

HAPPY 2ND ANNIVERSARY!

MAR 2025

RAMS MONTHLY



Empowering Generation Alpha Through Early Learning

Culturally Diverse Future Leaders – and the VVC Educators Shaping Their Journey



STORIES OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND LEARNING AT VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE

Preschool
Education Month
2

Dr. Walden Op-Ed
4

Building Futures
5

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
Happy 2nd Birthday
RAMS Monthly!!

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION MONTH

March is recognized as Preschool Education Month, a time to celebrate the importance of early childhood learning and its lasting impact on a child's development. Preschool provides a critical foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive growth, setting the stage for future academic success. During this month, educators, parents, and communities come together to highlight the value of structured early learning environments that promote curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills in young children. It's also an opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of preschool teachers who play a vital role in shaping young minds.

Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool programs are more likely to develop strong language skills, improved social interactions, and a love for learning that carries into their elementary years and beyond. Early childhood education fosters essential skills such as communication, cooperation, and critical thinking, which help children navigate both academic and real-world challenges. Furthermore, studies indicate that preschool attendance can lead to higher graduation rates, better job prospects, and even improved social outcomes later in life.

Preschool Education Month is also a time to raise awareness about the need for accessible early learning programs, well-trained educators, and family involvement in a child's education. Many children, especially those from underserved communities, lack access to quality preschool programs, making it essential to advocate for increased funding and support for early learning initiatives. By investing in early childhood education, we help shape a brighter future for the next generation, ensuring they have the skills, confidence, and curiosity to thrive in school and beyond.

Victor Valley College



Early Childhood: Empowering Gen Alpha Through Early Learning

If you read the headline you probably did a double take to ask yourself what the heck is "Gen Alpha?"

Generation Alpha refers to individuals born roughly between 2010 and 2025. This generation follows Gen Z and consists primarily of children of Millennials. Gen Alpha is growing up in a world dominated by technology, social media, and artificial intelligence, making them the most digitally immersed generation in history.

More on that later. One aspect of educating this generation is keeping up with the behavioral and key characteristics that make this future generation one of the most soon-to-be diverse groups on the planet. VVC's Child Development Center has not one, not two, but three student workers who are helping our Gen-Alpha Rams in their early childhood education.

VVC student worker Joshua Kho tells RAMS Monthly that his start with teaching children began before he attended VVC, "Through tutoring and babysitting while in High School I found I love teaching and the more I help children in their educational growth and journey, the more I love teaching."



Angelo Fraydealfaro - VVC Student Worker

According to data from Kidsit.com, 38% of people who babysit put it on a resume to find additional babysitting jobs, while 17% do it to obtain childcare employment, additionally another 14% use the experience to apply to a college or educational program.

Jiovanni Mauricio also works at the CDC on campus and says his time at the center is an investment. He also says that it gives him an "opportunity and chance to work with many different families that all have different cultural backgrounds than [his] own." Jiovanni went on to say that "it gives [him] the chance to experience things that [he] may have not gotten otherwise. And [he] hopes in the future that [he] can integrate the things [he] learned into [his] own classroom" one day.

We also had the opportunity to speak to student worker Angelo Fraydealfaro who says the joy and curiosity in the children he helps take care of at



Jiovanni Mauricio - VVC Student Worker

CDC is his favorite part, "It's incredibly rewarding to be part of their early development, helping them build confidence, social skills, and a love for learning. Knowing that I play a role in shaping their future makes every moment worthwhile."

So, back to those young Rams who fall into the Gen Alpha category. Here's a sneak peak into who makes up the upcoming generation:

Key Characteristics of Gen Alpha:

Tech-Native – Raised with smartphones, AI, and digital media from birth.

Visual & Interactive Learners – Prefer short-form, gamified, and video-based content.

Globally Aware – More inclusive and connected due to digital exposure.

Personalized Education – Learning shaped by AI, VR, and adaptive technology.

Short Attention Spans – Thrive on quick, engaging content over traditional methods.

Why They Matter?

By the mid-2030s, Gen Alpha will enter the workforce, reshaping industries with their tech-savvy skills, global mindset, and adaptability. Businesses, educators, and marketers are already paying attention to their behaviors, as they will be the largest generation in history and hold significant economic power.

As Gen Alpha continues to grow and shape the

future, the role of early childhood educators—like the dedicated student workers at VVC's Child Development Center—becomes even more crucial. By fostering a love for learning, encouraging social development, and embracing diverse cultural perspectives, these educators are laying the foundation for a generation that will redefine the world as we know it. As technology and education evolve hand in hand, the investment in Gen Alpha's early years will undoubtedly pay off, ensuring they are prepared to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape.



