

Spotlight on Excellence: Stories from the Class of 2025

Hundreds of students gathered to mark a significant milestone in each of their lives during CCAC's Commencement Exercises on May 22. Each graduate crossed the graduation stage with their own story, shaped by their personal goals, background and experiences that led them to that moment—each one, treading a separate path. But for two hours, those paths converged at Acrisure Stadium as the CCAC community celebrated the accomplishments of the 1,674 students who comprise CCAC's class of 2025, before those hundreds of threads split once again and led to bright futures.

Here are the stories of a few of this year's graduates whose successes are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the faculty, staff and administrators who help CCAC students develop essential life skills, the ability to thrive in an ever-changing world, and to reach their educational and career goals. To see the full collection of photos from the Commencement and Nursing Pinning ceremonies, click [here](#).

Deborah & Victoria Sfamenos

AS, Nursing

When Victoria Sfamenos received her nursing pin and recited the words of the Florence Nightingale pledge at the CCAC Nursing Pinning Ceremony to signify her transition from student to health care professional, her mom, Deborah, didn't just watch her daughter from the stands—she stood beside her, reciting the same pledge.



The mother-daughter duo embarked on their educational journey together in 2021, when they decided to start taking prerequisite classes at CCAC and eventually join the college's Nursing program. The pair was inspired to pursue nursing after witnessing the compassionate care Deborah's father received from home care nurses while he grappled with terminal illness.

Throughout their studies, the Sfamenoses supported each other, often relying on one another to navigate assignments and study sessions. They completed their clinical rotations at UPMC Passavant. Although they were on different floors, they nevertheless made time to meet for lunch and during breaks to motivate and encourage each other to persist during the demanding Nursing program. According to the pair, their experience at CCAC strengthened their bond and revealed new sides of their relationship.

"We learned a whole other side to our relationship," said Deborah. *"Nursing school is really challenging, but it was rewarding to go through it with Victoria. She wasn't just my precious daughter, but my classmate to lean on."*

As they prepare for the NCLEX exam, Deborah and Victoria said they're now focused on their nursing career goals. Deborah said she plans to work in home health care, like the caregivers who helped her family and inspired her to heed the call to pursue nursing. Alternatively, Victoria plans to gain experience at a local medical facility before transitioning to in-home health care.

Dominic Rocco

AS, Mathematics & Science Certificate, Software Development

While students across the world celebrate graduation this time of year, Dominic Rocco had twice as much to celebrate. The home-schooled senior is graduating from high school and CCAC with an associate degree and a certificate earned through the BNY Early College Program.



Starting his academic career at CCAC during his freshman year of high school, Rocco wasn't content to sit on the sidelines. During his four years at the college, Rocco participated in multiple clubs and was actively engaged in the Student Government Association. Additionally, his contributions to CCAC's student life will continue long after his tenure through the CCAC Computer Club, which he founded in 2024.

Rocco said he will continue his education at St. Vincent University in Latrobe, where he plans to pursue a double major in computer science and data science. He will start as a junior, thanks to the credits earned at CCAC. With plans to combine his skills in software engineering and data science, Rocco said he hopes to carve out a career in the burgeoning Pittsburgh tech industry.

As he embarks on this next chapter, Rocco said his experiences at CCAC will serve as a strong foundation for his future, both in the next phase of his education and beyond.

"CCAC has been a huge part of my life for the past couple of years," he said. *"It feels odd to let go of these clubs and say goodbye to everyone, but my time at CCAC prepared me for whatever comes in the next four years."*