

# WH!

WIDER HORIZONS

{ A PUBLICATION OF LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE }

# VIEWS FROM THE FRONT LINES

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WINTER 2022



## WIDER HORIZONS

{ VOL. 15 | ISSUE 2 | WINTER 2022 }

*Wider Horizons* is Lethbridge College's community magazine, celebrating the successes and stories of students, employees, alumni, partners and friends. The magazine aims to educate, engage and delight its readers through compelling stories and images about Lethbridge College people, places and experiences.

In addition to free distribution to our regional community, *Wider Horizons* is also mailed to all alumni and available on campus. Alumni looking to connect with the college or update their contact information can email [alumni@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:alumni@lethbridgecollege.ca) or go to [lethbridgecollege.ca/alumni](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/alumni).

Readers who would like to receive an e-version of the magazine, send a letter, comment on a story, change their address or remove their name from our mailing list should email the editor at [WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca).

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Located on the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Lethbridge College is committed to honouring the land from a place of knowing. We honour the Siksikaitsitapi as both the traditional and current Land Keepers of this area, and we welcome all First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-Indigenous peoples who call Blackfoot territory their home.



When I think back on my experiences with hospitals and health care, what stands out most vividly are the kind and competent actions of nurses and other health-care workers.



There was the hospice home health-care worker who made sure to put my mother-in-law's lightly scented face cream on each day, the smell triggering powerful memories as we hugged her, held her hands and said goodbye. There was the postpartum nurse who helped me take a shower after the birth of my first child, keeping me steady as I thought to myself "wow, they call it labour for a reason." And earlier this year, when one of my daughters fainted after receiving some catch-up vaccines at Exhibition Park, there were four calm health-care workers who seemed to appear as if from nowhere to make sure she was OK (she was) and to keep us both from panicking (it worked).

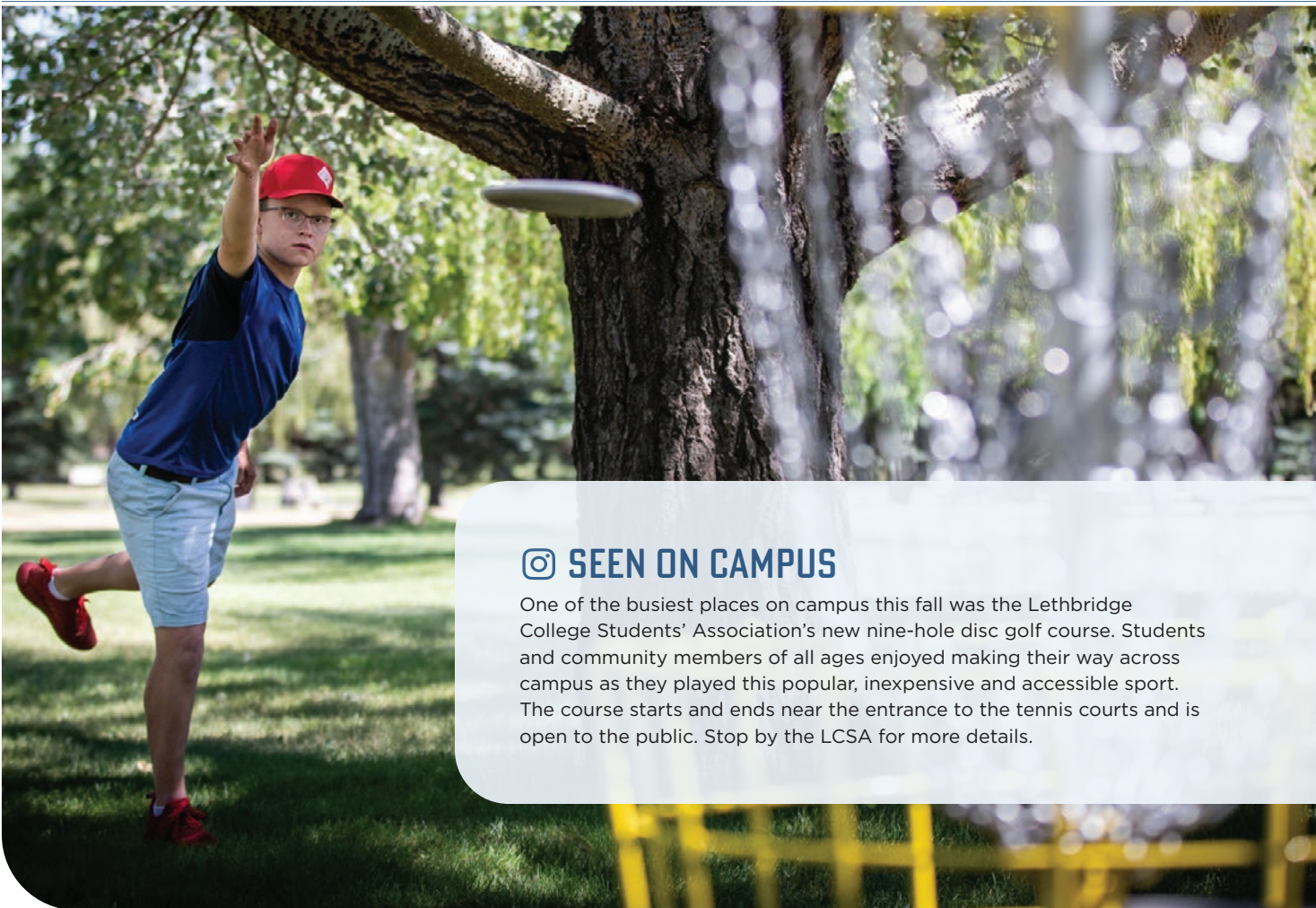
I am certain these small but important aspects of good health care take place every day, and I hope health-care workers know what a difference they made and make. I also know these routine daily actions are nothing compared to what so many health-care workers have been doing as they approach the two-year mark of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. From unit clerks to Licensed Practical Nurses to Registered Nurses and beyond, they have worked long hours, walked past protesters to start their shifts, postponed time off, faced angry patients and their families, provided exceptional care, and so much more, coming back day after day to help make sure the people of our province and country have the best care possible.

All of us at Lethbridge College are grateful for the heroic health care that has been provided since the start of the pandemic – and proud of the fact that so many people working in these roles are also alumni. That's why we created this issue's cover story and photo essay starting on page 12. We wanted to showcase and celebrate the extraordinary work that our grads and all health-care workers are doing in the most difficult of circumstances, just three kilometres down the road from the college at Chinook Regional Hospital.

We couldn't have created this special story without a remarkable partnership with the talented team at Alberta Health Services. Just as we did in our Winter 2019 special issue focusing on the opioid crisis, we have collaborated with AHS to tell a story that we hope all of our readers appreciate, which means you'll be able to see these photos through AHS communications channels as well as the college's. Special thanks go out to Gwen Wirth, a former communications manager here at the college who now is director of Communications in AHS's South Zone; to Leah Hennel, AHS photographer and senior advisor, Story Hub; and to Vicki Hall, AHS director of Story Hub and Social Media, all of whom worked together to make this happen when there were already so many other demands on their time.

And the biggest thanks of all go out to every single person who has made someone's life and health-care experience a little better since the start of the pandemic. For your acts of good health-care small and large, our community is grateful.

Lisa Kozleski  
Editor



## 📷 SEEN ON CAMPUS

One of the busiest places on campus this fall was the Lethbridge College Students' Association's new nine-hole disc golf course. Students and community members of all ages enjoyed making their way across campus as they played this popular, inexpensive and accessible sport. The course starts and ends near the entrance to the tennis courts and is open to the public. Stop by the LCSA for more details.

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### From feet to hands

Former soccer standout refuses to let any barrier slow her down.



### Families in focus

The Walgama family came from Sri Lanka to southern Alberta – and made Lethbridge College their place to work and learn.



### The last word

Take a look inside the carpentry shop where apprentices nail down the skills they need for their future careers.



The land where Lethbridge College sits has been home to the Blackfoot people for thousands of years, providing sustenance and spiritual connections for generations. Now, those who walk the coulees surrounding the college's campus can learn about the importance of the plants native to the area, with the creation of the *lissksiniip* (Coming to Know and Learn) Coulee Walk, which was unveiled in September as part of Truth and Reconciliation Week.



The *lissksiniip* Coulee Walk is an interpretative self-guided tour that explores the traditional plants found in the area, explains their uses and shares some of the traditional creation stories of the *Siksikaitsitapi*, the Blackfoot Confederacy. Traditional Blackfoot plant knowledge keeper and artist William Singer III (*Api'soomaahka* - Running Coyote), seen here walking with Lethbridge College President and CEO Dr. Paula Burns, created the walk in conjunction with the college's Indigenous Services team.

Photo by Rob Olson



# NEWS AND NOTES

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black graduation cap with a gold tassel and a black gown with a green stole, is smiling and looking to the right. She is holding a silver circular medal with a mountain and water design. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows.

## READY TO CELEBRATE REMARKABLE NEW GRADS

KYLA HORNBERGER, WHO EARNED A 4.0 GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND GRADUATED WITH HONOURS WITH GREAT DISTINCTION FROM THE INTERIOR DESIGN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM, WAS NAMED THE VALEDICTORIAN OF THE FALL 2021 CONVOCATION.

Want to keep up on all of your Lethbridge College news between issues of *Wider Horizons*? Check out our news and events webpage ([lethbridgecollege.ca/news](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/news)) for the latest stories and all of the college news you need. And don't forget, you can read past issues of *Wider Horizons* at [widerhorizons.ca](http://widerhorizons.ca).



## LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE CELEBRATED ITS GRADUATES AT A FALL CONVOCATION IN OCTOBER, RETURNING TO A PREVIOUS COLLEGE TRADITION THAT SAW MORE THAN 120 PEOPLE RECEIVE CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND APPLIED DEGREES IN THE VAL MATTEOTTI GYMNASIUM.

In alignment with the college's Pandemic Response Program, only faculty, college leaders and graduates were a part of the in-person ceremony, although the entire community joined in the celebration at home and online.

"There was so much to celebrate about this remarkable group of grads, who showed true grit and perseverance in completing their post-secondary education," says Lethbridge College President and CEO Dr. Paula Burns. "And we were thrilled to mark this shift from one annual convocation ceremony in the spring to two true graduation ceremonies each year – in the spring and fall – after students completed their practicum experiences, clinical placements and other work-integrated learning opportunities. We were thrilled to honour their achievements."

One highlight of the ceremony was the recognition of the fall valedictorian, Kyla Hornberger, who earned a 4.0 grade point average and graduated with Honours with Great Distinction from the Interior Design Technology program. She describes herself as "a mother to five glorious humans, a believer, a dreamer, a creator, a doubter, someone who is deaf, someone who is hearing (thanks to technology)," and so much more.

At the age of 39, and despite past experiences where her deafness was not received with understanding, Hornberger decided to change her path and enrol in the Interior Design Technology program. She says taking the step to go back to school has opened doors she never could have imagined, and that "learning to live from a space of possibility and choosing to simply try has left me in awe and filled with gratitude. I had no idea of the community that would find me when I decided to leap."

