

# THRIVE!

COACHELLA VALLEY

## Inside the Career Academies

- STUDENTS GAIN AN EDGE EN ROUTE TO COLLEGE AND CAREERS
- DATA DUO TAKES ON THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

### PLUS:

- SET AND ACHIEVE WINNABLE GOALS
- SMARTER, DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS WITH GIS
- FRESH THINKING AT THE HEALTH & MEDICAL INNOVATION CENTER

FREE  
*Business and  
Education  
Programs*  
PAGE 48



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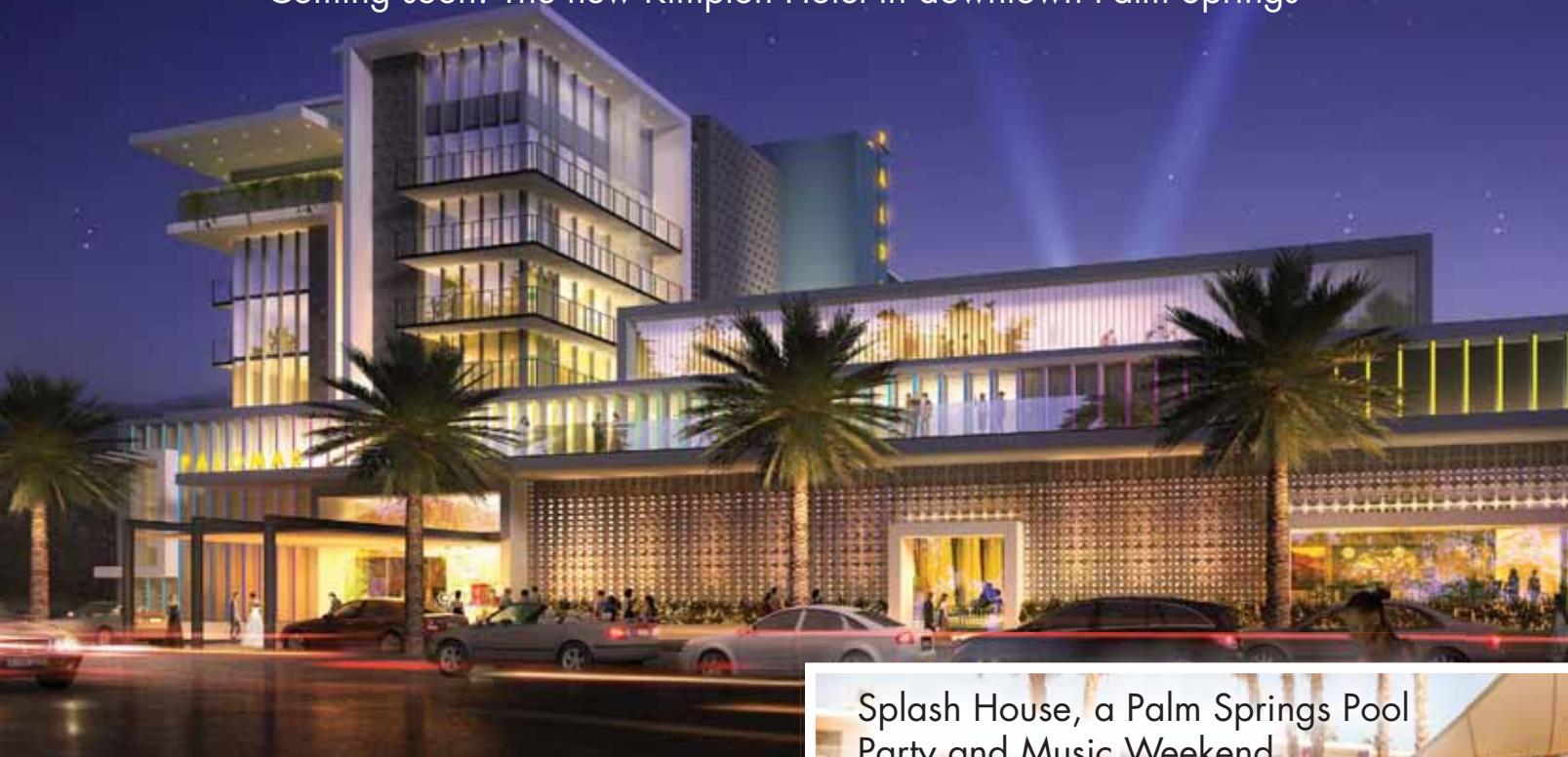
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# THRIVE!

COACHELLA VALLEY



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Clockwise from top: Green Energy and Technology Academy students Estefania Salgado Patricio, Cynthia Portillo and Jesus Gutierrez; Health & Medical Innovation Center entrepreneur Dr. Allan Wu; Coachella Valley Economic Partnership's David Robinson.



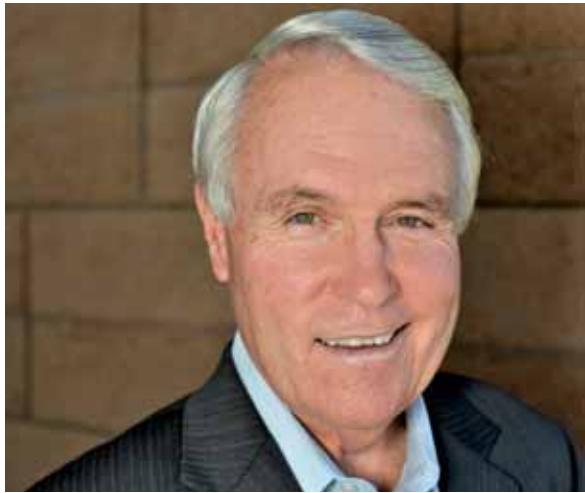
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COACHELLA VALLEY

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**ABOUT THE COVER:** Anthony Ramirez, 17, works on a green screen set in the Digital Arts and Technology Academy classroom at Cathedral City High School.

"**O**h, you're with CVEP? What exactly do you do?"

The staff at the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership hears this so often that we created *Thrive! Coachella Valley* to celebrate the amazing stories that the nonprofit organization discovers as it helps attract, retain and expand business and collaborates with educators across the region to prepare students for college, careers and life.

In this edition, we preview the opening of the Health & Medical Innovation Center at the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, a satellite location of the Coachella Valley iHub, which incubates high-tech and clean energy businesses. The campus reinforces the power of public/private partnerships. The city of Palm Springs, Desert Healthcare District and Wells Fargo provided the initial support, which was boosted in May when the U.S. Economic Development Administration kicked in almost \$785,000 for campus construction. This support enables the Coachella Valley iHub and Palm Springs Accelerator Campus to set the stage to help launch sustainable businesses, diversify the economy, and create jobs that will retain some of the region's best and brightest high school and college graduates.

This is the mission of CVEP: to promote and support a diversified, year-round economy and facilitate the alignment of business and education so that students learn skills they need to win higher-wage, higher-skill jobs at home in the Coachella Valley (see "Inside a Career Academy," page 34).

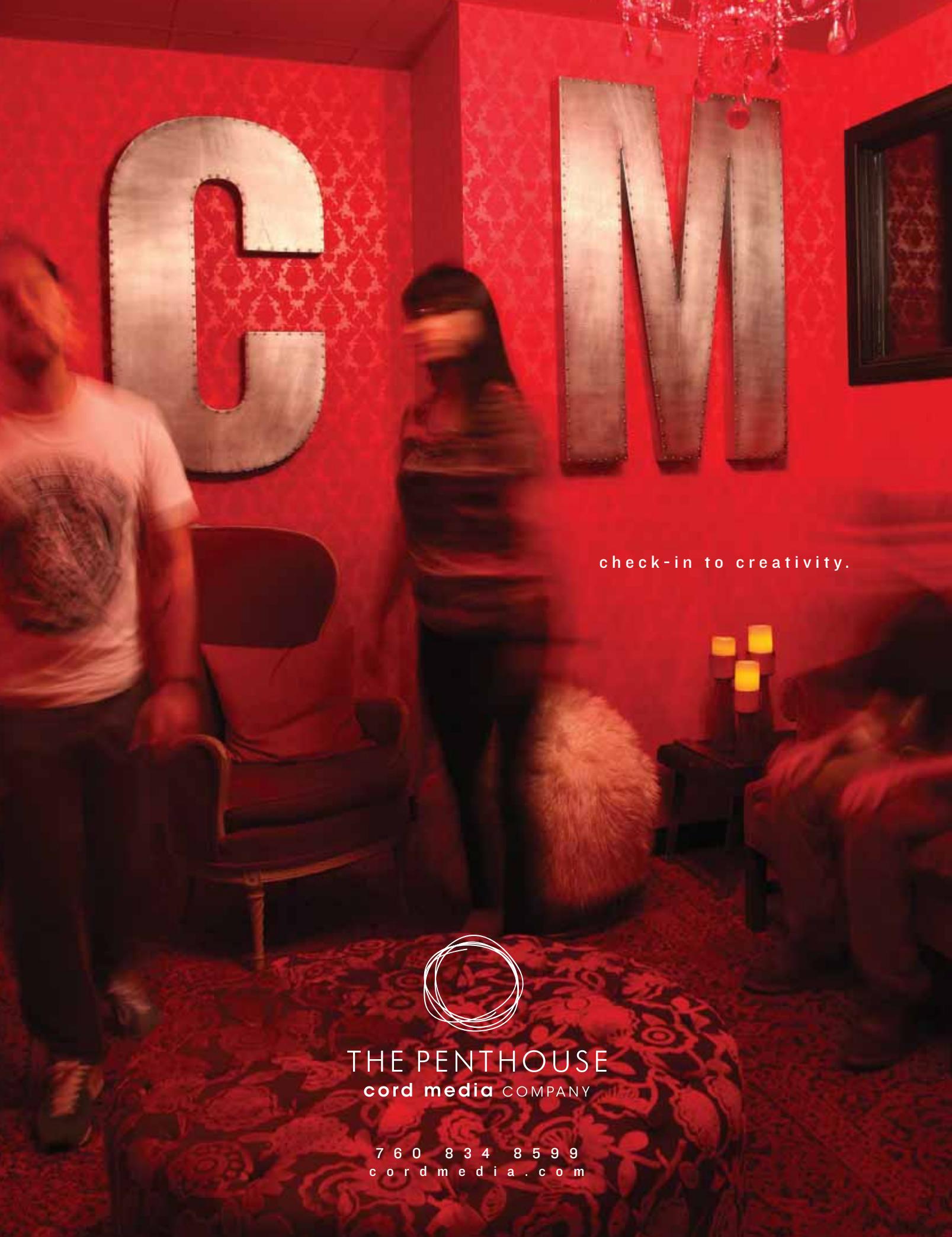
Other stories in this edition will help businesses set and achieve winnable goals (page 22), tweak their social media strategy (page 8), and see how CVEP is using geographic information systems (GIS) for data-driven site selection and decision-making (page 26).

