



Summer Newsletter

HELPING PEOPLE DO THE THINGS THEY LOVE



Join VCB in congratulating three of our clients who recently graduated, Mia, Kong, and Debra! We are extremely proud of these individuals for this major accomplishment and are delighted to share these milestones with you.

Mia, our long time VCB team member who has taught braille and been an excellent part of our COVID-19 response team, graduated from Fresno State with her Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling this year. Mia expressed what a great feeling it is to have reached this milestone. She looks forward to taking a much-needed break before seeking a job with the Department of Rehabilitation.

Mia had the opportunity to be part of VCB's first summer youth program and has been involved with the organization ever since. She would like to thank VCB for all the support and for allowing her to gain virtual work experience. "I want to let anyone looking to pursue a degree know, school is possible, even with a disability, I want to let them know there is so much help and resources offered within the university. If they do have dreams to further their education, go for it- do not let your fears and anxiety hold you back!" Way to go, Mia!

Kong graduated this summer from Fresno City College with his Associates Degree in Pre-Social Work. He expressed how happy he was for having reached this goal. He is thankful for having his family as an amazing support system and for VCB giving him the confidence to go back to

school. Kong stated that he is looking forward to sharing with the Asian American Community the services and support available through VCB, after being inspired by his work with staff members such as Tom, Jose, and Matt. "I feel like VCB had all the answers I needed." He encourages others to pursue their educational goals. "You have to have the will and accept you will be doing things differently in and out of the classroom." We are extra excited to report that Kong will begin pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Social Work starting this fall at Fresno State.

Long time client and a huge part of the VCB family, Debra, received her Associate in Science in Paralegal Studies, Certificate of Achievement in Paralegal Studies, and the 21st Century Competency Award for 2021 from Fresno City College this year! She shared she is extremely thankful for VCB's endless support and for providing her with the necessary tools to succeed, specifically our assistive technology program that made these achievements possible. With the help of VCB's Employment Services, Debra recently attained a great job with the Fresno Federal Courts. Her advice for others is, "Even though it may be difficult, keep reaching for the stars and do not give up on your dreams!" Debra, we are so proud of you!

Thank you to Mia, Kong, and Debra for letting us share their remarkable stories of perseverance and achievement. You inspire us all!



Adaptive Sports are Back!



VCB is proud to see the return to our exciting Adaptive Recreation Program to provide inclusive opportunities for adventure, confidence boosting, and team building. This program will be offered every summer and winter allowing clients to have powerful experiences in the beautiful outdoors. VCB primarily offers our Adaptive Recreation Program in partnership with Central California Adaptive Sports Center, which incorporates the latest equipment and therapeutic recreation practices for people with disabilities.

The program facilitates activities in a professional manner with the goal of providing programming that has a lasting impact on the quality of our participants' lives. Our clients can expect to do a wide range of seasonal activities such as mountain biking, beach yoga, rock climbing, skiing, kayaking, and paddle boarding. Said one summer program participant, "It was very humbling seeing my totally blind friends overcome their life challenges and reach their goals. I was so moved from the experience- I think anyone would be."



A VCB client makes it to the top during adaptive rock climbing.



VCB Employment Specialist Jamie and Guide Dog Tad relax around the campfire.

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Dear Friends of VCB,
How quickly the summer has passed! As these past months have gone by, VCB was delighted to see the return of some of our favorite programs which were paused due to COVID. Our monthly

“lunch bunch” group resumed meeting in July, bringing clients together to celebrate accomplishments, discuss solutions to barriers, and enjoy the camaraderie of being with people with shared life experiences.

We have also revived our Adaptive Summer Workshops in partnership with Central California Adaptive Sports Center. This exhilarating program gives people who are blind the opportunity to head to an authentic camping experience in Shaver Lake and participate in activities such as rock climbing, paddle boarding, hiking, and fishing. This program is an amazing example of how just a few days can truly change a life- we love the empowering stories that come out of this camp.

This summer we have also seen great progress made in our community partnerships resulting in work experience and jobs for VCB clients. Amazon, Goodwill of South Central California, IRS, and Good Dirt Pottery Studio are all actively working with our organization to improve equity in employment here in the Central Valley. We appreciate each new partnership that broadens VCB’s reach and gives our clients a better variety of work experiences.

So many of the successes we have experienced this year have been dreams for such a long time. Clients are succeeding in school, work, and recreation in a way that VCB

has never experienced before. The hard work, growth, and accomplishments are boundlessly rewarding for our team who is united by our simple but important mission: We train, support, and employ people who are blind or low vision. As we move into our next stages, we continue to seek more community partners and supporters. Your gift to VCB is used directly to fulfill that mission which time and time again, has truly changed lives. Thank you for being a part of our journey- your support makes every achievement possible.



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” -Helen Keller

All the best,



Shellena Heber
SHeber@myVCB.org
559-222-4447 or 661-865-5115



As a VCB employee, I've had the pleasure of getting to know many inspirational clients and team members who have lost their vision. It's been (for lack of a better term) incredibly eye-opening to be surrounded by people who represent the true meaning of hard work and dedication. One of them is none other than our very own Juan Ramirez.

Juan is a Spanish-speaking client who is going through Assistive Technology and Orientation and Mobility training while working towards his GED and attending West Hills Community College. Juan is learning everything from a different perspective. He is using his assistive technology skills to learn a variety of different websites, Microsoft Word, and Outlook, and all while learning his second language, English.

Juan began to lose his vision when he was nine years old. After falling on a glass table, he lost sight in his right eye and was later diagnosed with glaucoma. As of 2018, Juan had little to no vision remaining. He can see some sunlight through his right eye, but indoors everything is completely dark. Like many of our clients, his biggest struggle has been losing his independence. He found everyday things like going to appointments, going to the store, and picking up groceries very difficult to complete on his own. That is where VCB has stepped in and made all the difference. Juan knows he has a long way to go, but as difficult as his journey has been, he knows nothing is impossible. With his incredible support system by his side, Juan will never lose his motivation. He describes his experience at VCB as a roller coaster of emotions. It was far from easy but he is eternally grateful for VCB because it has changed his life for the better. Juan has worked very hard and continues to amaze us every day with the amount of heart, hard work, and dedication he puts into everything he does. We are so proud of his success and know this is just the beginning of his story. Stay tuned... because we know great things are coming for him!

- Destiny Martin



"Everything you've always wanted to have is on the other side of fear."



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**Fresno, California
(559) 222-4447**

3417 W. Shaw Ave. Fresno, Ca. 93711

**Bakersfield, California
(661) 865-5115**

1707 Eye St. Bakersfield, Ca. 93301