

FOR RELEASE

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**MIDDLESEX HEALTH CARE AWARDED THE GOLDEN ACORN BY
THE CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE FOUNDATION**

Higher Education Foundation holds annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast

NEW BRITAIN – November 14, 2019 – The Foundation for Charter Oak State College, Connecticut’s public online college, recently held its annual Employer Appreciation Breakfast. The origin of the event recognizes the economic and personal importance of employment opportunities that arise for the College’s graduates. Carol Hall, the Foundation’s Executive Director said, “We want to acknowledge and thank employers who recognize the talents that are brought to their organizations by graduates of the College.”

The event includes the awarding of the prestigious 2019 Golden Acorn Employer of the Year Award. This year’s recipient was Middlesex HealthCare. Suzanne D’Amato, Operations Manager, Health Information Services, of Middlesex Healthcare was nominated by current Charter Oak student Kelly Carlson. “Suzanne,” Kelly explained, “not only oversees multiple functional units, she is a great mentor and admired for the manner in which she juggles daily tasks and keeps staff informed.”

The event featured a variety of speakers including Charter Oak Alum, Seila Mosquera-Bruno, who was appointed by Governor Ned Lamont as the [Department of Housing Commissioner](#). Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno shared her Charter Oak success story thanking Charter Oak State College President Ed Klonoski for “providing her with an academic advisor and the opportunity for her to gather her credits and life experience into the quickest path to degree completion.” She explained that as a single mother who moved to the United States from Ecuador, she found herself working in a factory, though she had a degree from her country.

Mosquera-Bruno received her bachelor’s degree from Charter Oak and went on to receive her Master’s degree in Urban Studies from Southern Connecticut State University. She completed the Achieving Excellency in Community Development 18-month fellowship program at Harvard

University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and she was named one of the 50 most influential Latinos in Connecticut.

Aetna VP of Talent Management, Nitza Rivera was a guest speaker – celebrating the 20 year partnership between Aetna and Charter Oak State College. Nitza thanked Charter Oak for the partnership and the over 200 employees that have earned degrees from Charter Oak and continue to work at Aetna.

Nancy Taylor, Assistant Director, Corporate Outreach, Charter Oak State College, said, “the employers in the room understood the value of an educated workforce and know that the return on investment for tuition reimbursement and other educational enhancement programs is enormous. It is, without a doubt, one of the best ways to reduce turnover and increase productivity.”

Other leaders within the following organizations were also recognized and appreciated at this year's breakfast, CREC Soundbridge, Community Health Network of CT, Precious Gifts Preschool, State of Connecticut, Highville Charter School, Hispanic Health Council, Department of Corrections, Educational Playcare, MassMutual, Triple Helix Corporation, Capital Community College, Community Renewal Team, Middlesex Health, and Burns Latino Studies Academy Elementary School.

Gold Sponsors, Liberty Bank, blumshapiro, Scalia & Associates, and Sheffy Mazzaccaro, made it possible for Charter Oak's community of learners to bring their boss to the complimentary breakfast. Hall said, “The Foundation appreciates and thanks employers who recognize the importance of higher education, and our community sponsors who helped to create this opportunity to honor many of them.”

The Charter Oak State College Foundation, Inc. was founded September 15, 1977. The Charter Oak State College Foundation is dedicated to supporting flexible and comprehensive degree completion opportunities for adults, and technology innovations through the work of Charter Oak State College. The Foundation Board of Directors provides volunteer leadership for development and fundraising programs and stewardship of the Foundation's assets in order to assist deserving and underemployed adult students with college costs; award scholarships; and encourage technological initiatives that enable the College to be a leader in higher education. The Foundation is exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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