

What's your NMC story? As part of the Grand Traverse community for 58 years, NMC stories are everywhere: A teacher who cared. Lifelong friends made. Scholarships that helped. Alumni who gave back. Volunteers who dedicated hours. Here are stories from just a few of the 50,000 people NMC serves every year. You can read and watch many more stories from alumni, business owners, community members, Dennon Museum Center patrons, WNMC listeners and others online at www.nmc.edu/mystory Enjoy – and while you're online, don't forget to share your NMC story.

Pauline Baver



Pauline Baver's NMC story starts at the very beginning: She was one of the first five original faculty members when the college opened its doors in 1951.

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"We started out at the airport and then we had those kind of makeshift buildings that the Navy left. Then we began to get buildings of our own," she said.

She taught business and English in those buildings for 25 years. Now 94, she still enjoys coming to events held for retired faculty and staff.

"I was proud to be part of it, the college. I feel proud and happy that it's grown and that it's become what it is."

Dan Karlskin



Though he's only 20, Dan Karlskin's NMC story goes back almost half his life.

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As a seventh grader in the rural Forest Valley school district, he was selected as an NMC Commitment Scholar. The program selects promising potential first-generation college students to receive full scholarships upon high school graduation, and provides mentoring and other activities during their high school years.

A Commitment trip to Chicago – his first to a big city – first opened Karlskin's eyes to the opportunity of education. He's now president of both the NMC and Michigan chapters of Phi Theta Kappa, the national community college honor society. He's studying business and plans to transfer to a four-year university after graduation.

"At NMC I learned more about myself and how to become more creative. It's been an amazing experience."

Hettie Molvang



In her 25 years in front of an NMC classroom, nursing instructor Hettie Molvang made it her business to know her students' stories.

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The student population was changing then, in the mid-1960s, '70s and '80s. More were divorced, older, single parents and men. In order to help them succeed, Molvang believed she had to become engaged with them as individuals, not just as students.

"They may need a little help, a little push along the way, some counseling, a little money, and a little forgiveness," said Molvang, who went so far as to make about 75 personal loans to students.

"Times were tough. (Students) would come and say, 'I can't come back next semester because I don't have the money.' I'd say, 'I'll give you the money. I'll lend you the money.'"

Only one went unpaid.

"I'm proud to have been part of NMC," she said.

Bonnie Alfonso



As one of Michigan's 2009 "Fifty Companies to Watch," a state award to celebrate small business and economic development, Alfie, Logo Gear for Work and Play, is a success story.

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President Bonnie Alfonso shares the credit for that success with her team at Alfie, which works out of a buzzing office south of Traverse City. Many on that 15-member team share something else: About two-thirds attended NMC themselves or sent a family member here.

That means NMC is part of Alfie's success story, too. Now Alfonso is co-chairing NMC's 2009-10 Annual Community Campaign because she believes that a thriving interdependence between the college and business community is key to more regional success stories.

"Education and economic development are partners. In order to have one, you must have the other, and NMC fills that niche for our region," she said. "NMC makes such a difference in our business community in that education really drives economic prosperity, and having such a great resource right here is critical for us to support so that it can continue."

Paul Maurer



Ask Paul Maurer, Class of '72, about his NMC story and you'll get a one-word answer: Relationships.

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Relationships with teachers like Walt Beardslee, whom Maurer was thrilled to bump into at this summer's NMC Scholarship Open golf outing. Relationships with friends like the three guys he rented a house with in East Lansing, after they all transferred to Michigan State University. Now scattered across the country, they schedule at least an annual reunion to reminisce about NMC and update each other on their lives.

There's also relationships with the 55 employees of his Traverse City contracting firm, Paul Maurer General Contracting, now in its 30th year. Provided employees maintain at least a "B" average, Maurer will pay for their tuition and books at NMC.

"We believe in NMC and what it brings to the community," said Maurer, who is also co-chairing the 2009-10 Annual Community Campaign. "We're proud of that. We have had several of our employees take advantage of it, and we hope that others will continue to do so."

Francis Hartsuff



Woven through Francis Hartsuff's NMC story is the sense of community he finds on campus, with teachers and other students as well as with the greater Traverse City community.

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He's done just about everything you can do as an NMC student. A business student, he commuted from Lake City for two years. Now he lives on campus in East Hall. He's the student manager for NMC's food services contractor, Sodexo. He's also president of NMC's Student Government Association and is involved with other student activities as well.

Involvement is what he preaches to other students, to not only discover community, but to discover themselves.

"We have a lot of programs that set you up for a university, and that's really great, that you have the opportunity, if you don't know what you're going for, to get ready for a university."