



Gloucester County College

LEARNING FOR REAL LIFE

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Title GCC MOTHER/DISABILITY ADVOCATE
AWARDED NATIONAL COCA-COLA SCHOLARSHIP

Deptford Twp. –The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation knows that Gloucester County College student Nancy Ivins of Deptford is the real thing, which is why the single mother of three and dedicated advocate for individuals with disabilities was recently awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for her commitment to academics and the community.

Ivins, a part-time student enrolled in GCC's Web Site Development for E-Commerce program, was among the 400 recipients nationwide recognized by the Coca-Cola Two-Year Colleges Scholarship Program. One of the most recognized and respected corporate-sponsored scholarships in America, all recipients are required to demonstrate academic success and participate in community service within the past 12 months. Ivins is only the second GCC student to receive the Coca-Cola award. Last year, Adam Paul, a civil engineering major pursuing a career in construction management, was the college's first recipient. The scholarship is made possible with funding from the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, one of the original bottlers of Coca-Cola.

Ivins, who maintains a 4.0 GPA, is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the National Honor Society for two-year colleges, and has earned GCC President's and Dean's Lists status. While attending college, caring for a family, and working part-time are in itself demanding, Ivins is also a key South Jersey advocate for individuals with disabilities. Her youngest son, Joel Brookes, 15, has autism and

attends the special education program at Bancroft School in Haddonfield.

“Gloucester County College is extremely proud of Nancy Ivins for being awarded the prestigious Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation scholarship,” stated College President William F. Anderson. “Her academic achievements and outstanding community service are an example of how one person can really make a difference.”

In her free time, Ivins volunteers as the facilitator for the Gloucester County Monday Morning Network, an initiative of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, which is a network of grassroots advocates working to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families. There are 19 networks and more than 2500 members in the New Jersey group. Although the Gloucester County Network only started a few months ago, the Monday Morning Project has been in existence for 11 years. Ivins volunteered with the network because “there is strength in numbers and together we can really make a difference.”

Ivins also works with the Regional Family Support Planning Council #8, another initiative of the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities, which she joined in an effort to get help with after school programs for children with disabilities. “I got involved because I had a need that was not being met and I wanted to find others in my situation so we could work together to find a solution,” she said.

“I am working hard to maintain my grades despite all other activities,” stated Ivins who has been employed as a part-time legal secretary for the past two years. It was only a little over two years ago that Ivins worked full time as a legal secretary at an insurance defense law firm earning a nice salary and health benefits. When her son aged out of the elementary after school program, she found it impossible to obtain affordable quality childcare. It was then that Ivins saw a need

not only within her own family, but also within the community.

“I was always advocating for my child so it was a natural transition for me to step outside of my family and begin advocating for others in my community,” noted Ivins.

Ivins’ perseverance and dedication to helping other families of children with disabilities has resulted in a big sigh of relief for area families in need of an after school program. After countless hours creating fliers, sending emails, preparing databases, making telephone calls, and meeting with various administrators, the first Gloucester County special needs after school program, hosted by the Bankbridge School in Deptford and operated by The ARC Gloucester will be opening in November. The facility is provided by the Gloucester County Special Services School District, with staffing supplied by ARC.

“We have achieved a major accomplishment in getting this program, however, more funding is needed to help create more programs and make the programs more affordable. There is still much work to be done,” stated Ivins.

“I was honored to be chosen for the Coca-Cola Scholarship, as well as be named the co-recipient of the ARC Gloucester’s 2006 Distinguished Community Service Award for my work on this project,” said Ivins. “I am gratified that many families will be helped by the child care program. It makes the hours I have spent on this project worthwhile.”

For more information about the Monday Morning Network or after school program, please call (856) 845-4034.

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