RAMAPO - Yesterday's graduation at Rockland Community College was a special milestone of sorts. The 46th commencement was also a time to honor David Rojas Jr., who was chosen by faculty members as the college's "special millionth graduate" and to acknowledge that this month community colleges in the State University of New York system will graduate their 1 millionth student.

After completing his freshman year at North Rockland High School in 1996, Rojas was found to have with medulla blastoma, a rare, malignant brain tumor that should have ended his hopes of ever graduating from college.

Surgery and cancer treatments left him with memory loss, double vision, third-degree burns and walking difficulties.

"Some told us this wasn't possible, that he could be a dishwasher, but he wouldn't have it," said Rojas' father, David Rojas.

The son said he is proud to be alive. So is his father, a New York City police officer sidelined by an injury.

For seven years, father and son attended classes together. While Rojas concentrated on class lectures, his father took notes to help his son review at home.

"After 30 years, I never expected to be in college," the father laughed, adding that he appreciates the students who were understanding and helpful. "Our future is in good hands," he said of the RCC graduates.

The family described RCC as incredibly supportive, working with Rojas at every step.

"He came here in a wheelchair, but now he is walking out as a man," his father said.
Rojas plans to continue studying photography at the College of Art & Design at Purchase College, SUNY.

His work is currently on display at the Independent Living Center in the Nanuet Mall.

During his address to the graduates, RCC President Cliff Wood said that "caring is what it's all about" for the graduates.

He cited examples of their work, including a fundraiser for Darfur refugees, a fashion show for research in sickle cell disease and a Battle of the Bands that raised money for AIDS patients.

When Wood stopped the procession of graduates to honor a surprised David Rojas, who walked on stage with the aid of a cane, he choked up.

"David, we care about you, and we are pleased to recognize you. It is the school's mission to offer access and opportunity to everyone," he said.

The crowd gave Rojas a standing ovation.

RCC offers opportunities to many students like Rojas who face challenges that require a leveling of the playing field but surpass their own expectations.

Daniel Angelucci will go to the City University of New York's John Jay College, to continue his education in law enforcement.

Angelucci's guest - Kathleen Mundt, a teacher of the hearing impaired in the North Rockland school district - described RCC as open to many students with disabilities and special needs.

"He learned he had the skills and knowledge to do it," she said of her former student.

A recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, Angeline Stuma will attend Cornell University this fall to study applied economics and management. At RCC, Stuma played tennis and volleyball and was part of the African club.

She said she learned a lot as student government president.

"I was able to see how the school functions. It was one of the best experiences for me because I'm shy and I had to make speeches," she said.

Find hundreds of additional photos in the special graduation gallery at LoHud.com

Thiells: James Thomas Nannariello, Edwin C. Sanchez
Tomkins Cove: Tara Baranowske, Dana Thiesing
Valley Cottage: Ryan K. Keiser, Manish Murali
Panicker, Gabrielle Tubito
Wesley Hills: Lauren Antoinette Lopez
West Haverstraw: Marisa Mary Damas
West Nyack: Chelsea Jacobson, Stephany Perez

December 2006 graduates
Airmont: Christine Marie Perfito, Harold George Sanchez, Gina Nicole Taffuri
Bardonia: Gregory Ross Fiorentino, Hwaeyoon Han, Misa Hirayama
Blauvelt: Gerald J. Bottari, Rosemary Delgado, Victoria Palumbo, Gina B. Sofia-Lettire
Chester: Eustace Klaveroux
Congers: Brian Costanzo, Jacquelyn LePre, Michelle T. Maciuzyński, Gloria P. Rinciari, Catherine Ruckel, Priscilla Anne Wilson
Garnerville: Antonia DeLeonardis, Georgina E. Escribano, Gerald Ettienne, Edward R. Judge, Shelda Millien
Hillcrest: Jacqueline Santos
Monsey: Valerie Bumbaco, Marlene Francois, Andry Goltset, Antoinette Marie Horrissald, Gina Marie Isaacs, Mohsin Javid, Deena Kohn, Ebben J. Lagarde, Yael Shoshana Lemel, Gabriella Pentrelli, Barbara Danuta Slota, Sebastien E. Tertulien, Shoshana E. Weissmandl
Montebello: Sean C. Hay
New Hempstead: Guirlene Dicette, Leslie Muhu, David Varkonyi
Orangeburg: Corinne B. Palazzo, Linda D. Romano
Pearl River: Sean E. Brady, Virginia G. Cook, Thomas J. Lang, Patricia Margaret McCormick, Amanda Leanne Reihard
Pomona: Jessica Abreu, Mia Roxane Clark, Krystal L. Corcoran, Tanya Diona DiMetreau, Charisse T. Gaza, Efstatia Elly Gletsos, Charles G. Gran, Amy Moss, Kristina C. Rolon, Anthony M. Stancarone, Jonathan Tallis, Prince R. Varghese, Brian Wilson
Sloatsburg: Bryan A. Bogin, Kimberly Camargo, Lauren Kathleen Conklin, Masakiyo Kasama, Kathryn A. McGowan, Zandrina D. Vanderbeek
Sparkill: Kelsey L. Prediger
Stony Point: Brian P. Coogan, Andrew Scarpone Dossi, Maureen A. Gill, Michael A. Livia, Jo Ann W. Phenix, Brianna Rose, Joy Scalera, Joseph A. Zinna
Suffern: Marcie Robyn Baron, Lauren Chersiela, Kara Emmons, Hazel Beatriz Gil Rodriguez, Dina Lynn Gilmartin, Emi Hagiwara, Vicky Jean-Joseph, Keun-Woo Kim, Cassandra Lynn King, Yuki Kyotani, Juliana M. Lovinger, Marlena L. Majestic, Marie M. Mathelier, Danielle Marie Migliaccio, Jennifer L. Mollokos, Shawn Nicole Patrick, Lori Pamela Pitkof, Pui King Teresa Pong, Donya Sadi, Randi Lauren Schwartz, Ryan A. Stephens
Tappan: Valsa J. Mathew
Thiells: Gina Castillo, Robertson Guercy
Valley Cottage: Christine Curley, Courtney Lia Sturm
West Haverstraw: Silvany Efendie, Christina Marie Gonzalez
West Nyack: Jared S. Daniels

