

# CHANGE STARTS HERE

## Grads Helping Grads

In 2005, then-19-year old Adam Gorlitsky became paralyzed from the waist down as the result of a car accident. Although he spent the last decade in a wheelchair, Gorlitsky never gave up on his determination to one day walk again.

Recently, this intention came true as he stood and walked a few steps with the support of the ReWalk system, a wearable robotic exoskeleton. The TTC graduate and filmmaker's next goal is to raise enough funds to purchase the exoskeleton and participate in the Cooper River Bridge Run this April.

Another TTC graduate supported Gorlitsky along his journey, physical therapist assistant Jamie Hamric, Class of 2006. At Roper Rehabilitation Hospital, Hamric helped Adam to adjust to and "test-drive" the ReWalk system. Hamric received her undergraduate

degree in biology, then came to TTC to get her Associate in Science degree in the Physical Therapist Assistant program so that she could work with patients with spinal cord injuries.

"We decided to move to Charleston, and I was looking for physical therapy training. Trident Tech had a great reputation and was very affordable," said Hamric. "Instructors like Lori Fischer helped place me in a clinical setting that matched my interest perfectly. That was almost 10 years ago, and I've been at Roper ever since."

Working with Gorlitsky, Hamric notes that physical therapy with an exoskeleton is much different than rehab for an injury. "There is a lot of extensive training. Each system is tailored to fit the patient. You have to work on balance and weight shift. There are a lot of adjustments, and

*continued inside...*



Adam Gorlitsky

Photo by: Andy Lyons



# Ashanti Bennett: TTC Alumni Spotlight



Attending college was not up for debate in Ashanti Bennett's house. Her mother, who was single-handedly raising her and her two brothers, knew that Ashanti would be the first in the family to graduate from college. What she didn't know was that she would get a college degree one month before getting her high school diploma.

"My high school classes weren't challenging enough, and I was afraid that I wouldn't be prepared for a more rigorous curriculum. My mother heard about Berkeley Middle College, and she strongly encouraged me to apply," laughed Bennett.

Berkeley Middle College is designed for students who want to get a head start on college, offering college-level courses at Trident Technical College's Berkeley Campus that count toward their high school diploma and college degree. Some students will graduate from high school

with college credits already banked, while others, like Bennett, can graduate with an associate degree. Claire Freeman, principal at Berkeley Middle College, cannot say enough about the student that Ashanti was during her two years at the school.

"Ashanti is a responsible young woman who always managed whatever task came her way with integrity and grace. She was respected by her teachers and peers and was friendly and outgoing, greeting everyone with a smile," said Freeman.

Bennett was also able to take advantage of TTC's Upward Bound Math and Science program, a federally funded program that helps talented students pursue careers in math and science, with a focus on students that are typically underrepresented in those fields. Bennett participated as both a member of the UBMS robotics and academic bowl teams.

"Two words describe Ashanti Bennet: dependable and perseverant," said Antonio Robinson, Director of Upward Bound Math and Science. "Despite her circumstances, she always saw barriers as opportunities to overcome a challenge and because of that attitude, she is no stranger to success."

Ashanti, now an honor student in her junior year at the University of South Carolina School of Business, feels that although her college classes at Berkeley Middle College were overwhelming at first, they taught her how to better prepare and organize. "I would not be as successful now if I hadn't made the decision to attend BMC and participate in the Upward Bound program," she said.



Ashanti Bennett

## President's Message — Dr. Mary Thornley



At first glance, computer networking, boat manufacturing and hotel operations might not seem to have much in common. But they are all opportunities within Trident Tech's new Workforce Academies designed to give high school students real-world career experiences. These experiences are not unpaid internships or job shadowing, but rather actual career opportunities where students can earn wages, college credit and marketable skills. When Trident Tech began offering youth apprenticeships in 2014, we hoped that the program would

offer a competitive edge for the region by involving young people in careers in manufacturing. But the response from employers and high school students far exceeded our expectations. Less than two years after offering the first youth apprenticeship program in the region, 62 young people have started apprenticeships, and the careers they are exploring have expanded beyond manufacturing. TTC's Workforce Academies include Information Technology, Hospitality, Manufacturing, Health Care and Contracting Services, all designed with one goal in mind: to connect young people to jobs of the future.



