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EDUCATION PROFILE

Pausing to Acknowledge Essential & Exceptional Workers

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

Recently, every evening, around 7pm, scores of New Yorkers open their windows and front doors publicly shouting their appreciation for the essential and exceptional workers who are keeping our city running.

Whether they're saving the lives of COVID-19 patients, providing a vital service for countless households, preparing food, responding to emergencies or keeping the transportation system running, essential workers are literally risking their life every day on the job to do what they do.

When I think of today's essential workers, I can't stress enough the importance of introducing students to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education at a young age. The STEM programs, which are offered in New York City schools in grades K-12, expose our youngsters to project-based learning through exploration and real-



What a difference a few months makes. In February, Dr. Claudia Schrader, president of Kingsborough Community College, center, joined by second-year students, welcomed a new class of future nurses to Kingsborough Community College. "Today, I'm grateful and praying for those serving on the frontlines and those preparing to do so," said President Schrader.

world problem solving. There are year-round programs and summer camps for STEM students across the city.

Many of today's essential workers, particularly former STEM students, have been prepared to help solve the

pressing challenges we're facing today and will face in the future. Every day, new diagnostics tools are being developed in medical labs to help the states with testing programs in the battle against COVID-19. Strategic envi-

ronmental plans are being implemented and observed to "flatten the curve." Medical professionals from across the country have travelled to the northeast region to volunteer in hospitals, and retired doctors and nurses have applied

for temporary licenses to help out. Restaurants and community leaders have organized to deliver hot meals to many in need. And countless men and women are trying to keep us physically safe.

It's an "all-hands-on deck" situation. The spread of the coronavirus has changed the way we all live and work. And, with great courage, essential workers are on the frontlines helping everyone get through the epidemic. We can't thank them enough. They are exceptional and deserve our support now and after this public health emergency has ended.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), located in the Manhattan Beach section of Brooklyn. Kingsborough Community College is committed to enhancing learning opportunities for the Brooklyn community. Visit www.kbcc.cuny.edu to learn about the classes, certifications and degree programs offered at KCC.

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