

**GO  
AHEAD**



**YOUTH ART CONTEST WINNERS! > page 4**

*Top-ranked artists celebrate feat*

**achieve.**

GROW. BUILD. CREATE. FOCUS. CARE. **SUCCEED.**



# PARKLAND COLLEGE GO AHEAD



## SUCCESS IN THE YEAR OF COVID

### Vice President's Message

**Dear District 505 Residents,**

March 2021 marked a full year of learning in uncharted territory. Our campus community, along with the entire nation, saw our lives and relationships turned into a remote, and often isolated, reality.

But challenging times often bring out the best in people, and the Parkland family was no exception.

Despite the trials of the past year, our students, faculty, and staff persevered. Remote learning, while not everyone's first choice, and certainly not always ideal, opened new avenues for students to engage in coursework that might otherwise have been unavailable.

As we return to a more open and traditional campus this fall, we will leverage what we learned in 2020. We will hang on to opportunities we created for online support services, such as virtual tutoring and writing lab. Faculty will continue embracing new ways to focus instruction to meet individual student needs. Students whose lives make regular in-person instruction difficult will continue to receive real-time interaction with faculty through synchronous, scheduled online classes. Finally, we will continue expanding our new flexible course delivery mode, which allows students to attend a class on one day and then attend remotely on another as childcare or work issues arise.

Giving students the ability to attend class while navigating hectic lives is one of the ways Parkland College can help students succeed in challenging times.

**Nancy Sutton**

**Vice President for Academic Services, Chief Academic Officer**



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**Go ahead is a biannual publication for the residents of Parkland College District 505.**

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TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN LEARNING.**

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# success in the natural sciences

## Triumphs for students, past and present

### *Second NSF-grant program aims to give underserved students the boost Allison Kelley received*

Seeing firsthand success in one of its National Science Foundation-backed programs last fall, Parkland College's Natural Sciences department now hopes a new NSF grant will help make such success—or the opportunity to achieve it—equally accessible for all students starting this fall.

Last December, the department learned that Natural Sciences alum Allison Kelley, a graduate of its Phenotypic Plasticity Research Experience for Community College Students (PRECS) program, had just co-authored a national science article. The article, “Increase in longevity and amelioration of pesticide toxicity by natural levels of dietary phytochemicals in the honey bee, *Apis mellifera*,” was published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0243364>).

Kelley and a team of University of Illinois researchers had studied the ongoing colony loss of honey bees and their diets. Kelley says her experience in PRECS encouraged her to continue pursuing research.

“I decided to apply for PRECS because I wanted to see where the STEM field could take me,” she said. “Nowhere else can you find better insight into the world of research as an undergraduate, with incredible support from program founders, collaborators, and experts. I left the experience feeling like I got to fast-forward through a four-year degree and be a graduate student for a summer.”



Although PRECS was producing successful graduates since its 2017 debut, faculty were simultaneously noticing a worrying trend among low-income students in the sciences, says Dr. Britt Carlson, chemistry professor and PRECS program director. These students were experiencing lower graduation and transfer rates than expected.

“Low-income students often have to juggle school with outside work, which can add stress and make it more difficult to complete a degree,” Carlson explained. “These students often face additional challenges, such as being the first in their family to attend college and being less familiar with college processes and support services.”

Carlson then applied for and won yet another NSF grant to fund, create, and lead a newly developed program, Parkland Science Scholars. The program's goal is to help ensure that at-risk science students receive both academic and financial support to pursue their studies through graduation.

“Parkland Science Scholars will support students through scholarships, opportunities for leadership, mentoring, and summer research,” Carlson said. “Students will gain experience related to their future careers, make professional connections, and form a community of learners that will sustain them beyond their two years at Parkland.”

Besides financial assistance, the program will include one-on-one faculty, peer, and UIUC graduate student mentoring; summer research experiences; and a course specifically designed for these scholars.

For more information about Parkland Science Scholars, please visit [parkland.edu/parklandsciencescholars](https://parkland.edu/parklandsciencescholars) or contact Dr. Carlson at [ccarlson@parkland.edu](mailto:ccarlson@parkland.edu).

**PRECS, or Phenotypic Plasticity Research Experience for Community College Students**, is a collaboration between Parkland College and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that provides community college students with authentic research experiences. Students earn a \$5,500 stipend for their 10-week participation, and housing, food, and travel allowances are also available to help students with financial barriers. Students from underrepresented populations are encouraged to apply. Visit <https://precs.igb.illinois.edu/> to learn more!



