



# Santa Clara Adult Education

*Where learning and community meet*



## ISSUE 23 JANUARY '24

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**WHEN A FLOWER DOESN'T BLOOM  
YOU FIX THE ENVIRONMENT IN  
WHICH IT GROWS, NOT THE FLOWER.**

*Alexander Den Heijer*

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Santa Clara Adult Education Community,

Welcome back and Happy New Year! We are excited to welcome back our students of all ages, from preschoolers to seniors, as they return to our campus and engage in the diverse range of classes offered at the SCUSD Adult School. This past fall we saw a notable surge in overall enrollment and we're excited to have even more new students in the Winter and Spring terms. Our school remains committed to increasing access and meeting the community's needs to the best of our ability.

In this issue of the Adult School newsletter, you will learn about the School Leadership Team (SLT) membership, catch glimpses of our students engaging with the community, and see the new pickleball classes in action. Additionally, you will learn about the journey of our English language students, employment survey results for our medical assistant students, and much more.

Thank you to our students and staff for all your hard work this school year so far. It is evident in the student outcomes that the commitment to our goals is achievable!

Wishing our community all the best in 2024!

Sincerely,

*Carrie B. Casto*

Carrie Casto

Principal Adult Education



# CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

## The Medical Assistant Program is helping students get jobs!

After completing the coursework (375 hours), students are placed in an externship (160 hours). Externship sites include Kaiser and Sutter Health.

### Student Survey

Below are the results of a recent employment survey of students who completed the program in the first half of the 2023-24 school year.

- Employed by the externship site: (46%)
- Employed by another healthcare agency: (23%)
- Looking for employment: (15%)
- Enrolling in nursing program (8%)
- Unreachable by phone, email: (8%)



The next National Certified Medical Assistant Exam is scheduled on January 26, 2024, from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm in room K-1.





# WILSON PRESCHOOL

## Helping parents and their preschoolers achieve K-12 Success.

The California Adult Education Program (CAEP) funds are provided by the state for specific adult education programming, including providing instruction for parents that enables their children to have success in K-12.

### Parent Education at Wilson Preschool

Parent education and participation are at the core of Wilson Preschool. It's through the involvement of families that the school is a strong, supportive community working together to help their children thrive in school and beyond.

### Topics include:

Kindergarten Readiness, conflict resolution skills, adult-child interactions, culturally relevant practices, self-care for parents, and building character.



Teacher Josiane and 3 year old parents during parent discussion.

### Wilson Preschool Open House 2024: Save the Date!

The Wilson Preschool is inviting new families to attend the Annual Open House on Saturday, February 3, 2024, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Flyer: [WPS Open House 2024](#)





# ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL/ESL)

English Language students start their journey to learn English with a computer-based placement test. The CASAS test assesses the level that is best suited for the students' needs. The test consists of a listening and reading portion.



Then students attend an Orientation given by Transition Specialist, Melinda Webster. The orientation welcomes students to the school and provides guidelines to help them with their learning and offers students the opportunity to advance their English proficiency.



Existing students will be joined by new students as we start the new year. There are currently 10 classes for English Language students, with over 300 students enrolled.

In addition to the ESL Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 classes, a new class, Citizenship class will be starting in January to prepare students for the Naturalization Test. We are excited to offer this new class for students interested in becoming a U.S. Citizen.





# EXERCISE & WELLNESS

The Exercise and Wellness Program ended 2023 with a wide range of classes and students! Vinyasa Yoga, Pickleball, Volleyball, and Indoor Soccer all increased enrollment with a lot of interest leading into 2024. Many adult students are reconnecting with sports they played during their youth, such as soccer and volleyball, while others are learning pickleball for the first time. SCAE classes provide the opportunity to learn while gaining health benefits and connections with the community.





## Aquatics - Swimmer Spotlight!

The Aquatics Program offers beginning to advanced level swimming and water exercise classes 12 months a year, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm! Beginner-level students work their way to deeper water and explore bobbing up and down for the first time! Advanced-level swimmers work on endurance, speed, and butterfly stroke. Additionally, the elements of the water make exercising more comfortable for both pregnant women and older adults with arthritis.



