

THRIVE!

COACHELLA VALLEY



Innovating Women

Meet the bright minds of the Coachella Valley iHub

PLUS:

- **Vanessa Gonzalez blazes a pathway to success**
- **Latino business owners find support in LanzaTech**

FREE
Business and
Education
Programs
PAGE 49



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Photo Credit Chris Miller



Tachevah, a Palm Springs Block Party



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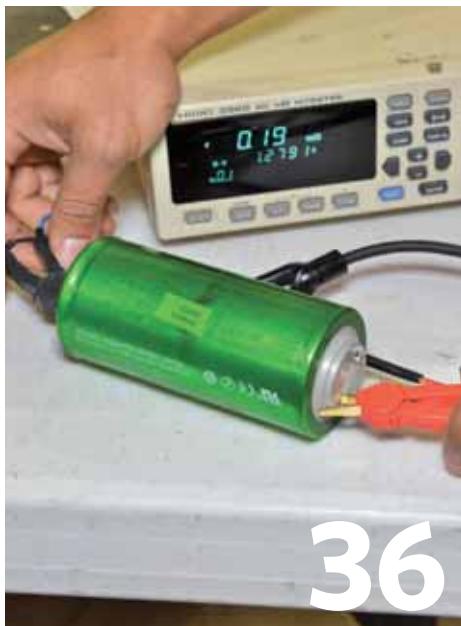
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Health Care As It Should Be

THRIVE!

COACHELLA VALLEY



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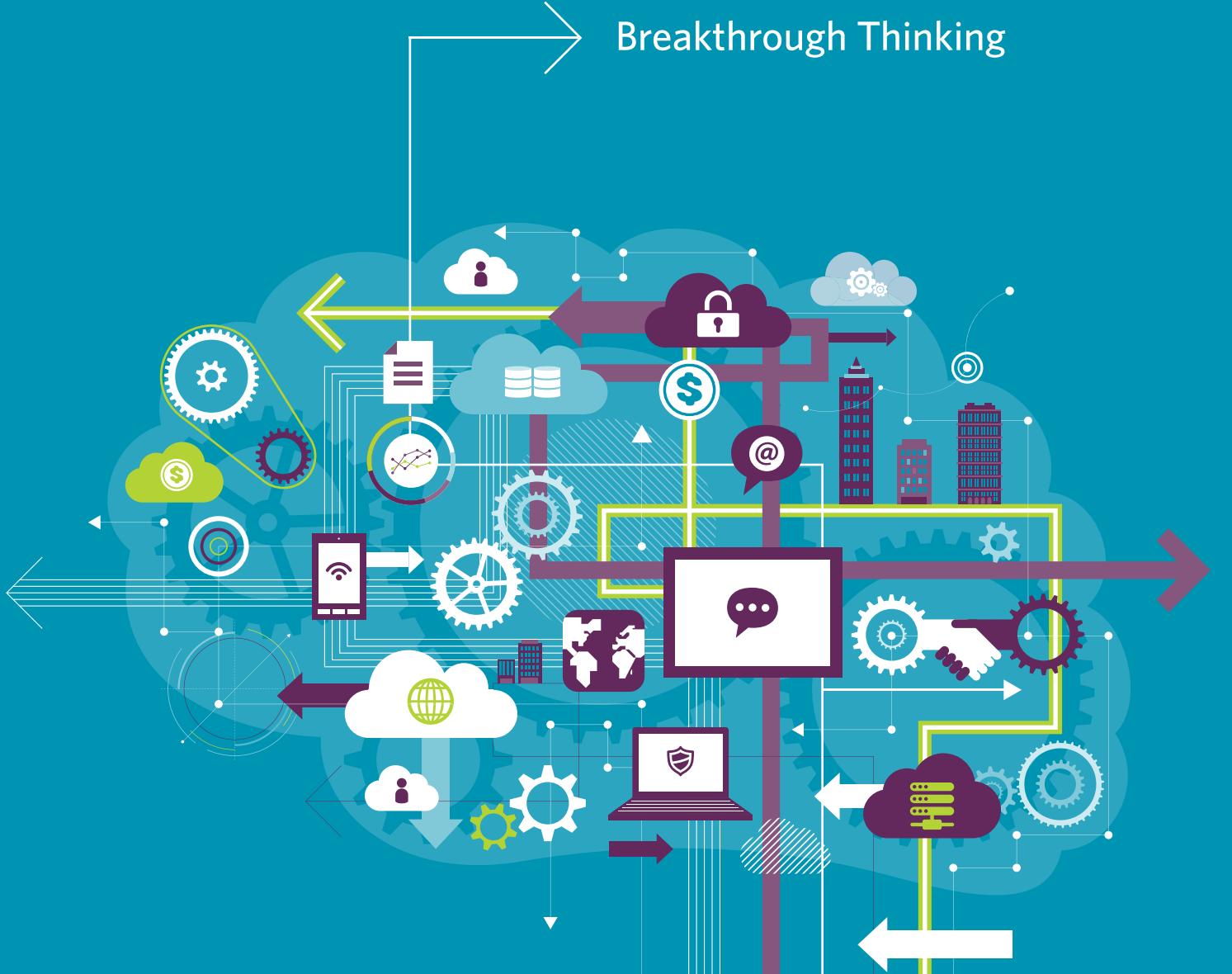
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Breakthrough Thinking

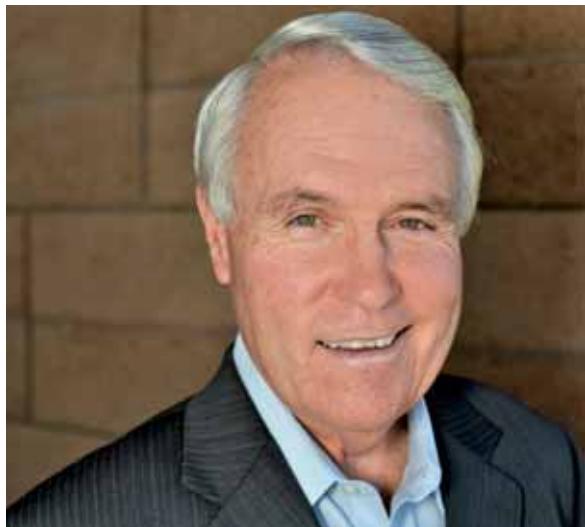
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ABOUT THE COVER: Sonia Kanner (front), creator and owner of hipS-sister, and Sara Nolet utilize Kanner's stylish and innovative product while hiking in the Coachella Valley.

Welcome to the first edition of *Thrive! Coachella Valley*, a quarterly magazine celebrating the amazing stories and opportunities in the region's business and education communities.

Powered by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership and *The Desert Sun*, this magazine and its website, www.thrivecoachellavalley.com, showcase success stories, important information, and vital programs for business growth and student achievement.

CVEP is on a mission to bring innovative businesses and higher-wage jobs to the desert, while also educating the emerging workforce to fill those jobs.

The Coachella Valley is famous for its year-round sunshine and idyllic quality of life. And although tourism and agriculture stand as the region's economic pillars, the area is also proving itself as a fertile ground for clean energy, technology, health care, arts, media and entertainment.

The Coachella Valley is a portal to 25 million consumers in Southern California and ports serving the Pacific Rim, offering a combination of quality of life and a friendly, supportive business environment that you cannot find in a metro area.

And it's a fine place to do business — with great incentives for new and relocating businesses, as well as 57,000 square feet of space to grow 21st century companies in the Coachella Valley iHub and Palm Springs Accelerator Campus.

Meanwhile, CVEP also promotes and facilitates the Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness, a collaborative initiative that links education and business, seeks to graduate all students from high school, and helps them gain scholarships and internships to prepare them for careers.

