

NAACP

MONTEREY COUNTY BRANCH #1049

THE FUTURE IS HERE

As we fight to achieve equality, eliminate discrimination and seek the enactment of civil rights laws to advance people of color in our nation, there is one group whose success must remain at the forefront of our efforts, and that is our youth. Over the last couple of years, our Branch has aspired to be more involved with the youth and young adults of Monterey County. So, we went out into the community and connected with the students at the local high schools and colleges to get a better idea of what we can do to support their success. In doing so, we were introduced to young leaders who are determined to make their mark and pave the way for those to follow. The stories that follow allow us to showcase the hard work of the youth and young adults at our local levels, but they also give us a starting point for how we can best invest in and equip our future freedom fighters.

By Jhailyn Bryant, Youth Leader

A Message From the President



Dear Community,

As we stand at a crossroads as both a community and a nation, it is crucial to recognize the challenges we face in maintaining our dignity. It feels as though we have strayed from our moral compass, leading us to seek unity among like-minded individuals who share our commitment to justice and faith. We find ourselves in a time where unity among like-minded individuals grounded in our faith has become essential. The Church and the NAACP have long served as beacons of peace and refuge, reminding us of the strength that comes from our shared values and

collective action. In Monterey County, we are fortunate to have a wealth of seasoned, wise clergy guiding us through these turbulent times, ensuring that we remain anchored amidst the chaos. It is imperative that we follow their lead with steadfastness and discernment, avoiding distractions from hidden agendas that may seek to divert us from our true purpose.

I urge every member of this esteemed organization to actively participate in revitalizing the Monterey County Branch of the NAACP. It is time for us to rise and reinvest in our community, our churches, and our houses of worship. We need to recognize the untapped potential within our branch; many committees have remained idle for far too long, waiting for individuals to step forward and take action. Together, we can forge a path forward, reinvigorating our commitment to civil rights and social justice. Let us rise to this occasion and demonstrate our collective strength. Your involvement is not just encouraged; it is necessary for the growth and success of our mission. Let us come together to reignite our commitment to service, advocacy, and community engagement. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter future.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Lyndon Tarver, President NAACP, Monterey County



The NAACP will continue to advocate for policies that dismantle systemic injustices and strive to improved the lives of the Black people and all Americans.

Derrick Johnson, President and CEO, NAACP



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY

In what ways is the NAACP important to our community?

As a Seaside resident born on the former Fort Ord at Silas B. Hayes Hospital and raised by a military veteran, I learned early on the profound significance of advocacy and representation for youth, particularly in a world, a race, and a community that has experienced injustices. It wasn't until I graduated from high school and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, that I took a chance at community

organizing and social justice work. I discovered a deep passion for helping the community I lived in. After 11 years away from home, I returned to Seaside, California, and the work I had started years ago found its way back to me.

I was familiar with the NAACP but became deeply involved in youth advocacy through my employment with the Monterey County Black Caucus. This experience broadened my perspective and opened my eyes to the important work done by the Monterey Branch of the NAACP. Through collaboration, I was able to witness firsthand how pivotal the NAACP is in creating positive change, particularly for the youth in Monterey County which extends beyond the local level.

The NAACP's advocacy provides a platform to raise awareness about systemic inequalities such as racial discrimination and unequal access to education. I have seen the Monterey Branch work tirelessly to provide scholarships, mentorship programs, and opportunities for young people to pursue higher education. By partnering with local schools and organizations, the NAACP empowers youth to succeed academically—an essential step in breaking the cycle of poverty and creating opportunities for future generations.

Moreover, the NAACP plays a crucial role in connecting youth with positive role models who have made significant contributions to the civil rights movement and continue to advocate for social change. These role models serve as mentors, guiding youth through activism, offering career advice, and showing them that their voices matter and can bring about change.

In summary, for the youth and residents of Monterey County, the NAACP serves as an invaluable resource for education, advocacy, leadership, and community-building. It amplifies the voices of marginalized individuals while creating opportunities for youth to shape their communities and become powerful agents of change.

