

January 2026 Board Highlights

Division One, Commercial Driver Training

CDL Graduate Credits YC Training for Launching His Dream Career

A recent Commercial Driver Training (CDT) graduate is seeing the payoff of his hard work—and the quality of his YC education. Jesse Nagle, a proud YC alumnus, shared an inspiring update after being recruited by Schneider National and successfully completing his second week of orientation training.

Jesse highlighted how prepared he felt compared to trainees from other states, crediting Yavapai College for providing exceptional, hands-on instruction. He shared that his:

-  Backing skills stood out
-  Highway driving felt natural and confident
-  Pre-trip inspections exceeded expectations

Perhaps most meaningful was Jesse's message to future students—encouraging them to listen closely, trust the process, and fully engage in the training. His confidence behind the wheel, he said, came directly from the skills and standards instilled during his time at YC.

From the student (email excerpt):

"I got recruited to Schneider National Trucking... My backup skills were amazing. My highway skills were perfect. My pre inspection trip was better than all the other states. I knew what I was doing, and I thank you guys for what you taught me... Thank you so much for allowing me to live my dream."

Stories like Jesse's reflect the real-world impact of YC's CDT program—helping students not only earn credentials, but step confidently into careers they've dreamed of pursuing. We're proud of Jesse and excited to see where the road takes him next!

Division One, Culinary and Agriculture

👉 From Garden to Kitchen: Students Collaborate on Holiday Pie Preparations

Cross-program partnerships continue to enrich the student experience as **horticulture students** delivered freshly harvested produce directly to **culinary students**, supporting hands-on learning across disciplines. 🌱🍎

Culinary students used the seasonal ingredients to begin preparations for holiday pies—connecting classroom instruction with real-world collaboration and farm-to-table practices. This shared effort gives students a deeper appreciation for the full food journey, from growing and harvesting to baking and presentation.

These partnerships highlight how YC programs work together to create meaningful, applied learning opportunities that benefit students on both sides of the experience—and make the holidays a little sweeter along the way. 🎉🥧



From Farm to Table: CTE Students Build Skills Through Agriculture & Culinary Collaboration

CTE students are gaining hands-on, real-world experience through a cross-program collaboration between **Agriculture and Culinary**, where learning goes well beyond the classroom.  

As part of this partnership, students practiced fish-cutting techniques—building knife skills, food safety awareness, and confidence while working with fresh products connected to agricultural instruction. This experience helps students understand the full food pathway, from sourcing and handling to preparation and presentation.

Collaborations like this strengthen career readiness, reinforce teamwork across programs, and give students practical skills they'll carry into the workforce.





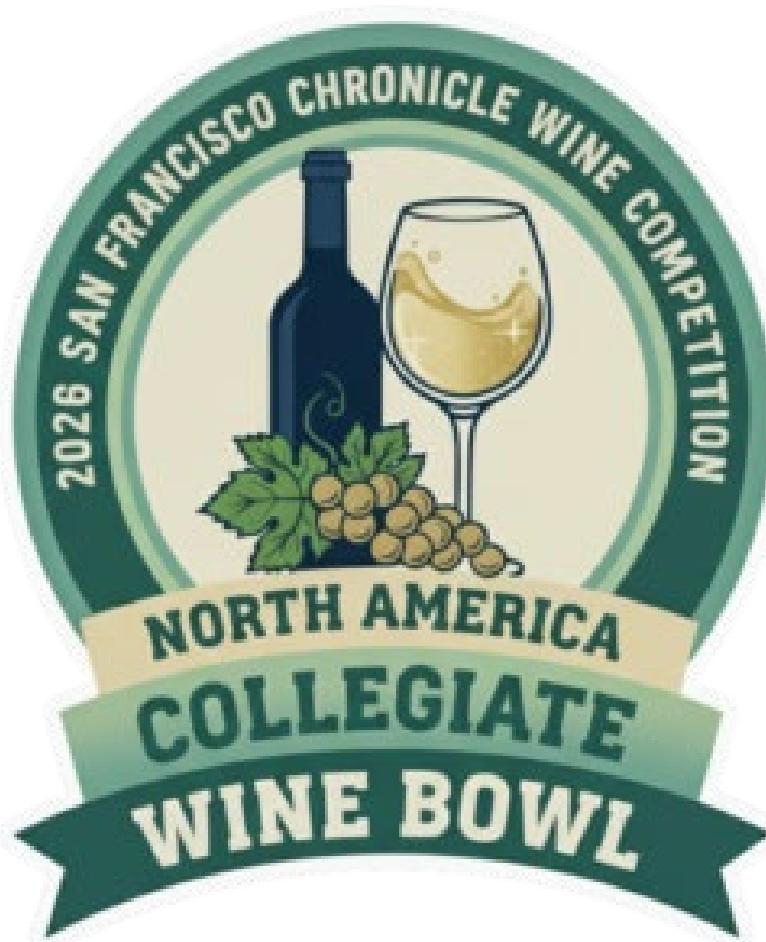
Division One, Viticulture, Enology, and the Southwest Wine Center

