A debilitating accident, unemployment and fears of burdening his young family led to despair for Derek Sanchez. In the end, it came down to a choice.

A challenge, one of friendly provocation, initially brought Derek Sanchez to Community College of Aurora.

"You ever have somebody say, ‘I double-dog dare you?’" Sanchez explained of his unlikely entry into college as a middle-aged man with only periodic thoughts of resuming his education. “That’s pretty much what it was.”

But ultimately it was the challenges of his life that forced his hand as much as someone tweaking his prideful side.

Sanchez not long ago had lived what he passionately considered the good life: newly married; child on the way; a steady job at United Airlines; certification as a licensed electrician.

Then, a horrible motorcycle accident became his life’s pivot point. His idyllic existence had become a shambles, comprised of a painful recovery lasting more than two years, a string of short-lived jobs and unemployment checks.

It was August 2010 when his phone rang. That simple noise wasn’t heard much back then. Sanchez recalled sending out 55 resumes and getting only three rejection letters at the time, with zero callbacks.

He had an infant daughter that he raised daily, and while it kept him going emotionally, his own physical well-being was being placed in jeopardy by a lack of money and prospects.

“I pictured my life as being a freight train running towards a brick wall on the side of the mountain,” Sanchez remembered candidly. “And I didn’t know what distance I was away from it before the train wreck.”

So, when the son of his best friend told him he was enrolling at CCA and that Sanchez should join him, he didn’t have much to lose by answering the challenge. He was unsure what he’d study. But it beat passing the time, which essentially what he was doing.

Sanchez thought about law enforcement, which fed into his childhood fascination with cops and robbers. But because he enrolled late
Eclectic mix means write stuff

Poets, essayist, novelists featured

The National Day on Writing at Community College of Aurora on Oct. 18 provides face time with authors usually available only via book jacket stares.

Take that accessibility with award winning and internationally recognized talent, add the most eclectic mix of artists in the event’s four-year history on campus, and it’s no wonder organizer Susan Achziger hopes the community at large will take advantage of this unique opportunity alongside students.

“People get access,” Achziger said. “They actually get face time with some of these people that a lot of people never actually come face-to-face with. It’s important because it makes it more real and makes it seem like it’s something they can do.”

Not many authors can write with the same aplomb as the all-day event’s final speaker: nationally acclaimed children’s and young adult author Avi.

He’s received three of the highest awards possible in the profession, earning Newbery Honor awards for The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle and for Nothing But the Truth in 1991-92. The author of more than 70 titles, Avi’s 50th book, Crispin: The Cross of Lead was awarded the Newbery Medal a decade ago, as well.

Avi met Achziger tangentially a few years back, and the Denver resident has since been to the college on several occasions to speak in her Creative Writing classes at no charge.

“For me, it’s a big deal that Avi is coming,” said Achziger, a longtime New Englander and English poet at CCA. “We have an award-winning author and community members can take advantage of this, especially if they have children. I definitely could see the home-school community coming here to hear him speak.”

Yet, one of the advantages of this year’s National Day on Writing is that attendees going to the Fine Arts Forum at CentreTech to observe can pick what motif best suits their intellectual fulfillment.

“They can come for the whole day and not hear from the same kind of person,” Achziger noted.

Two former CCA students, Suzy Q. Smith and Ken Arkind, and a former faculty member, Wayne Gilbert, will deliver their unique brand of performance art. Smith is among the highest-ranking slam poets in the country, while Arkind is a national champion in that realm. Gilbert’s unique shows of both spoken-word and slam poetry were popular staples for years at the college before his retirement.

Fiction author Rachel Coles specializes in stories embedded with ghosts, horror and mythology. Bob Kunzinger, a professor of Humanities and Creative Writing, in Virginia, and the event’s first out-of-state participant, has been cited in Best American Essays and has another collection of his works on the way.

“You get a real broad spectrum,” Achziger said.

The event not only will feature top-tier authors but also encourage involvement from attendees. There will be chalk writing on sidewalks and a wall of writing comprised of giant sticky notes.

“Somebody wrote ‘Tacos Rule the World,’” one year,” Achziger said with a laugh.

