



Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence

A Message from Sonya Blake, President and CEO, The Valley Economic Alliance

REFLECTING ON THE remarkable journey of The Valley Economic Alliance fills me with pride for the resilience and strength of our San Fernando Valley community. Thirty years ago, in the aftermath of the Northridge earthquake, visionary leaders united with a powerful mission: to rebuild, recover, and rise together. From this spirit of collaboration, The Alliance was born, evolving into a champion for our region's economic vitality.

Today, we represent over 160,000 businesses and more than two million residents across Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, Los Angeles, and San Fernando. The Alliance acts as a vital conduit, uniting government, corporations, small businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to create a prosperous future for our Valley.

Our strategic initiatives are built on four pillars: Economic Development, Education and Workforce Development, Livable and Sustainable Communities, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Through our Steering Committees, we drive job creation by empowering local businesses, attracting new enterprises, and revitalizing neighborhoods. We connect employers with qualified talent, support job seekers in gaining essential skills, and foster educational partnerships. Additionally, we advocate for diverse housing options and promote environmentally sustainable practices to enhance quality of life in a way that facilitates inclusive development.

Each year, we host dynamic in-person and virtual events that attract thousands of participants while offering transformative resources like our Business Assistance Program (BAP) and Talent Connect initiative. The BAP provides free educational workshops, business advising, and professional mentoring, while Talent Connect bridges the gap between employers and job seekers in the tech industry.

Our Annual Meeting and Board Installation on December 12 will officially kick off our 30th anniversary—a celebration of the collaboration and innovation that have propelled our community forward. We invite you to join us at Calabasas Founders Hall to honor our accomplishments and the leaders who will guide us into the next chapter.

For three decades, The Valley Economic Alliance has been instrumental in driving economic development and enhancing quality of life throughout the Valley. As we look ahead, we remain committed to uniting stakeholders to collaboratively create a brighter, more prosperous future for the San Fernando Valley. Visit EconomicAlliance.org to learn more.

THE VALLEY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE



Sonya Kay Blake
President and CEO



Gregory Martayan
Vice President of External Affairs



Fred Gaines
Chair, Board of Directors



From left: Elen Asatryan, Mayor of Glendale; Celeste Rodriguez, Mayor of San Fernando and Alicia Weintraub, Mayor of Calabasas.

A Conversation with THREE VALLEY MAYORS

INSIDE THE VALLEY AND THE ALLIANCE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT this roundtable discussion featuring the mayors of three leading San Fernando Valley cities. Each explores current business trends, shares their outlook on the region’s economic future, and discusses their strategic goals for growth. Additionally, the mayors shed light on their collaboration with the Valley Economic Alliance, highlighting efforts to strengthen the local business environment and support sustainable development.

**What is your city's five-year vision?
What are the most important initiatives
that will shape your city's future?**

WEINTRAUB: The City of Calabasas has a strategic priorities work plan centered around key goals, including environmental stewardship, fiscal resiliency, public safety and emergency preparedness, recreation, youth and senior services, and development and infrastructure. Over the next five years, our objective is to strengthen and enhance the City's initiatives in these areas.

RODRIGUEZ: The City of San Fernando's five-year vision is centered on building a resilient, sustainable, and vibrant community that prioritizes economic growth, environmental justice, and quality of life for its residents. This vision aligns with the City Council 2022-2027 Strategic Goals and focuses on fostering a thriving downtown, and enhancing infrastructure and community's character. Key initiatives shaping the City's future include:

A) Downtown Master Plan/Economic Development: Aims to revitalize the historic downtown area, attracting new businesses, increasing density in housing near commercial districts, and enhancing the sense of place. This plan will help create a vibrant and economically robust downtown that serves as a hub for the community. The City also recently established a Business & Community Resource Center to assist in the post-pandemic recovery of businesses. The City partnered with local organizations such as ICON CDC, Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity, the Valley Economic Alliance, and other organizations to promote and support small business. *B) The Cli-*

mate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP): focus on addressing climate change and sustainability, this initiative focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting energy efficiency, and creating a climate-resilient community through environmental justice and the development of green infrastructure.

