

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE forum

September 2023 • Volume 27 • Number 3



A new partnership between Miami Dade College and the **Miami-Dade County Public Schools District** will place aspiring teachers into a degree program before they even graduate from high school.

"We know that there are many students who want to teach, and this will engage them and get them get started early," said MDC President Madeline Pumariega. "It's about fostering their interests and giving them the opportunity they need to succeed."

Starting with the 2023-2024 academic year, the Dual Enrollment Teaching Academy will be available at all 51 of the District's public high schools. Students will take college-level education classes that count toward their high school diploma as well as an MDC associate degree in one

of four education pathways: early childhood education, secondary biology, secondary math or exceptional student education. They will be exempt from paying tuition, fees or the cost of books while enrolled.

"Our goal is for students who start in the ninth grade to graduate from high school with their associate degree," said Dr. Carmen Concepción, dean of MDC's School of Education. "They can then come straight into the bachelor's degree program at MDC."

Added Concepción, a Miami-Dade Schools alumna: "This is an exciting opportunity to continue to elevate the teaching profession, specifically for those students who early on, just like me, know that all they want to do is teach."

Continued on page 8

Mark Your Calendar for This Year's Season of the Arts

The tradition of showcasing the best in art and culture continues this year as Miami Dade College presents its annual Season of the Arts. From a momentous anniversary of the Miami Book Fair to unique theater and dance performances, art exhibits and cinema, there's something for everyone.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, the globally recognized Miami Book Fair will be presented both in person and virtually and include a variety of readings and appearances from 600+ authors, as well as the signature Street Fair and other events. The popular *Evenings With* series will feature authors and actors **Jada Pinkett Smith**, **Kerry Washington** and **Henry Winkler**, and singer **Joan Baez**.

The Miami Film Festival GEMS will delight movie buffs with its mid-season "Film Festival Fix." Over four days there will be red-carpet premieres, panels, parties and in-person appearances.

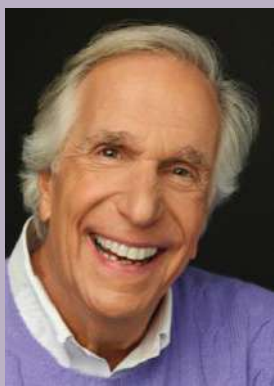
Live Arts Miami features **Arturo**

O'Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra at the Miami Beach Bandshell, and *Summon*, an exploration of Jamaica's Maroon culture through film and performance at the Sandrell Rivers Theater in Miami.

The Koubek Center in Little Havana presents the world premiere of *Two Islands Performance*, a multidisciplinary dance and musical production from Australia and Cuba. And the Museum of Art and Design unveils Germane Barnes' *Ukhamba*, a circular wooden structure that is named after a type of African woven wood basket, at MDC's Wolfson and North campuses.

If live music is more your style, then take a lunch break with Jazz at Wolfson Presents, the free jazz series in Downtown Miami. Now in its 26th year, the 10-concert series, which begins in September with a performance by the Jazz Faculty Quartet, features a stellar lineup of artists.

Read about these and other events on pages 12 – 14.



— CT

Clockwise: Henry Winkler at Miami Book Fair; official poster; Sara Serpa at Jazz at Wolfson Presents; Arturo O'Farrill with Live Arts Miami. Left: Bloom! By Sway



Veteran Principal Found ‘Wonderful Opportunity’ at MDC

A teacher and school administrator for over 30 years, William Aristide was actually applying to other schools when a Miami Dade College recruiter won him over.

“The recruiter said my first two years at MDC would be no different than in any other state university and offered me a partial scholarship,” Aristide said. “I visited the North Campus, and it was beautiful. The people were friendly and I saw kids in similar situations as mine.

“I spent the next two years at Miami Dade. It was a wonderful opportunity,” said Aristide, who in 2020 was named principal at **Law Enforcement Officers Memorial High School** after serving 10 years as principal at **Booker T. Washington Senior High School**.

A social justice major at MDC, Aristide immersed himself in extra-curricular activities, serving as president of the Black Student Union and staying active in the Student Government Association and the Haitian IBO Club.

“The faculty and staff always went above and beyond to help, and that made a difference,” he added.

From MDC, Aristide transferred to Florida State University, majoring in criminology with a minor in education. He fell in love with the classroom after picking up a substitute-teaching job at a Tallahassee high school.

Aristide later joined Miami-Dade County Public Schools, moving from teaching to administration and earning a master’s in Special Education and a specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

His numerous awards and accolades include the Miami-Dade Schools Principal of the Year for the Central Region in 2015-2016, and induction into MDC’s Alumni Hall of Fame in 2016.

Given MDC’s leadership in teacher training, Aristide said he looks for open-minded and compassionate applicants who are willing to try new things. “Most importantly, I want someone who wants to make a difference in the lives of young people.”

– MB

As Professor Predicted, She Became a Great Scientist

Elsa Murano, a Cuba native who lived across Latin America as a youth, found a nurturing culture at Miami Dade College, where she began her path toward a career of “firsts” as a Hispanic woman in government and academia.

“MDC seemed like a great place to start my higher education, a place that would not judge me for coming from a low-income background, that would give me a chance to prove what I could do if given the opportunity,” Murano recalled. “Frankly, it was the best experience I could have hoped for.”

Murano, who moved to Miami at age 14 with her mother and siblings, graduated from MDC with an Associate in Arts with a pathway to major in Biology and later earned her Ph.D. in Food Science and Technology at Virginia Tech.

After starting her career at Iowa State University, Murano moved to Texas A&M’s Department of Animal Science in 1995. In 2001, President Bush appointed her as the first Hispanic Undersecretary for Food Safety at the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**.

In 2005, Murano returned to **Texas A&M** and from 2008-2009 served as the university’s first woman and first Hispanic president. She has since been working as professor and president emerita, and in 2012 was named director of the university’s Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture.

Initially on a pre-med track at MDC, Murano became interested in research when she presented her biology lab team’s results to the full class. Sensing Murano’s nervousness, her professor reassured her, predicting she would be a “great scientist” someday.

“Needless to say, this absolutely amazed me and gave me the confidence to believe in myself,” she said.

– MB



William Aristide



Elsa Murano

MDC Alumni Leading in Education

Ana L. Cordal

Vice President of School Support & Compliance,
Charter Schools USA
Miami/Fort Lauderdale

Dr. Alexis L. Martinez

Administrative Director
Facilities Operations,
Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS)

Daniel Marcos Mateo

Superintendent, School Choice and Parental Options, Instructional Technology
– Library Media Services,
MDCPS

David K. Moore, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools,
District of Indian River County

Carlota E. Morales, Ed.D.

Principal (retired),
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School, Miami

Teresa Ellen Murphy

2022 Francisco M. Walker Miami-Dade
Teacher of the Year,
Bob Graham Education Center,
MDCPS

Dr. Pablo G. Ortiz

Vice President and Vice Provost, Senior Fellow,
School of Education and Human Development,
Florida International University

Douglas P. Rodríguez

Principal,
Miami Tech at Mater Innovation Academy
Charter School

Aillette A. Rodriguez-Diaz

District Director, Family and Community Engagement,
MDCPS

Cynthia Valdes-Garcia

Principal,
Glades Middle School, MDCPS

Read about MDC’s new Teaching Academy Dual Enrollment Program on page 8.

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For more information about MDC programs, call 305-237-8888 or visit www.mdc.edu.

MDC Leading the Way in Artificial Intelligence Studies

Miami Dade College has proven once again to be a leader in tech education, as it will become Florida's first institution of higher ed to offer a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Applied Artificial Intelligence (AI). The news follows the recent approvals from the Florida State Board of Education for MDC to offer two College Credit Certificates (CCC) in AI Awareness and AI Practitioner, as well as an Associate in Science (A.S.) in Applied AI.

With both the A.S. and B.S., MDC is among the first colleges in the nation to offer two vital degree programs that will prepare students to meet the increasing need for skilled professionals in a rapidly evolving tech workforce. Industry demands for a large and diverse AI talent pool, in particular, are expected to translate to 513,000 new jobs by 2029, with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity projecting more than 1,000 AI job openings in South Florida annually.

"There is a significant demand for AI professionals in our state, and MDC is poised to train that future workforce," said MDC President Madeline Pumariega. "We are proud to be leading the way to ensure students have the skills they need to succeed."

Strengthening Miami's AI Ecosystem

The new bachelor's program is designed to offer a comprehensive curriculum that lays the foundation for pursuing advanced degrees in computer science or other STEM fields.

The degree programs and their approvals are a culmination of MDC's forward-focused determination to strengthen Miami's AI ecosystem in ways that benefit students, employers and the community. The College has opened two state-of-the-art AI Centers at the North and Wolfson campuses dedicated to enhancing AI education, and established an AI Advisory Committee to help build its AI curriculum. AI concepts are being integrated

across all academic pathways, and the College hired expert faculty members to lead the charge.

AI for All

Business Administration professors Dr. Veronica Ramsundar and Dr. Allison Hudson, for example, were tapped to create an elective course for the College's AI programs called "Applied AI in Business." The idea is to introduce students to AI in fields not typically associated with the technology. The course explores how AI is currently being implemented in the industry and across business functions.

"When the majority of our students graduate, their future will essentially be a workplace that is dominated by some sort of AI, as businesses continue to build the tech into their business models," Ramsundar said. "It's important for our business students to know about the technology even if they don't necessarily know the technical aspect of it."

Creating that kind of awareness is already proving to be successful in igniting a passion for the topic. Take it from student Destiny Ayala, who decided to pursue the CCC in AI Awareness in addition to a B.S. in Supervision and Management after taking the course. She's also considering the CCC in AI Practitioner, which is designed for students seeking to develop the technical skills needed for real-world AI applications.

"I never thought I would be interested in this topic, but the professors really captured my interest," she said. "I hope to improve my career with my new knowledge of AI and its role in the workplace."

MDC's B.S. program in Applied AI will begin in 2024, while the A.S. and both CCCs are being offered this fall. The one-year CCCs will stack toward the two-year A.S. and the four-year B.S.

— JR

STUDENTS AT THE HELM OF INNOVATION WITH AI PROJECTS

Several Miami Dade College students had the privilege of showcasing their inventive approaches to artificial intelligence (AI) during a visit by U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information **Alan Davidson**. The student projects included:

Harry Potter and the Secret Power of AI

Ulysses del Pino and Dylan Polverine showed how they've been working on an AI chatbot that can pinpoint examples of literary devices – such as metaphors – used in the *Harry Potter* series. Led by North Campus professors Carmen Bucher and George Gabb and Learning Resources Associate Director Stephanie Garcia, the project is one of 10 faculty proposals selected for the President's Innovation Fund to explore the interdisciplinary implementation of AI.

Virtual AI Assistant

Nicolás Campos presented Clera, a virtual AI assistant designed to become the next generation of receptionists and advisors, to provide enhanced customer service interaction. The virtual assistant is powered by the conversational AI chatbot ChatGPT, and made its debut as the welcoming face of the new AI Center at MDC's Wolfson Campus.

Vertical Landing Rocket

Luis Luna demonstrated how his experience working with robotics in MDC's Makers Lab has helped inform his ongoing work on a self-correcting, self-landing vertical landing rocket. The rocket, which will be tested later this year, will launch and land using AI. The project is his attempt to better understand the mechanisms of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, which uses an AI autopilot system to carry out autonomous operations.

Eco Events LLC

Rosalyn Lax presented a business capstone project in which she created an eco-friendly party supply company. Lax demonstrated how AI can be used in e-commerce to automate business practices, such as using an AI chatbot for customer service.

— JR



Top: Student Luis Luna, left, introduces U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Alan Davidson, center, to NAO, an autonomous, programmable humanoid robot; Right: Student Nicolás Campos poses with Clera, a virtual AI assistant he created that welcomes visitors to the Artificial Intelligence Center at Wolfson Campus.



Venture Miami Scholarship Helps Students Succeed

Genesis Guardado felt like she was struggling during the start of her academic career at Miami Dade College.

Balancing her time as a Data Analytics student and working a full-time job to afford her classes was not easy. But after taking a year off, Guardado made a triumphant return, which she credits to the **Venture Miami Scholarship**.