**Q&A FOR NEW CAREERS**

# Tips from Brennon Hightower, Career Counselor

*Parkland College Career Services' Brennon Hightower answers some commonly asked questions about starting a new career.*

**Q: What should I do if I am undecided on my next career path?**

A: Take a career assessment! A career assessment is a way to learn more about how well a variety of careers may suit you. You may take a free one on Parkland's PathwayU platform, which also links to the Indeed job board for current positions.

**Q: How do I know what positions are available if I want to change careers but stay in the same industry?**

A: For career changers who would like to stay in the same industry, spend some time on My Skills My Future (**[myskillsmyfuture.org](https://myskillsmyfuture.org)**), which allows you to find new career options based on the skills and experience you gained in a past job, without having to return to school.

Additionally, some may qualify for Parkland's Support for Workforce Training program (**[parkland.edu/swft](https://parkland.edu/swft)**). SWFT helps move people into high-demand careers with family-sustaining wages within a year or less.

**Q: Does Parkland College have a job board?**

A: Yes. You may search for positions on Parkland's College Central Network Job Board (**[collececentral.com/parkland/](https://collececentral.com/parkland/)**). We also encourage employers to register at no cost.

**Q: Where can I get help with my resume and cover letter?**

A: You may schedule an appointment with me, Brennon Hightower, career counselor, using Microsoft Teams. You may also choose to use online platforms such as LinkedIn's Resume Builder, which builds your resume based on your profile, or **[Resume.com](https://www.resume.com)**, which allows you to create an updated and professional resume in minutes.

**Q: What is the ATS (Applicant Tracking System)?**

A: Applicant tracking system software provides recruiting and hiring tools for companies. Among other functions, these systems collect and sort thousands of resumes. Therefore, when you apply for a job online, it's first being processed by an ATS. If

you are worried about your resume being a match for the job description, **[Jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co)** can give your resume a free ATS scan, and often provides resume wording examples.

**Q: What assistance does Parkland College Career Services offer?**

A: Career Services offers one-on-one advising sessions to assist students in exploring interests, skills, and values as they select their college majors and career goals, with the goal of helping students become great employees and develop skills adaptable to changing environments.

Additional services include assistance with LinkedIn, resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, and job search strategies. Career Services also offers classroom and community presentations.

For more information, please email **[careerservices@parkland.edu](mailto:careerservices@parkland.edu)**.

**GO AHEAD  
CELEBRATE**

# Celebrate the Arts! virtual contest a success

## Top-ranked local youth artists win camp scholarships

**IAIN:** "AFTER I RECEIVED THE NEWS ABOUT WINNING, I WAS VERY EXCITED AND PROUD, OF MYSELF AND MY ART. IT IS EXCITING TO GO TO A SUMMER CAMP FOR THE FIRST TIME TO HOPEFULLY MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND LEARN."