Cherie Bowker, chair of the School of Spatial Design Technologies, says "Kyla is inspired, and she inspires others. She is enthusiastic, illuminating every room she enters. She is creative, talented and ambitious. She is an interior designer extraordinaire, and I am so thankful to know her!"

To read an illustrated version of Hornberger's moving speech, go to p. 24. To watch the ceremony online, go to [lethbridgecollege.ca/convocation](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/convocation).

**WH** Photos by Rob Olson and Jamin Heller

## DRAGONFLY EDUCATION FUND TO HELP STUDENTS SOAR TO A BETTER FUTURE

A \$50,000 gift from a retired post-secondary education employee will be used to launch a new scholarship and bursary fund at Lethbridge College. The fund will support students with immediate unexpected financial barriers that keep them from completing their studies.

This initial donation from Jessica Bennett, who previously worked as a Records and Information Manager within the post-secondary environment, has been used to establish the new Dragonfly Education Fund. Bennett created this fund as part of a planned gift endowment designed to provide bursaries and scholarships to Lethbridge College students at the time they need it, as a way to promote mental health and student success. The gift is part of the college's \$1 million Ready to Rise Campaign, which is raising funds for new scholarships and bursaries that will provide support to students in need, helping them to rise up, meet the challenge, finish their education and be ready for their future.

Bennett says it was important to her to work with the college to create a fund that can accept donations of any size "as a way to bring together a community who is as diverse as the students who need our assistance." She adds that she wanted to make a gift that would have a true positive effect on students and lead them to a better future where they can give back to their own communities. The first bursary has already been awarded to Shanjini Kumar, a second-year student in the Interior Design Technology program, who says: "Like everyone else, I have various obstacles to overcome daily, but being able to pursue full-time education in the wonderful environment Lethbridge College provides is truly such a blessing. This award will definitely help me continue on and fund my dreams. I feel extremely motivated going into my final year and I cannot wait to finally cross the finish line!"

For many students, scholarships and bursaries are the one support that make it possible for them to stay in school and complete their programs, says Edna Stobschinski, a second-year Renewable Resource Management student and the president of the Lethbridge College Students' Association. Lethbridge College saw a 100 per cent increase in demand for bursaries in December 2020 compared to previous years.

For more information about the Dragonfly Education Fund, or to learn more about other ways to support students at Lethbridge College, go to [lethbridgecollege.ca/give](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/give) or call the Development Office at 403-320-3457.

## CAMPUS NEWS

While the pandemic has put some of the usual campus events on pause, the news didn't stop this summer and fall. For more details, check out [lethbridgecollege.ca/news](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/news).

In the meantime, these headlines hint at some of the happenings and developments the campus experienced these past four months.

### SCREENING OF AWARD-WINNING KAINAI DOCUMENTARY ON CAMPUS

*Kimmapiiyipitssini: The Meaning of Empathy* is an intimate portrait of survival, love and the collective work of healing in the Kainai First Nation in southern Alberta. Lethbridge College presented a screening of the award-winning documentary on Nov. 22, followed by a panel discussion with local experts in health care, social work and addictions.

### BLOOD TRIBE PARTNERSHIPS HIGHLIGHT LC EXTENSION'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Lethbridge College has long been a destination for people looking for professional development and skills upgrading. But, as two partnerships with Blood Tribe Employment and Skills Training (BTEST) show, LC Extension also plays a role in connecting community organizations with the wealth

of expertise available at the college. This past summer, LC Extension worked with BTEST to run a pair of programs – an introduction to trades and construction program and a coding camp for high school students – to develop real-world skills for Indigenous students.

### COLLEGE REVAMPS BE FIT FOR LIFE TO SERVE STUDENTS, COMMUNITY

Lethbridge College's commitment to the health and wellness of the entire community has led to a new home for Be Fit for Life (BFFL). Previously funded by the provincial government to provide fitness classes and training, BFFL centres across the province lost their funding in 2021. The onus was then on individual centres to determine whether to keep the program and how to fund it. Lethbridge College's unique solution is to integrate BFFL into an academic centre, creating expanded opportunities for students, while still providing fitness classes, workshops and presentations to the larger community. Be Fit for Life is now part of the college's Centre for Business, Arts and Sciences (CBAS), where students will have opportunities to get hands-on with their learning.

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR STUDENTS

Congratulations go out to these Lethbridge College students and new grads for exceptional work in their programs:



**Sammy Demchuk** (General Studies), was one of four youth in the Yukon to receive the Outstanding Youth Achievement Award in September "in recognition for their remarkable service and contribution to their communities." Demchuk was recognized "for her enthusiasm in all of her community volunteering efforts." She has been a trainee with the Golden Horn Volunteer Fire Department, played basketball, volleyball and soccer, and coached young basketball and volleyball players.



**Anabella Cordero** (Multimedia Production) won a National Campus and Community Radio Association award for Best Third Language Show. Anabella Cordero creates Mega Latino with her husband Carlos Castellanos. The two-hour Spanish language show airs from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturdays on CKXU 88.3 FM or online at [ckxu.com](http://ckxu.com). The show includes music, news reports from journalists based in Ottawa, the U.S., El Salvador and Chile and updates from the Latino community in southern Alberta.



### Digital Communications and Media (DCM) students:

A unique partnership is giving second-year DCM students the opportunity to have their work published in the Lethbridge Herald. City editor and LC grad Trevor Busch (Communication Arts 2008) reached out to School of Media and Information Technology Chair Deborah Hadley with the idea, and together they created a system that recognizes above and beyond storytelling and photography. The stories are published in Tuesday's issues.



### BACHELOR OF ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT DEGREE OFFERS MANY OUTCOMES

Lethbridge College's Bachelor of Ecosystem Management degree program is the perfect pathway for students interested in fulfilling careers, pursuing professional designations or attaining further post-secondary education while creating a career focused on the outdoors. The Government of Alberta approved the program's name change – from Ecosystem Management – Bachelor of Applied Science to Bachelor of Ecosystem Management – in July 2021. The program hasn't changed, but the new name is intended to clarify the many outcomes the program has provided over its first five years and into the future.





## MIAMI HEAT, LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE TEAM UP TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

From southern Alberta to South Beach, there's no better way to beat Lethbridge's January chills than with the Miami Heat. That's why Lethbridge College launched Ready to Feel the Heat: The Miami Heat Experience, a new raffle that will send one lucky winner and a guest to Florida for a one-of-a-kind experience to see the Miami Heat take on the Toronto Raptors in January 2022.

All money raised by the raffle will support the financial needs of Lethbridge College students. Each November for the past three decades, the college's annual Clayton Allan Wine Auction has raised money to support student needs or college priorities. This year, the Wine Auction was postponed due to the pandemic; however, the organizing committee still wanted to make sure students

were supported. The committee approached Lethbridge College alumni John Vidalin (Communication Arts 1991) who is the Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer for the Heat, to create a one-of-a-kind experience. The prize includes airfare for two to Miami, a two-night hotel stay in Miami, two lower-level tickets to see the Heat play the Raptors on Jan. 17, a Heat prize pack including a pair of Kyle Lowry jerseys and more. The contest was open to all Alberta residents over the age of 18, including Lethbridge College students, employees, alumni and community members, and the lucky winner was Lisa Weich.



## COR VAN RAAY INDUCTED INTO ALBERTA ORDER OF EXCELLENCE

Lethbridge College is proud to celebrate the induction of Cor Van Raay into the Alberta Order of Excellence this year. Van Raay was one

of eight Albertans to receive the recognition, which is the province's highest honour a citizen can receive as an official part of the Canadian Honours System and is given to those who have made outstanding provincial, national or international impact. On behalf of Lethbridge College and the people of southern Alberta, President and CEO Dr. Paula Burns provided the official nomination of Van Raay, while Rick Paskal of Van Raay Paskal Farms seconded the nomination. More than a dozen other individuals and community organizations contributed letters of support.

Van Raay learned he was to receive the Alberta Order of Excellence in the summer of 2021, but passed away on July 29, 2021, before the investiture ceremony. He is known as one of southern Alberta's most prominent entrepreneurs and philanthropists, praised for strengthening the agriculture industry, ensuring the future of agribusiness through 50 years of innovation and building community through his generosity. In the nomination letter, Burns wrote how Alberta has benefitted from the hard work and dedication of many successful farmers, ranchers and innovators. What made his work so extraordinary, she wrote, is that he chose to use his financial success to continue investing in and supporting worthy Alberta organizations.

# READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING TO EXPAND YOUR PERSONAL INTERESTS OR YOU'RE A BUSINESS LEADER LOOKING TO UNLEASH YOUR TEAM'S POTENTIAL THROUGH STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT, **LC EXTENSION CAN PAVE YOUR LEARNING PATH TO SUCCESS.**

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# INNOVATION IN ACTION

The teams in our Centre for Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and in our Integrated Agriculture Technology Centre have been moving their research programs along this summer and fall. To read detailed descriptions of their work these last four months, check out [lethbridgecollege.ca/news](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/news); but for a glimpse of some of their creative and collaborative projects, here are some highlights.



## RDAR COMMITS \$783K TO GROW ALBERTA'S GREENHOUSE SECTOR

Lethbridge College and Sunterra Farms Greenhouse Ltd. recognize that current demand for fresh, locally grown produce far outstrips the available supply in a market reliant on Mexican and U.S. imports for fruits and vegetables most of the year and that the greenhouse sector in Alberta is ready for expansion. Together, the college and Sunterra are conducting an applied research project to optimize the growing conditions for pre-commercial and commercial-scale production of strawberries and tomatoes on the vine as they look to boost Alberta's crop output during times of limited supply and low import quality. Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR)

has invested \$783,205 in the project to support the applied research activities that will advance innovative indoor growing techniques in Alberta. The work will occur at the college's Brooks Research and Production Greenhouse and Sunterra's new 20-acre state-of-the-art greenhouse in Acme, Alta.

## GRANTS BUILD RESEARCH CAPACITY

To encourage faculty and staff to take on new projects and build research capacity, Lethbridge College offers funding through Centre for Applied Research Internal Fund (CARIF) grants. Faculty can also access SSHRC Institutional Grants (SIG) through the college to support small-scale research and related activities to strengthen research excellence and foster the professional development of students. In 2021-22, CARIE will support six CARIF grants and three SIG grants to nine different researchers.

Congratulations to Dr. Sophie Kernéis, Dr. Simon Schaerz, Dr. Gary Barron, Dave Maze, George Gallant, Allyson Cikor, Josh Hill and Dr. Amy Hodgson-Bright.



# COLLEGE RECEIVES OVER \$1.3 MILLION IN FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING

Lethbridge College has received one of the most significant financial boosts to its applied research activities in the college's history. The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) has awarded two grants to Lethbridge College, totalling more than \$1.3 million. The approved projects include \$935,490 for Dr. Chandra Singh's work towards creation of the Advanced Post-Harvest Technology Centre, and \$410,921 for Mike McCready's work in the Spatial Technologies Applied Research and Training (START) initiative.