Thank you to the Post Secondary students that help set up and put away equipment for our classes each week. The aquatic program appreciates the collaboration and teamwork!



SCAE Aquatic teachers and students participated in the 9th annual FireHouse run to help raise money for the Santa Clara Schools Foundation. It was a great opportunity to bring teachers and students together for fundraising, health and connecting with the Santa Clara community.







# INDEPENDENCE NETWORK (IN)

Independence Network students are serving our surrounding communities. Students volunteer at the Campbell Community Center once a week preparing materials for community classes and events. Our students also volunteer at the Santa Clara Senior Center four days a week serving lunch to our community's seniors while building relationships and skills.

The community also gives back to Independence Network. The Chahal Family, Santa Clara residents, joined our holiday celebration to distribute gifts to all of our students and staff.

*"At this school, I feel like anything is possible." -Brianna, IN student*





# ENRICHMENT

## Community Interest Increased Significantly in the Enrichment Program!

The enrichment program has experienced tremendous growth during the first half of the 2023-2024 school year, with over 1,500 registrants taking part in classes. The program's expansion has captured the interest of a wide range of adults, with student participants between the ages of 19 and 95.

We're thrilled to announce the growth of our program with the addition of new classes. Now offered are eight Wood-turning classes at Santa Clara High School and 18 Woodworking classes at the Buscher Middle School location. In addition, expanded class offerings include Poetry and Creative Writing, Video Game Development, Spanish, Classical singing, and six more sessions of Beginning Piano. The classes have been filling quickly and have waiting lists, which can be attributed to our highly skilled and dedicated teaching staff.

Additionally, we increased capacity to accommodate more students in the Sewing classes with the purchase of more sewing machines and better space allocation. We are also adding Intro to Woodworking classes on an ongoing basis to accommodate the growing interest. The on-campus Garden Program has seen growing interest, too.

We're honored to serve the community and excited for continued success by providing our adult students with opportunities to enrich their lives.





# SKILLS PLUS

## Skills Plus Holiday Celebration

The annual event celebrating the holidays with all the classes at Skills Plus is always a special and fun event. This year there were lots of games, smiles, gifts, and a visit from the Wilson Preschool 4-year-old class. The children joyfully sang "The More We Get Together" on stage for the crowd.

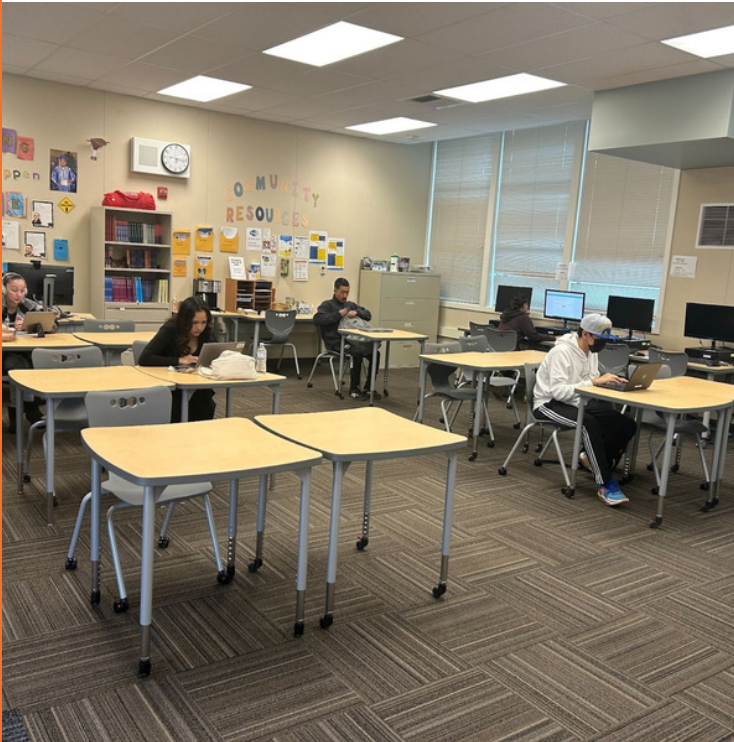




# HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (HSD)

Students in the High School Diploma program have the opportunity to meet in person or virtually and complete their coursework through independent study. Teachers, Melinda Webster and Daya Sánchez, work with students in the classroom and online.