May 2007 graduates
Bardonia: Michael Aharoni, Emmaliesle Bierker, Beth Etta Schweizer Broadnax, Bonnie Chang, Jill Ashley Rickli, Tiffany Taffe
Blauvelt: Judith Basso, Lyndsay E. Falco, Brittany E. McLaughlin, Casey A. Pereira, Alice H. Ryan, Julia Marie Sheridan
Chestnut Ridge: Liedrea M. Allen, Mchedette Ciceron, James Gerard Hargat, Frank Miranda IV, Nina Mittal, Romaine Price, Taryn Jaye Price, Cherish K. Riley
Congers: John Luke Chemerov, Joel R. Cruz, Gregory Lewis, Nicole G. Masiello, Kathryn Ann McCormack, Michelle V. Ragusa, Stephanie A. Sabino, Rhia C. Tolentino, Brigitte Weinberg
Haverstraw: Joseph Thomas Woard Aquilino, Georgeline Aristide, Karolyn M. Cruz, Korym Cruz, Nicholas Culver, Richard Thomas Dunn, Anthony R. Ford, Wendy Jeanniton, Kate Johnson, Jeffrey F. Krol, Hong M. Nguyen, Darline R. Paulin, George Mose Pavilus, Mary Sims, Kaylyn Marie Strysko, Stephanie J. Ventura
Hillburn: Maria Angela G. Navarro, Jorge Ruiz
Hillcrest: Wendy E. Beron, Marie Osline Domond
Monsey: Chaim D. Adler, Jodie Arnold, Malka Bernstein, Marlon T. Brilantes, Monika Ufir, David D. Fernando, Levy Y. Forchheimer, Tzadok Gable, Melissa Galati, Sara Gilbert, Aylah Loewenstein, Jessie Meehan,
Alicia M. Noel, Loel Park, Lowly Pierre, Kinga Piersiak, James Raymond, Rachel J. Rosenbaum, Ruth Sternfield, Rie Suzuki, Barbara A. Wanamaker

**Montebello:** Gregory F. Gomes

**Nanuet:** Michael Aquilante, Samantha Arena, Michelle Bonacci, Thomas Buckenberger, Christina Michelle Conte, Patrick Dowling, Laurie Michelle Drago, Michael James Gargano, Nicole M. Higgins, Christine A. Jackson, Janine Jackson, Keith Lee, Lance L. Liberstein, Pui Sum Lo, Kathy I. Manalang, Alexandra Markowski, Jennifer L. McDonald, Kevin Peter Ostrom, Michael Panzarino, Amy Patel, Carissa M. Petrillo, Samantha Reda, Philip Santos, David S. Schwartz, Christopher Matthew Sferlazza, Reynaldo J. Suarez, Jenny Marie Ucker, Kim-Marie Ugenti, Zaida B. Yupa

**New City:** Dorota Edyta Adamczyk, Sergei Alexeev, Anthony James Amendola, Ana Maria Barbas, Basmy Bashjr Jr., Daniel M. Birnbaum, Samantha Hayley Bomzer, Michael Brennan, Amy Ceresnak, Vincenzo Cortimiglia, Kenneth Cosgrove, Gregory De Marco, Gerard DeCarlo, Claire Altagrace Malory Duverger, Joseph J. Farrenkopf, Evan R. Follo, Maren Gallo, Dean A. Gentile, Alex M. Gomber, Timothy John Horbach, Eddy S. Jean-Baptiste, Michael Kcira, Angelo J. Koutros, Ariel Lender, Shu-Fen Liao, Joel Mathew, Justin L. Narine, Igor Nikolskiy, Gina Pachlin, Maria A. Parziale, Karyl E. Pointer, Amanda Rice, Asvinee Ruiz, Sangyeon Son, Tana Tosto, Jonathan C. Zisser