After earning the scholarship two semesters in a row, Guardado said her grades have significantly improved and are the best they've ever been.

"I was relieved," she said. "Instead of focusing on working hard to make money so I can pay for those classes, I could just focus on my classes."

The financial relief has allowed Guardado to invest in her time as a student at MDC, where she has successfully participated in hackathons, earned several industry certifications and served as a portfolio manager of the Student Managed Investment Fund. She's also picked up a marketing internship with technology firm TradeStation.



Genesis Guardado

"As someone who has personally benefited from scholarships and witnessed the positive impact they can have, I encourage every student to explore and pursue these opportunities," she said.

The Venture Miami Scholarship is a partnership with Miami Mayor **Francis X. Suarez's** Venture Miami initiative, **The Miami Foundation** and local institutions of higher education designed to help Miami residents pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) careers.

The program launched last year with a \$500,000 allocation from the city, which is being matched by MDC, Florida International University, Florida Memorial University and the University of Miami.

MDC has also partnered with Suarez's Venture Miami to host the Venture Miami Tech Hiring Fair, which helps connect Miami's tech talent with recruiters from top-tier companies like **Amazon Web Services** and **Microsoft**.

— JR

Tech High School Welcomes First Class of Students



Students attending the "All Hands On Tech" summer camp at Kendall Campus, where technology topics were the focus, as they will be at the new MIA Tech.

The first cohort of Miami Dade College's **Miami Tech at Mater Innovation Academy (MIA Tech)** is well underway this fall, giving Miami's young tech talent a head start in joining the region's growing tech industry.

The tuition-free charter school is a partnership between MDC, Miami Mayor **Francis X. Suarez** and **Mater Academy** to train high school students to become the most capable candidates for in-demand tech careers.

The school's technology-focused MIA Tech Scholar program is designed to help students earn an Associate in Science (A.S.) degree, as well as valuable industry certifications, in addition to graduating with a high school diploma.

"This school is going to prepare my son for the future by exposing him to tech now," said parent Karen Baltodano, whose 15-year-old son, Francisco Cruz, started ninth grade at the new school.

Students can choose between two career pathways: Cloud Computing or Mobile Applications Development.

Those who qualify will be dual enrolled at MDC's Wolfson Campus to take college-level courses simultaneously with their high school curriculum.

Upon graduation, the students will have earned both their high school diploma and either an A.S. in Computer Programming and Analysis, with a concentration in Mobile Applications Development, or an A.S. in Networking Services Technology, with a concentration in Enterprise Cloud Computing.

Yazmin Navarro, director of Academics and Operations, said MIA Tech enrollees who do not immediately qualify for MDC's dual enrollment program will be prepared to attend college courses by their junior or senior year so they can earn some college credits before graduating.

MIA Tech is still accepting applications for new students, at <https://materinnovationtech.org/apply>.

— JR

Corporate Teams Defend Against Cyberattacks in Cyber Cup

Within 39 seconds, an inconspicuous email in an inbox can set off a cyberattack.

That's the kind of time pressure that incident response teams worldwide worked to overcome in the first **International Cyber League (ICL) Americas Cyber Cup** hosted by Miami Dade College's Cybersecurity Center of the Americas and **Cyberbit**.

The virtual tournament over the summer challenged participants to defend against hyperrealistic, simulated cyberattacks that may be encountered in the field.

"We believe that competitions like the ICL Americas Cyber Cup are a vital component of cyber readiness, providing critical hands-on experience and the chance to perform as a team under pressure," said Jorge Ortega, director of MDC's Cybersecurity Center.

The defense teams' skills were put to the test in what is known as a cyber range — a virtual environment where cybersecurity professionals are trained to mitigate realistic cyberattacks by utilizing multiple tools and techniques. The College partnered with Cyberbit in 2018 to provide hands-on cyber skills development for cybersecurity students and professionals at MDC's Cyber Range training facility.

"By leveraging the cyber range, cyber defense teams can develop, test and benchmark their cyber defense skills, helping them identify performance gaps and strengths to master the skills they need to become leaders in the field," said Susan Green, senior national director at Cyberbit.

The corporate teams competed for the title of "Best Cyber Defense Team in the Americas," with Western Union's incident response team coming out on top. Competing teams also included **Assurant**, whose team has trained at MDC's Cyber Range, and College industry partners **Telefónica** and **Akamai**. Results were based on response time, overall detection, investigation and remediation performance.

— JR



GS10KSB Program Builds Better Business in Miami

Getting Kids to Eat Veggies? It's EasyPeasie

When Dr. Jamelah Tucker needed to get her two young nephews to eat vegetables, she and her sister dehydrated and ground vegetables into a powder and slowly introduced it to foods the kids already enjoyed, such as cereal, oatmeal and applesauce. It worked.

"For children, vegetables are a multisensory experience," said Tucker, a pediatrician. "It involves taste, smell, texture and even the sound they make when bitten. We used the exposure of the palate and nose to get them familiar with vegetables using those foods in which they took comfort."

Hence, **EasyPeasie Veggie Blends** was born. They were the first vegetable palate-primers on the market and contain no sweeteners or additives. Each blend has a unique flavor profile and comes in kid-friendly, portable packaging.

Tucker began selling small amounts at farmers' markets throughout Florida. Then the product exploded in popularity during the pandemic, forcing the women to move sales online in 2020. To take her business to the next level, Tucker turned to the **Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program** (GS10KSB) at Miami Dade College's



Dr. Jamelah Tucker, left, and her sister Dr. Dorielle T. Price

Miguel B. Fernandez Family School of Global Business, Trade & Transportation.

"The program gave me the opportunity to dissect my own business," she said. "We looked at everything from the business culture to the finances."

GS10KSB, a free program, helps entrepreneurs scale up their small businesses by providing access to education and business support services. Participants gain practical skills and develop actionable growth plans with the help of advisors.

"GS10KSB was a fantastic way for someone not in business to learn," Tucker said. "I developed a camaraderie with the members of my cohort and found we all face similar challenges despite having very different businesses."

Her company's product works on adults, too. Tucker admitted she didn't like beets, but after creating a blend with the vegetable, her tastes changed.

"I eat beets now," she joked. "I 'EasyPeasied' myself."

— DJ

GS10KSB at Miami Dade College | At a Glance

- Has assisted 765 businesses in 28 cohorts since 2014
- Those firms employed a combined 12,610 people
- Advised entrepreneurial endeavors in many fields, including real estate, food production, medical services, personal training, photography and others



Jessie Lopez



and encouraging."

Pontevedra employs skilled artisans who carve and shape different types of rock into a variety of building materials including countertops,

This Business Is Solid as a Rock

Jessie Lopez left his career in finance in 2016 to operate **Pontevedra Marble and Granite Solutions**, a company with a track record of 20-plus years. As he grew into his new role, he turned to the GS10KSB program.

"I was searching for some type of coaching to help our business take the next step," he said. "It was great to be around peers who were encountering similar challenges and to exchange ideas with them. The faculty has been so attentive

flooring and furniture for use in the U.S. and the Caribbean. With little industry regulation, Lopez said that craftsmanship and customer service are his keystones to success.

"This is where Pontevedra stands out," he said. "We offer high-quality products, affordable pricing and are one of the few stone fabricators that carries an inventory of slabs for sale, making us a true one-stop-shop."

While Lopez does have a background and education in business, the GS10KSB program taught him how to apply new concepts directly to his business in real time. He was able to develop a growth plan, too. "Our processes have been improved and we are launching a marketing campaign for the first time ever," he said.

Now, he has a new network of business owners with whom he can consult and even commiserate. "I have come away from this program feeling as if I now have a team of colleagues who are also excited about the future of my business, and whom I can call on for advice if needed. And as any business owner can attest, I will probably need it."

— DJ



Members of the latest cohort of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program at MDC

Students Take Flight on Transformational Study Abroad Programs

Juan Romero has always been drawn to Japan because of its rich culture, delectable food and whimsical anime. So when the Miami Dade College student had the chance to study there, he didn't hesitate.

"Japan's legacy, customs and new advancements in technology all converged to make it an enticing location for my academic endeavors," said Romero, one of more than 137 students who embarked on a study abroad trip through MDC's Office of International Education this summer. Countries visited included Italy, Japan, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Costa Rica, Australia, Scotland, Belize, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands.



Students and professors exploring the sites in England



From left, Emilee Garcia, Nathaniel Forbes, Karen Ramirez and Megan Di Russo on the Camino de Santiago



Students learn to drum in Japan.

It was the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic that the College was able to carry out its robust study abroad program.

"Fortunately, all programs were successful," said Gabriela Esteves, director of Global Student Programming. "Feedback from our students has been incredibly heartening. They are now eager to pay it forward and encourage others to embark on this life-changing experience."

Most study-abroad programs are led by MDC and are tied to a specific area of study. For example, the program in England through the School of Justice and the Department of Mathematics centered around crime scene analysis using math and statistics. Film-making students created content in Prague. And separately, a New World School of the Arts trip to Madrid provided graduating visual arts college students with a unique artistic experience.

A Journey Through Spain

Ten students were able to participate because they received the **Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship**, which gives students with limited financial means the opportunity to study abroad.

On another trip, four MDC students took part in the Way of Saint James (*Camino de Santiago*), where they walked one of the major routes that lead to Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia, Spain.

Recent graduate Megan Di Russo, who will start Stanford University in the fall, said the program was a chance to reflect and forge friendships with students from Madrid, New York and Miami. "This trip allowed me to see just how human we all are and how no matter where we are from, we aren't all that different," she said.

A 'Transformational Experience'

Japan was one of the most popular programs -- and it didn't disappoint. "The experience has been nothing short of transformational, leaving an everlasting imprint on my personality and view on life," said Romero, who is pursuing an Associate in Arts with a pathway to a major in Law at Padrón Campus. "Embracing the unfamiliar, pushing oneself beyond one's comfort zone, and experiencing a new nation are all catalysts for significant personal growth and interesting experiences."

Benjamin Augustyn, an Anthropology professor at MDC's Wolfson Campus, said the program gives students an overview of Japanese culture in ways "you typically don't get just by taking a vacation."

"Study abroad is an excellent way to enrich the overall educational experience, which is why we put so much effort into making them happen," he said.

— CT

2023 World Strategic Forum Returns in November

"Mastering the New Economy" will be the focus when Miami Dade College presents the 12th annual **World Strategic Forum** Nov. 6-7 at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables.

An initiative of the **International Economic Forum of the Americas** (IEFA), the World Strategic Forum cultivates engagement and encourages dialogue, corporate insight and collaboration on the central issues affecting the world's economy.

The conference will feature prominent speakers from various industries and governments.

Through both in-person and virtual presentations, the Forum sponsors thought-provoking and real-time conversations among global leaders dedicated to discussing the strategies that will enable society at large to thrive during challenging times for the economy. Discussions will address what happens when inflation coupled with a potential recession collides with environmental imperatives and digital transition, and how to turn adversities into opportunities.

"We will examine the major governance challenges of today, as well as the opportunities

and challenges specific to the Americas," said Nicholas Rémillard, CEO of the IEFA.

Last year's Forum welcomed close to 100 speakers and more than 1,000 in-person participants from 35 different nations.

To learn more or to register, visit <https://forum-americas.org>.



Getting a Head Start on Careers With Summer Internships

Harvard Stint Plants Seeds of Opportunity

As a child in Costa Rica, Helen Tarrau loved trekking around mountains and volcanos. Her love for nature grew as she got older. Now a Miami Dade College student, Tarrau explored her passion during a summer internship with the **Harvard Forest Summer Research Program in Ecology**.

"This internship really did solidify that this is something I want to do for the rest of my life," said Tarrau, who is studying Environmental Sciences at The Honors College at Homestead Campus.

Tarrau was not alone. Many MDC students spent their summer learning about their future careers, whether in laboratories or institutions including the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** and the **Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD)**.

At Harvard, Tarrau was one of only 21 students picked nationwide for the prestigious, 11-week research experience. While monitoring the growth of tree seedlings, she attended seminars with students from other renowned universities. "Being there made me think that transferring to Harvard or a school like it is really an option," she said. "I am definitely more motivated now."

