On June 8, the Parkland College Foundation and over 250 guests celebrated the 2011 Entrepreneur of the Year Award winner, Rick L Stephens of Horizon Hobby. The banquet was held in the Illinois Ballroom of the I Hotel and Conference Center. Attendees at the event included most of the founders of the Parkland College Entrepreneurial Program, including Greg Cozad, Donald C. Dodds, Jr., David Eades, Peter Fox, Roy Lambert, the Stewart family, and Murray Wise. Remarks were given by Joe Ambrose, president of Horizon Hobby; Tim Johnson, vice president of Field Ministries Fellowship of Christian Athletes; Larry Stephens, brother of Rick; and Dr. Thomas Ramage, president of Parkland College.

Rick L Stephens entered the hobby industry in 1980, working for a company that sold high-end hobby products to U.S. retailers. After five years he left to start Horizon Hobby, Inc., with three other industry veterans, from the basement of his home.

Today, Horizon Hobby is a world leader in the design, manufacture, marketing, and distribution of hobby products. Horizon sells to 2,500 retailers in North American and 700 in Europe as well as consumers via the Internet, and has distributors throughout the rest of the world. The company employs 650 people with facilities in Champaign, Illinois; Ontario, California; Harlow, England; Elmshorn, Germany; and Paris, France.

Mr. Stephens is active on the board of directors for Carle Foundation Hospital, University of Illinois Research Park, YMCA/Larkin’s Place, and Pinnacle Forum America. His passion for excellence in both corporate and nonprofit environments and desire to teach people to become better leaders have been driving forces in his life for many years. He and his wife Jeanene have been married for 39 years and have three married daughters and five grandchildren.

Special thanks to the presenting sponsors of this event, Central Illinois Manufacturing and Regency Apartments. Thanks also to event sponsor The News-Gazette and to the following corporate sponsors: BankChampaign, Benefit Planning Consultants, Inc., Busey, Carle Foundation Hospital, Farmers-Merchants National Bank, First Mid-Illinois Bank, First State Bank of Monticello, Fox Development Corp., Freestar Bank, McGladrey, Meyer Capel, Prairie Gardens, Serra Ventures, LLC, Singleton Law Firm, and Wampler Apartments, LLC.
Dear alumnus,

Celebrations occur in many forms and for a variety of reasons. It is refreshing to observe that, even during what might be challenging times in our collective lives, the Parkland College family still pauses to celebrate all that is best in our communities. The Foundation has noted some of our most recent celebratory moments in this edition of the Update.

As you might expect, at this time of year we especially enjoy celebrating academic excellence and the educational accomplishments of our students. Our 44th Commencement Exercises gave 800+ graduates a chance to reflect with pride on skills and knowledge they have acquired “to share with the world and its well-connected global marketplace,” something that keynote speaker Dr. Robert Easter, interim vice president and chancellor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, encouraged them to do.

We often celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit and its resultant success in area business and industry. This spring, our annual Entrepreneur of the Year banquet served both as a scholarship fundraiser for students with enterprise potential and as an occasion to applaud Rick L. Stephens, whose company, Horizon Hobby, Inc., is a world leader in hobby products. We also recognized well-known businessman Donald C. Dodds Jr.’s significant contributions to Parkland by renaming a campus facility in his honor, and we presented Darrin Peters, founder and president of telecommunications leader Midwest Underground Technology, Inc. (MUTI), with Parkland’s 2011 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Finally, we celebrate lives that have been well-lived, pausing to honor departed loved ones. Although we were saddened at the loss of Foundation Board of Directors member Steve Hartman at the end of May, we were comforted, not only by his nine years of dedicated service to Parkland, but also by his lifetime of noted community service and involvement in everything from the Boy Scouts to the St. Joseph-Ogden school board. Such lives are a privilege to acknowledge.

In celebration of the best that is Parkland,

Thomas R. Ramage
2011 Distinguished Alumnus Award Recipient:

Darrin Peters
Founder and President, Midwest Underground Technology, Inc.

