

**news**

**#OCStrong rallies community messages of encouragement and kindness**

Since launching in late March, the #OCStrong hashtag and community movement has garnered numerous messages of hope, support and encouragement for Okanagan College students.

A counsellor at Okanagan College's Penticton campus, Sarah Letefer, started leaving positive chalk messages on her daily walks, hoping to brighten other people's days with words of encouragement. See her creations [here](#).

For Michelle Howe, an Education Assistant program instructor, connection with students and the program cohort has come in the form of a [Facebook group](#). From throwing a surprise baby shower to hosting pollack lunches over Zoom, she tells students, "I respect and thank you for being patient, kind and for pushing through as a TEAM to the finish line."

The College's very own Rob Kjarsgaard, from Trades and Apprenticeship, along with his wife Heather, help us cope through the [sound of music](#).

Also from Okanagan College Trades and Apprenticeship is Kim Noakes, Marketing and Recruiting Assistant, [giving a shoutout](#) to trades students who have now made the transition from days in the shop to learning online.

City of Kelowna Mayor, Colin Basran, extended his congratulations to all of the Aboriginal students who completed studies at OC over the past year [in the form of a letter](#). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, they were not able to attend the recognition ceremony that was to be held in March.

You can play a part in #OCStrong by submitting your photos, videos and stories to [Andrea Dodd here](#). Head to the College's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for more #OCStrong messages from staff, faculty and community members.

**Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**

There have been many rapid changes to protect all of us from the spread of COVID-19. If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or even depressed as a result, know that you are not alone and that help is available. In times of transition and uncertainty, taking good care of ourselves is more important than ever and Okanagan College Counselling Services has some tips and resources to share.

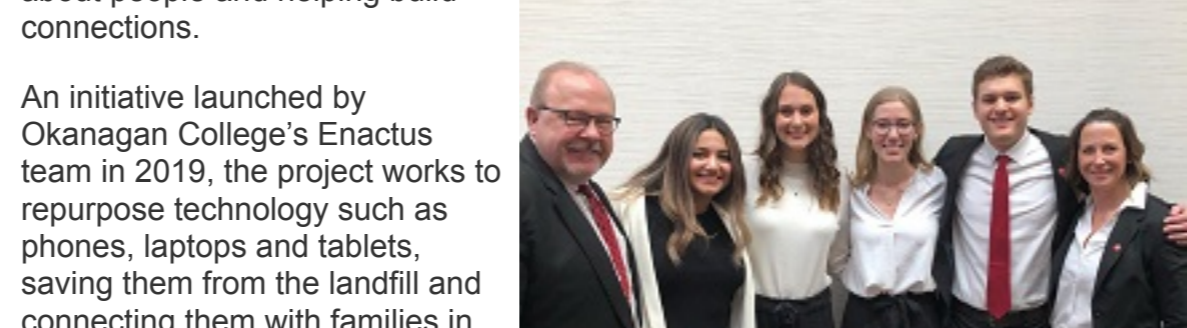
**Essential Strategies for Wellness:**

1. Look after your basic needs: eat well, drink lots of water, get enough sleep, get some exercise.
2. Follow or create a routine: wake up and go to sleep around the same time every day, make your bed, get dressed and set a goal for the day.
3. Stay connected: using phone, text, video chats or social media, stay in regular communication with friends and family.
4. Get some fresh air and sunshine when you can: schedule it into your day.
5. Practice mindless relaxing activities such as meditation, yoga, art-making or journaling. You can find many free apps and websites for learning to meditate or doing yoga at home.
6. Limit the amount of time you watch or listen to media coverage. Find a credible source you can trust for correct facts.
7. Remind yourself that this is for a limited time. Life will return to normal.

The College has a dedicated page [here](#) with resources for taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Watch the Okanagan [news blog](#) for a release expanding on these tips and resources.

**Families and community at the heart of Enactus GreenScreen technology initiative**

GreenScreen is bigger than just a technology recycling program. It's about people and helping build connections.



An initiative launched by Okanagan College's Enactus team in 2019, the project works to repurpose technology such as phones, laptops and tablets, saving them from the landfill and connecting them with families in need.

The team consists of students Isaac Hossmann, Emily Pilon, Rachel Wehrmann and Maya Samadpur, and coached by College Professors Mark Ziebarth and Laura Hetherington. Working alongside Kelowna Cell Repair, Columbia Bottle Depot and Go ReCell, devices are collected at drop-off points then refurbished and recycled appropriately.

