

STEPPING OUT for COD 2023



Celebrating 40 Years of Funding Student Success



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2023 Spring Intern



Cindy Chavez
2023 Spring Intern



Gianni Olivares
2022 Fall Intern



Isaiah Mora
NEW KESQ EMPLOYEE
2022 Fall Intern



Sara Snow
NEW KESQ EMPLOYEE
2022 Summer Intern

THESE STUDENTS WERE GIVEN THE AMAZING OPPORTUNITY
TO LEARN NEW SKILLS THAT LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT THANKS TO

THE COD FOUNDATION



NOW LIVE AT 4:00 PM

KESQ.COM



COD Foundation Celebrates 40 Years!

I am deeply inspired by the progress of the College of the Desert Foundation and its support of the college and its students over the past 40 years. In my six-year journey with the COD Foundation, I have personally witnessed us provide valuable programs and resources that have significantly changed students' lives. For many, this is the first time a school has understood their basic needs and has supported them. COD reaches out to the whole person and, most importantly, their academic needs.

The COD Foundation assumes a 24/7 commitment to meet students' financial, academic and emotional needs, enabling them to truly enjoy the educational experience. Upon graduation, these high-achieving graduates are critical for excellence in our workforce. Businesses need quality workers, and COD supplies them. Some launch careers locally; others earn a four-year degree before coming back to serve the community in essential fields. The impact of their contribution returns to its roots, with nearly **80% of students returning to the Valley and rendering the college as a crucial link to our thriving economic success.**

It's no wonder when McKenzie Scott was looking at non-profits to support that she chose COD to donate \$18 million dollars to. The COD Foundation has proudly put that donation into an endowment toward the college's multi-award-winning program, EDGE/pLEDGE!

The EDGE/pLEDGE program has been proven to dramatically improve student success and graduation rates by combining math and English review with wrap-around services, counseling and 2 years of free tuition and fees. Currently, COD can fund and serve up to 1,700 students per year through the EDGE/pLEDGE program. But 1,700 students per year is not enough!

The Foundation's 10-year goal is to be able to provide this incredible program in perpetuity – that means forever – to all students who wish to commit to the program. This will take \$50 Million! I know we can do it! We already have an endowment of \$18 Million... we are nearly halfway there.

We all know that state funding is never enough. And that if you want an exceptional school that turns out exceptional graduates, we need to have an exceptional community that gives and supports our students.



In over 40 years, we have raised more than \$100 million dollars for students and programs including **EDGE/pLEDGE**, the **Fund for Student Success**, **Student Scholarships** and **Internships** and our **Foster Youth Program**, making it possible for thousands of students to pursue their education and chosen careers.

In turn, these students have become the **skilled nurses** caring for you and your loved ones, the **firefighters** and **EMTs** who respond to your 911 calls, the **chefs** who prepare your meals in your favorite restaurants and the **entrepreneurs** and **business leaders** who consistently give back to our community and **generate over \$300 million annually into our local economy.**

If you are moved by the individual stories of dedication to pursuing an education against all odds and you would like to join us in making a significant impact on the lives of students and their families and the economic growth of the Coachella Valley, please reach out to any of us. We are here to help you learn more about the Foundation and ultimately to make our students' dreams come true!

Christine Anderson
COD Foundation Board of Director's Chair

Interested in Pledging to Give Students the **EDGE**? Call Catherine Abbott at **760.773.3561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.

Celebrating
40 Years of Funding
Student Success



- 1983 • COD Foundation established
- 1984 • The McCallum Theatre invited to build
- 1986 • CSUSB opens on COD's campus
- 1988 • COD offers classes at Indio High School
- 1994 • Multi-Agency Library opens
- 1998 • The Hilb Center reopens
 - Carol L. Meier Lecture Hall reopens
 - Faculty Resource Center opens
- 1999 • Math and Science building groundbreaking
 - Rededication of Pollock Theatre
- 2000 • COD's Criminal Justice Program launches
- 2001 • East Valley Center opens
- 2002 • Rededication of McCarthy Family Child Development Center
- 2003 • The Marks Center for the Arts opens
- 2004 • Measure B Bonds promote future growth and expansion
- 2007 • Nursing and Health Sciences groundbreaking
 - Public Safety Academy groundbreaking
- 2008 • Peggy and Donald Cravens Student Services groundbreaking
- 2012 • EDGE program begins
 - Communications building groundbreaking
 - BIGHORN Golf Club Charities Veterans Resource Center launches
- 2013 • COD East Valley Campus opens
- 2017 • pLEDGE program begins
- 2020 • Student Emergency Fund launches
- 2020 • MacKenzie Scott donates \$18M
- 2021 • Academic Angels' Learning to Lead program launches
- 2022 • COD East Valley expanded campus groundbreaking
 - COD Food Pantry opens in Palm Desert and on Indio campus
- 2023 • COD Foundation celebrates its 40th Anniversary
 - COD East Valley expanded campus opens



“

*By supporting College of the Desert students,
we are investing in the future of the Coachella Valley.*

”

| Alan and Helen Greene & James and Jessica Greene
Stepping Out for COD 2023 Visionary Sponsors

Empowering Students to Spread Their Wings

Platinum Award-Winning Human Nature Takes Center Stage at Stepping Out for COD 2023



HUMAN NATURE's performances are a celebration of the timeless music of Motown and the iconic artists who created it. The band's set list is packed with classics from artists such as The Temptations, The Supremes, Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson, and their energetic and enthusiastic performances bring these enduring hits to life. These captivating artists have earned **27 Platinum Awards**, charted **18 Top 40 hits** and **5 Top 10 hits worldwide**. Plus, these Las Vegas Headliners have delighted millions, performing on the strip for over 13 years and selling out shows around the world.

HUMAN NATURE has performed to global audiences for decades, from the Opening Ceremony of the *Sydney 2000 Olympics* to opening for *Michael Jackson* and *Celine Dion* at concerts around the world. They have appeared on U.S. television shows including *The Talk*, *The Chew*, *Oprah* and *Dancing With The Stars*, as well as their own PBS specials – *Human Nature Sings Motown* and *Human Nature "Jukebox"*.

HUMAN NATURE is Australia's biggest-selling boy band, producing impeccable, soulful harmonies and slick dance moves that bring to life Motown's most beloved songs and their own original chart-topping tunes. Brothers **Andrew** and **Michael Tierney** along with **Toby Allen** will perform "Get Ready", "Tracks of My Tears", "Uptight", "Reach Out (I'll Be There)", "Stop in the Name of Love" and many more favorites.



Proceeds Benefit the Fund for Student Success

Nearly two-thirds of COD students qualify for some form of financial assistance, but traditional scholarship support rarely extends to cover all basic human needs. The cost of books and class-related supplies alone can add up to several thousands of dollars, leaving many students with limited options to pay for program fees and supplies, affordable childcare, technology and equipment.

Board Chair Christine Anderson explains, "When we provide comprehensive access to education and alleviate significant financial barriers to learning, we produce a professional workforce to strengthen our Valley's social and economic infrastructure. We believe that no student should miss out on a class or find they are unable to complete an assignment due to a lack of supplies, books or equipment."

For more than 60 years, COD has made it possible for local students to pursue their academic dreams, and for 40 years the COD Foundation has provided over \$100 million in support programs, resources and essential tools, empowering students to *Spread their Wings* to achieve a meaningful path for their career. In turn, these students become skilled **nurses, firefighters, EMTs, chefs, hoteliers, architects, entrepreneurs and business leaders** of 125,000 alumni strong, who give back and significantly impact our local economy. With your support, you can empower students by removing financial barriers. Your generous investment gives them a chance to succeed in college today and create a better life and community tomorrow.

"Stepping Out for COD is not only one of the most important philanthropic events of the year, but it also raises critical donations for the Fund for Student Success. Your generous gift helps the COD Foundation meet the most pressing initiatives on campus, enrich academic programming and resources, and ultimately provide our students the opportunity to spread their wings and achieve their educational dreams."

**| BILL CHUNOWITZ, TOM MINDER AND ROBERT MOON
2023 CO-CHAIRS**



Rob Moon, Tom Minder and Bill Chunowitz.

HUMAN NATURE
back to the sound of
MOTOWN

Thinkers. Doers. Trailblazers. Headline Makers.

PALMSPRINGS LIFE

WOMEN WHO LEAD LUNCHEON

PRESENTED BY SBEMP ATTORNEYS

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2023

11 A.M.

THE RITZ-CARLTON, RANCHO MIRAGE

2023 HONOREES INCLUDE:

Outstanding Achievement: **Kay Hazen**, *Kay Hazen and Company*

Business Leader: **Norma Castaneda**, *Fidelis Health Group and HR Advantage*

Nonprofit Leader: **Jane Garrison**, *Oswit Land Trust*

Rising Star: **Jessica Campbell**, *Coachella Valley Firebirds*

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION, VISIT:
PALMSPRINGSLIFE.COM/OUR-EVENTS

SBEMP
ATTORNEYS



THE RITZ-CARLTON
RANCHO MIRAGE

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ALAN AND HELEN GREENE & JAMES AND JESSICA GREENE
PRESENT

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Give Students the Basic Needs to Succeed

80% of COD's Students are Either the First in their Family or the First Generation in their Family to Go to College.

Since the onset of the pandemic, many of our students have lost their jobs, housing and financial security. Soaring food, gasoline and housing prices add mounting pressure. They remain faced with a grim reality: pursue their education or pay for utilities, rent, gas or groceries. Our Valley's business owners are desperate for trained workers, yet our students navigate multiple jobs, battle inflation and struggle to regain years of lost revenue – all while juggling childcare and striving to complete their degree. In too many cases, they will relinquish their dreams of building a career and a better life.

While tuition remains low at community colleges, non-tuition costs make up the majority of student expenses. Combined with California's higher cost of living, students are experiencing significant financial barriers to college completion. Your donation to the Fund for Student Success will enable thousands of low-income students to complete their studies because they have their essential basic needs met and can begin their climb up the economic ladder.

