

A Unique Place...

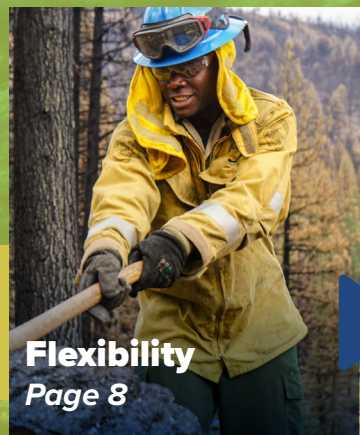
A Unique Program



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ADVANCE**
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Founded five years ago in South Lake Tahoe, ADVANCE is an education collaborative like no other. Find out how and why it was created—and what it plans to do next.

Photo by Paul Hamill @paulhamillphotos

Navigation, Innovation, Impact

BY KRYSTA SCRIPTER

ADVANCE set out to create the first adult education consortium in South Lake Tahoe that did more than offer degrees—it helped change the regional economy

A mother and son graduate in an ADVANCE ceremony.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF ADVANCE

Creating stable employment in a tourist town marked by seasonal jobs and an income disparity is no easy task, but ADVANCE was up for the challenge.

“Adult learning historically, nationwide and certainly in California, was always relegated to just kind of helping individuals learn Microsoft Word, if they didn’t complete a high school diploma, or if they had English as a second language,” Michael Ward, professional facilitator, says. Though no longer with ADVANCE, Ward was instrumental in founding the consortium as it’s known today,

including securing key state funding. Ward was approached by school leadership at Lake Tahoe Community College about setting up a consortium specifically for individuals who had not succeeded either in high school or the traditional college pipeline.

In 2014, Ward put together a series of workshops with every public agency, organization and nonprofit in the area dedicated to making South Lake Tahoe residents’ lives better. It was about laying out everything they did, Ward says, and figuring out where the gaps were. Understanding those gaps, and where other aspects

of people’s lives—such as childcare or housing—may be impacting their schooling, made a world of difference for both agency and individuals.

The South Lake Tahoe area, in particular, faced a problem not unlike other tourist towns: seasonal jobs and a high-income disparity between those who lived here and those who worked here. It became important to create an adult education system that went beyond transferring community college students to universities or getting their GED.

“It was not necessary that an adult learner had to become a transfer

“We could offer competency-based career pathway programs with certificates and enable people to build successful careers without having to transfer and being a traditional student.”

Michael Ward
Professional Facilitator



student seeking a bachelor’s degree,” Ward says. “In fact, we could offer competency-based career pathway programs with certificates and enable people to build successful careers without having to transfer and being a traditional student.”

This way of thinking helped ADVANCE secure a second round of funding, further cementing ADVANCE’s presence in the area for those who need alternative methods. “Instead of making it about enrolling people in classes, it was about enrolling people in their own destiny and then helping them navigate that,” Ward says.

AT A GLANCE: ADVANCE’S HISTORY

2016

Transition navigation and personalized pathways services begin

First culinary boot camp models piloted

2017

First high school credentials awarded in combined ceremony with EDCOE and LTUSD partners

ADVANCE and LTCC awarded a \$500,000 pre-apprenticeship grant for the culinary boot camp

2018

Competency-based high school diploma approach implemented with partners at EDCOE

Awarded contract to provide WIOA Title I services from Golden Sierra Job Training Agency

2019

First small-engine repair boot camp offered

Launched 2,000 Hour Culinary Apprenticeship using the American Culinary Federation model

