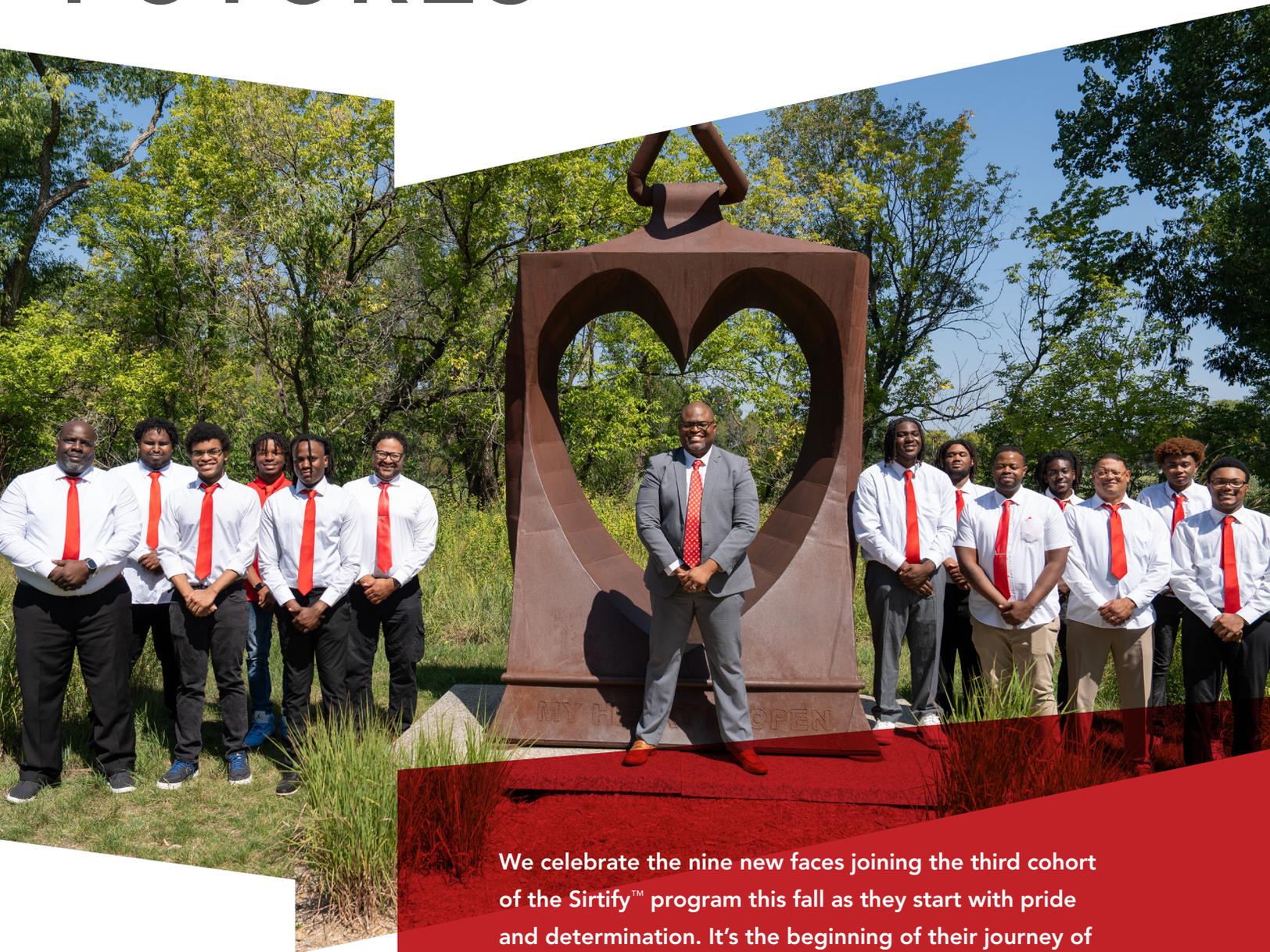


CREATING FUTURES



We celebrate the nine new faces joining the third cohort of the Sirtify™ program this fall as they start with pride and determination. It's the beginning of their journey of empowerment and they face it with pride.