Putting more than a decade of talent and hard work into the wireless telecommunications industry, Darrin Peters has seen the fruit of his creative, energetic, and entrepreneurial labor, making him a well-deserved recipient of Parkland’s 2011 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Mr. Peters is founder and president of Midwest Underground Technology, Inc. (MUTI), recognized by INC. Magazine as one of America’s fastest growing private companies for 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. He is also co-founder and CEO of CITCA, LLC; president and CEO of Vertical Tower Partners, LLC; and co-founder and vice president of Sky Enterprise, Inc.

Throughout his professional career, Mr. Peters’s adept service in domestic and international telecommunications has supported numerous Fortune 500 companies. He developed and authored the premier industry-related site inspection software program being used by major telecommunications companies across the nation, and he pioneered innovative methods and procedures that have improved efficiencies in telecommunication tower construction and maintenance. He is a strong advocate and practitioner of mandatory company-wide superior safety and health programs for all employees.

Mr. Peters is a graduate of Gibson City Melvin Sibley High School and earned a degree in agricultural business management from Parkland College in 1996. He and his family live in Mahomet, Illinois, where they are active in outdoor sports and in civic and community volunteer service organizations.

PARKLAND ALUMNI ELECTED TO STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

A Parkland College student organization for future teachers recently saw three of its former members elected to state-level leadership positions and two current members elected as officers of a similar group at Eastern Illinois University.

Parkland College Student Education Association (PCSEA) former treasurer Kristin Walker (fall 2010) of Champaign was voted president-elect of the Illinois Education Association’s Student Program (IEA-SP) in late April. Parkland transfer student Matt Hiser of Champaign, PCSEA’s president in 2009-2010, was elected the IEA-SP vice president. Hiser is also the state group’s community outreach coordinator and a student delegate to the 2011 IEA Representative Assembly.

PCSEA faculty advisor Charles Larenas, a Parkland associate professor in education, expressed confidence that the newly elected state and 4-year-college officers will “live up to the high standards set by the local teachers, professors, and administrators that have been my role models in the education profession. The opportunities PCSEA students have to strengthen their educational knowledge base makes the PCSEA an avenue for grooming future teachers that I would someday love as teachers for my own children.”
SURVIVOR, STUDENTS PLANT HEALING GARDEN FOR YOUNG CANCER PATIENTS

Close to 40 Parkland students and employees traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, in mid-March during an Alternative Spring Break service project to install the “Hope Garden” at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, one of the world’s premier centers for cancer treatment. This unique spiritual healing garden located at the main entrance to the hospital was designed by horticulture Associate Professor Kaizad Irani and was the vision of landscape design graduate and former St. Jude patient Jeremiah Godby, one of Irani’s students.

A 20-year survivor of a rare form of childhood leukemia, Godby is now co-owner of G&C Precision Landscaping in Champaign. His dream was to incorporate patient survivors, donors, St. Jude physicians and faculty, students, and professionals in the garden installation process.

“I always dreamed of growing up and working for the hospital,” Godby said. “Parkland College’s Horticulture/Landscape Design program equipped me with the technical and entrepreneurial skills necessary to create a successful company as well as provide a way to give back to the two institutions that help me live.”

Professor Irani, recipient of the 2010 Business Friends of Master Gardeners Award from the University of Illinois-Champaign County Extension, originally called the garden design the “Possibility Place” because he believed it was “important to focus on the child’s potential and what is possible.” Through a contest, the hospital’s young patients decided to rename it Hope Garden. Irani is also the Illinois Association of Park Districts’ 2005 Community Service Award winner and the landscape architect whose design was chosen for the World Trade Center Heroes’ Park in Manhattan, commemorating the victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

The Hope Garden includes some 4,000 stone pavers on which St. Jude patients and their families can express themselves artistically; art expression walls; sunny and shady areas with ample sturdy seating; wheelchair-accessible paths; and options for interaction through hands-on, nature-focused activities, including a children’s labyrinth.

More than $10,000 was raised from generous donors such as you to help defray the cost of the Alternative Spring Break project.

NEW MODULAR GREEN ROOF SYSTEM OUTSIDE LIBRARY

In an ongoing effort to create an eco-friendly and self-sustaining campus, Parkland College covered a portion of its library roof in live plants. A green roof ribbon-cutting was held on Monday, May 2, in the Parkland Library.

