

# THE WHOLE STUDENT

By Anne Stokes

## Dedicated educators say taking (and teaching) classes has myriad benefits

A fulfilling educational experience goes beyond quality curriculum, lectures and self-study. At Poway Adult School, it's the dedicated educators that play the most integral role in students' success. Through these long-time adult instructors' stories, we learn the importance of passion, connection and commitment to their students

### Naomi Lesberg, acrylic painting instructor.

Naomi Lesberg, a former middle school art teacher, started with one class at the adult school and now teaches five. Her classes are very popular and—with a limited number of students allowed in each class—students rush to register so they don't miss the opportunity to attend. She says it's been a great experience, especially since adults also use the classroom as an extension of their socialization circle.



"It sounds intimidating teaching grown-ups, but when you realize you're teaching something they want to learn, it's really cool," she says. "People should realize it's a lot of fun. You get to pick your own hours, how many people you want in your class and with the support I get from the adult school staff, all I just have to do is just focus on teaching students. These are great benefits."

Can art inspire world peace? If Lesberg had her way it would. "One of the best things is seeing people make friends with someone they may not have even spoken to in the past. Sitting next to each other, sharing a common passion, and then opening up a dialogue, that's good for making the whole world better," says Lesberg.

"I joke that if you put everyone together in an art class, it will lead you towards world peace."

### Lisa Lorraine Taylor, Total Fitness Workout and Forever Young fitness instructor



While it's important to keep your mind sharp, it's also vital to keep your body active too. For the past 21 years, Lisa Lorraine Taylor has been helping students of all ages keep fit and healthy.

"Starting a new fitness program can be intimidating," she said. "At first, students come in, take a seat and don't say much. But by the fourth or fifth class, they're laughing, interacting and encouraging each other. For me, that's the important thing, they want to show up because they've met people who make it exciting and who make it fun."

Taylor says her fitness classes attract students as young as 18 and as old as 87 years old. The secret to her success? Keeping it enjoyable.

"Think about everything that you've loved about any teacher or instructor and what you loved about their class. Now think about the things you didn't like and why they didn't appeal to you," she says.

"People that create energy and positivity around you also generate a successful learning environment. A total fitness workout is not just a physical benefit, it also enhances your emotional and mental well-being. Add fun to the mixture and you've found our purpose."

### Carol Gratzke, Italian foreign language instructor

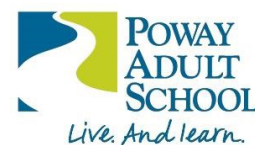
You might think going from CFO of a publicly-traded company to teaching Italian might be quite an adjustment, but for Carol Gratzke, it was a logical next step after retirement.



"As accounting has rules—there are all kinds of rules, tax laws have rules—so do languages, they have fundamental grammar rules. It just fit in with me respecting rules," she explains. "I just sort of fell into it and it's been a wonderful transition from the world of accounting to the world of foreign languages."

A self-admitted "Type A" personality, Gratzke stresses the importance of keeping active physically, mentally and socially, especially after retirement. Through Poway Adult Education, community members can keep active by taking a class or joining the school's roster of dedicated educators, if they possess a unique skill.

"If you have something to offer the community, by all means at least present yourself to our administrators to see if it's something that we can offer," she says. "We offer a plethora of classes and I know that if people take time to look through our catalog, they'll find something that will be exciting. Maybe it's painting or ceramics, or whatever interest you may have. Open yourself up to finding something new and bring a new creative mindset in your own life."



Poway Adult School is one of almost 300 adult schools in California that are operated by K-12 school districts. California Adult Schools provide education, training, and support services to ensure that adult learners reach their education and workforce goals. For more information, visit [powayadulthoodschool.powayusd.com](http://powayadulthoodschool.powayusd.com) or call (858) 668-4012.