The magazine also steers you to valuable resources and programs (page 48), including the Coachella Valley iHub, the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, and CVEP's business services and a creative resource centers.

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.

For information, please call 760-340-1575, e-mail [blueprint@cvep.com](mailto:blueprint@cvep.com), or visit [www.cvep.com](http://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. For information, please call 760-340-1575.

**JULY 9**  
**SBDC Fireside Chat: PR—Getting Your Story to the Media**  
7:30 a.m.

**JULY 11**  
**Healthcare Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**JULY 14**  
**Business Engagement**  
3:30 p.m.

**JULY 17**  
**LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop**  
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., Rabobank Regional Business Center (CVEP Headquarters)

**JULY 23**  
**Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**JULY 25**  
**Nurse Work Group**  
8 a.m.

**AUG. 11**  
**Business Engagement**  
3:30 p.m.

**AUG. 13**  
**SBDC Fireside Chat: The New Rules of Networking**  
7:30 a.m.

**AUG. 21**  
**LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop**  
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., Rabobank Regional Business Center (CVEP Headquarters)

**SEPT. 3**  
**SBDC Fireside Chat**  
7:30 a.m.

**SEPT. 8**  
**Business Engagement**  
3:30 p.m.

**SEPT. 12**  
**Healthcare Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**SEPT. 12**  
**Health Academy Lead Teachers**  
5:15 p.m.

**SEPT. 18**  
**LanzaTech business and technology workshop**  
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., Rabobank Regional Business Center (CVEP Headquarters)

**SEPT. 19**  
**Renewable Energy Roundtable**  
7:30 a.m.

**SEPT. 19**  
**SBDC Entrepreneur Growth Series event TBA**  
7:30 a.m.

**SEPT. 19**  
**Advanced Technology Council**  
3:30 p.m., Desert Energy Enterprise Center

**SEPT. 24**  
**Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**SEPT. 26**  
**Nurse Work Group**  
8 a.m.

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

**OCT. 10**  
**Healthcare Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**OCT. 10**  
**Health Academy Lead Teachers**  
5:15 p.m.

**OCT. 13**  
**Business Engagement**  
3:30 p.m.

**OCT. 16**  
**LanzaTech Business and Technology Workshop**  
(In Spanish) 6 p.m., Rabobank Regional Business Center (CVEP Headquarters)

**OCT. 17**  
**Renewable Energy Roundtable**  
7:30 a.m.

**OCT. 22**  
**Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council**  
3:30 p.m.

**OCT. 24**  
**Nurse Work Group**  
8 a.m.

**OCT. 30**  
**Economic Summit**  
11 a.m., JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa

## Business Workshops Draw Record Attendance

**T**wo monthly workshops that help small businesses expand their management, marketing, and technology knowledge set attendance records in May.

Both programs produced by the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center—the Fireside Chat and the Spanish-language LanzaTech—hosted sessions on integrating social media into marketing programs and received standing-room only attendance.

The Fireside Chat meets on the second Wednesday of every month, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at UCR Palm Desert. LanzaTech workshops take place on the

third Thursday of each month, from March to November, at 6 p.m., at the Rabobank Regional Business Center (CVEP headquarters) in Palm Springs.

### UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

#### Fireside Chat

**July 9:** Public Relations  
**Aug. 13:** Networking in Modern Times

#### LanzaTech

**July 17:** *Estrategias de Persuasión con Lenguaje Corporal*  
**Aug. 21:** *¿Dónde conseguir dinero para mi negocio?*

**Information:** Contact Ezekiel Bonillas at 760-340-1575 or [ezekiel@cvep.com](mailto:ezekiel@cvep.com).



Nicole Middleton of Graphtek Interactive and Chris Anderson of Coachella Valley Brewing Co. discuss social media strategies for small businesses at the Coachella Valley SBDC Fireside Chat in May.

# Strategic Public Affairs

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ADVOCACY • ISSUES • CAMPAIGNS

## SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER SBDC HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

The U.S. Small Business Administration has awarded Ezekiel Bonillas and the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center its 2014 Excellence & Innovation Award. The honor recognizes the CVSBC for growing from a satellite center to a full-service center, building and maintaining an effective team, and encouraging access to capital for its clients. In 2013, the center helped clients start 10 businesses, create 110 new jobs, retain 43 jobs, and obtain \$7.3 million in debt and equity financing, Bonillas, CVSBC's director, reports.

## COACHELLA VALLEY ECONOMIC SUMMIT GEN Y EXPERT TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Dan Schawbel, who helps some of the world's largest organizations become more attractive to their millennial employees and customers, will give the keynote address at the 2014 Coachella



DAN SCHAWBEL

Valley Economic Summit on Oct. 30 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert. Schawbel, managing partner of Millennial Branding, a Gen Y research and consulting firm, reveals this new generation's attitudes and values around education and

work—and demystifies the process of finding, recruiting and retaining the best young talent. He is also a best-selling author (*Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success* and *Me 2.0: 4 Steps to Building Your Future*) and a frequent guest on NBC's *The Today Show*, PBS' *The Nightly Business Report* and Fox Business. For information about the summit, call 760-340-1575 or e-mail blueprint@cvep.com.

## COACHELLA VALLEY IHUB CAMPUS WINS GRANT TO HELP GROW HIGH-TECH BUSINESSES

The U.S. Economic Development Administration has awarded a \$784,769 grant to CVEP to renovate four buildings at the Coachella Valley



iHub Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, an incubator for high-tech and clean energy companies.

"Innovation hubs are the economic development model of the future," says Tom Flavin, president and CEO of CVEP. "This grant allows us to set the stage to help launch sustainable businesses,



Coachella Valley SBDC Director Ezekiel Bonillas (center) accepted the Small Business Administration's 2014 Excellence & Innovation Award at the organization's annual program May 21 at Disney Grand Californian Hotel. CVEP President/CEO Tom Flavin (left) and SBDC Associate Director Kyle Wagner also attended the event.

diversify the economy, and create desirable jobs that will retain some the region's best and brightest high school and college graduates."

The Coachella Valley iHub and Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, part of a statewide innovation hub network and managed by CVEP, consist of 20 high-tech and renewable energy companies in their incubation stage. The iHub provides an office, conference area, consulting, and administrative support, and the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus provides operational space for light manufacturing. A Health & Medical Innovation Center opened on the campus in June.

"The City of Palm Springs is extraordinarily pleased to learn of the U.S. EDA award to the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus," says Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet. "The city council's award of \$1 million over three years to the Accelerator, through Measure J, along with the Desert Healthcare District's commitment of \$500,000, provided the financial leverage for the

grant application to succeed. The total effort will yield a cutting-edge facility for the development of companies commercializing new technologies, and the creation of jobs, for many years to come."

## HEALTH & MEDICAL INNOVATION CENTER BEGINS CONSTRUCTION

The sounds of progress are humming at the Health & Medical Innovation Center, an incubator for high-tech healthcare startups such as medical device companies, at the Coachella Valley iHub's Palm Springs Accelerator Campus.

"The changes occurring in healthcare are creating new markets for the delivery of medicine, and this facility will put us at the forefront of that," says Joe Wallace, managing director of the Coachella Valley iHub network. "The businesses operating in the Health & Medical Innovation Center will create good-paying jobs that require a high level of skill for

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DEDICATED MAY 2014

COUNTY LAW BUILDING



EXPECTED COMPLETION: JANUARY 2015

# RIVERSIDE COUNTY

COUNTY LAW BUILDING

TOPPING OUT

APRIL 2014



*In downtown Indio, major construction activity is under way as the County of Riverside builds modern infrastructure to serve the growing Coachella Valley for decades to come.*

## THESE EXCITING PROJECTS ARE BRINGING

- MORE THAN \$375 MILLION INVESTED TO BUILD LANDMARK FACILITIES THAT REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN INDIO AND ENHANCE EFFICIENCY
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- 400 NEW PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS, A PERMANENT INCREASE IN PAYROLL THAT STIMULATES FURTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES
- IMPROVED PUBLIC PARKING FOR LARSON JUSTICE CENTER, NEW FACILITIES AND THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY FAIR & NATIONAL DATE FESTIVAL



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Cathedral City High School representatives accept the top cash prize for achieving the highest scholarship application completion rate in the Coachella Valley.

the future workforce of the Coachella Valley." Several public and private partners have joined the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership to bring the center to life. They include the **City of Palm Springs**, which has invested more than \$1 million for campus construction and operations; **Desert Healthcare District**, which contributed \$500,000 to the Health & Medical Innovation Center; **Wells Fargo**, which donated \$100,000 for the campus; **Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians**, which is donating construction consulting services throughout the build-out of the campus and the center; **Penta Building Group**, which is donating a portion of the construction; and Mike McAuliffe of **McAuliffe & Co. Architects** of Palm Desert.

## GEOTHERMAL COMPANY THINKS SMALL

Desert GeoExchange, the first geothermal client of the Coachella Valley iHub, is testing the idea of building geothermal heat pump systems in homes across the Coachella Valley. Its parent company, Palm Desert-based Geothermal Resource Group, already drills for large-scale geothermal-power-plant projects around the world. At the iHub, the company seeks to expand into small-scale drilling for geothermal heat pumps in homes, schools, hospitals, and commercial developments.

## SYSTEM DETECTS QUAKES, AVERTS INJURY AND DAMAGE

Seismic Warning Systems Inc., a virtual business in the Coachella Valley iHub, received a \$250,000 award from the Imperial County Board of Supervisors to deploy the

nation's first regional earthquake warning system. "This is a major milestone in our quest to transform earthquake warning notification and action throughout the world," says George E. Dickson III, founder of SWS, which designs and manufactures the patented QuakeGuard family of seismic detection systems that help avert human injury and mitigate earthquake damage to property and other assets.

## WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE CASH AWARDS TO SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION RATES

Five schools earned a combined \$12,000 in cash prizes in the fourth annual Battle of the High Schools, a competition that encourages high school seniors to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, which organizes the competition, awarded \$4,000 to Cathedral City High School, which had the highest FAFSA/California Aid completion rate in the region; \$3,000 each to La Quinta High School and Coachella Valley High School; and \$1,000 each to West Shores High School and La Familia High School.

"Our community is committed to making sure all students can succeed in college, career and life," says Sheila Thornton, CVEP vice president of Workforce Excellence. "Nationwide, 90 percent of students who fill out the FAFSA enroll in college. It's a basic principle: If we want to assure that Coachella Valley students succeed in college and achieve high-paying careers, we have to support their financial path through college."

The Coachella Valley showed a completion

rate increase of 11 percent, for a total regional completion average of 64 percent among Coachella Valley Unified, Desert Sands Unified, and Palm Springs Unified school districts. This translates into an estimated \$13 million in state and federal student aid for local college-bound students.

