

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS SUCCESS GAME CHANGERS

FINDING A PURPOSE

VITAE

THE MAGAZINE OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

UNCOMMON OPPORTUNITIES TURNING POINT TALE OF REDEMPTION PERSEVERANCE COURAGE

SHINING STAR SCHOLARS

TENACIOUS HOPES & DREAMS LONGSHOT BREAKING STEREOTYPES

AGAINST ODDS A QUIEN MADRUGA DIOS LE AYUDA

REACH SOAR HOPE FROM

REMAKING LIFE



Angel Sanchez defied the odds to become a success story. And he's not the only one.

...K... SUCCESS

VITAE

Rooted in the Latin word for “life,” vitae (vee-tay) means: the course of one’s life or career; a short account of a person’s life; a resume. Because the purpose of this magazine is to keep you connected to Valencia, the title Vitae reflects the collective resume of alumni, faculty, staff and students who have proudly walked through our doors.

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VALENCIA NEWS



Photograph by Joe Burbank

President Obama Launches Women's Initiative at Valencia

The national spotlight turned to Valencia on March 20, when President Barack Obama visited West Campus to deliver a speech about women's issues.

Women make up 56 percent of the 70,000 students whom Valencia serves, as well as 58 percent of community college students across the country. But that wasn't the only reason Valencia was selected.

"A few years ago, I announced a new competition called the Aspen Prize to recognize exceptional community colleges," Obama said.

"And lo and behold, your school won it—out of all the community colleges in the country. This college represents what's best in America—the idea that here in this country, if you work hard, you can get ahead."

During his speech, Obama announced that the next 12 months would be "a year of action" to help women. His visit to Valencia kicked off a series of five regional forums on women's issues. The forums will take place this spring and will culminate in a White House Summit on Working Families on June 23.

Before his speech, Obama held a round-table discussion with female students, faculty and local working mothers to talk about the economic

challenges they face. The group included culinary student Carolyn Verno, Valencia West Campus President Falecia Williams, and Lynn Desjarlais, an adviser who works with students in Valencia's Hospitality and Culinary program. Verno graduated from high school in 2007 and worked in retail in what she describes as "a dead-end" job. Discouraged by the low pay, she enrolled in Valencia in 2012 and has just graduated, with the prospect of almost doubling her income once employed.



Valencia Wins National Quiz Bowl Competition

Pop the corks and get out the dictionaries: Valencia College's quiz bowl team captured its sixth national title at the National Academic Quiz Tournament's Community College Championship Tournament in Atlanta on March 1.

Valencia's Red Team—consisting of Julio Gonzalez-Zuluaga, Cassandra Logan, Levar Burton and Lincoln Warner—dominated the competition. The squad lost only one match throughout the two-day

contest. Valencia's Black Team—consisting of Jen Smith, Diorcy Ortiz, Barry Grogan, Will Ober and Nam Nguyen—finished fourth in the competition.

With dominant performances at the Atlanta tournament, the Red and Black quiz bowl teams earned the right to go to the Intercollegiate Championship Tournament, which was held in Chicago in late March. There, the Valencia teams competed against teams of freshmen

and sophomores from academic heavyweights such as Cornell and University of Chicago.

Led by coaches Chris Borglum, who teaches English at Valencia's Winter Park Campus, and math professors Boris Nguyen and Damian Hammock, Valencia's Brain Bowl teams have held their own against the elite squads of four-year colleges. In the 16-year history of the national tournament, only two community-college teams have had a top 10 finish. In 2003, Valencia finished second, while Chipola College of Marianna, Fla., finished sixth last year. This year, Valencia's Red Team finished 18th, beating Cornell, UCF, Alabama, Northeastern, Kansas State and Kenyon College.

Blogger David Pogue Sees the Positives and Negatives of the Latest Tech Innovations

Americans are at the dawn of a new technological age, but it's difficult to predict where technology is heading, says David Pogue, the former New York Times columnist who currently writes about technology and gadgets for Yahoo! and stars in NOVA Science Now specials on PBS. He visited Valencia on March 25 and 26, speaking at East and West campuses.

Although Pogue's job requires him to test the latest and greatest gadgets, he focuses on their function. He wants to determine if they make sense—and what impact they'll have on our lives.

The most ubiquitous—and life-changing—piece of technology in the American arsenal today is the smartphone. Far from being just a phone, the smartphone allows

millions of Americans to carry a small computer—one that can be used many ways, thanks to the millions of apps being developed.

But he notes that technology is changing so rapidly that there's a growing generation gap.

Today's college students are less likely to use email and voicemail, and much prefer texting and Twitter. Those services allow them to immediately connect with one another.

Indeed, one employer told him that because college graduates do not have home phones—and many have never used one—the company's standard employee orientation includes a demonstration on how to use a desk phone.





MAKING

Students from
Celebration High School
ride the "Campus Express."



THE CASE FOR COLLEGE

By Susan Frith

Valencia is teaming up with Osceola organizations to remove barriers to higher education.

It's the Night of the Bull on Valencia's Osceola Campus. While flamenco dancers clap and stomp, a stilt walker maneuvers through the crowd and a mechanical bull lurches under its latest rider. Campus President Kathleen Plinske joins the fun on the college green, stopping by student tables to chat, and, at one of them, gamely agrees to try the kind of unusual jellybean that only a Hogwarts could love.

Besides her sense of adventure, Plinske has something in common with many students here: She was the first in her family to attend college.

So is Paloma Trejos, an international business major from Colombia who came out to enjoy the festivities. "I love Valencia and couldn't be more blessed to be here," says Trejos. Without a scholarship from Valencia's Bridges to Success Program, college might have been beyond her reach. Because Trejos was an undocumented U.S. resident at the time she applied, she couldn't qualify for in-state tuition.

Financial difficulty is just one reason that Osceola County students lag behind the state and other Central Florida counties in college attendance. Only 41.3 percent of

Osceola high school graduates attend college the year after they graduate, compared with 51.2 in Orange County and 62 in Seminole.

To counter that trend, Valencia is collaborating with the Osceola County School District and the Education Foundation of Osceola County on a campaign called Got College? They hope to boost college-going rates by working with the community and promoting a variety of strategies, from campus tours and curriculum alignment to information sessions and financial-aid assistance.

"I want Osceola County to be a place where kids have at least the same chance of going to college as kids in Orange and Seminole do," Plinske says. "There is a real significant impact to having a college education."

Unfortunately, that priority can get overshadowed when families are struggling to pay their bills or even facing homelessness. The school district has identified 3,100 students who live in motels and other transitional housing.

"We realized that so many kids have so many barriers to getting there," says Kathy Carr, executive director of the Education Foundation of Osceola County. (Her

organization supports teachers and students with everything from classroom supplies to scholarships.) "With our partnership with Valencia and the school district, we are seeing how we can all share what we are doing and come together with new ideas and try to add some additional services to help kids be able to make it."

Both individuals and the community stand to benefit from more education, Carr says, giving the example of how Medical City, the health and sciences park in Lake Nona, is projected to generate 37,000 jobs. "We want our [graduates] to get those jobs and not have Medical City have to recruit from other places when they have all of these people that could be trained right in our backyard."

Learning to dream

Plinske grew up in a lower-middle class home in Crystal Lake, Illinois, northwest of Chicago. "We never went on vacations," she recalls. College was out of the question without a scholarship. But her house was full of books, and her grandfather championed education. "He was one of these super-smart guys who grew up in the Great Depression and had to go to work when he was really young," she says. "He would get so angry with me if I would tell him I was bored [because] there were so many things to learn, so many things to do."

In eighth grade Plinske saw a poster for the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. "It said 'Be a Part of the Dream.' I didn't know what the dream was, but I knew I wanted to be a part of it." Once Plinske enrolled, it wasn't a question of whether she would go to college, but which one. She earned a "full-ride" scholarship to Indiana University.

"That, I think, is a lot of what drives me," Plinske says. "I feel this tremendous responsibility to give back for all the gifts I was given."



Students from Osceola High School arrive for a tour of Valencia.



Student Brandon Rodriguez (far right), a member of the welcoming team, encourages high school students to become involved in Valencia clubs and activities.

“Los vamos a recibir con los brazos abiertos.”
(“We will welcome them with open arms.”)

Putting out the welcome mat

That’s what brought Plinske one rainy February night to Flora Ridge Elementary School in Kissimmee, where 100 community members gathered in the cafeteria for one of the college information sessions held around the county.

Addressing her audience members in both English and Spanish, Plinske shared the message that college is within their children’s reach: Regardless of income, their work schedule, or how much English they know, they have a place at Valencia.

“Los vamos a recibir con los brazos abiertos,” she said. (“We will welcome them with open arms.”)

With classes offered day and night, on weekends and online, students can keep working to support their families while earning an associate’s degree, a few credits at a time, Plinske explained. In fact, students don’t even have to leave the Osceola Campus to earn one of a dozen bachelor’s degrees from the University

of Central Florida through the Direct Connect program.

