A Message From the President of the Alumni Association, George Ruiz

Dear Fellow Alumni and Friends,

People touch our lives in many different ways. We are often blessed with various positive impactful gestures, words, knowledge and a helpful hand. As you read this letter, images may come into your mind of those people that have touched your life, even in the smallest way. Thanks to those individuals, you were able to propel into a new level of greatness.

Most of us encounter these wonderful beings during our educational journey. If we just take a moment to look around us, we will learn that even amongst our friends, we can find that special person who inspires us and pushes us to reach higher than we ever imagined we could reach.

During my journey, I have encountered many people who inspired me but none more than two very special people. My wife Sonia – and fellow Valencia alumus – is a dedicated nurse who not only is devoted to caring for babies at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, but also to helping students striving to become nurses themselves. She always finds time to help those around her. The other person that inspires me is my son Christian, with his happy-go-lucky attitude, nothing brings him down. He may have his medical issues, but that does not stop him from enjoying life, playing baseball and bringing smiles to those around him. His belief that everyone has something special to offer makes me look for that in everyone I meet.

Johann Gottfried Von Herder said it best when he stated that “Without inspiration, the best powers of the mind remain dormant, there is a fuel in us which needs to be ignited with sparks.” This powerful statement leads me to encourage you to seek these sparks amongst the people you know and those you encounter. Allow them to teach you and help you propel forward into your next adventure and the success that comes with it. As Valencia alumni, you too will be someone’s spark. Become the leaders of tomorrow and help pave a better road for those that look up to you. Give back and inspire greatness in others as others have inspired you.

I encourage you to visit our Web site! It may spark a whole new set of opportunities! Best of luck to all of you as you continue your path to greatness.

Best regards,

George Ruiz ’08
Alumni Association President
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VITAE
Rooted in the Latin word for “life,” vitae (vee-tay) means: the course of one’s life or career, a short account of a person’s life, a résumé. Since the purpose of this alumni magazine is to keep you connected to Valencia, the title Vitae reflects the collective résumé of alumni, faculty, staff and students who have proudly walked through our doors.

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Tina Collyer lived her life to the fullest. She worked hard, played hard, and gave with all her heart. An alumnus of Valencia, Tina was a firefighter/paramedic with the Orlando Fire Department (OFD). Sadly, Tina’s life ended unexpectedly in 2008, after a long battle with a lingering illness. Tina’s family, friends, and the Valencia Foundation and Alumni Association have established The Tina Collyer Memorial Scholarship “Tina’s Heart,” which will be available to Fire Department Explorers wishing to enter the EMT program at Valencia.

When Tina was exploring career paths, Randy Tuten, who was the OFD fire chief at the time, encouraged her to pursue a career in firefighting and recommended that she contact Valencia about their programs. Tina took Randy’s advice and got Associates’ degrees in Fire Officer Technology and Emergency Medical Service Technology from Valencia. She became an OFD employee in January 1996. Later, she returned to Valencia and received a certificate in Paramedic Technology.

Tina volunteered many hours teaching CPR, First Aid, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Citizen Fire Academy, and Fire Extinguisher classes for the OFD Public Relations Division. She ran the OFD Explorer Post 657 for teens and young adults for several years. Explorers attend meetings, receive training, and are allowed to ride with a firefighting team on actual calls. Tina loved being a firefighter, and she believed strongly that the Explorer program provides a wonderful opportunity for young people to discover this fulfilling career path. She was also a proud member of the Honor Guard that pays tribute to the OFD members at funerals and memorial services. Tina herself was honored by the OFD Honor Guard in a beautiful memorial service after she passed away on Oct. 12, 2008. The OFD Honor Guard still has a tribute to Tina posted on its Web site.

In addition to her OFD volunteer roles, Tina also volunteered at the Central Florida Burn Camp and worked eight days a year at Dreamflight, a program where terminally ill children from England go to the Orlando theme parks. Tina often used vacation time in order to fulfill her volunteering efforts.

Tina enjoyed spending time with family and friends. She was my best friend. Tina was there during many important moments of my life, including being my maid of honor and being at the hospital when my oldest son was born. I knew I could ask Tina for anything. I personally knew that Tina gave with all her heart, so I wasn’t surprised when I heard at her memorial service that she had given money to a previous Explorer for his education when his own money ran out. And she did not have extra money lying around.

This spirit, Tina’s heart, is what prompted us to create the memorial scholarship fund at Valencia. We are working to raise $25,000 necessary to make this an endowed scholarship that will keep Tina’s spirit of giving alive forever.

To donate, please go to valencia.org, click on “GIVE NOW Make a Donation”, and select ‘Tina Collyer Memorial EMT Scholarship, Tina’s Heart.’
On March 21, about 300 athletes of all ages, shapes and abilities launched out on a 5K (3.1-mile) track at Valencia’s West Campus. Children under 10 enjoyed creating sidewalk art masterpieces and other crafts developed by Donna Sovern and her team of volunteers.

Justin Harvey was an Association board member and a founder of the first Valencia Annual Run, Walk & Roll in 2006. He was a student at UCF at that time and recruited his fellow UCF Student Athletic Trainers Organization friends to lead warm-ups for the race. They have been a valued partner each year since. Justin’s mother and family members were present as guests of honor at this year’s race.

“I know it was a lot of hard work and planning. I appreciate all that was done for the 5K to bring in money to support Valencia students. Thank you very much for making a mother proud!” – Sharon Skoloski, a.k.a. “Justin’s Mom”
Kim Do
2009-10 Distinguished Graduate

By Melissa Tchen

Academic excellence, community service and student leadership have earned Kim Do the honor of being named the 2009-10 Distinguished Graduate by the Valencia Alumni Association.

Born in Vietnam, Kim moved to the United States with her family when she was just nine years old. While her father had his own business back home, he gave it up and took a minimum-wage position here in order to provide Kim and her younger sister the opportunity for a U.S. education. His efforts were not in vain.

Kim quickly adapted to her new life, overcoming culture shock and learning a new language in order to make friends and succeed in school. Now, as a graduating Valencia student, she holds a 3.64 GPA and has earned a reputation for her involvement around campus and within the community.

As president of the Alpha Phi Zeta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society on the Osceola Campus, Kim wanted to inspire other students to become active as well. To increase membership, Kim promoted the group, hosted orientations for new members and developed a rewards program for participation. Under her leadership, the group's number of active members has nearly tripled.

“Kim really wanted to improve the chapter and make a difference in our college and community,” said Albert Groccia, mathematics professor and PTK advisor. “She really believes that Phi Theta Kappa is a wonderful opportunity for students to learn how to communicate, become leaders and help the community.”

Through PTK, Kim has led many community service initiatives. She has helped to organize bake sales, car washes and cookouts to raise funds for Relay for Life, and has volunteered with several organizations, including B.A.S.E. Camp Children’s Cancer Foundation, Give Kids the World, Second Harvest Food Bank and Florida’s Nature Conservancy.

“It’s important for me to give back,” Kim said. “Because I have been given opportunity, I want to pass that on. It’s almost like a rent you pay – giving back to those around you and to the community.”

During her time at Valencia, Kim has also served as the parliamentarian for Phi Theta Kappa, as the treasurer for the Student Government Association, and as historian for the Honors Student Advisory Committee. She has been named to Valencia Dean’s List, the National Dean’s List and the 2008-09 All-Florida Academic Team. She is the recipient of Phi Theta Kappa’s High Star Achiever Award and was nominated for 2009’s Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Kim graduates from Valencia with an Associate in Arts degree focused in biology. She plans to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in chemistry and is currently awaiting admission to University of Notre Dame, University of Central Florida and Florida State University. Kim’s ultimate goal is to become a plastic surgeon so that she can help children with birth defects.

As she leaves Valencia, Kim continues to encourage other students to get involved.

“Dream big and have courage to take on big roles. Do not pass on an opportunity to be a leader in your school or community.”
Don’t miss this fun-filled weekend with something for everyone! Reconnect with old teachers and friends and make new ones. Current Bridges students look forward to mingling with Bridges alumni and will offer tours of the growing West Campus.

Register online at valenciacc.edu/alumni or by calling 407-582-2946.

- Bridges Alumni Reception – West Campus Special Events Center
  Friday, July 30, 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. / optional student-led campus tours, 5 p.m. – 6 p.m.
- Bridges Alumni Family Picnic – Barnett Park
  Saturday, July 31, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Bridges Alumni Reception & Museum Tour – Wells’ Built Museum
  Located at 511 W. South St.
  Saturday, July 31st, 4 – 6 p.m.

Students Helping Students 2009-10 Class Gift

With support from the Valencia Foundation, the Alumni Association, Student Development and graduating Valencia students partnered to create the “Students Helping Students 2009-10 Class Gift” for the first year ever.

The Alumni Association provided a dollar-for-dollar match to student donations to bring the total to $2,000!

The Class Gift was a longtime dream of Valencia grad John Spencer ’08. John was the recipient of several Association and Foundation scholarships while a student at Valencia and strongly believes in students giving back to support future students.

Valencia-Orlando Magic Night

A group of 189 Valencia sports fans joined together on March 28 for the second time this season to help cheer the Orlando Magic to victory over the Denver Nuggets – 103 to 97.
Each year, Bridges selects 300 students from a pool of more than a thousand graduates from Orange and Osceola county high-school applicants who will begin college. These scholars will begin their journey in a seven week summer program designed to prepare students for two rigorous academic years during which they’ll earn their Associate in Arts Degree (A.A.) or Associate in Applied Science Degree. Throughout the summer program, students meet college administrators, participate in special events, create peer mentoring groups, and take classes intended to equip students with tools for academic and personal achievement. “The entire summer session has been created to set these students up for success,” says John Stover, manager of the Bridges to Success Program and perhaps the program’s greatest advocate.

In the Fall, Bridges students begin their regular classes plus a few compulsory college survival skills courses that give them more tools to succeed in this academic setting. “It’s really important for us to acknowledge that these students typically come from populations with very low college enrollment rates and very high college dropout rates. They have the odds stacked against them when it comes to graduating. So, we realize that we need to supply a lot of support and services to help them every step of the way,” Stover says.

