



# The Art of **GIVING**

Accomplished painters Jamie Dang, a recent graduate, and Yvonne Branchflower, a donor, both understand the profound impact of PCC's support programs. Jamie benefited from Future Connect, PCC's nationally recognized mentoring and scholarship program, and Yvonne invests in the program because of its impact.



“As a first-generation student, I knew I’d need help to succeed in college.”

My PCC graduation was truly a group project. From the support of my family to the guidance of my amazing Future Connect coach, Vanessa Hernandez, it took all of us to get me through the challenges I faced.

Growing up, I thought you went to community college when you had no other choice. But my sister, who is 13 years older, had accrued lots of debt from her bachelor’s degree and told me she wished she’d gone to PCC. Seeing the hardships she and my mom went through trying to pay that debt made it clear I should start where I could afford to figure out what I wanted to study.

Thankfully, I quickly found the Future Connect program at PCC and it proved invaluable. With the help of Coach Vanessa, I learned to navigate college life. I picked up tutoring jobs, made a transfer plan, and best of all, figured out how to pay for college.

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“I am eternally grateful for the scholarship support I received.”

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The scholarships I received lifted a huge financial burden. My mom, the sole provider for our household of six, works as a seamstress. But she’s developing arthritis and may not be able to support us much longer. It’s tough for her to care for everyone and I get overwhelmed when I think about the future for all of us.

When I’m not in class or studying, art is my outlet. I’ve loved it for as long as I can remember and I find peace exploring my family’s story and my Vietnamese heritage through painting. I’ve even had my work hung in some local exhibitions.

My time at PCC has been incredible. I studied hard, pushed myself out of my comfort zone socially, and now I’m transferring to Oregon State University. I can’t wait to dive into the cybersecurity program and explore the possibilities and implications of artificial intelligence. I think the most effective way to ensure ethical AI-integration is to get into the industry, find like-minded people, and work together toward the best possible outcomes — much as PCC has done for me.”

**Jamie Dang** is completing their associate degree in computer science and is transferring to Oregon State University to study cybersecurity. Future Connect scholarships and the Patty Jeanne Semura Scholarship helped Jamie finish PCC debt free. Jamie has also donated pieces to PCC’s permanent art collection.

**Yvonne Branchflower**  
Artist and Future Connect Donor

“**I never expected to find my life’s passion at a summer art program.**”

In 1967, I worked for Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) in Los Angeles. The invaluable lessons in human dignity I learned there informed my life’s course. The art program and its students deeply inspired me. I saw what a difference community support can make in people’s lives and I fell in love with painting.

Shortly after my time with VISTA, I moved to rural Southern California and began painting the raw scenery around me while attending community college as time and money allowed. I went to five different schools before completing my associate degree and going on to earn a bachelor’s degree in studio art. My paintings have been exhibited in local galleries, contracted as part of Portland Art Museum’s Rental Sales Gallery, and purchased for set design by 20th Century Fox.

Additionally, I taught oil painting in my studio for many years, even being so fortunate as to teach a student with severe macular degeneration to reconnect with color.

My career carried me through some amazing places and experiences and allowed me the freedom to move to Portland in 2010 to be near the calming influence of the water. I’ve been able to study the landscape in a much different light than sunny Riverside County, California. I’ve loved building a community here and connecting with like-minded people.

When I look back at the 17-year-old first-generation college student I started out as, I can’t help but think how much a program like Future Connect would have meant to me. And when I discovered how Future Connect wraps community college students in the support they need to succeed, I decided to give back. I continue to be inspired by students, like Jamie, and their talent and dedication to pursuing their dreams.”

**Yvonne Branchflower** is a renowned oil painter who discovered Future Connect in 2011 as she browsed PCC’s art department offerings. She is committed to supporting students and makes ongoing investments to the program.





From left to right: **Vanessa Hernandez**, Future Connect coach, **Jamie Dang** and **Yvonne Branchflower**

## FOUNDATION PRIORITY: **Strengthening Supports**

### **We are committed to supporting equitable student success in the classroom and beyond.**

We know that students often need support outside of the classroom (like paying for rent, utilities, or transportation) to make it possible to focus on school. We ensure that there are resources available to address these urgent needs so students can prioritize achieving their dreams.

In 2023–24:



**361,114**

Pounds of food provided by Panther Pantries, PCC's food pantry



**10,494**

Students supported by Panther Pantries



**\$161,000**

Provided by the donor-supported Urgent Student Need Fund

**Our nationally recognized college success program, Future Connect,** provides scholarships, career guidance, and individual and group coaching to students who identify as the first in their family to attend college or have limited resources.

**1,016**

Students served by Future Connect in 2023–24, with 338 first-year students

**4,010**

Future Connect students served since its founding in 2011



To learn more about Future Connect, visit [pcc.edu/futureconnect](https://pcc.edu/futureconnect).