– Marvis Kilgore, Sirtify Program Coordinator



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings dear Normandale Foundation contributors:

As we settle into a new academic year and the leaves around us fall to the ground, it is easy to see that "change is in the air." With each new semester/year, I enjoy watching new friendships, mentorships, and community being developed and maintained. I am energized by hearing students speak fondly about a recent class lecture or a staff interaction that was so meaningful to them in unanticipated ways. I hear the excitement in the voices of faculty as they discuss the success they see after trying new things in their courses or when describing that pivotal moment when a concept is finally understood by a student. And it warms my heart when I see a student respond favorably when a seemingly random staff member greets them or asks them about their day. These examples demonstrate the many ways that Normandale employees are using their personal spheres of influence to impact change at the college. As a donor you, too, are impacting change for good at Normandale.



A couple of years ago, I challenged the college to think about change using an "I-we-WE" framework. We can achieve success when we work together as a collective (WE), when we pursue change in smaller groups (we), and when individuals take personal actions toward change (I).

I want to thank all of you, our donors, for using your "I" to make a difference in the lives of our students. Your willingness to make individual, family, and/or corporate gifts to the college is a wonderful example of the "I-we-WE" change that we aspire to. Your generosity

not only impacts students directly, but also the families and the communities that they represent. Each day, our Normandale employees show students that they care in a variety of ways – and your willingness to give your financial resources to show students you care is limitless!

Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D.

Joyce C. Ester, PhD
College President

COLLEGE PRESIDENT:

Joyce C. Ester, PhD

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Neuger

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NORMANDALE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

FUELING THE LIGHT TO SHINE BRIGHT

Dear friends,

What a year it has been! When I last wrote, I was settling into my role as Executive Director. You welcomed me with open arms and proceeded to sprint past my expectations. I have been honored by your trust in me and your unwavering commitment to the students here at Normandale.

Whether you're a long-time supporter or new to our donor community, we are so glad you're here. As you will see in the pages ahead, we have strengthened the relationship between the Normandale Foundation and the college to make major progress in a number of areas. This would not be possible without each of you.

Besides scholarships, the Normandale Foundation raises money to support campus programs. I'm happy to report that we have seen very strong returns on your investments:

- The Academy of Math and Science, which supports underrepresented populations in STEM, has a 92% success rate of transfers and graduates;
- Sirtify, our fully-funded pathway for Black men to become teachers, has an 82% retention rate;
- The Campus Cupboard is now a free grocery store for students and their families to frequent as often as needed. We've seen a 91% increase in visits over the last year, 53% of which are new users;
- The Normandale Cares emergency grant program gives up to \$500 to students facing unplanned costs that threaten their ability to stay in school;
- And, thanks to a local private donor and Hennepin County, we gifted 900 laptops to low-income students to help shrink the digital divide.

If you know me, you know how much I love to think about next steps. I'm excited to share that we are launching an alumni program! This organization will allow us to engage with our alumni and understand how Normandale is shaping lives after students leave our campus. Stay tuned for future developments.

I'd like to call your attention to our board member section – we have some amazing people terming off, and are welcoming six new members, as well as our new Board Chair, Teresa Biss. I'm excited to forge our next chapter as we work our way through the year.

Cheers to you and to our students!

And, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.



Jane Fenton
Executive Director, Normandale Foundation





SIRTIFY PROGRAM UPDATE

CREATING **STRONG PATHWAYS**

Normandale's Sirtify™ program embraces students who identify as Black, African, and/or African American men with a shared goal of becoming K–12 teachers. Sirtify's care and commitment is continuous. No student sets foot on a new campus without assurance that their existing network will remain. In addition to leadership training, professional and academic support, and professional mentors, the program provides an annual scholarship of up to \$10,000 covering all tuition, fees, books, and supplies, plus a contribution toward cost of living. Nine new members were recently inducted, bringing the program's total membership to 23. Two students have already secured transfers into four-year programs – one to Hamline University and one to Concordia University – both on significant and full scholarships.

