

PROJECT SUCCESS NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of TRIO-SSS at Illinois Valley Community College



25th Annual End-of-Year Recognition Luncheon

Our 25th Annual End-of-Year Recognition Luncheon was a truly memorable event as always to celebrate the achievements of our students. Aseret's beautiful slideshow highlighted the wonderful memories we created together. Thanks to Liz's creativity the room dazzled with balloons from table to ceiling, which made the event festive and special.

A highlight of the celebration was hearing IVCC alumna Zulma Guzman's inspiring success story and learning how Project Success significantly influenced her journey as a leader. She reflected on her time at IVCC as the president of our leadership team where she found her voice and her purpose. Zulma went on to graduate from Depaul University with her bachelor's in finance. Today, she is a respected financial expert in her field and she continues to lead and uplift others; especially as a mentor and advocate for Hispanic women through leadership programming.

When it comes to being successful she spoke of the importance of having grit. To have perseverance, passion, and determination to go onward in the face of adversity and commit to the hard work necessary to achieve your goals. Grit is the stamina to not give up, to learn from setbacks, and not be easily discouraged.

We cherish this annual event as an opportunity to extend our best wishes to our graduates and energize our returning students for another exciting year ahead. Look for this year's award winners inside.

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Director's Corner

Dear Project Success Students:

I hope you are taking some time to decompress and relax after Spring Semester 2025. I had the pleasure of watching many of you cross the stage and receive various degrees at graduation last Saturday. I know for some of you it has been an absolute grind, but you displayed determination and grit to get to the finish line. You persisted and you never gave up in times of adversity. For many of you IVCC is a stepping stone towards even greater accomplishments, achievements, and goals. Many of you were able to attend our End-of-Year Recognition Event last week. I briefly touched on the political landscape and some of the challenges we face in the TRIO Community as programs have come under attack. Like many in the TRIO Family, I have been dealing with a wide array of emotions and feelings. This included disbelief, anger, and fear. Some of the best advice I heard was from Dr. Arnold Mitchem. Mitchem has been with TRIO since the beginning in 1964 when he helped initiate the birth of TRIO Programs. Mitchem said, "We must turn these emotions like fear and anger into mobilization and action." We cannot sit on the sidelines and expect others to pick up the slack.

Some of the best advice I received personally was from a co-worker here at the college. They saw that I was visibly upset by some things that were transpiring lately. They said something simple. They said, "just breathe." It seems simple, but it is so true. If we stay calm and use our heads relying on each other, we will prevail. TRIO WORKS and you are in the TRIO FAMILY. We all need to just breathe! The TRIO Family is big on persistence. Many of you have had to overcome significant barriers and obstacles, whether as first-generation college students, individuals from low-income backgrounds, or students with disabilities. You have persisted, you will persist, and WE will continue to persist!

Sincerely,
Chris Herman



2024-25 Award Winners

Most Outstanding Participants

THIS AWARD IS GIVEN YEARLY TO AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF PS, HAS A HIGH GPA AND IS A LEADER IN THE COMMUNITY.

Ashton Watkins



ASHTON TRULY STEPPED UP THIS YEAR—FOUNDING TWO STUDENT GROUPS, BALANCING WORK, ATTENDING WORKSHOPS AND CULTURAL EVENTS, ALL WHILE SERVING AS A STUDENT GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE AND ACTIVE MEMBER OF MULTIPLE CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS. OVER HIS TIME AT IVCC, HE'S ALSO COMPLETED AN IMPRESSIVE 100 HOURS OF SERVICE.

WELL DONE, ASHTON!

Avriel Miers-Shiell



AVRIEL JOINED PROJECT SUCCESS IN LATE FALL AND QUICKLY MADE A REMARKABLE IMPACT. SHE STEPPED INTO LEADERSHIP WITH CONFIDENCE—SERVING AS A TUTOR, LAUNCHING OUR FIRST ST. BALDRICK'S FUNDRAISER, AND MAINTAINING A PERFECT 4.0 GPA. WE'RE EXCITED TO SEE ALL SHE'LL ACCOMPLISH IN THE FUTURE!

SO PROUD OF YOU, AVRIEL!

