



# CAMPBELL COUNTY EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

MAKING EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO CAMPBELL COUNTY STUDENTS  
AS THEY SEEK HANDS-ON, SKILLS-BASED TRAINING FOR HIGH-DEMAND JOBS IN OUR REGION



## Dream. Plan. Do. Altavista Future Center Helps Seniors Get on Track

When Stephanie Tyree was hired as the Future Center director in 2023, she developed the vision statement “Dream. Plan. Do.”

To bring this vision to reality, Tyree listens, encourages, guides and follows up with each student to ensure every one is on a track with a post-graduation plan.

She meets with seniors every fall in the space designated for the Future Center at Altavista Combined School. Some show up with a list of dream schools. Some focus on a trade or plan to join military or get a job.

Still others don't have a clue. “Those conversations last longer,” Tyree said. “Sometimes I can get them to vocalize what they actually are thinking, but they're afraid to give it a voice.” She often directs students who are floundering to SchoolLinks.com, a platform that helps navigate career pathways and work-based learning programs. She also schedules a follow-up meeting. “It isn't my job to give them a plan, but to help them know how to achieve their dreams through a plan that is their very own,” she said.

When Tyree joined in the summer of 2023, 91% of students had just graduated with a plan for their future. In the last two years that percentage has risen to 100. “It is imperative that each senior has a plan that they can follow after they walk across the stage with their diploma,” she said.

Tyree works with students on job and college applications and organizes interview and resume workshops often in conjunction with community employers with which the center continues to build working relationships.

She also holds preliminary interviews for scholarship programs such as the Jefferson and Walentas Scholars at the University of Virginia which makes college affordable for deserving, high-performing students.

In addition, the Future Center organizes a Virginia College Application Week when students can submit their college applications for free; a College Nights Event that explores the benefits of college and awards a \$1,000 scholarship; FAFSA Next where financial aid officers from area colleges help families complete forms; a Decision Day in May celebration; SAT Prep sessions; college field trips; college admission visits to ACS; and a Middle School career speaker series.

The Future Center work is separate from services offered through school counseling though the two departments work in tandem. The Future Center work allows counselors to focus on mental health and relationship issues as well as class schedules, graduation requirements, testing coordination and specialized instruction followup. Tyree said the close working relationship between the two departments allows students to benefit from the best of both worlds.

**Our most compelling testimonials come from students who pursue their dreams and secure employment through programs we support. See page 3.**

Campbell County Educational Foundation (CCEF) supports quality educational and career programs that encourage and prepare students in area public schools to become successful citizens. These are offered through Central Virginia Community College's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Academy as well as college and career readiness programs at all Campbell County high schools.

Dual-enrollment offerings include administration of justice, early childhood education, health sciences, emergency medicine, HVAC, information technology, machine technology, mechatronics and welding.



Campbell County Educational Foundation board members recently presented another \$37,000 check to Campbell County School Board members bringing the foundation's total donations to Campbell County Schools to more than \$300,000.

## Board Member Spotlight:

# Farmer Continues Merryman Legacy of Supporting Education

Dean Farmer said the late Sonny Merryman, noted Campbell County businessman and founder of the company bearing his name, instilled in him the importance of education and helping young people. Farmer considers Merryman a mentor and continues to honor his example through his commitment to public education.

When Merryman's son Floyd stepped down from the Campbell County Educational Foundation (CCEF) board in 2017, Farmer took his place. Today Sonny Merryman Inc. supports numerous public education foundations across Virginia, and Farmer said it's only natural that the company gives special attention to its local foundation that helps Campbell County students pursue both academic and vocational goals.

A key priority for CCEF is supporting the dual enrollment program at CVCC as well as Altavista Combined School's Future Center, which ensures every student has the resources needed to plan their next steps — be it a four-year degree, the military or a skilled trade. "We want to help young people get the training and education they need to succeed in the real world — and hopefully stay right here in Campbell County," Farmer said. "Our mission is not only to help students, but also to strengthen our community by putting skilled folks back into the workforce."

Campbell County provides more students to the dual enrollment program than any other locality combined, a point of pride for the foundation and Sonny Merryman alike, Farmer said.