The projects are funded through CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund, which supports productive partnerships between Canadian colleges and institutions, and businesses. The grant for the Post-Harvest Technology Centre will help address increasing global food demands. One-fifth of all food produced in Canada is avoidably lost or wasted during harvesting, packing, storing, handling, transporting and processing. Dr. Singh's work applies technology to crops during the post-harvest period to significantly reduce food loss and wastage.

The research funding will also help bridge a gap between industries and community organizations that could benefit from virtual or augmented reality technology and the expertise to support them. Many industries are exploring the integration of VR and AR to enhance employee safety, improve business process efficiency and reduce operating costs, but they lack the expertise and equipment to articulate a vision and develop immersive experiences.

The July announcement saw CFI award almost \$17 million for 16 research infrastructure projects at 15 colleges across the country. Lethbridge College is the only institution to have multiple projects funded during this round of applications.



## PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

WH Research by Kristina Madarasz

Grads of Lethbridge College's Practical Nurse program had a lot of good things to say about their experiences on campus. Here are a few highlights from our Practical Nurse alumni who completed the recent Graduate Outcome Survey and the Alumni Survey:

78%

OF GRADS SAID THEIR PROGRAM DEVELOPED THEIR ABILITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY TO A GREAT EXTENT

94%

OF GRADS SAID THEIR PROGRAM DEVELOPED THEIR ABILITY TO WORK WELL WITH OTHERS TO AN EXTENT OR A GREAT EXTENT

89%

OF GRADS SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND THEIR PROGRAM TO OTHERS

100%

OF GRADS SAID THEIR PROGRAM DEVELOPED THEIR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TO AN EXTENT OR A GREAT EXTENT



### NURSING ON THE FRONT-LINE

Hannah Johnson (Practical Nurse 2021), Licensed Practical Nurse, works on the COVID Unit at Chinook Regional Hospital. To read reflections from our nursing graduates working in the pandemic, go to p. 12 or visit [widerhorizons.ca](http://widerhorizons.ca).

Photo by Leah Hannel



## KODIAKS NEWS

The Kodiaks came out of hibernation and were ready to roar into a new season this fall. With restrictions in place to help keep campus and the community safe, the Kodiaks have been excelling in what has been an exciting season.

### MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY TEAM EARNS BRONZE IN ACACS

The Kodiaks cross country teams had a strong showing at the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) championships on Oct. 30. The men's team earned a team bronze medal, with rookie Reggie Williams earning an ACAC All-Conference award selection after placing sixth overall. At the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) national championships in Calgary on Nov. 13, which featured runners from over 30 post-secondary institutions from coast to coast, Williams placed 17th overall to help lead the men's team to a ninth-place finish in the team standings.

The Kodiaks women's team entered the November race as the defending CCAA national champions after winning in 2019. This year's edition had the Kodiaks coming off a fifth-place finish at the ACAC championships and looking to gain valuable experience at nationals.

### FIVE KODIAKS PLAYERS NAMED TO ACAC ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

Five Kodiaks student-athletes were named to the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) men's and women's soccer all-conference teams in October. On the women's side, rookies Krista Van Diemen and Megan Morrison as well as second-year standout Olivia DePasquale were recognized as all-conference players. On the men's side, team captain Ben Knight received his third straight all-conference selection as a midfielder, while fifth-year defender Jaden Veluw finished his post-secondary career on a high note, being named to the all-conference team for the second consecutive season. Both Kodiaks men's and women's programs enjoyed strong regular seasons before bowing out of the ACAC playoffs in the south division semifinals in October. The teams will now take a short break before preparing for the 2022 ACAC futsal season.

### KODIAKS ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS WELL-BEING OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

Part of providing a meaningful experience for student-athletes means ensuring systems and tools are in place to enhance care for their health. A new gift from the Kodiaks Association means Lethbridge College student-athletes, coaches and training staff members will have a new tool to help diagnose, track and treat concussions, while safely returning student-athletes to action once they're ready.

The gift has allowed the Kodiaks to purchase and implement the HeadCheck Health system, which helps with concussion diagnosis and recovery. Used by teams and leagues across Canada, HeadCheck allows coaches or training personnel to conduct advanced digital baseline and post-injury assessments for head injuries and quickly and easily share that information with the Kodiaks chief medical staff. The result is better care for Kodiaks student-athletes.

The Kodiaks Association is a dedicated group of boosters that has operated since 1996 with a mandate to support Kodiaks Athletics by funding initiatives and equipment that go beyond the normal scope of institutional funding. "As an association, our goal is to ensure the Kodiaks student-athletes have access to resources they need to succeed in action, in the classroom and in life," says Jean Schnarr, Kodiaks Association president. "When we learned of the HeadCheck Health system and the benefits it provides for students, it was an easy choice to support its implementation. We're glad we're able to provide this resource and we feel this system will provide further assurances to the student-athletes that they will be well taken care of when injuries do occur."

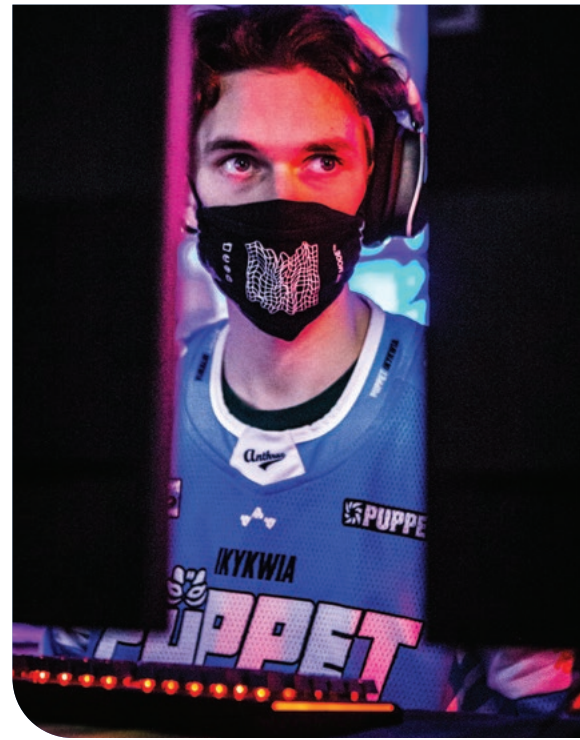
The HeadCheck app will be available to all Kodiaks coaches and training staff. Its features include a detailed return to play protocol that can be implemented in conjunction with the Kodiaks' medical staff, ensuring student-athletes are fully cleared and safe to get back on the court or field following an injury. The HeadCheck system was implemented during the latter-part of the 2021 Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference soccer season, while the Kodiaks basketball and volleyball teams have all undergone preseason baseline testing with the system. The Kodiaks Association raises money through a season-long 50/50 raffle and by participating in casinos, with all funds returned to the athletics program. Ongoing initiatives include funding training system aids, athletic therapy equipment, scholarships for student-athletes and more.

# COLLEGE PRESSES START BUTTON ON ESPORTS INITIATIVES

Lethbridge College is ready to make its mark as a hub for esports activity in southern Alberta. With the popularity of esports on the rise, the college has launched initiatives to promote gaming at the competitive, recreational and community levels.

This fall, serious gamers joined the new Kodiaks esports team and are taking part in the Canadian Collegiate Esports League (CCEL), competing against nearly 20 post-secondary institutions across Canada. Those with a more passing interest in esports are taking part in tournaments and intramural leagues organized by the Lethbridge College Students' Association. And the college is becoming a community hub for esports, planning and hosting tournaments for high school students from across the region in 2022.

Employees got a glimpse of the fun in December when the college hosted an Esports Test Tournament on campus. The event involved about 30 student competitors, ranging from leisure gamers to Kodiaks, who spent the afternoon playing four video games. This tournament provided an afternoon of fun for competitors, but, more importantly, it was a technical test for organizers who are planning intramural tournaments for college students in April and high school students in May. The setup of computers, monitors, big screens, a control room and a set for shoutcasters (a term for esports commentators) required collaboration by Information Technology Services, Facilities Management, Digital Communications and Media, Multimedia Production, and Virtual and Augmented Reality employees and students.



## > WE ARE ALL KODIAKS

COME CHEER ON OUR STUDENT-ATHLETES AT THESE HOME GAMES THIS WINTER!

### BASKETBALL

- JAN. 15 VS SAIT **M** 6 P.M. **W** 8 P.M.
- JAN. 21 VS BRIERCREST **M** 6 P.M. **W** 8 P.M.
- JAN. 22 VS BRIERCREST **M** 1 P.M. **W** 3 P.M.
- JAN. 29 VS AMBROSE **W** 6 P.M. **M** 8 P.M.
- FEB. 4 VS ST. MARY'S **W** 6 P.M. **M** 8 P.M.

### VOLLEYBALL

- JAN. 14 VS SAIT **M** 6 P.M. **W** 8 P.M.
- JAN. 28 VS AMBROSE **W** 6 P.M. **M** 8 P.M.
- FEB. 3 VS OLDS **W** 6 P.M. **M** 8 P.M.
- FEB. 10 VS BRIERCREST **W** 6 P.M. **M** 8 P.M.
- FEB. 12 VS RED DEER **W** 2 P.M. **M** 4 P.M.



#WEAREALLKODIAKS

[gokodiaks.ca](http://gokodiaks.ca)





On the left, Sam Vervoort (Nursing 2012), RN, works with Dustin Godlonton (General Studies 2004 and Nursing 2005), RN, in the emergency department of Chinook Regional Hospital in November.



# IN THIS TOGETHER

WH Story by Paul Kingsmith | Photos by Leah Hennel

AN INTIMATE VIEW OF THE  
FRONT LINES AND WHAT IT'S  
REALLY LIKE ON THE JOB AS A  
HEALTH-CARE WORKER IN THE  
MIDST OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

**B**ack when this all started, the common refrain was “we are all in this together.”

The community lauded health-care workers as heroes, saluting them with nightly pots and pans serenades, providing them with free pizza and drive-by parades, and offering them thanks for being on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. While most people stayed home to help slow the spread, health-care workers went out every day to do the essential work of saving lives.

The first wave crested, and then came the second, the third and the fourth. Each wave has brought new trials. But health-care workers continued to go out in the world every day, doing whatever was needed to help and protect the patients in their care.

Each wave carried with it some shifts in public perception. The parades gave way to protests of public health restrictions, some held right in front of hospitals; to shouting by family members at the doctors, nurses and other health-care workers doing

their best to save the lives of loved ones; to the circulating of social media posts that questioned whether the pandemic was even real.

Despite these challenges, health-care workers continued to show up, never pausing in their commitment to providing critical care and skilled services to patients in need.

The entire Lethbridge College community is proud to call many of these health-care workers alumni, and grateful for the work all health-care workers have done to keep communities healthy and safe throughout the pandemic. And so, in collaboration with Alberta Health Services, *Wider Horizons* went behind-the-scenes at Chinook Regional Hospital, and through photographs and the words of our alumni, we are providing a glimpse at what work during two shifts in a pandemic is really like.