🍇🍷 Viticulture, Enology, and the Southwest Wine Center

Yavapai College will be the site of the 1st Arizona Wine Summit on January 12th, in M137. The Viticulture & Enology program has been an active participant in the planning of the event, in direct partnership with the Arizona Wine Growers Association, bringing more than seven speakers to the stage, a tradeshow with national vendors, and participants from all three Arizona wine regions together. Academics from Washington State, New Mexico and California will travel to the Verde Campus to present to our winemaking and winegrowing community 🍇🍷 .

The Southwest Wine Center has been entered in a first of its kind “College Wine Bowl” at the 2026 San Francisco Chronicle’s Wine Competition. Colleges and Universities will go head-to-head (via the judge’s tasting notes and opinions) in a football-playoff themed approach 🏈🍷, with one academic program being named the champion 🏆 !

More updates to come in February!



Division One, Skilled Trades Center

Skilled Trades Center

On 12/17/25, 7 Prescott Valley building inspectors/professionals attended a focused professional development training, “Carpentry: Guards, Handrails, Stairs and Landings” at the Yavapai College Verde Valley Skilled Trades Center. The session was led by Brian Pearson, YC’s Verde Valley campus Carpentry & Plumbing faculty with 45 years of professional experience, including 13 years as the City of Sedona Plans Examiner/Inspector. Designed to address the rapid evolution of building codes and construction practices, the training reinforced current code requirements through hands-on, real-world examples . Participants strengthened their ability to interpret standards, identify compliance issues, and apply best practices related to guards, handrails, stairs, and landings.

Coming up in January and February 2026, 4 additional trainings in this series will take place on topics ranging from HVAC Duct Design & Airflow to Safety Compliance, Building Trusses, and Drywall, Insulation, and Weather Proofing. This training series highlights Yavapai College’s continued commitment to workforce development and continuing education  , supporting local communities by providing practical, trade-based learning that promotes safe, code-compliant construction across Yavapai County.



Vice President of Workforce Development and Health Sciences Board Highlights



Division Two, Aviation



YC Aviation Student Earns Private Pilot Certificate in Record Time

On Wednesday, November 5, 2025, Chris Dollesin earned his FAA Private Pilot Certificate after a successful checkride with FAA Designated Pilot Examiner Daniel Knight—an exceptional achievement completed in just 2.5 months from the start of the semester.

A U.S. Air Force Veteran, Chris trained under Instructor Tom Lynn and became the first student in Yavapai College's Fall 2025 Aviation Cohort to complete certification—an accelerated timeline that's virtually unheard of in flight training.