One of the program's goals is to equip students with the skills to interview for jobs. Many Sirtify men are already eligible for teaching licenses or ready to enter classrooms as paraprofessionals, but to secure those roles they must navigate the hiring process. To support that goal, this year's theme is "What is your brand?" Students will develop a personal brand by preparing headshots, tailoring LinkedIn profiles, and practicing mock interviews to learn how to move through

professional spaces. In their first semester, students will take an NCC-1000 college prep course. Students immediately encounter two examples of Black success in academia. The class is taught by academic advisor Njia Lawrence-Porter, with recurring guest lectures from Normandale alum and Sirtify Advisory Board Member Torrior Amie. Torrior and Njia are also co-authors of the required textbook, so first-hand knowledge is imparted from subject experts.

The need to supply Minnesota schools with Black male teachers remains critical. Representation matters, since less than 2% of teachers are Black men.

"As the momentum of this program builds, we look forward to creating even stronger pathways for our students as they work to become part of the solution to Minnesota's educational achievement gap," said Sirtify Program Coordinator Marvis Kilgore. "Many thanks to our faithful donors who've been here every step of the way."

THANK YOU!

The Normandale Foundation sincerely thanks these departing Board members for their service!

**Romesh Poppler**

Rome Poppler joined the Board in 2017 and is concluding his term in 2023. He is the Director

of Enterprise Real Estate at Ameriprise Financial in downtown Minneapolis. Rome's ties to Normandale run deep: he and his wife are both alumni (and they met on campus!). Now, he is passionate about giving back to the community that supported him. Rome is proud of the Board's expanded focus on funding critical needs, including the Campus Cupboard and other social services, in addition to scholarships. He co-led the alumni mentorship pilot program that kicked off this past fall. He also says that promoting Jane Fenton to Executive Director and gaining new friendships were some of the best things to come from his time on the Executive Committee. To future board members, Romesh has these words of wisdom: "Say yes and get involved right away. Identify your passions and use your expertise for good. Don't sit on the sidelines."

**Andy Kannenberg**

Andy Kannenberg is exiting the Board after a successful six-year term. In 2019, he retired from a career

in the mortgage industry and doubled down on his philanthropic commitments. In Andy's words, Normandale is an unbelievably well-kept secret. As soon as he heard about Normandale's story and the resilience of the student body, he was sold. Andy motivated others to think strategically about new avenues for funding and leaves behind a legacy of ambition and commitment to getting money to students. To new and aspiring board members, Andy shares these thoughts: "There is no better story than Normandale's, and there's never any harm in asking someone to support a good story. Tell your friends, tell your family, tell your coworkers – Normandale is worth it."

**Joel Peterson**

Joel Peterson is leaving the Board in better shape than he found it. As founder of iSpace Environments, he

saw an opportunity to learn more about the needs of higher education and used his business ties to grow Normandale's friend list. He was generous with support, involving his employees at every turn. He remembers his own humble beginnings, and says, "Education opens the door for individuals to realize their full potential. However, the financial strain of college expenses hinders many from pursuing higher education. Thanks to the Foundation's fundraising initiatives, support is available for tuition costs, essential technology like free laptops, and food assistance to alleviate student hunger. This not only makes the college dream attainable but also enables students to concentrate on thriving academically."

NORMANDALE FOUNDATION BOARD 2023

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WELCOME, NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Normandale Foundation is thrilled to welcome seven new Board members to the team!



Aaron Riippa Aaron is the Sourcing Director (Transportation, Warehousing, GHG Sustainability) for General Mills. He earned a B.S. in Economics from the University of Minnesota and an M.S. in Operations Management from the University of Arkansas. Aaron's mom is a Normandale alum, and he and his family now live just a mile

away from campus. He is passionate about local education and looks forward to advancing corporate engagement with the Normandale Foundation.



Lindsey Siegfried de Sanchez Lindsey is a Paralegal at the Law Office of Iris Ramos in Minneapolis. She holds a certificate in Baking and Pastry from the Art Institutes International and is also an alum of Normandale. She has since transferred to the Harvard University Extension School, where she is pursuing a ALB in Government and

an ALM in Management. Lindsey is excited about non-profit management and looks forward to supporting the Normandale Foundation's social media presence.



Hunter Saklad Hunter is the Chief Supply Chain Officer at Sleep Number. He earned a B.A. in American Civilization and Public Policy from Brown University, an M.P.A. in Economic Development & Environmental Policy from the University of Minnesota, and an M.B.A. in Finance, Operations and General Management from the

Columbia Business School. Hunter believes that community colleges and their students are vital assets to the future of Minnesota. He is looking forward to better understanding the educational landscape of community colleges.