"Many community college students have difficulty affording basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and childcare. Community colleges provide equal opportunity to pursue high quality education without incurring crushing debt. We believe education is the key to preserving our democracy and hope others will join in supporting community colleges across the country."


| DAN PRITZKER, PRESIDENT OF THE JAY PRITZKER FOUNDATION

GIFTED \$100 MILLION TO THE FOUNDATION FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES BENEFITING 34 STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

When we provide comprehensive access to education, we produce a professional workforce to strengthen our Valley's social and economic infrastructure. We believe that no student should miss out on a class or find they are unable to complete an assignment due to a lack of supplies, books or equipment. You too can *Empower COD Students to Spread Their Wings*. Call **760.773.2561**, email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu** or scan the **QR code** to pledge online.

Your financial support **MAY** purchase one of the following student resources to **Fund for Student Success**.

\$750
Meal Card
one meal per day for a semester




\$350
Dell Chromebook Pro Laptop



\$3,000
Childcare
one child for one semester



\$300
Textbooks
one or two textbooks



\$1,500
Supports Housing Insecurity



\$2,500
EDGE/pLEDGE Tuition
EDGE/pLEDGE Program includes Summer Bridge Program and two years free tuition for one student



Daysi Guzman knew it was her calling to become a nurse.



When Daysi's son was born with a rare condition and required an intensive and frightening surgery, a very special nurse stayed with Daysi, comforting her and explaining the procedure. She filled her with hope and taught her how to care for him.

Now, Daysi dreams of becoming an ICU nurse and earning her master's degree so she can teach nursing. "Education is a powerful tool," Daysi believes. "And no matter what your background is, you can accomplish anything with dedication and hard work."

| DAYSI GUZMAN
 CLASS OF 2021

Scan this QR code to donate to **Fund for Student Success**.



How Supporting Basic Needs Makes the Difference Between a Diploma or Dropping Out

Empowering Success for Foster Youths

It's easy to understand how young adults in the foster system face extremely challenging obstacles in achieving long-term stability and academic success. Basic needs such as housing, nutrition, transportation and emotional stability are heavy burdens to overcome.

The College of the Desert Foundation recognizes these burdens and proudly supports the Foster Youth Services (FYS) program, which has helped 100 marginalized and underserved COD students attain academic and lifelong success and supports the complex needs of young adults who have experienced traumatic hardships. Because of FYS, these students have a place to go between classes to grab a snack, study, speak with a counselor or lean on each other and build each other up so they can continue pursuing their dreams of a bright future and new opportunities. The results have been positively overwhelming with stories that we want to share.

Eveny Felix, Jasmine Lopez and alumna Stephanie Monroy have experienced COD's outstanding Foster Youth Services program, which provides valuable tools, resources and programming.

Meet Eveny Felix Future Neurosurgeon

As a freshman majoring in Biology and Science, Eveny has future plans to transfer to a four-year university and one day become a neurosurgeon. She and her three brothers were placed in the foster care system when she was in high school – until she aged out. "My mother was a single mother of four, so it was rough on her," states Eveny. "The stress became too much, which left all the pressure on me, being the oldest daughter. I was taking care of three little boys on my own, and I had just started high school. Needless to say, it was a rough transition."

After graduating from high school in Hemet, she returned to the Coachella Valley to be closer to her family. She had her sights set on a college degree, so she registered at COD, where she soon learned about Foster Youth Services. Eveny says she was incredibly appreciative of the comprehensive services they provided, including priority registration for her classes, assistance with picking the right classes to achieve her future career path, funding for textbooks and school supplies and even assisting her in getting her

California ID. With feelings of relief and gratitude, Eveny shares, "COD has meant a lot to me. The donors who are supporting FYS are impacting so many people and they are saving lives. Every Foster Youth Services student understands that FYS is a safe and caring environment where everyone is welcome and supported. It has changed my life!"

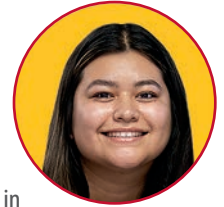


Meet Stephanie Monroy, Future Child Psychiatrist

Stephanie Monroy is a recent COD Alumna who graduated with her degree in Psychology and Early Childhood Development, along with getting her degree in Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Behavioral Sciences. Stephanie entered the foster care system in middle school, which took an enormous negative toll on her. "It was a tough and dark time for me," she shares. "I kind of just shut down and didn't care too much about my school or my future. My sister attended COD and convinced me to come. I started to find focus and direction; creating goals became so important to me. It felt like a breath of fresh air."

Stephanie felt inspired after getting involved with the many clubs at COD. She befriended Carla, the Fostering Youth Knowledge club president, and they became very close. "It felt as if her motivation and drive to succeed rubbed off on me. Then, as a new school year began and many club members had graduated, leaving positions available, I was asked to be the president and accepted, serving until it was her time to graduate. FYS has been so supportive of me from the moment I started. The center, the program, the people – it was definitely a second home for me, a second family."

"COD's Foster Youth Services program is a saving grace for many students. Without their generosity, resourcefulness and support in giving us back our self-confidence, I don't know if any of us would be where we are today. Thank you to the amazing donors who have funded this program, which has significantly impacted our lives and the lives of so many others."



Stephanie attends Cal State San Bernardino with plans to pursue a career in child therapy and is focusing her studies on supporting foster care youths. "While in foster care, I always wished I had someone there to talk to me and help me. Now, as an adult, I want to encourage others just like the counselors at COD did for me," she says. The inspiration and encouragement that Stephanie received from FYS will be passed down to future generations of students. "It's all thanks to the donors for making it possible for students like me to have a second chance in life. We are all walking proof of people who have been positively impacted by the generous donations from the donors."



Meet Jasmine Lopez Future Emergency Room Nurse

Jasmine Lopez is also a recent COD Alumna who graduated with her associate's degree in Health Science. She is currently taking extra classes to apply for COD's acclaimed Nursing program.

Jasmine was inspired to become a nurse back in high school. She started her freshman year at Indio High School and began participating in their health academy with great interest. Shortly thereafter, she and her siblings entered the foster care system. Jasmine then found herself tossed in and out of the system, constantly moving from school to school, and losing her ability to be part of the health academy.

During her senior year of high school, she got pregnant. Holding fast to her dreams of attending COD, she gave birth to her little boy and signed up for classes after graduation. When she arrived on campus, it all became too overwhelming, and she dropped her classes.

Everything changed for Jasmine seven years later. As she was getting her second son ready for kindergarten, he looked up and asked her, "Mommy, when are you going to school?" Finally, she decided it was time for her to make a change. Though she had buried her ambition deep within her busy life, she realized that she still had dreams of becoming an ER nurse.

This time around at COD, she discovered FYS. The staff helped her enroll in classes, gave her a safe space to study and introduced her to other foster kids and the Child Development Center. The program even gave her an on-campus job so she didn't have to leave campus and miss dinner time with her boys. FYS was a lifeline for Jasmine. "Countless students and myself have found incredible courage and I have developed a new resiliency because of the unyielding support I have received through FYS and the COD Foundation," she says.

At graduation, FYS presented her with a blue tassel – the Foster Youth symbol. Her kids were so proud of her achievement, and now Jasmine is more determined than ever to become an ER nurse and help others in their time of need.

Become a Path Builder, Give a Student a Chance to Achieve Their Degree

Since March of 2020, 70% of COD students lost their income source, and nearly 50% had their housing disrupted. Around their course schedule, many of our COD students work several jobs to support their families amidst skyrocketing costs for food and rent. The future trained workforce of our Valley, one of the biggest assets to our community, is too often forced to postpone their degree, career plans and hopes of providing a stable life for their family.

No student should miss out on a quality education due to a lack of resources. When we provide COD students with comprehensive access to education, we produce a professional workforce to strengthen our Valley's social and economic infrastructure.

Join the COD Foundation in providing critical resource assistance to *Empower COD Students to Spread Their Wings*.

Support **COD's Foster Youths**. Donate to **CODFoundation.org**, call **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.



"While in foster care, I always wished I had someone there to talk to me and help me. Now, as an adult, I want to encourage others just like the counselors at COD did for me."

| STEPHANIE MONROY, FUTURE CHILD PSYCHIATRIST



101 Fall Students
85 Spring Students

COD's Foster Youth Center welcomes all current and former foster students no matter the age or length of time they spent in foster care. Many have faced several hardships including food insecurity, homelessness, lack of resources, and unemployment. We offer support and services to give these resilient students the same opportunities as others.

WISH LIST

- **Book Vouchers** | \$500 per student
- **Beeps Café Meal Cards** | \$100 for full-time students, \$50 for part-time students
- **Class Materials** (not provided) | \$10,000 for art supplies, cameras, calculators, software and TEAS test preparation courses
- **School Supplies** | \$10,000
- **Open purchase order to address student food insecurity at Central Pantries** | \$10,000
- **Outreach Promotional Materials** | \$10,000
- **Emergency Hotel Vouchers for Unsheltered Students** | \$10,000
- **Gas Cards and/or Ride Sharing Cards** | \$10,000
- **Personal Hygiene Supplies** from Target and Walmart | \$5,000
- **University Tours and Campus Visits** | \$25,000
- **Graduation Sashes for Foster Youth Students** | \$2,500
- **Student Worker Computer, Printer & Phone** | \$2,250
- **Acknowledgment Celebrations and Recreational Activities** | \$10,000

Scan this QR code to donate to
Fund for Student Success. ▶



COD Central Pantries and FIND Food Bank Help Students Eat While Reducing the Plight of Hunger

Students who hunger for a meaningful way to serve their community while moving toward a college degree, have found it at COD, thanks to a program that started in early 2022. College of the Desert, the **FIND Food Bank**, and the nonprofit groups **One Future Coachella Valley** and **Growing Inland Achievement** have banded together to take a bite out of food insecurity while helping service-hearted students offset their school costs and develop leadership skills.