Stover is referring to a seemingly endless supply of resources that are at the fingertips of Bridges students, including a series of achievement workshops that students are required to attend. The “skill-shops” provide students with time management skills, reading techniques, and exam preparation. Windy Pierre, a Bridge’s student in his sophomore year, is a huge supporter of these workshops. “Our workshops are intended to empower the Bridges students. The more

Former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said that “the greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.” These words perfectly epitomize the essence of Bridges to Success, an incredibly successful Valencia program designed to give a hand up, not merely a hand out, to Orlando’s underprivileged, but no less deserving, young minds.

by Kristen Manieri
information you have, the better and easier things will be,” Pierre says. “Thanks to these workshops, no one is left behind, and your chances of success and survival are a lot greater.”

Another critical part of Bridges is the compulsory volunteering component that mandates that each Bridges student complete a minimum of 30 hours of community service every semester. Students network with various non-profit groups and choose their volunteering focus at the annual Community Service Fair held each September. “Our Bridges students are given a lot from the community so it’s important that they give back in some way,” Stover says. “Volunteering helps these students become better citizens, it gives them a sense of the work-world, and it helps them develop as leaders.”

Pierre couldn’t agree more. He sees opportunities to be involved with the campus and the greater community as opportunities to expand personally, academically and professionally. “One thing I’ve learned is that the more active you are, the more you become used to being active – it’s an acquired taste,” Pierre reasons. “The more you get used to being active the more success will come to you. You’re not going to be successful sitting around at home. If you’re very active, it will show up in all aspects of your professional and personal life.” While Pierre can see that his speaking and leadership skills began to develop long before he enrolled at Valencia, he readily admits that the Bridges program has helped to magnify and amplify these skills. Between his academic pursuits, campus involvement, and community service work, Pierre’s resume is packed with experiences that demonstrate to future employers what a well-rounded, integrity-driven leader he has become.

Bridges also helps to facilitate a highly comprehensive mentoring program that’s spawned groups like IMAGES and REGAL. Windy was the founding president of IMAGES and knows first-hand how important it is to lean on fellow peers for support and guidance. Mentoring programs participate in annual retreats as well as host influential guest speakers such as congressmen, doctors, lawyers, and high-level administrators, who convey first-hand what it takes to pursue a career at their level.

At any given time, there are about 700 Bridges students enrolled at Valencia, all of which are expected to complete 75 percent of their course work attempted and maintain a 2.5 GPA. Free counseling and tutoring is provided to those students who fall short of these expectations. Bridges students also have access to an online community called Bridges Online Learning Community Group. It’s specifically intended to connect Bridges students with each other and foster peer mentoring. “It’s about being responsible
for each other, developing as leaders, and the belief that no one gets left behind,” Stover says.

After 18 years, the Bridges program is well-known on campus. Faculty have taught Bridges students for more than a decade, and they know what it takes to help Bridges students succeed and what resources are available when someone needs assistance. Stover calls this a team approach to teaching. “Everyone is staying in the loop about each student.”

To say that Bridges to Success has met its goals and achieved the hopes of its founding members would be a huge understatement. The Bridges program boasts retention and graduation rates that are much higher than Valencia’s general population. Valencia’s president is so pleased with its results that he has approved funds to grow the program by an additional 50 students each year for the next three years.

As Bridges students approach the end of their two years at Valencia, they are strongly encouraged to participate in college tours and to contemplate participation in the 2+2 Program, which gives students the opportunity to pursue a four-year degree at one of 13 partner schools including UCF. Priscille Elie ’02 is an excellent example of how the Bridges program serves as a stepping stone for many other academic pursuits. After Valencia, Elie received a scholarship to Nova Southeastern University where she earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

“The Bridges to Success Program was a fundamental experience in my life,” Elie says. “I had an amazing, fulfilling, and enriching experience that is the foundation of who I am today.” A natural leader, Elie was encouraged by faculty to participate as a leader in various campus organizations. She became the President of the African American Student Association, then the Secretary of Florida African American Student Association. By the time she graduated from Valencia, she had also held the positions of Region Five Director and Vice-President of Programs. These leadership opportunities framed my path.” These days, Elie is a reading specialist for her school district in South Florida, responsible for developing programs for elementary students, training and staff development. “I’m not sure I would have come this far without the program. It all started with Bridges and someone giving me the chance to be successful.” Pierre echoes Priscille’s sentiments. “It’s about so much more than the financial benefit, which is really a big thing. Having tuition completely covered means you can focus solely on succeeding academically. But the program is really about improving your chance of success, not only in school but in society.” Inspired to get involved, to make a difference in the lives of others, and to make something extraordinary out of their own lives, Bridges students don’t need a fire lit underneath them because the fire has been lit within them.
Helping Haiti
by Melissa Tchen

In January, when a series of devastating earthquakes struck Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere Guy Chevalier, knew he had to help.

A former Valencia student and a Haitian native, Chevalier is also the founder of the United Relief Force Foundation, a non-profit organization aimed at providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief wherever needed. Founded in 2007, long before the 2010 earthquakes, the organization has now made Haiti its primary focus.

“Right now it’s time to focus on helping my country,” Chevalier said. “It’s a chance to give back to my people and the place where I grew up.”

Having gotten his own first experiences in community service during his time as a Valencia student, Chevalier knew that current students would be responding to the disaster in Haiti. He contacted Victor Collazo, student development coordinator on the West Campus, to see how he could coordinate his efforts.

The Valencia Volunteers and the Valencia Haitian Student Association had already begun fundraising and collecting donations on all campuses. But a few students wanted to help out in person. Seven Valencia students joined Chevalier for a volunteer trip to Haiti.

“We went to Port-au-Prince and Jacmel and to Léogâne – places affected by the earthquake – to help at the tent hospitals, distribute food and water – whatever we had,” Chevalier said.

During the trip, Chevalier and the Valencia students who accompanied him worked alongside volunteer doctors and nurses, serving as translators and providing any other assistance they could – even helping to move the deceased from the hospital to the morgue.

Having seen the devastation in Haiti first-hand, Guy knows that there is still plenty of work to be done. He is now planning his next trip there, over the summer. During the visit, he will deliver provisions and donations to an orphanage and will launch The Kitchen Project, which will provide food to doctors, nurses and volunteers.

This idea came to Chevalier after he noticed that many volunteers were leaving months earlier than planned simply because they weren’t getting enough food and water to keep going.

“I thought, you know what, I can help by bringing them food to encourage them to stay a long time,” Chevalier said. “Rainy season is here now, and one thing we can’t afford is volunteers leaving Haiti.”

Chevalier welcomes anyone who is interested in volunteering in Haiti to travel with his organization on its next trip. Volunteers will receive three days of training. For more information, please visit the United Relief Force Foundation Web site at unitedrff.org.

Haiti photos courtesy of Guy Chevalier
Doing Our Part

On all of Valencia’s campuses, people came together to help Haiti, raising funds and donations. Some highlights of the efforts include:

• On the Osceola Campus, Valencia Volunteers and LASO collected $850 to donate to the Red Cross through bake sales, hot dog sales and charitable donations.

• On the West Campus, the Valencia Volunteers and other student groups helped raise more than $600 for the Haitian Relief Fund.

• Student Development on the West Campus collected clothing, food and health supplies to deliver to Haiti. The dental hygiene department donated 18 cases of Listerine and the Valencia Haitian Student Association helped deliver the items to the Haitian Baptist Church.

• On Jan. 27, Florida Blood Center donated $1 to the Haitian Relief Fund for every student or faculty member on who attempted to donate blood on the West Campus. They raised $30 and collected 18 units of blood, saving 54 lives.

• The Valencia Film Celebration donated all proceeds from its Hip Hop for Haiti Night to Yéle Haiti, raising $1,432.

Remembering the Dominican Republic
by Lana Powell, Professor of Business

Valencia student, Vanessa Hornedo ’10, continues to help the small village of Cucarita in the Dominican Republic long after the service learning trip sponsored by Valencia and the Diocese of Orlando ended. For a week in August 2009, Vanessa was one of 10 students led by my colleague, Christie Pickeral who is a Professor of Communications EAP, and me in a visit to this remote community, which has neither electricity nor running water. Christie is currently collaborating with our Valencia student team in writing a book titled, “Las Lomas,” about the La Cucarita community, which will be sold to raise scholarship funds to support students from that area.

It was my pleasure to encourage our Valencia student team to develop ideas for cottage industries, which could also provide funds for the scholarship program. Upon returning to the United States, Vanessa took the lead in designing and making jewelry using stones collected during the trip and organized a special jewelry sale in December at L&J Displays in Maitland. Owners Linda and Jay Keane provided the space for the sale and also contributed a percentage of the profits to support the La Cucarita scholarship fund.
Q: Where are you from?

Born in South Africa, but spent my adult life in the United Kingdom, specifically from Windsor, Berkshire, England, west of London. Windsor is surrounded by English countryside at its best with the River Thames running alongside it. The famous 1,000-year-old Windsor Castle and the Long Walk located in the Great Park, which measures 2.64 miles, are both extraordinary features that people from all over the world travel to visit. The town is smothered in tradition with the Changing of the Guard, a ceremony that occurs daily around 11 a.m. along the high street. This is a scenic and historical town that’s worth visiting, and of course, living in.

Q: What inspired you to go to school in the U.S.?

Two years ago I came over to America from London, with two suitcases and my four-year-old son. I had sold my house, received my divorce and resigned from my job of four years. I had no idea what to expect other than I wanted to change my life. Little did I know that attending Valencia would actually be one of the most memorable times of my life. I had very little expectation other than to try spending time with my parents who lived here in Orlando and have some more valuable time with my son. At 36 years old, I was starting over again and taking a “time out” from the workplace.

Q: Tell us about some of the differences between here and there.

Unlike Florida, which is dominated by sunny weather, Windsor in contrast is dominated by mild wet weather. Being outdoors all day is not really an option. Luckily for those who do not like to be in the cold, you will find the best indoor establishments at your finger tips. From local pubs serving traditional English food like fish & chips, bangers & mash and great beers on tap, to coffee houses, restaurants and contemporary wine bars. Like Orlando, you also have the option to indulge in international cuisine such as Indian, Chinese, Moroccan and American. One meal of the day that is not as common in Orlando is, of course, the traditional afternoon tea, which is still widely celebrated in Windsor.
Our attire always consists of a coat and an umbrella but generally we dress up more in contrast to Orlando. I imagine it is the heat that prevents many Floridians from wearing the full suits and stockings common in England.