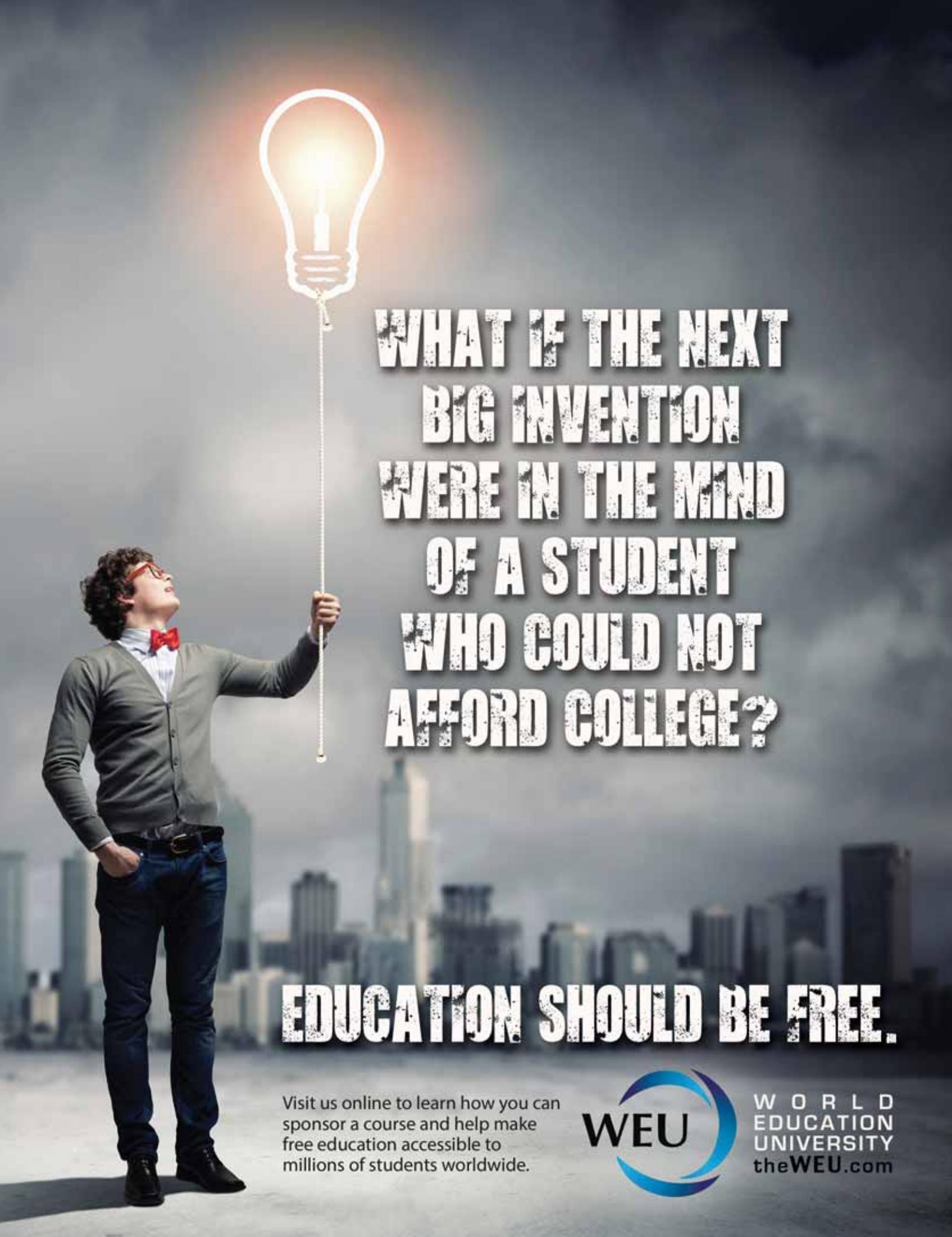
## DHS STUDENTS WIN JUDGES AWARD AT NATIONAL KIDWIND CHALLENGE

Students from Desert Hot Springs High School won the Judges Award at the National KidWind Challenge, a competition and celebration of wind energy held at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C. More than 35 teams from all around the United States brought their handcrafted turbines for the competition.

## EAST VALLEY COMMUNITIES CVEP MOVES EAST VALLEY OFFICE IN INDIO

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership has relocated its Indio office to 45125 Smurr St., Suite A, and shares the space with the Coachella Valley Enterprise Zone. Initially, the office will include staff from the Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center and LanzaTech, which produces Spanish-language technology and business development workshops. Additional CVEP business and workforce development staff will rotate between the Indio location and CVEP offices in Palm Desert and Palm Springs.

The city of Indio made the new space available to stimulate growth and economic vitality in the eastern Coachella Valley.



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# Jacob and Anthony's Excellent Digital Adventure

BY MATTHEW LINK

**W**hen Jacob Janes and Anthony Ramirez met each other over lunch at Ruby's Diner in downtown Palm Springs, it was far from friendship at first sight.

Their mothers were close friends who worked together as childcare and early-education professionals, Janes says, and brought the boys along to lunch one day.

Opposite page: Anthony Ramirez (left) and Jacob Janes (seated) work with DATA instructor Tom Buck at Cathedral City High School. Above: Behind the scenes shots of DATA students at work.



**Jacob Janes (left) and Anthony Ramirez conceptualized a video game set at Cathedral City High School.**

Students from rival middle schools, they "did not hit it off so well," Janes says. "We tried to stay away from each other and be as introverted as possible. We were two kids from two different worlds: mine, James Workman Middle School; his, Nellie Coffman Middle School."

But Cathedral City's two middle schools have at least one thing in common: Career Technical Education programs in digital media design and computer graphics. These programs would eventually unite Janes and Ramirez in a way they could not have anticipated.

Courses introduce students to subjects they can pursue deeper once they enter Cathedral City High School's Digital Arts Technology Academy, better known as DATA. DATA classes include digital imaging, digital photography, animation, filmmaking, media studies, and many other 21st-century technology skills.

Janes and Ramirez reconnected as freshmen in DATA and soon "it seemed like fate

wanted us to be the best friends we are today," Janes says.

Now, Ramirez refers to Janes as his "partner in crime."

"We have a lot of creative potential together, and that is something that doesn't come along in a friend too often," he says.

Both students were aware of their creative potential early in life. Ramirez, a 17-year-old who was born and raised in Indio, always envisioned himself as a film director. Janes, an 18-year-old who was born and raised in Cathedral City, was always fascinated by digital technology. After learning about DATA in their pathways classes, both were certain it should be their destination for developing their interests and talents.

"I was told that DATA was the program for me," Ramirez says. "I saw for myself how the professionalism and the experience of this program was what I was searching for. In DATA,

with all the community projects we do and the sheer atmosphere of the classes, I live the life I dream of as a film professional. It is truly remarkable."

"DATA was the right choice for me," Janes agrees. "However, it wasn't the technology that really hooked me. When I entered DATA, I realized I was entering a family, a family of tight bonds and friendships that would last me a lifetime. That is what made me stay in DATA."

As one of almost 500 California Partnership Academies in the state, DATA is a "school within a school." The academy encompasses 10th, 11th and 12th grades, focusing students on usable skills in specific "real-world" careers. Teachers integrate and reinforce concepts from these specialty studies into required courses, such as English, math, science and social studies.

In other words, students enjoy academic

CONTINUES ON PAGE 16

# Do You Solar?

- Yes
- No



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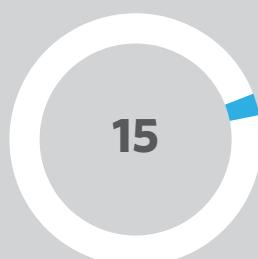
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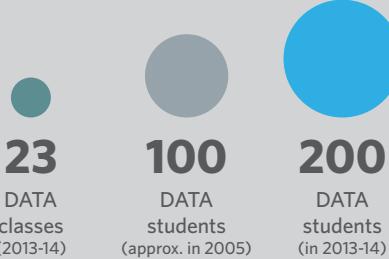
# Snapshot of Cathedral City High School's Digital Arts Technology Academy

<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Founded as California Pathways Program	Transitioned to California Partnership Academy	Designated Apple Distinguished Program	Awarded CPA Lighthouse Status (to mentor existing academies and advise developing academies and pathways)



Academies with California Partnership Lighthouse Status of 500 academies in the state

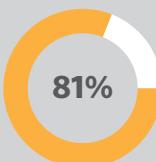
1 DATA counselor/coordinator  
7 DATA teachers



23 DATA classes (2013-14)  
100 DATA students (approx. in 2005)  
200 DATA students (in 2013-14)



DATA student graduation rate



DATA graduates attending two- or four-year colleges



Completed FAFSA and California Dream Act



Grades covered by DATA (with one 9th grade elective course)

9th students are enrolled in Contemporary Media  
10th, 11th DATA students travel in cohort in three academic and one CTE classes  
12th DATA students travel together in two academic and one CTE class



DATA Career Technical Education (CTE) choices: Media Literacy, Intermediate Digital Media Production, Animation, Photo II, Journalism II, Digital Imaging, and new for 2014-15, Advanced Digital Media Production.



DATA collaboration with Coachella Valley Economic Partnership's Arts, Media & Entertainment Industry Council and leader of The Student Creative global arts collaboration

**\$72,000**

Scholarships and awards earned by DATA and its students

6

Coachella Valley high schools with an career academy or pathways program for Arts, Media & Entertainment

**1,300+**

Coachella Valley students enrolled in Arts, Media & Entertainment academies or pathways programs

**22**

Professionals from the community who formally mentor DATA students on a monthly basis

**30+**

Business and organization partners work with DATA students

**5**

Film festivals where DATA students showcase their work

**66**

DATA juniors participated in the Junior Mentor Program

synergy and can answer that age-old question: "Why do I have to learn this?"

To graduate from an academy, students must work as interns, interact on projects with community organizations and businesses, visit job sites, receive formal mentoring from professionals, and complete a student portfolio of original work. After graduation, students find themselves light years ahead of their college-bound competition, and some academy alumni find jobs in their field right after high school. (See "Inside a Career Academy," page 34.)

The model already shows momentum and success. Enrollment has doubled since its inception a decade ago. And DATA students'

graduation rate is 100 percent, while the Coachella Valley's overall high school graduation rate is lower. (See above for more facts on DATA.)

In 2013, DATA became one of only 15 career academies in the state to earn elite Lighthouse status by demonstrating outstanding observance of the California Education Code. This designation enabled DATA to help develop and guide new academies in other high schools. DATA was instrumental in the launch of the Digital Design and Production Academy at Coachella Valley High School.

Besides DATA, Cathedral City High School hosts two other career programs: HEAL

(Health and Environmental Academy of Learning) and MESA (Math, Engineering, Science, Achievement).