Proving there’s all manner of food for thought available to attendees.

National Day on Writing Lineup

8:00-9:15 a.m.: Rachel Coles, Fiction Author
Credits include the story “Orphans of Lethe” in the new anthology What Fears Become from Imajin Books and numerous other horror shorts in genre magazines. The title of her new novel, Pazuzu’s Girl, was published last February. An anthropologist by training, Coles, a Denver native, grew up with a background in Semitic and Middle Eastern folklore and her love of diverse cultures and passion for mythology are woven throughout her writing.

9:30-10:45 a.m.: Wayne Gilbert, Poet
A longtime faculty member at CCA, Gilbert since retiring from the college continues to mentor teachers working on their master’s degrees in Education at University of Colorado-Denver. He’s also remained focused on his original poems and his dynamic showmanship, which he began with performances in summer 2000. Among Gilbert’s credits are Maggie Maymystic, published by Mighty Rogue Press in 2011, and From the Ashes, a collection of poems written in the year following his mother’s death.

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Bob Kunzinger, Essayist
Author of five collections of essays, including the forthcoming Borderline Crazy (Nov 2012), Kunzinger is a repeat offender for such diverse publications as Southern Humanities Review, The Chronicle of Higher Education, as well as many other regional and national reviews. He can be seen in Best American Essays. He is a professor of humanities and creative writing in Virginia.

12:30-2 p.m. Suzy Q. Smith and Ken Arkind, Spoken Word Poets
The pair are former CCA students and award-winning poets. Smith is among the highest-ranking slam poets in the country and has shared stages with internationally known artists such as the late Gil Scott Heron, Les Nubians, Dead Prez, Talib Kweli and more. Her work has appeared in a number of literary magazines and anthologies. She received worldwide attention as a finalist in the BBC’s “Next Big Thing” contest.

Arkind is a national poetry slam champion and the executive director of the Denver Minor Disturbance Youth Poetry Project. He has opened for Cloud Cult, Devotchka, The Flobots, Sage Francis Gil Scott Heron, NPR’s Amy Goodman, and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa.

2:30-3:30 p.m. Avi, Children’s and Young Adult Author
Born in New York as Edward Irving Wortis and raised in Brooklyn, his sister gave him the name Avi when he was one year old, and he has used no other name since. His writing has won numerous awards, and he is in constant demand as a speaker/presenter. He is a Newberry Award winning author of over 70 titles, including: Crispin: the Cross of Lead; True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle and Nothing But the Truth. He has written mystery, adventure, fantasy and ghost stories.
Sanchez grew ‘emotionally, spiritually’ at CCA

From Sanchez / Page 1

for his first fall semester, most classes that piqued his interest were filled and he was forced to take all online courses.

“In the first two weeks, I had to talk myself out of quitting I can’t even count the times,” he said. “What am I trying to do? How am I going to do this?”

A ride-along with the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Department and observation of a courtroom trial that were class assignments through CCCOnline a few weeks later changed everything.

“That was something that just made the light go off in my head.”

Two years later, Sanchez finds himself one course shy of earning an associate of arts degree in December. And, following an intensive month-long training academy, he’d do so having become a peace officer for the state of Colorado.

“If it hadn’t been for CCA, I’d be working at a convenience store,” he said. “This school has not only reshaped my thinking, but the direction of my life.”

Another phone call, equally impactful in Sanchez’s life, served as a painful metaphor for the life-altering trajectory he’d been forced to face before he found his education salvation.

He literally was sliding down Interstate 70 as he shouted into his Bluetooth to a 911 dispatcher that he’d been struck on his motorcycle. He was thrust from about 60 mph onto the seat of his pants after a vehicle cut across three lines, crossed the double white line and locked its brakes, launching him as his motorcycle rear-ended the car.

Sanchez never lost consciousness while he slithered helplessly down the highway, even as his ankle turned 90 degrees from being broken in nine places and with his shoulder touching his cheek due to a shattered collarbone.

“I thought pretty much my life as I knew it was over,” he admitted.

For more than 18 months, it was, at least as Sanchez had known it.