We are, in fact, all in this together. And we are so grateful for the service and care provided by our health-care workers.



WORKING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC HAS REINFORCED THE IDEA THAT WE ARE LIKE FAMILY TO EACH OTHER. WE HAVE ALL COME TOGETHER TO GET THROUGH AN UNIMAGINABLE AND CHALLENGING TIME TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL CARE TO OUR PATIENTS. WE HAVE DONE THIS BY WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM, SUPPORTING EACH OTHER, LAUGHING TOGETHER WHEN WE COULD AND TAKING IT ONE DAY AT A TIME. WE HAVE A SPECIAL BOND AND WE WILL LOOK BACK AND KNOW THAT WE DID IT, TOGETHER.

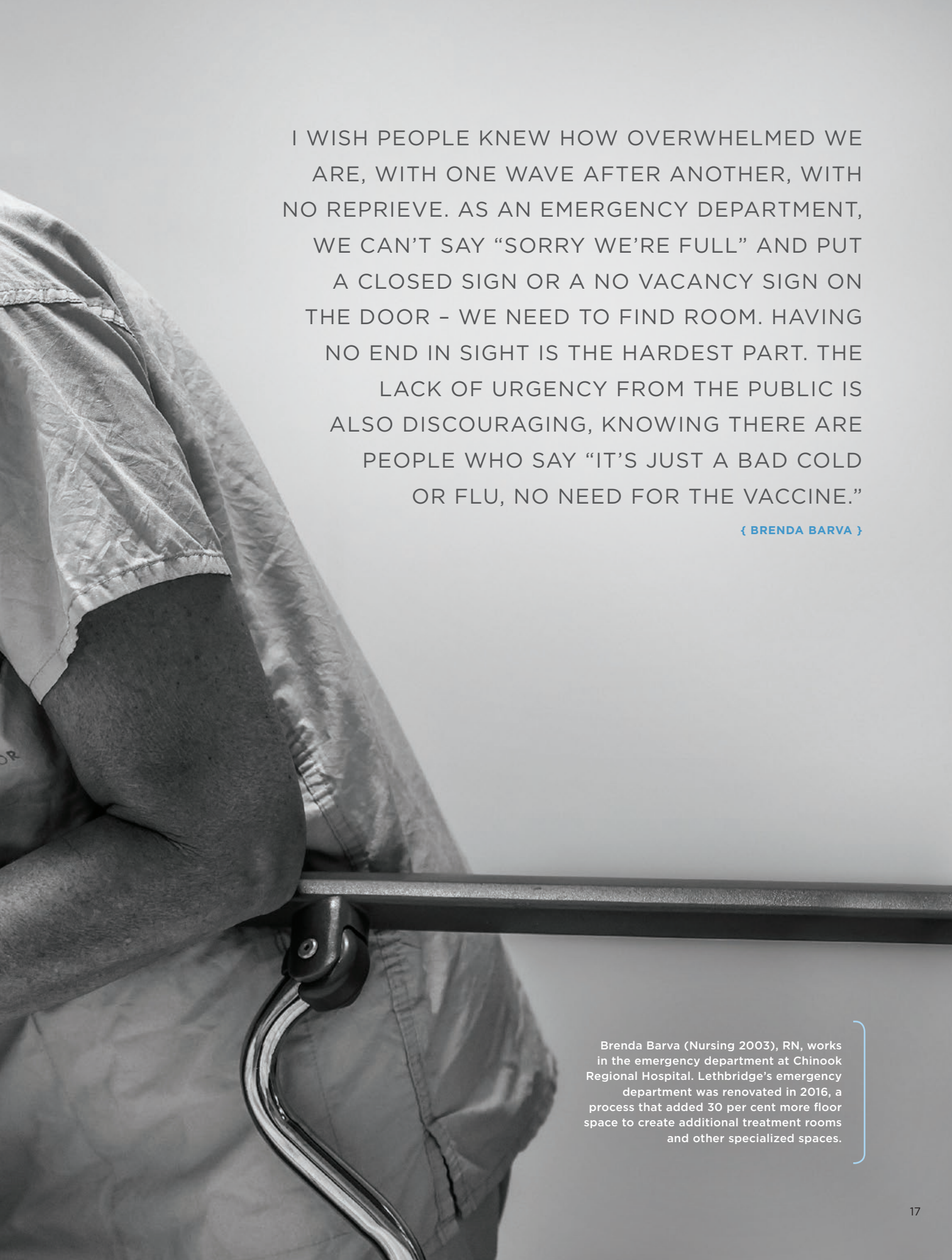
{ JEN SCHERER }





Jen Scherer (Nursing 2002),  
RN, works with a COVID-19  
patient in the ICU at Chinook  
Regional Hospital.






I WISH PEOPLE KNEW HOW OVERWHELMED WE ARE, WITH ONE WAVE AFTER ANOTHER, WITH NO REPRIEVE. AS AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, WE CAN'T SAY "SORRY WE'RE FULL" AND PUT A CLOSED SIGN OR A NO VACANCY SIGN ON THE DOOR - WE NEED TO FIND ROOM. HAVING NO END IN SIGHT IS THE HARDEST PART. THE LACK OF URGENCY FROM THE PUBLIC IS ALSO DISCOURAGING, KNOWING THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SAY "IT'S JUST A BAD COLD OR FLU, NO NEED FOR THE VACCINE."

{ BRENDA BARVA }

Brenda Barva (Nursing 2003), RN, works in the emergency department at Chinook Regional Hospital. Lethbridge's emergency department was renovated in 2016, a process that added 30 per cent more floor space to create additional treatment rooms and other specialized spaces.



THIS HISTORIC EVENT HAS DEMONSTRATED HOW STRONG AND RESILIENT NURSES ARE. WE WERE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER FROM MANY DIFFERENT SPECIALTY AREAS, ADAPT, AND PREVAIL OVER ALL THE OBSTACLES THIS PANDEMIC HAS THROWN AT US. THE SUPPORT WE RECEIVED IN ICU FROM ALL THE OTHER UNITS IS INCREDIBLY HEARTWARMING.

{ JENNIFER NEUFELD }


Jennifer Neufeld (Nursing 2004), works in the ICU at Chinook Regional Hospital. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were more than 210 acute care beds, 10 ICU beds, 45 acute geriatric beds and more than 15 NICU bassinets. At times during the last 22 months, there have been at least 24 beds in the ICU.



WHILE WORKING AS AN EMERGENCY ROOM NURSE DURING THE PANDEMIC, I HAVE REALIZED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FRONTLINE MEASURES WE HAVE TO FIGHT COVID ARE PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES. OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, I HAVE EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO MANAGE AND TREAT ACUTE COVID-19, AND I HAVE WITNESSED THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVASTATION IT CAUSES. I HAVE BECOME MORE VOCAL ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC MASKING AND VACCINATION BECAUSE I WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW THAT WITHOUT THESE MEASURES, THE VIRUS WILL CONTINUE TO SURGE.

{ JENNIFER DAVIS }






Jennifer Davis (Bachelor of Nursing After Degree 2013), RN, works in the emergency department at Chinook Regional Hospital. While much of nursing involves direct care of patients, it is also essential that nurses are excellent communicators and collaborators who share information with colleagues working other shifts.



Renae Nedza (Bachelor of Nursing After Degree 2013), RN, works in the emergency department at Chinook Regional Hospital.





SOMETHING I HAVE LEARNED DURING THE PANDEMIC IS ABOUT THE RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION OF HEALTH-CARE STAFF. WITH THE INCREASED STRESS, DEMAND AND RISK, HEALTH-CARE WORKERS CONTINUE TO COME TO WORK TO CARE FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDE THE BEST CARE THEY CAN, WHILE JUGGLING FAMILIES, STAFF SHORTAGES AND JOB UNCERTAINTY. IT JUST REAFFIRMED TO ME THAT HEALTH-CARE WORKERS ARE REALLY HERE FOR THE PATIENTS AND NOT A PAYCHEQUE.

{ RENAE NEDZA }

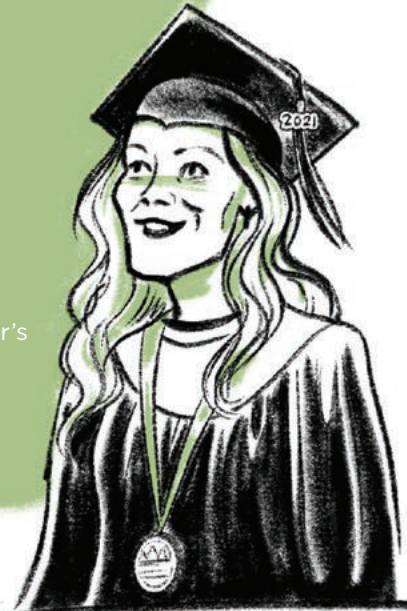
While the jobs in the health industry are varied, the people who choose these careers all have something in common — the desire to help others. Whatever the position, the essential training needed to succeed in these in-demand careers starts at Lethbridge College. Learn more about these programs at [learn.lc/health\\_and\\_wellness](https://learn.lc/health_and_wellness): Bachelor of Nursing; Bachelor of Nursing - After Degree; Health Care Aide; Massage Therapy; Medical Device Reprocessing; Medical First Responder; Practical Nurse; Practical Nurse Refresher; Primary Care Paramedic; Therapeutic Recreation - Gerontology; and Unit Clerk.

To read more reflections from our graduates and see even more photos, go to [widerhorizons.ca](https://widerhorizons.ca) or check out Lethbridge College social media channels.

# LISTEN CAREFULLY

WH Words by Kyla Hornberger  
Illustrations by Gillian Goerz

Powerful words should be savoured – and shared. That’s what the *Wider Horizons* team decided after hearing the spoken words of this year’s fall valedictorian, Kyla Hornberger (Interior Design Technology 2021) at October’s Convocation. Her words resonated so much with us that we wanted to share them with you, with hopes that they move you as well.



KYLA HORNBERGER  
~VALEDICTORIAN~

HELLO. WHAT A MOMENT.  
LET'S JUST ALL PAUSE FOR A  
MOMENT. TAKE A PICTURE  
WITH OUR MINDS.



I RETURNED TO SCHOOL AS AN OLDER  
STUDENT AND AS SUCH, I AM GOING TO  
TAKE THE LIBERTY OF IMPARTING  
ADVICE LIKE I AM OLD AND WISE.

HUMOUR ME, AND  
LISTEN CAREFULLY.



IF LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT IS THIS:

YOU ARE  
A  
FORCE

YOU HAVE  
A  
VOICE

AND MOST  
OF ALL

YOU HAVE  
A  
CHOICE.



YOU ARE A FORCE BY NATURE.

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE IT, IT IS  
INHERENT WITH YOUR BIRTH.  
SO EMBRACE IT. ENERGY IS YOURS.

YOU HAVE A VOICE. I TRULY BELIEVE WE ALL NEED A STAGE,  
AND WE ALL NEED TO BE HEARD.

