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News Release

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NMCC to “Go Blue” March 4 in honor of Instructor Chuck Kelley

Aroostook County - Northern Maine Community College will “Go Blue” on Friday, March 4, as part of a national and statewide effort launched to draw attention to efforts to help prevent the second leading cause of overall cancer death in both Maine and the United States.

The day, which will be marked with unique “blue-themed” activities on campus, will be both enjoyable and meaningful at NMCC, especially for one faculty member whose own survivor story has been featured in public service announcements across the state. Chuck Kelley of Limestone, an instructor in the trade and technical occupations department, credits early detection with saving his life.

“As a survivor of colon cancer, I am grateful mine was caught in a very early stage,” said Kelley. “In addition to colonoscopies, I am a big believer in routine physical exams, because that is what sparked my diagnosis. My primary care doctor found something that concerned him, and a colonoscopy confirmed I had cancerous polyps.”

Kelley had minimally invasive surgery to remove a third of his colon in 2007. Today he is doing just fine and continues to get routine colonoscopies every two years. He was recently selected as one of seven people from across Maine to share his story through a Maine CDC public service announcement campaign to draw attention to the importance of screening.

Kelley will be a focal part of NMCC’s events to mark “Go Blue” day on March 4. The campus has dedicated the day in honor of the 16-year veteran faculty member. Proceeds from two special fundraising events that will culminate on the National Dress in Blue Day will be donated in his honor to the Colon Cancer Alliance, a national non-profit organization committed to ending the suffering and death caused by colorectal cancer.

The most unique fundraising activity is currently underway. Ten of Kelley’s NMCC colleagues have volunteered to take a blueberry cream pie to the face to help raise money for the worthwhile cause.

Glass canisters, each featuring a photo of an NMCC employee, have been placed in the campus bookstore for the “Pie in the Face for Cancer” fundraiser. Students, community members and fellow co-workers are asked to place a donation or their spare change in the canister displaying the photo and name of the individual they would most like to see get a pie to the face.

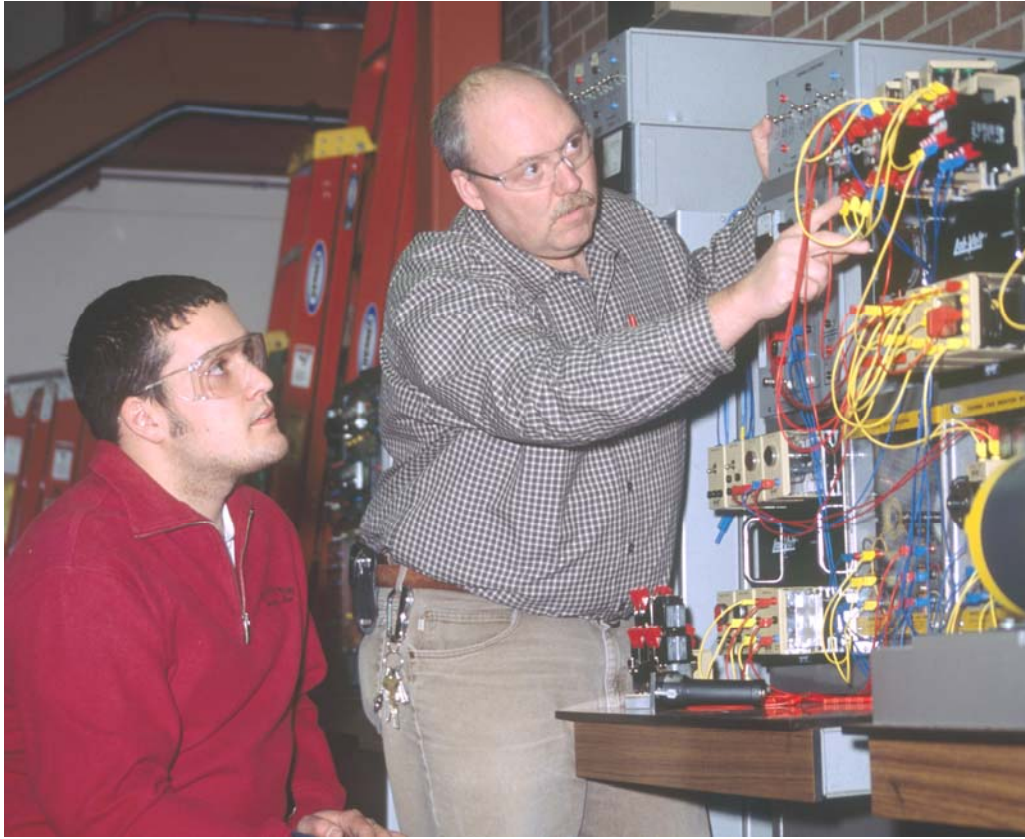
At week’s end, the money in each canister will be tallied and the top two “earners” will get a blueberry cream pie in their face at the hands of Kelley, who has been tapped to do the honors. The big event will take place on March 4 in NMCC’s Christie Lobby at the noon hour, immediately following a campus group photo taken of NMCC students, faculty and staff who dressed blue for the day.

In addition to the “Pie in the Face for Cancer” and dress blue festivities, NMCC will hold a “Blue Bake Sale” between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Christie Lobby. Sponsored in part by Aramark, NMCC’s dining services provider, the bake sale will feature baked goods including blueberry muffins, blueberry yogurt parfaits, blue-frosted cupcakes and other confections created and donated by both Aramark and campus students and staff. All proceeds from the bake sale will be sent along with the other funds raised in honor of Kelley.

In 2009, almost 900 Mainers were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and approximately 260 died from the disease. Nationally, March is recognized as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The Colon Cancer Alliance has established March 4 as Dress in Blue Day.

NMCC is participating in activities being promoted statewide by the Maine Center for Disease Control’s Colorectal Cancer Control Program to “Turn Maine Blue.” Other activities are planned in other parts of the state, including illuminating public buildings in blue and a ceremony at the State House in Augusta.

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Northern Maine Community College Instructor Chuck Kelley (right), a colon cancer survivor, gives direction to student Jamie Lizotte of Madawaska in an electrical lab. NMCC will dedicate Friday, March 4, National Dress in Blue Day and Turn Maine Blue Day, in Kelley's honor. Unique events and fundraisers will be held on campus to raise awareness and money for colorectal cancer.