COD was among 45 universities and colleges selected statewide to participate in #CaliforniansForAll College Corps, the first program of its kind in the state. Through the innovative state grant program, the partners offer up to \$10,000 in paid fellowships and scholarships to each student who contributes a year of community service at the food bank. The initiative is part of a statewide effort to create a debt-free path to higher education and represents a \$1.8 million investment into the Coachella Valley.

Students who choose to invest themselves for a total of 450 hours of service at FIND Food Bank and in the program over the academic year will earn \$7,000 and qualify for a \$3,000 scholarship to attend College of the Desert. Volunteer opportunities for these students include working at pilot campus supermarkets and FIND's mobile food pantries and distribution centers.

"Housing insecurity has been a significant issue and challenge for students" shares Jocelyn Vargas, COD Interim Director of Basic Needs Center. "So, for us COD to have the ability to connect to students to resources that can help them has been a blessing."

"Every day, FIND helps to address the pressing problem of food insecurity and inequities across our region by feeding approximately 150,000 people each month at more than 150 distribution sites throughout the desert. Partnering on this project will create a cadre of future leaders to help us meet our mission of solving hunger for life."

| DEBBIE ESPINOSA, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF FIND FOOD BANK



Jocelyn Vargas, COD Interim Director of Basic Needs Center at the Indio Campus Central Pantry.

Set right in the heart of the COD campus, the Palm Desert Central Pantry location provides food and other essentials to up to 100 people per day. Each person can visit once per week, every week, to receive up to 15 pounds of food.

Hunger and Housing Insecurity Is Real for Our Students

"I couldn't think of a better way to help those in need," says **Derick Matthew Talay**, an 18-year-old freshman at COD studying Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting. He immigrated from the Philippines in 2020. Now his goal is to transfer to UC Berkeley and one day become a certified public accountant. His volunteer service in the food pantry hits especially close to home.

"Coming from a third world country, I know firsthand the struggles food insecurity," says Talay, who is part of COD's EDGE/pIEDGE program, supported by the COD Foundation. "A lot of my people back home go hungry, and I assumed America would be a little bit different, that fewer people would be hungry or impoverished. It was a big eye-opener when I realized that poverty is everywhere.

It chooses no country, no person. It affects the people who are really struggling the most. And poverty can be a factor that hinders people from continuing their education and careers."

Few may realize that food insecurity is another significant barrier to completion for many community college students. When resources are scarce, families need to focus on putting food on the table over attending classes. Even money for books or the cost of gas or bus fare to get to school becomes a burden they can't afford to bear. "I travel to and from school by bus each day," Talay adds. "Seeing homeless people and struggling college students who have food insecurities has given me insight into how big of an issue we truly have here."

Since working in the food pantry, Talay has met many people who have confirmed the critical importance of the FIND Food Bank at COD. One was a fellow Filipino foreign exchange student who related to his own struggles of being an immigrant and an international student. "He has two children in the Philippines and he dreams for them to be here and get an education," says Talay. "He also expressed

how thankful and appreciative he is because of the food he was able to choose from our food pantry. It was just one of the many examples of how we impact people.”

Because hunger can affect anyone at any time, COD has opened two on-campus Central Pantries – in partnership with FIND Food Bank – where students themselves can access non-perishable items, fresh fruits and vegetables, and other household items. The Palm Desert location opened in September and the Indio location opened in November. So far, nearly 1,000 students have benefited from the program, with nearly 4,000 visits in the past few months.

“The vision is to provide access to food services on campus and give students the ability to come in and pick what they need. They can take items such as fresh fruits and vegetables so they can cook a meal at home. The center’s support programs and resources assist students in meeting basic needs like food, stable housing, wellness and security so they can keep their focus on their academic success.”

| JOCELYN VARGAS, INTERIM MANAGER
FOR COD’S BASIC NEEDS CENTER



Derick Matthew Talay at COD’s Palm Desert Central Pantry.

“Every week we encounter COD students who share their challenges around housing insecurity and access to food,” Vargas shares. “It’s been really inspiring and has motivated us to continue to reinforce that commitment to serve them. Hearing the students’ stories as they come in and express that they need support has really pushed me and our other staff members to further strengthen our services.”

Vargas adds that when students have the resources they need to succeed academically, COD takes its own step toward breaking the cycles of generational poverty and inequity. “Trying to focus on your academics and learn in class becomes very difficult when, in the back of your mind, you’re not sure where your next meal is going to come from.”

For Talay, as he works toward higher education and volunteers at the food pantry, the journey often becomes emotional.

“My mother is a single mother, and I can only imagine her struggle when I was born. She didn’t finish college because of our needs, and she wanted to provide a better future for me. Working in this program has made me think back on the days of how hard she worked to provide diapers and food. She always taught me to be grateful and to value education; this program gives me a platform to do both. I can’t even describe how much I appreciate her and sometimes when I see people here, especially single mothers with their babies, I can see my mom’s face reflected in theirs.”

| DERICK MATTHEW TALAY, CENTRAL PANTRY STUDENT WORKER
AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MAJOR

It’s a program he is proud to be part of. “I see people working together so hard every day to build this community,” he says. “I will never get tired of helping those in need, and I believe that this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Support **Food Insecure Students!** Donate to [CODFoundation.org](https://www.codfoundation.org), call **760.773.2561** or email cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu.

“We have regulars who come in to the Central Pantry once a week for their allotted provisions or to just grab a snack before class. Students comment on how much better they can concentrate in class or how much of a difference it has made having an important resource like this available to them.”

| NEVAH GARCIA, CENTRAL PANTRY STUDENT WORKER



100 Students serviced per day

Central Pantries team members witness firsthand the gratitude from nearly 100 food insecure students each day who have the opportunity to take home free groceries and household items needed to care for their families. Many students are hesitant to get what they need because they aren’t used to receiving free valuable food items and necessities.

WISH LIST

- **Washer/Dryer Combo** | \$1,388
- **Meal Cards** | 150 cards at \$15 each = \$2,250
- **Hotel Voucher** | 100 cards at \$90 per night = \$9,000
- **Visa Gift Cards** | 50 at \$50 each = \$2,500
- **Gas Cards** | 75 at \$50 each = \$3,750
- **Portable Charger** | 50 at \$27 each = \$1,350
- **Book Voucher** | 100 at \$100 each = \$10,000
- **Sleeping Bags** | 25 at \$80 each = \$2,000
- **Portable Sleeping Cot** | 25 at \$130 each = \$3,250
- **Sleeping Pad** | 25 at \$57 each = \$1,425

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Fund for Student Success. ▶



Childcare Empowers Single Parents to Pursue Higher Education and Build a Brighter Future

When **Natalie Holland** arrived at College of the Desert, she was a newly single mother who had just left a bad relationship. Worrying about how she and her one-year-old were going to survive, she remembers seeing various COD signs and knew this was an opportunity to build her future. She met with a counselor and who “started connecting me to a variety of resources, most importantly The McCarthy Family Child Development Center (CDC),” she shares. “I was excited that COD offered childcare because I didn’t know how I was going to go to school, work and take care of my baby. Then, all of a sudden, there was this amazing opportunity!”

When her daughter enrolled in childcare at the Center, Natalie had the chance to connect with parents and teachers, which led her to being hired as a student worker.

“It quickly became my home. Once strangers that I was handing my child off to soon became friends and mentors, teaching me parenting methods. This wasn’t daycare, it’s Child Development. People always say, ‘It takes a village to raise a child,’ and I really found my village by working and meeting other parents. I’ve seen the Center grow exponentially each year. Childcare is not something a lot of families can afford, so the Center is really changing the entire family’s life!”

Children Learn While Parents Earn Their Degree

The childcare center fulfills dual purposes. Firstly, it provides top-tier childcare for low- to middle-income student families through state-funded subsidies. Open year round, the Center has earned contracts with the California Department



of Education and the California Department of Social Services, allowing COD students to pursue their education knowing their little ones are receiving quality childcare right here on campus – as long as they maintain their grades.

Secondly, it is a teaching facility for the Early Childhood Education program, which draws about 250 full- and part-time students per semester. This hands-on lab environment trains them in all aspects of child development including assessments, reports, leading a classroom, parent-teacher conferences and understanding children from various backgrounds and situations.

In partnership with the Patrick M. McCarthy Foundation, the COD Foundation subsidizes \$50,000 in tuition for 55 children ages 1-5 years per semester, plus an additional 20 children of veteran students.

“We use the outdoors as a classroom, not just as recess,” Program Director Diane Russom notes. “The community garden lets kids participate in growing their own food to take home. In the kitchen garden, seasonal fruits and vegetables become part of the day’s menu. Chef Bruno Romanello prepares and serves up to 360 healthy full meals a day,” all as part of feeding the children a wholesome, nutritious diet, which, in turn, helps them begin to understand the food groups and develop a taste for healthy choices.

Caring for others plays a big part in what the Early Childhood Education students learn along with patience and compassion. “When you take a child in, you have to understand the family – otherwise you won’t understand the child,” adds Russom. “They’re part of a unit, a family culture, that influences their behaviors. Every child is going to have a special need at one time or another. You need to understand and involve that child’s family to help them through it. Every day will be different. But when our students are not sure what to do, we teach them to ask: ‘What’s in the best interest of the child?’ and that answers it immediately.”



Natalie Holland, COD Alumna and Administrative Assistant of the Kinesiology and Athletics Department.

Recipient of a **Golden Bell Award** for inclusivity, the CDC is one of the only centers that welcomes a high percentage of kids with special needs. The Center is also accredited by the National Association for Education, a recognition that less than 10% of all childcare centers, preschools and kindergartens achieve. The COD Foundation is actively fundraising to open a second center at the Indio campus in Fall 2024, which will benefit more underserved families who are pursuing an education while feeding and enriching their children.

Prior to enrolling at COD, Natalie had worked in the medical field. So taking the classes that are required to enter the Nursing program seemed like a natural fit. Through her work at CDC, however, she soon discovered a real passion for finding resources for the families of the little ones she was educating.