2020

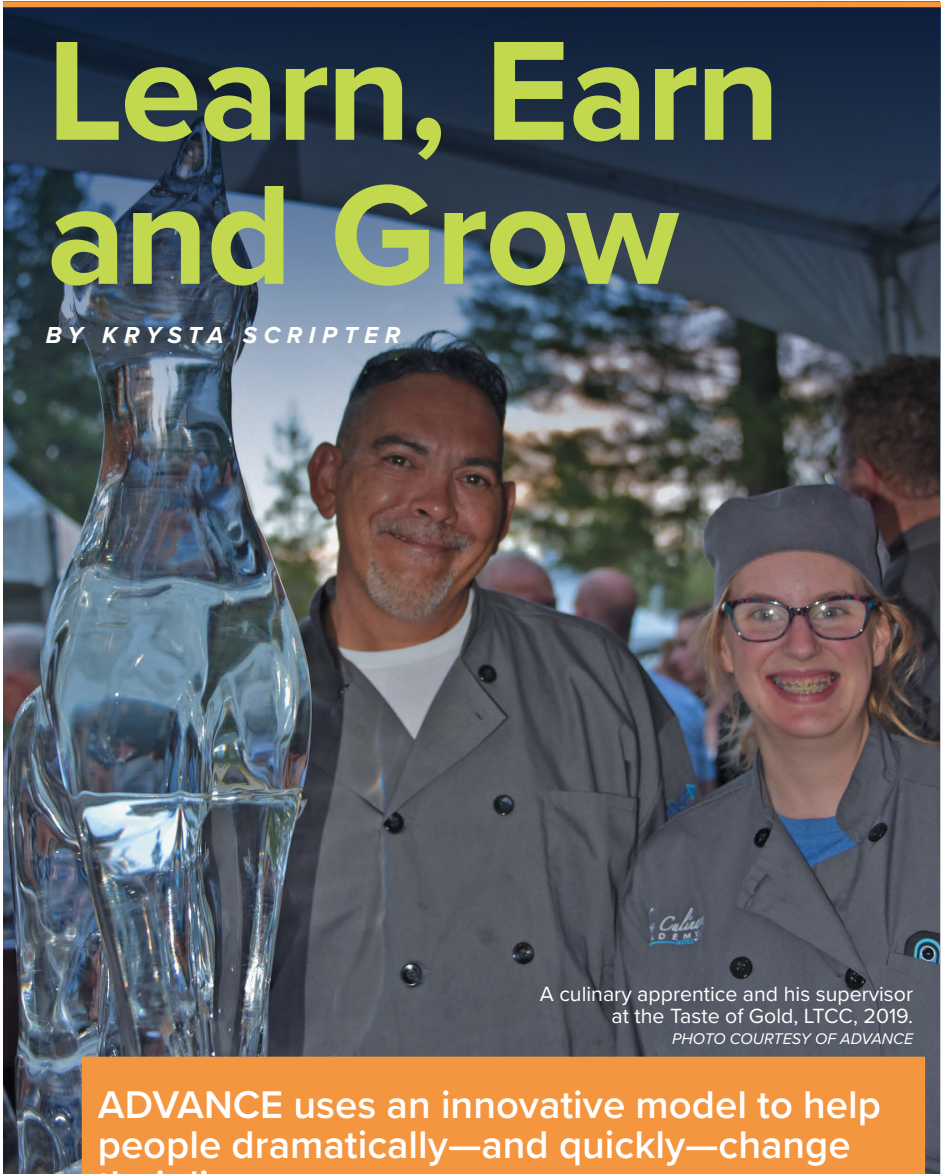
Enhanced support to LTCC ESL programs with online, on-demand learning platforms (BE and EnGen)

Off-campus office opened to continue in-person services access as organizations and institutions shut down face-to-face options

2021

Launched pilot ski lift maintenance apprenticeship program with partners at Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resort

LTCC campus reopened for limited in-person services—ADVANCE now operating on- and off-campus



Learn, Earn and Grow

BY KRYSTA SCRIPTER

A culinary apprentice and his supervisor at the Taste of Gold, LTCC, 2019.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

ADVANCE uses an innovative model to help people dramatically—and quickly—change their lives

ADVANCE provides competency-based programs that are modified for every individual's needs. It's what sets ADVANCE apart, director Frank Gerdeman says. "The primary service we provide is really personalized pathway plan creation and management. They have a plan—or we help them articulate a plan—and then we manage that plan toward their goals," Gerdeman says. "Two people walk in the door at the same time with the same goal and have very different situations in life. So expecting them to be successful following the same exact steps seems a little ridiculous to us." Instead, ADVANCE partners with local nonprofits, organizations and public agencies to address all

obstacles a person might be facing, whether it be childcare, food insecurity, housing, health care or other concerns. This holistic case management—recognizing the needs of individuals outside of the classroom—sets them up for more long-term success. "In the context of that individual who receives food stamps from one agency and job training from another, traditional case management is really limited to the outcomes that matter to the agency giving that support," Gerdeman says. ADVANCE can help integrate all of those services with the client to form a manageable approach. ADVANCE's continued success in South Lake Tahoe also includes serving as an incubator for new programs and services that can be rapidly deployed to meet the fluid



"They have a plan—or we help them articulate a plan—and then we manage that plan toward their goals."

Frank Gerdeman
Director at ADVANCE



needs of this mountain resort community. Once new programs gain traction, they can be transitioned to partners like

Lake Tahoe Community College or the Tahoe Chamber for longer term sustainability. The work is not without its challenges, especially during the pandemic, but ADVANCE is always solution-oriented. As institutions closed and things moved online, for example, ADVANCE opened an off-campus office and set up an array of virtual resources. At the end of the day, it's about making sure all clients have access. Gerdeman says addressing those barriers means the difference between those who pass the program and continue to succeed, and those who don't. "Not only in that arena but in moving forward primarily to better, greater, more sustainable economic participation."

THEN & NOW: A SNAPSHOT

Unique Clients Served			
Year 1	2016-17		144
Cumulative	2016-21		780
Total Earning High School Credential			
Year 1	2016-17		16
Cumulative	2016-21		124
Employment Goals Met			
Year 1	2016-17		35
Cumulative	2016-21		187
Navigation Services (one-on-one direct service with clients, excludes all other services)			
Year 1	2016-17	122 sessions	144 hours
Cumulative	2016-21	3,890 sessions	3,875 hours
College Enrollment/Transition to College			
Year 1	2016-17		11
Cumulative	2016-21		316



No Barriers

BY EDGAR SANCHEZ

ADVANCE focuses on solutions not obstacles; goals not setbacks

Great teachers, it is said, open pathways to success for their students.

