

# CSULB GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM



**Spring 2023**

The Gerontology Program had another busy semester and we are proud to share with you just a fraction of what we've been up to.

In this edition of our newsletter, we celebrate the Masters, Certificate and Minor students who reached the finish line to graduation. We applaud the students that made such great achievements during this time that they received an award.

We so appreciate the participation and support of our alumni and partners, both on-campus and in the community. Have a wonderful summer!



## **GERN Program Vision**

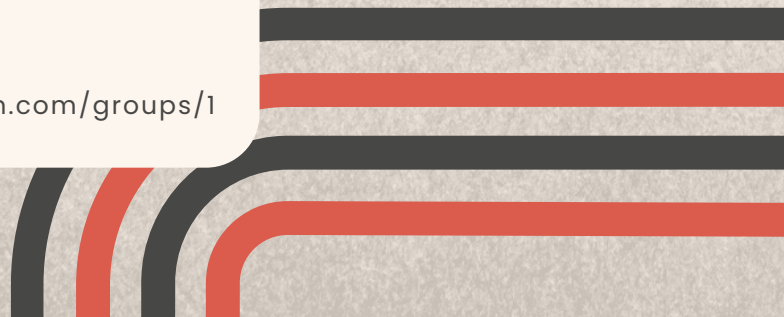
To support the quality of life of a growing population of older adults in a society that embraces aging.

## **GERN Program Mission**

To inspire and prepare students for careers in aging fields through best practices in classroom and experiential learning supported by faculty that engage in innovative research and community collaborations.

## **Keep In Touch!**

[www.csulb.edu/gerontology](http://www.csulb.edu/gerontology)  
Instagram: @AgingCSULB  
[www.facebook.com/CSULBGerontology](https://www.facebook.com/CSULBGerontology)  
Linkedin:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13545267/>



# Congratulations Graduates!

## **Masters of Science in Gerontology**

**Ellasandra Masami Kubota**

**Directed Project: *An Educational Presentation on Death Doulas and Their Services***



*A death doula guides a dying individual through the process of preparing for death. A doula may also provide extended services to the family both pre and post death. The importance of a death doula lies in the fact that healthcare professionals often do not have the time nor capacity to guide their patients through this process...*

*Being prepared for death can decrease the anxiety and fear that surrounds it and make the dying process less traumatic. Therefore, the purpose of this directed project is to create an educational program defining a death doula's service that provides support to those in end-of-life stages and encourages open discussion about death without negative connotations.*

# Congratulations Graduates!

## Gerontology Minor

**Yvette Campos**

**Esperanza Carmona**

**Stephanie Fessler:** I've been accepted into the Advanced Standing MSW program, so I'm very excited about that. I would have to say my favorite memory at Cal State Long Beach from the gerontology department would be meeting Alex Wilkinson's father this semester. He spoke to the class briefly, but it was just so exhilarating to see an older person in his 70s still moving and Grooving, and it just brought a lot of hope for my future when I reach that age. My future plans would be to work as a case manager, or social worker in the hospital or at a Long care facility. I've been eyeballing a position for ombudsman because I believe that protecting the rights of older people is just as important as protecting their health.

**Emily Guadarrama:** My favorite memory from CSULB has working at the Life Fit Center on campus and teaching group fitness and personal training to such amazing individuals. The conversations and connections made will always hold a special place in my heart. My plans after graduation include working full-time in a fitness setting that caters to older adults and continuing to educate myself through older adult fitness certifications. I'm looking forward to continuing teaching group fitness! In addition, I plan to begin my journey in opening a gym facility with another CSULB grad. Eventually, I intend to return to school in a year or two to pursue a teaching credential!

# Congratulations Graduates!

## Gerontology Minor

### **Pushti Javiya**

**Sierra Jones:** My favorite memory from CSULB has been meeting so many wonderful people from my social work and gerontology classes. I have met many compassionate individuals who have become my friends and supported me along the way in my undergraduate degree. In my very first social work class, I met three individuals who inspired me to be the best person that I could be and they will always be people that I look up to. After I graduate, I am going into the Advanced Standing Master of Social Work program with a specialization in adulthood and aging!

**Cassidy Nguyen:** My favorite memory actually didn't come until 7 days ago. It was my last day having to be on campus as all of my finals were on campus. Having been a student since 2019, I've been on campus for about 2.5 years. I initially didn't like having to drive miles to go to school or walk so far from the lot to classes. But on my last day, I knew I had to take a final walk around campus. I visited all of the places I went to so often during my time like the library, Brotman fountain, and the student union center. It was bittersweet knowing that those moments could've been my last at LB. I'll never forgetting my last glimpse of the Go Beach sign and turning back to see the pyramid one last time.

