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CLASS NOTES

Taylor Abels (2012) and **Daniel Rodriguez (2012)** were married on October 1, 2016. They made their first home together in New York City.

Lori Hamada (1984) has been selected as one of the Top Ten Professional Women by the Marjaree Mason Center for 2016. She is the executive director of the AIMS Center for Math and Science Education located on the campus of Fresno Pacific University.

Dwayne Dahlberg (2004), **Richard Sponholz (2008)** and **Darrell Dahlberg (2006)** are the new owners of Double Play Pizzeria. The restaurant, at Gettysburg and Willow avenues in Clovis, California, is in its 23rd year. They met while living in the same apartment complex as business majors at Fresno State. All three earned degrees from the university's Craig School of Business.

Amy Noel Ellison (2009) has been named the fourth Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Post-Doctoral Curatorial Fellow. She holds a Ph.D. from Boston University, and is conducting research at the American Philosophical Museum in Philadelphia. As a Fresno State student she was a member of the Smittcamp Family Honors College.

Barry Falke (2001) and AJ Griem were married on September 24, 2016. They have made their first home together in Fresno, California.

Justin Vecchiarelli (2010) joined Sutton Hague Law Corporation's Fresno office as an associate attorney. He represents employers before federal and state courts and agencies and in arbitration.

Stephanie Catron (1999) has joined Facility Designs as an interior designer. She has more than 15 years of experience in design.

William Van Landingham (1972) has been presented the Heart of the Lion Award from the Visalia Pride Lions Club.

Khetphet "KP" Phagnasay (2000) has co-founded Fulton Film Company, which is located within the Crest Theatre complex in downtown Fresno.

Cassidy Jakovickas (2006) and his business partner, Arthur Moye, are taking over the ownership and operations for Full Circle Brewing Company, located in Fresno's Chinatown. Their plans include adding a full service kitchen, as well as selling Full Circle craft brews in stores, on tap and in bottles and cans.

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EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOV 7

CSU Alumni SoCal Mega Mixer

Multiple CSU campuses from up and down the state have joined forces to bring you an evening of networking with fellow CSU alumni at Twenty Eight in Irvine. Bring your business cards and get ready to network!

LOCATION

Twenty Eight
19530 Jamboree Road
Irvine, CA 92612

NOV 9

Palm Springs Alumni Mixer

Join the Fresno State Alumni Association for an opportunity to connect with Fresno State Alumni and friends in Palm Springs. This is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with your alma mater and fellow Bulldogs. Enjoy a great atmosphere and hear about exciting things going on at Fresno State.

LOCATION

Lulu California Bistro
200 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs, CA 92262

NOV 30

CRIM TALK

Attendees will learn to successfully recognize terrorists, the psychology of terrorists, terrorists' recruiting methods, and their attempts to de-radicalize potential terrorist incidents.

LOCATION

North Gym 118
Fresno State Campus

DEC 2

CDDS Continuing Education Course - Fall 2016

Participate in three separate workshops: Cognitive Theories of Autism: Executive Function, Theory of Mind, Central Coherence, Visual Schedules and Supports and Common Core State Standards and IEP Development for Students with Moderate-to-Severe Disabilities.

LOCATION

David E. Cook Center 1670
David E. Cook Way
Clovis, CA 93611

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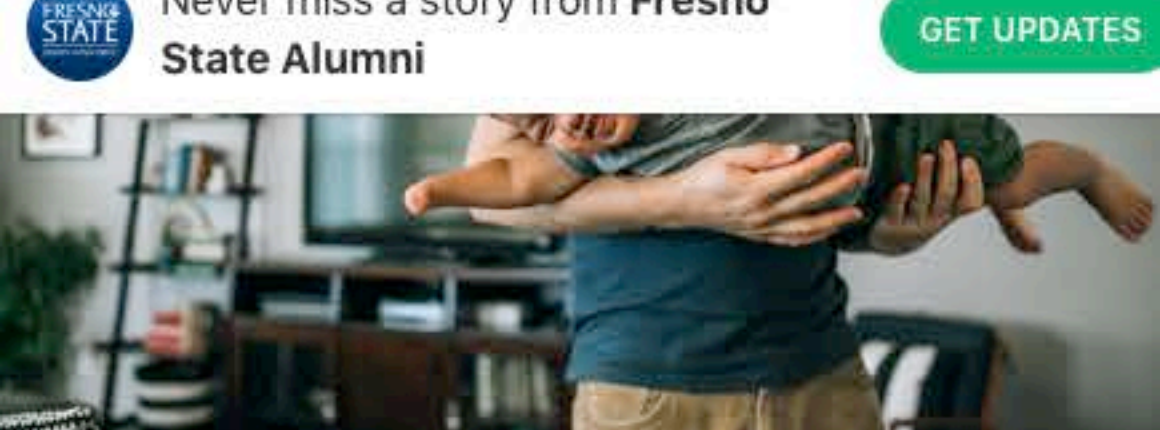
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Stories celebrating Bulldog alumni.

Nov 2, 2016 · 4 min read



Photos courtesy of Tim Kanallakan

There was never a time when you were unwanted

By MARISA MATA, Student Writer

In March of 2015 Tim and Amber Kanallakan (2006) anxiously boarded a plane to China, where they would finally meet their son, Oliver.

The couple began the adoption process two years earlier, but adoption was something Amber always knew she wanted to do—she still has journal entries that she wrote at the age of seven about wanting to adopt. It was also at this young age that Tim and Amber first met.

“My wife and I had many conversations of adoption and knew that God wanted it to be a part of our family’s story. My wife and I could not agree on the timeline of events, so while she was patiently waiting for me to be ‘all in,’ she started an amazing orphan care ministry at our local church and began teaching seminars on adoption and foster care for a Fresno based organization called City Without Orphans. Once I heard God say ‘go’ and felt confident in proceeding, we officially began the process of adoption.”

Because of Tim’s career in prosthetics, the Kanallakans decided that they wanted to adopt a child with a limb difference; this limited them to adopting from China.



Photo from the Visalia Times-Delta

The cost of adopting internationally ranges from \$20,000–\$30,000, but after some coworkers admired a leather phone sleeve Tim had made for himself, the Kanallakans had the idea to start an Etsy shop, Standard Goods, as a way to fundraise for their adoption. Together Tim and Amber made many items, including phone cases, wallets, dog collars and purses. Standard Goods sold out not just during the holidays but also when the Kanallakans took their items to the Embellish and Restore Maker’s Market in downtown Visalia.

In December of 2014, after a year of fundraising, Amber got the call from their social worker.

“...she said, ‘I think I have an early Christmas present for your family!’ She proceeded to tell me about the file of a seven-month old baby boy...she said he was missing his right hand. [She] said she would email us the file and include photos at the end,” Amber wrote about the experience in her [blog](#).

“I called Tim as soon as I hung up with the social worker...Tim came home, and without saying anything, we went straight to our room and opened the laptop...Sitting on our knees, at the foot of our bed, we saw the face of our son, Oliver, for the first time.”



Dates on the referral made the Kanallakans realize that Oliver was conceived around the time that Tim agreed to start the adoption process.

“That felt really significant. The Lord knew—I’m creating your son, start the process now. We are excited to tell him one day, ‘There was never a time when you were unwanted,’”

Amber said, as quoted in the [Visalia Times-Delta](#).

Three months later, Tim and Amber were on a plane to China to get Oliver, and he has been a Kanallakan for almost two years now.



Tim said, “It was a huge and traumatic transition for him to go from an institution in China to the suburban life in Visalia. Things like cars and car seats were totally new. He had never seen a dog before meeting our pup, George, and he was terrified of him for weeks. We still have more challenges ahead, [but] it has already been such a beautiful thing to watch him flourish as our son.”

One thing Tim and Amber want to make sure Oliver grows up knowing is that he is complete with or without his right hand. Tim plans to build him one as he gets older, and guesses that Oliver will need a mechanical hand once he is a teenager, but now, with only his left hand, Oliver is still “incredibly mobile.”

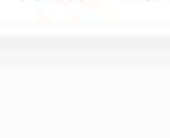
“I graduated from the Smittcamp Honors College in 2006 with a B.S. in kinesiology-exercise science. I then went to California State University, Dominguez Hills for a graduate certificate in prosthetics, followed by a distance learning program through the University of Hartford for a certificate in orthotics. I am a certified prosthetist-orthotist.”