**New Hempstead:** Lisa M. Davis, Christopher D. Dillon, Tzivia B. Gottlieb, Beatrice M. A. McCarthy, Batsheva Schwab

**Nyack:** Collin M. Crabtree-Keeler, Wayne R. Evans, Nicholas Hair, Colby Ippoliti, Sarah Mary Katavolos, Kelly O. Gaetz, Erin M. Lapayover, Jane E. Pluhowski, Madeleine Svensson, Elizabeth M. Tangredi, Robert Valdez, Jr., Elena Vasilenko

**Orangeburg:** Marilou Antonio, Amanda L. Feiertag, Michael A. Kelly, Robert A. Reid, Angelina Yucht

**Palisades:** Roxana Bartolome, Amanda Christine Vogt

**Pearl River:** Annmarie Connell, Jenna Lynn Cawley, Veronica T. Cooper, Michael Damien Daly, Terence Ryan Hanneman, Yvonne Leahy, Brendan A. Murphy, Michael Terrence O'Keeffe, Christina T. Saudel, Drayton Robert Shorter, Heidi Lyn Spicer, Heather A. Taylor, Amy Lynn Vassallo

**Piermont:** Liz Fagan

**Pomona:** Michael Aspinall, Tanya Diona DiMetreau, Stanley S. Dorelien, Kerry Ann Furey, April Elizabeth Hansen, Austin Victor Hansen III, Michael LaCondi, Kim S. Mihok-Wade, Mary Ann Monaghan, Paul Senzamici, Michael A. Sheridan, Jonathan J. Urena Pena

**Sloatsburg:** Steven Mits, John Sheehan

**Sparkill:** Jennifer T. Garcia

Johane Paulemon, Neomie Pierrilus, Charis O. Pinkston, Richardson Rabil, Naomi Ramsey-Stewart, Marsia V. Riley, Kocka R. Sabban, Oksana G. Sackaris, Shaina Moriah Sadow, Olsen Monel Samedy, Marlene Avril Sanon, Teresa Sciarretta Bellaby, Peta-Gaye Toni Simpson, Tova Soloff, Stephanie St. Louis, Mordechai Steinfeld, Daniel Tang, Phoebe Jan V. Tan, Pamela Toral, Vince Luigi Valencia, Dely P. Vil, Josh A. Zelcer, Jaime Zhinin

**Stony Point:** Daniel J. Angelucci, Keith R. Baisley, Fanny Benderoth, Beatrice Burkert, Kenneth D. Daniels, Gregory Dillon, Anthony Dilullo, Stephanie E. Jackson, Nicole Marie Karell, Victoria Rayco Mahan, Michael Pantliano, Gregory L. Pelton, Maryann Perruna, Alicia Ramos-Rosado, James M. Rist, Francine J. Triano

**Suffern:** Stacey Lynne Barba, Mikhail Y. Bayankin, Amanda T. Belanich-McNamee, Kathryn Louise Borghoff, Michelle A. Buffardi, Jessica Lynn Christensen, William Dowling, Shaaron Elisha, Michelle Gariola, Michael L. Holden, Deborah Jansen, Hetali Joshi, Sophary Kim, Adam Kostrinsky, Avi Kramarczyk, Stephanie Kunow, Jeffrey A. Oregero Jr., Andrew E. Perez, Patrice Providence, Natalie Ramos, Earl Ricci, Hannah Rice, Keith A. Rich, Joshua Eric Roberts, Erin M. Rooney, Jennifer Corey Spampinato, Yukiko Suda, Joseph Sussman, Robert A. Valentin

**Tappan:** Lauren Bochart, Mirline Desir, Denise Ferri, Reethamma Joseph, Carolyn Ladolcetta, Elizabeth M. Nick, Thomas H. Nick, Flor de Maria Rivera, Christine Joy Solidum, Kathleen Ann Spratley-Watters

**Thiells:** Camillia M. Constantineides, James L. Natale, Andrew B. Neiderman, Myles Peckler

**Tomkins Cove:** Joseph Coskey, Seth Evan Fisher, Lisa Marie Rose, Megan Elisabeth Shea

**Valley Cottage:** Jennifer Ann Argenti, Karen Christine Armada, Timothy P. Marino, John G. Owen

**West Haverstraw:** Enis M. Giannone, Joanne G. Schroeder, Elizabeth R. Shurman, Mary Thomas, Tara Jacqueline Marie Wargo

**West Nyack:** Tasnim Amina Azad, Sean Jordan, Peter J. Milmore, Pamela J. Notaro, Arleen M. Ott