



NEWS from CAA

We are Different.
We are Able.

Mission

CAA provides an equitable collegiate experience to adults with special needs who historically have not had access to college education.

Vision

Empowering the student body to creatively transform the way the world views individuals with disabilities. CAA creates successful contributing citizens through the arts.

Motto

Showcase Ability!

Founders

Dr. Pamela Lindsay, EdD/CI
DeAnna Pursai, Exec. Dir.
Board of Directors
Adrien LeBlavant, Chair
Toni Cook
Stephen A. Fiss
Mimi Giannini
Santee Raval-Kiehl
Nicole Matarangas
Teresa Montes de Oca
Ivan Rodriguez
Joe Siecinski
Jen Mulry, ex-officio

Executive Board of

Directors
Ali Barekat
Reverend David Bird
David Cross
Piero Dusa
Fleet Easton
Omair M. Farooqui
Hubert Gotuaco
Geri Jewell
Sam T. Liccardo
David Maley
Michael Pritchard
Blair Williamson
Gail Williamson



Mayor Sam Liccardo inspires the crowd at CAA's Visionary Luncheon at Scott's Seafood

Momentum is accelerating for this lifelong collegiate model

The first half of 2019 has been truly historic for the College of Adaptive Arts. Thanks to the tremendous underwriting by Cisco, CAA was able to produce four ABC7 Bay Area LIFE segments featuring CAA and community partnerships, students and families, professors and staff, and CAA's quest to take this model nationwide to become the Special Olympics-type model in the education space.

On January 10, we launched our ten-month Epic Party celebrating our 10th year of existence. Each month we will feature stories about CAA's beginnings, students, donors and supporters, and CAA professors, all of whom are pouring their hearts and souls into making this equitable collegiate model a viable reality for adults with special needs who are hungry to learn past age 22.

In March, CAA received a Certificate of Commendation from Mayor Sam Liccardo and the San Jose city council. In April—Autism Awareness Month—we were honored with a Congressional Certificate of Recognition by United States Congressman Ro Khanna for providing lifelong collegiate education to adults who historically have not had access to higher education. The Rotary Club of San Jose Silicon Valley Foundation gave us a grant for new classroom tables and chairs. And the Office of Cultural Affairs awarded the College of Adaptive Arts a TakePART grant to build out the School of Fine Arts.

In May, Mayor Sam Liccardo spoke at CAA's sold-out Giving Luncheon. Donations tripled over that of previous years, thanks to the exquisite talents and skills of Dee Dee Kiesow of BenEvent Auctions. The audience was spellbound by compelling speeches from CAA film actor Oliver Motiee and Cisco Executive Karen Sanders, who has been a steadfast supporter and underwriter of the College and its School of Health and Wellness.

Community collaborations continue to grow and strengthen with the San Jose Museum of Art New Terrains Project, which allowed CAA to produce its graduate theatre troupe to perform the *Camping Trip* at their beautiful venue. as well CAA's School of TV/Film's 10th Annual Best of the Fest Film Festival. The Latizmo Hip Hop Troupe DreamTeam and the Graduate Theatre Troupe showcased their incredible dance and teamwork abilities at sjDANCEco festival and at STEAMfest of Redwood City. The Sign Language, Adaptive Guitar, and Children's Music troupes were received by a standing ovation from 400+ women educator leaders at the State Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) Convention in May.

CAA continues to grow and flourish thanks to the collective goodwill, spirit, and belief that education truly is for all adults who want to continue to grow and learn and to become the best versions of themselves. Thank you for your steadfast belief in this model. Please join us at Saratoga Springs on 10/10 for a #CAA10YearsStrong Epic Party of the decade!



Trying out Adaptive Guitar

@CAACardinals

caacardinals

collegeofadaptivearts

collegeofadaptivearts

www.collegeofadaptivearts.org

1401 Parkmoor Ave., Studio 260
San Jose, CA 95126

408-538-3809

info@collegeofadaptivearts.org

From the board

Ivan Rodriguez

I loved CAA as soon as I walked in.