Although I may return to CSULB in the fall for my MBA, I would like to explore a new campus and its student life for that degree. I think it would be good to learn from a new place to be more well-rounded with my education and experiences. I am currently enjoyed at COPE Health Solution as a program coordinator so I'm ecstatic to have a healthcare job lined up well before graduation.



# Gerontology Minor

**Alexia Sandoval-Carranza:** I plan to work full-time in the pharmaceutical industry for one year, and then plan to return to school to complete a Masters of Public Health or Masters of Gerontology. From my time here at CSULB, I have been gifted with countless valuable and special memories, but my absolute favorite that I will cherish forever is being able to be a part of ASI's Beach Pantry. I've been so fortunate to have been able to work with an exceptional team for the last four years, and an organization that has allowed me to meet and help so many of my peers while allowing me to grow as a college student. ASI has helped me in so many ways, much more that I can even list, and will always be something that I will lovingly remember as I look back on my undergrad journey.

**Liliana Soriano Carrera:** I would say that my favorite memory from CSULB is a tough question to answer. I have a lot but to make it simple I would say the times I would be in campus outdoors ,during the asi events and the week of welcome I have attended and been part of. As well my favorite memory has been the times ever since I joined a cultural club on campus called Hermanas Unidas De Long Beach (HAU DE LB) , fall 2020 and still am part of that cultural club on campus made my college years so much better. My plans after graduation well I would say find a job in relation to my academics and interest as well. And as well take a year or so gap/ break from school and work in the moment , focus on getting my license, helping my family out and if it is possible do some exploring within myself as traveling. And then if. so I decide to go back to school well do my masters into health field area.



# 2022-2023 Award-Winners

## FCS Outstanding Thesis



**Lavina Gregorio, MSG**

Thesis Title: Ageism Experienced by Older Adults in the Workplace

Committee: Dr. Maria (Claver) Carpiac, Francis Ginder, MSG, Miriam Watts, MSG.

## FCS Graduate Student Honors



**Emily McNabb, MSG**

*I have no doubt that Emily will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of the older adults and families she works with. She has the “complete package:” a consistent work ethic, infectious excitement for her work, creative approaches to challenges, and a hunger for continued learning and growth. - From letter of support by Dr. Carpiac.*

## FCS Outstanding Student Citations

Jocelyn Espinoza  
Stephanie Fessler  
Emily Guadarrama  
Sierra Jones  
Ashley Molina



# Scholarship-Winners

## Marian Last Endowed Scholarship

### **Premita Pradhan, MSGc**

Premita traveled to the US from Bhutan to earn a Masters in Science of Gerontology at CSULB. She plans to take what she learns back to her home country to better the lives of older adults there. She is active in the Gerontology Club and works at the CSULB Center for Successful Aging.



## SCAN Health Plan Scholarships for the Health and Independence of Seniors

At press time, the names of the scholarship winners had not yet been released, so please check out our social media pages soon for the "big reveal"

So, we will take this space to say THANK YOU to SCAN for their continued generous support of students at CSULB preparing for fields in aging.