Most Outstanding Leader



EACH YEAR, WE HONOR SOMEONE WHO EXEMPLIFIES TRUE LEADERSHIP. THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT: MEGEN BERG. FROM DAY ONE, MEGEN HAS LIVED OUT THE VALUES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP—CONSISTENTLY SHOWING UP, OFFERING THOUGHTFUL IDEAS, AND VOLUNTEERING FOR NEARLY EVERY PROJECT, FROM HANDING OUT VALENTINES TO BRAVING A FROZEN LAKE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS. ALL WHILE WORKING ON CAMPUS, RAISING FOUR KIDS AS A SINGLE MOM, AND MAINTAINING A 3.5 GPA.

CONGRATULATIONS, MEGEN—YOU TRULY DESERVE THIS HONOR!

Megen Berg

Most Enriched Participant



YAIR SANTIAGO WAS RECOGNIZED AS OUR MOST ENRICHED STUDENT. HE JOINED PROJECT SUCCESS AS A QUIET, RESERVED STUDENT SEEKING GUIDANCE, AND OVER THE YEARS, WE'VE SEEN HIM TRANSFORM INTO A CONFIDENT, ENGAGED, AND ACTIVE MEMBER OF OUR PROGRAM.

YAIR IS A DEDICATED MEMBER OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM WHO CONSISTENTLY STEPPED UP TO SUPPORT A VARIETY OF CAMPUS EVENTS. HE REGULARLY MADE THE TREK FROM EAST CAMPUS TO STAY INVOLVED, AND WE'VE TRULY APPRECIATED THE ENERGY AND COMMITMENT HE HAS BROUGHT TO OUR COMMUNITY.

GO YAIR!

Yair Santiago

Most Active Participant



AARON NOBLE WAS THE MOST ACTIVE PARTICIPANT THIS YEAR. WE HONOR OUR TOP ACTIVE STUDENT WHO CONNECTED WITH US THE MOST OFTEN, SEEING THEIR COUNSELOR AND ATTENDING WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS AND USING OUR STUDY AREA AS WELL AS THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER.

AARON JOINED THE PSLT, HELPED FORM THE NEW STUDENT GROUP - MINDS OF ALL KINDS. HE HOLDS A 4.0 GPA AND WORKS IN THE TUTORING CENTER.

WAY TO GO, AARON!

Aaron Noble

Sites & Bites: A Tasty Tour of the Windy City

This spring, Project Success headed into the city for a special tasting tour of Chicago. The morning started with a surprise visit to Navy Pier where we embarked on the virtual reality "Fly Over Chicago" experience. All were in agreement--it was a ride like no other! Strapped into our seats we careened over skyscrapers and into the heart of the city. Motioned seats, scents, mists, and music captured the feel of the flight as we explored Chicago from above, experiencing the most iconic landmarks like never before.

Afterwards, our expert tour guide and local historian, Dave, took us to all the legendary "must-eat" favorites for tastings of the best deep dish pizza, Italian beef, Chicago-style hot dogs, and more. While we dined, he fed us stories of Chicago's unique history and culture. It was a perfect introduction to the soul of Chicago as we walked the River North neighborhood stopping at different restaurants. Our tour guide bid farewell as we ended the day at Millennium Park. It was a quiet ride home as tummies were full and hearts happy!



Spring 2025 Honors

President's Honors

3.75+ GPA and 12 semester hours completed

Esmeralda Avila
Ayden Barajas
Hope Baratta
Allyson Bohms
Brandon Campbell
Emelina Coss

Makenzie Eichelkraut
Coral Garcia
Mary Heermann
Katelyn Kiska
Jacob Maier
Avriel Miers-Shiell
Jo Mindeman

Emir Morales
Katya Quintana
Mariana Rodriguez-Martinez
Brenton Sampson
Alysa Sharp
James Sokol
Maya Zeman

Academic Honors

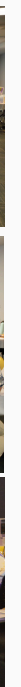
3.25+ GPA and 6 semester hours completed

Courtney Bailey
Megen Berg
Kendra Brandner
Morgan Brown
Itzel Cervantes
Kaiden Connor
Kahmr Dailey

Sunshine's Flourish
Brayan Gonzalez
Rolando Gonzalez
Tyler Graves
Jennessa Israel
Keira Kiersnowski
Litzzy Lopez

Jasmine Morales
Jazmin Moreno
Zoe Murphy
Toni Newton
Jessica Noak
Aaron Noble
Cruz Orozco
Sonja Penney