DATA teacher Tom Buck, born in Palm Springs and raised in Yucca Valley, knows from his own life experiences how important real-world applications are for motivating teenagers. "I began working as an unpaid intern at a local TV news station when I was 15," Buck says. "That was supposed to last for two months, but it ended up going on for more than five years. I eventually did move up to paid positions."

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18



## TOSCANA. ITALIAN FOR PELOTON.

Life is best when it's unrehearsed, unpretentious, when the day's choices are many, the competition spirited and the rewards many. Toscana is a vibrantly social place where friends are joined in a celebration of a Tuscan-inspired lifestyle in glorious Indian Wells. This is la dolce vita.

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Seniors Melissa Medina and Cristian Herrera photographing the 2014 Indian Wells Arts Festival. Right: DATA Digital Imaging instructor Matt Cauthron and junior Jasmine Valles learn in the field at the Hot Purple Energy tent at the Indian Wells Arts Festival.

When he joined the program two years ago, Matt Cauthron — a founding DATA teacher whom Buck describes as “one of the most innovative teachers in the state” — headed up the digital imaging side of the DATA curriculum. He also led the digital storytelling component, and realized the intrinsic value of his years interning and working in the media. “I’ve taken the digital storytelling program from a traditional journalism class into a filmmaking, TV production, and screenwriting direction,” he says.

Academy students thrived with the new direction. At this year’s Digicom Student and Teacher Film Festival, works by DATA students and staff won \$18,000 in awards and scholarships. A DATA student’s project also captured one of 125 honorable mentions (from more than 2,000 entries) in The White House Student Film Festival — and plum placement on the official White House web site.

But DATA is much more than a film school. Its alumni pursue a variety of careers in journalism, photography, graphic design, business, computer science, and biological sciences.

“These graduates will be able to apply the skills



Melissa Medina edits a tethered green screen setup with Hot Purple Energy at the Indian Wells Arts Festival.

they developed in DATA to whatever field they pursue," Buck says. "It makes them an asset to any company."

During the past couple years, Buck has worked closely with Janes and Ramirez and became impressed by the dynamic digital duo. "What really made Jacob and Anthony stand out to me was what happened when they were given creative freedom," Buck says.

Janes and Ramirez conceptualized a game, CC Zombies, set at the high school. After assembling a team, the students created a 3-D model of the campus, wrote a script and learned coding and animation.

"[Their] enthusiasm is infectious," Buck says.

Ramirez says his experiences at DATA as all "super awesome." "We have had more adventures than we could count," he says, recalling film events at Sunnylands Center and Gardens, speaking on the radio and even meeting an astronaut.

The boys' greatest adventure came at them from Cathedral City's Mayfield College. The duo was asked to produce a film for the senior class's graduation ceremony.



Digital Imaging students (from left) Norma Vazquez, Jazmin Acevedo and Sara Lopez sold their Dia de Los Muertos prints at the Palm Springs Unified School District Showcase Art exhibition. The work was purchased by (second from left) Michelle Gonzales, special projects manager at UC Riverside.

"It was a real monster that we took on," Janes says, adding that filming took almost two months. "It was insanely scary to say the least, but it was incredibly rewarding for the firsthand real-world experience."

The film screened in the theater at Agua Calienta Resort Casino Spa in Rancho Mirage and, Janes says, "really boosted my confidence."

So much so that when the boys needed donors for a school fundraiser, "We decided to straight up ask the mayor of Cathedral City if she would give us any advice on where to look to get some sponsorships," Janes says. "She did give us a few businesses' names, but also told us to come to the next city council meeting to present our case and see if we could get

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something out of it."

Janes says that adventure was "nerve-wracking" for Ramirez and himself.

"There were so many important officials that it became pivotal that we did a good job to avoid embarrassing the academy," Janes says. "Oh, and it was on live TV, so that added to the pressure."

The boys aced their presentation, receiving \$750 in cash, a free Vimeo.com professional account — and a friendship with their mayor.

Now the boys are moving on to bigger game. This fall Janes is heading to UC Santa Cruz to study computer science. "It's a beautiful school with what seems to be a pretty good computer science program," he says. "Also it is a mile from the beach, so how could I not?"

Ramirez is squarely focused on his lifelong ambition to work in film. He'll be the first in his family to enter college directly from high school when he starts at UC Riverside later this year.

"I chose that school because the film program is getting started in a new direction and I would like to be a part of it," he says. "It's also much closer to the industry where I plan to get my start one way or another."

"I am going to miss Jacob very much," he says. "He is my partner in crime and I surely plan to keep in touch with him after all is said and done."

But fate may likely intervene in their friendship yet again.

"I might end up coming back to the desert," Janes reveals. "And if I do, I might even come back to the high school and work for DATA." ■



**Anthony Ramirez (left) will start at UC Riverside in the fall while Jacob Janes will attend UC Santa Cruz.**

PHOTO BY DAVID A. LEE



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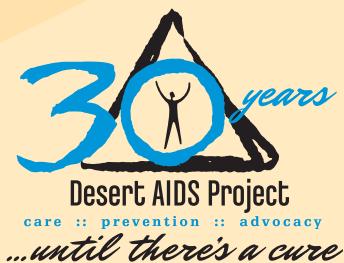
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# Here Comes the Future of HEALTHCARE

ENTREPRENEURS WILL CREATE MED-TECH PRODUCTS AND JOBS IN NEW HEALTH & MEDICAL INNOVATION CENTER

BY CAROLYN PATTEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID A. LEE

**T**ucked behind Palm Springs City Hall at the Coachella Valley iHub's Palm Springs Accelerator Campus, a cavernous building once filled with the aroma of Salisbury steak and the clatter of metal trays is being reborn as the Health & Medical Innovation Center.

Dr. Allan Wu, whose company, Priatas, is the first business at the center, immediately saw the potential in a building that used to be the hub of food prep for the Palm Springs Unified School District.

"I was amazed to find out how much clean room and refrigeration space was already in existence," Wu says. "It's ideal for young grad students and biotech entrepreneurs, because this kind of space is typically too expensive for those who are starting out."

Priatas makes disposable/recyclable products for the biomedical research field.

"Large companies will make one plastic piece that can be used only once," Wu explains. As chief scientific officer for the Regenerative Surgery Institute at the UC Riverside Stem Cell Center, "I used to see millions of plastic syringes get trashed after only one use, and I didn't think much about it until my son came along and I started worrying about his future."

With the goal to reduce plastic waste, "We're coming up with designs for pieces that can be autoclaved [an autoclave is a device used for sterilization] for multiple uses, modified for different needs or recycled with ease," Wu says. "It saves the planet. And we're going to do it at a price point that makes it feasible for universities and the medical complex." Current plastic medical tools are not recyclable.

Priatas started as an informal group of clinical scientists and researchers across the country, all looking for greener alternatives to the one-use plastics, in mid-December, when his colleagues in Seattle, New York and California charged him to "get moving."

Wu investigated setting up Priatas in San Diego, which was too expensive. He also met with the Coachella Valley iHub, toured the building and soon became immersed in planning improvements. "The iHub moved incredibly fast to help us," he says.

Wu put up his own money and donated equipment to launch Priatas



Opposite page: Dr. Allan Wu is the first entrepreneur of the Health & Medical Innovation Center, part of the Coachella Valley iHub. Above: One of the many recyclable instruments Priatas will manufacture for biomedical research.



**Dr. Allan Wu envisioned the disposable and recyclable instruments while thinking of his son's future.**

in the center, and is helping shape its future as a place where new, sustainable health and medical technology companies can grow and thrive. Although Wu will remain in his job at UC Riverside and commute to Priatas, he says the Coachella Valley is an ideal location for entrepreneurs in this field, with its high quality of life and low cost of living. And, his ties to the area are deep, cemented by his work as a medical volunteer and clinical director for the Remote Area Medicine (RAM) Coachella Valley medical mission, providing free indigent care throughout the community.

With a long-term lease from the airport, \$1 million in funding from the city's Measure J (the 1 percent tax increase to maintain community services), a \$500,000 grant from Desert Healthcare District (DHCD), and the networking skills brought to bear by Coachella Valley iHub Managing Director Joe Wallace, the center had a "soft opening" in June, and will host a grand opening for the public in the fall, when Wallace and Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet introduce it as a powerful magnet for innovative health and medical tech companies.

Priatas will be the first company on site, followed quickly by Dr. Christopher Hancock's TransMed Imaging and Fanny Ramirez's Incontinence Technologies. A third company is "in the queue" for a fall move-in.

"The city has been a visionary partner," Wallace says.

Pougnet, in turn, lauds the DHCD: "Developing the center is an example of what creative collaboration and partnerships can achieve," the mayor says. "Together with the Desert Healthcare District we are creating an environment for iHub clients to develop products and services that advance our goals and commitment to a healthy community. It provides the specialized environment iHub clients in the healthcare field need to advance their technologies, which helps ensure their success and leads to a better quality of life for our community." ■

## DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT: INVESTING IN BETTER JOBS AND BETTER HEALTH

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Scholarship, also known as Pathways to Success, has received almost \$2 million from the Desert Healthcare District to increase the number of skilled health service workers in the Coachella Valley.

Dr. Glen Grayman, vice president of the Desert Healthcare District board, says the district "has invested more than \$60 million within the community during the last 15 years in an overall effort to improve the health of its residents."



DR. GLEN GRAYMAN

In mid-2013, recognizing that "it is one thing to increase the number of highly educated and highly competent healthcare providers and another thing to offer them high-wage jobs and professional positions" locally, Grayman says, DHCD awarded a \$500,000 grant to CVEP to help launch the Health & Medical Innovation Center and create an environment for entrepreneurs, as well as local students committed to working in this field. Along with the city's \$1 million from Measure J funds, the Health & Medical Innovation Center costs are covered for the next three years.

In that time, Grayman says, the partners expect that "up to 12 health, wellness, and medical companies will be in operation in the Coachella Valley through the efforts of this center." Those companies will create as many as 1,000 new healthcare jobs and professional positions, many to be filled by the students now being groomed through CVEP-facilitated programs that connect education and industry.

Grayman adds, "More high-wage health providers and workers will allow greater access to healthcare services, with the reasonable expectation that the overall health of our residents will improve as a result. Ultimately, that is the reason why the Desert Healthcare District exists."



**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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# Mapping the Future

DAVID ROBINSON BRINGS DATA-DRIVEN ANALYSIS TO BUSINESS SITE SELECTION IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

BY WILL O'BRIEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID A. LEE



Lisa Houston, CEO and president of FIND Food Bank, knows that food scarcity is often caused by a lack of grocery stores and easily accessible transit options.

So she turned to David Robinson for help in proving it.

Robinson isn't a fortuneteller, but when it comes to analyzing the characteristics of regions, cities, neighborhoods, even blocks, he's darn close.

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership's first geographical information systems (GIS) coordinator, Robinson has a masterful understanding of data and maps.

