



# NEWS from CAA

**We are Different.**  
**We are Able.**

## Mission

- Building an innovative college of the arts for students with disabilities

## Vision

- Empowering the student body to creatively transform the way the world views individuals with disabilities

## Mottos

- Lifelong collegiate experience through exposure, education and friendship
- Creating successful contributing citizens through the arts
- Showcase ability!

## Upcoming Events

### February 15

*Communications Showcase Night*  
Corinthian Grand Ballroom

### April 1

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Staff Showcase*  
The Hammer Theatre Center


### April 23

*9<sup>th</sup> Annual Film Festival*  
BlueLight Cinemas, Cupertino


### May 23

*Annual Giving Breakfast*  
Scott's Seafood

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[www.collegeofadaptivearts.org](http://www.collegeofadaptivearts.org)

1401 Parkmoor Ave., Studio 260

San Jose, CA 95126

408-384-8674

info@collegeofadaptivearts.org



## Highlights From College

This past fall has seen tremendous momentum for the College of Adaptive Arts. Thanks to the support of the San Andreas Regional Center and its Executive Director Javier Zaldivar, we have welcomed 15 new students and their families into the CAA community, bringing our total fall enrollment to 86 students.

With our grant from the Adobe Foundation, we have built out our distance learning infrastructure. CAA now has two rolling carts with Apple TVs, which in conjunction with Skype/teleconferencing will allow adults who cannot be physically present to be part of a learning community. We have begun testing with existing students and Skyped a *Spanish55* Spanish instructor from Mexico into our Spanish class this quarter. CAA has also welcomed two part-time technical support staff, who happen to have differing abilities, to the CAA Mountain Movers Leadership Team.



*An instructor in Tijuana joins a CAA Spanish class thanks to distance learning tools purchased with the support of a grant from the Adobe Foundation*

In October we held our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual College of Adaptive Arts Golf Classic at the Santa Teresa Golf Club. It was a glorious day bringing together 91 golfers from the community and the CAA Golf Team to enjoy a 9-hole round of golf. The Mountain Movers leadership team helped secure the most ever corporate sponsors to date, 28 in

total, which helped us gross \$40,000 which will be directly invested into our eight schools of study and our Education and Media Resource Library. San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo kicked off the afternoon, following a stellar performance by professional Elvis impersonator Ricky Torres, who also took students on a joyride in his beautiful pink Cadillac!



*San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo kicked off CAA's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic*

Fall Quarter ended on a high note with a Wishbook Feature in the San Jose Mercury News—a masterful piece by Mercury News columnist Karen D'Souza. Student Daniel Stickney was invited by the Kiwanis Club of West San Jose to present about our College in November. In early December we celebrated our first post-graduate valedictorian, Renee Gonzales, at our Annual Holiday Choir Concert and Graduation Ceremony at the Hammer Theatre Center, thanks to a wonderful partnership with Lisa Laymon and San Jose State University. The School of Dance has instituted Nutcracker workshops for special needs families, and the School of Communications has entered into a partnership with the Corinthian Grand Ballroom for its Showcase Night in February. CAA is so grateful for the ever-growing support from our community.

## Happy Holidays from the Board of Directors

CAA's Mountain Movers wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. We are grateful for your ongoing support and humbled by your efforts to help move the mountain for our students. Our team continues to work hard behind the scenes and to be inspired by our students, staff and amazing founders who shine on the front line. We are committed to our students' success and look forward to sharing in the growth that 2017 will bring to the CAA Community.



*The CAA "Mountain Movers" Board: From left, standing: Brian Appleton, Pamela Lindsay, Mimi Giannini, Toni Cook, Shar Yorgey, Jen Mulry, Joe Siecinski. Seated: Loni Spratt, DeAnna Pursai. Not pictured: Suchita Chetia, David Cross, Adrien LeBiavant*

## Disability Brings Us Together

*DeAnna Pursai—Executive Director*

During these turbulent times I have heard so much about what sets us apart as different groups. It is at these moments that I cherish and relish our community of artists, contributors, leaders, and survivors even more because of what brings us all together: disability, or *differing ability*, as we say at the College of Adaptive Arts.

My personal experience in the world of disability began when I was one year old and my sister Angel was born with Down syndrome. My family was thrust into a different realm or paradigm, trying to meet her needs. It's the only world I've ever known, and I love and adore the path I walk each day and the truly awesome people I have encountered.