This milestone highlights Chris's dedication and focus, as well as the speed, structure, and quality of YC's Professional Pilot Program, where motivated students can move quickly from the classroom to the cockpit. We're proud of Chris and excited to see him continue his journey as he begins Instrument Training this semester—congratulations on an outstanding accomplishment!

Division Two, Administration of Justice Studies

YC Students Engage in Adoption & Foster Care Awareness Event

On Tuesday, November 18, YC students joined the Yavapai College Respect Campaign and the Yavapai College Justice Institute for *Families We Choose*, an evening event celebrating National Adoption Month and centered on learning, reflection, and community connection.

The event featured a keynote presentation by Joani Fisher, followed by a panel of individuals sharing diverse fostering and adoption experiences. Students also had the opportunity to connect with community partners, including the Arizona Department of Child Safety, Fostering Alliance of Arizona, and Yavapai County CASA.

Events like this give YC students meaningful exposure to social justice topics, lived experiences, and career-connected community partners—reinforcing YC’s commitment to empathy, awareness, and civic engagement.



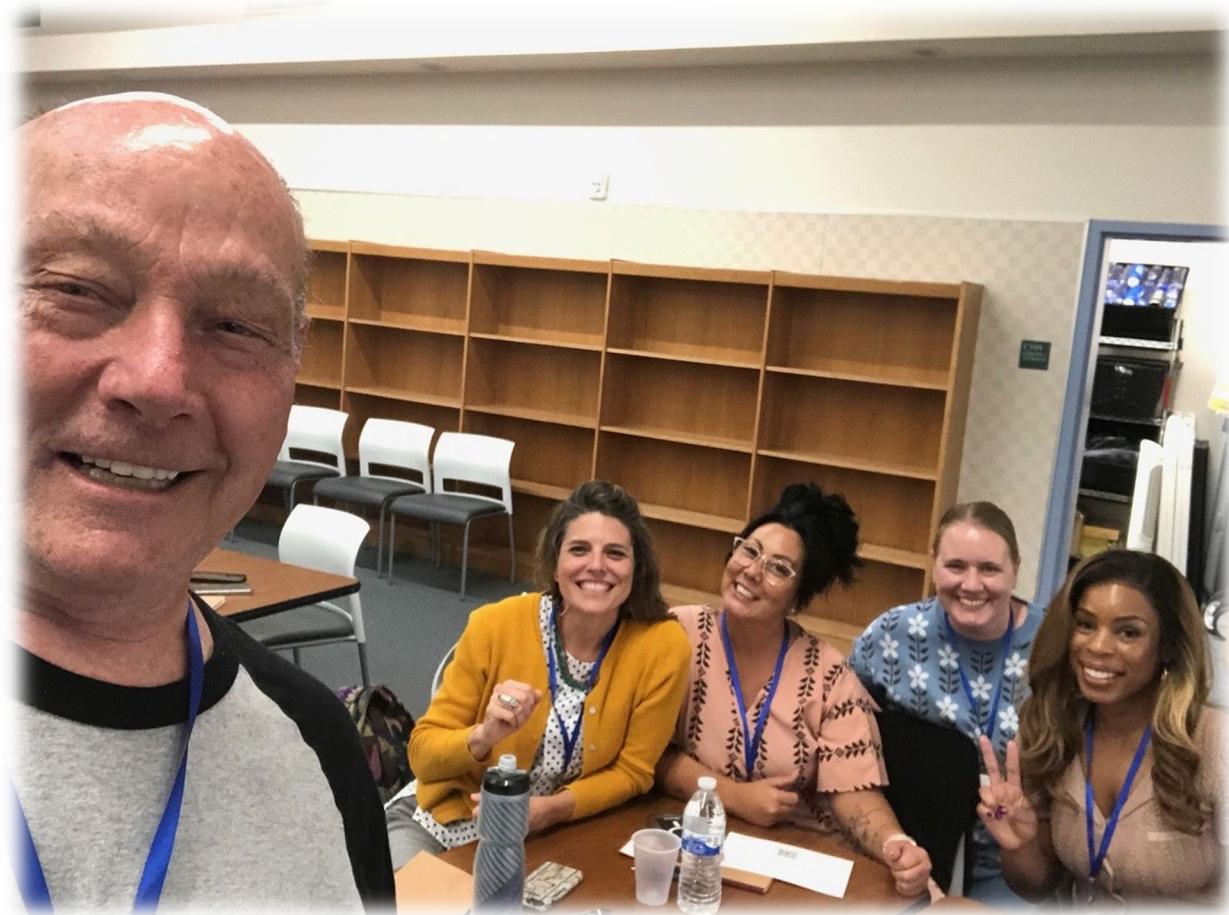


YC Advances Family Support Strategies That Benefit Students & Communities

On November 19, 2025 YC students and families stand to benefit from important collaborative work led by **Brandelyn Andres** and Dr. Joani Fisher, who were invited to participate in a Family Impact Summit brainstorming and goal-setting session at the **Glendale Caring Center**.

Hosted by **Prevent Child Abuse Arizona**, the summit brought together community leaders focused on supporting families *before* they experience crisis. Both presenters are certified Protective Factors trainers, equipping them to share evidence-based strategies that strengthen family stability—an essential foundation for student success.