Joshua Kho - VVC Student Worker

Op-Ed: Investing in Care to Combat Declining Enrollment in Higher Education

By: Dr. Daniel Walden

Our educational system is facing an unprecedented challenge – declining enrollment. Across the country, community colleges and universities are seeing fewer students enroll, a trend that could have long-term consequences for both individuals and the economy. A shrinking student population means fewer trained workers entering key industries, bringing about economic decline as the demographic cliff continues to grow. The number of traditional college-age students is steadily declining, with fewer high school graduates enrolling in higher education. This enrollment issue is exacerbated by students struggling with loneliness, uncertainty, and declining mental health. As this trend continues, it becomes even more imperative for colleges to be intentional about retaining their current students. At Victor Valley College, we have found a powerful solution that will be instrumental in keeping students engaged and enrolled in the years to come – care.

Turning Enrollment Decline into Growth

Serving California's High Desert, our college has long navigated economic and educational inequities. Similar to institutions nationwide, we saw enrollment plummet during the pandemic, dropping by 20% in 2020-2021. In 2021-22, we regained five percent, followed by a 30% increase the next year and another 20% the year after. Today, we stand as California's fastest-growing community college, with enrollment up 33% overall from pre-pandemic levels. We believe a key factor in achieving this turnaround was building our campus foundation on a culture of care, connection, and belonging through Caring Campus.

Caring Campus, developed by the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, intentionally equips staff and faculty with strategies and tools to create a welcoming, supportive environment for every student. At Victor Valley, it has been a game-changer, shifting our campus culture to one where care is not just a value, but an action that we carry out every single day. By fostering strong connections and ensuring that students feel valued as individuals rather than just as numbers at a college, we have created an environment that encourages persistence and completion. This is critical in the face of a shrinking student population.

Proactive Student Support Services

Our Student Services Call Center plays a huge role in ensuring students feel seen and heard. Every call the college receives is answered by our Student Service Specialists, ensuring each caller speaks with a real person and eliminating frustrating menus and voicemail systems that often leave callers feeling irrelevant. Our Call Center boasts a 90%



first-call resolution rate, with the remaining 10% of calls directed specifically to an individual that can help.

We also have four Engagement Centers that provide a space where students can connect with mentors, counselors, faculty, and staff for even more personalized support. Whether they need academic guidance, help navigating college resources, or just a place to feel connected, these centers serve as a crucial hub for student success.

We are incredibly proud to have embedded Victor Valley counselors in our 36 feeder high schools, providing a direct line of support for high school students as they begin their college search. Last year, more than 70% of the graduating seniors in our high schools completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, and a Victor Valley application, and 40% enrolled. These efforts signal to students that we care about their success even before they set foot on our campus.

Building a Caring Campus for Students, Staff, and the Community

The culture of care on our campus is equally transformative for employees. We celebrate our staff and faculty who go above and beyond in their interactions with students through weekly shoutouts. We also frequently hear of employees putting their own busy schedules on pause to help their fellow colleagues, embodying what it means to be a Caring Campus.

Our efforts have changed how students, employees, and our community view Victor Valley. A college that was once nicknamed "Tumbleweed Tech" is now a vibrant hub of opportunity and growth. The community is excited about Victor Valley, and students enroll not just because it's

accessible, but because they want to be here, and they know we're here to support them every step of their journey.

Community colleges often serve many students from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college students, and those balancing school with full-time jobs. Many potential students feel disconnected from higher education or uncertain about whether college is worth the investment. This is why it's critical to ensure they feel welcomed, supported, and valued from the moment they consider enrolling. When students feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to stay engaged and complete their degrees.

The Path Forward for Community Colleges

Community colleges are uniquely positioned to lead the charge in reversing national enrollment declines. At Victor Valley College, we have seen that the solution is about people. By building a culture that prioritizes care, we have demonstrated continual enrollment growth. But the ripple effects extend far beyond numbers and statistics. Our culture has created an environment that students, employees, and the community are proud to call home.

Investing in a culture of care is not just good for students – it's good for society. It's time to recognize that addressing potential enrollment crises starts with something as fundamental as awareness, consideration, and kindness; and that by mindfully attending to the needs of students, we help ensure their success both in school and in life.

This Op-Ed was originally published on DiverseEducation.com March 3, 2025

Building Futures: VVC Celebrates MC3 Construction Apprenticeship



Victor Valley College recently celebrated the success of its Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Construction Apprenticeship Readiness program with two graduation ceremonies held on February 10th and 12th, 2025. The ceremonies marked a significant milestone for 39 graduates who completed the intensive six-week program designed to prepare them for careers in the skilled trades.

The first ceremony, hosted at ARISE High Desert Juvenile Detention and Assessment Center, honored 10 graduates who completed the program on-site. The second celebration,

held at the Victor Valley College Event Center, recognized 29 graduates from Options for Youth Charter School and Victor Valley College. Both events highlighted the students' dedication and the transformative power of hands-on learning.

Throughout the Winter semester, students engaged in practical training across multiple construction disciplines, including framing, carpentry, roofing, electrical work, and painting. Their skills culminated in a final project: the construction of a fully functional shed. In addition to their technical training,

participants from Options for Youth and Victor Valley College earned critical safety certifications, including the American Heart Association CPR and OSHA-10, enhancing their readiness for the workforce.

The ceremonies concluded with inspiring addresses from Victor Valley College Superintendent/President Dr. Daniel Walden and Building and Construction Trade Council Executive Secretary Albert Duarte. Both leaders praised the graduates for their hard work and emphasized the program's role in preparing the next generation of skilled professionals.