The LiveRoof® modular green roof system, installed by Nogle & Black Roofing of Urbana, is the first of its kind for the campus. Students from Parkland’s CIT 135 class, Construction Practices and Sustainability, were also involved in the project, according to instructor Greg Walburg. Besides helping to cut the school’s energy bill, the new 353 sq. ft. roof system will help reduce campus greenhouse gas emissions.

The project was paid for by the campus’s annual remodeling fund with additional funding from the Parkland College Foundation. For more information, contact Greg Walburg, 217/373-3784, gwalburg@parkland.edu.
ESTATE PLANNING

USING LIFE INSURANCE IN CHARITABLE PLANNING

Life insurance permits donors to satisfy charitable objectives and enhance the value of contributions made to the Parkland College Foundation. Contributions may be made by gifting either a new or existing policy to the Foundation. A donor may also simply name the Foundation as the beneficiary of a new or existing policy.

Leveraging a charitable legacy with life insurance can be a powerful way to add value to your philanthropic legacy without detracting from your estate or heirs. Depending on your age and health, life insurance may pass many times the value of cash contributions. A charitable legacy can be created using life insurance in three ways:

1. Gifting of an existing policy. A policy that is no longer needed by an individual for family protection or has been earmarked for charitable giving can be transferred to the Foundation and benefit both the Foundation and the donor. Owner and beneficiary designation change forms should indicate the charity as the new owner and as the beneficiary. The donor will then be entitled to a charitable tax deduction in the year of transfer equal to the fair market value of the policy.*

2. Gifting assets for the charity to purchase a new policy. You may gift cash or another property directly to a charity with the explicit intention these gifts be used for life insurance premiums. The policy may insure your life alone or jointly with your spouse. A joint policy pays the death benefit upon the second death and may provide a greater death benefit for the same premium. The charity is both owner and beneficiary of the policy. You receive a current income tax deduction for your gifts, and the charity is ultimately endowed by the death proceeds.

3. Naming a charity as a beneficiary. With life insurance, you have continued access to the policy’s lifetime benefits, and the charity receives the death proceeds. Naming a charity as beneficiary of the policy you own does not create a current income tax deduction, but instead will create an estate tax deduction for the death benefit that is paid to the charity.

*This information is intended to be of general education nature. For specific tax or legal advice seek and rely on a qualified tax advisor or attorney.

For more information, please contact Mike Hagan, director of planned and major gifts, at mhagan@parkland.edu or 217/351-2457.

RECORD YEAR FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS!

The annual celebration of the recipients and donors of Foundation Scholarships was held on Wednesday, April 20. The Parkland College Foundation, Trustee, and Academic Opportunity scholarship reception was attended by over 200 students, guests, donors, Parkland College trustees, and Foundation board members. In fall 2010 and spring 2011, the Foundation awarded 246 scholarships to 222 students totaling over $214,000. Thank you for your continued support of Parkland College students.

Left: Susan Maurer, who established the Maurer Family Scholarship, is pictured with Paylee Ochs, fall 2010 recipient of the award.

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

Parkland’s 31st Arbor Day celebration, sponsored by Illinois American Water Company, dedicated seven trees in the campus’s Memorial Grove. One tree was dedicated in honor of John and Jeannette Beck’s wedding anniversary and six trees were dedicated to the memory of Jean Butler, Gunter and Janine Konigsmann, John Mahaffey, Ruth Walker Parks, Betty Riggins, and Tammy Walsh.

If you would like to participate in next year’s Arbor Day event, please call 217/351-2464.
IN MEMORIAM — STEVE HARTMAN

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Parkland College Foundation Board of Directors member Steve Hartman. Mr. Hartman had served on the board since 2002. He was a self-employed real estate developer for 42 years; was highly active in the community, particularly with the Boy Scouts and the St. Joseph-Ogden school board; and was a loyal Illini fan. He is survived by his wife, Laura, two daughters, two sons, and two grandchildren.

THANK YOU!

The Parkland College Foundation extends its gratitude to Spencer and Todd Atkins of Westgate Apartments for the donation of a club car to the Parkland College Athletic department. Nate Mast, Parkland’s basketball coach, and Carl Meyer, executive director of the Foundation, accepted the golf cart on behalf of the college.

Carl Meyer (left) and Nate Mast (right) receive a donated club car from Tammy Wittig and Spencer and Todd Atkins of Westgate Apartments.