

Adult Education has a rich 150-year history in our region, but until now has still been considered the “best-kept secret.”



# PATHWAYS FOR EVERYONE



Learn how these low- and no-cost programs are life-changing for individual Californians and their families, but may also be the economic engine for the entire state.



Northern  
Regional California  
Adult Education  
Programs



# THE LONG HISTORY— AND IMPORTANT FUTURE—OF ADULT EDUCATION



How programs that have quietly been helping Californians since 1856 may be the answer to recovering from 2020

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

It's hard to believe adult education has been around for 150 years, but so many people don't fully understand what it is, what it does or what impact it could have on our state as a whole.

"Adult education is still the best-kept secret because we offer the same programs private schools offer but we don't charge for them," says Susan Lytle Gilmore, Ph.D., director of adult education for Sacramento City Unified School District. "Or...we charge just enough fees to cover the expenses of our teachers. We are significantly less expensive than private schools."

As a result, Gilmore has spent her decades in adult education getting the secret out. She tells the story of going to dinner with a friend, who explained her granddaughter wanted to go into nursing. But the \$35,000+ tuition for the private LVN program meant the young woman's father must give up retirement and return to work.

"I said, 'Have her come to us!'" Gilmore recalls. In fact, Sac City's health education program at the Charles A. Jones Career & Education Center is nationally accredited, so "we can offer Pell Grants and Stafford Loans, and students graduate owing almost nothing."

Her advice was gratefully accepted. "And I was at that graduation party—the entire family was so happy," she says. "She graduated, got a job and was on her way. Her father didn't have to go back to work."

Gilmore also believes adult education plays a pivotal role in jump-starting the California economy, both now and in the future. "What we're looking at is huge—63% of all jobs that will come available in the U.S. require education beyond a high

school diploma," she says. "And 50% of our workforce has achieved a high school education or less. Our challenge is to attract them to come to our programs and get what they need. We need to be creating pathways for students to escape all the barriers they have."

Finally, Gilmore says adult education programs need partnerships with community colleges, workforce development boards, labor unions and volunteer-based organizations. A good template for that is the new manufacturing program at Charles A. Jones, which was created with help from the Sacramento Employment Training Agency and the City of Sacramento, along with a \$264,000 grant from the Sacramento Valley

*"What we're looking at is huge—63% of all jobs that will come available in the U.S. require education beyond a high school diploma. And 50% of our workforce has achieved a high school education or less."*

**Susan Lytle Gilmore, Ph.D.**  
Director of Adult Education, Sacramento City Unified School District

Manufacturing Initiative.

"Leadership isn't about a title," Gilmore likes to say. "It's about impact, influence and inspiration."

To learn more about the history of adult education in California, visit [caladulthood.org](http://caladulthood.org). To learn more about Sacramento City Unified School District's adult education programs, visit [scusd.edu/adult-education-schools](http://scusd.edu/adult-education-schools) or call 916-643-7400.

## WHY WE NEED ADULT EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

Number of adults who aren't high school graduates:

**4,702,104**

\*Number who aren't employed:

**1,557,681**

Number who are in poverty:

**2,624,531**

Number who are illiterate:

**2,976,145**

Number who need to learn English:

**3,473,458**

Number who have a 7th grade education:

**2,030,579**

\*The impact of COVID-19 has pushed this 2010 figure to 2.172 million.

From the 2010 U.S. Census

## START HERE!



### STEP 1: Decision to pursue your education

Student gets motivated due to having an immediate need (i.e. need to put food on the table, get a better job, learn English, go back and get their diploma, etc.) and/or is referred by another local/regional program.

### STEP 2: Find a local adult education provider / no wrong door

Reasons why adult students pick their school:

- Based on word of mouth
- Was a referral from another program
- Saw an advertisement/saw it via social media
- School had proven success
- School was close by
- Track record of quick student acceleration toward goal
- Their kids went there
- Flexible schedule
- No cost



### STEP 3: Create your plan, develop your goals

Student is assessed, goals are discussed, student talks to a counselor, education plan is created, a personalized pathway to goals is created, or student is referred to another adult education provider in the region based on their plan (and who can meet their needs).



### STEP 6: Transition to reach your goal

- Transition from English Second Language or Adult Basic Ed to Adult Secondary Education
- Transition from ESL/ABE/ASE to Career Technical Education



### STEP 5: Make progress

- Achieve student progress (measurable skills gains)
- Awarded a short term certificate, diploma, or high school equivalency
- Complete a workforce preparation milestone
- Complete training to help individuals better access their community

### STEP 4: Pick a program(s), follow your path

Possible course offerings:

- High School Diploma/High School Equivalency
- Adult Basic Education/Literacy
- English Second Language/Civics/Immigrant Integration/Citizenship
- K-12 Success (adults helping elementary & secondary students succeed)
- Adults with Disabilities (living skills, learning skills for adults)
- Career Technical Education – Short Term Vocational, Workforce Preparation, and
- Pre-apprenticeship



