CONGRATULATIONS 2015 SCC GRADUATES!
Jeff Gettys’ Journey Shows Power of Education

Jeff Gettys spent 12 years addicted to methamphetamine. Today, he is a model student in the mechatronics program and helps other students as an assistant in the robotics lab at the SCC central campus.

Gettys, now seven years sober, credits a faith-based counseling center, a GED program in his native Gaffney and Spartanburg Community College with helping forge a new life for him and his two sons.

“I really wasn't sure what I was going to do with my life,” said Gettys, now 35. “I had just kicked one of the worst drugs in the world.”

Jeff Gettys demonstrated how to use a robot in a lab at Spartanburg Community College's central campus. Gettys is a lab assistant at SCC and plans to graduate in the fall.

While taking a College 101 course in Cherokee County, Gettys and his classmates took a field trip to the SCC Cherokee County Campus. There, he met Daryl Smith, executive director of the campus, who encouraged Gettys to attend classes at the college and helped secure financial aid.

“I'm thankful for all the college has done for me because I would never have been able to do it myself with my income and being a single dad,” Gettys said.

Gettys now has a 3.8 GPA and is on pace to graduate with an associate's degree in mechatronics in the fall of 2015. He works part-time as a lab assistant and part-time at a Cherokee County manufacturer, where he’d like to transition into full-time work after graduation.

In December 2014, Gettys was a featured speaker when SCC broke ground on the new $9 million Center for Advance Manufacturing and Industrial Technologies (CAMIT) on the Cherokee campus. His impassioned speech about his personal journey stole the show, illustrating to all who heard it the transformative power of education.
Campus Highlights

SCC Central Campus

In March, Jay Coffer, Department Chair of Advanced Manufacturing, and Jeff Hunt, dean of Technologies, spent time in Hiroshima, Japan, touring Kobelco Construction Machinery Co. The SCC team learned what kind of skills the company needs in its local workers. Kobelco is investing $41 million to build a plant in Moore, creating 131 jobs.

SCC Cherokee County Campus

In January, the Cherokee County Campus hosted the FIRST Lego League tournament, held at Gaffney High School. During the event, 270 fourth through eighth-graders built programmable robots. Blacksburg Elementary, Blacksburg Middle, Alma Elementary and Granard Middle school students advanced to the state competition.

SCC Downtown Campus

This spring one of the student lounges at the downtown campus will be hopping thanks to a new name. Students, faculty and staff recently voted to name the first floor student lounge The Rabbit Hole. Student Carolina Gonzalez is creating a mural on a lounge wall to reflect the new moniker, and new works of art by Edythe Wise and Bobby Kimbrell have been added to the building's hallway gallery.

SCC Tyger River Campus

In February, the Tyger River Campus hosted a two-day program for 250 Byrnes High School juniors. Students learned about options available to them while pursuing higher education, including starting their first two years of post-secondary education at Spartanburg Community College and earning college credit while still in high school.

Union County Advanced Technology Center

The Union County Advanced Technology Center, in partnership with Union County Schools, submitted a proposal to continue funding the AdvanceSC High School Welding Grant program. In place since 2011, the program continues to be successful in efforts to promote education, activities and workforce training. To date, AdvanceSC has awarded over $60,000 to support the enrollment and training of 41 students in the program.
Leaders In Our Community: Bart Winkler

In March, Bart Winkler retired from his post on the commission that governs Spartanburg Community College after six years of service.

During Winkler’s time on the Spartanburg County Commission for Technical and Community Education, Spartanburg Community College experienced several milestones. In 2013, Spartanburg Community College restored and opened the Downtown Campus, and in 2014, the SCC broke ground on the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Technologies (CAMIT) on the Cherokee County Campus.

Born in Philadelphia, Penn., Winkler grew up in Washington D.C. He later attended Georgetown Preparatory and Georgetown University before serving his country in the U.S. Army.

After his military service, Winkler worked in a variety of roles during a four-decade career, including sales, training, company spokesman and vice president of residential and commercial sales, before becoming president of Piedmont Propane, a division of Piedmont Natural Gas Company.

Fostering education and volunteering have continually played important roles in Winkler’s career and life. During his time with the utility giant, Winkler helped create a natural gas commercial equipment program for Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, N.C. He also volunteered with law enforcement, serving as an instructor for AARP’s Alive at 55 program.

Habitat International and Piedmont Natural Gas honored Winkler for chairing the construction of two Habitat homes during his time with the utility company, and he has worked tirelessly as a church deacon, elder and Sunday school teacher.

In April, the S.C. House of Representatives adopted a resolution commending Winkler for his years of outstanding service on the commission and wishing him “much happiness and fulfillment in the years ahead.”
Dear Friends,

In the early days of Spartanburg Community College, when multiple areas of study shared a single building, teachers would gather around the coffee pot in the mornings, talking about the days ahead and the challenges of the classroom. An English instructor might have discussed how to make composition relevant to an aspiring mechanic by informally chatting with an educator in that field. It was a collegial interaction fostered by a shared space and shared sense of community.

As our institution grew to include campuses in downtown Spartanburg, Cherokee, Union and Duncan, those kinds of cross-disciplinary conversations haven’t occurred as naturally. Geography and the sheer scope of the classes we now offer mean there are now dozens of coffee pots in dozens of buildings across the Upstate.

In an effort to rekindle those conversations and give faculty members opportunities to help one another in a purposeful, sustainable way, instructors will soon be able to participate in a new program. The SCC Foundation obtained a grant to allow cross disciplinary faculty members to attend a symposium in Kentucky. Those faculty members brought back the idea of Faculty Academy, which is a way to share with colleagues best practices and the latest advances in our profession. This faculty-driven process will be repeated again and again, shortening the learning curve for less-experienced instructors, while reinvigorating veteran educators who choose to participate.

Through this program, we hope that our traditionally tight-knit college family will grow even closer, with faculty raising our already high expectations for instruction. As we know no one is better suited to help a new colleague learn the ins and outs of creating blueprints for classroom success than excellent teachers, and we’re blessed with so many of those. While learning together, those instructors also will be socializing, creating bonds that once would have been formed around that coffee pot.

Sincerely,

Henry C. Giles, Jr.
President, Spartanburg Community College

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Spartanburg Community College is partnering with other job-training groups and Spartanburg County jail officials to train workers and reduce crime.

On any given day, the Spartanburg County Detention Center houses about 750 people - with an average inmate staying there 102 days. Some are awaiting trial, unable to make bond. Some will be released on bond and are awaiting trial, while others will be sentenced and could be given time already served for their crimes.

Through Operation Education, SCC leaders, Detention Center officials, the Upstate Workforce Investment Board and S.C. Works Upstate hope to break the cycle of crime by providing training and instruction in areas where jobs are readily available, as well as teaching skills for interviews.

The pilot program, which launched in April, has already drawn praise from the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, which labeled the initiative a worthy effort.

“It is gratifying to see these local leaders stepping up to solve a problem every community has and coming up with an innovative solution,” the newspaper wrote in a recent editorial.

The first class of eight participants completed the program on May 20.