During the session, Brandelyn and Joani presented the **Actively Caring 4 People** model, demonstrating how communities can work together to wrap supportive resources around families so they can thrive. This leadership and collaboration directly enhance YC's ability to support students through stronger, more connected communities—creating environments where learning, growth, and resilience can flourish.



January 2026 Board Highlights

Division Three, Visual, Performing, Film and Media Arts

- On December 12th, the Visual Arts department took a trip to the Phoenix Art Museum, where 40 of us explored several current exhibitions. Highlights included *Eric Fischl: Stories Told*, *Radical Clay: Contemporary Women Artists from Japan*, and selections from the Museum's permanent collections. The visit offered a shared opportunity to engage with a wide range of artistic styles, ideas, and perspectives, sparking thoughtful conversation and inspiration.



- In December, the woodworking shop hosted young visitors from the **Del E. Webb Family Enrichment Center**. Students helped hand-craft snowmen for children. A big thank you to **Dean Humphrey and his class** for creating a little holiday magic!



- The “Made In Clarkdale Artist Showcase” included a special tribute to **Patty Mikles**, a beloved art instructor at Yavapai College, Verde Campus. Several of Patty’s works were featured by her son, **Lee Mikles**, with proceeds benefiting the **Patty McMullen-Mikles Art Gallery** at Yavapai College. The tribute highlighted Patty’s lasting impact on the local arts community and provided an opportunity for attendees to reflect on and celebrate her legacy.



Division Four, Lifelong Learning

OLLI at Yavapai College in Prescott, Prescott Valley, Sedona, and the Verde Valley

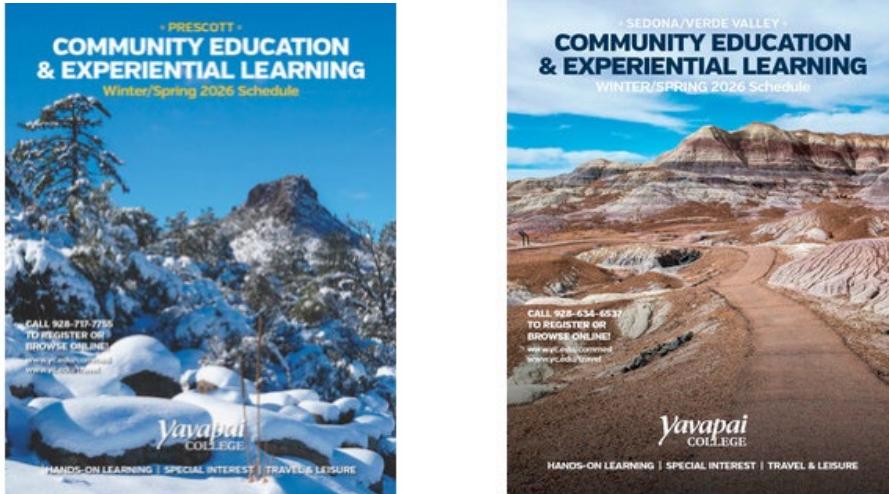
- OLLI’s Winter Session starts January 26, and includes classes through the Osher National Resource Center, where local OLLI members can take online classes with OLLI members from all over the county.