People generally take public transportation as the train system is often quicker and less expensive. We, of course, drive on the other side of the road.

Windsor and Orlando are similar in that they are both tourist destinations, so the locals generally know the best hang-outs and places to go to avoid the crowds. We watch football, by which I mean “soccer,” of course. Many people see us as very reserved and unemotional. However, if you hear shouting and screaming on the street, do not be alarmed, it is just us passionate English cheering on our fellow sportsmen.

**Q: Is there a driving ideal in your culture?**

I have kept those same friends right up until now, and I realize that being English is having a home in people. They are not all English and they come from many places from around the world, but once you are accepted you have a network that will stay with you forever. In this, I believe England has a way of letting you in and you will do whatever it takes for your fellow man or woman. The bond is strong and the dedication is pure. You never pass up time to have a coffee with a friend, and you buy a round of drinks when they are feeling down. Even when you are the underdog, you never change sides. Forever English, I suppose!

**Q: Tell us about any life changing moments you’ve had since you’ve been at Valencia?**

Although a minority, I was not the only older person in class. I never felt out of place apart from some comical moments such as what occurred on my first day of college. I was late for class as I had gotten lost as any new student might, and I was in a hurry, so I almost ran when I saw the classroom I needed. Students were sitting down on the floor outside the classroom and when they saw me try to open the door they assumed, as the teacher was late too, that I was the teacher and they all stood up to follow me. I will never forget having to apologize and sit down with them and watch as they realized that I wasn’t the teacher after all. I realized my life was about to change and that I was not a mother that day nor a business development manager but a student. I felt grateful that I had an opportunity to be that person and I challenged myself to be the best student I could be.

**Q: Is there anything else in regards to “inspiration” that you would like to share?**

I have met some incredible people who thought what I was doing was inspiring and yet I turn to them and feel the same way about what they were doing. There were times that I sat studying at two o’clock in the morning because my son would not go to sleep until 10 and all I wanted to do was go to sleep and forget about the exam the next day. Hearing about another student who worked nights and had to use his breaks to study made me fight to stay up and finish studying. If he could do it, so could I.

*Lori Sunday is the International Student Services manager at Valencia*
THE miss
Dr. Shugart, known for being an inspirational leader, shares an excerpt from his essay, “On Doing Good,” which will be published in the forthcoming book, “The Crucible of Work: Reflections on the Inner Lives of Leaders.” Read on as he shares his thoughts on a leader’s responsibility to foster a work environment where people not only do well, but also do good.

To the question, “how well am I doing?” the stuff of performance review, we should always add, “what good am I doing?” the stuff of a life that nourishes the soul.

I discovered the hard way that there is a special responsibility for leaders here. Quite a few years ago, in my first college presidency, I and my senior colleagues were having just these kinds of discussions and feeling we were beginning to make headway in our organization, a public college of about 20,000 students. One day a student—we’ll call her Jenny—came to see me. She was a college ambassador, selected for a role representing the college with me in the community, for which she received a modest scholarship and the standard khaki trousers and blue blazer ambassador uniform, and so I was acquainted with this thoughtful student. Jenny was, on this occasion, clearly upset, so I brought her into my office and encouraged her to open up. She told me her boyfriend, with whom I was also acquainted, had been killed two weeks before in an automobile accident. We had a cry, and I offered to do anything I could. She said there was one thing I could do. She had tried coming back to school (this tragedy had occurred mid-semester), but just couldn’t complete the term, so she was withdrawing. Further, her finances were very tenuous, so she asked me to arrange a full refund of her tuition. Now, in that particular state, this was actually illegal, the cut-off date for refunds established in the appropriations act by the state legislature. Nevertheless, I promised her a refund and offered to take her textbooks back at full value. Jenny and I talked a while further and she left.

During my lunch hour, I was on a long training run with another staff member, several miles from campus, telling him this story. He was not thrilled with it – he was the Chief Financial Officer, a wonderful and caring human being. His concern, I assumed, was the potential of an audit finding, something CFO’s hate. I told him not to concern himself, that this was one audit exception I’d be happy to take. (I could just see the headlines: “President Breaks Rules to Help Devastated Student.”) “Okay,” he said, “but how is this going to make the other staff
she talked to feel?” I was stopped dead in my tracks. Of course, I wasn’t the first person she had brought this concern to. So we ran back to campus and dressed. I went to see the Dean of Students. Had she heard from Jenny? Yes, she had. Isn’t it awful? She told her there was nothing she could do, but she could come see me if she wanted. Then I went to see the Director of Admissions, whom I knew to be a friend of Jenny’s. Had Jenny come to him? Yes, isn’t it awful? He told her there was nothing he could do, but she could go see the Dean if she wanted. So I stopped asking.

I want to emphasize that both the Dean and Director were and are wonderful people, kind and responsive, always willing to go the extra mile for anyone, and especially for a student in need. Both of them wanted to help her, but it required breaking a rule, creating some risk for the organization and perhaps themselves. They wanted to do good, but didn’t feel the organization could afford it.

I went back to my office and put my head down on the cool glass top thinking that I had accomplished nothing in two years of leadership. It was my job as the leader to create an environment in my organization where good people could do the right thing for the right reasons fearlessly. And I hadn’t. And there were two kinds of prices being paid for that failure. People like Jenny who needed our organization to do something good, something special and out of the ordinary, something involving a little bit of risk, were not being served. We were not “doing all the good you can to all the people you can.” In addition, people like these two staff members were being damaged. What price does one pay when he knows there is some good to be done, wants to do the good, and doesn’t for no better reason than it might break some rule? We put people in this position all the time. I recall telling this story to a large group of counselors in California who work with students with disabilities every day, coordinating services to support them in their education. Except that the perennial resource limits more often put these people, who entered the work out of a calling to serve, in the position of rationing the services. When I made this point in a rhetorical question, “what price must you be paying in your hearts when this happens?” sobbing could be heard from all over the auditorium.

If we believe in “doing all the good you can,” as a part of our spiritual and psychological health, then we leaders have to create the environment, the organizational culture that permits it, even when it means breaking the rules. We may have to learn how to break the rules intelligently. We may even have to pay some consequences for someone else’s rule-breaking when it was the right thing to do. And this behavior has to be a daily habit, not just a special case.

If doing good and enabling others to do good is vital in our daily jobs, it is all the more important in our thinking about the whole enterprise we are attempting to lead. It is inherent in the experience of the crucible of work that the greater the heat and pressure, the more narrow the focus of our attention often becomes. Under pressure to survive and produce, our hierarchy of attention is often forced straight to the “bottom line,” the tangible and proximate outcomes of our work. We generally don’t fail to consider the good we might accomplish together in the world because we couldn’t care less, but because the press of daily demands on us squeezes out the habit of reflection, both as individuals and as communities of work. As the poet Rainier Maria Rilke wrote, “For somewhere there is an ancient enmity between our daily life and the great work. Help me in saying it to understand it. Requiem for a Friend.”

The source for a deep sense of transcendent purpose in our organizations, the mission beyond the mission, isn’t the difference we want to make in the organization, or the difference we want to make in the industry, but the difference we want to make in the world. Rarely is this question asked in any serious way in our organizational life. As I sit on various boards of directors, I can imagine the resistance to questions of transcendent purpose as useless distractions and pontificating. But I am certain that these are among the questions that separate great organizations from the mediocre, giving their leadership broader and more meaningful insight into the present and future of the enterprise and calling themselves and their employees to a different sense of pride and commitment to the work. X

To read the essay in its entirety, please visit valenciacc.edu/alumni.
I embarked on this journey of living in my “Element” just recently when I left my career in advertising and marketing to pursue what had always been at the center of my heart: music—songwriting, singing and performing. How timely that I discovered Ken Robinson’s book “The Element—How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything.”

The work of Ken Robinson, PhD was introduced to me through a friend who had heard him speak at a conference. He was so enthusiastic about Robinson’s insight that I was bombarded with links of “must-see” videos on his refreshing approach to intelligence, education, creativity and innovation. Personally, I think it was also a nudge for me to get with the program and examine the limiting beliefs that kept me from doing what I love for a living. In the book it states, “The Element has two main features, and there are two conditions for being in it. The features are aptitude and passion. The conditions are attitude and opportunity.” This is what I was setting out to explore for myself.

For those looking for a self-help book with formulas and how-to’s, this book is not that. It is however a wonderfully inspirational book and an eye-opening look at the need to cultivate learning environments that foster creativity and the imagination. Furthermore, it goes on to show how this translates to every aspect of our society.

I really enjoyed reading this book and the stories of well-known figures such as Gillian Lynne, Matt Groening, Paul Samuelson, Mick Fleetwood, Bart Conner, Albert Einstein, Paul McCartney, Meg Ryan, Debbie Allen and a number of others as it illustrated the diversity of intelligence and creativity and how finding the Element is not always a direct path immediately encouraged or supported by our educational systems, our families or even communities.

Their stories shine a light on how the deepest forms of personal achievement and contributions to society are made—when we are most inspired and in-line with our calling. Finding and living in your Element is also not something that necessarily begins early in life, “For the most part, people seem to think that life is linear, that our capacities decline as we grow older, and that opportunities we have missed are gone forever... many people have not found their Element because they don’t understand their constant potential for renewal,” Robinson writes. I could definitely relate with this idea and was charged with a renewed sense of urgency and validation as my belief system was becoming more clear and my comfort zone challenged.

Some of my favorite topics Robinson covers are on the expanded view of intelligence and the power of imagination; our 10 senses and the things we take for granted; creating opportunities by looking differently at ordinary situations; encouraging your peak performance and the freedom and authenticity of being in the zone; the importance of mentors; relationships with your tribe and the alchemy of synergy; and how it’s never too late to find the work you love by reprogramming your thinking.

One of the most important discoveries I had while reading The Element was realizing what I am truly self-motivated to do, creating music and singing are essential to my daily happiness, my sense of identity and personal well-being. I also realized that we must never underestimate the power and relevance of our own personal gifts and creative talents. We are each unique in this aspect and when we embrace that concept we truly can approach life with a more holistic view of ourselves.

For updates on Jennifer’s music, visit isabellsmusic.com
For Colin Boyer, 19, there is no secret to overcoming the dreaded “artist’s block,” the lack of inspiration that plagues artists, writers, poets and musicians. The Valencia alumnus, who is now a student at Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, finds his inspiration in the relentless pursuit of his artistic skill – painting and illustrating – and very hard work.