YOUR STAGE IS YOUR OWN AND  
CAN BE FOUND IN WORDS ON A  
PAGE, ACTS OF KINDNESS, OR  
THE THINGS YOU CREATE,



AND TELL US  
SOMETHING.  
WE ARE LISTENING.



YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

Oh, this one is tricky. Trust me.

LIFE OFTEN FEELS  
LIKE IT IS VOID OF  
CHOICE.



LIKE IT IS ALL HAPPENING  
TO US AND WE ARE JUST  
REACTIONS.

NO MATTER YOUR BACKGROUND, YOU HAVE A STORY, A COMMUNITY,  
AND A METAPHORICAL BOX THAT HAS BEEN SLOWLY BUILT AROUND YOU.  
IT PROTECTS YOU AND HOLDS YOU. IT OFFERS YOU SAFETY.



UNFORTUNATELY, IT CAN ALSO BIND YOU, IT BUILDS WALLS AND  
YOU SLOWLY BECOME BLIND TO POSSIBILITIES,  
AND SOMETIMES EVEN YOUR FELLOW HUMANS.

AT 36, MY BOX FELL APART,  
BLEW TO BITS, CRUMBLED,  
IT WAS GUT-WRENCHING  
AND SUCKED THE BREATH FROM  
MY LUNGS FOR MONTHS.



MY WHOLE WORLD WAS BUILT  
ON WHAT I HAD BELIEVED  
INSIDE THAT PRETTY  
LITTLE, CONFINING BOX.

BUT THEN I GOT TO REBUILD.

AND AS I STARTED TO LOOK AROUND, I BEGAN  
TO SEE A WHOLE WORLD THAT I HAD NEVER KNOWN  
BEFORE. I DISCOVERED I COULD BE A PART OF IT  
LIKE I USED TO DREAM OF AS A KID - AND THE  
OPTIONS WERE ENDLESS,



I JUST NEEDED TO CHOOSE.

LEARNING TO CHOOSE IS A NEVER-ENDING JOURNEY

CHOOSE YOUR LIFE. LIVE IT.  
LET THE BOX  
BE BROKEN.



NOW AT 42, I AM A COLLEGE GRADUATE.  
I DID IT! WE DID IT! AND GUESS WHAT?

I'M LEARNING THAT THE BOX NEVER  
REALLY WENT AWAY. IT JUST GREW.  
OUR WORLD JUST ADJUSTS TO FIT OUR

**GROWTH**

IN CLOSING, I WILL SAY IT AGAIN:

You are a  
**FORCE.**

you cannot  
fight it.

You have a  
**VOICE.**

We are  
listening

and

You have a  
**CHOICE.**

I cannot wait  
to see what you  
decide.

YOU HAVE ALREADY COME THIS FAR!

PLEASE DON'T LET THESE WORDS BRUSH  
PAST YOU AND THINK THEY ARE FOR SOMEONE ELSE.  
THEY ARE FOR YOU, JUST LIKE THEY ARE FOR ME.



THANK YOU.

WH

To read about Hornberger and this year's fall Convocation, go to page 6; to hear speeches from Hornberger and others from Convocation, go to [lethbridgecollege.ca/convocation](http://lethbridgecollege.ca/convocation).

{ CHEF MARK DIESER }

# SAVOURY PULLED PORK



If you're looking for a recipe that hits the spot in the heat of summer or chilliest days of winter, Chef Mark Dieser, the college's manager of Food Services and Culinary, has the perfect suggestion.

This savoury pulled pork recipe works well on the barbeque in the summer, especially if you add some smoldering smoke chips to give it even more flavour. But there's also nothing better to come home to in the winter than this dinner when it's been in your slow cooker all day. And it works just as well in your oven, too.

Chef Mark says if you want a little more heat and zip, you can add more cayenne pepper to the spice rub. One trick he suggests is, if you are cooking your pork in the oven, try "mopping" the roast every hour with a mix of apple juice, cider vinegar and jalapeno juice liquid for even more bite. One last suggestion from the chef? Serve this with coleslaw to cut the heat, baked beans and your favourite beverage. Bon appetit!

**WH** Story by Lisa Kozleski | Photos by Rob Olson



## INGREDIENTS



### For the brine

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1 gallon..... | water                   |
| 3/4 cup.....  | kosher salt             |
| 2/3 cup.....  | sugar                   |
| 3/4 cup.....  | soy sauce               |
| 1/4 cup.....  | olive oil               |
| 4 pounds..... | boneless pork leg roast |

### For the rub

|             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2 tbsp..... | paprika              |
| 2 tbsp..... | light brown sugar    |
| 1 tbsp..... | chili powder         |
| 1 tbsp..... | kosher salt          |
| 1 tbsp..... | cracked black pepper |
| 2 tsp.....  | granulated garlic    |
| 2 tsp.....  | granulated onion     |
| 1 tsp.....  | cumin                |

### For the pulled pork

|              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 2 tsp.....   | canola oil              |
| 1 sprig..... | fresh thyme or rosemary |
| 1.....       | minced shallot          |
| 1.....       | juiced lemon            |

## METHOD

### For the brine

1. Bring the water to a boil and dissolve the sugar and salt. Add the soy sauce and olive oil and cool to room temperature. Put the pork roast into a large container, cover with the brine and put into the refrigerator overnight.

### For the rub

1. Measure the eight spices into a bowl and whisk to combine. Store in an airtight container until ready to use.

### For the pulled pork

1. Remove the roast from the brine. Brush all over with oil and lemon juice. Rub the outside of the roast with the spice rub.
2. Get out your slow cooker, preheat your oven to 300°F OR preheat your grill to high heat.
3. In a hot pan on the stovetop or on the hot BBQ, sear the outside of the roast, until it is brown and crisp.
4. After you finish searing the roast, you have three options:
  - Option 1.** Place it in a crock pot on low on an eight-hour setting.
  - Option 2.** Place it in a roasting pan in the oven at 275°F for five hours. Make sure you have a tight lid or cover the pan with aluminum foil.
  - Option 3.** Place it on indirect heat on your grill, trying to maintain about 300°F. Place a smoke chip pouch in the grill to create that smoky flavour. There are many options online that describe how to create your own smoke chip pouch. *Which ever method you use, ensure pork is cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.*
5. Remove the pork from the crock pot, oven or grill, and let stand for 10 minutes. Pull apart with two large forks. Serve on a fresh bun.
6. For a tasty finishing touch, take your favourite barbeque sauce and pour it over the pulled pork.
7. Enjoy!



# FROM FEET TO HANDS





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A LIFE-ALTERING INJURY THREATENED HER  
ATHLETIC CAREER - AND NEARLY ENDED HER  
LIFE. BUT FORMER KODIAKS SOCCER STANDOUT  
PAYDEN OLSEN VAIR REFUSES TO LET ANY  
BARRIER SLOW HER DOWN.

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**P**ayden Olsen Vair (General Studies student 2018) entered the Makuhari Messe stadium in Tokyo, Japan, last August, proudly wearing Canada's colours and ready to play the biggest game of her life.

She felt nerves, of course. Team Canada was about to open the round robin against archrival Brazil, then ranked fourth in the world. Every point would be critical. Medals were on the line, and an opening win against Brazil would be huge for the team's goal of reaching the podium.

Even with no fans in attendance and an eerily quiet arena, Vair felt pressure, too. After all, she was wearing the maple leaf on the world's biggest stage. In her mind, she could hear the cheers from supporters staying up late to watch the team back home, and she knew thousands more would be watching the replay later in prime time.

As a serving sub for the team, Vair knew she had to be ready. Her number could be called at any moment. So, she focused on the moment.

She was about to make her debut at the Paralympics as a member of Team Canada's sitting volleyball team. She wasn't thinking of the moments that came before – about being named the Kodiaks women's soccer rookie of the year at the end of her first season in 2017. She didn't think back to the summer of 2018, when she woke up in a grey hospital room and started her recovery from a life-threatening lawn mower accident. And she didn't think of the work it took to adapt to a new prosthetic right leg, to learn to walk again, and to wonder if and when she would be able to play sports again.

As Vair stepped onto the court in Tokyo, she thought of nothing but representing her country and giving her all. That was the moment that mattered most.

# SET ONE

## A GOLDEN ROOKIE SEASON

Sports have always been central to Vair's life. A talented multi-sport athlete, she played varsity volleyball and basketball for Cardston High School – but soccer was always her true passion.

She turned that passion into a starting defender role for the Lethbridge College Kodiaks women's soccer team in 2017. Her composure with the ball and ability to read plays quickly earned the trust of head coach Sean Carey. She started every game and was named the team's Newcomer of the Year after an impressive rookie season.

On the pitch, her future was bright. But in a single moment, her life completely changed. In July 2018, Vair suffered a lawnmower accident on her parents' farm – causing an injury that nearly took her life.

She managed to grab her phone and call 911, with paramedics arriving on the scene an hour later. An ambulance rushed her to Calgary on the ground as a storm had come in and STARS couldn't fly, and doctors managed to save her left leg. However, they were forced to amputate her right leg below the knee. She also required major reconstruction of her left heel, needed multiple



additional surgeries and had to learn to walk again.

Even during those shocking initial days after the accident, though, everyone close to her knew it wasn't going to keep her away from sports for very long.

"I can remember the phone call when it came through from her brother," recalls Carey. "It didn't sink in for a little bit. But once I visited her with [Kodiaks co-coach] Mark Pries, you quickly realized it was going to take more than this to keep her down. She could've easily just given up, but that's not in her nature. That's not what she's about."

"I CAN REMEMBER THE PHONE CALL WHEN IT CAME THROUGH FROM HER BROTHER. IT DIDN'T SINK IN FOR A LITTLE BIT. BUT ONCE I VISITED HER WITH MARK PRIES, YOU QUICKLY REALIZED IT WAS GOING TO TAKE MORE THAN THIS TO KEEP HER DOWN. SHE COULD'VE EASILY JUST GIVEN UP, BUT THAT'S NOT IN HER NATURE. THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE'S ABOUT."

Finding a way to return to the soccer pitch was on Vair's mind, but a new path emerged as she began her recovery.

Kodiaks Manager of Athletics Todd Caughlin had a connection with the Canadian sitting volleyball program and made a few calls. Soon after, members of the team – including future teammates Jennifer Oakes, Shacarra Orr and Julie Kozun – visited with Vair in the hospital. They shared their stories and invited her to give the sport a try.

The key message? Being an amputee doesn't make you incapable of playing sports. In fact, it can open new and rewarding opportunities.

# SET TWO

## ENTER SITTING VOLLEYBALL

It didn't take long for Vair to take her future teammates up on their offer. Less than one year after her accident, she attended a training camp. Soon after, she was named to the Canadian national women's sitting volleyball team.

Nicole Ban has been head coach of the team since 2015. She says the athletes have a unique bond that goes well beyond that of a typical sports team.