“Amber also graduated from Fresno State in 2006, with a degree in child development. She is an amazing woman who continually inspires me. We make an awesome team.”

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Photos and video by Ricky Gutierrez

Building a community for creative writing alumni

By MARISA MATA, Student Writer

“We have a tight knit community within the [creative writing] program, but once people leave it’s much more loose,” Jefferson Beavers (1996, 2007), president of the newly established Creative Writing Alumni Chapter, said, “We all see each other at readings all over the community, but there’s nothing specifically for alumni.”

“We’re very interested in that because those are the people we read and there are so many commonalities and connections that can be made, but we don’t know each other or we only know each other in name—we’ve read the writing but haven’t met the person and heard the voice—so I’m really hoping this chapter can help bridge some of those gaps.”



The chapter’s first event was held at Mia Cuppa Caffè in Fresno’s Tower District, an area with a long history with Fresno poets and a social, community atmosphere. It included a raffle for books written by local authors and 20 people—alumni, students and community friends—who read their poetry or prose at an open mic in front of a crowd of about 70 people.



“The chapter was really blown away by the response to participate in the event. When we called for readers...20 people said they wanted to read. It’s always fun when you get 15–20 readers. You only get three to four minutes a piece, and you hit a lot of different kinds of styles...I think the audience liked the variety too—definitely a lot of different types of stories and voices. It was emblematic of the students that come out of here.”

“There were a lot of people that stayed for a while, congratulating each other and meeting each other. I saw some writers reconnecting and some people meeting new people. I think that’s definitely an element we want to develop in the future, more one to one time.”

The chapter currently doesn’t know when or what its next event will be, but it has a few ideas—all aimed at bringing together different generations of alumni.

“The writers that come out of the university are such good, really interesting people. There are so many great writers doing great things, but they don’t really have a social atmosphere to connect, they don’t always get to see how cool and awesome they all are. I think an event like this really gives people the chance to do that.”

[Click here to connect with the Creative Writing Alumni Chapter.](#)

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Photos courtesy of HistoricalExploration.org

Working with National Geographic in the search for Atlantis

By MARISA MATA, Student Writer

“It was lightning fast—we spent three days [scouting different sites] and then the film crew showed up and we filmed everything in three days. They filmed a lot of locations, and me and Simcha Jacobovici—who’s been doing this work for 20 years and has three Emmy awards—went to the sites, comparing them to what Plato said and I was asked questions about my thesis. So I was there for a week, and of course it goes through the editing process and we’ll have to see how it turns out. They told me to expect it in December, before Christmas,” Robert Ishoy (1987) said.

Ishoy’s thesis, focusing on the lost civilization of Atlantis having existed in what is present day Sardinia, was published online in 2001 but didn’t get much attention until earlier this year. In April, when Ishoy had just about lost hope of his work being recognized, he received a call from National Geographic.

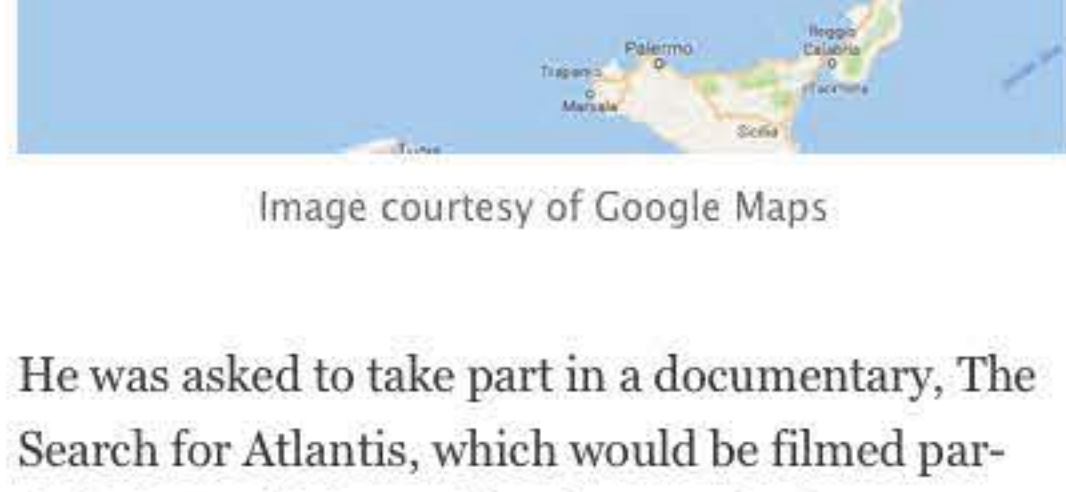
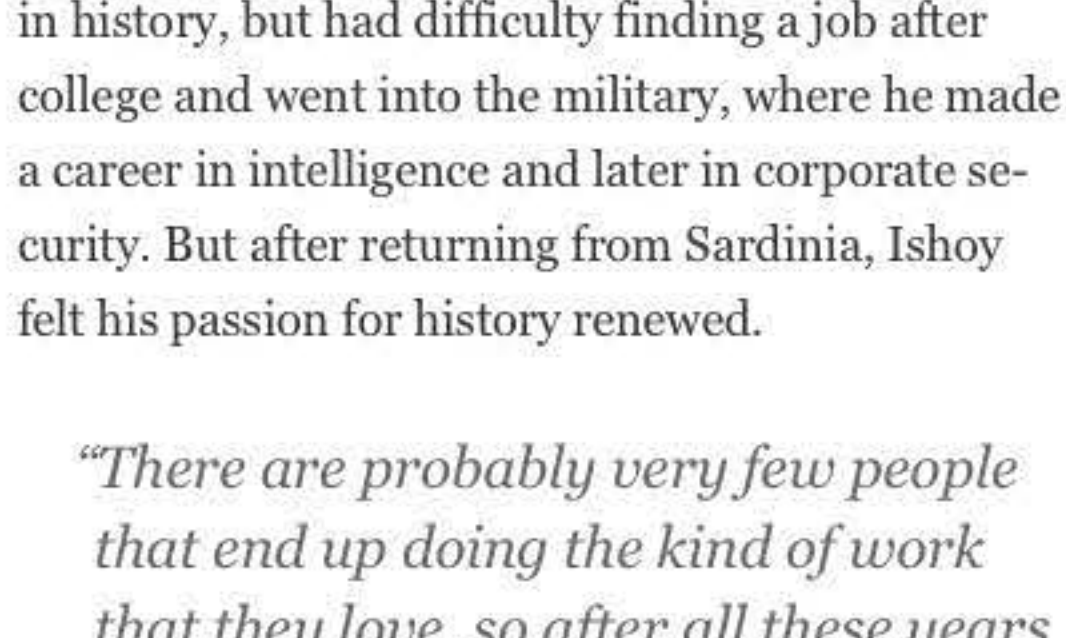


Image courtesy of Google Maps

He was asked to take part in a documentary, The Search for Atlantis, which would be filmed partially in Sardinia, an island west of Italy. Presented with the opportunity of a lifetime, Ishoy rushed to get his passport renewed and flew to Sardinia two weeks later.

“I waited 29 years for this—I wrote my [thesis] in 1987 at [Fresno State] and I had dreamed that someday I could do a documentary.”

“I was very pleased to [later] find out that James Cameron was involved. He’s done big films—Titanic, Avatar—and I know that along with the filming on the island, they’re going to do some high-tech stuff too. I’m sure that’s where James Cameron is going to come in and make the film wonderful, so that’s a big plus.”



Jacobovici and Ishoy

Ishoy graduated from Fresno State with a degree in history, but had difficulty finding a job after college and went into the military, where he made a career in intelligence and later in corporate security. But after returning from Sardinia, Ishoy felt his passion for history renewed.

“There are probably very few people that end up doing the kind of work that they love, so after all these years I [thought], ‘Maybe I have an opportunity here to do something bigger than the one single film.’ So I made the commitment when I came home to start this nonprofit organization to get people interested in history, going on expeditions, [making] discoveries.”



Exploring archaeological ruins in Sardinia

“I formed the Society for Historical Exploration so that we could conduct research on ancient civilizations, historical events, legends and myths, and use this research to promote a new renaissance of learning in the social sciences.”

