Sophie Rheinheimer in the 2012 Friend of the College… but she is so much more than just a friend. She is part of the heart and soul of the College. She is a teacher at, champion for and benefactor of Las Positas.

Sophie has been teaching at Las Positas College for over 37 years. She is one of the original 'founding faculty members' who was hired in 1975 to teach at then, Chabot College's Valley Campus. She has a Bachelor's degree in Zoology and a Master's degree in Physical Education from the University of California, Berkeley.

Besides her many teaching assignments, Sophie has been an area chair, athletic director, advisor to student government and coach for the women’s tennis, cross-country, and fencing teams. She has also been Director of the Honors Transfer Program, co-advisor to Alpha Gamma Sigma, and Academic Senate President at LPC.

Sophie is a “master teacher,” and her areas of teaching expertise include tai chi, yoga, fitness walking, and fencing. She won a bronze medal in fencing at the 1998 Nike World Master Games and was a member of the USA team competing at the 1999 and 2000 Veteran's World Fencing Championships. She is an avid fitness enthusiast who has completed 15 marathons, numerous long-distance biking events, and can engage in lively conversations about healthy lifestyle habits.

Her skill as a teacher not only impacts her students along an athletic dimension; it affects them in myriad different ways. One student wrote about Sophie that “She knows how to brighten your day. I took her relaxing yoga class and she made everything that was stressful before class not stressful by the time the class was over. She is the most positive person I know.” Another notes that she “supports her students like a mountain. Her classes are so much fun that you don’t even know that your muscles are going to hate you tomorrow.” A special teaching passion of Sophie’s is working with 8 and 9 year old children in her community education courses. The students learn discipline, skill and caring for each other. One said of her that she is the “awesomeest PE teacher in the world!”

When not actively engaged in instruction on campus, Sophie works to teach the larger community about Las Positas College, the crown jewel of higher education in the Tri-Valley. She is engaged with the community so that community members become engaged with, and support, the College. Beyond simply talking about LPC, however, Sophie has set a remarkable example of how to support Las Positas students today and tomorrow. Last year, her family and she endowed six $1000 scholarships per year in perpetuity. Sophie’s legacy will live on as long as LPC serves the residents of the Tri-Valley.

Personally, I have come to know Sophie well in a very short period of time. Soon after I started at LPC, she was among the first to welcome me to the College. She has been a good friend to my family and me ever since.