We hope that *Thrive!* encourages you — whether you're an entrepreneur or businessperson, educator, parent or student — to engage in CVEP's robust programs and services. (See page 48)

For information, please call 760-340-1575, e-mail blueprint@cvep.com, or visit www.cvep.com.

Thomas Flavin, CEO/President
Coachella Valley Economic Partnership



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All events take place at the University of California, Riverside's Palm Desert Graduate Center, 75080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert, unless otherwise noted.

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MAY 3
Emerging Health Professionals Career Showcase
9 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 8
Healthcare Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 8
Health Academy Lead Teachers
5:15 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 12
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 14
SBDC Fireside Chat: Social Media Marketing & Tools for Productivity
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 15
Renewable Energy Roundtable
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 15
Advance Technology Industry Council
3:30 p.m., Desert Energy Enterprise Center, College of the Desert

MAY 15
LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 22
Nurse Work Group
8 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

MAY 27
Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 9
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 11
SBDC Fireside Chat: Thriving in the Summer
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 12
Healthcare Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 12
Health Academy Lead Teachers
5:15 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 19
LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 24
Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JUNE 26
Nurse Work Group
8 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 9
SBDC Fireside Chat: PR—Getting Your Story to the Media
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 11
Healthcare Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 11
Health Academy Lead Teachers
5:15 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 14
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 17
LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 23
Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

JULY 25
Nurse Work Group
8 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

AUG. 11
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

AUG. 13
SBDC Fireside Chat: The New Rules of Networking
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

AUG. 21
LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 3
SBDC Fireside Chat
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 8
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 12
Healthcare Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 12
Health Academy Lead Teachers
5:15 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 18
LanzaTech business and technology workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 19
Renewable Energy Roundtable
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 19
SBDC Entrepreneur Growth Series event TBA
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 24
Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

SEPT. 26
Nurse Work Group
8 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 8
SBDC Fireside Chat: Everything You Want to Ask an Attorney But Are Afraid to Pay For
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 10
Healthcare Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 10
Health Academy Lead Teachers
5:15 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 13
Business Engagement
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 16
LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 17
Renewable Energy Roundtable
7:30 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 22
Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council
3:30 p.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 24
Nurse Work Group
8 a.m., UCR Palm Desert

OCT. 30
Economic Summit
TBA, JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa

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INNOVATION



The Women of iHub

IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY'S BUSINESS INCUBATOR,
THESE ENTREPRENEURS
HAVE FOUND COMMON GROUND

BY CAROLYN PATTEN



PHOTO BY DAVID A. LEE



SONIA KANNER



SHARI RANDALL



DEENA SUFFIN



JANE SHORE

They're developing experiences to connect people with their favorite brands, marketing solar energy and even creating innovative fashion. They're the women of the Coachella Valley iHub and Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, a business incubator network that gives entrepreneurs office space and professional support to launch their high-tech and clean energy businesses.

The iHub reviews more than 200 ideas each year and selects entrepreneurs with the brightest ideas and the strongest ambition and eagerness to learn and grow.

Thrive! introduces a few of the most dynamic women incubating businesses in the iHub.

SONIA KANNER

Creator and owner, hipS-sister

An avid hiker, Sonia Kanner wanted a fashionable alternative to the clunky fanny pack. Finding nothing that suited her taste, the single mother with no business experience designed a simple piece of fabric with pockets and eventually began producing and distributing her product, hipS-sister, from the dining room of her San Diego home.

"I knew I was onto something," she says, "but I was lost about how to take the next step. I needed structure and location and the Coachella Valley iHub offered me that. When you're a small business, this is critical."

Kanner joined the iHub in July 2013 and moved into a larger facility at the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus five months later. Now, hipS-sister is one of six businesses at the campus, where it has four employees (two more work in San

Sonia Kanner (far left) and Sara Nolet of hipS-sister turned to the Coachella Valley iHub to take their business to new heights.



Jane Shore (left) and Deena Suffin co-own the social media marketing company Post Modern Inc.

Diego) and is a regular vendor on the Home Shopping Network. Her newest products include cellphone covers that block radiation and the HipFix line of activewear with built-in pockets.

The iHub helps hipS-sister with the logistics for its new affiliate program in which other businesses refer to Kanner through their marketing and take a commission for any resulting sales. Kanner is paying forward iHub's support with her Sisterhood Marketplace, helping women-owned businesses with distribution, branding and marketing.

"I could not have done this without the Coachella Valley iHub and the valley's business community," Kanner says. "This level of support and networking would never

happen in a large city like San Diego."

DEENA SUFFIN AND JANE SHORE *Owners, Post Modern Inc.*

Based in Los Angeles for almost 20 years, the owners of Post Modern Inc. are using their high-tech kiosks to bring consumers into to their clients' branding and marketing programs.

"Today's clients know they need social media but don't know how to get good data from it," co-owner Deena Suffin says. "We weren't planning to launch a new company, but the Coachella Valley iHub made it easy."

Post Modern customizes proprietary photo kiosks for companies to capture their consumers at events and post their images

CONTINUE ON PAGE 13

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- Nelson Mandela

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PHOTOS BY DAVID A. LEE

Post Modern customizes photo kiosks for companies to capture their consumers at events and post to major social networks.

and messages to the major social networks.

"It takes the paper out of registration and contests, making it fun and fast," Suffin says. "It also delivers detailed analytics, which are keys to the client's overall marketing. Technology is just a toy unless it's combined with savvy marketing."

With clients in Los Angeles and Phoenix, and a constant stream of major events in the Coachella Valley and Las Vegas, Suffin and partner Jane Shore say the Coachella Valley iHub in Palm Springs is ideal. As one of four resident iHub companies, Post Modern has no offices elsewhere.

"One of iHub's goals was to get us press and help us network," Shore says. "Out here it's easier to meet people and being in the iHub has put us over the top. It's very hard to start from scratch and keep the momentum, but their support has really reinvigorated us."

With patents pending on the technology, Suffin says, "We see this company as something that will be





PHOTOS BY DAVID A. LEE

Shari Randall is head of marketing and business development at SunUp Solar Systems Inc.

extremely successful and appealing to a big company that will buy us out in two to three years.”

SHARI RANDALL

Head of marketing and business development, SunUp Solar Systems Inc.

An owner in a family-owned business who saw great success with solar thermal energy systems until tax credits disappeared and the industry nosedived, Shari Randall is deeply involved in re-launching SunUp as one of that industry’s top manufacturers in Southern California.

The company, which has been selling, manufacturing and installing solar thermal systems in California for 10 years, is based in San Diego. Its headquarters relocated to the Coachella Valley when it joined the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus in December. The company has since used the facility for research and development, training, assembly and

quality control.

“The iHub has been extremely supportive with information and training, putting us in touch with potential financing, finding solid information on trademarks, state regulations and incentives, and setting up a distributor network,” Randall says. “The iHub is especially interested in renewable energy companies and manufacturing, so it’s a good fit.”

She says the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus provides two substantial benefits that can’t be found elsewhere.

“With the Coachella Valley’s abundance of hotel and condo association pools, this area is ripe for a quick acceleration,” she says. And, because solar thermal energy is more prevalent in other parts of the world, “being in a designated foreign trade zone will be very advantageous as we ramp up manufacture and assembly of many of the components of the complex systems. These are huge pluses.” ■



Shari Randall and her husband, Rick Rothman, chief executive officer of SunUp, examine one of SunUp's solar thermal systems.



BY THE NUMBERS COACHELLA VALLEY iHUB

A new report on the long-term potential of the **Coachella Valley iHub network** — which includes the **Palm Springs Accelerator Campus** and the forthcoming east valley **iHub for advanced manufacturing** — suggests billions of dollars in economic activity including **3,500 high-skill, high-wage jobs** at about 80 new companies

engaged in clean and renewable energy, high-tech, health and medicine, and advanced manufacturing.