There was something powerful about College of Adaptive Arts. I was eager to get involved; I thought “maybe I can offer my theater training and experiences or help out in any other way needed.” Shortly after our first visit, I talked to DeAnna and Pam about the possibility of getting involved. I had the privilege of becoming a Board Member two months later.

In January, as the Graduate Theater class rehearsed their play, the *Camping Trip*, Professor Katie encouraged me to offer acting notes to the students. Each week, the students worked tirelessly, as we dug deeper into their characters. And recently, volunteering during the play's preview at San Jose Museum of Art, I was as nervous as I used to be as a young actor.

I believe in CAA's mission of providing an equitable collegiate experience to adults with special needs. I believe in the students' competence and unique abilities. I believe in a culture of active engagement, high expectations, and empowering students to expand their strengths while maintaining a safe space for creativity and expression. I believe in CAA.

It is important for me to dedicate time to an institution which can serve and teach someone like my younger sister, who has Down Syndrome. College of Adaptive Arts has become an essential part of my life.

That something powerful is the students, faculty/staff, parents and leaders of the College of Adaptive Arts. I am very excited to continuously assist in the growth and be a part of the CAA community.

Warmly, Ivan Rodriguez, MFA



CAA board member Ivan Rodriguez kicks off the Visionary Luncheon at Scott's Seafood

Reflections on 10 years of growing this college model ...from the journals of the founders

DeAnna's daughter, Nina, remembers when the idea of a college for adults with disabilities was born:

It was 2008. I was in the back; DeAnna and Pam were driving. DeAnna said, "You know, we should start a college for adults with differing abilities." Pam, who was interested in developing a theatre arts program, replied, "OK." Pam suggested, "How about if we call it the College of Adaptive Arts?" DeAnna replied, "OK."

What followed was brainstorming, researching, writing a business plan, talking with parents of adults with special needs, more brainstorming. Homebase was a local coffee shop where town hall-style meetings were held. There were many moments of joy and pride; one of DeAnna's was receiving a notepad emblazoned with the CAA logo that Pam sketched.

The 2009 inaugural school year began with small group classes at Pam's house. By the summer, CAA had received its charitable organization status and moved the show to Capitol Dance Company where a musical theatre workshop class dubbed the "Showboaters" served 12 students. By fall, more adults found the College and the course offerings grew to include choir, guitar, songwriting, and visual arts. In the fall of 2009, the de Oro Cupertino Club invited the students to perform. Pam and DeAnna were so grateful for the opportunity to illuminate the students' abilities; that trip launched the development of CAA's beloved dance, music, and spirit squad community touring ensembles.

Since then, the students have consistently elevated their work, goals, dreams, and expectations. Over the years, we've held classes at Capitol Dance Company, Randol School, Redwood City Senior Center, Starting Arts, UGMX Recording Studio, Trinity Cathedral Church, Silver Creek Sportsplex, CCO, the

Almaden YMCA, HOPE Services, and other generous community locales. The students and instructors worked hard to spread the word about this collegiate model for adults of all abilities, and the power of ongoing educational opportunity. In 2015, CAA was acknowledged as an approved state program for the adults served and we moved to our current Cardinal "nest" thanks to Barry Swenson Builders.

Over the years, our student body has steadily grown from 25...to 40...to 60...to 114 students enrolled this Spring '19 quarter. However, a bigger story exists behind that number. Most students enroll in multiple classes, and currently, they are filling over 425 seats at the physical and virtual campus. That's over 425 individual, adaptive learning experiences that our amazing professors plan every quarter, gathering resources and developing engaging curricula. We've also grown from offering a handful of classes to 10 Schools of Instruction, welcoming our new School of Business to the line-up during our 10th year. All of these wonderful developments are due to a robust, part-time staff of over 30 leaders and professors who teach over 40 courses each week.

We have a long way to go to bring this model into full fruition but today feel nothing but gratitude. We've made it #10YearsStrong. We are debt-free. We have a healthy and vibrant community of learners, professors, and supporters. We are helping adults, their families, and support team realize that there is so much more out there for them, even after they make that profound transition out of the public school system at age 22.

Each day looks a bit brighter than the previous day. Our hearts are full. Immeasurable thanks for your belief in the CAA students, mission, and vision.