Congratulations to the 30 amazing, hard-working students who completed their High School Diploma in December and will have the opportunity to participate in the in-person graduation ceremony on May 24, 2024!



# HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY (HSE)

Students taking the High School Equivalency test will be transitioning from a paper-based test to a computer-based test starting in February.

The computer-based test will provide students with an opportunity to receive their scores sooner and help them prepare for the next steps in their educational journey.





# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)

The 2023-24 SLT started meeting monthly since the October 9th Professional Development day. Membership includes a representative from all Adult School programs, CSEA (Classified Staff), AFT (certificated Teachers), Classified Instructors, Program Supervisors, TOSAs, and Administrators.

- Imrana Aejaaz - Preschool Paraeducator
- Amy Bhatnagar - Piano Instructor
- Terry Brink - ESL Teacher
- Carrie Casto - Principal
- Gaby Corrales - Secretary
- Christine Berdiansky - Program Administrator
- Erin Brown - Program Administrator
- Ana Fong - IN Instructor
- Melinda Webster - High School Diploma Teacher, Transition Specialist
- David Grant - High School Equivalency Teacher, AFT President
- Ed Kendrix - IN, Skills Plus Instructor
- Nada Meck - Exercise & Wellness TOSA, Teacher
- Rachael Peterson - Enrichment Program Supervisor
- Janine Sahm - Art Teacher
- Daya Sanchez - IN TOSA, High School Diploma Teacher
- Josiane Sawaya - Parent Ed./Preschool Teacher
- Christina Schell - Registrar

## NEW STAFF MEMBERS



**David Currie**

Exercise & Wellness Instructor

Email: [dcurrie@scusd.net](mailto:dcurrie@scusd.net)

My name is David Currie and I am the new Santa Clara Adult Ed. Pickleball teacher. Lately, Pickleball has become a passion of mine. I had pickleball as a physical education class in high school back in 1985. (I know it seems that pickleball is a recent fad but it was invented in 1965). I have taught pickleball on and off at Wilcox High School for the past 30 years where I am a physical education teacher, former head varsity baseball coach, and athletic director. However, in the past 5 years, I have been playing pickleball rather religiously replacing activities such as golf and jogging. It is a sport for all ages and athletic ability. If you haven't tried pickleball I highly recommend giving it a try!

My name is Maricela Portillo, I am excited to introduce myself as the new Spanish teacher at Santa Clara Adult Education. Teaching is my passion, and I am thrilled about this amazing opportunity. I have over twenty years of experience in the education field, where I have taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses focusing on developing oral and written competency in Spanish and education research, both in Peru and California. I am eager to meet the students. If you enjoy learning Spanish and having fun through activities such as listening to music, singing, reading, writing, and more, I encourage you to join the Spanish 1A class.



**Maricela Portillo**

Enrichment, Spanish Instructor

Email: [mportilloayza@scusd.net](mailto:mportilloayza@scusd.net)





**Principal Weekly Updates**  
[SCAE Weekly Updates](#)

**Social Media - Follow SCAE**  
[Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)

**For Frequent Updates Visit**  
[Santa Clara Adult Ed](#)

**Alarms On:**

This is reminder that the alarms are on for the holidays in the calendar of events. Please plan accordingly. Special hours are also listed in the weekly update.

**Office Hours**

Monday 8:00am - 4:00pm

Tuesday - Thursday 8:00am - 6:30pm

Friday 8:00am - 1:00pm

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 3 - Wilson Preschool Open House
- February 19 - Holiday No Classes Alarms ON
- February 19 - 23 - Break No Classes
- February 23 - Holiday No Classes Alarms ON
- April 15 - 19 - Break No Classes
- April 19 - Holiday No Classes
- May 24 - Adult School High School Graduation
- May 27 - Holiday No Classes
- June 19 - Holiday No Classes