# Getting Creative in the Classroom



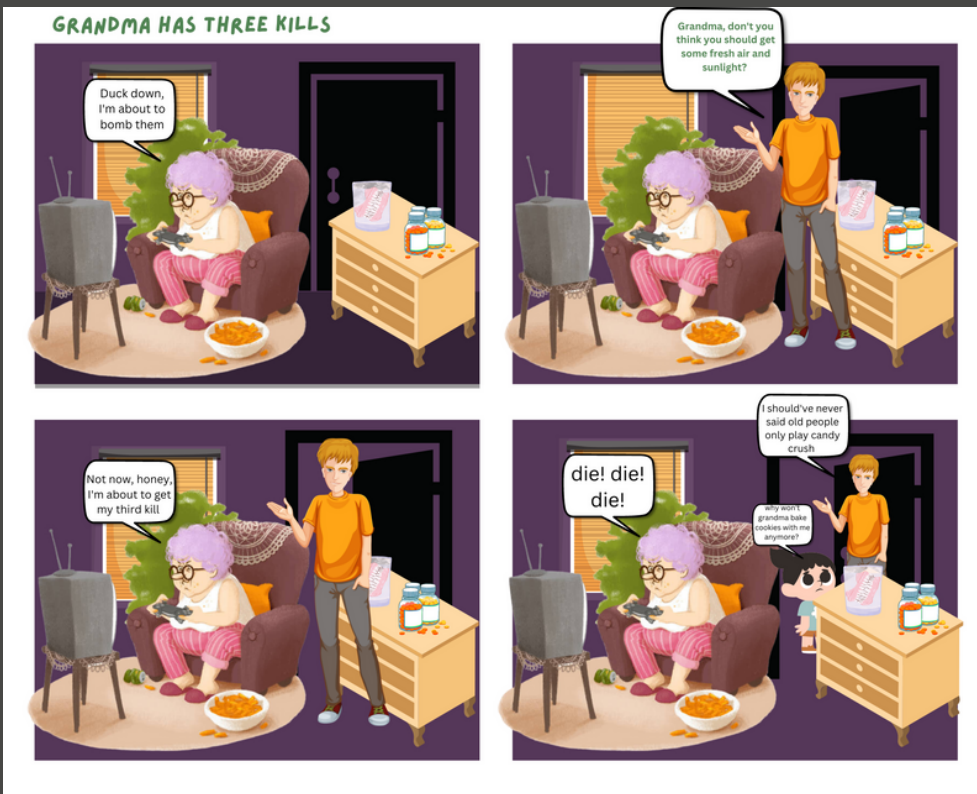
Students in Lecturer Jesse Archer's Gerontology 400 classes are given the opportunity to earn extra credit points in a creative project.

Several articles about timely topics related to older adults are posted and students are challenged with creating a 3-panel comic about the topic.

Students that accept the challenge receive 10-20 extra credit points and, as Instructor Archer describes, "their art is featured in a subsequent 'comic genius award' post with a lot of fanfare and adulation."

These two examples were inspired by an article about gaming.

Comics by: Joyce Kim (top)  
Alexandra Estrada (bottom)



Creativity is intelligence  
having fun.

ALBERT EINSTEIN





# MEET ANTONIO RUIZ

*My age or theirs was never a factor. It was clear that we were pursuing the same goal, excellence.*

## **Why did you return to school at this time in your life?**

I like to joke that since I don't play golf or enjoy sitting on a park bench quietly feeding the squirrels, I had to find something more enriching. Seriously, one of my greatest regrets was never completing college when given the opportunity in 1966, the year I graduated from high school. I tried again in 1967 and 1970, and I couldn't compete with all the insanity around me in New York, where I grew up. After that, life got in the way. I was fortunate to keep falling into successful careers in radio, television, and journalism that allowed me to forgo a college degree because it wasn't needed. My intelligence, determination, and "being in the right place at the right time" served me well. Then, when I determined that those careers were over, another opportunity presented itself: enroll at Long Beach City College as a matriculated student in 2016 at sixty-seven years of age. At first, the adventure was about fulfilling the number one item on my bucket list. Then, it became an exercise in intellectual enrichment.

My wife encouraged me, and the rest, as they say, is history. I graduated with honors and an associate degree in English in 2020 and transferred to California State University, Long Beach, that fall. I plan to graduate in Spring 2024 with a bachelor's degree in English, Creative Writing at seventy-four.

## **What are the barriers you had to face as a non-traditional student?**

The first came as a recognition that all the skills of a lifetime of real-world jobs don't mean they are easily transferable to a classroom. I can't sit quietly in a chair for an hour and fifteen minutes or longer. My personality does not do that well.

The second discovery was that there was a reason for my short attention span. Before enrollment, I was tested and found to be ADHD, meaning I would need to approach school differently and with support. I was fortunate to have found it both at Long Beach City College and home.

## What support have you used?

As stated, I relied heavily on support systems like subject tutors, Writers, and the Math resource centers (especially Math). Equally important were the advisors and the assistance of the professors, who never hesitated to answer my questions without compromising their ethical obligations not to change rules for the older student (not that I ever asked for them). I gave maximum effort because that's just the way I am. Then there were my fellow students. They never hesitated to collaborate with me on class projects or study groups. My age or theirs was never a factor. It was clear that we were pursuing the same goal, excellence.

## What is next (after graduation)?

At the moment, I am seriously considering pursuing either an MFA in Creative Nonfiction or a master's degree in American Studies, but I have not made a final decision.

