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PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICIA LYONS

Acts of Optimism

LENS ON TCC STUDENT LIFE

David Elliott Cohen and Rick Smolan shook up the world of photography books with their popular *Day In the Life (of America, of Japan, of Australia)* series, started more than 20 years ago. The students and faculty of Tidewater Community College have adopted the concept, with a twist. Instead of sending out a phalanx of photographers to shoot a country in 24 hours, TCC asked 23 photojournalism students from its Visual Arts Center to document the lives and aspirations of their fellow students—and teachers—over one year. The students took 25,000 photos, and after a year of editing, 350 made it into a new book titled *Acts of Optimism: Life at Tidewater Community College*.

The book is a compelling snapshot of a college that enables people young and old to get ahead, whether by earning a degree or simply following their muse. Spread over four campuses (Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach), many of TCC's 38,000 students hold jobs while taking classes in programs ranging from a shipbuilding apprenticeship to engineering. "*Acts of Optimism* captures the daily struggles, achievements and dreams of our students," TCC President Deborah M. DiCroce tells *Virginia Living*, adding that the project should help engage the college community as well as the citizens of south Hampton Roads.

The book's photographs are divided into five parts—Openings, Discovery, Endurance, Endings and Next Acts—and they reflect, often poignantly, human ambition and human spirit: a young mother, baby in tow, buying books; a student practicing his commencement address in an empty auditorium; a student trudging through a parking lot to her car on a snowy winter night. The book is available at TCC's Barnes and Noble bookstores. —RICHARD ERNSBERGER JR.



BOOK COVER PHOTO OF TCC STUDENT BY DANNIS DOLES

Impressions In Paper

NOTEMAKERS USE VENERABLE METHODS WITH MODERN STYLE (AND YOU CAN TOO)



< Classic

Railway Station Press uses vintage equipment to produce limited editions of its greeting cards, booklets, broadsides (the Smithsonian recently purchased a few) and more. And, for those with a true DIY hankering for letterpress, they're ready to show the way. Now with two locations, one in the Boyce Railway Station and a newer one in Alexandria, Railway Station teaches letterpress workshops to beginners on Chandler & Price Pilot tabletop presses and other vintage equipment. (703) 683-2335 or RailwayStationPress.com

Couture >

Saima Khan, creative director and owner of D.C.-based invitation design studio **Saima Says Design**, has built her business on the idea that invitation design best reflects "the essence and mood of your event." Whether that means elegant, earthy or a little quirky, Saima Says Design will create one-of-a-kind letterpress, engraved or offset-printed invitations to fit. Samples on Khan's website come in a broad palette, from subdued to fiery, and show creative pairings of typeface with image. (202) 370-6381 or SaimaSaysDesign.com



< Fanciful

Louisa Wimberger has parlayed her full-blown addiction to playing with paper into **weehah!**, her custom card and invitation business in Charlottesville. She embellishes her whimsical, handmade cards, announcements and invitations with glitter, stamps and even metal charms. "I am picky about cardstock, ink colors and even packaging," writes Wimberger, "so that each weehah! card feels like a treat to the customer." (434) 923-0561 or Weehah.com



Fresh >

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