“Going to Valencia is a wonderful investment in your child’s future,” said Plinske, noting that a person with an associate’s degree will earn half a million dollars more in their lifetime than someone who has only completed high school.

Adam Tehfa was ready to apply, though he’ll have to wait a few more years. The Kissimmee sixth-grader, whose family comes from Morocco, is impatient to go to college and become the next CEO of Google. “I like how they provide programs that are flexible so you can have it on your computer,” he said, “and if it’s on a day you can’t attend, you can do that course another day.”

Edna Colón, a mother of three, was pleased to learn that an associate’s degree costs just \$6,000. “I hear the prices, and it’s nice,” she said. “It’s more affordable [than other programs], and it’s close to the community.”

Unfortunately, some educational barriers are hard to lift. Undocumented students, for example, can’t qualify for financial aid, are shut out of some scholarships, and at least until this fall, have had to pay out-of-state tuition, which is four times more expensive.

Valencia’s Student Government Association has taken on the issue, traveling to Tallahassee to ask lawmakers to overturn the regulation. Plinske supports their efforts. “I feel so passionately about the issue, not because of some political slant, but because of interacting with these students and their families,” she says. “I’m hearing from parents that if students know they’re undocumented in high school and think they have no chance of going to college, they just give up.”

Express bus to opportunity

Though her students come to her with difficult situations, Kathy Donato, Gateway High School college and career specialist,

tries to keep them from giving up. She says many seniors count themselves out of college because they think they lack enough money or the required grades, or they must work to support their families. Sometimes a language barrier keeps them from filling out financial-aid applications. (Almost 100 languages are spoken by families in the school district).

Donato, who is active in the Got College? effort, encourages them to find ways around those obstacles. “I tell them this is going to break the chain of you getting low-paying jobs.”

Demystifying higher education is another priority of Got College? “Until you’ve been on a college campus, you don’t really get it,” says Gloria Niec, executive director of the Celebration Foundation. “You [need to] see it, hear it, touch it.”

That’s why her organization started sponsoring bus tours to Valencia and the Technical Education Center Osceola for county high school students two years ago. She expects to arrange Campus Express tours for 1,000 students this year. The Celebration Foundation will also pay the Valencia application fee for students who have taken one of the bus tours.

“When we pick them up on the bus, they’re a little bit like, ‘Oh, what am I doing?’” Niec says. As the tour continues, “you can see them start to walk prouder and prouder and prouder [because] they begin to see themselves as college students.”

Amanda Lopez, a college and career specialist at Poinciana High School, says the tours have been a “real game-changer” for her students, removing the mystery about college and showing that they don’t have to commit to four years in the classroom.

For instance, says Lopez, students learn they could go to TECO and in nine months have certification in certain industries; this unlocks the door to higher-paying jobs. “Whether that child goes on to earn more certifications or transfer into Valencia’s programs, it gives them what I call a buffet of opportunity.”

According to Lopez, 100 percent of the 60 Poinciana seniors who’ve taken a campus tour this year indicate they plan to apply to Valencia, TECO or both institutions.

“I wasn’t even sure about going to college in the first place,” admits Jessica Langford, a Poinciana senior who took a Campus Express tour. “I’m one of those creative people who was like, ‘I’ll just do my own thing,’ but actually going to Valencia and seeing everything makes college seem a lot more important than how I felt before.”

Classmate Ashley Ayala says, “I heard rumors that community colleges in Florida weren’t that great: they were just like another high school. But then I saw [Valencia’s] campus, and it looks like a real college. The library there was absolutely amazing.”

Valencia is also working with the district to shrink the gap between what’s taught in high school and college, hosting professional development workshops for 300 math, science and English teachers this summer. “Our faculty say, ‘I don’t care if they’ve read British literature,’” Plinske says. “I care more if they can construct a paragraph.”

They can change the world

Gateway High’s Donato is pleased to see college awareness grow as more workshops take place. To spark some friendly competition, the district will post college-going “thermometers” at each high school. “I tell the students I want us to have

the highest thermometer in the county,” Donato says.

While waiting for the mercury to rise, Plinske finds inspiration in stories that show Got College? is already having an impact. At a recent Got College? event, a drawing for a laptop was held for prospective students. The winner had to show proof of college registration to pick up the prize.

“The student who won the laptop was an orphan,” Plinske says. “She had lost her parents and was trying to find her way on her own.” Now that student is registered at Valencia. “It seems as though it was meant to happen: The student faced such a tremendous barrier and uncertainty with regard to the college enrollment process, but the promise of this laptop was an incentive [to enroll].”

Ultimately, Got College? is about helping students pursue their dreams. “The faculty and staff at Valencia believe that Osceola County students can accomplish absolutely anything that they set their minds to,” says Plinske. “I believe that in our Osceola County high schools, we have future disease curers, peacemakers, lifesavers, policy developers, business builders, and world changers,” she says. “My goal is to help students believe this—that they can change the world, that they are college material.” ♦



Valencia staff chat with students and parents at Denn John Middle School.

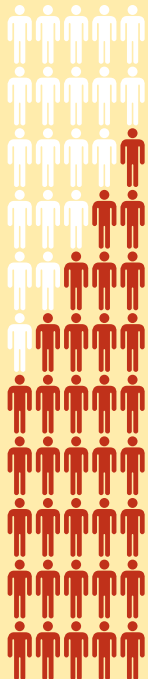
THE A.S. ADVANTAGE

You would think earning a bachelor's degree would bring a bigger paycheck than a two-year degree. Not true. Starting salaries for Associate in Science graduates are often higher than those for bachelor's degree recipients. And while workers who've earned a bachelor's degree or higher will make more money over their lifetimes, many with an A.S. degree often return to college later and work in their fields while going to school.

Source: Florida Education Training and Placement Information Program, Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University



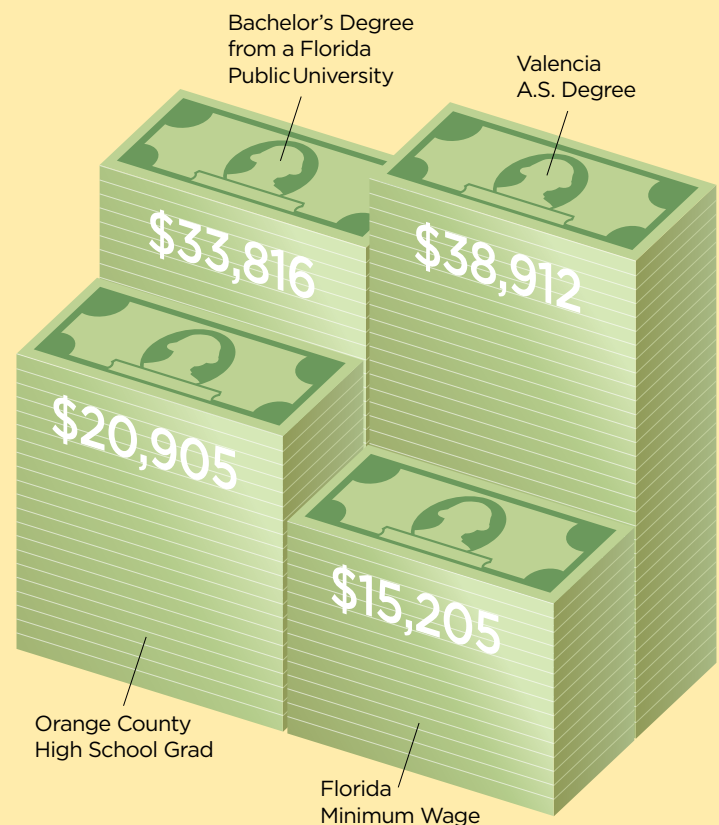
Pursuing an A.S. degree not only reduces college costs but also increases the chance of finding a job after graduation.



The U.S. economy will create 55 million job openings by 2020, and nearly two-thirds of them will require some postsecondary education.

