

VALENCIA Alumni Voice

VISIT US ON THE WEB @ VALENCIACC.EDU/ALUMNI

2005 Distinguished Graduate Blends Diversity, Leadership and Scholarship

The first thing to know about Abeer Abdalla, who has been named this year's distinguished graduate, is that she loves defying the norm.

At 23, Ms. Abdalla has amassed a list of accomplishments that have made her a valuable presence at Valencia. In 2003 she co-authored and published *Millennial Manifesto: A Youth Activist Handbook*, that is now in its second printing following a favorable coverage in *Entrepreneur* magazine and on the CBS Morning Show.

Graduating with a 3.76 GPA, Abdalla made the National Dean's List in 2004 and was nominated to the All-USA Academic Team. She has been recognized as one of the top ten distinguished Phi Theta Kappa members in Florida, receiving numerous chapter awards including the Servant-Leader Award, the Outstanding Inductee Award and the most spirited Inductee Award. She is the first ever Valencia student, and one of 20 students in the nation to be selected as a 2005 Guistwhite Scholar and has received a \$5,000 stipend toward her undergraduate education.

She describes Valencia in terms of the possibilities it afforded her: "Where but Valencia can John Stossel, noted television personality, match wits with a young man on sexism and economic sustainability? Where but Valencia do those who once feared mathematics return to share their experiences as NASA physicists? Here I have met students from more than 30 countries and all 50 states. The faculty and administration have guided me beyond the



left to right: Dr. Louise Pitts, Interim V.P. for Academic Affairs and C.L.O., Abeer Abdalla, Distinguished Graduate 2005; Roger Keyes, Alumni Board President 2004–2005

classroom and helped cultivate my willingness to change the world."

It is a world that Abdalla hopes to change as a documentary filmmaker, a career she decided on while watching news coverage in the aftermath of September 11. "As an Arab-American, I want to bridge the gap between the story and the truth. I want to show the reality of duality, what it means to be both an Arab and an American. I want to tell the stories of hyphenated Americans everywhere."

Abdalla received her \$600 Distinguished Graduate Award from the Alumni Association June 1 at the annual Alumni Achievers Reception. That same night, she was elected to the Board of Directors at the Alumni Association's Annual meeting.

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LOOKING AHEAD



First Annual Run, Walk & Roll

Opening doors for all students

Funds raised from this community event will help open doors for students with special needs through scholarships and other assistance.

Register online at: www.buttar.com

Yes, the 5K race is still on but has been rescheduled from October 2nd, 2005 to February 26th, 2006.

> Distinguished Graduate, continued from page 1

“ Being elected to the Board of Directors was an honor and a privilege. The Board’s emphasis on diversity in leadership, thought, and focus, makes my time as a Board member a worthy endeavor. Being a board member of the Alumni Association is the final step in my holistic journey as a Valencia student. ”

Abdalla is currently a staff writer for the *Central Florida Future*, an undertaking that is certain to play into her future goals. She is pursuing her bachelor’s degree in radio and television and then plans to pursue a master’s in film at the University of Central Florida (UCF).

Who We Are

The Alumni Association helps Valencia’s alumni stay in touch with one another and with the college. Membership is not only open to graduates but to anyone who has taken a class at Valencia. The association supports the college by providing meaningful programs and services to strengthen the bonds between Valencia’s students, faculty and staff, alumni and the community. Extensive service is contributed through volunteerism, scholarship and recognition programs, and special events.

Please visit www.valenciacc.edu/alumni for the most up-to-date information and the online application.

FIRST FOUNDATION SIGNATURE FUNDRAISING EVENT

A **Taste for Learning** generated \$234,000 in scholarships. 100 percent of every expense was paid for so that revenues generated from all ticket sales, table sponsorships and silent auction receipts went directly to scholarships. www.valenciacc.edu/foundation

Former Valencia Student Awarded Medal of Valor

Prior to becoming a detective in the Orange County Sheriff’s Office, Jennifer Fulford-Salvano completed her law enforcement officer training at Valencia’s Criminal Justice Institute, graduating in 1993. She went on to earn her Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Florida.

Fulford-Salvano was awarded the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, the nation’s highest award bestowed upon public service officers, during a ceremony at the White House on July 14, 2005. She has the distinction of being the only woman ever to have received this award.

Detective Fulford-Salvano responded to a burglary in progress call May 5, 2004, after an 8-year-old boy called 911 to say “strange men” were in his home in Pine Hills with weapons and that he and his sister were hiding inside a van in the garage. She entered the garage to check on the children, and two men emerged from the house firing their weapons. Trapped in the garage, she returned fire. She was struck a total of ten times, including in her shooting hand. She was still able to retrieve her weapon with her other hand and continue

firing until both gunmen went to the ground. The children were kept safe and unharmed throughout the incident.

Fulford-Salvano maintains her connection to Valencia as a part-time instructor at the Criminal Justice Institute and as a member of the Alumni Association. “I believe that my life experience can serve as an excellent educational tool. Valencia is a great place to start because going straight to a university can be overwhelming for anyone just out of high school, or even the adult that has been out of school for a while. Plus it’s more affordable.”

DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE FINALISTS HONORED

Congratulations to the four following finalists for this year’s Distinguished Graduate award from the Alumni Association: **Ernest Bilinski, Ana Dragan, Lawrence Kiang and Emma Longster**. Each student not only met but exceeded the strict criteria for this award, receiving a \$100 award, and presented strong competition for Distinguished Graduate, Abeer Abdalla.

Vice President Dick Cheney awards Detective Jennifer Fulford-Salvano of Florida’s Orange County Sheriff’s Office the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Award Thursday, July 14, 2005, during a ceremony at the White House.

