

April 16, 2025

## ALUMNI CREDITS MIDDLESEX COLLEGE FOR HIS GAINS AND GRAINS

During his time at Middlesex College Vetchay Vilvert '14 began to put together his plans for his future, including his career as a food entrepreneur.

Now the founder of Naturalvert, a food maker based in Hawthorne with products available online nationally and in-store throughout New Jersey, Vilvert is grateful for his days on campus and the lessons learned.

"When I first got to Middlesex, I had an idea of what I wanted to do, but I didn't have a lot of resources around me. But when I reflect back, if I didn't take this route at Middlesex and get my degree I probably wouldn't be where I am today," said Vilvert, who earned an associate degree in culinary arts. "Now, I am in position to do better."

Vilvert grew up on the border of Irvington and Maplewood, graduating from Columbia High School in 2007. He's open about the challenges he faced after high school. He was involved with the wrong crowd and encountered some adversity—including suffering a

traumatic brain injury that put him in the hospital.

"I was going down the wrong path. I am definitely not ashamed," Vilvert said. "Everyone has a past, some of it is positive, some of it not. I don't want to say I'm proud of it, but I am very grateful to have gone through what I went through and almost losing my life. I see it now as a blessing in disguise."

Vilvert distanced himself from that crowd and entered Middlesex College seeking a job in the food industry, but he was not sure in what capacity. While on campus, he explored various roles, one of which was creating his own special blend of granola.

That granola—and its many flavors—are now the major product at Naturalvert. The company produces several thousand pounds a week.

"It's a passion," Vilvert said. "I first developed the product at Middlesex College and won a few competitions. I realized at the time that there weren't as many products out there that were very healthy and I wanted to make a difference in people's lives when it came to healthy food choices."

Vilvert has returned to Middlesex College on several occasions to speak about his business and the impact the school had on his life. He's on the advisory board for the Hospitality, Culinary Arts, and Dietetics department and is outspoken about the gains (and grains) he made at Middlesex.

"One thing I love about Middlesex is they are constantly trying to promote and enhance the academics," Vilvert said. "Students want to have something they can relate to [while they] continue to learn and figure out what route they can take to success. I find it important that Middlesex has someone like myself who can engage with them."



# WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

## COLTS FOREVER

April is Community College Month! As part of the month-long celebration, Middlesex College will spotlight inspiring individuals who make up our alumni community.

## ALUMNA HELPS STUDENTS GET ORGANIZED

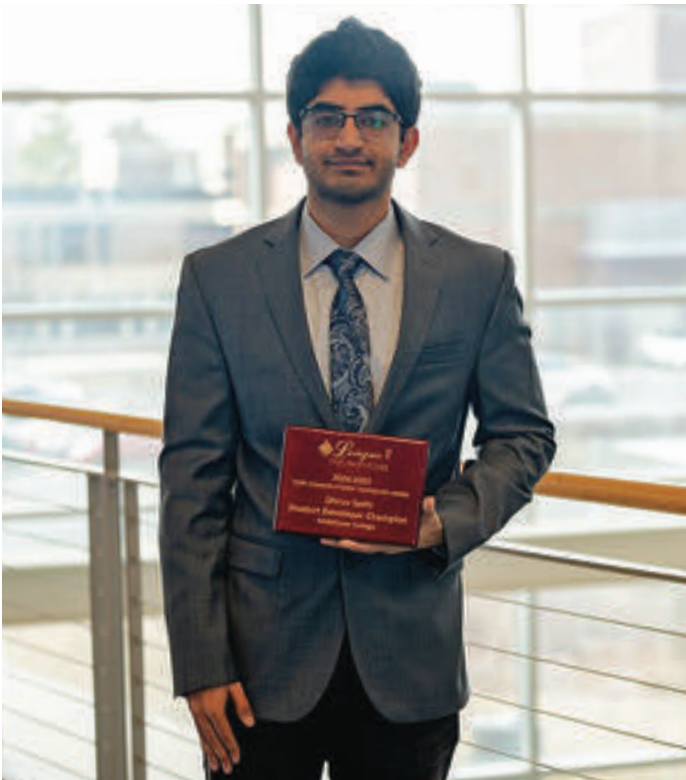
Middlesex College Learning Center Tutor and Class of 2024 Valedictorian Katherine Fallon-Reusch presented at a workshop coordinated by Student Success Coordinator Jennifer Kwok on Time Management and Keeping Your Life Organized as a Busy College Student. Katherine discussed techniques she used as a student at Middlesex College to keep herself organized and manage her time. She encouraged students to personalize the techniques to see what works best for them. Based on the post-survey, the Pomodoro Method was the most popular method students plan on incorporating into their own routines.



## RADIOGRAPHY STUDENTS SHINE AT NJSRT CONFERENCE

Middlesex College students excelled at this year's annual New Jersey Society of Radiologic Technologists conference. Students Mickayla Zupa and Christina Toms took home first place for their poster, "Can Weekly X-rays Affect the Appetite of the Venus Flytrap?", while their fellow radiography student Matthew Mulroy secured second place out of 92 students in the Emma Wolfe Memorial Student X-ray Competition.