Ten minutes before the accident, his life was “fantastic” Sanchez’s job with United had led to a jet-set romance with his new bride, Melissa. The news that their baby was on the way was shocking in that neither was supposed to be able to have children. He’d been an electrician for 15 years and loved the profession.

“I had just wooed my wife and told her how wonderful life was going to be in Colorado and how we’d ride off into the sunset on the motorcycle.”

But now the bike and his body were wrecked. They weren’t sharing a motorcycle seat but a hospital bed, as Melissa lay beside Derek for months during what at times was a brutal recovery.

“I could have been confined to a wheelchair. They weren’t certain I’d keep my leg from the ankle down -- basically my foot,” Sanchez recounted. “They were waiting to see if the surgery was a success and blood flow had returned. I had a lot of damage all the way down my right body. So they really weren’t certain with the muscle and nerve damage what was going to go on. So, that point in life was pretty dark. I really didn’t know what to expect.”

Melissa frequently would have to change dressings on a softball-sized patch on Derek’s leg that would create intolerable pain when the wrapping was removed.

Eventually, his orthopedic work became home therapy. He did more than persevere. It got him back on his feet.

“It was painful. I’m not going to say it wasn’t. It was excruciating. But I didn’t want to be a guy who just sat in a wheelchair,” Sanchez said. “I didn’t want to be a dead weight to my new wife and daughter.”

The physical discomfort was only heightened when he was furloughed by United. Because it wasn’t a worker’s compensation case and his accident occurred off the job, the medical bills were piling up. The people of United, though, rallied around him, donating their vacation time and working extra hours to help cover many of his expenses.

What may be considered another rare positive to being confined to home was that Sanchez was able to spend quality time daily with his daughter during her formative years. But once he was physically able to work, he was having trouble making ends meet. He worked in a county weatherization program, at an aluminum factory, a short time at a bread factory. Those periods were measured in months, and he couldn’t return to his electrician’s job because no one was hiring.

An understanding mortgage company was the only thing between him and losing his house.

“Life stunk,” he said. “At one point we didn’t know where food was going to come from. There were days I didn’t eat so that my daughter could eat. I just didn’t say anything. I’d drink water or make tea, just to fill my stomach once a day, maybe. It took a lot, but it got to the point where I was broken and humbled.”

But getting “double-dog dared” was the thing to eventually pull him out of the doldrums.

Following his one semester taking online courses, he was able to get on campus and immediately began to appreciate the college experience.

Caring instructors helped push him along. And, in his second semester, he received an email from the TRiO scholarship program and forged a close bond with its director, Daniel Sandoval.

“That really turned my life around, not only in college but even in my personal life,” said Sanchez, who shifted his life’s plan and came to CCA at age 46. “It gave me encouragement that someone cared that much, because here’s a guy who’s never had an education beyond high school, came up digging ditches and running backhoes and all that. Who was I fooling with all these kids, 18, 19 or sometimes 16 years old?

“I joked at first with Daniel that these kids are like sharp knives and that I’d been put in the toolbox for a long time. I said I don’t know how to sharpen myself. He said, ‘We’ll work on that. You just do your part.’

Sanchez did that and then some. He was awarded a Student Success Award for his classroom work and overcoming obstacles. He currently owns a 3.9 grade point average in Criminal Justice as he prepares to walk on stage and grab his diploma in two months.

“He has a fierce work ethic. It’s pretty unreal,” Sandoval said. “He does not rest until projects are complete, until assignments are finished. I’ve gotten emails from him at 3 a.m. that he’s working on things. That’s the kind of student he is. He just doesn’t give up. He’s like a pit bull that latches on to something and doesn’t let go and it’s helped that he’s got a great support system, led by his family.”

Sanchez’s recent life has been, as he described it, “orchestrated chaos.” His month-long schooling in a completely different field has been taxing both mentally and physically. He’s still healing, often wearing a lace-up boot that compresses his ankle.

He’s also completing his CCA degree at the same time while trying to continue keeping quality family time in the equation.

