UPCOMING EVENTS

South Kern

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES
AT ARVIN HIGH SCHOOL
Wednesday, May 2
3:00–5:30 PM

ENROLLMENT WORKSHOP
AT THE JOB SPOT
Wednesday, May 23
4:00–6:00 PM

BC ASSESSMENT
AT THE JOB SPOT
Wednesday, May 30
4:00–6:00 PM

NEW STUDENT WORKSHOP
AT THE JOB SPOT
Wednesday, June 6
4:00–6:00 PM

North Kern

INFORMATION & OUTREACH IN LOST HILLS
Monday, May 7
6:00–8:30 PM

THE FUTURE OF AEBG

BY ENDEE GRIJALVA & JAIME LOPEZ

So what’s next for BC Adult Education? Our North and South teams have been incredibly diligent in their effort to expand Adult Education throughout Kern County and are excited to announce the next sites we will be serving. The South Kern team will now serve Arvin and Lamont through its work at Arvin High School and community organizations. An Adult Education Enrollment Event was held in Arvin on April 21st and will be the first of many upcoming events. Academic Liaison and Educational Advising hours are also now available to provide supportive services to the beautiful Arvin community as potential students look to transition back into school. We are excited to announce that the Bakersfield College Rural Initiatives Team will begin offering Adult Education services in Lost Hills. Born from the continued collaboration between Wonderful Company and Bakersfield College, BC will offer services to community members seeking to pursue higher education or training.

MEET OUR ACADEMIC LIAISONS

BY KIM COLLINS & JESSICA FLORES

Jessica Flores, South Kern Academic Liaison: A critical part of my role as an academic liaison is to advocate for our students to ensure that their needs are met by connecting them to resources either on campus or in the community. I serve as a line of communication to address issues, questions, or concerns between our students, instructors, and staff to keep our program running as smoothly and effectively as possible. Kim and I both serve multiple sites throughout Kern County to provide reading and writing support for students in our EMLS classes to ensure that they are successful in achieving their personal, professional, and academic goals. My favorite part of this job is the connections I have made with the students who I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with. It has also been great to discover the many resources and organizations in Kern County that I have learned about through our outreach efforts in the community.

Kim Collins, North Kern Academic Liaison: Due to the needs of North Kern (Wasco, McFarland, and Delano) students, my role differs slightly from Jessica. Language is the greatest of many barriers for these students; therefore, I offer conversational English classes at the various sites. These classes have been a wonderful avenue to build strong relationships with the students and to help them transition into EMLS and other courses offered on the Delano Campus. I love the job—it’s extremely challenging and varied—but it is not without frustrations. Students’ lives are complicated in ways I can’t always fix. Keep reading, though, because you’ll see on the next page that there are significant successes. These keep us going.
THE POWER OF COLLABORATION & COOPERATION

BY KIM COLLINS

The progress of Nadia Baabad, a 19-year old Yemeni immigrant and beautiful human being, illustrates the value of the collaboration between Bakersfield College and North Kern Adult Schools. Nadia arrived in the U.S. in April of 2016 and, after an emotionally tumultuous several months, began her English studies in earnest at the Delano Adult School in January of 2017. Progress was slow as Arabic speaking students face unique challenges—the predominance of Spanish in the classroom and among students and the tremendous structural and phonological differences between Arabic and English that especially complicate reading and writing. As the Academic Liaison for North Kern’s AEBG team, I began working with Nadia in October 2017. Since the program was in its fledgling stage, I had ample time to work with Nadia three days a week for an hour each day. Nadia’s progress was rapid. Each session I was forced to prepare new material as review was never necessary. In Spring 2018, she commenced her educational journey at BC, enrolling in the free EMLS B72 course offered on the BC Delano Campus. She is blossoming. I could not be more proud of her nor confident of the future fulfillment of her dreams to become a dentist, nurse practitioner, or doctor. I am grateful for the deep connection Nadia and I have developed throughout the journey. We have shared laughs, music, in-depth discussions on a variety of topics, and cultural connections. I have glimpsed her tumultuous life in war-torn Yemen: the proximity of bombing, the inability to complete high school, and the years of separation from members of her family. I have also witnessed the resiliency of the human spirit as Nadia, despite her many hardships, is playful and cheerful, yet she is also a spirited fighter who is determined to carve out a brighter future. Nadia’s story is special but not unique. Many students have availed themselves of the additional tutoring and language support BC is able to offer to adult school students and have increased language fluency, enrolled in Bakersfield College courses, passed OED subject specific tests, or received support in any number of equally important ways. We are BC and, in collaboration with North Kern adult schools, we are helping adult learners transform their lives.

ONE SECRET TO SUCCESS

BY KIM COLLINS

Michael Westwood is a seasoned ESL instructor but a new full-time hire for the BC Delano Campus EMLS department. It would have been nice if Michael could have slowly acclimated to various changes—institutional and departmental policies, Delano students and colleagues, and Delano culture and weather—but by Spring of 2018, he was selected to teach the first EMLS course especially offered to accommodate adult learners from rural communities, and the chaos commenced. Despite tremendous and sustained efforts by AEBG staff, only approximately half of the students were on Michael’s register five weeks into the course and most students did not have class materials provided by AEBG funds three weeks into the course. Furthermore, Michael consistently faced students arriving late to class due to work conflicts, tremendous variation in English language fluency, class interruptions by AEBG staff needing to communicate with students, late enrollees and auditing students, and technological barriers. Throughout, Michael’s flexibility and patience were unparalleled. Timid and reserved students quickly warmed to Michael’s welcoming and calming demeanor, and, by all measures, the class has been a tremendous success. Students’ listening and speaking skills have improved, as has their confidence to undertake future college coursework. Despite the difficulties, Michael has found teaching the course to be enjoyable and rewarding. In part, he notes, it is because students are mature, focused, and eager to learn. They have warm personalities and freely share from the wealth of their experiences which has provided a peek into their sometimes troubled but rich worlds. He hopes that future classes will be less riddled with administrative issues, but he recognizes that many issues are hard to resolve and will require much thought and conversation before equitable and productive solutions are discovered. AEBG staff are continually working to streamline processes in order to avoid the mishaps of our inaugural class, but the truth is that things will always be more than a little messy when individuals from communities wrought with innumerable barriers cross the bridge into college. Ultimately, there are many factors that will contribute to the success of the program, but one factor will always remain constant: instructors who are sensitive, flexible, and committed to meeting the needs of adult residents in the rural communities of North Kern. Michael Westwood is such a professor, so, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you. It’s been a pleasure working with you.