C) Public Safety and Technology Integration: The City is advancing public safety by increasing police staffing, adopting modern technologies like automated license plate reading cameras, and integrating an electric vehicle into the police fleet to focus on traffic safety while doing our part to reduce carbon emissions. This commitment ensures a safe and sustainable future for the City.

ASATRYAN: Glendale is a regional connector city committed to building on its already strong foundation of being recognized as a hub of innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity over the next five years. To achieve this vision, the City Council has identified four key priority areas: *A) Economic Development:* Continuing to build a business-friendly environment that attracts, retains, and expands businesses within our city. *B) Financial Sustainability:* Essential to ensure Glendale's long-term growth and to maintain a strong foundation for public services. *C) Mobility, Traffic, and Pedestrian Safety:* Making Glendale safer and more accessible to all. *D) Operational Efficiency:* Streamlining government operations to deliver better services to our resident and businesses and continuing to cut the bureaucratic red tape. Moreover, recognizing that Glendale is not only the 4th largest city in LA County, but it is also home to the largest immigrant population in California with over 53% of our residents being foreign born we have heightened our efforts in tailored community outreach and engagement to ensure we are meeting the needs of our diverse communities. Our Economic Development Division has adopted the city's first Three-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan. This strategic plan is a roadmap for fostering sustainable economic growth, enhancing the city's business environment, and ensuring long-term prosperity for businesses and residents alike.



How do you envision leveraging land use and real estate to advance economic development?

RODRIGUEZ: The City has a certified Housing Element and received grant funding from SCAG to embark on a comprehensive zoning code update and objective design standards that maintain our small town character while promoting mixed use housing development in our commercial corridors. By creating thoughtful land use standards, the City is facilitating steady and responsible growth to compliment our economic development efforts with the Downtown Master Plan and Business and Community Resource Center.

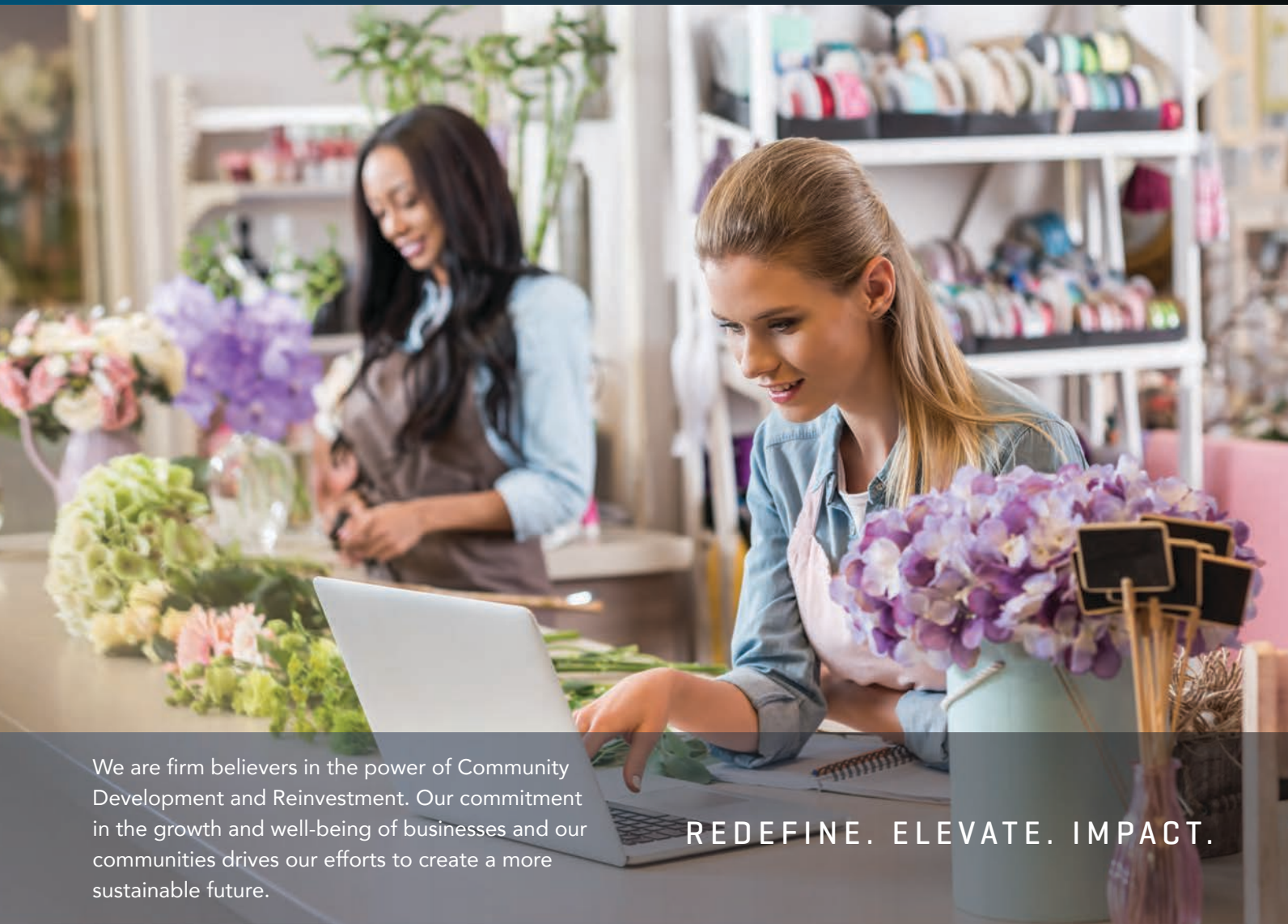
WEINTRAUB: As the City of Calabasas is nearly built out, we will be focusing on redevelopment opportunities and potential projects that may arise through a proposed annexation.