Additionally, the team works with students at Kelowna Christian School to teach them the business and marketing side of organizing the project in tandem with the environmentally sustainable elements of recycling technology.

While the ecological impacts of saving devices from sitting stagnant in the landfill are perhaps the most logical benefit of the program, seeing technology in the hands of people who need it showcases the relational side of GreenScreen.

"This is bigger than tech," says project co-manager Pilon. In her fourth year of a BBA in marketing at the College's Kelowna campus, she's helped get the program off the ground this past year.

"Just because things go out of date quickly doesn't mean those items are worthless. There's potential there. Technology paired with a big gap of people who are at a disadvantage in education or work simply because they don't have access to devices – we want all of these people, especially when they're in our community, to have the same opportunities."

Read the rest of the story [here](#).

**OCSU contributes emergency aid for students**

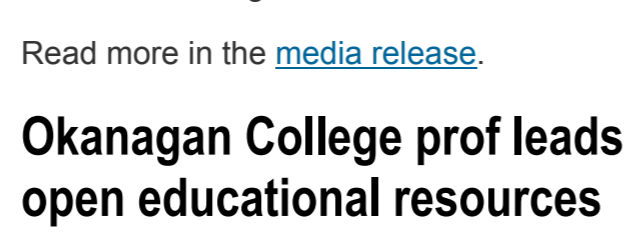
The Okanagan College Students' Union (OCSU) is applauding the emergency aid investment of \$3.5 million for domestic students and \$1.5 million for Indigenous students across the province announced recently by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. To support OC students facing hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, the OCSU is adding to that investment by committing \$15,000 for emergency relief for students in addition to the current funding available through the College.

"The Okanagan College Students' Union was created to provide support to our members and, in this time of crisis, this financial commitment is something more we can do to provide that support," said Alex Starke, Chairperson of the Okanagan College Students' Union.

"With layoffs, physical distancing and classes suddenly being completed online, students and their families have a lot to worry about right now," said Starke. "Providing additional relief will go a long way to help those in need be able to stay focused on being successful in their studies."

Read more in the [media release](#).

**Okanagan College prof leads the way in developing new open educational resources**



In a challenging time when nearly every post-secondary institution has made the move from in-person to online classes, an Okanagan College Business professor is working to develop and put free online textbooks in the hands of students.

Announced in March, Michael Orwick, professor at Okanagan College's School of Business, was awarded one of four BCcampus Marketing OER grants. With aid from the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, the grants will help the development of open educational resources in marketing across the province.

For Orwick, the journey to the BCcampus grant was not a short one. While free textbooks are just a click away, Orwick quickly discovered various trends among his students that would help propel the initiative at Okanagan College.

Full story to come on the Okanagan College [news blog](#).

**people**

**Nurses inspire nurses: OC health care students step up during time of crisis**

"The community needs us."

It's a statement that has become a rallying cry for a class of Okanagan College practical nursing students who are only weeks away from completing their studies and joining their teachers on the front line.

And like many other OC health care students and grads, their actions are speaking even louder than their words in the face of COVID-19.

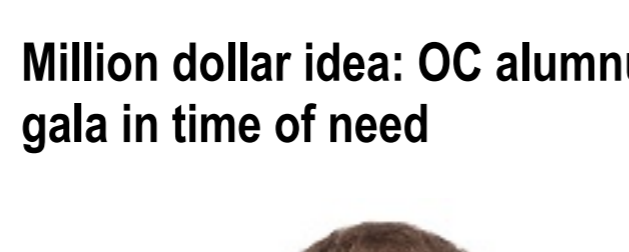
Jodi Kemp is one of those students who is stepping up in a big way to support her community, her profession and the nurses she is training alongside at Kelowna General Hospital this month.

The Kelowna native and veteran health care worker is letting nothing stand in the way of becoming a nurse and providing the care she knows is needed in her community now more than ever.

"I've got one shot at this, so I'm determined to get it done," says Kemp, who embraced the challenge of going back to school after a 20-year career as a care aid. It has already been a path not without sacrifice – for now, it means living hours away from her husband and son who remained back home in Kamloops.

Read the rest of Jodi's story [here](#).

**Million dollar idea: OC alumnus creates a charitable gala in time of need**



OC alumnus Drew Vincent knew he wanted to bring the community together during a global quarantine. His challenge: how to hold an in-person event online and still generate the kind of participation needed.