White House photo by David Bohrer— www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident



2005-2006 Alumni Association Volunteer Awards

One of the hallmarks of the Valencia Alumni Association is volunteerism. Volunteers support many college functions during the year to promote learning opportunities for students, alumni and the community. Tammy Lamm, chair of the volunteer committee, expresses her great pride in the work of association members and friends: "Each year our volunteers surpass the outstanding contributions of previous years." This year's volunteer awards included: Lifetime Achiever—Betty Palmer, Volunteer of the Year— Kyle Lublin, and Newcomer of the Year—Diana Lott.

Annual Alumni Achievers' Reception

Each year the association hosts the Alumni Achievers Reception to award scholarships, honor outstanding alumni and volunteers, and recognize graduates who have demonstrated academic excellence, exemplary leadership skills, and community service. Students who were awarded scholarships at this year's reception in June include:

Alumni Annual Scholarships

- David F. Collier Scholarship—Maryori Linan
- Lula Crosby Keyes Scholarship—Amelia J. Crepaz
- Roger G. Keyes Scholarship—Kim Dang
- Rosita N. Martinez Scholarship—Sean Barry

Alumni Endowed Scholarships

Spring 2005—Maryori Linan and Aleshia Pauldo
Fall 2005—Aleshia Pauldo and Sonia Vega

A Scholarship is Born

A new scholarship was unveiled at this year's Valencia Alumni Achiever's Reception, the Howe Collazo's Starfish Swam Scholarship, by former Distinguished Graduate (1999), Jennifer Howe Rogan. She based the name on the inspirational *Starfish* story written by anthropologist *Loren Eiseley*. (<http://www.muttcats.com/starfish.htm>)

Rogan wants to make a difference for other students. "I learned at Valencia that an education includes experiences inside and outside of the classroom. I dedicate the Starfish story to my

friend and mentor, Victor Collazo, and thank him for pushing me, reminding me, encouraging me to believe in ME and making a profound difference in my life."

Valencia and UCF Team Up

Valencia Community College and the University of Central Florida Alumni Associations developed the 2 Plus 2 Scholarship program to provide financial assistance to outstanding students during their pursuit of an Associate in Arts degree at Valencia Community College and, subsequently, a bachelor's degree at the University of Central Florida. "UCF and Valencia have always had a great partnership and this program is just one reflection of that partnership," says Tom Messina, Executive Director of the UCF Alumni Association.

Barry Bohnsack is this year's 2 Plus 2 scholar graduating from Harmony High School (2005) in Saint Cloud with a 3.96 GPA and now a full-time Valencia student. "Valencia has a nationally recognized honors program and I would like to be a part. Later, I plan to seek out educational opportunities at UCF." Bohnsack plans to pursue a career in engineering.

This year's 2 Plus 2 scholar graduating from Valencia (2005) with a 3.95 GPA is international student, Ana Dragan, from Romania. She will pursue a bachelor's degree in finance at UCF. "I plan on working in the international business world and becoming an "ambassador" of my country, Romania, wherever I travel."

Left to right: Eileen Stana, Valencia Alumni Association; Barry Bohnsack, 2 Plus 2 scholar; Jim Matthews, Valencia and UCF Alumni Associations



ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2005-2006

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Diana Lott

Linda Marcia

Betty Palmer—Historian

Eileen Stana

Richard Williams

Alumni Relations Office:

Barbara Shell

Sheila Williamson

Phone: 407-582-3124

alumni@valenciacc.edu

Website: valenciacc.edu/alumni

First Annual Valencia 5K Walk,

Run and Roll to benefit students.

Please see enclosed flyer or visit valenciacc.edu/alumni for details

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

5:30 p.m.—Networking

6:00 p.m.—Business

September 7, East Campus

October 5, Winter Park Campus

November 2, West Campus

January 11, Downtown Center

OPENING DOORS FOR Students

“People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

The plaque is mounted in building 1 on the Osceola Campus.

This quote is included on the plaque presented at the Alumni Association's automatic door dedication on the Osceola Campus on Thursday, January 13, 2005. The Valencia Alumni Association raised \$ 4,000 for this door to assist students and others with special needs through its Ride for Scholars special events.

Highlights of this moving ceremony can be viewed on a video clip in the Special Event Archives at: www.valenciacc.edu/alumni/specialevents

STUDENT AND ALUMNI Career Corner

Barbara Frazier, Valencia Internship Placement Office & Susan Howells, Tews Company

Getting your foot in the door with a company can take many paths: You may take the traditional route and apply directly to a company for a permanent position, or, you may opt to work through a recruiting firm for a period of time. The latter choice has



**CHECK OUT THE UPCOMING
VALENCIA 5K EVENT.** Page 1

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENTS

Contact the Alumni Relations office at 407-582-3124, alumni@valenciacc.edu, or the Valencia Foundation at 407-582-3150, valenciacc.edu/foundation for information about financial contributions and areas of need at Valencia.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please help us update our database by completing the online membership application on our website—or drop us a line. Thanks in advance!

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NEW DATE for VALENCIA 5K!!!

**Yes, the 5K race is still on but has been rescheduled
from October 2nd, 2005 to February 26th, 2006.**

HERE'S WHY:

The "Valencia 5K Walk, Run & Roll" has been postponed until **Sunday, February 26, 2006**. Valencia and the community are heavily involved in local Katrina relief efforts. Katrina victims can't wait; the Valencia 5K can. We know you will agree this is the right decision for all the right reasons.

See you on race day – Sunday, February 26th, 2006!

Visit www.valenciacc.edu/alumni for details and online registration or call 407-582-3124.