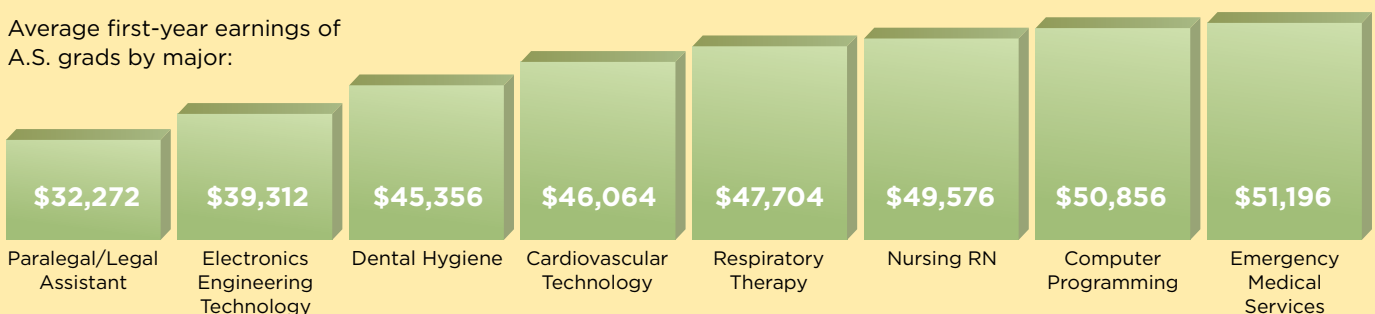
Two Years Tops Four

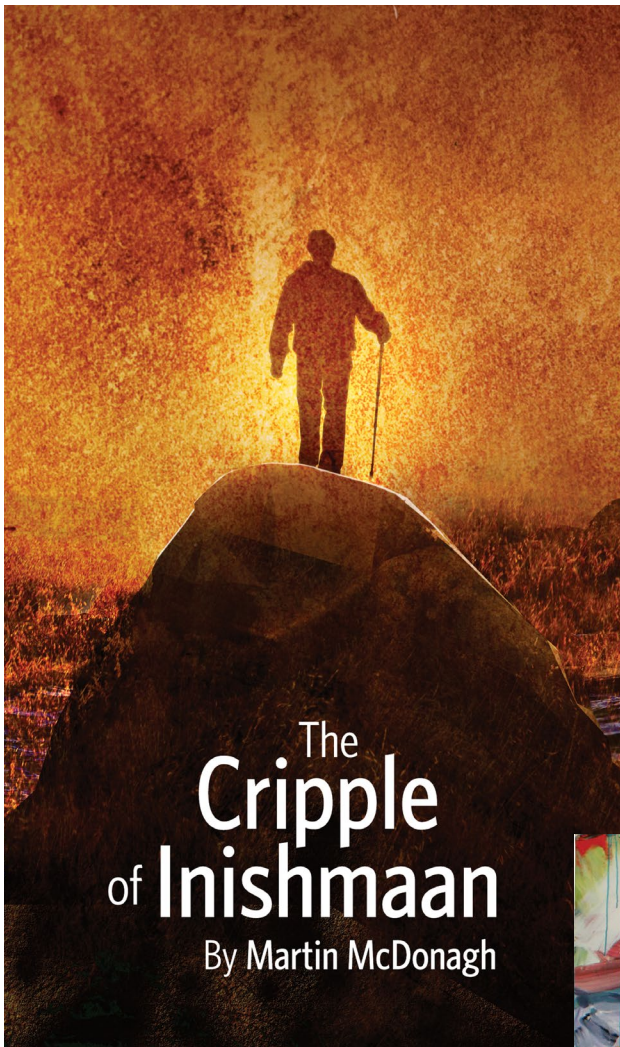
First-year earnings by educational achievement:



Who Makes What?

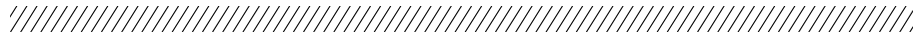
Average first-year earnings of A.S. grads by major:





The
**Cripple
of Inishmaan**
By Martin McDonagh

VALENCIA EVENTS



Chris Robb: Abstractions

June 13 – Aug. 1

Opening Reception: Friday,

June 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Artist lecture begins at 7:30 p.m.

*Anita S. Wooten Gallery,
East Campus*

Works by an Orlando artist and
ad agency creative director.

Admission is free.



“La Mer,” painting by Chris Robb

JUNE

“The Cripple of Inishmaan” By Martin McDonagh

June 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14
at 7:30 p.m.

June 8 and 15, at 2 p.m.

Black Box Theater, East Campus

Valencia presents the Central
Florida premiere of the darkly
hilarious Irish comedy from
Martin McDonagh, the author of
“Beauty Queen of Leenane” and
“The Pillowman.”

Note: Audience members can
participate in a talkback with the
director, cast and crew following
the June 14 performance.

Tickets: \$12 general admission;
\$10 for students, faculty/staff,
alumni and seniors.
valenciacollege.edu/arts



JULY

Valencia Dance Summer Repertory Concert

July 11, 12 at 8 p.m.

*Performing Arts Center,
East Campus*

Valencia's resident dance company, Valencia Dance Theatre, joins the Valencia Summer Dance Institute with faculty and guest-artist choreography.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, faculty/staff, alumni and seniors; \$6 for children under 12.
valenciacollege.edu/summerdance

Photograph by Kevin Abel



AUGUST

Small Works by Central Florida Artists

Aug. 15 – Oct. 3

Opening Reception: Friday,
Sept. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

*Anita S. Wooten Gallery,
East Campus*

An exhibit dedicated to works—
from paintings to sculpture—that
are less than 16 inches in size.
Admission is free.

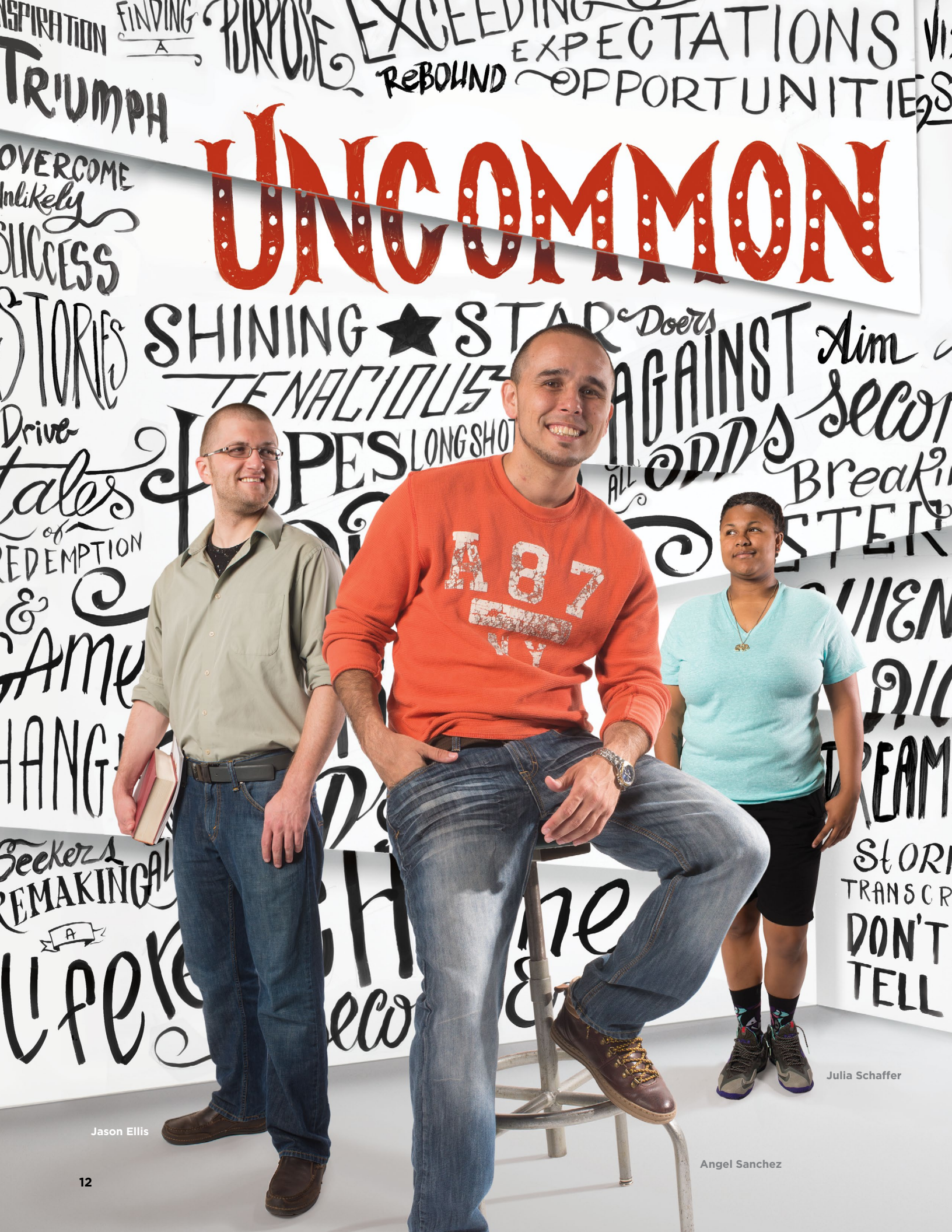
SEPTEMBER

2nd Annual Osceola 5K Run/Walk for Heroes

Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m.