“I found independence and strength that I didn’t know I had. The parents and I even created a Parent Advisory Committee for the Center where I served as President and we created an Annual Spring fling and Resource Fair that included games, food and local agencies like WIC and FIND Food Bank for our families to learn about and make important connections.”



Soon, new opportunities arose for her like being chosen as a Student Wellness Ambassador for California Community Colleges' pilot program to advocate and conduct peer outreach for student mental health and wellness. She also became a member of the Riverside County Local Childcare & Development Planning Council who collaborated and provided advocacy and resources to support quality, affordable and accessible childcare services for children and families through local partnerships. She also initiated the partnership with Borrego Health to originally bring their mobile health clinic to the Center which led the clinic to becoming a resource for the entire campus of COD.

Embracing New Opportunities in Health Sciences

Natalie had hit upon a love for research and for matching people with information they need. When a position for the Administrative Assistant for the Kinesiology and Athletics Department opened up, she realized that where she first connected parents with resources, she now had the opportunity to connect COD athletes from all over

the country with key resources. Today, she welcomes the athletes, manages their travel, helps them advocate for themselves and often finds herself in the role as a "second mom" projecting their success at COD.

"I was so sad to leave the Center because my child and I grew up there," she recalls. "But I realized that this new position was furthering my own personal development and building upon new student and family connections."

Natalie's daughter is now 8 years old. She was fortunate to attend the CDC program at COD for four years until she went off to kindergarten. "She was so blessed to grow up in a natural and fun environment where she constantly learned and thrived," Natalie adds. "I am so grateful for the Center because our lives really blossomed there."

Support **COD Parents!** Donate to **CODFoundation.org**, call **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.

"Nursing and Culinary Arts students perform a kitchen rotation to learn about child nutrition and the kids learn how to plant seeds and harvest from the agriculture and ESL students. Community gardens, farm-to-table meals, an outdoor musical garden and a highly awarded enrichment program make COD's Child Development learners the luckiest toddlers in the Valley."

| DIANE RUSSOM, PROGRAM DIRECTOR
THE MCCARTHY FAMILY CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



144 Children served per semester at Palm Desert campus
100 Children expected to be served per semester at Indio campus

WISH LIST

- **Childcare Tuition** | \$1276 - \$2,992 per month, per child depending on age
- **New Security Gate** | \$6,000
- **Child Development of Education (CDE) Welcome Orientation** | \$800
- **Refurbish Palm Desert Professional and Children's CDE Library** | \$5,500
- **Professional Promotional Materials** | \$15,000
- **Establish Indio CDE Professional & Children's Library** | \$10,200
- **Establish Indio CDE Outdoor Equipment & Tricycles** | \$18,000

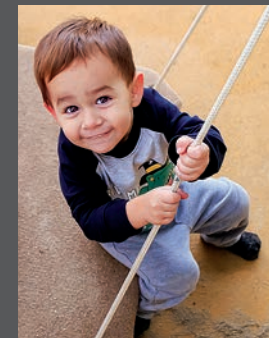
Indio Child Development Center Opens Fall 2024

In addition to the Indio Campus enhancement, COD is also constructing a 17,000sf Child Development Center (CDC) across the street from the campus. The new building will include toddler and preschool classrooms, an outdoor play yard and shade structures, as well as observation and support spaces, conference room, laundry, kitchen and storage required for a modern facility.



We are extremely excited about the Indio Child Development Center, not only because it's going to be a great opportunity for student parents to have truly affordable high-quality childcare while on campus and studying, but it also provides an outstanding opportunity to train to student teachers under a nationally accredited and fully bilingual Early Childhood program directed by Professor Avalos. We can't wait to welcome the first class of future teachers and the children who will thrive under their care and instruction.

| WENDY HINRICHS SANDERS, COD CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER INSTRUCTOR



Scan this QR code to donate to Fund for Student Success.



This pLEDGE Gives COD Students an EDGE

Dedicated Full-time Students Receive Prep for Every Aspect of College Life, from Math and English Skills to Counseling and Free Tuition, Thanks to the 10-Year-Strong EDGE/pLEDGE Program.



EDGE/pLEDGE serves as a powerfully life-changing program for students who attend College of the Desert. Many of the 1,900 students in the new cohort each year would not have believed there was a way for them to attend community college then launch a promising career or transfer to a four-year university if someone from the program had not reached out to them personally and inspired this attainable dream.

Students enrolling at COD full-time are encouraged to “Get the EDGE and take the pLEDGE!” as part of a multifaceted program that works to remove the academic, social and financial barriers that prevent students from enrolling, persisting or succeeding in college. With a dream-making three-pronged approach, it encompasses: 1) college-prep review in math and English 2) counseling and student support services and 3) tuition assistance for local high school graduates.

Students who complete the EDGE summer bridge facet to solidify their math and English skills are eligible to receive free tuition and fees for two years through the pLEDGE aspect of the program. EDGE and pLEDGE are two pieces of the same puzzle that give students an EDGE into higher education while making a financial pLEDGE to help them succeed.

The EDGE/pLEDGE program relies upon the partnership with the COD Foundation and its many donors including The Richard Brooke Foundation, The Donald and Peggy Cravens Foundation and countless others to support its success with up to \$1.25 million per year.

EDGE Was Inspired to Make Education Accessible

When EDGE started in 2012, it was a Title V Hispanic Serving Institution pilot program focused on helping Hispanic students with remedial education. The program was designed to address student learning and success



outcomes for Hispanic, low-income and first-generation college students who placed below college-level coursework on the assessment test.

In its first summer, the EDGE program welcomed 22 students to the Indio campus. After tremendous initial results, services grew, and its footprint expanded to other campuses each year. By 2016, EDGE served about 650 students. Showing impressive persistence and graduation rates, they also reported a positive student experience and career outlook, thanks to a caring, pro-active network of faculty, staff and counselors who underscore their efforts. EDGE aims to equip students for the full community college experience, from academic skills and course load counseling to financial aid help and emotional well-being.

The path to COD often begins at the local high schools, where specialists from the EDGE/pLEDGE team provide bilingual outreach services in English and Spanish. These presentations spark a fire of interest, educating students and their parents about COD’s educational opportunities and the potential to earn a degree without impacting the family’s financial welfare. Once enrolled, their smooth transition into college life kicks off with a structured onboarding process that includes registration and financial aid assistance.

The summer bridge component prepares them for college and college-level coursework. Students participate in a rigorous math and English review, attend counseling sessions, learn about campus resources and build meaningful relationships with faculty and staff before launching their academic journey. By the end of the summer, they’re fully committed to their dreams of pursuing an education and a career they love. To date, **7,879 students have benefited** from the program as EDGE fulfills its mission to increase student success and mitigate achievement gaps in access, persistence and completion.

How are COD Students Most Benefiting from EDGE/pLEDGE?

“Our EDGE/pLEDGE college completion program closes equity gaps and provides support to all students, including our Latino population. It fulfills our mission to boost college-going rates in our community and helps change the lives of students and their families.”

| DR. MARTHA GARCIA, SUPERINTENDENT/PRESIDENT

Since its inception:

85%

The EDGE/pLEDGE Program serves 85% Hispanic/Latino students, an increase from the overall general student population.

83%

EDGE students persist at an 83% rate, compared to the 66% rate for non-EDGE students.

89%

Latinos who completed the EDGE program in 2016 persisted at an 89% rate, compared to 73% of Latinos who did not complete the EDGE program.

“I am motivated to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse. The pLEDGE program supports my school expenses so I can save up for my third year of nursing school. If I didn’t have the pLEDGE program, I would worry about how to pay for school and student loans. Honestly, I would have rethought my career. Thank you to those who have given so much to help me succeed.”



▲ NORA RIGUAL, REGISTERED NURSE

| JASMINE BUSCH, NURSING STUDENT

Adding a pLEDGE to the EDGE

Following five years of incredible outcomes with EDGE, COD introduced its perfect partner, the pLEDGE program, in 2017 and doubled program participation in the process. While EDGE had effectively addressed students' academic and social barriers, financial barriers still prevented many from enrolling or graduating. With the institution of pLEDGE, COD was able to provide free tuition and fees for two years to any full-time student who graduated from a local high school, completed the EDGE summer refresher program, performed 10 hours of community service and attended one career-focused workshop per academic year. Students must also stay in good academic standing and have a completed financial aid file. With EDGE and pLEDGE joining forces, students are supported on every level, from their first interaction with COD through their proudest moments at graduation.

Proven Student Success

Students in the program not only have higher persistence rates, but EDGE/pLEDGE students also complete more units in their first semester (9.5) than their non-EDGE/pLEDGE counterparts (7) and complete more units in their first year (17.2 compared to 12). pLEDGE students also have a higher three-year completion rate than non-pLEDGE students. Due to the skills-building of the summer bridge, these students are academic performers during college, which boosts their self-esteem and motivation. Students aren't shy about their gratitude. "If I hadn't enrolled in the EDGE/pLEDGE program, I would be lost in college right now. Thank you, College of the Desert!" read one student survey. "I can plan on graduating faster now because I took EDGE for math," shared another.

Many EDGE staff members are former College of the Desert students who are eager to share their own success stories, creating an instantaneous and deeper connection with potential students and their families. This active support system keeps students on track and focused on their goals and dreams. Students establish a bond with faculty that remains intact after graduation as they keep in touch.

Meeting Needs In All Times

The pro-active nature of the ever-evolving program allows it to pivot at any time, from staff reaching out to help a single student complete his or her financial aid file to the program adding evening sessions to welcome a new adult learner population.



EDGE 2020 had to quickly adjust from its three-week, in-person format to a two-week online program conducted via Canvas and Zoom. Students learned how to manage their time as well as their physical and mental health, while also receiving help from faculty with the financial aid application and class selection. When technology was a hurdle, COD quickly stepped up to provide loaner laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to students who needed that support.

An Award-Winning Initiative

The EDGE/pLEDGE program is evaluated each year, informing staff and administrators that it is increasingly effective at serving all students, and significantly Hispanic/Latino students, which account for 6,855 of the 7,879 total students served since inception.