But, after what he’s experienced, he wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I wish I could name every single professor and put them on a plaque,” he said of the college’s impact the last two years. “I’ve had incredible instructors through CCA, and I’ve grown emotionally and spiritually by the way they led their classes.”

The train is back on the track, though instead of oblivion, it’s headed for a new life again full of possibilities.

“That, by any measure, is a pretty daring move.
Chinese class’ fall debut greeted with enthusiasm

There were practical reasons for the college to introduce a Chinese class for the first time this fall.

“It’s the most powerful economy right now outside the United States,” said Ana Martin-Mejia, World Languages Coordinator. “And having some Chinese under your belt will definitely make you more marketable when you look for a job.”

But it also came down to simple opportunity.

CCA had a federal grant for three years to develop a Chinese immersion curriculum for high school-aged students in partnership with local charter school Global Village Academy that wasn’t renewed. It left the program in limbo right as the first classes were going to be offered this past summer.

The college opted to fill that vacuum by offering its own classes, beginning this fall with Chinese 111. It drew 14 students taking the language for the first time.

“It shows there’s an interest in Chinese,” Martin-Mejia said.

This is the fourth language now offered at the college, along with Spanish, Japanese, and American Sign Language.

The introductory Chinese course teaches basic vocabulary and grammar having to do with real-life situations, such as names, birthplace, hobbies, etc.

Cherng Guo was handpicked to teach the course following a lengthy search. She has a Masters degree in Business, a Bachelor of Applied English and a long history teaching Chinese in her native Taiwan.

Plans are now in place to continue the program in the spring with Chinese 112, with hopes that it potentially could lead to four-course introductory class block that will comprise a language achievement certificate.

That will be largely driven by interest, but Martin-Mejia said currently the current excitement about the program has created momentum in that direction.

It didn’t hurt that in creating enthusiasm Cherng brought an ace in the hole to the new class: her father, Lien Ti Chao. The master calligrapher demonstrated how the Chinese characters were written, spoke about the history of the art form and the inks used and his methods for writing with Chinese brushes.

“Based on students’ reaction, I believe that I have showed them a different way to learn Chinese and have also planted a seed into the students’ heads and hearts,” Cherng said.

Interfaith forum eyes conflicts via masses, margin

Dan Buttry envisions a world of interfaith dialogue and respect once described by Dr. Martin Luther King as the “beloved community.”

A Baptist preacher from Michigan, and featured speaker at a Sept. 6 forum at CCA, Buttry serves as a global consultant for peace and justice, working tirelessly on conflicts involving numerous religious traditions with an overriding goal of promoting understanding of different faiths.

But with consistent clashes between the mainstream and the so-called ‘fringes’ of society, the Utopian view often gets buried by those “clueless of the experience of the margin,” which leads to misunderstanding, divisive language and, at times, oppressive legislation.

Buttry asked during his lecture entitled “Post 9/11 Religion and Community: Interfaith Strategies for Peacemaking how, most often, this pushback is countered.

“Many times,” he responded, “it has to happen from voices raised from the margins saying something is wrong here.”

A watershed moment for Buttry came in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, when he helped rally the interfaith communities of Muslim, Jewish and Christian leaders in a community housing the nation’s largest mosque in Dearborn, Mich.

“We, as Christians, had to stand up and say that this is not what our faith is all about,” he recalled.

Instead, an alternate, unified vision was presented, and the formation of a group that eventually became the Interfaith Leadership Council took root. The multi-cultural organization was integral in later giving a loud statement about humanity and damping the message of protestors planning an anti-Muslim demonstration outside the mosque. The “alternate vision” involved a silent demonstration including more than 100 Christian and Muslim clergy “in which all faiths respect one another and uphold each other’s freedom and dignity.”

“If we counter cluelessness and advocate for the religious freedom of all people, then we will be able to find our way to local communities, into a nation and even a world that’s close to the peace that is ideal for all our faiths,” Buttry said.

“Cluelessness” was a key word Buttry used to generally describe the mainstream’s understanding of the “experience at the margin” that leads to fear, hatred and violence, instead of a healthy curiosity and their learning from one another.

Enlisting different faiths to work together to build more diverse environments is vital to ensuring that religious liberty or freedom is protected, he added.