Emily McGrath Emily is the Director of Integrated Communications at Tunheim. She holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Bard College and a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Maryland. She's served on numerous boards, including the Art Shanty Projects, Healdsburg Education Foundation, and the Healdsburg

Charter School. Emily is motivated to help build an education pipeline for non-traditional students. She is looking forward to fundraising on behalf of Normandale so that priority projects can advance.



Nathan Coulter Nathan currently represents district 51B in the Minnesota House of Representatives. His committee assignments include: Children and Families, Veterans and Military Affairs, Higher Education, and Elections. Nathan has authored policies intended to benefit lower-income and working families with \$630 million

in new investments. He holds a B.A. in Music Education and Political Science from St. Olaf College and an M.P.A. in Health, Housing, and Education Policy Leadership from the University of Minnesota. Nathan is excited to deepen his roots in the community through board service.



Moses Onyangore Moses is the Associate Manager (Portfolio and Asset Management) at Northmarq Capital. Previously, he served in the Minnesota National Guard, where he was a Combat Medic (Sergeant). Moses received a B.S. in Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate from St. Cloud State University. He also attended North

Hennepin Community College. Moses is looking forward to using his relationship-building skills to benefit the Normandale Foundation and hopes to be pushed outside of his comfort zone in service of the community at Normandale.



Jim Roots Jim is the Senior Product Manager (Digital Marketing Operations) at NVIDIA and a former US Air Force Captain (O-3). He holds a B.S. in Political Science and Engineering from the US Naval Academy and an M.B.A. (Marketing) from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He also received a Change Management

certification through Normandale. Jim currently serves on the Board of Directors for 7TH BATT, where he works alongside other alumni of the Naval Academy. He looks forward to serving the students at Normandale in their personal and professional growth.



MINNESOTA'S NORTH STAR PROMISE & THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL GIVING

In the fall of 2024, Minnesota's Office of Higher Education will debut a new funding initiative: the North Star Promise (NSP) Scholarship Program. While program details are still in development, public colleges like Normandale are preparing for the impact.

The NSP program has a "last dollar" structure, meaning funds will cover *tuition and fees only*, **after** federal aid and private aid have been awarded. Federal aid is calculated on what is called the "Cost of Attendance," which includes *all associated costs of living*, like books, transportation, groceries, childcare, and rent based on that school's zip code.

Donors Bridge a Crucial Gap

As exciting as these new funds are, it is vital that donors stay engaged at Normandale. Donors bridge a crucial gap. Private scholarships can go toward books, technology, and living costs, impacting the quality of life for those students who are balancing family, work, and studies. Donors are buying students the time and the mental capacity to focus on learning.

Another crucial area for donors to consider is gifts to support programs like the Laptop Giving Program, emergency grants, and the Campus Cupboard food shelf. These areas may not have been considered essential 10 years ago, but now they are a critical component for first-generation or low-income students. At Normandale, our hope is that people will start

to understand how many obstacles stand between a student and their education – and donors will see an opportunity to directly change that narrative. Most of our students are working full-time and juggling real-world expenses on top of their education. One of our fastest-growing groups is non-traditional students, ages 25 and up. They are particularly grateful for the extra help as they work toward starting or finishing a college education.

Hope & Trust

The future of educational giving looks like trust and hope. The fewer restrictions placed on a gift, the more likely those funds are to be used for a student in dire need. Establishing a line of trust between donors and the Normandale Foundation is imperative. We encourage donors to reach out to Normandale Foundation staff to understand where their money can make the biggest impact. Together, we can make a life-changing impact on Normandale's exceptional students.



REDEFINING ESSENTIAL: THE LAPTOP GIVING PROGRAM

Laptops can no longer be considered luxury items for college students. In fact, faculty and staff at Normandale were seeing students struggle without access to a computer long before their schooling solely depended on it.

Beena Cook, Director of the Tutoring Center, says “Laptops are a necessity for college students. Our students use these laptops for access to education, and they also use them for access to participate in their community. In our increasingly digital world, students search for food shelves, apply for jobs, access telehealth, review business hours, game, zoom, and more through the Internet. These are all aspects of being a whole person. When we acknowledge our students as whole people, they are more engaged, welcomed, and included online and on our campus.”

