



LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

Newsletter October 2025

Dear Friends,

The LAVC Community benefits from the many individuals who dedicate their time and efforts on behalf of LAVC Students. From dedicated staff members to faculty and board members, their individual efforts contribute to a greater whole.



This month, we are profiling LAVC Community Services Director Debra Erickson and highlighting her tireless efforts to [expand the center's programming to the greater community](#).

In addition, we congratulate LAVC Foundation Board Member Sharon J. Udkoff on her being nominated as one of five finalists for this year's Fernando Award. [The Fernando Award](#) is the highest award for volunteerism and philanthropy in the San Fernando Valley, and is supported by the Valley Chambers of Commerce, civic and philanthropic organizations, entrepreneurs and corporations located in the San Fernando Valley. Congratulations Sharon!

Every day, we encounter individuals who go above and beyond to ensure LAVC students receive the best possible educational experience. One such individual is Jason Beaton, who is an LAVC professor of Media Arts, Broadcasting, and Vocational Education. Jason oversees [KVCM](#), LAVC's very own radio station. The station enables broadcasting students to be able to express their ideas, thoughts, stories, and music in a radio and podcasting setting. [You can listen to it here](#).

Every day, these dedicated individuals tell the story of Valley College. By supporting the Foundation, you support their efforts. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schmitt
Executive Director

Pictured above Left to Right: 2025 Fernando Award nominees Armida Colmenares-Stafford, Dennis DeYoung, Jorge E. Rabaso, and Sharon Udkoff. Not pictured: Steve Fazio.

LAVC Profile: Debra Erickson



Debra Erickson in her office at LAVC's Community Services Department

“Community Services at LAVC is more than just classes - it’s about family, belonging, and lifelong learning,” says Debra Erickson, who leads the department with passion and purpose.

Raised in the San Fernando Valley by a family of educators, Debra always knew education would be part of her path. “I never imagined it would be in higher education,” she reflects. Her journey began at the University of Utah, where she discovered the transformative power of continuing education. “It was never just a job. I loved meeting students, hearing their stories, and building connections.”

“We welcome everyone, from age 5 to 95,” she says. “We bring the community to campus, and the campus to the community.” Her vision for the next five years includes expanding partnerships with local businesses, offering classes in restaurants, bakeries, and flower shops. One such partnership is already blooming: a floral design program led by a local entrepreneur. “One day, I hope we’ll hold those classes right in her shop,” Debra says. “That way, we’re enriching lives and supporting small businesses.”

And that, she says, is the spirit of LA Valley College. "Our colleagues support each other like family. Valley isn't just a college. It's a community where people care deeply. When you give here, you're not just supporting [Community Services](#). You're investing in Valley, and in the lives, we change every day."

"A Perilous Reckoning" LAVC Art Gallery



The 2025–2026 LAVC Art Gallery season opened this September with "A Perilous Reckoning", a solo exhibition by artist [Gina Herrera](#). Drawing on her Native American (Tesuque Pueblo) and Costa Rican heritage, as well as her 25 years of service in the Armed Forces, Herrera's work weaves together natural materials, branches, rocks, cocoons, and nests, with reflections on conflict, industrialization, and our planet's fragile future. [The show runs through October 17th and is free to the public.](#) Fall 2025 Regular Gallery hours are Mondays from 6-8 p.m., and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 1-6 p.m.

Veterans Archery Workshop



Last month, student veterans participated in an archery workout with LAVC's Kinesiology faculty to learn and develop archery skills. The workshop was hosted by LAVC's [Veterans Resource Center](#), as part of a series designed to support mental health and well-being for student veterans. These events help foster an environment of unconditional belonging, community, and encouragement as students transition from the military and seek to complete their educational and career goals. The workshops have been well-received by students as they enjoy the activities, build friendships, and take a break from academics.

Upcoming Events



LAVC HALL OF FAME 2025 BBQ

Saturday, November 1st

BARBEQUE: 12PM

GAME: 1PM



LA VALLEY

VS



LA SOUTHWEST

Event is free but a \$10 Donation would be appreciated.

DONATE HERE:

LAVC FOUNDATION ATHLETICS



OAK CREST LAW GROUP

ESTATE PLANNING, TRUST & PROBATE

Back by popular demand! Our second annual **Estate Planning Seminar** will be held on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at Los Angeles Valley College. Look for more information on how to register soon!

Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) is a two-year community college in Valley Glen, CA and part of the nine-college Los Angeles Community College District. It serves a student body of over 18,000 students each year from some of the most disenfranchised communities in the San Fernando Valley. **The Los Angeles Valley**

College Foundation's mission is to enhance the education of its students through community involvement and to provide additional financial resources to Los Angeles Valley College.

Donate to the LAVC Foundation

Thank you to our President's Circle Member:



www.lavcfoundation.org | (818) 947-2619

Stay connected with LAVC Foundation! Get the latest news, upcoming events, and Foundation highlights by following us on social media.



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