Elizabeth Shaw
Matthew Sims
Cheyenne Smith
Breanna Sondgeroth
Carmen Trent
Ashton Watkins
Sidney Wilson
Logan Zeglis



PSLT: Project Success Leadership Team

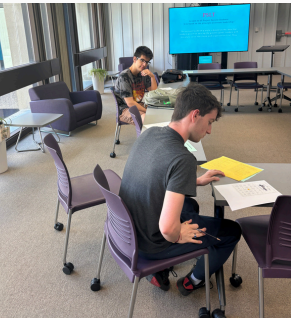
A Year in Review

This year with our leadership team has been an exciting journey filled with growth, learning, and meaningful experiences. In the fall, we focused on building a strong foundation by developing leadership skills through inspiring presentations from Dr. Kuester, Stephanie from TG, Madonna Duncan, and President Morris. With a newly formed team, we prioritized education and personal development before diving into service projects. We believe everyone truly enjoyed exploring what it means to be an effective leader.

In the spring, we had the opportunity to put our leadership skills into action by supporting impactful organizations and contributing to our community.

"Being a part of the Project Success Community has been a tremendous experience to develop my professional, leadership and networking skills while remaining successful as a student."

- Megan Berg



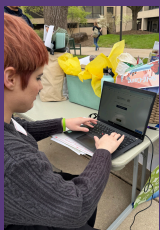
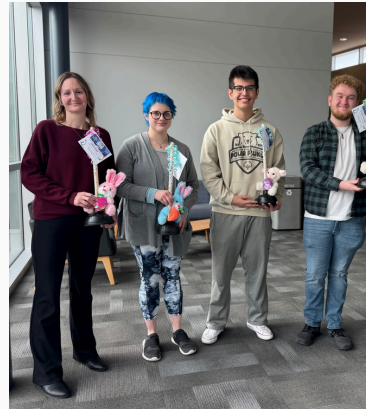
PSLT: Project Success Leadership Team

SERVICE IN ACTION: LEADERSHIP THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The Project Success Leadership Team had a busy and impactful spring semester! This year has been an exciting journey of growth, learning, and service. Staying true to our mission, we focused on fundraising and deepening our understanding of organizations like Special Olympics and St. Baldrick's.

Putting their newly honed leadership skills into action, our students hit the ground running—jumping into fundraising with just a few short weeks to prepare for February's Polar Plunge into Lake Mendota. Despite the tight timeline, they surpassed expectations, raising over \$1,700 for Special Olympics! Energized by their success, our leaders quickly took on a second service project: IVCC's first-ever St. Baldrick's event.

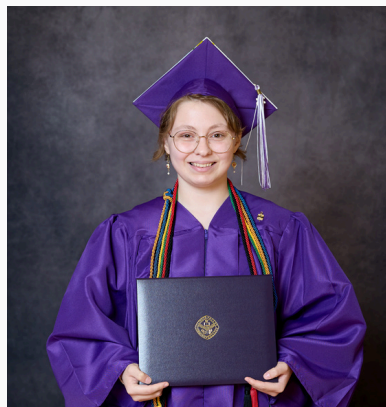
Our debut St. Baldrick's fundraiser was a resounding success! With determination and heart, the team recruited brave shavees and promoted raffle baskets to support childhood cancer research. Even a rainy day couldn't dampen the spirit—thanks to incredible community support, we raised over \$1,500. An absolutely inspiring effort!