Da'Ja Robinson
Black Power-Building Youth Program Coordinating Manager
Building Healthy Communities/Monterey County Black Caucus



Matthew Sanders, CSUMB

Matthew Sanders is a student worker in the Helen Rucker Center (HRC) for Black Excellence at CSUMB that has a passion for empowering his school's Black community and paving a way for those to follow. Matthew began his educational career at Chico State. After struggling to find a sense of belonging, he transferred to CSU Monterey Bay. Upon his arrival at CSUMB, he was instantly welcomed by members of the HRC and was happy to find a place where he belongs.

In his time with the HRC, Mr. Sanders has hosted the Black Gala, mentored students at the local high schools and was a part of CSUMB's first cohort that attended the Afrikan Black Coalition (ABC) conference. Sanders greatly appreciates his team at the HRC as they have pushed him to get out of his comfort zone and to reach towards his dreams. As a business major, with a concentration in management, Matthew hopes to continue building a community for the Black community at the HRC so that he can use these skills to do the same upon entering corporate America.





NAACP
Monterey County Branch

Monterey High School Black Student Alliance

Gianna Daniels, Vice President

A'nayah McBride, President

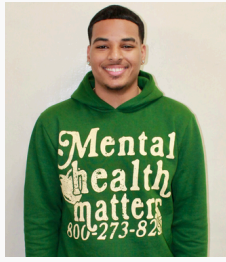
Brooklynn Choates, Treasurer



Gianna Daniels, A'nayah McBride, and Brooklynn Choates are all seniors at Monterey High School and members of the school's Black Student Alliance (BSA). All three women have been members of the Alliance since their freshman year of high school. While their desire to join the organization began as a search for a place on campus for them to belong, it did not take them long to realize that it was more than a school club; it was a movement. Gianna, A'nayah and Brooklynn enjoy themselves as best friends outside of the BSA, but know that it is time for business when it comes to their meetings and events. In their time in the organization, they have worked hard to provide opportunities for their fellow members such as informative field trips, collaborations with other local BSU's/BSA's, and have raised over \$2,000, some of which they plan to leave behind for their successors. To these three friends, being a part of the BSA means having pride in their Afrocentric origins, being leaders on their school's campus, and making sure that their peers are seen, heard, and respected on campus. Gianna, A'nayah and Brooklynn all wish to go to Sacramento State after graduating high school – Gianna and A'nayah for nursing and Brooklynn for America's SWAT – and they hope to have paved the way for those who come after them, encouraging them to continue in their fight for justice.



Jamar Aquino, Senior, Monterey High School



Jamar Aquino is a senior at Monterey High School known for his great character and his athletic ability. Not only is he a star on the football field as a defensive lineman, but he is also able to hold it down as a post player on the basketball court. Aquino began playing sports at the age of 5 and has committed a great deal of time to perfecting his craft. In his time at Monterey High School, he was named the PCAL Defensive Player of the Year, First Team All-League, won a CCS title and was a player on the varsity boys' basketball team that won the 2024 CIF Division 4 State Championship. Jamar is known by many for his ability to stay calm in trying times, to persevere through pressure and the respect that he carries for those around him. Mr. Aquino plans to pursue a career in physical therapy or as an electrician and hopes to continue his sports in college.



Addison Kirk, BSA President and Niyah Sandoval, BSA Vice President Seaside High School

Addison Kirk and Niyah Sandoval are both seniors at Seaside High School and active members in the school's Black Student Alliance (BSA). The two young women were recruited by their advisor, Ms. Rickee Ross, during their sophomore year and quickly became eager to be involved. Ms. Kirk and Ms. James love the community that the BSA provides the Black students on their campus, not only because of the race-related tensions that the school faces, but also because the African-American community makes up less than 5% of the school's student body population.

The highlight of President Kirk's time in the BSA has been hosting the Black Joy event. Doing this event forced her out of her comfort zone and allowed her to build unimaginable bonds with her fellow BSA members.