But Hermelinda Aguirre has a different narrative.

She maintains the gateway to her dreams was opened by a brilliant transition navigator, Claudia Manzano, and the remarkable education consortium where she works.

Despite not having its own physical campus, ADVANCE has furthered the career goals of Tahoe Basin adults by delivering customized instruction through its various partners since 2016.

“Ms. Manzano has helped me so much,” Aguirre, 54, of South Lake Tahoe, says recently. “She’s always attentive to what I’m doing.”

Aguirre, who has a physical disability limiting her mobility, and who likes being called Meli, described ADVANCE as a superb program “with nice personnel always ready to assist us.”

She first met Manzano in mid-2018, when the latter succeeded Aguirre’s original ADVANCE counselor, who had left the program.

“I met with Meli and she shared with me her career story,” Manzano

says, recalling how Aguirre enthusiastically explained her goal: to obtain an A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education, so she could teach foundational lessons to youngsters.

At the time, Aguirre was learning English at Lake Tahoe Community College in preparation for the five-part high school equivalency exam. The problem: the nearest HSE testing sites were 60 miles away in Placerville and 30 miles away in Carson City.

Getting to either location multiple times—Aguirre would test on one subject a day—was challenging.



“Ms. Manzano has helped me so much. She’s always attentive to what I’m doing.”

Hermelinda “Meli” Aguirre
ADVANCE client

Aguirre had stopped driving after a 1998 stroke left her partially paralyzed.

Before tackling that problem, though, Aguirre had to bolster her writing and mathematics, not just her language skills, Manzano determined.

With input from teachers, Manzano developed a “pathway plan” for Aguirre to meet her goals, through a combination that included independent book work and college classes, some of which she attended virtually amid COVID protocols.

In 2020, Aguirre was ready for her test. By then, ADVANCE was an HSE testing site, meaning she took the HSE exam at LTCC, a 2-mile bus ride from her home.

ADVANCE helped make that happen and has helped her in countless other ways.

Aguirre received her high school diploma in June 2020. She will receive her A.A. in 2023, after completing ongoing LTCC classes.

“I have no doubt Meli will succeed,” Manzano said. “She sees no barriers. She’s a force to be reckoned with.”

Meli Aguirre earned her high school diploma in June 2020.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

AT A GLANCE: THE HIGH SCHOOL CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

ADVANCE helps people build a competency-based, personalized pathway to graduation. That means valuing the learning that happens throughout life, not just in a classroom. ADVANCE can build on those skills and then “fill in the gaps” using any resource available, including ESL, college courses or job training. By working with partners at EDCOE and LTUSD, requirements have shifted from “Credit” (where we were) to “Expectation” (where we are).

Credit	EDCOE Requirement	Graduation Expectation
10	World History	Analyze problems and the role of citizens using perspectives that reflect the differences among cultures and peoples
10	American Studies	
5	Civics	
5	Economics	
30	Mathematics <i>Must include algebra or algebraic thinking</i>	Use a variety of mathematical methods and appropriate technology to solve problems and function confidently in a mathematically sophisticated world
40	English	Construct and interpret the English language in a variety of situations and texts

Whole-Person Approach

BY ANNE STOKES



Riley Hinkson has been able to build a new life and career in forestry.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RILEY HINKSON



“Having people who are there and who are enthusiastic about my goals and what I want to achieve in my life helps give me the motivation to keep on pushing on some days I just want to quit.”

Riley Hinkson
ADVANCE client

navigators can connect students with community resources for health care, mental health care, housing, food insecurity and more.

“We meet clients where they’re at and we also offer wraparound services. ... It’s really looking at the individual and what they need in their lives to be successful,” Crosby explains. “Two people can have a goal, ... but how they reach that goal can be drastically different based on the individual. As a navigator, it’s my job to help guide individuals to a pathway that meets their needs.”

For Hinkson, such support included help handling the formal bureaucracy involved in legally changing their name and gender as well as emotional support during more personal trials and tribulations.

“Whether it be my personal life or academics, I’m always able to talk to her about it. She’s been an incredible sounding board for me because she has such great advice,” Hinkson says. “My family doesn’t support me but having people who are there and who are enthusiastic about my goals and what I want to achieve in my life helps give me the motivation to keep on pushing when on some days I just want to quit.”

enthusiastic support for me ... really makes it that much better.”

In 2020, Hinkson—who identifies as transgender—found themselves cut off from family and on their own. In search of a more sustainable future, they joined the California Conservation Corps, where they not only found a new job they loved, but the training and college education to make a career out of it.

As college liaison for the CCC’s Tahoe Center, Crosby helps corpsmembers like Hinkson navigate the college system with things like enrollment, financial aid options and creating academic plans. Luckily, that’s not where support ends. ADVANCE

ADVANCE sees people as individuals and asks ‘What do you need?’

