



# Center for Community Engagement Community Partnerships

## Community Partnerships

Community partners are **co-educators** who work directly with faculty to provide high-quality service-learning projects for groups of students on a semester basis. This entails providing training, orientation, guided reflection and supervision for students.

They are integral to the success of our service-learning students as they facilitate onsite learning and reflection resulting in an integrative teaching approach that provides a foundation for student learning.

## Thank You To Our Community Partners/Co-Educators

The Center for Community Engagement partners with over 100 non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, libraries and area schools. These service-learning partnerships address community needs such as: homelessness, housing, food insecurity, environment, immigration, youth development, literacy, senior issues, health, education, and community economic development. We appreciate their involvement in our program and their commitment to our students.

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Heart of an Angel, Inc.</li> <li>A.I.M. Entrepreneurial Academy</li> <li>Agriculture Museum</li> <li>AHA!</li> <li>American Red Cross</li> <li>ÁNIMO Theatre Company</li> <li>Art Through Action</li> <li>Arts Mentorship Program, Inc.</li> <li>Ascension Lutheran School</li> <li>Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians</li> <li>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County</li> <li>Bike 4 a Cause</li> <li>Boys and Girls Club of Camarillo</li> <li>Boys &amp; Girls Club of Santa Clara Valley (Santa Paula)</li> <li>Brain Injury Center of Ventura County</li> <li>BRITE: Building Resilience &amp; Inclusion Through Engagement</li> <li>Buen Vecino</li> <li>Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>California Association for the Education of Young Children</li> <li>Californians for Pesticide Reform</li> <li>CalThrive Community Agriculture</li> <li>Camarillo Family YMCA</li> <li>Camarillo Health Care District</li> <li>Camarillo Heights STEM Academy</li> <li>Camarillo Public Library</li> <li>Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times</li> <li>Cancer Support Community – Valley/Ventura/Santa Barbara</li> <li>Canine Adoption &amp; Rescue League (CARL)</li> <li>CAREGIVERS: Volunteers Assisting the Elderly</li> <li>Casa De Vida Inc.</li> <li>Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)</li> <li>Central Coast Labor Council, AFL-CIO</li> <li>Channel Islands Park Foundation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Channel Islands Restoration</li> <li>Child Development Resources</li> <li>Climate First: Replacing Oil &amp; Gas (CFROG)</li> <li>Coalition for Family Harmony</li> <li>Communicare</li> <li>Community Advocacy Coalition</li> <li>Community Memorial Healthcare</li> <li>Community Roots Garden</li> <li>Conflict Resolution Institute</li> <li>CSUCI – 27 departments</li> <li>Diversity Collective of Ventura County</li> <li>DRAGG</li> <li>Emily Shane Foundation</li> <li>Femme Futures Foundation</li> <li>FirstSteps for Kids, Inc.</li> <li>Focus on the Masters Arts Archive &amp; Library</li> <li>FOOD Share, Inc.</li> <li>Friends of Fieldworkers</li> <li>Girls Inc. of Carpinteria</li> <li>Girls Inc. of Santa Barbara</li> <li>Guide Dogs of America/Tender Loving Canines</li> <li>Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County</li> <li>Healthcare for the Homeless/One Stop</li> <li>HealthCorps, Inc.</li> <li>House Farm Workers!</li> <li>Housing Opportunities Made Easier (HOME)</li> <li>Humane Society of Ventura County</li> <li>Interface Children &amp; Family Services</li> <li>Juneteenth Celebration of Ventura County</li> <li>Justice for All Ventura County</li> <li>kidSTREAM Children’s Museum</li> <li>Laborers Intern’l Union of N. America, Local 585</li> <li>Livingston Memorial</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Los Robles Children’s Choir</li> <li>Lulapin Chumash Foundation</li> <li>Many Mansions</li> <li>Mary’s Mercy Center</li> <li>Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)</li> <li>Moorpark College Student Health Center</li> <li>Museum of Ventura County</li> <li>National Park Service Santa Monica Mountains Nat. Rec. Area</li> <li>Native Monarchs</li> <li>Ojai Valley Land Conservancy</li> <li>One Step a la Vez</li> <li>Operation Gratitude</li> <li>Oxnard Performing Arts Corporation (OPAC)</li> <li>Pleasant Valley School District</li> <li>Project Access</li> <li>Rancho Campana High School</li> <li>Reel Guppy Outdoors</li> <li>Ride On Therapeutic Horsemanship</li> <li>Rodale Institute California Organic Center</li> <li>Ronald McDonald Family Room – Ventura</li> <li>Ronald McDonald House – Bakersfield/Los Angeles</li> <li>Samaritan Center – Simi Valley</li> <li>Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History &amp; Sea Center</li> <li>Santa Barbara Zoo</li> <li>Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council</li> <li>Santa Paula Parks &amp; Recreation</li> <li>Saticoy Food Hub</li> <li>Saving Lives Camarillo</li> <li>School on Wheels</li> <li>Search Dog Foundation</li> <li>SEL4CA</li> <li>Senior Concerns</li> <li>Social Justice Fund for Ventura County</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somis Elementary</li> <li>Special Olympics Southern California</li> <li>Step Up Tutoring</li> <li>Storyteller Children’s Center</li> <li>Students for Eco-Education &amp; Agriculture (SEEAG)</li> <li>Sunset Little League</li> <li>Surfrider Foundation Ventura County Chapter</li> <li>Swap Meet Justice</li> <li>Teatro de las Americas</li> <li>The Human Nature Center</li> <li>The Restorative Justice Education Center</li> <li>Turning Point Foundation – Growing Works</li> <li>UFW Foundation</li> <li>United Way of Ventura County</li> <li>University Preparation Charter School</li> <li>Ventura County Area Agency on Aging</li> <li>Ventura County Community Foundation</li> <li>Ventura County Continuum of Care</li> <li>Ventura County Family Justice Center</li> <li>Ventura County Farm to School</li> <li>Ventura County Library System</li> <li>Ventura County Medical Center</li> <li>Ventura County Office of Strategy Management</li> <li>Ventura County Rescue Mission Alliance</li> <li>Ventura Land Trust</li> <li>Ventura Wild</li> <li>Westminster Free Clinic</li> <li>Women of Substance &amp; Men of Honor</li> <li>Women's Economic Venture</li> <li>YAC Foundation (Young Athletes for Christ Inc.)</li> <li>Youth Pride Association</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|--|

# CSU Channel Islands is Recognized as a 2026 Carnegie Community-Engaged Institution: Celebrating Our Shared Commitment To Community, Collaboration, And Impact



## Community Engagement Is Not Just An Initiative It Is Who We Are

California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) was among more than 230 U.S. colleges and universities including only one of nine CSU campuses who received the **2026 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification**, an elective designation awarded by the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that highlights an institution's commitment to community engagement.

“This Carnegie Community Engagement Classification **affirms what has always been central to CSUCI— our deep commitment to serving and learning alongside our community,**” said CSUCI President Susan Andrzejewski.

“This recognition reflects the collective work of our students, faculty, staff, and community partners, and our shared belief that **higher education has the opportunity and responsibility to create meaningful, reciprocal partnerships that strengthen our region and prepare students to be engaged, compassionate leaders.**”

The Carnegie Classification recognition echoes the depth and breadth of community-engaged work across CSUCI's divisions and units—including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business & Financial Affairs, University Advancement, and the Office of the President.

The Classification acknowledges the work happening in classrooms and research spaces, in student programs and partnerships, and in the relationships built with surrounding communities.

## This Achievement Belongs To The Campus and the Community Together, We Make A Difference



CSUCI CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
CELEBRATION OF SERVICE 2026



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# Farmworker Immersion Program

## Established Spring 2012

### Project Description

Since 2012, the Center for Community Engagement has offered the Farmworker Immersion Program (FIP) to students each Spring semester. The program has grown to include: House Farm Workers!, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), Reiter Affiliated Companies, Ventura County's Farmworker Resource Program, & Limoneira Company, FIP is a program that places students in the community to learn about farmworker rights, resources, and the direct link to the agricultural business in our county. The FIP guides students through a first-hand experience of farm work life in Ventura County.

This year, students had the opportunity to:

- Toured Limoneira and learned about innovative agricultural robotics initiatives and sustainable practices
- Attended a presentation from the Ventura County's Farmworker Resource Program
- Visited CEDC's Villa César Chávez Apartments & heard directly from farmworker families
- Learned about local housing legal battles led by attorney & farmworker advocate, Barbara Macri-Ortiz
- Engaged with House Farm Workers! on local housing advocacy efforts and contributed to the Youth Engagement initiative that will be displayed at 10 City Council meetings



### Goals of the FIP

- Act in solidarity to promote human dignity and the rights of workers, by connecting immersions trip participants with farmworker community leaders
- Raise awareness of the living and working conditions of farmworkers and immigrants and the social issues that impact these communities, by participating in daily activities with migrants
- Explore the connections between service and justice, by reflecting on experiences during the immersion trip
- Highlight examples of successful grassroots leadership and community organizing efforts



### Farmworker Issues

Farm workers face social issues such as lack of safe, affordable housing, low wages and wage theft, health issues (based on type of work and exposure to pesticides and outdoor elements), lack of affordable healthcare and language access, as well as sexual harassment, and abuse.



### Need for Farm Worker Housing

Ventura County has 93,025 acres of irrigated cropland & 1,812 farms. They grow more than 100 different crops, with a gross value of \$2.3 billion a year, & provide more than 25,000 jobs. Top crops include strawberries, avocados, nursery stock, celery, raspberries, & lemons.

There are likely 36,500 farmworker in Ventura County, and their average wage is \$22/hour. A farmworker's median annual income is between \$22,500-\$25,000 (often only seasonal work)

48% of a farmworker's household income is spent on rent. Farmworkers would need to make \$50.31/hour (\$104,645/year) to afford the County's average monthly rent of \$2,616.

Avg cost of rent in Ventura County by bedroom size:

- 1 bedroom: \$2,375
- 2 bedroom: \$2,848
- 3 bedroom: \$3,425

40-45% of farmworker households share a dwelling unit intended for one household with one or more households. Over crowding can have a severe impact on a child's health & development.



### FIP Logo – Spring 2024

We partnered with an Art Capstone student, **Gabriel Burgos**, to design a logo that branded the event & celebrated over a decade of immersing students in the lives of farmworkers.



CSUCI Center for Community Engagement, Celebration of Service 2026



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# CSUCI Climate and Trails Corps, 2025-26 Community Service Internships

## Climate Corps

The Climate Corps (**Alexa Palafox**) supports **CSUCI's Office of Sustainability** to advance sustainability programs on campus to reduce environmental impact and help curb climate change. The Climate Corps focuses on organizing the university's Sustainability Month and Earth Month activities as well as enhancing the campus waste programs by educating students and employees about how to properly sort waste. This year, the Climate Corps focused on launching Adopt-a-Spot, an initiative that encourages departments, clubs, and programs to adopt a spot on campus to clean and beautify.

## Trails Corps

The Trails Corps (**Luna Huitron, Jade Beltran, Matt Bema, and Diego Espinosa**) works alongside the **Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council** to construct, repair, maintain, and restore the public trail system throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent areas. They also actively work to engage CSUCI students in trail restoration and conservation through education, volunteer opportunities, and promotion and marketing with the goal of connecting students to nature, developing future volunteers, and helping students build civic and professional skills. In addition, the Trail Corps also provide garden support to **CSUCI's Modoc Garden**.





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# CSUCI Edu and STEM Corps, 2025-26 Community Service Internships

## Edu Corps

The Edu Corps provides homework, literacy, and mentoring activities and support to elementary-age school children at **Somis Union School District (Breezin Brick, Mariana Perez Gonzalez, Maria Tellez Mendoza, and Jazmine Gomez)** and **Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation's Villa Cesar Chavez Apartments (Karla Lopez and Montserrat Romero Hernandez)**, a farmworker housing property.

## STEM Corps

The STEM Corps (**Aliya Atkins and Saisree Kalikota**) provides enrichment activities focused on supporting K-12 student learning in math and sciences at the **Boys & Girls Club of Camarillo**. Every Friday afternoon, they facilitated activities such as Paper Circuits, Stacking Liquids, Air Ball Bowling, and Exploring Enzymes. The STEM Corps will also participate in the annual **CSUCI STEAM Carnival** on May 9<sup>th</sup>, where they will host an activity called, Find Ekho with Echolocation.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF CAMARILLO



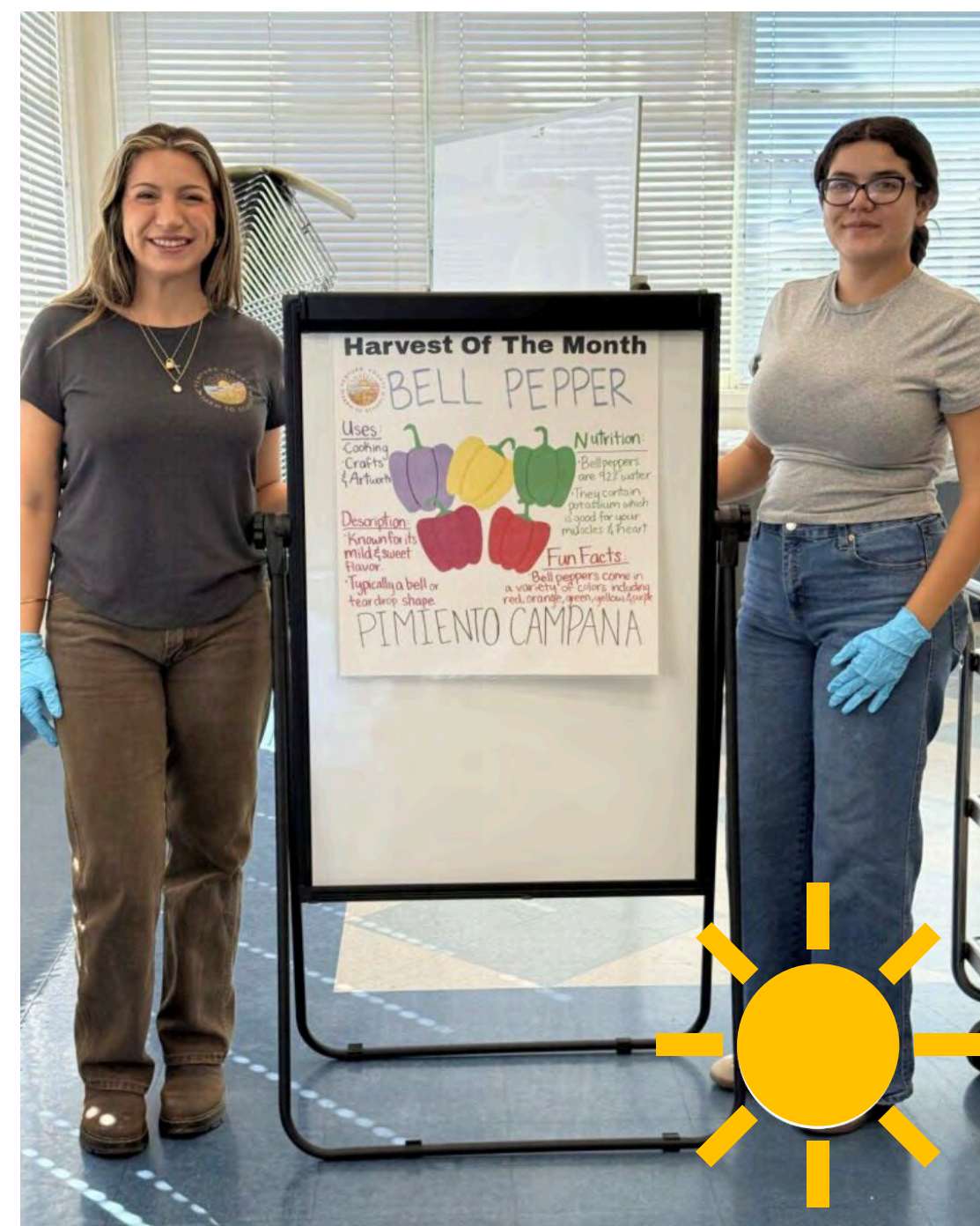
# CSUCI Food and Health Corps, 2025-26 Community Service Internships

## Food Corps

The Food Corps, **Samantha Cayetano**, works closely with **Ventura County Farm to School** to implement various activities aimed at fostering a deeper connection between youth and their food sources. Through hands-on experiences and educational initiatives, Food Corps members play a vital role in promoting nutrition education, environmental sustainability, and community outreach. This year, Samantha also helped make the inaugural **Ag Education Summit**, held on campus, a success! Bonus: VC Farm to School hired last year's Food Corps member, Cassandra, & Samantha worked closely with her this year.

## Health Corps

The **Health Corps** supports the public health sector with a local non-profit in the areas of advocacy, research and/or community education and outreach. This year, students were serving with **Westminster Free Clinic (Josefina Tellez Gomez)** and the **Oxnard Performing Arts Center (OPAC) (Hailey Martinez)**. Josefina was a medical scribe for patients visiting Westminster's Santa Paula clinic. Hailey supported OPAC's Art as Wellness program, ANDALE!, a partnership with Ventura County Behavioral Health that provided free community mental health class and activities.



Ventura County Agricultural Summit Highlights Hands-On Learning and Future of Farming





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# Serve It Up! Service Days

## A Cross -Divisional Initiative to Build a Culture of Service at CI with Learning Communities & Housing & Residential Education (HRE)

### 9/11 NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE & REMEMBRANCE



In September, students, staff, faculty, and community partners came together in the Modoc Garden to honor the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance through meaningful action. Rooted in the question, “What can I do to help?”, this annual day of service continues a national legacy of compassion and collective care. Participants dedicated their time and energy to maintaining the Modoc Garden, a space that has grown from a research site into a vital campus resource providing fresh food and supporting pollinator ecosystems. Through this shared effort, the CSUCI community came together to serve, reflect, and contribute to something greater than themselves.



### MLK JR. DAY OF SERVICE

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy of service, students came together for a Day of Service rooted in compassion, action, and civic engagement. Participants assembled hygiene kits to support individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity and wrote advocacy letters to elected representatives addressing community needs. Through collaboration and purposeful action, students not only gave back to their community but also strengthened skills in teamwork, communication, and social responsibility. This event served as a reminder that meaningful change begins with service and that even small actions can contribute to a greater impact.

### MARCH DAY OF SERVICE

During the March Day of Service Workshop, students came together to explore the power of civic engagement and the importance of using their voices. Through a conversation with Atticus Reyes, Field Representative for Assemblymember Steve Bennett, participants gained insight into how local government connects with the community and how young people can play an active role in advocacy and public service. The workshop created a space for learning, reflection, and dialogue, empowering students to feel more confident engaging with civic processes. This experience highlighted that meaningful change begins with awareness, participation, and the willingness to speak up for issues that matter.





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# CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Connecting Communities Through Outreach

## Leadership & Involvement Fair

**Sep 2025:** In collaboration with Student Organizations and Involvement (SOI), the CCE hosted over 40 of our community partners, while SOI hosted over 60 CSUCI clubs and organizations in Central Mall for the Fall semester *Leadership and Involvement Fair*. Our community partners were able to connect with students about their volunteer, internship, and employment opportunities, as well as raise awareness to their organization.



## CSU Channel Islands: Connections Breakfast

**Mar 2026** -The CCE and its Volunteer Engagement Ambassadors were invited to table and share our mission and success with key figures in the University community. This was an opportunity to show partners and members who invest their time and resources in our campus what our campus invests back into the community through student-community engagement. Representing all three initiatives of the CCE, McKai and Thomas got to talk about our Corps, Service-Learning, and Volunteerism programs.

## The Power of Volunteerism

Throughout the Fall semester, we worked to create a presentation highlighting the power and importance of community engagement. This student led initiative focused on highlighting the CCE's programs and resources available to help connect students to their communities in meaningful ways that build skills, develop networks, and reinforce social responsibility. Throughout the Spring semester, faculty, clubs, and organizations were contacted to share the presentation with students.

## Community Coffee

The objective of Community Coffee is to actively engage the student body in discussions central to the CCE's desire to promoting student volunteerism, activism, and social responsibility. By the end of the year, we had driven up participation in student led initiatives, like Serve it Up! and the Prom Formal Wear Donation Drive, connected with more faculty and departments, and engaged with tour groups along the way. Bonus...we provided free coffee and tea!



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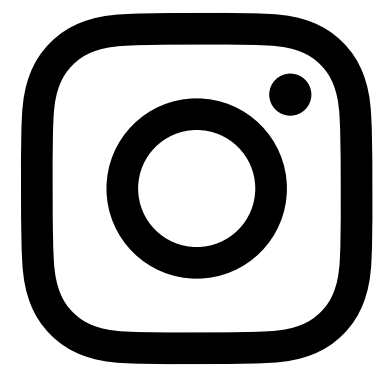


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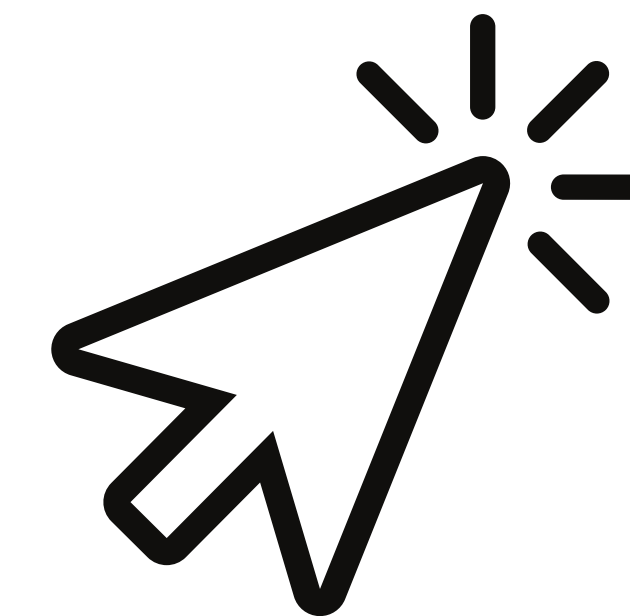
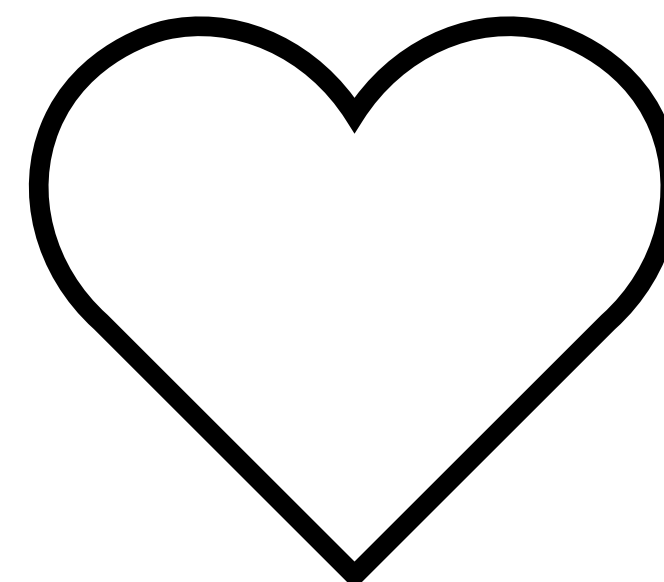
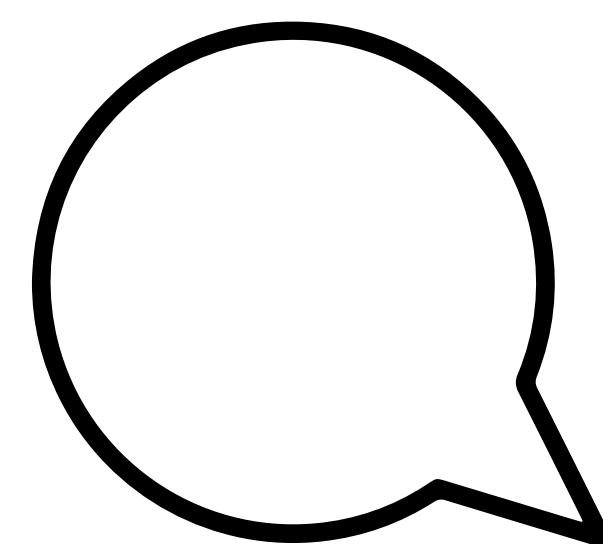
# Center for Community Engagement *Promotion and Media!*

## CCE SOCIAL MEDIA

CCE Social Media accounts, led this academic year by Volunteer Engagement Ambassador **Sophia Gallo**, was used to promote upcoming events with flyers and posts created by the CCE, to share Recaps of our events, and to highlight our Corps (Corps Spotlight series) as well as the achievements of our current and alumni Dolphins (Voices of CI and Alumni Spotlight). Our social media also offers valuable information to Dolphins, like volunteer opportunities with our community partners and events happenings on campus. **Following our social media** is an accessible and convenient way for people to stay connected to the CCE and what we are doing on campus and in the community.

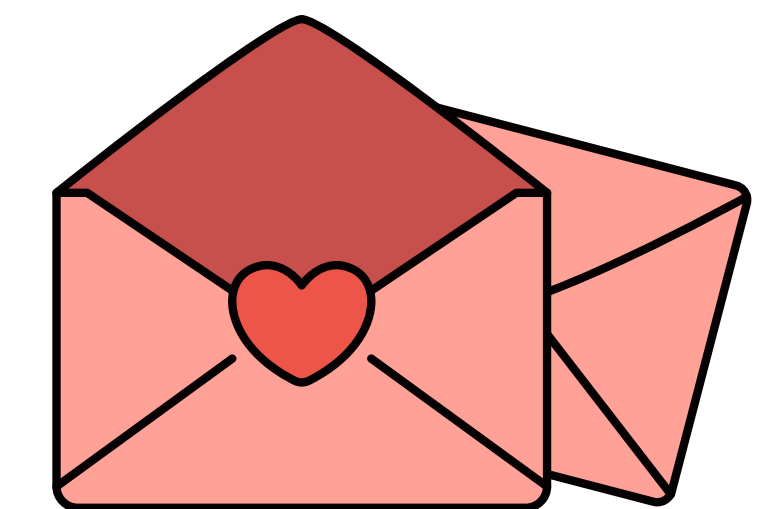


@ci\_serves



## CCE NEWSLETTER

The monthly CCE Newsletters, led this academic year by Volunteer Engagement Ambassador **McKai Bacon**, offer valuable information to students, staff, and faculty on our email list. This information includes upcoming donation and volunteer opportunities, Voices of CI and Alumni Spotlights, Corps Highlights that showcase CCE student workers and the work they do at their sites, recaps of events, as well as upcoming events. Overall, it's a great way for people to stay tapped into what the CCE is doing and what is happening in the community. **Use the QR code below to be added to our email list!**



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# 2026 Prom Donation Drive

## McKai Bacon

### ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

**Casa Pacifica** is a nonprofit organization, serving at-risk children, young adults, and families across Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. In addition to mental health services, Casa Pacifica provides critical support for youth transitioning out of foster care — a population at increased risk of homelessness, unemployment, and instability.