“Usually the hardest thing about painting is just deciding what to paint,” Boyer says. “So you have to draw from life every day, paint all the time and look for subjects no matter where you are. If you just keep working, you’ll find your subject.”

But recently, Boyer had his subject – a very famous one – chosen for him.

After submitting his portfolio for consideration to Ringling’s Illustration Department, the student artist from Kissimmee was selected to paint the portrait of former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Boyer would then present the portrait to Secretary Rice when she appeared in Sarasota as part of the college’s Town Hall lecture series.

Being chosen to paint the portrait of the Ringling program’s lecturer is a special honor. The commission and presentation of a portrait by a Ringling student is a traditional part of the Town Hall program, which has hosted leading speakers of the day, including Mikhail Gorbachev, Maya Angelou, William Buckley and Colin Powell.

Boyer was provided with a photograph of Secretary Rice to use as the model for his portrait. But the lighting in the picture proved tricky and he kept restarting the painting. When he began to feel frustrated, he referred to the work of masters such as John Singer Sargent for encouragement.

In all, Boyer painted seven portraits of Secretary Rice before feeling comfortable with the final piece. But his hard work paid off. In February, Boyer presented his portrait to the accomplished speaker, diplomat and author with pride.

“Painting that portrait was a great experience,” Boyer remembers. “It was exciting to present a portrait to someone like Condoleezza Rice in person … and she seemed to really appreciate it!”

“I Never Considered Another Career”

Though he probably never thought he’d paint the portrait of an international stateswoman, Boyer always wanted to be an artist. He began studying art at the age of 11 with a kind woman in his community who provided free art classes for children. And he continued to practice drawing and painting in school.

After moving to Florida from Virginia, Boyer attended Valencia in 2008 as a dual-enrolled student and earned his diploma from Celebration High School. He was excited to begin his formal art education, take his first studio courses and draw from a live model. Surrounded by new artistic experiences and opportunities, Boyer’s interests and abilities continued to develop. His dedication to realistic drawing and painting was matched by his drive to learn and grow as an artist.
“What is most important is doing the hard work of practicing, learning from other artists and trying to improve your skill in drawing and painting,” Boyer notes. “It takes a long time and a lot of work ... but it's worth it!”

While at Valencia, Boyer explored various traditional and digital media, trying digital painting and diligently copying the works of masters such as John William Waterhouse, Anders Zorn and Howard Pyle. As he had in high school, the artist displayed his work in student art shows at Valencia. During one show, three of his works were accepted and all won awards, including Best in Show and the Jackson Pollock award. In addition to the recognition for his artwork in the show, Boyer’s awards even earned him two small scholarships.

Propelled by his studies at Valencia, Boyer enrolled as a sophomore at Ringling, where he is now a junior. He never questioned his desire to attend art school or his goal of becoming a full-time artist.

“The beginning, I saw myself as an artist,” Boyer says. “I never considered another career.”

Always Learning, Always Growing

For Boyer, one of the most exciting things about art is its limitless possibilities, the endless combinations of media, composition and subjects. His enthusiasm has moved him to explore a variety of techniques and learning environments. Whether sketching at a café, mastering the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) software or attending an intensive illustration workshop, the artist is always seeking to strengthen his skill and searching for ways to learn and grow.

Boyer believes this quest for improvement will help him understand his calling in the art world. Though he knows he will pursue a career as an artist, he is unsure of a specific path.

“Gallery painting appeals to me, but I also feel strongly about creating digital illustrations and design,” Boyer explains. “I just have to follow my interests and see where it takes me.”

Regardless of his choice of media and employment, Boyer is aware of the many challenges artists face. Though he doesn’t regret going to art school, he

“Inspiration exists, but it has to find us working.”
- Pablo Picasso
sometimes thinks about studying math and science to have a background in traditional academic subjects. He feels that art is an especially competitive field, and that artists must constantly stretch the limits of their talent and creativity to be successful.

"That’s why it’s so important to learn all you can and be open to new media, techniques and experiences," Boyer says. "It’s a tough world out there for artists."

Boyer’s strong commitment to education and hard work hardly fit the stereotype of the temperamental artist with innate brilliance and inspiration. But he is confident that his combination of talent and perseverance will earn him artistic success. And that his studies at Valencia helped steer him in the right direction.

“My interaction with other illustrators online and studies at Valencia have really made it clear to me,” Boyer says. “You don’t need to go to some fancy, expensive art school to get a quality education and start a fulfilling career in art.”

To see more of Boyer’s work, visit his blog at www.ColinBoyer.blogspot.com
An Interview with Dr. Bill Mullowney

Q. Just how did Valencia fare?

Despite revenue shortfalls, lawmakers passed a budget that recognizes the growth of colleges like Valencia. We received an increase of $4.3 million in state funding. Even with this 7.2 percent increase over last year, state funding is less than half of Valencia’s operating budget.

During the past four years, Valencia’s enrollment has grown 54 percent while our state funding increased only 36 percent. Our funding per FTE has dropped from $5,284 to $4,668 per FTE during that same period. So while we appreciate this year’s increase in funding, the challenges remain great.

For the third consecutive year, the legislature declined to fund the community college system’s challenge matching grants program. If funded, Valencia’s foundation would have received more than $3.6 million.

Q. How does Valencia, with its tremendous enrollment growth, make up the difference?

Tuition and fees fund a large part of operating expenses. This year, the legislature authorized local college boards of trustees to increase tuition by 8 percent. In May, following consultation with students, Valencia’s trustees raised tuition by 5 percent for 2010-11, rather than by the full 8 percent allowed.

In addition, federal stimulus dollars help address our growth. The Florida College System (FCS) received the second and final installment of $83 million in federal stimulus funds. At Valencia, approximately $5 million is helping to meet growth needs by supporting the hiring of adjunct professors, also contributing to job creation, a key goal for the stimulus program.

Q. Where will the college find space for the increase in students, particularly at Osceola Campus where demand is greatest or for a new Lake Nona Campus?

An unexpected influx of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds boosted state funding for facilities by $127 million. Valencia’s highest capital priority, Building 4 on the Osceola Campus received $21.7 million.

(Watch for details about this new 108,000 sq. ft. library and high tech classroom building in the next issue of Vitae.)

Q. What about next year? Are there any issues looming or changes that may affect Valencia employees?

There will be an interim actuarial study of the Florida Retirement System during the next year. Issues that could be included in the study are changing the average final compensation, employee participation/contribution in the FRS, elimination of a retirees Health Insurance Subsidy, capping final retirement benefits, changing or eliminating the automatic 3 percent annual cost of living benefit, eliminating the senior management retirement classification, eliminating the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), and reducing what can be included (leave, overtime, faculty overloads, etc.) in the determination of final retirement benefits/costs.

The 2011-12 budget is expected to be “the cliff year” as the level of funding for those receiving state funds will drop off sharply, and current federal stimulus appropriations will be gone. Budget shortfalls could reach $5 billion, according to some estimates.

Q. What Can We Do?

Stay informed. Ask questions and share your thoughts with those actively involved in championing Valencia’s cause. Your voices make a difference.

Bill Mullowney is Vice President for Policy and General Counsel for Valencia. He serves as lobbyist and legislative counsel to the executive and legislative branches of the State of Florida.
Some people in life are simply born natural educators. For these rare gems, the gift of instruction and academic administration flows naturally; bringing clarity through confusion is not only a talent, but a passion that ignites their souls. Lucky for Valencia and hundreds of its students, Silvia Zapico is one such educator and administrator. After more than 20 years at Valencia, Silvia may have retired from her teaching and Provost posts but she will always be an educator at heart.

Hers is a tale that begins long before she began her legendary teaching and administration career at Valencia in 1984; this story begins in colorful Cuba where a young and vivacious Silvia lived with her family and fell in love with learning, chemistry in particular. “I was drawn to chemistry, especially organic chemistry, because I had a very good high school chemistry teacher in Cuba who was an organic chemist,” Silvia reflects fondly. “I remember that her name was Silvia, too, and that she inspired me to see the beauty and simplicity of chemistry. That’s when I decided to pursue a career in chemistry.”

In 1965, Silvia graduated from Miami-Dade Community College – now Miami State College – with an Associate in Arts Degree in organic chemistry. That same year, Silvia married her husband Leonardo, a Georgia
Tech engineering graduate she had met on a blind date the year before.

After earning her Honors degree from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, her Master’s Degree from the University of Miami, and her Doctorate at the University of Central Florida, Silvia began her chemistry profession at a pharmaceutical company in Orlando. “It was interesting but profit goals were meaningless to me,” Silvia says. She longed to be back in a school setting.

In Atlanta, Silvia had taught part-time and she had found it very fulfilling. “Learning is meaningful. To see students learn so much is just an inspiration for me.” In 1984, she began teaching chemistry full-time at Valencia’s East Campus. A few years later, Silvia became the chair for the Science and Social Science Department. Then in 1996, she accepted the position of Provost at the Osceola Campus.

To say that Silvia remembers her teaching and administration career at Valencia fondly is a gigantic understatement. With an infectious smile that starts in the furthest corners of her heart, Silvia reminisces happily about all of the students she’s encountered over the past two decades. “To see people fall in love with learning, to witness the moment when something clicks and, aha, they finally get it, well there is nothing more rewarding than that.”

Like her Cuban chemistry instructor so many years before, Silvia has helped foster in students a passion for learning that will stay with them for a lifetime. “I’ll never forget when three hurricanes struck this area a few years ago. Many of Osceola’s students were forced to leave their homes and live in shelters, yet they still came to class because they truly valued their education. It was very inspiring,” Silvia recalls.

The bulk of Silvia’s career at Valencia has been spent in her roles as an administrator. “I consider that my most important contribution at Valencia has been my work at the Osceola Campus as an administrator and Provost. In the year 1996, when I started my mission at the Osceola Campus, the campus had barely 1,000 students; today, the campus stands at close to 10,000. In order to provide academic programs and sustained learning for these students, the Osceola Campus has had an extraordinary team of professionals, consisting of faculty, administrators, and professional and career staff.”