Dr. John Husing of Redlands-based Economics & Politics Inc. based his study on modest assumptions, such as annual iHub company graduation rates, number of employees they hire, average salaries, and profit-to-revenue ratio.

He projects that by the 20th year, the impact could be:

81 new companies

3,544 new jobs

\$711 million in revenue

\$174 million in payroll

\$142 million in profits



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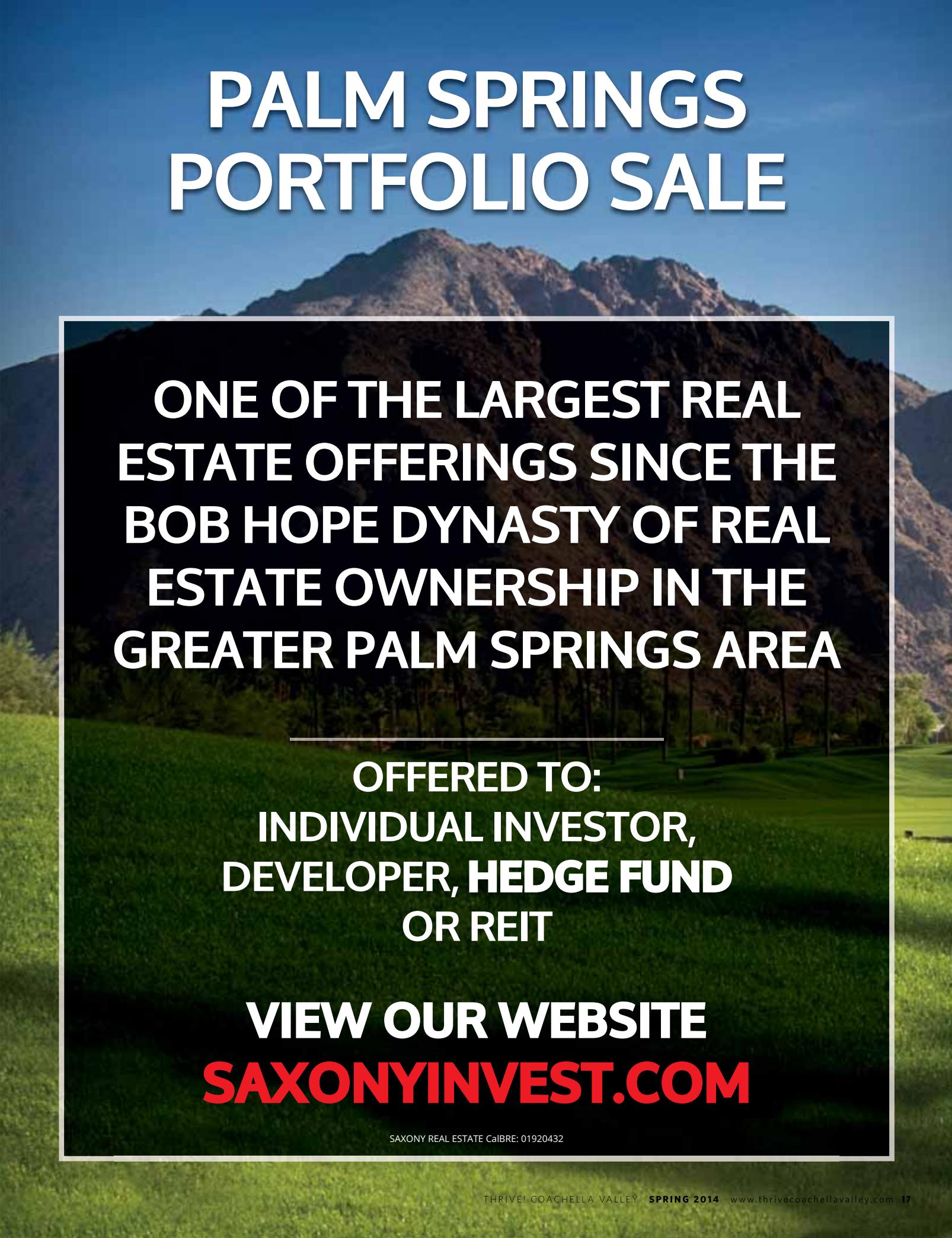


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LANZATECH HELPS LATINO ENTREPRENEURS
ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM

BY WILL O'BRIEN

After he was laid off from his position as a materials and process scientist, Felix Barajas needed to find a new path. “I was the guy who figured out how to put missiles and satellites and all that stuff together,” he says. “[After being laid off], I had to do something. A friend and I were talking and I kept asking, ‘What does everybody need?’”

A close-up portrait of a man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a teal shirt. He is looking slightly to the left.

*Felix Barajas turned success
in his own company, Eco
Green Supply, into success for
the Latino community with
LanzaTech.*

PHOTO BY DAVID A. LEE

At first, the friend suggested health-care, a field too complicated and political by Barajas' estimations.

But he saw great potential in soap.

An increasing percentage of the population has allergies to soap, Barajas learned. So he began developing an environmentally friendly cleaning product line and started his company, Eco Green Supply, in his garage.

Business has boomed, thanks in part to the lessons in sales and online marketing that Barajas received through the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center.

"From the first meeting, they have supported me in so many ways," he says. "They've helped me with my website. They gave me a lot of professional help. It's a continual thing. They keep helping me, giving me new ideas. I go to a lot of their classes to see what others are doing and how they're doing it."

Barajas, who has moved his business into a production warehouse in Cathedral City, feels he's on the brink of taking Eco Green Supply to the next level. His company, which distributes to boutique and small hotels in Southern California, has increased its sales by 200 percent and branched off to pick up laundromat and recovery center customers.

"I don't have enough money to hire somebody, but it's not going to be long," he says. "I'm not going to have a choice. It keeps growing and growing and growing."

Not long after starting Eco Green Supply, Barajas founded LanzaTech, a series of Spanish-language small-business development workshops that help local Latino entrepreneurs start and grow small businesses. He sought consulting services from the Coachella Valley Small Business Development



Manuel Martinez, former president of the SCORE Los Angeles Chapter, delivers a workshop to a Latino audience looking to polish their credit to boost their business.

COURTESY PHOTOS



From left, Erasmo Nuñez of the Entrepreneur Center with Patricia Borunda, Tocando Fondo Coach, and Armando Ehrenzweig, a LanzaTech business consultant.

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“There are a number of untapped possibilities within Latino-owned small businesses.”

Ezekiel Bonillas
*managing director of the
 Coachella Valley
 Small Business
 Development Center*

Center and forged a relationship that continues today.

LanzaTech, a program of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership and SBDC since 2012, helps entrepreneurs refine their business plans, access capital and launch and operate businesses so they can grow profits, create jobs and contribute to local economic vitality.

“There’s tremendous potential in the area’s untapped Latino-owned small businesses,” says Ezekiel Bonillas, SBDC’s managing director.

About 95 percent of LanzaTech clients immigrated to the United States and overcame many challenges along the way. In addition, we are finding untapped job creation and economic opportunities within this segment that are not capitalized on because these business owners don’t know or fully understand the ‘American way’ of doing business.”

The SBDC offers LanzaTech business workshops on topics relevant to owning and operating a small business, and its bilingual business consultants meet with clients individually to discuss specific business challenges, including accessing capital, acquiring permits, hiring employees, marketing and managing intellectual property.

“The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership has been a key supporter of SBDC’s LanzaTech program from the beginning,” Bonillas says. “We have full-time, bilingual business consultants and experts presenting business workshops, as well as one-on-one coaching for

these business owners. As we enter our second year into the program, many businesses are becoming bankable for traditional funding and hiring employees. In addition, some are filing for patents and have ambitious goals of bringing their products to market.

