Rowan University's second annual 24-hour Day of Giving closed with almost triple the amount of donors from its inception last year. With a goal of 500 donors (450 contributed in 2015), the single-day giving record was shattered when 1,240 donors contributed $86,895.

"In just two years, #RowanGIVES Day has gone from a bold idea to an extraordinary success," said John Zabinski, senior vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the Rowan University Foundation. "Thanks to everyone who participated at every level, we were able to far exceed our expectations."

Second annual Day of Giving achieves record-breaking success

Held on March 3, #RowanGIVES Day challenged and celebrated the Rowan community by highlighting the importance of philanthropic behavior and its positive effects on the institution. With the day tracked and updated online through a custom website designed by the University's Web Services team, efforts were also pushed through social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

"I think a large component of the day's success was definitely due to our digital communications efforts," said R.J. Tallarida, vice president for University Advancement.

Rowan alumni, students, parents, friends, faculty and staff came together to make the second annual #RowanGIVES Day a resounding success, raising $86,895 to support Rowan initiatives.

Five days, eight ceremonies, 2,800+ graduates—University celebrates Commencement Week

During the week of May 9, more than 2,800 students celebrated their graduation from Rowan University and joined the ranks of proud Rowan alumni. In all, over 3,800 degrees were conferred during the institution’s 91st Commencement. Cooper Medical School of Rowan University celebrated its long-awaited inaugural Commencement as 43 members of the charter class earned their Doctor of Medicine degrees.

1. Robert O. Carr, CEO of Heartland Payment Systems and founder of the Give Something Back Foundation, was the speaker for the William G. Rohrer College of Business ceremony and received an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.
2. Ira P. Monka D.O. ’84 (center), shown with Rowan President Dr. Ali Houshmand and SOM Dean Dr. Thomas Cavalieri, received the 2016 School of Osteopathic Medicine Distinguished Alumnus Award.
3. New Jersey Senator Fred H. Madden Jr. served as the speaker for the College of Humanities & Social Sciences Commencement and received an honorary Doctor of Law degree.
4. William Castner, Jr. ’95, senior vice president of corporate and regulatory affairs at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, received the CHSS Medal of Excellence in recognition of his achievement in his field and leadership in his profession.
5. Governor Chris Christie attended the CMSRU ceremony and offered remarks and congratulations to the precedent-setting class.
6. Dr. Devi Parikh ’85, an assistant professor at Virginia Tech and an Allen Distinguished Investigator of Artificial Intelligence, received a Medal of Excellence for Alumni Achievement from the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering.
The Dr. Bela Mukhoti Scholarship in Economics will recognize full time students at Rowan University studying Economics in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Born in Dhaka, India, Dr. Mukhoti spent most of her early years inspired by learning and education through her brothers, as women were not permitted to attend school. She strongly valued education and strove to make a difference not only for women, but for students who wanted to pursue lesser-known career paths—such as a career in economics.

After taking a placement test in India, she went on to earn her B.A. and M.A. in economics from Calcutta University. Her achievements included receiving the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the National Cadet Corps of New Delhi, earning her Ph.D. in Economics from the London School of Economics and serving as an economic advisor to the administrations of Presidents Carter and Reagan.

In 1974 she began her career as a Professor and Chairperson of the Economics Department at Rowan, retiring in 2009 after 35 years of service. Her grandson, Stephen Fleming, assistant dean in Rowan’s College of Humanities & Social Sciences, spearheaded the effort to create a scholarship in her name with the support of his sister, Samidha, as giving back to Rowan was one of Dr. Mukhoti’s greatest wishes.

[facing page]

“I am continually impressed by the way the Rowan community comes together in support of our University. This collective commitment is extraordinary and is a shining example of what we can do when we work together.”

Dr. Ali Houshmand
Generous support from the Subaru of America Foundation, Inc. promises to yield a significant impact on the social and educational mobility of Camden’s youth through the C.H.A.M.P./GEAR UP program at Rowan University—Camden (The Creating Higher Aspiration and Motivation Project/Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs).

“At Subaru we have a heavy focus on education, specifically science, math and environmental programs,” said Anthony Trosclair, Field Marketing Specialist at Subaru of America. “The C.H.A.M.P./GEAR UP program was ideal not only because it’s right in our backyard, but it’s a program that will build a foundation for students to develop necessary skills and characteristics to succeed in their futures.”

“I was able to interact with the students and even parents about the program,” said Trosclair after an on-site visit. “What’s really great about this program is it gives students the opportunity to interact with other students who come from diverse backgrounds—students they may not have had the chance to interact with otherwise.”