His ingenuity and the community's generosity yielded results that surpassed expectations. In just five days, his idea turned into a \$20,000 donation to help the Okanagan community during COVID-19. The event also laid the groundwork for an even bigger charitable effort on May 2.

A graduate of the College's Bachelor of Business Administration program, Vincent is the creative mind behind the Stay at Home Gala which launched March 27. The event was organized by a group of people from the Okanagan with the intent of bringing everyone together during what has been a hard time for many people.

"The positive response we have received is a testament to our community's values," says Vincent. "We started calling it social distancing at its finest, but we might have to change that to community at its finest."

The first-of-its-kind event hosted all the familiar elements of a gala: optional dinner from a local restaurant (delivered to your door), game-changing speakers, including Lane Meredith, an Okanagan College Honorary Fellow and the newest "strong" to join CBC's hit show *Dragons' Den* and more. There were over 200 Okanagan households that participated.

Read the full release [here](#).

**From ice to the backyard: virtual hockey mentorship with Chiefs player Myles Mattila**

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't putting a damper on Sascha Richards' hockey training any time soon. And, it's all with the direction and help from Okanagan College business student and Kelowna Chiefs hockey player Myles Mattila.

In his third year at the College's Kelowna campus, Mattila has stepped up to aid Richards through FaceTime sessions. In a photo and story by *Global News*, Richards' backyard shows a simple yet effective backyard set up, complete with the junior-aged hockey player shooting pucks into a goal. A slab of synthetic ice hosts a few hovering pucks as he flicks his wrist with an impressive shot.

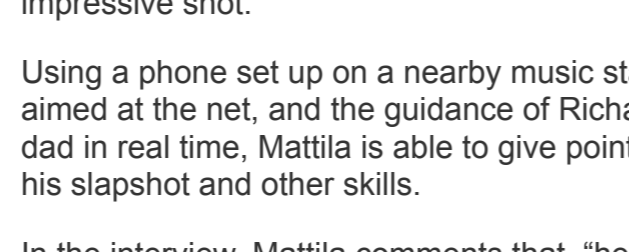
Using a phone set up on a nearby music stand aimed at the net, and the guidance of Richards' dad in real time, Mattila is able to give pointers on his slapshot and other skills.

In the interview, Mattila comments that, "he not only enjoys being able to pass on his hockey skills, but he also enjoys the connection he has with Sascha."

Mattila started MindRight for hockey players wanting to know more about mental health, whether in the form of support, awareness or education as well as mental health resources. The vision for MindRight is to end the mental health stigma and promote player assistance and support for those who are navigating mental health difficulties.

Read the full story [here](#), and learn more about Myles Mattila and MindRight [here](#).

**Penticton Soupateria kitchen relaunched with the help of OC alumna**



Penticton's recently re-opened soup kitchen needed staff and Okanagan College alumna Rachael Broe saw a chance to serve her community.

Only a few days into her new role at Hillside Winery, Broe unexpectedly lost her job in mid-March as restaurants and wineries throughout the valley made the difficult decision to close dine-in operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few weeks later, Broe noticed a Facebook post about Soupateria, which also closed its doors in late March due to health concerns for those attending. In a story on *Global News*, Tracy Corner, president of the Penticton Soupateria Community Society, explained that the decision to close the Soupateria doors was based on the desire to keep clients safe.

Once the community soup kitchen closed down, multiple community organizations including the Community Foundation, Interier Health and One Sky secured a grant to quickly reopen the location. With this, they could rehire paid employees to safely operate the kitchen, like Broe, all while supporting those in need.

For the Professional Cook Apprenticeship alumna, who also won the *Okanagan College Foundation's B.C.-wide \$5,000 tuition prize in 2016*, starting work at the Soupateria is a full circle moment.

"I have been there," Broe says, "I was a single mom and trying to fend for myself and I've had to go use the food bank and a free store. To give back, it feels great."

Read the full story on *Global News* [here](#).

**Carpentry student serves as WorkBC success story**

WorkBC is showcasing the efforts of Okanagan College Carpentry student Brittany Couchman as an example of how valuable training that first step toward training is the scariest – but so incredibly rewarding.

Two years ago, Couchman was struggling. She was a single mom of two young kids, and things were tough. She reached out to WorkBC Vernon, and staff connected her with programs that identified strengths she didn't know she had.

That gave her the boost to enroll in the Women in Trades program in Vernon, with the help of WorkBC's Single Parent Employment Initiative to cover extra costs like daycare and gas.