Each year, Casa Pacifica hosts a **prom** for the youth they serve, offering them the opportunity to experience a milestone event that many might not otherwise have access to.



CASA PACIFICA®  
CENTERS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

### PURPOSE AND MOTIVATION

When I was in high school, I experienced housing instability following the sudden loss of my father. During that time, nothing felt normal. I moved between homes, lived out of my car at one point, and struggled to finish my senior year of high school after once being a straight-A student with a full-ride scholarship.

I was supported by the nonprofit “Homeless Youth Connection” in Phoenix, Arizona, who provided therapy, community, and access to basic needs, including clothing and even prom formalwear. Being able to choose a prom dress and attend my high school prom gave me a sense of normalcy during an incredibly difficult time.

This experience inspired me to host a **prom donation drive** so that other young people facing similar challenges can feel supported, confident, and celebrated during an important milestone in their lives.



### RESULTS & IMPACT

Through this initiative, 44 prom dresses were collected, along with shoes, jewelry, and accessories to help create prom outfits for youth with Casa Pacifica. Each item donated represents an opportunity for a young person to feel confident, seen, and celebrated on a night that might otherwise feel out of reach. This project also helped build a connection with Casa Pacifica, opening the door for continued collaboration and future support for the youth they serve.



## Voices of CI

**Alexa Palafox- '26 Environmental Communication, Minor in Chicano/a Studies**

**Samantha Cayetano- '27 Communication**

### Voices of CI Description

Voices of CI highlights the stories and experiences of CSU Channel Islands students, staff, and faculty whose commitment to service and social responsibility helps shape both campus life and the surrounding community. Inspired by Brandon Stanton's *Humans of New York* project, the initiative began as a way to share meaningful stories of community engagement and activism. What started as a small campaign has grown into an ongoing platform where these voices are shared across social media and campus publications. Through these stories, Voices of CI celebrates the passion, creativity, and dedication that make service an essential part of life at CSUCI, inspiring others to get involved and make a difference.

**Alexa Palafox**



**Spotlight**

Alexa Palafox is a senior at CSU Channel Islands majoring in Environmental Communication with a minor in Chicano/a Studies. While she grew up visiting national parks and exploring lava tubes with her family, she didn't initially know where those early experiences would lead her. It wasn't until high school that her passion for environmental justice and sustainability truly took shape. Through her involvement in the Environmental Advocacy Club, Alexa developed a deep love for hiking, outdoor spaces, and environmental advocacy—ultimately guiding her toward a path in.....



To read more, scan the QR code

**Samantha Cayetano**



**Spotlight**

Samantha Cayetano's journey into community service began during her first year of high school, when a final project required her to volunteer. She chose a neighborhood food distribution site, a decision that opened her eyes to both the needs of her community and her own desire to help. As a first-generation Mexican American, raised in a household where pride often discouraged seeking assistance, Samantha grew determined to reshape that mindset for herself. She came to understand that everyone needs support at some point, and she wanted to be the kind of person who offered it...



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# Voices of CI

Sophia Gallo - '27 Sociology  
Thomas Ray – '27 ESRM  
McKai Bacon – '26 Sociology

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Sophia Gallo



Spotlight

Justice, equality, love, and community guide Sophia's decisions about where she shows up. For Sophia Gallo, service means recognizing the needs around her and stepping into the roles she can genuinely fill. Whether she's tending community gardens, packing food boxes, or marching in the streets, she views each act as a way to uplift her neighbors and deepen the solidarity that connects different struggles. Sophia's journey began at 15, when she first learned about...



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Thomas Ray



Spotlight

Thomas Ray is a first-generation college junior majoring in Environmental Science and Resource Management. His academic journey has been shaped by curiosity, community connection, and a growing commitment to environmental stewardship. What began as an unexpected fascination with environmental topics in his business courses quickly evolved into a deeper sense of purpose that now guides his studies and involvement on campus...



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McKai Bacon



Spotlight

For McKai Bacon, service goes beyond volunteering. To her, it is a way of nurturing all forms of life, human, plant, and animal alike, and a commitment to lifting up the world beyond the boundaries of her own experience. Service is rooted in connection through the small, everyday choices to care for others, to stand beside those who need support, and to honor the shared responsibility that binds diverse communities together...



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# Alumni Spotlight

## Joey Algiers- '11 Biology- Focus on Ecology, Evolution, & Organismal Biology

## Vance Garcia- '24 Organizational Communication Studies

### Alumni Spotlight Description

The Alumni Spotlight showcases the unique paths and lasting impact of CSU Channel Islands graduates, highlighting how their commitment to serving their communities shapes their journeys beyond campus. In today's evolving workplace, these alumni stand out for their ability to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, work across diverse populations, and address complex social challenges. Their experiences reflect the importance of community engagement in building skills like empathy, adaptability, and collaboration—qualities that are especially vital in service-driven fields such as the non-profit sector. Through the support of fellow Dolphins near and far, the Alumni Spotlight celebrates graduates whose dedication to service continues to make a meaningful difference in their communities and exemplifies the spirit of CSUCI.

### Joey Algiers



### Spotlight

Joey Algiers graduated from CSU Channel Islands (CSUCI) in 2011 with a degree in Biology with an emphasis in Ecology, Evolution, & Organismal Biology. Joey's path to becoming a Plant Ecologist and Vegetation Branch Chief with the National Park Service is anything but straightforward. As a student at CSUCI, he initially pursued music, driven by dreams of becoming a professional rock musician. Music shaped much of his early adulthood—playing in bands, recording, and performing live, yet even then, Joey carried a quiet curiosity about science and the natural world.....



To read more, scan the QR code

### Vance Garcia



### Spotlight

For Vance Garcia, service is not an abstract idea or a requirement to fulfill—it is a responsibility shaped by lived experience. In his work in Community Outreach and Care Coordination at the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County (BIC), his work is grounded in something deeply personal: the understanding that recovery after a brain injury can feel isolating, uncertain, and overwhelming. Through every conversation, resource, and connection he helps facilitate, Vance works toward a clear goal—to ensure that no one has to navigate that journey alone.....



To read more, scan the QR code

# Alumni Spotlight

## Bridgette Bagheri- 24' Biology, Minor in Business Management

## Lupita Rodriguez- 22' Health Science

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Bridgette Bagheri



Spotlight

Bridgette Bagheri views service as an ongoing commitment to both people and the environment, rather than a series of one-time achievements or grand gestures. Her path into service began early in life, growing up immersed in the outdoors. She spent time gardening with her family, caring for animals, and exploring through hikes, bike rides, and museum visits. These experiences fostered not only a love for nature, but also a deep sense of responsibility toward it.....



To read more, scan the QR code

Lupita Rodriguez



Spotlight

Lupita Rodriguez views service as an ongoing commitment to community health and well-being. Her journey began at home, growing up in a low-income family where resources and services were often limited—if available at all. From lining up for toy drives to navigating healthcare gaps with her family, Lupita's early experiences shaped her understanding of the challenges faced by underserved communities. These moments instilled in her a deep desire to give back and support others in meaningful and sincere ways.....



To read more, scan the QR code

# Faculty Development Programming: Community Engagement and Social Justice Fellows Program

## Program Description

The Community Engagement and Social Justice (CE&SJ) Fellows Program is a development opportunity designed for faculty who seek to deepen their service-learning teaching and practice by pushing their thinking about social justice and, at the same time, create or refine a course that will allow students to engage with community issues through a social justice orientation (i.e. examining systems of power, privilege and oppression, questioning biases and assumptions, and working to dismantle the tools that perpetuate social and economic oppression and entrenched racial hierarchies), so they begin to see themselves as social change leaders and community advocates.

Through this program, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) aims to shape campus and community culture, to further develop students as agents of change, and to engage students in critical consciousness while actively processing issues of equity and justice in the community.

## Program Expectations

- Attend monthly 2-hour workshops (October -May) offered over the course of the academic year.
- Propose a new service-learning course or revise an existing service-learning course integrating best practices across the range of course components (planning, partnering, reflection, etc.) to be offered in academic year 2024-25
- Submit a syllabus to the CCE
- Apply for the service-learning designation for your anticipated course
- Attend the annual Celebration of Service
- Attend and present a poster of your course design at the 2025 Celebration of Service

Please contact Georgina Guzmán, Faculty Director for more information.

## Meet the Fellows



### **Gladys Aguilar, Assistant Professor, Bilingual Education**

Advancing justice for racially and linguistically minoritized communities is central to my values and goals as a scholar and as a person. I want to learn how to infuse this in my teaching to foster my students' critical understanding of the world and their role in it while contributing meaningfully to our surrounding community.



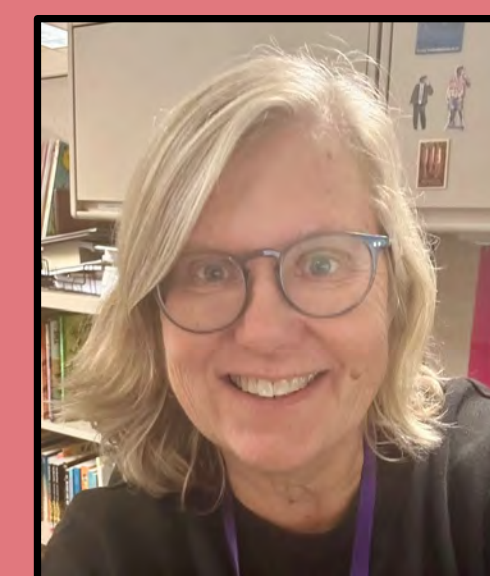
### **Sandra Ayala, Assistant Professor, Nursing**

I believe community-engaged learning is a powerful way to connect academic content with real-world impact while promoting equity and social justice. As an educator, I want to better prepare my students to understand the social determinants of health and to serve communities with compassion and awareness.



### **Cynthia Estrada, Assistant Professor, Education**

I'm am interested in the CE&SJ Faculty Fellows Program because it connects directly to the work I care most about—helping students build their critical consciousness and see education as a pathway for social change.



### **Danna Lomax, Assistant Professor, Education**

I am especially drawn to the program's focus on social justice and critical pedagogy, which aligns with my commitment to preparing teacher candidates who understand systems of power, privilege, and oppression—and who are ready to challenge them.

## Faculty Quotes

Being a Fellow has been one of the most meaningful highlights of my first year as an assistant professor at CSUCI. Rooted in comunidad, cariño, and co-learning, this fellowship has offered invaluable professional and personal lessons alongside an inspiring group of mujeres dedicadas a nuestra comunidad, a la educación y a la justicia social. I am deeply grateful for the relationships we have built and for the powerful space we cultivated to reimagine and plan how to center service in our teaching and research in culturally sustaining and justice-advancing ways. ¡Mil gracias, Georgina y Pilar, por crear esta oportunidad, y Sandra, Danna y Cynthia por caminar este camino juntas! **Dr. Gladys Aguilar**

The Community Engagement and Social Justice program has allowed me to make a stronger connection with our institutional expectations and commitment to the community. It connected our nursing curriculum to real world projects, benefiting both the student and the community.

**Dr. Sandra Ayala**

It has been so beautiful to pause and reflect on what Community Engagement and Social Justice means to me as an early career faculty member. In the midst of how easy it is to get caught up in the day-to-day, this program gave me space to slow down, think more deeply, and find hope, joy, and community alongside faculty who care deeply about this work. It has also been a gift to dream together about how we can better engage and support our students and the broader community.

**Dr. Cynthia Estrada**

Through the CESJ Faculty Fellows Program, I gained a deeper understanding of how profoundly interconnected our communities are, and meaningful change depends on honoring those ties through deep listening. Guided by the principle of "nothing about us without us," this experience reinforced that sustainable, impactful work only emerges when we move away from "service" and toward a model where communities work together as co-creators of shared visions and realities. Solo el pueblo salva al pueblo. Together, we hold the collective capacity for change. By shifting courses to include service learning, we are working with students to see the power we have in our communities. Finally, this fellowship also allowed me to meet new colleagues and build deeper personal connections on campus, for which I am very grateful. **Danna Lomax**



Channel Islands  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Engaged Civic Learning and Economic Mobility Project

## Assadullah Sadiq, Assistant Professor

### Early Childhood Studies

#### INITIATIVE

American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in partnership with Public Agenda, invites faculty and staff to apply to participate in a cohort of instructors who will redesign existing community-based learning courses to integrate economic mobility goals and frameworks.

Public Agenda's research finds that community-based courses and programs can be powerful tools for supporting the recruitment and retention of low-income students when they are explicitly aligned with economic mobility goals. They also suggests that public four-year institutions that enroll large numbers of low-income students from the local community could be central to systemic efforts to improve mobility, because graduates from these institutions often remain in the community, contributing to the economy and civic life.

Cohort participants will work directly with peers and experts to redesign current community-based courses to align with strategies for positive economic mobility outcomes.



#### DR. SADIQ'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Assadullah Sadiq is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies. A former elementary school teacher, children's museum educator, and former refugee, his work is informed by both professional and lived experience with refugee and immigrant communities. His research focuses on the literacy practices of Afghan refugee children and families across both first-asylum contexts and permanent resettlement settings, with particular attention to first language maintenance, family literacy practices, and community engagement.

His work is grounded in sociocultural and ethnographic approaches and centers how literacy is shaped within family and community life. For the past three years, he has led *Tiempo de Cuentos*, a community-engaged storytime initiative in which preservice teachers work alongside families and young children, creating spaces that value multilingualism and families' funds of knowledge.

Dr. Sadiq was nominated by Provost Lavariega-Monforti and the Center for Community Engagement to participate in the **Engaged Civic Learning & Economic Mobility Project** and chose to apply after witnessing the transformative impact of service-learning experiences in his teaching.

At CSUCI, where many students are first-generation and come from historically underserved communities, Dr. Sadiq sees a responsibility to more intentionally connect this work to economic mobility. Participating in this initiative allows him to further align his courses with strategies that support students not only academically, but also in navigating broader pathways toward opportunity and stability.

This work is deeply personal. As a former refugee who grew up in low-income housing, Dr. Sadiq aims to create learning experiences that support students' success across multiple dimensions, including their long-term economic mobility.



#### QUOTE FROM DR. MARI RIOJAS-CORTEZ

Dr. Sadiq's work stands out as a powerful example of culturally sustaining community engagement—creating meaningful and lasting experiences. Students consistently value his courses and deeply appreciate the genuine connections he builds with them. He approaches his work with remarkable humility, viewing service-learning as a collaborative partnership with students, families, and the broader community.

*Dr. Mari Riojas-Cortez, Professor & Program Chair, Early Childhood Studies*

# Campus Compact 2025-2026 Newman Civic Fellow Alexa Palafox

## ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes and supports community-committed students who are changemakers and public problem-solvers at Campus Compact member institutions. Fellows are nominated by their president or chancellor on the basis of their potential for public leadership.

Through the fellowship, Campus Compact provides students with training and resources that nurture their assets and passions and help them develop strategies for social change. The yearlong program, named for Campus Compact founder Frank Newman, includes virtual learning opportunities and networking as part of a national network of engaged student leaders and an optional in-person convening.

The Newman Civic Fellowship builds a national network of engaged student leaders who can support one another in building transformational partnerships between campuses and communities.

## QUOTE FROM PRESIDENT RICHARD YAO

Stephanie “Alexa” Palafox, a junior majoring in Environmental Communication exemplifies CSUCI’s core values through her deep commitment to environmental justice, civic engagement, and service. As a member of the CSUCI Corps, Ms. Palafox serves as a Climate Corps intern with Sustainability at CI, organizing impactful initiatives such as Campus Cleanup Day and a reusable bag collection program. She will soon lead Adopt-A-Spot, a sustainability project designed to create lasting environmental change on campus. Her academic background in Environmental Communication and Chicana/o Studies prepares her to address complex social and environmental issues. Ms. Palafox is a creative thinker and compassionate leader whose work bridges practical impact with long-term systemic change. I am confident that she will both benefit from and contribute meaningfully to this national network of civic-minded student leaders. Dr. Richard Yao



## ALEXA’S STORY

My concern for the environment began during my junior year of high school. I took an environmental science class and joined the environmental advocacy club. During my senior year, I became secretary of the club and started to understand the complexities of humans and the environment.

This exposure led me to choose my course of study in Environmental Communication at CSU Channel Islands. I believe that my educational experience is preparing me to make an impact both on campus and after graduation. These classes are teaching me important skills, such as writing policy briefs, grant proposals, and communicating science to the public.

On campus, I work for the Center of Community Engagement as a Climate Corps member and work closely with Sustainability at CI. Here, I plan volunteer events, like Campus Cleanup Day, help run programs, like our reusable bag collection, and promote environmentally friendly practices and environmental issues to my peers.

Sustainability at CI’s next big project is Adopt-A-Spot, modeled after Adopt-A-Highway. My role in developing this new campaign demonstrates my ability to lead and contribute meaningfully to the betterment of my university by promoting community and environmental stewardship.

I cannot thank the many people at CSU Channel Islands who have encouraged me to pursue any and every opportunity to grow, and to those who see the potential I hold. I could not have asked for a better or more inspiring support system. I am very excited to see what the future holds.

## ALEXA’S PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

“Systems don’t change until we change who’s in the room”, so let’s continue to be the change we want to see in the world.” Alex Edgar

# Community Health Nursing NRS 453 6L/7L

## Project 1: Heat Related Illness in Farmworkers

## Project 2: Plant Forward Eating Health Education

### Dr. Vanessa Atyabi, DNP, FNP -BC and Senior Nursing Students

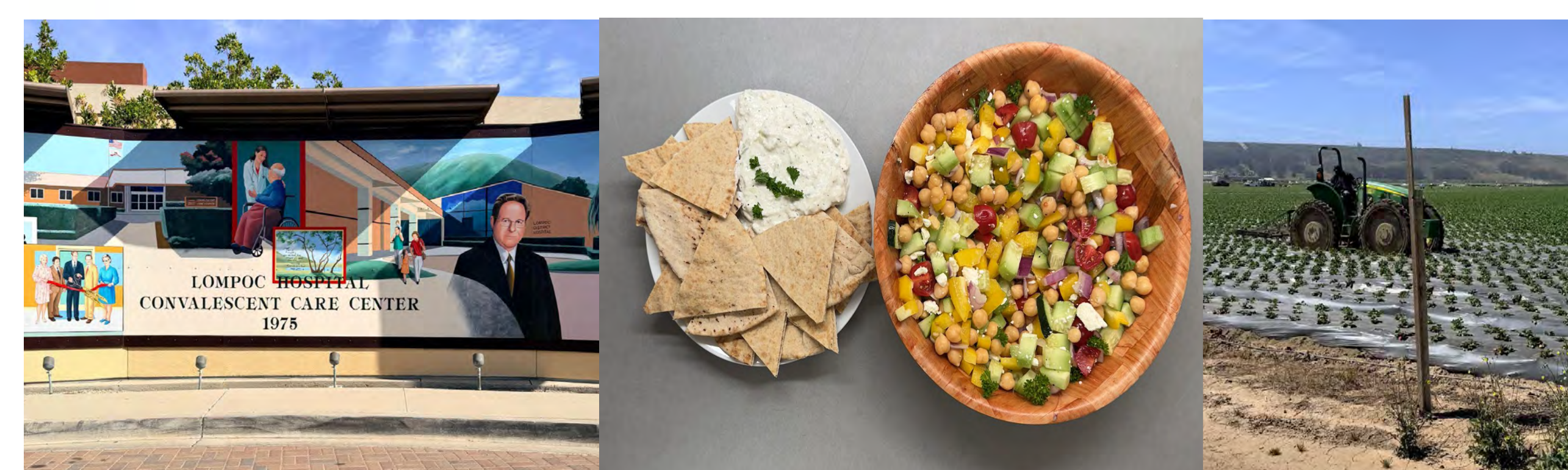
#### Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

##### Project 1

1. Migrant farmworkers in Santa Maria and Lompoc face elevated heat-related illness risk during peak harvest seasons from April through October.
2. Community needs include improved worksite access to shade, hydration, and rest breaks, alongside health education in Spanish and Mixteco. The majority of farmworkers in the region are Latino, foreign-born, and low-income, with limited access to healthcare, transportation, and cooling resources.
3. The project aims to reduce heat-related illness through educational videos, telehealth access, community health worker training, and local partnerships.

##### Project 2

1. Project description: Worked with community agencies (Rooted Santa Barbara) to deliver relevant nutritional education to the population of Santa Barbara County.
2. Community needs includes culturally sensitive, fiber forward nutrition education focused on the diverse communities within Santa Barbara County; that is both evidence-based and individualized.
3. Project goals:
  - a. Promote healthy eating by increasing knowledge of hydration and fiber intake.
  - b. Provide culturally sensitive, hands-on nutrition education to students and adults.
  - c. Build on existing knowledge to support sustainable lifestyle changes.
  - d. Improve access to clear, relatable health information for diverse communities.
  - e. Encourage healthier food choices through interactive and engaging teaching methods.



#### Service-Learning Outcomes

##### Project 1

1. Apply culturally responsive education to improve heat-illness prevention in farmworker communities.
2. Assess community health needs through windshield surveys and stakeholder engagement.
3. Implement evidence-based interventions to reduce heat-related illness risk.
4. Collaborate with community partners to increase access to health resources and services.

##### Project 2

1. Increased literacy in fiber nutrition among community members.
2. Ensured recipes were culturally relevant and aligned with community preferences.
3. Integrated clinical concepts by promoting food as medicine to support overall health.
4. Strengthened communication skills through culturally sensitive, bilingual, and hands-on teaching strategies

#### Project Activities

##### Project 1

Partnered with Santa Barbara County Public Health Dept. to support heat illness research and funding processes targeting farmworkers ages 13 and up.

1. Conducted windshield surveys of Santa Maria & Lompoc to assess availability of shade, water stations, cooling centers, clinics, and social service resources.
2. Identified a project plan and road map: increased shade, proper hydration, education.

##### Project 2

Partnership with Rooted Santa Barbara County to:

1. Share information with Spanish-speaking parents at Harding Elementary on the importance of fiber intake and proper hydration balance; and how to prepare simple, nutritious recipes such as chia seed pudding, kale salad, and bean vegetable salad
2. Engage San Marcos High School students in discussions on fiber-forward nutrition and maintaining adequate water intake. *San Marcos High School (In-Person)*: Quick, easy, and accessible fiber-forward options for busy high school students.
3. *Cafecito (Zoom)*: Latino-centered, fiber-forward nutrition that reflects cultural food traditions.
4. Educate Pre-K teachers and staff on appropriate, healthy foods to offer school-aged children in the classroom setting; while making it fun and colorful.
5. Develop and share community-focused social media content featuring recipes and preparation videos that are quick, easy, affordable, and accessible



#### Best Practices Elements

##### Project 1

Build trust before educating, use community health workers from the same cultural background.

1. Partner with local farmworker advocacy organizations early in the planning process.
2. Conduct windshield surveys to assess real community needs before designing interventions.
3. Use a multilingual approach from the start Spanish, Mixteco, and pictographic materials.
4. Meet workers where they are: fields, labor camps, parking areas, not clinics.
5. Involve community members in designing outreach to increase cultural relevance and acceptance

##### Project 2

1. Use products and examples that feel familiar and culturally relevant to the target group. Avoid medical jargon, use a weight inclusive approach, encourage gradual changes, use research, give options.



#### Project Participants

**Project 1:** Angela Bermudez, Nicole Bignami, Stephanie Chavez -Marquez, Liliana Germann, Celeste Gonzalez, Marlene Hernandez, Sarah Kennedy, Ava Martin, Tristan Gaviola, Tanner Rauschenberger, Jerico Rojas, Jannalyn Titco, Sarah Flores, Lyran Federis, Britney Nguyen

**Project 2:** Amairani Alvarado, Gabriela Ceja Rodriguez, Emma De Alba, Madisyn Girba, Emily Gonzalez, Aimee Juarez, David Lee, Emma Lucas-Zerbe, Sean Martinez, Rebecca Perez, Alexandra Rios, Isabella Salgado, Hayley Skorpen & Lizbeth Zaragoza



## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

The overall goals of the Theatre Capstone Service-Learning class were to challenge students to:

- Reach out to community partners to identify needs that would be served by collaborating with the Theatre & Performance Studies Capstone students.
- Address those needs through a series of creative activities and oriented projects;
- Utilize the resources of the CI Library and the Internet to inform, contextualize, and refine their projects;
- Experience “hands-on” the logistics of planning and ultimately producing a successful community event or other deliverable;
- Engage in productive reflection about the process, product, and impacts.

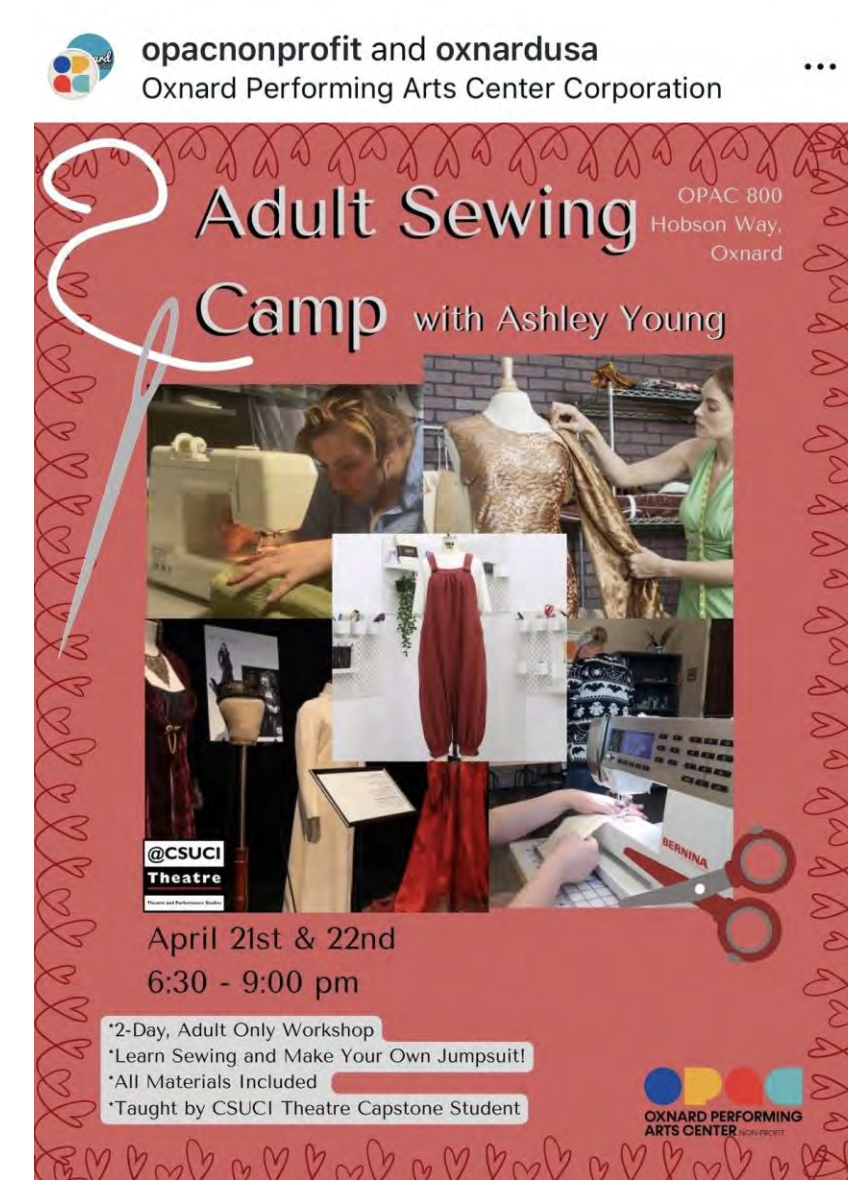
## Project Participants

**Students:** Abd Alnouri, Patrick Brady, Kalena Curry, Angela Diaz, Lindsey Dodge, Mateo Escobedo, Anita Montgomery, Benjamin Muley, Nneoma Obi, Sophia Pantess, Jake Wiley, Ashley Young.