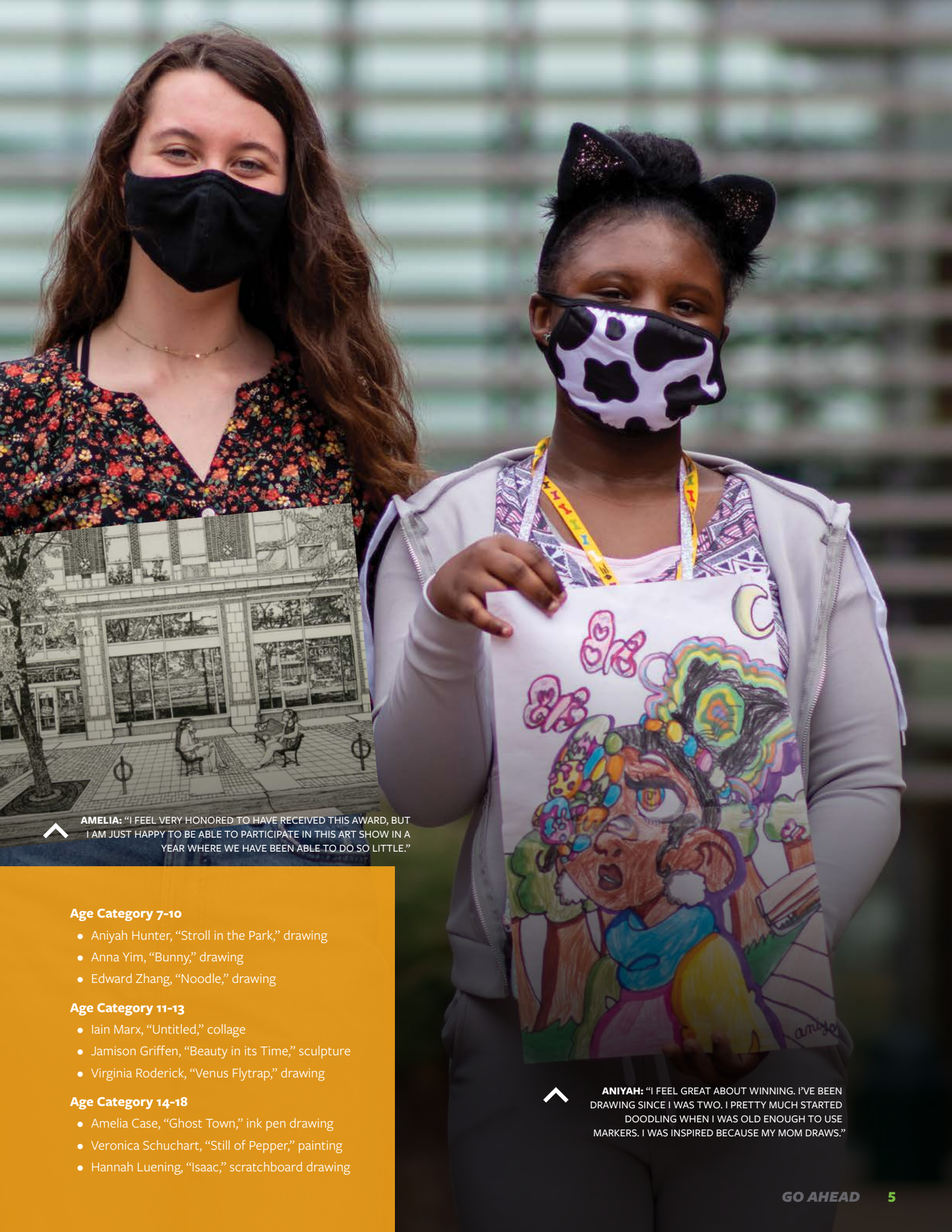


With community classes and in-person art exhibits stymied due to COVID-19, the Giertz Gallery and Parkland College Community Education needed new solutions to keep residents interested in the arts. So, the two joined forces this past spring and launched Parkland's first-ever virtual art competition. The "Celebrate the Arts!" Youth Art Contest invited primary and secondary students from District 505 to submit their best 2D and 3D artwork for the chance to win a full scholarship to a Parkland College Community Education

summer camp. The juried competition was featured in an online Zoom webinar March 9, where student artwork was displayed and winners were announced. There were three awards from each of three age categories. Terry Thies, youth program manager for Community Education, said gallery and CE staff were not sure how the community would react at first. But with 115 students participating and over 175 entries, the competition was a successful and exciting way to engage students in art making and

encourage appreciation for the arts. "We wanted to provide a safe way for students to continue creating, enjoying, and engaging with art," Thies said. "We were so delighted to see the response and so many promising pieces from the talented student artists in this community." Congratulations to all participants and the top placers in each category, listed to the right:





AMELIA: "I FEEL VERY HONORED TO HAVE RECEIVED THIS AWARD, BUT I AM JUST HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS ART SHOW IN A YEAR WHERE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO SO LITTLE."

**Age Category 7-10**

- Aniyah Hunter, "Stroll in the Park," drawing
- Anna Yim, "Bunny," drawing
- Edward Zhang, "Noodle," drawing

**Age Category 11-13**

- Iain Marx, "Untitled," collage
- Jamison Griffen, "Beauty in its Time," sculpture
- Virginia Roderick, "Venus Flytrap," drawing

**Age Category 14-18**

- Amelia Case, "Ghost Town," ink pen drawing
- Veronica Schuchart, "Still of Pepper," painting
- Hannah Luening, "Isaac," scratchboard drawing



ANIYAH: "I FEEL GREAT ABOUT WINNING. I'VE BEEN DRAWING SINCE I WAS TWO. I PRETTY MUCH STARTED DOODLING WHEN I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO USE MARKERS. I WAS INSPIRED BECAUSE MY MOM DRAWS."

# Community, Cooperation, and Computer Science

## Sheriff's office, Parkland team-tackle programming problem

The Champaign County Sheriff's Office implemented a new jail management system late last year but soon realized that, if it wanted to run large reports from the system in a timely manner, it would need someone adept at Structured Query Language database programming (SQL) to do it.

County Sheriff Dustin D. Heurman then decided to reach out to a community resource in time of community need. Remembering that Parkland College offered programs in SQL, he approached Executive Vice President Pam Lau with the idea of forming a partnership that could benefit both parties.

