



Forward Thinking

Despite changes, we move forward together



Autumn has made its grand entrance. The leaves are changing. And, Fall Semester 2020 is quickly coming to a close. Students become graduates. And, we become permanently etched into the chapter of their personal stories titled, "How GPTC Changed My Life."

Change is the only constant. Our external environment is changing. We persist through turbulent times heavily influenced by a global pandemic, social injustices and the political rhetoric that ramps up as during every election cycle. Internally, we refocus on our commitment to workforce development and our vision "to create unforgettable learning experiences" while maintaining a safe, healthy learning community. This is challenging.

In spite of it all, we move forward because we believe that every person that walks through our doors is worthy of dignity, respect and a high quality education. TCSG Commissioner Greg Dozier experienced this last week during his visit to our Clarkston Campus. He toured the campus, interacted with the faculty and staff, and even got some hands-on experience in our programs.

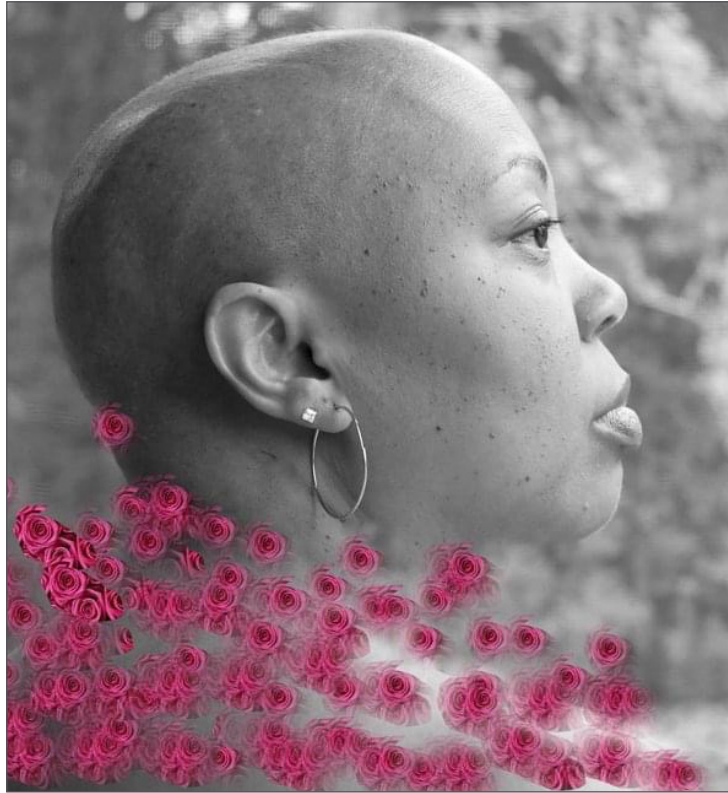
In his words, "I had a great day and was very impressed with the work being accomplished at the College. Tell the team that I said 'Thank You' and to keep doing a great job."

- Tavaraz Holston, President

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Instagram Live / Nov. 12**
Virtual event at 7 PM. Prizes for winners! Visit [GPTC Facebook](#) for details.
- **Trivia Thursday / Nov. 14**
Virtual event. Prizes available! Visit [GPTC Facebook](#) for more information.
- **Thanksgiving Holidays / Nov. 23 - 28**
College campuses are closed.

GPTC employee beats breast cancer



Cancer free In honor of October as Breast Cancer Awareness month, GPTC recognizes survivor Kimberley Alexander, administrative assistant to Executive Vice President Cheree Williams, PhD. Although battling the cancer was a challenging time in her life, Alexander sees every experience as an opportunity to be blessed. She made and continues to make many special friendships with women all-over, who have shared in the journey, she says.

By Justin Clay

Kimberley Alexander, administrative assistant to the Executive Vice President of Georgia Piedmont Technical College (GPTC), was on her way home after taking her last dose of chemotherapy, when she was caught in a violent rainstorm. Despite not being able to see ahead and the painful thoughts that riddled her mind, she kept driving.

"About two miles from my house, suddenly there was no storm," she said. "It was actually a beautiful, sunny brightness that was so different from what I'd driven through; I marveled at its brilliance.

"I looked behind me to make sure I hadn't imagined the storm I drove through," Alexander continued, "and it was still there — behind me. After I spent a minute pondering what I'd seen, I knew my dark days with [breast cancer] were done."

The surgery, which was scheduled two weeks later, confirmed what she already knew, after nearly four months of enduring chemo. The road to reach this point in her life, however, was not one without hardship.

"I found it hard to ask for help when I needed it," she said, "because I've always been the strong woman wanting to help others."

Alexander's breast cancer journey began in 2010, when she discovered a noticeable lump under her arm and at the base of her left breast. She was not initially alarmed but sought medical attention to be safe. When

the results came back as positive for cancer, her first reaction was unexpected.

"It might sound crazy," Alexander said, "but my immediate response to the [cancer] results was pure, unadulterated anger."

In 2008, Alexander had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, among other medical complications, which she accepted with poise and dignity. The breast cancer diagnosis, however, proved to be too much.

"Chemo was a big challenge," she said. "As with most people, I lost my hair, but that actually wound up being pretty cool — I loved my bald head.

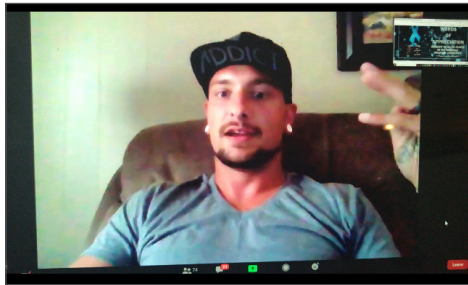
"What were real struggles, were the stomach issues, fatigue and emotional issues that came with it."