Ellen Pastorino began working with Silvia more than 12 years ago, first as a professor of psychology and then as Faculty Association President. “It has been a pleasure working with Silvia,” Ellen says. “She maintained an open-door policy, encouraging anyone to come by to talk about their concerns, problems, or goings-on. She never failed to ask about how one’s family was faring and seemed genuinely interested in our lives outside of the college.”

Ellen also remembers that in the role of Provost, Silvia has always been fair, firm in her convictions and dedicated to student learning. “She always strived to find a workable solution to a problem that gave all parties involved a little bit of what each of them wanted,” Ellen remembers. “And she always took the time to say hello to students, faculty or staff. It was truly a privilege to have worked with her and she will be greatly missed.”

Over the years, when Silvia wasn’t at the Osceola Campus, she was likely to be found with her family. “I’m a very family-oriented person. Even when I was working full-time and earning my doctorate, I was still balancing family life. It wasn’t easy, but I was determined not to neglect my two children.”

Between them, her daughter Sylvia and her son Leonardo have given Silvia and her husband three granddaughters and one grandson. Her family lives close by and they spend time every week together. For years, the entire family has taken vacations together, visiting places like San Francisco and Yosemite. “Every year we all go on a big trip to some place in the U.S.” Of course, being a teacher through and through, Silvia insists that these be educational trips so the children learn something on their travels. “We choose to visit places like Yellowstone National Park – historic, meaningful places that provide a lot of learning experiences for everyone.”

So, what will Silvia be doing in the newly retired life that officially began on April 30? Teach, of course. “I’m already tutoring my grandson in physics and math, but I also plan to offer free tutoring to students needing assistance in reading comprehension, science, and vocabulary.” She also plans on teaching one or two chemistry courses part-time in the Fall at Valencia.

Thanks to the beautiful, top-of-the-line sewing machine she received as a retirement gift from her Valencia colleagues, Silvia will also be re-awakening her passion for sewing. She plans to become more involved with the church and reconnect with old friends.

And when Silvia isn’t teaching, traveling, or sewing, she’ll be found in her kitchen pursuing her love of cooking. “Cooking is a natural fit for chemists. I love trying new recipes and experimenting with different ingredients.” With her swanky new infrared BBQ, she plans to concoct a bevy of Italian, Chinese, Spanish and Cuban dishes.

Retirement is the dawn of a whole new beginning for Sylvia Zapico; one filled not only with joyful anticipation of so much yet to come, but also with the pleasant reminiscence of a job well done, a professional life well-served, and a countless number of hearts touched and inspired by one extraordinary human being who simply took the time to care. ✨
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Rejected. The one word that flashed across my mind after being denied acceptance into the University of Florida. I didn’t apply to any other colleges. UF had the best architecture program in the state, and I had placed all my hopes into getting in.

So after graduating from Lyman High School, when most of my friends went off to college, I stayed behind in Altamonte Springs. I transitioned from a part-time to full-time employee at Panera Bread, where I worked throughout high school. In a year’s time, I was promoted to middle management. Although the pay was very little for the workload I had, I stuck with it hoping an upper management position would open up. However, when new management came in, the restaurant underwent downsizing, and I was the first one out. Rejected again.

I was 19, hopeless and confused. I wondered what I would do next in life. Reluctant to give the workforce another try, I mustered just enough money and courage to take courses at Valencia Community College. Although I enrolled part-time, every class engaged my interests and challenged my curiosity. Along the way, I met fascinating classmates, worked a few great jobs, including a land development-drafting job, and was inspired by the best faculty and staff around. I want to especially acknowledge and thank a few people:

- **Richard H. Weinsier, Director of the Math Support Center**
  While working as a tutor in your Math Support Center, I met several fascinating people and made a new family in all of you.

- **Leesa L. Sward, Professor of Biology and Environmental Science**
  Your Biology of Human Sexuality course was both enlightening and entertaining.

- **Thomas S. Zurosky, Professor of Chemistry**
  Attending your Chemistry II course was like being in a laboratory and comedy club at the same time – not every chemistry student can say that!

- **Areej Zufari, Professor of Humanities**
  You were the only non-literature professor who took an intrinsic interest in my writing. The passion I hold for creative writing is still very strong, mainly due to your encouragement.

- **James L. Chase, Professor of Economics**
  You are the first Renaissance man I have ever met, and I was fortunate enough to be your student.

- **Merton A. Hollister, Professor of Physics**
  You are a brilliant thinker who challenged me, through the instrument of Physics, to view the world in different perspectives.

- **Chris D. Borglum, Professor of English**
  You infused an appreciation for literature I would not have had if it were not for your zealous instruction.

- **Richard L. Russell, Professor of Mathematics**
  I followed you through seven different mathematics courses, including a sit-in for self-enrichment! I am minoring in mathematics, in large part, due to your impact on my mathematical interests.

- **James D. Lang, Professor of Mathematics**
  Your calm, collected teachings resonated strongly in my mathematical reasoning and, for that, I have a firm understanding of multivariable calculus today.

- **Patsy G. Buckley, Professor of Student Success**
  You played an important role in my transition from a good high school student to a great college student through the very first course I took at Valencia: Student Success.

Eventually, I found enough courage and hope to reapply to the University of Florida. This time, I was accepted into a program I was more passionate about: civil engineering.

I hope my story can be one of many that will help and inspire anyone who got rejected and felt like giving up.

Again, my warmest thanks go to those mentioned above for making Valencia a better place to start.
Faith is a virtue that I live by on a daily basis. It is at the core of everything that I do. I believe that everyone needs to believe in something – a person, a concept, or even a dream in order to process the enormous amounts of information that comes each day. For me, remembering those times when others reached out to me inspired me to define the mark I want to have on this world.

Today we hear the popular phrase “pay it forward.” This means doing an unexpected good deed for someone so that good comes back to you. This is just one of the ways I’ve been inspired to pursue my academic success. In a similar fashion, there have been those who have greatly influenced me, such as the many educators from various educational institutions who poured hours of knowledge and understanding into my life, and my parents who inspired me not to give up and to keep my faith in God.

I believe in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson when he said, “It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

Another source of encouragement for me was Phi Theta Kappa (PTK). Involving myself with PTK inspired me to do things I thought were beyond my potential. PTK inspired me to pursue my educational goals. I gained confidence and became successful during my academic stay at Valencia. Whenever I felt backed against a wall, I was inspired by others such as my peers, professors, and my PTK chapter members. Success itself inspired me. When things came against me to attempt to derail my hopes and dreams, the strength I acquired through my life experiences helped me stand against adversity.

I believe in a Christian concept called “Servant-Leadership” coined by Robert Greenleaf that says, “Before one can lead, they must first be willing to serve.” I am a Christian-oriented person that strives to help others as I would myself. My life is all about helping others in my field of study. Throughout my journey in life, others have helped me to become the person I am today. Therefore, it is a lifelong commitment for me to reciprocate to others. The professors at Valencia helped me to see things in myself that helped me become the person I am today. Valencia as a whole inspired me to continue my education and helped me develop a strong foundation.

I graduated from Valencia Community College in 2005 with an Associate in Arts Degree. At Valencia I was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society-Alpha Gamma Omega Chapter. I was elected and served as the Senator of Scholarships where I represented my chapter at the International Honors Institute in Washington, DC. I became knowledgeable in ways to promote scholarship, leadership, fellowships, and service and was recognized as an Honors Scholar. I was listed on the President’s and/or Dean’s list many semesters. I have received numerous academic recognitions such as the Phi Theta Kappa Tony Galloway Leadership Award, Award of Excellence, Officer of the Semester, Distinguished Chapter Officer, and the African American Cultural Society Distinguished Scholar Award on several occasions.

I graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. At UCF I served as the Vice President of Gamma of Florida, the Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Chapter. I became a lifetime member of Psi Chi National Honors Society and Delta Epsilon Iota National Honors Society. The road has not been easy and at times the tasks seemed insurmountable, but through my faith in God and a good support network, anyone can attain their goals.

To further build upon my success, I am currently pursuing a Master’s of Science in Psychology at Palm Beach Atlantic University and expect to graduate in May 2011. My desire to pursue a degree in psychology comes from surviving a tumultuous period in my life. I changed my way of thinking that allowed me to accomplish many goals, which I can be extremely proud of. I have now positioned myself to serve my community in my field of study.
Rogelio Alberic Correa 2010

Rogelio is currently working in the construction industry after earning an A.S. degree in Building Construction Technology at Valencia. “These past couple of years in this business have been tough. Some companies and many employees are without work. As for me, I am still employed with the same company for three years now. For my first year at Valencia, I only took two classes a semester while I held a full-time job, and then I started taking three classes a semester to speed things up. Because of my education at Valencia, I have been able to work multiple duties for my company. I started as a laborer and will soon be serving as a lead on a new project and supervising some of the men in the field, and also working on a system to help break down job labor and materials. I owe thanks to Valencia and my instructors for all their support.”

Edwin Blaine Harvey, Jr. 2010

Edwin is a student at the Winter Park Campus and will graduate in Fall 2010. He plans to attend UCF with a focus on Public Administration. In addition to being inspired by his god parents and many others through his extensive community service, he has been inspired by his student development advisor, Sunni Prevatt.

Eunice Gonzalez 2009

Eunice is attending UCF after earning a degree at Valencia in Psychology. She finds being a new student at UCF challenging. She is “keeping a positive attitude and always keeping Valencia in my heart.”

Kirsten (Preztak) Heimburg 2009

Kirsten is currently studying Sociology with a minor in Criminology at Flagler College in St. Augustine. She is president of the Nu Chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honor Society, a domestic violence advocate and volunteer, and a member of St. John’s Reads Program, which tutors kids who need help learning to read in grades K-5. She plans to pursue her Clinical Master’s in Social Work with an emphasis on Criminal Justice. “I greatly miss the diversity and close-knit style of Valencia. It was such a brilliant experience and the professors were instrumental in my ability to succeed and become so active in my community.”

Angel Fonseca 2009

Angel graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in Engineering. He is currently attending UCF and will graduate in 2011 with a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Engineering. Angel works as a certified tutor in math and science in the Learning Center at the Osceola Campus. He and his girlfriend plan to marry in December 2011.

