

THE CARDINAL TIMES

Written by, Alison Kennedy



Summer Break Is Here!

* Summer/Fall 2026
July 6, 2026

Summer/Fall Semester
Begins: Monday, July 6,
2026



CAA GRADUATION

* CAA Graduation
Celebration at Mission
College
June 20, 2026

**Congratulations to all of
the College of Adaptive
Arts graduates!**



PHOTO TAKEN BY ROBERT TAFOYA

Jerry Evans and Doc Lewis Make a Delightful Appearance At Second Accessibility Expo

On Wednesday, March 18th, 2026, from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm the second annual Technology and Accessibility Expo took place in the library on the main campus of West Valley College. The expo was hosted by both West Valley College and the College of Adaptive Arts (CAA). Students and staff sat at the long tables listening to the two guest speakers. Doc Lewis and Henry Evan were guests of honor. Both guests shared inspirational stories with the attendees.

Lewis, who resides in Fresno, California, was awarded a Grammy as a gospel singer. Evan is nonverbal. Evan used modern technology to share that he suffered a major stroke that paralyzed him and left him unable to speak. Evan created Robots for Humanity, an organization that makes robots to help those who are unable to do certain things that most take for granted.

Lewis and Evans showcased their inspirational videos during the Expo. There were accommodations for people with hearing differences. There was a big screen TV by the main door to the event with a court reporter typing word-for-word what the videos were about. This is an example of assistive technology, known as CART. CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation and provides a live, word-for-word speech-to-text service provided by a certified stenographer. CART is recognized as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, and it allows individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to read instantaneously what is being spoken. CAA also uses CART services for our community events.

After the event, CAA employees had the opportunity to meet and talk with Doc Lewis. Some students took pictures with Lewis. Lewis shared 25 autographed copies of his book to CAA.

West Valley Hosts Second Annual Rotarian Art Show

On Saturday, May 2, 2026, the Saratoga Rotary Club hosted at the West Valley College campus with 125 booths.

Besides the 125 booths of creative works on display, there was a kid's center with face painting and artwork. Three food trucks were parked right behind the CAA site: Momo Grill, Local Sustainable Organic. Kettle Korn, Cousins Lobster and Grill. The cafeteria at West Valley College had a booth featuring various snacks and beverages. There was music throughout the entire event.

One booth was designated to the College of Adaptive Arts (CAA), a privately accredited college for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The booth set aside for CAA featured three students who created outstanding works of art. Kayla Jimenez, Shane Tarkington, and Rujul Bandikalla. All three artists representing CAA had their own table to display their artwork. When asked how long it takes her to do a single art project, Kayla Jimenez said "Not very long". Jimenez went on to say some take longer than others. "A bigger piece of art will take longer than a small piece of artwork."

Jimenez's answer was very similar to what many artists had to say when asked how much time they needed to complete their art projects. That goes for artists from CAA as well as the community artists displaying and selling their work at the Rotarian Art Show.

Maureen Tarkington said her son Shane Tarkington is a student at CAA. Shane spends more time on bigger, more detail-oriented projects compared to smaller, simpler pieces.

Education is another key feature in the artwork featured at the event. Fellow student Rujul Bandikalla and fellow rotarians agree that education goes a long way in being an artist. Bandikalla's parents say their son has taken art classes at CAA as well as Mission College. Several artists shared that knowing what you're doing beforehand is helpful, so you have the right materials and skills to take your creativity to the next level.



PHOTOS TAKEN BY ROBERT TAFOYA



Community building with CAA and the Los Gatos Kiwani's Club

Thursday, May 14th, the Kiwanis Club welcomed Co-Founder DeAnna Pursai of The College of Adaptive Arts (CAA) at Double D's restaurant in Los Gatos at one of the groups regular meetings. CAA is a private non-profit college for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities eighteen and older who would not typically have access to a college education. Fellow staff members, Curtis Kitaji and Alison Kennedy, were also present to represent CAA and its student body of 304 pupils. Curtis and Ali are part of the Workforce Development Program.

The Kiwanis Club is a global organization that aims to be a positive influence in communities worldwide. "Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time" (kiwanis.org). The main purpose of the meeting was to share the work of CAA with the local Kiwanis Club. During the lunch meeting, CAA shared a three-minute-long video to educate Kiwanis members about CAA. Speeches were given throughout the meeting. Various members of the Kiwanis Foundation shared personal knowledge about the club.

DeAnna Pursai shared the story about how CAA was created in 2009 with Dr. Pamela Lindsay. Dr. Pam is the other co-founder of CAA. In 2009, they both had adults in their own families with disabilities, which inspired them to create CAA. Lindsay and Pursai found out that besides day programs, there were no options to benefit adults after they turn 22 in higher education. In August 2009, Dr. Pam Lindsay started teaching musical theatre with 12 students. Now, almost seventeen years later, there are 304 students enrolled within CAA either virtually or in person. The college now has its own small building on the grounds of West Valley College in Saratoga, California. The meeting concluded with Kiwani's members expressing their respect, appreciation, and admiration for CAA and the impact it makes in our community.



CAA Line Dancing Lounge Night

Saturday, May 16th, the entire student body, staff, care providers, as well as a few special guests from College of Adaptive Arts (CAA) piled into the Hospitality room at Mission College at 300 Mission College Boulevard in Santa Clara for the school's second line dancing event. The Lounge Night is one of CAA's favorite events organized by our Social Director, Paula Murray.

