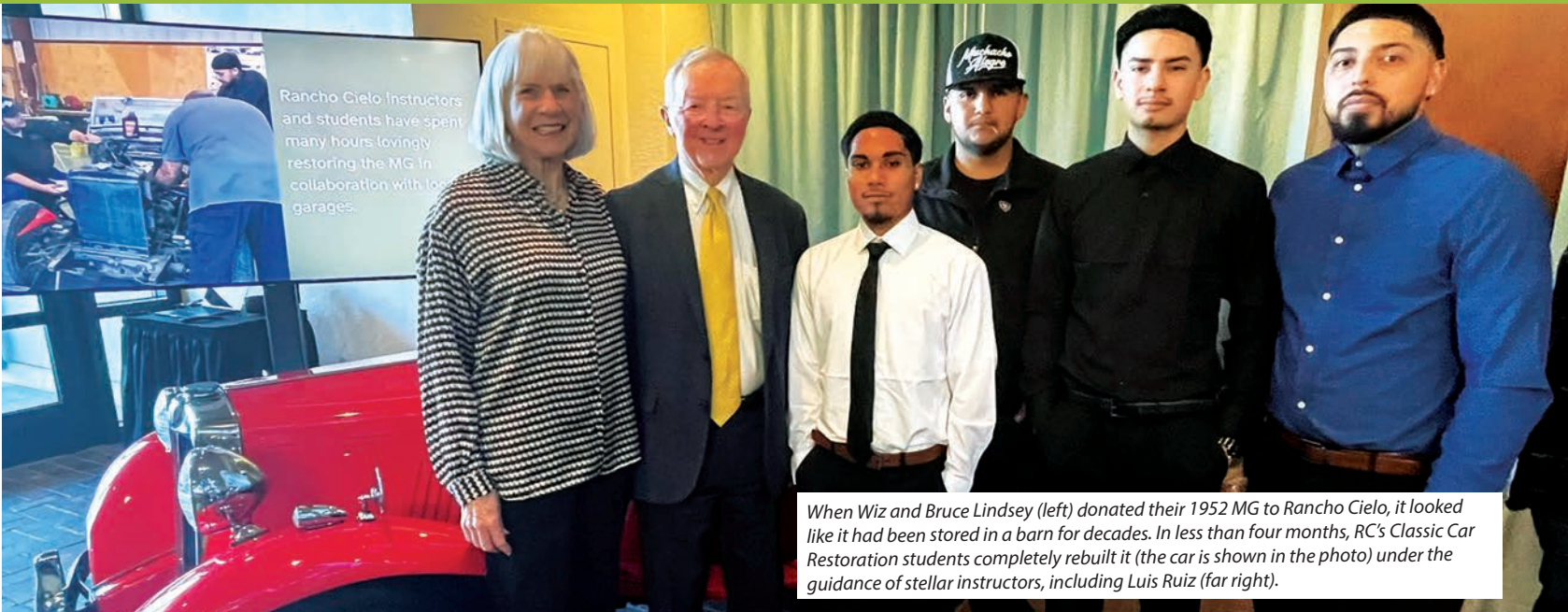




# RANCHO CIELO

Spring 2024



*When Wiz and Bruce Lindsey (left) donated their 1952 MG to Rancho Cielo, it looked like it had been stored in a barn for decades. In less than four months, RC's Classic Car Restoration students completely rebuilt it (the car is shown in the photo) under the guidance of stellar instructors, including Luis Ruiz (far right).*

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## Culinary Round Up Delivers...Big!

