

EAST BAY HAPPENINGS



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WE HAVE LIFT-OFF

PACT, Inc. Has a Brand-New Website



We are beyond thrilled to announce the launch of our completely redesigned, totally refreshed, and proudly upgraded website — **pactinc.org**.

What's New?

- A fresh, modern look that reflects who we are today
- Easier navigation for students, families, and supporters
- Clear info on programs, services & community impact
- Simple ways to volunteer, donate, and connect
- A space that finally feels like PACT — welcoming and empowered

This website is about the students and communities we serve. It's about accessibility, equity, and telling a story that's been over **60 years in the making**.

Dive In Now

www.pactinc.org



PROGRAM UPDATES:

SOLANO MIDDLE SCHOOL

This year, the PACT team at Solano Middle School has been hard at work supporting students both inside and outside of the classroom. We've continued our push-in support model, focusing especially on helping students strengthen their math skills and build confidence in their academic abilities.



Students also recently participated in our Student & Career Month Project, where they created poster boards highlighting the four major types of colleges:

- HBCUs
- UCs
- CSUs
- Private Universities / Junior Colleges

Their creativity and engagement made this project a huge success, and we're incredibly proud of their work.



UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

📍 7th & 8th Grade College Tour — Sacramento State University

Scheduled for **late February**, this visit will expose students to campus life, academic majors, and the pathway to a four-year university.

📍 7th Grade College Tour — Sonoma State University

Our 7th graders will also explore a university campus and learn more about preparing for college.

📍 End-of-Year Incentive Field Trip (Pending)

We are hoping to reward students who have shown strong academic performance, positive behavior, and growth this year with a **water park field trip** to celebrate their hard work.

Rashad Ross

PACT Program — Solano Middle School

Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Email: Rashad.pactinc@gmail.com

Richmond High



Submitted by: Sarah Day, PACT Advisor at RHS

Back in October, PACT scholars from Richmond High attended College Information Day at UC Berkeley, hosted by our friends at East Bay Consortium. After taking BART to Berkeley, we attended admissions and financial aid workshops in the morning. Students learned about the college application process, and got to meet representatives from many UCs, CSUs, and out-of-state colleges. In the afternoon, we ate Ike's sandwiches, received a campus tour, and attended a rally. At the rally, we got to watch Cal Band perform, and even got a selfie with Oski! We wrapped up our day taking in the views from the top of the Campanile before taking BART back to Richmond. Special thanks to the Vallejo & Jesse Bethel advisor, Tony, for co-chaperoning with me!

Spirit Rally
outside
Sproul Hall



Group photo in
front of Doe
Library



Group selfie
with Oski!



You submitted your college applications. What now?

Congrats to all of our PACT seniors who just crossed the finish line of this busy college application season! Now that you've submitted, here are some things you'll need to do next:

Check your email inbox!

- a. Each college you applied to will send you an email with instructions on setting up your online portal specific to that school.
- b. When creating your portals, be sure to stay organized and use a password manager.

Familiarize yourself with your portals and check them regularly!

- a. Each school's portal will have a different layout and a different way of checking your admission status, financial aid offer, and to-do list.

Keep track of deadlines for submitting materials!

- a. Within each college portal, there will be a to-do list. This includes deadlines to submit additional materials such as fall grade updates, letters of recommendation, and test scores.
- b. Other deadlines you might need to keep in mind include supplemental application materials, such as additional essays, portfolios, or auditions, for programs such as architecture, nursing, or majors in the visual and performing arts.
- c. I recommend writing a checklist with dates for each college's deadlines to keep yourself organized. You can also utilize tools like a physical planner or Google Calendar.

Apply for financial aid!

- a. Complete your FAFSA or CADAA by the Cal Grant priority deadline on March 2nd for CSUs and UCs. Private and out-of-state colleges may have earlier financial aid deadlines, and may also require a CSS profile.
- b. My recommendation is to be sure to attend your high school's Cash for College Workshops, and come prepared with all of the information and documents you need to complete your application.

