

# THE JOHNSONIAN

WINTER 2024



## FROM LIMITED TO LIMITLESS: HOW ONE STUDENT IS REDISCOVERING HERSELF IN THE TRADES

Alyssa Crawford is many things – a mother of three, a wife, a friend, a non-traditional student, a scholarship recipient, and soon she will be a graduate of the Electrical Construction Technology program. As she looks ahead at a future of endless opportunities, Alyssa shares a glimpse at the life-changing journey it took to get here.

Before enrolling at Johnson College, Alyssa was a stay-at-home mom caring for her children and home. Among the chaos of raising a family, she felt like she needed a personal achievement in her life but wasn't sure where to begin. Her husband is a carpenter who has dreamt of investing in real estate and flipping properties. When they purchased their home with plans for renovating it themselves, Alyssa realized she enjoyed the work. Although her husband was very skilled, he was inexperienced in electrical. Knowing that learning this trade could support him, and be the achievement she was searching for, Alyssa enrolled at Johnson College.

Soon after beginning her classes, Alyssa was excelling in her coursework. "Once I realized I was good at it, I only wanted to excel," she said. Her hard work and efforts did not go unnoticed. Cullen McKenna '11, Electrical Construction Technology Program Director and one of Alyssa's instructors shares, "Alyssa is always hungry for more knowledge and experience. She volunteers for projects, stays late in lab, and asks questions to perfect her craft." She will be interning with Automated Lifestyles LLC and is excited to work with them to build a state-of-the-art conference room in the College's Ideal Saldi Hall.

"If people at the College met me five years ago, they wouldn't recognize me. I've grown so much," Alyssa said. She is appreciative of everyone who has helped her achieve her academic goals, especially her instructors. "I love their passion for the trades and how much of their own time they're willing to give up to teach us, answer questions, or come in so we can make up labs," she said. "They see potential in us and know we can be better."

Before becoming a student, Alyssa felt life kept throwing obstacles in her way, and the greatest hurdle was herself. "It was hard to see that I could be more because it always seemed like everything was

against me. I never thought I could go to college," she said. "Knowing that I could decide on my own to jump off the cliff and learn how to fly has motivated me." She now walks into every situation with more self-assurance, confidence, and a better understanding of the importance of knowing when to ask for help. "Before, my pride didn't allow me to do that. I've torn down whatever walls I built to be willing and open to being vulnerable," she said.

As she continues to grow, her family supports her journey. "Having my husband believe in me shows how much he wants me to succeed." Even her children are excited about this new adventure, especially her son, who asks about electrical and enjoys wearing his Johnson College sweatshirt. "It brings tears to my eyes every time I see him wear it because it reminds me that he's proud of me," she said. "My kids are the biggest part of my life and that's one of the reasons why I decided to do this. I wanted to give them a better life and more opportunities. It's cool to be able to show them that it's okay to make a life-changing decision later in life, and I love that they get to grow up seeing a woman in industry."

After graduation, Alyssa looks forward to building a career of her own. She's excited for the opportunities that are available to her because of her education and personal growth. With a fascination for electrical, math, and automation, she's considering returning to the College for a degree in Electrical Engineering so she can pursue a career that incorporates all aspects of her passion. "As soon as you get a degree at Johnson College, options open up," she said.

After feeling so limited in life, Alyssa is finally enjoying feeling **limitless**.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

As I reflect on the fall semester and the holiday season, I'm reminded of just how thankful I am for the Johnson College family. Your resilience, commitment, and generosity, are supporting our vision of making the world our campus. These qualities strengthen the intersection between higher education and industry throughout our region, and beyond. It is because of you that we all have so much to celebrate and be thankful for.

In August, as we welcomed new and returning students to our Scranton campus, our Hazleton campus started its very first semester. Both campuses were bustling as students settled in and the academic year began. Outside of the classroom, we've witnessed great progress on the construction of Ideal Saldi Hall and can't wait for our students to be in the space this year. At our Scranton campus, we held several community events to

mark the growth of Johnson College, including our Celebration of Industry and the reveal of Bracey Hall. We appreciate everyone who helped us in honoring our industry partnerships as well as the generosity of the Bracey family for supporting our Building Trades programs. These events, and so many more, were all huge successes because of the Johnson College family.

Thank you to our students for becoming a part of our family, our staff and faculty for an exceptional Fall semester, and our outstanding alumni and industry partners for their dedication to Johnson College. I can't wait to see what we accomplish together this spring!

*Katie Leonard*

KATIE LEONARD, ED.D. | PRESIDENT & CEO



## CELEBRATION OF INDUSTRY

On September 7, Johnson College hosted a Celebration of Industry at its Scranton campus to celebrate the unique relationship between the College and its industry partners. During the event, David Boniello '84, President of Simplex Industries, was honored for his leadership and contributions to Johnson College and the surrounding region. Mr. Boniello graduated from the College's Building Construction Technology program and currently serves as the Chair of the Innovation at Work Capital Campaign.