“In my opinion, the social sciences have taken a back seat in our educational system. I’m very passionate about the social sciences and the liberal arts being taught for the benefit of you as an individual...it makes us intelligent critical thinking human beings, it makes you an intelligent citizen of a community and enriches you as an individual...if you bring history to life, to where it has meaning and helps you understand yourself and the world you live in, it’s like this door opens up and you have a hunger for knowledge and for truth. You don’t get that studying other disciplines.”

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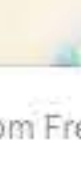
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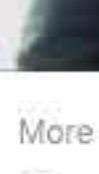
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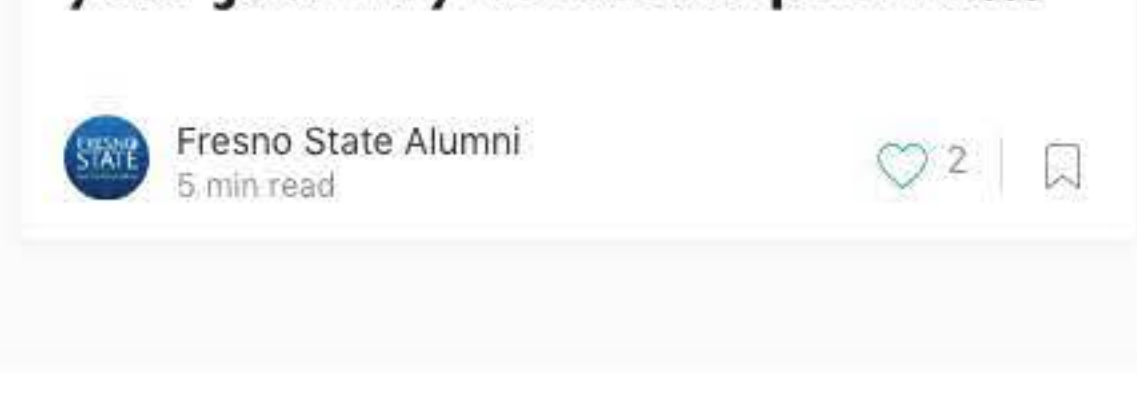


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Photos provided by Sandy Martinez

It's all about the students

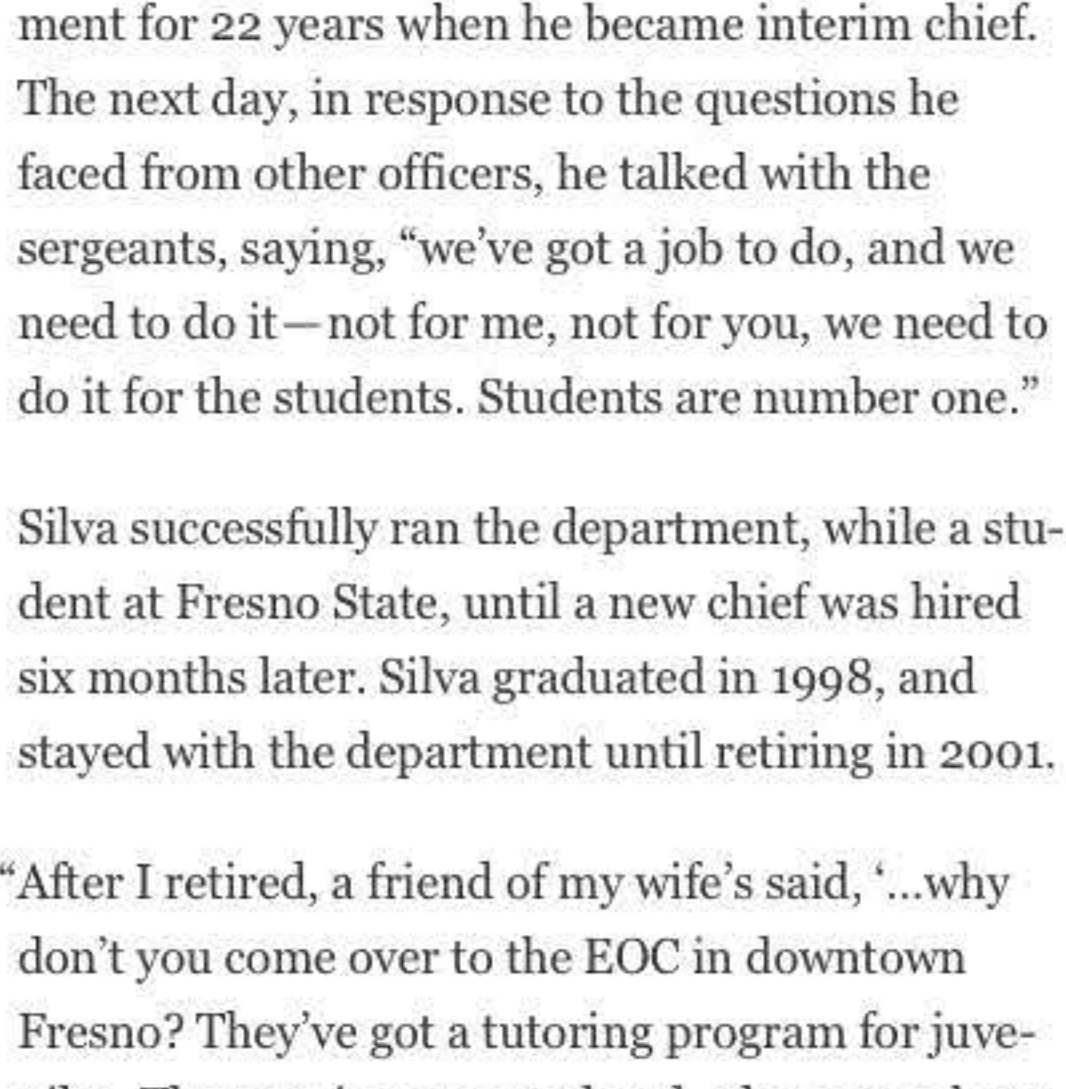
By MARISA MATA, Student Writer

“In Madera, I was called at about 11 o'clock in the morning. They give me an address, and it sounds like they've got a disturbance of some kind going on. I was, maybe, five, six blocks away, so I'm moving, but not too fast. Then, dispatch comes back and says it's code three, red lights and siren—we've got a baby that's stopped breathing.”

“I turned the lights on, zoomed through stop signs and everything. I go into the living room—grandma is sitting there, rocking the baby, and everybody, mother and siblings, are all screaming. I knelt in front of her and took [the baby], it was a little boy. He was beginning to turn a little bit. I gave him a little puff. Nothing happened. I gave him a little stronger puff. He goes, ‘WAAHHHH.’”

“The ambulance comes over and they took him from me. They're gone, grandma's gone. I walked out, got back in the car. I drove about four blocks and pulled over, just sat there for a little while. I got a call, the dispatcher said, ‘got a call from the hospital—he's going to be fine,’” Sergio Silva (1998) said.

Sergio Silva began his career as a police officer with the Madera Police Department, after leaving the Marine Corps in 1967. He was one of the first officers to implement the ride-along program, allowing officers to work with high school students. After this initial work with children, Silva continuously dedicated his career to helping kids and young adults.



One evening in 1997, Silva was working in his orchard when his wife ran outside and told him that she had gotten a call from Fresno State's campus police, they wanted him at the department right away. When Silva arrived, still in his work clothes, dusty from being on the tractor, he was given the position of interim police chief.