ASATRYAN: A key part of our economic development strategy is how we leverage land use and real estate to create more walkable, vibrant, and urban centers throughout the city. We are focusing efforts on transforming city-owned commercial spaces into destination venues and re-imagining public spaces through creative place-making initiatives. A great example of this is our Artsakh Creative, a pop-up Accelerator Program, for short-term use of city-owned commercial spac-

“
SAN FERNANDO'S FIVE-YEAR VISION IS CENTERED ON BUILDING A RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE, AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY."

-CELESTE RODRIGUEZ

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es. This program is designed to give small businesses and unique brands an opportunity to test their products or concepts in the heart of the city's growing Arts & Entertainment District with minimal risk. This not only enriches Glendale's appeal but also boosts foot traffic and provides opportunities for entrepreneurs to grow and thrive in our city. We are also currently updating our Land Use, Circulation/Mobility, and Safety Elements, and will soon begin updates to the Open Space, Conservation Element, and Recreation Element. A new Environment Justice Element will be introduced to ensure a sustainable and equitable city. With multiple General Plan Elements being updated concurrently, Glendale has an opportunity to ensure a consistent and coordinated plan that will serve the city in the decades to come.

How will we strengthen our workforce so that employers get the talent they need and job seekers are fully trained and employed?

RODRIGUEZ: Through the City of San Fernando's BCRC, we are working to identify community resources, such as community colleges and technical training programs, to connect our business community and industrial sector to a pipeline of skilled workers. Responsive and flexible programs for upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce, as well as programs that ensure the next generation of employees have the skills needed today and into the future, are necessary to strengthen the local modern economy.

WEINTRAUB: Through collaboration with our local secondary schools, trade pro-

grams, and post-secondary institutions, we aim to create pathways for students and employees to acquire the skills necessary for success in today's evolving workforce. By aligning educational programs with industry demands and providing hands-on training opportunities, we can better prepare individuals for a wide range of careers. This partnership will not only enhance workforce readiness but also support economic growth by ensuring that businesses have access to a pool of skilled, capable employees.