**Community Partners:** ÁNIMO Theatre Company, BRITE (Building Resilience and Inclusion Through Engagement), Canine Adoption and Rescue (C.A.R.L.), CI Music / Channel Island Choral Association (CICA), Oxnard Performing Arts Center.



Capstone student Lindsey Dodge, left, with OPAC staffer, right, in a studio full of kids and parents making their own puppets by following models and instructions from Lindsey.



Digital flyer designed by Capstone student Nneoma Obi and posted on OPAC's Instagram to promote Capstone student Ashley Young's workshop.



Capstone student Mateo Escobedo, right, demonstrates how to create and run sound and light cues in Qlab, with the help of fellow Capstone student Jake Wiley, center, in one of two workshops for Teatro de las Americas.

## Project Activities

### With ÁNIMO:

Abd Alnouri: “**A Bridge Between Communities**” a documentary short that explores connections between Arab and Latino cultures.

Jake Wiley: “**ÁNIMO: Theatre of Pride and Positivity**” a promotional video highlighting how ÁNIMO's latest show, *¡Ay, Chihuahua!* (opening May 7 at CSUCI!) promotes the company's mission “to raise cultural awareness, celebrate diversity, and promote inclusivity.”

### With BRITE's Creativity for Mental Wellness (Ventura County VibeWell) initiative:

Patrick Brady: “**West Coast Swing Dance Workshop**” to give the community youth an engaging outlet that improves physical and mental health.

Ben Muley: “**Horse Race**” a recorded reading of an original short play with a message of cooperation, helping inspire audiences to keep their humanity in the face of capitalism.

### With C.A.R.L.:

Kalena Curry, Angela Diaz, & Sophia Pantess: “**Building Engagement for Animal Welfare: Creating Content for C.A.R.L.**” an online media campaign and presentable digital portfolio supporting C.A.R.L.'s greatest needs.

### With CI Music and CICA:

Anita Montgomery: “**Lesson Planning for Elementary Choir**” to develop a framework of exercises to reinforce elementary students' learning of rhythm, solfege, and melody.

### With OPAC:

Lindsey Dodge: “**Puppeteering the Future: the Beginnings of Puppetry**” a workshop for OPAC's Community Art Night covering how puppets have been used and different kinds of puppets, with participants making their own puppets!

Nneoma Obi: “**Creating Connection with Capstone Events**” designing promotional materials for Capstone events at OPAC.

Ashley Young: “**Costume Basics for the Community: Adult Sewing Camp**” a two-day workshop for beginner adults who want to learn to sew, from a costumer's perspective.

### With Teatro de las Americas:

Mateo Escobedo: “**Sound and Light Workshops in English and Spanish**” on the basics of Qlab cueing software to help Teatro's community build capacity among those who lack access or time to learn about theatrical lighting and sound.

## Service-Learning Outcomes

### Community Outcomes:

- Community Partners gained free **access to Theatre (and Music) students' expertise, talents, and skills.**
- Community Partners got the opportunity to **try out new projects and initiatives** with minimal investment of their organization's human resources.
- Community Partners were able to **provide the populations they serve with unique opportunities** for performance-oriented education or experiences.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Students learned how to **interact, communicate, and collaborate with community partners**, and to conduct themselves professionally.
- Students experienced the **intense preparation and coordination necessary to produce a deliverable or stage a successful community event**, the benefits of preparation, the repercussions of inadequate planning, and the need for flexibility when dealing with multiple stakeholders.
- Students learned that the **service-learning component made projects more meaningful than staging an event on campus or producing a deliverable for an instructor, and the impact they can have on the community.**
- Students **increased awareness of and empathy for the diversity of our communities** and their needs, and they felt **validated in the power of their art** to reach others.

## Best Practices Elements

- Combining high impact practices – using service-learning to enhance the intense learning and community orientation of theatre and performance activities.
- Scaffolding the creation, design, and implementation of projects through a series of assignments to be presented in class or on the project website.
- Challenging the students to assess their unique strengths and skills, identify a Community Partner with needs that their strengths could address, and design a project tailoring their skillsets to the Community Partner's needs.
- Strengthening the ties of the campus and Theatre and Performance Studies program with each of our community partners.
- Sharing the impact with the campus community through Capstone Presentations: Come join us 5-8pm on May 20 in Malibu 140!

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

### Project Description:

This service-learning course provides structured observation and tutoring experiences which reflect a rich array of student diversity in local schools. Emphasis is placed on gaining awareness of connections between discipline knowledge and teaching and learning. In addition to thirty hours of field experience in elementary schools, students meet weekly in a seminar course to discuss their observations, professional goals and topics related to the teaching profession

### Project Goals:

This course will help students decide if a career in the teaching profession is the right choice for them.

### Alignment with Professional Standards:

In the preparation of professional educators, the CSUCI Education Program (Liberal Studies Department) has given extensive consideration to the alignment of professional standards and assessments as articulated by professional associations, certification agencies and learned societies.

## Project Participants

EDUC 101, Spring 2026, was held at University Preparation Charter School (UPCS).

### Enrolled students & UPCS Cooperating Teachers:

Ms. Abraham:  
Yareli Palacios

Ms. Hillendahl:  
Anahi Gomez  
Jimena Perez

Ms. Bender:  
Salma Ghorri

Ms. Vara:  
Bruce Gaither  
Tommy Ho

Ms. Bullicer:  
Anahi Arenas  
Carlos Diaz

Ms. Vigil:  
Maliyah Bulusan  
Emma Lawson

Executive Director: Charmon Evans  
CSUCI Liaison: Rebecca Kruse

## Project Activities

Students' favorite or most memorable moment from EDUC 101:

In ED101, I have learned to explore further from what I believe I am capable of and have a try at it. To take with me in my professional practice, I've learned many ways to include every student in a class to allow them to feel comfortable and safe in the environment. To me, it was crucial to learn about how different classrooms are organized or structured and how it works for the students in said class. I've taken with me many engaging ways to improve student community engagement/communication and how much change or impact educators can really make in early learners or learners in general. The class definitely helped me in my wish to work in the education field. I was able to figure out/narrow down and even widen my curiosity for different fields of expertise. I have always wanted to help people and this is a great opportunity and a great way to do so! (Anahi Gomez)

One of the most important things I've learned in ED101 is that being a teacher is not just about delivering lessons, it's also about managing time, building relationships, and maintaining balance so you can support your Students. (Yareli Palacios)

Throughout EDUC 101, I've learned a great deal about the importance of being intentional as a teacher, particularly in areas such as classroom management, building relationships, and understanding student behavior. Observing in a 1st grade classroom has really helped me connect what we talk about in class to real situations. I've seen how routines, clear expectations, and positive reinforcement make a big difference in how students behave and engage.

One of the biggest things I'll take with me into my professional practice is the importance of being patient and flexible. Working with younger students shows me that not everything goes as planned, and being able to adjust while still supporting students is really important. I've also learned how important it is to create a positive and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable and supported.

This class has definitely helped me feel more confident about becoming a teacher. It's reinforced my goal of going into education and has given me a better understanding of what the role really looks like day to day. Being in the classroom, even just observing, has made me even more motivated to work with students and continue on this path. (Carlos Diaz)

There is time for a hundred visions and revisions which a moment can reverse. I am grateful that those visions stood strong and stable for my opportunity at CSUCI. (Bruce Gaither)

## Service-Learning Outcomes

EDUC 101 is often the first time students are part of an elementary classroom fabric. The cooperating teachers rely on the observers; often the students in the classrooms become attached and look forward to the observers' regular time with them. By the end of the term, observers will have:

- 30 hours of observation
- Working knowledge of how an elementary school classroom operates
- Developed professional skills such as the value of timeliness, professional dress and communication skills.
- Begun to develop a professional resume and philosophy of teaching document
- Many will have developed a working relationship with UPCS (host school/partner) and will come back to substitute teach or student teach.
- The great hope for this experience is that by serving the community in this way, students will solidify their wish to become a teacher OR learn early on that teaching is not the path they wish to take. By providing this experience, whichever way students go after the course, our hope is that this experience has set them up for professional satisfaction and success.

## Best Practices Elements

With School Site: Ongoing communication with UPCS was imperative in terms of creating supportive placements. We opted to place students in groups of two rather than individually. The thought behind this practice was that in light of potential absences, we wanted to provide continuous support to our cooperating teachers. Concurrently, we wanted to have built in peer support for the students; having an "observation buddy" has been helpful in the past for academic, emotional and professional success.

During the course of the term, communication between the instructor and cooperating teachers was ongoing. This was in the form of syllabus sharing, discussing student celebrations and concerns, in classroom visits and providing an opportunity for the cooperating teachers to provide direct feedback to their EDUC101 observing students.

With Students: Prior to the start of the term, students were asked which grade levels they'd like to observe and if they are bilingual (bilingual students have the opportunity to observe a dual immersion class). While we were unable to accommodate all requests, most were honored.

Over the course of the term, professional skills such as timeliness, dress and expression of gratitude were modeled and discussed. This helped build a trusting relationship with our community partner.



**Recognition for  
Best Practices in  
Service Learning  
2026**

# Service Learning in Health Sciences: Building Skills Through Community Engagement

Melissa Gutierrez Jimenez, MA • HLTH 492

We thank Jorge Boyzo & Aliyah Frausto for assistance with data collection and poster preparation

## Course Description

HLTH 492: Service Learning in Health Sciences is a course that involves an individual or team-based service-learning project or internship within healthcare settings such as community health organizations, public health programs, and the healthcare industry. Students will gain hands-on experience and are required to submit a written report upon completion of the project.



## Project Activities & Community Needs

While serving at their community health organization, students help to address the needs of their community. Community needs that students help meet and provide support for are:

**VC Caregivers:** Assisting older adults through companionship, basic home support, food access, and call center outreach.

**Camarillo Health District:** Supporting nutrition programs and services for older adults in community-based settings.

**Livingston Memorial:** Participating in hands-on activities with older adults and gaining exposure to clinical environments through observation.

**A Heart of an Angel:** Assisting with youth fitness and leadership programs that support personal and academic growth.

**CSUCI Recreation Center:** Supporting health promotion efforts and encouraging active, healthy lifestyles on campus.

**CSUCI Boating Center:** Promoting water safety and assisting with CPR, first aid training, and community events.

## Service Learning Outcomes & Course Goals

Through the HLTH 492 course, students will be able to:

- Understand the mission, goals, and impact of a community organization and the issues they address.
- Gain insight into the community being served and how individuals access healthcare services.
- Document and reflect on a real-world healthcare work experience.
- Apply program knowledge and skills in a professional setting.

## Project Participants

### Current Students Placements

Students are actively engaged in various community organizations, including:

VC Caregivers



Camarillo Health District



Livingston Memorial



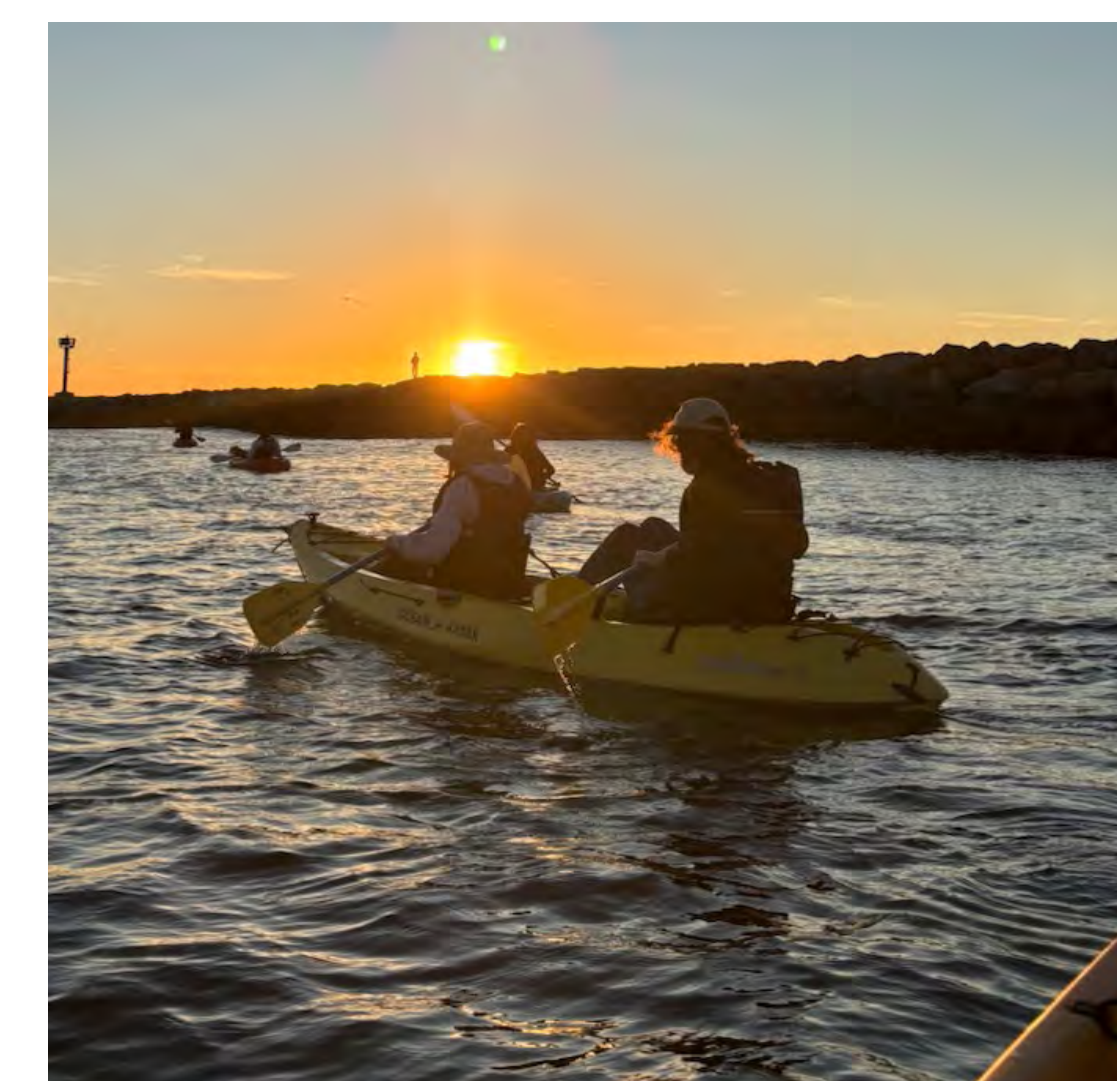
A Heart of an Angel



CSUCI Recreation Center



CSUCI Boating Center



## Best Practices Elements

### The Value of Community Engagement in Health Science

In Health Science education, service learning focuses on working with diverse communities and using reflection to connect real experiences to health outcomes. These experiences help students understand health disparities and build cultural competence for more equitable care.

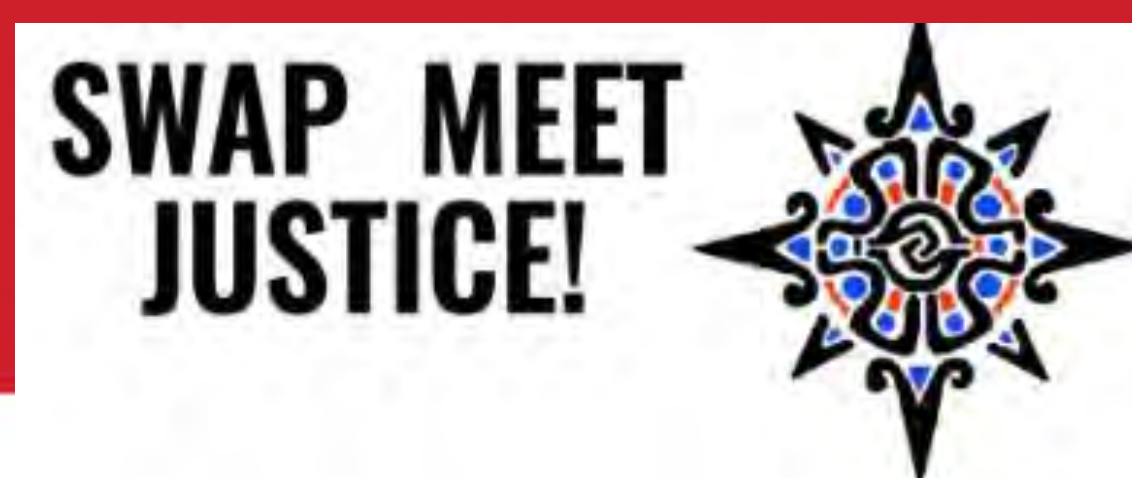
- At **VC CAREGIVERS**, students gain hands-on experience in elder care while building communication skills and understanding the importance of dignity, trust, and community-based support.
- At the **Camarillo Health Care District**, students gain public health experience through nutrition and adult day programs while learning about HIPAA, elder abuse, and ethical client care.
- At **Livingston Memorial**, students support physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being through hands-on activities and nurse shadowing, building empathy and patient-centered care skills.
- At **A Heart of an Angel**, students support youth fitness and leadership programs while engaging in community outreach and mentorship.
- At the **CSUCI Recreation Center**, students design fitness programs that promote preventive care and overall wellness in a diverse community.
- The **CSUCI Boating Center** blends health education with recreation by training peers in CPR, first aid, and water safety, showcasing health promotion beyond traditional settings.



Award for  
Best Practices in  
Service Learning  
2026

# Literature and Resistance: Supporting Our Immigrant Farm Worker Community

Dr. Georgina Guzmán • ENGL/CHST 353: Chicana/o-Latina/o Literature



## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

With the increase of federal raids targeting and afflicting our immigrant farm worker immigrant in Ventura County, this academic year 2025-26, I was intentional in increasing my collaboration with local non-profit organizations who provide much-needed services to our farm worker communities. I included more literature from and about farm workers in my Chicana/o-Latina/o Literature class and I integrated more hands-on service to farm workers.

Community needs: financial aid, legal services, family preparedness plans, food items, hygiene products

I established partnerships with Friends of Fieldworkers, the United Farm Workers (UFW), House Farm Workers!, and free immigration law services at Swap Meet Justice in Oxnard College with the goal of serving, supporting, uplifting, and advocating for the most vulnerable populations in Ventura County.



## Project Participants

**Fall 2025** Arreola, Juan\* Banderas, Idaly\* Baron, Adam\* Bermudez, Audrey\* Cayetano, Samantha\* Corral, Luis\* Curtis, Bianca\* Del Cid, Brandon\* Garcia Dimas, Yolanda\* Guerrero, Alexa\* Hernandez, Kayla\* Leon, Ixara\* Lopez, Isaac\* Lunde, Melissa\* Magana, Brandon\* Marcelino, Benjamin\* Marquez Pantoja, Jacob\* Mellin Serna, Helen\* Meza, Daniela\* Miron, Alexis\* Quiroz, Elias\* Reyes, Moises\* Robles, Joarie\* Romero Hernandez, Montserrat\* Saucedo, Jocelyn\* Shay, Abigail\* Turrubiarres, Adriana

**Spring 2026** Abbott, Kalaya\* Acevedo, Estefania\* Arriaza, Dennise\* Avalos, Giselle\* Arjon, Yarelli\* Chavez, Jaime\* Contreras Zavala, Neida\* Enochs, Maxwell\* Gonzalez, German\* Gonzalez, Rachel\* Gonzalez, Sergio\* Hartley-Pantoja, Lilly\* Martin Del Campo, Daisy\* Murillo, Scarlett\* Noland, Ayden\* Olivera, Erika\* Orozco, Arriana\* Ross, Janie\* Segovia, Emily\* Tadillo, Dania\* Vargas Aguilar, Lizbeth\* Velasquez, Giorgio\* Beltran, Lizbeth\* Dorado, Emily\* Lopez, Alonso\* Negrete, Michelle\* Rendon, Dante\* Reyes, Daniel\* Rodriguez, Brandon\* Shibata, Colin\*



## Project Activities

As organizations shared upcoming events, we stepped up and found class volunteers to serve and support. The UFW, Swap Meet Justice, Friends of Fieldworkers, and House Farm Workers held various resource fairs and events for immigrant farm workers throughout the academic year. Our students volunteered at Family Preparedness Planning workshops to help families prepare in case they come into contact with ICE. Students also worked with farm worker families' kids at activity tables.

Friends of Fieldworkers organizes a monthly program called Laundry Love in El Rio and Oxnard. They provide laundry services free of charge to families. Children come along and join in the fun at our children's activity tables. Our students helped survey participants at Laundry Love to see how the program was serving needs.

Students volunteered at Swap Meet Justice helping families fill out their Family Preparedness Plans. They also helped support House Farm Workers' Affordable Housing Resource Fairs and Farm Worker Focus Groups (in partnership with the County of Ventura).



## Service-Learning Outcomes

**RECIPROCITY:** Students shared that they had a very reciprocal learning experience with the farm workers. They expected to come in and teach the workers and realized that they actually learned just as much from them, especially about their unique and difficult immigration and educational experiences. Farm workers told us that they felt validated by being listened to by college students. **EMPATHY:** They shared that they are glad that students are reading books about farm labor and migration so that they can develop the capacity to empathize with their experiences and perhaps think twice before seeing them as inferior or look down on them. **SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS:** In public society, farm workers say that most people in positions of power treat them with haughtiness and arrogance. They told students that as they become educated and go on to be teachers, doctors, police officers, or Homeland Security officers, they hope "that they will know better and be better."



## What Students Gained

- Learned what workers' lives are like and what challenges they face
- Gained cultural, historical, political context
- Listened to field/farm workers' life stories, exchanged in real life storytelling
- Helped serve, support, and advocate for vulnerable populations in our region
- Leadership, planning, communication, and language skills
- Knowledge and Critical Consciousness about issues that affect our community
- Understanding of how non-profit organizations work



Recognition for  
**Best Practices in  
Service Learning  
2026**



Channel Islands  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

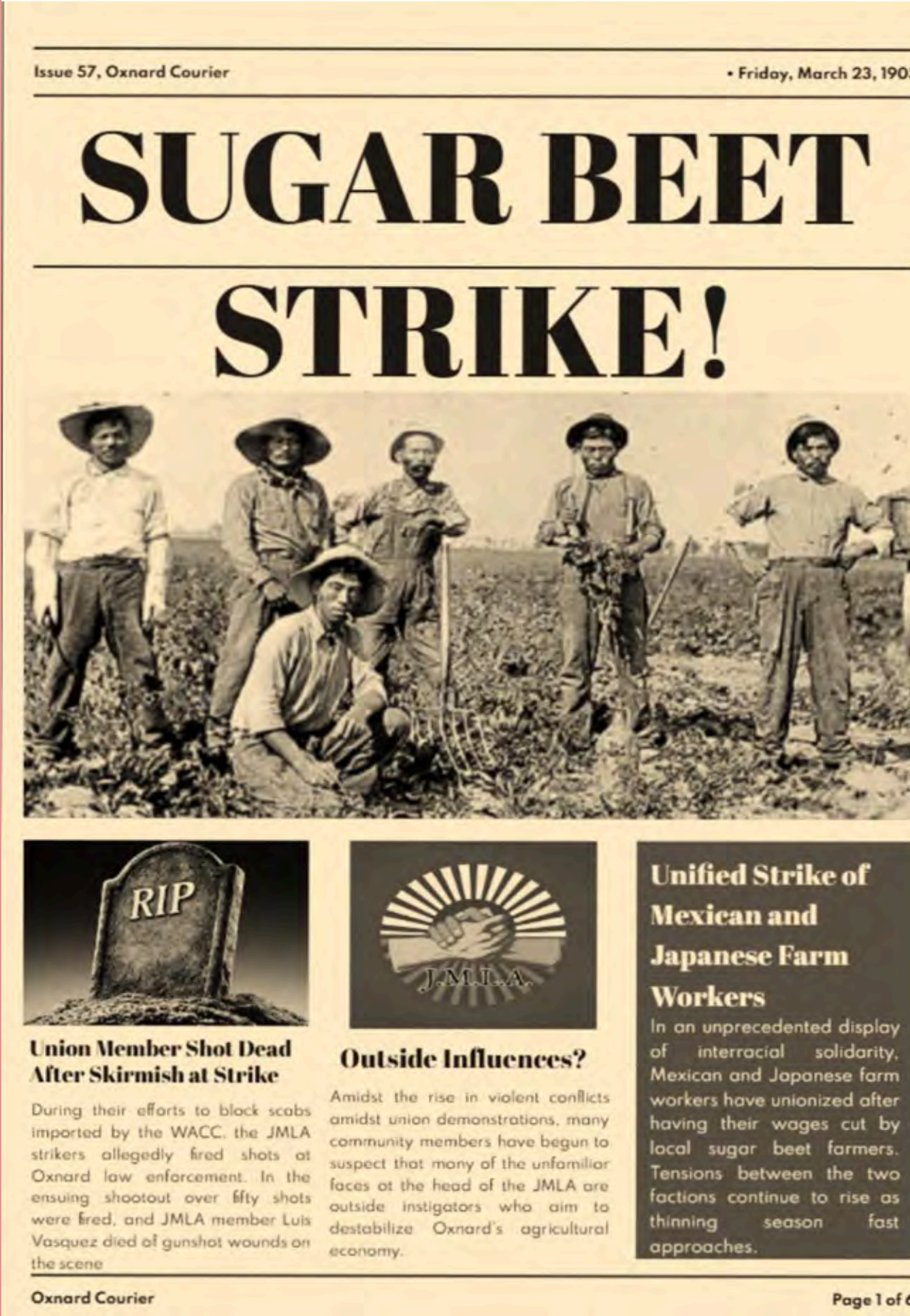
# JMLA: Celebrating Labor History & Union Power

Dr. Kendall McClellan, English 33 I: Narratives of the Working Class

## Community Partner: The Central Coast Labor Council

As a campus labor organizer for the California Faculty Association (CFA), I knew I wanted this course to connect our students to the historical struggles of workers nationwide, with an emphasis on the power of unions. I approached Jeremy Goldberg, the Central Coast Labor Council's executive director, about partnering on a project that would celebrate the power of unions. The CCLC is a coalition of 75 labor unions across Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties. They raise funds to support labor centers in higher education, hold regional events to strengthen labor solidarity, and fight for political change that increases workers' rights & dignity.