Work-based learning is a key component of Parkland's career programs, so Lau proposed the project to Charles Schultz, who teaches Parkland's SQL Fundamentals II (CSC 191) course and works as a senior database coordinator at the University of Illinois.

"I really respect Sheriff Heurman for approaching Parkland leadership on this project," Schultz said. "He recognizes the significance and the importance of allowing students to interact with real-world projects; that in itself is hugely valuable, that we have people who want to give back to the community and make these opportunities available."

In the same spirit of community giving, the CSC 191 class that took on the project decided to donate its compensation from the Sheriff's Office to the Parkland College Foundation.

**Obstacles.** One of the most "real-world" qualities of the project has been the many obstacles the class has had to overcome. First,

the system they are trying to help the sheriff's office utilize is also brand new to the office. The class has had to rely on its own expertise—and on Schultz's—for guidance.

Another second area of concern has been the sheer size of the database, which has required looking through tables and tables of data (about 1,600 of them so far) to find the most useful information.

"It's like a not-fun *Where's Waldo*," said CSC 191 student Tony Petrotte.

"It is a needle in a haystack—or, really, needles in haystacks," added classmate Alex McHattie.

**Experience.** From tackling clunky computer programs to access restrictions, all while still learning the ropes of SQL themselves, the students say these bumps in the road have made the project worthwhile.

"When you get into a real-world scenario, you have to solve problems as they come," Petrotte said. "You learn to ask questions and formulate your own problems to solve."

"I would say that the learning experience from this project is definitely unorthodox!" remarked classmate Colton Alexander. "But I think working with real data is a good way to go about learning."

"This project is very interesting in terms of getting a glimpse into what this career path might have, and exploring if it's something I really want to do," mentioned Martin Chlopecki.

While nobody is sure how long the project will last, the timeline doesn't seem to concern them. The class has found the worth of the

project in not only its career aspects, but also in the relationships they have built with one another.

"I would definitely recommend this course, but I would also recommend that [CS students] take a class with Charles," said Joni Hoerr, whose 30 years of legal assistant experience has been put to unique use in this project. "He puts more responsibility on us than just showing up. He makes us very proactive participants in what we're doing."

"One of the really wonderful aspects of the class is that everybody has some terrific knowledge to contribute," Alex added. "Charles is great at letting us try to contribute based on our experiences, and my classmates deliver. I'm impressed by everybody in this class, and I'm so glad to be a part of it."

### The Parkland College Foundation

works to support Parkland College, its students, and communities within the district by administering resources such as scholarships, technical equipment, program enhancements, and other funds. Learn more at [parkland.edu/foundation](http://parkland.edu/foundation).



PARKLAND COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION





STATE LT. GOV. STRATTON AND GRAD WILLIE C. DISCUSS WORKFORCE EQUITY TRAINING AT PARKLAND IN MARCH.

# Pritzker, Black Caucus Visit Parkland Campus

## Education Equity Act opens educational opportunities

In a show of educational solidarity, Gov. JB Pritzker and members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus visited Parkland College on March 10 to publicize the signing of a new state law aimed at supporting underrepresented students.

The Education and Workforce Equity Act aims to support low-income students and students of color from kindergarten to college and into the workforce. Although many of its 23 provisions are targeted at K-12 education, the goal of decreasing racial gaps in opportunity and access across all stages of education is particularly relevant to the mission of Parkland College.

“What we’re really looking for is continued access for students into higher education, for the door to be wide open,” said Stephanie Stuart, Parkland’s vice president of communications and external affairs. “At community colleges, that’s close to our heart. We’re open-access institutions.”

The bill will make college more affordable and accessible to people of all backgrounds. Programs like the college’s Support for Workforce Training (SWFT) program are funded via the Workforce Equity Initiative, which has similar goals and the same sponsors as the Education and Workforce Equity Act. Members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and Leader Carol Ammons, who spoke alongside Gov. Pritzker at the March 10 press conference, have been instrumental in passing new equity legislation in recent months. Leader Ammons also spoke about the SWFT program as an example of an effective, equity focused initiative that is having an impact statewide and in the local community.

The work of the Black Caucus has already had a measured impact on many in the Parkland community, such as new Highway Construction Careers Training Program graduate Willie Craft, who also spoke at the press conference. Craft’s story moved Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton to

highlight him on her official Facebook page. “I met Willie yesterday at Parkland College in Champaign. He’s in the Highway Construction Program and graduates today!” Stratton wrote. “The Education and Workforce Equity Act is now the law of the land in Illinois and is focused on creating equitable pathways to success.” After thanking advocates of the program, Stratton continued: “Thank you, Gov. Pritzker, for signing the bill into law [...] for Willie and all who follow in his footsteps, including his month-old daughter.” She was particularly touched by Willie’s succinct but heartfelt statement, “Education saved my life.”