In 2020, Normandale received unrestricted federal funds for essential student support. When the pandemic hastened the transition to online learning, so did the realization that many of our students have little to no access to appropriate technology, so \$1 million went toward purchasing laptops for students.

In partnership with President Ester, the Normandale Community College Foundation has secured a private donation of \$300,000 which will purchase 454 laptops. Hennepin County stepped up with another 460 devices for Hennepin County residents. Years of experience running the distribution made this partnership feasible, since the college had collected data on its efficacy and could demonstrate impact.

Thank you to all the donors who have contributed to this program! Please contact the Foundation office if you'd like to help.

Student Testimonials

“I am a student returning to school and have limited financial means. On top of that I have been diagnosed with cancer and have extra financial obligations because of that. **I want to continue with my schooling and change my career to better support myself despite the health issues and having better access to tools such as a computer would help exponentially.**”

“I am in dire need of a laptop for my computer science major due to limited funding. This program's assistance is crucial because it caters to students like me who lack access to a computer. **With a laptop, I can fully engage in online classes, complete programming assignments, and participate in coding projects. It's my gateway to resources, coding platforms, and essential software required for my coursework.** Access to a laptop is integral for my success in the program, and your support makes a significant difference in my academic journey, allowing me to pursue my computer science major effectively and achieve my educational goals.”

“In the future, I plan to gain admission into the Dental Hygiene program at Normandale. This past August, my husband and I welcomed our first baby and we are currently residing with my father to aid with our financial needs as we are both unemployed. I am currently sharing a desktop computer with my father, and my sister which makes sharing time difficult. **Gaining access to a laptop will help me to have more time to work on my classes as I will not need to share with my family or travel to a public area where computers are accessible.** I truly value education and having my own laptop will help to ensure that I am best prepared to receive one.”



INFECTIOUS GRATITUDE

Leandro Duarte Idiarte

“Son, you know we can’t afford that, but it is a beautiful dream.”

That’s what Leandro Idiarte’s mother told him when he expressed his desire to attend law school and fulfill his dream of becoming a lawyer.

Leandro grew up in the city of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil. His parents understood the value of higher education, even though they were unable to pursue it themselves.

Just as Leandro’s hopes of obtaining a higher education were fading, he learned of a test he could take to apply for a fully government-funded scholarship. Following much preparation, he took the test, and qualified for law school.

Unfortunately, a few years later, Leandro was faced with a difficult decision. His daughter had been born with hearing loss, and by the time she reached the age of two, she had lost her hearing completely. Leandro had to choose between continuing his studies and leaving Brazil to take his daughter to the United States, where she would be able to have surgery for a cochlear implant. And so, he walked away from his dream.

“Looking back, I have no doubt that I made the right decision,” Leandro said. “The joy of hearing my daughter respond to sounds and hearing her speak reminds me that it was the best choice I could have made.”

While Leandro and his family settled in Minnesota, his ambition to become a lawyer never went away. After years of working and learning English on YouTube, he worried he was too old to return to school. Not only that, but he knew how time-consuming and expensive going back to school would be.

After visiting Normandale for the first time, Leandro felt it was exactly where he was meant to be. He said, “What truly captivated me was the positive energy and welcoming people I met. They made me feel as if I had found a second home.” However, simultaneously balancing the responsibilities of being a full-time worker, student, and parent was taking a toll on him.

“Every day is a new obstacle to overcome: trying to find time to study, work, and most importantly, spend time with my family,” Leandro shared. “Receiving the Normandale scholarship from the Chorzempa Family Foundation was not just a matter of financial aid; it was a breather, allowing me to reduce work hours, focus more on my studies, and cherish moments with my daughter.”



From the very start of his Normandale journey, Leandro involved himself in as many extracurricular activities as possible. He became a member of the Politics and Law Club, which gave him the opportunity to represent Normandale at the Model United Nations event earlier this year; was elected the President of the Student Senate; and even served as a student representative on the Normandale Foundation’s board.