Graduates 2024-2025



Torri Atkinson



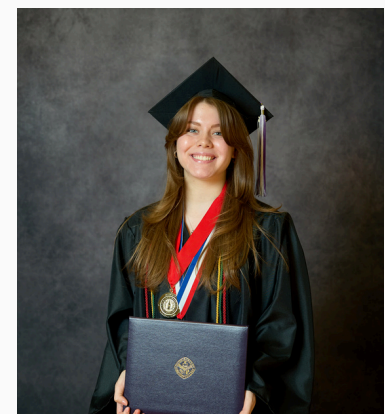
Courtney Bailey



Megen Berg



Haylee Bruce



Emma Coss



Kahmr Dailey



Flor Delao



Rolando Gonzalez



Tyler Graves



Alexia Gross



Dylan Harris



Qu'Amar Hobbs

Graduates 2024-2025



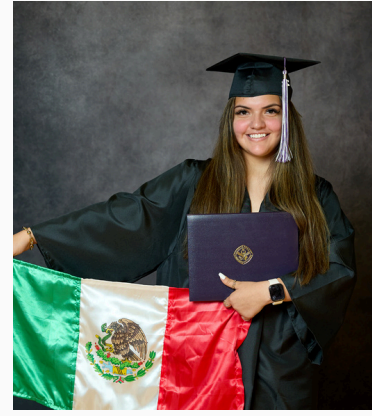
Lynn Keyt



Anastasia Mallery-Sondgeroth



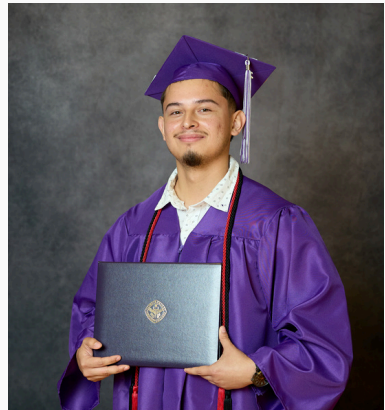
Aaron Noble



Yovanna Reyes



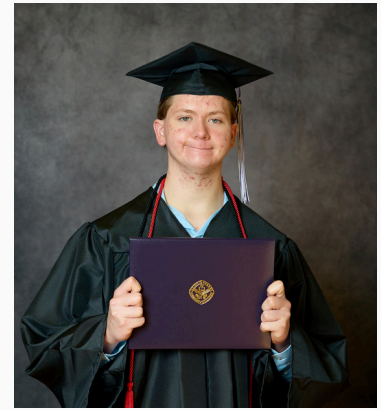
Daniel Sack



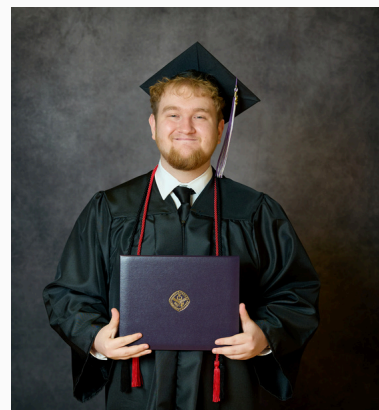
Yair Santiago



Elizabeth Shaw



James Sokol



Ashton Watkins

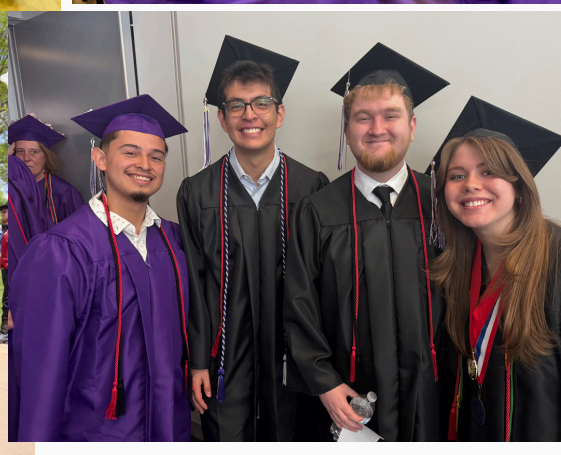


Logan Zeglis

Not pictured:

Itzel Cervantes, Danielle Densing, Brenda Dimas, Amarion Ford, Chloe Hillyard, Grace Johnson, Kasandra Mandujano, Antonio Martinez, Haley Mosqueda, Alexander Nieto, Yasmine Orozco-Godinez, Katya Quintana, Matthew Sims, Breanna Sondgeroth, Jessica Valdez

Celebrating Success



Graduates, Families & Friends

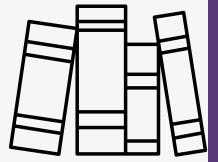


**FALL SEMESTER IS AROUND THE CORNER, AND WE'RE
READY TO WELCOME YOU BACK!**

SAVE THE DATE

Jumpstart

Wednesday, August 13



IMPORTANT DATES

Fall tuition due: July 30

PS Jump Start: August 13

Campus Preview: August 15

First day of Classes: August 18

Welcome back event: August 20

**"College is not just about learning
a job, it's about learning who you
are." – Unknown**