"The support system on the team is truly incredible," says Ban. "Although each athlete has a unique experience and an incredible story, they can relate to the trauma they have each experienced and the adversity that they faced. They can also help each other by supporting teammates through new changes such as wearing a prosthetic or phantom limb pain, as well as showing each other best ways to sit on the court and play our sport. Our team is a safe space where differences are celebrated, and our team's uniqueness is what makes us so resilient."

Sitting volleyball is a lot like standing volleyball – but much faster. It's played on a smaller court with a lower net, and players must contact the court with some part of the body between the buttocks and shoulders at all times during playing actions.

"Payden has caught on to sitting volleyball as she brings a lot of sport knowledge and competitiveness to our team, but the unique ways in which Payden must sit on the ground and move with her hands is difficult. Adding the speed at which the sport is played internationally is another thing," says Ban.

Vair is the first to admit learning a new sport has its challenges – and there's lots to keep learning.

"As much as I want to say it was easy, it was not," says Vair. "I played high school volleyball, but I definitely wasn't the best at it. For me, sports always came easy, and then I joined [sitting] volleyball and it wasn't something I was good at. I mean it's not fast on your feet – it's fast on your hands and on your butt."

Despite the learning curve, Vair credits her teammates and coaches with continuing to support and push her.

"I'm still adapting and I'm still learning," she says. "The girls have been great with helping me learn new skills and changing a lot of my bad habits. I'm still struggling with it, but I'm improving every day."



# SET THREE

## ARRIVING IN JAPAN

For Vair and her teammates, heading to Tokyo was the realization of a dream they didn't think would happen. Vair had made her Team Canada sitting volleyball debut at the 2019 Parapan American Games in Peru, when the team earned a bronze medal. They then secured their spot at the Paralympics in February 2020 after winning a last-chance qualifier in Halifax. But soon after that, the start of the pandemic cast doubt on the future of the games.

With the Paralympics delayed and the world seemingly on pause, Vair found creative ways to continue her training – and also celebrated a major life moment. She married Carson Vair in June 2020, hosting an intimate wedding on her parents' farm.

With gyms and training facilities shut down, Vair was able to continue working on movement and volleyball-specific drills after her husband, with help from the community, constructed a temporary court out of plywood and puck board.

Vair and her teammates were relieved to finally be Tokyo bound in August 2021. After a 30-hour travel day to Japan, the team attended a staging camp in Shiwa Town, an eight-hour drive north of Tokyo, to acclimatize and prepare for the Paralympics.

In addition to daily training sessions, they also got their first taste of Japanese hospitality and culture. "The Japanese people are amazing," Vair recalls. "They're so kind, and it was kind of cool to just be treated as a professional athlete at that level."



“IT SEEMED LIKE THE VOLUNTEERS KNEW YOUR BACK STORY. I’D EVEN GET A FEW PEOPLE ASKING ME ABOUT SOCCER. IT WAS AWESOME.”

Food was available around the clock and included opportunities to try local cuisine. The organizers took care of every detail, including a cultural showcase at the end of their camp to send the team off to the games.

Once the team arrived in Tokyo, they were immediately struck by the grand scale of the games. “We were just overwhelmed by the number of volunteers initially,” says Vair. “It seemed like the volunteers knew your back story. I’d even get a few people asking me about soccer. It was awesome.”

The impact of the pandemic was evident throughout the games. Athletes underwent daily COVID tests and had few chances to interact with competitors from other countries. Touring the city outside of the athletes’ village was prohibited. Strength and conditioning opportunities were limited too, since COVID outbreaks had been linked to gym areas during the Olympic games.

Still, the team made the most of it. For Vair, a typical practice day included team sessions and mental training, then time for team bonding. One of the best parts? A two-storey food court open around the clock. “The food was pretty good considering how many people they had to cook for,” says Vair.

As for the cardboard beds that drew plenty of media attention? “They were awful,” laughs Vair. “We actually got some mattress covers for them, so we covered those up to make it better.”

## SET FOUR

### THE GAMES

After finishing seventh at its Paralympic debut in Rio 2016, Team Canada was considered an underdog heading into the tournament despite being ranked fifth in the world.

“Going into it, nobody had big expectations for us,” said Vair. “We were kind of the underdogs of the whole thing, and we really blew all the countries away with how well we played.”

The team kicked off the round robin against rival Brazil, dropping a tough five set decision – including a heartbreaking fifth set 17-15. There were nerves before the first game, but Vair says they were proud of how they played.

“That game, it was a big deal,” she says. “We played really good our first match and we were happy with our outcome even though we didn’t end up winning. It was a good test, and we knew we were going to match up with them again.”

Vair embraced her role as a serving sub, coming in to serve in high pressure situations late in games when her team needed points the most. She says getting her first ace was a moment she’ll never forget. “It kind of shocked me and I was just like ‘Oh my gosh, I got my own point in the Paralympics!’ That was just a big step for me.”

Canada went on to win its next two matches against Italy (3-1) and host Japan (3-0), earning a berth in the semifinals and guaranteeing them a new best Paralympic finish. But the team wasn’t satisfied – they wanted a spot on the podium.

They matched up against world No. 2-ranked China in the semifinals but couldn’t pull off an upset, dropping a straight sets decision. While the loss was disappointing, the team was excited for one last showdown with Brazil – this time with a bronze medal on the line.

The bronze medal game was a tight, hard fought battle. The teams split the opening two sets, before Brazil squeezed out a 26-24 win in set three. With the bronze medal in their sights, the Brazilians took control of set four to win the match – sending Canada back to the locker room devastated.

“I wish I could say it was the best that we’ve ever played and it’s hard to admit that we just didn’t bring our game for that match, which was really unfortunate,” recalls Vair. “Losing that game was probably the toughest thing for me and my teammates. I’ve never heard a quieter locker room in my life.”

# SET FIVE

## PREPARING FOR PARIS

Despite the disappointing finish, Vair returned home with unforgettable memories – and a burning desire to win a medal at the next Paralympic games in Paris 2024.

“We’re already back grinding,” says Vair, who is balancing her training with taking courses at the University of Lethbridge, pursuing her dream of being an educator, and working a part-time job at an automotive shop in Cardston. “Right now, I’m just getting as many touches in as I can at home, while continuing my strength and nutrition training. Our focus is on locking in that position to go to Paris and then train as hard as we can to take home a medal. Three years seems far away, but it comes so fast and it’s going to be here before we know it.”

She has a personal goal to earn a starting role for the team, something her coach sees her striving towards every time she hits the court.

“Payden has developed immensely within her time with the program,” says Ban. “She works incredibly hard, and as a serving sub in Tokyo she performed under an immense amount of pressure, serving often at the end of the game or when we needed a point most. She has embraced that and succeeded, but I don’t see Payden stopping there. She wants to continue to work on her back-row skills of serving and defence so she can push for an even bigger role as we move into Paris 2024.”

Vair can’t wait. “It was really hard to have that medal on the line and come up short,” in Tokyo, she says. “It definitely fuels the fire for the future.”

At times, Vair still can’t believe she’s playing volleyball at an international level. Yet she remains grateful for the opportunities the sport has given her.

“Even looking back, it just doesn’t make sense to me. How did I go from playing soccer to totally switching from feet to hands for volleyball?” says Vair. “The accident really was an awful situation. It was traumatic and it changed my whole life. With that said, it’s amazing how such a negative experience has made such a positive difference in my life. I would have never had the opportunities I’m having today.”

Read even more about Payden Vair’s Paralympic story online at [widerhorizons.ca](http://widerhorizons.ca).

## THE KODIAKS CONNECTION

Payden Olsen Vair says words can’t describe how much the support she received from the entire Kodiaks family helped her through a very difficult recovery process. “I didn’t realize how close the Kodiaks family was really until I was in the hospital,” says Vair.

She fondly remembers a special hospital visit from a Kodiaks alumni member – one she didn’t even know. She says he was part of the Kodiaks family and wanted to be there to support her.

Lethbridge College Athletic Manager Todd Caughlin isn’t surprised to hear about that support from the extended Kodiaks community. “We strive to create an environment where all of our Kodiaks are like family,” says Caughlin. “Once you’re a Kodiak, you’re always a Kodiak, and Payden is an important part of that culture.”

Kodiaks soccer head coach Sean Carey and his coaching staff also made frequent hospital visits during Vair’s recovery and have ensured Vair remains connected to the team to this day.

“Having the Kodiaks just be there through my whole hospital experience made it feel like I was able to get through it,” says Vair. “Sean and the rest of the coaching staff were amazing, always asking me if I needed anything. Honestly, it was the best. I wish I could attend the college forever. They were truly amazing in supporting me and I can’t say thank you enough. I love being a Kodiak and I’m so thankful that I went to school there. The Kodiaks will always be my family.”



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## MAKERS, DOERS AND THINKERS

Celebrating the Lethbridge College alumni who are building community and making their mark in memorable ways.

### FEATURING:

**Casey Koyczan**  
Multimedia 2003

Casey Koyczan says the installation above, “Emotive Ascension,” is a representation of nature reclaiming an architectural space. Exhibited with a soundtrack of found sounds and experimental analog effects, it also includes branches and wood that had been collected from all over Kamloops, B.C.

# SHARING THE SUCCESSES OF OUR ALUMNI IN THEIR CAREERS AND THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.



Casey Koyczan is a Tlicho Dene interdisciplinary artist from Yellowknife, who works with various mediums to communicate how culture and technology coincide with the political, economic and environmental challenges of the world.

A portion of his large-scale installation work uses earth materials to evoke the idea of nature reclaiming architectural space and takes on many forms throughout site-specific locations. Inspired by sci-fi and the future, Casey also implements various techniques of interactivity, audio-video, virtual reality, 360 video and extended reality, and the engagement of the bodily senses within his creations. Casey says he chose to work as an interdisciplinary artist because it presented him with a lot of opportunities and ways to express himself. He is also a musician, video game developer, and 3D modeller.

Casey was born in Yellowknife and moved with his father to Edmonton when he was seven. After a few years there, they moved to Whitehorse for his adolescence before moving to Lethbridge when he was 16. Casey completed high school at Winston Churchill High School, took a year off and worked in Lethbridge, then enrolled in the Multimedia Production program at Lethbridge College.

Some of Casey's favourite memories of the college include pulling all-nighters at the end of each semester with his classmates. "Sometimes we'd all take a break and have a LAN (Local Area Network) party game of Call of Duty or something like that where we could all play the same game and just have some fun for a bit before getting back to work," he recalls.

After graduating from the college in 2003, Casey moved back to Yellowknife and worked for a few years, then moved to Kamloops to earn his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. During his time as a student at Thompson Rivers University, Casey discovered sculpture and installation, which became his major. After graduation, Casey moved to Vancouver briefly before going back to Yellowknife for six years where he worked for the government and in multimedia positions. He is now based in Winnipeg and has participated in many residencies, exhibits, festivals and collaborations in Finland, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Casey says that culture, technology and the environment are intrinsically linked within the evolution of society. "We live day-to-day practising the teachings of our ancestors, while at the same time coexisting with the technological advances that are consistently developed every year," he adds. "We have adapted to the use of these resources in order to develop a better understanding of where we come from, who we are, and what we will be in the future."