From 3-5 pm, Nicole Matarangas, dance instructor and Director of the School of Health and Wellness at CAA, led the crowd through at least 5 songs and dance routines. Students and attendees alike lined up in long vertical lines across the dance floor. Many of whom wore western-style attire. Most students wore plaid-covered shirts with blue jeans. Bandanas were given out as party favors in various colors.

Small refreshments, including bottled water, were laid out for free. Three tables had coloring pages and felt pens for students to get creative off the dance floor. The check-in station was managed by Bobbi Tafoya from Student Services. Students were able to pose with a large frame for pictures, dance, create, eat, socialize, and enjoy time with friends and family.

A quiet room was set up down the hall and to the right of the party for those who required it. Alison Gray, manager of the college's Workforce Development Program, and student Kyra Attenbury were in charge of the event's quiet zone.

The music was turned off right at 5 PM on the dot. Leftover refreshments were packed, and tables were dismantled. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped bring the event together for our students and the CAA community. The second lounge night of the semester was a complete success!



PHOTOS TAKEN BY
ROBERT TAFOYA



Q&A with Dr. Pam on CAA being honored as America's Most Admired Work Culture



Question 1: Can you explain the award that you received in Washington, D.C.?

Answer: The award received in Washington, DC, was called the “America’s Most Admired Cultures” award, recognizing outstanding organizational culture. Some of the reasons CAA received this award are our foundational, innovative models to promote accessibility for staff and students, and our work to change perceptions through national demonstration of the incredible talents and abilities of all individuals. A panel of prestigious reviewers chose the recipients. The award was presented by DRiWaterstone Human Capital and CEO Doug Trout. All recipients also received a copy of Doug’s popular book titled “Culturepreneur” and a rare commemorative 2026 ornament from the White House Historical Society. My favorite part of the ceremony was when they showed a video about CAA to the attendees, including interviews about and glimpses into our college campus and classes. The eyes and hearts of everyone watching swelled with tears of appreciation and joy!

Question 2: How long ago did you apply for the award?

Answer: After finding out we were nominated for this award, the co-founders initially submitted information together about how we worked to build unique and historic accessibility for students and staff into this higher education model. We then received information that we were a finalist for the award. A short time later, we learned we were one of only 10 winners from across the country who would fly to Washington, DC, to receive the award at the White House Historical Society.

Question 3: How long were you ladies in Washington, D.C?

Answer: We were there for a few days. When we first learned we would travel to DC, we took the opportunity to make an appointment at the Capitol's Longworth Building to meet with California Congressman Sam Liccardo. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about pathways for moving the CAA model out across the country to all of the adults still needing this lifelong and equitable higher education option. We also visited the offices of other representatives, spreading the word about CAA

Q&A with Dr. Pam on CAA being honored as America's Most Admired Work Culture

Question 4: Did you see any famous tourist attractions or events while in Washington, D.C.?

Answer: While staying centrally in the middle of DC, I was able to see and take pictures of many monuments just by driving through town! Some of these include those around the National Mall, such as the Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson Memorials. One of my favorite things was the opportunity to walk through the underground tunnels connecting the Capitol Buildings while navigating between the offices of the multiple representatives I visited. We also took in an incredible view of the monuments and White House from the top of the famous Washington Hotel.

Question 5: What did you like the most about Washington, D.C.?

Answer: The thing I liked most about this trip was the chance to proudly represent our entire Cardinal family in receiving such visible recognition for our revolutionary higher educational opportunity. After countless years of work, it represents a national stamp of approval for how we have all “built the college we couldn’t find” and are making it available to adults throughout the country. In a nutshell, my favorite part was that our unique CAA model and college culture received additional and beautiful validation through this most humbling and appreciated national award.

Question 6: Did you see any of our remote professors and/or staff members while in the nation’s capital?

Answer: We did! Professor Lauren Bridgman-Fralin lives near DC and joined us for the award ceremony. Fun fact: Lauren has over 100 chickens at her house! Nicole’s sister, Jennifer, was also able to join us each day, with tons of congratulatory support. We were all able to take some lovely pictures together.

Question 7: What do you most recommend to someone who wants to visit Washington, D.C.?

Answer: If anyone is headed to DC for the first time, I would highly recommend a day pass for the “Old Town Trolleys,” which drive between all the major monuments and attractions all day. You can jump off and hop on at any stop, like the cable cars in San Francisco. Or, just stay on for the whole route and get pictures of them all. Night-time tours of all of the dramatically lit monuments are another personal favorite.

The Cardinal Times Editorial and Photography Team

Alison Kennedy, Editor and Writer



Hi, my name is Alison Kennedy. Not only am I a journalist and the editor of The Cardinal Times for the College of Adaptive Arts, but I am also a writer at heart since writing is one of my favorite hobbies. I hold a degree from San Jose City College in journalism. My love for journalism comes from my love to meet and talking to people. As someone who loves to write and to meet people, my vision for the school newsletter would be for more people to get to know each other.

Robert Tafoya, Photographer



My name is Robert Tafoya. Photography is something I like to do a lot. It makes me happy. I like to take my time. My mind thinks about good backgrounds, not blurry ones. I have liked taking pictures for a long time. I like electronics like my iPad. I enjoy taking pictures of my church, Terry, friends, and family. I would like to have a career in taking pictures for the June youth conference (Northern Valley Baptist Church).