Below is a look at some of the other summer internships:



Helen Tarrau

Science and Engineering Opportunities

Five Honors College students participated in the **U.S. Department of Education's Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP)**. Jorge Hurtado said his time at the FDA **Center for Food and Safety and Applied Nutrition** helped verify his chosen career path. His research dealt with ways to track food from source to table.

"I knew I needed to have exposure to a variety of industries and careers earlier on in my undergraduate path as a way to confirm my decision to be an Industrial Engineering major," he said.

In addition to Hurtado, the other participants were Thierry Laguerre, North Campus, at the FDA **Center for Veterinary Medicine**; Rian Gonzalez, Padrón Campus, and Lucas Jesus Tembras, Wolfson Campus, at the **U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory**; and Veronica Calzadilla Sosa, Wolfson Campus, also at the Center for Food and Safety.

Circling the Globe

Eslyn Gonzalez was part of the inaugural **Community College Global Affairs Fellowship**, a paid enrichment and mentorship program funded by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**. It featured virtual mentorship and a two-week, in-person program. The fellowship exposes community college students to global education opportunities and international affairs careers.

Experimenting With STEM

Nine MDC students participated in a STEM undergraduate research internship program at the University of Florida (UF).

Through the School of Science's STEM Strategies for Maximizing Achievement, Retention and Transfer (STEM SMART) project, the students gained research experience in science, technology, engineering and math alongside UF mentors. Samiah Bodden, who is studying Biology at North Campus, worked in UF's microbiology and cell science department.

"I really enjoyed making new discoveries and seeing what being a researcher entails," she said. "When it comes to research, you will be troubleshooting experiments a lot, and although it can be tedious, it's all worth it in the end when you obtain valuable results!"

Other participants were Sophia Jerez, Brianna Jean, Aizada Berdalinova, Claudia Leon, Jose Jerez, Maeva Dalce, Javier Gil and Maria Abrahamyan.



Studying STEM at UF

Police Work, Up Close



Alexandra Vega and Joy Stanley

Two Criminal Justice students learned the ropes at the **Miami-Dade Police Department**. Alexandra Vega, who attends Padrón Campus, said she had the chance to witness "real police work."

"This internship allowed me to get a behind-the-scenes look at what officers do on a daily basis and how every 911 call is different," said Vega, who aspires to be a special victims unit detective.

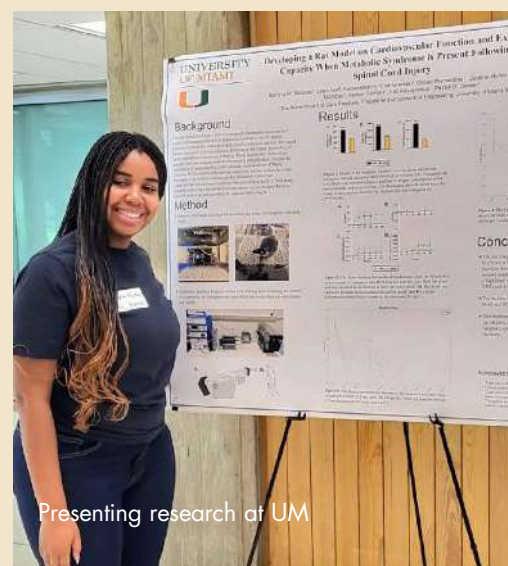
Student Joy Stanley said the internship will help her in her future endeavors after she gets her bachelor's degree.

"Over the course of three months I have gained valuable insights, shadowed officers wherever they went, discovered myself more and made connections," the Rising Scholar alumna said.

It's All About Research

Seventeen students attended **The South Florida Research Consortium's Undergraduate Research Internship Program (URIP)**. The Honors College STEM students conducted research at Florida International University (FIU) and University of Miami (UM) for 10 weeks.

The students at UM were Fiorella Yantani Coto, Sara Cruz, Anabel Alonso Diaz, Marrero Mayon, Ronrya Nicolas, Gabriel Gamez Ortega, Claudia Flores Ruiz and Carla Cano Velasquez. The students at FIU were Samantha Espinosa, Jesus Galarza, Michael Hidalgo, Daniel Melayes, Ilian Ramirez, Heidy Umana Ramos, Sofia Torrech and Ivanna Zambrano.



Presenting research at UM

Keeping It Green

The Underline, a nonprofit initiative to transform the land below Miami's Metrorail into a park, named five MDC students as Green Leaders Apprentices to explore horticulture. The students were Daniel Arrubla, Julianna Barrios, Elissa Eguiluz, Milca Jeune and Andrea Terrero.

— CT

Continued from page 1

Once in the bachelor's degree program, qualified education students can participate in a residency with a Miami-Dade Schools supervising teacher, through another partnership with MDC. The student interns will earn a salary while also satisfying their student teaching requirements. The initiative is intended to address Florida's critical shortage of teachers, including in Miami-Dade County's school system, the third largest in the nation.

MDC has placed 59 resident interns with the school district for the fall semester. Student Michael Burns will have his own second grade classroom at South Hialeah Elementary School with supervising teacher Evelyn Delgado and principal Dr. Dillon Williams. All three agree the residencies are a valuable tool.

"It's an excellent program that places pre-service teachers into the actual practice," Williams said. "Shifting from theory to practice is key to becoming a great educator. Participating students also can benefit from having a



The first cohort of School of Education resident interns celebrate their graduation.

supervising teacher who understands the profession and can be a valuable mentor."

Burns is excited at the prospect of having his own classroom. He intends to prep the students before he even starts a lesson.

"Classroom management is so important," he said. "The children need to know how to work as a team and support one another before you begin."

While Burns will rely on his mentor Delgado to guide him through the process, even she said she plans to brush up on her teaching toolbox.

"In order to make sure that I properly prepare the resident interns, I have had to take a detailed look at how I do things," she said. "I have found areas that I needed to improve so that I can be the best mentor possible."

— DJ

Young Summer Interns Explore Future Careers

Benaiah Boisvert dreams of opening her own café in South Florida. The Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High student spent the better part of her summer learning the ropes from seasoned professionals at Miami Dade College's Miami Culinary Institute.

"It's been really interesting to see how much organization is required to operate a restaurant," she said. "You have to be very detailed with everything."

Boisvert, 16, participated in the **Summer Youth Internship Program**, a collaboration between MDC and **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**.

Participating students earned dual enrollment credits that count toward their high school and college degrees. MDC sponsored 160 intern positions across the College's eight campuses.

Students worked in all areas of the school including academic offices, student services and even the College archives. Boisvert spent her time learning about food-handling safety, preparing fresh ingredients and kitchen equipment.

"I got to learn how much goes into keeping foods fresh and safe for people to eat," she said. "I loved the experience and would definitely do it again."

— DJ

Students See Success in Signature Scholarship Programs

Confidence. Stability. Community. These are only a few of the words used by Miami Dade College Presidential and Rising Scholars to describe what they gained from being a part of these signature scholarship programs.

"You are surrounded by people who care about you and your success," said Ciarra Ashley, a Rising Scholar alumna.

Now in their third year, both programs have seen tremendous success with scholars serving as student leaders, graduating on time or early and coming back to mentor new cohorts. The programs together welcomed more than 600 students this fall term. From volunteer projects and leadership development to meet-and-greets with public and private leaders and etiquette/life skills training, students in both programs are exposed to a wide range of educational opportunities.

"Given the right learning environment and the right support, these students are able

to achieve their dreams and beyond," said MDC President Madeline Pumariega.

The Presidential Scholar Program had 595 participants in its first two cohorts. Students go to school

tuition-free and receive a stipend. There was a 93% fall-to-fall retention rate for the fall 2021 cohort, which was made up of 300 students.

For the Rising Scholars Program,

scholars receive free tuition, a book stipend and a laptop. There have been 331 Rising Scholars. There was a 97% fall-to-fall retention rate for the fall 2021 cohort, which had 125 students.

While the programs are run separately, they do link up for various educational and leadership events, including a recent trip to New York. Taking students outside of South Florida is one way the programs offer new experiences and expand their world views.

"This experience has given me a broader perspective on the prospects available to me as an immigrant in the United States," said Presidential Scholar Alexandra Villagra. "This allowed me to visit New York, see the Statue of Liberty, and learn about prestigious institutions like NYU and Columbia University, all of which had been childhood ambitions. This experience has changed my life."

— CT



Presidential and Rising Scholars visit the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

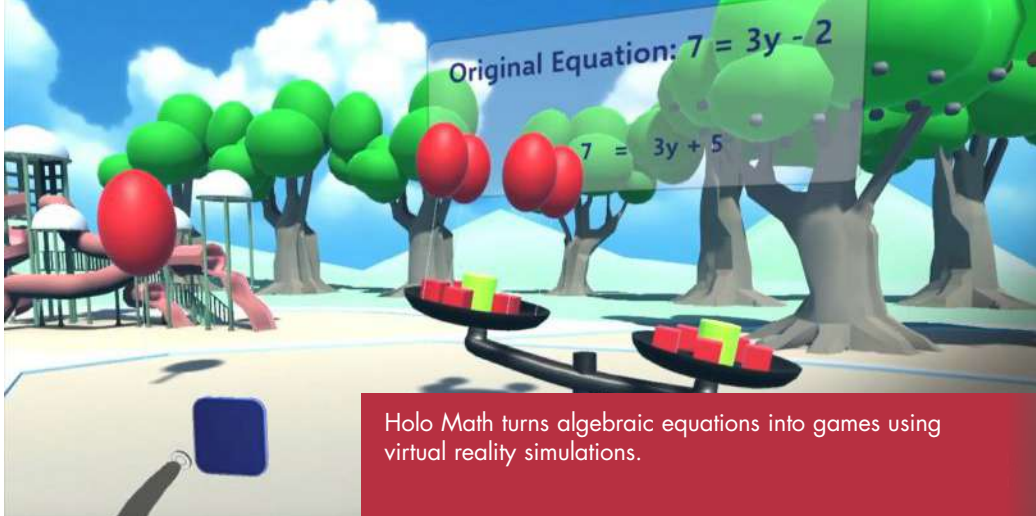
Student VR Project Puts Fun Twist on Learning Math

If you ask students for their least favorite subject, odds are math would rank No. 1. Now, thanks to an ingenious project by two students at Miami Dade College’s Miami Animation and Gaming International Complex (MAGIC), learning math can be a lot more interesting.

“Holo Math,” created by students Diego Castillo and Pedro Terra, aims to make learning algebra interactive and engaging using virtual reality (VR) simulations to visually present abstract mathematical concepts in a video game format. The project started off as the first-place winner in MAGIC’s third annual 24-hour Halloween Hackathon last year.

“Ever since I was in middle school, I always dreamed of creating a way to enjoy school more,” Castillo said. “Once I got to the hackathon, I realized this was my chance.”

Holo Math has since garnered the attention of **Microsoft** software engineer Denise Mendez, who is mentoring the students, with additional support from MDC’s STEM Legacy grant and the Teaching and Learning Center at Wolfson Campus. MAGIC Chair Mauricio Ferrazza said the VR project is being implemented this fall following its success during MDC’s Summer Bridge Program Math Summer Academy.



MAGIC
MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

MIAMI ANIMATION
& GAMING
INTERNATIONAL COMPLEX

“We surveyed participating students, and they said they wanted more,” he said. “When’s the last time you heard that – students wanting more algebra?”

MAGIC is also working with faculty to create similar VR projects as the College strives to enhance student learning through its Metaversity with virtual classes and simulated lessons. First up is a chemistry VR simulation for Dr. Davia Hudson-Holness to help her students learn the periodic table of elements. MAGIC students will work on the VR application as part of their annual capstone projects.

“We know that people learn in different ways, so this is an effort to enhance the student learning experience,” Ferrazza said.

– JR

Finn-Con@MDC Celebrates Anime and Gaming



Professor Alberto Bade, center, directs the Miami Dade Symphony Orchestra; Below, a gang of *Ghostbusters* take on Slimer.

Beloved pop culture characters came to life this summer in the form of Miami Dade College students dressed in their best cosplay at the first Finn-Con@MDC Anime and Gaming Expo.

The daylong convention transformed MDC’s North Campus into a vibrant space for all things anime, graphic novels, visual arts and gaming. College and community participants partook in a dynamic range of activities and experiences, from an immersive *Harry Potter*-themed escape room to singing and cosplay competitions.