ASATRYAN: The City of Glendale has taken a unique approach to strengthening the workforce to create the talent that employers need. Partnering with the Verdugo Workforce Development Board (VWDB) which is comprised of 51% business members and administered by the City of Glendale, a business-driven strategy was implemented almost 10 years ago for workforce development. Leveraging data, we are also now looking at ways to partner with CBRE, to help bring additional job markets and economic development opportunities to the City of Glendale. Bringing businesses together for a specific industry sector, these hiring employers lead the design, development, and implementation of workforce development projects to ensure their requirements are met and a pool is created of skilled, qualified job candidates. The partnership includes the local colleges that design the curricula to align to business requirements. The students not only receive the technical skills training but also career preparation and guidance, tuition support, work-based learning, and supportive services from the City's

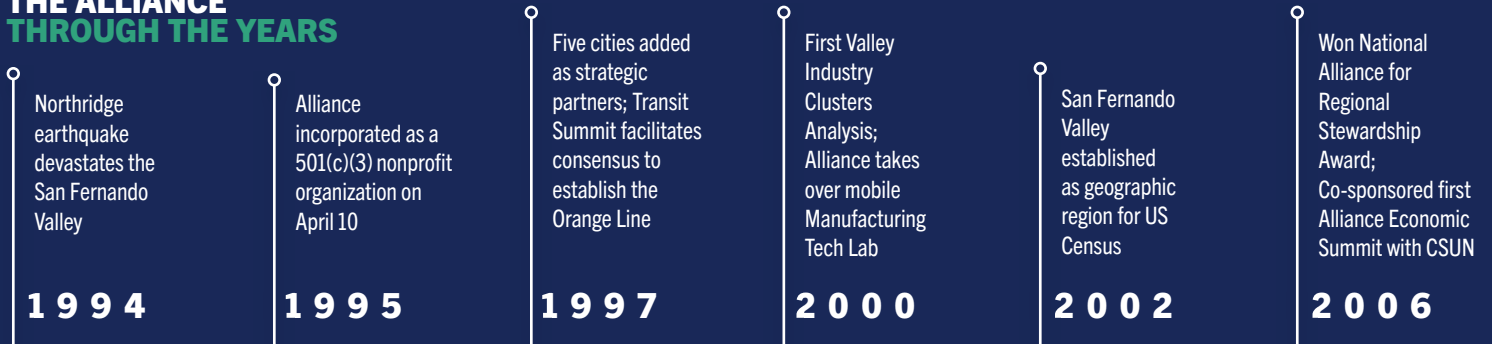


GLENDALE HAS TAKEN A UNIQUE APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE TO CREATE THE TALENT EMPLOYERS NEED."

-ELEN ASATRYAN

Verdugo Jobs Center (VJC). The VJC targets underserved populations including low-income, English learners, and adults with disabilities to assist employers in meeting their diversity goals. An example of this business-driven collaboration is the Biocom Institute Technician Certification (BioTC), funded and administered by the City of Glendale's VWDB, and includes Grifols Biologicals, ProLacta, Gilead and Biocom California Institute as BioTC Collaborative members. Other members include the VJC, Glendale Community College, Los Angeles Mission College, Citrus College. Other business contributors include Amgen, Takeda, Kite, and Neutrogena. Students who complete a biotechnology or biomanufacturing technical training and receive a 70% score or higher on the BioTC Collaborative-designed assessment, will earn this credential. Credentialed students' resumes are entered into the Biocom Career Portal by the VJC for easy access by the hiring employers. In addition, students work with VJC which matches them with the Bioscience companies for employment.

THE ALLIANCE THROUGH THE YEARS



In your view, how critical are sustainability and combating climate change for the Valley's future? What sustainability initiatives taking place in your city are you most proud of?

WEINTRAUB: I firmly believe that sustainability and combating climate change are critical for the future of the Valley. One of the initiatives I'm most proud of is our Green Business Program, which recognizes local businesses for their commitment to environmental excellence. This program not only celebrates their achievements but also serves as a catalyst, inspiring other businesses to adopt sustainable practices and make impactful improvements. By fostering a community of environmentally conscious businesses, we're making strides toward a greener, more resilient Valley.

