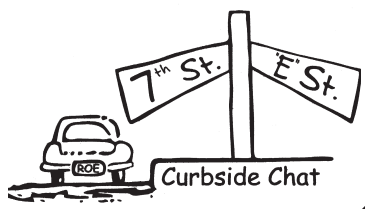
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From Our Viewpoint

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How Rogue Community College Helped Launch a Physician's Path

Finding physicians who are accepting new patients is a challenge for many in our community. As a member of the Asante board, I learned that one of our top priorities is recruiting and retaining qualified healthcare professionals. Health care offers a wide range of respected, well-paying careers, from environmental support staff to nurses, technicians, and physicians.

Building Career Pathways Through Education

A key to hiring and retaining quality employees lies in strong partnerships with local schools. By working together, we can raise students' awareness of the many career opportunities available close to home. This effort often begins in high school through career and technical education (CTE) programs that expose students to fields such as healthcare, providing a valuable pathway into those professions.

Rogue Community College (RCC) plays a vital role in this process. The college offers extensive job-skills training for a variety of allied health occupations, including pharmacy technician, physical therapy assistant, phlebotomy technician, and dental or surgical assistant programs. RCC students can earn certifications that open immediate employment opportunities or serve as stepping stones to further higher education.



Zack with the Botswana malaria lab

Recognizing Community Success

Earlier this year, I was honored to be named the Rogue Community College Foundation's "Citizen of the Year." While I deeply appreciate the recognition, the award truly belongs to our entire community—to the many people who work every day to make education and opportunity possible.

At the same event, **Dr. Zackary Salem-Bango** was honored as RCC's 2025 Alum of the Year. Now an emergency medicine physician at the University of Washington's Harborview Medical Center, Dr. Salem-Bango's story is an inspiring example of how early educational opportunities can change lives.

From RCC to the World

Dr. Salem-Bango began taking classes at RCC at just 13 years old. Those early experiences became the foundation for a career that spans continents and disciplines. At RCC, he found not only challenging coursework but also mentorship. Two instructors, Matt Haugen (mathematics) and Rick Williams (world literature), made a lasting impression on him.

Haugen transformed calculus from a source of anxiety into an engaging puzzle. Williams opened up the world of literature, helping a self-described "STEM kid" see how science and humanity are deeply connected. Through these mentors, Zackary learned that academic rigor and compassion can—and should—coexist.



Lindsay and Zack met while working in the Peace Corps Botswana

After RCC, Zackary earned a degree in biochemistry and biophysics from Oregon State University. He then joined the Peace Corps in Botswana, conducted malaria and fungal disease research in The Gambia, and helped develop malaria diagnostic tools still in use today. It was in Botswana that he met his future wife, Lindsay.

He went on to attend UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine, graduating in 2025. Yet the values he learned at RCC — curiosity, compassion, and community — continued to guide his work in research, medicine, and service.

Compassion in Practice

Today, as a resident physician in emergency medicine, Dr. Salem-Bango often works 80 to 100 hours a week. He approaches each patient with empathy, reminding himself that "this ER visit may be the worst day of a patient's life."

Outside the hospital, he enjoys the same outdoor activities he loved growing up in the Applegate Valley—rock climbing, cycling, and exploring the outdoors. His wife, Lindsay, holds a Master's in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University and currently works in Mexico City for Doctors Without Borders as an Epidemiology Activities Manager. Together, they hope to one day serve in conflict zones, bringing medical expertise and humanitarian care to those most in need.

Investing in the Future

Dr. Salem-Bango's journey illustrates how local education can build global impact. The foundation laid at RCC—early exposure, supportive mentors, and opportunities to grow—helped make his remarkable path possible.

The RCC Foundation continues to rely on donors who provide scholarships and program funding. As technology transforms both education and the workplace, from robotics and telemedicine in healthcare to advanced systems in automotive repair, the need for continual learning and technical training has never been greater.

Thank you to the donors, instructors, staff, and community members who support Rogue Community College. The help we give our students today builds a stronger, more hopeful tomorrow. Learn more at roguecc.edu.

—Steve Roe



The medical team in The Gambia



Teaching school childen in Botswana