“Our goal is to continue breaking down the cultural barriers Latino entrepreneurs encounter and helping them capitalize their economic opportunity to fulfill their American dream.”

For Barajas, the training in sales and website-based marketing has been most helpful. But his participation in LanzaTech has also created professional relationships with dozens of other business owners, fostering collaboration and an exchange of ideas.

“That’s what LanzaTech does best,” he says. “They line you up with different entities that support your new business. In the process, you’re supporting those entities, so that makes everyone grow.”

Barajas credits LanzaTech with helping his effort get off the ground, and now that he’s cruising, he’s maintaining the relationship.

“I can’t think of a week that goes by when they don’t support me,” he says. “I know I will be very successful. There’s no question about that.”

For information about LanzaTech, visit www.cvlanzatech.com or connect with CVEP on Facebook or Twitter. ■

Writer Mark DeHaven contributed to this story.



Nachhattar S. Chandi, Chief Executive Officer

"Our company is chiefly a labor of love. The twenty years we have been working in the gas station/fast food industry have been a constant learning experience.

We hope to become an engine of prosperity through every city that welcomes us, for the city at large but primarily for the residents. The goods and services that we provide are hopefully an answer to the needs of that area, and our ability to stay in business will be governed by how efficiently we are able to provide those.

Our enterprise began as a single station and I believe thus far we have done well enough to prove that hard work and dedication are the keys to success."

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'I've Always Had Big Goals'

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT VANESSA GONZALEZ BRINGS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TO CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY WILL O'BRIEN

Vanessa Gonzalez has never needed anyone to push her to work hard. Growing up with limited financial resources, the Coachella Valley High School alum and first-generation college student knew early on that education was the way to a better life.

"I've always had big goals," Gonzalez says. "I enjoy pushing myself."

In May, the soon-to-be 22-year-old will graduate with honors from Pitzer College in Claremont and begin a post-undergraduate adventure she hopes will include international travel, an array of work experiences and ultimately a doctoral degree in clinical psychology.

While self-motivated, Gonzalez gives credit to an annual \$5,000 Pathways to Success scholarship made possible by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership.

The scholarship was among many that made Gonzalez the most decorated student at her high school's senior awards night. In all, she's received more than \$100,000 in scholarships and will graduate from college with no debt, even after spending two semesters abroad in Spain.

Gonzalez set her sights high at a young age. "Ever since middle school I knew I was going to continue on to college, and it [was] always a goal to receive as many scholarships as possible so I

could help my parents pay for college," she says. "I've always just been very good in school."

She has a white robe — given to Coachella Valley's top 10 graduating seniors — to prove it.

During her final year in high school, Gonzalez typically arrived an hour early for student government meetings before spending the day's study halls and lunch hours applying for scholarships and admissions. Cheerleading or soccer practice immediately followed. Then it was time for homework, completing more applications, and — when the demanding schedule finally allowed it — sleep.

"I've always just been very driven to succeed as far as I can," Gonzalez says. She also managed an active social life.

She was rewarded with not only tuition assistance, but also a deep sense of pride, having set a positive example for younger siblings and cousins.

Last fall, Gonzalez's 18-year-old sister, Karina, enrolled at California State University San Bernardino with hopes





Coachella Valley High School grad and Pathways to Success scholar Vanessa Gonzalez will soon graduate with honors from Pitzer College in Claremont.



COURTESY PHOTOS





of earning admission into the nursing program. Their 8-year-old brother, Andrew, while years away from serious college decisions, already appears eager to follow in his sisters' footsteps.

"He's already saying he's coming to Pitzer," Gonzalez says with a laugh.

At Pitzer, Gonzalez took an interest in psychology that deepened during a sophomore-year internship at Landmark Medical Center in Pomona, where she noticed a language gap among staff and the center's many Spanish-only speaking patients.

"It shocked me because it's like [the Spanish-speaking patients] are attending all these group therapies and individual therapies, but they're just in the background because they can't understand anything," Gonzalez says. "I was able to help them more than the counselors could on a daily basis because of that language barrier."

Now, about half of the counselors at Landmark speak Spanish, says Gonzalez, who is interning there again.

The need for Spanish-fluency resonated with Gonzalez and focused her career ambitions. She hopes to continue to work in Coachella Valley and serve patients in their native tongue.

"I think that's really important, especially being able to be culturally sensitive," she says. "Knowing culture and traditions is all very important to being able to diagnose a person correctly and know what they've been through."

Her commitment aligns with the region's desire to return to the Coachella Valley to serve and help diversify the local economy.

"The Pathways to Success scholarship has helped me in countless ways, and I will never be fully able to thank CVEP staff for all that they have done for me," Gonzalez says. She urges community members to contribute to organizations like CVEP so students like her can follow their dreams and excel in higher education.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Vanessa Gonzalez in Salamanca, Spain during a class trip while studying abroad in Leon, Spain.

Gonzalez on a camel in Morocco, during a visit while studying in Sevilla.

Gonzalez with fellow students in the Sevilla study abroad program.

Gonzalez met Dolores Huerta, labor leader and civil rights activist who co-founded United Farm Workers. Gonzalez met Huerta during spring break her sophomore year while enrolled in the course Rural and Social Movements that included a class trip to La Paz to volunteer.

CVEP's Pathways to Success scholarships are part of the Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness, provide not only tuition assistance but also ongoing counseling and resources to its participants, including worthwhile professional development experiences. Gonzalez has been an intern through CVEP's Healthcare Industry Council, which brings together health care and education professionals to create work-based learning opportunities for students.

"Out of all the scholarships I was fortunate enough to have been awarded, Pathways to Success is the one scholarship I always made sure I reapplied to because of all the resources and networking opportunities the program gives to its recipients," Gonzalez says. "It has always been more than a scholarship to me; it has been an important support system."

After graduating, Gonzalez plans to take a year off to gain work experience and earn admission to graduate school. She's applying for many jobs but hopes to teach English abroad, possibly in Hong Kong.

Ultimately, Gonzalez plans to give back to those who guided her and steer the next generation toward college.

First, there's the matter of crossing a stage and receiving a diploma.

"It's going to be really exciting being able to have my grandparents in the audience and watching me accept my diploma, because it's something I've worked so hard for, and it's just going to be awesome sharing that experience with family and friends," Gonzalez says. "(My parents) always worked hard to give us opportunities they didn't have. I've always tried to take advantage of opportunities that do come my way and make them proud."

For information about CVEP's Pathways to Success scholarship program, call 760-340-1575 or visit www.cvpts.com. ■

Writer Mark DeHaven contributed to this story.



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The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Coachella Valley is more than twice the national rate—putting everyone at greater risk. That's why the Department of Public Health is a proud partner of the Get Tested Coachella Valley public health campaign.

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Cameron Kaiser, MD
Public Health Officer, County of Riverside

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Partnership

Improves Local Access To Care



Dr. Gemma Kim and her husband Dr. Tae Kim together are leading the residency and UCR Health, the associated clinics.
COURTESY PHOTO

Desert Regional Medical Center aims to increase local access to primary care through its partnership with the University of California Riverside's School of Medicine.

The partnership launches the UCR School of Medicine Residency Program at Desert Regional. The arrangement allows for seven physician faculty to see patients at clinics near campus, including the Las Palmas Medical Plaza and the El Mirador Medical Plaza.

"Establishing the UCR School of Medicine Residency Program at Desert Regional Medical Center is an important step in filling the need for primary care in our community and has added benefits for our patients, physicians and staff," Desert Regional President and CEO Carolyn Caldwell said. "The faculty-run clinics of UCR Health already are seeing patients and providing direct care to our community."

The faculty physicians also will train the first group of residents in family medicine, who will arrive next year to begin their three-year program.