For students, success depends on more than academic support—it lies in supporting them both in and outside the classroom. For Riley Hinkson, that support came from Meredith Crosby, transition navigator with ADVANCE.

“She’s been cheering me on the whole time, she’s been incredibly supportive and super accepting,” Hinkson says. “Having that

PERSONALIZED PATHWAY: A SNAPSHOT

What does ADVANCE mean by personalization?

It means tailoring the pathway and plan to each client’s specific needs, abilities, situations and expectations rather than forcing individuals to comply with an established pathway and/or process.

“I was really worried that I wouldn’t be able to meet my goals because of everything else going on in my life, but you found a way to make it work on my schedule.”

Etta B., former client

It means building a meaningful relationship with each client and helping them better understand and articulate their own goals, opportunities, strengths and challenges.

“For the first time in my entire life experience...I had people available to me who cared that I was here to rebuild my life from wherever I had stopped.”

Brad H., client

It means validating and measuring what matters to the client, not just to the program or the system, which means better support and meaningful goal attainment.

“Without you guys I wouldn’t be where I am today...”

Neil Y., former apprentice

It means applying these principles to our service and industry partners, as well as individuals.

“Our students have benefitted greatly. It’s been really wonderful having this new system in place.”

Anna P., educational partner

“This is exactly the kind of partnership we were looking for.”

Meghan R., employer partner

AT A GLANCE: SKI LIFT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Another example of industry-specific training is ADVANCE's new ski lift apprenticeship. Aligned to standards established by the recognized ski industry leader NSAA (National Ski Areas Association), this program leads to all the skills and experience necessary to certify as a Level One ski lift maintenance mechanic or electrician.

- ▶ ADVANCE was a partner in the creation and review of the Lift Operations Guide
- ▶ A significant local need—15 resorts within the Tahoe Basin, with over **300 lift-related positions**
- ▶ Competency-based—the skills and competencies are fixed but time is variable

Industry Related Boot Camp Participants

Year 1	2016-17	19
Cumulative	2016-21	171



Cooking Up a Path to Success

BY GAIL ALLYN SHORT

At the West Shore Café in Homewood, Calif., the eatery doubles as a training site for those dreaming of one day cooking for a living.

In 2016, ADVANCE designed, delivered and refined a culinary boot camp and in 2019, turned it over to Lake Tahoe Community College, which today offers it as a non-credit course, says Brad Deeds, the college's dean of Workforce Development and Instruction.

"The boot camp prepares participants for entry-level prep cook and cook positions in the local culinary industry and to transition into credit courses and programs," Deeds says.

ADVANCE also helped secure a \$500,000 pre-apprenticeship grant through the California Apprenticeship Initiative. The funding was used to realign curriculum, purchase equipment and provide the support needed to launch an American Culinary Federation 2,000-hour Certified Culinarian Apprenticeship program.

By focusing on the skills and knowledge requirements established by the American Culinary Federation, the apprenticeship program teaches the skills local chefs say are necessary for advancement in the industry. The program currently has eight apprentices working on both sides of the California/Nevada border.

"It's a unique opportunity for students to get industry-valued training in combination with college credit coursework," Deeds says.

Program innovations include the opportunity for registered apprentices to earn college credit on the job or to meet on-the-job requirements through college coursework. This can reduce stress, increase enrollments and decrease resistance from supervising chefs and managers.

"West Shore Café/Homewood Ski Resort currently has multiple culinary apprentices working at the property and participating in the training," says

Hands-on learning paved the way to more opportunity



David Smith evaluates boot camp participants' plates.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

David Smith, the restaurant's director of food and beverage.

During an early boot camp, Smith recalls one cynical 20-something-year-old boot camp participant who told him, "I'm just here because I don't want to be out in the cold. You're not going to be able to teach me anything." After Smith demonstrated how to cut a roasted chicken into eight parts to create eight different meals, "the light went on in her head and she said, 'You mean I can put this with potatoes or rice and a vegetable and have five or six meals for my daughter instead of taking her to McDonald's?'"

"For the rest of the week," says Smith, "she asked me every question in the book."

Deeds credits ADVANCE for not only the boot camp, but for being an invaluable partner to Lake Tahoe Community College and industry partners in the Tahoe basin. He says numerous students have obtained jobs and promotions because of the program.