## What have you learned from younger students, and what do you think they have learned from you?

I began with an advantage. For the past forty years, I have worked with and managed a much younger staff in Hollywood as a Production Executive and, in retirement, as a Journalism and Media Mentor. It also helps that I have two sons, one in his early forties and another in his late twenties, who connect me to the cultural and generational shifts. I have been privileged to work with some of the brightest young people I've ever met at my career positions and school. Their curiosity about the world was always infectious and contradicted the media stereotype that they only care about their phones and living with Mom and Dad. Whoever is claiming that should get out more?

This was a mutual admiration relationship. They brought me up to date on culture today, and I shared my experience and worldview. Both of us were rewarded because of that positive relationship.



*Did you know...*



California residents who are age 60 years or older may attend classes at CSULB by applying and completing admission via the Older Adult Degree Program. Through this pathway, qualifying applicants may see greatly reduced fees but still must complete general university requirements for admission, registration, and enrollment.

# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Dr. Carpiac Recognized through CSULB President's Award for Outstanding Faculty Achievement

Dr. Maria Carpiac (formerly Claver) was named one of 20 Full Professors to receive a \$10,000 award for outstanding teaching, research and service. Faculty eligible for this award are at least 5 years post promotion to Full Professor.



## Lecturer Alexandra Wilkinson Continues an Outstanding Record of Service and Professional Accomplishment



Lecturer Wilkinson has had another exciting academic year. She renewed her certification as a Certified Professional Gerontologist (CPG), organized a symposium on elder justice as Member-at-Large of the CA Council on Gerontology & Geriatrics, spoke at the Phenomenal Women Lead Summit, and completed a year of service as recording secretary of the CSULB GEAR Committee.

## Lecturer Elena Ionescu Receives Ukleja Center for Ethical Leadership Curriculum Award

Lecturer Ionescu will receive a stipend to create pedagogical materials about Ethics and Biogerontology.



# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Publications and Conference Presentations

Acquati, C., Miller-Sonet, E., Zhang, A., & **Ionescu, E.** (2023). Social Wellbeing in Cancer Survivorship: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of Self-Reported Relationship Closeness and Ambivalence from a Community Sample. *Current Oncology*, 30(2), 1720–1732. <https://doi.org/10.3390/currenocol30020133>

Acquati, C., Wittmann, D., Roth, M., Rosen, A., Carr, L. C., Gresham, Z., & **Ionescu, E.** (2023). Sexual Health Outcomes of Adolescent and Young Adult Colorectal Cancer Survivors and Their Partners: Protocol of a Dyadic Mixed Methods Study. *JMIR research protocols*, 12, e41831. <https://doi.org/10.2196/41831>

Acquati, C., **Ionescu, E.**, Goltz, H.H., Wittman, D., LaMarca-Lyon, A., & Roth, M. The Moderating Role of Dyadic Coping in the Relationship between Distress and Health-Related Quality of Life among Young Women with Breast Cancer: A Cross-Sectional Study. Abstract submitted to Society for Social Work and Research, 28th Annual Conference.

**Ionescu, E.**, Jump, V., Nowling, M., & Ortiz, G. (2023). Building livable and dementia-friendly communities one step at a time: Increasing access to specialized services for people living independently at home when dementia related conditions exist. Week of RSCA. April 17-21, Long Beach, CA.

**Ionescu, E.**, Jump, V. & Nowlin, M. (2023). Navigating the path of designing dementia-friendly community services to facilitate independence for people with dementia-related conditions while aging in place: Outcomes of a pilot project. 2023 Optimal Conference, April 16-18. Online

**Ionescu, E.**, Jump, V., Nowling, M., & Ortiz, G. (2023). Access to services for people with dementia aging at home. Abstract accepted for 2023 USAging, Salt Lake City, UT.

Acquati, C., **Ionescu, E.**, Yabroff, R., Smith, L.G., Conti, R., Chang, S., Banegas, M., Smith, G. (2023). Characterizing financial strain of cancer informal caregivers: Results from the 2020 Caregiving in America Survey. Society for Social Work and Research, 27th Annual Conference, January 11-15, Phoenix, AZ, USA.

Acquati, C., Chen, T., Connors, S., Leal, I., Rogova, A., **Ionescu, E.**, Jacobs, N, Reitzel, L. (2023). Cancer care disruption and health related quality of life among a tri-ethnic sample of women diagnosed with breast cancer during COVID-19 pandemic. Society for Social Work and Research, 27th Annual Conference, January 11-15, Phoenix, AZ, USA.



# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Publications and Conference Presentations

**Watts, M. D.** (2022). Health literacy levels in adults: A comparison of digital and health literacies. The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. Virtual presentation at the Adult Education Research Conference at the University of Oklahoma, 2022.