The program at Rowan University—Camden is one of seven GEAR UP programs in New Jersey specifically designed to serve students in grades 6–12. The original C.H.A.M.P. program was founded in 1985 as a small, volunteer counseling service that involved 100 Camden High School seniors. The project now serves over 400 Camden City middle and high school students through annual college access activities.

The program includes a six-week summer enrichment program on Rowan’s Glassboro campus, which concentrates on increasing the students’ skills in math, science, English, public speaking and computer science. Emphasis is also placed on self-esteem and social and cooperative skill building as well as career broadening experiences.

The academic year program includes after school tutoring, in and out of school counseling and mentoring, Saturday field trips and educational activities and trips to colleges and universities. PSAT/SAT instruction is offered twice a week as well as assistance with college applications and financial aid forms.

“At Subaru we are frequently looking for ways to make a greater impact in Camden and the C.H.A.M.P./GEAR-UP program will be one them,” said Sandy Capell, Philanthropy and Corporate Responsibility Manager at Subaru. “Our support will not only help by enhancing academic opportunities, but also by opening doors for these students to have career exploration and really think about what they want to do after high school.”

The program is supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Education administered through New Jersey Higher Education, NJ College Bound Grant Program, Camden City Public Schools and Rowan University.

“One of the great things about our program is it is hugely community based,” noted Winona Wigfall, Director of the CHAMP/GEAR UP Program. “Our entire staff cares about these students and we will do anything possible to get them prepared for college. We have a lot of siblings, neighbors and friends who encourage each other to join. Parents are also widely involved and we have a lot of our students come back and serve as tutors and mentors.”

The support from the Subaru of America Foundation, Inc. will provide students with the resources they need to prepare for college and will make it possible for students to gain valuable knowledge about the importance of education and the lasting, life-long impact of programs like CHAMP/GEAR UP.

Subaru partnership to provide college readiness support for Camden students

In February, the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund awarded its third and largest investment to ZSX Medical, LLC, continuing its commitment to accelerating the growth of regional businesses and research initiatives.

The $5 million private-equity fund, established in 2014, provides early-stage funding primarily to students, faculty, staff, alumni and South Jersey individuals and companies that have developed and tested projects and products that are ready to compete in the marketplace.

“One of the main goals of this initiative is to help continue the momentum and spur innovation by investing in people who have ideas,” said R.J. Tallarida, vice president for university advancement and deputy executive director of the Rowan University Foundation. “And those people with ideas often just happen to be members of the Rowan community.”

A 10-step process for applicants includes applying for the fund and being invited to a screening where presentations of up to 12 minutes in length are made. The Fund’s Due Diligence Team then evaluates the competitive landscape to determine each proposal’s viability and decides if an applicant will move on to the coaching stage.

Applicants then work with and obtain the “blessings” of Fund coaches and mentors, and upon approval of second presentations from the Fund’s Advisory Committee, companies then enter into a comprehensive 8–10 week Due Diligence phase where those who emerge successfully secure funding.

With two previous investments made, the Fund made its third and largest investment in February to ZSX Medical, LLC, a University City-based health care/life sciences firm that has developed Zip-Stitch™, a simple and safe fast surgical closure method that replaces sutures in laparoscopic procedures.

“ZSX is exactly the type of firm the Venture Fund was designed to invest in,” said Tony Calabrese, chairman of the Fund’s Board of Managers. “The Fund is committed to supporting strong proposals that will address real-world problems, have the potential to reach the marketplace and contribute to the economy of our region.”

As a research institution, Rowan is committed to supporting the entrepreneurs and business leaders who will bring jobs to the region.

“The Venture Fund is unique and reflects Rowan University’s commitment to South Jersey, to our push to increase commercialization and technology development efforts, particularly in growth sectors such as engineering, medical education, health sciences and business,” said Rowan President Dr. Ali Houshmand.

RIVF’s Managing Director Howard Lubert notes that the Fund is invested in Rowan’s students, faculty and alumni, but also in the region and its future.

“Unlike the other 67 university-based venture funds, the Rowan Fund is the only one where the money came from the University endowment through the foundation,” said Lubert. “We are truly committed to expanding and innovating around our Rowan family and community.”