The interpretation of just what religious freedom means and looks like in practice has been argued locally and judicially for decades all the way from coffee houses to the Supreme Court.

Buttry’s lecture touched upon the history, both recent and ancient dating all the way back to the Persian Empire, Buddhists in the Third Century and in India in the 16th.

Every major religious tradition, he explained, has its “victims and victimizers” and the ones that haven’t are on the margins “with no power.” At the same time, “Every religion has its peacemaking tradition and every one has people in these traditions appealed by what’s going on in the name of their faith.”

To combat both the cluelessness of the mainstream and allow the margin to have its voices heard, Buttry made some suggestions.

The mainstream must listen to the voices coming from the margins: “The best way you can get clued in is to get tuned in to what the people who are different are saying.” That isn’t to suggest there will be total agreement but listening can perhaps unearth insights and experiences to forge a broader vision of community.

Be sensitive to one’s own experiences on the margin: The feeling one’s derived while operating outside the mainstream should be used to not marginalize others once becoming part of the mass culture. It shouldn’t be a lash back or move toward self-preservation to ‘never go back’ to the way things were.

Tap into the best of each country’s heritage to protect the liberties of all people: It isn’t just about tolerance but going beyond that to listen to the voices from the margin in order to build a community that incorporates the views and insights of everyone, with an undercurrent of religious liberty without coercion.
Clockwise from top: The 2012 Faculty Art Show, top, ran from Aug. 30 to Sept. 27 and showcased the techniques and range of conceptual and visual approaches practiced by CCA's Art and Design instructors at the Donna Moravec Gallery. The Lowry Cafe began welcoming customers on Sept. 4, officially giving the college a wide array of dining areas on both campuses. On Sept. 19, about two dozen faculty and staff participated in “Talk Like a Pirate Day” festivities. Rich Bogdanovich (Mathematics), Megan Kinney (Director of Library Services), Vicki Graham (Communication), Ted Snow (Dean of Liberal Arts and CentreTech Campus) and Susan Achziger (English) were among those getting into the spirit of the event, during which 22 students received extra credit, or “pirate treasure,” for answering a question about course material. On Sept. 7, faculty members gathered to further explore immersive and game-based learning techniques and strategies used in their classrooms and collaborated on potential ideas for including such concepts in their curriculum. JoAnn Burkhart and Erin Smith kicked off the day of activities, which included Monopoly, a CSI scavenger hunt and review of accepted grant proposals. Ten days later, Political Science faculty Bobby Pace used a remote to call up the Electoral College map during one of two Constitution Day events.
New stage production isn’t the same old

Prism of 2012 event sparks reinvention

Stacey D’Angelo’s second experience with the play “Glimpses” four years after the fact promises more of the same – levity meshed with truths, or as the writer/director put it, “a carnival ... but one with purpose and intention.”

But everything’s different, too, as the November production takes shape.

As it was in 2008, CCA students came to auditions and were instructed to do something, whether it’s read poetry, free-write a question of D’Angelo’s choosing, lay bare emotions, improvise with an object, juggle or simply uncover a facet of personal experience.

Those snippets were captured on tape and used as a starting point to “create sparks” that often veer off into completely different directions after peeling away layers and uncovering thematic elements.

D’Angelo embraces that kind of flexibility within the process, since it’s the often liberating experience of her cast getting from Point A that eventually leads to a script after weeks of rehearsals.

Yet, this year, the undercurrent of passion from the cast that will eventually be seen by audiences isn’t just confined to the evolution of the production. Emotion sparked the entire notion of rekindling Glimpses.

D’Angelo was considering a different play altogether before July’s shooting incident at the Century 16 Theatres. Her own purpose and intention changed as a result.

She wanted to do her part to aid in the city’s healing process, and, with material she envisioned as simultaneously “beautiful and thought-provoking,” take an audience along for a journey in a safe space far away, and far removed, from negative headlines.

And if she left attendees dancing in the aisles, as they were the first time “Anonymous” was a nod to the area’s community needs now. It brought people together -- and it transformed those people that were in it.”