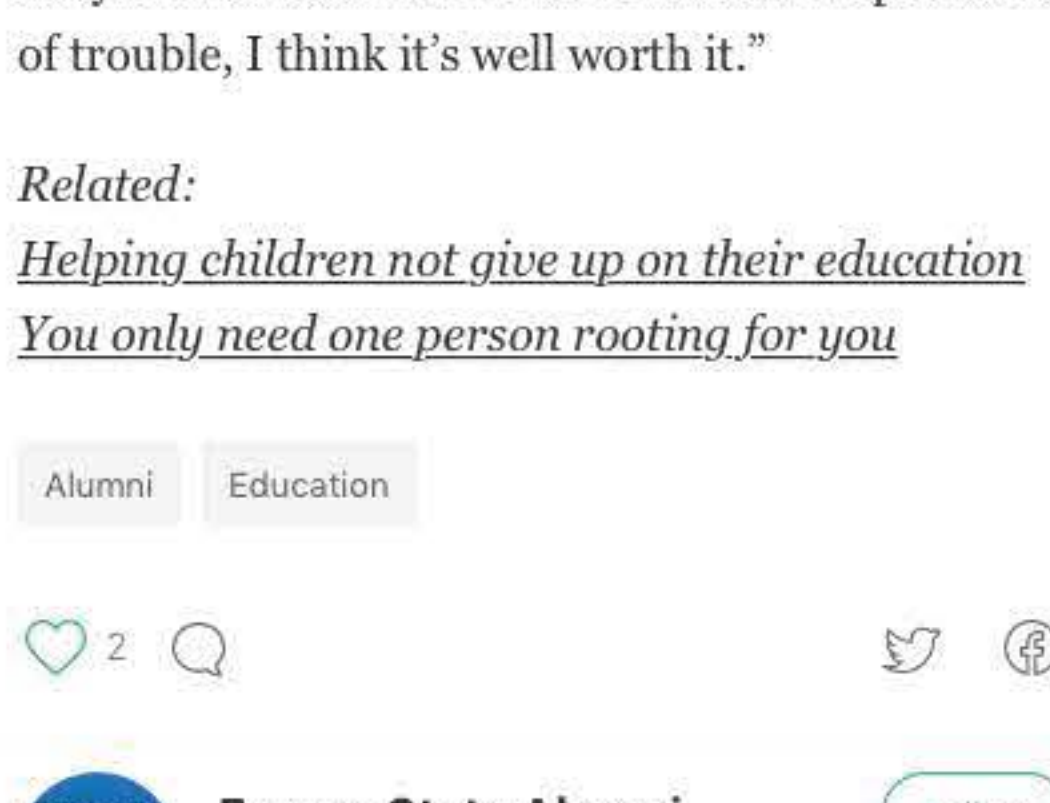
Silva had been with the campus police department for 22 years when he became interim chief. The next day, in response to the questions he faced from other officers, he talked with the sergeants, saying, “we've got a job to do, and we need to do it—not for me, not for you, we need to do it for the students. Students are number one.”

Silva successfully ran the department, while a student at Fresno State, until a new chief was hired six months later. Silva graduated in 1998, and stayed with the department until retiring in 2001.

“After I retired, a friend of my wife's said, ‘...why don't you come over to the EOC in downtown Fresno? They've got a tutoring program for juveniles. They are incarcerated and...they come here and they need help with their homework and things like that.’ And that's how I got involved with the juvenile hall tutoring program of the EOC.”

“It was sad to say that some of those kids didn't really know how to read or write—we're talking 15, 16 year olds.”

After six months, lack of funding caused the tutoring program to shut down. Silva began spending more time tending his orchard, and later joined the staff of the Clovis Young Marines.



“The Young Marines is kind of like an explorers' organization. And the program requires that they learn a little bit of military—a right face, left face, march a little bit. I've been with them for—actually I was with the original staff—so I've been there for 11 years.”

“We've got a lot of [kids] that really need direction. Young people are willing to listen but they need someone to tell them ‘you're doing this right’ or ‘you're doing this wrong.’ I remember [when I was growing up] in Merced, there was an adult who took time from his work to come and coach our baseball team. [And our department] coached little league...I umpired for a little while. I got things thrown at me, got called different names, but it's okay. It's all about the kids. If we can keep one out of trouble, I think it's well worth it.”

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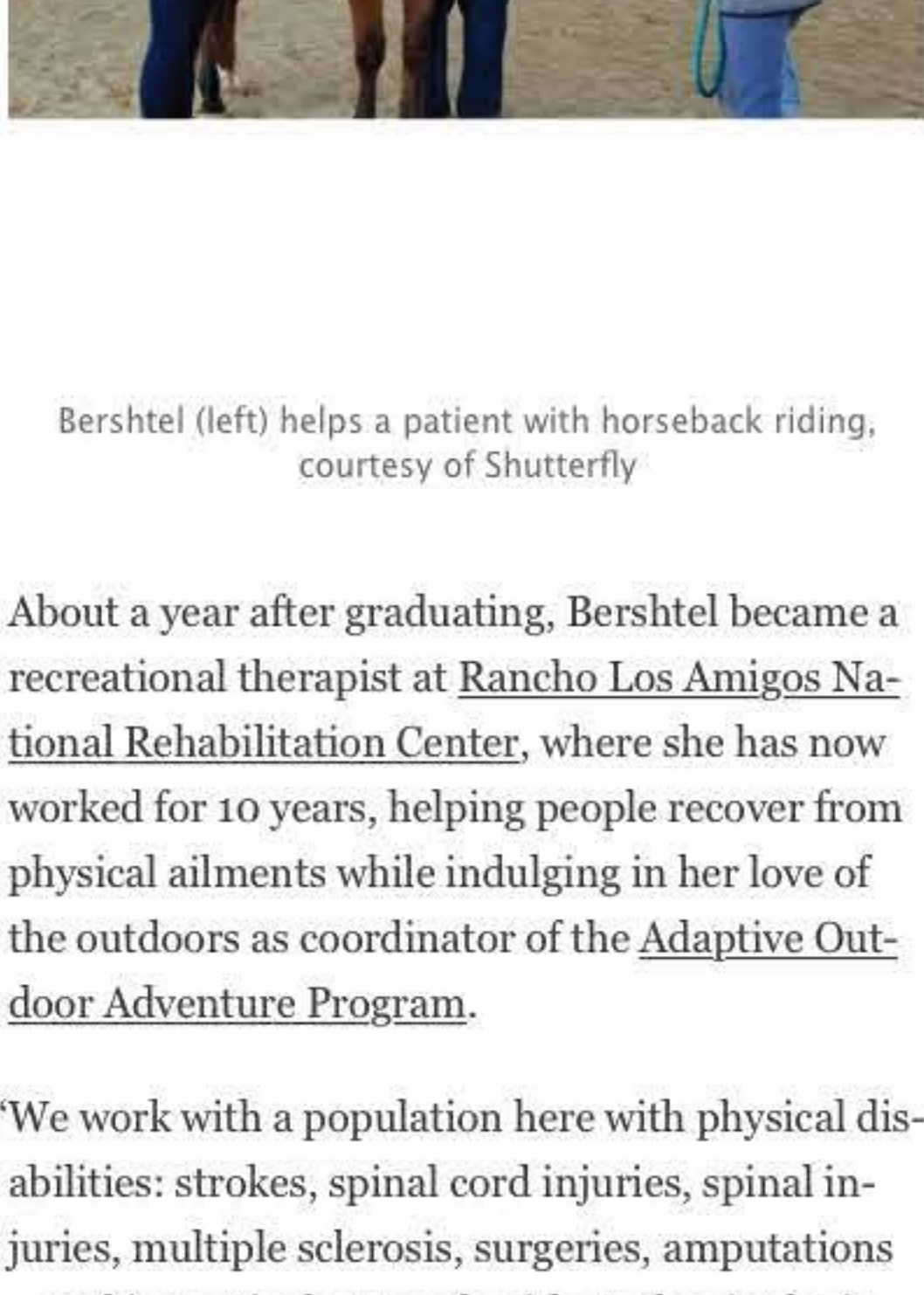
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Photos courtesy of Rebecca Bershtel (left)

Indulging in a love of the outdoors while helping patients recover

By MARISA MATA, Student Writer

“[My favorite part of my job is] watching the progression for somebody. Say they start off at a certain level, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally, and then they progress to where they’re more physically capable, stronger, they’re more confident, more social—seeing that progression and being able to provide the opportunity to give them that progression, [that’s my favorite part],” Rebecca Bershtel (2005) said.

