



NEWS

PR 61 - December 10, 2008

GCC STUDENTS REACH OUT TO HOMELESS MOTHERS

Deptford Twp. - Gloucester County College's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Club members provided lunch and a large serving of support for eight mothers from the Center for Family Services Mother/Child Residential Program in Woodbury on November 19.

EOF advisor and college admissions coordinator Sandra Hoffman welcomed the mothers to the campus then introduced GCC program offerings ranging from Adult Basic Education classes and GED testing to certificate and associate degree choices. To alleviate some of the pressure of returning to school, Hoffman provided the guests with financial aid options, her contact information and a promise to "walk them through the process."

The luncheon, which in addition to making available program information and college admission packets, consisted of a campus tour and gift bags purchased with funds from a student bake sale. Also included at the event was an extra helping of encouragement from GCC student Nicole Bard.

The fact that Bard has actually walked in the mothers' shoes added credibility as she spoke about feelings of low self esteem and the importance of education. Bard has "been there, done that" and the first-year social sciences major is determined never to be in that position again.

A Dean's List recipient and active member of EOF and student activities, Bard stayed briefly at the Woodbury shelter with her two children, ages 6 and 8, because of an abusive relationship. A counselor at the shelter helped her to focus on the future, leading Bard to pursue an associate degree at GCC.

“I graduated from high school 13 years ago and I was nervous about returning to school like many of you,” Bard told the young mothers. “This past January, I started at GCC. I plan to graduate from here then continue on at a four-year school for my bachelor’s degree and eventually become a social worker.”

Bard will be the first to tell others that it is not easy to be a mother, a full-time student and not own a vehicle. She is, however, unwavering in her desire to earn a degree and be a role model for her children and others.

“I believe in taking someone with you on the way up,” said Bard, who also volunteers each week at a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.

Other EOF Club students participating in the event included Gail Swain, Michelle Gotti, Sayyeda Brown and Jackie Petracci.

For more information about the EOF program or admission to GCC, call (856) 681-6272.

Gloucester County College’s 250-acre campus is located on Tanyard Road in Deptford, just off Exit 56 of Route 55.

Located in Deptford Township, N.J., Gloucester County College is a comprehensive two-year institution of higher learning with more than 6,000 full- and part-time day and evening students enrolled in 70 academic programs in business, humanities, allied health, technologies and the math and sciences. An additional 10,000 men and women are registered in the college’s non-credit Continuing Education Division classes. To learn more about Gloucester County College and its programs, visit www.gccnj.edu.