Looking forward, Leandro will be heading to the University of Minnesota next fall, where he will work towards a bachelor’s degree in psychology and political science, and a minor in business law. Ultimately, he is planning for the day he will return to law school and achieve his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer.

“My daughter has witnessed how much Normandale means to me,” Leandro recalls. “Once, she told me, ‘Dad, hearing you talk about Normandale makes me want to go there too.’”

A SIMPLE & **STEADFAST SPIRIT**

Jim Hays Jim was born and raised in North Minneapolis and now lives in Miami, where he is a Vice Chairman at Brown & Brown Insurance, and also a business owner and investor with a core group of colleagues. He has no direct relation to Normandale's campus, but was intrigued by an article in the Star Tribune, which shed light on the gap in academic representation for Black men and highlighted Normandale's Sirtify program. Jim called Sirtify's Program Coordinator, Marvis Kilgore, to learn more. The conversation confirmed what his gut was already telling him: Sirtify is a cause worth supporting. Jim and his colleagues are active in their collective philanthropy and share a commitment to



empowering young children, particularly those with socioeconomic disadvantages, so he and his business partners – Mike

Egan, Steve Lerum, Bill Mershon, John Newhouse, and Tom Fish – made a large donation directly to the program. The same group also sponsors the New Directions Hockey Program in North Minneapolis, where kids from low-income families are taught to play organized hockey. Jim's generosity is simple and steadfast. He is interested in staying connected to the inner-city and helping kids access more opportunities, so that's exactly what he does. Instead of using flowery words or lengthy monologues of persuasion, Jim's mantra is simple: "Leave the world a better place than you found it." Luckily for Normandale, Jim and his team have certainly made our campus better.



After 15 years, English Department Chair Dan Darling never struggles to be happy at work and says it's because he gets to participate in the dreams and hopes of his students. Dan is drawn to community college because the stakes are higher for students trying to achieve social mobility and long-term stability.

Dan's commitment to empowering disenfranchised students led him to join the team of faculty that formed what is now his favorite class: Integrated Reading and Writing. This entry-level class is the epitome of Normandale's "student-ready" mentality. Dan and his colleagues created a class meant to level the playing field for international and learning-disabled students, students from low-income neighborhoods with faltering schools, or those returning to education after a gap period. Dan's approach to this class is guided by a mission statement: "Yes, everybody can make it."

A DOMINO EFFECT **OF POSITIVITY**

Dan Darling

Students enter a supportive environment during their first semester to boost their reading and writing skills and ensure access to an equitable experience at Normandale. The assigned texts are intentionally diverse so that students from marginalized communities see themselves reflected in academic text. The developmental program acts as a bridge to academia, providing safe passage for those who may not otherwise dare to make the trek.

Dan currently serves as a Normandale Foundation board member. He cites the immediate urgency around funds. Students arrive at Normandale with economic hardships, some so dire that they are a single economic disaster from dropping out of school. What feels like a small scholarship to some donors will have huge impacts on the recipients. Dan offers his voice to the Board in order to trigger a "domino effect of positivity."



FAST-PACED PASSION

Babatunde Santos Babatunde ‘Babs’ Santos attended Normandale from 2015 to 2017 as a high school student. Eager for a challenge, he completed his general courses through the post-secondary enrollment options program. Babs was drawn to Normandale because he saw multiple family members attend and express remaining gratitude for the campus. After his high school graduation, he attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, where he majored in journalism. Since then, he has been on a rocket-powered path toward success. Babs is now a news reporter at Fox 9, where he is surrounded by resources and information. He’s passionate about keeping people informed and loves his role as a storyteller. Each day at the network is different, and he credits Normandale with preparing him for the fast-paced environment. His long-term goal is to become a news anchor (though anyone who knows Babs is confident that this dream is not far from becoming a reality). In his commencement address to Normandale’s graduating class last year, he led with a powerful, yet simple message: **“Don’t settle.”**



UPLIFTING OTHERS

In 1991, Torrior Amie became a Normandale student. An athletic injury in high school intersected with family tragedy, interrupting his athletic recruitment and blurring his path. Normandale’s eclectic campus piqued Torrior’s interest, and he enrolled as a music major, triggering a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. He attended the University of Minnesota before transferring to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where he completed his music degree. Later, he returned to the University of Minnesota for a master’s in kinesiology. Now, Torrior is working toward a doctorate in theology. His degree collection supports an equally fascinating professional path. Torrior’s primary work is in real estate, but he is also a worship director, an educational consultant, and a high school track and field coach. In his scarce free time, he sits on multiple nonprofit boards (including the Normandale Foundation Board, from which he will soon depart after a full term). Torrior’s dedication is rooted in personal experience – from kindergarten through his current PhD, Torrior never had a Black teacher. He is determined to change that narrative for others. By contributing to Normandale’s community, Torrior is part of a process that uplifts people, especially Black people, and sets them on a trajectory for success.