Osceola Campus

All proceeds go toward
the Rotary Club of Lake Nona's
Sept. 11 Memorial Fund to
support Valencia scholarships for
emergency responders.
valenciacollege.edu/alumni



UNCOMMON



Jason Ellis



Angel Sanchez



Julia Schaffer

INSPIRATION FINDING PURPOSE EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS VICTORY
 TRIUMPH REBOUND OPPORTUNITIES
 OVERCOME Unlikely SUCCESS
 SHINING ★ STAR Doers AGAINST Aim
 TENACIOUS LONGSHOT ALL ODDS SLOW
 Drive Tales of REDEMPTION Breakin'
 & AME DREAM
 HANG- STORI
 Seeker's REMAKING DON'T
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COURAGE

SCHOLARS

TURNING POINT
2d CHANCES
STEREOTYPES
I MADRUGA
S LE AYUDA
ERS SOAR
ES HOPE
FROM
% DESPAIR

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

When Angel Sanchez was released from prison at age 28 —after serving 10 years behind bars—he faced life and death choices.

He could return to Miami, where he'd been a teenage gangbanger, and risk falling back into the same cycle of violence that had landed him in prison. Although he knew Miami could be dangerous territory for him, it was still tempting.

“When you're in prison, your dream is to go home,” he says. “It's like ‘Cheers’—it's where everybody knows your name.”

Or he could follow the plan that he developed behind bars: Move to Orlando, where he knew no one, and go to college. It was a risky plan and one that would be lonely. He knew no one in Orlando and, when he arrived, he had nowhere to live but a homeless shelter.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



I THOUGHT, 'I'M GOING TO
LOSE MY IDENTITY.'
I'M GOING TO BECOME A
NOBODY AND START FRESH.'



But that was the path that Angel Sanchez chose.

He seemed an unlikely candidate for college. In prison for a 30-year sentence—which was later reduced to 15 years—Sanchez earned a high-school diploma behind bars. Eager to work in the prison law library, he took correspondence courses in paralegal studies. And, after he landed the job in the law library, he read an article in USA Today about the newspaper's "All-USA Community College Academic Team."

Now that, he thought, is something to aspire to.

So Sanchez began writing to most of Florida's community colleges, asking if they'd let him enroll after he was released. Yet only one college sent a reply. Someone in the admissions department at Valencia College wrote back with a simple note: "Contact us when you're released."

Sanchez latched onto that note with fervor. It was the hope he needed.

"I would have been happy if they'd sent a student handbook," says Sanchez. "But they sent a note!"

And that little note led Sanchez to take a bus to Orlando with nothing but a dream.

In Orlando, with no job, no family, no work history, Sanchez was alone. He slept on a bunkbed at the Salvation Army men's shelter, landed his first job (flipping burgers) and rode the bus to Valencia's West Campus to enroll. At the Bridges to Success office, he talked with academic advisor, Dr. Sylvester Robinson. Robinson listened to Sanchez's story, got him the paperwork and helped him enroll.

And though he didn't have any money, state law requires that Florida's two-year colleges grant homeless students free tuition. Robinson also suggested that Sanchez fill out financial aid paperwork.

That was one of his first stumbling blocks. Rejected by the financial aid department, Sanchez learned that he'd been turned down

because he'd never signed up for the U.S. Selective Service, which is required of men when they turn 18.

But like so many times in his life, Sanchez turned that negative into a positive.

He looked up the financial aid regulations—and, there in the fine print, lay the answer. Because he was in prison when he turned 18, he was exempt from the regulation to register with the Selective Service. He highlighted the passage and submitted the regulation and rules along with his financial aid paperwork.

His application landed on the desk of Kenya Richardson, financial-aid coordinator at West Campus, who raised an eyebrow at the meticulousness of the application. She quickly called Robinson to ask if he'd looked up the statute himself. "No," Robinson replied, "the student did that."

Richardson was floored. "I've got to meet this student," she said. "No student does that."

It was the beginning of a friendship and a partnership. Wowed by his tenacity, Richardson hired Sanchez as a work-study student. "He was almost in tears when we offered him the job," she says. But before he got hired, Richardson asked him to write a letter to the college's administrators—including President Sandy Shugart—explaining his background. With their approval, the ex-con—the guy that many people would have written off—got hired.

For 18 months, "he worked his tail off," Richardson said. So when a part-time job opened up, she offered it to him. Saving his money, he was able to move into an apartment and buy a used car.

Today, 31-year-old Angel Sanchez is proof that everyone who believed in him was right. He graduated with honors and a 4.0 GPA, and was the Distinguished Graduate, giving the commencement address in May. He also won the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke scholarship—and hopes to one day attend law school.

Where he'll go next is up in the air. Although he has a chance to go to prestigious colleges, he isn't sure he's ready to leave Orlando, where he has finally found a home.

"I know he has applied to Columbia, to Yale and I know he's thinking a lot about UCF's honors college," says Richardson. "But I want him to go where he feels he can be himself and where he can succeed. I don't want him to feel that he cannot be open about who he is. At Valencia, we took him in with open arms. And I hope that he will go to a school that will do that as well."

Angel Sanchez's experience at Valencia demonstrates something that Valencia prides itself on: Helping students from all backgrounds achieve.

"I think people at most community colleges would say that's what we're about—welcoming people from all backgrounds, believing in potential, believing in second and third and fourth chances," says Dr. Joyce Romano, vice president of student affairs at Valencia.



Sanchez delivered the 2014 commencement address.

But if every college believes that, she says, the trick is getting a bureaucracy to behave that way.

"In a school our size, it's natural to look for measures of efficiency, but efficiency doesn't have that human touch," Romano says. "It's really cultural, and it's something we would want to deliver all the time."

But she's proud that at Valencia, that spirit still carries on, in the note that Angel Sanchez received in prison. It also lives on in the help that Jason Ellis has received.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Kent Deguzman, assistant manager of the men's facility at the Salvation Army, helped Sanchez in the early days.



Finding a purpose

Like Sanchez, Ellis is an uncommon scholar—a student who is defying the odds to attend college. Today, Ellis, 28, is taking the prerequisites to get into the nursing program and has been earning As in all his classes.

But as a former addict, Ellis was homeless regularly for nearly a decade. “I lived in tents and on park benches,” he recalls. “For a year, I lived in an office building: My boss let me sleep on the floor of the call center where I worked.”

In and out of rehabilitation facilities, Ellis has struggled with drugs and alcohol addiction since the age of 16. Kicked out of high school at age 17, he earned his high-school diploma while in a rehab facility. After that, he bounced from his parents’ home to the streets to shelters. Occasionally, he’d go into rehab, get sober, land a job and get an apartment with roommates. But invariably, he fell off the wagon and found his way back to the streets.

At one point, officials at the Coalition for the Homeless sent him to Valencia to get tested for aptitude training—in hopes he could get a job driving a forklift. The test administrator was impressed by Ellis and told him he ought to go to college, not just settle for driving a forklift.

Although Ellis headed back to the streets, that counselor’s advice stuck with him. Maybe, he thought, I am college material.

Ellis repeated his pattern of rehab for several more years until two years ago, when he was hospitalized and entered detox. There, the nurses made an impression on him—and Ellis vowed to change his life.

One of his first stops was Valencia, where he decided to enroll in pre-nursing classes. “I like it (nursing) because the field is stable, it’s exciting and I’d be helping people,” he says. “And I’ll be giving something back to the world, which is important to me because I spent a long time taking what I could from it.”

Like the 60 or more homeless students who attend Valencia each year, Ellis receives tuition vouchers so his tuition is free. Although he relies on financial aid for his living expenses, he has applied for the college’s work-study program for next year.

Now clean and sober for more than a year, Ellis has found a place where education and friendship, not drugs and alcohol, are the primary focus. Here at Valencia, he’s a member of Phi Theta Kappa and has discovered a new outlook on life. “All those people I used to hang out with, I don’t see them anymore. Now, all my friends go to Valencia,” says Ellis. “Valencia has given me