### STEP 7: SUCCESS!

- Living Wage / In Demand Jobs
- Transition to Post Secondary credit coursework for AA degree, Certificate

# ADULT EDUCATION STUDENT JOURNEY

#### Network of Adult Education Providers:

- K-12 adult school programs
- County Office of Education programs
- Regional Occupational programs
- Jail Education programs
- Community College noncredit programs

#### Network of Adult Education Partners:

- Workforce Boards and One Stops
- Employers
- County Social Services
- Library literacy programs
- Community-based organizations
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations

# LEARNING ENGLISH WAS JUST THE BEGINNING

## How one woman used adult education as the first step in her road forward

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

The Delta Sierra Adult Education Consortium in San Joaquin County is focused on helping people from all backgrounds overcome barriers to education and employment, leading them to opportunities and success.

Veronica Flores was certainly a likely candidate when she moved from Mexico to the U.S. in 2006. “I didn’t know much English and I couldn’t communicate the way I can now,” she says.

That began to change dramatically when she moved from Arizona to Stockton in 2010. “I’d had an education in Mexico, but I didn’t have one here, but I like learning,” says Flores, 54. “I learned to be a hard worker from my family—not with my back, but with my head.”

Flores summoned the determination to change her life’s course over the coming years. Her first stop was the School for Adults in the Stockton Unified School District, where she earned a certificate in English as a Second Language and a High School Equivalency certificate.

“Learning English and being able to communicate and being able to understand what I was studying opened up a new world of opportunities,” she says. “Had it not been for adult education, I think I would have learned English the wrong way or maybe I wouldn’t have learned it at all.”

Her newfound literacy sparked her next move, to San Joaquin Delta College, where she left with an associate’s degree in accounting. Flores went from there to the University of the Pacific, earning a bachelor of science degree in organizational behavior in 2017.

Then it was back for more adult education for her state license as a medical administrative assistant, which enabled her

to get her present job as administrative assistant to the dean of the San Joaquin Delta College Health Sciences Division.

Being bilingual “is a big advantage” on the job, Flores says. “We have a lot of Spanish-speaking people who feel more comfortable communicating with a Spanish-speaker.”

What was the motivation behind Flores’ arduous academic journey?

“It was to give a better life to my son, Erin (now 20), my

*“Had it not been for adult education, I think I would have learned English the wrong way or maybe I wouldn’t have learned it at all.”*

**Veronica Flores**  
Assistant to the Dean, San Joaquin Delta College Health Sciences Division

parents and myself,” Flores says. “Also, I’m the oldest of three sisters, so I’ve always felt that I should set an example for them.”

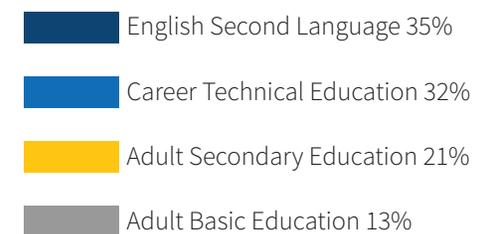
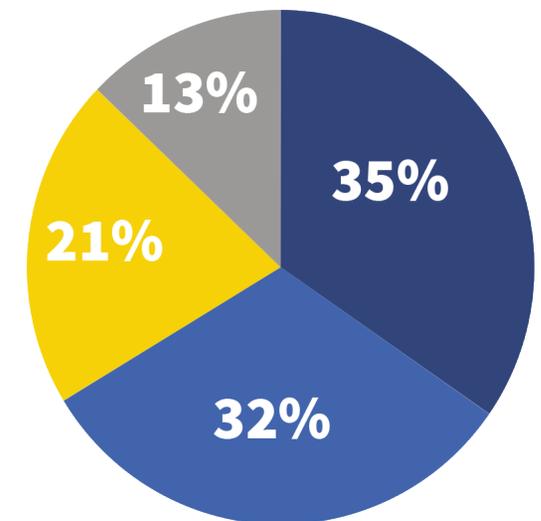
What advice does she have for others beginning their own journeys?

“I would tell those from other countries who have come here for a better future that it starts with education, which begins with learning English,” she says. “That’s huge. It will open doors for anybody.”

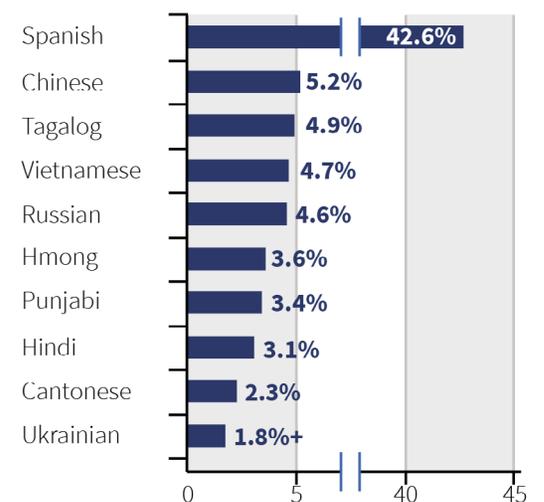
For more information on the School for Adults in Stockton Unified School District, visit [stocktonusd.net/SchoolForAdults](http://stocktonusd.net/SchoolForAdults) or call 209-933-7455.