"They delivered customized, just-in-timing training and support for the



**"West Shore Café/
Homewood Ski Resort
currently has multiple
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and participating in the
training."**

David Smith, director of food and beverage
West Shore Café/Homewood Ski Resort

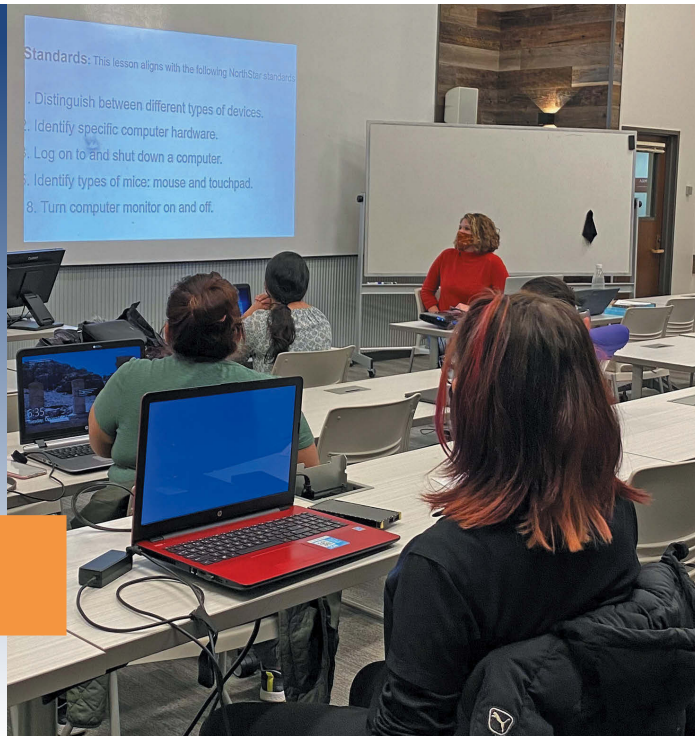
adult population in our community," he says, "and helped hundreds of individuals increase skills, earn a high school credential, connect to college courses, and increase their current and future earning potential."

WIOA participants can receive money for tuition and materials in class.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

Power of Partnership

BY GAIL ALLYN SHORT

ADVANCE teams up with job training agencies to get people job-ready



Many residents in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Alpine County area who are unemployed or working in low-wage, low skill jobs struggle to find affordable ways to train for new, better-paying careers.

But ADVANCE, a program designed to harness the collaborative power of a community, is working to change that.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, ADVANCE is able to partner with the Golden Sierra Job Training Agency, headquartered in Roseville, to give clients the training they need to land good-paying, in-demand jobs.

"At ADVANCE, we work with adults in the community who are looking to get a job or a better job, go back to school, get job training or all of the above, and we provide individualized, personal pathway planning that's tailored to each individual's career or education goals," ADVANCE transition navigator Nicole Paulley Davenport says.

Partnering with Golden Sierra is mutually beneficial as they work together to give clients the support they need based on their unique circumstances and can be used for a wide range of services and supports.

"It has allowed us to expand our services and provide more flexibility and opportunities for participants. So not only can we support a student with tuition and supportive services funds,

we can also place people in work experiences such as paid internships," Davenport says.

Jason Buckingham, Golden Sierra's Executive Director, says his agency offers clients occupational skills training and other supports that provide on-ramps to self-sufficiency.



"The (ADVANCE) program is uniquely positioned between education and industry, therefore allowing them influence that supports students, job seekers and local businesses."

Jason Buckingham, Executive Director
Golden Sierra Job Training Agency



And working with the ADVANCE partnership in this unique region, Golden Sierra is able to leverage the expertise and industry relationships developed through the hard work of the ADVANCE program.

The agency helps people access programs that lead to economic mobility. "Our primary goal is to utilize the experience and planning done by the ADVANCE group to meet the labor needs of the local industry planners," Buckingham says. "The program is uniquely positioned between education and industry, therefore allowing them influence that supports students, job seekers and local businesses."

One way ADVANCE and Golden Sierra work together is On-the-Job Training contracts. ADVANCE identifies a match between a job seeker and an employer, the employer provides the training, and the employer receives wage reimbursement directly from Golden Sierra.

After completing the training and apprenticeship programs, ADVANCE follows up with graduates for up to a year to see how they are progressing in their new careers, Davenport says.

"Even when someone exits the WIOA program," she says, "they don't have to exit ADVANCE."

CLOSING THE JOB GAP: A SNAPSHOT

Starting in 2018, when ADVANCE was first awarded a contract by Golden Sierra Job Training Agency to provide WIOA Title I services in South Lake Tahoe and Alpine County, ADVANCE has served

400 individuals.

More than 130 received individual career services

53 received

direct financial support for training, education, job placement, and/or general supportive services

\$378,000 in program and direct client support training

Supportive services include:

- ▶ Tuition, books and materials in fields like Fire Science, Culinary, Medical Billing and Early Childhood Education
- ▶ Tuition and travel for non-local programs like Commercial Driver's License training at schools in Sacramento and Reno
- ▶ Online course tuition, fees and materials for programs such as Boat Captain's Licensure, Coding and Drone Operation
- ▶ Supported job training opportunities with regional Tahoe employers in childcare, video production, dental tech/assistant and water treatment plant operations
- ▶ Housing assistance
- ▶ Application for U.S. citizenship
- ▶ Incentives for completing high school diploma programs

AT A GLANCE: THE CCC CONNECTION

The relationship between ADVANCE and the California Conservation Corps is bigger than the forestry crew at the local Tahoe Center. It connects across crews and across the state. Some of that work includes:

Operating a culinary boot camp, which has provided critical culinary skills training to over **80 corpsmembers statewide.**

ADVANCE's Transition Navigator

role was the model for similar positions in CCC Centers throughout California.