VALLEJO TALENT SEARCH

VALLEJO HIGH SCHOOL



JESSE BETHEL HIGH SCHOOL



Program Updates

At PACT, we are all about dismantling the barrier between secondary and higher education and building our foundations with knowledge and curiosity. To build on these values, our Vallejo students participated in a number of application workshops and information nights. Most recently, I enjoyed seeing students at our UC Information Night where we got to learn information about admissions, living, and financials for:

- UC Berkeley
- UC Santa Cruz
- UC Merced

We also were very excited to welcome students to various application workshops we had through the semester. On 11/21, the final day before Thanksgiving break, we had Turkey Day with counselors from PACT, Vallejo High, and other organizations! This was an all day event where students finished their UC and CSU applications in a warm, supportive atmosphere.

As we wind down into the holiday season, it's important that I take a moment and recognize the hard work and perseverance of the students of Jesse Bethel and Vallejo High School. The fall semester has certainly been a memorable one as students from both schools have been working tirelessly to improve themselves, support their families, and uplift their community. During the past few months, we have been focusing our seniors on the coming road ahead in higher education. With a focus on academic well-being, I've had the pleasure of preparing students by building confidence in study habits in core subjects, connecting with professional and academic opportunities, and matching students with paths that reflect their values.

Advisor Contact Info:

Anthony Andrews

PACT Advisor, Jesse Bethel HS & Vallejo HS

Office Hours:

JBHS: Mon-Tues, 8:30am-3:30

VHS: Wed-Thur, 8:30am-3:30

Email: anthony.pactinc@gmail.com

Website: pactinc.org/educational-talent-search

Welcome to one of the most exciting (and nerve-wracking) times of your life. How do we prepare?

With all the work behind us that comes with college applications, you might think that the potential for additional anxiety is lower. This is FALSE! The process of waiting to hear back from colleges can be similarly stressful (if not more) than doing the applications (“Just let me in already!”)

This is completely normal. Let’s talk about some strategies to keep in mind during the next 3 excruciating months.

1. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is being aware of all of your body functions, like physical sensations, thoughts, and feelings. During this time, it’s important not to deny any negative things that you may be experiencing. Denial is a short-term solution. We want to build strategies that we can build upon in the long-term. Pushing something down doesn't make it go away, it just puts it somewhere else for later. If you are feeling anxious or nervous, it’s always okay to admit that! Don’t suppress your feelings. Wear them proudly! To practice mindfulness and get in touch with how you’re doing, there are some great habits you can try:

- **Journaling:** A private way to chronicle your thoughts. This lets you physically “release” your angst through writing. It also allows you to reflect on your thoughts at a later time to track reflection and improvement.
- **Talking with a close loved one:** Do you have a good-listening friend that you can trust? They would love to chat! Sit down with them and let them know how you’re feeling. They’ll be happy to know what’s going on and you’ll be happy being able to talk about it.
- **Mental self-check-ins:** It’s a good idea to get in the habit of assessing your mood and feelings. Once a day (could be when you wake up or before you go to sleep), ask yourself “How am I feeling today?” and be honest with yourself! Get used to the process of checking in and reflecting on how you’re doing. You can take this a step further by combining it with something like journaling.

2. Rewards

Have you ever heard the phrase “All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy?” Kind of grim, but it has merit! ONLY working is not healthy. Make sure you have some positive things to look forward to in your work. This can take the form of:

- **Create a reward system.** Establish mini rewards for the completion of tasks. Do you have to finish a math problem sheet? Get a snack after you finish 5 problems. Did you find a video on YouTube that you want to watch? Commit to finishing the whole sheet and reward yourself with some relaxation for your hard work!
- **Do your favorite things.** Always make sure that you are spending your relaxing time effectively. That means doing what YOU want to do and relaxing how YOU like to relax! If you are spending your relaxing time thinking about work and stress, then you are not recharging. After big tests or particularly stressful days, make sure that you are treating yourself with things like your favorite food or activities. For example, in college, after big exams I would always get burritos from my favorite spot on campus as a way to reward myself for my hard work.
- **Keep moderation in mind.** There needs to be a balance between work and reward. Only working or only rewarding/relaxing won’t get you to where you want to go.

3. Preparation

The next chapter of your life is coming and that's exciting! One thing you can do that would provide some security and support is getting ready!