Organizer Angel Hernandez, director of the North Campus Learning Resources, said the campus library has previously hosted similar events, like International Games Month, and wanted to expand its offerings.



A brave attendee investigates the mystery of a *Harry Potter*-themed escape room.

And expand they did. The convention took over two buildings on campus, including the Lehman Theater, where the Miami Dade College Symphony Orchestra, directed by Professor Alberto Bade, transported audiences into the thrilling worlds of video games and anime series like *Super Mario* and *Cowboy Bepop* with live renditions of theme songs.

“We thought the expo could be something that would have a significant impact on our students and the community, while at the same time allowing MDC to serve as a convener of people and cultures,” Hernandez said.

Finn-Con also raised over \$500 for **Nicklaus Children’s Hospital** thanks to registration donation proceeds collected for video game tournaments hosted by Genshiken, a North Campus student club dedicated to anime, gaming and Asian culture.

– JR





Promoting Civic Engagement Through Changemaker Week

Sarah Compere thought being a changemaker meant you had to be “the next Einstein.” But the Miami Dade College student realized quickly that wasn’t the case. Through MDC’s Civic Action Scorecard – a way for students to track their engagement – she learned that donating food, planting trees and voting all are ways to make a difference.

“That’s when my mindset switched,” said Compere, who is studying business administration. “I am a changemaker. And we all can be changemakers.”

For the first time, MDC will sponsor Changemaker Week, being held Sept. 18-24 across all campuses to highlight the importance of civic engagement and social change.

“Having students understand that they take responsibility and an active role in their own learning is one of the ways that our faculty continues to lead the efforts in changemaking and social innovation at MDC,” said Dr. Malou C. Harrison, executive vice president and provost. “Our students are the beneficiaries,

but they are also the propellers of this work.”

Throughout the week, there will be workshops, fairs, service projects and more that focus on six United Nations Sustainable Development goals including quality education and climate action. The week will culminate with the annual Pink Walk, to raise funds to beat breast cancer.

Sandra LaFleur, director of Changemaker Education and Social Innovation, said the College has been practicing changemaking for years and wants to showcase the work. In 2015, MDC was designated as an **Ashoka U Changemaker Campus**, which means it is among a group of institutions recognized for their efforts in changemaking and education innovation.

Robert Henry, an Arts and Philosophy professor at Wolfson Campus, said it’s all about perspective: “We want to think about changemaking as a type of lens, a way of looking at the world where we see the possibilities for a better future.”

– CT



With Some Help, These Students Can Study, Get Jobs and Thrive

Miami Dade College launched the Kendall Learning Academy, a year-long pilot designed to provide an educational experience for 15 students with autism or other developmental disorders.

The program, which started over the summer, is designed to guide the students through a 20-credit curriculum that gives them the opportunity to receive a Business Intelligence Professional College Credit Certificate and, ultimately, gain meaningful employment. To ensure success, the class is being paired with MDC School of Education students for mentoring, and with the ACCESS Disability Services office to provide academic accommodations.

“We’re meeting the needs of these students and helping them become more independent,” said Mercy Macrina, ACCESS director at MDC’s Kendall Campus and leader of the Academy.

The idea took root after it was suggested by **Miami-Dade Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado**, a former Miami-Dade County

Public Schools board member and the parent of two children on the autism spectrum.

Kendall Campus President Dr. Anthony Cruz said by next summer, it’s expected that all 15 participating students will have had a paid internship. Regalado has pledged to help them find jobs, he added.

At a District Board of Trustees meeting, trustee Marcell Felipe spoke highly of the program and its goals. He has raised an autistic child for the past 14 years, and urged everyone not to underestimate neurodivergent students. He pointed out that a nonspeaking autistic student gave the 2022 commencement speech as the valedictorian at Rollins College in Winter Park.

Felipe also emphasized the importance of mentorship.

“I’ve seen it work miracles – not just for autistic kids, but for the cohorts who get such a degree of responsibility and pride. It’s a beautiful program.”

– WV

Program Puts Students on ‘Fast Track’ to Education

When Yenice Hecheverria started the fall term at Miami Dade College, she already had nine credits, knew how to work the student portal and was familiar with her home campus.

That’s because she was one of nearly 1,100 students who enrolled in MDC’s Fast Track Sharks program, a summer enrollment option that gives new high school graduates a head start on their education at no cost.

“I felt a lot more confident about attending MDC in the fall,” said Hecheverria, who graduated from Hialeah-Miami Lakes High School in the spring and started at Hialeah Campus over the summer. “I was nervous about starting college, and this made it easier.”

Now in its third year, Fast Track is a six-week summer scholarship program that pays for up to six credits. It’s growing in popularity: This year, 1,080 students enrolled, up 57% from last year and 66% from 2021. Out of those 1,080 students, 95% enrolled for the fall term.

“It’s getting them to connect early with the College and having them learn what MDC offers,” said Adam Porro, executive director of First-Year Development and Student Success. “We want to get them engaged as early as possible.”

Participants are required to take two courses. In addition to free tuition, they receive a \$500 book stipend, academic coaching from a student success advisor and are connected with multiple services, including Single Stop, mental health counseling, MDC Works and Learning Resources.

Porro said the program helps retain students; many of the 2021 and 2022 Fast Track participants are graduating or close to receiving a degree.

For Gabriel Albarran, attending the Fast Track program was a summer well spent. Receiving the scholarship allowed him to get credits under his belt and save money.

“I am thankful I already have experience and know how things work,” he said.

– CT





ATHLETICS

MDC Scores a Winning Goal

Sharks Soccer Kicks Off in 2024

Told that soccer was returning to Miami Dade College in 2024, Haitian soccer legend, alumnus and former MDC player/coach Ernst “Zenono” Jean-Baptiste let out a cry of joy.

“This is a wonderful, wonderful thing!” he exclaimed. “Yes, yes, yes! I’m so happy for MDC and its students. This will create so much excitement.”

After winning two national championships followed by a nearly 30-year hiatus, MDC soccer will make its return, fortuitously as *fútbol* enjoys a growing wave of popularity sparked by the arrival of Argentine superstar **Lionel Messi** to David Beckham’s **Inter Miami** team.

“We have had a long tradition of winning and given our community, now is the time to bring soccer back to MDC,” said College President Madeline Pumariiega.

The men’s and women’s teams, each with 24 roster spots, will compete in the Florida College System Activities Association against Daytona State and Eastern Florida State colleges and other teams in the National Junior College Athletic Association. Games will take place on the Kendall Campus fields, which are being outfitted with new lighting. Coaches will be hired first, allowing them time to recruit high school players. Games will kick off in 2024.

Soccer has been the talk of the town in Miami with the men’s and women’s International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) **World Cup** to be played in the city in 2026, and Messi joining Inter Miami. His record-setting goals since his start have set the soccer world ablaze.

Dr. Anthony Cruz, Kendall Campus president, said that while the recent developments are exciting, MDC has been analyzing the return of the

sport for some time. Many MDC students have roots in countries where soccer reigns supreme.

“While the student athletes will play at the Kendall Campus, this is MDC’s team, and we really hope to see students from all of our campuses come out to support the Sharks,” he said.

The current Athletics system is different from decades ago when MDC campuses had independent teams that often faced off.

Alumnus Jean-Baptiste was recruited by head coach Laszlo Nagy and became a standout midfielder for the Jaguars at South Campus, now known as Kendall Campus.

“Laszlo was a legendary coach,” said Jean-Baptiste, who immigrated from Haiti in 1975. “We knew we would be a great team with his leadership.”

And they were. Jean-Baptiste was selected as an All-American in 1978. He was instrumental in the team’s 1979 national championship, Nagy’s final year as head coach. The men won a second national title in 1983 under head coach Herb Dunning.

Jean-Baptiste went on to play during the **Miami Americans’** only season in 1980 and then the famed **Fort Lauderdale Strikers** before returning to his alma mater, where he coached the MDC Wolfson Campus Barracudas from 1984-1990. He amassed a record of 44 wins, 13 losses and three tied games.

“My years at MDC were the best of my life and my career,” he said. “I treasure all my memories and still keep in touch with my coaches and teammates. MDC is truly a special place for me.”

Zenono returned to Port-au-Prince in the 1990s to coach the Haitian national team.



MDC President Madeline Pumariiega, Board of Trustees Chair Michael Bileca and Trustee Roberto Alonso showing off new T-shirts displaying the Sharks soccer logo.

He was named deputy director general of the Haitian Ministry of Youth, Sports and Civic Action in 2015. Miami-Dade County recently named new soccer fields at Oak Grove Park in his honor.

North Campus Philosophy Professor Amnel Molina, who coached a student soccer club in 2016, said students will support the new teams. “Even before Messi’s arrival, soccer fever has been high in South Florida and on my campus. I talk to students about soccer before and after class, and a large number of them wear soccer jerseys.”

Looking forward, “I really do see MDC becoming a force in soccer,” he said.

— DJ



Ernst “Zenono” Jean-Baptiste at Kendall Campus with the 1979 national championship trophy; Above: The winning team, with Jean-Baptiste in the second row from the top, second from right.

MDC Athletics Elevates Program With Winning New Hires

Miami Dade College has hired veteran basketball coach Mike Balado as the College’s new athletic director. In addition, alumnus and

former **Major League Baseball** player Alex Fernandez will serve as the new senior advisor to the Athletics Department.

“Mike is a proven leader who brings years of experience across Division 1 schools to our coaches and student-athletes,” said MDC President Madeline Pumariiega, who played basketball at the College. “I look forward to seeing him grow MDC Athletics to new heights.”

Balado spent two seasons as an assistant at MDC, helping lead the Sharks to back-to-back winning seasons and the conference championship in 2004-05. He comes to MDC from Arkansas State University, where he was head

basketball coach since 2017. He has coached more than 15 seasons at various institutions.

“With the talent of our student-athletes and coaches, the future of MDC Athletics is bright,” Balado said.

Fernandez, an MDC alum, pitched for the **Chicago White Sox** (1990-96) and **Florida Marlins** (1997, 1999-2000) during his 11-year MLB career. He led the **Miami Marlins** to their first-ever **World Series** championship.

“It’s an honor to work toward putting this program in the position to compete for a national title every year,” he said.



SEASON of the arts

40 YEARS, STILL GOING STRONG

Miami Book Fair Presenting Acclaimed Authors, Music



Nov. 12-19, 2023

Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus

For more information:

www.MiamiBookFair.com

wbookfair@mdc.edu | 305-237-3258

Miami Book Fair is one of the most anticipated events of South Florida's cultural season and a globally recognized model of excellence for book festivals everywhere. This year's Fair marks 40 years of bringing books, culture and community to Miami, with 600+ critically acclaimed and bestselling authors across genres representing a wide range of voices, viewpoints and experiences.

The *Evenings With* program will include **Joan Baez**, **David Brooks**, **Rosa Montero**, **Jada Pinkett Smith**, **Kerry Washington** and **Henry Winkler**, among others. Fairgoers can also indulge in an exciting and eclectic three-day Street Fair, live music and DJs on the Off the Shelf stage, the nightly Lost Chapter social get-togethers under the stars, and family-friendly programming and events at Children's Alley, nearly all of it free.

A full schedule of presenters and events, as well as ticketing information, can be found at www.MiamiBookFair.com. Early access to ticketed events is available for Friends of the Fair members.

Also, in celebration of the 40th anniversary, the Fair is sponsoring The Next Page, an inaugural dinner supporting the Fair's next decade. The gala will honor Miami community leaders and authors who have been important to the region's literary arts. It is being held Nov. 17 at the JW Marriott Marquis. For more information, visit www.MiamiBookFair.com/nextpage.

The *Evenings With* program includes presentations by these authors, and many more!



Mitch Albom

The Little Liar: A Novel



Joan Baez

Am I Pretty When I Fly?: An Album of Upside Down Drawings



Richard Blanco

Homeland of My Body: New & Selected Poems



David Brooks

How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen



Meg Cabot

Enchanted to Meet You: A Witches of West Harbor Novel



Jonathan Eig

King: A Life



Ross Gay

The Book of (More) Delights: Essays



Kerri Maher

All You Have to Do Is Call



Evelyn McDonnell

The World According to Joan Didion



Walter Mosley

Touched



Christopher Paolini

Murtagh: The World of Eragon



Jada Pinkett Smith

Worthy



Kerry Washington

Thicker Than Water: A Memoir



Henry Winkler

Being Henry: The Fonzie... and Beyond



David Zucker

Surely You Can't Be Serious: The True Story of Airplane!