Jeremy had an ideal project proposal. The CCLC would be hosting a large-scale event Spring of 2026 to commemorate the 1903 Oxnard Sugar Beet Strike, a historic labor win for farmworkers that exemplified cross-cultural solidarity. Mexican, Japanese, alongside Chinese workers created a new union, the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA). The CCLC wanted to bring more young people into the labor movement. What might CSUCI's students do to further that mission?



## Historical Education & Zine Making

What could CSUCI students do to both engage deeply with this historical event and to help promote the CCLC's event? When I approached Jeremy to suggest community partnership, I had a ready-at-hand class concept that fit the bill perfectly. Students would create weekly zine pages in response to our readings in labor history. After discussion, I provided prompts and students drafted their pages. We produced a black and white work on national labor history and a full-color Zine to commemorate the JMLA and promote the CCLC's event.

### Sample Zine Prompts:

- Explore a central theme in the novel by pulling 3-6 passages from various parts of the book. Theme ideas: labor, Filipino American culture, racism, violence, family, land, etc. Place these passages on the page and then connect them either through commentary or illustrations. Indicate the theme somewhere in your work.
- Write a letter home from Allos to his mother OR imagine her life during this time, and write a letter from her perspective to Allos.
- OR Write a 1-2 page scene of life in the cannery or harvesting crops. Include dialogue between Allos and at least one other worker that captures both the labor itself and the interpersonal dynamics of laboring together.

- Listen: Anne Hills & Cindy Mangsen, "A Housewife's Lament"
- Week 4: 9/17 ("the company" vs. the union)
- "1913 Massacre" by Woody Guthrie
- Watch: "Harlan County, USA"
- Listen: Tennessee Ernie Ford, "16 Tons" & Billy Bragg, "There is Power in a Union"
- Week 5: 9/24 (imperialism & trade)
- *Bananas, Beaches, and Buses*, "Carmen Miranda on my Mind"
- Carmen Lyrá, "Bananas and Men"
- Watch: *Banana Land*
- Listen: Harry Belafonte, "Day-O"
- Week 6: 10/1 (working class communities)
- Michelle Serros, from *Chicana Falsa*, "Amie Says"
- Kimberly Blaeser, "Housing Conditions of One Hundred Fifty Chippewa Families"
- Sean Carswell, "Barney's Crew"
- Listen: Blues Scholar, "Proletariat Blues"
- Week 7: 10/8 (building the railroads)
- Maxine Hong Kingston, "The Grandfather of the Sierra Nevada Mountains,"
- Frank Norris, *The Octopus*, Chapter 1
- Listen: Pete Seeger, "Paddy Works on the Railroad"
- Week 8: 10/15: (America is in the Heart: migrant labor, farmworkers, & unionization)
- Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart, Part 1*
- Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden"
- Listen: Odetta "Pastures of Plenty"
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Week 12: 11/12 (the Oxnard Sugar Beet Strike)
- Frank Barajas, *Cariboo Unions*, Chapter 4, "Bitter Repression, Sweet Resistance"
- Fred B. Glass, "The Oxnard Sugar Beet Workers Strike"
- Listen: "Solidaridad Pa' Siempre"
- Zine Planning Session

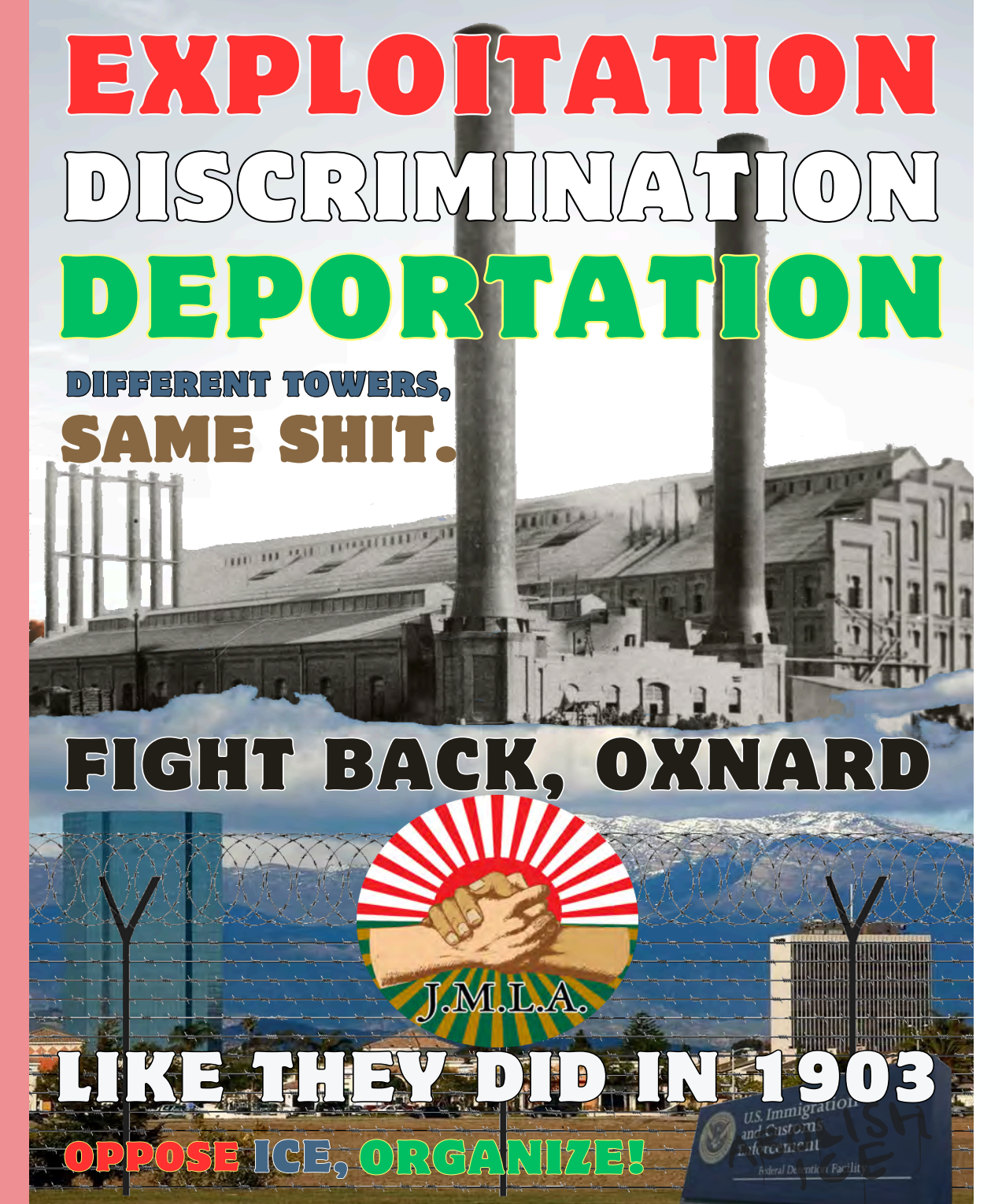
## Creativity as Empowerment

In written reflections, students described gaining a broader and more inclusive perspective of what constitutes the working class, and on the ongoing importance of unions. Regarding the value of making zines, I will let the students speak for themselves:

"In fact, our class zines have inspired me to work on a few of my own, exploring issues I care deeply about, like women's beauty standards, violence against women, and environmental justice. Moving forward, I would love to continue implementing this strategy to advocate for change, as it is creatively fulfilling and effective in helping readers to more easily digest hard-to-swallow information.

"The creative projects that we did weekly for our zines helped me to express my frustrations about inequality...in a way that felt productive, empowering, and meaningful instead of overwhelming."

"Not only through our readings showing me how change was possible in the past, but also through our creative efforts in zine production and going out into the real world and participating in events concerning working class issues. These factors have given me hope that change for the better is possible if enough people care, and have made me value the importance of my own voice more."



## Inception & Significance of the JMLA

### From the CCLC's website

The Oxnard brothers sought to reduce costs of their massive [American Sugar Beet] company by lowering wages. In 1902, they formed the Western Agricultural Contracting Company (WACC) and began recruiting farm laborers – most of whom were Japanese immigrants and Mexican laborers. Some of this recruitment was necessitated by the Chinese Exclusion Act, which had banned Chinese laborers from entering the U.S.

With the threat of absolute monopoly nearing and WACC wages dropping [approximately 50%] due to lack of competition, on Feb 11, 1903, 500 Japanese and 200 Mexican farm laborers created the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA).

The formation of the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA) launched the first multiethnic agricultural strike in California history. The Oxnard Sugar Beet Strike of 1903 was a formidable moment in American labor history. JMLA members fought against sub-living wages and contracting out of their work – while facing violence from their employers, a monopoly of subcontractors and a racist miscarriage of justice.

## ROOTED IN RESISTANCE:

The 1903 Sugar Beet Strike & the Continued Fight for Farmworker Justice on the Central Coast in 2026

# J.M.L.A.

Recognition for  
Best Practices in  
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2026

### Ballad of the J.M.L.A.

In the plains of Oxnard years ago  
The work was hard and wages low  
Sweet sugar only reached the top,  
But without their work the beets would rot

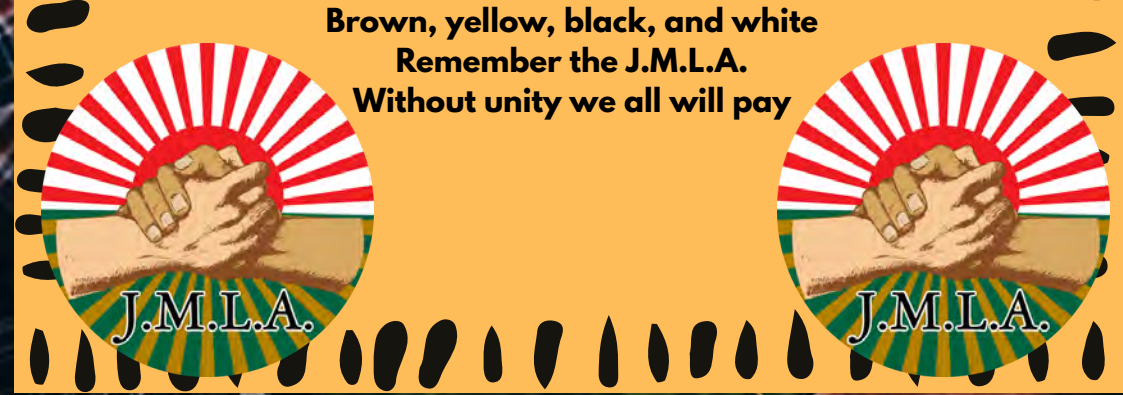
But ol' Yamaguchi had a plan  
A union for every man  
All they wanted was a decent wage  
He said it plain on the page

They put a stop to the sugar flow  
Until brothers got what they were owed  
When the boss came down with guns and bricks  
They sent him running with a black eye and bloody lip

They may have gunned a brother down  
As a martyr, he lives on for now  
And orchid on the casket wilts  
But all remember the blood was spilt

But our brother's union finally fell  
Thanks to Gomer and the AFL  
They said the unions only for white skin  
But we all know that's a load of shit

From brothers to scabs we must unite  
Brown, yellow, black, and white  
Remember the J.M.L.A.  
Without unity we all will pay



## Classroom and Community: Past is Present

Following English 331, the CCLC extended a paid summer internship program to CSUCI, reserving two spots in local union organizing for our students.

On April 12, 2026, around 200 organizers and workers gathered in Oxnard to celebrate the JMLA. The speaker line-up included CSUCI faculty Frank Barajas and John Caravello, and two English majors and alums of the course, Sergio Ramirez and Alexander Fernandez, who spoke about gaining perspective on the labor struggle and about the ways that struggle connects to their own lives.

During a time when farmworkers and immigrant populations more generally are being targeted by oppressive and violent state forces, this event served as a reminder of the counter-veiling power that simmers within the working class. It brought workers from various industries, including agriculture and education, into community with one another. Local immigrant defense organizations as well as those devoted to farmworker needs shared resources, and I had the opportunity to lead a zine workshop. It was a powerful way to experience the connection between past and present, classroom and community.

# Teaching Tomorrow: Serving Elementary & Secondary Math Students

Dr. Chrissy Soderlund, Mathematics for Future Secondary Teachers (Math 318)  
A. Aguina, J. Carlson, E. Casamiro Guillen, T. Crawford, D. Dominguez Martin, K. Heer, M. Minkoff, T. Morales, M. Rosales

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

Math 318 is an elective course for undergraduate **math majors who are considering a career in teaching mathematics at the secondary school level**. The course covers an array of topics relevant to modern secondary school math curriculum.

This project connects CSUCI students with local classrooms, partnering with **Rancho Campana High School** and the **Rio School District** to provide meaningful, hands-on engagement with students.

At **Rancho Campana High School**, CSUCI students observed mathematics instruction and assisted in the classrooms. They engaged with students to answer questions and to positively influence the students' *perceptions* of mathematics.

In collaboration with the **Rio School District's Saturday School**, CI students worked with elementary and middle school students (grades 3–8), facilitating games and activities designed to foster positive and engaging experiences with mathematics.

The goals of the project are

- to **assist** in the teaching and learning of mathematics among local secondary students,
- to **demonstrate** a culture of interest in mathematics beyond what is required of a student, and
- to **experience and reflect** upon the classroom experience for these future teachers.

## Project Participants

**Rancho Campana High School** (RCHS) is an academy, project based academic institution in Camarillo, CA. It serves an average of 800 students in grades 9-12.



**Rio School District's Saturday Success Academy** offers a four-hour program on Saturdays to excite students about academic areas in English Language Development & Literacy, Science & **Math**, Arts, Music & Physical Education. It is also an opportunity for students to catch up on work and receive academic support.

### CSUCI Math 318 Students, Spring 2026 Semester:

Adela Aguina	Kurtis Heer
Jadon Carlson	Michael Minkoff
Ever Casamiro Guillen	Tania Morales
Thomas Crawford	Melissa Rosales
Dennise Dominguez Martin	

## Project Activities

Each of the Math 318 students visited RCHS on multiple occasions to **serve and observe** the high school's math classes. During each hour-long visit, CSUCI students were assigned to a math teacher and a math classroom.

CSUCI students **served** at the high school by providing in-class support. They walked around to assist with questions, offer guidance, and encourage participation. CSUCI students also encouraged the high school students on a social/emotional level by demonstrating a keen interest in the mathematics and in the students themselves.

CSUCI students **observed** classroom dynamics, including teaching strategies, student-teacher interactions, classroom culture, and the learning environment.

At the Rio School District's Saturday School, CI students facilitated interactive and fun math games designed to build **confidence, joy, and a sense of belonging around math**. Before each Saturday event, CI students curated and prepared the games and activities to effectively elicit mathematical thinking among the children.



*"I think we were able to help the kids understand that math isn't just about doing operations like adding and subtracting but it also involves a deeper level of organization and problem solving."*  
-J. Carlson

*"I think this will shape my experiences as a teacher by providing an in-depth view into how teaching may look when I am the one who is running the classroom."*  
-T. Crawford

*"While helping the students, I realized that concepts that seem simple to me can be challenging for them, so I had to break problems down into smaller steps and use examples they could relate to."* – M. Minkoff

*"I tried to make all the kids feel seen and I hope that stuck with at least one of them."*  
-D. Dominguez Martin

*"I showed [the kids] that math is more than just numbers. It can actually be fun and meaningful. This helped students feel more comfortable participating and learning."*  
-T. Morales

*"I think the more experience I get the more I'll feel comfortable and find ways to connect with the students."* – M. Rosales

## Service-Learning Outcomes

Through this experience **CSUCI students**

- Observed a variety of teaching strategies and activities that encouraged active engagement.
- Developed relationships/rapport with math teachers and students.
- Prepared mathematical activities for children.
- Assisted in the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- Reflected on their own strengths and challenges as mathematicians and educators.

Through this experience the **Rancho Campana High School population**

- Received assistance in the teaching and learning of mathematics, especially in the introductory math courses.
- Developed relationships/rapport with CSUCI students and with the greater university.

Through this experience the children of **Rio School District**

- Experienced STEM-focused activities that built confidence and mathematical identity.
- Interacted with "real-life college students" who shared their joy in mathematics

## Best Practices Elements

This project has prepared the way for many **collaborative opportunities between CSUCI students and Rancho Campana High School**. The faculty at RCHS were ever encouraging and welcoming. The high school students appeared responsive to the CSUCI students' presence and assistance. It was valuable for our future teachers to experience "the other side" of a classroom during their undergraduate career.

By **preparing mathematical games and activities** for the Rio children, CI's future teachers learned how to predict student responses, to point to the mathematics in non-numeric mathematical games, and to cultivate a community of play around mathematics.

Through **reflective essays**, the CSUCI students evaluated their own strengths as mathematicians and educators. They reflected on how they might teach the topics presented at the high school and discovered new mathematical backgrounds and ideas pertaining to those topics. They also reflected on the ways in which their actions positively affected student learning.

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Best Practices in  
Service Learning  
2026**

# UNIV 392: Social Innovation & Global Service Learning In South Korea

Chelsea Grandpre & Daisy Vaca  
Community Development and Cultural Exchange in  
South Korea

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

Describe the projects, along with the community needs and project goals. ...

### Haeng bok Na Noom Youth Center in Anseong City

This project was a part of UNIV 392: Social Innovation and Global Service Learning in South Korea, a project based course collaborating with Korean students. As students, we collaborated through service learning projects focused on youth development and cultural exchange. Community needs included cross cultural interaction and English language engagement. The goal was to engage cross culturally using social innovation and cultural understanding to create a meaningful impact on children within the youth center.

### Social Innovation Workshop with Kwangwoon University in Seoul

This project focused on social innovation in Korea. It was a one day workshop where CSUCI students grouped with Kwangwoon University students to develop understanding of social innovation. We explored community challenges, brainstormed, and presented ideas as a team. Community needs focused on collaboration across cultures to tackle challenges. The goal was to apply social innovation to real world concepts while developing problem solving skills in a cross cultural setting.

### Han Nam University (English Department Capstone Course)

Throughout the semester, students participated in weekly Zoom calls with Korean students from Han Nam University. We faced challenges of time zones and language barriers while building strong relationships and later meeting in person. These interactions helped prepare for engagement abroad. Community needs included opportunities for global connection and intercultural learning. The goal was to foster meaningful cross cultural connections and build communication skills through virtual connection.



## Project Participants

Identify the participating class, and community partners. ...

### The Participating Class

Students of California State University Channel Islands apart of the UNIV 392. Course, Social Innovation and Global Service Learning. C students ranged from a variety of majors.

### Community Partners

We then were paired up with Haeng bok Na Noom Youth Center in Anseong City, Kwang Woon University in Seoul participating in a Social Innovation Workshop, and lastly with Han Nam University (English Department Capstone Course), with whom we virtually connected with all semester long.

## Project Activities

What did your students actually do?

### Haeng bok Na Noom Youth Center in Anseong City

We led cross-cultural activities, including icebreakers and American hand games, to connect with children despite language barriers. In return, we learned Korean games like Gonggi and participated in shared experiences such as museum visits, cultural sites, rice cake-making, and a traditional meal. We also introduced our diverse backgrounds through Coco and the Day of the Dead. These experiences fostered meaningful cross-cultural understanding and lasting connections.

### Social Innovation Workshop with Kwang Woon University in Seoul

We collaborated with Korean students to connect local challenges with global perspectives. We explored HOPE Institute initiatives, such as recycling innovations, pedestrian safety systems, and inclusive public spaces. We then developed our own community-based ideas focused on themes like generational inclusion, declining birth rates, animal adoption, and cultural preservation.

### Han Nam University (English Department Capstone Course)

During Fall 2025, we held weekly virtual meetings with Korean peers to exchange cultural insights and discuss daily life. These sessions supported cross-cultural understanding and provided English majors with real-world language practice. When we met in person, they organized a day of activities including a sustainability workshop, museum visit, and shared dinner, strengthening our connection.



## Service-Learning Outcomes

What are the outcomes (or expected outcomes, for ongoing projects) – in terms of both service and learning?

### Haeng bok Na Noom Youth Center in Anseong City

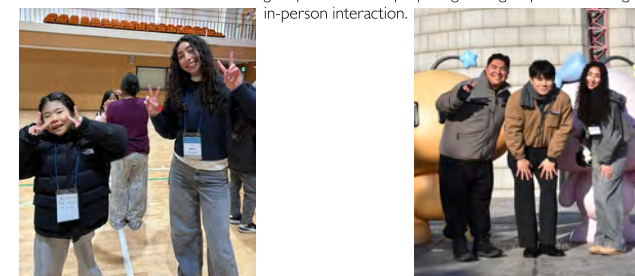
Our goal was to create a welcoming and memorable first interaction with foreigners, promoting open-mindedness and cultural awareness. Despite language barriers, we built meaningful connections with the children while strengthening our adaptability and communication skills. Overall, the experience fostered mutual understanding and lasting cross-cultural connections.

### Social Innovation Workshop with Kwang Woon University in Seoul

This workshop aimed to connect local challenges with global perspectives through collaboration with Korean university students. We explored citizen-led initiatives from the HOPE Institute and developed our own solutions addressing themes like generational inclusion, declining birth rates, and cultural preservation. The experience strengthened cross-cultural collaboration and creative problem-solving.

### Han Nam University (English Department Capstone Course)

Our virtual meetings aimed to build cross-cultural relationships, enhance cultural understanding, and improve communication across language barriers. They also provided Korean students with real-world English practice while preparing both groups for meaningful



## Best Practices Elements

What is/are the aspect(s) of your project that you think would be most useful for colleagues to focus on in trying to create their own great service-learning projects?

### The Best Practice Elements

After reflecting on our time abroad, the elements that struck the most as students was the true engagement we felt with the students, no matter how long or short of a time we spent together. This was due to the engaging activities we had done with the youth, playing games and laughing. The encouragement of games and activities made it easier to overcome the pressure of a language barrier. As well as building relationships with students before ever meeting them abroad. This made the in-person connection feel natural, as if we have always known the University Students. Learning the basics of Korean culture had prepped us greatly anytime we were in Korea. We also learned to embrace any discomfort we felt anytime throughout the projects, we truly focused on building genuine connections that left major impacts on both CSUCI and Korean Students.

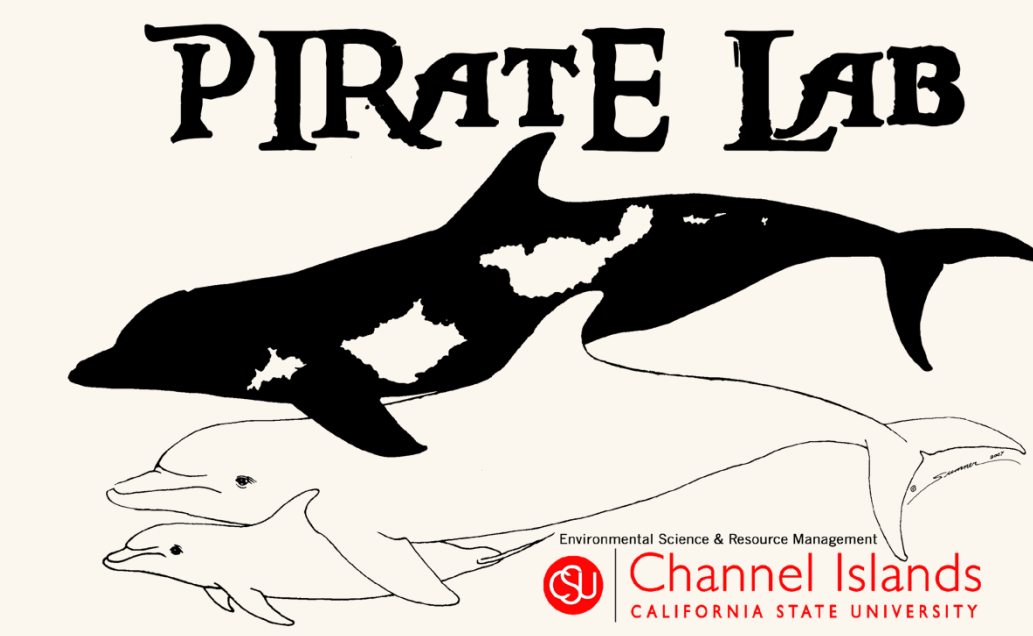
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2026



# LA Stronger: Community-Based Wildfire Recovery & Service Learning

## ESRM 492 – CSU Channel Islands

Brenton Spies, Timnit Kefela, Sean Anderson + CSUCI Students



Students working alongside community partners to restore, rebuild, and strengthen wildfire impacted communities across Los Angeles County

### BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

This course immersed students in post-wildfire recovery efforts following the Eaton and Palisades Fires. Students worked directly with communities and partners on restoration, rebuilding, monitoring, and recovery.

Beyond ecological restoration, students supported community healing, listened to local voices, and contributed to long term resilience.

- 12 full field days
- Altadena, Topanga, Palisades & surrounding areas
- Applied service-learning experience
- Hands-on, place-based learning
- Building relationships and strengthening community resilience.

