

Press Release



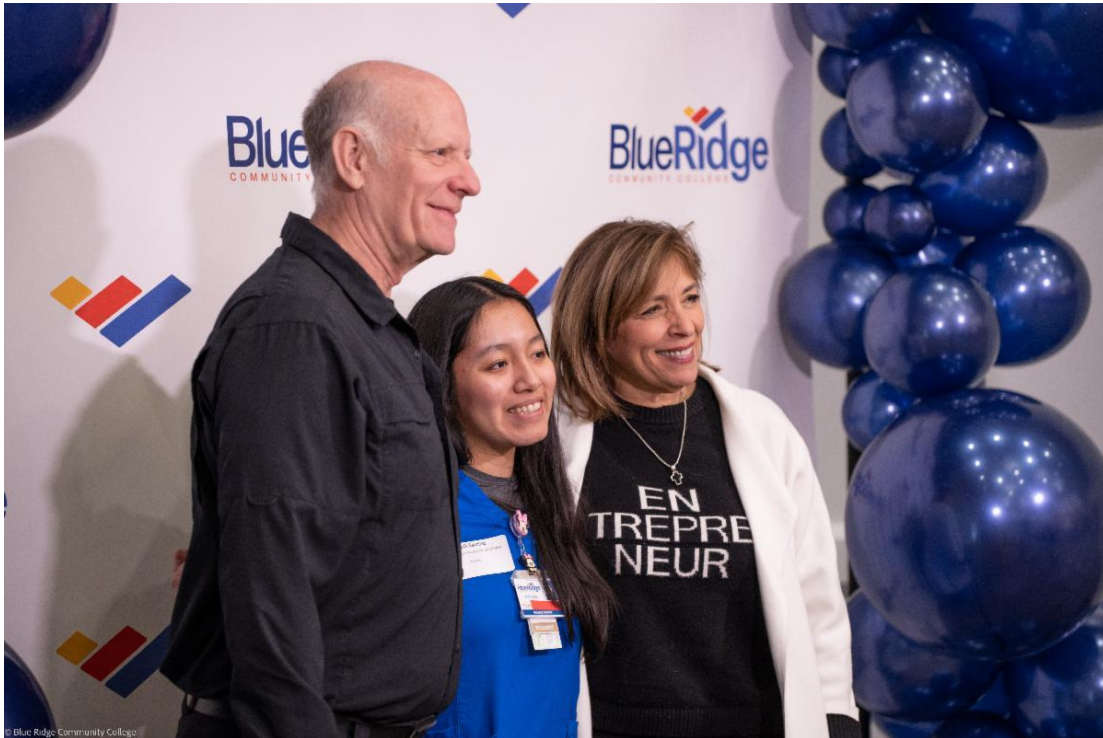
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Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation Hosts 2024 Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon



Featured photo: Donors and scholarship recipients meet at the 2024 Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon. (Photo by Benjamin Rickert. [High-resolution photos available.](#))

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. – The Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation recently hosted the 2024 Scholarship Appreciation Luncheon in celebration and recognition of donors' support of the College.

Donors and scholarship recipients gathered on Feb. 21 to share how donations have opened doors for the students. Several Blue Ridge dignitaries, including the Board of Trustees and the Educational Foundation Board of Directors, were in attendance, as well as Mayor of the City of Hendersonville and a long-time Blue Ridge supporter, Mrs. Barbara Volk.

Jim Rasmussen, Blue Ridge trustee and president of the College's Educational Foundation, began the luncheon with a reminder of the far-reaching effects of scholarships.

"The scholarships we celebrate today represent a collective effort of our community, working together to invest in the future of our students and Western North Carolina," Rasmussen said. "As we gather in fellowship today, let us not forget that the value of education extends far beyond the individual. It shapes communities, fuels innovation, and strengthens the fabric of the place we all call home."

Luncheon sponsor and Blue Ridge alumnus Dan Poeta of Horizon Heating and Air echoed that sentiment, crediting Blue Ridge as the place where he cultivated his own skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit which have led him to a successful career.

Trina Stokes, executive director of the Educational Foundation, introduced student and keynote speaker Marion Hawsey.

"Not only has this young lady excelled academically, but she has also demonstrated unwavering dedication, resilience, and a true passion for education and learning," Stokes said. "Her journey serves as a vivid illustration of how support can open doors and create unlimited opportunities."

In her emotional address, Hawsey shared her life story and described the moment she received a much-needed scholarship to continue her education amidst challenging circumstances, including the loss of her mother. She closed by expressing gratitude to all of the College's scholarship donors.

"I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for giving each and every student here today a chance," said Hawsey, "because thanks to your generosity, you have turned our dreams into realities, obstacles into opportunities, and empowered us to reach heights we never thought possible."

Donor Pam Rogers served as the event's second keynote speaker, and she encouraged the crowd to employ a "Yes, I can" attitude toward making a difference through scholarship support. "Yes, I Can" is also the name of the Blue Ridge scholarship established by Rogers and her husband, Charley.

Blue Ridge President Dr. Laura B. Leatherwood concluded the event with an inspiring message about the long-lasting effects of higher education.

“Through our Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation, scholarships remove barriers, and empower students to remain focused on their studies and fully engage in their educational journeys,” Leatherwood said. “It’s a leg-up that will have an immediate and tangible impact on their lives and careers, as well as an untold impact that will ripple through their lives and those of their families. At Blue Ridge, we see this kind of life change day after day, and it adds up to a stronger workforce and economy that make our Western North Carolina communities thrive.”

More information about the work of Blue Ridge Community College’s Educational Foundation is available at www.blueridge.edu/foundation.

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About Blue Ridge Community College

Blue Ridge Community College is a two-year, post-secondary institution that elevates the educational experience to prepare students for 21st-century success in the workplace or at four-year colleges and universities. Providing real-life, affordable, and accessible education, the College offers more than 200 degrees, diplomas, and certificates; more than 200 online courses; and fast-tracked job training.

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