- **GIVES** **OLLI Gives Back!** OLLI collected \$2,200 in gifts cards to be included with the YC Student Pantry food boxes for the holidays, beating last year's total!

Community Education, Experiential Learning & College for Kids (C4K)



- Winter/Spring 2026 Community Education & Experiential Learning: Registration for Winter/Spring opened online December 4, and catalogs arrived in mailboxes on Dec 31. Classes start on Feb 2.
- Community Ed and Experiential Learning managers presented at a Division 4 meeting to talk about opportunities for faculty to teach for DLL.

Experiential Learning - Prescott & Verde/Sedona

- **Experiential Learning**

WINTER/SPRING 2026

MEET THE TRIP LEADERS

CHRIS WUEHRMANN
Chris is our senior trip leader and has been leading trips for Yavapai College since 1981. Chris came to Arizona in 1967 from Illinois and was in the second class of Yavapai Prescott College back when it first began. He studied Social Anthropology and has always been a leader and has something of a self-taught historian and is also a musician (keyboards) who plays in a band around town. Chris has hiked and backpacked all over the Southwest, including hundreds of days spent in the Colorado Plateau. He has worked on a number of archaeological projects. He is remarkable developing most of the current curriculum offered and is heavily involved with bringing our two new trips to life. Chris' wife, Rita (retired administrator of the college's OLLI Program) for 45 years, and they have three children.

KYLE SHORT
Kyle is a new trip leader for the college this year. He moved to the Prescott area in 2012 from Baha, California, where he lived there for three years. Kyle is originally from Delaware where he graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in Geology. Kyle brings a wealth of prior experience developing and leading adventure trips including trips to the Grand Canyon, Colorado River trips, other southwestern destinations, and also trips to our international destinations in Mexico and Salvador. After teaching 12 years at the Yavapai Experiential Learning Academy in Prescott, he's now teaching at Skyview School. He's married to Jessica who teaches Spanish in Chino Valley, and they have two children.

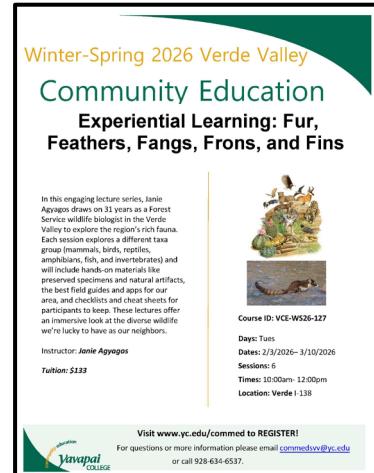
WILL ASCARZA
Will is a new interim trip leader for the college this year. He has extensive prior experience to our program. He came to Arizona from the Bay Area in 1999, first living in southern Arizona and more recently in Phoenix. Will has a degree in Geology and at the University of Arizona, Will has led adventure trips for Prima College, been a columnist for the "Arizona Daily Star", and as an author has published seven books, including "Zenith in the Horizon". Will has also written a column for "The Sun" for several years, "Mine Tales", in the "Arizona Daily Star" in Prescott and has worked with a number of tourism and environmental organizations. Will has a special interest in Arizona history, particularly mining history. He's married to Lorie, an environmental educator, and they have one child.