THANK YOU

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This list recognizes cumulative gifts made to the Normandale Foundation between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.

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ASSETS	TOTAL
Current Assets	\$ 1,670,298
Investments	\$ 4,830,994
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 6,501,292

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Total Liabilities	\$ 66,164
Total Net Assets	\$ 6,435,128
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 6,501,292



817

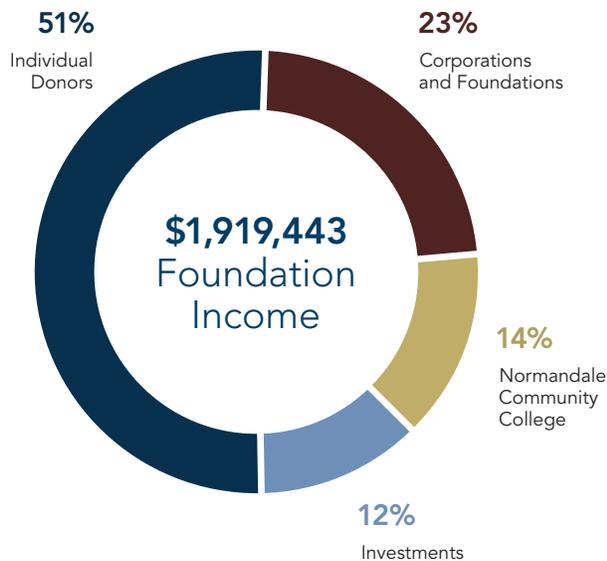
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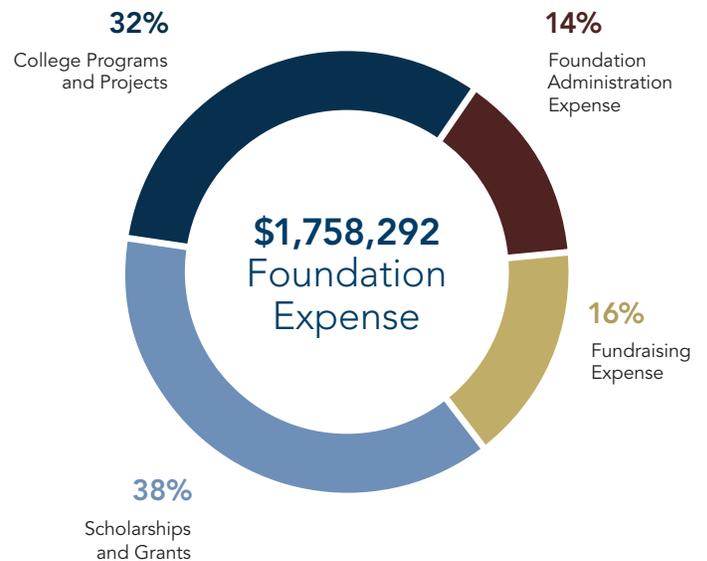
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FROM GOOD TO GREAT

This year's Creating Futures Breakfast featured alumni speaker Torrion Amie, pictured here, right. Torrion came to us from Burnsville High School, graduated from Normandale, went on to get a master's degree, and eventually ended up back at Normandale as Dean of Recruitment and Outreach until a few years ago. On the left is current Student Leandro Idiarte. He is the Student Senate Vice President, an aspiring law student, and ready to transfer to the University of Minnesota in the spring. His story is covered in more detail inside. Center is President Joyce Ester, embarking on her 10th year at the college, who recently led a conference for those wishing to become college presidents. Her message was "Find your Why." Joyce's "why" is: "I want to lead my college into a place where it hasn't been yet – a place that takes it from good to great."