IberoAmerican Authors



Héctor Abad Faciolince

Salvo mi corazón, todo está bien



Rosa Montero

La desconocida



Julia Navarro

Una historia compartida



Miami Film Festival GEMS

Nov. 2-5, 2023
Various Locations

MDC'S Miami Film Festival presents GEMS, a fall presentation that serves as a mid-season "Film Festival Fix" in Miami. This four-day event showcases red-carpet premieres, panels, parties and in-person appearances with filmmakers during a concentrated weekend to present "the jewels of the fall season."

Miami Film Society members receive exclusive discounts to all screenings and events plus a one-week pre-sale period before general

admissions opens to the public in early October. A full list of venues, films, events and ticket information will be available in fall 2023 at www.miamifilmfestival.com.

Opening night for the Miami Film Festival is scheduled for April 5, 2024. The popular event was thrilled to win the *Miami New Times* Best Festival award this year, after four decades of providing a world-class platform for local, international and Ibero American independent cinema. Stay tuned for exciting announcements about films, speakers and more.

Live Arts Miami Fall 2023 Season

For tickets and more information:
www.liveartsmiami.org |
305-237-3010

Live Arts Miami, Third Horizon and
Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator
present:

Summon

Sept. 23, 8 p.m. and Sept. 24, 3 p.m.
Sandrell Rivers Theater | Ticket: \$30
6103 N.W. Seventh Ave., Miami

A deep exploration into the heritage
of Jamaica's Maroon culture through a
combination of film and performance.
Jamaican American performance artist
and MDC alumnus **Shamar Watt** incorporates experimental cinema along-
side live performance to investigate the spirit of resistance embodied by the
Maroon people of Jamaica and its timely relevance to the fight for racial jus-
tice. Summon incorporates a new cinematic work led by Jamaican-based
filmmaker **Nile Saulter** and a live performance featuring multiple dancers
and percussionist **Austin Williamson**.



Photo credit: Karli Evans @allseeingmedia

Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra

Oct. 21, 8 p.m. | Ticket: \$41.20
Miami Beach Bandshell
7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach

A night of nostalgia, mambo and cha-
cha! Get ready for an electrifying evening
of music that will transport you back in time
and celebrate the monumental moments
when jazz met the rhythms of Cuba. Multi-
Grammy Award-winner Arturo O'Farrill and
his 20-piece Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra bring
that classic Cuban big band sound for an
unforgettable night.

Bloom! By Sway

Nov. 17-19, multiple times daily | Free with Book Fair admission
MDC's Wolfson Campus
300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami

A colorful and spirited aerial spectacle performed amidst the
Miami Book Fair Street Fair in Downtown Miami. Inspired by
the beauty of flowers, Bloom! features the aerial antics of
three highly skilled and colorful performers atop
15-foot sway poles. Drawing parallels to
the world of humans,
Bloom! explores
themes of individuality,
diversity, transformation
and community.



Photo credit:
Elsie Management
& Alex Lambert



Visit the Koubek Center in Little Havana

Yankee Bajan

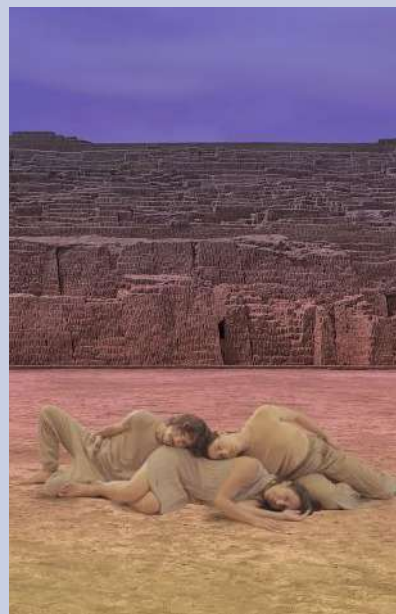


Koubek Center
2705 S.W. Third St., Miami
Free parking
www.koubekcenter.org

Apuntes Americanos-Kanay Multi- disciplinary Dance Performance

Oct. 27-28, 8 p.m. | Ticket: \$15

Roxana Barba investigates the
ancestral Peruvian cosmovision,
the cyclical character of time, and
the European campaigns of cul-
tural extraction in Peru. To reinter-
pret an archaeological excavation,
the performers travel through time
cleaning the material remains of an
ancient civilization.



Yankee Bajan

Nov. 3-4, 8 p.m. | Ticket: \$20
MDC's North Campus
Lehman Theater (Presented by the Koubek Center)
1380 N.W. 27th Ave., Miami

A determined couple seeks a new beginning away from the vio-
lence and injustice in their adopted land and initiates a quest home to
Barbados. Soul-stirring traditional Bajan songs and engaging visual
scenery will inspire viewers.



Visual Arts Exhibition by New World School of the Arts Students

Dec. 1, 7 p.m. | Free
Koubek Center is proud to
continue its annual partnership
with New World School of the
Arts in a collaboration that will
transform the Center and its
gardens into an outdoor sculp-
ture exhibit developed and cu-
rated by New World School of
the Arts visual arts students.

Two Islands Performance – World Premiere

Dec. 16, 8 p.m. | Ticket: \$20

This cultural exchange residen-
cy featuring Afro-Cuban artists from
Miami and Aboriginal artists from
Australia will explore how these two
different cultural traditions, in their
ceremonies and rituals, speak to
their ancestors through a music and
dance performance.



MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN AT MDC

MOAD Pavilion Series

The MOAD Pavilion series consists of commissioned, site-specific, creative spatial interventions. It is the Museum's primary contemporary art presentation during MOAD's Freedom Tower site closure for historic restoration. The series presents **Germane Barnes' Ukhamba**.

Ukhamba is a 10-foot tall, circular wooden structure that is named after a type of African woven wood basket. Combining influences from Barnes' time working in South Africa as well as in Miami, the pavilion is part basket, part traditional breeze wall found in tropical climates.

Nov. 12, 2023 – Feb. 24, 2024: Wolfson Campus
March 11 – May 26, 2024: North Campus

Remaking Miami: Josefina Tarafa's Photographs of the 1970s

This exhibition of images by the photographer, editor and philanthropist captures Miami's transformation after the arrival of Tarafa's fellow Cuban immigrants.

Sept. 18 – Dec. 13: Padrón Campus Gallery
Jan. 8 – Feb. 28: Hialeah Campus Gallery

Viewpoints: Photographs From the EFE Archive

This selection of striking and impactful images aims to give new perspectives on controversial or celebrated characters, places and events, opening the eyes of audiences to unfamiliar moments of international, American and

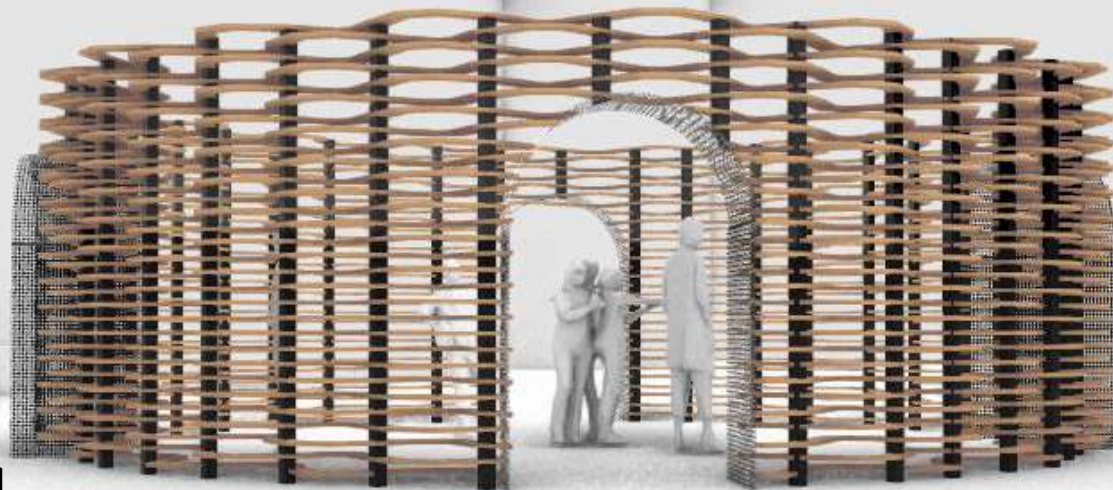
Hispanic culture and history. *Agencia EFE* is the world's largest Spanish-language international news agency.

Sept. 25, 2023 – Jan. 24, 2024
North Campus Gallery

MOAD Projects — Miami Walking Studio With Onajide Shabaka

Onajide Shabaka is a South Florida-based artist whose "studio" occupies a metaphorical space of a walk or hike in the urban and rural environment. These public programs will invite participants to interact with the artist by trying out his practice of walking to discover nearby hidden landscapes and overlooked seedlings, rocks or other natural detritus. Then, using drawing, mapping, printmaking and photography, audiences will be able to investigate the environments and explore the language of plants, and make their own drawings or prints using natural plant materials.

Nov. 4: Environmental Demonstration Center
Kendall Campus, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.



Above: *Ukhamba* pavilion by artist Germane Barnes
Below left: *Repatriation is not a reward*, raw pigment, encaustic, watercolor, collage on paper by artist Onajide Shabaka



Kislak in Depth

This series of programs organized by the Kislak Center and curated by art historian **Dr. Carol Damian** focuses on the diverse cultures of the Americas, from the Caribbean Islands to Mesoamerica and North America.

Sept. 16: Welcome Back with the Kislak Center, Koubek Center, 2705 S.W. Third St., Miami
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Free parking.
Oct. 21: Kislak Artifacts With Clay, Koubek Center, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Free parking.

GOGO MOAD

MOAD's free children's education program on the move, GOGO MOAD, pops up at locations throughout Miami.

Sept. 21, Oct. 21, Jan. 20, 2024: Various creative activities, Koubek Center
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Free Parking.
Nov. 17, 18, 19: At the 2023 Miami Book Fair, Children's Alley
Feb. 17: Hialeah Campus, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Public Programs

6 – 9 p.m., Padrón Campus
Sept. 15 and Nov. 17: *Viernes Culturales* x MOAD Gallery Night
Oct. 20: *Viernes Culturales* x MOAD Gallery Night With Dr. Paul George

Jazz at Wolfson Presents Returns With Stellar Lineup

Take a lunch break to enjoy free concerts featuring renowned performers at Miami Dade College's **Jazz at Wolfson Presents**, now in its 26th season.

The longest continuously running free jazz series in Miami-Dade County, the concerts run from Sept. 13, 2023 to April 3, 2024. They offer

musical performances to students and music lovers of all ages.

All concerts are open to the public at the Wolfson Auditorium, Suite 1261. To see which concerts are livestreamed as well, visit www.mdc.edu/jazzwolfson or the Jazz at Wolfson Presents' Facebook page.

FALL

MDC JAZZ FACULTY QUARTET
Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023 – Noon

CARMEN STAAF • piano
Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2023 – Noon

WOLFSON JAZZ ENSEMBLES
Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023 – 5:40 p.m.

DICK OATTS • sax
Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023 – Noon

DAVID WONG • bass
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023 – Noon

SPRING

ALLISON MILLER • drums
Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024 – Noon

SARA SERPA • singer
Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024 – Noon

WOLFSON JAZZ ENSEMBLES
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 – 5:40 p.m.

DION TUCKER • trombone
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 – Noon

MARTIN BEJERANO • piano
NICOLE YARLING • singer
Wednesday, April 3, 2024 – Noon



MFI GRADUATE FASHION SHOW RAISES THE ROOF

As the sun set and day turned to dusk, the rooftop pool deck of the **Elser Hotel** became a glittering runway overlooking the Miami skyline. There, new graduates of Miami Dade College's Miami Fashion Institute presented their minicollections to a packed house during the "Future in Memories" runway show. The portfolios were the culmination of their two years of study at MFI.