Using census data, surveys, property value listings, traffic counts and information from a variety of databases, Robinson can provide exacting details about any given site, its qualities and inhabitants.

"I can tell you

what the traffic counts are for an intersection," Robinson says. "Or I can tell you what it's like in the morning versus the day or weekends. It might look like lots of apartments nearby, but those apartment-dwellers may not have the characteristics you want. You might find out there's a competitor two blocks from you [that] you didn't know about."

You can figure out a lot, he says, "Because it's real data, not just hunches."

CVEP hired Robinson in January, thanks in part to a federal grant, to do much more than bring specialty latte houses to town. The economic vitality organization is thinking big: big data and big results.

Economic development leaders think GIS will aid in luring advanced manufacturers to the area, a major goal for CVEP, as evidenced by its Coachella Valley iHub business incubator. Other targeted sectors are healthcare, high tech, renewable energy, and manufacturing and logistics, presently concentrated in San Bernardino.

"My purpose for CVEP is to determine what we need to make this a first-class destination for businesses," Robinson says. "Looking at things geographically rather than just demographic charts or reports, you can start to see patterns in a physical way. We can look and see there are clusters of manufacturing. Why are they there? Where's the workforce? Where are the people who have associate's or bachelor's degrees?"

Using GIS software, Robinson can find the answers to all those questions and more.

"CVEP know this is great technology, and wanted to start making decisions that were data-driven and analytical," Robinson says.

An architect of 20 years and former adjunct college professor, the Midwest native says he's always had a knack for organizing.

"I think all along I should have been a geology professor," he says. "That's what I really should have been, because I've always been a map freak."

Luckily, while Robinson was working at a Pomona-based firm, he encountered a college-age intern familiar with GIS technology.

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership can help businesses find ideal locations for growth based on data patterns.

"A student came up and said, 'You guys are Neanderthals.' As usual, the young people are telling us how stupid we're doing things," Robinson says. "It really was an eye-opener for me."

Robinson learned the skills, graduated, worked as a freelancer and college instructor for about four years before he found his way to CVEP.

Robinson has since given presentations at city council meetings, worked with CVEP staff, collaborated with affiliates and discussed business ventures with operations interested in the Coachella Valley. He has also served as a liaison between CVEP and the University of Redlands business school.

"I've been able to be creative, and it has been lots of fun."

Part of Robinson's work is assisting CVEP partners, such as FIND Food Bank.

For FIND — a food bank distributing goods through more than 100 nonprofit partners to about 90,000 area residents every month — Robinson is creating maps that show the valley's poverty levels by area.

Houston says presentations based on GIS findings will be far more persuasive to elected officials and other stakeholders than the less dynamic presentation models used up to this point.

What's interesting to Houston is using the maps to examine what might be contributing to those areas' issues.

"It's helping us show the issues at hand that are causing this number to be so high," Houston says. "It's using a tool to paint a picture a planner can understand. I can talk all day to a planner about food insecurity and things like that, but if I show him the bigger picture of how that community looks from 50,000 feet above, he's going to get that more. Mapping is important in talking with groups who would not otherwise be at the table."

Mapping might also help attract healthcare manufacturers to the valley, CVEP officials believe.

In studying healthcare manufacturing nationwide, Robinson's learned such operations usually exist in communities with numerous higher-education institutions.

As a result, CVEP has been working with California State University San Bernardino, Palm Desert Campus; University of California Riverside, Palm Desert Campus; and College of the Desert to develop degree programs and fields of study that will produce graduates ready to work prescribed fields.

Robinson's studying of healthcare manufacturing





**David Robinson uses GIS technology, such as tracking traffic patterns, to help companies determine the ideal locations for their businesses to grow and thrive.**

clusters goes beyond looking at education systems. He's asking other questions, too, like: How close are healthcare manufacturers to hospitals? Expressways? What does their workforce look like? Are they women or men? What income level do such areas generally have?

"I can put all these characteristics in the computer, and the GIS software says, 'Well, with all these characteristics moving forward, here are the five places that have those characteristics."

The idea is to measure — with exactitude — what exists, how things are changing, and where things need to go (the maps can be animated to show data changing over time).

Having precise information also aids CVEP in applying for federal grants and when going through other processes that require detailed applications with information on trade partners, transit, supply chains and more.

"We're such a big area that people just don't really know," he says.

Robinson's primary function is support CVEP staff in examining industry clusters, but he's also responsible for fielding questions from businesses looking to relocate.

Robinson has done analysis for a public storage operator and a few other businesses, but with word of CVEP's capabilities seeping through the community, he's sure more companies will call on him.

Kathy Greco, CEO of Desert Healthcare District, is already a GIS believer.

"When I found out about David over there, I was the first one in the door to get a meeting with him because I just think this could have a tremendous value in understanding the different determinants of health," Greco says.

With the Affordable Care Act's rollout, Greco found herself performing rudimentary mapping work, trying to figure out what areas of the valley to target with sign-up campaigns.

While such work could — and has for a

long time — be done using assumptions, GIS replaces guesses and notions with hard facts and figures, something executives, especially those in the healthcare field, like Greco, can appreciate.

"We're always looking to identify gaps. We're always looking to identify best practices," she says. "This gives you a clear idea of where your efforts should be spent, where your successes are and how to best move those success forward."

Getting residents to relocate is another goal. The Coachella Valley, Robinson says, has a quality of life and housing cost that appeal to the talented, highly educated professionals residing in more steeply priced areas like Silicon Valley. Using GIS maps, Robinson can statistically prove the cost of living differences and cultural, environmental similarities.

Robinson is also charged with furthering CVEP's Workforce Excellence initiatives, uniting area educators and business owners together to find solutions for the school-to-office pipeline.

Because GIS mapping is based on overlapping sets of data, Robinson's work with agencies like the food bank and the healthcare district can in turn aid future research.

"Every time I do something with them, I'm building my database and it always helps inform my other work," he says.

Looking toward the future, with his GIS operation running at full tilt, Robinson envisions adding online tools enabling interested parties to perform mapping on the CVEP website.

With residents constantly moving, businesses coming in and out and life chugging along, there's no end point for Robinson's mapping work.

"It's kind of sky's the limit," he says. "I don't really think there's an end. Every time you grow and something happens, that has implications. There's so many aspects of it that are very exciting." ■



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# Desert Regional Medical Center takes cardiovascular care to heart

**D**esert Regional Medical Center has built one of the premier programs for cardiovascular care in Eastern Riverside County through advanced technology and achievement of national guidelines for quality of care.

The Joint Commission – the foremost hospital accrediting body in the United States – has granted Desert Regional's heart program advanced certification in the treatment of heart failure. Desert Regional also has been honored as the hospital with three "Get With the Guidelines" awards from the American Heart Association: a Gold Plus Award for Heart Failure, a Gold Award for Stroke and a Silver Award for Resuscitation.

"Desert Regional Medical Center is dedicated to improving the quality of care for our heart failure patients, and implementing the American Heart Association's Get With the Guidelines Heart Failure Program helps us to accomplish this goal by tracking and measuring our success in meeting internationally respected guidelines," said Desert Regional President and CEO Carolyn Caldwell.

Designated as a trauma center, Desert Regional also is an official STEMI Receiving Center (ST segment elevation myocardial infarction cases), with special protocols in place for the treatment of heart attacks.

Desert Regional also has some of the latest technology for emergency and elective heart procedures at its disposal, including the Valley's first Stereotaxis Robotic Navigation system for precise treatment of atrial fibrillation and other heart rhythm disorders. Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of heart rhythm disorder, affecting more than 2.7 million people in



Members of the medical staff in cardiovascular and stroke care at Desert Regional Medical Center. (Back from left) Narasimha Rao, MD, cardiology; Hetal Bhakta, MD, electrophysiology; A. Victor Kubbeh, MD, cardiology; Denise Rigney, MSN FNP-C, heart failure; Robert Bernstein, MD, cardiology; Alicia Rios, RN, cardiac rehab; Ziad Tannous, MD, critical care medicine; Philip Koovakada, MSN MSHCA, director of cardiovascular services. (Seated from left) Ronald Himelman, MD, cardiology; Saeid Habibipour, MD, cardiothoracic surgery; Glenn Fischberg, MD, vascular neurology.

the U.S. Stereotaxis Robotic Navigation works by enhancing a cardiologist's ability to navigate precisely and treat the problem cells that are causing the heart's electrical system to misfire.

Stereotaxis technology is 10 times less likely to injure a patient than manual treatments that do not make use of robotic navigation. It also requires a third less time for the patient to be exposed to radiation.

"Manual ablation is like trying to paint a canvas on a small fishing boat in the middle of the ocean with all the waves, compared with painting that same canvas on a steady cruise ship," said Dr. Hetal Bhakta, MD, an electrophysiologist at Desert Regional Medical Center.

The cardiovascular team at Desert Regional is focused on improving cardiovascular care for patients while hospitalized and upon their return home. To further this

goal, Desert Regional created a dedicated heart failure nursing position. This nurse is charged with meeting with patients and following up with them at home to ensure they are taking their medication.

The hospital also established a 24-hour hotline to answer cardiac patient questions, hosts a community cardiac support group, and offers a medically-supervised on-site rehabilitation gym for cardiac patients.

"This enhanced communication has reduced readmission by almost half from 20 percent to 12 percent as of February," said Philip Koovakada, MSN, MSHCA, the hospital's director of cardiovascular services. Koovakada noted that the nationwide average for readmission of heart failure patients is 23 percent. "We are fine-tuning our program and seeing a direct correlation with positive outcomes." ■

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# Joint replacements on the rise

**T**he leading cause of disability in the United States is bone and joint problems, which account for more than half of all chronic conditions in people over 50.

Total knee replacements number 719,000 annually in the U.S., with total hip replacements at 332,000. Driven partly by older Americans' desire to remain active and healthy, the number of knee and hip replacements is expected to increase.

JFK Memorial Hospital consistently has earned five-star ratings from HealthGrades over the last few years for both hip and knee replacements, as well as for hip fracture treatments.

In 2012 and 2013, JFK Memorial also received an overall Award of Excellence from HealthGrades for joint replacement. HealthGrades is considered a leading online resource for information on hospitals and physicians and independently analyzes 5,000 hospitals annually.

Joint replacement at JFK Memorial is in the top 10 percent in the nation as measured by the lowest risk-adjusted complications, according to the recent HealthGrades report American Hospital Quality Outcomes 2014: HealthGrades Report to the Nation. The report examined more than 4,500 hospitals nationwide for 31 of the most common inpatient procedures and conditions from 2010 through 2012.

The report highlighted the disparity in hospital performance for specific conditions and procedures and the impact the variation has on health outcomes.



