

It takes a community

Child care center unites Ross County children and OU-C students

By Jack Jeffery

In Ross County, where there's a need, there's a way. Or make that 60 different ways. That's the number of community donors, both individuals and businesses, who responded to a call to support construction of the new Ross County/Ohio University-Chillicothe Child Development and Family Service Center. These local donors — who contributed some \$400,000 to the \$3.4 million project — say the center will be a valued community partner, providing a high-quality education for Ross County children for years to come. "This is a win-win situation," says Benney Haller, founder of Haller Funeral Home in Chillicothe and a donor. "It is something that is beneficial to the entire community and to Ohio University-Chillicothe." Approximately 120 OU-C students majoring in early childhood education and nursing eventually will attend classes in the center, with many

participating in state-required student-teaching labs and clinical experiences. They will be able to observe children's development and plan appropriate activities for each child, says early childhood education instructor Deborah Zurmehly. "This type of laboratory experience is invaluable in allowing OU-C students the opportunity to interact with children and apply what they learn in the classroom," Zurmehly says. The facility includes 13 classrooms, playground areas, therapy rooms for children and infants with disabilities, a courtyard, commons area, a conference room, a nurse's room, a receptionist area, a full-service kitchen and small offices. Currently, the center serves about 100 children daily, and that number is expected to reach 300 when the facility is fully operational next fall. "This type of opportunity opens the doors for future success," says Richard Bebee, dean of the Chillicothe Campus.

"OU-C students have classes in the center, allowing them to easily interact with children, which creates an ideal learning environment. "Plus, the fact the center is located at OU-C helps introduce local families to the college environment and makes a college career seem much more of a realistic goal," he adds. A March open house recognized donors and others who assisted with the center, which is debt-free. The center is the result of collaboration between government entities, businesses, foundations and the citizens of south-central Ohio. OU-C has committed more than \$1 million in financial support for the center. The center operates Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Agencies utilizing the facility eventually will employ 60 to 65 individuals.

Jack Jeffery is coordinator of communications for Ohio University-Chillicothe.



Tracy Ison, of Ross County Head Start, runs under a parachute while playing with some of the children served by the new OU-C child care center.

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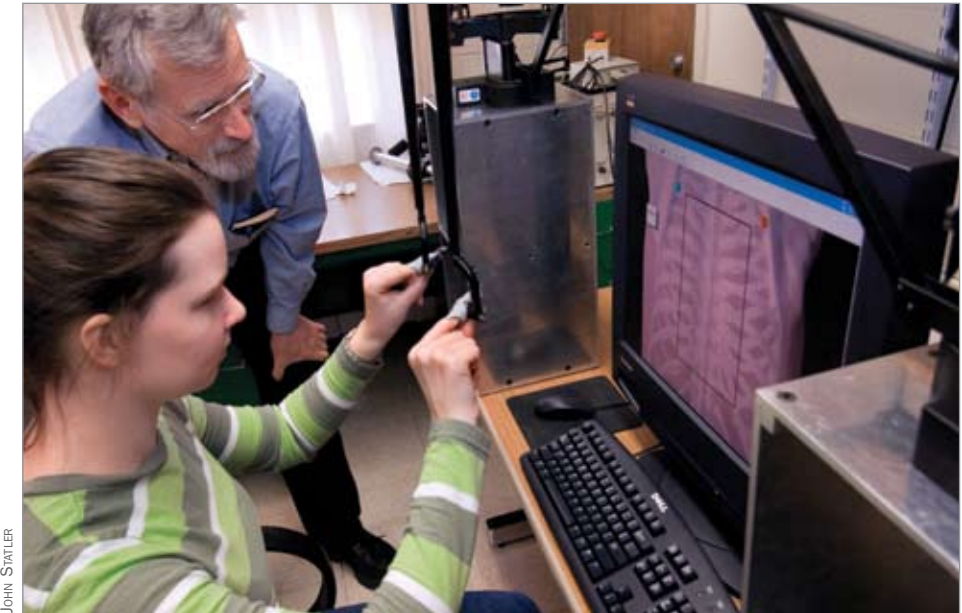
Joining forces

Alumni influence the programs that mean the most to them

By Tricia Niederkoeh

It can be hard to let go of the activities and relationships that helped shape your college experience. Yet through the university's more than 20 societies of alumni and friends, many graduates are finding they don't have to. From the College of Osteopathic Medicine to the Marching 110, societies give alumni a chance to meet people with similar backgrounds while bettering the colleges, schools, departments and groups they became passionate about as students. Societies have established endowed scholarships, organized service opportunities and supported philanthropic projects. For example, the College of Osteopathic Medicine Society of Alumni and Friends recently contributed \$50,000 — the largest single gift by an alumni society in the university's history — to support the new integrated learning and research facility. The \$30 million multidisciplinary facility is a joint project of OU-COM, the Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ College of Engineering and Technology, the College of Health and Human Services, and the College of Arts and Sciences.

To be built on West Green, the facility will combine research and learning spaces and bring together a variety of disciplines to advance science, engineering and technology. Its café, which will provide a venue for discussions among students, faculty and researchers, will be named in honor of the society's gift. "This research center will promote OU-COM and OU and provide a venue for medical research to strengthen our college's profile — nationally and internationally — as the leading osteopathic medical college," says Thomas Anderson, DO '83, president of the society. The OU-COM society is dedicated to promoting osteopathic education and research, alumni participation and fundraising activities in the college. "As part of Vision OHIO and the mission of the university, we saw it as an important effort to support the facility," says Sharon Zimmerman, director of development and alumni affairs for OU-COM. "Close to 85 percent of our board members have made personal gifts to the project." The connection between medical students and the Marching 110 may not seem obvious, but it's simple really: Both are supported by passionate alumni. The Marching Band Society of Alumni and Friends became the university's first nonacademic society in 1999. Its nearly 2,000 members support the university by attending Homecoming and



College of Osteopathic Medicine students will engage with tools such as the virtual haptic back, used here by Emily Drummond and Associate Professor John Howell, in a new integrated learning and research facility.

JOHN STATLER

participating in the Alumni Varsity Band. Since the society's founding, alumni and friends have contributed more than \$293,000 for scholarships, uniform replacement and travel. The Marching Band Endowment Fund, established by the society's board of directors, totals more than \$19,800. "Band Director Richard Suk talked about financial limitations and how many trips the marching band can take each year," says former society president Pete Couladis, AB '75. "I made the initial pledge and secured other commitments for the \$15,000 required. It was exciting to surpass that so easily!" All alumni are eligible to join a society. Each society's board meets at least twice a year, and many hold special alumni gatherings for members. "Societies have the mission of bringing alumni together for the support of our university," says Greg Scharer, director of alumni campus relations and advocacy. Societies are a vital part of alumni relations and of the university's continued success. "Societies allow alumni to be partners in the life of a university," Zimmerman says.

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How to join a society

To look for a society of interest to you, follow the "societies" link on the Ohio University Alumni Association's Web site, www.ohioalumni.org. Or inquire about starting a new society by sending an e-mail to alumni@ohio.edu.