Fifteen students selected by a jury of experts showcased their work in the annual event attended by relatives and industry professionals, including **Fäde Zu Grau**, a German designer who appeared on two seasons of TLC's **Project Runway**.

The show opened with a selection of casual wear that included

pieces for the beach, a collection of retro womenswear and some outerwear suitable for climates somewhat colder than Miami. Then came the glitz and glam of eveningwear collections, ranging from the little black dress to a collection of bridal gowns.

MFI offers an Associate in Science in Fashion Design or Fashion Merchandising. Students can also earn a College Credit Certificate in Pattern Making and Construction.

— DJ

A model shows off a piece by Jabari Mickles



Collection by Laura Muneton Miranda



Clockwise from above, models wear pieces by student designers Edverson Raymonvil, Kseniia Zagorodneva, SHLOMOH, Tasha Jean-Noel and Isabella Villarroee.



Life-Saving Competition

Tests Skills in Bombing Scenario

After a Miami medical facility is bombed by a suspected terrorist, the scene is littered with blood, body parts and victims in need of immediate medical care. This was the scenario for the 2023 **Randy Boaz Memorial Advanced Life Support Competition** held at Miami Dade College's Medical Campus.

Fourteen teams of first responders from across Florida participated in the annual event, which reinforces best practices and pushes team members to their limits.

Ricardo Barnet, event organizer and assistant professor of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), competed in the first competition as a student in 2001. He said it is a great way for students to witness a simulated crisis in a controlled environment.

"This type of activity allows them to see professionals at work and under pressure," he said. "They get

to see the practical application of their studies in a realistic scenario."

Realistic is an understatement. More than 100 MDC students and faculty begin preparing for the competition six months in advance. A set is constructed around a carefully chosen scenario and "victims" are made up to appear gravely injured.

"It's important that this be as realistic as possible," said Barnet. "Conscious victims are portrayed by MDC students, while those with more critical injuries are represented by manikins."

Fake appendages and other equipment allow EMS teams to administer IVs, intubate victims and even deliver a baby when a pregnant woman goes into labor during the crisis.

The name Randy Boaz is synonymous with emergency medical services. One of the first paramedics in the country, he taught at MDC for 18 years before his death in 1999.



Student competitors from MDC are evaluated on their life-saving skills — including delivering a baby — during the simulated disaster.

The Palm Beach County Fire Department took home first prize this year, followed by the Miami-Dade County and Tamarac fire departments. The winners receive a trophy and bragging rights for the next year.

— DJ

A Good Reason to Return to Prison: His MDC Degree

When Larry "Eddie" Fordham walked out of **Everglades Correctional Facility** after serving 35 years, he knew he would be back one day — not as an inmate, but as an inspiration.

And so it was. In July, Fordham returned to the prison as a free man to receive his long-awaited diploma from Miami Dade College. Donning a cap and gown, Fordham, who now lives in Tampa and works at a food bank, joined a group of incarcerated students at the all-male, Level 5 security prison to receive his associate degree.

Fordham was part of the first cohort of the **Second Chance Pell Experiment**, an MDC program facilitated through the U.S. Department of Education that allows incarcerated individuals to get an education. He was released on parole just shy of completing his degree.

"Not finishing wasn't an option," said Fordham, who enrolled in a community college in Tampa to get the final four credits he needed. "For me, education is redemption."

Fordham was 18 and a high-school senior when he made "the worst decision of my life." He drove

his friends to an auto parts store for a drug deal and one of them shot and killed the clerk.

Fordham was convicted of felony murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Fighting for an Education

While in prison, Fordham was determined to make the best of it. He knew he wanted to continue his education. By writing letters and "fighting for every inch," he managed to get his high school diploma and earn a welding certificate.

In 1994, the government cut funding for education in prisons. In 2015, funding returned under the Obama administration with the launch of the Second Chance Pell pilot program.

For years, MDC offered classes at Everglades, but it wasn't until 2020 that the College received state approval to offer a degree

program, thanks to Samantha Carlo, a criminal justice professor, and social sciences professor Dr. Minca Davis-Brantley, both of the North Campus.

MDC essentially built a campus in prison and began the degree program in January 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic raged.

Bachelor's Degree Now Offered, Too

While Fordham was part of the first cohort — that group of 18 men graduated in July 2022 — he walked with the second cohort. His former group is now in the process of earning bachelor's degrees — also a first for the College.

Fordham, who speaks around the state and nationally about the importance of higher education in prison, said he is an example of how such programs pay off.

"The system has to change," he said. "We have to do something different. And I want to be a part of that."

— CT



Larry Fordham gives a thumbs up during his graduation ceremony.



Where Are They Going Next?

These are some of the transfer schools for 2023 graduates of The Honors College at Miami Dade College, which *Time* magazine dubbed “an Ivy League step ladder.”

- Boston University
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Emerson College
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Rice University
- Stanford University
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Southern California
- Vanderbilt University
- University of Florida
- University of Miami
- University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
- Yale University

The Class of 2023 reported more than 440 acceptances to transfer institutions with nearly \$4.7 million offered in scholarships.

Taking the Next Step

These 2023 Honors College graduates, all Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship winners, transferred to top institutions. From left, Carlen Arevalo, Emerson College; Kayla Ribeiro, Rice University; Nathalie Saladrigas, Boston University; Javier Gil, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Skilled Trades Get Boost From Lowe’s Foundation



Miami Dade College is one of 10 schools nationwide set to receive funding through the **Lowe’s Foundation** Gable Grants, an \$8 million fund to support skilled trades workforce development initiatives.



“Workforce development is a critical aspect of the mission of Miami Dade College,” said MDC President Madeline Pumariega. “Through the generosity of the Lowe’s Foundation we will be able to expand our trades programs and offer students the training they need to acquire one of these high-demand careers.”

“We are confident that these college programs will strengthen the skilled trades infrastructure for years to come.”

— Janice Dupré, chair, Lowe’s Foundation

the College’s North Campus. Students will be able to study construction, carpentry, electrical, plumbing and HVAC through MDC’s certificate and apprenticeship programs. MDC will receive \$500,000 to serve 60 students a year, for two years.

The grants are the first in a five-year, \$50 million commitment from the foundation, which estimates that there are nearly 400,000 job openings in the skilled trades fields nationwide. The Gable Grants will help prepare 50,000 people for related careers.

Participants will be enrolled in MDC’s Construction Trade Institute at

Penny-Wise From the Start

Miami Dade College hosted a graduation ceremony for the 16th annual Future Bankers & Financial Professionals Camp, held for high school students interested in careers in the financial services sector. The camp is organized by the Center for Financial Training International with MDC and other partners. Participants received bank teller training and, upon completion, the American Bankers Association Bank Teller Certificate as well as school credits.



Trailblazing Reporter: MDC 'Made Me Feel Like I Was at Home'

The first story **Bea Hines** wrote for Miami Dade College's student newspaper was about the new cafeteria manager at North Campus. When she showed up for the interview — more than 50 years ago — she was so nervous her hands were shaking.

What she didn't know was that would be the beginning of her long and illustrious career as a journalist.

The first Black woman to be hired as a reporter for the *Miami Herald*, Hines has shattered glass ceilings, inspired countless journalists and held people accountable. At 85, she continues to share her wisdom through a column about faith and current events that runs weekly in the *Herald's Neighbors* section.

She credits MDC for setting her on the path to success.

"The teachers were so kind to me," she said. "They made me feel like I was at home."

Born in Williston, Florida, Hines moved to Miami when she was 6 and spent most of her childhood in Overtown and Liberty City. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in 1956, she got married. By 1962, she was widowed and had two young children.

To make ends meet, Hines began working as a maid. Then she saw an ad for a library clerk at the newspaper.

Striving for More

She remembers being "so proud" that she was able to enter the *Herald* building through the big, glass front doors. She was used to having to enter buildings through the rear.

She was already in her late 20s when she began taking MDC classes to become a teacher — an acceptable career choice for a Black woman

back then and her mother's preference, she said.

But she always loved to write. Fred Shaw, the vice president of development for MDC — also the newspaper's book editor — suggested she switch her major from education to journalism.

"I laughed and said, 'They are not going to hire me, I'm Black,' " she recalled. "He said, 'Things are going to change, and you need to be ready for the change.' "

Following Her Dreams

Hines started writing for the college paper, then called *The Falcon Times*. Unbeknownst to her, colleagues showed her stories to the *Herald's* managing editor, who hired her on a trial basis.

Her first assignment: Covering the 1970 riots in Liberty City. Hines walked by a man and heard him complaining that the riots were impacting his business. Curious, she asked him what he did. Her story on self-described hustler Iceberg Slim ran on the front page.

She went on to write countless stories and columns for the *Herald* and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in the 1980s. In 1986, she was invited back to MDC to deliver North Campus' commencement speech, which she still considers a huge honor.

In February, the *Herald* hosted a fireside chat called "Down Memory Lane With Bea Hines" in observance of Black History Month.

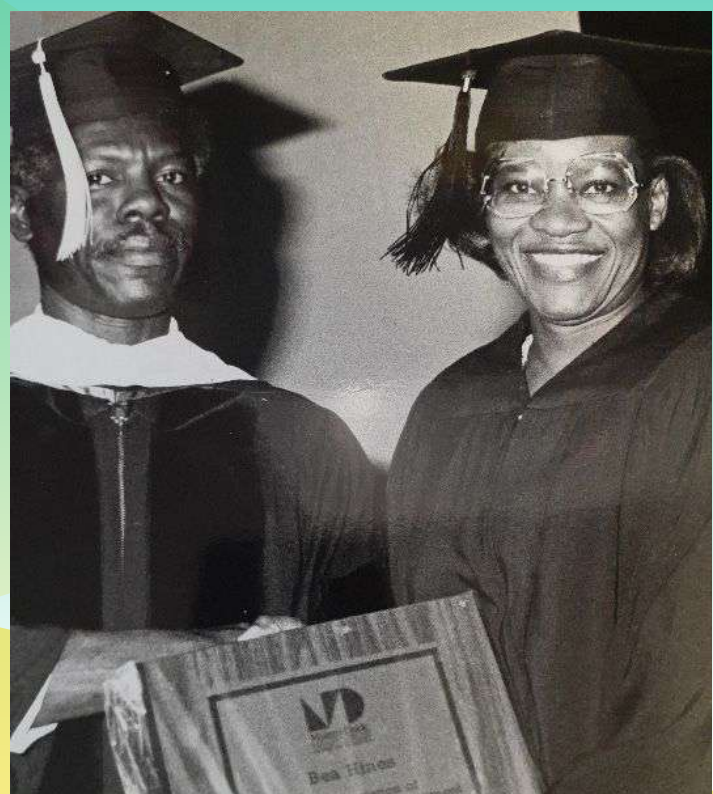
Hines, who recently spoke to students as part of MDC's Journalism Speaker Series, said such opportunities allow her to inspire future generations to be dreamers.

"I've always been a dreamer," she said. "And it's up to you to make your dreams come true."

— CT



Bea Hines



Bea Hines gave an MDC commencement speech in 1986.

Deaf Professor Signs National Anthem at Stanley Cup Finals

Miami Dade College adjunct professor John Paul Jebian, who teaches **American Sign Language**, is accustomed to small class sizes.

Recently, though, he found himself signing before nearly 20,000 fans.

The occasion was professional hockey's **Stanley Cup Finals**, featuring the host **Florida Panthers** against the Vegas Golden Knights.

Jebian, who is "profoundly deaf," signed the national anthem.

"I was the first deaf person to sign in the Finals in Florida with the Panthers," Jebian said through an interpreter. "The experience was wonderful, but it was a challenge. I was so nervous with all the lights and the flash photography. There was a camera right in my face."

"I can sign; that's not a problem," he continued. "But memorizing all of the lines with the music ... I had an interpreter in front of me to let me know if I needed to slow down or speed up

or if I was at the right pace."

He practiced signing the song morning, noon and night.

Jebian was born hearing. But, at age 7 months, his 14-year-old sister accidentally dropped him. Jebian fell on his head, and that caused his hearing to disappear.