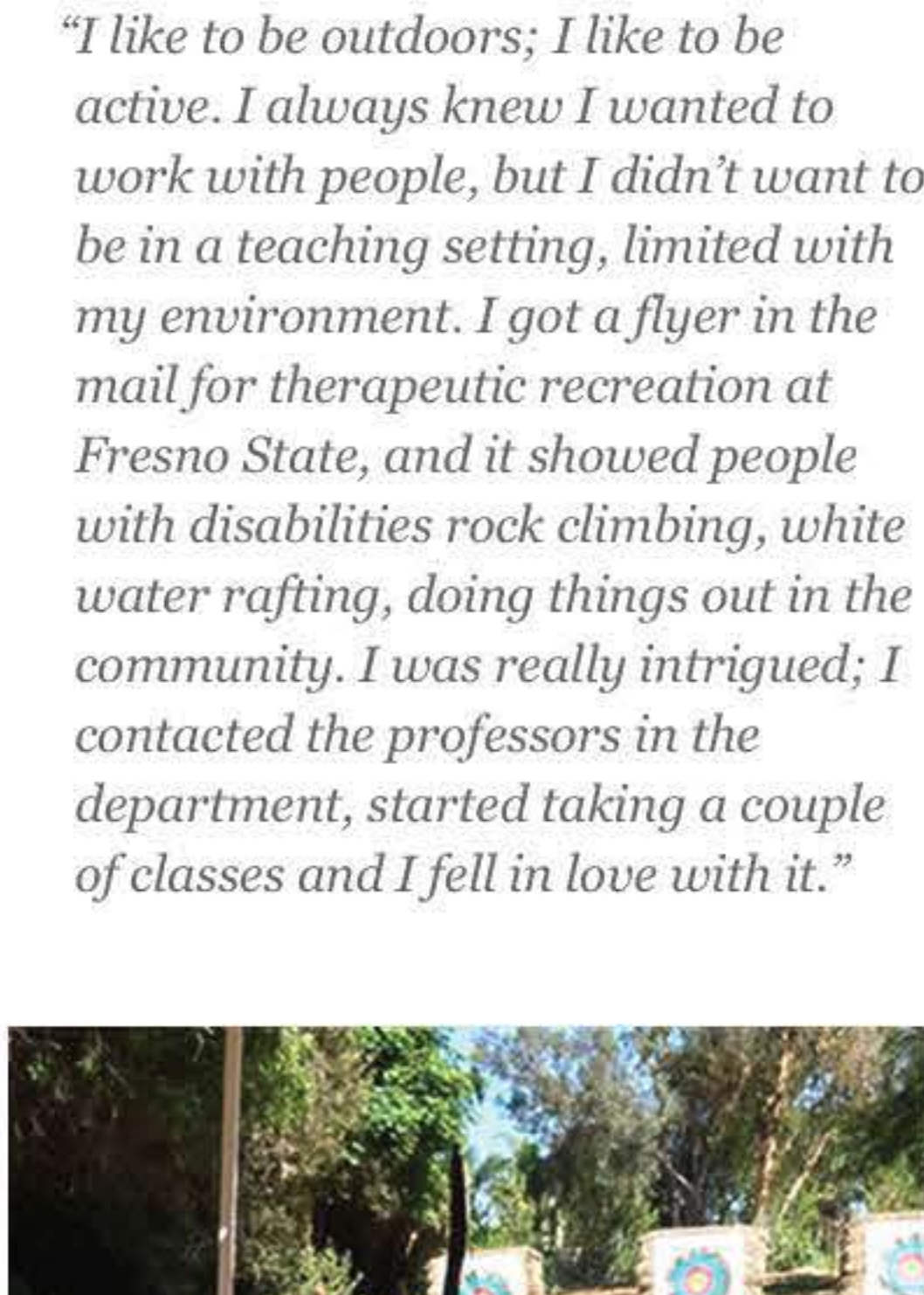


Bershtel (left) helps a patient with horseback riding, courtesy of Shutterstock

About a year after graduating, Bershtel became a recreational therapist at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, where she has now worked for 10 years, helping people recover from physical ailments while indulging in her love of the outdoors as coordinator of the Adaptive Outdoor Adventure Program.

“We work with a population here with physical disabilities: strokes, spinal cord injuries, spinal injuries, multiple sclerosis, surgeries, amputations—and in particular I work with strokes in the in-patient unit. Our goal with the patients is to get them home safely and give them as much information we can. It’s a little more tailored to them, [but] we do art and games, social activities, adaptive sports, community outings, community reintroduction, and a lot of that is interdisciplinary with physical therapy.”

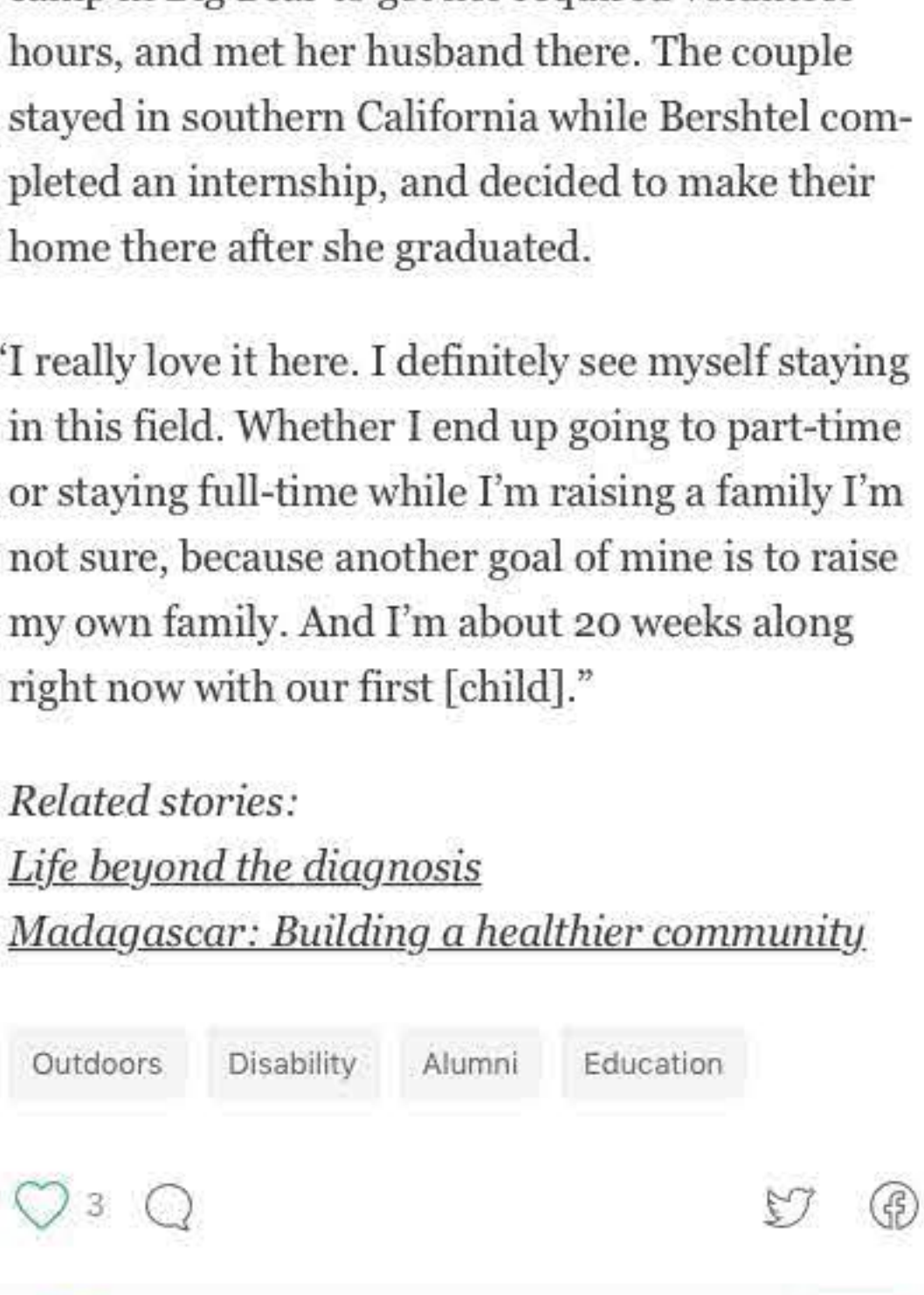
In the stroke unit, Bershtel typically works with patients that are in their 50s or 60s, but she also works with patients ranging from their 20s into their 40s in the Adaptive Outdoor Adventure Program.



Bershtel (right) kayaks with the Outdoor Adventure Program

“It’s a neat program; we do all kinds of things in the community—therapeutic cycling, therapeutic horseback riding, adaptive fishing, rowing, kayaking, we do overnight trips, we go to Mammoth and Big Bear—and that program is for any in-patient.”