## LANGUAGE ABILITY

### GREATER SACRAMENTO AREA ADULT EDUCATION ENROLLMENT BREAKDOWN



### LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME IN SACRAMENTO REGION



California Adult Education 2019 Fact Sheets

Maria McLaughlin achieved her goals through adult ed, and is now a role model for her children—and works at their neighborhood elementary school.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIA MCLAUGHLIN

# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DIPLOMA MAKES

## How adult education helped a woman find her dream job—at a school across the street from her home

BY ALLEN PEIRLEONI

As a high school senior, Maria McLaughlin was preparing to take on her senior project, then later pass the California High School Exit Exam and graduate with her hard-earned diploma. But her plans were derailed when her mother became ill and, as the oldest of four daughters at home, her priorities shifted.

“I couldn’t finish my senior project, which was a requirement to graduate,” recalls McLaughlin, now 34, who lives in Stockton. “I was already working, so I put my education on the back burner, though I did pass the exit exam.”

McLaughlin discovered that the lack of a high school diploma was a hurdle in the job market, confining her to a series of customer service positions in retail stores such as Victoria’s Secret and Hollywood Video.

“Even though I’m professional and have amazing customer service skills, I felt that because I didn’t have a high school diploma I couldn’t get the jobs I wanted,” she says. “I was looked over when I applied.”

McLaughlin’s goal was to work in the education field “because I love helping kids learn,” she says. “I knew the only way to get that job was to get a high school diploma. I only

*“Never think you’re too old to further your education, and don’t be afraid to ask for help.”*

**Maria McLaughlin**  
Para educator, Parklane Elementary School

needed 25 credits and I wanted to go back.”

This led her to the Lodi Adult School, which specializes in multiple adult education programs.

“The staff made it known that they were available and interested in helping us reach our goals,” McLaughlin says.

When it comes to adult education, she advises, “Never think you’re too old to further your education, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. As my husband says, ‘A closed mouth does not get fed.’”

After graduating with her diploma in October 2019, McLaughlin learned of a “dream job opening” at Parklane Elementary School—literally across the street from her home.



“We already had one child going there, it was perfect.” She interviewed and was hired last March.

McLaughlin works as a para educator, helping teachers prepare lesson plans and working one-on-one with students, some of whom are on the autism spectrum. “To be able to help kids like this is something I really wanted to do,” she says. “But, because of COVID, everything’s now being done through Zoom.”

McLaughlin’s driving force is rooted in the example she wanted to set for her four sons. “I wanted my kids to see that no matter what your circumstances, it’s never too late to work hard toward a goal and accomplish it,” she says. “It’s important to have that victory.”

To learn more about the Lodi Adult School in the Lodi Unified School District, visit [adulthood.lodiused.net](http://adulthood.lodiused.net) or call 209-331-7605.

### ADULT EDUCATION ENROLLMENT AND LEVEL GAINS

#### GREATER SACRAMENTO

Data Points	16-17	17-18	18-19
Enrollment	33,139	36,352	36,557
Level Gains	28%	40%	46%

#### NORTH VALLEY/STOCKTON

The Chancellor’s Office Adult Education Pipeline on LaunchBoard  
\*Studies find that increasing English proficiency by one level raises earnings by over 30%, Immigrant Integration in the United States: The Role of Adult English Language Training, Harvard University, November 2020.

# THE GIFT OF HOPE

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

## How an innate resilience—combined with education—helped a woman engage with her community and become a role model for others

Carlada Thomas is focused on the people around her, all the time. Whether that's her three "birth children," her two "adopted children," her patients at the skilled nursing facility or her church community, she is always helping others.

What's surprising about that is Thomas had an admittedly difficult childhood—with a mother who had substance abuse issues and a father who was incarcerated. She suffered physical and emotional abuse. There were many times she could have turned inward or just given up. What saved her?

"Unconditional love," she recalls, citing in particular some strong women who loved her like she was their own child and treated her children like their grandchildren. "In spite of my anger, no one judged me. For me, that's what unconditional love looks like."

As a result of that support, Thomas made a conscious pivot away from "victimhood" for both herself and her kids. In her early 30s, she enrolled in an adult education program through the Sutter County Superintendent's Office of Education. She finished her high school education in January 2019 and immediately started classes at the community college, with the goal of completing a degree in social work.

But once again, life intervened: COVID hit. Her grandfather passed away and she lost her retail job. Her college classes, which she had been struggling with—Thomas has some learning disabilities—were becoming more difficult because they were all remote. "What am I going to do?" she remembers asking.