The Rowan Innovation Venture Fund accepts applications on a rolling basis. For more information visit rowan.edu/venturefund or contact Howard Lubert at HLubert@RowanVentureFund.com

Venture Fund continues its investment in innovative regional business initiatives
President’s Forum Reception honors loyal friends and donors

More than 275 of Rowan University’s friends gathered at The Union League of Philadelphia on May 20th for the annual President’s Forum reception. The event celebrated the vision and contributions of this loyal group and their commitment to the University. The significance of private contributions to the Rowan University Foundation continues to grow. As the institution transforms higher education, the investment of generous alumni and friends is vital for continued success.

1. Michael Vernamonti ’09, President Ali A. Houshmand, William Moon, Jr. ’09
2. President Houshmand, Sherry DiMedio, Kevin DiMedio, Farah Houshmand
3. Rowan Board of Trustees member Lita Abele, Merrill Abele, Diane Mazzei ’69, ’80
4. President Houshmand, Rowan Board of Trustees member Barbara Chamberlain ’88, Farah Houshmand
5. Minh Huynh, d.o., Pamela Zee, m.d., CMSRU Dean Dr. Paul Katz, Michael Renzi, m.d., Elias Iliadis, M.D.
6. President Houshmand, Patricia ’87 and Joseph Miskel ’87, Farah Houshmand
7. Janette Drayton, President Houshmand, Rowan College at Burlington County President Paul Drayton
8. President Houshmand, Joan ’58 and William Brower, Farah Houshmand
9. Kelly Dun, Robert O. Carr, Frances Brodeur, Rivka Tadjer
10. President Houshmand, Debi ’82 and Anthony Fugaro, d.o., Farah Houshmand
Pediatrics Faculty Honor a Colleague, Mentor and Leader in CMSRU Auditorium

Ernest Post, MD, is a pediatrician and a “do’er.” So when he decided to participate in CMSRU’s Take a Seat Campaign, which allows donors to place a name on an auditorium chair here at the school, it wasn’t a huge surprise.

He noticed that his colleague, William Sharrar, MD, had his name on a chair already, and thought it was a great idea to place his own chair right next to his friend Bill’s. “A couple of pediatricians, it’ll be perfect,” he joked.

The joke was the glimmer of something bigger and more exciting. First, he asked around to see if any other members of the Pediatrics faculty were getting an auditorium chair. Turns out, Michael Goodman, MD, was filling out his form. From here, a great idea was born and—well, maybe just sharing Dr. Post’s email to his entire department is the best thing to do. He wrote:

“At yesterday’s interesting CMSRU grand rounds in the auditorium, [a few of us] discussed the seats there that have our names because of financial contributions we have made to the medical school. We agreed that Sid Sussman should have a named seat there, too, and are asking for your help. Sid was the first chair of an academic department at Cooper, from 1978 to 1991 and was still seeing patients and/or teaching here into the aughts (2000s). He built the department and the dream he always worked for was having a four-year school here. If you’re getting this email it’s because our recollection is that you were here before Sid retired. For us to get a seat for Sid, we need to collectively contribute $3,500. Together I’m sure we can do it.”

Did they ever do it!

The gifts came in, marking admiration for Dr. Sussman from pediatricians he hired, led, and worked with, including several who have moved on from their posts at Cooper University Hospital. The financial goal was met with a final push from three exceptionally generous individuals: Dr. Goodman, Dr. Sharrar, and yes, Dr. Post.

But the plaque on the chair? That was just one part of the goal. Next up in Dr. Post’s plan was to get the long-retired Dr. Sussman to campus to see the plaque.

Working with members of CMSRU’s staff, Dr. Post planned and organized a reception held in the CMSRU Auditorium in late January. There was a near-miss weather hiccup, but thankfully the snow cleared up and the Pediatrics faculty, current CMSRU students, and members of Dr. Sussman’s family joined Paul Katz, MD, founding dean of CMSRU, for a very special evening.

Featured speakers included Dr. Katz, Dr. Post, and of course, Dr. Sussman.

“Take a Seat” to support scholarships at CMSRU

On May 9, 2016 Cooper Medical School of Rowan University graduated its charter class of 43 physicians. Scholarship support was critical in reducing the financial burden for many of these students, allowing them to focus their best efforts on their academic pursuits and pursue the specialty of their dreams.

CMSRU invites you to help today’s medical students receive the education they need to become tomorrow’s successful physicians by participating in the “Take a Seat” initiative. This campaign allows donors to have their names, or the names of their choosing—a family member, friend, mentor, patient or a beloved physician—placed on a chair in the CMSRU Auditorium.