**Watts, M. D.** (2022). Ageism in Healthcare. Virtual presentation at the National Council on Aging: Age+Action, 2022.

**Watts, M. D.** (2023). Disparities of health literacy in vulnerable populations: Conference presentation at OnAging Conference, Atlanta GA.

Kim, J., Jin, B., Livingston, M. A., **Watts, M. D.**, & Hwang, J. (2023) Fundamentals of Digital Health Literacy: A scoping review of identifying core competencies to use in practice. Adult Learning Journal.

**Claver, M.** & Shah, J. (February 2023). Her ThirdAct: Chronic Illness and Older Women. Virtual presentation for WomenX.

Campbell, C., Kardously, J. Conahan, L., & **Claver, M.** (April 2023). Older Students Use of Student Health Services. CSULB Week of Research, Long Beach, CA.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Drs. **Maria Carpiac** and **Mary Marshall**, along with several student volunteers, continue to partner with **Vivante on the Coast** assisted living to assess the effectiveness of the Vitality Program on improving mental, cognitive, physical, social and nutritional health for residents. Vivante hosted two MSG students during the 2022-2023 academic year and one, Carly Huston, is focusing her thesis on evaluating a new Vivante program focused on residents with mild cognitive impairment.



To see more about the Vitality Program: [https://f.io/o\\_LGFF5B](https://f.io/o_LGFF5B)

# LEADERSHIP

Four members of the Gerontology faculty hold leadership positions in the California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics (CCGG): **Dr. Maria Carpiac** (President), **Dr. Mary Marshall** (Secretary), **Mr. Jesse Archer** (Member-at-Large) and **Ms. Alexandra Wilkinson** (Member-at-Large).

CCGG's vision is to cultivate a state that celebrates the value of every older Californian. CCGG's mission: The California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics (CCGG) promotes the quality of life of California's diverse aging population through leadership and by fostering statewide collaborations among educational programs, providers, practitioners and public policy advocates in the field of aging. Join us! [www.ccg.org](http://www.ccg.org).

# HAPPY "UNRETIREMENT" TO ME

**by: Gary L. Wilkinson, father of Gerontology Lecturer, Alexandra Wilkinson-Korn,  
and Lecturer for the CSULB School of Business**

Retirement:

I was 65 and thought I would never retire from a job I loved. After all, I enjoyed a productive, interesting career as a global training manager for a high-tech company. I enjoyed the challenges of the job, the pay, the travel, and of course, the people and customers I worked with.

Then in 2019, I received a text message from the corporate network advising us of a 'buy-out' and generous severance package if we retired in a year. After consulting with my family and financial advisor, I said yes to the deal. I spent the last year in my job training my replacement and telling my team that work would go on without me. I still remember the moment I logged off my company PC for the last time. Ah, how was life going to change?

On the first day of retirement, I began a daily journal and meditated each morning. Then it was off to a kickboxing class, visits to the public library, and health food stores. Of course, I was also more available for not only my family but for my own interests. Time had become my primary currency rather than money. I also volunteered as a mentor at my alma mater, California State University at Long Beach.

Well, it was a wonderful retirement for one year.....

Unretirement:

Almost like clockwork, a year later to the day my old employer called and asked me to come to work as a consultant. I told them I was not looking for full-time work (unpleasantly remembering the administrative responsibilities, the performance reviews, and the vicissitudes of mandated training for managers). Ah, but the opportunity to teach an occasional training class? Yes, I have always enjoyed that aspect of my work. So, my old company agreed with my proposed new employment terms (for a change). What can I say? I love to teach.

Then early December 2022, my oldest daughter, a Gerontologist and lecturer at California State University, Long Beach, called me and mentioned that a Professor at the School of Business was looking for lecturers with a background in business and information systems. After an introduction and an interview, I became a lecturer teaching best communication practices to Business majors. It was a dream come true – teaching at my alma mater! This became more special because I would be teaching at the same school as my daughter. Furthermore, both of my daughters were Long Beach graduates.

I returned to work as it was a fantastic opportunity to do something I love! Of course, I found time to attend some of my daughter's classes and it was a challenge not to cry as I watched her teaching with confidence, passion and dedication to her craft. I must mention that my daughter was very helpful to me in navigating the labyrinth of the University's learning management system.

The best part about returning to work was the engagement with students, establishing myself as their instructor and a seasoned professional that could help them in their business careers. I was confident and believed I gained their confidence as well.