"Patients in the hospital will benefit because, as a teaching hospital, our physicians will continually be discussing the latest thinking in medicine," Caldwell said. "Patients often

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will have more than one set of eyes looking at their health issues and defining the best course of action based on the evidence. Many of our medical staff will be involved in teaching and evaluating the residents, and that offers personal and professional growth as well."

A new clinic, which combines the two offices currently operated by UCR Health, is set to open in July.

The new UCR Health Family Medicine Clinic at 555 E. Tachevah Drive, 2E-107 in Palm Springs, also will include space for faculty offices and lecture rooms for instruction.

"It will be a state-of-the art facility that will have more than 13,000 square feet with over 20 exam rooms in addition to procedure rooms, triage room and a group counseling room," said Gemma Kim, Desert Regional's residency program director. "Our focus is on creating a patient-centered medical home that will improve health care access and strengthen primary care in the Coachella Valley while providing personalized care of the highest quality to all populations, including the underserved, of

Inland Southern California."

Leaders of the program said it will have numerous benefits for both of the participating organizations and the surrounding community at large.

"This partnership benefits the School of Medicine by creating an educational platform for residency training and partnering in research for the ultimate benefit of the community and residents of the Coachella Valley," Dr. Tae Kim, UCR Health regional medical director, said. "The School of Medicine will continue to build upon the support of Desert Regional, Desert Healthcare District and the community to expand patient services to the Coachella Valley."

The program is also hoped to entice future graduates to stay and practice medicine locally, addressing a regional shortage in physicians. Caldwell said there is only one doctor for every 9,000 residents in parts of the Coachella Valley, while federal recommendations suggest there should be a physician for every 2,000 residents.

"Research studies have shown that many residents tend to stay where they were trained," Caldwell said. "This can create a new pipeline of doctors, especially in primary care." ■



The Master Plan

EDUCATION AND BUSINESS LEAD THE NEXT GENERATION
TO COLLEGE AND DREAM JOBS

BY WILL O'BRIEN

A student's first glimpse into the professional world can be a transformational experience, sparking an interest that could one day launch a career. As the former manager of a local CBS affiliate and studio tour leader for area high school students, Don Perry has seen this effect firsthand.



DON PERRY

"It was at least a dozen times that a student would turn to me or my news director and say, 'I get it. I now know why I want to finish high school. I now know why I want to go to college. I want to be able to

work in an environment like this.' You could see the light turn on," says Perry, a board member and former chairman of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, which facilitates the Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness and creates similarly inspiring experiences throughout the region.

The plan, launched in November 2012 by local education and business leaders, is designed to give elementary, middle and high school students a framework to explore specific career pathways and encourage success in college.

The long-term effort is multifaceted and collaborative, bringing together

businesses, educators and community members to offer work-based learning and access to college scholarships and support throughout their education.

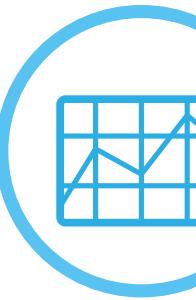
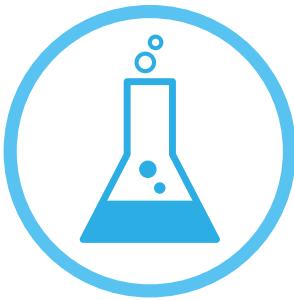
"We believe all students should have the opportunity to excel and graduate high school prepared for college, career and life," says Sheila Thornton, CVEP vice president of Workforce

Excellence. "Although the Coachella Valley is seen as a premier resort destination, many of the 70,000-plus students live in poverty and have little



SHEILA THORNTON





expectation of going to college."

While the number of Coachella Valley residents with college degrees continually grows, the percentage of residents ages 18 to 54 attending school has been declining, CVEP data shows.

A key component of the regional plan is exposing students to professional environments and providing a glimpse of what's possible in order to inspire students toward their goals.

The strategy encourages businesses to start intern, job shadow and school visit programs. All three school districts take this mission straight to the students in the form of 18 career-specific academies in Coachella Valley schools.

The plan has buy-in from stakeholders of all backgrounds, from business executives to the superintendents of the region's three school districts.

Perry, who has participated in economic development partnerships in other states, knows the Coachella Valley regional plan is special.

"This is really the first time I've been involved with an economic development organization where all the

stakeholders in the education world are sitting at the table," he says. "To me, that's significant, and I think that's one of the things that will help us succeed."

Perry and fellow CVEP board member Deborah McGarrey of the Southern California Gas Co.

say collaboration is vital to uplifting the valley's students and making the region a more desirable place to open a business and for highly skilled workforce to

call home.

"If we have an educated community, it's easier for us to find employees," McGarrey says. "The more higher-paying jobs we have, the more people will spend, and that in turn creates more jobs. It's one great big circle that continues to feed itself."

Perry calls it a chicken-or-the-egg scenario, in which students need more available jobs and business considering a move to the desert need a larger, more skilled workforce.

"You have to run the two trains down

the track at the same time," he says.

That's what the regional plan does: tackles the issue from all sides with mutual benefits for all involved.

"It's taking a big swing at the plate," Perry says. "We're really trying to create opportunities."

In addition to making on-the-job training more widely available, CVEP provides students with access to financial aid for college.

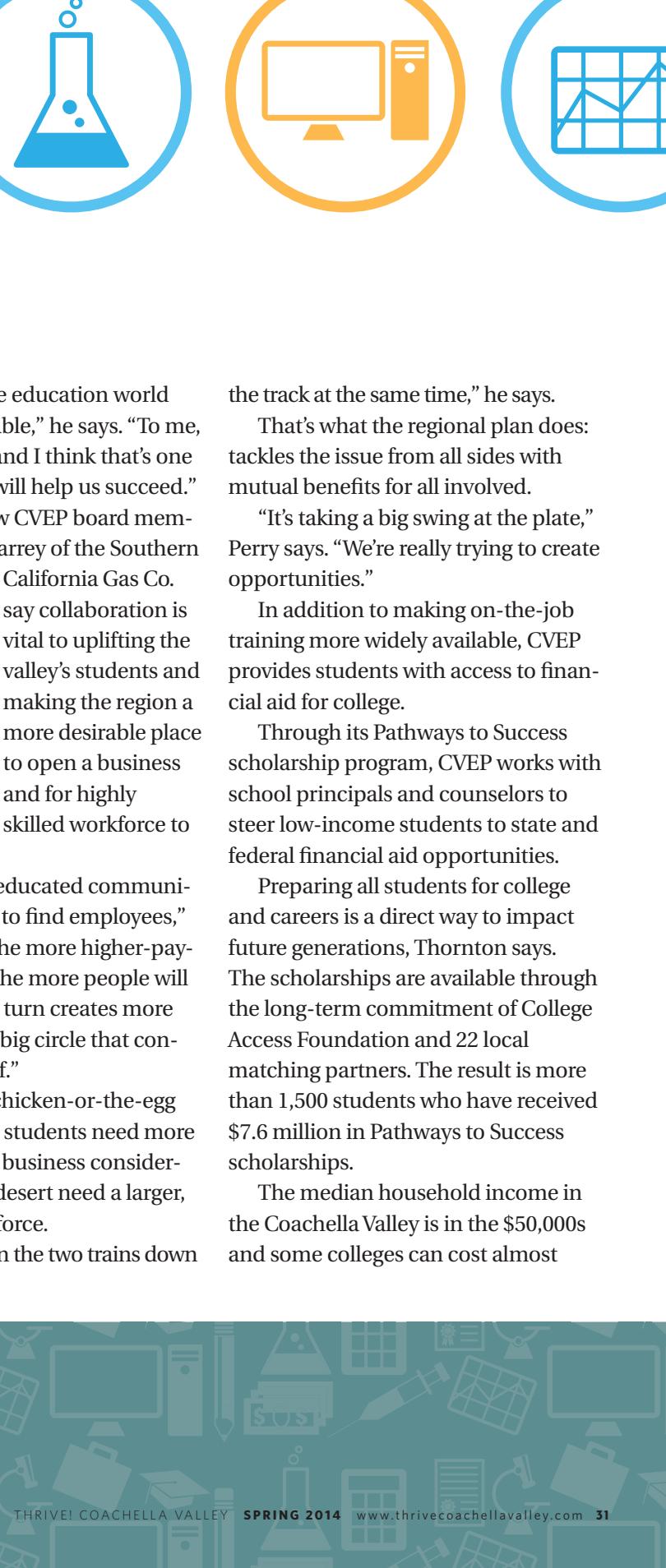
Through its Pathways to Success scholarship program, CVEP works with school principals and counselors to steer low-income students to state and federal financial aid opportunities.