### OUR APPROACH

- Community-engaged service learning
- Partner-driven projects
- Restoration, monitoring, and assessment
- Soil testing and remediation techniques
- Drone mapping and spatial analysis
- Teamwork, leadership, and adaptability
- Community rhetoric: documenting local voices, signage, and communication post-wildfire impacts

### FIELD WORK & COMMUNITY PROJECTS

- Ecological Restoration**
  - Oak woodlands restoration with RCDSMM
  - Native planting and habitat restoration
  - Post-fire landscape stabilization
- Clean-up & Stewardship**
  - Topanga Creek clean-up efforts
  - Debris removal and site preparation
  - Stewardship of fire-impacted landscapes
- Monitoring & Assessment**
  - Ecological surveys at Topanga Lagoon
  - Habitat condition assessments and rapid field evaluations
  - Species-focused monitoring, including tidewater goby rescue efforts
- Community Recovery & Partnerships**
  - Altadena community garden soil remediation and rebuilding support
  - Assisting homeowners with rebuilding and soil testing
  - Collaboration with community partners across Los Angeles County
  - Engagement in community spaces and recovery efforts
- Mapping & Rhetoric**
  - Drone-based aerial mapping & Imagery
  - Field documentation of recovery and landscape change
  - Community rhetoric: documenting signage and public response
  - Listening to local voices and engaging in cultural activities



### COMMUNITY PARTNERS



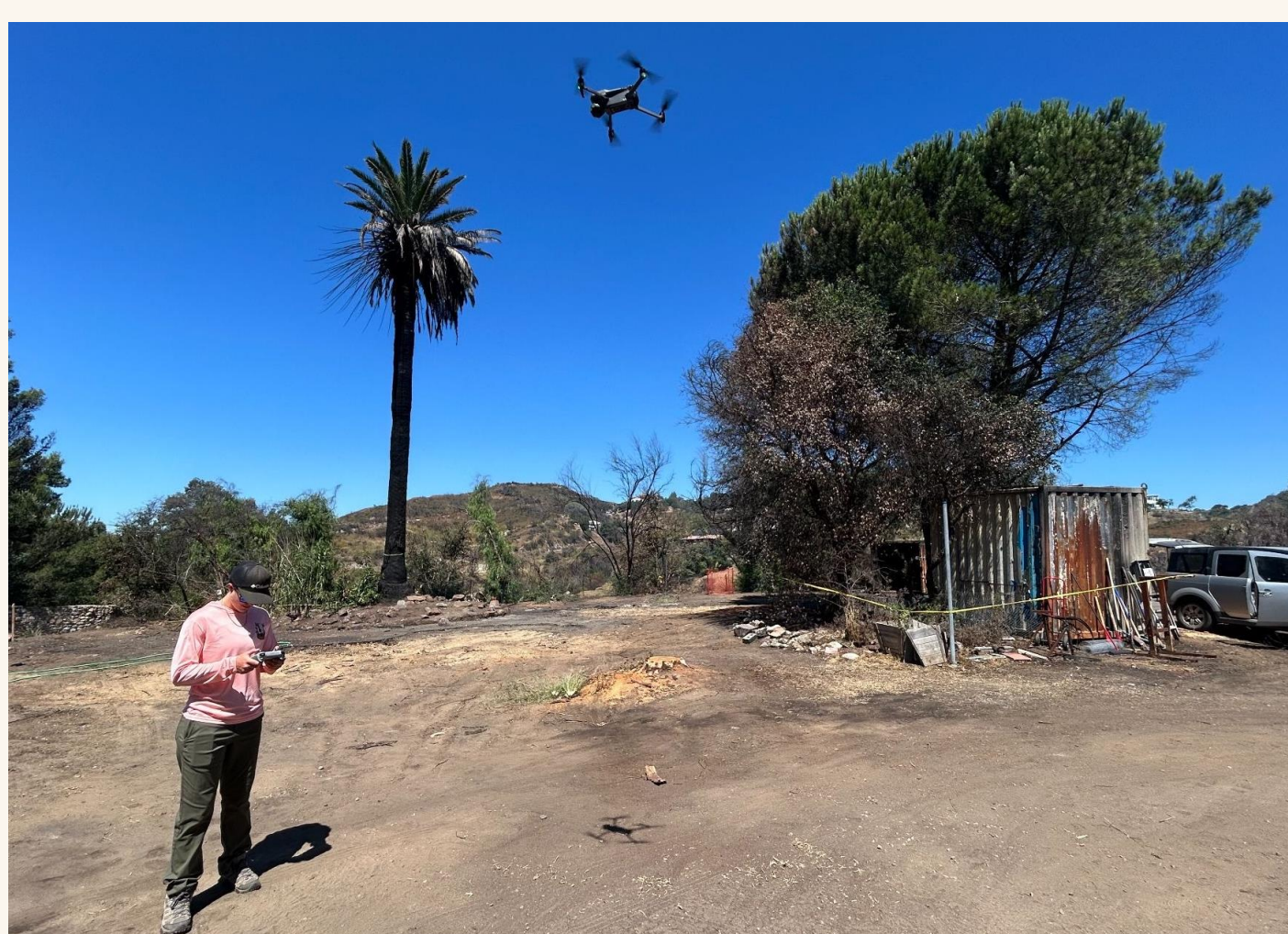
### IMPACT & OUTCOMES

- 2000+ hours of student volunteer service
- Strong partnerships & lasting community relationships
- Meaningful contributions to recovery initiatives
- Direct support during early stages of recovery
- Broad impact across multiple communities
- Expanded hands-on learning for CSUCI students
- Elevated CSUCI's role in regional resilience
- Actionable data and field insights supporting ongoing recovery work

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Service learning is most powerful when it is immediate, collaborative, and grounded in community needs

Students didn't just study wildfire recovery – they were part of it.



Drone Aerial Imagery



Community-Led Stewardship



Soil Testing & Remediation



Ecological Surveys & Monitoring



Disaster Recovery & Rebuilding



Post-fire Restoration

# The Community-Based Research Faculty Fellows Program

The Community-Based Research (CBR) Faculty Fellows Program is a professional development opportunity for faculty interested in engaging in community-based research in the context of Capstone and Service-Learning classes. The program is designed to serve as a learning community for novice and experienced CBR practitioners working together to build individual and collective expertise. The program is also designed to build campus capacity to engage in CBR work in a variety of settings. The program is organized around a series of interactive workshops featuring invited speakers (including CBR practitioners and community partners), review of CBR literature and exemplar projects, and explorations and reflections on CBR practices in the context of classroom instruction. Emphasis will be placed on discussing designing and implementing CBR projects that have significant, positive impacts on community partners and on students.

*Consider joining our growing community of CBR practitioners!  
Stay tuned for an announcement for AY26/27*



**This year, the program welcomes its newest cohort:  
Joshua Gold (Health Sciences), Vanina Machado (Spanish),  
and Assadullah Sadiq (Early Childhood Studies)!**

# What is CBR?

Community-based research (CBR) is a collaborative research approach that actively involves both academic researchers (e.g., faculty, staff, students) and community partners in all phases of the research process including: identifying pertinent research questions addressing community needs, selecting appropriate research methodologies, collecting and analyzing data, and disseminating results among applicable stakeholders (including community members). CBR is rooted in principles of mutual respect, shared decision-making, and co-creation of knowledge to address community-identified needs.

The research is action-oriented with the intention to generate practical outcomes that benefit the community, advances scholarly knowledge, and enhances professional development among academic researchers.

# Is my work CBR?

To determine if your work can be considered CBR, use the following checklist!

- Collaboration: Does the research involve community partners in defining the research questions, methodology, data collection, data analysis, and/or interpretation of findings?
- Reciprocity: Does the research provide tangible benefits to the community, such as capacity building, policy recommendations, or direct interventions - and, is there a mutual benefit, such as providing research experience to students or furthering faculty professional development?
- Equity: Are community members regarded as equal contributors, with their knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences valued in the research process?
- Data-Informed and Action-Oriented: Does the research seek to generate knowledge that can lead to community improvement, social change, or policy advocacy?
- Commitment: Does the research foster ongoing relationships between the university and community organizations beyond a single project?
- Experiential Learning: Does the project provide opportunities for students to engage in applied learning, working directly with community stakeholders in a research capacity - or, if students are not involved in the research, does the project provide a basis for future community-based collaborations with the potential to involve students?
- Sensitivity: Is the research designed with sensitivity to the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the community, particularly in serving diverse and underrepresented populations?
- Dissemination: Are the research findings shared with community members in accessible formats, such as reports, community meetings, workshops, or policy briefs?

# **CBR@CSUCI Vol. 3 coming soon!**

## **Vol. 3 Featured Reports**

**Saticoy Food Hub Community Needs  
Assessment**

**A Chrysalis in the Santa Monica  
Mountains: Assessing the Impacts of  
SAMO Fund Milkweed Giveaways**

**Intergenerational Volunteer  
Caregiving: Impacts of Caregivers'  
Building Bridges Program among  
Youth Volunteers**

**Oxnard Performing Arts Center  
Corporation Brand Awareness**

**Reviving a City's Culture and Arts  
through the Oxnard Performing Arts  
Center: Let's Bring Light, Hope, and  
Vibrancy!**

## **Journal Description**

**CBR@CSUCI** is an annual digital volume of community-based research (CBR) reports collaboratively produced by students and faculty members in partnership with community partners associated with CSUCI. All reports submitted for inclusion are reviewed by the Editorial Board to ensure that published reports represent rigorous research, are presented in a clear and accessible fashion, and make an identifiable contribution to the community. The volume is designed to collect and highlight the best CBR conducted in our community and to make it widely available to our campus, our community, and beyond.

**We are accepting submissions for future volumes! Consider submitting your research for publication and to highlight the impacts of your community partners.**



***An Annual Volume of  
Community-Based  
Research***

Check out previous volumes and consider submitting your work for future publication at <https://journals.calstate.edu/cbrci> or by scanning the QR code below!



# Saticoy Food Hub Community Needs Assessment

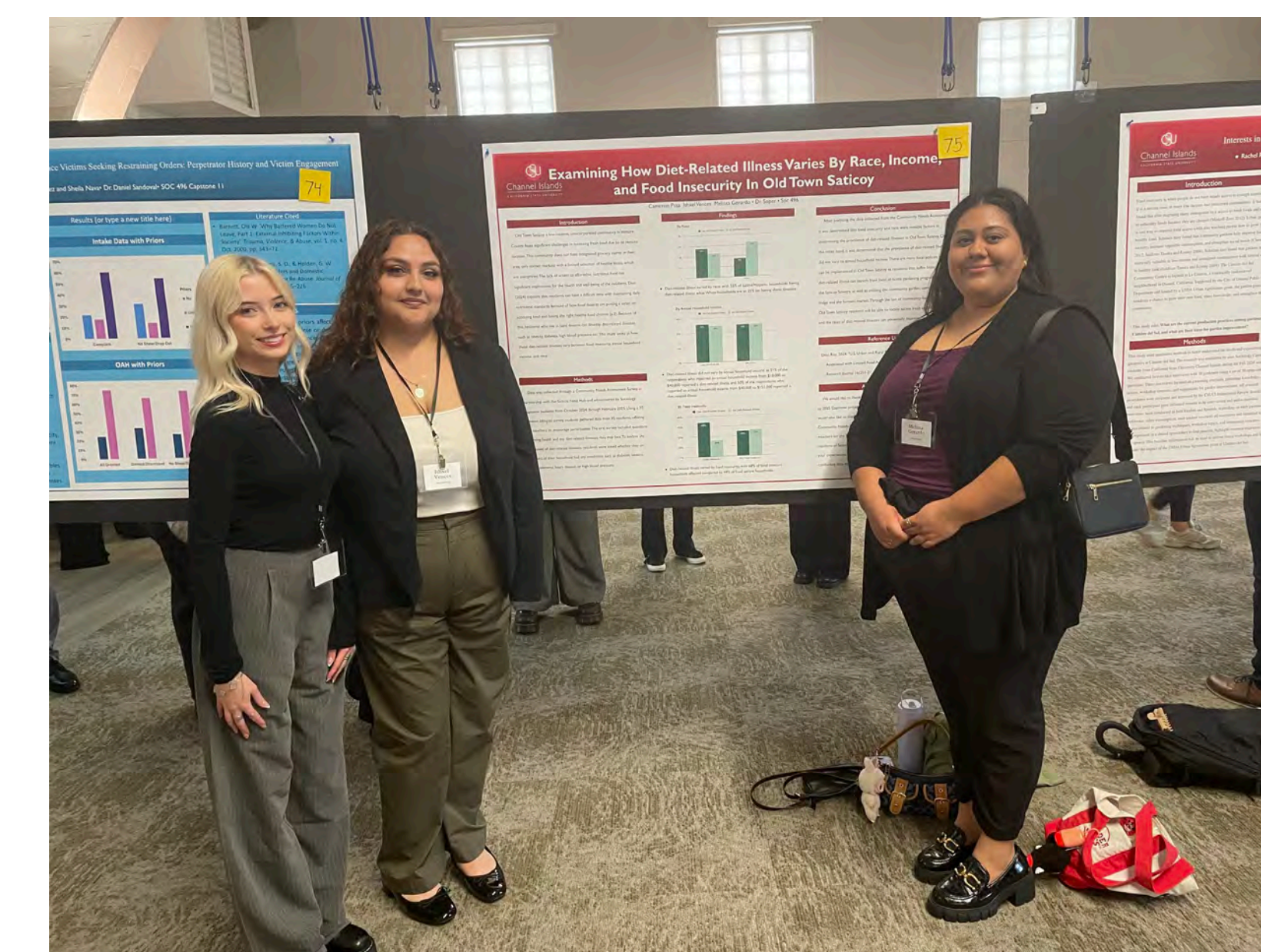
SOC 495 Capstone I / SOC 496 Capstone II

Dr. Rachel Soper, Sierra Doehr, Daniel Chavez, Juan Costilla Reyes, Binny Flores, Melissa Gerardo, Derek Gonzales, Ana Iraola-Baker, Mayra Morales Lopez, Aracely Munoz, Melaney Ocegueda, Rachel Palmer, Cameron Pitts, Ithxel Vences, Ryan Wiener, Kaitlyn Zavala

## Executive Summary

Sociology Capstone students conducted a Community Needs Assessment in partnership with the Saticoy Food Hub to answer the research question:

What is the current access to healthy food, rate of diet-related illness, and interest in services among residents of Old Town Saticoy, and how does it vary by demographic characteristics?



## Key Findings

Healthy Diet by Race (n=94)			
	Yes	No/Sometimes	Total
White	85%	15%	100%
Non-White	65%	35%	100%
Total	69%	31%	100%

Diet-Related Illness by Race (n=94)			
	Diet-Related Illness	No Diet-Related Illness	Total
White	35%	65%	100%
Non-White	58%	42%	100%
Total	54%	46%	100%

## Community Impact

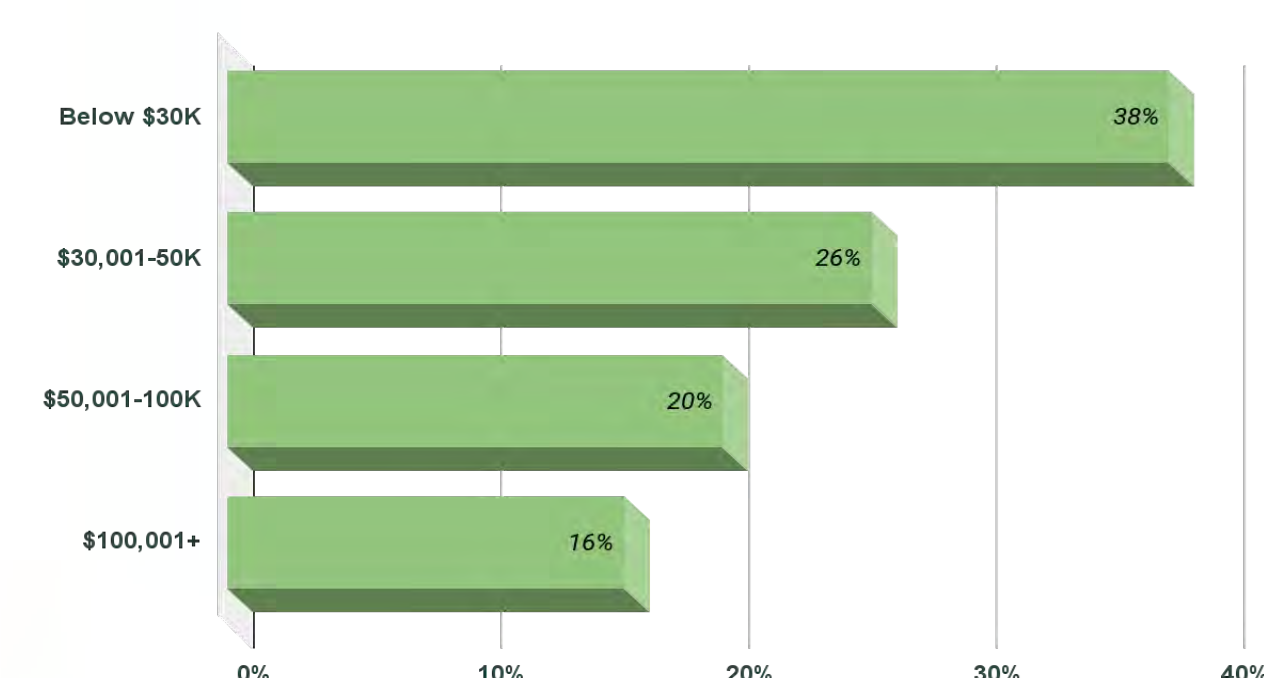
We found that residents in Old Town Saticoy face **racial disparities** in their ability to **access to a healthy diet** as well as the prevalence of **diet-related illnesses**. Latinx, Black, Indigenous, and Multiracial respondents are more likely to report diet-related illnesses and less likely to have access to a healthy and balanced diet. Saticoy Food Hub should continue to offer their **farmers market** and **community fridge**, and expand services to include **senior produce delivery** and a **mobile market**.

## Methods

Survey data collected between October 2024 and February 2025

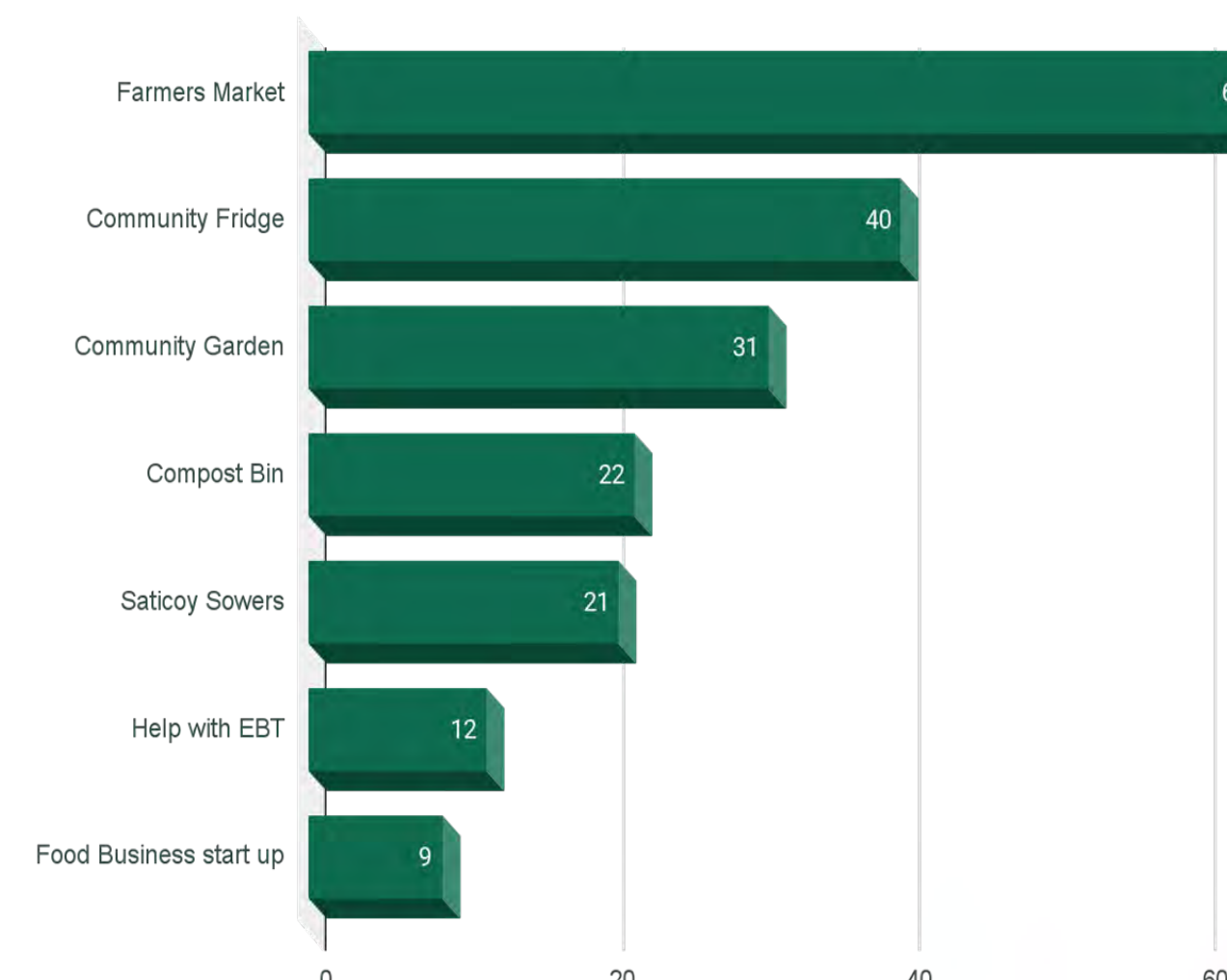
Sample size of 95 households in Old Town Saticoy

Respondents received a \$20 voucher to the spend on produce at the Saticoy Farmers Market

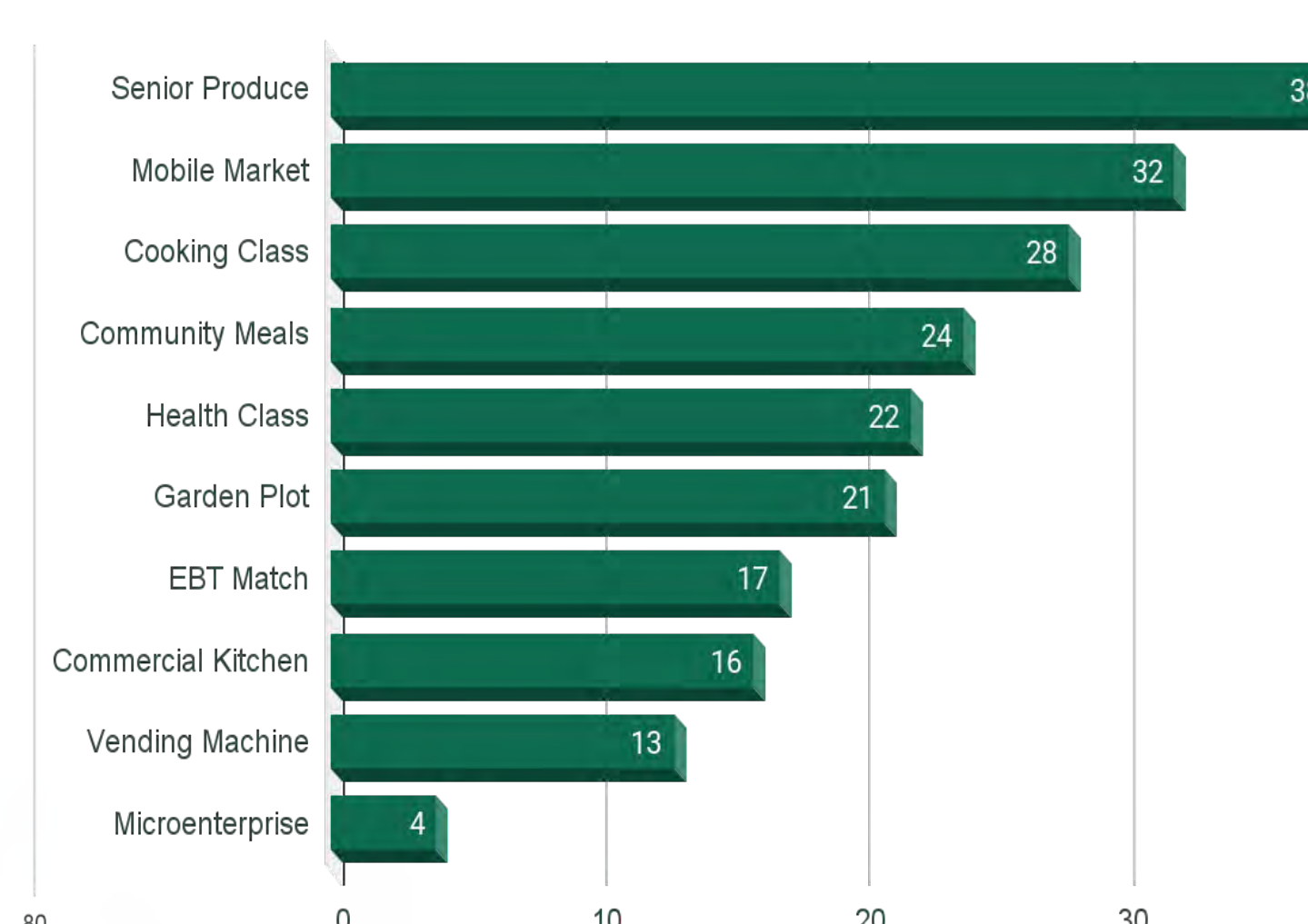


Hispanic	63%
White	22%
Multiracial	9%
Black	3%
Native American/Indigenous	3%

## Interest in Services



## Future Services Desired



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the **13 amazing students** who helped design this research project, spent months going **door to door** in Old Town Saticoy to **collect surveys**, analyzed the data, wrote up a final paper, and **presented findings** to our community partner, at the Student Research Conference, and at the **Social Science Student Symposium (S4)**.

Thank you to **Saticoy Food Hub** for **trusting us** with this project, and being **very involved** with survey construction, **on-site logistics**, and the presentation of results. We appreciate that you secured the **funding** to give out **participant incentives**.

Spotlight on  
Community -  
Based Research  
2026

# Spotlight on Community-Based Research

## Generative AI Use and Psychological Well-Being among Older Adults



**Student Research Team: Elsa Ashmon, Chloe DuBoux, and Gracie Lake**  
**Faculty Mentor: Ronald W. Berkowsky, PhD**  
**Community Partner: Communicare**

### Background

Despite significant increases in Internet use and adoption over time, some segments of the population remain at risk for decreased access and literacy, including older adults.

Engaging in creative activities, including in a digital environment, has shown significant benefits across the lifespan (e.g., enhanced physical health, cognitive resilience, and independence) - however, older adults are often excluded from creative exercises in a digital space due to a lack of access and false assumptions about their ability and willingness to learn new technologies.

In Ventura County, the nonprofit *Communicare* is committed to addressing elder issues and needs (e.g., social isolation, loneliness) through information and communication technology education - in offering diverse technology training courses, *Communicare* helps older adults overcome anxieties that accompany learning new technology platforms (e.g., Zoom).

In partnership with *Communicare*, we describe an ongoing pilot project to teach Ventura County older adults how to use generative artificial intelligence (i.e., generative AI, like ChatGPT) for creative and reflective activities designed to enhance well-being.

### Research Focus and Project Goals

We utilize a community-engaged approach to explore the impacts of a technology intervention (i.e., use of ChatGPT for creative/reflective activities) on the well-being of older Ventura County residents - findings can assist *Communicare* in further developing technology training courses to promote creative expression which enhances elder well-being.

To accomplish this, our team:

- (1) developed an intervention (consisting of six 90-minute classes) introducing older students to the basics of ChatGPT and how to use the platform for creative and reflective activities;
- (2) will implement the intervention and measure the impact of the intervention on various measures of well-being among participants (including psychological well-being) in Spring 2026.

At the conclusion of the project, we will draft a summary report for *Communicare* which includes details on the implementation of the intervention, intervention materials (e.g., manuals), and study findings.