D’Angelo’s plays in the past have been community-based, with an intention of relevance. Her version of “Romeo and Juliet” was a juxtaposition of hearing and deaf culture. “Anonymous” was a nod to the area’s refugee population.

The new “Glimpses” recognizes the place and time in which Aurora finds itself in fall 2012 and is an organic growth process within that time stamp.

The hope is that it’s not only a release for the audience but the ensemble going through the process by touching upon individual struggles and difficult topics.

“I want people to feel empowered to express themselves,” D’Angelo said. “I want people to bring their talents and find uses for their art. I want to reinvent theatre. I want people to feel they belong and have fun. There’s a million reasons to do it,” she added.

“I want to show what’s possible if you decide that through the rehearsal process and become a script only after several weeks of shaping thematic elements.

“My intention is to say the word theater is a place where we can celebrate, where we can sit back and let our guard down.” — Stacey D’Angelo, CCA Theatre Director

Glimpses ... The Rising Dawn

WHEN: November 8-10 and 15-17, 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 10 and 17, 2 p.m.
WHERE: Larry D. Carter Theatre
TICKETS: General admission, $10; Students with valid ID, $5.
MORE INFORMATION: www.ccaurora.edu/glimpses or 303-340-7529
CCA began its partnership with Staples corporate office in September.

CCA helping office chain manage

Coursework catered to help employees, college a “win-win”

Staples regional office has begun a curriculum arrangement with the Community College of Aurora that’s replete with information germane to the office supply giant’s push towards specialized management training for its employees.

The course to date already covers a wide spectrum, and there’s still more than a handful of classes expected to be modified and installed within the next 1-2 years.

If only there was something that could help instructor Matt Earnhardt smooth that upcoming process: say, an easy button.

“I should ask for one,” the CCA Business faculty said with a laugh. “I should make that part of my perks package.”

Right now, the benefits still are tangible, not the least of which is the fun Earnhardt is having working with the Staples folks.

The partnership gives CCA additional exposure, while Staples employees receive material applicable to their own unique situation to aid their professional growth.

CCAs first course at the company began in early September, and comes on the heels of a relationship of about a half-dozen years between the college and Pinnacol Assurance locally.

Staples corporate, located behind Aurora Mall, contacted the college in the early summer in an effort to expand upon a previous arrangement with a Florence, Ky., community college.

CCA was more than happy to oblige.

“One of our mandates as a community college is serving the needs of our community,” Business department chair Tamra Schmitt said. “And we’re really able to serve their needs by bringing our course work to their campus.”

The CCA model for this relationship includes keeping core competencies of its regular Business curriculum in place, yet tweaking its courses at the company’s behest to suit Staples’ individualized workplace needs.

Thus, UNIX for programmers was put on the docket. Decision-making with a managerial emphasis was added. Effective workplace communication, conflict resolution and corporate culture became integral facets.

Earnhardt also used aspects of the Myers-Briggs personality test so that employees could learn the most effective communications techniques whether they were judged as introverted or extroverted.

“We have students in the class with master’s degrees that are still gaining important skills in the class now,” Earnhardt maintained.

Still, while the classes are modified— resume writing, for example, is out -- the basics of the CCA courses remain since employees are earning college credits in hopes that students will eventually complete an associates degree once the in-office sessions conclude.

Those future disciplines would cover such facets as Accounting, Business Administration, Marketing and Human Resources at CCA.

At the very least, Staples employees completing the coursework will receive an internal management certificate from the company. But those students have had their tuition and books paid by the company, already have built CCA transcripts and will have a large credit base stockpiled once the on-site sessions are complete.

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“The ultimate goal is to keep this relationship with Staples indefinitely and not just have the students that are starting now stop but gain enrollment over time and have basically every person at Staples go through this program,” said Earnhardt, who added that some of the finer details of the partnership still are being worked out.

There are 14 people in the initial Staples class.

A side benefit for the college is that Earnhardt is able to bring real-world corporate issues and possible stumbling blocks back into his classrooms.

But the give-and-take has practical applications for Staples employees, too.

