

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

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CHC formally introduces the Captain Mike Orland San Manuel Fire Department Engine Bay to the public

On Jan. 31, Crafton Hills College unveiled the newly minted Captain Mike Orland San Manuel Fire Department Engine Bay to hundreds in attendance at a naming ceremony, including Orland’s mom, Margie, and colleagues.

The naming of an engine bay is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a firefighter,” said Keith Alexander, a colleague of Orland and chief of the San Manuel Fire Department. “It ensures that every firefighter who walks through these doors remembers the standards that came before them. And today, those standards bare the name of Fire Captain Mike Orland.”

Orland, a Crafton alumnus, last worked with the San Manuel Fire Department until his retirement in 2018.

Throughout his career, Orland mentored hundreds of academy cadets and firefighters, leaving a legacy of service above self through his work in the fire service and by raising funds for various causes.



Prior to his death in Sept. 2021, at the age of 54, Orland established a scholarship to support Crafton academy cadets who exemplified what it takes to become a firefighter: courage, perseverance, and tenacity.

His family carries on his legacy by combing through every student essay received every January and August to select cadets for

scholarships who possess the characteristics of selflessness and kindness and a “don’t quit” attitude.

These essays,” shared Mike Orland’s mother, Margie Orland, “give me an opportunity to learn their background and realize the struggles they face but overcame through determination.”

Photo: Orland Naming Ceremony

In the Everyday: Gordon Parks



The CHC Library celebrates Black History Month with the exhibition *In the Everyday: Gordon Parks*. On view through Monday, March 9, 2026, this exhibition introduces early works of Gordon Parks from the Library of Congress, Office of War Information Collection and is curated by CHC Librarian, Krista Ivy.

In the early 1940s, Parks joined the Office of War Information (OWI), a government agency created during World War II to document American life on the home

front. The photographs on view capture the rhythms of daily life of a nation in transition—families gathered on front porches, workers navigating new wartime industries, and children at play in neighborhoods reshaped by migration. In Parks’ hands, these scenes transcend documentation. His images illuminate not only the social fabric of the 1940s but also the foundations of the humanistic style that would define his later, celebrated career.

Photo: CHC Library Exhibition

Twenty-eight new paramedics celebrated at Crafton Hills College



sections to reach graduation day: a 460 hour-long didactic learning portion and field and clinical work where students experience hands-on first-responder situations.

The celebration was filled with tradition, such as a pinning ceremony where loved ones are invited on to the PAC stage to place a program pin on their graduate's lapel and remarks from a class speaker chosen by each cohort.

Kristen Clements, a program professor and program alumnae, encouraged her graduates to remember three necessary life tips: commit to lifelong learning; always be a patient advocate; and take care of yourself.

"This program changed my life, and today, seeing you cross the same finish line is incredibly moving," she said. "Class 107, you are ready. You are well trained. You earned your place in this profession, and we are glad to welcome you in."

Photo: Paramedic Graduation

Becoming a certified paramedic is not given, it's earned.

That's what Amanda Ward emphasized during her remarks as she spoke to the 28 who comprised Crafton Hills College's 107th Paramedic Class during the cohort's graduation celebration on Jan. 30.

sometimes difficult to manage, and you were able to do that with grace, resilience and here we are today," said Ward, the college's interim associate dean of public safety. "I am so incredibly proud of you for your efforts, and I am so excited to welcome you into 'Club Paramedics.'"

Crafton's paramedic program demands hard work. Students must complete three

"Life will hit you in ways that will be

How Jennifer Solis Found Her Calling at Crafton Hills College



access the same kind of transformative college experience that changed her own life.

Solis earned two associate degrees for transfer in psychology and social sciences from Crafton Hills College in 2019 before completing her bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology and school counseling at the University of Redlands. She's currently pursuing her Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) with a focus on higher education and student affairs.

That encouragement inspired Solis to build a career centered on empowering others. In her current role, she leads recruitment initiatives that expand college access for underrepresented students.

"Through this work, I've become an advocate for all students—especially transfer students—and for the support they need to thrive," Solis said.

She also proudly represents Crafton Hills College whenever she shares information about her educational journey.

When Jennifer Solis first stepped onto the Crafton Hills College campus, she didn't know that her time there would ignite a lifelong passion for education, advocacy, and leadership. Now serving as the Assistant Director of First-Year Admissions at the University of Redlands, Solis is committed to helping first-generation and low-income students

Her journey wasn't always easy. Solis credits the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) at Crafton for helping her believe in her potential.

"I specifically have to say that it was the EOPS program at Crafton that got me where I am today," she said. "My counselor, Kashaunda Harris, never made me feel unworthy even when I felt I would get nowhere."

"I always make sure to introduce my education starting from Crafton Hills College," she said. "I do that because, just as I work for a private university that people think is 'too expensive,' I've also seen the stereotype that community college is someone's 'last option.' Crafton Hills was always my first option, and it was the best decision I could have made."

Photo: Jennifer Solis with her mom

Crafton Hills College Student Veterans Participate in 18th Annual NATCON Conference



about how to seek out and connect with organizations and employers committed to supporting and recruiting veterans. Representatives from veteran-focused organizations and industry partners provided information on career pathways, helping attendees better understand how military skills and experience can translate to civilian careers.