### Project Activities

Over the course of Summer 2025 (as part of the SURF program) and through Fall 2026, we (1) conducted relevant literature reviews, (2) developed a detailed 6-week lesson plan and instructional manual focused on use of ChatGPT for creative and reflective exercises, (3) drafted a standard operating procedure (SOP) binder for instructors to support consistent program delivery (both by the research team and for *Communicare* volunteers), (4) drafted pre-intervention, post-intervention, and 3-month follow-up surveys (along with a data collection strategy) to address the research focus, and (5) sought ethical approval from university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The lesson plan covered the following:

- **Week 1:** *Introduction to ChatGPT* (account creation, navigation, simple prompts, icebreakers)
- **Week 2:** *Fun and games using ChatGPT* (e.g., Scattergories, Akinator)
- **Week 3:** *Reflective exercises* (creating sniglets, journaling prompts)
- **Week 4:** *Creative writing* (using sniglets and journal entries to generate poems and stories)
- **Week 5:** *Advanced storytelling and digital literacy* (rewriting stories from different perspectives, identifying AI deepfakes)
- **Week 6:** *Visual storytelling* (generating images from AI-generated stories and reflective group sharing)



### Project Status and Next Steps

The research team was granted ethical approval to conduct the research in Winter 2026; upon receiving approval, the research team coordinated with *Communicare* to schedule and hold the first set of ChatGPT classes from late January through early March 2026 at the Goebel Center (Thousand Oaks, CA), with this first intervention serving as a pilot study.

Data collection is ongoing, but early reactions from participants (N = 8) indicated that they were enthusiastic about the class and felt immense value in using generative AI for creative and reflective purposes.

**"I came into this with a lot of curiosity and a bit of nerves, but I've discovered that ChatGPT is a wonderful way to be creative and productive. I am excited about how I will be able to use it in my daily life. It's empowering to realize that it's never too late to learn and stay in tune with today's digital world."**

Due to the success of the intervention, and due to the popularity of the course among Goebel Center attendees (i.e., initially over 30 individuals had signed up for the first class), a decision was made to hold additional classes to accommodate those on the class waitlist - *Communicare*, the research team, and an additional team of Health Science Capstone students are currently conducting a new intervention (with optional office hours) which began in March 2026 and will end April 2026.

At the conclusion of the second round of classes and once all data has been collected (including all 3-month follow-up surveys), the research team will reconvene to analyze the available data and draft a summary report for *Communicare*.

All instructional materials (e.g., SOPs, training manuals) have already been shared with *Communicare* in the spirit of community engagement - *Communicare* is thus able to utilize these materials to hold additional classes even once the research project has completed.

### Acknowledgements

The SURF team would like to acknowledge and thank our community partner, the Ventura County nonprofit *Communicare*, for their guidance and insight in the initial development of this project.

The team would also like to thank CSUCI and the 2025 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program for their support of this project and for the support of all participating students researchers and faculty.



# Health Science Community-Engaged Project: Technology Intervention with *Communicare*

Esmeralda Perez, Tara Winkler, Lorraine Erica Punto, Jasmine Rivera, Gracie Lake, & Natalie Salazar  
HLTH-499 Sec 002 (Instructor: Dr. Berkowsky)



## Description

In partnership with the Ventura County nonprofit *Communicare*, this technology program (developed by a previous SURF team) is meant to introduce older adults to ChatGPT.

The 6-week course teaches older adults basic ChatGPT skills with a specific emphasis on recreational, creative, and reflective activities.

The program is designed to be simple, engaging, and accessible for beginners it is also designed to enhance community and socialization among attendees.

The course is led by a team of Health Science students as part of a Capstone course.

### Community Needs:

Older adults lack access to technology training that is connected to their learning needs and pace - this project addresses these gaps by providing clear instruction, creative activities, and opportunities for engagement.

### Project Goals:

The project aims to increase digital confidence and basic ChatGPT skills among older adults, particularly as it relates to creative and reflective activities.

It encourages creativity and social interaction through hands-on activities, with a broader goal of supporting lifelong learning and encouraging confident independent technology use.

## Project Participants

The community partner, *Communicare*, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the well-being of older adults in Ventura County and Western Los Angeles County through research and engagement.

ChatGPT course students included older adults attending activities at the Goebel Adult Community Center in Thousand Oaks (the main site for delivering the interventions).

Any older adult who was interested in participating in the course was welcome to join, regardless of technology experience.

## Project Activities

In the 6-week course, our students learned how to:

- (1) Navigate ChatGPT as well as how to access the website on their own through Google
- (2) Create and log into their own accounts
- (3) Use ChatGPT for recreational activities, like games and word puzzles (including Akinator and Scattergories)
- (4) Generating writing prompts for reflective journaling and creative writing
- (5) Use ChatGPT to edit their own writing
- (6) Use ChatGPT to create images related to their creative and reflective writing.



## Service-Learning Outcomes

The expected outcomes we are looking for is to improve older adults' access to digital tools and be more comfortable using them, particularly for creative and reflective writing.

Students should be able to write prompts for ChatGPT to respond to as well as be able to carry a conversation with ChatGPT that involves questions, edits, and clear understanding of what ChatGPT said.

Ultimately, we want our student to be able to use ChatGPT as a writing tool in their daily lives without additional help, while also being aware of the limitations of AI tools like ChatGPT.

We want our students to feel confident in their ability to ask ChatGPT questions while also being able to be wary of all responses generated.

We encourage our students to fact check all responses generated by ChatGPT.

**“You girls are wonderful helpers.”**

**“You girls are really needed here.”**

**“My husband said he has never seen me so happy for a class!”**

## Best Practices Elements

With guidance from *Communicare*, an essential element in our course is adhering to best practices in teaching older adults (using materials provided by *Communicare* to guide us, making this a true partnership).

Older adults have slight differences in learning and communication preferences compared to younger people – we make sure to keep this in mind while teaching!

## Acknowledgements

Our Capstone team would like to thank the SURF team which initially developed the 6-week course.

We'd also like to thank the *Communicare* team for all their support – including Denise Calhoun, Seung Lee, and the volunteers who have assisted with the classes.



**Recognition for  
Best Practices in  
Service Learning  
2026**

# Organizational Profile of the Volunteer Caregiving Movement

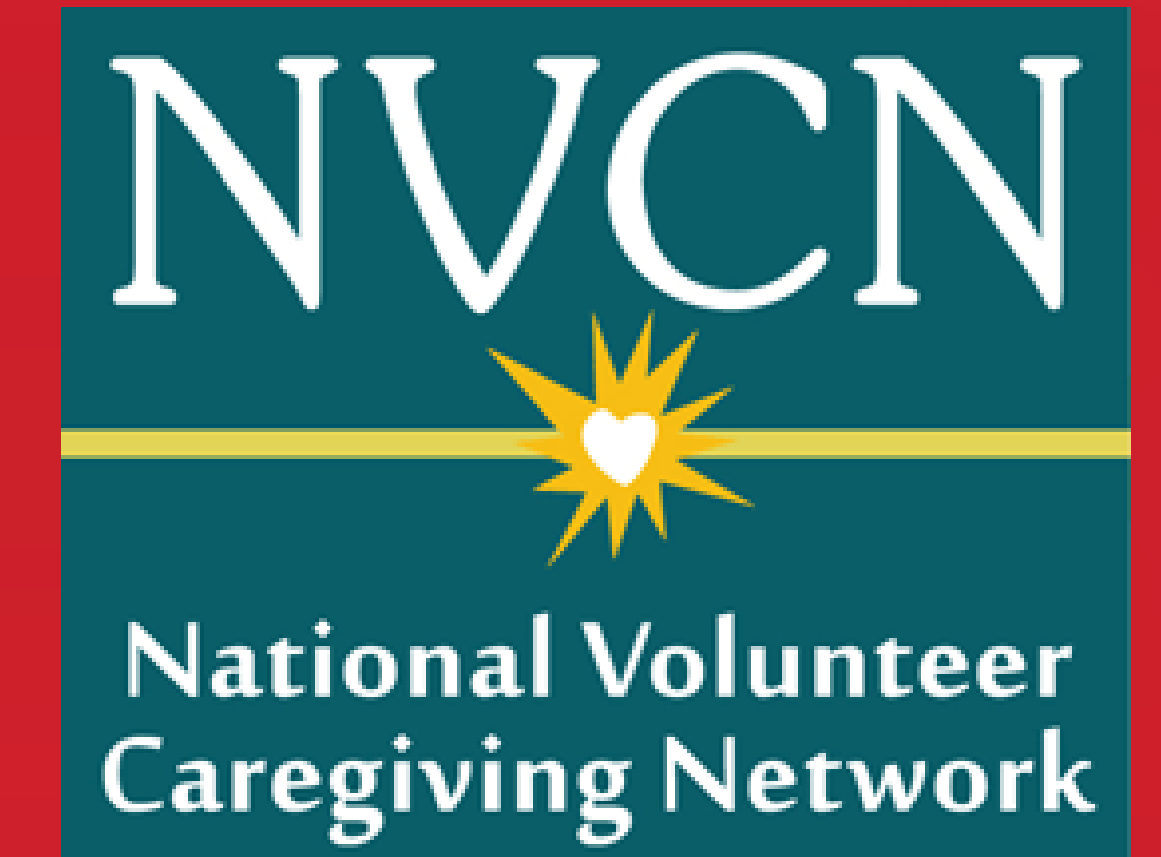
## A Survey Study



**Student Research Team:** Avani Abeyratne, Esther Azcorra, Carlos Ceron, Itzel Fernandez, Tiffany Guadenzi, and Salvador Ibarra

**Faculty/Course:** Ronald W. Berkowsky, HLTH 499 (Senior Capstone Project)

**Community Partner:** National Volunteer Caregiving Network (NVCN)



### Background

There has been due consideration towards examining issues and challenges related to expanding and strengthening paid caregivers and family caregivers; however, little research has been devoted to examining how volunteer caregiving services can mitigate gaps in caregiving.

First piloted in 1984 through support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the volunteer caregiving model matches community volunteers with care recipients based on services the volunteer is comfortable providing and services the recipient needs – these services may include transportation to medical appointments, completing household chores, or paying social visits.

Volunteer caregiving can be an essential resource for many older adults and those with disabilities who cannot afford paid caregiving services or who lack access to family care networks – yet, little is known about the diverse impacts this movement has had on a national level.

To best position volunteer caregiving organizations to receive needed support, data is needed which shows the value of these organizations while also highlighting systemic issues and challenges.



### Focus and Methods



This project seeks to assess the organizational characteristics of volunteer caregiving organizations (VCOs) across the US.

This project utilizes a community-engaged approach – students from a Health Sciences Capstone course have partnered with the National Volunteer Caregiving Network (NVCN) to identify the reach of the volunteer caregiving movement in the US, better understand the volunteer and care recipient characteristics of those affiliated with each VCO, and better understand the capacity of these organizations.

The NVCN has facilitated access to VCO representatives while the Capstone team has been responsible for data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Data is currently being collected via an online Qualtrics survey developed by the Capstone team under the guidance of both the community partner and the faculty mentor.

### Status

The survey was officially launched mid-March 2026; at the time of reporting, a total of 32 VCOs have submitted their data through the Qualtrics survey.

Notably, the NVCN attempted a similar project 2 years ago and were only able to collect data from 36 VCOs over the course of 6 months (out of a possible 600+ sites).

Challenges experienced in this round of data collection include non-response (e.g., recruitment phone calls and emails going unanswered) or a change in status of the site (e.g., many organizations report not offering volunteer caregiving services anymore).

The Capstone team is determined to continue working through the end of the semester, collecting organizational data from as many VCOs as possible while also assisting the NVCN in updating its site roster (e.g., identifying organizations that are no longer volunteer caregiving sites).



### Acknowledgements

A special thank you is extended to Tammy I. Glenn (Executive Director of the NVCN) and Kaylin Krawczyk (Director of Member Services for the NVCN) for their ongoing commitment, guidance, and support for this project and for the work they do on behalf of care recipients across the US.



# Toward a More Age -Friendly Santa Paula through Service- and Research-Focused Class Projects



**Faculty/Course:** Ronald W. Berkowsky, HLTH 499 (Senior Capstone Project)

**Community Partner:** Santa Paula Department of Parks and Recreation

## Background

On July 2, 2025, the city of Santa Paula adopted its Master Plan for Aging (MPA), a multisector strategic plan to better coordinate aging services in the city.

In Spring 2026, students from a section of HLTH 315 (*Public Policy for Older Adults*) and a section of HLTH 499 (*Senior Capstone Project*) collaborated with the Santa Paula Department of Parks and Recreation on service- and research-related projects tied to the MPA designed to create a more age-friendly city.



**Santa Paula  
Master Plan  
for Aging**

*A Blueprint  
for Building a  
Santa Paula  
that is Age  
and Disability  
Friendly*

## HLTH 315 Projects

The Santa Paula MPA includes 75 recommendations on ways the city can better address local elder needs – these recommendations cover topics related to housing, health, engagement, caregiving, and finances.

In Spring 2026, HLTH 315 self-selected into teams and designed projects to address an MPA recommendation.

Examples of projects include: creation of elder-friendly technology classes to enhance digital literacy, drafting of multilingual messaging on elder-friendly disaster-preparedness, creation of video-educational materials on elder financial mistreatment and scams, and creation of a caregiving workshop.

Projects are in various stages of development, with some being piloted at the Santa Paula Senior Center – all projects will be formally presented to the Department of Parks and Recreation in the last week of the semester.

Class roster: Natalia Arellano, Tania Avila Almazo, Edward Avila, Natalie Becerra, Jorge Boyzo, Karime Calles, Audrey Childress, Ryan Corado, Astrid Cruz Lemus, Benny Davis, Ashley Enriquez, Briseyda Flores, Cierra Garfield, Iris Hernandez, Soren Jacobsen, Gracie Lake, Priscilla Lemus, Jennifer Morales, Sarahi Olivares, Jazel Pasion, Lorraine Erica Punto, Michelle Rodriguez, Shea Sadowsky, Emma Shider, Warren Soo Hoo, Angela Soto, and Elena Villagomez

**Spotlight on  
Community -  
Based Research  
2026**

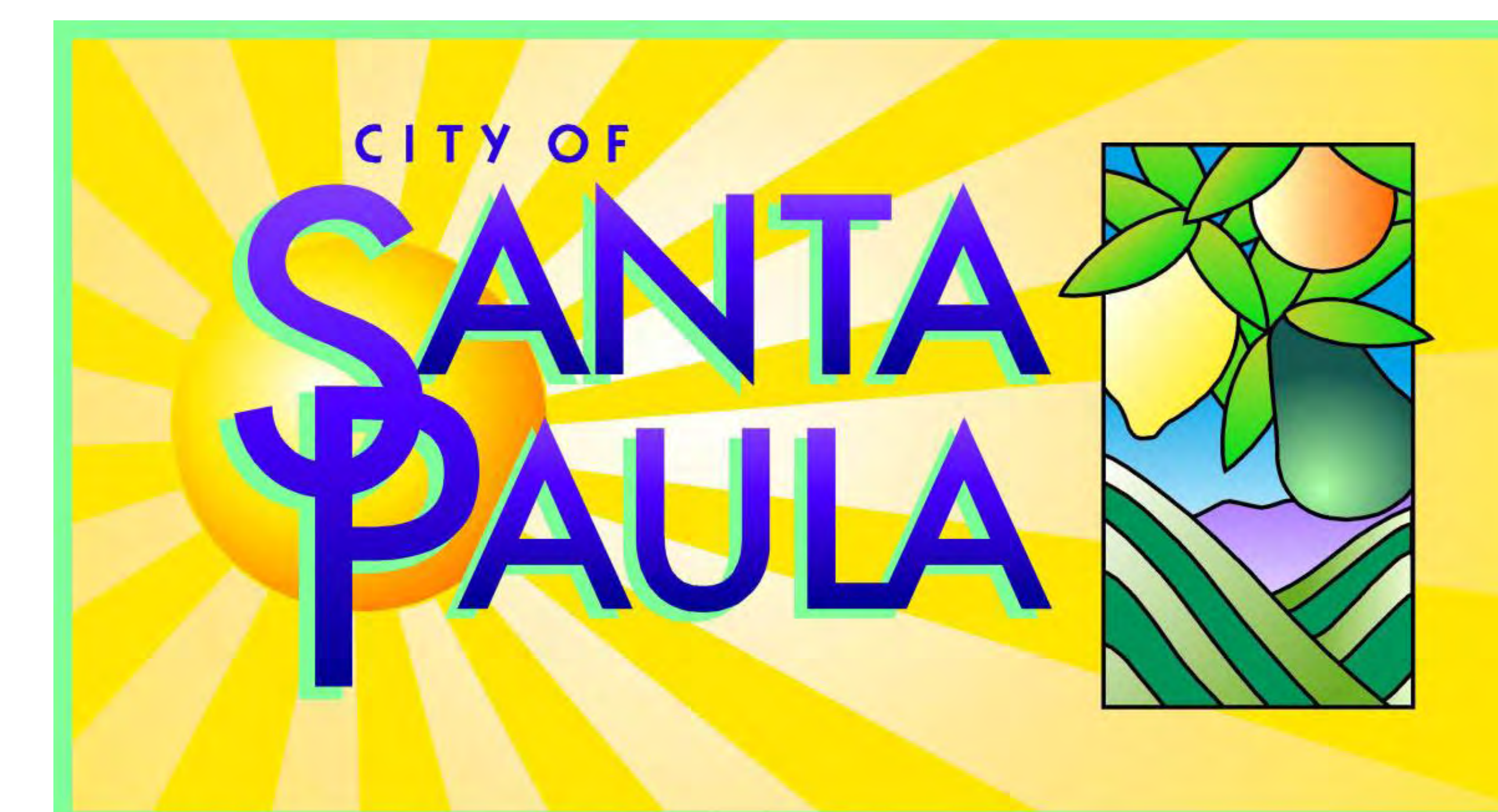
## HLTH 499 Project

As the HLTH 315 students designed their projects to address MPA recommendations, a team of Health Sciences Capstone students concurrently designed a research project to collect data from the HLTH 315 students on their experiences in completing their projects.

The Department of Parks and Recreation was interested in this research because of the potential to provide guidance on future collaborations with CSUCI students (or with students from local community colleges and high schools).

The research project was submitted and approved by the IRB – data collection will occur during one of the final HLTH 315 classes of the semester (with data being collected in person through paper-pencil surveys and an online Qualtrics survey).

Research team: Hannah Ann Nicole Binuluan, Deysy Cabrera Tobon, Cesar Gonzalez Mojica, Izzy Mendoza, Gabriela Zamora, and Miranda Zendejas



## Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank Michael Schouten at the Santa Paula Department of Parks and Recreation for his guidance and assistance with the described projects.

# Assessing Stakeholder Perspectives on the Change of Management of the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging

**Student Research Team:** Ryan Corado, Naomi Flores, Whitney Harchanko, Jacob Huff, Adelynn Piper, and Valerie Zavala

**Faculty/Course:** Ronald W. Berkowsky, HLTH 499 (Senior Capstone Project)

**Community Partner:** Ventura County Aging Services Coalition



## Background

The Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) coordinates and provides services designed to enhance the lives of older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers - these services include meal deliveries, fall prevention programs, transportation programs, and more.

Management of VCAAA services currently falls under the Ventura County Human Services Agency (HSA), but the HSA announced in November 2025 its intention to relinquish control of the VCAAA to a yet-to-be-named nonprofit.

Leaders in aging care and community members voiced concern about this transition due to a lack of transparency in the HSA's decision-making and due to questions surrounding continuity of services.

In response, a coalition of concerned stakeholders has banded together to collect data on models most appropriate for aging services in Ventura County and to collect data on community concerns surrounding the transition.

A team of Health Sciences Capstone students have partnered with this coalition to collect data specifically to assess community perspectives and concerns surrounding the VCAAA transition.

## Focus and Methods

This project uses interviews to generate qualitative data that will be used to assess community perspectives and concerns regarding the transition of the VCAAA from county control.

Objectives for the research focus on identifying risks correlated with the relinquishment of county control, including service continuity, operational capacity, designation loss, lack of transparency, and fiscal costs.

Interviews are conducted virtually and last 45-60 minutes; as a community-engaged project, recruitment has been facilitated by the Ventura County Aging Services Coalition (with additional assistance from the Advisory Council of the VCAAA).

Interviewees include members of the Ventura County Aging Services Coalition, members of the VCAAA Advisory Council, and concerned citizens that sit in leadership positions in Ventura County aging services.



**Spotlight on  
Community -  
Based Research  
2026**

## Status

After receiving IRB approval for conducting interviews in March 2026, interviews began at the end of the month and will continue through the end of the semester.

To date, 7 interviews have been conducted with prominent leaders in aging care in Ventura County.

***“We're not stupid, and it feels like they are assuming that we are, that we will just take their word for it. It doesn't add up.”***

-Interviewee, discussing frustrations with the HSA

While data is still being collected, themes immediately emerged regarding frustrations with the HSA and a lack of transparency in their decision-making, inconsistencies in messaging (e.g., inconsistent arguments regarding county budget issues), and the county's failure to ensure continuity of services.

This research is significant because of Ventura County's rapidly expanding elder population, many of which are vulnerable (they live alone or belong to minority group).

Once data collection and analysis is complete, the research team intends to share their findings with whatever organization takes over the VCAAA to best prepare them in specifically addressing community concerns.

## Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank all Ventura County Aging Services Coalition members, as well as the Advisory Council for the VCAAA, in their guidance and assistance with this project.





# Con Mucho Amor: Keeping Our Home Language Alive

Angelica Arenas Hernandez  
ECS 635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

This project focuses on supporting families of Dual Language Learners (DLLs) by encouraging them to maintain their home language and view bilingualism as a strength, support identity and confidence and increase family engagement.

The need for this project was identified through a conversation with the program director of Friends of Fieldworkers. It highlights several key concerns, including the decline in home language use among children, children feeling embarrassed to speak their home language, limited literacy support at home, and a need for accessible bilingual resources for families.

### Goals

- Encourage families to maintain home language
- Promote bilingualism as a strength
- Support identity and confidence Increase family engagement

### Read-aloud

- Welcome & present
- Read-aloud: Con Mucho Amor
- Discussion (family & language)
- Family sharing
- Book & paleta distribution

- ### Project Activities
- Introduction and welcome presentation
  - Read-aloud, Con Mucho Amor & Mi Propio Cuartito books (Opportunity for families and children to read)
  - Passed out flyers with information to support language at home
  - Discussions and questions about language
  - Distribution of Bilingual books for families and their children
  - Distribution of Paletas
  - Children used watercolors and drew pictures for their loved ones.

### Materials

- Con Mucho Amor book/ Mi Propio Cuartito book
- Bilingual books for families
- Watercolor paint and heart-shaped paper
- Visual presentations
- Paletas (popsicles)

- ### Project Participants
- **Student lead:** Angelica Arenas Hernandez
  - **Community partner:** Friends of Fieldworkers, Inc. (Laundromat-based community service)
  - **Contact:** Christine Cardona, Director of programming
  - **Participants:** Dual Language Learners (DLLs)
  - The families' home languages include Spanish, Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Amuzgo

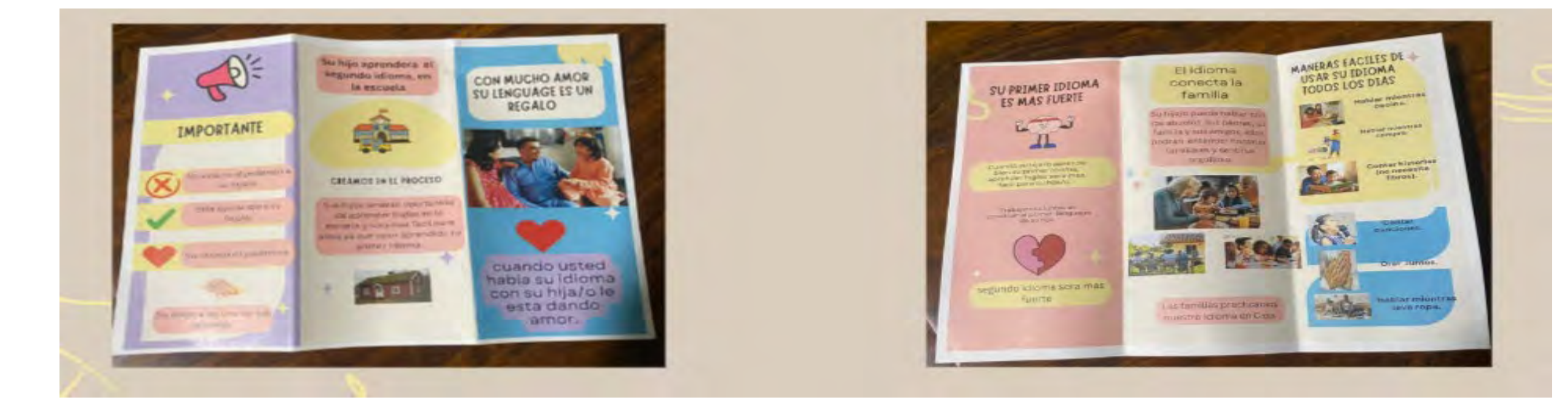
### Community Partner

- Friends of Fieldworkers, Inc.
- Laundromat (Laundry Love)
- Dual Language Learners (DLLs)
- Spanish-speaking families
- Spanish-speaking families
- Mixteco-speaking families

### Promote bilingual reading & home language use

- Families participate in bilingual reading
- Children respond in home language
- Families learn about benefits of bilingualism
- Families practice language strategies

- ### Service-Learning Outcomes
- Gained confidence working with families outside classrooms
  - Learned to meet people where they are
  - Built meaningful relationships
  - Being present makes a difference
  - Positive impact on families and children



- ### Best Practices Elements
- Builds language confidence
  - Strengthens identity
  - Supports home language development
  - Encourages family engagement
  - Promotes bilingualism as a strength

### Painting for our love ones

Children painted something for their families on what made them happy, such as their families, favorite colors, happy faces and rainbows.

- "Mira mi familia"
- "Un arcoiris"
- "Mi papa manejando"
- "Un corazon feliz con forma de arcoiris"
- "Por que los colores me hacen feliz"
- "Mi mami y yo"
- "Mi familia pero no mi papa no tengo uno"



# Multilingual Library at TLC Preschool

Amber Newman • ECS 635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners



## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project

With the linguistic diversity of our school community there was a need to acknowledge and support our dual language learning students and their families.