Rachel Rene Stevens 2009

Rachel graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in General Studies. “I cannot believe it was only eight short months ago that I graduated from Valencia. I was accepted into the Ingredients Training Program: a dance program under the ministry of Dance Revolution that trains dancers in all areas of technique as well as teaching them the proper way to evangelize using diverse art forms. I packed my bags and was on my way to Dallas. Having the opportunity to live away from home for the first time while learning so much is certainly a challenge, but it is also a life-changing experience. Being able to use my art form to minister to others is a lifelong dream.”

Orlando Raymond Remak 2009

Orlando graduated with an A.A. in Economics from Valencia. “After graduation, I was admitted into Florida State University. I have had an opportunity to travel to Japan, and later work for Grant Thornton LLP in Vancouver, Canada. Through the leadership experience I’ve gained within Valencia, I was honored at Florida State for my commitment to serve and have been introduced to many honors and academic scholarships.

If it weren’t for the West Campus Student Activities Center, led by Victor Collazo and Pat Lee, I wouldn’t have had the experiences that have opened the doors it has.

I am looking forward to traveling to China for an extended period of time. I have studied the Chinese language for almost a year now here at Florida State, and hope to continue it further in China.”
Matt Vanture 2009

Matt earned his A.A. degree in General Studies at Valencia and transferred to the University of Florida’s Rinker School of Building Construction. He plans to graduate in May 2011. Matt is currently the president of the Design-Build Institute of America Student Chapter and captain of the Building Information Modeling (BIM) Competition Team. Before becoming team captain, he helped his team finish second place in the Associated Schools of Construction 2010 National BIM competition.

Miranda S. Ratcliffe 2009

Miranda is currently majoring in the School of Communications at the University of Miami with a double major in Motion Pictures and Psychology. She graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in General Studies.

Michelle Lynn McGath 2009

Michelle currently lives in Kissimmee. She writes: “I am a 39-year-old single mother and was a non-traditional Valencia student. I decided to go back to school when my children were independent enough not to have me home at all times. I graduated in May ’09 with my A.A. in General Studies and started that summer in the social work program to achieve my B.S.W. at UCF. The time I spent at Valencia was a great learning opportunity for me. I was out of school for 22 years and was very intimidated by the process.

I started my first semester with prerequisites, including Intro to Humanities. My professor, Betty Fenner, was an inspiration to me. I found myself admiring everything about her. She allowed us to learn about the different arts there are to enjoy in one’s life. I realized that after my brief encounter with her that there is art in everything you see, even in what you say. I plan to get my M.S.W. and become a counselor. I thank you, Betty Fenner, for being my inspiration and giving me the strength to go ahead and follow my dream!”

Randi Lee Krasny 2008

Randi is currently enrolled at Rollins College pursuing a B.A. in Humanities. She anticipates graduation in May 2011. In addition to her studies, she works as a contractor/actress/intern for Background Entertainment in Orlando. Since graduating from Valencia, she has worked on various productions and advertisements, both locally and nationwide.

Eva Alipieva 2007

Eva went on to earn a B.S. in Psychology at UCF after graduating from Valencia with a degree in Psychology. “I used to be a work-study student at Valencia’s West Campus Atlas Lab and now I am working as a Career Advisor at the Osceola Campus. That’s progress!”

Megan (Elder) Evans 2007

Megan graduated from UCF with a B.A. in English after earning her A.A. in English at Valencia. She is now teaching English Prep on Valencia’s West Campus as an adjunct faculty member.

Naranda Ford 2007

Naranda graduated from Valencia’s Nursing Program and is currently working at Arnold Palmer Hospital in Orlando. She received her Certified Pediatric Nursing certification in December 2009. “Nursing is my dream career. I was my family’s first college graduate and do not want it to stop there. I want to make sure my children finish school so they can experience college if they want to go.”
Alexis Brittany Gay 2007
Alexis attended Valencia while on scholarship with the Bridges to Success Program. She will graduate from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee in August 2010 with a B.A. in English and a minor in Education. Alexis opened her own non-profit organization, Silexa Services, Inc. in May 2008, providing services for persons with disabilities.

Lynn Guzower 2006
Lynn earned her B.A. in Education at UCF in 2008. She is currently employed as a 9th-grade reading teacher at Professional and Technical High School in Kissimmee and was recently honored as the First-Year Teacher of the Year.

Stephanie Ann De Leon 2006
Stephanie graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in Business Administration. She is currently enrolled at Everest University earning a Bachelor’s degree in the Criminal Justice program and will graduate in December. She is also the proud parent of a wonderful little baby boy!

Robert Edward Lovvorn, Jr. 2006
Robert completed Valencia’s Paramedic program in 2006. He has been employed with the Clermont Fire Department since 2001 and serves on its Honor Guard Team. He is currently working on his neonatal resuscitation certificate and is a transport driver for the Winner Palmer Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Robert is the lead advisor for the Clermont Fire Department Explorer Post.

Robert Thomas Morris 2006
Robert graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in History. He is currently working as a manager in the retail field and is also the owner of THE OUTHOUSE, a pop culture website.

Rosalia Villard 2007
Rosalia will graduate from UCF with a B.S. in Psychology and a minor in Marketing this year. She graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in General Studies and Psychology.

Elena Izoita 2006
Elena graduated with an M.S. in Nursing in Family Practice from the University of South Florida in 2009 and is now an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner. Her marriage to Dennis Izoita in November has made her “a very happy woman!”

Jennifer (Mezquita) Muscadin 2002
Jennifer earned a Bachelor’s degree in Food and Resource Economics from the University of Florida in 2004. “While at Valencia, I was introduced to the higher education profession by John Stover. I developed a passion for addressing issues of social injustice, inequality and access. My concern for breaking the barriers of access into higher education for underrepresented and underserved populations led to a change in my major from Pre-Law to Educational Leadership. I currently work at UCF as coordinator of academic support services. My long-term goal is to pursue a PhD in curriculum and instruction.”

Grenka Bajramoski 2002
Grenka earned a B.S. in Marketing at UCF in 2007. She is currently employed with the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality and Management as a Senior Library Technical Assistant. She is pursuing a B.S. in Psychology with plans of obtaining an M.S. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

Scott Edward Davis 1997
Scott earned a B.A. in Organizational Behavior from Rollins College in 1999 and an M.B.A. from the University in Phoenix in 2008. He says he is working hard—and playing hard—in Colorado.
Jennifer Pride 1997
Jennifer graduated from the Interdisciplinary Honors Studies Program at Valencia and went on to study Art History at Florida State University and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, specializing in 19th Century European art and architecture, and Word and Image Studies. She is an instructor at Florida State University and Barry University in Tallahassee. Jennifer divides her time between Paris, France, and Tallahassee where she is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Art History at Florida State University.

Kristin David Cawn 1996
Kristin graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. from North Carolina State University in 1999 and then earned her J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law in 2002. She is currently an attorney practicing state and federal commercial litigation in Miami. Professionally, she added a new bar to her resume – the bar for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit – in 2009. And personally: “On October 24, 2009, I got married to fellow Valencia alumnus, Zachary Simon Cawn.”

Sherri (Dyer) Dixon 1994
Sherri graduated from Keller Graduate School of DeVry University with a Master’s of Public Administration in June 2009. She also completed a three-year certificate from the College Business Management Institute in Lexington, KY in August 2009. Sherri is currently employed as the Budget Director for Valencia Community College where she has been employed for more than 20 years.

J. Scott Puleo 1994
Scott graduated with both an A.A. and an A.S. from Valencia. He has served as the Director of Recruiting for Northwestern Mutual, The South Florida Group for the past two years.

Andrea Johnson-Young 1987
Andrea graduated from Valencia with an A.A. in General Studies. “After graduating from Valencia, I enlisted in the United States Air Force and continued my education. My foundation at Valencia helped me to earn additional Associate’s degrees through the Community College of the Air Force in Information Systems Technology, Social Services and Instructor of Technology and Military Science. Additionally, I have completed a B.S. in Human Resource Management and Social Psychology, and an M.A. in Education/Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Adult Education. I will retire from the U.S. Air Force in June after 22 years service and will pursue an EdD in Educational Leadership and Management.”

David L. Outing 1985
David went on to earn a B.S. in Organizational Management from Palm Beach Atlantic University in 2006 and an M.S. in Strategic Leadership from Mountain State University in 2008 after graduating from Valencia with an A.A. in General Studies. David has been happily married for 22 years and is the father of six “wonderful adults.” He is the Executive Director of the Jobs Partnership of Florida, a non-profit, faith-based workforce development agency. “Valencia gave me my academic start and is very much a part of my success as a person and leader.”

Kathleen Lucinda Grimmett 1973
Kathy earned a B.A. in French from Rollins College in 1975 after completing her A.A. in General Studies at Valencia. She celebrated 20 years working at Austin Community College in Austin, TX this year. Kathy is a member of the Texas Archeology Society and Travis County Archeology Society and volunteers at the Texas History Museum.

PASSINGS
Judi DeLisle
Judy Epstein
Corinne Linton
Ernest Niblack
Martha Owen
Elbur Skeath
Betty Venable
Earl Williams
LET EVERYONE KNOW WHAT YOU’VE BEEN UP TO!

To be featured in Class Notes visit valenciacc.edu/alumni/class_notes.cfm and fill in the submission form or mail to: Class Notes Editor, Valencia Alumni Association, 701 N. Econlockhatchee Trail MC: 3-12, Orlando, FL 32825.

If you wish to include a photo, please use the following guidelines:
- Candid shots of you interacting in an authentic setting are preferred. Avoid sending traditional portraits.
- If sending electronically, files should be in jpeg or tif format. Files should be 300dpi resolution at 4”x6” (this would be a file approximately 1mb to 3mb in size).

The Alumni Association can also help to spread the word! Let us know about your meet-ups, networking events, annual retreats, reunions and save-the-dates that your fellow alumni might like to attend or did attend with you. Whether it’s getting a group together for sporting events, charity fundraisers, a day at the parks or just brunch and lunch, let us know. And if you send pictures we might just include them in the next issue. We can share your adventures and good times with our readers so next time they can plan on joining in on the fun!

And don’t forget if you have an idea for a future article or would like to be a contributing writer, please contact the Alumni Association. Send all submissions to alumni@valenciacc.edu.
Long-time Valencia humanities professor, Dr. Philip Bishop, lost his battle with cancer April 12. He leaves a tremendous legacy in the community and the college where he worked for 21 years.