Since then, Alexander has lived 10 years cancer-free. She credits God and the faithfulness of her family, friends, coworkers and support group surrounding her, seeing her through this challenging time in her life.

For Alexander, the importance of self-examination and awareness cannot be overstated. "Always check your 'girls,'" she said, "and don't hesitate — no matter your age [or gender] — to get checked by a doctor if you find something that concerns you.

"Breast cancer is not fun, but like many cancers, early detection determines survival."

GPTC Econ Dev team honored by Rockdale recovery group



Wyatt, in substance recovery, envisions a future now through GPTC's pre-apprenticeship program.

By Jana Wiggins

Five Rockdale County citizens participating in supervised alternative sentencing through Georgia's Accountability Courts have been given a second chance over substance addiction and criminality through the Grit & Grace Recovery Community Organization and Georgia Piedmont Tech.

Grit & Grace recognized GPTC's Economic Development division with the Champion of Recovery Award recently during a presentation held virtually via Zoom. GPTC's Pre-Apprenticeship Industrial Maintenance Program is providing a lifeline and the prospect of valuable job skills and gainful employment for these five students.

"I now have a positive future and something I can use to stabilize my family for the rest of my life," said Wyatt, a pre-apprenticeship program student in recovery. "I am extremely grateful for every opportunity and everything you all have done to get me where I am."

Spring 2021 scholarship cycle kicks off for students

It's that time of year again! That's right — scholarship season is upon us and so, this is our students' chance at earning funds from the GPTC Foundation on their pathway to success. Applying for scholarships has not been any easier than with AwardSpring! This one-stop-shop houses 15+ scholarships, all available at their fingertips. Students can simply visit gptc.awardspring.com, enter their GPTC credentials and apply today! Deadline for applying is Nov. 30.

5 easy and low-cost ways to market your college



By Jana Wiggins

The first-hand knowledge and program expertise of our GPTC faculty and staff members are much more effective in drawing in potential students than any advertising space we can buy and are the keys to turning tire kickers into job-getters.

"As public technical college employees, we have a responsibility to share with others how and why we enthusiastically anticipate and respond to the educational, training and employment needs of the community," says Dr. Irvin Clark, GPTC's vice president of economic development.

Check out these five easy and low-cost ways you can actively spread the word and help GPTC boost enrollment.

WEAR IT

Take a trip to the GPTC Bookstore and get outfitted in style. Sport the college logo in public on shirts, hats and even your socks. Wear your GPTC nametag out on your lunch hour to prompt questions from restaurant servers, retail cashiers and Uber drivers. And during this pandemic, protect yourself and others while giving a shout-out to your college in a GPTC mask.

SHARE IT

You are just one click away from being part of the enrollment solution by sharing posts from our main GPTC social media accounts on your personal pages. The reach of the college's social media grows exponentially when it's shared by our followers. Don't follow us yet? Visit [@gogptc](#) on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. You can even create your own posts celebrating student success and then tagging the college. Want to go old school?

Use a tool from the "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" playbook and phone a friend.

LISTEN UP

Keep your ears peeled in conversations with friends, family and out in the community. When someone expresses the need to start or return to college, offer GPTC as a solution and provide specific contacts within the college to help get their questions answered.

SHOW IT

Provide outstanding and friendly customer service with every interaction, and the students will talk. Word of mouth is one of the most effective forms of marketing. According to a recent Nielsen study, 92% of consumers believe reviews — both positive and negative — from friends and family more than they do those from advertising.

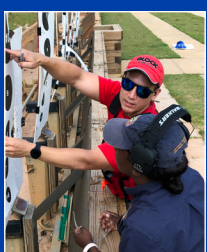
SHOUT IT

The evidence of the transformed lives and futures of our students is one of the most exciting and captivating stories we have to tell. And our businesses, industries and community partners need to hear us shouting it from the rooftops. Engage your employer advisory committees, churches and social services agencies in shouting it on our behalf. They can help by sharing examples of success and the results they have seen through the work we do to prepare students through technical education.

"Why should faculty and staff participate in promoting the college? Simple, we exist to serve our students," adds GPTC Academic Affairs Coordinator, Dr. Ramona Pollard.

"When they win, we win."

Hotseat with Gene McKinney: GPTC Law Enforcement Academy Instructor



Gene McKinney

Going Above & Beyond

Captain Eugene McKinney is a key figure in the continued growth of our Law Enforcement Academy. Captain McKinney is one of premier young minds in the state of Georgia in regards to training our new police recruits. He provides a level of dedication that is unmatched to his new recruits every single class. He is at the forefront of directing our new police officers to help understand the impact that they have on our communities and the people that live in them.

- Chief Chris Hughes, GPTC Police & Public Safety

Favorite part of the job?

My favorite part is having the ability to directly better the law enforcement profession by shaping our future officers.

Advice you always give to your students?

Treat people how you would want to be treated.

Favorite food?

PIZZA.

Favorite memory?

Taking motorcycle trips out west with my dad.

Your life's theme song?

Lean on Me by Bill Withers

Favorite place to visit?

My favorite place to visit is the mountains. Mountains display nature's power yet are very peaceful.

Favorite quote?

"It's not who I am underneath, but what I do, that defines me."
- Batman



Have a question? Comment? Got a great story idea? Email us at marketingandcommunications@gptc.edu