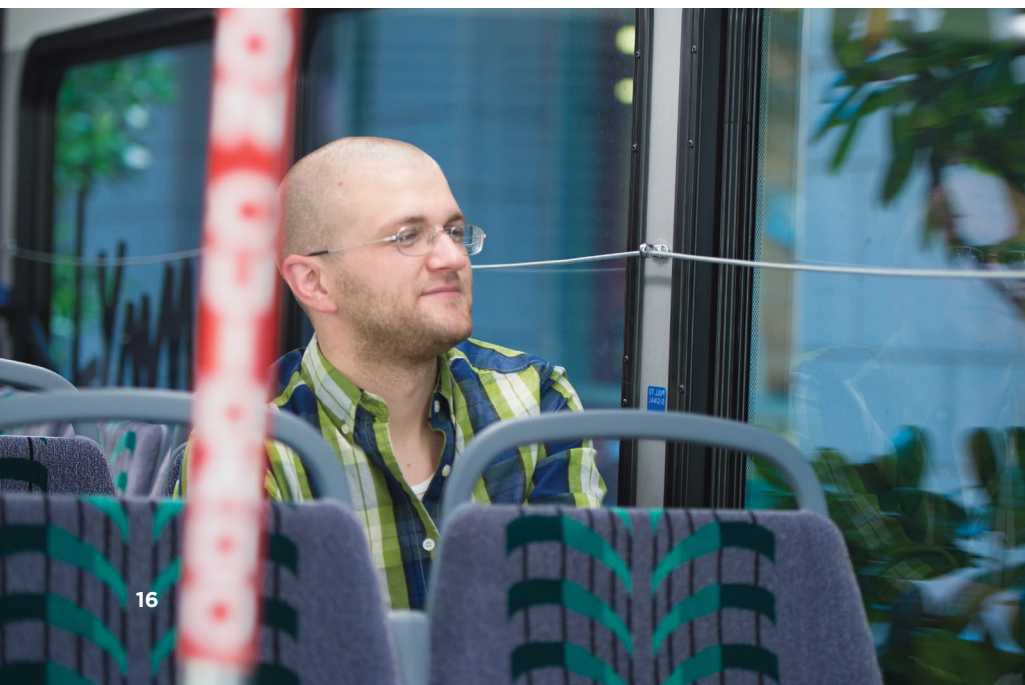


“
I’LL BE GIVING SOMETHING
BACK TO THE WORLD,
WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO ME
BECAUSE I SPENT A LONG TIME
TAKING WHAT I COULD
FROM IT.”

more than an education. It’s given me a purpose: If I don’t have anything to do, I go down to the school. There, everybody’s about making something better in the world.”

Just as homeless students are given tuition waivers and guided through the admissions process, the same approach is used for foster-care children, many of whom have trouble producing the types of documents typically needed for admission. Thanks to legislation passed by the Florida Legislature last year, foster-care students can stay in their foster homes until they are 21 or they can receive financial assistance as they pursue a college degree.

But the road to college for foster-care kids is often filled with potholes. Many struggle with so many family issues that they don’t concentrate on school; many become parents as teenagers and have children to support. And for many, there’s no one—no family member or adult—who expects them to go to college or pushes the idea.





Setting a higher bar

That's why Valencia student Julia Schaffer, who spent much of her childhood in foster care, wants to major in criminal justice and eventually open a group home for foster kids. "Everybody has such low expectations of us. And there's no one there pushing foster kids to try college," she says. "Frankly, the only way out really is to get an education. And I find it frustrating that more foster kids don't take advantage of the benefits that are offered to us."

Schaffer, now 20, entered the foster-care system at age 5 and was later adopted by her foster family. But after enduring sexual abuse from her adoptive father, she left her adoptive family and re-entered the foster care system at age 13. Despite the instability in her life, she graduated from Wekiva High School in 2012 with good grades. From there, she headed to the University of South Florida.

Yet health problems derailed her. Long plagued by anxiety issues and fainting spells, she began fainting more. Doctors eventually diagnosed her with a heart ailment and installed a pacemaker.

To recover from the surgery, she moved back to Orlando and began rooming with her sister, who is two years older. While on the mend from heart surgery, Schaffer enrolled at Valencia. Now, she has a 3.25 GPA and will graduate after taking two classes this summer.

Julia Schaffer (right) talks to other foster-care students about her experience in foster care at The Faine House, an Orlando facility for young people who have turned 18 and aged out of the foster-care system.

"I think this was the smartest decision for me," says Schaffer. "I needed to be in Orlando so my sister could take care of me after my pacemaker operation. But Valencia also has smaller classes, and it's more convenient for me."

Now Schaffer is eyeing graduation and transferring to UCF. Meanwhile, she has applied for an internship that would pay her to mentor foster kids in Montana this summer.

"I'm very excited," she says of the internship. "That's exactly what I want to do with my life, so I'm hoping I get it."

For each of these uncommon scholars, Valencia has provided opportunity. And in many cases, the college provides something more—a place where friendships and mentors can change a life.

"I like to say that by becoming homeless, I found a home," says Sanchez. ♦

“Frankly, the only way out really is to get an education.”







Idolizing Opera

By Roger Moore

When it first began in 2004, the Opera Theatre Workshop, offered by the music department on Valencia's East Campus, was starved for students.

"I was combing the campus, saying 'Please PLEASE come sing with us!,'" recalls Carla DelVillaggio, the associate professor of voice and music who helped dream up this project.

Then, what music professors call "The 'American Idol' Effect" kicked in. Various TV shows that emphasize singers as they are prepared for a showcase and/or a career singing, from "Glee!" to "The Voice," caught on. Students who liked to sing saw something resembling a path that could make their dreams come true. Attendance at the workshop spiked, and the music department didn't have to go in search of singers who might be ready to take singing seriously.

"Now, we have auditions and not everybody gets in," DelVillaggio says. "It's competitive, and word gets around that it's hard, but that it's fun."

But it's not as easy as the various TV shows make it look.

"It takes far more training than what people who get on 'American Idol' would need in order to make a career out of it," says Alan Gerber, associate professor of music. "What the workshop does is help students figure out if they have the desire

and commitment, the stamina, for a singing career."

Students audition, receive close instruction and evaluation by the faculty, and at the end of each semester, there's a showcase—often a short opera, followed by a revue of singers performing tunes from musical theater.

Gerber and DelVillaggio say they see a wide range of students at the auditions before the beginning of each semester, from the career-oriented who might have been studying opera for years, to novices who just love to sing and like having the chance to perform.

Steven Flores, 22, is an Orlando native, a tenor who started singing in chorus way back in third grade. Like many of his generation, he got his first taste of music singing along to a Disney cartoon.

"I decided to try out opera when I saw 'Monsters, Inc.,' when Mike sang 'You and Me, Me and You, Both of Us Together,'" Flores says. "I realized that I wanted to sing opera when I tried to sing it myself."

Students in Valencia's two-year music program are "being prepped for the work they'll face at a four-year school or conservatory," Gerber says. "We like them to explore as many areas as possible to see where their sound works the best. Our goal is to make them marketable singers."

Since many students are just starting to consider making a living



Emily Grainger, with Alan Gerber on piano

“We like them to explore as many areas as possible to see where their sound works the best. Our goal is to make them marketable singers.”

with their singing voices, the first thing the teachers do is tell them where their vocal range lies on the Fach System, opera’s categories for singers—mezzo soprano, lyric soprano, coloratura soprano, and so forth, through lyric tenors to dramatic bass baritone.

“We have to make sure they don’t hurt themselves by singing beyond their range, out of their repertoire,” DelVillaggio says. “We take the most time considering what sorts of pieces they should be doing, ones that will help them stretch and grow and explore.”

Students don’t just sing at the workshop. They pitch in with props, costumes, marketing and ticket sales for the showcase, to get an appreciation for the wide range of jobs there are in opera and musical theater, DelVillaggio says. And Gerber adds that many students start to realize that there are paying jobs

in an opera’s chorus and other ways to sing and make a living.

“Not everybody can be in the spotlight,” DelVillaggio says. “There are plenty of opportunities for jobs and careers that aren’t centered on performing.”

If they’ve been focused on opera, they’re exposed to jazz singing from “The Great American Songbook,” especially tunes made famous in Broadway shows. Aspiring opera singers and Broadway babies learn that the acting is as important as the singing, that physical conditioning is a must, that the cliché of opera’s “fat lady” singers is dead and gone.

The idea is to give students the foundation, to help them come up with pieces they do well enough to use for auditions to get into conservatories or music programs at four-year colleges such as Stetson or Florida State University.

Emily Grainger had plans to become a church choral director or music “worship leader” when she started at Valencia. But once enrolled, she discovered “the complexity of opera.” Now the soprano has her eyes on assorted Eastern music conservatories with plans for a bachelor’s degree in music performance and a career in opera.

Flores wants to be a choir teacher “and help high school students who want to pursue music and need help with auditions for school.” Not that he’ll stop performing. The Valencia faculty are living, singing examples of how one can make a career in music without having to give up singing. Gerber is a baritone and composer, and the workshop performed his short opera, “Under the Rainbow,” and then took it to this year’s Orlando Fringe Festival.

And DelVillaggio is a lyric soprano who has built a career out of using that voice in “Simply Streisand,” a stage show built around impersonating that diva’s diva, Barbra Streisand.

The best thing the teachers can get across to their often-“Idol”-struck students is that no matter what they’ve seen on TV, those shows barely scratch the surface in the amount of work that goes into getting that big break, starting that career.

“I hate to rain on their parade, to quote a famous singer I know and love,” DelVillaggio jokes. “But thinking a career will be handed to you on a silver platter is just a fantasy. It’s very competitive, it takes a lot of work, and you’ve got to put together a complete package.” ◆◆



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To be featured in Class Notes, visit valenciacollege.edu/alumni/class_notes.cfm and fill in the submission form or mail to: Class Notes Editor, Valencia Alumni Association, 1768 Park Center Dr., Orlando, FL 32835.