Now an award-winning template for fellow institutions, the EDGE/pLEDGE program has become a national model for community colleges that strive to support underserved students and set them up for success, both in college and in their communities.

In 2018, a year after the addition of pLEDGE, the program was scaled to serve 80% of all incoming students. That same year, **COD won a 2018 Bellwether Award for the EDGE program.** (The prestigious national awards focus on innovative programs that other colleges might consider replicating.) In 2021, COD was also the only community college in California to be named a **National Finalist in the Examples of Excelencia**, presented by Excelencia in Education. The award acknowledges programs dedicated to accelerating Latino student success in higher education, and the EDGE/pLEDGE program was specifically recognized for those efforts.

A Future of Supporting Dreams

Looking ahead, the COD Foundation would love to supplement the EDGE/pLEDGE program's tuition support by providing free textbooks (which can cost \$500-\$1,000 per semester), laptops to enroll in online courses or complete work at home, assistance with fees for Nursing students and the purchase of essential software for students in digital or visual programs. These actions would further remove cost barriers to education for students supporting their families.

Support **EDGE/pLEDGE** program. Donate to **CODFoundation.org**, call **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.

"The EDGE/pLEDGE program is a game changer! Students applying to the program are ones we normally would not see because they are the ones who are already working night and day to support their families. They will use the knowledge and skills they receive to propel them into careers they only dreamed about. Their 'What if's...?' become 'I did it!' "

| CHRISTINE ANDERSON,
CHAIR OF THE COD FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

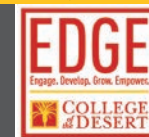


WISH LIST

- Tuition for 15 units Fall/ Spring semesters and fees for one year | \$1,468 per student
- Textbook for one year | \$1,000 per student
- Total costs per student | \$2,468
- Total costs for 1,900 students per year | \$4,689,200

EDGE offers hands-on assistance including:

- Math and English/reading review
- Priority registration for one semester following completion of EDGE
- Dedicated faculty, counselors and staff
- College student success strategies
- Assistance with financial aid applications and financial literacy exposure
- Follow-up services and workshops
- Free tuition and fees for two years with pLEDGE!



The pLEDGE program provides two full years of FREE tuition and fees to recent local high school graduates. To participate, students are required to:

- Complete the summer bridge program in EDGE
- Enroll full time during the Fall and Spring semesters
- Maintain good academic standing
- Participate in 10 hours of community service, mentoring or internships
- Attend a career pathway workshop at the COD Career and Workforce Solutions Center
- Submit a FAFSA or California Dream Act application



The Annexstad Family Foundation Provides Hope and Inspiration to COD Students

Part-time residents of the Coachella Valley, **Al and Cathy Annexstad**, established The Annexstad Family Foundation in 2000. For more than two decades, they have provided college scholarships that help students continue on the paths to their goals with little to no college debt.

Saluting the Ambitions of Our Service Men and Women

When given the opportunity to expand their scholarship offerings locally, donors Al and Cathy Annexstad wanted to recognize veteran scholars to thank our service men and women. They believe veterans are a vital national resource and that they too deserve to receive a higher education. Thus, five years ago, The Annexstad Family Foundation created a **Veteran Student Scholarship** with College of the Desert.



To date, the Annexstads have donated \$75,000 in renewable annual scholarships to award veteran students studying Public Safety, Registered Nursing, Education, Business or general education in preparation to attend a University of California or California State University campus.

"We are honored that the Annexstads have taken such an interest in COD," shares COD Foundation Executive Director Catherine Abbott.

"Education is the answer to life's biggest hurdles; it's a tremendous resource you can never take away. The cyclical effect that education can have on a family and a community is a gift that lasts a lifetime."

"Our **Bighorn Golf Club Charities Veterans Resource Center** provides a valued touchpoint to strengthen these hard-working scholars," she adds. "Veterans are transitioning from combat into civilian life, and navigating their new normal can be overwhelming."

The Annexstads aim to ease that transition: "By creating a safety net, we acknowledge what veterans have sacrificed for our country. Our focus is to provide personal connections, emotional and physical resources and needed financial support."

The Annexstad Family Foundation Hope & Inspiration Scholarship

The success of COD's Veterans Scholarship inspired the Foundation to develop a special Hope & Inspiration Scholarship. The Foundation established tuition assistance for a worthy scholar possessing the academic potential to excel in their field of study and achieve their associate's degree within two years. The ideal candidate is an exceptional citizen, one who demonstrates a high moral character and the desire to contribute to the betterment of society. COD, along with the Boys & Girls Club of Coachella Valley, selected the first recipient. Admirably resilient, **Julio Mendez-Delgado** grew up sleeping on

the floor of his single mother's apartment, with no means of personal transportation. "He is not letting his life's beginnings define who he wants to become as a world-renowned architect," notes Al.

Mendez-Delgado shares, "I'm excited to bring a new style to homes, something that has never been done before, where people are curious to see the inside. My education will instruct me, and my training will hone my skills, but my journey exhilarates me the most of all. Your scholarship means that I don't have to work two jobs to afford my rising rent plus tuition and tools, then juggle my time to complete assignments. Someday I will wake up in a house of my own design and know that I made it. Not by myself alone, but thanks to the support of everyone who believed in me, taught me and gifted me with this scholarship. Your generosity will help me achieve my dreams!"

Abbott adds, "How can you not be inspired by Julio? He will be a tremendous ambassador to the Architecture program. And just as the Veterans Resource Center supports Annexstad Scholars, our COD Foundation will support Julio so he can feel secure and thrive – both in his educational experience and wherever his dreams lead him."

To support **COD Students**, donate to **CODFoundation.org**, call **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.



Julio Mendez-Delgado



COD Veteran Students Find Purpose and a New Path to Thrive

When Coachella Valley native **Cindy Curriel** was 17 years old, she enlisted in the Navy. “I was so young that I needed my parents’ permission,” she recalls. “But after a lot of convincing, I got their signatures.”



Two weeks after she graduated from Coachella Valley High School, she arrived in Illinois for three months of intense basic training. From there, Cindy entered Boatswain’s Mate school to learn how to drive the crew’s ship and manage speed boat and helicopters operations. While the work was exciting, it was also physically, emotionally and mentally demanding for an 18-year-old.

“Knowing that I was responsible for driving the ship put me under a tremendous amount of pressure,” she relates. “Although, after a while, it was a lot of fun because the rough seas weren’t scary anymore.”

Cindy came from a family with traditional values who expected her to follow a more conventional path. “The environment I grew up in was a little rocky. So, I looked for a way to better my life. I wanted to show my younger sister that we could grow from our circumstances and become better people. I wanted to do great things, and I wanted to see the world.”

However, while Cindy had excelled in the Navy, where they provided instruction and structure for everything, the civilian world proved challenging.

“When I came home, I didn’t know how to speak to others or do basic things. I found it difficult to communicate and adapt. I bounced from place to place, job to job, and home to home.” Then, during the pandemic, she broke her leg in a motorcycle accident. “I had a lot of time on my hands, and thought, “What better thing can I do than to go back to school?”

Fighting back nervousness and fear, Cindy bravely stepped out on a limb that transformed her life. COD opened the doors for her to communicate with people again, beginning with an email she received from the Student Veterans Organization affiliated with the Bighorn Golf Club Charities Veterans Resource Center. The message welcomed her to COD and invited her to join an upcoming meeting.

“That first day, surrounded by veterans, I think we were all a little intimidated. But the first meeting really set the pace for me, and I returned time and time again. Eventually, I was elected vice president of the Student Veterans Organization where I developed a support system, camaraderie and mentorship with people who I respect and admire. Now, if I’m not in class, I am at the center. Truthfully, I found my new home here and I’ve gained a fresh purpose.”

With all of the tools the Veterans Resource Center offers – from help with financial assistance and housing information to academic advising and mental health resources – Cindy feels anything is possible. Currently, she is pursuing her lifelong dream of working in the cinematic arts. “I’ve always had a passion for it and a natural ability since I was a kid,” she says. “My main goal is to create prosthetic special effects for movies.”

The motivation and encouragement from the counselors and co-veterans in the program have helped her realize that, even back in the civilian world, she can accomplish anything. Cindy and her fellow veterans could not be more thankful for the generous donors who have come to their rescue on many levels. “To all of the donors out there, thank you,” she adds. “You’ve given us a home and a place to be ourselves again. From the bottom of my heart, personally and truly, thank you so much.”

Support **COD veterans**. To learn how, call Catherine Abbott at the COD Foundation at **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.

Proudly Supporting Our Returning Veterans

The Bighorn Golf Club Charities Veterans Resource Center (VRC) proudly serves 400 Veterans, Military Reservists, National Guard members and veterans’ dependents age 20 and over.

Dedicated to serving the unique needs of veteran students, COD recognizes the sacrifices made and provides them with the resources and support they need to succeed in their academic pursuits.

Staffed by knowledgeable and compassionate professionals, the Center offers a wide range of services, including assistance with the educational benefits process, academic advising and referrals to community assets. The VRC provides a welcoming environment where students can connect with one another, participate in activities and events, and receive academic advising and support including counseling, disability, priority registration and a link to County, State and Federal Veterans organizations.

The educational benefits process can be a complicated and confusing, but the VRC team provides guidance on eligibility, application procedures and educational benefits, ensuring that they receive all their entitled support.

The VRC also provides a variety of community resources including mental health services, career counseling, housing information and financial aid. These resources help veterans achieve their academic goals, transition to civilian life and succeed in their personal and professional lives.



NASA Community College Program Brings STEM and Stars to Students

The great beyond is within reach for students right here in the Coachella Valley. **College of the Desert is one of five colleges in the country** to receive a special grant from NASA to develop their STEM classes and engage minority students.