Amidst the collaboration between our brightest Drummond Culinary Academy students and Monterey County's most esteemed chefs, the Culinary Round Up showcases Rancho Cielo's harmonious blend of education, vocational training and life skills. This year, over 600 attended, and approximately \$500,000, a record, was raised, thanks in part to the dedication of nearly 115 volunteers, including chefs, wineries and breweries. We are eternally grateful! (More on p. 3). One of many high points was a 1952 MG Roadster meticulously restored by our students in less than four months, just in time for the live auction. (More on p. 4). Furthermore, information on our Construction & Sustainable Design Academy students' award-winning 800-square-foot home (Nexus\_01) that triumphed at the inaugural 2023 Orange County Sustainability Decathlon last fall was displayed prominently. Round Up attendees were also given glimpses of our culinary academy expansion through mock-ups of the pastry kitchen and barbecue pavilion. (More on p. 4). Meanwhile, the Pebble Beach Company Foundation has steadfastly committed to enhancing our community by supporting youth-focused organizations. This year, Rancho Cielo had the privilege of experiencing this impact during Pebble Beach Food and Wine, where James Beard Award-winning celeb chef Andrew Zimmern teamed up with Drummond Culinary Academy's talented Executive Chef EJ Jimenez and our students for an unforgettable epicurean journey at The Foundation Table. There's so much happening at Rancho Cielo that it's easy to forget things we take for granted, like driving! We are proud to highlight our partnership with Drive Carmel. Our students can now complete their driver's education on campus and get their licenses. Nearly 95% of the first cohort passed their test last December! (More on p. 7).

Finally, we encourage you to take a moment to discover our new website if you haven't already had the chance. The platform offers an all-inclusive experience in Spanish and English and features numerous enhancements. Making reservations for our popular Friday Night Dinners, inquiring about facility event rentals, staying informed about upcoming events, and even donating has never been simpler. Much like the Culinary Round Up, our new website epitomizes the essence of Rancho Cielo, encapsulating our mission and offerings in one accessible space.

Chris Devers  
CEO



# Fundraising and Development



## 14TH ANNUAL CULINARY ROUND UP

*Thank You, Sponsors!*

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**More Than \$504,000 Raised!**

# Fundraising and Development

## 14th Annual Culinary Round Up's Tastiest Moments

In addition to the ample supply of delicious food and drink served at the 2024 Culinary Round Up, the speakers filled attendees' bellies with home-cooked words delivered from their hearts.

Salinas native Ashleigh Soto (right) and Rancho Cielo alum: "I became part of [Rancho Cielo's] Youth Corp program, and the staff rooted for me to keep going. Susie Brusa and Judge Phillips never gave up on me. I felt empowered. This is what Rancho Cielo represents. This caused me to shed the old and a new journey began."

Soto left the violent world of drugs and gangs behind. After receiving her GED through Rancho Cielo, she was hired by the Don Chapin Company, where she began her career as a cement mason.

"I was used to being part of the problem," Soto added. "Now, I'm part of the solution."



Current Drummond Culinary Academy student, Kaitlyn Davis (left), also a Salinas native, has overcome numerous hurdles throughout her life, including learning disabilities.

"I think, hands down, this is the best decision I ever made for myself," Davis said. "Rancho Cielo has taught me that anything is possible. The staff has taught me to work hard and stay determined. Every day is different and I love the opportunity to create new things. Now, I look forward to each day. I have goals for my future."

Since Culinary Round Up, Davis was invited to the Ted J. Balestreri National Restaurant Association Dinner in Pebble Beach and awarded a scholarship to further her culinary training after she completes DCA. You can usually find Davis honing her skills as a pastry chef.



From left: Drummond Culinary Academy Director Mark Bruszer and DCA Executive Chef/Instructor EJ Jimenez.

On the right: Construction and Sustainable Design Academy instructor Ed Bennett collaborated with students on several handcrafted wooden pieces for the silent auction, including a birdhouse replica of Nexus\_01, Rancho's award-winning home presented at the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon.

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# Ranch News

## Rancho Cielo is Building a Pastry Kitchen



*Drummond Culinary Academy students employ their superior knife skills on bananas.*

The Community Project Funding initiative enables members of Congress to advocate for specific projects that directly benefit their districts. It's a significant step in supporting local communities.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, California's 18th Congressional District, requested funding for 14 local projects totaling \$50,095,535. On Saturday, March 9, President Biden signed off on the initiative.