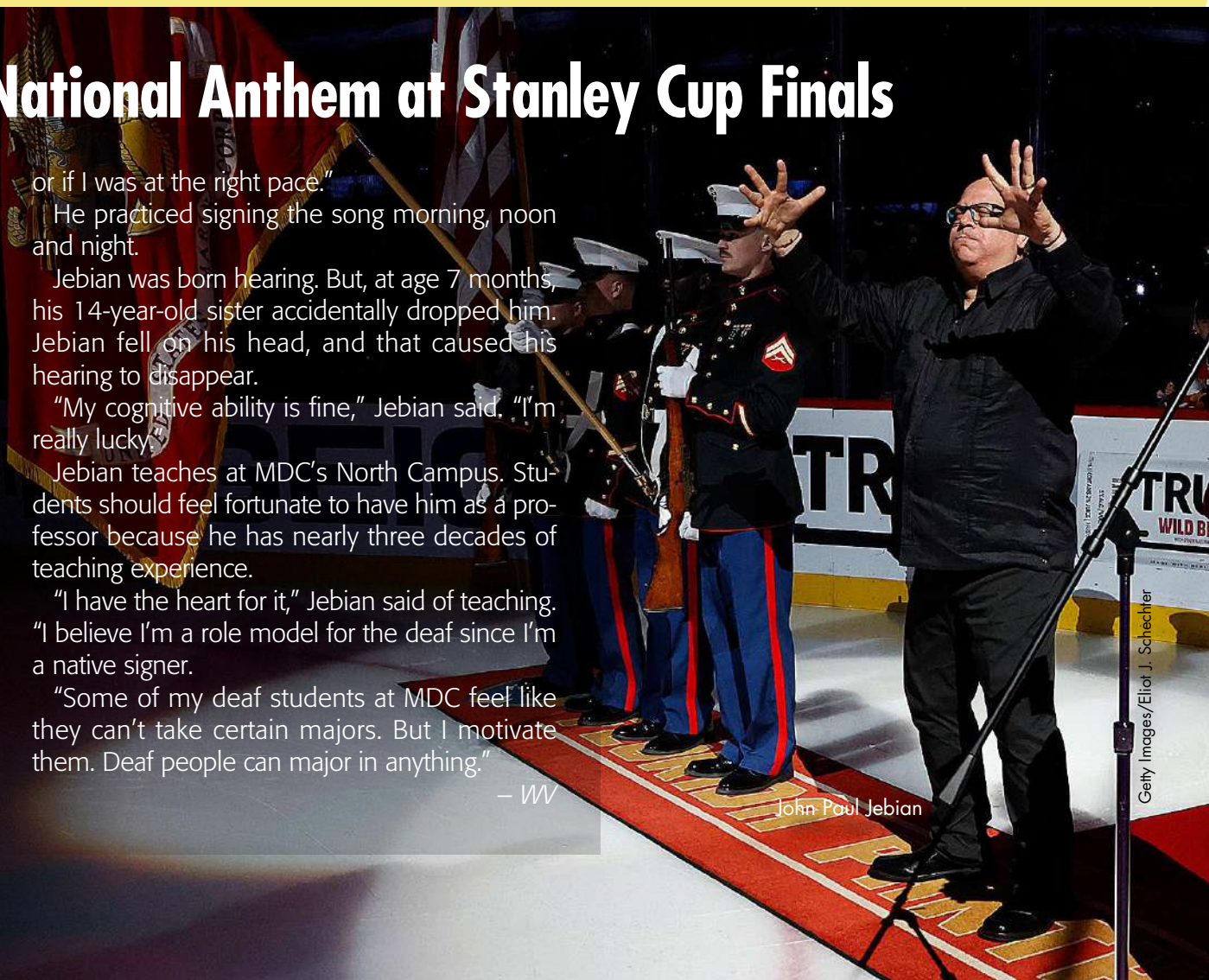
"My cognitive ability is fine," Jebian said. "I'm really lucky."

Jebian teaches at MDC's North Campus. Students should feel fortunate to have him as a professor because he has nearly three decades of teaching experience.

"I have the heart for it," Jebian said of teaching. "I believe I'm a role model for the deaf since I'm a native signer."

"Some of my deaf students at MDC feel like they can't take certain majors. But I motivate them. Deaf people can major in anything."

— WV



John Paul Jebian

MDC Faculty, Leaders and Alumni Recognized for Excellence

Dental Hygiene Professor Takes Helm of National Group



Dr. Becky Smith

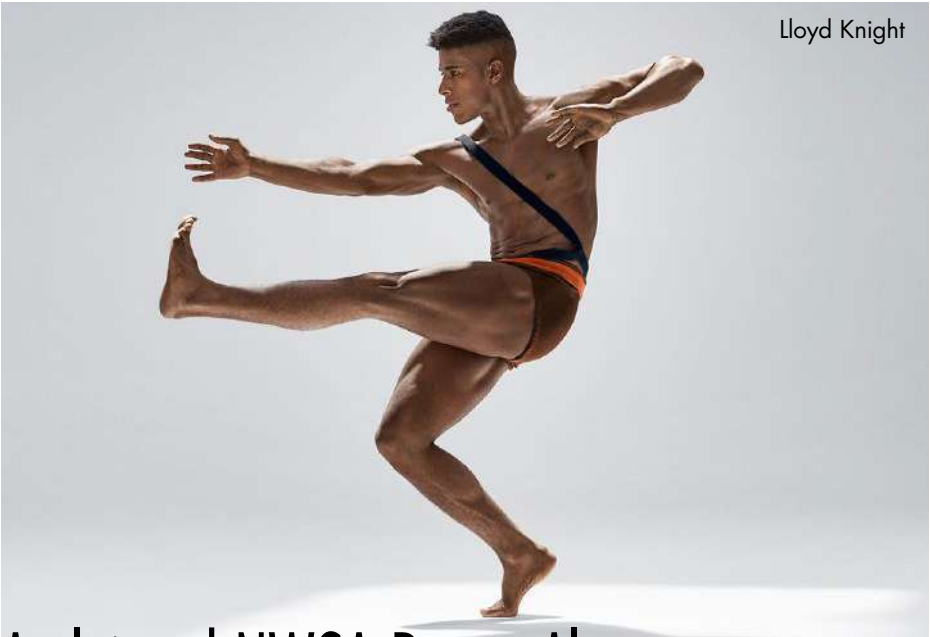
Dental Hygiene Professor and alumna Dr. Becky Smith was installed as 2023-2024 president of the **American Dental Hygienists' Association** (ADHA), a national organization that is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

Smith, a bilingual Miami native, gave her installation speech at the group's annual conference in both English and Spanish, focusing on the power of unity.

"The ADHA represents the interests of 226,000 dental hygienists nationwide, and as ADHA members and leaders, let's unite and be the role models for all dental hygienists, so that together, we can achieve great things! *Tenemos que unirnos para lograr grandes cosas.*"

After graduating from MDC's Dental Hygiene Program, Smith worked as a public health dental hygienist on a Native American Indian reservation for 10 years before moving to private practice.

She holds a bachelor's of Health Services Administration, master's of Public Health in Epidemiology, and a doctorate in Higher Education Administration.



Lloyd Knight

Acclaimed NWSA Dance Alumnus Awarded Performing Arts Fellowship

Lloyd Knight, a 2005 graduate of the New World School of the Arts (NWSA) at MDC, was named a 2023-24 Dance Research Fellow selected by **The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts**. A principal dancer for **Martha Graham Dance Company**, Knight's and the other fellows' projects will focus on Graham in celebration of the dance company's 100th anniversary. Knight, a 2017 inductee into the MDC Hall of Fame, holds a Bachelor's in Fine Arts from NWSA.

State Awards \$500K Toward Freedom Tower Restoration

Miami Dade College was awarded a \$500,000 Cultural Facilities Grant from the **Florida Department of State** to support the restoration of the College's National Historic Landmark Freedom Tower in downtown Miami, which will reopen with a centennial celebration in 2025.

Donated to MDC in 2005, the Freedom Tower has been carefully cared for by the College for nearly two decades. The grant will help cover current construction and restoration costs, as well as the creation of a new visitor experience.

"The renovation of the Freedom Tower will ensure the preservation of this beloved landmark for future generations in our community," said María Carla Chicuén, MDC's executive director of Cultural Affairs.

The Freedom Tower also was selected by **PBS** and the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** to be featured on their upcoming show commemorating the United States' 250th anniversary. And it was highlighted on the *This Day in Miami History Podcast* on July 26, the anniversary date of its opening in 1925.



Emblem of American Dream

Built as the home of the city's oldest newspaper, *The Miami News*, the Freedom Tower became an emblem of the American dream. From 1962 to 1974, the building served as the **Cuban Refugee Assistance Center**, providing crucial aid for hundreds of thousands of Cuban exiles fleeing political persecution.

President Pumariega Named 2023 Latina Pioneer of the Year

President Madeline Pumariega was named the 2023 **Latina Pioneer of the Year**. She was among the honorees at the **Hispanic Women of Distinction** charity luncheon, which pays tribute to Latina professionals who are making inroads in the leadership pipeline.

Presented by *Latina Style Magazine* in partnership with Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and other corporate and media partners, the charity event has become one of the nation's largest celebrations of Latinas. Proceeds benefited the **Multiple Sclerosis Foundation**.



President Madeline Pumariega

Funeral Services Professor Makes the Cover of Magazine



Dr. Tanya Scotece

Funeral Services Professor Dr. Tanya Scotece was featured as the cover story of *American Funeral Director* magazine in April.

Scotece, program coordinator for the Funeral Services Education Program at North Campus, said she is "very fortunate to be able to share 13 years of actual funeral service experience with my students. This experience has proven invaluable as a learning tool, as I am familiar with all facets of funeral service and can answer my students' questions."



College and campus leaders with SGA officers; Inset: Arturo Orti



There's a Familiar Face Among New SGA Officers

As the Class of 2023 made its way into the world, the next generation of Student Government Association (SGA) officers were sworn in at Miami Dade College. While most were new to the office, there was a familiar face in the group. Students elected Arturo Ortiz as campus president for the second time in as many years. He served at MDC's Hialeah Campus for the 2022-2023 school year, focusing on civic activism and mental wellness.

Now enrolled as a nursing student, he represents the student body at Medical Campus for the coming academic year. He plans to continue the work he started at Hialeah, which earned him a nomination for the prestigious Newman Civic Fellowship. Ortiz was only 4 months old when his parents brought him to the United States from Peru in 1988. After graduating from Miami Beach Senior High in 2006, he discovered that he was undocumented and could

not attend a pre-med program he had been accepted to because he was not eligible for financial aid. It was a life lesson that shaped his desire to represent others. "I hope to give the student body a voice, because I have experienced first-hand what it's like to be unrepresented," said Ortiz, who is now a legal permanent resident. "When I had my legal issues, I didn't really have a voice. With SGA, I don't feel like that anymore."

— DJ

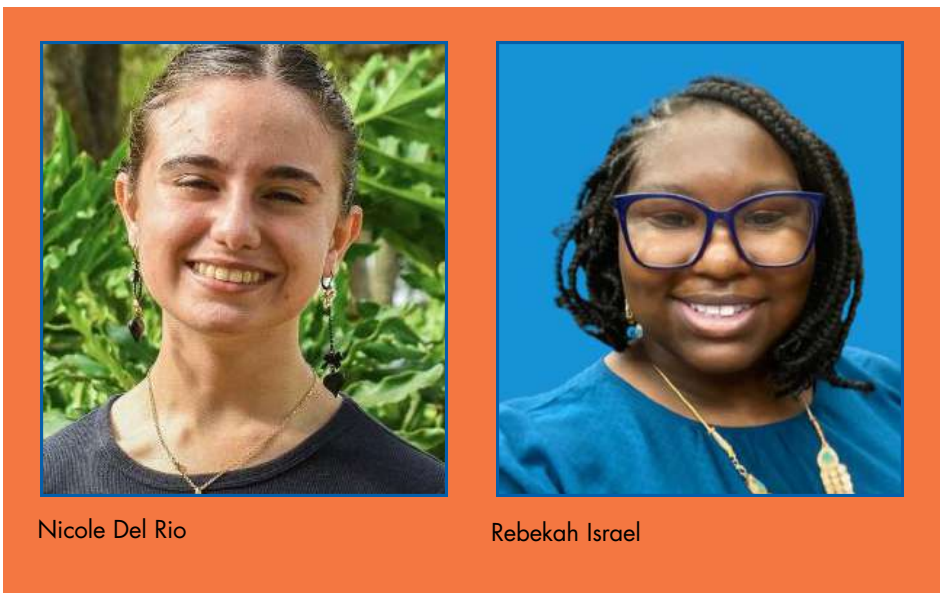
2023-24 SGA Campus Presidents

Hialeah Campus Laura Triana	Padrón Campus Melissa Rodriguez
Homestead Campus Jack Taks	West Campus Maria G. Velazquez
Kendall Campus Gabriella Gonzalez	Wolfson Campus Arquimedes Rivero (District Board of Trustees Representative)
Medical Campus Arturo Ortiz	
North Campus Marlom Elvin	

11 Students Awarded NBCU Journalism Scholarship

Nicole Del Rio thought she was dreaming after learning she was one of 11 Miami Dade College students to receive the **National Broadcasting Company Universal Media's (NBCU) Academy Fellows Scholarship**. "I woke up to the news with a phone call and was disoriented at first," she said. "After mentally waking up, I was extremely happy and felt super honored they chose me." The scholarship awards \$5,000 to each recipient and supports the College's efforts in educating future journalists and content creators.