CEO Gary Honts



JFK Memorial's 5-star rating indicates that the hospital's clinical outcomes are better than expected when treating the condition or conducting the procedure being evaluated. JFK Memorial not only performs at a 5-star level, but also outperforms other hospitals in the nation for this condition.

"JFK is dedicated to having an orthopedics program among the best in the country," said Gary Honts, president and

chief executive officer for JFK Memorial Hospital. "I'm proud of the record of excellence we have achieved over the years."

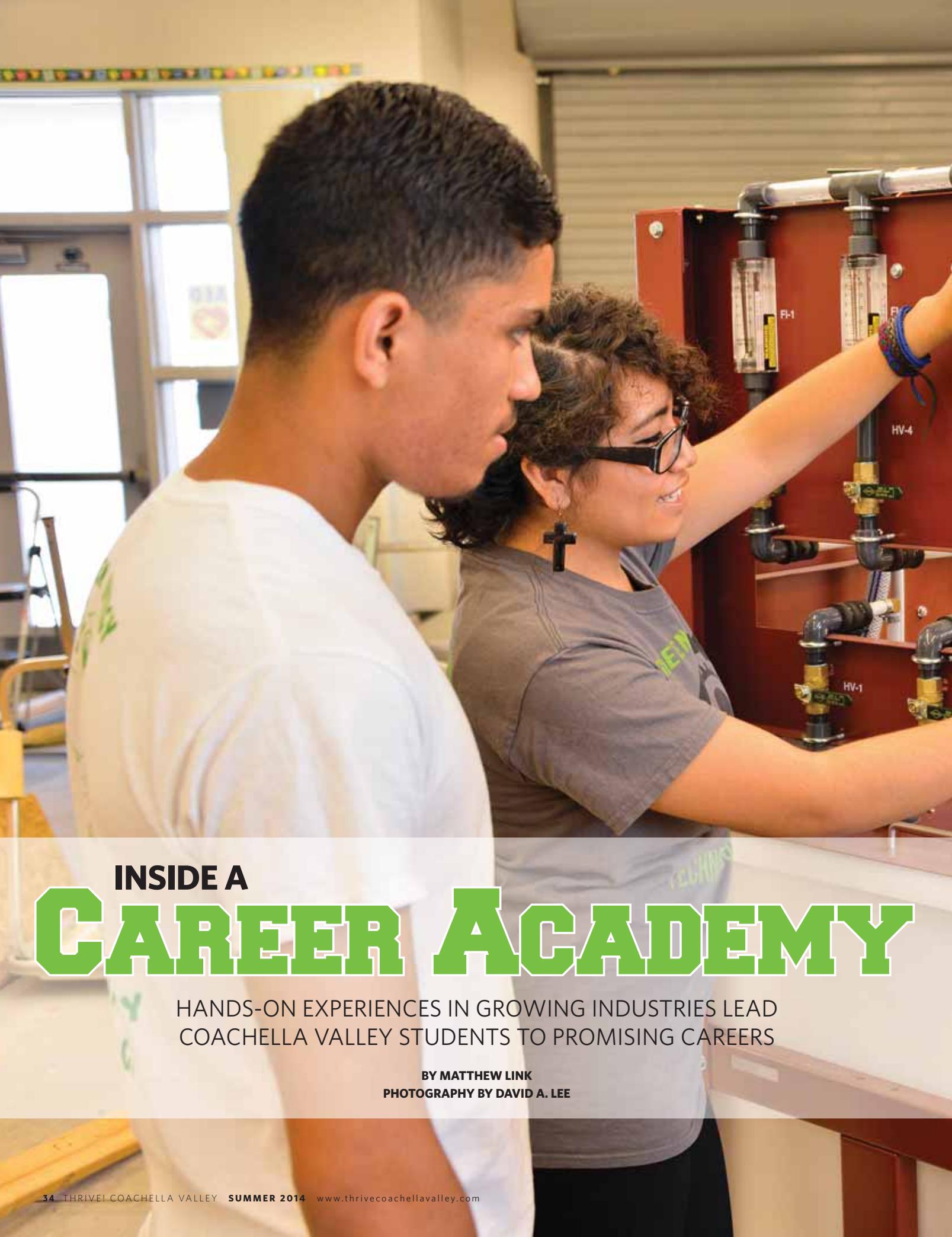
Rob Ballew, chief executive officer of the Family YMCA of the Desert, has happily told others about his five-star experience at JFK Memorial in both November 2012 and January 2013, when he underwent hip-replacement surgery.

"On the day of my first surgery, I saw familiar faces from the pre-op appointment and they treated me like family," Ballew said. "I wish I would have done this earlier and saved myself from months of pain."

## JFK Memorial's award-winning record includes:

- Recipient of the HealthGrades Joint Replacement Excellence Award for three years in a row (2012-14)
- Ranked among the top 10 percent in the nation for joint replacement for three years in a row (2012-14)
- Five-star recipient for Total Knee Replacement for 10 years in a row (2005-14)
- Five-star recipient for Hip Replacement for three years in a row (2008-13)
- Five-star recipient for Hip Fracture Treatment for seven years in a row (2008-14)

"We cherish our role as a community hospital for our area, and we are excited that our joint replacement program and orthopedic surgeons have become a destination and choice — for both our full-time residents and our seasonal 'snowbirds,'" Honts said. ■



# INSIDE A **CAREER ACADEMY**

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES IN GROWING INDUSTRIES LEAD  
COACHELLA VALLEY STUDENTS TO PROMISING CAREERS

BY MATTHEW LINK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID A. LEE

# GEOTHERMAL TRAINING SYSTEM

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**W**hen he thought about his future career path, Jesus Gutierrez had his sights set on medicine — his mother's dream for her son to become a doctor.

But after a career academy presentation in his freshman English class by Desert Mirage High School's Green Energy and Technology Academy instructors, Gutierrez's ambitions began to shift.



Above: Green Academy students Estefania Salgado Patrício, Cynthia Portillo and Jesus Gutierrez had hands-on work experience. Previous page: The trio work with geothermal technology on site at Desert Mirage High School.

"I was mesmerized by all the possibilities and positive impacts this new technology could bring to my community," Gutierrez recalls.

Soon, he began to pursue a new dream.

"Joining the Green Academy was the greatest decision I've made," says Gutierrez, who graduated from Desert Mirage in June with a prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship — a full ride to pursue a terminal degree in engineering at UC San Diego. "I am who I am because of the Green Academy."

Raised in Thermal, Gutierrez, 18, says the academy, also known as GrEAT, revealed the huge impact he could have in the Coachella Valley.

"I truly did fall in love with the idea of changing my community, while saving the environment and expressing my ideas on innovation," Gutierrez says. "The fact that we would be working on hands-on activities instead of essays was also a plus."

Career academies like GrEAT are "schools within a school" with a career-focused curriculum focusing on practical, real-world skills and concepts. Students take their entire sophomore-, junior- and senior-year coursework within an academy with same teachers.

Coachella Valley's first career academy — Palm Springs High School's Money Marketing Management Academy — opened in 1986. When the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership launched its Workforce Excellence initiative in 2005, multimillion-dollar grants helped boost the number of local career academies from six to 16 in 2011. (Although CVEP provides no direct funds to the academies, it links schools with outside funders and business partners.)

Today, career academies operate in all 10 public high schools in the region's three school districts (see map, page TK). The most common fields for academies in California are Health Science and Medical Technology; Arts, Media, and Entertainment; Finance and Business; Engineering and Design; and Public Services. About one-third of the region's academies focus on healthcare and medicine.

In addition to GrEAT, Desert Mirage has Engineering Design and Visual and Media Arts academies.

"[The GrEAT] academy is a perfect fit for the Coachella Valley," says Tony Korwin,

## PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS BOOSTS COLLEGE-BOUND COACHELLA VALLEY STUDENTS

In 2009, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership helped launch a scholarship program called the Pathways to Success to help local high school graduates pay college costs.

Funded by foundations and local business partners' matching dollars, the program up awards about 350 scholarships each year, ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 each. The program also includes college readiness workshops on goals, stress and time management, test taking, and more.

When selecting its scholarship recipients, CVEP typically favors applicants who have been involved in a career academy or career pathway program, are the first in the family to attend college, or have demonstrated community leadership and compelling financial need.

Information: [www.cvpts.com](http://www.cvpts.com)

CONTINUES ON PAGE 38



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*The Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce, has recently completed it's re-accreditation process. In 2009, the Chamber was awarded the Valley's first and only 5 Star Chamber status, and joined the ranks of only 78 out of 7400 Chamber's to achieve that level in the nation. The grueling process explored 9 areas of Chamber expertise and vitality, including it's finances, policies, political action, facilities, and it's programs; scoring a 91% - a difficult feat.*

*Throughout 2013 and early 2014, the Chamber team applied for it's 5 year reaccreditation, after months of preparation, evaluation and organization, the package was submitted. We are proud to announce that as of June 2014, YOUR Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce is not just the only 5-Star Chamber in Riverside AND San Bernardino counties - but improved!*