The conference also provided ways for veterans to access healthcare, including same-day service, and other veteran benefits. On-site opportunities included consultations regarding VA disability ratings and assistance with claims.

Highlighting the impact of these services, Wyatt Downs, Crafton's SVA Vice President, shared, "The consultation cleared up a lot of questions and made me feel more confident about moving forward!"

One of the most impactful aspects of NATCON is the opportunity to build a national network of student veterans. The Crafton Hills College participants returned to campus with an expanded network, increased confidence, and a clearer sense of direction for their goals.

Photo: Joshua Macias and Wyatt Downs

The 18th Annual NATCON Conference, hosted by Student Veterans of America (SVA), took place in Colorado Springs, Colorado, from January 8-10. The conference brought together student veterans from colleges and universities across the United States.

panel discussions, and networking sessions focused on leadership, professional development, and the transition from military service to higher education and the civilian workforce.

Reflecting on the conference, Joshua Macias, Crafton's SVA President, stated, "These lessons helped reinforce the idea that strong leadership is built through communication, awareness, and continuous learning."

The conference included information

Crafton Hills College was represented at the conference by student veterans, Joshua Macias and Wyatt Downs, and Steve Rush, Coordinator of the Veterans Resource Center. The attendees participated in a wide range of workshops,

Crafton Hills College Hosts Chinese Students for Educational Exchange



The YCE program provides international students with a unique opportunity to explore American institutions, family life, and culture through workshops, guest lectures, on-site visits, and homestays with American families. By participating in these activities, students gain a deeper understanding of U.S. society while also reflecting on their own communities.

A group photo taken at the conclusion of the visit captured the students and hosts looking tired but happy after a full day of learning and exploration.

Photo: CHC Youth Cultural Exchange

On January 28, Crafton Hills College welcomed 24 Chinese students as part of a two-week Youth Cultural Exchange (YCE) program. The visit included a structured morning workshop featuring a mock debate on U.S. gun control and the American education system.

Following the workshop, students enjoyed lunch and then toured the campus with guides Jamie and Angel, who received high praise for their engaging and informative presentations. Students received Crafton Hills College swag bags as a gift, which was warmly appreciated.

Black History Month Opening Celebration: Honoring a Century of Black Commemorations



who has performed with orchestras and chamber groups from San Diego to Los Angeles. Frierson played a piece by a Black composer, honoring the profound contributions of Black musicians to classical and contemporary music traditions.

The celebration concluded with dominoes, spades, music, and dancing. Attendees were encouraged to linger and enjoy refreshments together.

The Dean of Enrollment Services and Co-Chair of the Black History Month Committee, Dr. Willie Blackmon captured the spirit of the event saying, “The opening ceremony was a true celebration of Black people not being a monolith, but instead embracing all facets of Black identity, experience, and expression.”

This opening ceremony was just one of many educational and community-centered events taking place throughout February, as Crafton Hills College continues to celebrate Black History Month.

Photo: Black History Month Opening Ceremony

On February 3rd, our Black History Month Opening Celebration powerfully marked a century of Black commemorations, honoring the richness, complexity, and ongoing evolution of black life, culture, and resistance.

embodies the living legacy of black history. Their reflections centered on black trans and queer spiritualities, religious expressions, and ethical frameworks as vital sites of communal healing, activism, and moral imagination.

The program opened with a deeply moving keynote by Dr. Ambrose. Formerly a professor at University of California, Riverside in black studies with a focus on black healing, Dr. Ambrose’s work

Vivian Williams, a student from Crafton Hills College, delivered a stirring rendition of the Black National Anthem. This was followed by a performance from Ryan Frierson, an Inland Empire-based cellist

Arianna Aguilera: Finding Confidence, Community, and Her Voice at Crafton Hills College



When Arianna began exploring theater programs, Crafton Hills College immediately stood out. Rather than feeling overcrowded or stagnant, the theater department felt full of possibility. “It felt up and coming,” she shared. “There was space for students to grow, contribute, and truly be part of building something.” That opportunity—to develop alongside the program and gain hands-on experience while forming strong connections with faculty and peers—was exactly what Arianna was looking for.

Crafton,” Arianna shared. “That level of care is rare, and it creates an environment where students feel valued, safe, and able to focus on their goals instead of worrying about basic needs.”

Crafton Hills College has also played a major role in helping Arianna believe in herself. She began her educational journey without a high school diploma, later earning it through Redlands Adult School—a milestone that already felt monumental to her. Still, when she arrived at CHC, she wasn’t sure what she was capable of academically. Today, Arianna maintains a 3.8 GPA. “That’s something I never imagined would be possible for me,” she said. “CHC gave me structure, encouragement, and opportunity—and because of that, I’ve grown not just as a student, but as a person who knows they can succeed.”

Arianna Aguilera is a Communications and Theater Arts student at Crafton Hills College, set to graduate in December 2026. A first-generation college student from Redlands, Arianna’s journey to higher education has been shaped by resilience, determination, and a deep appreciation for community.

One thing Arianna believes more people should know about Crafton is how deeply the college supports students beyond academics. CHC looks out for the whole person, not just their coursework. From food resources to counseling and campus programs, the college ensures students have what they need to succeed. “I have never gone hungry while attending

Photo: Arianna Aguilera