

## Keiser University in Melbourne connected to community through commitment to volunteer service by student body; big Job Fair set for May 3, open to public

By Ken Datzman

On March 1, South Florida-based Keiser University kicked off its 40th-year anniversary with a statewide graduation ceremony in Lakeland, the site of one of the institution's 18 campuses.

The school was co-founded by Dr. Arthur Keiser in 1977, who today is the university's chancellor and chief executive officer.

The success of Keiser University over the past four decades has been well-documented, growing from "one student" in Fort Lauderdale to nearly 20,000 students in 2017 at multiple campuses, online and internationally. The private, not-for-profit university offers 100 degrees, from the associate through the doctoral level, and employs 3,800 faculty and staff across the state.

Keiser University's model has been very effective and one key component centers on its community-service participation. Volunteer service is inextricably linked to Keiser University's mission in the respective communities where it has campuses, such as in Melbourne.

"We are a statewide higher-education institution and each campus is involved in a wide range of community-service activities throughout the year — both the students and the faculty members," said Kimberly Dale, the regional director of media and public relations at Keiser University.

"We have campuses in 18 cities around the state. It's important for us to give back because the communities in those markets have given so much to Keiser University over the years. The school is well-connected to the communities in which it operates. Community involvement has long been a centerpiece of Keiser University."

Student groups at the Melbourne campus have conducted many fund-raisers for community organizations. The events are held on campus and in the community, said Dr. Murielle Pamphile, director of student services at Keiser University in Melbourne.

Some of the groups include: Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Student Government Association, National Student Nursing Association, Student Occupational Therapy Association, Student Veterans of America Association, and the Lambda Nu-Honor Society for Imaging Sciences.

"They continue to be involved in on-campus and community activities raising money for charitable entities," said Dr. Pamphile, adding that students have volunteered and participated in fund-raisers for many different area organizations, including Relay for Life, Cystic Fibrosis, Tots for Tots, Salvation Army Toy Drive, Brevard Search and Rescue, the Humane Society of South Brevard, and the Daily Bread, among others.

"We just did a beach cleanup project in Melbourne Beach," said Dr. Pamphile. "It was a student initiative. This was the first of four cleanups we have scheduled this year. The others are set for April, June and July. We were very excited to get off to a fast start. The students did a



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Community service has long been a centerpiece of Keiser University in Melbourne. Both students and faculty members participate in a wide range of fund-raisers and charitable events. All of the school's programs are involved in volunteerism in the community. James McGuinness is dean of Culinary Arts and general studies advisor. Dr. Murielle Pamphile is director of student services.

great job. They take a lot of pride in their project keeping the Melbourne Beach shoreline looking good."

Keiser University's first campus expansion from South Florida was in Melbourne. The school opened a campus here in 1989 with a small number of students. Today, the Melbourne campus enrollment is roughly 1,000 students. The university expanded at its 900 S. Babcock St. campus in late 2015 building a new 29,850-square-foot facility. Known as the "800 Building," the facility houses a number of programs, including Biomedical Sciences, Dietetics and Nutrition, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Sports Medicine and Fitness Technology. All of these programs have a presence in the community through volunteer service.

"Part of Keiser University's strategic plan as an institution revolves around community service," said Karen Runk, the dean of academic affairs at the school's Melbourne campus.

"The students not only learn in the classroom and through hands-on projects and internships and externships, but they also learn to become civic-minded individuals through their volunteer community service. And each program at Keiser University is involved in their community through service hours. Many of the students continue their volunteer work long after having graduated from Keiser University."

The Occupational Therapy Assistant students, for example, have teamed up with a charitable organization called "Caps of Love," which is based in Palm Beach. The organization's goal is to provide wheelchairs to physically challenged individuals and to educate the public on how to identify and recycle correctly. "This is a project near and dear to the hearts of the OTA students," said Runk.

Caps of Love was founded in February 2013. As of July

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2016, it had recycled more than 165 tons of plastic caps and lids. All the proceeds from the recycling go to provide wheelchairs for uninsured, needy, or financially disadvantaged handicapped children and adults under the age of 21. Caps of Love is "100 percent" supported by volunteers and donations.

One of the programs at Keiser University in Melbourne that receives a lot of requests throughout the year to take part in fund-raisers is Culinary Arts. "We try to offer as much support as we can," said James McGuinness, dean of Culinary Arts at Keiser University in Melbourne. "It tends to be food-related involvement, but we try to do other things to help the students better understand the importance of community service in general."

He added, "We have alumni who still volunteer their time at the Daily Bread. These are students who graduated years ago. So it's nice to know that the desire to serve was instilled in them while they were here or prior to their arrival, and they continue that community-service tradition today."

Culinary Arts students just took part in Aging Matters in Brevard's 10th annual "Passport to Wine" benefit recently held at the Space Coast Convention Center. The event drew hundreds of people. The money raised helps fund services for seniors in Brevard County. "Each year we have helped out with that event providing hors d'oeuvres," he said.

Keiser University's Center for Culinary Arts, at campuses in Melbourne, Sarasota, and Tallahassee, was

ranked 18th of the 50 "Best Culinary Schools in the United States" by Best Choice Schools in 2016. Keiser University has the highest-ranked culinary program in Florida. The school offers an associate of science degree in culinary arts, and baking and pastry arts.

The culinary schools throughout the nation were ranked based on hands-on experience, internship/externship opportunities, student-operated restaurants, modern facilities, and a solid reputation in the industry. The schools had to be nationally accredited or accredited by the American Culinary Federation.

The Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts programs are recognized as "Exemplary" by the American Culinary Federation. They have also received the "Recognition of Quality Culinary Education" from the World Association of Chefs Society. Keiser University is one of only six such schools acknowledged in the United States. Culinary is still one of the fastest-growing fields in America, with solid demand for chefs and head cooks at restaurants and other establishments.

Keiser University will host a Job Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, in the 800 Building. The Melbourne campus held Job Fairs in January and August of 2016. Both Fairs grew each time in the number of employers participating.

"We partnered with Goodwill Industries and CareerSource Brevard to include the community and develop community relations," said Dr. Pamphile.

"The January Fair had 50 employers and about

600 attendees. The August Fair had 72 employers and some 500 attendees. For the May 3 Fair, we're expecting 80 employers to take part in the event. We will use all of the rooms (24) in the 800 Building. The event is open to the community. The employers will range from Health First to Home Depot."

Dr. Pamphile said she always tells the students to come professionally dressed and to bring a good number of résumés. Keiser University puts on "Leadership Distinction Program" seminars before the Job Fairs to prepare students. "We had 69 LDP seminars last year and 898 students attended," Dr. Pamphile said.

The seminars cover such topics as Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, Job-Search Technology, Networking, Study Skills, Time Management, Leadership, Civic Responsibilities, Professionalism, Do's and Don'ts of Social Media, and Financial Success Strategies.

"The students tell us the Leadership Distinction Program has been very beneficial to them during their job search, and well beyond. I think this is one of the programs that helps distinguish Keiser University in the marketplace."

Dr. Pamphile said Keiser University has increased its community involvement through on-campus events such as advanced degree workshops, alumni gatherings, and education fairs. "We're proud of our graduates as they go out into the community to work and to volunteer their time with organizations. Keiser University provides them with the training and skills to succeed."

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