In the Summer of 2022, COD and NASA collaborated to host the **NASA Minority University Research and Education Project Innovations in Space Technology Curriculum** for the third year. Dr. Ahmed ElShafie and Dr. Michael Gariety led the summer internship, developing the cutting-edge course and equipping the COD labs using hands-on STEM projects that included designing and programming a rover to perform tasks on remote planetary bodies.

Seven COD engineering students were selected to participate. Their extraordinary projects included:

- A portable satellite ground station to receive signals from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellites with pictures of the Earth's surface.
- Designing, building and launching a "CubeSat" satellite over the Salton Sea to measure the sea's immense carbon dioxide emissions.
- Customizing an environmental chamber to simulate conditions on comets, asteroids, icy satellites and planetary bodies with a goal of space travel.

The exhilarating program offered students a closer look at NASA's unique missions and research methods and demonstrated how students can develop their talents, interests and real-world skills to become future STEM professionals and allies of STEM education.

Two of the lucky seven COD students selected for the program were **Grecia Paola Siono Guitierrez** and her brother, **Enrique**. As a senior attending high school in Mexico, Grecia had big dreams of coming to the United States to earn her undergraduate degree. Now, she crosses the border every Sunday to enter California where she resides and attends COD until Thursday when she turns around to make the trip home. While Grecia and Enrique study in the STEM program, their mom, **Teresa**, is learning ESL with hopes of earning



her Child Development degree. The three live together in a one-bedroom unit while they encourage each other to push ahead in their education, ever closer to a brighter future.

"Our journey requires a lot of time management, losing six to eight hours a week just on the commute," shares Grecia. "Overall, of course, it is worth it because the programs and the experiences at COD are amazing. In Mexico, the opportunities are not as great, which is why my family and I have made an effort to all come here."

At COD, the family works and studies hard. Even with their grueling schedule, Grecia has made it a priority to devote her time to tutor other students at COD's Mesa Center, located in the Math Engineering Science Achievement Center on campus. Her genuine excitement for circuit design and for being involved with the important aims of future space missions, along with her aspirations to pursue a bachelor's degree in science and a Ph.D., are all aligned with her goal to eventually work for NASA.

Grecia's passion for space and learning is larger than life. Upon her arrival at COD, she first learned about the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars program. "NASA opportunities have not really been available for me, but Professor Perez encouraged me," she recalls. The program forever changed her path. "I saw women that looked like me who were engineers, and I began envisioning myself right along with them."



Throughout her years growing up, Grecia says, she often heard that women do not belong in the engineering field.. “My experience at COD has been just the opposite,” she says. “I am filled with nothing but joy, growth and positive experiences. My peers encourage me daily, and I’m truly grateful to be at COD!”

Grecia’s professors, however, have been her biggest supporters. After once receiving a poor test score, she was so discouraged that she nearly gave up. Then she received a call from Professor Perez and they talked at great length about her future. By the end of the call, he told her that one day he wants her to show him the rocket that she built. That single conversation set her back on track to pursue her career and fulfill her dream of being an integral part of NASA’s legendary achievements.

Her experience reflects the mission of COD staff and administrators, who strive to provide an enriching educational environment that supports each student as an individual.

“COD is a very tight-knit community where everybody wants everyone to succeed. In Mexico, I had to fight others or endure the disappointment of them taking away big opportunities from me because they wanted it for themselves. COD is a family where we all collaborate and help each other succeed. It has truly brought the best out of me and out of my academic journey.”

| GRECIA PAOLA SIONO GUITIERREZ, ENGINEERING STUDENT



Dr. Martha Garcia interviews the NASA Minority University Research and Education Project Innovations in Space Technology Curriculum program during 2022’s State of the College. Shown from (l-r): Dr. Ahmed Dr. Ahmed ElShafie, COD Associate Professor Physics; COD students Grecia Paola Siono Guitierrez, Josue Gomez, David Jackson and Dr. Michael Gariety, COD Professor of Physics.

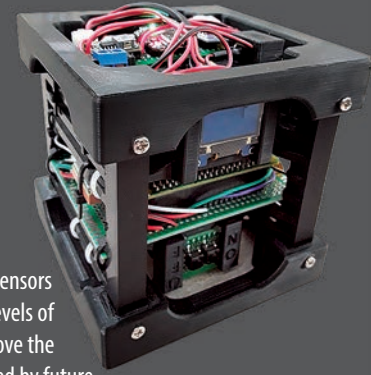
As she spends the hours each week making the incredible commute, attending classes, studying and tutoring others, Grecia maintains a clear focus on her short- and long-term plans. “I would really love to transfer into the University of California system,” she shares. “Maybe UC San Diego, UC Los Angeles or UC Riverside. In the future, I’d like to receive my Ph.D. at Stanford University, which I have dreamed of since I was a little kid.”

Her family, and most especially her mom, stands behind every one of her academic and professional ambitions. “She really encourages my brother and I to work hard for our dreams,” Grecia says, all while being a student herself. “She also expresses her gratitude to the COD Foundation. Because thanks to the Foundation’s scholarships and programs, I have textbooks, resources and school supplies to support my academic journey. And, thanks to the professors and staff at the Mesa Center, I have found the strength and confidence to take on great challenges, accept meaningful internships and grow as an engineer.”

The COD Foundation is proud of the resiliency, drive and optimism of our students and the accomplishments they have achieved. To learn how to support students like Grecia, Enrique and her mother, donate to a and her family, donate at CODFoundation.org, call **760.773.2561** or email the Executive Director, Catherine Abbott at cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu.

Why is it Important for NASA to Measure Carbon Dioxide Levels Above Our Salton Sea?

The Salton Sea is a large, landlocked lake that has become a major source of carbon dioxide emissions in the Valley.



Cube Satellites are low-cost equipment with advanced sensors to accurately measure the levels of carbon dioxide in the air above the Salton Sea. The data collected by future CubeSats will play a crucial role in developing strategies to mitigate the environmental impact of the Sea’s carbon dioxide emissions and other outgassing on the Coachella Valley and Los Angeles area. It will also contribute to the scientific community and NASA to better understand the role of natural and human-made sources of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and its impact on global climate change.

The results from this mission will provide valuable insights for policymakers and communities to make informed decisions to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

STEM PROGRAM WISH LIST

- **2 Week Math Intensive Academies** | \$2,500*
- **Student Travel to STEM Conferences** | \$250 per student; \$2,500 for 10 students*
- **Professional Society Student Memberships** | \$25 per student; \$250 for 10 students*
- **STEM Student Club Resources** (supplies, equipment, travel) \$500 per club; \$2,500 for 5 clubs*
- **STEM Speaker Series** | \$350 per speaker; 5 speakers at \$1,750*
- **Science Day Community Outreach** | \$2,000*
- **STEM Career Seek** | \$2,500*
- **University and Government Lab Tours** | \$1,000 per trip, \$5,000 for 5 trips *
- **Innovative STEM Learning Center** | \$100,000

* Mesa Center will match donated funds

Scan this QR code to donate to Fund for Student Success. ▶



COD's Innovative Hospitality Management Curriculum Delivers Excellence

To say that the Coachella Valley relies upon on tourism as one of our most important resources would be an understatement. Millions of visitors vacation in the Valley, generating over \$7 billion annually.

So it is no surprise that COD would invest in developing the most innovative, hands-on curriculum by such an esteemed instructor of Hospitality Management as **Yolanda Bender**. Her impressive resume includes managing over 650 team members in 15 of the most prestigious hotel brands in the country.

What started as teaching two intro classes in 2020, soon multiplied into developing courses in hospitality law, operations, management, sales and marketing.

“If we can jump-start a student’s career here, then they can earn a higher-level salary, which often affects their entire family. A hospitality career can literally change their life. Students share their dreams with us of buying a house, caring for parents and having a career they love. With an AA degree, those dreams are possible. And, because they have received professional training, they will go on to lead their teams to excel. Together with our students, we can bring excellence to the service industry.”

| **YOLANDA BENDER, HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTOR**

American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute Partnership

To address the need for professional training, Bender has developed a partnership with the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute, which focuses on creating career opportunities for upward mobility, spurring economic growth, investing in communities and serving America’s travelers. Students will take a final exam and, if they score a grade of 70% or higher, they are able to earn a certificate

for that class and can continue to study through the full program. When they achieve a **Certificate of Hospitality Operations** and add that to their resumes, they will have a more promising chance of landing a supervisory or management position.

Virtual Hotel Simulations

Students have also experienced running virtual hotel simulations, giving them the ability to operate a hotel, engage in potential scenarios and explore the effects of their discussions on food costs, profit and loss statements, etc. This has been a game-changer in advancing their cause-and-effect results and understanding how they play into the comprehensive scope of the business.



7-Week Hospitality Management Course Culminates with a Study Abroad Trip to Japan

Study abroad programs enrich a student’s education in a variety of ways. Acting on an idea she imagined during the pandemic, Bender partnered with Director of International Education **Cody McCabe** to create a new course on Leadership and Management in the Hospitality Industry. Held in conjunction with students from **Wakayama University** in Wakayama, Japan, the course culminates with a 7-10-day trip to Japan where students from both schools, along with industry leaders, will immerse themselves in educational activities.

“The global perspectives our 15 Roadrunners majoring in Hospitality Management, Business, or Culinary will gain through this program will meaningfully impact their educational and professional journeys. When asked, Japan is the number-one destination that our students want to visit.”

“Many of our students have never left the Coachella Valley. The chance to learn about sustainable development, business practices in Japan vs. the USA, compared to what we consider a business major to the Japanese educational view that hospitality management is a social science, and hear from Japanese industry leaders will be a life-changing opportunity for COD students,” Bender adds.





Wakayama University, School of Tourism.

