



Make It Happen! Volume 3 Issue 3 September 2024

Welcome to the September 2024 issue of *Make it Happen!* We're excited to share some fantastic updates from our center!



First, this month we're celebrating the second anniversary of Big Blue, our campus thrift store founded by two innovative freshmen (now seniors). Over the past two years, Big Blue has grown beyond just a store—it's now an official practicum! Last semester, our proposal to transform Big Blue into a learning laboratory where students can develop and practice essential business skills was approved by the Curriculum Committee. Want to get involved?

Visit our website at [Big Blue | Marietta College](#) to learn how you can donate or shop at Big Blue!

We're also gearing up for this year's BIG Workshop, scheduled for November 14. This event is a fantastic opportunity to expand your professional network and ignite new ideas. To learn more or to register, please visit our website at [BIG \(Build, Innovate, Grow\) Workshop | Marietta College](#).

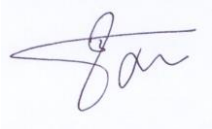
Lastly, we encourage you to explore PathwayU, a powerful platform that helps students align their passions with their skills to find a fulfilling professional path.

[Click here](#) to log on to PathwayU and learn how it can support our students' professional journey.

In this issue of *Make It Happen*, two Marietta College alumni reflect on their professional journeys since graduation, sharing valuable lessons and insights they've gained. You'll also discover how our students are engaging in hands-on experiential education activities. We will conclude by highlighting exciting upcoming events you won't want to miss.

We look forward to a productive and inspiring fall semester!

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Khorassani, Ph.D.

Senior Director, Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development

Marietta College

**OH THE PLACES YOU'LL GO:
THE PLACES I'VE FACED AND WHAT I'VE EXPERIENCED**

By: Tres Ross '97

I remember receiving multiple copies of the book "Oh the Places You'll Go" by Dr. Seuss when I graduated from high school. Little did I know the places I would get involved with throughout my years. Yet each new place has created unique opportunities. The educational learning through college followed me wherever I went.



Place 1: Education

I knew I wanted a small school with family nearby that offered a quality education. Marietta College offered that opportunity. Initially, I was going to major in Computer Information Systems due to my love of computers since I was young. Yet, I didn't want to just do technology, but wanted to use my technology mindset and incorporate it in a business environment. So I shifted to Business Management with a minor in Economics. Through my time at college, I enjoyed the business mindset and fell in love with the research aspect in analyzing information both from a business and economics perspective.

Place 2: Family Business

I took a summer job at SBR, my father's operation that consisted of a woodworking retail operation and several building product operations. It involved web development for Woodcraft, the woodworking retail operation. The internet was just developing as a new medium of communication for businesses, and Woodcraft was looking into the best ways to incorporate it within the business. I was also involved in the development of Simonton's initial website. My love for technology became my job while using my business/economics mindset.

After graduating from college, I rejoined SBR under the Simonton Windows operation within the marketing department as the Web Developer. We began looking at ways to incorporate a web presence in more detail for Simonton, a manufacturer of vinyl windows and doors. I also developed more advanced technologies for both the Simonton website, internal operations, and the other companies that SBR acquired within the building products sector, including Fypon and Hylite. This includes using research tools to help evaluate information. Even though technology became a central part of my life, I continued to look at everything through the business and economics lens that I majored in at college. During my time at Simonton, I also got my MBA through WVU allowing me to develop more of a business mindset towards the family businesses.

Place 3: Charitable Giving

SBR, the family business, always had a charitable mindset. They supported nonprofits of various types and would get involved with the groups they supported. They were unique and they had a policy of giving 2% of operating income every year to charity. In 2006, SBR decided to sell the building product operations, while retaining the woodworking operation. My father had dinner with me in December 2005 and asked if I wanted to start a foundation that he wanted to create. It was a major shift, yet I had some experience in the charitable

sector. Between December 2005 and March 2006, I started to research and develop strategies to create our family foundation. After the announcement in March 2006 about the sale of the building products businesses, I left what I had done for 10 years and moved into uncharted territory to run a family foundation.

I knew a little about the nonprofits we supported in the past but did not get as engaged as I knew I would need to be to run the new operation. My first task was to determine what we wanted to support and what would be our service area. The idea of the foundation was to continue supporting the communities that made the family business successful. The main business was Simonton Windows, so we decided to narrow our service area to where the plants were in West Virginia, where the employees came from, and where the corporate office was located. We used the foundation as an extension of what we supported in the past through SBR. Our focus areas were education, arts, disabilities, animals, community initiatives, and temporary assistance initially. Our service area became Wood, Ritchie, Doddridge, Pleasants, and Jackson counties in West Virginia.