If you wish to include a photo, please use the following guidelines:

- Candid shots of you interacting in an authentic setting are preferred. Avoid sending traditional portraits.
- If sending electronically, files should be in jpeg or tif formats. Files should be 300dpi resolution at 4" x 6" (this would be a file approximately 1mb to 3mb in size).

The Alumni Association can also help to spread the word! Let us know about your meetups, networking events, annual retreats, reunions and save-the-dates that your


fellow alumni might like to attend or did attend with you. Whether it's getting a group together for sporting events, charity fundraisers, a day at the parks or just brunch and lunch, let us know. And if you send pictures, we might just include them in the next issue. We can share your adventures and good times with our readers, so that next time they can plan on joining in on the fun!

And don't forget: If you have an idea for a future article, please contact the Alumni Association. Send all suggestions to alumni@valenciacollege.edu.

Lessons

from

MAIN STREET



Business students are teaming up to serve as consultants for small-business owners.

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

The 30 students crowd into the commercial kitchen, past racks of coconut bread while a pair of workers rolls out dough to make hundreds of Jamaican beef patties, pastry-covered meat pies that are wildly popular in the West Indies.

Here, in a strip mall on West Colonial Drive, amid the din of commercial mixers and a noisy ventilation system, they are getting a lesson in small business 101.

They listen as Peter Daley, owner of the Caribbean Sunshine Bakery, explains that his company operates a commercial bakery—but also has three small restaurants that serve Caribbean favorites, including beef patties and jerk chicken. His problem, he tells the students, is endemic for small businesses: Although his regular customers love his food, he has struggled to expand beyond that loyal customer base.

After the brief tour, the Valencia business students pepper Daley with questions. What kinds of benefits do you offer workers? Have you tried a food truck? Where do you advertise? Do you ever participate in festivals? Some of the students take notes; others use their phones to record his answers.

It's an unusual way to teach a class, but Valencia business professor Lana Powell decided last year to give her students more than the standard dose of textbooks

and classroom work. In addition to the fundamentals of running a business, Powell now gives her business students a taste of the real world—by pairing them with local small businesses that need help and are eager for suggestions from a younger, marketing-savvy demographic.

This semester, Powell's students are working with Daley's Caribbean restaurant and bakery; Victory Martial Arts studio in Ocoee, the Dessert Lady, an upscale cake company in Dr. Phillips; and MVP's Clubhouse & Restaurant, a sports bar located in a strip mall on Conroy-Windermere Road (now operating under the name Loudmouth Grill).

"We're actually stepping out into the community and getting hands-on experience with local businesses," says Powell.

Each class is assigned to one small business. The students are then divided into teams—each working on a different area, from marketing to innovation to customer service. Throughout the course of the semester, they gather information, study the business and make suggestions in the forms of memos to the small business owners.

"Our first memo was full of questions," says Valencia student Max Nuttall, who was assigned to the marketing team. "We

want to make suggestions, but don't want to suggest something that he's already tried."

The students target every area of Daley's business, from advertising and marketing to employee morale. The innovation team zeroes in on his catering business, which Daley advertises only on his website. That, he agrees, is one avenue for bringing in more business.

Meanwhile, the customer service team—Nathalie Maycock, Hassona Anthony and Britney Cain—has a surprise for Daley: they've already conducted an undercover visit and have a few suggestions. The first? Have the cashier call out, "Welcome to

For Maycock and her fellow students, the on-site visits and real-world experiences bring the textbook lessons to life.



Clockwise from bottom left: Peter Daley, owner of Caribbean Sunshine Bakery, fields questions from Valencia business students inside his company's kitchen. The Dessert Lady, a small business in the Dr. Phillips area, is known for its signature pink cake boxes. Valencia student Shaya Chamorro samples a "cake bite" as part of her research. And Dessert Lady Patti Schmidt gives the students a behind-the-scenes tour of the kitchen where she produces an extensive line of gourmet cakes.





the Caribbean!” or “Good afternoon!” to entering customers because the layout of the restaurant is confusing to first-time visitors.

Among their other ideas: Make the menu clearer, clean the tables regularly, and instruct the cashiers to tell customers where to pick up their food.

“If he wants to elevate his business beyond the typical mom-and-pop operation, he needs somebody to manage the front of the house,” says Maycock, a former customer service representative. “He’s doing a great job running the kitchen and the bakery, but if I’m a customer and I

walk in and I’m not treated well, I’m going to tell my friends. And that’s feedback that he may never be aware of.”

For Maycock and her fellow students, the on-site visits and real-world experiences bring the textbook lessons to life. And this gives students—many of whom have professional experience in the work world—the chance to apply their knowledge and share it with others.

“I love this class,” says Maycock, “and Professor Powell is wonderful about sharing her knowledge and letting us share our experiences too.”

Powell kicked off this new approach last fall, when her students worked with a franchise pizza business, a day-care center, an auto body shop, and a lawn-mower sales and repair business. At the end of the semester, the students put together a final presentation and a complete business plan for each company.

“They had a lot of good ideas when it came to relating to staff,” said Scott Cahill, owner of Papa Murphy’s Take and Bake Pizza. In addition, the students suggested that he partner with local businesses to draw attention to his product. “They even did a little research on what businesses are interested in doing a kind of partnership—hosting an event together, hosting a fundraiser at my shop for local schools and organizations.”

But there are no cookie-cutter solutions. Every business’s challenges are unique, which requires Powell’s students to be

creative in finding solutions. For instance, Patti Schmidt, a custom cake baker who owns the Dessert Lady, is frustrated that her shop is hard to find amid the jumble of stores at Dr. Phillips Marketplace.

Now she wants to grab the attention of local shoppers—and get national exposure too. With that goal, she has asked Valencia students to create a fun YouTube video for her business and another team to come up with ideas for spreading her name.

Schmidt doesn’t shy away from bold ideas. During the Casey Anthony trial, when she heard that the jurors were tired of the same old food, she arranged with Judge Belvin Perry to deliver slices of cake to the jurors—and got her company mentioned on national TV.

Because Schmidt has done TV appearances in the past, the Valencia students are pitching her as a possible guest to food-related TV shows. “Since she doesn’t have an advertising budget, we think she might be able to get some free publicity from TV shows, such as the Travel Channel and Food Network,” says Connie Whiteside, an economics major.

And though \$55 cakes seem like a tough sell in a recession-plagued area, the students say Schmidt has one hot commodity: the bright pink boxes in which the cakes are delivered.

“The little advertising I do is with the box,” says Schmidt. That signature box led Valencia’s enterprising students to make some out-of-the-box suggestions.

One team of students suggested that Schmidt hire a costume company to create a pink box costume. To get attention in the shopping center, an employee in the costume could parade around the shopping center, or hand out cake bites as samples.

And another student wondered why Schmidt’s website doesn’t feature the signature pink box more prominently.

“She talked about the box all the time,” said Samantha Bianco, 20, a business major at Valencia. “So why not redesign the website, so that you have to click on the pink box to enter the website?”

That’s a capital idea, says Powell.

Class dismissed. ♦

A man with a goatee, wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt and a yellow tie, stands on a rooftop. He has his hands on his hips and is looking slightly to the right. In the background, there are rows of solar panels on a roof, and a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

For Facilities Chief, It's Easy Being Green

By Loraine O'Connell

EXPERTS SPOTLIGHT

Thinking outside the box comes effortlessly to Dr. Allen Bottorff.

Valencia's new assistant vice president of facilities and sustainability is brimming with ideas to improve the college's environmental stewardship: parking lots and roofs studded with solar panels to collect energy; solar-thermal storage units to reduce hot water and air conditioning costs; public-private partnerships to enhance bus transportation, light rail and bike lanes that will bring students to Valencia's far-flung campuses, reducing traffic congestion.

Bottorff, 42, is also responsible for the college's grounds, custodial and general maintenance.

"I think we do a great job with all of that," he says, "but I want to see us take it to the next level, to update our facilities" so that students will be drawn to appealing sites on each campus to engage in academic conversations.

Sounds very Ivy League, right?

"I have this really romantic philosophical idea of what we can turn some of these spaces into," he says.

Mind you, these ideas are just for starters.

Bottorff, who started at Valencia in November, credits his training as an engineer for the profusion of ideas that tumble around in his brain.

"One of the things engineering teaches is the idea of process," he says. "Here, my talents are being applied to topics education-related simply because I think differently than other people."

But his thinking isn't pie-in-the-sky, he says. All of his sustainability ideas center on energy-efficient options "that can lower our costs as



well as our carbon footprint,” he says. “I consider myself pragmatic in all things.”

It was while working as a land development engineer that Bottorff realized he “had a sustainability bent.”

“When you look at a large hardwood hammock and realize you’re going to tear all that down and put in houses, you start to guide the plans,” he says. “You have to be gentle. At the end of the day, you don’t own the land, and your clients want to maximize their profit.”

Although he’s proud that many clients listened to his advice and developed land responsibly, Bottorff says, he “quickly realized the uphill battle” that he would continue to face and shifted his career toward government and education.