My network of friends, family, supporters, and contributors includes leaders on the far right who are ultra-conservative to citizens on the far left who would be considered generously liberal. I have friends and colleagues who are very religious, and others in my close networks who are not religious at all. I cross paths each day with persons of very high independent wealth and persons who struggle for enough money to manage transportation, rent, and food. I have had the privilege of working with people from all over the world, including China, Mexico, Israel, Japan, Venezuela, Iran, Argentina, Serbia, France, Italy and India. I have dear friends who are gay, straight, and transgender.

The most beautiful part of my network is that I love and cherish them all very dearly, primarily because our underlying bond is that we are and/or love someone very much who happens to have a disability. I sincerely believe that disability brings out the best in us as

human beings. For me, the highest determining factor to be in my network is: will you help me support my loved one in need, and can I be a support to help you with your loved one? I know parents who work the entire day, every day, to keep their child alive. I am humbled and overwhelmed by the daily obstacles that families face to support their loved ones, and it leaves me so inspired to see how these families live with integrity, grace, and humanity.

It seems so easy and effortless to me to befriend someone of a different race, economic group, or political party when I know that person sincerely loves and believes in my loved one. I do the same for all of the awesome people I meet with disabilities who are in a different "group" than myself. It doesn't matter; what matters is love, and love comes so easily through the bond of "disability." That gives me such hope in humanity. Thank you, Angel, and all of the amazing individuals I have met with disabilities, for allowing me to be a better person and giving me the privilege of meeting the best network of friends and supporters in the world. ♥



*DeAnna Pursai, right, with her sister and inspiration Angel*

## Student Perspective

*Alison Kennedy*



CAA (College of Adaptive arts) is one of a kind. We offer so many more accommodations that any other place will. Teachers at CAA remind you of things if you're one to forget dance routines or lines for a school play.

Our dance floor is not all we have. There's student government, public speaking, and acting classes and a yearly prom and a yearly movie festival. We have yearly play productions in the summer. Our dance classes have weekly performances where the dance teachers remind us of the routines right then and there in case we forget what routines to do in our performances. In our acting classes our teachers in the drama department remind us of our lines when we do our yearly plays.

There's no finals or midterms at our school!!!!!!!!!!

We sometimes charge a little money to have social gatherings at the end of some months where we just hang out. Please look us up if you know someone who would like CAA. We have scholarships and we'd love to have you!



*Creating a masterpiece in art class*

## CAA Students: Successful, Contributing Citizens



CAA student council donated toiletries and socks to LifeMoves, an organization that helps give hope to homeless people



CAA dance students in one of several performances at San Jose's 2016 Christmas in the Park

## Staff Spotlight: Nicole Kim

Those lucky enough to experience our eloquent student speakers have seen the fruits of Professor Nicole Kim's labors. As Chair of the Department of Oral Communication within our School of Communications, she provides students with keys to success including respect, love, and supreme confidence.

She is also known as the mama of Said Padellan, one of our founding students who continues to brighten our classrooms with his talent and excitement for learning—and for performing in any capacity.

Nicole has been a foundational part of CAA since its inception in 2009, has served as past Board President, and continues to provide support and expertise in many areas including marketing and social media. As a long-time “master” member of Toastmasters, she brings a similar structured and interactive format to classes and extends learning to

speaking opportunities through community collaborations. Her students have participated in Toastmaster events at eBay, delighted listeners at San Jose Rotary Club and other group meetings, and represented the CAA Cardinals at local events including walk-a-thons and performance showcases.

Nicole recently used her sabbatical from work to create and launch a podcast titled “How to Move a Mountain.” Through focus on our similarities, the show challenges the pervasive paradigm of what is possible within ongoing, lifelong education for adults of all abilities. This audio treat is coming soon to listeners everywhere, so watch for the links!

Nicole somehow juggles all of this with a full-time job in technology and the daily demands of family life. Nicole's talents, smile, and gentle approach have made her a faculty favorite. Thank you, Nicole, for your huge heart and for your belief in the continued learning potential of all adults!

## Underwrite a School

School underwriting allows us to focus less on fundraising and more on expanding services and programs.

Your financial commitment enables CAA to grow and flourish, and provides an equitable relationship between your corporation and our student population.

**For more information** please contact Executive Director DeAnna Pursai, [deanna@collegeofadaptivearts.org](mailto:deanna@collegeofadaptivearts.org) 408.394.6816

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## College of Adaptive Arts

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

408-384-8674

info@collegeofadaptivearts.org

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## Together We Are Moving Mountains

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DeAnna Pursai, *Exec. Dir.*

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