Del Rio, who is working on an Associate in Arts (A.A.) with a pathway to a major in English at MDC's North Campus, qualified for the scholarship through her work with *The Reporter* – the College's award-winning, student-run newspaper. The newly appointed Arts and Entertainment editor said the scholarship will help as she saves up to transfer next spring. For Rebekah Israel, the opportunity to gain hands-on experience through the scholarship's offerings motivated her to apply. Recipients have the chance to work one-on-one with media professionals and



Nicole Del Rio

Rebekah Israel

take on internship opportunities at NBC News. Israel, who is pursuing an A.A. with a pathway to a major in Mass Communications/Journalism, hopes the scholarship program will help her make a positive impact through stories – something she aspires to achieve through the Finn Production Club she founded. "Being a part of the club has allowed me to grow as a leader, collaborate with amazing individuals



and fuel my passion for media production," she said. The other scholarship recipients are Kelly Castro (Hialeah); Yomiris Reyes (Homestead); Albury Burrows, Sebastian Garcia, Cyhaira Troutman and Joanne Victory (North); Loureen Soto (West); and Andrea Prieto and Virginia Tijerino (Wolfson). This was the second consecutive year MDC students were awarded the scholarship.

— JR



MDC Students Once Again Named 'Leaders of Promise'

Seventeen Miami Dade College students were named **Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) 2023 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholars** for their outstanding academic achievement, demonstrated leadership potential and community service. Each student will receive \$1,000. Twelve of the winners are enrolled in The Honors College Dual Language program at Padrón Campus. They are Julieta Alviarez, Juana Bustos Martin, Samantha Espinosa, Jesus Abel Galarza, Gabriel Gamez, Romina Gutierrez-Zamora, Amanda Marrero, Manuel Andres Martinez, Mateo Fabian Medina, Gissel Ortiz, Melissa Rodriguez and Mariangel Valcarcel. Winners from Homestead, Kendall and North campuses are Mayra Moreno, Felipe Rosas, Kasha Finlay, Apollinaire Mendoza and Javier Cunat.



'Perfect Fit'

New MDC faculty are welcomed by President Madeline Pumariega, left, and Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Malou C. Harrison, right.

New Professors Join the MDC Team

Miami Dade College welcomed 26 new faculty members this fall, adding to an already dynamic team of educators. The new hires will be spread across all eight campuses and represent a variety of disciplines including computer science, English and music.

"The energy this group brings is amazing," said Gloria León, associate provost for Faculty Initiatives. "They are all really motivated and passionate about student success." Among the new hires: A Latin Grammy winner, an adventure seeker who loves ziplining and a

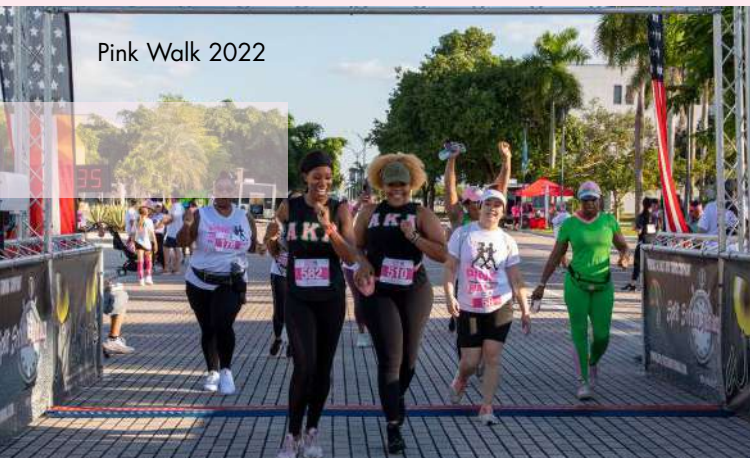
former hotel-worker-turned-nurse. The professors bring with them years of combined teaching experience — including some as MDC adjuncts — and they include alumni, as well. "We are excited to welcome them," León said. "We think they are all the perfect fit."

Joining Forces Against Breast Cancer at Pink Walk

Miami Dade College's North Campus will turn into a sea of pink when hundreds of people gather to raise money to beat breast cancer. MDC is partnering with **The Women's Breast & Heart Initiative (WBHI)** to host the **7th Annual Pink Walk**, a 5K run and walk event on Sept. 24. MDC President Madeline Pumariega, an 11-year breast cancer survivor, will be among the participants. The charitable event is organized by WBHI to raise awareness, provide a platform for disease reduction strategies and offer resources for prevention and early detection among college students, at-risk women and other targeted communities. "We are proud to once again host and co-sponsor this important event to spread knowledge and promote advocacy within our College and our community," said North Campus President Fermin Vazquez.

This year, the walk is part of MDC's inaugural Changemaker Week. Pink Walk registration is \$35. Supporters can also participate virtually in a 5K run and walk around their neighborhood or any location. "The money raised from the walk is used specifically to help women, right here, in our community," said WBHI Executive Director Andrea Ivory. Register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/Miami/ThePinkWalk>.

— CT



2023 MLB Draft Taps 2 MDC Players

Two Miami Dade College players were selected in the 2023 **Major League Baseball** Draft. First baseman Wooyeoul Shin was chosen in the 16th round by the **Tampa Bay Rays**, and pitcher Herick Hernandez in the 19th round by the **Cincinnati Reds**. A former player on the U12 and U15 Korea national teams, Shin arrived at MDC from South Korea with few contacts and no English-language skills. Three years later, Shin is fluent in English and is coming off a monster season in which he hit .407 with 15 homers and 47 RBIs in 47 games. The 2023 draft continues a decades-long trend of MDC players getting drafted and ultimately



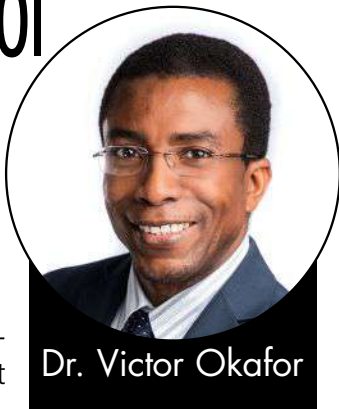
ending up in the major leagues. Few schools — even in NCAA Division I — can match MDC's success rate. "Miami Dade has a great program," Hernandez said. "They teach their players well." He is an example of MDC's famous ability to develop players. Hernandez played but never pitched at Hialeah High. His first time as a pitcher in a real game was at MDC in 2022. He didn't pitch much that season, but he blossomed into an ace this year, going 8-3 with a 2.86 ERA. In 2022, Hernandez was clocked throwing 86 mph. This year, he lit up the radar guns at 96 mph, qualifying him with elite arm speed. That intrigued the Reds enough to select him.

— WV

Dr. Victor Okafor, Dean of School of Science, is Mourned

Miami Dade College and the community suffered a great loss with the sudden death of School of Science Dean Dr. Victor Okafor. He and his twin 10-year-old sons tragically drowned in a hotel pool while vacationing in St. Augustine. Okafor was an integral part of MDC since 2003, serving in various roles at both the Padrón and North campuses. He was known as a dedicated leader and passionate educator, transforming so many students' lives. "Victor was more than just a colleague; he was a friend to so many, a steadfast supporter of the School of Science, a mentor to his

students he dearly cherished, and most of all, a devoted husband and father," said President Madeline Pumariega. "I and Provost Dr. Malou C. Harrison join all of you in our profound grief for our friend Victor," the president said in a collegewide communication. "As we collectively grieve this heartbreaking tragedy, our thoughts and prayers are with his loving wife and family during this unimaginable time of loss."



Dr. Victor Okafor

AROUND campus



A joyful graduation for the Exploration Station Pre-K at North Campus



West Campus hosted an Electric Vehicle Summer Camp where students built prototypes and put them to the test in a racing competition.



Homestead Campus' High School Equivalency Program supports migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their children, shown here, to help them complete their first undergraduate year of study at MDC.



Physician Assistant students celebrated after securing the top spot in the 2023 Florida Academy of Physician Assistants (FAPA) Challenge Bowl.



Students from the Wolfson and North campuses visited Casa Valentina for the annual service project, "Finn Cares."



Cybersecurity Professor Dr. Diego Tibaquirá, center, and students attended Def Con, the nation's largest cybersecurity hacking convention in Las Vegas.



Architecture Professor Dr. Lyle Culver with student projects at the *Teahouses of the Mangrove Moon* exhibition.



All 23 recruits of Class 199 got job offers after earning Corrections certificates from the School of Justice.



Observing Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month at Wolfson Campus



Hialeah Campus and Univision hosted a Back-to-School Fair to provide families with resources for their children’s educational journey.



Homestead Campus’ Upward Bound students made the top 3 in track & field overall, co-ed volleyball, Scholars Bowl, checkers, chess and spelling bee at the Florida TRIO Olympics.



West Campus celebrated the 10th graduation of the Tesla Start program. All participants got jobs after completing the training.



Hundreds of people discovered community resources at the Family Expo co-hosted by MDC and the Children’s Trust at Kendall Campus.

MDC Partners With United Way for Workforce Training

When Miami Dade College received a grant to boost enrollment in its Certified Nursing Assistant program, the goal was to sign up 100 people for information sessions. In the end, more than 1,800 people registered. That success drew the attention of **United Way Miami**, which is partnering with MDC to create **UpSkill Miami**, a \$2.5 million fund that will invest in workforce training scholarships for approximately 500 students.

UpSkill Miami is an effort to assist low-income, underserved Miami-Dade County

residents with workforce training in health care, transportation and other high-demand industries. Phase One will focus on health care, an industry beleaguered by workforce shortages in fields such as nursing, emergency medical services and allied health professions.

"We are proud to be a part of this transformational partnership dedicated to training tomorrow's workforce through innovative programs," said MDC President Madeline Pumariega.

"Together we are building a stronger, equitable and vibrant Miami."

A study by the **Florida Hospital Association** showed that 40% of nurses in the Sunshine State will reach retirement age in the next 10 years, while the need for health care professionals will grow by 21% as the state's population continues to see rapid growth.

To receive a scholarship, applicants must earn less than \$35,000 annually and have a high school diploma or GED. The scholarship covers tuition, books, uniforms and fees,

and includes a stipend to assist the student while completing the program. Students will study at MDC's Medical Campus.

"The need for, and interest in, the program is tremendous," said Medical Campus President Dr. Bryan Stewart.

"MDC is ready to meet that demand with expanded programs, state-of-the-art facilities and a continuum of study that allows these professionals to continue advancing their education even after they complete a certification and begin working."

MDC is leading efforts to address the nursing shortage by expanding its Benjamín León School of Nursing. MDC offers programs for Certified Nursing Assistants, Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses as well as a bachelor's degree in Nursing.

UpSkill, made possible by a donation from billionaire philanthropist **MacKenzie Scott**, is a collaboration that includes partners **Baptist Health, Jackson Health System** and **United HomeCare**.

— DJ



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