



# **Ventura County Leadership Academy Thirty Years of Community Leadership**

**Pattie Braga**  
**Executive Director, Ventura County Leadership Academy**

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024**

# VCLA's Founder

## *Dr. Priscilla Partridge de Garcia*



United Way of  
Ventura County

From its inception in 1994 until 2016, Ventura County Leadership Academy (VCLA) operated as a special program under the United Way of Ventura County. VCLA recognizes the valuable assistance United Way of Ventura County has provided in its growth.



# Mission and Purpose:

*“To connect people and issues to strengthen our county.”*

**Ventura County Leadership Academy** connects and cultivates a diverse network of passionate, capable leaders through an immersion in both critical issues shaping Ventura County & opportunities for personal and professional growth. VCLA's comprehensive program ignites awareness and inspiration, helping cohort members discover their individual pathway toward impacting our region.



# VCLA Program

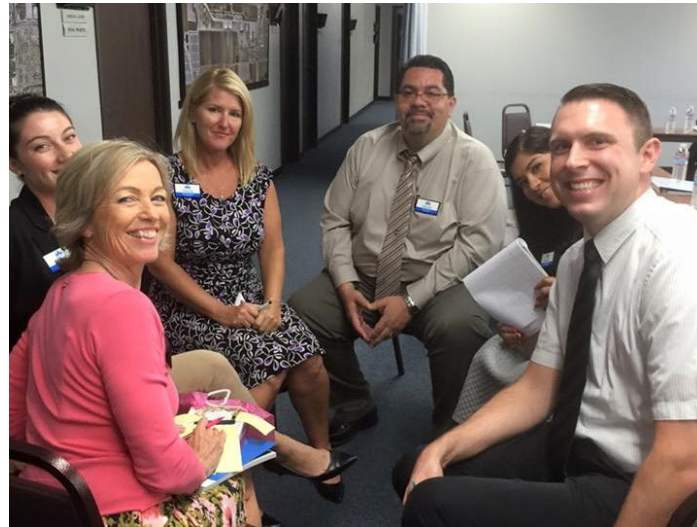




# VCLA Program



# VCLA Program





# VCLA Relationship Building



# VCLA Relationship Building





# Our Alumni



**Jim White**

Class V

## Current Engagement:

- Ventura County Transportation Commission - Commissioner
- California Van Pool - Board Member
- San Buenaventura Housing Authority - Commissioner & Vice-Chair
- Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau - Board Member

## Previous Engagement:

- Ventura Family YMCA - Board Member and Past Chair
- City of Ventura Parks & Rec. Commission - Commissioner & Past Chair
- Ventura County Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee - Past Chair

# Our Alumni



**Susy Lopez  
Garcia**  
Cohort XXVII

## Current Engagement:

- Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Board Member
- Oxnard Leadership Program, Steering Committee





**Linda Rossi**

Cohort XX

# Our Alumni

## Current Engagement:

- Women's Economic Ventures (WEV) – Secretary of the Board
- Interface Children & Family Services – Admin & Finance Committee
- Foundation of Ventura County Credit Union – Founding Officer & Current Advisory Board Member
- America's Credit Unions – CEO Council, Executive Committee
- CA & NV Credit Union Leagues – Social Impact Committee Chair

## Previous Engagement:

- Habitat for Humanity Ventura County – Strategic Advisory Council
- CU-First – Board Member

# Our Alumni



**Dr. Julius  
Sokenu**  
Cohort XXVI

## Current Engagement:

- Ventura County Leadership Academy – Board Member
- The Colleges of Law - Board Member
- California Community College League – LGBTQ Caucus

## Previous Engagement:

- Boys & Girls Club of Moorpark - Board Member
- City of Moorpark – General Plan 2050 Advisory Committee Member



# Feedback for Our Future

## January 2024 Community Focus Groups

Engaged with over 80 VCLA alumni, stakeholders, and local community leaders

### 2014-2019 Goals:

- More non-profit engagement and opportunities for connections
- Produce an annual or semi-annual impact report
- Host alumni projects/volunteer events throughout the county
- Offer alumni and community member opportunities to attend leadership and educational events