Among the projects on Rep. Lofgren's list is funding for Rancho Cielo to expand its Drummond Culinary Academy. This expansion aims to transform the academy into a state-of-the-art culinary center, providing students with unparalleled opportunities.

DCA Executive Chef Estevan Jimenez said, "This funding will allow us to offer more specialized training and continue shaping the next generation of culinary professionals."

By investing in these facilities, Rancho Cielo's DCA students will benefit from enriched experiences, essential resources and skill enhancement. Ultimately, this investment will contribute to better living wages for our graduates.

With the support of the Community Development Funds, we plan to build a 1,200-square-foot pastry kitchen that includes a lab/classroom, production room, administrative office, storage space and restrooms.

Our curriculum combines the science of baking, an artist's finesse and an entrepreneur's strategy, adding skills and knowledge for students to start a path toward creating their own businesses.

## Classic Car Restoration Added to Auto & Diesel Repair

In addition to being home to the iconic Concours d'Elegance classic car show in Pebble Beach, Monterey County has one of the country's highest concentrations of vintage car enthusiasts. Also, the renowned WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, bordering Monterey and Salinas, holds antique car races yearly.

With only a few certified classic car repair educators in the United States and not one in Monterey County, adding Classic Car Restoration to the school's vocational offerings was a no-brainer.

"I've been doing development work for 25 years, and I've never had anybody drop a project or a program in my lap that is well designed, funded and connected to industry, doing everything that is within our mission to do here," Devers says.

Devers is referring to Rotary Club of Carmel by the Sea President-Elect Mark Grandcolas and Rotary International Foundation Co-chair Ric Masten, the key players who initially approached him about creating the program.

The first eight-week course began in summer 2022 with 14 students, 10 of whom completed it. Meanwhile, the first three years are funded by a Rotary Foundation global grant of more than \$56,000. Rancho Cielo has also received state and federal funding to keep the program running and \$100,000 from donors connected to the Pebble Beach Concours.

"The mechanics who do this work are starting to retire," Christopher Almaraz, Career Education Coordinator, says. "They need someone to take their place."

Instructors Jose Tavares, Luis Ruiz and Tom Forgette make up the Auto & Diesel Repair program's all-star team, fueled by knowledge, patience and artistry. Recently, the trio and their pupils were put to the test when they were asked to restore a 1952 MG for Rancho Cielo's 14th Annual Culinary Round Up, the perfect opportunity to showcase the blossoming program and raise money.

Forgette says a project of the MG's magnitude usually takes at least a year. However, the instructors, students and local garages came together and made it happen in less than four months. The pristine vehicle was showcased at the Round Up, bringing in over \$20,000. The kicker: Rancho gets to keep it. The car was auctioned off as an experience, an opportunity to drive it at Laguna Seca.



*The 1952 MG was in rough shape when it first arrived on campus. Luis Ruiz (top left), one of the instructors who oversaw the Roadster restoration, worked with students for over three months to get it "showroom ready" in time for the 14th Annual Culinary Round Up. The night before the Round Up, Judge Phillips and students enjoy the fruits of hundreds of hours of labor (top right).*

# Ranch News

## Arts Council For Monterey County Partners with Rancho

Rancho Cielo's Arts Program is the latest of the school's seven new Enrichment Programs to kick off officially. Students are encouraged to experiment with various mediums and techniques as a creative outlet to express themselves. This allows them space to explore feelings and process experiences while developing self-awareness and coping skills. Over time, it's proven that programs like this can foster healing, resilience and a positive sense of self.

Thanks to a partnership with the nonprofit Arts Council for Monterey County, students are benefiting from one of their teaching artists, the fantastic and talented Karina Carrasco-Cortes.

Carrasco-Cortes has guided students through a weekly kaleidoscope of color, fractals and discovery, from self-portraits to paper flowers to murals. Rancho Cielo has dedicated space for public murals, where students can contribute a lasting piece of art on the property and inspire others.