# STUDENT EARNS NATIONAL COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AWARD



Dhruv Sethi, a Computer Science major and president of the Computer Science Club at Middlesex College, has also been recognized for software development with the Terry O'Banion Student Technology Award from The League for Innovation in the Community College. Nominated by Professor Dhruv Chunawala, Sethi received a \$1,000 scholarship to continue his education and will be honored at a ceremony at the League's annual conference in San Antonio, TX. Under his leadership, the Computer Science Club became the largest on campus with over 100 active members, hosting workshops on software platforms like Google Cloud and Python. He was also part of Middlesex College's award-winning team at HackTCNJ last year, where they developed an inflatable robot that could be used to tunnel inside rubble of fallen buildings and find survivors. Fluent in three languages, Sethi participated in the Princeton Transfer Scholars Initiative and is now applying to top universities, crediting Middlesex College for his strong foundation.

# BONNER SCHOLARS ENGAGE IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT THE FARM

Middlesex College Bonner Scholars, who participate in community service as part of the program, got their hands dirty while learning at Tamerlaine Sanctuary and Preserve in Montague, NJ, over spring break. The trip was designed to provide additional education and reflection opportunities, serving as a foundational element in the students' development. Through their work on the farm, the students were eager to learn about the animals, land, and stewardship responsibilities. The students spent the first half of the day cleaning out one of the farmhouses, and the second half touring the farm, learning about the animal rescue, and gaining a deeper understanding of the farm's mission. On the ride home the students shared their pride in the service, camaraderie, and hands-on learning they had the opportunity to experience throughout the day.





## CONNECTIONS

External Partner(s)	Middlesex College Representatives	Action
Edison Township Public Schools	President McCormick, Vice Presidents Laureano and Miller, Dean Aydin, Acting Dean Hack, Assistant Dean Rodriguez Gregory, and K-12 Partnerships Director Hooper	Met with the Edison Township Public Schools Superintendent and members of his team and explored opportunities for expanding the partnership between Middlesex College and Edison Township Public Schools
Middlesex County Executive Superintendent's Office	President McCormick and Vice Presidents Laureano and Miller	Presented to the Superintendents of school districts in Middlesex County
Sayreville School District	President McCormick, Vice Presidents Laureano and Miller, Dean Aydin, Acting Dean Hack, Assistant Dean Rodriguez Gregory, and K-12 Partnerships Director Hooper	Met with the Sayreville Schools Superintendent and members of his team and explored opportunities for expanding the partnership between Middlesex College and Sayreville School District
Woodbridge Township School District	resident McCormick, Vice Presidents Laureano and Miller, Dean Aydin, Acting Dean Hack, Assistant Dean Rodriguez Gregory, and K-12 Partnerships Director Hooper	Met with the Woodbridge Township School District Superintendent and members of his team and explored opportunities for expanding the partnership between Middlesex College and Woodbridge Township School District

## OUTREACH

Date(s)	Outreach Activity	Location or Means of Access
Monday, March 24	Woodbridge High School College Fair	Woodbridge
Tuesday, March 25	South River High School College Fair	South River
Tuesday, March 25	Monroe High School Campus Visit	Edison campus
Tuesday, March 25	East Brunswick High School Opportunity Night	East Brunswick
Wednesday, March 26	Dunellen High School – ESL Presentation	Dunellen
Friday, March 28	Jamesburg Middle School Campus Visit	Edison campus
Wednesday, April 2	East Brunswick Magnet School Campus Visit	Edison campus
Thursday, April 3	Milltown Middle School Campus Visit	Edison campus
Monday, April 7	Dunellen Middle School Campus Visit	Edison campus
Monday, April 7	East Brunswick High School Career and Trade Fair	East Brunswick
Monday, April 7	Perth Amboy High School Presentation	Perth Amboy
Tuesday, April 8	New Brunswick High School Instant Decision Day	New Brunswick
Wednesday, April 9	North Brunswick High School College Fair	North Brunswick
Wednesday, April 9	South Brunswick High School College Fair	South Brunswick
Friday, April 11	Woodbridge Township Career Meet and Greet	Woodbridge
Saturday, April 12	Cathedral International Admissions Presentation	Perth Amboy
Friday, April 11	Career Meet and Greet for Woodbridge Township	Woodbridge
Saturday, April 12	Cathedral International Admissions Presentation	Perth Amboy
Multiple times	Admissions Information Session*	Virtual events
Multiple times	FAFSA on Demand Workshop*	Virtual events
On an ongoing basis	Live chat appointments*	Via the web

\*in English and Spanish

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location or Means of Access
Wednesday, May 7* and Thursday, May 8*	Board Committee meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, May 14 8:30 a.m.	Board meeting	Boardroom and via Zoom

\*Schedule TBD