



Educational Assistance Center

THE ADVOCATE: A Newsletter Devoted to Disability Equity



MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Building an Inclusive Campus

March marks Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM), a nationwide observance established in 1987 by Ronald Reagan to promote inclusion, opportunity, and respect for individuals with developmental disabilities. At our community college, inclusion is more than a value—it's a commitment. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is an opportunity to reaffirm our dedication to creating a campus where every student has equitable access to education, resources, and opportunities to succeed.

Understanding Developmental Disabilities

Developmental disabilities are lifelong conditions

that begin during early development and may affect learning, communication, mobility, or daily living skills. These conditions include:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Intellectual disability
- Epilepsy

Students with developmental disabilities are an important part of our campus community—pursuing degrees, participating in student life, and preparing for meaningful careers.

Why It Matters on a College Campus

Community colleges are gateways to opportunity. For students with developmental disabilities, access to inclusive classrooms, academic support, and welcoming spaces can be life changing. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month encourages us to:

- Promote accessible course design and inclusive teaching practices
- Highlight campus disability support services
- Encourage respectful language and disability etiquette
- Celebrate the achievements of students of all abilities
- Strengthen peer support and a sense of belonging

Inclusion in higher education benefits everyone. Diverse perspectives enrich classroom conversations, strengthen campus culture, and prepare students for an inclusive workforce.

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DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR SUGGESTION FOR NEXT MONTH'S CONTENT?

Contact Leo Orange at lorange@vcccd.edu

STUDENT INTERVIEW: AMBER LOZANO

Welcome to The Advocate's first interview column, dedicated to none other than the very people the EAC is designed to serve: our students! We'll try to conduct more of these in the future—they're both eye-opening and fun.

What do you like about being a student at Oxnard College?

What I love most about Oxnard College is the sense of community. Professors truly care about student success, and there are so many opportunities to get involved. I've grown academically and personally here. I've felt supported every step of the way.

What kinds of activities do you participate in on campus?

I serve as Director of Student Life in ASG, where I help coordinate campus events and student engagement initiatives. I'm also President of the Psychology and Sociology Clubs. Being involved allows me to advocate for students and create welcoming spaces on campus.

How has the EAC assisted you with your academic endeavours?

The EAC has played a crucial role in my academic success through accommodations and consistent support. They've helped ensure I can fully access my education. Their encouragement and advocacy have strengthened my confidence. It reminded me that asking for support is a strength, not a weakness.

What have been some of your proudest achievements at OC?

Some of my proudest achievements include stepping into leadership roles, organizing campus-wide events, and maintaining strong academic performance while serving the community. Balancing service, academics, and advocacy has challenged me in the best way and helped me grow into a more confident leader.



What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about mental health advocacy, student leadership, and creating equitable opportunities in education. I believe in serving others and uplifting voices that are often overlooked. My goal is to continue working in spaces where I can support individuals and strengthen communities.

What would you like our faculty to know about teaching students with disabilities?

I would love faculty to remember that accommodations are about equity, not advantage. Small adjustments can make a significant impact on student success. When professors are understanding and flexible, it creates an environment where students with disabilities feel valued, capable, and empowered.

HELP EAC CELEBRATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH!

WHEN: Wed, March 18, 1:00-2:00

WHERE: EAC Lab (SS 114)

WHAT: Experience what daily life is like for individuals with developmental disabilities by participating in interactive simulations. Snacks included!

WHEN: Thu, March 26, 1:00-2:00

WHERE: Student Lounge (ASG)

WHAT: Join EAC for a disability-mythbusting game of *Kahoot!* followed by a round of EAC-themed Bingo. Snacks and prizes included!

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How Our Campus Can Participate

Students, faculty, and staff can support inclusion by:

- Wearing blue to show support ❤️
- Learning about Universal Design
- Partnering with the EAC
- Amplifying student voices
- Attending campus workshops

Moving from Awareness to Action

Awareness is the first step. Belonging is the goal. This month—and throughout the year—let's continue building a campus community where differences are respected, barriers are removed, and every student has the opportunity to thrive. **Together, we create access. Together, we create opportunity. Together, we create belonging.**

EAC STAFF SPOTLIGHT: STEVE TURNER



Steve Turner has been a tenacious supporter of diverse individuals with disabilities for more than two decades. Beginning his teaching with community nonprofits and various government agencies, Steve is currently a Learning Skills Instructor at Oxnard College.

Steve has his Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and sees the tremendous benefits of working in the community and providing access to higher education by helping students break down barriers.

"I truly appreciate being part of such an amazing EAC team. My goal has always been to reach students exactly where they are and to help create a genuine sense of belonging for everyone. Supporting equity and access isn't just a job; it's about building a community where every student feels seen and empowered."

CONNECT WITH US

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