



Alumni eNewsletter - September 2008

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Alumni Association News



Congratulations to First Five Scholarship Awardees

Scholarship Chair Mark Hanna, '02, is surrounded by the Alumni Association's first awardees of the Alumni Association Family Scholarship. From left, Catherine Medeiros, Janet Reed-Verdusco, Chair Mark Hanna, Alexis Rhine, and Dawn Harward. Not shown: Sarah Magness.

- Dawn Harward has returned to school determined to combine her skills as a professional artist and community volunteer with a degree in psychology.
- Sarah Magness is working on establishing a digital arts business and will continue her education with a bachelor's degree in business and law.
- Catherine Medeiros is working toward a bachelor's degree in social services and would like to work with CPS or some other child-oriented agency.
- Alexis Rhine has been accepted into PCC's nursing program and plans on continuing her education in health care after she finishes the associate's degree program.
- Janet Reed-Verdusco is working on an associate's degree in business management and will continue her education in business at Arizona South, located at PCC's East Campus.

The scholarship is available for qualified alumni and their dependents. The number awarded will vary each year depending on contributions to the Endowment. And YES, you can contribute online at: www.pima.edu/foundation/. If you click the Scholarships button, you will have the opportunity to designate your donation to the Alumni Association Family Scholarship. By clicking on the Alumni Association button, you will be helping to further the work of the Alumni Association.

Upcoming Alumni Events!

Alumni Family Reptile Hike - September 27, 2008

Fascinated by slithery desert creatures? A reptile-spotting “hike” exclusively for PCC Alumni families is planned for Saturday, September 27th at Tohono Chul Park, 7366 N. Paseo del Norte, from 10:00-11:00 a.m. Herpetologist Ed Moll and venom and poison expert, Tom McDonald, will give a half hour talk, complete with live (but docile) snakes that children and adults can handle, followed by a 20 minute walk through the park grounds to spot local lizards, ending up at the tortoise enclosure. The hike is limited to 25 people. Cost is \$10.00 per person, payable at the gate. The tour will gather at the Entry Ramada across from Admissions. Bring water, sunscreen and a hat. Closed footwear is recommended. Click <http://www.pima.edu/mhtml/reptile/> to reserve your place.



Pima Alumni at Zoo Lights - December 9, 2008

We are pleased to again present an evening just for PCC Alumni, families and friends to enjoy holiday splendor at the Reid Park Zoo. Not only will you avoid the rush at this popular holiday venue with only a \$5 entry fee, you’ll have the opportunity to visit with PCC friends and faculty and listen to a PCC musical celebration of the holiday season.

The event also features a special “behind-the-scenes” fundraiser. For an additional \$25, you can visit the gourmet kitchens and the night homes of some special zoo residents. The invitation and reservation form will go online soon. Check the Alumni website in October for more information.

Save the Date: 40th Anniversary Gala at La Paloma Resort - April 24th

The Pima Community College Foundation will kick-off the College’s year-long 40th anniversary celebration with a Gala Dinner on April 24 at La Paloma Resort. The evening will spotlight the achievements of some of our alumni over the past four decades. Watch this space for updates and plan on joining your fellow alums at this festive dinner.

Opportunities for Alumni

Participate in West Campus Health and Safety Fair

Volunteers are needed for a Health and Safety Fair at West Campus, sponsored by the MHC Health Clinic and the College's Allied Health Programs. The event on October 16th from noon to 5 p.m. will offer a variety of health screenings, workshops and demonstrations as well as information on PCC health-related programs. Please contact [Leslie Dionne White](#) at (520) 206-3110 if you can help.

Become a Registered Alumni Association Member!

You can register as an active member of the Alumni Association by filling out the registration form at [\[www.pima.edu/alumni\]](http://www.pima.edu/alumni). Be sure to include your full name, email and mailing address, what you are doing now, and the last year you attended PCC. Membership is free.

Alumni Salute!



Sidi-Amar Taoua is putting the skills and knowledge gained through PCC's Travel and Tourism program to work in a world-wide way. The second son of a Tuareg nobleman, born in a nomad camp in the heart of the Sahara, Taoua has already established an adventure travel company to bring tourists to Niger, where he shares his intimate knowledge of the desert and the nomadic culture of his people. This Fall Taoua has been invited by National Geographic to accompany one of its writers on a research trip for an upcoming feature.