All proceeds from the Take a Seat Campaign go directly to CMSRU’s Scholarship Fund. Seats in the first four rows may be named with a minimum gift of $3,500. All other seats may be named with a minimum gift of $2,500 and all gifts are payable over five years. Your participation guarantees that you and the person you honor will be a visible part of Cooper Medical School of Rowan University for years to come.
With over $2 million awarded in Rowan University Foundation scholarships in 2015, scholarships are an essential part of supporting Rowan’s mission. Therefore, the Foundation hosted its first annual Scholarship Reception & Dinner on November 12 to recognize and thank donors who support scholarships.

The evening allowed donors to meet their scholarship recipients and students to express their gratitude for their scholarship. The event included donors who have made a gift or pledge to named, endowed scholarships; have established a bequest for a scholarship; or have given $25,000+ to a currently operating scholarship at Rowan or CMSRU, as well as corporate/foundation donors who support a currently operating scholarship.

The evening also featured a short video “Changing Lives: The Impact of Philanthropy” which can be viewed at www.rufoundation.org.

1. Rowan Board of Trustees Chairman Linda Rohrer, Cassandra Aran ’16, Anthony Wohlrab ’16, Gerald B. Shreiber and Nina Sciucca.
2. Dylan Livingston ’17, Darlene Rasmussen and Samantha Beckett ’16.
3. Jiayun Shen ’19, Rowan Board of Trustees member Virginia Smith and Michelle Alspach ’16.

For more information on the 1923 Society, please visit rufoundation.org or contact:
Rowan University Foundation
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028
856-256-4095
contact@rufoundation.org

Award supports medical education

Since 1993, the JT Tai & Co. Foundation has provided scholarships for hundreds of medical students across the country. The late JT Tai, a Shanghai-born antiques dealer, started the foundation, and today, YC Chen, his friend and business partner for more than 40 years, maintains and oversees the daily operations.

Tai always recognized the high costs associated with medical education and saw scholarships as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young people hoping to pursue careers as physicians. The foundation has had a special interest in supporting the medical field because Tai believed scholarships are important and effective way of helping people. He also understood that whether you are old or young, rich or poor, everyone gets sick. Helping the next generation of doctors is something he was very passionate about doing.

RowanSOM students, Sujana Bhattacharyya ’17 and Sharde Chambers ’17, were among those selected for 2016 scholarship awards from the foundation.

By providing financial assistance to promising students in need, scholarships at Rowan provide the resources to recruit and support the best and brightest students and ensure that their education remains affordable. To learn about opportunities to support scholarships at Rowan, please call 856-256-4095 or visit giving.rufoundation.org

"Rowan gave us so much.”

John and Diane Mazzei, who each earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Rowan University in 1969, are prime examples of what it means to give back to their alma mater.

The couple earned master’s degrees from Rowan as well—John in guidance counseling in 1975 and Diane in curriculum and instruction in 1980—and both spent their careers in education, working to enhance the lives of students in the South Jersey region.

Active in supporting the University, Diane served for 28 years on the Rowan University Alumni Association Board, including three years as President, while John has been a loyal member of the Brown & Gold Gridiron Club, also having served as President.

With more than 28 years of consecutive giving, the Mazzeis are among Rowan’s most loyal donors and are proud to be members of the 1923 Society, which encourages continued consistent annual giving at any level.

“We made a commitment to give every year because Rowan provided us with the opportunity to embark on successful careers in education,” said the couple. “Giving back helps that legacy continue.”

Thanks to their generous support, Rowan students will continue to receive enhanced educational opportunities for years to come.
The Rowan University Alumni Association hosted its first annual Run For Rowan 5K on April 23 and all the proceeds from the event benefitted the University’s Emergency Scholarship Fund.

Created in 2011, the Rowan University Emergency Scholarship Fund assists students who are experiencing life-altering crises in their families by providing the financial support they need to complete a semester and/or course in the pursuit of graduating and thus realizing their dream of a Rowan degree.

Thanks to strong support from event sponsors, volunteers and the Rowan community, the event raised over $5,000 for the Fund.

Over 260 runners braved the weather and completed the on-campus run which began and ended on the Chamberlain Student Center patio. The event welcomed all members of the Rowan community and included competitive racers, joggers, walkers, strollers and even pets!

Following the run there was a brief awards ceremony. Rowan student, Charlie Garb, posted the winning time of 17:38, setting the bar high for the event’s participants in years to come.

“Even in the rain, the run was still a success,” said Chris D’Angelo, director of Alumni Engagement. “This is definitely an event we are going to continue doing annually. We really wanted to raise awareness about the Emergency Scholarship Fund and will possibly use this event to bring attention to additional lesser-known University scholarships.”