She once again had some angels on her side, and was offered a job at River Valley Care Center. She completed a certified nursing assistant degree through the care center's in-house program and worked directly with patients, but then another pivot occurred. River Valley assigned her to its social services department, much closer to her social work goals. And she is more committed than ever to completing a college degree in that field at Yuba College.

In the meantime, she continues to work with her church, where she has long been involved in programs like Feed My Sheep, which provides meals in the Yuba-Sutter area, and the Mobile Community Closet, which distributes clothing and school supplies. During COVID, which sidelined some of these in-person services, she connects via Zoom or Facebook with young people to encourage them during these challenging times.

"It's going to get better," she says emphatically. "I want them to know, 'you have a voice. Find out who you are in the midst of this. This storm isn't going to last forever.'"

To learn more about Sutter County Adult Education, visit [suttercountyadulthood.org](http://suttercountyadulthood.org) or call 530-822-5810.

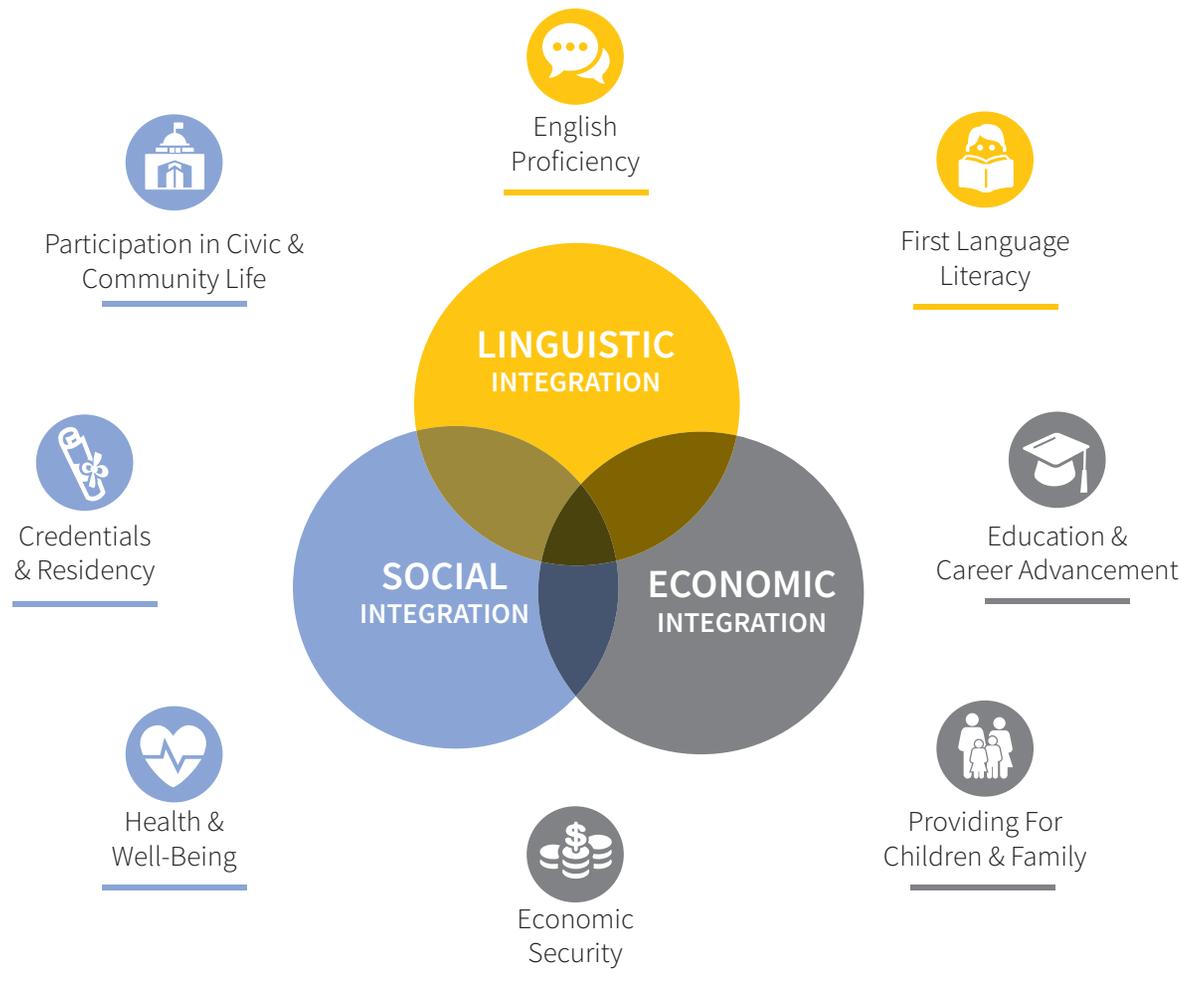
*"It's going to get better. ... You have a voice. Find out who you are in the midst of this. This storm isn't going to last forever."*

**Carlada Thomas**  
Graduate, Sutter County Adult Education



## INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

When students learn English, become a citizen or complete academic milestones, they become more involved in all aspects of their community.