He will be missed in the classroom where he encouraged deep thinking from his students. A compassionate teacher, believing that we all deserve a second chance, he shared his values and influenced many of his colleagues in their approach to students. His own appreciation of the arts came alive in his courses and made the material accessible for our students.

A great thinker, Dr. Bishop had the ability to deepen a question, clarify a statement, and push thinking to a new level. His influence in that work will be sorely missed, but remains a legacy of his powerful vision.

In the humanities department on the East Campus where he acted as the department coordinator for 10 years, many of the tenured faculty looked to Dr. Bishop as a mentor and guide. His textbook, Adventures in the Human Spirit, now in its 5th edition, is used throughout the country as a core text in the humanities, and A Beginners Guide to the Humanities (a handbook on experiencing art) is in its 3rd edition.

A self-taught appreciator of art, Dr. Bishop thought that being “smart about art (and other things, too) doesn’t require a sophisticate’s birthright or a minimum intelligence score or even a college degree. Art smarts come to an open mind that’s willing to reach out, take a risk, and encounter new experience.”

In addition to teaching at Valencia and part-time for the University of Central Florida, he served as The Orlando Sentinel art critic, a job he began in the mid ‘90s.

As busy as he was with book revisions, newspaper articles and paper grading—and at the end his struggle with cancer—Dr. Bishop always welcomed anyone who stopped by, whether for professional advice, personal counsel, or a friendly conversation. Remarkably, he was on the East Campus one week before his death, doing all that he could to be present for his students and do what he loved most... teaching.

Upon his death, he was at home surrounded by family and dear friends. He is survived by his mother, Verna Bishop; his brother Mark; his sister Elaine; his two children, Aaron and Shaughna Bishop; and his two grandchildren, Cole and Lillian.

Philip Bishop: Adventures in the Human Spirit

“Philip Bishop was the rare individual whose intellect and character were equally evolved. He brought a magnificent head and heart to every important teaching and learning initiative at Valencia for the last two decades ... his imprint permeates our College.” — Helen Clarke, colleague

“I was on the committee that interviewed Bishop. There were many good candidates for the position and friends who expected our votes. We had asked that they “teach” something. Having a degree in Art History, I was pleased when he chose that topic. There was no question as to the best candidate.”
— Dr. Carole Trachy, Valencia Retiree Connection member & colleague

“As a man genuinely in love with teaching and concerned with the future of our mass cultured-controlled generation, he taught us, challenged us, and flipped our conventional worldviews on their heads. Personally, he taught me to live authentically and I will take so much more from my time under his guidance than simply the course material.”
— Andrew Henderson ’10, Valencia alumnus
In the Mix

Marlene Petty-Geis retired in 1999 as the Employment Manager in Human Resources after 30 years of service at Valencia.

“Hard to believe that it has been 10+ years!

I have taken several trips with my brothers and their wives. All four brothers still spoil their sister! I traveled to NYC with friends for shopping and the theatre, have taken several cruises and went to Italy with my daughter, Twighla, and her family, traveling to Venice, Tuscany, Florence and Rome. What a wonderful trip! I took a trip to Atlanta and Virginia to visit with friends in June. Keeping my bags packed just in case another trip comes along!

I have delighted in seeing two of my grandchildren get married this past year, and my granddaughter Trisha receiving her Master’s degree and buying her first condo.

I serve on the Retiree Connection Committee and volunteer at ORMC two days a week. I love being a part of giving back to the community. I am so blessed!”

Dr. Carole Law Trachy retired from Valencia as a Professor of Humanities on the West Campus in 1995 after 18 years of service. She is enjoying her retirement and is excited to have become a great-grandmother in August 2009!

Where are they now?

Valencia Retiree Connection
Annual Luncheon

Lunch, Program & Networking!
Thursday, October 14, 2010
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Valencia West Campus Special Events Center
(Building 8)
1800 South Kirkman Road
Orlando, FL 32811

Photos courtesy of Carole Trachy
Retirement Jitters!
by John Scolaro

Please forgive me if what I am saying in this article is somewhat disjointed, but I am having second thoughts about retirement at the end of 2010! Teaching is my life and my blood! This might require me to rethink my retirement strategy and continue working until my younger colleagues carry me out in one of those infamous pine boxes at the end of the last hour of the last day of my life. This insightful point was made by Marcel Proust, a prolific French writer of the late 19th-early 20th century. Proust invited his readers to answer the following provocative question: What would you do if this was the last hour of the last day of your life? My answer is simple: I would continue working until my last breath!

On second thought, however, if the truth were known, I love to write as much as I love to teach, so I would have no problem whatsoever writing my life away, after retirement, until the living end! My wife and I also love to travel. In fact, since I have family in Italy, one hour north of Venice, and she has family in Canada, we have talked about living abroad for blocks of time. I also enjoy reading, so my time could be spent catching up on those books I have tabled based on my heavy teaching load over the years. And finally, since my wife is an exceptional cook, I could also spend my retirement days sampling the main dishes and desserts she would so willingly invite me to sample.

Despite the fact that you might think that I’m just being fickle, strike what I just said! The fact is that I’m conflicted over the prospects of my retirement. To use the metaphor of witches, there are times when I feel like I’ve been cast into a boiling cauldron. There is, however, a way out of this conundrum. The Lebanese writer, Kahlil Gibran, just might help us resolve this dilemma. He said that we have been propagandized to think that work is a curse and that labor is a misfortune. Perhaps this explains why so many people hate their work! If this is accurate, then it might also explain why many of us either try to avoid work altogether or to retire as early as possible. If work, however, according to Gibran, is “love made visible,” then our work is a form of loving life.

Thanks to Kahlil Gibran, I am having second thoughts about my retirement. This may inspire me to continue working in the years ahead and to forego any thought of retirement. I don’t want to be one of those individuals referenced by Marcel Proust when he said: “There are few things (we) humans are more dedicated to than unhappiness.” I want to be happy! And what makes me happy is my work! My retirement jitters may soon become a thing of the past!

John Scolaro is a professor of humanities at Valencia Community College and the author of “American Dog House” by Willie GetOut?, his pen name.
Every Friday, June 4 – Sept. 3 from 5 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Rockin’ Lake Eola
Head down to Lake Eola for this weekly summer concert series. Local artists, as well as some nationally known acts and tribute bands, will perform live.

Aug. 21-22
The August Stomp!
Celebrate grape harvest season at Lakeridge Winery in Clermont with grape-stomping competitions, live music and complimentary winery tours and tastings. Admission: $2 donation to the Boys & Girls Club. lakeridgewinery.com

Sept. 16
Space Shuttle Launch
Don’t miss your last chance to watch a shuttle launch from Kennedy Space Center. Space shuttle Discovery will make the 134th and final shuttle flight as it heads to the International Space Station. Launch time: 11:57 a.m. kennedyspacecenter.com

Oct. 2
Latin Food & Wine Festival
Enjoy a culinary extravaganza with a Latin flair! The Grand Tasting will be held at the Dellagio on Sand Lake Road and will feature food and drink samplings from some of Central Florida’s finest restaurants. Cost: $1-$5 per dish/beverage. hispanicchamber.net

Nov. 13-14
4th Annual Roar N’ Soar
Get your speed on with thrills from land, sea and air. This high-energy event includes a car show, racing boat regatta, extreme sports and plenty of food. Held at Fantasy of Flight in Polk City. fantasyofflight.com

Nightly, throughout December
Epcot’s Candlelight Processional
Get into the holiday spirit with this event, which incorporates a celebrity narrator, orchestra and choir to retell the story of Christmas. Keep an eye out for the Valencia Candlelight Chorus, which performs as part of the choir each year. disneyworld.disney.go.com/parks/epcot
Valencia Arts Dates for 2010-2011

**Music**
For more info, contact: 407-582-2332

- **Faculty Recital**
  Sept. 14, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **House Band Concert**
  Nov. 5, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

- **Winter Choral Concert**
  Dec. 1, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **Fall Symphonic/Jazz Band Concert**
  Dec. 9, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **Fall Opera Workshop**
  Dec. 10, 11, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

- **Show One-TBA**
  Oct. 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Oct. 24, 31, 2010 @ 2 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **The Crucible by Arthur Miller**
  Feb. 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.
  February 20, 26, 27, 2011 @ 2 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

**Film**
For more info contact the production office: 407-582-2413

- **16th Annual Film Celebration**
  Feb. 4, 5, 2011
  Time TBA
  Performing Arts Center

**Theater**
For more info, contact Theater Box Office: 407-582-2900

- **Choreographer’s Showcase**
  Nov. 19, 20, 2010
  @ 8 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **House Band Concert**
  Nov. 5, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

- **Winter Choral Concert**
  Dec. 1, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **Fall Symphonic/Jazz Band Concert**
  Dec. 9, 2010 @ 7:30 p.m.
  Performing Arts Center

- **Fall Opera Workshop**
  Dec. 10, 11, 2010
  @ 7:30 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

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  Oct. 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 2010
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  February 20, 26, 27, 2011 @ 2 p.m.
  Black Box Theater

- **Film**
  For more info contact the production office: 407-582-2413

- **16th Annual Film Celebration**
  Feb. 4, 5, 2011
  Time TBA
  Performing Arts Center

**Dance**
For more info contact Theater Box Office: 407-582-2900

**Visual Arts**
For more info, contact: 407-582-2298

- **Courtney Puckett – Recycled, Wrapped and Sewn**
  June 18, 2010–July 30, 2010
  Opening Reception – June 18 @ 6:30 p.m.–9 p.m.
  Anita S. Wooten
  East Campus Gallery

**Selected Fine Art**
**Faculty 2010**
Oct. 29, 2010 - Dec. 17, 2010
Opening Reception:
Oct. 29, 2010
@ 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
Anita S. Wooten
East Campus Gallery

- **Jeff League: Painting**
  Opening Reception:
  August 13, 2010
  @ 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
  Anita S. Wooten
  East Campus Gallery

**Homecoming ’10**
The start of a Valencia tradition.

This October, join Valencia for our first-ever homecoming celebration! With a variety of activities and events on multiple campuses, you’ll have plenty of opportunities to revisit the college and connect with fellow alumni, retirees and friends.