Pam and De ☺



Broadcast personality Brian Adams is interviewed for a CAA podcast



Sound check

Cardinal student highlight: Kaleah Maldonado

When Kaleah Maldonado was three, her parents learned that Kaleaha had Jacobsen Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that only affects a few dozen families across the US. The average life expectancy was two years of age. Kaleaha is now 30, and a thriving student at the College of Adaptive Arts.

When Kaleaha turned 22 and exited the public school system, her parents struggled to find a viable option that would accommodate Kaleah's medical needs and her need to have a 1:1 assistant. They grappled with various programs that had high staff turnover rates, and at times they almost gave up. The inconsistency of staffing seriously affected Kaleaha's mental and cognitive abilities,

severely triggering her negative autistic tendencies.

Kaleaha's ILS service referred the family to the College of Adaptive Arts, as she was very impressed with the progress she saw there with her other clients. Kaleaha selected some courses and arranged various caregivers. After a brief period of adjustment, Kaleaha took off like a rocket! She started participating in programs that got her back out into the community. She enrolled in classes that rekindled her love of cheerleading. Reading and public speaking became new interests.

Kaleaha's mother reports, "As a family, we do not believe Kaleaha would have achieved



the success and overcome the many hurdles that she has, had it not been for the staff and programming at the College of Adaptive Arts. They have formatted a program that seeks out abilities and adapts a curriculum to allow individuals with different abilities to prosper and shine like the superstars they are."

Superstaff spotlight: Danielle Weaver

Danie Weaver is the Director of the School of Communications. She is also a lover of literature, hero journeys, and nerd-dom. Her philosophy inside and outside the classroom is that everyone has a voice and journey, and the only way empathy can start is by listening.

In the classroom, she believes in her students. She believes every student deserves a chance to read a novel more than 300 pages long, to read and write poetry, to have their own ideas and interpretations. Every student has the right to have an opinion, especially if it is different from the teacher's. She challenges her students and shows them how to believe in themselves.

What you may not know is Danie survived Hodgkin Lymphoma. At 25 years old and newly married, her life was a series of treatments, radiation, and chemo. To get her through this, Danie embraced poetry; it was a way for her to express all her feelings and talk about things for which there are no words.

The day came when treatment was finished but for safety, she was not allowed to be alone.

One day Danie accompanied her younger sister to a class at CAA. She was impressed with the respect given to the students and put a bug in DeAnna's ear about ways she could get involved.

The rest is history. Danie started at CAA in 2013 as an Assistant Professor. The next summer she created a poetry class which became one of the most popular classes at CAA. In quick succession came reading partners, sign language, speaking with confidence, and many more.

Danie loves to share and teach her favorite novels and encourages her students to explore tropes and relate them to their lives. As Danie was encouraging her students to use their voices, she felt a nudge to use her own. In 2018, Danie started a blog about fandom, anxiety, self-reflection, and how her world view changed as a cancer survivor.

When she's not teaching, scheduling APs and site managers, and doing payroll, Danie can be found at her desk, usually laughing, ready to discuss Anne of Green Gables or X-Men



comics. Danie loves visiting Disneyland or Disney World; she also loves the beach. Danie and her husband Jeremiah love going to superhero movies and drinking tea. Her favorite quote is from the Newsies Musical: "Courage cannot erase our fear. Courage is when we face our fear."

Check out Danie's blog at: <https://daniewithanereflections.blog>



Distance learning removes barriers to participation



Rehearsing interview techniques



Acting students review their scripts



College of Adaptive Arts
1401 Parkmoor Ave., Studio 260
San Jose, CA 95126

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 90
Santa Clara, CA

10s OF 10s AT 10 IN 10

- **10s OF 10s:** 100 NEW DONORS
- **AT 10:** \$10/MONTH RECURRING
- **IN 10:** CAA'S 10TH YEAR OF OPERATION: 2019

#CAA10YEARSSTRONG

BECOME A \$10/MONTH RECURRING DONOR

BE A PART OF HISTORY IN THE MAKING

52 recurring donors to date – 48 more to go by 10/10 at 10:10pm!

**Sign up as a monthly recurring donor at any meaningful amount
and receive a special prize!**

