

What the Pan Valley Institute (PVI) means to the Central Valley



Since 1998, the Pan Valley Institute (PVI) has strengthened immigrant leadership and fostered active citizenship across California's Central Valley. Based in Fresno and expanding to Tulare, Merced, and Madera counties, this immigrant-led organization creates intergenerational learning spaces that empower participants to become agents of social change. Below, PVI's Advisory Board members and staff share what PVI means to them.



"I've met amazing people here. Both within my own ethnic group and also with the Southeast Asian community and people from the Middle East. The human experience PVI has built over the years is so enriching. People who go through PVI are influenced by those relationships and also build them. I talk with everybody about PVI." – *Juan Santiago, Board member*

"What brought me to PVI is the belief that art and culture are things we can share across borders—to bring people together and foster dialogue. What makes me stay with PVI is everything else I've discovered here. The focus on popular education is something I value a lot, and something I haven't seen in other U.S. institutions.

– *Gina S. Diaz, Board member*



"PVI has allowed me to focus and see all the underrepresented communities. It can be very trendy for organizations that do work for social change to come in and say that's what they do, but then they're gone. But PVI has a lifelong mission in social change, social justice, ArteVism and community building that makes staying in the Central Valley bearable for me." – *Joshua Slack, staff*

"Values alignment is big for me in terms of why I support PVI. PVI is building and strengthening relationships and change for the long haul. Throughout all its different kinds of program work, PVI has always had the same guiding values. That's really unusual and super valuable." – *Anne Marie Richard, Board member*



"I came to know PVI by accident – and PVI has helped me personally. The reason I've stayed for more than a decade is that PVI keeps creating spaces to support community development for me and other youth. PVI creates opportunities for people to collaborate and people in the community to join those spaces." – *Jose Eduardo Chavez, Board member*

"What has kept me with PVI throughout the years is learning about my own culture, my own people, and the other people who call the Central Valley home. Consciousness-building, learning and re-learning happens at PVI. The many skills I've learned at PVI as a volunteer, staff and consultant – I've been able to replicate in other community work I've done on my own." – *Minerva Mendoza, staff*





“PVI’s work is so profound. It takes longer because it’s changing the ways we think and understand – it’s not just a service being rendered. I love this work. It’s big. This kind of work can change a whole society if given the opportunity to radiate out into the community and beyond. That’s why I support PVI and will continue to support it the best I can.” - *Robin DeLugan, Board member*

“We know art is powerful, but PVI commits to that work. I really believe in PVI’s vision – it’s intergenerational, it’s cross cultural, but it’s also gender expansive. Especially in these times it’s important to uplift queer and trans folks of color, and especially young people. PVI is that space committed to doing this work, and I want to be a part of it.

- *tsim+nuj (chee new) vang, ArteVism Fellow*



“It’s been 19 years since I got to know PVI through the Tamejavi Festival. I got involved because of community and cultural events. I stayed with PVI because I realized, saw and experienced that PVI is creating a platform, a venue for all the community’s different ethnic groups, to come together, learn from each other – and somehow learn to live together and have a voice.” - *Mina Abdollahian, Board member*

“I believe that the communities that PVI works with are very important. The Central Valley is still a very colonial place. I continue to support PVI because I don’t agree with how people are being treated. Immigrant communities and People of Color are essential to a well-functioning society.” - *Hans Van der Noordaa, Board member*



“What’s kept me connected with PVI for 26 years now is building consciousness, creating spaces. There’s always something going on in the world, politically, socially – there have always been constraints. But the community is always there, and there is power in community. PVI always finds a way to walk with people, meeting them where they are, and learning as we go.” - *Estela Galvan, staff*

“I’ve been involved with PVI since day one. PVI is not noisy – it doesn’t go in with a flag, bragging that we’re doing great things. It’s more of a quiet work that’s touching lives. We have lots of testimonies of how people are moved by this work and what they’re doing now on their own – things they didn’t do before connecting with PVI.”

- *Eduardo Stanley, Board member*



“If we really want to increase leadership capacity and lift the voices of people of color, we need this kind of institution to build power. Because the other institutions out there don’t meet our needs and don’t care. In PVI we have this place we’ve built, with so much history and such deep roots. We need to keep it running for the long term.”

- *Myrna Martinez Nateras, PVI Founding Director*

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