“Where the Coachella Valley is an established tourist destination, Wakayama students are in the process of learning how their city too can become a destination, so the students will have a spirited exchange of ideas to share with one another.”

| YOLANDA BENDER, HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTOR

Students will also have the opportunity to study and compare American and Japanese hospitality techniques and training. Course content will include:

- Managing Organizational Change
- The Changing Nature of Leadership and Management
- The Quest for Quality Control Management
- Continuous Improvement – Process and Tools
- Power and Empowerment
- Communication Skills
- Goal Setting, Coaching, and Conflict-Management Skills
- High-Performance Teams
- The Challenge of Diversity
- Strategic Career Planning
- Ethics

The opportunity for COD students to participate in the course for the low cost of \$500 plus cost of enrollment and personal expenses (subject to change) has been made possible by the generous donations made by **Jeremy Hobbs** with the Western Wind Foundation, **John Monahan** and the **Visit Greater Palm Springs**

Foundation. The COD Foundation’s donors acknowledge the immense value to COD students in learning about sustainable development and gaining a deeper understanding of management theories while engaging a new culture.

“The Western Wind Foundation and I are very excited to sponsor COD’s study abroad course,” says Hobbs. “The time spent in Japan, at an internationally renowned hospitality program, is an incredible opportunity for our students to learn and live in a distinct cultural environment. And I appreciate COD for providing this immediate, cost-effective program for our local students – especially those who are often overlooked or underrepresented, but who I know to be filled with smarts, drive and passion.”

According to John Monahan, “COD has always been innovative in the curriculum they develop. This new hospitality program is just another example of COD’s creativity and leadership, and I’m proud to be able to support it.”

Founded in 2018, the **Greater Palm Springs Tourism Foundation** is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to advancing education, employment and professional growth in the Valley’s tourism and hospitality community through providing scholarship opportunities to local students and hospitality workers, developing funding sources to support Foundation programs and services and fostering passion for and excellence of service at every level.

Many of Bender’s students are already putting their education into practice after graduation, developing their inspirational ideas and making them realities. She has seen talented students pursue their four-year degree at Cal Poly Pomona or accept strong job offers at prestigious hotels. They quickly advance to managerial positions, gain transfers to larger properties and soon find themselves earning considerable incomes. Bender expresses, “I am continuously blown away by our students’ creative ideas, energy and enthusiasm. We are here to support them, and I know they are going to go far!”

To support the future of **COD’s Hospitality** program, donate at codfoundation.org, call **760.773.2561** or email cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu.



Industry internships will give students hands-on training with the Valley’s best hotels while learning a variety of positions in restaurant, golf, catering, finance, front office, housekeeping, maintenance and human resources.



COD'S TASC Center Fosters Academic and Skill-Centered Growth, Encouraging Students to Thrive

Considered a critical resource for COD students seeking to improve their academic performance, the **Tutoring and Academic Skills Center (TASC)** offers a variety of services and programs designed to help students reach their full potential and achieve their academic goals.

At TASC, students can receive one-on-one tutoring in math, science, writing and foreign languages. Experienced tutors work closely with students to help them grasp challenging concepts, build confidence and improve their grades for future transfers to 4-year universities.

TASC also provides group tutoring sessions, allowing students to work together and collaborate on coursework. Workshops and classes on topics such as study skills, effective writing, time management and test-taking strategies help students develop additional skills they need to succeed in college and beyond.

“Tutoring centers in community colleges are the foundation of student success. They provide students with the necessary support and guidance to overcome academic challenges, develop critical thinking skills and reach their full potential. In a safe and inclusive environment, students can learn, grow and thrive. By providing access to knowledgeable tutors, state-of-the-art resources and engaging programs, tutoring centers empower students to reach their academic goals and succeed. Without this support, many students would struggle to find their path and achieve their dreams.”

| DANIEL AUCUTT, DIRECTOR OF TASC AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

Director of TASC and Supplemental Instruction Daniel Aucutt took on the COD program over seven years ago. He has led its incredible success even throughout the pandemic, when staff moved the entire program online in two short weeks. During the recent fall semester, nearly 1,750 students visited TASC.



Aucutt understands the student experience. As an undergraduate, he struggled with focus and discipline, and he left school for a short time. After recalibrating his life, he returned more determined to graduate and begin the next chapter of his life.

He became a teacher in turbulent inner-city school systems in California and the Midwest, where his efforts produced unprecedented graduation rates. Aucutt proudly sent his students off to study at schools like Stanford and Johns Hopkins.

In 2016, he joined COD and quickly bolstered the credibility of the TASC program. He collaborated with the faculty to include the TASC in their syllabi, held informative student conferences and built a team devoted to making genuine connections with students so they could perceive the possibility of accomplishing great things at 4-year institutions and beyond.

“One of our tutors was selected as a student speaker for the 2022 commencement, where he gave a shout-out to the TASC faculty for being instrumental in his development and his trajectory to attend UCLA. Watching our students excel is one of the job’s greatest pleasures,” shares Aucutt.

The remodeling of Hilb Library elevated the TASC program by adding study rooms, independent study areas and presentation rooms filled with innovative technology, all with views of the campus and the mountain range beyond. Rounding out TASC’s offerings, a robust schedule of programs and events provides students with opportunities to connect with other students, build their skills and engage in their academic pursuits.

Pre-pandemic stats were extraordinary, with 80% of the college students making one or more visits to TASC per year. In March 2020, the Center moved their tutors online and added an independent 24/7 tutoring service to ensure students continued to receive the resources needed to continue their academic journey supported and without interruption.

“With COD’s Fall semester headcount around 10,000 students, our team was over the moon to learn TASC had 17,460 visits,” says Aucutt. “Our end-of-term survey revealed that 98% of student respondents would recommend TASC services to other students! We have also received our **International Tutor Training Program Certification**. Students feel valued and cared for by our talented tutors. When they succeed, we succeed!”

Students Build Tiny Homes On Wheels That Make Big Impact

College of the Desert is on a roll, building **Tiny Homes on Wheels** that will make a big impact on future communities. The project began in 2020 with a focus of teaching Architecture and Environmental Design students about sustainable building practices while creating a functional living space.

Tiny homes are typically less than 400sf, and have attracted attention for their affordability and energy efficiency. Offering a lower carbon footprint than traditional housing, they can also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The original tiny house began as a class competition among Architecture and Design students. The case study required the understanding of national regulations for recreational vehicles, the use of smart materials and tiny home construction trends. A jury consisting of an architect, an engineer and a contractor used specific criteria to name the winning design. A **\$125,000 Strong Workforce Grant**, geared toward helping career and technical education programs prepare students for the workforce, funded the project.

COD and **Desert Sands Unified School District** navigated 18 students at **Amistad High School** through a series of construction courses. **Southwest Carpenters Union** provided textbooks and a direct pathway for students into their apprenticeship program.

“The students learned valuable skills such as building, wiring, electricity and plumbing,” says **Bert Bitanga**, MARCHRED, a COD professor of Architecture who oversees the project. From designing the home and sourcing materials to framing the walls, managing the budget and meeting local building codes, they learned by doing.

Impact on Future Communities

“The tiny house build doesn’t just benefit the students; it also presents an opportunity for residents seeking affordable housing options,” adds Bitanga. “It’s a model that can be replicated in all communities. The

Architect scholars Molly Glaab and Gleisy Romero recently pitched their winning design for COD’s third tiny home project.



project aims to educate students and the public about the benefits of sustainable housing and encourage them to adopt similar practices in their own lives.”

Construction of the first COD home took 18 months, due to pandemic delays. Measuring just 225sf and bolted to a trailer, it is big on amenities and efficiencies. Dual-glazed vinyl windows and a multi-split air conditioning/heating system join sustainable royal vinyl flooring, recycled wool insulation, low-VOC paints, a tankless water heater, a rainwater-harvesting system and solar panels.

Recently shown at **Modernism Week**, the design is inspired by mid-century modern architecture with clean lines, simple forms and a connection to nature. The minimalist interior features a space-efficient living area, kitchenette (with dual cooktop, sink, mini refrigerator and freezer), bathroom (with composting toilet and shower), a queen-sized sleeping loft and washer/dryer combo. A powered awning shades the outdoor living space.

After the success of the initial tiny home, a second is currently under construction, housing two student lofts, desks and a bathroom all under a butterfly-style roof. The third tiny home project by two female students, **Gleisy Romero** and **Molly Glaab**, was recently won in a hotly contested competition. It is the first to require ADA compliance.

“I thought my first year would be learning the basics of architecture and design, but we are making a difference already,” shares Gleisy. “With such a small space, we need to be innovative with functional loft, bathroom and study areas. We have sourced everything down to the toilet paper holder. It’s been an incredible learning experience.”

To learn how to support **Architecture and Environmental Design students**, donate to **CODFoundation.org**, call **760.773.2561** or email the Executive Director, Catherine Abbott at **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.



Second tiny home design under construction.

Tiny Homes on Wheels Premiered During Modernism Week



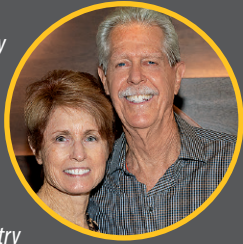
ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN PROGRAM WISH LIST

- Two 3-D Printers | \$4,400
- 11x17 Laser Printer | \$3,000
- Ten 24"x36" Cutting Mats | \$700
- Ten 36"x48" Cutting Mats | \$1,700
- Ten 12" Adjustable Triangles | \$570
- Ten 12" 30/60/90 Triangles | \$100
- 12" 45/45/90 Triangles | \$130
- 36" T-Squares | \$600
- 30 24"x36" Portable Drafting Boards | \$300
- Student Chair Design and Construction Project | \$2,500

Scan this QR code to donate to Fund for Student Success. ▶



"We believe strongly in the community college system. California has one of the best community college systems in the country and COD ranks high within that system. COD plays an important role in the Valley by educating a large portion of our workforce."



| MAUREEN AND WAYNE JOHNSON



"I am passionate about COD for two reasons. I believe people must be educated to ensure a prosperous future, and College of the Desert has

identified, developed and provides the education programs that meet our community's needs."

| PATRICIA CLINTON



Sherrie Clark's bequest will have an impact on College of the Desert students long after she is gone.



Ed Oehler and Bill Haines chose to make a difference in students' lives by including College of the Desert Foundation in their estate plans.