*From left: Students work on creating murals after learning about the importance of "public art." Arts Council for Monterey County instructor Karina Carrasco-Cortes leads Rancho Cielo's Arts Program, one of our seven new Enrichment Programs.*

## Rancho Cielo Welcomes New Board Members

As of 2024, we are pleased to welcome four new board members! Jennifer Daquisto, the President of Bank of America Monterey Bay. With over 20 years of experience leading marketing, branding, communications and community programs in financial services, Daquisto's relationships with community development sectors are an asset.

Chartwell School's Board of Trustees President Katrina Maestri's experience will be invaluable for our students and their educational needs. Maestri is known for devoting time and expertise to advocate for equitable access to high-quality education for all learners.

In addition to Rancho's Equity Committee, Jennifer Rosenthal will head up our Legal Aid Committee. She champions "quality representation with compassionate and continued personal contact through all stages of the legal system." Rosenthal serves on the Board of Directors of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Monterey County; she's also a member of California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, the Monterey County Bar Association, and the Monterey County Women Lawyers Association.

President and Founder of Scudder Roofing and Scudder Solar Energy Systems Pete Scudder is an industry partner in construction and is dedicated to our students. His generosity and mentoring helped lead our Construction and Sustainable Design Academy students to victory at the 2023 Orange County Sustainability Decathlon.

We'd also like to acknowledge our outgoing board members. Thank you to Shyam Kamath, Lorri Koster and Jesse Lopez for your service and dedication.

# Ranch News

## A Ride to School is a Ride to Success

Despite the allure of spring break, 21 determined Rancho Cielo students have chosen to invest their time in learning about crucial driving skills such as navigating “black ice,” understanding the legal definition of a “complete stop” and safely maneuvering through the fog.

The class is offered through Rancho Cielo’s partnership with Drive Carmel and culminates in the written exam (transportation is provided to and from the DMV) needed for students to get their driver’s permits and, eventually, driver’s licenses.

### 5 DRIVER’S ED COHORTS

78

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED

67

PERMITS EARNED

34

LICENSES OBTAINED

Every student who’s participated in Rancho Cielo’s driver’s ed program since its spring of 2022 inception, is dedicated and has shown up every day. Obtaining a driver’s license in California is costly and no longer a standard offering in public schools, so students benefit significantly. A driver’s license symbolizes equity, inclusion and independence. Additionally, it broadens employment opportunities for our students and paves the way for personal growth and responsibility. Of the 78 who have taken the course so far, 67 have earned their driver’s permits and 34 have obtained driver’s



Through a partnership, Drive Carmel brings driver’s education to Rancho Cielo. A student shows off her recently acquired learner’s permit.

licenses (that number will increase within the next month). Two more driver’s ed cohorts are scheduled for the summer of 2024.

## Drone Certification Now Offered at Rancho Cielo



Rancho Cielo’s first group of TRUST certification recipients. Drone footage shot of the Rancho Cielo campus. PHOTOS: Christopher Almaraz

Drones have revolutionized the agricultural industry by enabling farmers to monitor large areas of crops, conduct precision fertilizer and pesticide spraying, map land, manage livestock and analyze soil. Real-time data on crop health helps farmers identify areas that need attention, optimize resource allocation and increase efficiency and yield. The Ag Technology & Mechatronics program at Rancho Cielo was an obvious choice for students looking to learn about drones and their future in the agricultural sector. Drone operation is not just about knowing how to fly them; it also requires a license. All recreational flyers must pass an aeronautical knowledge and safety test called The Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST). This test ensures an understanding of airspace regulations, safety guidelines and operational limitations.

The first cohort of 26 Rancho students received their TRUST certification this year, and another group will be certified next year. Drone operations can lead to various employment opportunities for students, including aerial photography and videography, mapping, surveying, agriculture, infrastructure inspection, disaster response, and even sectors like entertainment and journalism.

TRUST certification is the first step towards obtaining the Part 107 drone license required for commercial drone operations in the United States. It signifies a higher level of competency and responsibility, allows license holders to fly drones legally for commercial purposes, and contributes to their career advancement and potential for professional growth in the rapidly expanding drone industry.