# ADULT EDUCATION OPENS DOORS

How one man got a high school diploma and is now working toward a lucrative new career

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

In some way or another, we all want to improve ourselves in order to find opportunities that will better our lives.

No-cost or low-cost adult education is one way to do just that. It paves the way for students from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and current life situations to finally overcome the barriers that have prevented them from learning new skills or sharpening old ones. In a very practical sense, it can be the gateway to second chances and newfound freedoms.

That's the path Edgardo Cerna has taken. His first stop was the Lodi Adult School in the Lodi Unified School District. He devoted many nights there for five months, studying for his high school diploma, while working at construction sites during the days, installing countertops in newly built houses.

As a married man with two children, Cerna shares the responsibilities with his wife that come with family life. Given that, he says, it's more important than ever for him to finish what he starts.

"I didn't finish high school because I didn't have the chance or the time," says Cerna, 34. "But now I have finished it and my wife is really proud and happy, because I can say I have a high school diploma."

With the diploma, Cerna's world began to immediately open up: He became eligible for enrollment in career training programs that require a high school education as a prerequisite.

Adult education propelled Edgardo Cerna toward a successful future.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDGARDO CERNA



So his next step was a program that will lead to certifications in maintaining and installing HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) in residential and commercial properties.

*"In May, when I get my certification, I can move on to a better job, a bigger income and a better life for my family and me."*

**Edgardo Cerna**  
Graduate of Lodi Adult School

Not only is there a growing need for HVAC technicians—as builders help communities recover from wildfires and address affordable housing challenges—but this career field offers life-changing opportunities on a personal level.

"I'm really happy doing what I'm doing at HVAC school," he says. "In May, when I get my certification, I can move on to a better job, a bigger income and a better life for my family and me."

For more information on the Lodi Adult School in Lodi Unified School District, visit [adulted.lodiUSD.net](http://adulted.lodiUSD.net) or call 209-331-7605.

## MANUFACTURING/ CONSTRUCTION CAREER GROWTH

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the manufacturing and construction fields are projected to grow. Jobs include painters, carpenters, construction equipment operators, sheet metal workers, plumbers, electricians, roofers, drywall and ceiling tile installers, and building inspectors.

### TOTAL ANNUAL OPENINGS: 980

- Total Openings between 2017 and 2027: 9,877
- Median hourly wages: \$21.81
- Median annual wages: \$45,364

### MANUFACTURING/CONSTRUCTION JOBS IN THE TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS:



#### Electrical Power Line Installers and Repairers

- Total 2017 jobs: 7,250
- Total 2027 jobs: 9,263
- Median hourly wages: \$57.12
- Median annual wages: \$118,811



#### Solar Photovoltaic Installers

- Total 2017 jobs: 4,224
- Total 2027 jobs: 8,286
- Median hourly wages: \$26.49
- Median annual wages: \$55,109



#### Pipelayers, Steamfitters and Plumbers

- Total 2017 jobs: 3,026
- Total 2027 jobs: 4,411
- Median hourly wages: \$25.29
- Median annual wages: \$52,601

The Egurrola family has three certified pharmacy technicians: father Eddie, son Kameron and daughter Saraya.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF EDDIE EGURROLA



# STARTING ANEW

## How a student forged a rewarding new career path—inspired by and inspiring his adult kids

BY ANNE STOKES

At 55, Eddie Egurrola embarked on a new career. It was something completely different from the jobs he'd been working for the past several decades, one that not only gives him security, but the satisfaction of helping others.

At the age of 16, he dropped out of high school to support himself. Soon, he was working to support his young family as well. He worked hard, albeit paycheck-to-paycheck.

"No matter how good you are at sales and commission, you never know what next week's check is going to be like," he remembers. "I worked my way up the chain, but I got as far as I could go...because I didn't have a GED or high school diploma."

Today, Egurrola—a graduate of the Charles A. Jones Career and Education Center—is a certified pharmacy technician working at Sutter Medical Center.

"Within 18 months, I went from getting my GED to finishing school and actually starting at Sutter," he says. "I'm really proud of myself for that. I wish I would have done it sooner."

He was inspired by his daughter, Saraya, the first in the family to pursue a career as a pharmacy technician. His son, Kameron, is following his sister and father into the same field.

"All I would hear her say was how much she loved her job. It got me thinking that maybe I want a piece of that," he says. "I just want to be able to enjoy my job, because honestly not everybody gets the privilege of working somewhere they love."

Initially, Egurrola says he was a little intimidated going back to school, but the support he got from both faculty and his

fellow students quickly put his worries to rest. And that support didn't end once he graduated: The program helped place him in an externship where he acquired hands-on experience and connections that got him hired afterward.