Preparing all students for college and careers is a direct way to impact future generations, Thornton says. The scholarships are available through the long-term commitment of College Access Foundation and 22 local matching partners. The result is more than 1,500 students who have received \$7.6 million in Pathways to Success scholarships.

The median household income in the Coachella Valley is in the \$50,000s and some colleges can cost almost



DEBORAH McGARREY





Don Perry (left) poses for a photo with Terry Green (rear) and the June 2012 Workforce Excellence's Pathways to Success Program scholarship winners Brian Araujo, Vanessa Gonzalez, Francisco Rodriguez along with Ernie Rios.

COURTESY PHOTO

that for a single year. The scholarship program employs counselors who visit schools to provide training on completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and Cal Grant application.

They also help parents understand the college application process and assist students through the challenges of being a college student. CVEP and its matching partners offer scholarships ranging from \$2,500 for a year of community college to \$10,000 for two years of university.

"Our region's common goal is to create an educated workforce that can work in higher-wage jobs locally," Thornton says. "This will change the paradigm for students and assist local businesses, which often recruit educated workers from outside the area."

Funding for these programs comes through grants, such as ones from

Desert Healthcare District, James Irvine Foundation, Weingart, Ford Next Generation Learning, SEMPRA/Southern California Gas Co., College Access Foundation of California and Wells Fargo.

In the bigger picture, the plan outlines how business and education collaborate to create a sustainability plan for career pipeline initiatives.

"The Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness drives our work in 2014 to increase graduation rates, college readiness, college completion, career/workforce readiness and the number of local students in higher-wage jobs," Thornton says.

Now the plan stakeholders are seeking greater participation from the community and smaller business to grow the initiative. While it holds benefits for students, the plan also holds promise for employers.

Going back to his CBS days, Perry talked about hiring former interns.

"The reason we were so willing to hire them is we knew that they knew our culture," he says. "We knew who they were. We knew what their work habits were."

"It's hard for businesses that have never done internships to understand, but you have to engage businesses to understand that, yes, you're going to take a little risk here [by setting up an internship program], but you're also going to help train the future workforce of the valley. You're making a contribution that's significant."

For details about scholarships and work-based learning opportunities, e-mail blueprint@cvep.com or call 760-340-1575. ■

Writer Mark DeHaven contributed to this story.

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A Place to Innovate

HIGH-TECH STARTUPS FIND A HOME
IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY IHUB

BY ELLEN PARIS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID A. LEE

Monday morning finds the Coachella Valley Innovation Hub in Palm Springs already bustling with activity, even as the workweek stirs to life. Managing Director Joe Wallace greets the week with back-to-back meetings with resident entrepreneurs and interviews to screen several prospects.

Wallace coaches businesses on their strategic plans, helps them find financing, evaluates their progress and offers advice to help them bring their products and services to market. He also networks these entrepreneurs with the considerable resources and programs of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, which manages iHub.

He is on a mission to help entrepreneurs transform ideas into viable technology and renewable energy businesses, and to diversify the region's economy and create jobs.

Lenny Caprino, president and founder of Solaris Power Cells, is among the success stories. He joined the iHub in 2012 and in May 2013 "graduated" to the nearby Palm Springs Accelerator Campus. Since beginning its iHub residency, Caprino's company has merged with Rolling Technologies and is now publicly traded. He has hired six full-time employees and begun preproduction on Solaris Smart Cells, used in solar-powered golf carts and green houses.

"People who say city and state government can't help private businesses are wrong," Caprino says. "I salute the city of Palm Springs and the city council for making the Coachella Valley iHub a reality."

The iHub opened in CVEP's 14,000-square-foot Rabobank Regional Business Center, a beehive of entrepreneurial activity, in 2011. The nearby 43,000-square-foot Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, the only one in California's network of 16 iHubs, houses the client companies that have advanced from proof of concept to pilot level manufacturing.

"The iHub was started to help build a year-round job base for the valley and integrate it within



CVEP's Economic Blueprint and its Workforce Excellence division," says Tom Flavin, president/CEO of CVEP. "A big part of the iHub is its focus on 21st century companies."

In addition to gaining attention locally, the iHub is on the cutting edge of President Barack Obama's national agenda for economic development, which includes the creation of 45 innovation hubs around the country.

The Coachella Valley iHub program consists of 20 high-tech and renewable energy companies — four iHub residents, six at the Accelerator Campus and 10 virtual. The iHub provides the resident and virtual companies in their "incubation" stage with an office, conference area and administrative





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Joe Wallace, Coachella Valley iHub managing director; Solaris Power Cells founder Lenny Caprino (left) tests a smart cell with Anthony Givens; Pallets of smart cells awaiting shipping; Solaris smart cells help power this solar-powered golf cart; Testing the juice on a smart cell; Left to right: Roy Givens, Lenny Caprino and Anthony Givens.

staff at no charge. (Each of the 16 California iHubs is funded by local government and private money.) They also receive hands-on consulting, advice and support from the iHub and CVEP team.

SecoSys, which joined the iHub in August 2013, captured the silver award at the World's Best Technology Innovation Marketplace, a top venture capital and investment conference held last October in San Diego. SecoSys provides water management

monitoring and water usage control utilizing proprietary technology.

Hank McCarrick, SecoSys founder and CEO, credits the iHub for his success at WBT.

"There is such a team effort at the iHub. We consistently receive excellent tutoring, mentoring and advice from everyone," says McCarrick, who chose the Coachella Valley iHub because it best suited him in meeting the needs of his target market: water energy management. He saw potential customers in the Coachella Valley's many resorts, private golf communities and golf courses.

Wallace and others at the iHub have helped McCarrick create a presentation for potential investors.

"All of our companies are starting from scratch," Wallace explains. "One thing we look for and they all have in common is a collective sense of awareness in identifying and solving problems."

Wallace and Kyle Wagner, iHub assistant director, see three to five aspiring entrepreneurs weekly. Of those, one is usually accepted to the iHub each month. Its reputation draws interest from a variety of technological fields.

"Because the iHub is known for being a technology-driven innovation hub, many people think they have the next iPhone and what they have is a pet rock," laughs Wallace, whose engineering degree and startup business expertise guides the iHub.

The iHub is designed for business incubation, with stays varying from six months to a few years. Companies that fail to move forward must leave the program, while those on track move to the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus for the next phase of development or into the real world with all the risks and rewards associated with entrepreneurship.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

The iHub was conceived in 2009, according to Cathy Van Horn, economic development administrator for the city of Palm Springs.

"Everyone was trying to figure out what do with the recession hitting the valley so hard because of the dependence on tourism," Van Horn recalls.