“I like to be outdoors; I like to be active. I always knew I wanted to work with people, but I didn’t want to be in a teaching setting, limited with my environment. I got a flyer in the mail for therapeutic recreation at Fresno State, and it showed people with disabilities rock climbing, white water rafting, doing things out in the community. I was really intrigued; I contacted the professors in the department, started taking a couple of classes and I fell in love with it.”



From the Outdoor Adventure Program’s Camp Fire Experience, courtesy of Shutterstock

While a student, Bershtel worked at a summer camp in Big Bear to get her required volunteer hours, and met her husband there. The couple stayed in southern California while Bershtel completed an internship, and decided to make their home there after she graduated.

“I really love it here. I definitely see myself staying in this field. Whether I end up going to part-time or staying full-time while I’m raising a family I’m not sure, because another goal of mine is to raise my own family. And I’m about 20 weeks along right now with our first [child].”

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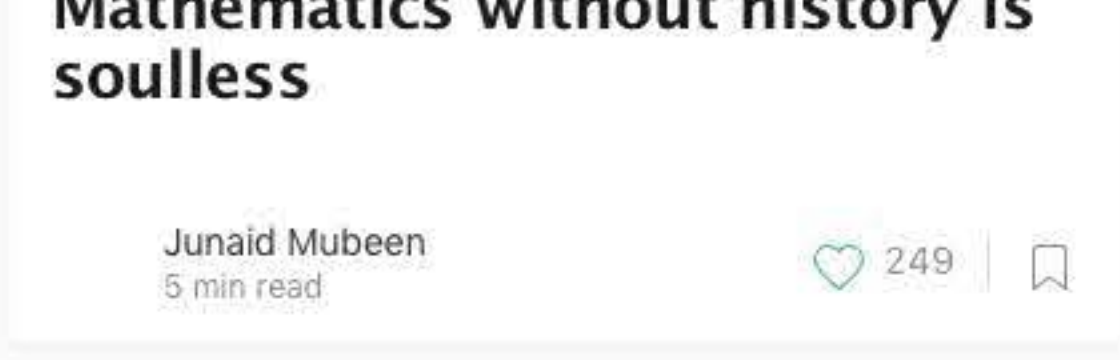
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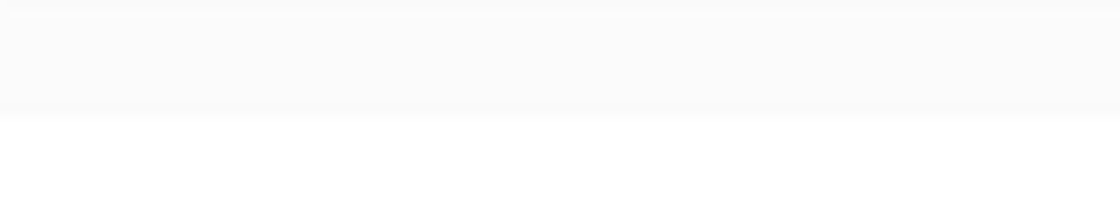
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TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR UNIVERSITY THEATRE 'TAR BEACH' PERFORMANCE

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TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR UNIVERSITY THEATRE 'TAR BEACH' PERFORMANCE

Fresno State's University Theatre will present ["Tar Beach"](#) Oct. 28 through Nov. 5 (excluding Oct. 31) with daily show times at 7:30 p.m. and a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee in the Dennis and Cheryl Woods Theatre in the Speech Arts Building.

This semi-autobiographical play, written by Tammy Ryan, is an exploration into marriage, family dynamics and adolescence, as two girls (portrayed by Fresno State theatre arts majors Emily Kearns and Lia Dewey) hatch a plan to stay out all night, only to have their plans derailed. The play will be directed by theatre arts professor J. Daniel Herring, who also directed Ryan's ["The Music Lesson"](#) for StageWorks Fresno. The play is set in the sweltering summer of 1977 in New York City and features a cast of five Fresno State theatre arts majors.

Told through the voice of the younger daughter, Reenie, (portrayed by Fresno State theatre arts major Kindle Cowger) the play examines the tension brewing in a crumbling household (Jacob Sherwood and Cecily Callahan, Fresno State theatre arts majors, portray the struggling parents), as a heatwave overtakes the city, the Son of Sam lurks and a power grid nears failure. All this, while three girls hope to escape and experience a wild night out.

"When I first read 'Tar Beach,' I was reminded that there are those times in our lives that we are on a collision course with the self, with family and with the entire world," Herring said. "These times are so intense that the only thing we have to hold onto is hope, and it is this sense of hope that drew me toward staging this sharply-written script."

"Tar Beach" is suitable for mature audiences due to strong language and mature themes.

[Tickets](#) are \$17 for adults; \$15 for Fresno State faculty, staff, alumni and military; and \$10 for students. Group rates, as well as season subscriptions are available. Box office hours are noon to 4 p.m. on weekdays and one hour before each performance.

Parking is free for shows on Friday through Sunday night. For shows on Tuesday through Thursday night, parking permits are required and can be purchased at dispensers in [parking lots](#) on campus.

For more information, contact the box office at 559.278.2216 or universitytheatre@csufresno.edu.

By Anthony Cody | October 24th, 2016 | Categories: [CAMPUS & COMMUNITY](#), [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [Fresno State](#), [Tar Beach](#), [university theatre](#) | 0 Comments

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STUDENTS WORK TO IMPROVE HISPANIC FAMILY HEALTH AND NUTRITION

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STUDENTS WORK TO IMPROVE HISPANIC FAMILY HEALTH AND NUTRITION

A Fresno State child family and consumer sciences independent study class is using the Abriendo Caminos community health promotion program this semester to positively impact the health of area Hispanic families.

Translated into “Clearing the Path,” the program’s Spanish-speaking education sessions focus on nutrition, physical activity and wellness to help prevent childhood obesity in Hispanic families. Fresno State students lead the sessions and gather data from the families to measure the sessions’ effectiveness.

“We’ve had a great turnout because the program is culturally tailored and provides families with lots of low-cost ways to make healthy choices,” said Dr. Amber Hammons, Fresno State professor and local program coordinator. “There are high rates of obesity and Type II diabetes in the Central Valley, especially in minority communities, so the program is a great way for families to come together and talk about challenges to healthy living and to learn ways to combat some of these health threats.”

The 15-student class meets every Thursday for one-hour sessions to learn about obesity, challenges and influences on children, anthropometric measurement training, survey review techniques and program planning and implementation.

Since Sept. 17, students began meeting with families for two-hour sessions on campus each Saturday that will continue through Nov. 5. The project is in its second year, and 29 families have participated in the workshops so far.

Each Saturday session offers three, 30- to 45-minute units taught by Fresno State students that tackle obesity issues by encouraging healthy eating using traditional Hispanic dietary patterns, collective family mealtimes and physical activity. The project’s findings will be analyzed in the spring to measure the program’s impact.

Another objective of the research is to teach students, specifically Spanish-speaking undergraduates, about methods and challenges of subject recruitment, survey data collection and evaluation techniques, workshop delivery and presentation of results.

Hammons initiated the local project in 2015. The program was initially created by the University of Illinois Family Resiliency Center and supported by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture as part of the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention Challenge.

The program also is being tested in Illinois, Iowa, Puerto Rico and Texas to develop an effective, low-cost obesity prevention intervention program that can be used across the United States.

The final cycle of the local Abriendo Caminos program will take place in the fall 2017, and participants hope to partner with local Hispanic-serving agencies and continue the community program after funding has ended.

Before coming to Fresno State, Hammons was a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She also served as co-coordinator of the pilot prevention program that aimed to increase healthy behaviors in Latino families with 5- to 13-year-old children increasing physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption and family togetherness. She worked on the Connect for Health project that connected college students with an afterschool program to increase children’s physical activity.

For more information, contact Dr. Amber Hammons at ahmmons@csufresno.edu or 559.278.1158.

By Geoffrey Thurner | October 21st, 2016 | Categories: PRESS RELEASES, RESEARCH | Tags: children, Fresno State, Hispanic family health, nutrition, obesity, physical activity, Spanish speaking | 0 Comments

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SECOND VOLUME OF 'MY NAME IS ARMEN' TO PUBLISH IN NOVEMBER

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SECOND VOLUME OF 'MY NAME IS ARMEN' TO PUBLISH IN NOVEMBER

The book “My Name is Armen – Outside the Lines (Volume II),” by Fresno State alumna Armen Bacon of Fresno, will be published in November by The Press at California State University, Fresno. The President’s Office at Fresno State and the College of Arts and Humanities will celebrate the book launch with a public reception and signing on Nov. 9 at 5:30 p.m. in the Table Mountain Rancheria Reading Room in the Henry Madden Library.