"It's not the easiest course for somebody my age, but there's so much help there, there are so many people you can lean on who can help you get through it," he says. "There's an honest feel of them caring about your career."

*"Not everybody gets the privilege of working somewhere they love."*

**Eddie Egurrola**

*Certified pharmacy technician and graduate of Charles A. Jones Career and Education Center*

Ultimately, Egurrola says the best part of his new career is knowing he's doing something that matters.

"At work, there's nothing more satisfying than compounding something and then taking it to the NICU unit, delivering it to the baby it's going to and seeing that baby eventually check out," he says. "You know that in a small part you were a part of them getting better."

*For more information on the Charles A. Jones Career and Education Center, visit [caj.scusd.edu](http://caj.scusd.edu) or call 916-395-5800.*

## HEALTH CARE CAREER GROWTH

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the health care field is projected to grow 15% in the next decade and add 2.4 million new jobs—more than any other occupational group. Some of the top fastest growing health care occupations include:



### Nursing assistant

- 2017: 103,345
- 2027: 131,054 (27% growth)
- Median hourly wages: \$22.39
- Median annual wages: \$46,578



### Home health aide

- 2017: 31,461
- 2027: 37,329 (19% growth)
- Median hourly wages: \$14.99
- Median annual wages: \$31,175



### Physical therapist assistant

- 2017: 5,114
- 2027: 7,710 (51% growth)
- Median hourly wages: \$38.49
- Median annual wages: \$80,063



### Occupational therapy assistant

- 2017: 1,955
- 2027: 3,209 (64% growth)
- Median hourly wages: \$40.30
- Median annual wages: \$83,832



### Health technologists and technicians

- 2017: 24,221
- 2027: 33,231 (37% growth)
- Median hourly wages: \$37.56
- Median annual wages: \$78,130

Kurt Teitscheid is building a new career with assistance from the Placer School for Adults.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF KURT TEITSCHIED



# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

## How changing careers can be less intimidating if you have the support you need

BY ANNE STOKES

Kurt Teitscheid wasn't happy working as a fitness trainer. He was looking for a change of pace and the opportunity to earn a better living. More importantly, he was looking for a career that afforded him a path to bigger things. He found it at the Placer School for Adults when he enrolled in the residential construction pre-apprenticeship training program.

"I considered doing the community college thing and possibly even transferring, but I wanted to work while I learned, so I decided I'd rather start work now," he says. "I grew up on a lot of horse property, almost a small ranch, so I grew up doing all sorts of odds and ends around there. ...I learn fast, I'm able-bodied, you can make decent money in construction, so I went for it and took a shot."

Teitscheid says the thought of going back to school and changing careers—finding a way to make ends meet while paying for tuition—was initially intimidating. When he saw an ad for the pre-apprenticeship program, he saw it was more affordable than he had thought. Not only did he get the training he needed, the program also provided job placement assistance and connected graduates with companies looking to hire, and one of these recruited Teitscheid.

"They're able to see you're committed to what you're doing because you've finished your class and they have feedback from your instructor," he says. "I definitely believe that helped."

For the past five months, Teitscheid has been doing solar installations and is in training for new opportunities. He's keeping his long-term career goals open: Either a career as a residential electrician or working on power lines as a linesman.

Today he's happy to have a career with room to grow instead of a 9-to-5 job.

"I have more energy, I have more time and I'm making more money. Overall, the most satisfying part is the trajectory I feel that I'm on is much better," he says. "It is hard, but anything worth doing is going to be hard. I tell people just to clearly define your vision—where do you want to be? And then make a decision toward it. If you make a decision to work

*"The most satisfying part is the trajectory I feel that I'm on is much better."*

**Kurt Teitscheid**

Graduate, Placer School for Adults residential construction pre-apprenticeship training program/Solar Installer

tirelessly and put all of your effort into that, then there's no way you're going to fall short."

For more information on programs available at the Placer School for Adults, visit [placeronline.org](http://placeronline.org) or call 530-885-8585.

## IT PAYS TO KNOW

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, getting an education pays off: Not only do higher levels of education usually result in higher earnings, they also correlate to lower rates of unemployment.



### Master's degree

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$1,497
- Unemployment rate: 2%



### Bachelor's degree

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$1,248
- Unemployment rate: 2.2%



### Associate's degree

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$887
- Unemployment rate: 2.7%



### Some college (no degree)

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$883
- Unemployment rate: 3.3%



### High school diploma

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$746
- Unemployment rate: 3.7%



### Less than a high school diploma

- Median usual weekly earnings: \$592
- Unemployment rate: 5.4%

Hermelinda Aguirre graduated with her high school diploma in June 2020.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF ASPIRE

# SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

## How a supportive program helped a woman overcome barriers

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

Hermelinda Aguirre, or Meli as she prefers, has a physical disability that limits her mobility—but not her future. With the personalized attention she received from the adult education program that partners with Lake Tahoe Community College, she is achieving—and setting—ambitious goals.

