



FOCUS

2022

COMPASSION IN ACTION

Ebony Fowler has found her calling as a licensed practical nurse at RMC Neurology.

“I’ve had patients come in and just start crying. I’ll ask if I can give them a hug,” she said. “I love that part of being a nurse, just showing my patients compassion. They’re coming to our office under unfortunate circumstances, so I try to do anything I can to

put a smile on their face or show that someone cares. People need that. It’s a rough world.”

Ebony graduated from OCtech’s Practical Nursing program in July. The former pharmacy technician and married mother of three said she was ready for a career change when she started the program in fall 2021.

A few months later, she was

laid off from her pharmacy tech job.

Ebony said while that ended up being a blessing in disguise because she was able to fully focus on her coursework, losing her job did affect her family’s finances.

Although her tuition was paid for through OCtech scholarships and one of her nursing instructors loaned her textbooks, Ebony said there

were times she needed emergency assistance to pay for unexpected bills while finishing her diploma.

That’s where financial help from the OCtech Foundation came in.

“OCtech has been so good to me. I’m just so grateful for this college, and for the instructors, staff, faculty and the OCtech Foundation,” Ebony said.

“Nursing is the best decision I’ve ever made. It was tough, but it’s very rewarding. The instructors have an open-door policy and are always willing to help. I believe everyone at OCtech has that same level of care for students.”





NEW SCHOLARSHIP HONORS AN OCTECH FOUNDER

Awarding a scholarship seemed like a natural way to honor the late T.W. Irick, one of the founding members of the Orangeburg-Calhoun Area Commission for Technical Education and a former Holly Hill School Board member.

Mr. Irick died in February 1969 – just

months after the Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical Education Center opened its doors for classes.

The T.W. Irick Memorial Scholarship was founded in memory of the late Vance businessman and farmer by his daughter, Caroline Harrelson, and her husband Ladd. The first scholarships were awarded in August.

“My dad believed strongly in helping others and that education was for everyone. We knew we wanted to help an Orangeburg County student in some way, and creating an OCTech Foundation scholarship seemed like the

perfect way to do that,” Caroline said.

The Harrelson’s \$5,000 gift will be used to award scholarships to assist students with tuition, textbooks, fees and other expenses associated with attending OCTech.

“My dad and mom raised four children, and that was the most important thing they wanted for us, to get an education,” Caroline said. “It’s exciting to think about someone being able to continue their education and benefitting from this scholarship. I’m thankful for the opportunity to help them do that.”

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

Kadden Irick was hired for an internship at Phoenix Specialty Manufacturing Company in Bamberg just weeks after starting OCTech’s Machine Tool Technology program in August.

“I toured almost every department at OCTech to figure out what I wanted to do,” the 2022 Branchville High School graduate said. “I was drawn to Machine Tool because I saw all of the stuff I could make, and I’ve already made so many things in such a short time. It’s a very hands-on program.”

An independent student, Kadden has lived with friends for several years. He is now trying to save for a place of his own.

“I can’t appreciate anything more than I appreciate OCTech,” he said.

“I needed tires for my truck so I could get to school and work but I didn’t have the money for them, and the OCTech Foundation helped me with that. The T.W. Irick Scholarship is helping me get through school and move up in my life. I’ve never had much, but I want to better myself. Machine Tool Technology is helping me do that.”

Kadden is especially grateful for the support he receives from his Machine Tool instructors Patrick Chavis and Mike Morris.

“Mr. Patrick helped me get the job at Phoenix,” he said. “They understand when you have hard times and work with you. That’s something I wouldn’t have gotten if I’d gone anywhere else. If you put in the work, they will help you.”



TOGETHER AGAIN

The OCtech Foundation welcomed the return of our signature special events in 2022!

More than \$95,000 was raised through the spring Home and Garden Symposium and fall Webber Evening of Wines and Food.

These events support scholarships and emergency aid for students, professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and state-of-the-art equipment and technology for academic programs.

"The OCtech Foundation is important to me because of the support it provides to our community by assisting our local students to help further their educational goals. The events that the foundation hosts are a great way to bring our community together."

CRAIG SMITH
Chair of the 2022 Webber
Fine Wines and Food Event



"Contributions made to the OCtech Foundation provide much-needed financial assistance to qualified students. It is a privilege to serve on the board and help these students achieve their educational goals and become successful citizens."

DR. DAWES EDWARDS, Chair of the 2022 Webber Fine Wines and Food Event

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Investing in our students is an investment in our community.

OCtech graduates are the next machinists and nurses helping our community grow. Join us as we work tirelessly to help these students and many more.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

In 2021-2022, the OCtech Foundation awarded over **\$60,000** in scholarships and emergency aid.



CONNECT WITH THE FOUNDATION TO LEARN MORE AND GIVE.

“We have referred many students to the foundation for assistance, and the contributions they have received have made a tremendous impact on them.

Most of our students are first-generation college students, who differ from their traditional peers in entering characteristics and college experiences. They are largely from working-class families or are lower income, and the economic realities of pursuing a degree can be challenging. Foundation assistance helps lessen some of their challenges so they can focus on achieving their goals. The foundation has also helped me as I pursue my doctorate in curriculum, instruction and assessment from Walden University. What the foundation gives to me helps me enhance the services I extend to our students.”

TAMMIE JENKINS, Director of TRIO Student Support Services and OCtech Foundation supporter and volunteer

