

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Thriving Neighbors

A Community Partnership





Established in 2013,
the **Thriving Neighbors Initiative**, facilitated
by Santa Clara University's Ignatian Center
for Jesuit Education, promotes strategic
ties between the University and nearby
neighborhood, the Greater Washington
Community of San Jose. These connections
benefit both Greater Washington residents
and SCU students through
engaged scholarship, teaching,
and community collaborations.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

All students in the Greater Washington neighborhood
will graduate from high school prepared to enter
post-secondary education.

Dear Friends of the Thriving Neighbors Initiative:

At Santa Clara University, we seek to develop students who will emerge from their college experience with competence, conscience, and compassion, actively committed to promoting a more just, humane, and sustainable society. The Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education supports this mission by engaging students, faculty, and community leaders to collaboratively serve our broader world.

It has been an incredible privilege for me to witness this mission in action over the past three years, as Santa Clara students and faculty have joined forces with community members from the Greater Washington neighborhood in urban San Jose to create the Thriving Neighbors Initiative (TNI).

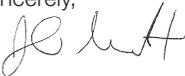
Through TNI, we strive to improve educational choice and expand pathways to prosperity in Greater Washington while developing a community-engaged university. The following accomplishments, realized to date, have allowed us to align successfully with our vision and goals:

- *Initiated 20 community-based programs that promote education, health, legal, justice, and economic development.*
- *Engaged more than 300 community resident participants.*
- *Launched the TNI After-School Academic Enrichment Program, which serves more than 100 kindergarten through middle school aged children annually with STEM, art, leadership, and nutrition/gardening education.*
- *Engaged 24 faculty, 32 student, and 20 community team leaders in collaborative program design, implementation, and evaluation.*
- *Conducted a community health and family life research survey with more than 200 respondents.*

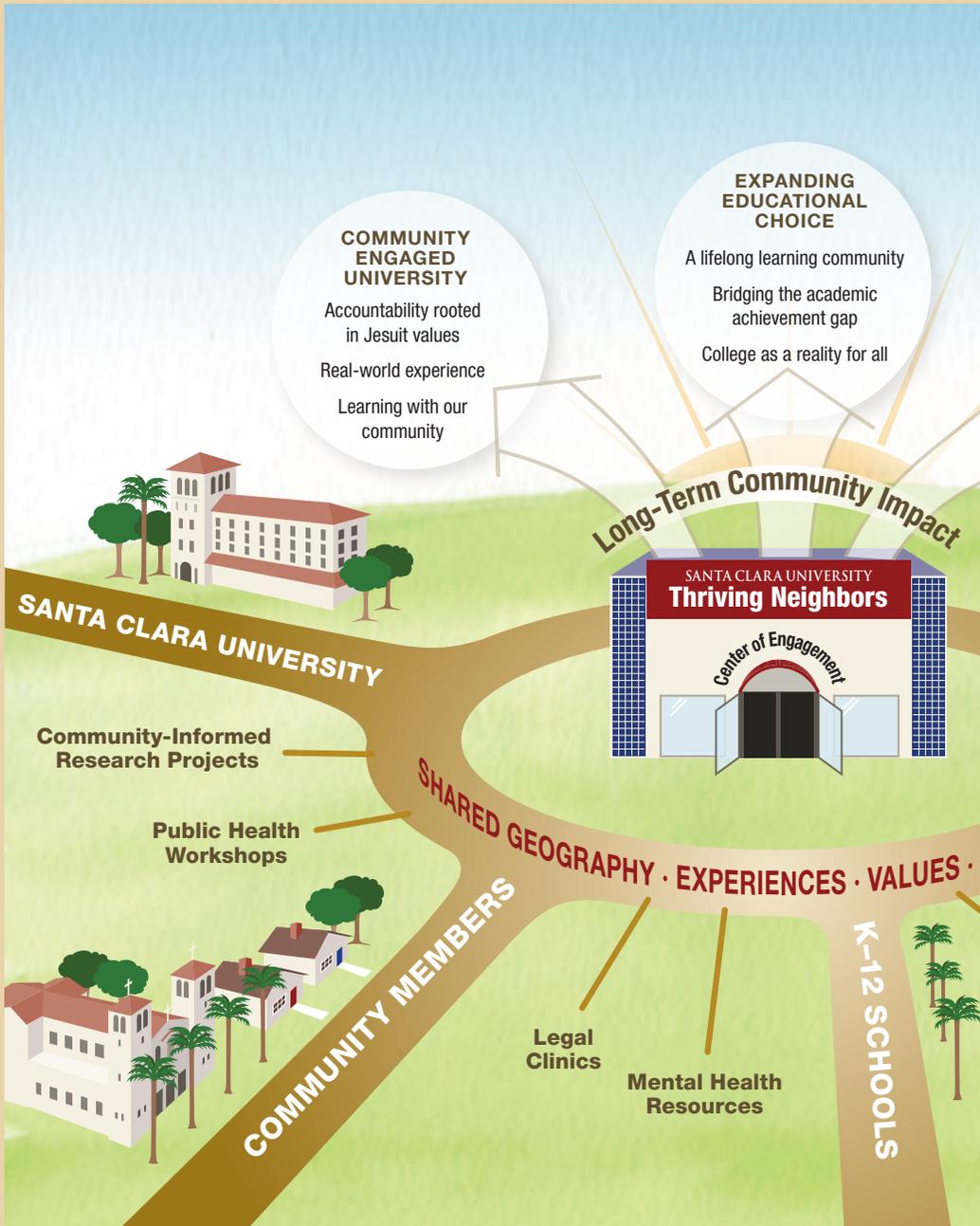
Perhaps most significant is the true friendship that has flourished between Washington families and the SCU community. It is this solidarity that will ultimately lead SCU graduates and Washington residents to transform our local community and the world.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for your interest in the Thriving Neighbors Initiative, and our warmest welcome as you discern the next step of your journey with us.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Merritt, Ph.D.
Director of Community-based Learning
Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education