ASATRYAN: The City of Glendale has a long-standing commitment to sustainability and is a leader in the region and in the State of California. The city's efforts focus on key areas such as waste reduction, climate action planning, and transitioning to a solar future. Glendale is dedicated to diverting waste from landfills by promoting the use of reusable, recyclable, and compostable products through policy initiatives. The city has built strong partnerships with alternative product vendors, including Huskee Cup, Direct Pak, Sustainable Works, Good Start Packaging, and Eco Products, to help businesses and residents make the shift. Additionally, the city is developing rebate programs to further incentivize sustainable behavior. Community-focused initiatives like the Clothing Swap and Repair Café have already diverted

over 2,400 pounds of waste from landfills through active participation. Meanwhile, the edible food recovery program reduces food waste by redistributing surplus food from restaurants to those in need. Glendale's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) provides a comprehensive framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate-related risks such as heatwaves, wildfires, and droughts. The CAAP aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and uniquely prioritizes community engagement. In addition to tackling environmental concerns, the CAAP focuses on public health through initiatives that improve air quality and protect against extreme heat. As part of its renewable energy goals, Glendale is on track to achieve 100% of energy sales from clean, renewable, or non-carbon-emitting resources by 2035. To meet this goal, the city has adopted policies encouraging at least 10% of Glendale Water & Power (GWP) customers to install solar and energy storage systems by 2027. Most recently, Glendale's Sports Complex is slated to go solar with the installation of carport solar canopies over parts of the parking area, expected to produce over two million kWh of clean solar energy annually.

RODRIGUEZ: Prioritizing environmental stewardship is woven throughout the City Council's strategic goals. Our commitment to strengthening climate resilience and environmental justice is reflected in our partnership with Tree-People that has resulted in more than 1,000 new trees being planted over the last three years; an award winning system that we constructed under one of our

community parks to capture, infiltrate, and reuse water that would otherwise be lost to the ocean; transforming an underutilized alley into a "greenway" that promotes walkability by planting trees, constructing bioswales, and installing other water capture features; and our Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) that will provide a blueprint for the City to create policies and implement best practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



How do you utilize your relationship with The Alliance to advance your city's goals?

ASATRYAN: Partnerships play a vital role in advancing our goals, and our collaboration with The Valley Economic Alliance is a perfect example of how we leverage strategic relationships for mutual success. Through active participation in key initiatives in economic development,

- 2008** First Hire A Vet Job Fair — largest vet job fair in the nation
- 2013** Partnered with LA Valley College for Health Career Expo
- 2017** Launched Women's collaborative Mentoring Program; Co-sponsored Housing our Workers Forum with the Southland Association of Realtors
- 2020** Fred Gaines elected as Chairman of BOD; Sonya Blake selected to serve as President/CEO
- 2022** Development of research-based Talent Market Strategic Brief to produce a qualified workforce
- 2023** Debut of 'Our Region | Our Future' Regional Development Summit; Awarded 2023 Ahead Grant; Launch of Discover San Fernando Valley tourism website



CALABASAS AIMS TO CREATE PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES TO ACQUIRE THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS IN TODAY'S WORKFORCE."

-ALICIA WEINTRAUB

housing, tourism, and retail, we work together to strengthen both local and regional business ecosystems. Together, we cross-promote business services, programs, and events, providing Glendale and surrounding businesses with greater access to resources while benefiting the broader region. This collaboration extends the reach of support services, including small business assistance

programs, grant opportunities, and workforce training initiatives to ensure businesses have the tools they need to grow and thrive in this region.

WEINTRAUB: The Alliance is a valuable partner for the City of Calabasas. By representing the City on a broader scale and collaborating with its diverse members, the Alliance plays a key role in positioning Calabasas as a regional leader. Through this partnership, we are able to amplify our influence, strengthen connections, and drive initiatives that benefit not only our community but the entire region.

RODRIGUEZ: Our relationship with The Valley Economic Alliance is instrumental in advancing our city's goals by leveraging their resources, partnerships, and expertise to drive economic development, attract new businesses, and support local entrepreneurship. Through collaborative



efforts, we work together on initiatives that attract new businesses to San Fernando and support small business growth.