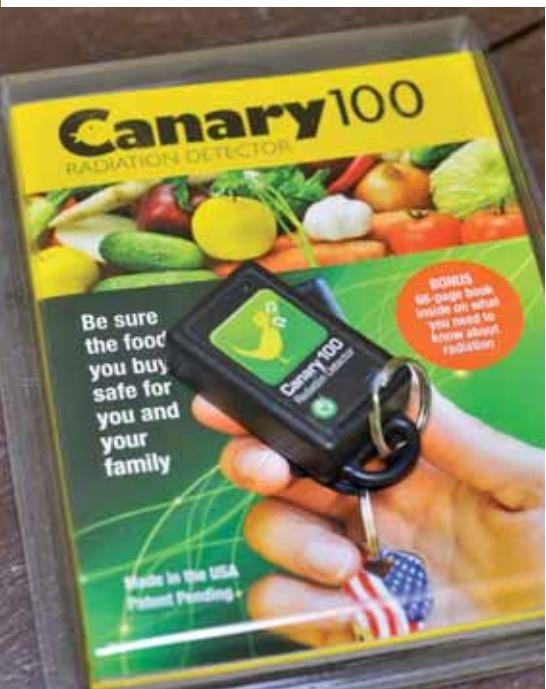
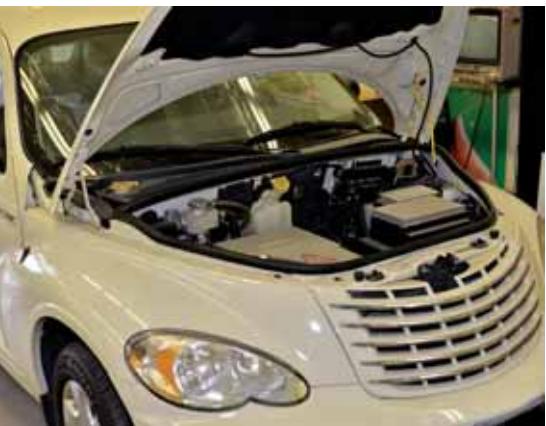
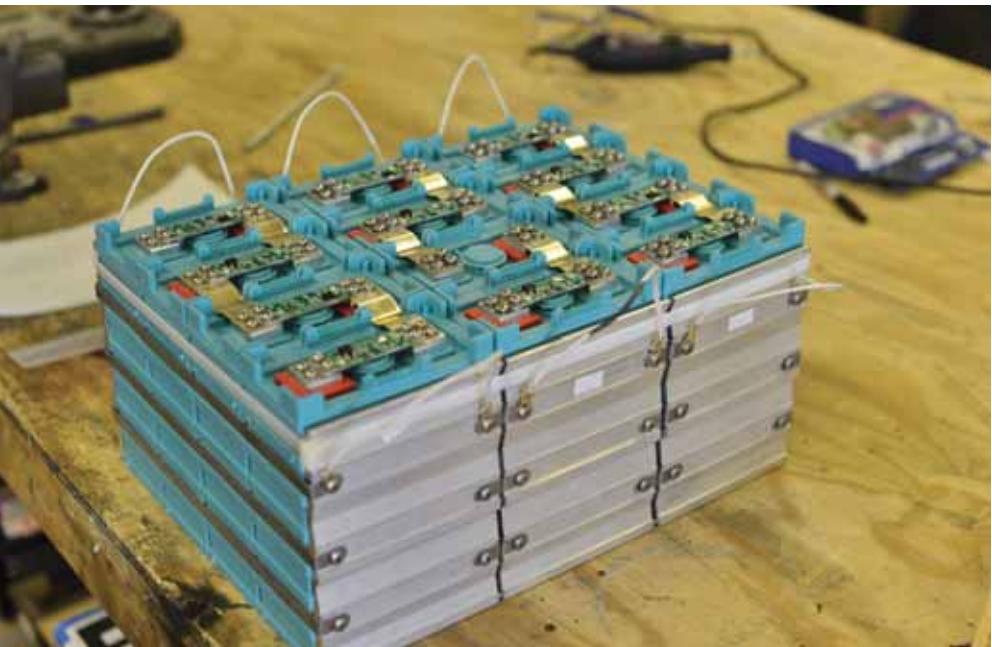
She remembered a conversation about innovation hubs between Mayor Steve Pougnet and Brian McGowan of the governor's office who worked as economic development coordinator for the city of Palm Springs for six years. McGowan asked the city to write the white paper to secure the state's support and the iHub designation.

Pougnet understood the need to diversify the local economy and create higher-paying jobs in sustainable industries. In a prepared statement, the mayor said, "This designation is transformational for Palm Springs and proof that our city is an ideal spot for creating jobs with a focus on renewable energy and clean technology. It means we are going to have a new economy and that this iHub will be the center for renewable energy growth in Southern California."

A number of Coachella Valley entities pitched in to make the iHub a reality. The city of Palm Springs applied for the iHub designation with Desert Hot Springs and Cathedral City, which supplemented the Palm Springs funding of \$125,000 per year with \$25,000 a year each for the first two years of operation. To date, Palm Springs' direct funding to the iHub totals \$1.6 million. All three cities have continued to provide funding beyond the two-year commitment that ended in July 2013.

Other initial iHub supporters include Desert Healthcare District, which contributed \$500,000 over three years to establish a Health and Medical Innovation Center. Rabobank purchased five years of naming rights for the building in which CVEP and the iHub are located.





OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: The SecoSys team is comprised of (from left) Kevin Burrow, Hank McCarrick, Jim Manley, Kris McCarrick and Vlan Archipov; SecoSys's HydraMeter is an ultra-intelligent water meter that manages water use, detects leaks and ensures water conservation.

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: This battery pack can be used to convert a gas engine into an electric engine for a car; (from middle left) A PT Cruiser and a vintage Land Rover have been converted from a gas engine into a fully functional electric engine; The Canary 100, made by EVEnterprises, is a small handheld radiation detector on a keychain which beeps if fruits, vegetables or meats contain any radioactive materials.

The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians donated construction consulting services to remodel the Rabobank building and Palm Springs Accelerator Campus.

"It was an in-kind contribution on behalf of the tribe to CVEP because the whole idea of the iHub is in line with the tribe's interest in making sure we have a diverse local economy and a platform for growing better-paying jobs for the valley," says Tom Davis, Agua Caliente's chief planning and development officer. The tribe worked in tandem with PENTA Building Group.

The Palm Springs Accelerator Campus opened last May to provide companies access to the business support network of the iHub as they begin production and start to earn revenues. The campus consists of seven buildings on a 3.5-acre lot adjacent to Palm Springs International Airport.

Wells Fargo & Co. also supported the development of the campus. "Wells Fargo was proud to provide a \$100,000 Clean Technology and Innovation Grant to CVEP's iHub that has created an ecosystem that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship and community engagement," says Ashley Grosh, the bank's manager of environmental philanthropy. The Health & Medical Innovation Center will open in May at the campus, with capacity for eight to 10 high-tech health care and medical companies.

"I expect we will attract five to six companies in 2014," Wallace says.

With public and private entities investing in its success, the iHub has become a national model for enterprise and entrepreneurship. The result will be a more diverse economy to augment the region's reliance on tourism and agriculture industries and provide a balanced, year-round business environment to keep the area's best and brightest workers working full time in the Coachella Valley. ■

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BUSINESS

DEVELOPMENT

COACHELLA VALLEY IHUB

One of 12 innovation hubs in California, the Coachella Valley iHub is a business incubator that helps clean energy and technology entrepreneurs and start up companies by providing an affordable physical infrastructure, an intellectual and entrepreneurial environment, and a service network to support their growth and success. Businesses operate in the iHub, the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus or off-site.

Contact Joe Wallace, managing director of Coachella Valley iHub, 760-340-1575, joe@cvep.com

RENEWABLE ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

The premier networking program for the clean energy and green technology set, the Renewable Energy Roundtable offers an opportunity to learn about initiatives and issues in the region and pitch your own business or ideas. The roundtable meets every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 a.m. at the UC Riverside Palm Desert Graduate Center at Frank Sinatra Drive and Cook Street.