Over 260 participants took part in the first annual Run For Rowan 5K to raise money for the Rowan University Emergency Scholarship Fund following a pre-race warm-up with the Rowan Prof (below).

Student Chosen as Emerging Artist
Junior Music Performance major Yahan Liu (below, far left) was one of five recipients of the 2016 Emerging Artists Award presented by the Catherine R. and Anthony A. Clifton Foundation. Yahan received $5,000 plus the opportunity to perform at the awards event held at the Kimmel Center on May 12. Performers cannot apply for the merit-based awards; rather the Cliftons have structured the program so that recipients are chosen by program heads at area schools identified by the couple. In addition to Rowan, this year’s schools were Temple University, West Chester University, the Westminster Choir College and the University of the Arts.

SOM Hosts Scholarship Luncheon
The Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine hosted its annual Scholarship Luncheon on March 15. More than 160 student doctors, their families, alumni, donors and friends attended the event, which provided the opportunity for scholarship recipients to meet and thank the donors who helped fund their medical education. Last year, SOM awarded over $160,000 in scholarships to 50 students; this year, over $258,500 in scholarships was awarded to 76 students. Thank you to all the generous donors who helped to make this a record-setting year!
When founder, President and CEO of Inductotherm Industries, Inc., Henry Rowan and his wife, Betty, pledged $100 million to Glassboro State College in 1992, they set the standard for private donors who recognize the value of excellence in public higher education. They also demonstrated, in the most tangible of ways, that an institution like Rowan could be a wise—and worthy—investment.

Although known for his drive to make a difference and to embrace challenges of all kinds, the transformational gift was admittedly one of Mr. Rowan’s greatest personal challenges.

Yet beyond challenging himself and other donors, Mr. Rowan also inspired a new generation of higher education advancement professionals, myself included.

What I have come to realize during my career at Rowan, in large part because of my visits and discussions with Mr. Rowan himself, is that philanthropy is about more than donors making monetary gifts to the University. Instead, it’s about improving and changing the lives of current and future students and the broader community for the better.

Perhaps Mr. Rowan said it best when he described his decision to make the gift, saying, “Certainly I enjoy the concept that a lifetime of work is doing more good than just generating dollars. There is a pleasure in thinking that all this work we have done for 40 years is going to benefit … the students and maybe all of South Jersey. I feel good about that.”

Indeed, Mr. Rowan’s generosity exemplifies philanthropy in its truest sense, embodying a “love of mankind” through an action done to better humanity. At its core, his gift was fueled by passion—a passion to create an educated workforce and society, with a particular focus on future engineers.

He has inspired a new generation of donors, many with no direct connection or ties to the University, to partner in the transformation of this institution while making their own impact. And while the amount, intent and designation of each gift received since his landmark contribution has differed, passion is at the core of each gift.

Mr. Rowan’s support of higher education opened—and continues to open—many worlds for countless students and graduates of the University. His gift was the catalyst for transformative change that is far beyond what anyone could have imagined in 1992. From the nationally acclaimed College of Engineering that bears his name to dramatic growth, progress and achievements University-wide, Rowan thrives in large part thanks to his vision and foresight.

Although he couldn’t have known it at the time, when Mr. Rowan challenged himself 24 years ago to give a transformational gift, he changed the landscape of higher education philanthropy forever.

Since 1992, more than 160 gifts of $100 million or more have been made to higher education institutions in the United States. His gift has driven university advancement efforts at Rowan as well, with more than $73 million in new gifts and pledges raised in just the past 10 years. His gift has inspired donors at all levels to invest in public higher education institutions like Rowan University. We, and higher education philanthropy as a whole, owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

December 2015 marked the conclusion of a remarkable life. And while journalists and reporters from The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and media outlets across the country paid tribute by expounding on Mr. Rowan’s pioneering industry achievements, his entrepreneurial spirit and his extraordinary generosity, perhaps the most remarkable story of all is how he charted a bold new course for philanthropy in public higher education.

We should all be proud of what Rowan University continues to achieve thanks to the culture of philanthropy and excellence that Henry Rowan created. As we reflect on the impact of his life and carry on his enduring legacy, I am thankful for the unique opportunity I have been given to be part of his continuing legacy.

— R.J. Tallarida Jr. is the Vice President for University Advancement & Deputy Executive Director of the Rowan University Foundation.

“A man of extraordinary character, Henry Rowan valued the power of education—to change lives, to create jobs and to improve the quality of life for all people.”

— R.J. Tallarida, Jr.