



# FALL NEWSLETTER

**2025-2026**

## IN THIS EDITION:

- Latest News
- Magnet Courses Update
- Adult Program Updates
- CAC and Sueños
- BACCC



## OUR MISSION

The Santa Cruz County Career and Adult Learning Services (CALS) provides students with the opportunity to acquire academic, career, and technical skills and to prepare for life-long learning and success in the changing workplace.

# Latest News

## Free ESL Classes

Our Career Advancement Charter (CAC) is proud to announce that we are offering three English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Classes are free and open to the community, classes will help students gain confidence in their reading, writing and speaking skills in English. We recommend that all who are interested register using the QR code.

## ¡Únete a nuestras clases de ESL hoy!

### APRENDE INGLÉS COMO SEGUNDO IDIOMA

Nuestros cursos ofrecen lecciones interesantes que te ayudarán a mejorar tus habilidades y ganar confianza al hablar, escuchar, leer y escribir en inglés.

Los cursos son gratuitos, recomendamos registrarse utilizando el código QR aquí.



Ya seas principiante o quieras mejorar tu fluidez, únete a nosotros. ¡Experimenta la alegría de aprender!

Para más información, envía un correo electrónico a [CALS@santacruzcoe.org](mailto:CALS@santacruzcoe.org) o llama a (831) 466-5680

#### CLASE NIVEL INICIAL EN SANTA CRUZ

LOS MARTES Y JUEVES  
6:00 PM. - 9:00 PM.

UBICADO EN: HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL  
300 LA FONDA AVE,  
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062  
SALÓN H12

#### CLASE NIVEL INICIAL EN WATSONVILLE

LOS MARTES Y JUEVES  
5:00 PM. - 7:30 PM.

UBICADO EN: CENTRO AVANCE  
119 WEST BEACH STREET,  
WATSONVILLE, CA 95076  
SALÓN DE CONFERENCIA

#### CLASE NIVEL 2+ EN FREEDOM

LOS MARTES Y MIERCOLES  
4:30 PM. - 7:00 PM.

UBICADO EN: ESCUELAS SEQUOIA  
229 GREEN VALLEY RD,  
FREEDOM, CA 95019  
SALÓN 223



# Latest News

## Statewide Recognition



This year's CAEP Summit showcased our CAC Foundations Success, where Xitlali Cabadas and Denise Sony Guerra-Sanson presented the details of our pilot Foundations Success program. Even more thrilling is that we are being recognized as a model program at the conference!

Returning to education as an adult learner presents unique challenges, particularly in independent study environments where self-direction is crucial. Our team shared insights from the foundational success program (details about this program on pg 10). A pilot initiative designed to foster a safe and welcoming space that emphasizes belonging, resilience, and academic skill-building.

Our program supported over 80 newly enrolled adult learners during the 2023-2024 academic year. We discussed the program's structure, outcomes, and essential strategies for building relationships, enhancing retention, and promoting goal-setting habits in independent study programs.

Thank you to our team that was able to attend and represent us.



California Adult Education Program  
**CAEP SUMMIT 2025**  
Building Bridges to Success. Innovate. Integrate. Impact.



California  
Community  
Colleges



## UC Honors Designation Granted



We are excited to share that our team successfully applied for and received UC Honors status for all of our magnet courses last spring. This designation offers students rigorous, high-quality learning experiences that align with college-ready standards, while also preparing them for success in the real world.

Each course culminates in a comprehensive final that includes:

- Hands-on projects
- Professional portfolios
- A student showcase where learners present their achievements and engage in interviews with industry professionals.

Through this initiative, the CALS COE is committed to providing an exceptional educational experience that challenges students academically while equipping them with the practical skills and professional exposure necessary to excel in their future careers.

# Latest News

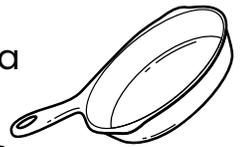
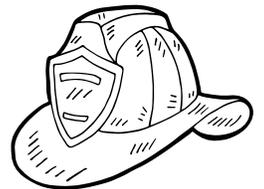
## CTE is Growing

Our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs continue to grow, offering increased opportunities for students throughout the county.



### Exciting Developments

- **Fire Technology:** This year, our Fire Technology program has seen remarkable growth, expanding from two sections to four due to heightened student interest in this career path. Classes are offered in North and South County.
- **Culinary Arts:** Our Culinary Arts program is also thriving, now featuring a new adult course at the Blaine Street Women's Facility in collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office. This course broadens access to career-oriented learning.
- **ICT Pathway:** We are launching a new course section in our Information and Communication Technology Innovation Lab pathway in collaboration with Costanoa High School and Santa Cruz City Schools, providing additional chances for students to acquire valuable skills in this in-demand field.