Over 1,000 hours of ADVANCE navigation support for forestry crew and general crew members at the Meyers facility.

ADVANCE has connected over **60 corpsmembers** to **36 unique courses** for a total of **248 enrollments.**

ADVANCE's personality/career interest assessment, Traitify, has been administered to almost **400 corpsmembers.**

A Forestry Program with Flexibility

BY RAUL CLEMENT

ADVANCE meets individuals 'where they are at' for a tailored approach to education

In 2018, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 2126. This bill required the California Conservation Corps to create a Forestry Corps program by July 2019. The bill also mandated that Forestry Corpsmembers be provided pathways to degree programs and jobs.

For the South Lake Tahoe branch of the CCC, this was an easier task than it might have been—due to a preexisting relationship with ADVANCE, an adult education consortium in South Lake Tahoe. The CCC had been working with ADVANCE for several years to provide corpsmembers access to high school credentials and post-corps transition. Now, it was simply a matter of formalizing degree pathways.

Gary Whitehouse, Director of the Tahoe Center of the CCC, sees the role of ADVANCE as a liaison between the Forestry Corps and Lake Tahoe educators.

"It helps us to have a central point of contact, rather than trying to get into the education system and community college and working with a counselor here, a professor there. ADVANCE can be kind of our single point of contact



"What ADVANCE is incredible at is having a tailored approach as part of their ethos. ... It's not an in-the-box answer all the time."

Gary Whitehouse
Director, Tahoe
Center of the CCC



and navigate any of the questions we may have," he says.

These questions may include which courses to take, where to sign up, and how to fit courses into a tight schedule. Forestry Corpsmembers' responsibilities can occupy 40 hours a week. Without the help of ADVANCE, it

The CCC's Forestry Corps also offers pathways to degree programs and jobs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CCC

would be difficult—if not impossible—to design a curriculum that works for them.

It also helps that ADVANCE shares key operational principles with the CCC. The CCC, says Whitehouse, is all about "meeting corpsmembers where they're at." Similarly, ADVANCE understands that any modern educational system must be flexible. One person might be 18 years old and looking to complete a high school degree. Another might be 25, with a family, and fresh out of the military.

"What ADVANCE is incredible at is having a tailored approach as part of their ethos," Whitehouse says. "That navigation to the higher wage, the new job, the education—they'll meet you and develop an individual plan for that. It's not an in-the-box answer all the time."

Innovation in ESL Learning

BY MATT JOCKS

Long a staple of adult education, ADVANCE has helped turn South Lake Tahoe's version into a tailored and cutting-edge program

Meeting any need is a challenge. Meeting the needs of a diverse population in a constantly changing environment requires more than hard work and dedication.

It requires new and creative responses. And, yes, often a little cash.

All of those have fallen into place with the partnership between ADVANCE and the English Language Learner program at Lake Tahoe Community College. As a result, Lake Tahoe area residents who do not have English as their primary language have been given new tools to clear barriers in their personal lives and be more likely to meet career and educational goals.

"We were kind of stuck in the things we were doing," says Maxine Alper, English as Second Language Department chair at Lake Tahoe Community College. "I had a lot of ideas about the ways I wanted to innovate, but there weren't a lot of resources to make that happen."

State funding flowing through ADVANCE has changed that. These resources have allowed the partnership to be more creative in finding new solutions.

The curriculum has been revamped to include targeted language courses in conversation, pronunciation and writing.

But there was a larger attempt to make the program more holistic, to



"We were kind of stuck in the things we were doing. I had a lot of ideas about the ways I wanted to innovate, but there weren't a lot of resources to make that happen."

Maxine Alper, English as Second Language department chair
Lake Tahoe Community College

meld the straight academic courses with life and job skills. For instance, making the culinary classes more accessible to Spanish-speaking students.

One of the biggest challenges is the diverse needs of those looking to improve their English proficiency.

Some come to the program with limited education. Others are highly educated professionals from other countries who need to secure licensing and credentials to work here. Some are looking primarily to enter the job market. Others may want to



English learners use new online tools.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

communicate with their children's teachers, doctors and nurses without having to use their children as interpreters.

One of the innovations was the introduction of Burlington English, an online platform that, along with a program to loan computers, enables students to learn on their own time.

"If they are at home, or in a restaurant, rather than scrolling through Facebook or playing a computer game, they can use this," Alper says.

ADVANCE bilingual transition navigator Grace Davis says Burlington English and Voxy EnGen open the doors for students by meeting their needs on their time.

"Voxy even has the option for learners to join a live small group at various hours of the day or night," Davis says.

Before these innovations, despite the best efforts of administrators and instructors, the ESL program had become stagnant, according to Alper. That is no longer the case.

