

April 15, 2026

ALUMNA'S PATH TO GENERATIONAL SUCCESS

Middlesex College was the gateway to a better life for Nancy Heredia-Villanueva '18, and she believes it will be for her daughter Alina, as well.

Now a paralegal at the law firm of Abrams, Gran, Hendricks, Reina & Rosenberg, Heredia-Villanueva was struggling as a single mom working multiple jobs when she realized Middlesex College could open new doors.

"Things were very hard, and I didn't want to struggle any more but I knew my recourse was going back to school and getting my degree," Heredia-Villanueva said. "The evening program at Middlesex College was great because I could work and go to class a couple of nights a week."

Heredia-Villanueva lived in Florida until moving to New Jersey for high school. She had issues in school with her attention span and admits she "hung with the wrong crowd." Eventually, she and her father agreed it would be smart for her to get her GED, which she passed on her first try.



"I had undiagnosed ADHD my whole life," Heredia-Villanueva said. "In elementary school, they thought I was just a crazy kid, but I always knew I was smart."

She studied for a short time at Essex County College but was looking for a more convenient option after moving to Piscataway. She enrolled in Middlesex College in 2013.

Heredia-Villanueva, a first-generation college student, was struck by the personal approach of her Middlesex College professors. She credits her paralegal instructors for teaching her the ins and outs of the job of a paralegal. Professor Manish Ramani inspired her to work hard in biology class and even encouraged her to make that her major, even though she was committed to law.

When she graduated with her associate degree in 2018, it enhanced her earning potential. Her salary doubled. Within a year, she was able to buy her first home.

Her experience at Middlesex College inspired Heredia-Villanueva to add to her skills. She went back to school during the pandemic and graduated from Berkeley College magnum cum laude with a degree in legal studies in 2023.

Now her daughter Alina is a student at Middlesex College studying biology. Nancy already connected her with Ramani to help her schedule her classes, and Nancy spoke at Alina's Phi Beta Kappa induction ceremony about her Middlesex College experience.

"She and I had a similar journey," said Heredia-Villanueva. "I don't hope, I know Middlesex College will positively impact her life the same way it impacted me."

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

JACK KENT COOKE SCHOLARSHIP SEMIFINALISTS

Six Middlesex College students have been selected as semifinalists for the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, one of the most competitive scholarships for the nation's top community college students seeking their bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. This year's cohort of semifinalists – **Branden Farano, Amani Harris, Mel Mancheno, Xuyang Pang, Nina Salamatova, and Mahi Sanghvi** – competed against 1,300 other community college applicants nationwide.



NJ ALL-STAR ACADEMIC TEAM MEMBERS

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges has recognized Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) members **Samina Naseem** and **Mahi Sanghvi** as members of the 2026 New Jersey All-State Academic Team. The two students are among a select few PTK members from the state's 18 community colleges that received this honor.



ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

Barbara Roberts '17 has been selected as the 2026 Middlesex College Alumna of the Year. Roberts, who currently serves as a music therapist at the Ann Klein Forensic Center in Trenton, founded the Middlesex College Gospel Choir in 2014. Roberts is a dedicated community servant and leader who, when not working, is often organizing charity events with her church for community food pantries or volunteering at local assisted-living homes.

SPEED NETWORKING



Over 40 students gathered for the Middlesex College Speed Networking and Simulation. The event, hosted by the Middlesex College **First-Generation Council**, **Business Club**, and **Alpha Alpha Alpha Honors Society**, aimed to connect Middlesex College students with local business professionals from a spectrum of industries for brief one-on-one meetings and breakout group networking. The professionals were advised

to treat the students like a candidate they were networking with while providing a bit more support for less-experienced participants. Middlesex College alumni **Katie Lanigan '16**, community director in the Office of Residence Life at Montclair State University, and **Alexander Salazar '20**, business support liaison for the Perth Amboy Business Improvement Corporation, were among the professional guests.

CONNECTIONS

External Partner(s)	Middlesex College Representatives	Action
Indian American Women Business Association (Edison)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Explored training opportunities
Louis Vuitton America (Piscataway)	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Explored training opportunities
New Jersey Department of Corrections	Director of Corporate Education and Training Vega	Discussed expanding training programs in New Jersey prison facilities
Spotswood Public Schools	President McCormick, Vice Presidents Laureano and Miller, Deans Aydin, Hack, and Rodriguez-Gregory, and Acting K-12 Partnership Director Mooney	Explored with Superintendent Bicsko ways to expand the school district's partnership with Middlesex College

OUTREACH

Date(s)	Outreach Activity	Location or Means of Access
Wednesday, March 25	Colonia High School College Fair	Colonia
Wednesday, March 25	East Brunswick High School College and Career Fair	East Brunswick
Wednesday, March 25	Middle School Student Day	Edison Campus
Wednesday, March 25	North Brunswick High School College Fair	North Brunswick
Wednesday, April 1	Woodbridge High School College Fair	Woodbridge
Saturday, April 4	City of Perth Amboy Annual Easter Egg Hunt	Perth Amboy
Monday, April 6	Registration Blitz	New Brunswick Center
Tuesday, April 7	City of Perth Amboy Career Fair	Perth Amboy
Tuesday, April 7	East Brunswick High School Opportunity Night	East Brunswick
Tuesday, April 7	Registration Blitz	Perth Amboy Center
Wednesday, April 8	Monroe High School Transition and Career Exploration Fair	Monroe
Friday, April 10	Community Financial Resource Fair (Sponsored by the Mexican Consulate)	New Brunswick
Wednesday, April 15	South Amboy High School Registration Event	Edison Campus
Wednesday, April 15	Spotswood High School College Fair	Spotswood
Wednesday, April 15	South Brunswick High School College Fair	South Brunswick
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 13* and Thursday, May 14*	Board Committee Meetings	Via Zoom
Wednesday, May 20 8:30a.m.	Board meeting	Boardroom and via Zoom

*Schedule TBD