Dr. Katie Leonard, President & CEO of Johnson College, awarded him with the President's Spirit of Giving Award, which is an artistic representation of industry, community, and education, made of steel and welded together by members of the College's Welding Technology department. Close to 250 industry leaders, government officials, industry and community partners, and supporters of the College attended the event, which featured cocktails, dinner, and mingling, before the award segment of the evening.

Proceeds from this signature fundraising event exceeded \$100,000 and are benefitting the College's Innovation at Work Capital Campaign to improve programs and facilities for student success.

## TRUNK-OR-TREAT

After a brief hiatus, the Johnson College Trunk-or-Treat was back this fall and better than ever! The Scranton campus was bursting at the seams with community members dressed in their most Spooktacular costumes. College students, faculty, staff, and regional organizations gathered to support the event and hand out candy. Trunks featured many different themes including various Disney characters, a disco party, electric chair, and so much more. It's safe to say the event was a big success.





## SCHOLARSHIP BREAKFAST

Johnson College hosted its annual Scholarship Breakfast in person at Fiorelli Catering in Peckville on November 9. Attendees enjoyed a delicious spread, followed by a presentation recognizing the scholarship recipients and the generous donors who make scholarships possible. Stephanie Ropietski, a student in the Veterinary Nursing program, served as the student speaker. She was followed by keynote speaker,

Nicholas J. Scarnato '80, Treasurer of the College's Board of Directors and supporter of the Sebastian "Sebby" Amico Memorial Scholarship, which was named in memory of a former classmate. The breakfast concluded with the presentation of awards to students by Dr. Katie Leonard, President and CEO of Johnson College, and Dr. Jeanine Engelmann, Chief Academic Officer of Johnson College.

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION THROUGH EITC

Johnson College is named in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program as an Educational Improvement Organization. This amazing opportunity is a way for businesses to earn tax credits while assisting the College in growing its Industry Fast Track and STEM Outreach programs.

The Industry Fast Track program is a partnership between Johnson College and area school districts where high school students can enroll simultaneously in secondary and post-secondary coursework at Johnson College. In addition to this program, Johnson College strives to raise awareness about STEM education throughout the region with its STEM Outreach program. The College hosts several STEM events on campus and at participating school districts to offer enrichment lessons to elementary, middle, and high school students.

To learn more, contact College Advancement at [dcCook@johnson.edu](mailto:dcCook@johnson.edu) or visit the PA DCED EITC website. Please discuss with your accountant or tax advisor to explore tax credit opportunities related to your contribution.



## STUDENT LIFE

During the fall semester, many of the departments throughout the Scranton and Hazleton campuses focused on fostering experiences for students to grow and become involved in activities outside of the classroom. Ensuring that there's always something fun planned, students have had the opportunity to join clubs and intramural sports such as the Student Government Association, the Volunteer Club, and intramural basketball and volleyball teams. The Student Success Coordinators were busy all semester planning events for national holidays and student wellness, while the Special Programs department focused on creating more experiences for student parents and the Women in Industry initiative. As the College continues to grow, so will the plans for enhancing the student life experience because we want to help our students thrive during their time at Johnson College.



## GREATER HAZLETON CAMPUS RIBBON-CUTTING

Johnson College and CAN DO celebrated the official opening of Johnson College at the CAN DO Training Center during a ribbon-cutting event on September 27 at the new satellite campus. Guests were invited to tour the new school, including classrooms, lab spaces, and the campus resource center that is open to all students. Dr. Katie Leonard, President and CEO of Johnson College, and Joseph Lettiere, President and CEO

of CAN DO, were both present and spoke about how this partnership is a monumental achievement for the Greater Hazleton Area, its residents, and its businesses. With its strategic positioning inside of the Humboldt Industrial Park, Johnson College's Hazleton campus will provide students with advantageous proximity to nearly 70 industries currently employing more than 11,000 individuals.



## BRACEY HALL REVEAL

The next phase of the College's "Innovation at Work" capital campaign is officially in motion following the reveal of Bracey Hall at a community event held on November 1 at the Scranton campus. The new and advanced facility will double the size of the current Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Technology laboratory and provide additional training facilities for Electrical Construction Technology at the Scranton campus.

During the event, Dr. Katie Leonard, Johnson College President & CEO, unveiled artist renderings and plans for the facility, which has been named Bracey Hall in recognition of the Bracey family's service to Johnson College and their support of the Building Trades programs.

In addition to the transformational gift from the Bracey family, the College was awarded a \$1 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the City of Scranton. The HVAC and Electrical Construction Technology programs also benefitted from a \$280,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant for campus technology upgrades.

The building trades programs at the College have seen continuous growth throughout the past few years. The College's HVAC program director and chair of the Building Trades division, Walter Wood '11, shared that the significant demand in industry has led to an increase in enrollment and the need to expand.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**ALUMNI NIGHT: WBS PENGUINS HOCKEY GAME** | Saturday, February 24

**ALUMNI AND STUDENT CAREER FAIR** | Wednesday, March 20

**OPEN HOUSES** | Scranton: Saturday, March 23 | Hazleton: Saturday, April 13

**COMMENCEMENT** | Saturday, May 11

**31ST ANNUAL JOHNSON COLLEGE OPEN** | Friday, May 17