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Los Angeles Rams' Focus on Community

THE LOS ANGELES RAMS' *impressive new headquarters, offices and training facility were recently established in Woodland Hills. With the team extending its roots deeply into the Valley, the Inside The Valley team sat down with Rams executive vice president of community impact and engagement Molly Higgins to explore her insights on the team's community focus and work as a civic entity.*

How are businesses in the Valley engaging with the local community, and what role do you see your business playing in contributing to the broader social and economic health of the region?

HIGGINS: At the Los Angeles Rams, we view ourselves as much more than a football team – we



view ourselves as a civic entity committed to contributing to the success of our local community. With the move to Woodland Hills, we have expanded our geographic priority areas beyond Inglewood and South LA to also prioritize our new home in Woodland Hills and the San Fernando Valley. From the work we've done with local non-profits like West Valley Food Bank and Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE) to our school engagement around our PLAY 60 youth health and wellness events, Rams Readers literacy efforts, Rams Pathways to Success mentorship program and youth

and high school football programming, we are excited to bring the San Fernando Valley into the "Rams House" and create special memories and impact the lives of residents.

How do you utilize your relationship with The (Valley Economic) Alliance to advance your business goals?

Our partnership with the Valley Economic Alliance enables us to support and engage in efforts to foster economic vitality and prosperity in our region. As we are now home in the San Fernando Valley, we are excited to play a part in bringing together a sustainable economic future for the region while continuing to positively impact our neighbors and learn from other members of The Alliance to grow among one another.



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CCRC's Critical Contributions and Impact

EACH MONTH, CCRC provides quality, support, development and education to over 100,000 children, families, and providers. Under the leadership of Dr. Michael Olenick, CCRC now has over 1,200 professional staff members working from more than 30 different locations. Dr. Olenick shared insights on the organization's work with *Inside The Valley*.

What are the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing the San Fernando Valley, and how do you foresee the local economy evolving over the next few years?

OLENICK: The San Fernando Valley, like much of Los Angeles County, is facing a crisis of livability. This is especially true for families with young children. The cost of food and essential household items is high. Rental housing rates are too high

for many and purchasing a home is out of reach. Transportation is difficult, even if you have a vehicle, with traffic constantly jammed on main thoroughfares and local freeways. Taking the bus means an hour or more to get where you're going. And, when combined with the cost of child care, the barriers to having children and raising a family seem insurmountable resulting in historically low birth rates. It is critical that businesses, governments, and non-profits work together to plan and provide a wide array of solutions to support young families.

How are you addressing workforce shortages, and what strategies are



you using to attract and retain top talent?

OLENICK: CCRC's People & Culture leaders focus on recruiting, compensation, and professional development strategies to address workforce shortages and retention. From a recruitment perspective, we are reviewing required versus preferred job requirements to increase the breadth and depth of the candidate pool to attract top talent. Regarding compensation, we facilitate annual salary reviews and provide adjustments to remain an employer of choice in the competitive SFV market. In terms of workforce shortages in critical industries, we continue to face an alarming shortage of those whose work is to care for young children since the onset of COVID-19.

We have increased our total compensation and we provide a variety of development programs to retain top talent focused on fully supporting staff.

What initiatives are you implementing to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion?

OLENICK: At CCRC, we are deeply committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our workforce and across the communities we serve. We believe that embracing diverse perspectives and life experiences — across all backgrounds, identities, and abilities — makes us stronger and more effective in fulfilling our mission.

How are businesses in the Valley engaging with the local community, and what role do you see CCRC playing in terms of the broader social and economic health of the region?

OLENICK: CCRC provides families with pathways to success including access to child care that supports a child’s healthy development, ensures parents have the opportunity

to work or go to school, and supports businesses and local economies while reducing absenteeism and turnover. We partner with local businesses, elected officials, social service agencies, and others to support family success. Businesses in the SFV looking to contribute to the broader social and economic health of local children and families are encouraged to engage with our efforts by sponsoring events, volunteering, and providing donations.

What are the biggest factors influencing your future growth plans, and what can the San Fernando Valley offer businesses that are looking to expand?

