



N E W S

El Camino College Compton Center | Public Relations & Marketing Department
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506

Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations

Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | Email: agarten@elcamino.edu

For Immediate Release

April 12, 2011

El Camino College Compton Center will Participate in Hands Across California Campaign to Support California Community Colleges

Help Raise Funds to Offset Escalating Education Costs and State Budget Cuts

On Sunday, April 17 at 2:00 p.m., students, faculty, staff and members of the community will gather at El Camino College Compton Center to join hands with nearly 2 million others in support of the California Community Colleges. The continuous line that will be formed is unprecedented and will stretch 1,500 miles from San Diego to north of Sacramento as part of Hands Across California (HAC). The goal for HAC is to raise awareness and scholarship funds for California Community Colleges, the nation's largest system of higher education.

Participants are asked to sign-in at the Student Lounge at 1:00 p.m.

El Camino College Compton Center students who participate in the April 17 event will be will receive a chance to earn a \$500 scholarship.

Although California's 112 Community Colleges make it possible for everyone to achieve the dream of an education, the escalating costs associated with college are a barrier for many students. On average, full-time students have an annual median income of \$16,223 and nearly a quarter has incomes of less than \$5,544 per year. Almost 90 percent of full-time students are in need of financial aid and about half (47 percent) of all students have no resources to pay for college.

These financial challenges coupled with increased state budget cuts are making it even more difficult for students to reach their full academic potential. California's Community College budget could be cut by roughly \$400 million overall. The effect on El Camino College Compton Center alone is anticipated to be anywhere from \$2.3 million to \$6.4 million.

"At times you simply have to do something amazing to get people's attention and get them to take action for a particular project or cause," said Ken Kragen, the executive producer of HAC and the architect behind Hands Across America in 1986. "That was true 25 years ago when I and 6.5 million other Americans created a line that stretched all the way across these United States. Now we're doing it again in a smaller, but no less spectacular and important version. Hands Across California will shine a light on the critical issues confronting our community college students and help raise needed funds for student scholarships. It's an event everyone should participate in."

Kragen is collaborating with the Foundation for California Community Colleges to organize and manage HAC, which is also receiving the support of major corporations such as AT&T, Clear Channel, Southern California Edison, UPS and Yahoo.

In addition to corporate partnerships, several top entertainers, politicians and sports legends are also lending their support. Many of those participating have directly benefited from the California Community Colleges and include:

- Actors George Lopez, Mark Harmon, Lily Tomlin, Yvette Nicole Brown, Joe Spano, Ben Vereen, Suzanne Whang and Michele Lee
- Music legends Quincy Jones and Dave Koz
- NHRA racing champions John Force and Courtney Force
- California State Congresswoman Karen Bass, State Senators Alex Padilla and Sharon Runner, and Assemblymember Roger Hernandez
- Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Today, the California Community College system serves nearly 3 million students each year, enrolls three out of every 10 Californians age 18-24 and provides a stepping-stone for students on the pathway to four-year and graduate degrees. The system is also responsible for educating a majority of the state's workforce including; 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians and 70 percent of the nurses in California.

This is why our community's support of and participation in Hands Across California is so important. Funds raised through the event will directly support the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment (CCCSE), a permanent fund that provides annual scholarships to thousands of students in need, including those at ECC Compton Center.

The ultimate goal of HAC is to raise funds for a \$100 million scholarship endowment that will work to provide desperately needed financial support to at least 5,000 students every year, forever. Thanks to a commitment from The Bernard Osher Foundation, every dollar raised through HAC will receive a 50 percent match that will be donated to the CCCSE. The foundation will also donate another \$25 million if the California Community Colleges are able to contribute an additional \$50 million to the endowment by June 2011.

There are a number of ways to participate in this monumental event including registering to stand in line at El Camino College Compton Center on April 17, making a donation, or by texting HANDS to 27722. For more information, please visit: <http://www.handsacrosscalifornia.org/>.

About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community's education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Many classes are available and offered at an affordable price—fees are only \$26 per unit. The catalog and class schedule for day, evening, weekend and online courses is available on the website at www.compton.edu or may be picked up at ECC Compton Center located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA. For more information, call 310-900-1600.

###