- Becoming mentally ready. College can be a lot, and there are a lot of variables that are associated with it. Don't let these questions sit unanswered! You'll feel a lot of relief in debunking your questions. Talk to your counselors, teachers, and advisors for college questions. We'd all be happy to talk with you. You can also ask other people who you know went to college to see how you can prepare.
- Don't forget about the classes you're in now! College is coming but we still have to round out your high school journey! Creating and practicing great habits in high school (like with studying) will make that transition to college work that much easier.
- Keep a reflective perspective. Prepare for college by being proud of yourself and all the work that you've done so far. You've done a lot to get to this point and the most important person to recognize that is you. You're doing great, and there is still so much more to come!

**VALLEJO
TALENT SEARCH**

**WISHES YOU A
HAPPY HOLIDAY
SEASON!**

TRIO

UPWARD BOUND

SUMMER ACADEMY
2025

UPWARD BOUND
VACAVILLE

EXPLORATION, COMMUNITY, AND GROWTH: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR'S SUMMER ACADEMY!

Submitted by: Viridiana Ventura

An exciting and memory-filled 6-week summer was well spent among Upward Bound participants at our in-person Summer Academy, hosted this year at Solano Community College: Vacaville campus! Students had the opportunity to engage in a weekly themed curriculum that highlighted Science, Math, Language, Culture, and College and Career concepts. Additionally, students built upon life skills, including CPR Training, Typing and Computer training, hands-on laboratory experiments, and team-building and presentation projects. The Vacaville Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club joined the cohort weekly on Thursdays to collaborate and further build community amongst students. Each week concluded with Friday field trips that connected to that week's theme. Those field trips included visiting the California Academy of Sciences, touring the State Capitol, creating silkscreen art at TANA Woodland Studio, visiting Crocker Art Museum, and touring UC Davis!



For the first time, Upward Bound Vacaville hosted an overnight trip to Southern California, an inspiring and thrilling opportunity for students! A total of four days and three nights were spent touring SoCal's prestigious universities and landmarks, which included: USC, UCLA, CSU Fullerton, and UC Irvine. Sightseeing landmarks included visiting the Getty Museum, Hollywood Walk of Fame, and Disneyland's Downtown District. A full day was spent at Disneyland and Disneyland's California Adventure Parks on Wednesday, July 23, making for a truly magical and unforgettable day for all! The 2025 Summer Academy concluded on Friday, July 25, with a family celebration and certificate handout hosted at Round Table Pizza.



We extend our gratitude to all students and families who dedicated their time to make this academy unforgettable. Additionally, a big **THANK YOU** to our advisors, Mia Castro, Sarah Day, and Viridiana Ventura, for their successful planning and execution of this year's Summer Academy.

UPWARD BOUND VACAVILLE

Vacaville High



Will C. Wood High

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Get Set for Finals!



Communication Skills



New Year: Setting Realistic Goals (and how to accomplish them)



Growth vs Fixed Mindset



NEW ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT!

Upward Bound Vacaville welcomes our newest team member- Justin Condevillamar! Justin recently graduated this year from UC Davis with a degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He currently works as a Manufacturing Associate at Lonza and is a tutoring specialist in the maths and sciences. During his free time, Justin likes to lift, watch sports, and listen to new music. He looks forward to supporting the Vacaville PACT community and helping students achieve success with their academics and future goals.



CONTACT INFO:

justin.pactinc@gmail.com

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2026...



College Tour- CSU Chico
** TBD for February





IN MEMORY OF

Mr. David Cook



Mr. David Cook of Plan of Action for Challenging Times, Inc., of San Francisco dedicated his life to opening doors of opportunity for young people. As a college prep counselor, he guided hundreds of students from Vallejo and beyond through the often-daunting journey toward higher education. With patience and wisdom, he helped them prepare for the SAT and ACT exams, navigate the complexities of applications, and secure fee waivers when possible. His steady presence at the PACT headquarters became a beacon of hope, ensuring that no student felt alone in pursuing their dreams.

Mr. Cook will always be remembered as the counselor who aided van loads of students brought from Vallejo to San Francisco after school and who stayed long into the evening to support them. On good days, the vans arrived between 4:30 and 5:00 p.m., carrying six to eight students and one or two staff members. No matter how late it became, Mr. Cook made sure each student was engaged in a specific part of the process and oversaw the expectations of every session with both students and staff.