## Student Spotlight: Jesus Camacho

Some see the world positively, no matter how bad it gets. Jesus Camacho, a recent graduate of the Construction & Sustainable Design Academy, is one of those people.

“He has a positive go-getter attitude and is always enthusiastic about learning more,” Construction Case Manager Wendy Guardado says of Camacho. “He’s graciously overcome obstacles and has a glass-half-full outlook on life.”

Camacho had to endure some considerable hurdles starting at a young age: When he was 10, his home burned down, leaving him, his mother and his three older siblings without permanent housing.

“We were really poor,” Camacho says. “It made me want to get my own money. I started selling chips in middle school.”

During Camacho’s time at Rancho, he’s proven to be one of the hardest workers on campus. He worked through his summer 2023 break on the home that went on to win the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon and was one of the 12 students who spent a month in Orange County during the competition.

“I liked being able to show the world, like, ‘Hey, look what we did,’” Camacho says. “I was proud and surprised.”

The Salinas native recently shared his experience growing up and at Rancho Cielo at “My Life Story,” a community event that partners with other local nonprofits. Camacho also participated in “Peace Pathways to Success” at the Soledad Community Resource Fair and Workshop.

“You always have to keep learning different things,” he says. “I never stop learning.”

The proof is in his actions: Camacho recently passed the driver’s ed class offered through Drive Carmel at Rancho Cielo, and he’s one of Rancho’s 2024 early graduates (roughly 50 total students will graduate in June 2024). Now, he’s making his own money. Rancho hired him as a Construction & Sustainable Design Academy shop assistant.

Next fall, Camacho plans to continue his construction studies at Hartnell College.



*Jesus Camacho is one of more than a dozen Rancho Cielo students what graduated early in 2024.*

## Award-Winning Disney Imagineer Zooms With Students

Rancho Cielo takes pride in offering students holistic learning experiences across various disciplines. When 12 of our Construction & Sustainable Design Academy students went to Southern California in October 2023 for the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon, they had to showcase numerous skills beyond construction, including public speaking and marketing, to win the overall competition.

So, a Zoom with a Disney Imagineer—a job that blends artistry, engineering, storytelling, and technology to bring Disney’s magical worlds to life—proved invaluable and inspiring for Rancho students from all programs.

Disney Imagineer Daniel Joseph leads a team of designers and conceives, designs and installs special effects and illusions for Disney theme parks worldwide. Along with 30 U.S. Patents, Joseph brought the Hatbox Ghost to life for the Haunted Mansion ride just in time for Disneyland’s 60th Anniversary. He’s also consulted on product development for medical equipment to improve safety and usability, and in 2023, Joseph was inducted into the Florida Inventor’s Hall of Fame.

Seventeen-year-old Auto & Diesel Repair student Zoe Dyer, one of the 40-plus Rancho students Joseph spoke to, never considered Disney a potential employer. However, she realized that her learning skills could be applied to more than cars.

“When Daniel was explaining the work he did on the Hatbox [Ghost] in the Haunted Mansion, it reminded me of working on a car,” says Dyer, who comes from a long line of mechanics. “He said it has a motor in it, and it takes certain things to make that motor run, just like a car motor.”

Joseph also spoke about his learning disabilities, which made school very difficult. This hit home for several Rancho students.

“I connected with him because I deal with those challenges, too,” Dyer says. “It’s inspiring because Daniel wanted to work [at Disney] so badly when he was younger, and now, he gets to do it, which makes him so happy. I thought, ‘Maybe I could do that as a job.’”



*Disney Imagineer Daniel Joseph installs the Hatbox Ghost in the Haunted Mansion.*

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# RANCHO CIELO

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## SAVE THE DATE

## CONTACT

**Veggie Box & BBQ**  
August 19-23, 2024



**Taste of Markon**  
October 4, 2024



**Jazz at the Ranch**  
October 18-20, 2024



**JAZZ AT THE RANCH**  
**RANCHO CIELO**

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### Donations

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### Volunteer Opportunities

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### Friday Night Dinners

[ranchocieloyc.org/dining](http://ranchocieloyc.org/dining)

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