- Changes to the Experiential Learning portion of catalog include:

- Instructor bios
- Information on areas explored: Yavapai County, Coconino County, Grand Canyon
- More trips have been added with Camp Verde and Verde Valley pick-up options
- New full-day and half-day trips added for the Winter/Spring terms

Community Education - Verde/Sedona

- Enrollments are up, with movement classes in high demand for the Winter/Spring terms.
- Collaborating with the Southwest Wine Center to offer monthly yoga classes in the Winter/Spring terms, starting March 14.
- Experiential Learning instructor and wildlife biologist Janie Agyagos is offering an exciting course through Community Education. Join us to learn more about regional fauna in the Verde Valley!



Community Education – Prescott



- Student registration is robust in January with more coming in every day.
- Multiple classes are already making and getting close to waiting list status.

College for Kids (C4K) – Prescott



- Summer 2026 registration will open April 10.
- Scholarships - We are looking to increase the total scholarships available to low-income families. If you know any service organization or person interested in helping support College for Kids, please have them contact Haley Green, Manager Community Ed & College for Kids – Prescott at haley.green@yc.edu.

Division Five, Business, Science Computer Science and Math



- Yavapai College's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) hosted a Resume and Cover Letter Workshop on November 21. Yavapai College's FBLA chapter traveled to Ridgeline Academy in Anthem, AZ, where they spent the day helping the high school FBLA students prepare for their upcoming Regional and State competitions. YC students walked them through how to build a strong résumé and cover letter and also took time to answer questions about their majors and what college life is like.



- Instructor **Amanda (Mandy) Atherton's** Precalculus Mat 183 students demonstrated their knowledge of Trig equations (like Sine, Cosine, and Tangent) multiple ways in the projects pictured below. The one requirement was that students modeled a real-life application and creatively demonstrated their learning. This was a project where the student becomes an expert and the instructor gets to learn new things.

The students from this semester really went above and beyond with projects ranging from a Rubens tube to a welding demonstration of AC current.



Office of Instructional Support

- Assessment Day 2025 was held on Friday, September 26th for all full-time faculty and cocurricular staff at Yavapai College. Yavapai College supports the assessment process by supporting an annual Assessment Day in September hosted by the Office of Instructional Support and the following faculty committees: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, Curriculum, and General Education. Activities during assessment day are designed as both professional development in the areas of course and program assessment and a work session for faculty to engage in dialogue that allow them to discuss assessment results, complete reports, and to make assessment plans for the coming academic year. There were 144 participants, including 91 faculty and 52 staff and leadership members. The day offered four faculty tracks (Assessment Foundations, General Education Assessment, AI in Assessment, and YC Assessment Processes) and two cocurricular assessment sessions for Student Affairs and Library & Tutoring Services

Verde Valley Campus

- YCSA 2025 Winter Celebration – Verde Valley Campus/Sedona Center at Strada@Bocce Pizzeria

Before heading into winter break, Yavapai College Staff Associate (YCSA) proudly hosted the annual Winter Celebration and Angel Tree Service Project.

Verde Valley Campus and Sedona Center staff gathered in Old Town Cottonwood at Strada @ Bocce Pizzeria for delicious food and memorable camaraderie. While a few colleagues noted they missed the seasonal game, the overall feedback reflected appreciation for the opportunity to connect, unwind, and enjoy meaningful conversation together.



- YCSA 2025 Winter Celebration – Verde Valley Campus Angel Tree Service Project

On the Verde Valley Campus, the YCSA Angel Tree project brought extra holiday magic to 22 children—20 from the Clarkdale-Jerome School District and 2 who are the children of a YC student. The thoughtfully wrapped gifts were delivered with care to Principal Madisen Westcott at Clarkdale-Jerome Elementary, helping brighten the season for local families.

Thank you to everyone who participated, supported, and made this tradition one filled with generosity, connection, and community impact. Here's to another year of spreading cheer—both on campus and beyond!