Casey completed his Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Manitoba in the spring of 2021. His work can be viewed on his website ([caseykoyczan.com](http://caseykoyczan.com)), on Instagram ([caseykoyczanart](https://www.instagram.com/caseykoyczanart)) and on Facebook ([caseykoyczanart](https://www.facebook.com/caseykoyczanart)).

After featuring a story about a Lethbridge College grad who went on to earn a PhD in the fall issue of *Wider Horizons*, we asked for other grads who have gone on to earn advanced degrees to reach out and let us know.

We were thrilled to learn about Dr. Michael Paplawski, a 2008 grad of the Conservation Enforcement program who earned an MD and is only a few months away from completing his residency in New York as a surgeon. We were delighted to see the news about Dr. Robert Tanguay, a 2005 grad of the General Studies program, who is a psychiatrist and one of this year's inductees into the University of Lethbridge's Alumni Honour Society. And we were heartbroken to learn of the death of Dr. Philip Browne, a 1979 grad of the Renewable Resource Management program, who went on to become a medical doctor specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, and who delivered babies in Lethbridge for more than 17 years.

There are so many places a Lethbridge College credential can take you. Thanks to every single person who reaches out and lets us share a part of their journeys in these pages.

Lisa Kozleski  
**Editor**

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Lisa".



## 2021

**Tannis Chartier**

### **Therapeutic Recreation – Gerontology**

In the Spring 2021 issue of *Wider Horizons*, we featured a story on Tannis after she started a weekly program called Resilient Art YQL at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen that encourages clients to express themselves by making art. Since then, the program has expanded to offer recreational opportunities to the soup kitchen's clients, including movie nights, bingo events, card games and outdoor activities. Resilient Rec was recently featured in a story from CTV Calgary. Tannis graduated in May 2021 and is starting to work on her Therapeutic Recreation degree at the University of Lethbridge this fall; she also is working at the Vulcan Health Centre as a therapy assistant on a casual basis.

**Loralee Klys**

### **Medical Device Reprocessing**

Loralee is working in the operating room at Chinook Regional Hospital.



**Jaxon McGinn**

### **Digital Communications and Media**

Jaxon has been working as a local journalism initiative reporter for the Sunny South News since the summer. He reports on civic and community-related happenings in the communities of Lethbridge County. In the article, he says the work has been great but also a little tough. "I am very outgoing, but I am still kind of shy sometimes. Overall, my experience has been great at Sunny South. I hope for more skills I can gain via Sunny South and via my skills I learned from college."

## 2020

**Christalee Brotnov**

### **Educational Assistant**

Christalee is working as a classroom educational assistant in a Grade 2 classroom.

**Toby Drozd**

### **Digital Communications and Media**

Toby told the Alumni office: "I have now been at my social media coordinator position at Redcliff Bakery for about six months now. I have also picked up part time/casual positions as a marketing associate at J&M Roofing and as a social media specialist at Redcliff Family Dental Centre."

**Dawn Gale**

### **Business Administration – Marketing**

Dawn started working for Alberta Health Services as an administrative support person scheduling the staff.



**Tyler Hay**

### **Digital Communications and Media**

Tyler started work as the new editor of the Ladysmith Chronicle in B.C. in September. He ended up there after starting Oceanside News in Parksville with fellow graduate Kevin Forsyth. His welcome to the community said: "My love of storytelling began with photography in the Alberta foothills and shifted to writing and reporting during my time studying digital journalism at Lethbridge College. After a year covering news in Parksville and Qualicum Beach, I am excited to bring my experience

and skills to Ladysmith. I believe a community newspaper should be filled with quality local content that reflects its unique readers. Expect to see me around town covering all the town's exciting, scary and important stories and if you have a story to share please do not hesitate to contact me. My other passions aside from news include sailing, music and reading. I can often be found working on my boat or sitting around with a good book."

**Kelsey O'Donnell**

### **Digital Communications and Media**

Kelsey just earned a Bachelor's in Professional Communications degree from Royal Roads University and is working as a marketing coordinator.

## 2019

**Charlene Kitt**

### **Administrative Office Professional**

Charlene told the Alumni office: "Right out of college, I took a maternity leave position with a couple financial advisors with Sunlife Financial. Then COVID hit, and that ended. I then started working for a family siding business in the office and now do payroll and admin in the company. I also continue to run my own small salon business creating beautiful nails. I hope to one day be in the office of the school district."

**Navdeep Sharda**

### **Criminal Justice – Policing**

Navdeep is studying Criminology at Griffith University and working as a loss prevention officer/executive protection officer.

## 2018

**Omar Almallah**

### **Computer Information Technology**

Omar is working as a system analyst/software quality analyst in the financial technology industry, and moved to B.C. after spending five years in Lethbridge.



## Cassidy Gallagher

### Exercise Science

Cassidy is attending Mount Royal University working toward a degree in Health and Physical Education with a major in Athletic Therapy.

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## Jennifer Henderson

### Educational Assistant

Jennifer is working full-time as an educational assistant.

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## Tiffany Trinh

### Nursing (NESA)

Tiffany wrote the Alumni office, saying: "I am currently working as a Registered Nurse on pediatrics. It's definitely getting hard now as more kids are getting sick with COVID/respiratory illnesses and more procedures for these kids are getting delayed due to the fourth wave. However, I love taking care of infants and toddlers; they sure make my job worthwhile. I am also attending the University of Lethbridge working on my master's in nursing!"

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## 2016

### Susanna Roulston

#### Business Administration – Accounting

Susanna told the Alumni office: "After graduation, I transferred to the University of Lethbridge to complete my Human Resource Management and Labour Relations degree. I am also currently working at the university in the Career Bridge: Centre for Work-Integrated Learning and Career Development office as the My Experience Transcript Advisor."

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## 2014

### Michelle Ellert

#### Office Administration

Michelle told the Alumni office: "Shortly after graduation, I began working at the University of Lethbridge. I have been working in the Registrar's Office for over seven years now, as a Student Records Assistant."

## ALUMNI AT WORK – Precon Manufacturing



**P**recon Manufacturing was founded in a small northside Lethbridge garage in 1980, by two friends who produced concrete pre-benched manholes with one wooden form. Forty-one years later, Precon has grown into one of Western Canada's most innovative manufacturers of underground precast concrete products. Precon produces professionally engineered, customizable concrete structures that are used to control water flow, remove environmental waste and dissipate hydraulic energy.

After outgrowing several northside facilities, the company built its current specialized production facility north of Coalhurst in 2008. With additional offices in Calgary and Edmonton, Precon now has a staff of 75 and counting, 17 of whom are Lethbridge College alumni.

Alumni pictured above are (left to right): Carl Palad, Michelle VanderWal, Carrie Stevenson, Ryan Grant, Scott Lowry, Jeff Sparks, Tyler Aikema, Peter Fehr, Andrew Beaton, Salmon Okunade, Kyle Biddlecombe, Max Clyde and Jesse Knutson. Alumni not pictured are: Cody Kibala, Daniel Smee, Jennifer Rombough and Art Lubin.

Together Precon's skilled staff members have created some of the most unique precast concrete structures in North America; some of which you can see right here in Lethbridge. Precon is proud to celebrate these Alumni at Work!

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In each issue, *Wider Horizons* and the Alumni Relations team feature area businesses that employ a large number of Lethbridge College grads. If you'd like your business showcased in a future issue, email [WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca).

## 2013

**Michael Bartz**

### Exercise Science

Michael recently won a Telus Storyhive contest to produce a six-part podcast and was featured in an article in the Lethbridge Herald. The article states: "Telus Storyhive grant winner Michael Bartz is ready to premiere his six-part podcast *Over my Head*, in which he talks to experts about reducing human impact on the environment. The podcast focuses on Bartz's own efforts as the builder and occupier of a 'tiny home' that he constructed and his discussions with experts about whether he is actually making a difference and what can be done on a broader scale to reduce mankind's environmental footprint."

## Candice Crapo

### Office Administration

Candice works as an administrative assistant in the Centre for Business, Arts and Sciences at Lethbridge College.

## 2012

**Wyatt Norn**

### Business Administration – Marketing

Wyatt reports that he is the president and co-founder of Breadmaker Productions Inc., a live performance and media company based in Calgary that celebrates creators and enhances the human experience through art.

## 2011

**Jurrai Nadeau**

### Criminal Justice – Policing

Jurrai told the Alumni office: "Since graduating I obtained my bachelor's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Griffith University in 2013. From there, I moved home and have worked as a correctional officer at Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert. I am an active member on the Crisis Negotiation Team and am also the CPR and First Aid instructor for all staff. After eight years, something I thought would be a stepping-stone has me realizing how much I enjoy my job."



## 2010

**Katt Panic**

### Fashion Design and Marketing

Katt was featured in a September article in the Lethbridge Herald celebrating her work as a makeup artist for Alberta's film and television industry. Katt, who runs Katt Panic Makeup Art and Design in Lethbridge, has worked full-time since May in the film and TV industry. Most of the work she has been doing involves historical productions, she says. "You really choose your career over a lot of other things," she told the Herald. "I'll be putting dirt on people or blood on people or whatever I'm doing that day and I'll be like 'I'm making money and this is my job.' This is pretty fricking cool. It's a pretty colourful career."

Photo by Jaime Vedres, courtesy Katt Panic

## 2008

**Corynn Hubick**

### Communication Arts – Advertising and Public Relations

Corynn told the Alumni office: "After graduation, I pursued a Communications degree with Athabasca University and worked in non-profit communications and corporate communications while finishing my degree. In 2011, I moved back to Saskatchewan to work as a communications consultant with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region in a variety of roles from technology communications, to acting director

of communications while leading a local team to amalgamate into a new organization, the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). During the COVID-19 pandemic, I supported the Emergency Operation Centre communications and co-lead vaccine communications. After 10 years, I recently moved to Strategy and Innovation to support large-scale change and strategy to support the SHA's pandemic efforts."

## 2005

**Robert Tanguay**

### General Studies

Robert was one of six people inducted into the University of Lethbridge's Alumni Honour Society in 2021. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Lethbridge in 2008 and today, he works as a psychiatrist trained in the areas of addiction medicine and pain medicine, making him one of very few nationwide with both specialties. Most recently, Robert helped found and is the chief medical officer/vice-president of The Newly Institute. This project aims to revolutionize how people access treatment and move forward from addiction. Addressing trauma and making it OK for people to get help is key to Robert's vision of recovery.

## 2004

**Scott Walker**

### Recreation Facility Maintenance and Management

Scott recently sent this update to the Alumni office: "My program was so beneficial to my career and because of it, I became employable right away in recreation, and I am very thankful to say that I am still in the recreation field nearly 20 years later. Because of this program, I was able to step into a management and recreation director role right after college, which I have held for the past 17 years. I've spent the last nine of those working as the director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Wainwright. My wife and two kids

love living in Wainwright and I still have a burning passion for recreation and providing services and programs for this wonderful community and now to have my kids and their friends utilize them makes it that much more special.