TTC Graduate Jamie Hamric

*Grads Helping Grads continued* just being upright is a new experience. There is a lot of technology involved."

"It's rewarding to know I helped a fellow TTC graduate, and I look forward to seeing Adam in the Bridge Run," added Hamric. "My husband, Nathan, is also a TTC alumnus and works in the hospitality industry. There are so many programs at TTC; you never know where you are going to run into other grads."

To help support Adam in his fundraising efforts for the ReWalk system, visit his GoFundMe page: <https://www.gofundme.com/igotlegs>.





# Supporting Veterans from Start to Finish

TTC enrolls more veterans than any other local postsecondary institution, typically serving over 1,500 veteran students each year. The college offers a variety of services to meet the needs of current and former military members. One student who has taken advantage of many of these services is Scott Buchheit II, an Army veteran still serving in the Reserves and studying electrical engineering.

Buchheit began his TTC experience with Veterans Upward Bound, a pre-college program funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant. VUB helps veterans transition to higher education with free-of-charge academic refresher classes, advising, assistance with college admission and financial aid applications, and other support services.

“My dad was in VUB; and he told me about it,” Buchheit explained. “They’re amazing. They’ve helped me far and beyond, especially with studying for the placement test. They helped me with finding scholarships and the best opportunities for financial resources. Because of VUB I’ve gotten in contact with other organizations that help veterans, and they’ve also put me in touch with available academic resources.”

Buchheit has also utilized the VETS Center (Bldg. 700/Rm. 201), recently supported by grant funding from Boeing and Palmetto Warrior Connection, where

veterans can socialize, network and study in a veterans-only one-stop center. An educational benefits counselor is on hand to help veterans understand their educational benefits and assist them in selecting programs of study. “The center is amazing as well,” said Buchheit. “Quiet and away from everything else; they give a lot of extra information to veterans and offer any kind of assistance they can.”

Other resources for veterans include the Veterans Assistance office in Financial Aid, where students eligible for military educational benefits can come for help. “They helped me figure out which forms I

needed to use, how I could apply, and how I could get funds to stay in school without having to work more,” said Buchheit. TTC also offers the Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership. This program offers sailors the opportunity to earn a college degree while serving in the Navy anywhere in the world, completing degrees entirely online.

Buchheit describes the services he received at the college with two words: miracle workers.



Scott Buchheit II

# A NIGHT IN THE VALLEY

Trident Technical College held its 13th annual A Night in the Valley wine dinner and auction on Jan. 29, 2016. Nearly 600 guests enjoyed the sold-out event which featured a three-course gourmet dinner, silent and live auctions, and Culinary and Hospitality students in action as they helped to prepare and serve guests. The record-breaking \$600,000 (gross) raised will provide critical support to the college and its students. We offer a heartfelt thank you to our generous sponsors:



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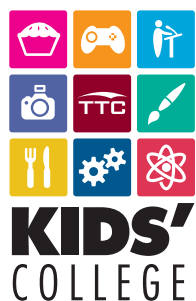


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## Kids' College and Teen U



TTC's Division of Continuing Education and Economic Development is pleased to offer a variety of educational opportunities to build on your children's imagination, creativity and talent as they experience TTC's 19th year of providing summer camps for students ages 7-17. Kids' College programs are geared towards children ages 7-11 and Teen

University is programmed specifically for teens and preteens ages 12-17. Last year, we had over 2,000 registrations for TTC's summer camps.

Exciting offerings are available in subject areas such as leadership skills, young professionals, computer technology, college prep, creative arts, culinary and pastry, and math and science.