**Jennifer Caldwell, President**  
Chief Development Officer,  
Food Share of Ventura County



**Steven E. Elson, Ph.D., Vice President**  
CEO Emeritus, Casa Pacifica Centers  
for Children & Families



**Dhruv Pandya, Treasurer**  
Director of Information Security,  
Wistia



**Crystal Stratton, Secretary**  
Community Engagement Program  
Admin., V.C. Fire Department



**Bob Harrell, Past President**  
Financial Planner,  
Independent Capital Management



**Brick Conners, Director**  
Assistant City Manager,  
City of Ventura



**Tim Gallagher, Director**  
Vistage Chair,  
Vistage Worldwide, Inc.



**Melissa Miller, Director**  
Community Partnerships Manager,  
Ventura County Credit Union



**Dr. Julius O. Sokenu, Director**  
President,  
Moorpark College



# Our Strength is Our Alumni Network



# VCLA's Cohort XXX (2024-2025)

**Alex Gallardo**, *VP, Community Impact* - Premier America Credit Union  
**Alicia Morales-McKinney**, *Interim Continuum of Care Dir.* - County of Ventura  
**Alondra Gaytan**, *Director of Strategic Relations-Economic Development Collaborative*  
**Brett McMurdo**, *Assistant County Counsel* - County of Ventura  
**Candice Tang Nyholt**, *Director of Marketing* - VC Community Foundation  
**Christin Shatzer Román, EdD**, *Director of Engagement* - Pepperdine University  
**Cynthia Torres**, *Chief Executive Officer* - New Dawn Counseling  
**Cynthia Salas Salgado**, *Community Schools Coor.* - VC Office of Education  
**Dani Anderson**, *Disability Access Manager* - County of Ventura  
**Danica Selvaggio**, *Chief Executive Officer* - Big Brothers Big Sisters of VC  
**Daniel Bednar**, *Chief Strategy Officer*, OceanAir  
**Diana Lopez**, *Branch Manager II* - Ventura County Credit Union  
**Dianne McKay**, *President/Owner* - Mustang Marketing  
**Ethan Walker**, *Programs and Partnerships Manager* - Cortico  
**Francisco Camarena**, *IT Director* - Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura  
**Gabrielle Vignone**, *Executive Director* - House Farm Workers!  
**Graciela Garcia**, *Resource Management Agency Manager II* - County of Ventura  
**Heather Williams**, *Development & Outreach Director* - Museum of Ventura County  
**Ingrid Hardy, M.P.A., C.L.C.**, *Assistant City Manager* - City of Thousand Oaks  
**James Schuelke**, *Director of Outreach & Marketing; PIO* - Oxnard College

**Jessica Hug**, *Sr. Director of Community Engagement* - Food Share of Ventura County  
**John Bandek**, *Economic Development Manager* - City of Moorpark  
**Justin Karbowski, M.B.A.**, *Founder* - The Fran Coach  
**Kathleen Mallory**, *Planning & Sustainability Manager* - City of Oxnard  
**Katie Norris**, *Chief Development Officer* - Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County  
**Kayla Ancheta Chey**, *Development Director* - United Parents  
**Kelly Brown**, *Community Information Officer* - Interface Children & Family Services  
**Kendra King**, *Humane Investigations Director* - Humane Society of Ventura County  
**Laura Ortega**, *Manager of Education* - CommonSpirit  
**Laura Hanson**, *Lead Sexual Assault Response Coor.* - DOD, Naval Base VC  
**Lynnette Coverly**, *President & CEO* - Coverly Professional Services, Inc.  
**Martha Johnson**, *Program Administrator* - Ventura County Health Care Agency  
**Mike Saum**, *Founder and Head Coach* - M2P Leadership  
**Dr. Nicolas Palacios**, *Global Marketing Manager* - Amgen  
**Ozzie Rios**, *Business Banking Relationship Manager* - Montecito Bank & Trust  
**Rhett Mauck**, *Chief Executive Officer* - Search Dog Foundation  
**Sonia Escobar**, *Territory Account Manager* - Thermo Fisher Scientific  
**Teo Lopez**, *Web & Multimedia Coordinator* - Oxnard Union High School District  
**Traci Holt**, *Program Administrator* - VCPH Emergency Medical Services Agency  
**Veronica Nava**, *Executive Director* - SPIRIT of Santa Paula



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