



San Bernardino  
**Valley College**

## *President's Board Report*

*February 12, 2009*

### **Spring Semester Starts With Most Students in 20 Years**

For the 5th consecutive term in a row, enrollment is up as approximately 1,400 more students are on campus taking hold of their future than this time last year. More than 12,000 students were enrolled when the semester started on January 12<sup>th</sup>—the highest total at the start of any Spring semester since the 1980s.

The Spring 2009 semester was punctuated by three WOW (Week of Welcome!) booths dotted around campus to assist new and returning students navigating their new educational home while seeking answers on everything from building locations to where to get a parking pass.



Throughout the week the Office of Student Life sponsored other activities like library tours, health screenings and a Meet and Greet with Associated Student Government (ASG) leaders.

### **SBVC Breaks Ground On Three New Buildings**



More than 100 community members and San Bernardino Valley College staff, faculty and students gathered on Friday, January 9 at 3:00 p.m. outside the South Quad as part of a Groundbreaking Ceremony for three new buildings that will add to the rich history of the 83-year old campus.

Hosted by SBVC President Dr. Debra Daniels, the commemorative ceremony kicked off the construction of the new Media and Communications Building, the New North Hall and the new Science Building. Each building will contribute in a variety of ways to the mission statement of SBVC—to provide quality education and services that support a diverse community of learners.

“These buildings are much more than concrete and steel, square footage and electrical wiring. They are the launching pads for the future of our students, our community, and our local economy,” Dr. Daniels said. “This is the training ground where horizons are expanded, creativity is sparked, futures are forever changed, and dreams become reality.”

When aggregated, the three new buildings will represent over 125,000 square feet and \$76.2 million. More than 80% of the recently completed construction projects through Measure P have been kept in the Inland Empire—representing an investment of more than \$40 million to bolster the local economy.

Local officials including State Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod, CSUSB President Dr. Al Karnig, SB County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gary Thomas, five members of the SBCCD Board of Trustees, SBCCD Chancellor Dr. Noelia Vela and others were in attendance. Construction partners Tilden-Coil and Kitchell/BRJ provided refreshments and logistical support for the event.



*(From L to R) SBCCD Board of Trustees President James Ramos, SBVC President Dr. Debra Daniels and SBCCD Chancellor Dr. Noelia Vela employ the golden shovels at the Groundbreaking Ceremony.*

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## Student Profile: A Vision for Education

On Monday, August 18, 2008, Jasmine Kotsay was one of thousands of new San Bernardino Valley College students finding their way around an unfamiliar campus on the first day of Fall semester classes. Navigating the sidewalks and hallways in search of classrooms, hunting for the nearest restrooms and selecting textbooks in the Bookstore are just a few of the stress-laden challenges that test the motivated spirit of a new student embracing the first few days of a fresh school year.

Now try to do it with your eyes closed. And then again the next day. And the day after that.

Living in this world without the benefit of sight has never been a barrier for 20-year old Jasmine Kotsay—it’s been a way of life. And after successfully completing her first semester at SBVC, she’s back for Spring 2009 to prove it all over again.

“I had the worst first day of college ever,” Jasmine said. “All I had was blank paper in front of me, my books weren’t ready, and after walking around the campus for two weeks in preparation for my first day, I still wasn’t sure I was in the right place at the right time.”

After getting connected with Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSP&S) and the DSP&S High Tech Center, many of her fears were eased as professors accommodated Jasmine’s needs. All of her math exercises were Brailled (translated into Braille) and she was able to listen to her textbooks on CD as she adjusted to what she knew would be a heavy academic workload.

"I reminded myself of the same thing I tell other people—that just because you're blind, it doesn't mean you can't live," Jasmine said. "There are blind people that go skydiving and enjoy hiking. Blindness is not what defines me, yet there are many things that do."

For Jasmine, one of those defining qualities is the desire to help teach children who are blind. Because of the positive impact that teachers had on her life as a child, Jasmine's goal is to earn liberal arts and special education degrees to return the favor for future generations.

"I love to help people and I feel like I can be a good asset to somebody who wants to learn," Jasmine said. "My parents, who are both SBVC graduates, have pushed me to go after my dreams and do whatever I need to do in order to fulfill them. My parents and teachers said I can do anything I put my mind to, and I want to share that with my students someday too."

Born six weeks early as a Christmas Day baby in San Bernardino, and the youngest of five children, Jasmine faced the harsh realities of the world from day one without ever having seen them.

Jasmine was born with Septo-Optic Dysplasia (also known as DeMorsier Syndrome) which is a birth defect characterized by a malformed optic disk and nerve, pituitary deficiencies and an unformed portion of the septum that separates the ventricles of the brain. There is no correction for this nerve-related defect that also contributes to other health-related issues for Jasmine—such as the diabetes insipidus she deals with daily that resembles traditional diabetes but features vastly different treatments.



*SBVC Student Jasmine Kotsay*

"I remember being given what was described as the smallest cane that my orientation and mobility specialists had ever seen. As soon as they left, I threw it on the floor and said "This is for blind people. I'm not blind,"" Jasmine shared. "One of my first memories as a child was wondering if blind people make it to the 8th grade. This is when I figured out I was really going to be blind. I had no idea how long blind people lived and must have thought it was some type of life-threatening disease."

Years later, Jasmine is plotting her course through life as an SBVC student who passed Math 095 and Psychology 100 while simultaneously taking a physical education class last Fall. With the start of a new semester, times are not always easy as Jasmine still faces the less-than-timely arrival of textbooks and class syllabi in Braille, while tackling yet another mathematics course that is a challenge for most sighted students.

"Valley has always been my first choice and I knew I needed to get started in a college setting where I felt like I could handle everything," Jasmine said. "My work takes me a long time to accomplish and the math tutoring lab is practically my second home."

SBVC Math Facilitator Jeneen Griffin tutored Jasmine at least 2-3 times every week in the Fall 2008 semester and was impressed with Jasmine's determination and quick mind.

"Typically, I would explain a problem to her verbally, she would take a moment, picture it in her head, and oftentimes finish it before I could complete it on paper," Jeneen said. "I'm studying to be an occupational therapist, and Jasmine has taught me a lot about overcoming obstacles. I truly believe she "sees" more than people around her and I think that translates to her math skills as well."

In her spare time, Jasmine loves to read books using Braille and enjoys movies and television with the help of her parental narrators who describe what is happening on the screen.

"My parents never told me that I had a disease and I don't see it as a disability," Jasmine said. "Of course there are things that I can't do, but, then again, there are things that lots of people can't do."

## ***Save The Date***

### **Friday, February 27, 2009**

9:00 a.m. – LA-100

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Celebrating Women in Mathematics & Science"

The SBVC Mathematics and Science Departments are expecting 200 girls from 18 different local high schools in seven separate districts to hear about the variety of career opportunities available to women in the fields of science and math.

### **Wednesday, March 25, 2009**

5:30 p.m. – Hilton San Bernardino

#### San Bernardino Mayor Patrick Morris and the Education RoundTable's Golden Apple Awards

Join in this celebration of education in San Bernardino as SBVC awardees are honored along with SBCUSD and CSUSB staff and faculty. Dinner is \$30/person and \$55/couple. For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at 909.384.5133

### **Saturday, April 25, 2009**

Time TBD – SBVC Greek Theatre

#### "Together Again" Benefit Concert

This major fundraiser for the Valley-Bound Commitment returns in 2009 after a successful premiere in 2008. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians will once again serve as the title sponsors. Performers and ticket information will be announced in coming weeks.