**COBRAVENTURE CHAMP VALUES  
EXPERIENCE GAINED**

# Prizes Secondary to Personal Growth

Armed with seed money from Parkland College to start his own business, Eliot Graham plans to turn your condo into a cozy haven.

And while Parkland's 2020 Student Entrepreneur of the Year appreciates this new opportunity to grow plants for what will soon be The Wood Violet LLC, it has been his own growth this fall through the school's CobraVenture Program that he considers far more valuable.

"Winning was truly secondary to all the knowledge gained over the last few months," Graham said about Parkland's second-ever student startup cohort. "The greatest part of CobraVenture was that everyone that came in wanted to see us succeed. This community is focused on ensuring success of small businesses, and that was not only reassuring, but very heartwarming."

Parkland College held its 2020 CobraVenture Pitch Showcase on Nov. 16, which took place virtually for audiences due to the pandemic. Having competed with six other Parkland students in his cohort during the event, Graham will soon receive the event's top prize: \$3,000 in seed money and \$1,000 in monetary technology to start The Wood Violet.

Through the Wood Violet, Champaign resident Graham plans to bring the power of plants to small living spaces. His pitch centered on how the pandemic has transformed our homes into "residences, office spaces, classrooms, and staycation

destinations." His new mobile gardening units will turn these spaces into what he calls "livable, comfortable, and functional sanctuaries."

Graham will graduate with his associate's degree in Horticulture and Landscape Design before completing a bachelor's in business administration. With the prize money, he plans to establish The Wood Violet as a limited liability company, lease a small plot of land, and have his business up and running by spring 2022.

The pitch contest highlighted students from the CobraVenture program's student accelerator lab, which provides students with an avenue for networking and business mentorship. It features a collaborative workspace, lectures by local serial entrepreneurs, and one-on-one mentoring. "Without a doubt, I enjoyed every presenter that came in and lectured," Graham said. "They provided thoughtful and in-depth detail of what would be our next or future steps for our businesses. That time and those talks proved to be invaluable."

CobraVenture is funded through existing funds from the Parkland Foundation Entrepreneurial Founders Program, Murray Wise Associates PEN Program, and the annual Entrepreneur of the Year event.



## Cobras Sports Success 2020-2021

Kudos to the Parkland College Cobras athletic teams for their high achievements this spring:

- Volleyball: NJCAA DII National Runner-up (33-2 for the season)
- Women's Basketball: NJCAA DII National Tournament Third Place
- Men's Golf: 2021 Mid-West Athletic Conference Champion (4th consecutive win)





# PLAN AHEAD

## FOR THESE SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS!

### MUSIC ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

[parkland.edu/musicensembles](http://parkland.edu/musicensembles)

Check back in the fall for new music ensemble performances!

### STAERKEL PLANETARIUM

[parkland.edu/planetarium](http://parkland.edu/planetarium)

#### Spring Prairie Skies

Every other Friday at 7 pm  
May 7–July 2

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION

[www.parkland.edu/ceRegister](http://www.parkland.edu/ceRegister)

#### Personal Development Classes

Pick up a new class this summer! Visit [parkland.edu/ceRegister](http://parkland.edu/ceRegister) to check out the personal and professional development courses offered all year round, and try [parkland.edu/btce](http://parkland.edu/btce) for college noncredit classes!

#### College For Kids

June 21–July 1 and July 12–22  
Class times: 12:45–2:45 pm and 3–5 pm  
Summer enrichment camps for students ages 8–13.

### GIERTZ GALLERY

[parkland.edu/gallery](http://parkland.edu/gallery)

While the Gallery will still be in a virtual format through spring 2021, you can visit [parkland.edu/giertzgallery](http://parkland.edu/giertzgallery) to check out its online exhibitions and galleries!

### PARKLAND COLLEGE CLOSED

[parkland.edu/catalog](http://parkland.edu/catalog)

May 31  
July 5  
All College offices closed on Fridays from June 11–July 30  
September 6

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[parkland.edu/arts](http://parkland.edu/arts)



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Parkland College ensures equal educational opportunities are offered to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, gender expression, disability, sexual orientation, veteran/Vietnam veteran era, age, or religion, and is Section 504/ADA compliant. For additional information or accommodations, call 217/351-2551.