After 9 years, the foundation board, which consisted of family members and their spouses, decided to redesign our focus areas to primarily Education and Community / Economic development with service areas of Wood, Ritchie, and Pleasants counties. This occurred in 2015. We decided to begin supporting larger initiatives. This redesign also shifted the approach of how we worked with nonprofits. We became much more active in the initiatives and in many cases wrote the grants in partnership with the organizations.

In some cases, a new organization needed to be created requiring the planning in creating the organization.

During my time in the nonprofit sector, I played an active role in a variety of groups at the state and local levels. I also reconnected with Marietta College through their Nonprofits LEAD, a capacity-building initiative for nonprofits in my area, and the Entrepreneurship Advisory Board (EAB). Entrepreneurship was becoming an area that we wanted to support through the foundation. So, being part of the newly formed EAB made sense.

Place 4: Large-Scale Charitable Initiatives

More recently, we took an investment approach to supporting large-scale initiatives. At our Fall 2017 board meeting, my father brought up the question “how can we affect a lot of people, especially youth and families.” His initial response was an ice-skating rink. I said first I can’t ice skate and second, that is something I see fitting better in northern parts of the US. I even met another foundation that did just that, creating an ice-skating rink for a community.

Instead, I brought up the idea of creating a children's museum. I had a family of 4 kids and had seen the impact of children's museums.

So, I began the process of doing research about children's museums and the value that they could offer. My father wondered how much impact it would have on the community, and how many people would attend a children's museum plus get involved within the programs offered at this type of museum. My initial estimate after doing the research was 20,000 visitors. So, we decided to proceed in creating a children's museum. This was our first significant large-scale initiative requiring a large investment beyond what we were usually supporting. After 5 years of planning, involvement with the community, renovations to a historic property, and development of the exhibits, we launched the children's museum in 2023. After the first full year in operations, we had 61,500 visitors. This was well beyond what was anticipated. It also became a major tourist destination for the region.

We are now moving into our next large-scale initiative, a technology center for our community college, West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVUP). It will be called the WVUP Innovation and Technology Center (ITC). It will consist of an incubator for technology-based businesses, the computer science department of the college, and the workforce development operation of the college. The launch will be in fall 2025. After we finish supporting the technology center, we'll see where we go next.

Place 5: Woodcraft

Besides the charitable aspect of my life, I began getting more involved in Woodcraft with my father at a strategic level. Last year after my father's passing, I shifted a lot of my time to getting involved with Woodcraft. It is a new opportunity to strengthen the operation of our family businesses. My brother and I are both involved in this operation.

You never know what you might lead to next. Yet, what you learn from your educational knowledge can apply to the various sectors you get involved with throughout your career. I've carried that knowledge and applied it to each sector I have been involved with. And yes, my love for technology is always there. Be open to new opportunities and accept there may be challenges. Each place helps define your path forward.

Tres Ross is the Executive Director of [The Ross Foundation](#)

EMBRACING NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND UNEXPECTED CAREER PATHS

By: Nancey McCann '76



Reflecting on my professional journey after graduating from Marietta College in 1976 with a degree in Speech, English, and Drama/Secondary Education, I realize that my passion for teaching initially led me to pursue a career in education. From an early age, I was determined to become a high school teacher, and my student teaching experience at Marietta High School further solidified my passion for education. However, the teaching job market proved to be extremely competitive at that time, making it challenging to secure a full-time teaching position. After substituting for a few months in Toledo, Ohio, I returned home to Morristown, NJ, where I secured a long-term substitution contract at my former high school. Despite this, obtaining a permanent teaching contract seemed elusive. However, I remained resilient and adaptable.

I made the decision to relocate to Washington, DC, where many of my college friends had landed, hoping for better opportunities in an urban setting. Despite my efforts, finding a teaching position continued to be an uphill battle. Although my initial plans did not materialize, this experience taught me the importance of staying open to alternative career paths. Leveraging my liberal arts qualifications and English degree, I transitioned into the field of government relations, which I quickly realized became my new passion.

I gradually advanced through different roles within the non-profit government relations sector, embracing each opportunity for growth and learning. Ultimately, my perseverance and willingness to accept change led me to achieve my goal of overseeing a Government Relations department and serving as the Director of Government Relations for the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. In this role, I represented the interests of over 9,000 member ophthalmologists specializing in cataract and refractive surgery before Congress, the Administration, and regulatory agencies. This was a career path I had never envisioned during my college years.

Retiring after 28 years in this role, I continue to contribute as a consultant, drawing upon my diverse experiences and expertise.

My message to others is clear - while the path to our dream career may be filled with uncertainties and unexpected turns, it's essential to remain open-minded and adaptable. Embracing new opportunities and leveraging the foundation provided by the fantastic education you received at Marietta College and your liberal arts background can lead to fulfilling and unexpected career paths.