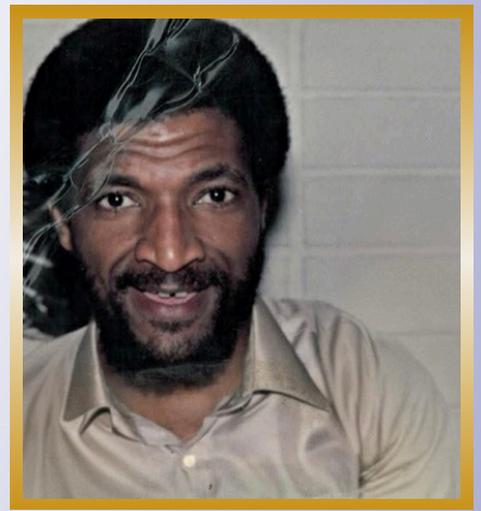
Beyond test preparation and paperwork, Mr. Cook offered something even more valuable: guidance in making life-changing decisions. He walked alongside students as they weighed their options, counseled them through difficult choices, and celebrated their victories. His work was not simply about getting young people into college—it was about empowering them to believe in their own potential and to see education as a pathway to a brighter future. The impact of his service continues to ripple through the lives of the countless students he touched, leaving a legacy of compassion, dedication, and transformative leadership.

Respectfully submitted by,

Pelton Stewart, PACT ALUMNUS

Former ED, Omega Boys and Girls Club, Inc., Vallejo, CA.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MR. COOK – A REMARKABLE COLLEAGUE AND CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS



Mr. Cook went far beyond the call of duty. Whether staying late to help a student complete an application, spending his own resources to remove barriers to their success, or offering encouragement during moments of doubt, he embodied what it truly means to serve. His generosity of spirit was not a gesture—it was a way of life.

He was beloved by students, parents, colleagues, and the community alike. Many families traveled from all across the Bay Area just to work with him, because they knew that he approached every interaction with kindness, respect, and a deep belief in each student's potential. He had a special way of making others feel seen, valued, and capable of greatness. It is no surprise that he was often considered the favorite—his sincerity, warmth, and professionalism left an imprint on everyone he touched.

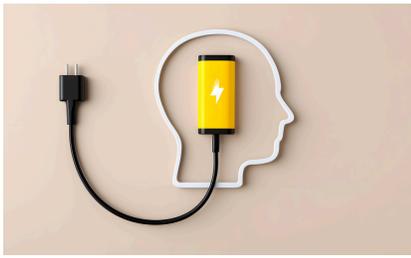
In addition to his extraordinary compassion, Mr. Cook consistently met and exceeded enrollment targets, demonstrating the same level of excellence in his responsibilities as he did in his relationships. His work was meticulous, his guidance trustworthy, and his leadership exemplary.

To me personally, Mr. Cook was the best colleague I have ever had. His presence brightened our workplace, his commitment elevated our mission, and his friendship enriched our lives. His legacy is reflected in the thousands of students who found their path because he believed in them.

We will forever be grateful for Mr. Cook's service, his heart, and his impact. Though he is no longer with us, the kindness he showed and the lives he uplifted will continue to speak for him for generations to come.

May Mr. Cook rest in peace, and may we continue his work with the same integrity, compassion, and love he showed every day.

Respectfully, and always your buddy,
Dr. Arvie



WINTER BREAK: REST, RECHARGE, AND GROW!

Submitted by: Cassandra Anderson, Administrative Assistant/Program Assistant

Winter break is finally here – time to relax and enjoy the season! But while you rest and have fun, there are also great ways to keep your mind, heart, and friendships strong. Here are a few ideas to make your break meaningful:

📖 Keep Your Brain Active

- Read for fun! Pick a book, comic, or magazine you actually enjoy.
- Try something new online. Learn a skill, language, or hobby through free videos or apps.
- Write or reflect- Jot down what you've accomplished this year and what you're excited to learn next.

👥 Stay Social

- Reconnect with friends and family. Plan a game night, baking day, or movie marathon.
- Reach out to someone new. A simple “Hey, how are you?” can brighten someone’s day.
- Balance screen time. Spend some time offline to enjoy real conversations and laughter.