"It was amazing," Brittany reflects. "I got my kids into Maven Lane daycare the Saturday before I started school. Everything was falling into place like it was meant to be."

Once in the program, she tried her hand at welding, plumbing, carpentry, electrical and more, with ups and downs like writing math tests. After the three-month course, Women in Trades sponsored Brittany to do her Carpentry Foundation program – and this past year, she accepted her first job in carpentry.

"I like the work," Brittany says today. "Some of it is scary. I have to get over some of the fears, like heights and the table saw, but I am proud of myself. I'm proud because I realized I can actually make a change in my life. I didn't even know how to read a tape measure before I started."

Her first year her daycare was covered through the WorkBC Single Parent Employment Initiative. Today, Brittany is home every night with her kids, and she's happy she can provide a regular routine and income for the three of them.

"There is help out there," she says to other single parents who are struggling. "Use that help. It might feel like a lot of steps and a lot of work, but it's so worth it in the end."

To read the full story on Brittany, go [here](#).

**notices**

**COVID-19 Recent Updates and News**

Find the latest COVID-19 updates [here](#), along with links and resources for online learning, teaching and working, what to do if you are feeling ill, answers to frequently asked questions, available services, and more.

[View the archive of COVID-19 updates here](#), including important recent messages:

- April 9** - [Read a message](#) from the College's Campus Stores team, outlining available services and support.
- April 8** - [Read a message](#) from the Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, about B.C.'s post-secondary, skills and training sector.
- April 7** - [Read a message](#) from Interim Provost and Vice President Academic Andrew Hay on new course withdrawal options for Okanagan students.
- April 7** - June convocations have been postponed until later in the year.

**Provincial and federal news updates pertinent to students:**

- [Federal government announces changes to Canada Summer Jobs program to help businesses and young Canadians affected by COVID-19](#)
- [Province of British Columbia announces supports for renters, landlords during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of British Columbia has updated its mental health resources page](#)
- [Federal government provides updates for International students studying in Canada](#)

**Access to OC facilities and services**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Okanagan College continues to operate and provide services remotely. Physical access to facilities is restricted in order to ensure social (physical) distancing and for the health and safety of all.

If you need to access facilities at any of our campuses, or have questions about how to access any services, please contact the Regional Dean office at your campus:

- Central Okanagan (Kelowna): 250-762-5445, ext. 4789
- South Okanagan-Similkameen (Penticton): 250-492-4305, ext. 3216
- North Okanagan (Vernon): 250-545-7291, ext. 2206
- Shuswap-Revelstoke (Salmon Arm): 250-832-2126, ext. 8239

You can also click [here](#) to find out how to access all available services, including hours and contact information.

**College organizing PPE to donate to Interior Health**

Employees across Okanagan College have stepped up to help assemble and coordinate donation of personal protective equipment (PPE) to Interior Health for distribution to frontline health-care workers battling COVID-19.

A master list is being coordinated by Facilities and Business Services and Science Technology and Health. Continuing Studies, Trades and other areas have also provided gloves, masks, eye protection and other items.

Any other departments that have PPE they are donating, should contact [Doug Watkins](#) to coordinate. Facilities is working directly with the Interior Health Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to ensure a cohesive and streamlined process.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this effort.

**Accommodated exam changes**

Effective Monday, March 30, Accessibility Services ceased face-to-face exam accommodations to adhere to social distancing.

Students and instructors with previously scheduled exams will receive email confirmation from the automated system. Instructors will be notified once the database reopens for future bookings. Out-of-time requests do not need to be submitted to Accessibility Services given there are no accommodated exams being scheduled on campus.

For instructors needing to add time extensions to their Moodle exam, here are the steps to follow:

- Look at the accommodation letter to determine if the extension is 1.5X or 2X
- Click on the exam in Moodle
- Then under quiz administration on right-hand side, click user overrides
- Then click add user overrides
- Select the student (click on their name)
- It is recommended to create a password for an override exam
- Use drop-down to select date and time for opening and closing quiz
- Enter time limit as per accommodations
- Save

For Moodle questions, please contact Education Technology by email: [edtech@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:edtech@okanagan.bc.ca)

Instructors who are unsure how to implement academic accommodation in the online environment should contact their campus Accessibility Coordinator or email [accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca).

**Employee and Family Assistance program is available to help**

The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) can support employees and their eligible dependents.

