency relief to the child care system.

New York state is using a por-

tion of this funding to provide free child care for income eligible essential workers. Essential workers using a regulated child care provider will receive a scholarship for the cost of care as long as the funds that support it are available. All licensed and regulated providers who are caring for essential workers are able to participate in this new program.

Access to affordable and safe child care is a barrier for working parents during the best of times, and even more so during a crisis. New York state's plan will ensure that the workforce that is needed to protect and care for the

public during this pandemic have the child care that allows them to continue to serve us all. CCR&R are the child care experts and the conduit to accessing child care in New York state.

If you meet the definition of an essential employee and have child care needs, please register (find

link at www.wnypapers.com). You will be contacted by Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara within one business day. We will follow up on next steps to gather information about your household and help you identify a participating child care provider or work with your current regis-

tered or licensed child care provider.

On behalf of the board of directors for Niagara Community Action Program Inc., we want to express our gratitude and appreciation to all those essential workers who are assisting us in beating the COVID-19 virus. Thank you.



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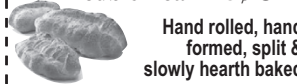
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