He traces his sustainability mindset to a youth spent hunting and fishing in Okeechobee. “I was raised to enjoy our natural resources and conserve them, to make sure I leave things better than I found them.”

These days Bottorff doesn’t have much time for hunting quail and duck, but he’s an avid member of the

National Sporting Clays Association.

As often as he can, Bottorff heads to his favorite shooting range in Okeechobee to take aim at clay disks.

“You get thrown 100 ‘birds’ over two hours,” he says. “They might throw one that flies like a quail or one that flies like a dove. Typically, I’ll hit between 85 and 90.”

In his new job as well as in his favorite pastime, Bottorff aims high—and he’s confident that his ideas will fly with Valencia and the larger community.

In Pictures

Covering the spectrum of campus life in photographs.



Members of the law enforcement community paid tribute to fallen officers, including Orange County Sheriff's Deputy Jonathan Scott Pine, at an April ceremony.



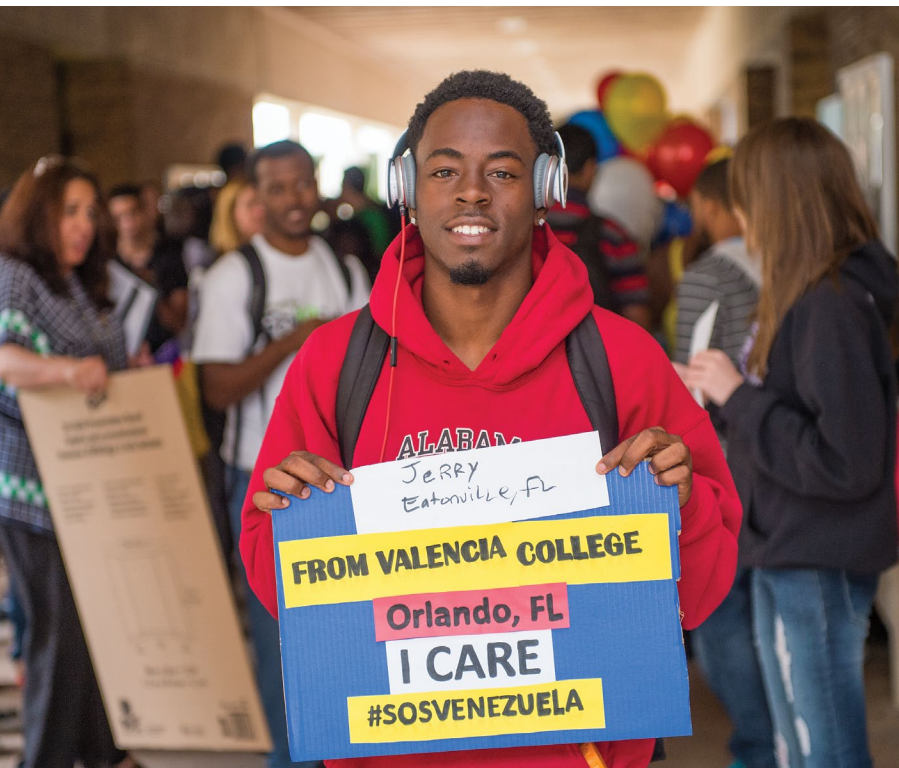
Above: Students getting ready to graduate signed a banner for the class of 2014. Left: Children posed for the camera at the 7th annual Brazilian Film Festival in February.





President Barack Obama spoke in March at the West Campus about women's economic prospects.

Croatian classical guitar virtuoso Ana Vidovic performed in concert in February.



Above: Students showed their support for Venezuela at a March event to raise awareness for anti-government protests taking place. Right: Valencia staff volunteers built bird boxes to donate to the Audubon Society.



Students played intramural volleyball in the East Campus gym.



Students from Nancy Jay's drawing class sketched scenes around East Campus.

CLASS NOTES



1 Cynthia Hinson Graham, '72

Cynthia published her first book, "Help! It Still Hurts," to enable church leaders and congregations to become more effective in addressing the impact of pastoral transition. Cynthia, who resides in Orlando, is a mother of three adult sons, a retired Orange County Public Schools educator, and a minister and consultant.

4 Jessica Zuniga, '99

After owning a freelance court reporting and marketing company, Jessica is now the senior partnership marketing representative for Visit Orlando, responsible for promoting the Orlando destination in the United States, Canada and Latin America.

5 Jon Christopher Frashier, '01

Since graduating in 2001 from Valencia with an A.A. degree, Jon received a bachelor's degree from Florida State University in 2003, lived in Japan for a few years, returned home to receive an MBA, and is now working as an IT project manager for the state of Florida.

6 David Torre, '02

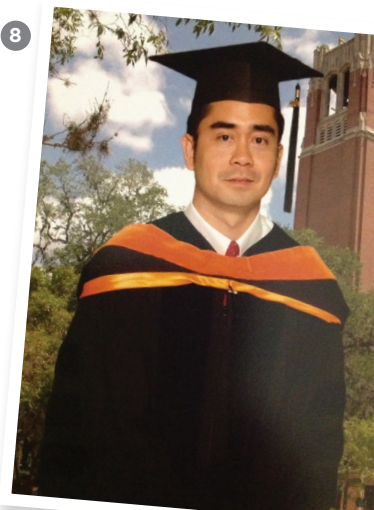
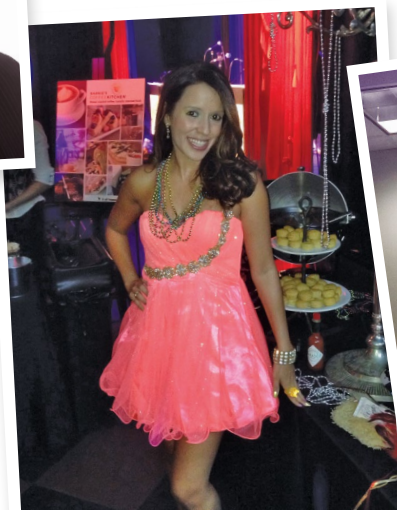
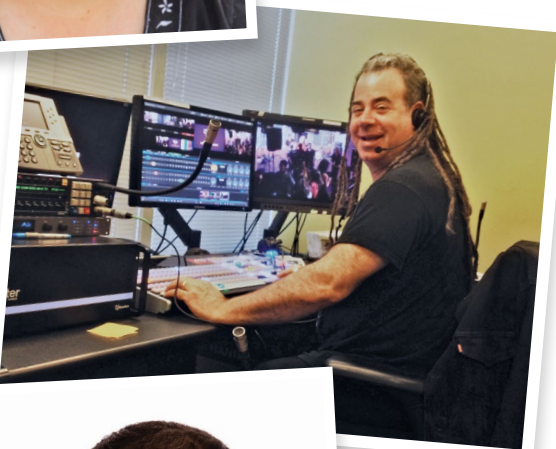
David was recently promoted to director of gift planning at Rollins College. His philanthropic case study on The Alford Inn at Rollins College was published in the January 2014 issue of the journal Planned Giving Today.

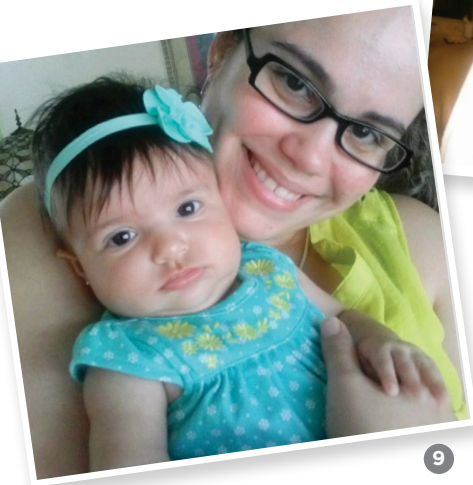
2 Mitch Jacobson, '90

Mitch has been a broadcast editor for 17 years and at MTV the past year working on shows like "Wild 'N Out," "Guy Code" and the "Woodie Awards." He also edits live shows as a technical director as seen in this picture from "The On-Line Music Awards," a 24-hour live show.

3 Mavis (Lori) Paschal, '94, '12

Mavis received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology at Seminole State, graduating on May 4. She's worked as a student lab aide in the CAD/Design Lab at Seminole State's Oviedo campus since September 2013. She has a freelance job lined up as an exhibit drafter and hopes to have a full-time job soon.





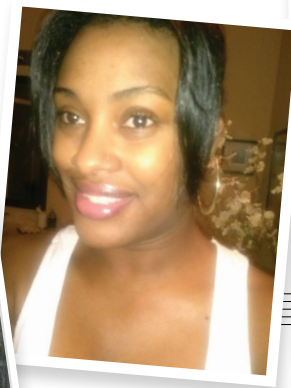
7

7 Kerry Gordon, '03

Kerry's novel "Blind Sky" was published in March and is available on Amazon.