SCU's Thriving Neighbors serves as a hub of engagement for sharing community knowledge and discovering pathways to innovative social change.



San Jose's Greater Washington Community

The Thriving Neighbors Initiative (TNI) focuses on the five predominantly Latino neighborhoods that make up Greater Washington—Alma, Gardner, Goodyear/Mastic, Tamien, and Washington/Guadalupe—all located south of downtown San Jose and east of Guadalupe Parkway.

Greater Washington is home to a vibrant population, strong community organizations, and seasoned community leaders. Conversely, it is also one of the most socioeconomically challenged regions of Santa Clara County. It is a place where families face significant barriers that impede their ability to live healthy and productive lives. Lack of access to adequate education and health care, limited support for business development and entrepreneurship, and other key issues keep Greater Washington from fully realizing its potential.

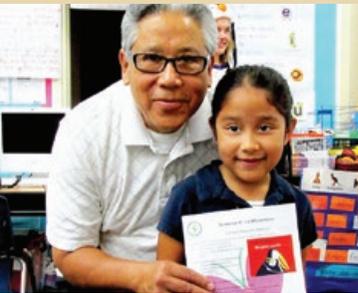
The philosophy behind Thriving Neighbors is that the most successful and sustainable community programs are those that grow organically. Thriving Neighbors' primary goals, illustrated on the following pages, recognize that a sense of community pride, a willingness to share and leverage individual and collective talents, and a desire to improve social and economic conditions in these neighborhoods can be powerful catalysts for change.