These expansions underscore our commitment to equipping students for success in both college and their future careers through relevant, hands-on learning experiences.

In collaboration with Cabrillo College, the CALS CTE team, along with San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District and Scotts Valley Unified School District, is excited to introduce a new Dual Enrollment Medical Terminology course. This semester course allows students the opportunity to earn credit for Cabrillo College's MA 70 course while preparing for a career in the health industry.



# Adult Education Program



Our Medical, Dental, and BTPA programs are off to a strong start with an amazing group of motivated students ready to take on the challenge of their new career endeavor.

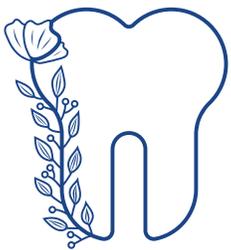
## Dental Assisting Program



### Dental Assisting Apprenticeship Program

The Dental Assisting Apprenticeship program began on August 11, 2025, led by instructor Deborah Martinez, with a cohort of eight apprentices—six placed at Dientes Community Dental Care and two at private dental offices in the community.

The apprenticeship pathway offers a “earn as you learn” approach, integrating paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction. This full-time program is designed to remove the barriers between education and employment, providing a seamless transition from training to a rewarding career in dental assisting.



### Dental Assisting Traditional Program

The Dental Assisting Traditional Training program started in September with 12 students. The traditional training pathway offers a flexible approach to becoming a dental assistant. This part-time option allows students to balance their studies with other commitments while receiving comprehensive classroom and hands on technical instruction. The traditional pathway provides a thorough education in dental assisting, preparing students for a rewarding career in the field.



### Coronal Polishing Certification Course Offering

We are excited to offer a new standalone Coronal Polishing course for the local Dental community. This board-approved course by the Dental Board of California (DBC) provides dental assistants with a valuable opportunity to expand their professional certifications. At this time, we are planning for two class offerings this Fall 2025. Please [complete this form](#) to express your interest and receive information on how to register.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# Adult Education Program

## Medical Assisting Program



The Career and Adult Learning Services is thrilled to announce the addition of Connie Williams as our new Medical Instructor. With an impressive background as a registered nurse since 2001 and a master's degree in Health Education, Connie is set to bring her wealth of knowledge and infectious enthusiasm to our program.

Our Medical Assisting program is off to a fantastic start, with a cohort of 18 eager students. They have plunged into their studies, exploring the intricacies of the skeletal, muscular, and cardiovascular systems, all while expanding their medical vocabulary. Learning is made exciting and interactive with innovative study methods, including the popular Kahoot! quizzes.

Connie goes above and beyond, offering extra support during tutoring hours before and after class to ensure every student receives personalized attention. Additionally, students can participate in Friday hybrid study sessions, providing even more opportunities for learning and connection.

Beyond academics, the class is fostering a strong sense of community through delightful potluck gatherings. These events are not only a culinary adventure but also a chance to build lasting friendships. We're excited to see how this program will continue to thrive under Connie's expert guidance!

**Early application window for the 2026-2027 Medical Assisting program will be opening in November!**

[LEARN MORE](#)



# Adult Education Program

## Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship



The [BTPA program](#) continues to thrive. Students who completed these cohorts received certification in MC3, OSHA 10, First Aid/CPR and are job-ready and employable. This 10-week, no-cost program is an intensive hands-on program designed to prepare adult students for entry into a fulfilling career with great potential for growth.



### **New instructor; Mark Lewis**

Mark came out of retirement from a 40-plus career in the Trades industry. He began teaching Alternative Education CTE Construction at Sequoia and 399 Encinal this year. The next BTPA class will start in Winter 2026, and Mark is eager to bring his wealth of experience and passion for teaching to this new role. His extensive background in the industry, combined with his dedication to student success, promises to enrich the learning experience for all participants. Mark is particularly excited to incorporate innovative teaching methods and real-world applications into the curriculum, ensuring that students are not only prepared for the workforce but also inspired to pursue lifelong careers in the trades. His addition to the BTPA program is a testament to our commitment to providing high-quality education and support for every student embarking on this journey.

### **Building Trades in Corrections**

In collaboration with Rountree, the CALS BTPA cohort is excited to carry on this program opportunity. Upon graduation and completion, these students are awarded a \$300 stipend along with work boots to help them thrive in the trades sector. Additionally, the CALS team offers personalized consultations, connecting individuals with local agencies to assist them in their job search.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# Adult Education Program

## Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship



### **Alternative Education and Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Graduate Nails It!!**

Wyatt York graduated from the Alternative Education program in January of 2023. Like many young people, Wyatt had his ups and downs in finding the right path to take. During his enrollment at the Alternative Education school site in the San Lorenzo Valley, Ponderosa, Wyatt took advantage of the Career Technical Education (CTE) courses offered. Wyatt completed CTE Construction Tech in 2021, learning multiple building trade skills like carpentry for framing, roofing, and trim, electrical work for wiring, plumbing for water and waste systems, and drywall or interior finishing for the walls and ceilings. Other skills include siding, flooring, insulation installation, and structural design, working to complete a Tiny Home.