ADVANCE, which is the name of the Lake Tahoe Adult Education Consortium, officially opened its doors in 2016. But Aguirre, who is now 53, had been preparing for the high school equivalency exam with LTCC off and on before that, and a problem had already been identified. While she could prep for the tests locally, she would have to travel almost an hour to take the HSE exams in either Placerville, California or Carson City, Nevada.

Her ADVANCE teachers quickly worked to accommodate her needs. Aguirre’s initial test—social studies—was administered locally for the first time in July 2016. But she encountered difficulties with the other exams, most notably writing and mathematics. Still, her goals were to earn a high school credential, then enroll at LTCC to begin working toward an AA degree in Early Childhood Education, and she remained willing to put in the time and effort to achieve them.

To honor both her goals and her determination, ADVANCE began to explore the possibility of a hybrid, competency-based approach to a diploma. With buy-in from its member partners at the El Dorado County Office of Education, her teachers were able to create a plan that capitalized on Aguirre’s success with the HSE tests she passed, added independent projects that contextualized the necessary learning in a more engaging way, and allowed her to start classes at LTCC in a “dual enrollment” approach to avoid future replication of coursework.

“Meli has a strong sense of commitment and a desire to succeed in all she does,” says Susan Baker, the ADVANCE adult education teacher who was most involved with Aguirre’s

personalized graduation pathway plan. “Despite her disability, Meli never gave up her desire to attain her high school diploma. Through a combination of independent book work, competency-based assessments and college classes, Meli was successful. Her goal is to get her degree in Early Childhood Education, and I have no doubt she will succeed.”

*“Despite her disability, Meli never gave up her desire to attain her high school diploma. Through a combination of independent book work, competency-based assessments and college classes, Meli was successful.”*

**Susan Baker**  
Adult Education Teacher, EDCOE/ADVANCE

ADVANCE also connected Aguirre to the California Department of Rehabilitation, adding additional resources to help mitigate the impact of her disability on her goal. Most importantly, this connection with DOR ensured her access to the supports needed to successfully complete her initial college courses.

Because of her hard work and determination, as well as the creativity of her teachers and ADVANCE’s education partners, Aguirre earned her high school diploma in June 2020 and continues to work her way through her college coursework.

To learn more about ADVANCE, visit [ltcc.edu/academics/specialized\\_programs/advance/index.php](http://ltcc.edu/academics/specialized_programs/advance/index.php) or call 530-541-4660.



## WHAT’S IN YOUR ADULT EDUCATION TOOLBOX?



### TRANSITION TOOLS FOR K-12 ADULT AND NONCREDIT STUDENTS:

**Integrated Education & Training**

**Guided Pathways**

**Dual Enrollment**

**Contextualized Instruction**

**Immigrant Integration**

**Career Counseling**

**Competency-Based Education**

**Pre-apprenticeship**

**Transition Specialists**

**Career Pathways**

**Federal Co-Enrollment**

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

A Q&A with Imelda Donato, adult education counselor

BY ANNE STOKES

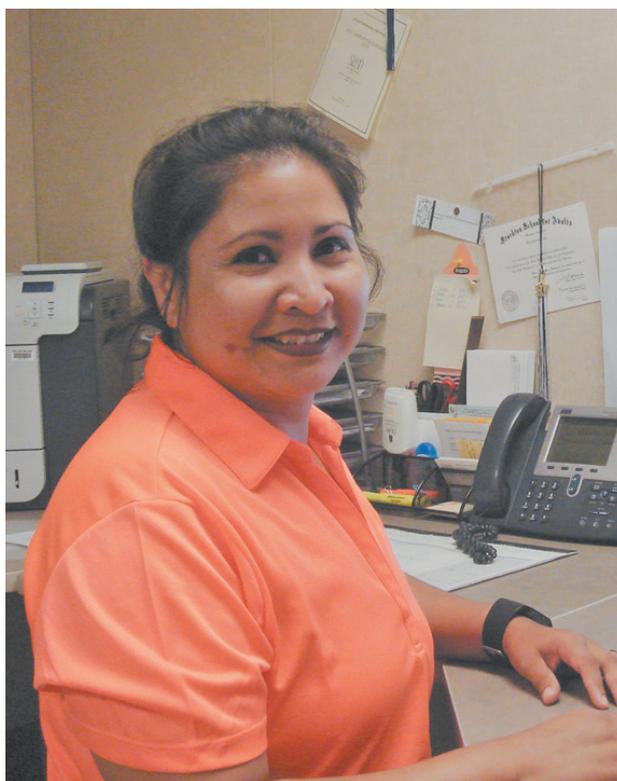


PHOTO COURTESY OF IMELDA DONATO

*“No question is a wrong question or bad question. Whatever they ask, we’re here as counselors to help.”*

**Imelda Donato**  
Adult education counselor, Stockton School for Adults

## **What types of programs are offered through the area’s adult education programs?**

We have high school diploma (programs) for students who have not completed their high school diploma. ... We also have preparation classes to help students prepare for the GED program and the HiSET (High School Equivalency Test).