Thriving Neighbors will build local capacity for expanded educational choice in Greater Washington such that children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn, that students are supported and successful throughout elementary, middle, and high school, and that they graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

THRIVING NEIGHBORS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- After-School Academic Enrichment Program
- Compassion Camp
- English As a Second Language Classes
- Family Engagement Day
- iPad Tutoring Program
- Madres Gatherings
- Mindful Schools Project
- Parent Academy
- Washington to Washington



A Community Prepares Its Students to Succeed

TNI COMMUNITY PARTNER:
Washington Elementary School

Designed to make college a reality for all, several TNI programs align with flagship partner Washington Elementary School to eliminate the opportunity gap. Washington Elementary is much more than a school—it's a community. Located in the heart of Greater Washington, this community raises and teaches K–5th grade students, providing a secure, basic platform for launching their education and enabling them to take flight through personal growth. Under the leadership of principal Maria Evans '81, and with the help of passionate and dedicated teachers, administrators, parents, and volunteers, the school has seen an outstanding improvement in the quality of education and community engagement.

“As I walk in and out of classrooms and visit homes around the neighborhood, I am reminded how much more students are prepared to embrace academic success than ever before. In large measure, I attribute this growth in mindset and potential to the outstanding work of our SCU Thriving Neighbors Initiative.”

Maria Arias Evans
Principal, Washington Elementary

iPAD TUTORING PROGRAM



Participating in the iPad program since its inception, Washington Elementary 2nd-grader Sofia demonstrates a favorite app to her mom, and community leader, Liz Molina.

PATHWAYS TO NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Also known as *Abriendo Caminos* (Opening Roads), the iPad Tutoring Program partners SCU's Department of Education faculty and graduate students with community parents to better prepare young learners for school expectations using iPad technology. Program founder Professor Marco Bravo, his SCU students, and five Washington Elementary mothers collaborated to design, implement, evaluate, and sustain this early literacy development program for pre-K through 5th-grade students.

The three-month, bi-weekly program familiarizes parents with the use of Spanish literacy apps on iPads to strengthen language and math skills. The goal is for parents to feel empowered as co-educators in supporting the school readiness of their

children through the use of technology at home. The newly tech-savvy parents are then invited to train other parents in the use of the iPads and apps, thereby increasing the reach of their children's academic success and helping to close the achievement gap. Parent participants report on the positive experiences they've shared with their children as well as the growing improvement they've seen in their children's language skills.

"When we started the program, it was only five moms. I began to recruit other parents to keep the program going. This is when professor Bravo asked if I would help to be in charge of parent recruitment. Ideally, I would like to see the program expand into other schools."

~ Liz Molina
Greater Washington Community Leader

RESILIENT FAMILIES PROGRAM



Through Resilient Families, parents discover how daily routines and family playtime can support learning skills, attachment, and self-regulation in their preschoolers.

TRANSFORMATION STARTS WITH LISTENING

“Resilient Families has helped me learn how to listen to my children, to have more patience with them, to understand them from my heart.”

~ Ruth S., Mom, Resilient Families Program

Healthy parenting and family resilience in early childhood have been shown to be important factors in promoting school readiness and school achievement, and preventing adolescents from participating in high-risk behaviors. Spearheaded by SCU Liberal Studies Chair Barbara Burns, the Resilient Families Program (RFP) educates Greater Washington parents in forming stronger relationships with their children as a means of combatting

gang pressures. The community-based intervention program focuses on increasing young children’s resilience by supporting parents’ ability to provide their children with sensitive and responsive caregiving.

SCU student participants not only witness a demonstrated change in how the children express feelings and show empathy, but also experience a transformation of their own in how they understand and more mindfully relate to community members through RFP’s holistic approach.

“After my experience with RFP, I feel that I have found my vocation working with children and families to promote compassion and positive mental health outcomes.”

~ Emily Fayram '16, Psychology and Child Studies



Thriving Neighbors will improve pathways to prosperity for community members by engaging with community partners to address health, legal, and economic disparities with the intention of supporting children in their learning process.

The Power of Healthy Families

TNI COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Sacred Heart Community Service

The physical and mental health of local families and community members is inseparable from the health of their neighborhood. For more than 50 years, Sacred Heart Community Service (SHCS) has brought the Greater Washington community together by providing essential services to those in need, including food, clothing, and housing assistance. In addition, SHCS offers the tools for self-sufficiency, such as employment support, adult and youth education programs, and family mentoring.

