



SRJC Alumni & Friends

In Her Words: Colleen Finnegan

“I owe SRJC my career. I was not in a financial position to go to a four-year college right out of high school, but having known the reputation of SRJC, I was more than pleased to start my college career with SRJC. I learned so much at the JC. The caliber of classes in the sciences made me more than prepared for my post graduate studies. Dr. Dennis Fujita and Dr. Randolph Newman were my mentors and I will always be grateful for their guidance and support. I graduated from UC Davis with a nutrition degree, went to medical school at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston. Now I am a practicing physician at Kaiser Permanente in Portland, Oregon. I am the Chief of Kaiser's HIV Department. When I look back at my training, I think about how SRJC not only taught me the basic sciences so comprehensively, but SRJC gave me the skills to learn how to learn, to be a curious person, to excel in my studies, and to pay it forward with regard to teaching the generations after me. I am so grateful to this community college. The city of Santa Rosa is very lucky to have such a strong educational resource.”



More About Colleen

Santa Rosa Junior College is thrilled to present Colleen as the 2014 Commencement Speaker at graduation on May 24, 2014.

For Colleen, SRJC is a family tradition as Colleen's mother attended SRJC and her grandmother was an accountant for the College. Colleen's original career goal was to become a ballet dancer. As she watched HIV hit America and saw friends and instructors pass away, Colleen made the choice to do something more tangible with her life.

After her experiences at SRJC, Colleen felt more mature and wiser about making a decision for her career path. Dr. Dennis Fujita was particularly instrumental in Colleen's career - she received a scholarship in his name and he would often take her out to lunch at University of California at Davis. “I so appreciate his kindness and that someone took an interest in me.”

One of Colleen's most notable achievements in her career occurred when she, along with some classmates, opened a free clinic at Tufts University that still operates today. <http://medicine.tufts.edu/Global-and-Local-Engagement/Sharewood>.

Currently, Colleen ensures HIV patients have the same life expectancy as non-HIV individuals as long as they take medication. She believes in treating her patients with dignity and respect; her team receives the highest quality measures in HIV health in the country.

As if practicing medicine wasn't time consuming enough, Colleen and her husband Joshua Johnson launched their own hard cider company, Finnegan Cider. “It's nice to go back to science background with fermentation and get a brain break from medicine.”