

VITA: “A Magical Experience”

Submitted by Kevin Erdkamp, Accounting Instructor

Many Orange County residents lack access to affordable tax preparation services. Coastline helps meet this need through participation in the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. For the past three years, **Kevin Erdkamp** has directed this undertaking, which has achieved outstanding results for the participants.

Taxpayers – VITA helps taxpayers who most need help with their federal and state returns. Those with lower incomes, people with disabilities, and the elderly all qualify for assistance. Coastline’s VITA program reaches out to those groups and to military personnel and to taxpayers with limited English skills. Nearly 200 taxpayers were served last year. In the past two years, our VITA clients received a total of \$250,000 in federal and state tax refunds.

Participating Coastline students – VITA clients get their help from Coastline accounting students, recruited and trained under Kevin’s direction. The local population mix makes language skills as important as financial expertise. Last year, in addition to English speakers, we served taxpayers speaking Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, and Farsi.

Coastline VITA volunteers make a difference in people’s lives. Students in the program can only explain it as a “magical experience.” Many volunteers form strong bonds with one another and feel a sense of regret when the tax season ends.

Joining with other institutions – Our VITA recruiting reaches out to other institutions. This year, volunteers from CSU Fullerton and UC Irvine joined in Coastline VITA training classes. Meeting at the Garden Grove Center, students take ACCT C130 (VITA 1 Tax) and ACCT C131 (VITA 2 Tax) to qualify under IRS rules.

One former Coastline student volunteer transferred to USC and insists that VITA helped him get there. A CSU Fullerton volunteer credited work in Coastline VITA with a job offer from the Government Accountability Office.

Coastline’s VITA program is a rewarding experience for all participants— students and taxpayers alike. The assistance of the Orange County United Way, the IRS, and many Coastline departments and individuals is gratefully acknowledged.

Closing the Achievement Gap: My Teach for America Experience

Submitted by Daniel Oase, Business English Instructor

My first teaching assignment was fourth-grade summer school at a Title I elementary school in Phoenix. The student population was approximately 90% Hispanic/Latino, and all of the students qualified for free lunch. We spent many blistering-hot days indoors reading *Curious George*, *Clifford*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and all sorts of other stories. It was fun for all of us, and the students improved by approximately 1.2 grade levels in reading within five weeks of instruction.

After my summer school assignment ended, I was hired full-time at a charter school in East Los Angeles called the Early College Academy for Leaders and Scholars (eCALS), where I teach ninth- and tenth-grade English and Math as a special education teacher. I have an Education Specialist Credential, and I am now completing my second master’s degree, which will be in special education. This year has been, without a doubt, one of the most rewarding, yet challenging experiences in my career.

10th Annual Golden West College Peace & Leadership Conference

For Peace, Justice, and Sustainability

Friday, April 22, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Earth Day)

Topics include:

- How will climate change affect our lives?
- What does human progress look like in the 21st century?
- What does slavery in modern times look like?
- Can there be a balance between the economy, the environment, and human rights?
- Technology allows us to be closer than ever before; why do we have a chronic sense of disconnect?

FREE ADMISSION for pre-registered CCCD Students (\$20 at the door). General Public: \$25 (\$40 at the door)

Registration fee includes vegan breakfast and lunch, plus conference materials & gifts. For registration details visit <http://www.goldenwestcollege.edu/peace/>

Location: GWC Student Center, 15744 Goldenwest St., Huntington Beach.

Questions?

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