After graduation, Wyatt enrolled in the CALS adult Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship program, further developing these building trades skills while completing certification in the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3), First Aid/CPR, and OSHA 10. This month, Wyatt gained entrance into the Local 405, San Jose Carpenters Union. Way to go, Wyatt, you Nailed It!!

# Career Advancement Charter



The Career Advancement Charter (CAC) is an Independent Study program for adult learners to earn their high school diploma while gaining academic and technical skills that will lead to college and career readiness.

## CAC Program Updates

### **New School Site in Downtown Watsonville**

We are excited to announce that we have expanded services for adult learners with the opening of our new facility in downtown Watsonville—Centro Avance. Giving us the opportunity to further connect with the community. This location will host High School Diploma (HSD) instruction for adults through our CAC Program and is currently offering a beginner-level ESL class.



### **Mental and Social-Emotional Counseling**

We are pleased to welcome Rio Ochoa as our new Mental Health Support Counselor, serving students across all adult programs. This role will enable us to provide on-site mental health services, expand access to social-emotional support, and address the growing needs of our adult learners. Rio brings a wealth of experience in counseling and a deep commitment to supporting adult education. By fostering a compassionate and understanding environment, Rio aims to empower students to overcome personal challenges and achieve their educational and career goals. With one-on-one sessions we strive to create a holistic support system that nurtures both mental well-being and academic success.



Kayla Dias from the Companion Project is joining us this year. Kayla is dedicated to enhancing our students' mental health and well-being. She is passionate about cultivating strong, trusting relationships and believes in meeting individuals with compassion and empathy. Kayla aims to support adults in reaching their personal and academic aspirations while also nurturing connection, safety, and resilience within our community.

**CAC Welcome Back Night:** The CAC kicked off the new school year with a Welcome Back Night on Wednesday, August 13th at our Sequoia Schools site. Students connected with the team, reviewed expectations, learned about available support services, completed registration, and explored resources. We were also pleased to welcome community partners--including the Youth and Adult WIOA programs in Santa Cruz County, along with Greater Opportunity through Adult Learning (GOAL)- who shared valuable information and opportunities with our students.

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**CAC Building Trades Program:** The CAC is excited to welcome back the Building Trades program at Sequoia Schools--a free 10-week course designed to prepare adult students for entry-level careers with growth opportunities in the trades industry. This will be a closed-section program for students enrolled in the CAC.

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**CAC Maker Space:** The Maker Space at Sequoia Schools is now open on Monday evenings and available by appointment to CAC students. This open drop-in session invites students to explore, design, and create through a variety of hands-on activities, including 3D printing, robotics and coding, laser cutting, woodworking, and more. It's a space to discover new skills, experiment with technology, and bring creative ideas to life. Throughout this process, students have the chance to earn subject matter credits along the way.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of several parallel diagonal lines in shades of orange and green, creating a modern, geometric look.



**Adult Learning Enrichment Opportunities:** All students enrolled in the CAC have the opportunity to participate in a variety of evening courses, ranging from culinary arts, to math tutoring, to ESL support classes. CAC students also have the option to pursue Dual Enrollment or non-credit career education classes at Cabrillo College. Additionally, we are pleased to share that we continue to offer work-readiness and job skills certification opportunities to our students through Certiport.

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**New Student Orientation:** In an effort to better serve our students, the CAC has implemented a new student orientation, registration and enrollment process. New students attend an in-person orientation session designed to inform them of all the services and community partnerships the CAC offers. CAC South County Orientations take place on a bi-monthly basis at our Sequoia Schools site. Orientation is designed to help students be successful from day 1 and beyond.

During the orientation, students complete registration and assessment activities. Following orientation, students engage in the CAC Foundations Success Program that spans five weeks. The Foundations Success Program is designed to help students learn essential skills that will support their transition into our Independent Study high school diploma program.

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**Evening Child Care (ECC):** In an effort to support our adult learner parents, we offer childcare services four days a week at our South County school site. Our childcare center operates Monday through Thursday from 3pm to 7pm on a weekly basis. Our staff engages with children in a variety of learning and enrichment activities.





## CAC Foundations Success Class:

### **Building Momentum!**

We're excited to share some significant updates from the Foundations Success Program, designed to help new CAC students transition smoothly into our community. This class is tailored to assist and encourage students as they pursue their high school diploma, offering them the chance to learn new skills or enhance existing ones.