Bacon made her authorial debut co-writing the memoir “Griefland – An Intimate Portrait of Love, Loss and Unlikely Friendship” (Globe Pequot Press, 2012), a story of two women whose words and astonishing friendship helped them survive the ultimate loss.

Her second book, “My Name is Armen – A Life in Column Inches” (2014, The Press at California State University, Fresno), contained a decade’s worth of the essays on family, friends, love and loss published in The Fresno Bee.

The author says Volume II takes readers outside the margins of everyday life – always circling back, returning home – celebrating the resilience of the human spirit.

Fresno State President Joseph I. Castro and his wife, Mary, said in their foreword for Bacon’s newest book:

“This book provides readers with an authentic voice about life in the Central Valley. Armen cherishes the tales you entrust to her because she believes them to be fragile, powerful and enlightening. They are all as valuable to her as they are to us. She keeps them close to the heart until the moment they are ready to be shared with her audience. Armen touches the core of our humanity by showing us how we are connected across many lines and barriers.”

Bacon was honored as the 2015 Top Dog Distinguished Alumna of Fresno State – the highest honor awarded by the Fresno State Alumni Association. For two decades, she served as administrator of communications and public relations for the Fresno County Office of Education. She holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology, and she spent four years honing her writing craft in the acclaimed CSU Summer Arts Program, where she studied memoir, poetic prose, narrative nonfiction and flash fiction. Summer Arts will return to Fresno State for five years beginning in June 2017.

“My Name is Armen – Outside the Lines (Volume II)” will be available through The Press website after Nov. 1. The cost is \$20 for paperback.

The mission of The Press is to publish great literature by both emerging and established voices, scholarly books that expand the horizons of human knowledge and other works that promote the rich cultural heritage of California’s Central Valley.

Related Links:

- [Author and education leader Armen Bacon named University’s 2015 Top Dog](#)
- [Fresno State Press publishes ‘My Name is Armen’](#)

By Lisa Boyles | October 4th, 2016 | Categories: [ALUMNI](#), [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [Armen Bacon](#), [author](#), [Fresno State](#), [My Name is Armen](#) [Outside the Lines Volume II](#), [top dog](#) | 0 Comments

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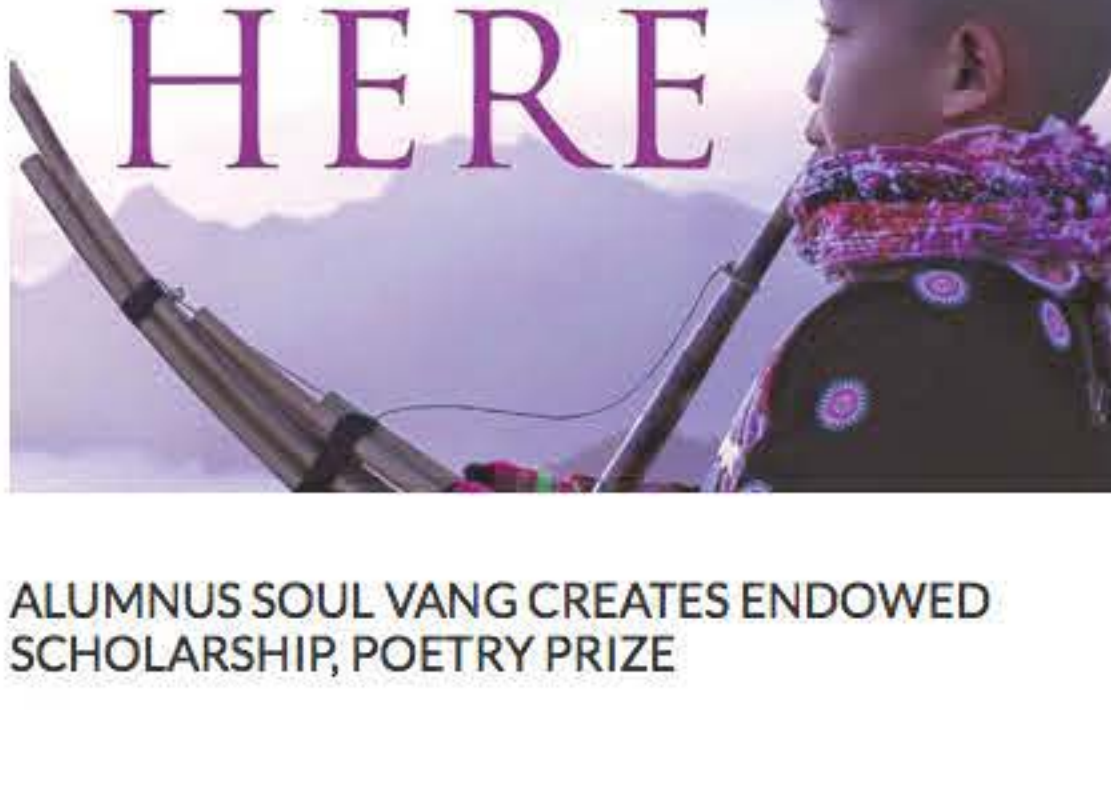
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ALUMNUS SOUL VANG CREATES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP, POETRY PRIZE

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ALUMNUS SOUL VANG CREATES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP, POETRY PRIZE

Fresno State will celebrate trailblazing Hmong-American alumnus [Soul Vang](#) for creating an endowed scholarship and annual poetry prize aimed at encouraging students to pursue their passion for writing about the Asian-American experience.

Vang, a poet and educator who holds a [Master of Fine Arts degree](#) in creative writing and a secondary teaching credential from Fresno State, will be honored at a public reception at 5:15 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 29, at the Smittcamp Alumni House (2625 E. Matoian Way). Parking is recommended in lots P1 or P2, with a free parking code available by calling 559.278.7082.

The reception will be hosted by Fresno State's College of Arts and Humanities, with President Joseph I. Castro and his wife, Mary G. Castro, attending. The program will include a poetry reading from Vang. The event will also celebrate the fall 2016 debut of the University's new [minor in Hmong language studies](#), which has so far attracted more than 100 students through the Department of Linguistics.

"The Soul Vang Scholarship will help to support a new generation of talented Central Valley writers from diverse backgrounds," President Castro said. "I am inspired by Mr. Vang's passionate commitment to Fresno State's mission of educating and empowering students for success. I was honored to provide support for this trailblazing gift."

An English instructor at Fresno City College, Vang is the author of "To Live Here," which won the 2014 Imaginary Friend Press Poetry Prize and the first full-length collection of poetry published by a Hmong-American. As an editorial board member of the [Hmong American Writers' Circle](#), he served as co-editor of "How Do I Begin? A Hmong American Literary Anthology," published in 2011 by Heyday Books.

Vang was born in Laos to father Nouchue Vang and mother Ying Yang Vang, who protected their children during the Secret War — a 15-year covert U.S. operation in Laos backed by the CIA — and brought them to the United States to begin a new life. They raised their family first with public assistance and later with humble jobs, saving every penny they could and enabling their children to go on to pursue individual interests and careers. There was enough of the savings left for Vang to start the scholarship and poetry prize in honor of his parents.

Vang joined the U.S. Army and served in Giessen, Germany and El Paso, Texas. After his service, he returned to Fresno to pursue his graduate education. He is the first Hmong-American to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree from Fresno State, and he's the first Master of Fine Arts program graduate to create an endowed scholarship. Vang hopes to provide opportunities to Asian-American writers who may not see writing as a viable career path.

"As a Hmong, I have always felt a gaping hole in my knowledge and my psychology, for we have no written history or stories prior to the creation of the Hmong alphabet in the late 1950s," Vang said. "When I started to write poetry, I felt like I had found a perfect tool to record my experiences and express my hopes. Though I had no role models in the Hmong-American community, I felt that it was important for me to do my part to keep our stories alive and to encourage others to write their own stories, so that our history and our stories will keep growing to fill that hole in our hearts."