"We've been able to revamp our program and better serve the ESL community," she says.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A SNAPSHOT

When in-person ESL classes were cancelled, access to ADVANCE's online resources, Burlington English and EnGen, provided a unique solution to ensure they remained available.

- ▶ Allowed for a rapid pivot to online/virtual environment
- ▶ Provided in and out of class access to relevant resources
- ▶ Allowed for personalizing content at the student level, even within a class
- ▶ Ensured critical "positive attendance" hours could be met, even if a student missed class

A typical ESL course provides **72 hours** of in-class instruction. That number plays a significant role in funding, which is based on actual hours of attendance per student. With the integrated use of Burlington English, students who missed in-class hours could log hours outside of scheduled class time that could be applied to the course total.

- ▶ During the academic year of 2020-21, over **40 students logged 441 hours** of "out-of-class" use in Burlington English alone.

COLLABORATION: A SNAPSHOT

ADVANCE is able to leverage the expertise of partners to reduce duplication of services and target resources to better support the needs of clients. Collaboration partners include:



California
Conservation
Corps



Golden Sierra
Job Agency



TAHOE PROSPERITY CENTER
The Tahoe Prosperity Center



The Tahoe Chamber



South Lake Tahoe Family
Resource Center



Saint Joseph Community
Land Trust



Edgewood
Tahoe Resort



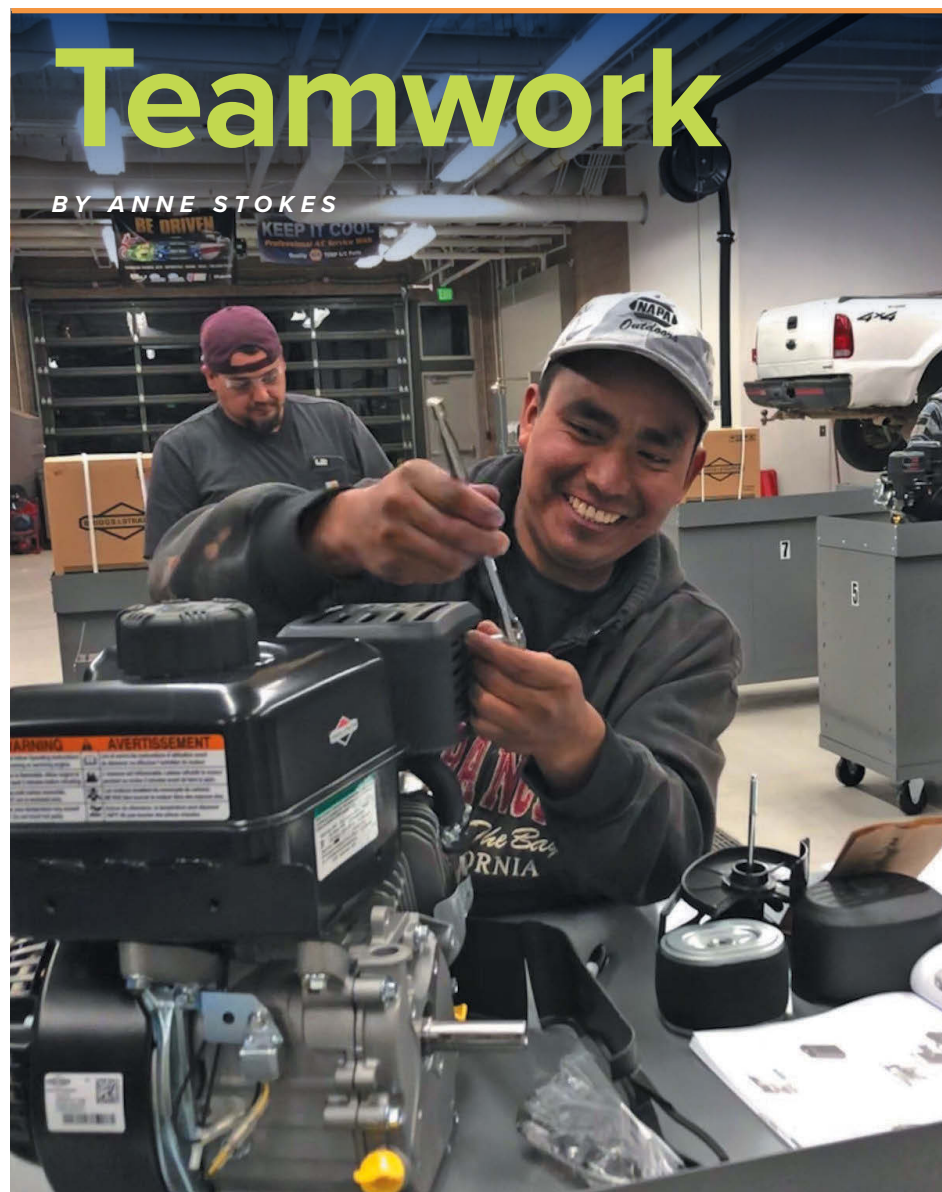
West Shore
Café



Live Violence
Free



Alpine County
Chamber



Teamwork

BY ANNE STOKES

ADVANCE works to ensure support is seamless
across state lines

Whether it's finding the right classes, paying tuition or ensuring they have a roof over their heads, ADVANCE doesn't let state borders get in the way of helping people.