Legacy Giving: Your Contribution, Our Future

Legacy gifts provide future support for College of the Desert and significantly alter students' lives using charitable strategies. Contributions by will, trust, other forms of written designation, life-income arrangements and endowment gifts all represent generous forms of legacy giving. These gifts represent powerful and meaningful ways for individuals to create a philanthropic legacy for their community and the organizations they care about. We encourage you to take advantage of the many tax benefits of making a planned gift.

The Benefits of Making Bequests

A bequest is one of the most popular and flexible gifts to make. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift be made to family, friends and COD as part of your estate plan.

- You leave a lasting legacy to be remembered.
- You lessen the burden of taxes on your family.
- You may receive estate tax savings.

A bequest can be made in several ways:

- You can gift a specific dollar amount or asset.
- You can gift a percentage of your estate.
- You can make a gift from the balance or residue of your estate.
- You can make a beneficiary designation of certain assets.

Charitable Gift Annuity

You may be tired of living at the mercy of the fluctuating stock and real estate markets. A charitable gift annuity is a gift made to the COD Foundation that can provide you with a secure source of fixed payments for life.

Benefits include:

- Receive fixed payments to you or another annuitant you designate for life.
- Receive a charitable income tax deduction for the charitable gift portion of the annuity.
- Benefit from payments that may be partially tax-free.
- Further our mission to enhance the quality of education by advancing COD.

To learn more, please visit www.codlegacy.org or contact Gailya Brown with the COD Foundation **760.773.2651** or at gbrown@collegeofthedesert.edu.

How a Charitable Gift Annuity Works:

- You transfer cash or property to the institution managing the annuity.
- You will receive a charitable income tax deduction for the gift portion of the annuity.
- The benefit to you is a charitable tax deduction and income for your lifetime.
- You also receive the satisfaction of knowing that you will be helping to further our mission of supporting student success.

If you decide to fund your gift annuity with cash, a significant portion of the annuity payment will be tax-free. You may also make a gift of appreciated securities to fund a gift annuity and avoid a portion of the capital gains tax.

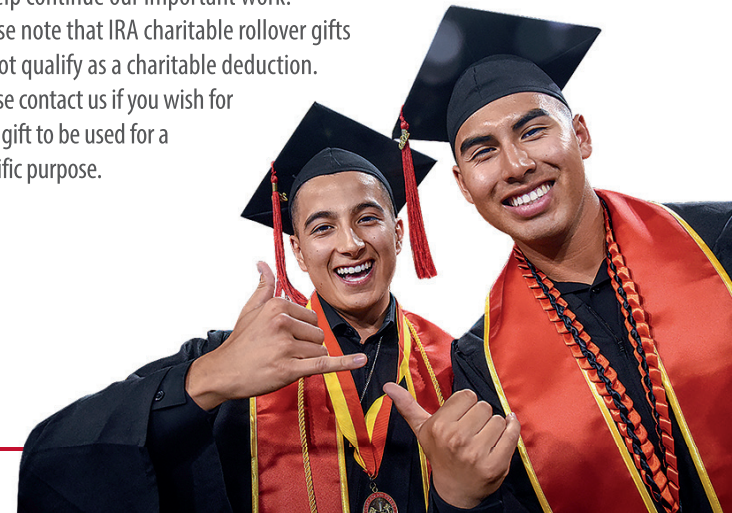
IRA Charitable Rollover

If you are 70½ or older, an IRA Charitable Rollover is a way you can help continue our work and also receive a tax benefit this year.

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to the COD Foundation.
- Satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- Make a gift that is not subject to the deduction limits on charitable gifts.
- Help further the work and mission of the COD Foundation.

How an IRA Charitable Rollover gift works:

- Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift from your IRA to us.
- Your IRA funds will be directly transferred to the COD Foundation to help continue our important work.
- Please note that IRA charitable rollover gifts do not qualify as a charitable deduction.
- Please contact us if you wish for your gift to be used for a specific purpose.



COD's Music Professor Hits All the Right Notes

Classical Guitar and Music Theory Adjunct Professor, **Jesus Palominos** has a love for music stems back to the cartoons he listened to as a young boy. As a visually impaired child, the animated music told a story that fascinated him. "I have a difficult time articulating how I feel, so sound is the best way to express my emotions" he says. "When I play music at a concert or at a recital, I lose myself in the sound and express how I feel with my hands. Music is an extremely powerful medium."

When Jesus was 13 years old, his high school science teacher noticed that he would hang out at the music building. One day, she asked him why he hadn't signed up for classes. Jesus shared that he was interested in a guitar course but he didn't own a guitar. A week later, his teacher gifted him with his very own guitar, which he lovingly still plays today.

Even though Jesus joined the class two weeks late, within a few days he caught up. "I was fascinated that I was able to teach myself to read music so quickly and to play the songs that everybody else was playing. From that point, I never stopped."

At age 19, Jesus came to COD where he was reading and writing at a second-grade level. With the support he received from the faculty and staff, not only did he graduate from COD, but he went on to attend California State Fullerton where he earned his bachelors and master's in music studying with some of the world's greatest classical guitarists.

After graduation, Jesus was hired to as a Music professor at COD. "Now, I'm the one helping and supporting my students. It's an incredible privilege," he shares. As an instructor, Jesus has formed connections with his students by relating to their sense of worry and doubt. "For many students, it's their first time attending a junior college. Students fear whether or not they can accomplish their goals," he explains. "It's critical for teachers to relate and guide them through a new, unfamiliar world from day one."

The pandemic changed the course of every instructor's life. But for Jesus, he had to develop a way to teach his students in order to



keep them engaged online. "I started recording my own videos so that my students could rewatch them. As someone who is visually impaired, I had to research and train myself with cameras, lighting and microphones." With online classes being such a visual medium, it's incredible that he produced 36 videos over two years.

Jesus is motivated by helping his students recognize that they are capable of so much more than they believe. "I've had many students tell me they have no musical ability and that they don't know if they can pass the course. But, by the end of the semester, they are playing songs and reading music. Music teaches you that when you work hard, when you study, when you feel passionate about it and if you want to learn something, you can do it!"

Jesus describes his COD working experience as an ongoing journey where he gets better each year. His passion and motivation for changing the lives of his students is not just impactful, but obvious to those around him. "Some of my proudest moments is when I'm walking through campus and my students run up to talk to me. They express how music really changed them. They may have been going through a hard time in their life and how playing music relieves them from pain even if it's just for one hour," he shares. "I know I'm doing something positive and making a difference in somebody's life, and who doesn't want to do that?"

Barry Manilow Gifts \$50,000 to COD's Music Program

Music icon and Grammy award winner **Barry Manilow** believes in the gift of music and has graciously donated \$50,000 to enhance COD's musical education program. But the gift of music is not new to him; he has donated instruments and equipment for over 34 years, giving disadvantaged young people the opportunity to experience community, passion and creativity musically.

"Music education at COD plays an essential role in fulfilling our mission to prepare students for meaningful careers while supporting communities across the Coachella Valley," says Superintendent/President Martha Garcia, Ed. D. "Not only does it increase brain function and improve memory, it also promotes positive social interactions and teamwork. By studying music at COD, students build confidence, patience, perseverance and other attributes, culminating in many certificates and transfer degrees. These certificates and degrees enable students to immediately use their newly honed skills to continue into a four-year educational program or enter the workforce. Many of our students impact the Valley by completing their advanced training and becoming music educators in their own right, continuing the cycle with music education."

Manilow's donation will support brass, woodwinds, percussion and guitar instruments needed to for six practice rooms to conduct applied music lessons, ensemble practices and prepare for music theory and assignments and performances. By supplementing the practice rooms with equipment, the 110 students currently working towards their degree will have access to the tools they need to succeed in their classes.

To give the **gift of music**, please call **760.773.2561** or email **cabbott@collegeofthedesert.edu**.





Empower COD Students to Spread Their Wings

About the COD Foundation

The mission of the COD Foundation is to act as an advocate for the college and to secure financial support, enhancing the educational opportunities for all students. For 40 years, the COD Foundation has raised more than \$100 million to support student services and now manages endowments and other assets of more than \$55 million. Endowment funds raised by the Foundation provide financial support for scholarships, textbooks, classroom technology upgrades, faculty positions, equipment and programs. Yet even with the Foundation's fundraising efforts, combined with the interest from the endowment providing this critical financial support, there still are unmet needs for thousands of students each year. A portion of all restricted endowment donations are used to further advance efforts on behalf of COD.

Ways to Support COD Students

Through your generosity, more students will have the opportunity to attend and have the resources to graduate in a shorter amount time. Here a few ways you can contribute to COD students:

- **Join the President's Circle** | Meet with an inner circle of givers while supporting the greatest needs for students and programming through scholarships, childcare, program support and internships.
- **Become an Academic Angel** | Serve as a goodwill ambassador for the Foundation through the Learning to Lead program and State of the College.

- Donate to the **Fund for Student Success** | Deliver the critical resources College of the Desert needs to ensure students achieve their academic goals.
- Donate to the award-winning **EDGE/pLEDGE Scholarship Program**.
- **Sponsor Signature Events** | Your name in our event program sends a message you care.
- **Sponsor a Scholarship or Program** | Create a meaningful memory for a special loved one.
- **Support the Endowment Fund** | Provide educational income to support scholarships, textbooks, classroom technology upgrades, faculty positions, equipment and other programs.
- **Legacy Giving** | Legacy gifts secure future support for COD and significantly alter students' lives using charitable strategies. Consider a contribution by will, trust, other form of written designation, life-income arrangement or endowment gift. These gifts represent powerful and meaningful ways for individuals to create a philanthropic legacy for their community and worthy organizations. We encourage you to take advantage of the many tax benefits of making a planned gift.

Your donations are critical to keeping COD students enrolled and on track to graduate. Each contribution has a profound impact on our talented students and promotes higher education, career advancement and lifelong learning. Through your ongoing support, you are furthering the value COD brings to the Valley.



Scan this QR code to give to the COD Foundation today!