

A Message from President/CEO  
Susan Davenport

As we all continue to move past Hurricane Irma, I think it is important to recognize those among us who are demonstrating exemplary commitment to the community's ongoing recovery alongside their own. In yesterday morning's issue of eJournal, you saw several examples of companies and organizations offering emergency assistance and resources to support both members of our own community, as well as others who were evacuated to avoid danger.

But in particular, I wanted to separately recognize the work of an organization whose efforts before, during and after Hurricane Irma stood out to me: Santa Fe College.

On a daily basis, Santa Fe College is responsible for the safety of approximately 16,500 students and 1,100 faculty and staff. During a crisis or disaster, as one of the region's key institutions, the College is responsible for these individuals, and also for collaborating with Emergency Operations Center personnel, Alachua County Public Schools and the University of Florida on school closures & messaging. As Irma approached and descended upon Gainesville, Santa Fe College was in full disaster preparation and management mode, advising students to keep them safe, keeping the community up to date on modified hours and sharing official information from the Emergency Operations Center. During all of this, Santa Fe College quietly stepped up to another critical task requested of it: sheltering members of the U.S. Army National Guard who were en route to aid relief and recovery.

During Hurricane Irma, more than 130 National Guard members served our region. While they were here, Santa Fe College was their home and a place to store their large convoy of vehicles and refueling equipment. While hosting the soldiers, Santa Fe College went about the business of preparing to receive returning students, opening up a welcoming station, the campus food bank and a share wear clothing store for students in need of clothing.

During and after Irma, Santa Fe College also contributed in other ways, including:

Efforts of the College's Kirkpatrick Center Institute of Public Safety, which hosted and provided staging for the Alachua County Sheriff's Office Crowd Management Team (CMT). The Kirkpatrick Center assisted CMT - also referred to as the "chainsaw crew" - in multiple locations across the County.

Contributing to the Association of Florida Colleges (AFC) and the AFC Foundation in starting a hurricane fund of \$20,000 to assist members who experienced extensive loss to personal property and possessions during Hurricane Irma.

This is just one of many examples of how, at Santa Fe College, community has always come first. The College so often embraces its role as 'The Community's College' with much commitment and grace, yet very little fanfare or self-promotion. I think it is important as we recover to pause and thank Santa Fe College for what it does to support the community academically, in terms of talent development, and in times of crisis.

Interwoven in its 50-plus years of excellence are many examples of how serving as 'the Community's College' has paved the College's road from Fifty Years to First. I encourage those of you who have not already done so, to take time to explore the story of Santa Fe College's first 50 years of service to the community. Equally importantly, I encourage you to keep your eyes on Santa Fe College for the next 50 years. It will be easy to spot them. Just look for good things happening for students, residents, businesses and the community at-large in Greater Gainesville. Chances are, when a positive thing happens here, Santa Fe College is involved.