

Opening Doors to Opportunity for Neurodiverse Adults

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Pedro Pallarés Foundation (PPF) and the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) program at San José City College have announced their collaboration on a mission to empower neurodiverse individuals in education and employment. Initially designed two years ago, the idea was to create real pathways for students on the autism spectrum and those with intellectual disabilities. Well, it's now a reality and the first cohort of students graduated last May!



San José City College and The Pedro Pallarés Foundation's Mission to Empower Neurodiverse Adults' Education and Employment

Co-funded by both, the collaboration expands opportunities for students as well as stands as a practical model of equity, empowerment, and student success for other institutions to follow suit.

"That idea took shape as a pilot program designed to prepare students for academic success and workforce participation. Now, after thorough research and evaluation, that vision has moved from pilot to reality. The first certificate programs, Academic Success and Career Preparation, are officially marking a milestone in inclusive education.

Together, the Pedro Pallarés Foundation and San José City College are turning inclusion into action—creating real practical pathways for neurodiverse students to succeed in school, work, and life" Dean Rene Alvarez PhD, strongly remarks.

The certification is designed to build foundational reading, writing, and math proficiency, this program equips students with the academic tools they need for everyday life and for navigating college coursework with greater independence and its focused on career exploration, job readiness, and employability skills, this program provides sensible strategies for students to pursue meaningful employment and participate fully in the workforce.

The success of these programs is built on a shared investment. San José City College provided funding for faculty salaries and instructional costs, ensuring high-quality teaching and curriculum delivery. The Pedro Pallarés Foundation contributed funding to support classroom aides, providing individualized assistance that has been vital for student engagement and success. Together, these contributions created a balanced structure of academic expertise and hands-on student support.

“The Pallares Foundation believes there are urgent inequalities that cannot wait for others to address and that we as a society have the obligation to act now locally, nationally and internationally. To paraphrase Hillel the Elder “If not you, who? If not now, when?” Pete Pallares adds. “Many neurodiverse adults face overwhelming barriers to employment due to limited access to structured training and support. PPF addresses that problem by providing students with essential workplace skills and communication strategies, building confidence for academic and professional environments, offering personalized support for learning differences and individual needs and preparing participants for real-world job opportunities and independent living. This program has the potential to reshape how educational institutions and employers support neurodiverse talent, now all we need is employers to respond and get involved!” Pallares continues... “specially here, in the Bay Area, look at all these great companies doing so well, can they now start giving a chance to a new pool of talent?”

Driven by Student Outcomes, the collaboration has witnessed astounding results. The first cohorts (15 students in Academic Success and 15 in Career Preparedness) quickly demonstrated what is possible when resources, expertise, and compassion align. Students achieved retention and completion rates well above program benchmarks, with over 85% completing their coursework successfully.

More importantly, participants reported newfound confidence, stronger self-advocacy, and a sense of belonging on campus. Parents and guardians expressed joy at seeing their students not only thrive academically but also build friendships and workplace skills that will carry them into their futures.

The Next Steps in Neurodiverse Education and Employment

This partnership has shown that when we invest in students with varying degrees of autism and intellectual disabilities, they rise to meet and exceed expectations. The next step in our collaboration is clear: to extend these pathways into the world of work by providing paid internships for program graduates. By bridging classroom learning with real-world experience, we can ensure that students not only succeed at college but also transition confidently into careers and community life.

Together, the Pedro Pallarés Foundation and San José City College are proving that inclusive education and career readiness are not just goals; they are realities we can achieve when we

lead with vision and commitment.

Pete Pallarés

Pedro Pallarés Foundation

+1 415-309-7981

Ppallares@pedropallares.foundation

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