Vice President Sandoval has enjoyed building a community for the students of color on her campus as well as being able to have an organization that represents Black excellence.

The BSA's hope for the future is to continue to provide a safe and welcoming space for all students of color and to continue to fight to make this possible for all students of color in the MPUUSD. Both Kirk and Sandoval hope to attend a four year college/university out of high school, Kirk in hopes of becoming a medical examiner and Sandoval as a sonographer, and will be using the tools acquired through the BSA to continue to pave the way for those who will follow.



AN INSIDE LOOK - HARTNELL COLLEGE



Melvin Jimenez, Director of Student Affairs

Melvin Jimenez is the Director of Student Affairs at Hartnell College with a focus on student engagement, development and policy change. Mr. Jimenez started his educational career as a first-generation student at Rio Honda Junior College and would later obtain a B.A. in History from UCLA and a M.A. in Education from SDSU. After struggling to get to know the ropes of education, Mr. Jimenez knew that his passion was to help develop disadvantaged students, like himself, in the academic and professional world. Though just becoming the Director of Student Affairs, Melvin has already made his mark at Hartnell as a History instructor and has worked hard to implement policy focusing on student success as the program manager of the school's CSIT-In-3 where students can obtain a bachelor's degree in computer science in three years, as well as the Interim Director of Student and Academic Support Services where he managed the department's staff, money and student learning outcomes. Mr. Jimenez is known by both students and staff for his vivacious personality and for fighting for student rights. Mr. Jimenez affords his success to his hands-off management style, and when asking the best way to describe himself he says he is "all in for Hartnell"!





Cal State Monterey Bay President Vanya Quiñones, seated left, and Marshall T. Fulbright III, president and superintendent of Monterey Peninsula College, celebrate the signing of the Lobo Otter Pathway Program at a March 24 ceremony on the CSUMB campus. | Photo by Emily McNally

Agreement to Streamline Transfers The Lobo Otter Pathway Program will Allow Students Dual Enrollment in CSUMB & MPC

By Mark Muckenfuss

Educational leaders from Cal State Monterey Bay and Monterey Peninsula College celebrated a new agreement between the two schools at a morning signing ceremony on Monday, March 24, at the CSUMB University Center.

The Lobo Otter Pathway Program will smooth the transition for students earning an associate degree at MPC who wish to transfer to CSUMB and is targeted toward students who do not meet the requirements to attend a CSU after high school or who are returning to school after an extended break. CSUMB recently entered a similar agreement with Hartnell College.

CSUMB President Vanya Quiñones said the new program will “provide local high school students with a clear, supportive roadmap to complete their associate degree for transfer and continue their education at Cal State Monterey Bay.”

She said the agreement was one more way in which MPC and CSUMB are teaming up. “Together, we are making a difference,” she said. “Together, we are making incredible strides in strengthening the educational pipeline in our region.”

Marshall T. Fulbright III, MPC’s president and superintendent, said the cooperative effort was an example of reinvigorating historical ties between the two schools. “We’re bringing back to life what had been the norm years ago,” Fulbright said. He said the new program shows the commitment both schools have in improving not only students’ lives, but the larger community as well.



“Creating a better future is not just about having a vision, it’s about taking action,” he said. “It’s about showing students that they can [succeed], and that we believe in them from the start, that they belong in higher education, and we will be walking with them every step of the way.”

He turned toward Quiñones.

“Your vision, your commitment are inspiring,” he said, adding that he appreciated the dedication and collaboration of other CSUMB administrators who had worked with their counterparts at MPC to finalize the agreement.

“I will join your raft if you will join our pack,” he said.

The new program allows students to apply to both schools simultaneously with one application. With guaranteed admission to CSUMB, students will have a clear pathway to earning an associate degree and going on to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

The two schools collaborated in recent years on a nursing program that allows students to concurrently enroll in both institutions and complete an accelerated bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2½ years. Quiñones said she looked forward to more collaboration with MPC in the future.

“I’m hoping the door we’re opening will remain open so we can provide more opportunities for our students,” she said.