“Whenever you can get into a workplace environment, especially one where the students work right there, it’s neat to be in their four walls and I think it gives the material a lot of life,” Earnhardt said. “We can talk theoretical examples all day long but when we’re actually there and they can say, ‘I was sitting in this room and this actually happened,’ it makes a big difference.

“Plus, being over there it’s all Staples employees and they can all bounces things off each other. ‘Oh, you went through this; now I understand how you feel because that’s how I saw it.’”

One offshoot that Earnhardt hopes occurs with his Staples students, as it has before with Pinnacol, is that the possibility of college is put in play for employees that may never have gotten an education past the high school level or are looking to enhance their degrees.

“I would like to see us have a partnership where eventually we can offer our students internships over there. … Or maybe they see the level of instruction here and they open up jobs over there and the first people they consider is our students,” Earnhardt said. “Personally, that’s why I wanted to pursue this, and why we wanted to pursue this, was anything we can do to make our students here and at Staples more successful. It’s a win-win.”

Plaudits and accomplishments

Ashley Moorshead, Brandon Feres and Rachel Blue Ankney have been chosen to present their proposal at the National Association For Developmental Education 2013 conference following a rigorous selection process. Their presentation will be entitled, “Rewriting Student Stories: Challenging Myths of Integrating English and Reading,” and touch upon cognition and affective learning theory; program development and redesign, and other facets.

Two new members of the advising team will be joining CCA’s staff.

Wendy Jenkins began her full-time duties at CentreTech on Oct. 1. She has been serving as a part-time advisor at the CTC campus since Oct 2011 and also has served in various other positions at CCA since 2009.

Phebe Lassiter, another longtime CCA employee in several roles, will join the Lowry Student Services team Oct. 8.

Josh Gold assumed the position of Associate Director of Donor Relations for the CCA Foundation on Sept. 24.

Gold will be responsible for the creation, implementation, managing and assessment of a comprehensive donor relations plan to assist he Foundation in reaching its strategic fundraising goals.

Constance Seiden retired as a full-time faculty member following a 22-year association with the college. A farewell celebration for Seiden was held Sept. 7.

The Student Government Association’s two-day “SGA Sizzle” fundraiser on Sept. 26-27 build a memorial for the victims of the Century 16 tragedy was a success. The two-campus event raised $556.92 toward the in-the-works project outside the CentreTech Student Centre.

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CCA is seeking hundreds of volunteer actors for use during a nearly two-day military exercise on the Lowry Campus from Dec. 5-7.

The event being staged will be an international hotel in Nigeria. Members of the college community who are interested in participating will be required to commit to at least an eight-hour time block during the high-tech training. More than 300 people will be needed per 24-hour period. Actors that are well-versed in speaking foreign languages, especially African dialects, are particularly in demand. CCA also is requesting props to transform the 900 Building at Lowry into the Nigerian landmark, including clothing, artwork and decor. Donations likely won't be returned.

Interested parties are asked to contact Stephanie at 303-340-7076 or via e-mail at Stephanie.Aigner@ccaurora.edu.

CCA Student Affairs, in conjunction with the college's Foundation, is providing counseling services for the fall semester.

Sessions are available at CenTech on Mondays (2-6 p.m.), Wednesdays (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) and Fridays (8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.). Counselor Rosanne Surine will be located in A106D in the advising area of the Administration Building.

Available times, beginning Oct. 1, at Lowry by counselor Sarah Gallegos are located in the Student Services office, West Quad, on Mondays (2-6 p.m.) and Thursdays (10 a.m.-2 p.m.).

Appointments re necessary and can be scheduled through Javon Brame at extension 4932.

Faculty and staff are advised that if a student is undergoing a true crisis to please walk the student over to Gallegos or Surine, both contract employees through the Aurora Mental Health Center. Both counselors are on camps to help with crisis intervention, short-term counseling and referrals.

Changes were made in September regarding the processing of travel and mileage reimbursements that are 60- plus days past trip dates. Please contact Nick A. Lozano in Fiscal Affairs at 303-360-4758 with any questions.