"This program is a testament to what can be achieved when education and industry come together to create opportunities for our community," said Dr. Walden. "We are incredibly proud of our graduates and excited to see the paths they will forge in the skilled trades."

Victor Valley College will offer the MC3 program again in the Summer. For more information or to enroll, contact Dave Nunez at David.Nunez@vvc.edu or Tony Bonato at Antony.Bonato@vvc.edu.

Congratulations to all our MC3 graduates—your future is just beginning, and the possibilities are endless!

RAMS Monthly Turns TWO!

By: Andrew Caravella

Over the past year, RAMS Monthly has remained a vital resource for the Victor Valley College community, consistently offering engaging and insightful content that resonates with students, faculty, and staff. The newsletter (magazine) has featured a wide range of campus highlights, from academic achievements to exciting student life activities.

With its focus on providing information that enriches the VVC experience, RAMS Monthly has become an essential tool for keeping the college community connected and informed. Through monthly updates, the publication has spotlighted key events, important dates, and exciting opportunities that help shape the student experience at VVC.

In addition to showcasing campus events, RAMS Monthly has emphasized the importance of student involvement and well-being. It has celebrated the successes of students, faculty, and staff while providing useful resources for academic and personal growth. Throughout the year, we have proudly highlighted special initiatives, including community outreach, student engagement programs, and campus improvements. As VVC continues to grow and evolve, RAMS Monthly plans to adapt with even more dynamic content, ensuring that the college community remains informed and inspired. Whether it's keeping students up to date with the latest happenings or offering a space to recognize the achievements of individuals, RAMS Monthly continues to be an essential part of life at VVC.



ANDREW CARAVELLA SERVES AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING COORDINATOR AT VVC. HE IS ALSO INCHARGE OF OVERSEEING RAMS MONTHLY.

VVC Receives Donation of Four Buses from VVTA for Transportation Training Facility

Victor Valley College (VVC) is proud to announce the donation of four buses from the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA), marking a significant step forward in the college's efforts to expand its transportation education programs. The buses will be used to establish a new transportation operations training area on VVC's lower main campus, furthering the college's vision of becoming a premier transportation education hub for the High Desert region.

VVTA, a public transportation agency serving the High Desert region of Southern California, is committed to providing safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation options for local residents. By offering bus service to areas throughout San Bernardino County, VVTA plays a crucial role in connecting communities and improving the region's transportation infrastructure. Their donation of these buses underscores their continued dedication to community growth and workforce development, particularly in the transportation industry.

The donated buses will be used to create a hands-on training facility located near VVC's solar fields and river walk, providing students with practical, real-world experience in the fields of transportation, logistics, and fleet operations. As the demand for skilled professionals in the transportation sector continues to grow, this training facility will ensure that VVC students are well-equipped to pursue careers in the industry.

The addition of these buses is part of a larger effort to address the need for workforce development in the transportation field, an area that is critical to the region's economic growth. With its focus on providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in transportation and related industries, VVC continues to play a key role in shaping the future workforce for the High Desert and beyond.

VVC's transportation education initiative aligns with the college's commitment to providing high-quality, career-focused education and training opportunities. The new training facility will not only offer hands-on experience but will also support VVC's long-term goal of preparing students for success in the ever-evolving transportation industry.

The college extends its deepest gratitude to the VVTA for their generous donation, which will have a lasting impact on the future of VVC students and the local workforce.



VVC Proudly
Presents

4th April
2025

THE JOSE SARRRIA PRIDE CENTER

MUSIC
& FOOD

RESOURCE
FAIR

**Victor Valley College Celebrates
the Grand Opening of our First Ever
LGBTQ+ Student Resource Center**

**Jose Sarria Foundation + Imperial Court
WOW Clinic, St. Johns Wellness
Food - Beverages - Music - LGBTQ+ Resources**

RSVP HERE



**Friday, April 4th
12 - 5 PM
Bldg 30
VVC Campus**





RAMS PROMISE PROGRAM



Benefits:



Rams Promise will cover student's enrollment fees for **TWO YEARS** regardless of income!

Eligibility Requirements:

- ☒ Have completed a Victor Valley College application (CCCApply)
- ☒ Enroll as a Full-Time student (12+ units for Fall and Spring)
- ☒ Complete the FAFSA or California Dream Act application and on file with the Office of Financial Aid at Victor Valley College - VVC's School Code: 001335
- ☒ Be a new, first-time college student (has not attended VVC or any other institution as a college student after graduating from high school)
- ☒ Be a California resident or have AB540 status

***To determine eligibility for the Rams Promise Program, the student's Social Security Number needs to be both on the CCCApply and FAFSA application. An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) can be used for student's completing the CA Dream Act application.**

For more information, visit: www.vvc.edu/ramspromise

Contact Us:

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MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION CAN BE REQUESTED AT 760.245.4271 EXT. 2395 OR BY EMAILING RAMSMONTHLY@VVC.EDU