*A score of 96% was achieved.*

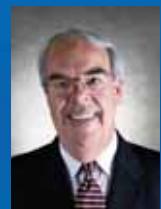
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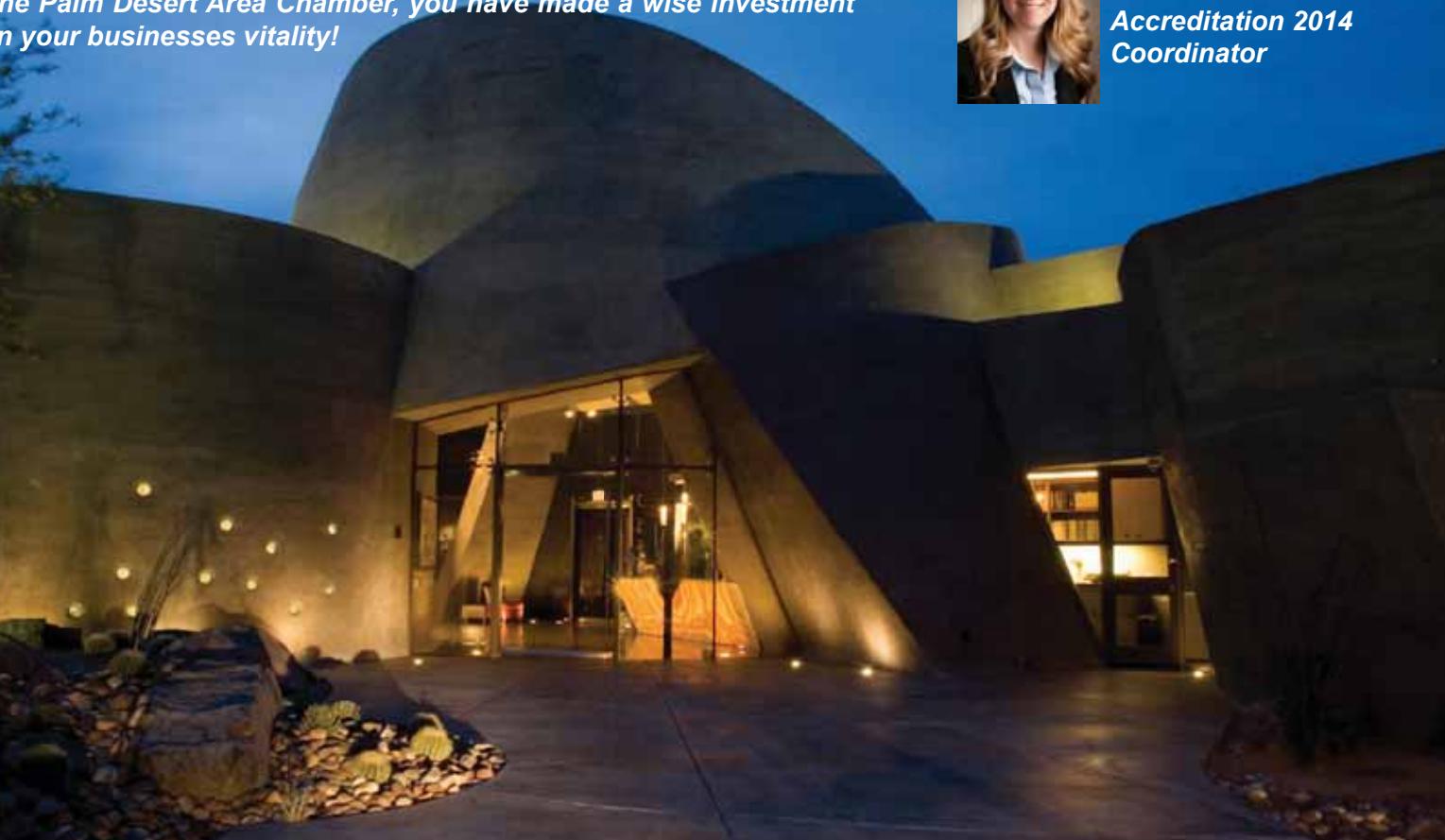
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**“ I was mesmerized by all the possibilities and positive impacts this new technology could bring to my community.”**

**Jesus Gutierrez**  
*Senior, Desert Mirage High School's Green Energy and Technology Academy*

## WHAT ACADEMY STUDENTS ARE SAYING



### **Estefania Salgado Patrício**

Estefania Salgado Patrício of Mecca — a self-described introvert who became student president of the Green Energy and Technology Academy — will attend UCLA this fall and will study linguistics and/or environmental sciences.

"I found out about the Green Academy during my high school freshman year, when the upperclassmen came to recruit in our classrooms. Once I found out how relevant renewable energy is to our lives, it awakened in me a sense of civil justice and general need for human unity. My classmates and I have done several projects such as community clean-ups, renewable energy presentations to elementary schools, and mobile training classes on solar, hydro, and geothermal power. I saw my classmates mature as a whole and graduate with bright futures ahead of them."



### **Cynthia Portillo**

Born in Indio and raised in Mecca, 16-year-old Cynthia Portillo hopes to attend Columbia College Hollywood in Tarzana to major in film, with an emphasis on cinematography. First she plans on being "one of the lucky few people in the world" to graduate from GrEAT.

"I joined the academy because it interested me to help the one and only planet we will live on. I applied to GrEAT in my freshman year, so I only had one year of 'regular' high school — and there are so many differences from that year compared to my two years (so far) in the GrEAT academy. I opened up to many new ideas in just about every kind of way.

"My most meaningful experience was my second solar install. It was a wonderful experience because I was able to return knowing what I had to do, what I could expect, and complete the job faster. I also got to meet so many great people. I plan on returning to the valley after college to make some films. If I stay in the valley, I would probably start my own production studio here."

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40



## WE MEAN BUSINESS

The Indio Chamber of Commerce has already welcomed over 150 new business members this year. The fastest growing city in the Coachella Valley has a Chamber that is moving just as fast. [Are you on board?](#)



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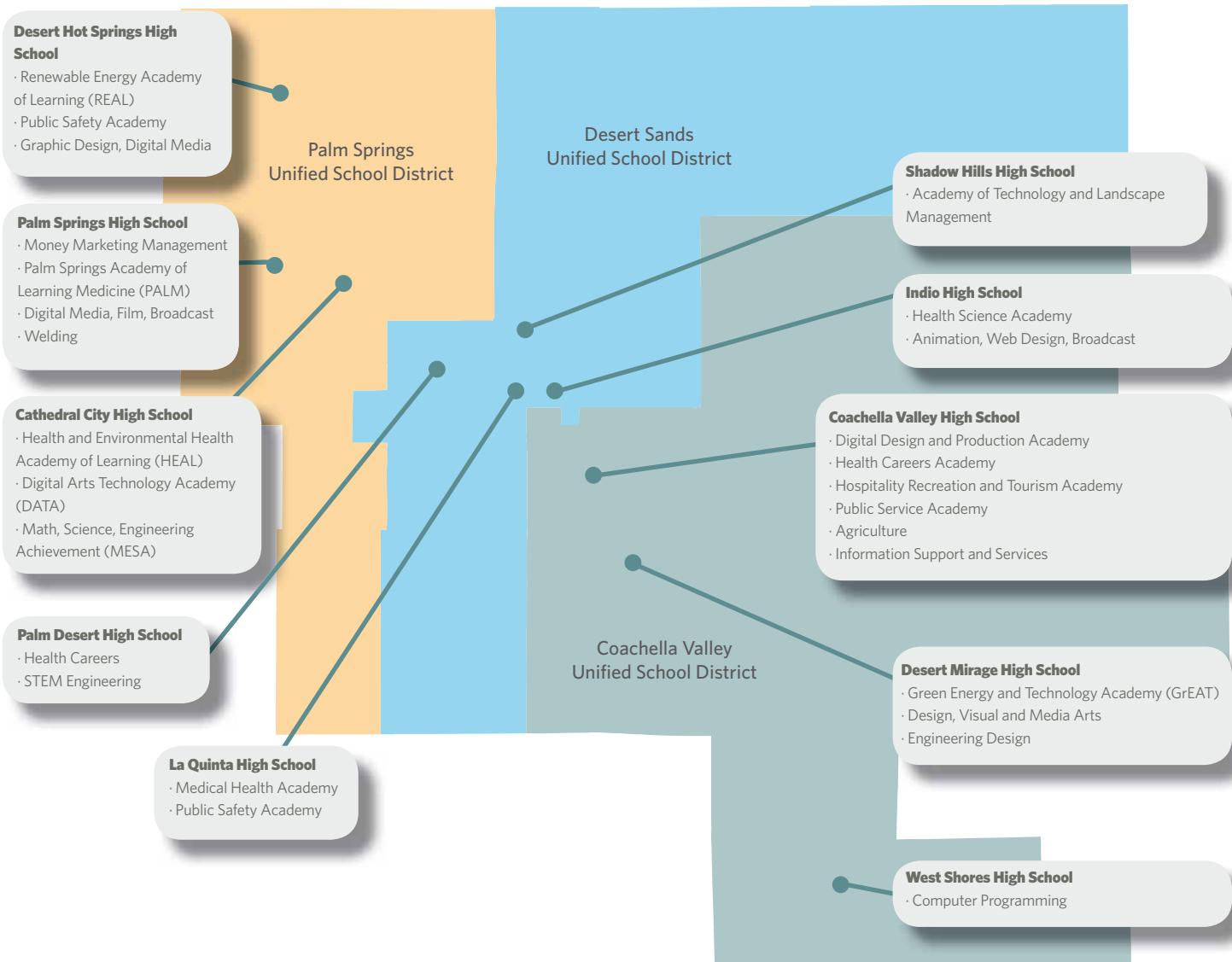
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# A VALLEY OF ACADEMY LEARNING



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q: Are academies the only career-focused course programs in local public schools?

The 16 local career academies make up a segment of the region's career "pipeline." The career-focused syllabus called Career Pathways — a smaller version of a career academy — is in nine of the area's 10 public high schools, with 15 Career Pathway choices for high school students. Many students begin the program through one of the seven

Career Pathway programs offered in six middle schools. Some begin even earlier in the three elementary schools.

### Q: How many Coachella Valley students are enrolled in academies?

Almost 7,000 students from 1st through 12th grade are enrolled in pipeline programs. That includes about 4,200 high school students.

### Q: Will academy students learn skills that help them find local employment?

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership has identified three industries poised for future significant growth — healthcare, renewable energy, and media/arts. Most academies emphasize one of these areas, preparing students for high-paying careers close to home.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 42



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**“I believe this academy is a perfect fit for the Coachella Valley in that all the major alternative energies are within 50 miles of the high school.”**

**Tony Korwin**  
faculty leader at GrEAT

## BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT WITH STUDENTS HELPS GROW WORKFORCE AT HOME

Through the career academies' work-based learning structure, students glean real-world knowledge while businesses affect positive change and develop the region's emerging workforce.

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership is integral to engaging more than 250 individuals, companies, foundations, and agencies as career academy partners.

"You want the students to experience what it's like to be part of the economy, to have a sense of who they are in the work world, and to have a connection to their power and capability," says Sheila Thornton, vice president of CVEP Workforce Excellence.

Beginning in 2005, CVEP established three industry councils focused on the region's major growth industries: renewable energy, healthcare, and arts and media. Now the organization partners with more than 250 local businesses and organizations that offer students job experience, training, internships, field trips, and mentoring.

Maureen Perry, education specialist for the last eight years at the Coachella Valley Water District, has seen strides in attracting students to jobs in the region. "The job shadowing opportunities provided by CVWD allow students to learn about local job opportunities," she says of the partnership with Desert Mirage High School's Green Academy Energy and Technology Academy. "High school academies expose students to a host of green

forms of employment in the valley."