Through its innovative partnership that focuses on family mentoring, Thriving Neighbors reinforces the mission of SHCS to build a strong community free from poverty and full of hope, opportunity, and action. With the demonstrated success of this partnership in implementing, evaluating, and scaling these programs, Thriving Neighbors hopes to share best practices with many more Washington neighborhood families.

THRIVING NEIGHBORS HEALTH, LEGAL, AND BUSINESS PROGRAMS

- Air-Quality Initiative
- Community Gardening
- Legal Workshop Series
- Madres Walking to Health
- Mothers Discussion Group
- Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative
- Resilient Families Program



“At Sacred Heart we provide essential services to stabilize families, but also offer tools for self-sufficiency. And actually try to find ways to get the larger community involved in trying to make change. The Thriving Neighbors Initiative has been an instrumental partnership, and we will continue to integrate work with our partners at Santa Clara University to strengthen and expand its programs beyond our walls.”

Poncho Guevara
Executive Director, SHCS



Thriving Neighbors will engage the University's students, faculty, and staff in partnerships with Greater Washington residents, businesses, community leaders, and organizations to promote mutual learning, critical dialogue, and transformational relationships through collaborative teaching, research, and sustainable program development innovation.

PILOT-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF STEM OUTREACH

Using new online assessment tools—developed by a team of SCU alums in their start-up company, Alloy Learning—Thriving Neighbors has begun to capture insights into young students' attitudes toward STEM-related activities. Early assessment has uncovered issues that will allow for valuable adaptations and adjustments in future programs.



Multidimensional Partnerships and Collaborations

TNI COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Santa Clara University and Greater Washington

Grounded in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition, Thriving Neighbors creates opportunities for SCU students, alumni, faculty, and staff to build a more humane, just, and sustainable world. These programs are not only impacting our neighbors here in San Jose, they are deeply impacting our Bronco community.

Through these partnerships, SCU students are learning first-hand the assets and challenges within the local community; SCU alumni are re-engaging with the core values of their education; SCU staff are strengthening their mentorship skills; SCU faculty are deepening their expertise in diverse fields of study. We do all of this alongside our community partners, such that both communities can continue to grow and thrive.

“As a faculty member, the most important legacy I can hope to leave for my students is to carry on my passion for sharing knowledge, to want to give back, and to realize that ‘it’s not just about engineering transforming these under-represented young students, it’s also about the community transforming me.’”

Shoba Krishnan, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering

AFTER-SCHOOL ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



SCU undergrads help Washington Elementary students envision what their roles could be in the world of science, technology, engineering, and math.

STEM OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY

The *Engineering 111: STEM Outreach to the Community* course guides SCU students to teach the principles of engineering to 5th graders through a variety of fun, hands-on projects, such as the exploration of flight, package engineering, and the safe removal of the invasive cane toad. The class also examines the social justice aspects of K–12 STEM education, including inequities in funding and accessibility.

Initiated by Associate Professor Shoba Krishnan, *Engineering 111* is headed by Professor Jennifer Mullin. The two professors are an integral part of a growing number of passionate educators focused on inspiring the next generation of young engineers—especially those who are underrepresented in the field.

By exposing the young learners to various engineering disciplines, what engineers do, and what it takes to study engineering in college, SCU student-mentors help to remove the uncertainty and fear of going to college and provide a visual road map for reaching this attainable milestone.

“I learned that with just a bit more attention, children can truly blossom. In areas where schools struggle to engage students, this extra effort can make a huge difference in the development of the students, introducing them to new ideas and encouraging them to pursue further education.”

~ Martin Prado '16, Electrical Engineering



LEARN MORE ABOUT THRIVING NEIGHBORS.
SUPPORT OUR INITIATIVE.

A gift of any size to the Thriving Neighbors Initiative enhances our capacity to increase educational choice and build pathways to prosperity for children and families, and also supports the engagement of hundreds of SCU students, faculty, and staff.

To learn more or take part in our programs, contact:

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To make a donation of support, go to scu.edu/ic/give.

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