

Child care center owner, 57, to earn second degree from BC3 @ Brockway

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(Reynoldsville, PA) Butler County Community College's Class of 2019 will be its largest of the century with 599 graduates – 14 more than in 2017, its previous top class since 2000.

Five-hundred-twenty-seven graduates will receive at least one associate degree, and 72 at least one certificate during BC3's commencement exercises, set for 7 p.m. May 15 in the Field House on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

Among the 599 graduates are 32 student-veterans. A 70-year-old grandmother of three who is the Class of 2019's most senior graduate. A 35-year-old married mother of six. BC3's first two-sport All-American. Six high school students who achieved a Workplace Certificate in Entrepreneurship by completing the first Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program.

And Jackie Frampton Walls, 57, who will receive an associate degree in early childhood education (Pre K-4) from BC3 @ Brockway toward her goal of becoming a director and teacher at the child care center she purchased in 2014 and named in honor of her twin sister, Sandy, who passed away in 2011.

"I have worked with children throughout my whole life," said Walls, an aunt of six nieces and one nephew. Walls worked at the Riverview Intermediate Unit 6 in Clarion before establishing Sandy's Angels Child Care Center in DuBois.

"With not having children of my own, my center gives me the opportunity to be a meaningful part of children's lives," said Walls, of Reynoldsville. "I feel as if each student at my center is part of my extended family."

Walls also earned an associate degree in child development education in 2017 from BC3 @ Brockway, which, she said, she selected because it is "small, close to home, and because of its cost."



Jackie Frampton Walls, 57, of Reynoldsville, will graduate from BC3 @ Brockway on May 15 with an associate degree in early childhood education (Pre K-4). The owner of Sandy's Angels Child Care Center in DuBois also received an associate degree in child development education from BC3 in 2017.

BC3 has the most affordable tuition and the highest salary-to-cost ratio among 43 regional colleges and universities, according to U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard data. Seventy-five percent of BC3 graduates are debt-free. BC3 has also been selected as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania in three consecutive rankings by Schools.com.

“I received a quality, affordable degree,” Walls said. “My education at BC3 @ Brockway will help me to become a teacher because I gained the knowledge to teach with competence.”

The beneficiaries of that education will be those children who attend Sandy's Angels Child Care Center – “The love and nurturing my sister Sandy had for children was amazing,” Walls said, “and she is my angel.”

“Children are our future and every child is a gift,” Walls said. “The enjoyment I get from helping teach a child to read, a new word, or to tie a shoe is so fulfilling when, at last, the child has mastered the task and is so excited. My passion for children has always been there and I feel now I am where I want and need to be in my career, with help from BC3 @ Brockway.”

Evans City woman most senior graduate

Seventeen BC3 graduates will receive two associate degrees, two will receive two certificates, and 13 will receive one associate degree and one certificate.

Evans City resident Deborah Carter, at 70 years, one month and 12 days on May 15 will be BC3's most senior graduate, 285 days more senior than Brenda Haney, of Cranberry Township. Carter will receive an associate degree in social work and Haney, in criminology.

Vanessa Eberle, 35, of Butler, a married mother of six, will receive an associate degree in psychology, as will her husband, Ethan, 41.

Mackenzie Craig, of Karns City, who since December was named a National Junior College Athletic Association Division III All-American in volleyball and in women's basketball, will receive an associate degree in criminology.

Ellwood City resident Mikayla Beachem, at 17 years, eight months and 22 days will be BC3's youngest graduate, 37 days younger than fellow Riv-Ell classmate Destiny DiMaggio, also of Ellwood City.

Ellwood City and Riverside high school students were able to participate in the first, yearlong Riv-Ell Entrepreneurship Program, a collaborative effort among BC3, the Community College of Beaver County and the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, which blended classroom learning with real-world experience. Students who completed the program earned 16 tuition-free, transferrable credits.

Past three graduating classes largest since 2000

BC3 will also graduate its second class of Presidential Scholars. Meghan Hyatt, of Butler, will receive an associate degree in mathematics; Kelly Kriley, of Butler, in chemistry; Drew Meier, of Fenelton, in electronics technology with CADD; Noah Pollock, of Chicora, in business administration; Claire Rodgers, of Saxonburg, in history; and Haley Vissari, of Renfrew, in early childhood education (Pre K-4).

The Presidential Scholars program is in its third year at BC3. The full-tuition President's Scholarship is presented to students in the Top 10 percent of their graduating class and who have achieved at least a 3.5 grade-point average at any of Butler County's public high schools. A cyber school student counted in those public schools' graduating classes is also eligible. Students must also enroll at BC3 in the first semester following their high school graduation to be eligible for the scholarship, and are required to take Scholars-only courses and maintain at least a 3.5 GPA at BC3.

More than 125 members of BC3's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, an international academic honor society, will graduate, as will 13 members of Delta Theta, BC3's chapter of Kappa Beta Delta, an international honor society for business students.

Eight students will receive from BC3 11 reverse-transfer degrees, an opportunity created in 2016 as part of an agreement among Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges and 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institutions.

Seven employees of Oberg Industries, a precision manufacturer in Freeport, will receive apprenticeship technology workplace certificates as a result of a program instructed onsite by BC3. BC3's 26-credit apprenticeship technology workplace certificate program, launched in fall 2016, is taught entirely at Oberg Industries.

Dr. Steve Tyrell, president of North Country Community College, Saranac Lake, N.Y., will be the keynote speaker. Sandra J. Ihlenfeld, a 2007 BC3 graduate and executive director of the Butler YMCA, will be the distinguished alumni speaker.

BC3's three most recent graduating classes have been its largest of the century. The college's Class of 2017 had 585 graduates and of 2018, 578. BC3's Class of 2018 also had 32 student-veterans. Its class of 2012 had 34.