As Sonny Merryman's vice president for sales and marketing, Farmer has overseen many of the company's scholarship programs. He was also a charter board member of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg, reflecting his long-standing dedication to youth development. Looking ahead, he says a future goal for the education foundation is to establish an endowment to ensure its long-term sustainability.

CCEF President Rose Epperson praised Farmer's impact, noting that his business insight has been invaluable. "He knows what businesses want," she said. "And he's always the optimist — someone who pushes us to go a little higher."



After 31 years with Sonny Merryman, Farmer will retire at the end of this year. He plans to travel, watch, and continue cheering on Hokies football from his tricked-out burnt orange and maroon van decorated with logos and a bird mascot, equipped with satellite dish, flat-screen and speakers. Even in retirement, he said, he looks forward to continuing his service and support of Campbell County Educational Foundation.

# Mechatronics Serves Industry Need

In response to industry demand, Central Virginia Community College's dual enrollment program now includes mechatronics.

This engineering field combines mechanics, electronics, robotics and computers to design, create and maintain systems. Five Campbell County students are enrolled this year.

CVCC was awarded revitalization grants to purchase eight robotics that students manually operate and program. The programmable logic controllers, or PLCs, are industrial computers used to automate and control mechanical and electrical processes.

In class knowledge is balanced with practical, hands-on training in areas such as assembly, testing and trouble-shooting. Students earn four industry certifications.

First- and second-level mechatronic workers, trained for installation, repair, and troubleshooting, start out making \$18 to \$22 per hour. Annual salaries for mechatronics graduates, which adds programming to the skill set, range from \$60,000 to \$85,000.

Some industry demand stems from lessons learned during Covid, when the United States set a goal to pivot and rebuild its own manufacturing capabilities when overseas options were limited, said Jason Clark, CVCC's work-based learning coordinator.



## Students Express Gratitude for ACS Future Center and Its Director



Sean Noto, who started Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing this fall, said the Future Center opened doors to pursue his choice of the trades. "It sent me in the right path for my future helping me get into ATDM," he said. Noto added that [Director Stephanie] Tyree's help with the application was invaluable.



Emma Greer, now a student at Eastern Mennonite University, had no idea what she wanted to pursue after high school. She gives the Future Center 100% credit in helping her with grants and scholarships that made college possible. Through the application process she learned not to be afraid to ask questions or to go outside her comfort zone.



Neal Harter, a first-generation student at UVa, didn't have a family member to help guide him and said he had no idea where to start applying to college. Extenuating circumstances also complicated his financial aid. "The Future Center helped me sort through all of these challenges and uncertainties so I could get where I needed to be," he said. "Ms. Tyree made sure everything on my application was perfect before I submitted and answered all my questions and connected me with even more resources along the way."

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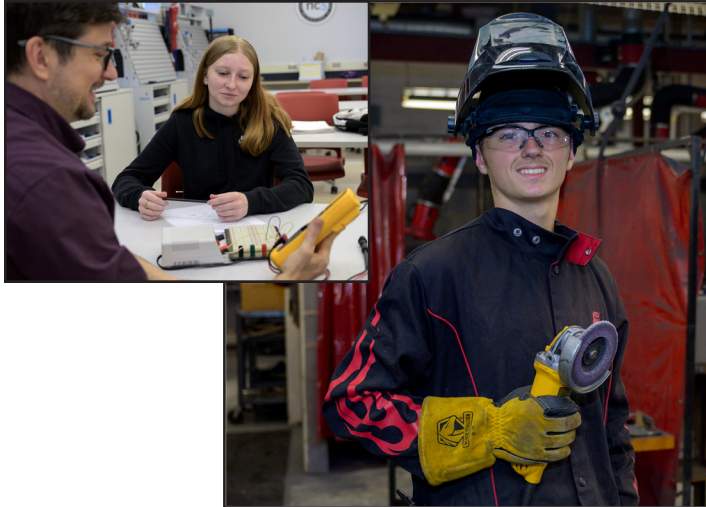
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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
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# Campbell County Students Prepare for In-Demand Jobs

CVCC's dual-enrollment program, known as CTE Academy, has 103 Campbell County high school students this year. They include individuals pictured here: Skylar Neal (below left: mechatronics) and William Hedrick (below right: welding), and two paramedics in training (right).



## 2024-2025 Corporate Donors and Grants

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