OLENICK: The first five years of a child’s life can have a lasting impact on later learning, behavior, and health. If you believe — like we do at CCRC — that children are the key to the future, we invite you to partner with us and invest in young children and their families. CCRC’s future growth in the SFV includes continuous identification and development of com-

“ CCRC PROVIDES FAMILIES WITH PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS AND SUPPORTS BUSINESSES AND LOCAL ECONOMIES WHILE REDUCING ABSENTEEISM AND TURNOVER.

prehensive systems to connect children and families to the right services at the right time. Partnerships with local businesses are vital in connecting employees to CCRC programs to ensure a stable and thriving workforce. With your help, we can provide accessible, affordable, and coordinated systems of support. By reaching families in places where they naturally go — like work, school, and child care, we can more effectively identify and meet their needs. Children thrive when their parents have the resources and assets they need to succeed, and communities thrive when families are successful.

GOING LOCAL? GO MATADORS!

Since the club’s inception in 2009, the CSUN Archery Club has been the central location for all athletic and recreational archery on campus. Our primary goal has always been to reflect the highly accessible nature of archery: teach and train absolutely any student who wants to take up the sport, no matter who they are! For this reason, we have a no-equipment, no-experience needed policy nor conduct tryouts. So as long as you have an iota of interest, you can join the fun with us and become an archer!

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County Supervisors Discuss The Alliance

INSIDE THE VALLEY asked two of the San Fernando Valley's County Supervisors, Kathryn Barger and Lindsey P. Horvath, about the Valley Economic Alliances work from their perspectives as leaders of the region.

What role does the Valley Economic Alliance play in terms of supporting the work you are doing on the goals you have for the future of your district?

“The Valley Economic Alliance plays an important role driving economic growth across Los Angeles County by fostering collaboration between businesses, local government, and community organizations. By supporting innovation and workforce development, and uplifting local businesses, the Valley Economic Alliance is helping create

sustainable jobs and inclusive growth. We are a stronger County when we are connected, and the Valley Economic Alliance shows up as a meaningful collaborator. I look forward to continuing our partnership to invest in our local economy to create communities where everyone can thrive.”

—**County Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District**

(Serving 20 cities and 83 unincorporated communities, and all or part of the San Gabriel, San Fernando, Crescenta, Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys)

“One of my top priorities is keeping our County's economy thriving and that can only be done by empowering and supporting our small business communities. I am proud of the strong partnership that exists between my office and The Valley Economic Alliance. Their work helps galvanize organizations and



From left: Sonya Kay Blake, Lindsey P. Horvath, Kathryn Barger, Greg Martayan.

businesses in the San Fernando Valley region so they're involved and connected effectively to government, educational and any other entities that can create a vital local economy. The business community in the region is all the stronger because of their efforts.”

—**County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Fifth District**

(Serving the San Fernando Valley, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Westside of Los Angeles)



Tierra champions inclusion and value for all people with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts. Tierra has decades of experience with job training, placement, and long-term employment supports. **We are here to help you meet your diversity goals.**



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Join us in Celebrating
**EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY,
EQUITY + INCLUSION**

The Valley Economic Alliance is honored to be recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal's *Inside The Valley* magazine as an Organization Honoree in the 2024 Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Leaders of Influence awards. This distinction celebrates our commitment to advancing impactful DE&I initiatives throughout the San Fernando Valley.

We proudly congratulate **Armida Colmenares-Stafford**, First Vice Chair of our Board of Directors, and **Carmen Bowen**, co-chairs of our DE&I Committee, for their outstanding leadership. We also celebrate **Greg Martayan**, Vice President of External Affairs, for being named an Individual Honoree in recognition of his vital contributions to this work.

Thank you to our Patrons, partners, and supporters. We are proud to work with you to build a brighter and more inclusive region.



**Armida Colmenares-
Stafford**

*Alliance Board First Vice Chair
Co-Chair of the Alliance Diversity,
Equity, & Inclusion Committee*



**Carmen
Bowen**

*Co-Chair of the Alliance Diversity,
Equity, & Inclusion Committee*



**Greg
Martayan**

*Alliance Vice President
of External Affairs*