As excited as I was, it did not come without some hesitations. I thought about how I would be accepted as a senior citizen teaching college undergrads. I would not say I was nervous; it was more the excitement that I always felt in my career teaching a class. That was a nice feeling. Could I get the same feeling if I accepted a volunteer post as a school crossing guard? Perhaps. But being back in the classroom was like going home to me. I really felt I had and have a lot to give and experiences to share that will benefit students. I am still awaiting student evaluations, but it is a good sign that the school asked me to return for another term in the fall, which I accepted!

What advice might you have for others?  
Keep a journal and follow your dreams!

What did you learn about yourself?  
That I am looking forward! Always!





# CSULB Gerontology Club

## UPDATES AND AN INVITATION

Under the faculty guidance of Dr. Mary Marshall, the entirely student-led Gerontology Club had an exciting year as it worked to re-establish itself as one club with three "arms:" GSA Student Chapter, Sigma Phi Omega Honor Society in Gerontology, and Dreamcatchers.

### **Accomplishments include:**

- Participation in the Fall 2022 Walk to End Alzheimer's in Long Beach, raising \$535
- Participation in the Spring 2023 Walk to End Alzheimer's in Anaheim, raising \$1080
- Careers in Aging Panel
- Guest Speakers Dr. Trinh, Jennifer Bechtel and Patty Mouton
- Hosting an information table at CSULB's Admitted Students Day
- Game Night Social
- Networking Meeting
- Fundraiser at Shakey's Pizza



Seeking Nominees for 2023-  
2024 Gerontology Club  
Board

Contact Dr. Mary Marshall, if  
interested:  
[Mary.Marshall@csulb.edu](mailto:Mary.Marshall@csulb.edu)

# Alumni

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



**Tanya Ezrol** was just promoted at work! She went from Regional Supervisor to Director of Resident and Community Impact at Thomas Safran and Associates. She'll be running the Social Services and Resident Services programming as well as doing some work with their Permanent Supportive Housing communities.

**John Fay** serves as Member-at-Large on the board of the California Council on Gerontology & Geriatrics, while working as Community Outreach Manager of MemorialCare. In this role he works with community nonprofits and elected officials to strengthen relationships in the community. For any nonprofits in the Long Beach area, I can be contacted at [JFay@memorialcare.org](mailto:JFay@memorialcare.org).

**Samanta Godinez** is teaching gerontology classes in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico.

**Emily McNabb** now works at Providence Little Company of Mary in their community health department. She is a fitness instructor and assists the PE teacher at Green Elementary School in Lawndale.

**Desirae (Gamboa) Moncayo** is the Principle Deputy Public Guardian at the Office of the Public Guardian, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

**Sylvia Quesada-San Filippo** works as a patient navigator at USC Tina and Rick Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery at Keck School of Medicine, USC.

**Montserrat Salvat** began a new position in April 2023 as a virtual bilingual instructor at Homebridge, Inc. delivering instruction for IHSS providers enrolled in the statewide IHSS Career Pathways Program. The company's site: <https://www.homebridgeca.org/training>

# Alumni

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



**Nathalie Sevilla** currently works as the executive assistant for the vice president of administrative and business services at LBCC. Completing a RCFE license training course is still on her radar with a goal of becoming an administrator of an assisted living. For now, she is providing students with a safe education environment, where they feel at home and receive all the resources they need to succeed.

**Amanda Shaon** just started working for a street medicine pilot program out in Garden Grove called Health Care in Action. They are a member organization of SCAN. They have a mobile van that provides medical care and also provide community resources to those who are unhoused. Amanda is a care management supervisor.

**Rose Trujillo** is working on a manuscript based on her thesis: Long Term Planning for Older Adults with Autism for publication in a professional journal.

**Dr. Nakia Thierry** earned her Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership at University of La Verne. As of August 2022, she has been the Chief of the Older Adults Program Branch. She oversees the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program Bureau (HICAP), the Planning, Monitoring and Data Bureau, the Supportive Services Bureau and the Nutrition and Wellness Bureau for the state of California.

**Angela Williams** serves as Member-at-Large on the board of the California Council on Gerontology & Geriatrics while running her business, Angel Flight Care Management and Advocacy Agency.

# GERONTOLOGY ENDOWMENT BUILD FUND UPDATE

The GOAL: \$25,000 by 2025

Our PROGRESS: nearly \$12,000

How you can CONTRIBUTE: Please visit  
[www.csulb.edu/gerontology](http://www.csulb.edu/gerontology)

The fund will support our future workforce in aging careers. If each person reading this newsletter contributed just \$10, we'd reach past the halfway mark!