**Lifeworks has an orientation session on Thursday April 16 at 10 a.m. to provide an overview of EFAP. Register [here](#).**

Here are some ways Lifeworks can help:

- 24/7 Confidential access to professional support to help employees manage stress, anxiety, grief, financial concerns and more.
- Connect to support by phone, video or chat anytime, anywhere.
- Vast library of online resources for coping with trauma, building resiliency, self-care and managing change.

Webinars and resources that address the reality of the present situation and strategies to boost resilience through thought and daily habits are available:

- [Emotional well-being during COVID-19](#)
- [Tips on coping with the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Introduction to working remotely](#)
- [Talking to your child about the coronavirus](#)

More information is available on the Lifeworks [website](#).

- Username: okanagan
- Password: healthy
- Or by phone: 1-888-307-0590

**New service launched to help students access software remotely**

IT Services has created a new service for students to access software they may not have available to them at home. This is done through Virtual Desktop Infrastructure. Students can watch this [how-to video](#) for more information about how to log in to access software while learning remotely. The service allows students to access software listed in the general pool [here](#).

Contact the Helpdesk at 250-762-5445, ext. 4444 (toll-free: 1-866-839-4032) or email [support@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:support@okanagan.bc.ca) if you have any questions.

**Working from home guidelines and employee health and wellness**

Okanagan College's Human Resources has prepared some information for employees working from home or remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) for some important and helpful guidelines and reminders around everything from safety to IT support and security.

During this evolving situation, Okanagan College strives to take care of our employees in the best way we can, and this includes their health and well-being. Working remotely and feeling disconnected with social connections can result in emotional strain on employees' mental health. Prevention and taking proactive steps to minimize this risk for employees and employers is important. Click [here](#) for some resources around employee health and wellness.

**events**

**Public health announcement**

**Ongoing** – As per the recommendation of British Columbia Public Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control and Health Canada, all events over 50 people have been cancelled until further notice. Please refer to the College's [coronavirus page](#) for more information, updated regularly.

**media**

[Castanet](#) and the [Kelowna Capital News](#) highlighted the College passing its 2020-2021 budget virtually.

The City of Penticton recently launched a task force involving local business leaders to consider economic recovery recommendations, including representatives from Okanagan College, highlighted on [Castanet](#).

*Global News* featured Rachel Broe, alumna of the College's Professional Cook Apprenticeship program, as an instrumental piece in the re-opening of Penticton's Soupateria kitchen.

Okanagan College was mentioned among other post-secondary institutions in British Columbia on *CTV News* with the announcement of the launch of a [\\$3.5 million emergency fund for post-secondary students](#), and a [\\$1.5 million emergency fund for Indigenous students](#).

Analyse Weiler, Okanagan College instructor of sociology, was quoted in [The Province](#) regarding the COVID-19 outbreak in West Kelowna at Bylands Nurseries.

[The Penticton Herald](#) and the [Daily Courier](#) noted new offerings planned by Okanagan College for the upcoming school year, also highlighting courses which will not be renewed, taking into account the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Westbank First Nations Chief and Okanagan College Board of Governors member Chris Derickson was mentioned in [Right Sizing Media](#), making note of ongoing developments on WFN land.

[The Daily Courier](#) and [Penticton Herald](#) highlighted the Okanagan College Students' Union contributions to COVID-19 student relief efforts.

Jodi Kemp, Okanagan College nursing student, was featured in the [Daily Courier](#), [Penticton Herald](#) and in the [Kelowna Capital News](#). Kemp is one of many health-care students and Okanagan College alumni working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [Kelowna Capital News](#) followed the response from Okanagan College and Andrew Hay, Interim Provost and Vice President Academic, to the student-led petition for an optional pass-fail system. The article cites the importance of the current grading system for College students.

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce annual 40-under-40 list was announced in early April, and includes Okanagan College culinary arts alum, [Adam Reivas](#).

The [Summerland Review](#) and [Revelstoke Review](#) noted the story of Sean Heddle, student at the College's Salmon Arm campus who created a live map of the spread of COVID-19 throughout the province.

The [Salmon Arm Observer](#) highlighted the launch of the #NOKTogether partnership group and website, a collective resource for North Okanagan businesses and residents.

**feedback**

Do you have comments, questions or a submission for INSIDE OKANAGAN COLLEGE? Please email Public Affairs c/o [Kate.Maryschuk](mailto:Kate.Maryschuk).

To ensure the best chance for your submission to be included, please send all details at least one day in advance of the newsletter's publication.

The next edition of INSIDE OKANAGAN COLLEGE will be issued on April 28, 2020.