## **Adult education programs also offer classes like English as a Second Language, citizenship and Career and Technical Education, right?**

Learning about the U.S. government and things like that, it’s all embedded in levels four, five and six which are higher level ESL classes. ... We also have something called job skills classes, which is more geared toward students who may already have a high school diploma. They have a job but they want to come in and learn how to increase their skills (or) practice for a specific test, whether it be the California Basic Educational Skills Test or California Subject Examinations for Teachers.

## **So it’s not just graduating high school, it’s also improving job skills to help students advance in the industry they’re already working in?**

Absolutely. I would also say that applies to our ESL students as well because sometimes we have students who have some English knowledge but they want to polish those skills in writing, in listening and speaking so they can then go get a better job out in the community.

## **How do these types of classes improve the lives of students?**

It increases their chances of financial mobility—they can move from earning minimum wage to doing a little bit better. And when you look at how it affects generations, we know that kids primarily learn by watching, so when they see their parents willing to take advantage of all those opportunities, it’s more likely that children themselves will then pursue higher education.

## **What are some of the most common concerns students have about going back to school?**

I think the biggest concern for students is finding that balance between being a student and still having that role that they may have at home, whether that’s as a provider (or) caretaker.

## **A lot of people are intimidated by the cost of education. How affordable are classes?**

Classes like our high school diploma, ESL or preparation for GED, those are all free. The classes that do have a small cost are the ones that are part of a certificate and what we have been doing is we bundle them. Say a student wanted to take more than one class, there are bundles they can take to lower the cost.

## **What kind of support is available from faculty and staff?**

We did have a community job fair—when we were able to—so students would also be able to partake in that. I believe we also refer our students to WorkNet if they’re looking for job placement, that’s another agency where we can send them. Sometimes with students who obtained their education in a foreign country, the question is how to get their education evaluated and of course we can guide them through that and connect them with the resources they need. No question is a wrong question or bad question. Whatever they ask, we’re here as counselors to help. And if we don’t know the answers, we’re here to help find the answer and go from there.

# ADULT EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER



Find out what you can do to access these Northern Regional California Adult Education Programs—or help support them.



**1**

## **NORTH CENTRAL (YUBA CITY/MARYSVILLE/WOODLAND AREA)**

The North Central Adult Education Consortium is a regional organization covering parts of Yuba, Colusa, Sutter, Lake and Yolo counties in the northern valley of California whose mission is to facilitate the alignment and collaboration of adult education.

970 Klamath Lane  
Yuba City, CA 95993

530-822-2952

[www.northcentralcaep.com](http://www.northcentralcaep.com)

**2**

## **DELTA SIERRA (STOCKTON/MANTECA, TRACY, LODI AREA, RIO VISTA, CALAVERAS)**

The Delta Sierra Adult Education Alliance offers classes and programs to help you reach your educational, training, career and personal goals. Programs are offered at sites throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

5151 Pacific Ave.  
Stockton, CA 95207

209-954-5151

[www.deltacollege.edu/campus-offices/instruction-and-planning/career-technical-education-and-workforce-development/dsae](http://www.deltacollege.edu/campus-offices/instruction-and-planning/career-technical-education-and-workforce-development/dsae)

**3**

## **CAPITAL (SACRAMENTO, ELK GROVE, NORTH HIGHLANDS, DAVIS, FOLSOM, EL DORADO, AMADOR AREA)**

The Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) is building a new future for adult education.

Sacramento County Office of Education

PO Box 269003  
Sacramento, CA 95826

916-228-2353

[www.caerc@scoe.net](http://www.caerc@scoe.net)

[www.caerc.org](http://www.caerc.org)

[www.capitaladulthood.org](http://www.capitaladulthood.org)

**4**

## **PLACER/SIERRA (ROSEVILLE-ROCKLIN-AUBURN AREA, TRUCKEE)**

Invest in yourself and enroll in the Placer School for Adults High School Diploma/GED Program. Our counselors are ready to answer your questions, help you enroll and explore potential career pathways after you graduate.

3775 Richardson Drive  
Auburn, CA 95602

530-885-8585

[www.placeronline.org](http://www.placeronline.org)

**5**

## **LAKE TAHOE ADULT EDUCATION**

ADVANCE, a collaborative network of local organizations, government offices and employers, is able to provide access to a wide range of services that help adults meet educational, career and personal goals.

One College Drive  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

530-541-4660

[www.ltcc.edu/academics/specialized\\_programs/adult\\_education.php](http://www.ltcc.edu/academics/specialized_programs/adult_education.php)