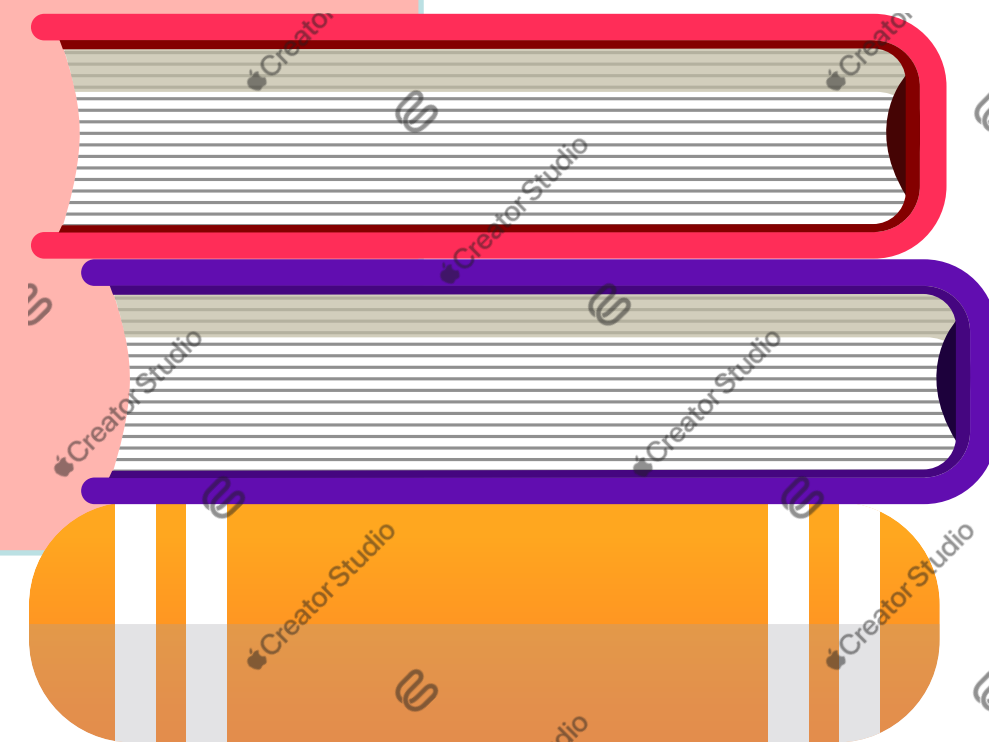
Hello TLC Families,

I will be working on a project here at school to create a multilingual library as part of my Master's Program in Early Childhood Studies at CSUCI. My goal is to foster language development among our dual language learners and ensure that our book collection reflects the diversity of our TLC Preschool community. To get started, I would love your input: please share any languages that you speak at home or in your family. If you have any recommendations or resources, I would appreciate your thoughts!

I really appreciate any help you can provide.

Best,

Amber Newman



## Project Activities

To create a Multilingual Library that reflects the linguistic diversity of our school community. The library provides books for the children and families to check out, engage with at home, and return, bridging home language practices and school to support children's language development. In order to continuously reflect the student population a home language questionnaire will be added to enrollment forms, to ensure every student's home language is represented in the library.

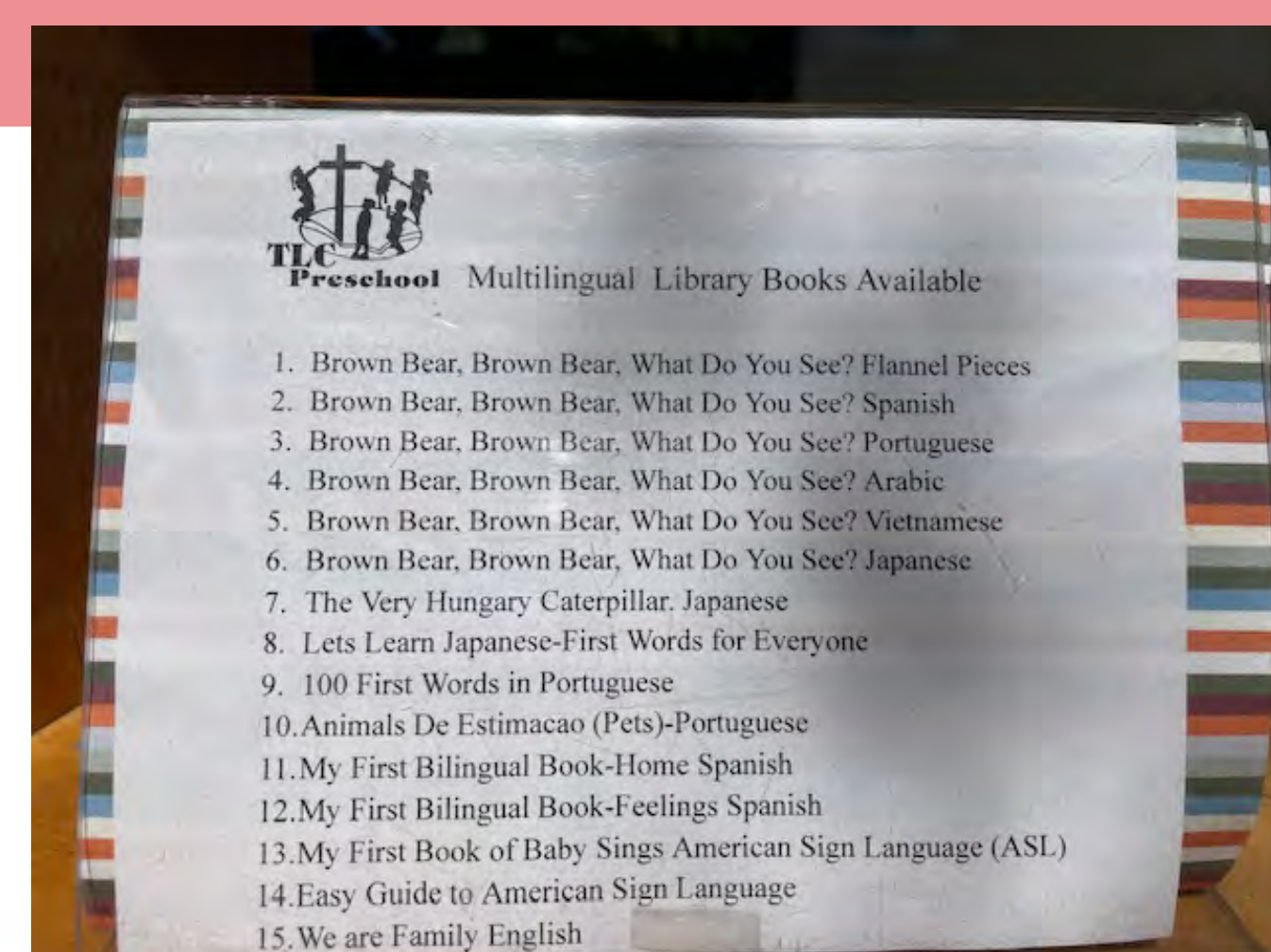
## Service-Learning Outcomes

The Multilingual Library affirms cultural and linguistic identity. Providing books that reflect home language frames bilingualism as an asset through understanding that home language supports English language development. Representing the linguistic diversity of the school community, providing books that are both mirrors and windows for the students.

## Project Participants

TLC is a small private half-day preschool in Ventura. There are four classrooms serving children from age two to five years old. Currently the students enrolled at TLC, represent a rich diversity of languages including Arabic, Farsi, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. In addition teachers speak German and Swedish.

This service learning project is aimed to celebrate the linguistic diversity within our school community and bridge literacy practices between home and school.



Recognition for  
**Best Practices**  
in Service  
Learning  
2026



## Best Practices Elements

### Supporting Dual Language Learners.

Children and families benefit from a Multilingual Library, linguistic representation and culturally affirming materials. The ability to check out books enhances families literacy practices and connects home and school for the children.

### As a Resource

A Multilingual Library benefits a center by establishing a sustainable resource library that supports language development and family literacy practices for linguistically diverse students, as well as monolingual students.





## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

My service-learning project was a professional development session with ten teachers from Catalyst Kids-La Escuelita. The aim of the professional development that I created was to support educators with advocating for dual language inclusive practices and to provide them with adequate tools and resources that could guide them to meet the individual needs of dual language learners and their families.

After meeting with my community partner the site supervisor of La Escuelita we identified that there was a need for appropriate DLL practices that support dual language learners. As well as providing the teachers with strategies and adequate approaches that target the needs of dual language learners (DLLs).

The overall goal of my project was for teachers to gain information on how to adequately serve DLLs, to gain information on how to create partnerships with families, to reflect and affirm children's languages in their environment, and to be able to support DLLs while using appropriate strategies that meet their individual needs.

## Project Activities

My participants engaged in a 35-minute professional development session in the preschool center of La Escuelita. My session included a presentation with slides that held information regarding instructional approaches, how to create partnerships with families of DLLs, and how to adequately meet the need of DLLs. During the session I also provided handouts that highlighted key points from my session which would serve as a reference for teachers to revisit as needed.

The participants had the opportunity to share what strategies they currently have in place that support DLLs, how much they know about DLLs, how they currently support the families of DLLs, and what they hope to learn throughout our professional development session serving as a reflective activity.

## Service-Learning Outcomes

A few of the outcomes of my service-learning project was that the participating teachers acknowledged how important it is for children to maintain their home languages. From the professional development session many teachers found new ideas that they could take away and implement in their classrooms to best support DLLs. The teachers also acknowledged an importance for collaborating with families of DLLs to meet the need of their children in their programs.

With this being my first experience with a service-learning project I felt empowered through this project as I was making meaning of my academic learning and using that to empower other educators in improving their practice with supporting dual language learners (DLLs).



## Project Participants

My community partner for my service learning was the preschool of Catalyst Kids - La Escuelita, located in the community of La Colonia in the city of Oxnard. My participating class was a group of 9 teachers from La Escuelita,

## Best Practices Elements

One aspect of my project that I think would be useful for colleagues to focus on when creating their own service-learning projects would be to consider the needs of the community partner. I believe that it all starts by communicating what the need is to then create a meaningful and collaborative experience that is beneficial to those that are apart of a service-learning project.

**EARLY EDGE CALIFORNIA** | Key Findings from the First 5 California Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot Study

First 5 California and American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a pilot study to identify and promote effective strategies that early learning and care programs can use to support DLLs and their families. See <https://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org> for key takeaways of the study.

**GENERAL DLL INFORMATION**

- Nearly all California young children (3-5 years old) are either DLLs and many programs serve children from a wide range of languages.

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

- More home language use in early learning is associated with positive academic and language outcomes.
- Using a classroom where the home language is used regularly does not have any negative impact on English skills for DLLs.
- Using home words or phrases in home languages in the classroom supports vocabulary and oral language skills.
- Use of home phrases and songs in the home language by teachers helps to create a more inclusive environment.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

- When families receive positive messaging about bilingualism from their child's Early Learning Program, they are more likely to participate in home language activities.
- Providing home language materials (DLL) materials in home languages is more engaging when serving children with diverse languages.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- When teachers receive DLL-focused professional development they are more likely to use instructional and family engagement strategies that support DLLs.
- There is a consistent need and desire from teachers for more professional development to support DLLs and their families.

**EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM ENROLLMENT**

- DLLs benefit from programmatic and environmental considerations in Early Learning programs.

[www.earlyedgecalifornia.org](https://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org)

**My Service-Learning Project**

Tools for Educators Serving Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

ECS 635 Advocacy for Dual Language Learners

Presented By: Evelyn Morado



**Tip Sheet** | **Creating Environments That Include Children's Home Languages and Cultures**

Physical environments in early childhood settings should reflect and include all children's home languages and cultures.

What can I do?	What are some examples of this?	Why should I do it? It...
Use environmental print labels, signs, posted in the children's home languages, as well as in English, if appropriate.	Add labels to enhance the print environment of the classroom. Don't make sure they do not overcomplicate it.	Demonstrates respect for children and families' home languages.
If the children speak several languages, consider use environmental print in home languages. For example, use language that describes language that children use to pronounce the language(s) used to label in the community.	Help children make connections between English and their home languages.	Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom.
Translate such words as "welcome" into all languages, and be sensitive about how that to language one and for each.	Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom.	Helps children and families understand what is happening in the classroom.
Use photographs, pictures, graphics, and other visuals to support English labels and signs.	Includes visuals with labels alongside words. For example, place a picture of a person next to the label "teacher".	Allows children and families to make use of the labels and signs even if they do not speak or read the language.
For classroom activities, visual representations of the activities. For example, add a graphic of an open book to the children's classroom shelves that has "read about this".	Includes visuals with labels alongside words. For example, place a picture of a person next to the label "teacher".	Allows children and families to make use of the labels and signs even if they do not speak or read the language.

**Tip Sheet** | **Including Children's Home Languages and Cultures**

Learning, talking, and engaging with children in their home languages and about their cultures can become a rewarding and important part of classroom life.

What can I do?	What are some examples of this?	Why should I do it? It...
If you don't speak children's home languages, learn to do "survival words" in the child's home language and use them from the children's very first day.	Conversations with the family can help identify terms and phrases important to children, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth</li> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cuddling</li> <li>• Drink/Thirsty</li> <li>• Sleep</li> <li>• Hurt</li> <li>• Help</li> <li>• Bathroom</li> </ul>	Helps children feel more comfortable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps children begin to communicate basic needs.</li> </ul>
Invite families and other speakers of the home languages into the classroom to actively use their languages.	Babies hear lullabies, rhymes, or songs in their home languages. Older children have stories, songs, rhymes, or read-alouds in their home language. Children of all ages have "conversations" with families or other speakers about baby babbling back and forth with an adult or older child using and answering questions about the class garden, for example.	Demonstrates respect for children and families' home languages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps children who are dual language learners feel more included in the classroom.</li> <li>• Helps families understand what is happening in the classroom.</li> <li>• Strengthens home-center connections.</li> <li>• Exposes children who do not speak a family's home language to a new language and culture.</li> </ul>
Children of all ages interact with a variety of home language while engaging in classroom activities, including looking at books and objects, participating in center activities, or joining dramatic play.	Children of all ages interact with a variety of home language while engaging in classroom activities, including looking at books and objects, participating in center activities, or joining dramatic play.	Children of all ages interact with a variety of home language while engaging in classroom activities, including looking at books and objects, participating in center activities, or joining dramatic play.

# Seeing Through Strengths: Learning Stories as Powerful Assessments for Diverse Early Learners

Ana Maria Hernandez • ECS 635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners



## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

This project provides professional development for early childhood educators on implementing Learning Stories as a strength-based assessment tool.

At the University Children's Center, UCSB, administration and teachers identified a need for ongoing training and support in using Learning Stories, especially to better serve dual language learners.

### Goals:

- Strengthen teacher understanding of Learning Stories
- Improve observation, documentation, and reflective teaching
- Promote culturally responsive and inclusive practices
- Ensure consistent use of Learning Stories across classrooms

## Project Participants

**Student Lead:** Ana Maria Hernandez

**Community Partner:** University Children's Center, UCSB

**Contact:** Marina Nolte, Program Coordinator

**Participants:** Early childhood educators (Infant, Toddler programs)

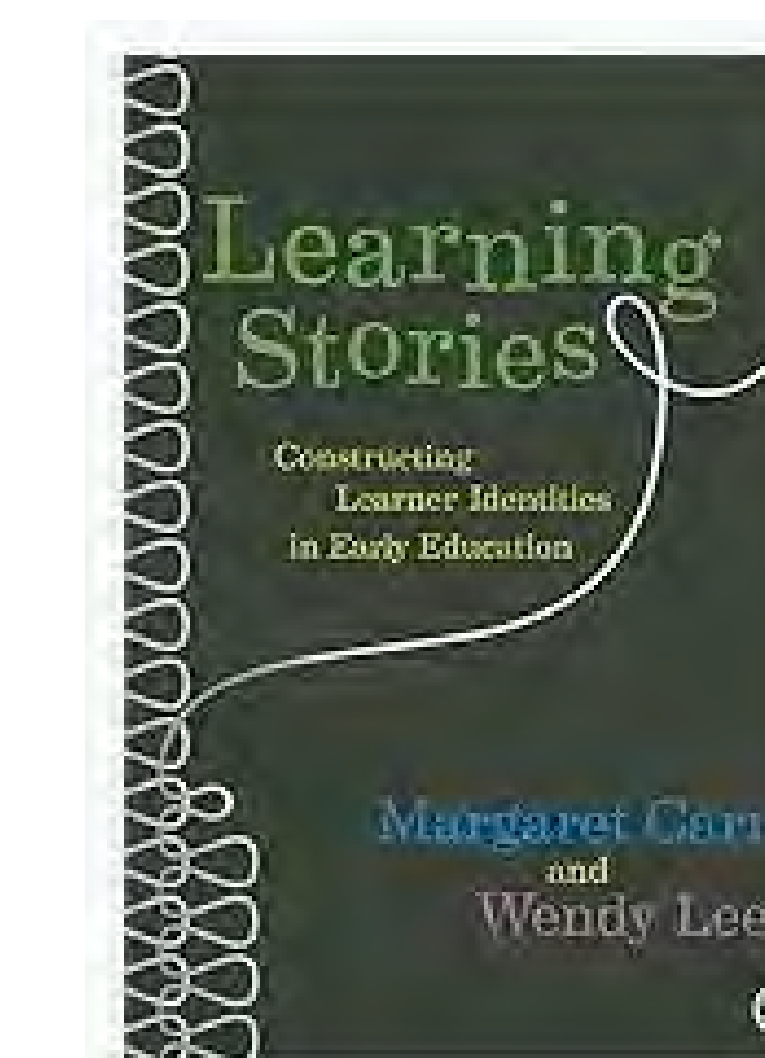
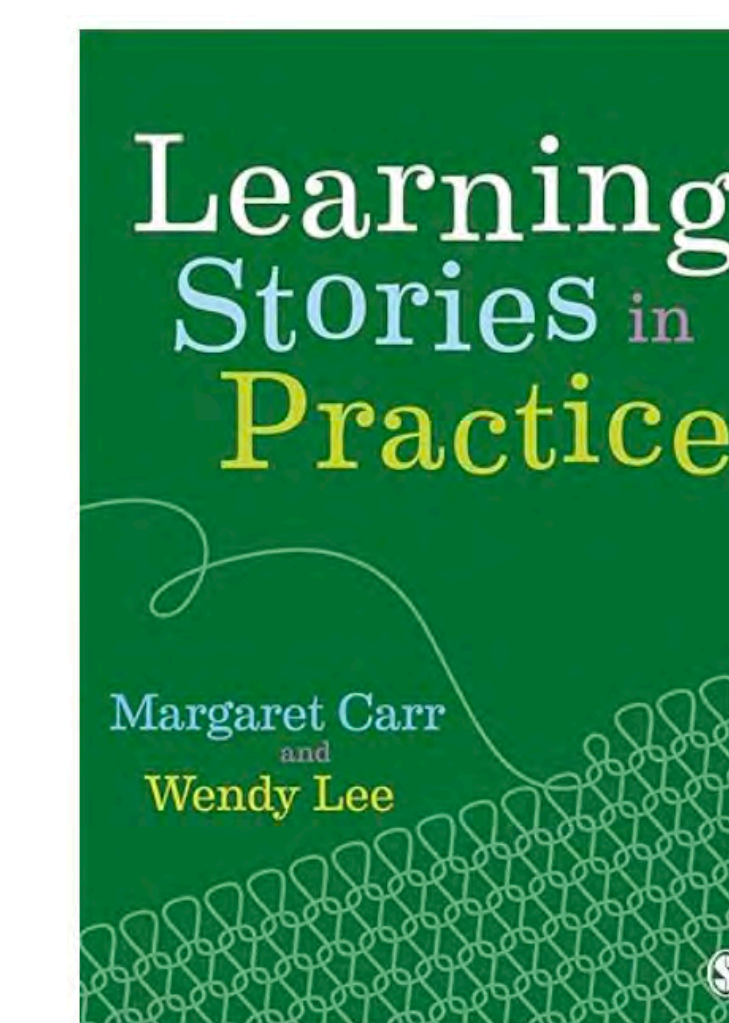
## Service-Learning Outcomes

### Service Impact:

- Increased teacher confidence in writing Learning Stories
- Improved quality and consistency of child documentation
- Stronger family engagement through narrative-based assessment
- More inclusive practices for diverse learners

### Student Learning:

- Applied Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
- Deepened understanding of dual language development
- Strengthened skills in facilitation, leadership, and reflective practice
- Promoted asset-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy



## Project Activities

- Introduction to Learning Stories and the updated CDE California Infant/Toddler Framework
- Teaching Learning Stories components: Notice, Recognize, Analyze, Respond
- Modeling a real Learning Story example
- Highlighting culturally sustaining and inclusive practices
- Facilitating discussion on dual language learners support strategies
- Inviting participation in the next step: An ongoing inquiry group on site

## Best Practices Elements

### Best Practices & Key Takeaways

- Strength-Based Approach: Focus on children's abilities, not deficits
- Cultural Responsiveness: Honor home languages and identities
- Teacher Support: Ongoing inquiry groups to sustain professional growth
- Reflection: Critical for reducing bias and improving practice
- Family Partnerships: Learning Stories create meaningful connections between school and home

### Why It Matters

Learning Stories transform assessment into a powerful, inclusive, and human-centered practice helping educators see children through their strengths while building stronger relationships with families and communities.

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# “Celebrando Dual Language learners”

Lizbeth Bello-Torres • ECS 635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

My service-learning advocacy project is called, “Celebrando Dual Language Learners”. A project centered on advocacy for equitable learning experiences using strength-based framework and connects theory, research and community-ended practices. I partnered up with an early childhood program located in Santa Barbara, Orfaea Children’s Center at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. I identified a need to ensure that educators feel constantly supported and equipped with the necessary resources to effectively meet the needs of young dual language learners. This support is especially critical during key components of the daily routines, including caregiving routines, transitions, song and story time, and play-based learning experiences. Additionally, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen cultural responsiveness within the classroom by intentionally incorporating and celebrating diverse cultures. This can be achieved through the integration of culturally representative artifacts, visuals, literature, and traditions that reflect the backgrounds of the children and families served. In response to these needs, the goal for this service-learning advocacy project is to celebrate/ celebrar young dual language learners and multilingual children by bringing their cultures into the classroom, honoring their home languages, and supporting their cultural identities in a meaningful and authentic way.

## Project Participants

Community Partner: Orfaea Children’s Center at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital  
Participants: Infant/Toddler Teachers & Admin.  
Student: Lizbeth Bello-Torres

## Project Activities

First, I identified these needs through informal classroom observations and conversations with teachers. During these discussions, we discussed their experiences with reading, singing and speaking different languages. Through this process, I was able to identify dual language learners and multilingual children in the infant and toddler classrooms. Next, I research relevant theories of bilingual development, second language acquisition and culturally responsive pedagogy to inform my advocacy project. I also applied reflective practice by actively listening to my colleagues and considering ways to help them feel more confident and comfortable supporting dual language learners as well as multilingual children birth to age three. To support this goal, I developed a PowerPoint presentation for infant and toddler teachers. I gathered the teachers, presented the material, and provided a hard copy of the content. The presentation included opportunities for questions, discussions, and sharing personal experiences. Following the presentation, I continued conversation with several teachers, many of whom expressed feeling more supported and recognized the importance of fostering language development during these early years. Together, we explored strategies to strengthened the language domain, engage families in conversation about their home language, and honor the diverse backgrounds of the children and families we serve.

## Service-Learning Outcomes

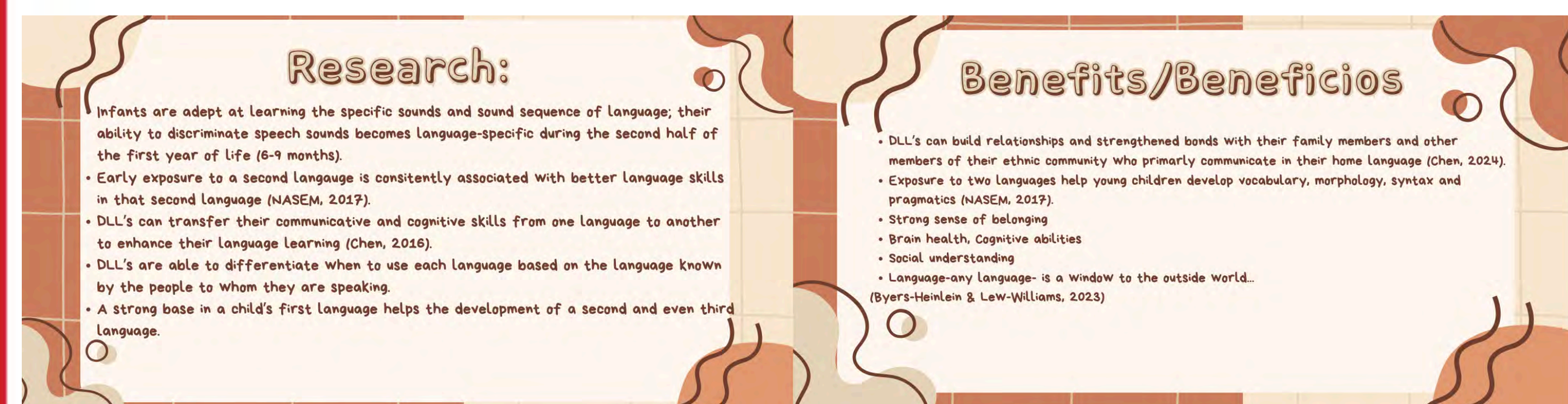
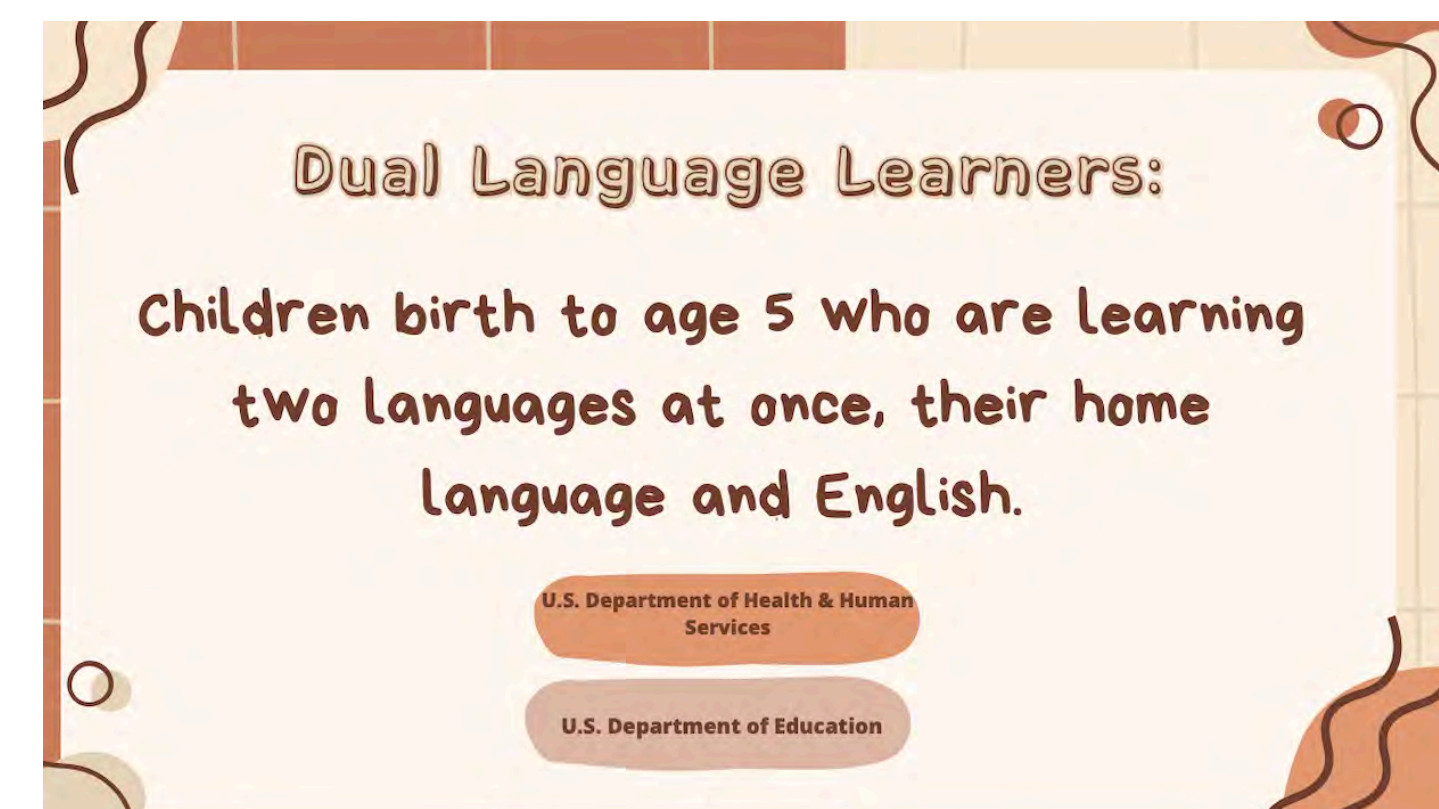
Benefits to Community Partner: Through community partnership, this project benefits early childhood teachers by empowering them to advance equity and create inclusive learning opportunities through a strength-based framework grounded in theory, research, and community-informed practices.