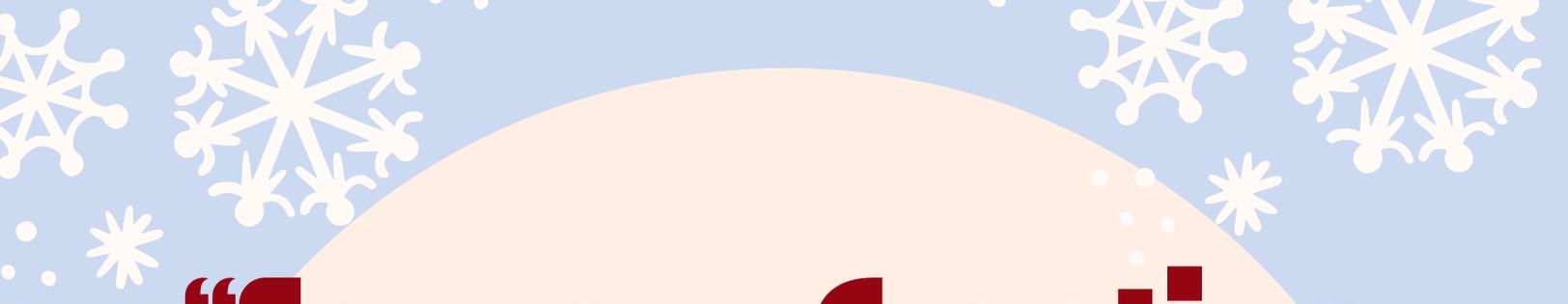
♥ Take Care of You

- Rest and recharge. Sleep in, take walks, or enjoy quiet mornings.
- Be creative. Draw, build, write, sing – do something that makes you happy.
- Give back. Do a kind act, help a neighbor, or volunteer. Small gestures make a big difference!

☀ Start the New Year Strong

Set small, positive goals – like being more organized, staying kind, or trying one new thing at school next semester.

- ☀ Enjoy your winter break! Use this time to rest, grow, and return ready to shine in the new year.



“Seasons Greetings

THANKS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SAY THE FUTURE TRULY IS IN YOUR HANDS AND A BRILLIANT FUTURE AWAITS AS YOU REACH FOR IT. OUR ENTIRE MISSION IS BUILT ON A SINGLE, POWERFUL HOPE: TO SEE YOU ACHIEVE TO THE HIGHEST DEGREE AND TO ONE DAY SEEING YOU RETURN TO LEAD OUR COMMUNITY. AS YOU NAVIGATE THIS SCHOOL YEAR, REMEMBER THAT YOUR EFFORT MATTERS DEEPLY. WE ARE PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL TO OUR STUDENTS' FAMILIES, AND TO OUR INCREDIBLE COUNSELORS, TUTORS, STAFF, BOARD, TRIO TEAM, AND SPONSORS.

**Wishing Happy
Holidays!”**

**MR. EVERETT
BRANDON**

**CO-FOUNDER &
BOARD CHAIR**

CONTACT US

PACT INC.
301 Georgia Street, Suite 315
Vallejo, CA. 944590
(707) 556-9357

Upward Bound Vallejo

Scan the QR code to apply
for the Vallejo Upward
Bound program!



Advisor Emails

Phoenix Rosete <rosetephoenix@gmail.com>
Advisor for Vallejo Upward Bound at Jesse Bethel HS

TRiO Educational Talent Search (ETS)

Vallejo High School/Jesse Bethel High School/Richmond High School

Scan the QR code to apply for the
Vallejo Talent Search program!



Advisor Emails

Sarah Day <sarah.pactinc@gmail.com>
Talent Search Advisor for Richmond High School

Rashad Ross <rashad.pactinc@gmail.com>
Advisor for Solano Widenmann Middle School Program

Anthony Andrews <anthony.pactinc@gmail.com>
Advisor for Jesse Bethel HS / Vallejo HS Talent Search

Upward Bound Vacaville

Vacaville High School/ Will C. Wood High School

Scan the QR code to apply
for the Vacaville program!



Advisor Emails

Justin Condevillamar <justin.pactinc@gmail.com>

Viridiana Ventura <viridiana.pactinc@gmail.com>

Advisors for Vacaville HS and Will C. Wood HS

Vacaville Program Email: ubvaca.pactinc@gmail.com

WWW.PACTINC.ORG