

MAVERICKS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Shining a light on the Mercy Community's Resilience and Strength During COVID-19

At the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, accounts of the Mercy College community and the former College of New Rochelle (CNR) on the front lines of the pandemic flooded student, faculty, staff and alumni email accounts and conference calls. The stories exemplified courage and perseverance on the ground of the greatest public health emergency of our time, as well as expertise integral to the mitigation of issues stemming from an economic, health and societal crisis unlike any other.

Mercy aptly designated these individuals as **"Mavericks Making a Difference."** They consisted of health care professionals, professors, musicians, Mercy students, grocery store clerks, artists, school teachers, and more, spanning diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences.

In the face of the coronavirus situation, they demonstrated tremendous ability to navigate an unprecedented set of challenges, and rise to the occasion to help the individuals, organizations and industries impacted by the pandemic. With resolve and altruism, they provided essential services, and more, to safeguard the health and well-being of individuals most in need of additional support.

Mercy disseminated "Mavericks Making a Difference" stories through multiple communication channels, promoting their achievements to the broader community. The sampling of profiles below represents a subset of six "Mavericks Making a Difference" stories out of the more than 30 features shared in only two months time. A common theme that resonated in each story was each subject's deep-seeded dedication to service as learned through their collegiate experiences at Mercy College and the former College of New Rochelle (CNR).

Evita Kubhar '19, a member of Mercy's first four-year nursing graduating class, had to hit the ground running, fast, in her new position as a registered nurse. The COVID-19 outbreak forced her to learn the ropes of the nursing profession and her hospital at a rapid pace. "Mercy taught me well and I definitely had the

fundamentals needed to do my job. I'll be able to look back and tell future nursing students my experience — that we can handle anything that's thrown at us," said Kubhar.

Nyssamae Garcia

CNR '19, part of the last graduating class of CNR, before CNR entered into an agreement with Mercy to provide a pathway for students to continue their education uninterrupted, is now a staff nurse for a Level I adult emergency room. Even though she faced immense personal and professional difficulties during the COVID-19 outbreak, she exhibited heartening positivity: "As long as I wake up with no symptoms, that's a blessing," said Garcia. "Every day is a day toward normalcy — a new beginning."

After the nationwide school closures began due to COVID-19, former Broadway actor and current New York City public school music teacher **Jesse Means, M.S. '03** was forced to shift his curriculum to online learning. Within days, Means tore apart his one-bedroom apartment to create a virtual classroom that rivaled any other. Already armed with a green screen, he began setting up a makeshift television studio. With his at-home video editing software, working late into the night, he began to create videos for his preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade students.



Since the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation hit New York, **Sherrye Samuels**, clinical instructor, has been on the front lines, working in the Emergency Department at Metropolitan Hospital in New York City. In the thick of crisis, Samuels often thought about her nursing students. "I always tell them, 'Don't doubt your ability. Think outside the box.'"



When Marine Corps veteran and retired firefighter/paramedic **Thomas Macpherson '16, M.S. '19** decided to pursue a physician assistant career, he enrolled in Mercy's PA program. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Macpherson was integral in diagnosing and treating coronavirus patients, using the skills he learned at Mercy, including airway and ventilatory management, suturing, fractures and dislocations, to treat patients. "The competencies I gained from both my undergraduate degree and the Physician Assistant Program are being used



daily. I wouldn't be where I am, nor able to function at a high level, without the training I received in the Mercy PA program and the professors' dedication," Macpherson explained.

Mercy professor and epidemiologist **Rossi A. Hassad, Ph.D., MPH**, has been a reliable source of crucial public health information throughout the course of the pandemic, providing scientific counsel to audiences spanning the country and internationally through News12, Newsmax, Al Jazeera, MedPage Today and New York Magazine. He has also been a source of sound guidance and strength for the Mercy community as a panelist in two Discussions with Mercy Leaders, where he addressed best practices for the prevention and control of COVID-19, and staying healthy.



Through his expertise and work on COVID-19 he understands that the pandemic has challenged conventional medical and public health knowledge. "In the classroom, and as a professor of research, it is important to provide an objective lens, educating students about evolving research, implementing good logic and common sense as well as helping to cultivate the next generation of critical thinkers."

Mercy Donates PPE and Essential Equipment to Montefiore Hospital

To address the national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), **Mercy's School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHNS)** donated approximately 20,000 pieces of PPE, as well as other essential equipment, to Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, New York. Montefiore Hospital is a valued clinical partner for Mercy College. Faculty, adjunct professors and alumni work for Montefiore, and many Mercy students are placed at Montefiore for their clinical rotations.

"We are very proud to be working at Mercy College, a place where the motto is, 'consumed in service,' and we are very proud to be able to donate these supplies to one of our sister institutions," said Miriam Ford, associate dean for nursing at Mercy's Dobbs Ferry and Manhattan Campuses.



These inspirational stories will be upheld in Mercy's history books and shared by future generations as they remember how the College community took the hardships caused by the coronavirus pandemic and turned them on their heels to ignite positive change. These "Mavericks Making a Difference" epitomize the heart and soul of Mercy College, and with great pride and admiration, will be honored for their heroic service for years to come.