Nancy is the Former Director and Current Consultant at Government Relations, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery

NEWS & EVENTS RECAP

Summer Experiential Education

The Experiential Education Summer Awards at Marietta College are designed to facilitate students in pursuing professional development opportunities, including internships, research projects, studying abroad, and conference presentations, during the summer months away from home and campus. These awards are made possible through the generous contributions of Marietta College's alumni and friends. This year, the Center received 34 applications for five awards. Last Spring, a diverse selection committee, consisting of individuals representing various departments across campus as designated by the donors, reviewed the applications and distributed the awards as outlined below:

Award	Amount	Recipient /Project
Danielle L. Cisler '05 Internship Award	One \$2011 award	Kayleen Placencia /Internship in Chicago
Howsmon-Keyes Experiential Education Award	\$6852 to be distributed among qualified applicants based on the award criteria	Alexis Sommers: \$3,352 to study in Greece Katie Lively: \$2500 to study in Ireland Yuro Ito: \$1000 for internship in Japan
Nancy Dare Luce '76 Experiential Learning Award	Two awards, \$5000 each	Liam Sherman / Internship in Italy Isabelle Poling / Internship in Virginia
Robert E. Evans Internship Award	One \$5000 award	Carson Halbower / Internship in Texas
Thrash-Henderson Mathematics Experiential Education Award	\$1500 to be distributed among qualified applicants based on the award criteria	Lily Sorensen: \$800 for presenting research in California Aditya Shah: \$700 for conducting research in Michigan

Here is how Katie Lively describes her study abroad experience:

I spent July of 2024 studying at Maynooth University, a small university in the Republic of Ireland not far from Dublin, and I couldn't have asked for a better location. Maynooth is beautiful, quiet, and wonderfully balanced between both the scenic landscapes and the exciting pub life for which Ireland is known. In class I learned much about the cultural heritage of Ireland and took several exciting field

trips to nearby historic sites. Granting me daily opportunities to take on novel challenges like navigating public transportation, planning trips, and managing time between adventures and studies, this experience proved invaluable. With vibrant green grass, ruins of medieval castles, (and the constant threat of rain) in my peripherals, I placed my focus on seizing every opportunity that presented itself, even when it meant stepping far beyond my comfort zone.

Katie Lively, MC'25

Major: History

Minor: Psychology

Howsmon-Keyes Experiential Education Award Recipient, Summer 2024.

Below is a photo of Katie's amazing journey.



September 10, 2024

Speed Connect

On Tuesday, September 10, 2024, Marietta College students participated in Speed Connect, a dynamic networking event designed to connect students with faculty, staff, mentors, and community members. Organized by the Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (CECD), the event was held in the Great Room of Andrews Hall.

Non-student participants were stationed at tables, where they remained throughout the one-hour event, while students rotated between six tables, spending 10 minutes at each. Each round began with brief introductions, followed by participants taking turns selecting a question card from the center of the table and responding. These conversations led to engaging follow-up discussions.

The questions ranged from light icebreakers to those commonly asked in job interviews, giving participants a well-rounded networking experience.

The goal of Speed Connect is to foster meaningful connections, enhance communication skills, and provide students with the opportunity to practice answering professional questions—preparing them for real-world job interviews and networking environments.







FALL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

AT MARIETTA COLLEGE

<p>SEPTEMBER 10</p> <p>SPEED CONNECT 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm The Great Room An opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and mentors to connect.</p> 	<p>SEPTEMBER 19</p> <p>PIOBIZ WORKSHOP 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Thomas 327 Learn how to compete in Round 1 of the PioBiz competition on Dec 5. Winners receive a cash prize.</p> 	<p>SEPTEMBER 24</p> <p>JOB MARKET PREP MINI-SERIES 12:20 pm - 12:50 pm Thomas 209 Part One: Resume and cover letter creation</p> 	<p>OCTOBER 8</p> <p>JOB MARKET PREP MINI-SERIES 12:20 pm - 12:50 pm Thomas 209 Part Two: Interview Coaching</p> 
<p>OCTOBER 22</p> <p>JOB MARKET PREP MINI-SERIES 12:20 pm - 12:50 pm Thomas 209 Part Three: Mock Interview</p> 	<p>OCTOBER 24</p> <p>MARIETTA MINGLE 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm The Great Room A chance to mingle with Marietta College Alumni</p> 	<p>NOVEMBER 14</p> <p>THE BIG WORKSHOP 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Various Locations on Campus Unlock insights beyond the classroom</p> 	<p>DECEMBER 5</p> <p>PIOBIZ COMPETITION 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Gathering Place Problem solution poster competition</p> 

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THANK YOU SPONSORS!

It is, in part, due to the generosity of our sponsors that we can offer our cocurricular and extracurricular events and workshops to the community either free of charge or at a discount. We do this because our goal is to build a network of young and seasoned entrepreneurs that together create economic, social, and environmental values through collaboration and cooperation. [Read More.](#)



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