BUSINESS SERVICES

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership is a one-stop resource for prospective, existing and expanding businesses that need assistance developing strategic plans, relocating from other regions, locating sites and buildings, accessing capital and incentive opportunities, identifying skilled workers, and much more. CVEP offers customized, one-on-one counseling to business in, or relocating to, the Coachella Valley.

Contact Delyn Meyers, director of business services, 760-340-1575, delyn@cvep.com

EXECUTIVE COACHING

Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, operated by CVEP, offers free, confidential, one-on-one consulting to entrepreneurs who seek guidance on developing a business plan, planning company strategy, preparing financial statements and projections for loan requests, accessing capital, developing a marketing/media plan, growing sales, overcoming obstacles in management and human resources, fine-tuning operations, integrating technology, achieving sustainability, buying and selling a business, and gaining information and advice about industry and local economic trends.

Contact Ezekiel Bonillas, managing director of Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, 760-340-1575, ezekiel@cvep.com

ENTREPRENEUR GROWTH SERIES

This seminar series presents a straightforward approach to topics relevant to business operations, including management, finance, marketing and sales. Each session offers an in-depth examination of how to gain efficiency, increase revenue, reduce expenses, understand legal issues and more.

Contact Ezekiel Bonillas, managing director of Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, 760-340-1575, ezekiel@cvep.com

FIRESIDE CHAT SERIES

Entrepreneurs and industry experts discuss topics relevant to owning and operating a business in the Coachella Valley on the second Wednesday of every month, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Contact Ezekiel Bonillas, managing director of Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, 760-340-1575, ezekiel@cvep.com

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

LANZATECH

This Spanish-language workshop series, led by CVEP and the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, offers free workshops on the third Thursday of each month, from March to November. Please visit [www.cvlanzatech.com](http://cvlanzatech.com).

Contact Ezekiel Bonillas, managing director of Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, 760-340-1575, ezekiel@cvep.com

WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

The Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness outlines how business and education will collaborate to develop, refine and sustain career pathways for local students. The plan includes the following initiatives:

CAREER PATHWAYS

CVEP supports the three local school districts that provide programs that bring together business and

education leaders to focus on K-12 career pathways programs, including high school career academies, which are three- to four-year programs around specific industries such as health care, digital arts, culinary arts, and renewable energy. Academy students take specialized career-themed courses in conjunction with their required academic classes.

Contact Kim McNulty, director of next generation learning, 760-452-8727, kim@cvep.com

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Students gain career skills and knowledge through internships, job shadows, mentorships, career exploration, workshops and more.

Contact Donna Sturgeon, director of work-based learning, 760-625-0118, donna@cvep.com

INDUSTRY COUNCILS

Education and business partners review labor market information, assess workforce needs, and tailor career pathways to prepare local students for the workforce. CVEP currently facilitates three industry councils: Healthcare and Life

Sciences; Advanced Technology; and Arts, Media, and Entertainment.

Contact Jacqui Tricco, industry council coordinator, 760-325-0084, jacqui@cvep.com

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS SCHOLARSHIPS

CVEP provides scholarships to students by matching scholarship funds with local nonprofits to increase college access and completion for low-income students.

Contact Ernie Rios, executive director of scholarships, 760-610-6116, ernie@cvep.com

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

CVEP promotes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the most important application for students to complete to be considered for free federal funding for college, including scholarships from colleges and universities, and low-interest government loans. The Cal Grant, awarded by the state, provides free funding for eligible college students attending California colleges and universities.

Contact Ernie Rios, executive

director of scholarships, 760-610-6116, ernie@cvep.com

CREATIVE RESOURCE CENTER**ARTSOASIS.ORG**

The CVEP Creative Resource Center maintains a website with a calendar of arts and culture events, creative community news, links to local artists and creative resources, and a summary of the Creative California Desert Economic Study, which offers information for educators, policymakers, and those seeking opportunities in creative enterprises (a full report is available on request). Visit artsoasis.org

COACHELLA VALLEY CREATIVE MARKETPLACE

The Coachella Valley Creative Marketplace, with a Web portal under development, is designed to grow jobs and market services and resources of the Valley's creative businesses.

Contact Robert Stearns, Creative Resources Center director, 760-340-1575, robert@cvep.com

**Coachella Valley Water District**

CVWD was formed in 1918 to protect and conserve local water sources. Since then, the district has grown into a multi-faceted agency to meet the water-related needs of the Coachella Valley.

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- ◆ Provides regional storm water protection
- ◆ Promotes water conservation through education and rebate programs

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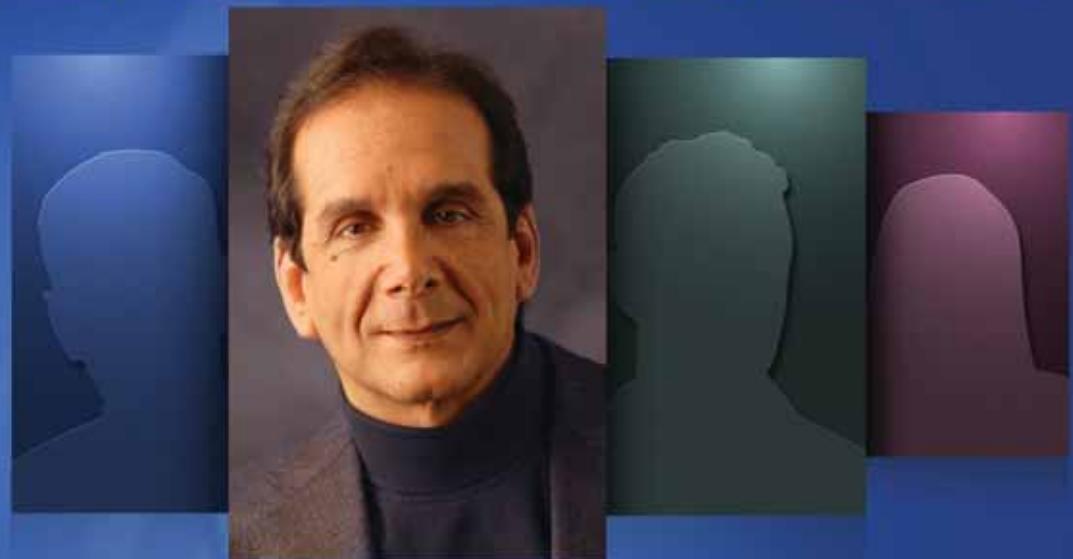
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NEXT ISSUE SUNDAY, JULY 6



You've experienced the first issue of Thrive! — a magazine and microsite devoted to the ideas, people and businesses that drive the new economy of the Coachella Valley.

You've learned about the accomplishments of the students and residents working to improve and enhance life in the Coachella Valley. THRIVE! will continue to tell these remarkable stories that touch on education, commerce and our future.

This effort has been made possible through the support of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) and the diverse institutions and businesses, noted below, which stand as cornerstones of our community:

- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Animal Samaritans
- Bank of America
- Chandi Group USA
- City of Palm Springs
- Coachella Valley Water District
- College of the Desert Foundation
- Cord Media
- Desert AIDS Project
- Desert Regional Medical Center
- Desert Town Hall
- Eisenhower Medical Center
- Farley Interlocking Paving Stones
- Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
- Hot Purple Energy
- Indio Chamber of Commerce
- JFK Memorial Hospital
- Kiner Communications
- Lamar Advertising
- Lucker Anderson
- Massage Envy
- Osborne Rincon Certified Public Accountants
- Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce
- Palm Springs International Airport
- Palm Springs Nissan
- Rabobank
- Riverside County
- RR Broadcasting
- Saxony Real Estate
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- The Desert Sun
- TMJ Head & Neck Pain Center
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