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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mary M. Feder, Director of College Relations  
Suffolk County Community College  
(631) 451-4256  
[federm@sunysuffolk.edu](mailto:federm@sunysuffolk.edu)

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE MARKS UNITY DAY ON THE  
MICHAEL J. GRANT CAMPUS**

Brentwood, NY - Suffolk County Community College marked *Suffolk County Unity Day* on October 24<sup>th</sup> in the Van Nostrand Theatre on the College's Michael J. Grant Campus in Brentwood. This day's program, designed for educators and for middle- and high-school students, was based on the theme *Coming to America: The Immigrant Experience*. It was hosted by the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity & Human Understanding with its partners, the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission and the Suffolk County Interfaith Anti-Bias Task Force. Over 250 students from area schools attended, including Hauppauge HS, Longwood Middle School, Copaigue HS, Half Hollow Hills West HS, Half Hollow Hills East HS, Bay Shore HS, and Commack HS.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Harold A. Fernandez, Professor of Surgery and Co-Director of the Stony Brook University Heart Institute. Dr. Fernandez is the author of "Undocumented: My Journey to Princeton and Harvard and Life as a Heart Surgeon." His talk was followed by a presentation by Joselo Lucero, brother of the late Marcelo Lucero, a victim of a hate crime. Mr. Lucero referred to film clips from "Deputized" and engaged in discussion on the importance of treating each person with dignity. The program continued with a panel discussion during which immigrant students enrolled at Suffolk County Community College talked about their personal stories. The student panelists came to Suffolk from Peru, Finland, Iran, Jamaica, El Salvador, Uzbekistan, and the Dominican Republic. Each student panelist shared what brought them to America, explaining the path they took to come here. One of the panelists told the crowd that, "The American education system teaches you what you don't know, and Suffolk is the opportunity bridge." Hendel Leiva, with LI-Wins, moderated the panel. The high school and middle school students concluded the day by engaging in dialogue stimulated by the Embracing Our Differences outdoor art exhibit.

During his remarks, Dr. Shaun L. McKay, President of Suffolk County Community College shared the story of his own journey to become the College's sixth president after leaving Tobago. In a speech that focused on each immigrant's motivation to reach their dreams, he said "At Suffolk, we believe education is transformative. In order to transform someone's life they must have access to opportunities--equal opportunities."



**Photo Caption:**  
Surrounded by Suffolk County Community College students who participated on an immigrant discussion panel during a Unity Day program, Dr. Harold Fernandez (l), and (center) Joselo Lucero, Outreach Coordinator-Hagedorn Foundation; Dr. Shaun L. McKay, President- Suffolk County Community College, and Steven Schrier, Executive Director of the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity and Human Understanding pose at the Embracing Our Differences art exhibit.

### **About Suffolk County Community College**

Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) is the largest community college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system, enrolling approximately 26,000 students at its three campuses in Selden, Brentwood and Riverhead. SCCC offers the Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.), and Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees, as well as a variety of certificate programs. Offering affordable college tuition, a highly respected Honors program, extensive extracurricular activities, championship athletic teams, and numerous transfer programs, SCCC is a first-choice college for Long Island students. Visit us online at [sunysuffolk.edu](http://sunysuffolk.edu).

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