"No matter what their program is—whether they're finishing their high school credential or moving into some kind of job training program—a lot of people don't have the support that others do ... [or] somebody who can connect them to different programs or resources to set them up for success," explains Nicole Paulley Davenport, transition navigator with ADVANCE. "We've been able to open

a door for more people and serve more participants and students and it doesn't matter which side (of Stateline) they're on."

To support clients on both the California and Nevada sides of the Lake Tahoe Basin, ADVANCE collaborates with partner organizations to provide academic planning, career assessments and financial assistance with tuition, school materials and supplies. But help doesn't stop at the classroom door: ADVANCE can connect people with further community supports to address basic needs like housing, food insecurity and employment.

ADVANCE helps people obtain job skills throughout the Tahoe Basin.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE



"We've been able to open a door for more people and serve more participants and students and it doesn't matter which side (of Stateline) they're on."

Nicole Paulley Davenport
Transition navigator
with ADVANCE



One such partner, JOIN, Inc., works with ADVANCE to help people living in Nevada overcome any barriers to continuing their education.

"We help pay for tuition for students, ... help them with support services like gas assistance, tuition, books, any supplies or tools they might need for their courses," says Birdella Goffinet, programs director for JOIN, Inc., a workforce development nonprofit headquartered in Carson City, Nevada. "ADVANCE will pay a portion and JOIN will pay a portion and we'll both case-manage that client, so they get the best of two different worlds."

According to Davenport, such teamwork is one of the reasons ADVANCE is able to serve so many clients on both sides of the state line.

"We're not duplicating services by any means, we just work together and I appreciate somebody else having another perspective or other experiences. ... We both have the same goal for the outcome to support this person and set them up for success and not failure," she says. "That wraparound team approach, I've really enjoyed. I've seen the most success when we take that approach."



Chef Mark Davis, who helped build the culinary apprentice program.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ADVANCE

What's Ahead

BY KRYSTA SCRIPTER

Five years in, ADVANCE looks to the future by continuing to adapt its unique program

ADVANCE's success is due in large part to its transition navigator model, which personally tailors each student's experience. To go forward, ADVANCE needs to continue—and expand—this innovative approach.

In traditional adult education, “everybody starts with this lengthy, standardized intake process,” says Brad Deeds, dean of Workforce Development and Instruction at Lake Tahoe Community College. “Everybody starts with the same pretest, everybody does the same multiple steps, regardless what they’re there for. Unfortunately, not everybody makes it through the cumbersome process, and don’t end up accessing services they need.”

Deeds, who is also an ADVANCE board member, says this “one size fits all” approach doesn’t fit most people’s needs. “Not everybody has to go through the same door. Some people just need tutoring or access to resources in order to earn their high school equivalency, or enroll in a specific course because that’s what they need to change careers.”

The ADVANCE difference lies in its transition navigator model, which keeps clients—especially those that require more support—from slipping

through the cracks. Clients have navigators—personal case managers—who assess their unique needs and offer solutions specific to their goals. This can include getting the required training for an already identified job or connecting them with an agency that can help solve issues outside the classroom.

John Pillsbury, ADVANCE board member and former Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Case Manager, says of this approach, “The development of the transition navigator position and ADVANCE’s collaboration with Lake Tahoe Community College dovetailed perfectly with my involvement in the development of a supported education program at Sierra College in Truckee.” Pillsbury says when efforts were made to expand supported education in South Lake, ADVANCE staff collaborated with him and provided multilevel services to his clients. “What developed out of that collaboration was a ‘whatever it takes’ philosophy,” he says.

Another innovative approach has been the industry-responsive, short-term workforce training programs, such as the culinary boot camp and ski lift maintenance apprenticeships. “ADVANCE moved quickly to create several programs that related to

the local job market...and the tourist economy,” says Pillsbury.

The wraparound supports and tailored programs have contributed to the strong outcomes for ADVANCE clients. “It’s not just the instruction,” says Deeds. “It’s everything else in an adult client’s life that’s either helping or preventing them from making that next big step.”

Deeds sees the difference in every graduation ceremony. “I’ve been to many high school equivalency graduations, and to watch children see their parents or their family members go and accomplish that—they’re standing in a cap and gown, they’re now going on to college—they can see their economic fortunes start to improve. You can just watch the effect on the younger



“... It’s just one of the best investments you can make.”

Brad Deeds

Dean of Workforce Development and Instruction at Lake Tahoe Community College



generation sitting in that audience saying, ‘Oh, I can now do that too.’ For me, it’s just one of the best investments you can make.”

AT A GLANCE: HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

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