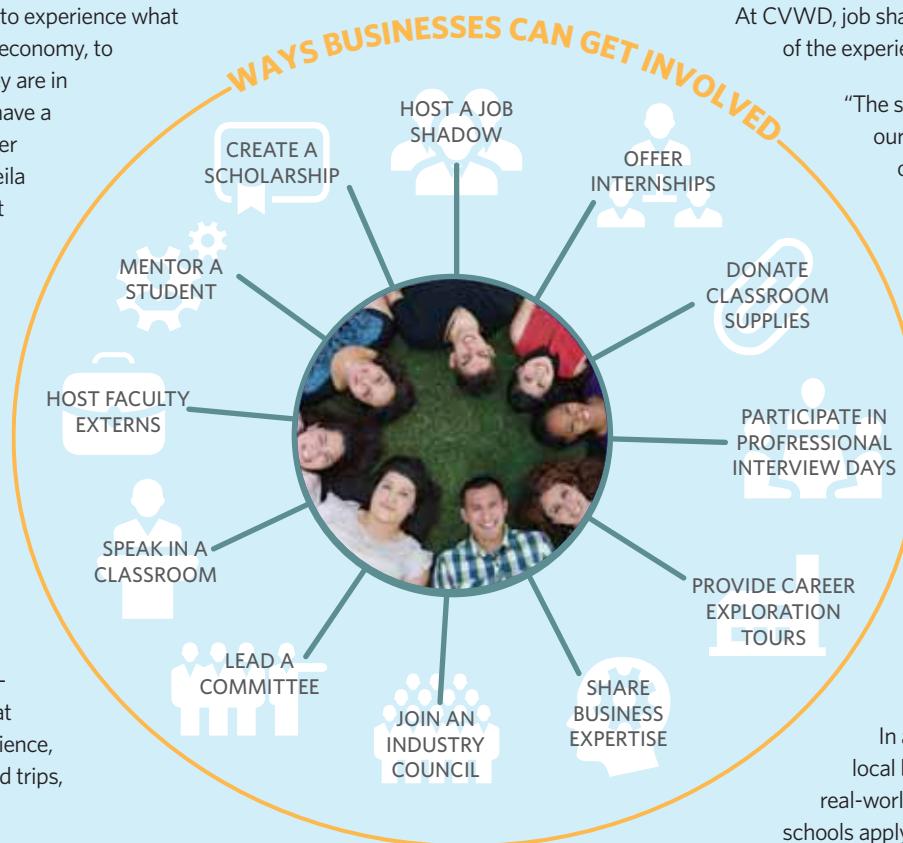
Industry partners continually grow in number: roughly 150 in healthcare; 50 in arts, media and entertainment; and 50 in renewable energy and advanced technology. These partners invest more than 11,000 volunteer hours working with academy students, as well as providing externships for faculty.

At CVWD, job shadowing is a significant part of the experience for academy students.

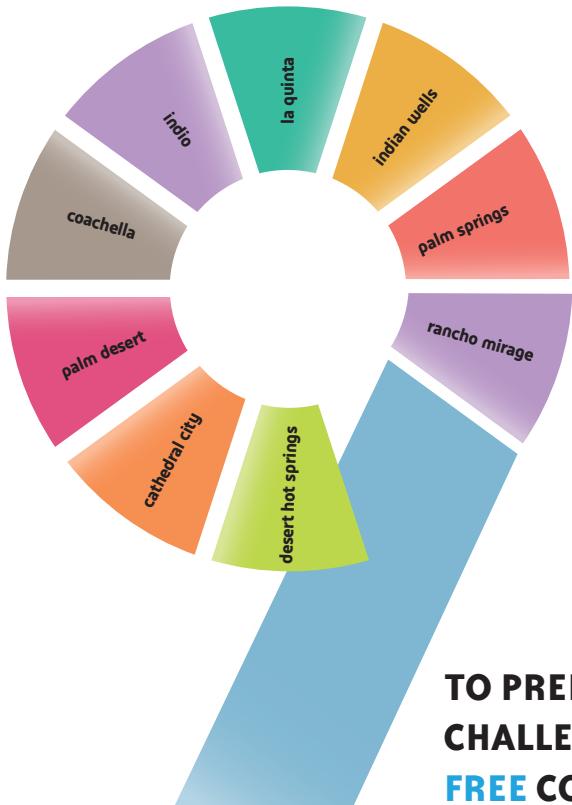
"The student accompanies one of our wastewater treatment plant operators as they do their daily job," Perry says. "The operator explains what is going on at each step of the process, and shows them some of the lab techniques used by the operators. We expose them to areas of the water industry that most people don't think about, such as wastewater treatment and recycling, water-quality management, and laboratory testing."

In addition to encouraging local businesses to offer students real-world experience, CVEP helps schools apply for grants and provides scholarships to college-bound students. A population of educated workers with specific skills

in a given industry attracts companies to relocate or expand to the region. In fact, the Ford Motor Co. Fund named the Coachella Valley one of only seven Next Generation Learning Resource Hubs in the United States. The Ford fund has subsequently donated millions to local initiatives for college-bound students.



CONTINUES ON PAGE 44



# nine ONE UNITED VALLEY

**cities walks with friends ways to help**



**TO PREPARE FOR THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAM ROAD CHALLENGE 6K, THE DESERT SUN IS LEADING A SERIES OF FREE COMMUNITY WARM-UP EVENTS.**

The Coachella Valley will celebrate **Make a Difference Day** – the nation's largest single day of volunteering – for the third consecutive year on October 25, 2014.

#### FREE WEEKLY EVENTS

#### EXPERIENCE THE COACHELLA VALLEY, MEET NEW FRIENDS, TRAIN FOR THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAM ROAD CHALLENGE 6K, MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Have you ever wanted to experience each of the nine unique Coachella Valley cities while making a difference? The Desert Sun, in partnership with KMIR, Klein Clark Sports, LAMAR and The United Way of the Desert will be hosting nine Saturday morning walks starting on August 23. Each walk will take place in a different city, allowing you to spend time with old friends while making new ones. The United Way of the Desert will introduce us each week to one of the agencies that's making a difference and you'll have the opportunity to help by bringing one simple but essential item to each walk.

#### OUR GOAL

Get fit. Meet our neighbors and help the United Way of the Desert – all by walking or running in the Palm Springs Aerial Tram Road Challenge 6K.

USC rugby trainer Tevita Vaikona will lead us through a warm up each week and give us tips to help us prepare for the challenge.

#### BONUS

We'll make it fun to get in shape by providing weekly walkers with a passport to the Coachella Valley. Get 6 of 9 city stamps and show your passport at the Tram Road Challenge check-in to be entered to win a prize.

An awards breakfast and health fair will follow the Tram Road Challenge at Desert Regional Medical Center, 1150 N Indian Canyon Drive in Palm Springs. (Free to Tram Road Challenge participants.)

#### FREE WEEKLY EVENTS SCHEDULE

<b>Aug 23 at 7am</b> <b>Desert Hot Springs</b> Mission Springs Park <i>Bring</i> Canned Food for Family Services of the Desert Food Now Program.	<b>Sept 27 at 7am</b> <b>La Quinta</b> Embassy Suites to La Quinta Trail <i>Bring</i> Canned Food for Catholic Charities Mecca Outreach
<b>Aug 30 at 7am</b> <b>Cathedral City</b> Dennis Keat Soccer Park <i>Bring</i> School Supplies for Boys and Girls Club of Cathedral City	<b>Oct 4 at 7am</b> <b>Indian Wells</b> Miramonte Resort <i>Bring</i> Women's toiletry or paper goods for Shelter From the Storm
<b>Sept 6 at 7am</b> <b>Palm Desert</b> The Living Desert <i>Bring</i> Toiletry Items for Martha's Village and Kitchen	<b>Oct 11 at 7am</b> <b>Palm Springs</b> Location TBA <i>Bring</i> Protein bars for Desert Blind and Handicapped
<b>Sept 13 at 7am</b> <b>Coachella</b> Rancho Las Flores Park <i>Bring</i> New Books for Boys and Girls Club of Coachella Valley	<b>Oct 18 at 7am</b> <b>Rancho Mirage</b> Location TBA <i>Bring</i> Preschool reading books for Family YMCA FINAL WARM-UP CHANCE!!
<b>Sept 20 at 7am</b> <b>Indio</b> Empire Polo Grounds <i>Bring</i> Canned Food for FIND Food Bank	<b>Oct 25 at 7am</b>  <b>PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAM ROAD CHALLENGE 6K</b> <i>Benefiting</i> United Way of the Desert!!

**TO REGISTER FOR THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAM ROAD CHALLENGE 6K VISIT:  
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**Jesus Gutierrez landed a Gates Millennium Scholarship and will study engineering at UC San Diego.**

the academy's faculty leader. "All of the major alternative energies are within 50 miles of the high school."

In the four years since its inception, GrEAT has become vital to Thermal, serving 80 to 90 students each year. The academy was a finalist for the 2014 Outstanding High School Program award from the California Industrial and Technology Education Association.

Academy students also tap into business and industry partners for internships, job shadows and mentors and also participate in group projects, such as tire recycling drives, solar panel installations for low-income households, and geothermal plant field trips.

"Wherever my students go, they prove that they get the real-world nature of the industry," Korwin says.

Gutierrez relates potential benefits of renewable energy to his own family.

"Coming from a poor family and community, I know that the meager wages are barely enough for families like mine to pay the bills and put food on the table," he says. "By creating solar panels and wind turbines and other sources of renewable energy, I can eliminate the burden of \$200 and even \$300 electricity bills in the hot summer."

GrEAT also boasts success with at-risk, low-income, disadvantaged students: Each of the

CONTINUES ON PAGE 46

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Green Education and Technology students Estefania Salgado Patricio, Jesus Gutierrez and Cythina Portillo with GrEAT faculty leader Tony Korwin, second from right.

23 students enrolled in the academy's 2013 graduating class directly entered a four-year university.

After graduating from UC San Diego, Gutierrez plans to return to the Coachella Valley.

"I see myself in the energy industry, hopefully with my own renewable energy company," Gutierrez says. "By becoming an engineer, I know I can accomplish this goal and give back to my community."

Developing the local workforce is one of CVEP's primary goals. With bonds formed between academy students and local businesses, graduates see tangible rewards of pursuing

a college degree as well as potential for future careers.

"Data [national and local] shows that academy students graduate at a higher rate than students not in an academy, and have higher attendance, grade point averages, and high school exit exam pass rates," says Kim McNulty, director of the CVEP Career Pathways Initiative. "In addition, employers see a marked difference in the work-ready skills of academy students, and several students have been hired upon graduation."

For Gutierrez, it's all about making a difference at home. ■

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ezekiel@cvep.com)

CONTINUES ON PAGE 50

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## AT YOUR SERVICE

### 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://www.cvlanzatech.com). **Contact Ezekiel Bonillas, managing director of Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center, 760-340-1575, [ezekiel@cvep.com](mailto: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:*

#### 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](mailto:donna@cvep.com)**

#### 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](mailto:kim@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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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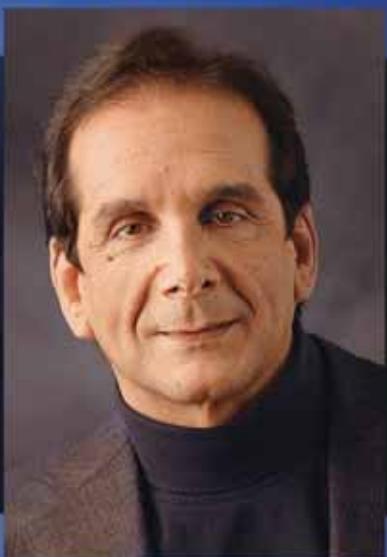


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