

# GETTING BACK TO WORK

## Vista Adult School helps students build marketable skill sets

By Raul Clement

The Great Recession of 2008 tanked economic growth across the country, leading to the highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many people were unexpectedly thrust back into the job market, including Kent Leithold.

“I had worked for an attorney service for 20-some years, but the business closed down and I was without work,” he remembers. “I never dreamed I would go back to school at my age, somebody in their 50s going back to school? ... When I thought about going back to school I truly was horrified, I didn’t know what to expect.”

Despite his initial worries, Leithold was surprised at the wealth of opportunities awaiting him at Vista Adult School. The variety of classes as well as the flexible schedules made going back to school easy and enabled him to improve marketable skills like typing and computer literacy, as well as build new ones like accounting.



During times of economic difficulty, like the 2008 recession, adult schools can offer affordable, flexible ways to build marketable skill sets that help people continue to support themselves.

have a great time, you’re going to meet a ton of people. That’s what I did.”

Another key draw over other local programs was cost. As opposed to comparable programs at community colleges, UCs, CSUs and private institutions, Vista Adult School offers many courses at low to no cost.

“It’s a great stepping stone,” he says. “Not everybody in high school knows exactly what they want to do. Don’t waste your money and go elsewhere if you’re not sure. Dip your toe in Vista Adult School and take a lot of things and see what’s going to be a good fit, what sparks your interest.”

Today, Leithold is the community engagement director with the Vista Chamber of Commerce – a position one of his teachers connected him with – organizing community events like the annual Strawberry Festival, holiday parades and awards celebrations like the Heros Gala. He credits the support and skills found at

Vista Adult School with his ability to pivot and build a new career at a time when he needed it the most.

“I loved every split second of Vista Adult School,” he says. “They care. That makes a big difference.”



For more information on what Vista Adult School can help you achieve, visit [www.vistaadultschool.org](http://www.vistaadultschool.org) or call 760-758-7122.

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**Kent Leithold, Vista Chamber  
of Commerce community  
engagement director and Vista  
Adult School alum**

“If people don’t take advantage of it and they’re looking to hone their skills and keep up on them, they’re shooting themselves in the foot,” he says. “You cannot get a better deal, it’s so inexpensive to do this, the instructors are great, you’re going to