For centuries, Tuareg tribes freely roamed the Sahara, a desert larger in size than the continental United States. Although a pastoral people dependent on herding goats and camels, Tuareg warriors were responsible for repelling decades of French military incursions into their land in the early 19th century. Small Tuareg bands coupled with the enormous size of the Sahara staved off the French military for nearly half a century. Ultimately, the Tuareg were defeated during the relentless drive toward the European colonization of Africa.

More recently, decades-long droughts have starved plants and animals alike, forcing tribal nomads into sedentary lifestyles. Today, the Tuareg are engaged in a modern battle for their land from national and international interests in the country's uranium and oil resources.

Taoua describes his early years as idyllic, moving from place to place, sheltered from the elements by rug draped tents, often out of sight of any other nomad group. As he grew older, he attended one of the small government residential schools set up to bring education to the nomadic tribes. By this time, the droughts had taken their toll on the nomadic way of life but a strong belief in the importance of education had taken hold in Taoua and he continued his education in Agadez, far from his family and life as he knew it.

Although he spoke four other languages when he and his wife, Phyllis, a member of the faculty at the University of Arizona, moved to Tucson, Taoua was not fluent in English, so began his educational path at Pima Community College. He mastered English through PCC's English as a Second Language program before entering the Travel and Tourism program, earning U.S. citizenship along the way. "I would not be where I am today without Pima's programs," he says.

Taoua feels a profound responsibility to his people. He hopes that through education, he can find a way to reconcile centuries-old pastoral ways of his ancestors with the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Where Are They Now?

One goal of the Alumni Association is to highlight our fantastic former students. The College is proud of you and we want to share your success in this newsletter. But we can share only what you send us! So please keep us informed about what you've been up to since taking classes here. It is as easy as sending us an email at alumni@pima.edu. We reserve the right to edit your submission for space and content.

Abdi Abdirahman, '97

Former Aztec track star Abdi Abdirahman has gone on to the next level and beyond as he transferred to and competed for the University of Arizona. In August, he represented the United States at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, in his third try for Olympic gold in the 10,000 meter run. Although reportedly ill, Abdi placed 15th. His qualifying time of 27:41.89 was actually better than both of his previous Olympic efforts where he placed 10th in 2000 and 15th in 2004.

Kateri M. Harris, '05

Alumna Kateri Harris, serving with the United States Marine Corps at Marine Wing Headquarters in Okinawa, Japan, was just promoted to lance corporal for sustained superior job performance and proficiency in her designated specialty. Harris is a 2005 graduate of PCC with an associate's degree.

David R. Stone, '01

David Stone, Fire Marshal with Drexel Heights Fire District, began taking fire sciences classes at PCC in 1991 while employed as a firefighter/paramedic. After a period as a flight paramedic, he returned to PCC for three Associate's degrees and then went on to earn a baccalaureate in fire service management from Arizona State University. In addition, Stone is now certified to teach EMT and Fire Science classes at PCC. His goal is to eventually become a Fire Chief. He states, "It's never too late to begin. As my Chief told me, 'you can have twenty years in the fire service, but without a degree you do not have the necessary credentials to become a Fire Chief.'"

Ignacia "Lupita" Chavez, '90

Lupita graduated with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Administration and then earned a Bachelor's degree in Management. She is currently working towards a Master's degree in Human Resource Management. She is employed by Offshore International, Inc. as

a Human Resources Manager and is active in the Tucson chapter of the Society of Human Resources Management. She says, “I am very grateful for the foundation that PCC provided to me.”



Deborah Munoz-Chacon, ‘00

Deborah graduated from PCC in 2000 with an Associate’s degree in Science and is finishing her Bachelor’s program at the University of Arizona. In 2004, she opened her own firm, Sonoran Oasis Landscaping, after 18 years of managing a similar business. Her firm was awarded the 2006 Minority Enterprise Development Service Provider of the Year Award by the Arizona Small Business Association. In 2007, she was awarded the national Enterprising Women of the Year award and a year later was Arizona Small Business Association’s SASIE award winner for Environmental Awareness. Deborah is a member of the City’s Minority and Women Business Enterprise Commission.

Upcoming Events

A complete list of key dates, events, Athletics, and the College Center for the Arts can be found on the [Pima Community College Online Calendar](#).

Comments or suggestions are welcome at: alumni@pima.edu

Pima Community College Alumni Association
4905 East Broadway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85709