8 Samuel Realista, '04

Samuel has been managing a small company called Real Health America since 2012. He also manages the health of dialysis patients in Central Florida for several nephrologists and does rounds at Florida Hospital for renal consults. Samuel is married with an 18-month-old son. He recently graduated with a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Florida and is now working on a research project for the National Kidney Foundation and the University of Florida that was accepted for publication by the American Journal of Chronic Kidney Diseases.



9 Noelia Maldonado Rodriguez, '05

Noelia, Valencia alumna and employee, and husband Neftali Acevedo, welcomed a baby girl. Noelani Valentina Acevedo Maldonado was born on Nov. 19, 2013, weighing 5.15 lbs, and measuring 19 inches. "We are completely overjoyed at her arrival. Our family is now complete," said Noelia.

10 Marcy Porter, '05

As a registered mental health counselor for the state of Florida, Marcy currently serves the local community as an outpatient clinician and targeted case manager.

11 Arya Eskamani, '07

After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida and his master's from Florida Atlantic University, Arya worked as project manager for AssistRX, a local pharmaceutical consulting firm. Now in South Florida, he serves as the marketing analyst for KEMET Electronics Corporation, the world's leading provider of capacitors and electrical circuit components. Arya is excited for this next chapter, and is grateful to Valencia for providing him with his first taste of higher education.

11



12

12 Jon Strong, '07

Jon Strong (center) of Strong Films won two gold Addys and the 2014 Best of Show award from the Orlando American Advertising Federation at its annual Addy Awards gala. This is the second year in a row that Strong's firm won Best of Show.

13 Sommer Amer, '08

Sommer is the business manager at Chase Back Up Day Care Center in Columbus, Ohio, where she enjoys helping children and seeing their smiling faces. She is also pursuing her master's in elementary education.

14 Zia-ur-Rehman Ansari, '10

Zia completed his Master of Science degree in Higher Education Leadership and Administration from Capella University in March 2014.



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CLASS NOTES



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15 Shannon Murdock, '10

In November, Shannon Jackson married Josh Murdock, a Valencia instructional designer. Shannon works in admission and records on Valencia's West Campus.

16 Bernard Huggins, '11

Bernard recently enrolled in the Master of Science in Leadership program at Nova Southeastern University, Millenia Campus. He also works as a student development advisor and volunteer coordinator for Valencia College, Osceola Campus.

17 Krystal Pherai, '12

After completing a service learning internship with Valencia's Peace and Justice Initiative, Krystal was offered the staff assistant position in the Peace and Justice Office. As part of her work, she co-founded and coordinates the Peace and Justice Ambassadors, and pursues her bachelor's in interdisciplinary studies at the University of Central Florida. Krystal is a new member of the League of Women Voters and is partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank, as she is actively engaged in justice issues in our community.

Frances Ann Dowdell, '13

Frances is working for Florida Hospital in a medical telemetry unit. She is looking forward to starting her Bachelor of Science in nursing this summer as well as working on Valencia Honors Alumni activities to build a stronger honors alumni.

18 Trina Gregory-Propst, '13

In October, Trina opened a bakeshop called Se7enbites in downtown Orlando in the Milk District. She describes it as a "sweet and savory bakeshop that serves breakfast and lunch."

19 Yassir Baroudi, '14

Yassir graduated from Valencia this spring and will move on to a university. He plans to stay connected through the Valencia Alumni Association and through his position as a curriculum assistant at the West Campus.



Robert Stio, '11

Rob decided to spend his last semester at Rollins College in South America, studying at the Universidad del Belgrano in Buenos Aires. You can read about his backpacking journey via his blog: <http://buenosairesyeyond.blogspot.com/>



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Improving the World, One Student at a Time

By Jill Wileden

This year, two national philanthropy organizations recognized several Valencia donors for service and fundraising.

The Council for Resource Development, a national association of community college fundraising professionals, selected **Paul Jr. and Deb Mears** to receive its 2013 Benefactors of the Year award. The annual award recognizes outstanding contributions of time and donations. They were honored in Washington,

D.C., as the top philanthropists for an urban, public college.

The Mears family and Mears Transportation Group have been involved with Valencia Foundation for more than a decade, and their contributions include an endowed scholarship to benefit students in Valencia's hospitality management program. Deb has served as a board director since 2008.

In 2010, the Mears family pledged \$1 million to create the Paul Mears Sr. Take Stock in Children Fund. Established in memory of Paul Mears Sr., who served on the Valencia Foundation board in the '90s, the fund supports educational opportunities through the Orange County Take Stock in Children program. Take Stock helps promising, at-risk children succeed through mentoring and a guaranteed college scholarship.

Every November, the Association of Fundraising Professionals celebrates National Philanthropy Day internationally. The Central Florida chapter's event acknowledges

the entire spectrum of services that nonprofit and civic service sectors provide, as well as the profound impact philanthropy has on the fabric of society.

The **Retired Air Force, Marine, Army, Navy Club** earned accolades as the outstanding civic and service group. The group was started in 1974 to unite retired military personnel as a brotherhood to become more actively involved in the community.

Member Arthur Jarvis observed a troubling trend in his church and his neighborhood: Young African-Americans wanted to attend college, but simply couldn't afford it. Arthur raised the issue with his brethren, and in 1996 RAFMAN Club partnered with Valencia Foundation to begin offering the club's scholarship. To date, 30 students have received financial support through RAFMAN.

Sue Foreman was celebrated as outstanding volunteer fundraiser for AFP's Central Florida Chapter. Her passion for giving back and making a difference has benefited this community through 40 years of service to at least a dozen non-profits. As she demonstrates the power of volunteerism in making a difference to solve community challenges, Sue inspires others to donate their time to local charities and causes.

Sue's involvement with Valencia dates back to 1976 when, as part of the Junior Women's Club, she worked in partnership with Valencia to create the Parent Resource Center, a family education and support program. She has volunteered her time as a Valencia Foundation board director since the late 1980s.



Arthur Jarvis and George Jordan (top), Deb Mears and Paul Mears Jr. (bottom left), and Sue and Steve Foreman (bottom right)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A BRIEFING FOR ALUMNI, RETIREES, FACULTY,
STAFF AND FRIENDS OF VALENCIA

Lawmakers Address Waivers, Funding and Textbook Costs

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

As the state's legislative session draws to a close, lawmakers are poised to give tuition relief to military veterans, provide a small increase in funding for the state's two-year colleges and tackle the hot topic of in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants.

Although economists are predicting that Florida will have a \$1.2 billion budget surplus for 2014-15, state colleges aren't expected to see much of that money. Instead, legislators are likely to approve a small budget increase for the state colleges, with some of the funding based on performance measures.

Along those lines, the Florida College System—which represents the 28 state colleges—asked the legislature for \$1.16 billion in funding, of which an amount to be determined will be distributed to the colleges based on performance funding.

"How much money Valencia gets depends on the performance measures chosen as the basis for distribution," says Bill Mullowney, Valencia's vice president for policy and general counsel. "But generally Valencia does well on performance funding programs."

Meanwhile, tuition waivers made headlines at the start of the legislative session, when the Legislature passed

a bill authorizing colleges and universities to waive out-of-state fees for most military veterans. The "Florida G.I. Bill" won unanimous support in both chambers and was signed by Gov. Rick Scott on March 31. Under current law, veterans who are not Florida residents must pay out-of-state rates, which can be four times what residents pay.

While the veterans' bill sailed through the Legislature, lawmakers debated whether Florida residents who are undocumented immigrants should be allowed to pay in-state tuition.

Passed by the House and Senate—and expected to be signed off by Scott—the bill stipulates that in-state tuition would be granted only to students who graduated from Florida high schools and attended school in Florida for their final three years of high school.

Valencia President Sandy Shugart has publicly backed the proposal, as has Osceola Campus President Kathleen Plinske. In addition, a team of student leaders from the Osceola Campus traveled to Tallahassee in March to lobby legislators in support of the bill.

In other news, state lawmakers made headlines when a few complained that some of the state's

two-year colleges have been so aggressively adding bachelor-degree programs that the colleges are beginning to infringe on the role of the state's universities. After some discussion, the college system and the legislators agreed to a compromise designed to ease tensions: a one-year moratorium on new bachelor's degrees.

"This is not a huge issue for Valencia," says Mullowney. "We have several bachelor-degree programs initiated in collaboration with the University of Central Florida and they're all very workforce-related. Plus, our Direct Connect articulation program with the University of Central Florida is a model for the nation and exemplifies our strong partnership."

Finally, legislators continue to express concern about the high cost of textbooks—and are expected to require state colleges to give students more advance notice about textbook prices before classes start. Lawmakers are also expected to lump "other instructional materials" into rules aimed at keeping textbook prices low.

"Textbook affordability continues to be an issue in the Legislature," Mullowney says. "We at Valencia are concerned about it as well."



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