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### **Pilot Year Achievements:**

We concluded our pilot year with four cohorts, serving a total of 87 students—a strong start that paved the way for even greater growth. Our focus includes teaching students how to effectively use Google Suite tools, such as Google Docs, Google Forms, and Google Spreadsheets, which are crucial for completing school assignments and staying organized. Students also enhance their writing skills by working on assignments like an autobiographical essay, enabling them to reflect on their experiences and express themselves more clearly.

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### **Expanding Impact:**

This year, we're on track to surpass that number with six cohorts planned, providing even more students with the tools and confidence they need to succeed. The class also introduces students to the Cyber High learning platform, where they study a subject independently from home, helping them become comfortable with online learning. Beyond academics, the course supports students in developing social skills and building self-confidence, especially when speaking in front of others.

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### **Strong Start to 25-26:**

Our first cohort of the year wrapped up with 36 students enrolled, and 25 consistently attending each week, a testament to the program's growing impact and student engagement. Overall, the Foundations Success Program is a fantastic starting point for new CAC students, helping them feel more prepared, supported, and confident as they begin their independent study journey. The momentum is strong, and we're thrilled to continue building a program that helps every new CAC student start their journey on solid ground.

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# Sueños Program



The **Sueños Program** supports teenagers and young adults (ages 16 to 24) to develop workplace skills that will prepare them to enter and thrive in an increasingly competitive labor market. Sueños is a Santa Cruz COE program in partnership with the Workforce Development Board of Santa Cruz County.

## Paid Work Experience



Our Sueños youth are hard at work this season, gaining valuable paid work experience that goes far beyond a paycheck. Through their placements, participants are building essential job skills, exploring career pathways, and learning what it means to be part of a professional team.

What makes this even more special is the impact they're having on the community. Many of our youth are serving as mentors and role models for younger children—sharing their time, energy, and encouragement while developing leadership skills of their own.

This hands-on learning experience is helping our youth grow into confident, skilled individuals who are preparing for bright futures while giving back in meaningful ways.

# Sueños Program



## Spotlight:



### Workforce Achievement Award:

Congratulations to Mirian Brito Sanchez, recipient of the Workforce Achievement Award! Through her commitment, dedication, and outstanding participation in the Sueños program, Miri successfully completed her paid work experience at the Career Advancement Charter (CAC). She is now thriving as a full-time Instructional Aide with CAC while attending Cabrillo College. Despite facing challenges along the way, Miri continues to excel and inspire others with her perseverance and hard work.



### Accepting Applications:

Sueños currently has space for eligible youth to join the program. If you know an interested youth or young adult between the ages of 16-24, please encourage them to apply using the link below.

[Sueños Pre-Screening Application](#)



YOUR FUTURE  
IS OUR BUSINESS



# HEALTH CAREER EXPO

Friday, November 14, 2025

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Cabrillo College Cafeteria

6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA 95003

**Healthcare organizations and training programs are invited to table and meet with local high school and college-level students.**

## **WHY YOUR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT:**

- Share various career pathways in health careers with students
- Support the region in "growing our own" future health workforce
- Meet and network with students and other organizations

**Join Us!**





## [Unveiling Future Careers Zoom](#)

25 September 2025 12-1pm

Learning by Doing: Expanding Access to Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeship. Discover how California's community colleges create hands-on pathways for high-demand careers, building a skilled and inclusive workforce. Zoom [Registration here](#)



## [Santa Cruz Trades Day](#)

9 October 2025

Register your students for the 2025 Santa Cruz Trades Day to give them a unique, hands-on opportunity to learn from industry professionals and discover rewarding career paths in the construction trades.



## [Cabrillo College & Career Family Night](#)

20 October 2025 6pm-8pm

Come to the free College and Career Family Night to meet with university representatives, explore Cabrillo College programs, and attend workshops offered in both English and Spanish. [Flyer](#)



## [Health Career Expo](#)

14 November 2025 10am-1pm

- Registration
- Cabrillo Aptos Campus Cafeteria
- Meet a variety of Healthcare Workers & learn about local career opportunities
- Meet with Cabrillo's Allied Health Faculty & staff
- Tour the state-of-the-art Allied Health Classrooms & Labs
- For more info, email [yourfutureisourbusiness@gmail.com](mailto:yourfutureisourbusiness@gmail.com)



## [Free Workshop, 3D Toy and Product Design Workshop Saturdays 4-6pm](#)

This FREE workshop is led by the 3DE Club—an online after-school program that helps kids (ages 8-12) develop entrepreneurial, leadership, and financial skills through 3D modeling and printing technology.

- [Registration Link](#)
- Location: Next Space Coworking (Opposite Abbott Square, downtown Santa Cruz)
- Teachers and Parent/Guardian Volunteers Welcome.
- Email [info@3de.club](mailto:info@3de.club) for more invitation

For more information about CALS, please visit our [website](#).