By [Jefferson Beavers](#) | September 19th, 2016 | Categories: [ACADEMICS](#), [ALUMNI](#), [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [Asian-American](#), [College of Arts and Humanities](#), [creative writing](#), [endowment](#), [Fresno State](#), [Hmong-American](#), [Master of Fine Arts](#), [poetry](#), [scholarship](#), [Soul Vang](#) | [0 Comments](#)

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ORIGINAL CHILDREN'S OPERA 'LUCINDA' BLOOMS ON CAMPUS

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ORIGINAL CHILDREN'S OPERA 'LUCINDA' BLOOMS ON CAMPUS

Fresno State Opera Theatre cast members are rehearsing for an originally composed children's opera featuring Mexican folk melodies with traditional Christmas carols that will be performed this fall for the first time.

The 45-minute production, "[Lucinda y las Flores de la Nochebuena](#)" by composer [Evan Mack](#) and librettist [Joshua McGuire](#), is based on a Mexican folktale about poinsettias at Christmas time.

Several free public performances are set beginning with the world premiere in Fresno on Nov. 19 at the Woodward Park Regional Library. A second public showing will be Dec. 17 at Campus Pointe at Fresno State.

The production will also travel to various Fresno County schools during the Christmas season, beginning with a performance for school children Nov. 16 at the Selma Arts Center. And two special-event performances on campus are set for this fall also.

The production and the free performances are the result of a [\\$10,000 grant awarded](#) to the Fresno State Opera Theatre by the [Central Valley Community Foundation](#) to commission and produce the new [children's opera](#) with part of the goal to reach communities that would benefit from seeing original live opera theatre. Fourteen performances are scheduled this fall.

[Dr. Anthony Radford](#), associate professor of voice and opera in Fresno State's Music Department where he is artistic director of Fresno State Opera Theatre and the Fresno State's Children's Opera. In 2015 he commissioned composer Mack and McGuire to write an original opera for Fresno State so the opera students could perform for the children of the Central Valley.

Radford said folk tales are a common operatic theme and are often based on European stories performed in foreign languages. Mack and McGuire chose to break ground with a Mexican folk tale about poinsettias at Christmastime and the true meaning of giving. It's presented mostly in English with music inspired by mariachi songs in Spanish.

In this story, [Lucinda](#) and her ailing mother are making a blanket as a gift for the nativity scene at the Christmas Eve service. Lucinda's mother is too sick to help Lucinda finish the blanket. Lucinda leaves to celebrate Christmas Eve without her mother and without a gift. On her way to church she picks a few weeds from the side of the road as a gift and worries this might not be good enough for the nativity scene. When she offers the gift at the altar, the weeds bloom into beautiful poinsettias. Lucinda learns that it doesn't matter what you give at Christmas, as long as you give from the heart.

"If you present the audience with a story in a language they understand and with a story that means something to them, they come and they consume the entertainment and enjoy it," Radford said. "The fun thing has been to create something new and to create something that will have meaning for them. Everybody can like opera, and even a 6-year-old kid can appreciate a story about love and loss. We don't have to go into schools and be silly. We can give them real stories."

While the opera combines Mexican folk melodies with traditional Christmas carols sung by bilingual Fresno State students, the production is mostly sung in English with some Spanish.

Fresno State graduate voice and opera student Alejandra Tejeda, of Porterville, who also performs for the Fresno State Mariachi in the Music Department, sings the lead role of Lucinda.

Senior voice student Chrysanthé Pappas, of Fresno, appears as Lucinda's mother. Graduate voice student Ed Olivarez, of Visalia, will appear as optimist "Nobody" and junior voice student Christopher Rodriguez, of Bakersfield, will appear as the pessimist "Everybody." Jordan Williams, a graduate student from Selma, is the pianist. The opera will be directed by Radford.

"Dr. Radford's brilliant fusion of opera with a traditional children's Mexican story regarding the birth of the poinsettia flowers is both timely and exciting," said Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, dean of Fresno State's College of Arts and Humanities, adding that this will be the first opera that many San Joaquin Valley children experience. "This beautiful opera will educate our children, touch our hearts and illuminate our understanding of the meaning and power of gift giving."

The four free, public performances of the opera in Fresno are:

- **Nov. 19:** 1 and 2:30 p.m. at the Woodward Park Regional Library (944 E. Perrin Ave.)
- **Dec. 17:** 12:15 and 1:15 p.m. at the outdoor Square at Campus Pointe (weather permitting, bring chairs or blankets to sit on — 3050 E. Campus Drive).

The opera will also be performed twice on campus: Oct. 22 at the [Feria de Educación](#), a free college fair in Spanish on the Maple Mall; and on Dec. 3 at the Christmas in Mexico concert presented by the [Los Danzantes de Aztlan](#) dance troupe at the Satellite Student Union (559.278.4115 for concert ticket info).

(Copy by Tom Uribes and Lisa Boyles).

Related links:

- [University Opera Theatre awarded grant for children's production](#)
- [Video about the production \(4 minutes\): A Children's Opera: Lucinda y las Flores de la Nochebuena](#)

By Lisa Boyles | September 28th, 2016 | Categories: [ACADEMICS](#) | Tags: [Alejandra Tejeda](#), [Central Valley Community Foundation](#), [Christmas time](#), [Dr. Anthony Radford](#), [Evan Mack](#), [Fresno State Opera Theatre](#), [Fresno State's Children's Opera](#), [librettist Joshua McGuire](#), [Lucinda y las Flores de la Nochebuena](#), [Mexican folktale](#), [poinsettias](#) | 0 Comments

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SENATE RECOGNIZES LYLES CENTER FOR 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

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SENATE RECOGNIZES LYLES CENTER FOR 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

State Sen. Tom Berryhill presented Fresno State's Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship with a Legislative Resolution for its 10th anniversary. He traveled to Fresno on Sept. 16 to present the resolution and commend the center for its role in advancing entrepreneurship in the Central Valley.

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to honor and call attention to such an amazing institution right here in the heart of the Central Valley," said Berryhill (R-Twain Harte). "The Lyles Center has been a center for innovation and collaboration among community leaders for 10 years, making for a much better now and a brighter future. I extend my best wishes for their continued success."

Fresno State President Joseph I. Castro was in attendance to accept the award alongside Dr. Scott Moore, interim executive director of the Lyles Center.

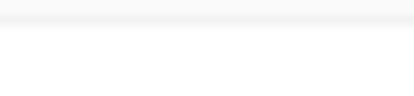
"It was an honor to receive the commendation from Senator Berryhill on the Lyles Center's 10th anniversary," Castro said. "I'm very proud of the Lyles Center's work in supporting Fresno State students, K-12 students in our region and community members as they pursue their bold dreams of innovation and entrepreneurship."

Moore stressed the vital role the Lyles Center staff has had on the success of the center and all of its programs. "The Lyles Center staff is the reason the center is so successful," Moore said. "Without their hard work, none of the center's success would be possible. I can't wait to see what the next 10 years holds."

The resolution was sponsored by local legislators, including Berryhill, Sen. Andy Vidak (R-Hanford) and assemblymembers Joaquin Arambula (D-Kingsburg) and Jim Patterson (R-Fresno).

By Erica Bermudez | September 26th, 2016 | Categories: ACADEMICS, PRESS RELEASES | Tags: 10 years, Fresno State, lyles center for innovation and entrepreneurship, resolution, Senator Berryhill | 0 Comments

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CSU Alumni SoCal Mega Mixer

You may think you've been to an alumni networking reception before, but you've never been to a *Mega Mixer* like this!

Multiple CSU campuses from up and down the state have joined forces to bring you an evening of networking with fellow CSU alumni at **Twenty Eight** in Irvine. Bring your business cards and get ready to network!



Hors d'oeuvres will be served and a no-host bar is available.

Pre-event registration is required; **no walk-ups**. Reservations close on November 3 or at sell-out, whichever comes first. Guests are welcome but space is limited so **register today** using the registration link below. We sold out last year!



Date: Monday, November 7, 2016

Time: 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Location: Twenty Eight, 19530 Jamboree Road, Irvine, CA 92612 ([map](#))

Cost: \$20 per person

Parking: Complimentary parking is available at the venue.

Take a look at the [photos from previous events](#).

Questions? Contact Sam Camarena at scamarena@calstate.edu or 562-951-4717.

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