Student Life is serious about campus involvement, so much so that students signing in to, then attending, many of the cultural and educational events at CCA can accumulate points that lead to prizes and an invitation to an award reception. The top-10 finishers will be rewarded with either certificates good at CCAs grill or café or the bookstore. The first-place winner will take home an iPad. So show up and sign-in.

The Community College of Aurora's blood drive will take place Monday, Oct. 15, at the CentreTech Rotunda from 10-11:40 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Potential donors are asked to call or email Angie Tiedeman at 303-340-7524 or angela.tiedeman@ccaurora.edu to reserve a space. Donors without an appointment will be registered on a space-available basis.

CCA will institute a parking permit program. Each vehicle at Lowry and CentreTech will need to be registered. Information is forthcoming for students, staff and faculty. More information is forthcoming.

Nominations for Student, Faculty and/or Staff member of the month at CCA can be made via the following link: http://www.ccaurora.edu/about-cca/studentfacultystaff-monthly-nomination. Monthly winners will receive a prize for their contribution to the college.

Request for Proposals (RFPs) are now being accepted for the second round of funding for the Colorado Community College System immersive and game-based learning grants.

A grant writing workshop will be held Oct. 10 from 3-5 p.m. at the Administration Building, Room 108 to ease the process for interested parties. The initiative is part of an overriding strategic goal to increase persistence, retention and completion and bring the learning experience to life for students.

Faculty that already has been awarded planning grants currently are helping fellow instructors with developing and streamlining proposals.

CCA was awarded four such grants in April. These game-based and immersive activities can take many forms and often are used with existing technologies.

Please contact JoAnn Burkhart, Kendra Rodriguez or Erin Smith in the college’s online learning department for more information. Proposal deadlines are Nov. 16, with awards announced Dec. 4 and projects beginning Jan. 1, 2013.

Elena Sandoval-Lucero, Dean of Student Success, is providing oversight to the Student Affairs portion of concurrent enrollment and the college’s overall outreach and recruitment while the college seeks a new director following Leigh Bessey’s retirement. VP of Student Affairs Betsy Oudenhoven in a Sept. 10 staff email thanked Bessey for her hard work and “significant leadership and oversight” regarding the development and implementation of concurrent enrollment at CCA.

The Donna Moravec Gallery will host its latest show Oct. 11-Nov. 15, featuring the work of Joel Cook, entitled “Dragonfly – The Paintings.” Regular gallery hours are from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

A reception will be held Oct. 12 from 6-8 p.m. and feature an artist’s talk at 6:30 p.m.

Cook will host a workshop on Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the Lowry Campus, Building 901 Room 220. Reservations are required by Oct. 5 by contacting Celia Miller-Morrissey at 303-340-7335 or celia.miller@ccaurora.edu. The workshop costs $25 and space is limited.

The new Assessment Center in the Administration Building (A205) is expected to be fully operational by the end of October. At that point, Accuplacer, CLEP, DANTES, CPL and other exams will be hosted in the new space. Once fully operational, Registrar and Director of Admissions Kristen Cusack said the site should have the wherewithal to simultaneously host 23 students.

Donations of new or used children’s books are being requested for a book drive to benefit the Adams 12 Five Star District Elementary Schools. The district has the state’s highest dropout rate and the goal for the 13 CCCS schools is to accumulate 3,000 books during this event. Items can be dropped off at Student Life at Lowry or arrangements can be made through Director of Student Life Angie Tiedeman for a pick up at CentreTech by calling 303-340-7524.

Pickup soccer games can be found Mondays at 5:30 p.m. at the Lowry Quad, courtesy of the college’s Health and Wellness Committee. All levels are welcome.

Viscom President of Instruction: Keturah Woodley has set two receptions in October that will serve as a “meet and greet” for adjunct faculty.

The first meeting is scheduled Oct. 10 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Todd Bergen Room (West Quad 112) on the Lowry campus. The second event will be held at the CentreTech Rotunda on Oct. 16 from 1-3 p.m.

RSVPs for these sessions are suggested. Light refreshments will be served at both gatherings.

Five “Money Cents Series” events are scheduled throughout October at Lowry, each dealing with a portion of financial discipline for students. Subjects touch upon budget basics, money management, spending wisely, saving and investing, and credit.