Homecoming plans are still in the works, but here’s how you can stay posted:

**ALUMNI AND STUDENTS:** Fill out the “Class Notes” form at [www.valenciacc.edu/alumni](http://www.valenciacc.edu/alumni)

**VALENCIA RETIREEs:** Complete the “Update Us” form at [www.valenciacc.edu/retireconnection](http://www.valenciacc.edu/retireconnection)

**FRIENDS:** Contact the Community and Alumni Relations office at 407-582-2946 or alumni@valenciacc.edu for more information.
Fernando Beltran has been a Walt Disney Cast Member for more than 22 years. He has been married to his best friend, Karen, for 10 years. Currently, he is a Business Program Facilitator for the Disney Institute.

“Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose.” — Tennessee Williams

This quote reminds me of what my mom used to say, “Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are.” For me that was a foundational message growing up that helped me build healthy and inspiring relationships all my life.

On January 24, 1966 I was born in New York City and was the baby of the family. My family had moved from Bogota, Colombia and there were four other siblings. The youngest was 14 and the oldest was turning 25. I wasn’t even two years old when my father died from a heart attack. It was then decided that we would move to Orlando to be close to my brothers who were in the Naval Training base where Baldwin Park sits today.

Growing up in Orlando, I attended Good Shepherd Catholic School and then Bishop Moore High School. On the outside it looked like I had a privileged life but by government standards we were living in poverty. To this day, I do not know how my mom was able to afford my education but what I do know is that she worked several jobs to make ends meet. Food stamps and welfare checks were part of my life along with special friends that always made me laugh and kept things real. This became evident the day of my mom’s funeral.

It was in my junior year in high school when I lost my mom to a brain tumor that had plagued her for more than two years. At her funeral, I can remember exiting the church and being surrounded by my friends and their parents. I knew at that moment that I was going to be OK.

My friends and I eventually graduated from Bishop Moore in 1984, and I can remember being excited about the opportunities before me but also scared of losing...
my friends. Fortunately, I was working part-time at Walt Disney in entertainment and a new chapter of my life was beginning.

I was now attending Valencia Community College on an art scholarship and making new friends. Eventually I finished my A.A. from Valencia and made the Dean’s List in 1987; two things I never thought I would accomplish or had been accomplished in my family.

It has been 23 years since I graduated and today many would say I am successful in many aspect of my life. Maybe, but it took faith, hope and true friends that inspired me every day to make me who I am today.

“As I look back I can point to seven key aspects of friendships that continue to INSPIRE me to never give up:

I-N-S-P-I-R-E: The Seven Keys to Success

INTIMACY.
I don’t mean in a physical sense but in the true sense of the word, intimacy. In other words, thinking of intimacy as INTO ME SEE. Allowing others to see you for who you are, to be authentic and to be real. Guys, having friends you can cry with is not a girly thing.

NURTURING.
This is thinking about what others need and giving unconditionally. This is an act of sacrifice. What is more amazing is how much you receive in the process. Losing my parents at an early age I saw how my friends nurtured me through very difficult times.

SURRENDER.
Interesting word surrender because it means “giving up” for many people. For me, it meant letting go of hurts and habits that were counterproductive to the well being of the ones I cared for in my life and to myself. Friendship is like a dance, sometimes you lead and sometimes you follow. The key is to know when to follow and let go.

PERSPIRE.
Yes, sweat together. Today, we see so many loved ones in unhealthy situations and tolerate this behavior. If it wasn’t for one of my closest friends, an endurance athlete, gently challenging me to participate in healthier activities, I would be still be over 200lbs and on heart medication. Today, I am prepping for my 18th 5K in 18 months and I am off all medication. Relationship takes a bit of perspiration and no one ever drowned from sweat.

INFLUENCE.
What happens to a young 15-year-old boy after losing his mom and dad? I can say today, that without the influence of positive role models and friends that shared strong family values, my story could have had a different ending. Your actions do influence others. They tell a story about what you value. Become a valuable influence in someone else’s life.

RECOVER.
In my life I have needed to recover from hurt relationships gone bad, being abandoned, even betrayed. Today I can tell you I am a stronger person because I had others become part of my story and help me recover the pieces. It is not pretty letting others be part of the process but I would not have survived the trials of my life without them. Thank you!

ENCOURAGE.
When was the last time you were encouraged? How many reality shows are there where all you see and hear are people tearing each other down? Begin today by encouraging one other person and begin to plant the seeds that INSPIRE a relationship.

“Promise me you’ll always remember: You’re braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”
—Christopher Robin to Pooh
Reviving Passion and Meaning in Uncertain Times

By Jim Belcher, Professor of Biology, East Campus

Our passion is our connection to the world, our unique way of responding to others. Reviving our passion can start with healing the separation most of us feel — from ourselves, others, and the world. For some, the anguish we feel at the devastation we see in the world closes our hearts and numbs our minds. The forecast for the world is rough weather ahead. When faced with rough weather, we tend to withdraw.

When the going gets tough, what do we do? We want to distract ourselves. At times, we get lost in our mind-numbing habits — we go shopping, watch TV and eat too much. When we lose our connection with our passion, our creative fire, life loses meaning.

Zen poet Thich Nhat Hanh was asked, “What do we most need to do to save our world?” His answer was this: “What we most need to do is to hear within us the sounds of the earth crying.”

*What can we do when we are lost? We can stand still and listen within us for the cries of the world. When we find the courage to stay with what’s happening and not what we think should be happening, passion finds us and meaning returns even deeper.

1. Start with gratitude. What makes you glad to be alive? Be creative. Reflect in silence. Do this often. Remember all that you are grateful for. Express your gratitude.
2. Reach out. Open your heart. Listen to the cries of the world. It takes courage to experience, express and listen to the anguish, concerns, fears and anger we feel. Try to just experience these things in yourself and others. Express what you feel.
3. Stay conscious, return to mindfulness. Be willing to look with new eyes, a new perspective. Cultivate your compassion for others. Replace old perspectives. What matters most now? When we are willing to look at things with new eyes, we begin to heal the separation, to reconnect, to re-ignite the creative fire. Passion is finding us. Stay open. Let the fire breathe.
4. Go forth. What can we do in the world to follow our new connections, our new passions? Sit quietly and reflect. What are you most interested in? What are you most talented at? Respond to the cries that you hear with the talents you have. You are a gift. You have a unique contribution to make. Encourage yourself and others to be bold, be courageous, and be the contributions you are.

I am grateful to Joanna Macy for her Work that Reconnects. She is a constant source of inspiration to me. joannamacy.net/

* From World as Lover, World as Self by Joanna Macy
Valencia Grad is Seminole’s Teacher of the Year
Valencia graduate Bradford Barsalou, who teaches at Crooms Academy of Information Technology in Sanford, was named Seminole County’s 2011 Teacher of the Year, to serve during the 2010-2011 school year. Barsalou teaches Advanced Placement U.S. government and politics, AP world history, honors economics, world history, and leadership skills. Barsalou graduated from Valencia in 1997 before completing a Bachelor’s in political science and history from Stetson University.

Valencia students to be featured in video series, “Take America to College”
Two Valencia students were chosen from 200 contestants to appear in a video series called, “Take America to College.” Charnee Ball (right), a navy veteran, and Kathryn McCormick (center), a single mother who waitresses 35 hours a week, will reveal their struggles in getting through college. The women traveled with five other finalists to Washington, D.C. to share their stories and concerns with policymakers about current initiatives to increase graduation rates. The videos can also be seen at www.takeamericatocollege.com.

Take Stock in Children Golf Tournament
Take Stock in Children hosted its first annual golf tournament on April 26 at the Lake Nona Golf and Country Club with signature sponsors, Full Sail University and Tavistock Foundation. Eighty-eight golfers came out for the event, which raised $62,000 to provide underserved children in Central Florida with scholarships for college, mentors and hope.

Valencia Receives $100,000 Wal-Mart Minority Student Success Award
The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) selected Valencia to receive a Wal-Mart Minority Student Success Award — a $100,000 grant to help build on Valencia’s demonstrated successes in enrolling, retaining and graduating first-generation, minority college students. The grant was made possible by a $4.2 million grant to IHEP from the Wal-Mart Foundation. Valencia was one of only 30 minority-serving institutions to receive the grant.

Congratulations to the Class of 2010
On Saturday, May 8, another 6,723 students joined the more than 70,000 graduates who have received degrees since Valencia was established in 1967.

Valencia News Online
There are now several ways to access Valencia news and information online. Visit our news blog: valenciacc-news.com, become a fan on Facebook™: facebook.com/myvalencia, or follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/ValenciaUpdates.

West Campus Student Service Building to Get New Name
In honor of Mears Transportation Group’s pledge to give $1 million to Valencia Foundation, the Student Services Building on West Campus will be renamed the Paul Mears Sr. Student Services Building. Mears’ generous gift will establish the Paul Mears Sr. Take Stock in Children Fund, in memory of Paul Mears Sr. The purpose of the fund is to support educational opportunities through the Take Stock in Children program.

OOPS!
Keep your eyes peeled and let us know if you see any errors in this issue of Vitae. We’re always eager to learn from our mistakes. Send corrections to alumni@valenciacc.edu

VALENCE
NEWS

Photo courtesy of www.takeamericatocollege.com
Stay connected.

Join the Alumni Association.

It’s the best way to know what’s going on with Valencia, other alumni and the community – and it’s free! For more information and to apply for membership, please visit our website at valenciacc.edu/alumni, or contact us at 407-582-2946 or alumni@valenciacc.edu.

Benefits and Services Include:

- Copy of Vitae mailed to you
- 10% discount – Valencia Conferences registration
- 15% discount – Valencia Conference & Meeting Planning Services
- 10% discount – Valencia Enterprises continuing education classes and programs
- Discounted Valencia Character Company theater performances
- Employment services for job seekers and employers
- Discounted Valencia 5K registration

Leaders Wanted!

Help us to create exciting, new, Alumni Association programs and activities. Consider becoming a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors or leader of a special project. Information is available on the alumni Web site or by calling the Alumni Relations Office.

Membership is FREE

Full Member
Has successfully earned an A.A., A.S. or A.A.S. degree.

Student Member
Has started but not yet completed an A.A., A.S. or A.A.S. degree.

Honorary Member
Any individual who is not otherwise qualified to be a member, but receives approval by a majority vote of the Association’s Board of Directors.

Vaughn Alumni Association
701 N. Econlockhatchee Trail
Orlando, FL 32825
Address Service Requested