Benefits to Dual Language Learners & Families: Promotes a sense of belonging and affirms children’s identities while strengthening family partnerships through ongoing communication, active engagement, and mutual respect.

Benefits to My Learning: Gain a deeper understaffing of effective strategies for supporting teachers in delivering high quality care and high quality language development teaching. Identifying and implementing additional approaches to support teachers, children and families within the center and responding to needs as they arise. Additionally, strengthened my ability to assess needs and design action plans to address identified gaps.

## Best Practices Elements

The most important aspect of my project that I would encourage colleagues to focus on is intentionality grounded in personal reflection and building equity. For me, this project is deeply personal and meaningful. As an immigrant child who did not have the opportunity to attend preschool and who later grew up as an ESL student, I experienced firsthand the challenges and missed opportunities that exists in the educational system. Those experiences drive my passion to advocate for rich learning that can happen in every child’s early years when equity, inclusivity, social justice and intention are prioritized. I believe that strong service-learning projects begin with reflection, understanding the needs of your community and to be willing to collaborate and grow with colleagues. Ultimately, every child deserves the right to play, to learn and to be celebrated for who they are. It is our responsibility to be knowledgeable, resourceful and reflective to ensure we dual language learners are respected, valued and given the opportunities to succeed.



# Supporting Dual Language Learners through Bilingual Stories

Melissa Avila Course: ECS-635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

Describe the projects, along with the community needs and project goals. ...

Community Partner: MOEES Meiners Oaks Early Education School and A Place to Grow Preschool.

Setting Description and DLL Context: The type of program is a preschool and Tk program. The age number of the children consists of 2-5 year old's and the number of DLL's are about 5-10 children who come from another language other than English.

Identified need: The specific need that I identified with dual language learners in consultation with community partner is how much low representation we have with many of the children in our school and how little family engagement she has noticed between the preschool and the school. By doing the Service learning project I am not only bringing more representation of the children's culture into the program but I am inviting families to participate in family engagement experience where they read books in their home language to children during this event.

## Project Participants

Identify the participating class, and community partners. ...

Participating Class:

- Dragonfly Classroom: Ages 3-4 year old's
- Monarch Classroom: Ages 4-5 year old's
- Caterpillar Classroom: Ages 2-3 year old's
- Ladybug Classroom: Ages 3-5 year old's

Community Partner: MOEES Meiners Oaks Early Education School and A Place to Grow Preschool



## Project Activities

What did your students actually do?

Activities done during the service Learning Project:

- The families were invited to sign up for the bilingual storytelling day and were given choices for days, times, and also write down the description of the book and author.
- All the preschool classrooms were invited to participate.
- Two out of the five parents showed up to read different books parent one read a book in English and parent two read the book in Spanish.
- Teachers like myself introduced the service learning project and presented the parents and the parents went up to read the books and also used open-ended questions such as "What do you think will happen?" or "How do you think that made him/her feel?"



## Service-Learning Outcomes

What are the outcomes (or expected outcomes, for ongoing projects) – in terms of both service and learning?

The Impact the storytelling had for the dual language learners in the school was the importance of bringing families into the preschool to bring their languages and share them through books that represent the children's culture who are bilingual. Involving families to share books or storytelling in the home language or in both languages helps the children learn from both languages and also feel comfortable in their environment. This will also help the school create more opportunities to celebrate those children who have another language other than English and support more family engagement in our classrooms!

## Best Practices Elements

What is/are the aspect(s) of your project that you think would be most useful for colleagues to focus on in trying to create their own great service-learning projects?

The aspects of my project that I believe will be most useful for my colleagues to focus on in trying to create their own project is the use of materials that I utilized and the Asset-Based approach that I used that focuses on:

- Building on the Funds of Knowledge
- Reframing important missing pieces in the children's education by allowing others to view the children's home language and culture.
- Inviting parents to read brings the school, families together to learn from one another.
- Building a community and partnerships with the parents and the family and celebrate their culture and inviting them to bring books to read for the children in their classroom

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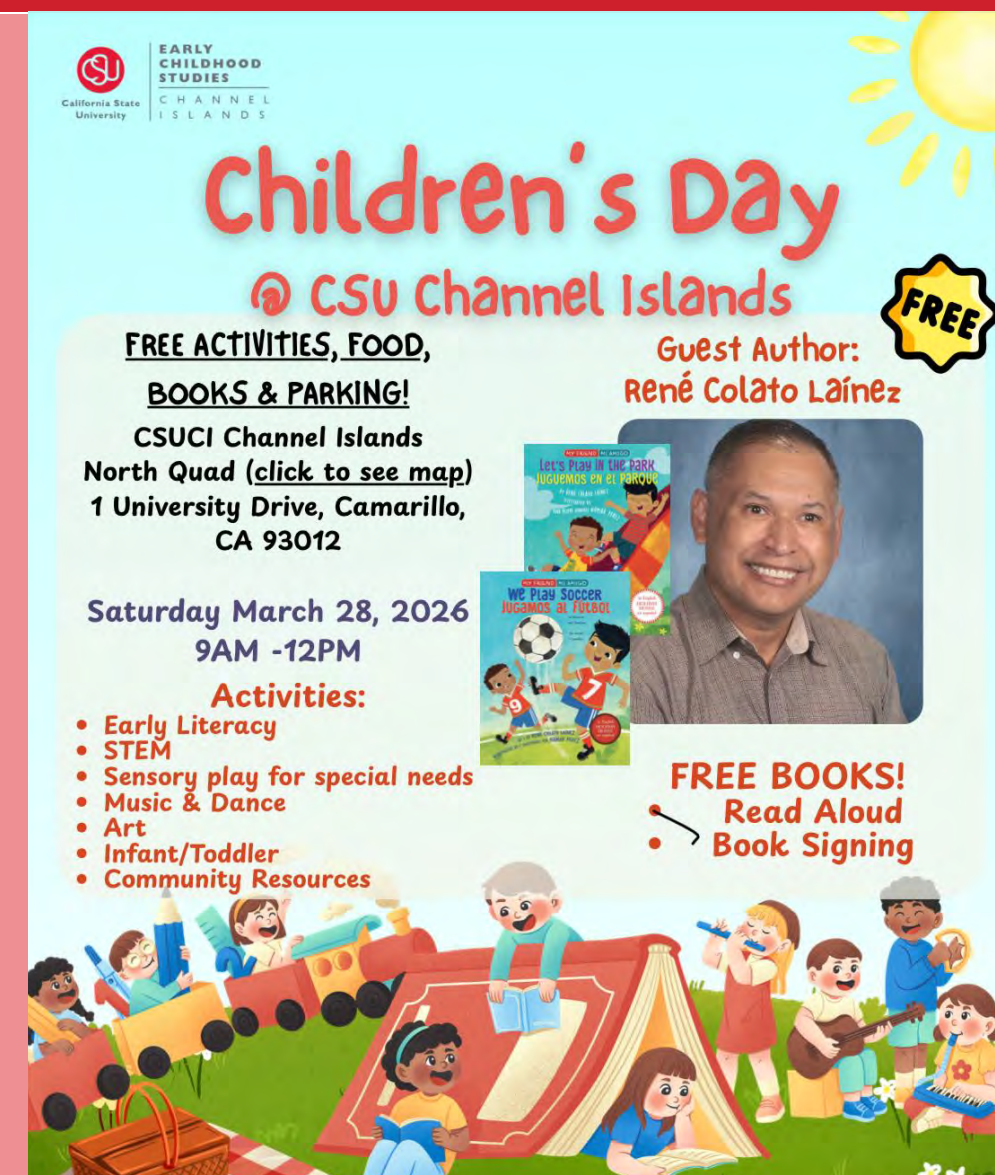
# Pequeños Gigantes: Highlighting the Importance of Early Childhood Education Through CSUCI's Día de los Niños Event

Paola Lopez

ECS 635 Advocacy for Young Dual Language Learners

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

With this service learning project, I supported the CSUCI School of Education's Early Childhood Studies (ECS) program in planning and organizing their annual Día de los Niños Event. I supported by planning activities and a music playlist, creating sign-in forms for guests (guests, volunteers, and community organizations), and supporting in the creation of the event layout that included a read-aloud area for our guest author, Rene Colato Lainez, community organizations, and developmentally appropriate activities for young children and their families. Creating an intentional layout supported our goal of creating an event that fosters an opportunity for families to build partnerships with our campus and community organization, while highlighting the importance of early childhood education.



### Goals:

- Positive experience for community families and organizations to connect
- Children and their families will engage meaningfully with the provided activities and read-aloud
- Emphasize the importance of the early childhood years.

## Project Activities



In this project, participants and guests were encouraged to use the language they are comfortable with while participating in activities that encourage the use of developmental skills (cognitive, language, socioemotional, and motor skills). Families were able to gain an understanding of the role play has in children's learning and development. The activities planned welcomed families as active participants, not just attendees of the event. Volunteers also encouraged families to participate in the activities alongside their children. Overall, the event celebrated the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in our community. Also this event brought together children, families, CSUCI students/faculty/staff, and community organizations in a positive way.

## Service-Learning Outcomes



Diverse families attended the event. Volunteers were able to provide diverse services to the guests in attendance. Volunteers guided families through

activities, and let them know when to make their way towards the read-aloud area. Families sat and listened to the stories our guest author read. Overall, the Dia de los Ninos event was a success! Through this project, we created an environment that fostered families' participation in activities that highlight the idea that play is vital to children's development. Volunteers, mostly ECS undergraduate students, were also provided with the opportunity to practice their skills to have meaningful conversations and build partnerships with families, which will benefit them professionally.

## Project Participants

The participants of this project included:

- Myself
- School of Education/ECS Faculty and Staff
- ECS Undergraduate and Graduate students
- Community Organizations
- Families from the community



## Best Practices Elements



This project was created with careful thought and meaningful reflection, both of which will be useful to anyone trying to create a great service-learning project. Creating a project with meaningful and careful thought is important because it creates a more

engaging project that provides service and learning for all participants. Working with a team is another strategy that can be useful to creating a service-learning project. I had a great privilege of working with Dr. Cortez, ECS Program Chair, and Gissell Toxqui, Early Childhood Studies Support Coordinator. This project could not have been possible without their support and guidance.



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# Supporting Dual Language Learners Through Arabic Language and Cultural Connection

Tyra Rabea • ECS-635

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

### Community Needs:

- Some children had limited confidence using Arabic
- Children felt shy to speak in group settings
- Parents were concerned that Arabic might affect English learning
- There was a need for engaging and interactive learning activities

### Project Goals:

- Support Arabic language development
- Build children's confidence in using Arabic
- Create fun and engaging learning experiences
- Encourage the use of home language at school and at home

## Project Activities

### Activity 1: Storytime

- Arabic story about fruits
- Used pictures and visual supports
- Helped children understand and learn new vocabulary



### Activity 2: Flashcards (Fruits)

- Children named fruits in Arabic
- Visual learning supported understanding
- Encouraged group participation

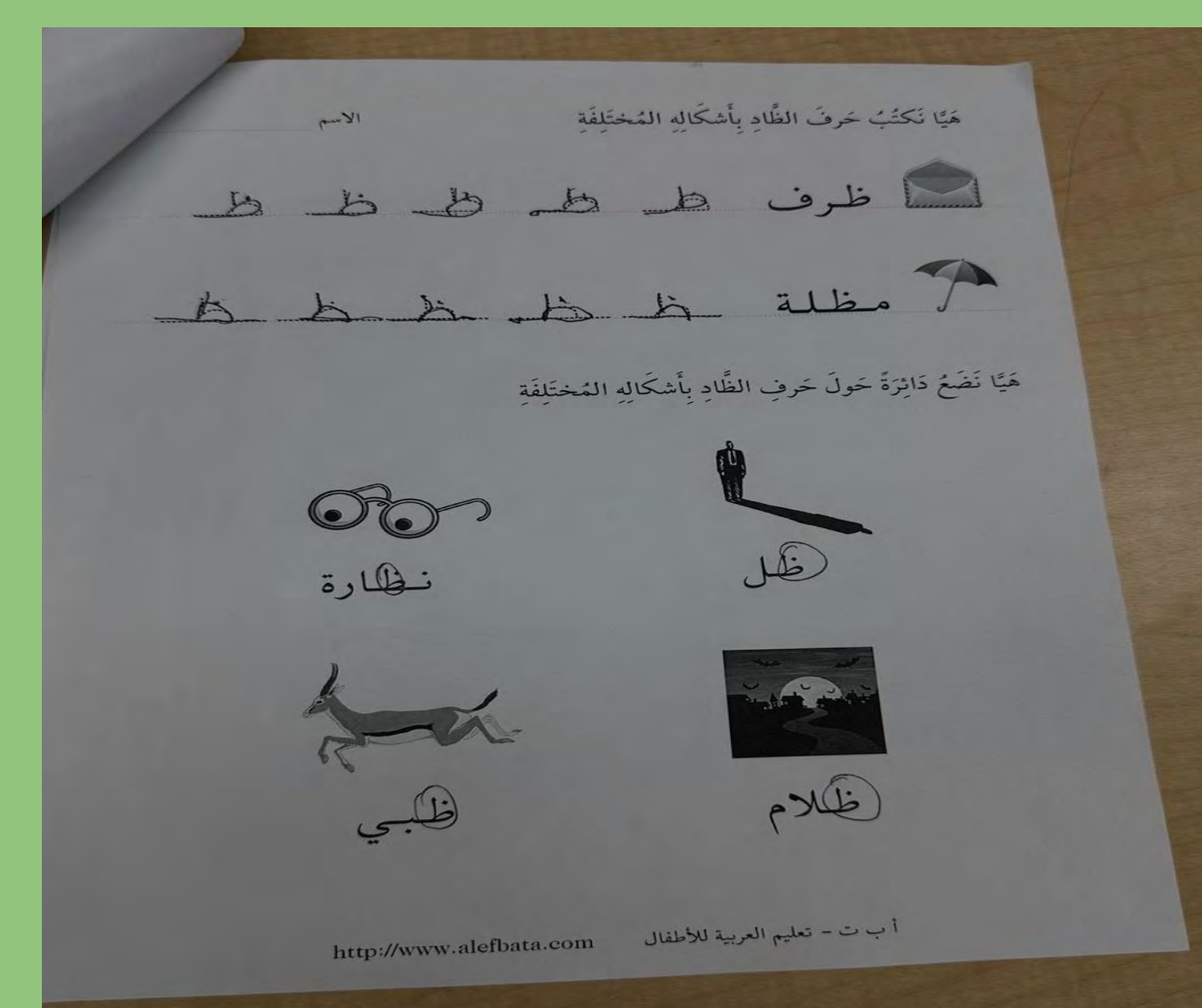


### Activity 3: Matching Game

- Matched pictures with Arabic words
- Hands-on and interactive activity
- Reinforced vocabulary learning

### Activity 4: Song & Letter Recognition

- Arabic song about fruits
- Practiced listening and pronunciation
- Identified and circled Arabic letters



## Service-Learning Outcomes

### For Children:

- Improved Arabic vocabulary
- Increased confidence in speaking
- Greater engagement in activities

### For Families:

- Better understanding of the importance of home language
- Encouraged to use Arabic at home

### For Me (Educator):

- Developed advocacy skills
- Learned how language connects to identity
- Gained experience supporting dual language learners

## Project Participants

- Early childhood students (Arabic speaking children)
- Tyra Rabea (teacher candidate)
- City of Knowledge School
- Families/Parents



## Best Practices Elements

**Bilingualism is an asset**

Children's home language is a strength that supports learning, identity, and confidence.

**Use of visual and hands-on learning strategies**

Activities like pictures, flashcards, and matching games help children understand and stay engaged.

**Creating a supportive and inclusive environment**

Children feel more comfortable participating when they are encouraged and not afraid to make mistakes.

**Connecting learning to culture and identity**

Using familiar topics, like foods and language, helps children feel seen and valued.

**Encouraging family involvement**

Families are supported to use the home language at home and feel confident in their role in their child's learning.

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# Providing DLL Resources for a Toddler Classroom

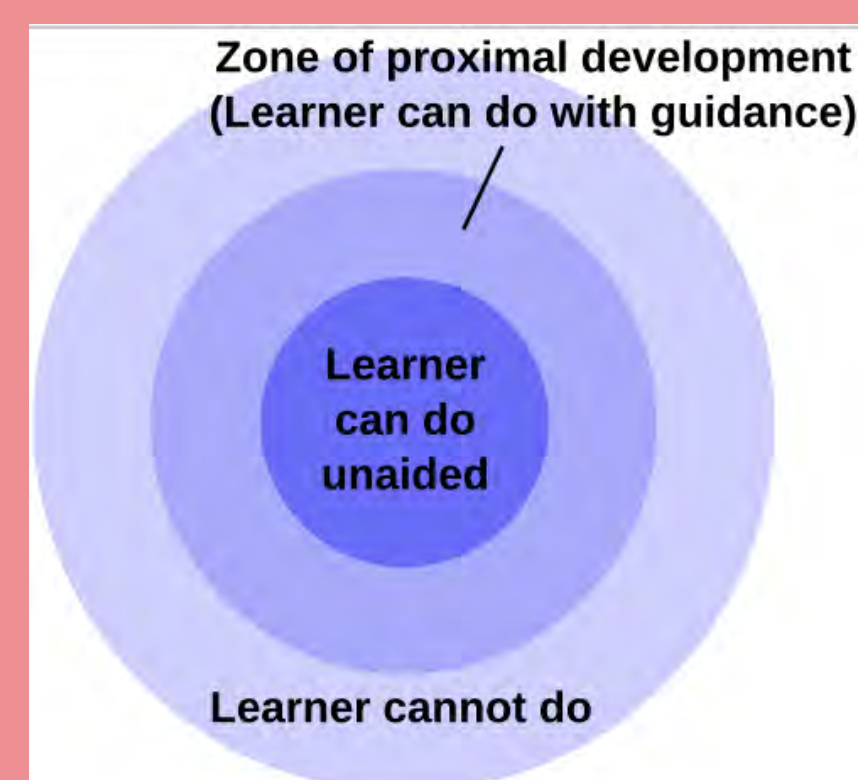
Vance Caruso • ECS 635

## Project Description, Community Needs, & Project Goals

My project focuses on creating resources via master document lists for teachers to use in their classroom to support dual language learners in the classroom. At our center, teachers primarily speak either English or Spanish, aside from one support teacher who speaks Mandarin.

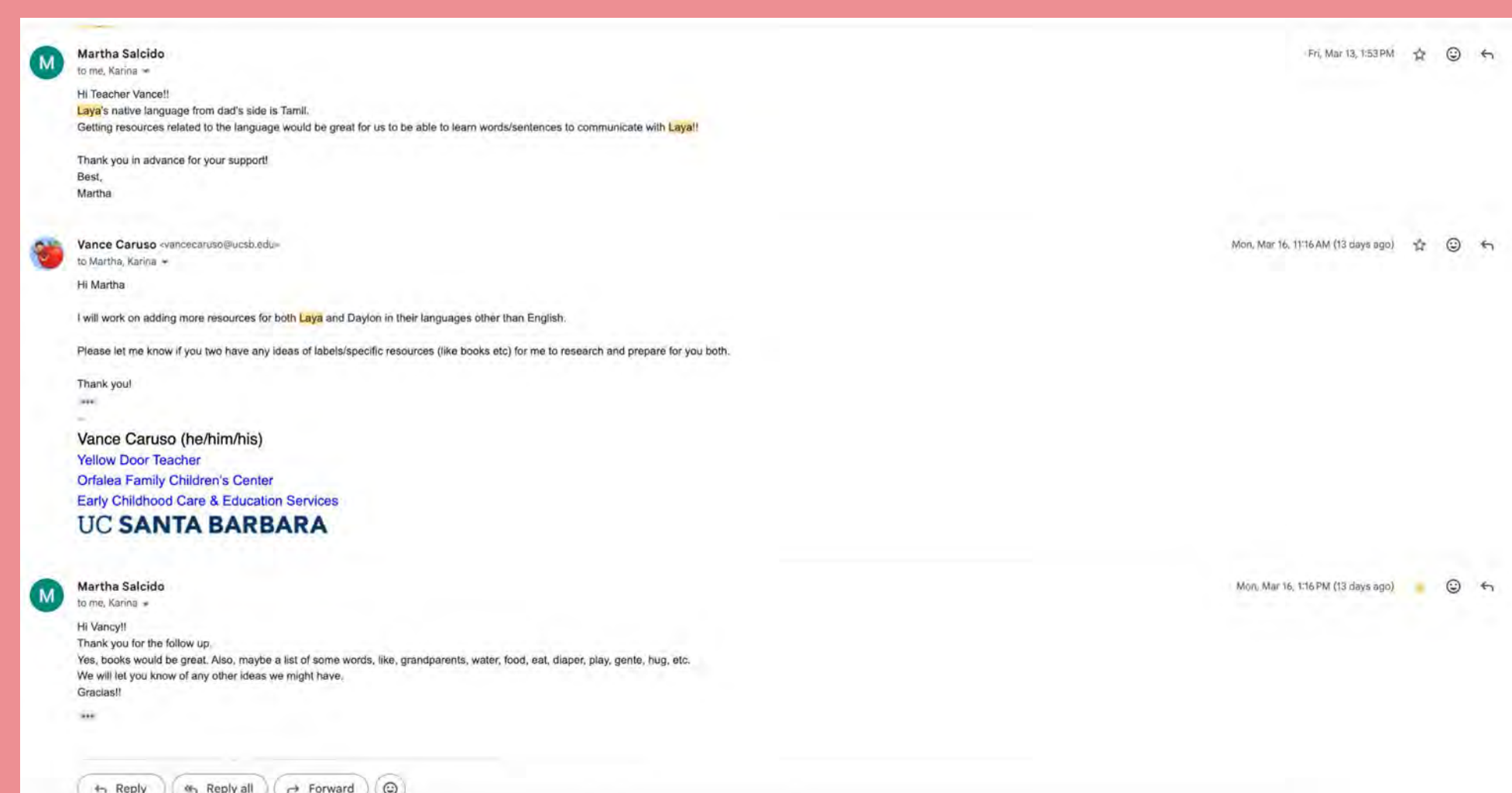
At our center, we currently have dual language learners from a variety of different language backgrounds, aside from English and Spanish. Because of this, many children are given instruction solely in English and Spanish, or ASL in certain classrooms. This poses a deficit in dual language acquisition, and in accordance with Vygotskian Theory, makes the children's teachers unable to act as the more knowledgeable other (MKO) that allows them to scaffold children's language skill acquisition in their home language (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

The end goal of this project was not to create an entire master document for every possible language that children can be learning at home, but rather to set a precedent across the center that teachers can find helpful resources at "arms length" using the internet.



## Project Participants

This service learning project occurred at UCSB's Orfaela Family Children's Center in the Green Door classroom. Green Door is a toddler classroom that serves 13 children ages 2-3+ years of age. In this classroom, multiple children who are DLL's in languages other than English or Spanish have transitioned here from their previous infant room. In particular, two children in this classroom transitioned speaking Tamil (southern Indian language dialect) and Mandarin. Both teachers in this classroom have expressed to me that they do not have adequate resources for either language in their classroom and would greatly appreciate my help in providing them with such.



## Project Activities

For this service learning project, I compiled two "master documents" for both Tamil and Mandarin language resources, book links, and common phrases that can be used as labels alongside English and Spanish

<https://forvo.com/languages/ta/>

Large Online PDF for more detailed Tamil-English language learning and understanding (opens with common phrases)  
<https://www.cmcch-yellora.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2023/11/other-resources-Tamil-Teaching-Adis-Book-9.4.07.pdf>

Words for Grandparents:  
-Grandfather: **Thatha** (தத்தா)  
-Grandmother: **Paati** (பாட்டி)  
-Grandparents: **Thatha Paati** (தத்தா பாட்டி)

**BOOKS**

[Paati's Dosa \(Bilingual English & Tamil Story with Transliteration\)](#) (\$9.99)  
[My First 100 Tamil Words: A Bilingual Picture Book for Kids](#) (\$12.49)

**Mandarin Chinese Language Web Resources**

NAVER English-Chinese Dictionary  
<https://english.dict.naver.com/english-chinese-dictionary/#/main>

Common Mandarin Phrases  
<https://www.chineseclass101.com/key-chinese-phrases/>

English-Chinese Dictionary with audio and pronunciation  
<https://chinese.yabla.com/chinese-english-pinyin-dictionary.php?define=hello>

Words for Parents/Family

After compiling these lists, I distributed them to the teaching team in Green Door and checked in regarding the materials that were offered to them.



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## Service-Learning Outcomes

The outcomes of this project overall were a success. Prior to making and creating the lists I had three goals for this project:

- Prepare a list of resources that the teachers in Green Door can use
- Find resources for both lists that are accessible
- Help teachers in this classroom feel better prepared to serve dual language learners in their classroom

After meeting with the teachers from Green Door after giving them these lists, I was happy to hear that the resources given to them were not only what they asked for, but also supplementary to their classroom resources for their children. By supporting this classroom in my project, they are able to support DLL's with less stress, and thus now have the time to view language diversity as an asset to their classroom as opposed to more work for them to do in their scarce prep times.

The reason I added books and websites for these teachers was not just for me to help them have words that they needed to use daily, but allow them to have access to web resources that could be accessed later in case they needed to be utilized. By doing this, these teachers were able to feel better prepared to further serve their dual language learners

## Best Practices Elements

The main takeaway from this project being successful is that complexity may not always mean superiority in effectiveness. This project involved me simply identifying a need in my immediate environment, and then subsequently seeking to help "fill" this need. By keeping this service learning project simple yet effective, I hoped to have highlighted the power of collaboration within the Early Childhood Education field. We teachers have a vast amount of tasks and duties imposed upon us that we hope to achieve with the highest quality possible, and sometimes collaboration alone can make all the difference in accomplishing this. I hope that this project serves as an example of that very power that simple collaboration amongst professionals can have.

## References (APA 7th Ed.)

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