“The hands-on professional training I received from Lethbridge College in partnership with the AARFP is a huge reason why I have been successful and able to stay in recreation and municipal government for this long. Our main professor, Mike Hastings, was one of the most amazing men I have ever met. I have great memories of the college and city. I met many great people during my time in Lethbridge and still stay in touch with a few from my class regularly. It is my hope that Lethbridge College could bring back a program like this in the future, so my kids and people of this generation get the same type of great hands-on learning that I received and benefited from. Recreation is a very worthwhile and rewarding career, and I am very proud to come to work everyday and do what I love, and I owe Lethbridge College a great deal of credit for that. “

## 2001

Ryan Harker

### Civil Engineering Technology

After graduation, Ryan started working with Lafarge in Edmonton and was with them for 15 years. He has spent the last eight years with TC Infrastructure Services in Sherwood Park as a manager.

### Chelsea Wall

#### Administrative Office Professional

Chelsea told the Alumni office: “After graduating from Lethbridge College, I started a successful career as an office administrator, leading into a rewarding career as a real estate assistant. In 2013, I started my own business offering online administrative support services, and just this past June, I opened a community and resource centre called The Collective. We receive a physical copy of *Wider Horizons* at The Collective and have the latest copy available for our guests to peruse!”

## Grad to grad: Do you have the other caricatures in this set?



When Sherri Gallant (Communication Arts 1986) was going through some boxes in her closet this fall, she came across a couple of drawings she did upon the graduation of her cohort in 1986. One drawing shows Veryl Todd, former Advertising/PR and Radio Arts instructor holding aloft the coffee pot that brewed his life’s blood (Sherri adds: “my boyfriend at the time, the lovely and talented Roland Milligan, helped to draw the boots). The other shows the late Journalism instructor Georgia Fooks in barrister’s robes, which she wore to teach Communication Law. Georgia is holding a gavel in one hand and a book in the other, called the *Dossier of Little Darlings*, which is what she called her students.

“We had them framed and gave them as gifts when we graduated,” Sherri recalls. “When I saw them, I connected with Nic Milligan, my friend and fellow ’86 grad, because he did the sketches of Richard Burke and D’Arcy Kavanagh. Nic checked, but he can’t find his originals. The missing link is still the drawing of Radio Arts Instructor, the late Ian Mandin.”

So Sherri connected with the *Wider Horizons* team and asked if her classmates remember the drawings, and if the artist who drew Ian might still have their copy. If so, *Wider Horizons* (and Sherri) would love to hear from you.

Just email [WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca) and we’ll share the discovery in a future issue. And if you have a question for your former classmates – or want to share a wonderful piece of LC memorabilia from your own archives – drop us a note. We’d love to feature your treasured item our pages.



**1999**

**Annette Bruised Head**

**Renewable Resource Management**

Annette was featured in a City News story in November about her work to keep the Blackfoot language alive. With help from a grant from the provincial government, she created a website called Mioohpokoikisi: Stories and Games for our Children.

**1996**

**Andrew Coulson**

**Criminal Justice – Policing**

Andrew is finishing up 25 years with the Edmonton Police Service.

**1994**

**Kam Heng Ng**

**Culinary Careers**

Chef Heng worked at Rimrock Resort Hotel in Banff and then instructed at Lethbridge College until he retired in 2019.

**1993**

**Monica Dahl**

**Fish and Wildlife Technology**

Monica works for Alberta Environment and Parks in the planning branch, working on caribou sub-regional plans.

**1992**

**Margo Lee**

**Criminal Justice – Policing**

Margo told the Alumni office she is just about 30 years into her career with Manitoba Corrections, “and I would never have succeeded without the guidance of Ian Hepher at LCC!”



**1987/1992**

**Doug Overes**

**Professional Cooking, Distinguished Alumnus**

Chef Doug, who is chair of the School of Culinary Arts at Lethbridge College, received a lifetime achievement award for the Canadian Culinary Federation this fall. According to Chef Ryan Marquis, Chef Doug was honoured in recognition of his years of mentoring young chefs in the region; because his accomplishments and awards are on a national as well as international stage; and in gratitude for his years of leadership as president on a branch level as well as his dedication on the national board level. Chef Doug currently serves as chairman of the board of the Canadian Culinary Federation and branch president of Culinary Federation Lethbridge.

**1984**

**Debra Savidant**

**Nursing**

Debra is working as a nursing manger for Alberta Health Services as part of the south zone’s Integrated Quality Management Team.

**Supporting and celebrating family**



The September opening of the *lissksiniip* (Coming to Know and Learn) Coulee Walk brought crowds to campus to check out the new plant walk that highlights Blackfoot history. The walk, designed by traditional Blackfoot plant knowledge keeper and artist William Singer III (*Api’soomaahka* – Running Coyote), can be accessed on the south end of campus along the coulee’s edge. In the crowd at the opening were Singer’s brother, Tom Russell (Communication Arts 1988); sister Maria Russell, a member of Blood Tribe Council; niece Diandra Bruised Head (Renewable Resource Management 2016), also a member of Blood Tribe Council; and niece Quincy Yellow Wings, a current Open Studies student at the college.

Learn more about the *lissksiniip* (Coming to Know and Learn) Coulee Walk on p. 2 or online at [learn.lc/plantwalk](http://learn.lc/plantwalk).

# THE WALGAMA FAMILY

WH Story and photo by Tom Russell (Communication Arts 1988)

As a young man who worked as an entomologist and a tea pest research manager at a tea research institute on a mountaintop in his home country of Sri Lanka, Dr. Sampath Walgama says the idea of one day raising a family and settling down in Canada was the furthest thought in his mind. Sampath, who went on to study for his PhD in Australia, immigrated to Canada in 2010 and eventually settled down to lay roots in Lethbridge.

“I studied at a research centre on the top of a mountain in Sri Lanka and it was cold up there,” he recalls. “The cold weather there prepared me for the weather here, and I am used to it here now. I really enjoy living in Lethbridge.”

Sampath and his wife, Manori, raised two children, Sam (Samila) and Udari, who both graduated from Lethbridge schools and then went on to further their education at Lethbridge College. Sam graduated from the General Arts and Sciences program in 2020, while Udari accepted her Practical Nurse diploma at the Fall 2021 Convocation. At this fall’s ceremony, graduates followed COVID protocols as they crossed the stage to receive their credentials, while their families and friends watched and celebrated online.

Udari says she was overjoyed upon receiving her diploma: “It was a great honour to receive my diploma from Lethbridge College,” she says. “Knowing that I was going to make a difference in a lot of people’s lives, that my credentials would be official and having the letters LPN next to my name – that really was what was going through my mind at the time.”

Sam watched the ceremony online with his parents and remembered that same feeling of pride and accomplishment in 2020 when he earned his diploma.

“I learned so much and there are so many opportunities” at Lethbridge College, he says. Earning a diploma “was a great feeling. I’m now the lead rental technician at Home Depot. It’s one of the best jobs I’ve ever had.”

Sampath, who has an extensive background in education including a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Entomology (Pest Management) from the University of Queensland, Australia, acknowledges his wife Manori for her support.

“My wife has always stood by me and my children,” he says. “She is very proud of our accomplishments and encourages us in everything we do.”

Sampath works as a lab technologist at Green Prairie International Inc. in Coaldale. He is also developing a course for Lethbridge College’s new Agricultural Sciences degree program and will deliver the course in the Winter 2022 semester. He acknowledges many people who have helped further his career. His path from the mountaintops of Sri Lanka to down under in Australia to making a home in southern Alberta has been a rewarding one, and Sampath, Manori and their children are still on their journey together.

They will go far.

Are you a multi-generational Lethbridge College family? If at least three members across one or more generations attended Lethbridge College, let us know by emailing [WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca). We’d love to profile you.



# THE LAST WORD

Illustrated  
by Eric Dyck

Lethbridge College's carpentry shop in the Trades building is where Carpenter Apprenticeship students nail down the skills they need for their future careers. The two labs, large storage area and two designated classrooms are where carpentry careers take shape, one two-by-four at a time, in a program celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

**Here's what two recent grads and an instructor have to say about their time building skills and more in the space.**

Finishing my apprenticeship has been one of my more valuable journeys in life. I met many people who work in different areas in carpentry and learned from their views and understandings of the trade. I had opportunities within the course to reach out and make new friends and have new career paths. The overall experience was very positive and helped me grow my knowledge and networking within the community. The instructors are fully knowledgeable and make the journey enjoyable. They helped me understand the importance of education.

Tyler Gordon **Carpenter Apprentice 2021**

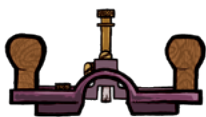
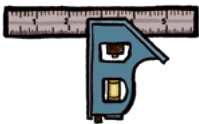
There were lots of opportunity for one-on-one with the instructors, and it made the time spent there very personalized. All the instructors were very professional and respectful of everyone in class. Shawn Scotney is the master of hand tools and his knowledge of fine finishing was amazing to see. Tyrel Churko knew the commercial world inside out and made third year much easier for a residential carpenter. Leon Wensmann was a wizard in the math and construction world and had good knowledge of the building process. I am currently building energy-efficient homes in Lethbridge and surrounding areas, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the learning community at Lethbridge College.

Arnie Brubacher **Carpenter Apprentice 2020**

Our labs are well-equipped. We have students who have come from other institutions and they regularly comment on the size of our space, and the amount of good quality equipment that we get to work with, so we are blessed in that regard. We have enough room that our students get to work on some cool, larger projects for their learning. We run smaller class sizes of 16 and we have enough space and tools for all.

Shawn Scotney **Carpentry 1995; instructor since 2014**

WH Interviews by Dawn Sugimoto





NEXT ISSUE: **THE LAST WORD** is yours...

### **RAISING THE ROOF!**

Kodiaks fans and family members rejoiced in the news that spectators will be allowed back in to the Val Matteotti Gymnasium to cheer on the Kodiaks this winter. To celebrate, we're looking to collect your memorable moments and mind-blowing victories (200 words max) to share in our Spring 2022 issue. Just email [WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:WHMagazine@lethbridgecollege.ca) or share your stories socially by tagging @LethCollege and #LastWordLC.

**We can't wait to read your submissions!**

# READY TO CELEBRATE OUR AMAZING ALUMNI



2022

HONOURING  
EXCELLENCE



## CELEBRATE A LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE GRAD WHO HAS MADE A MARK IN THE COMMUNITY AND WORLD.

- **Distinguished Alumni** – for alumni who have made a significant contribution to their communities and demonstrated service to the college and its students.
- **Career Virtuoso** – for alumni who have made significant contributions to their professional fields through their diligence, talent and dedication.
- **Community Leader** – for alumni who have made contributions to their communities through their work or personal interests.
- **Rising Star** – for alumni who, within 10 years of graduation from Lethbridge College, have demonstrated many forms of success in their professions.

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION PACKAGE BEFORE FEB. 10 AT

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