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Umoja Tumaini Program Launches Virtual Study Tools for Student Success



Umoja Tumaini is reaching out to all who need extra help with their classes at San Bernardino Valley College, such as English and Math, or they can just drop in for encouragement in these high-stress times. Frederick Jones, president of the Umoja Tumaini club on campus, said when they first launched their Virtual Study Corner only a few students were participating, but it didn't take long for the zoom room to fill up.

Now it's the place to stop by if they want to talk about what in the world is going on. Until they opened the venue, he said a lot of students were just ready to give up and drop out of school. "They were so inundated that they're doing things online," Jones said. "We found that in doing this, they don't feel like they're alone as much."

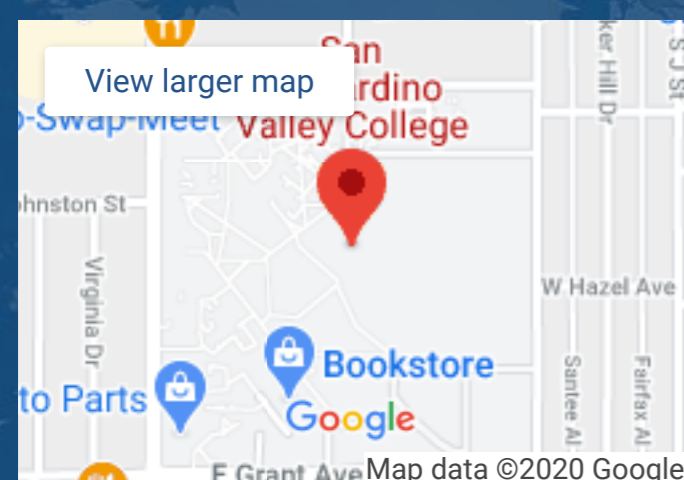
Jones, who has been partnering with other clubs and departments at SBVC, said he's excited to see how their virtual approach has grown. "I created a podcast for the program, people can come and it doesn't necessarily have to be about school but just talk if they feel anxiety about the changes that's going on," he said.

The Tumaini program seeks all those who love African American history, culture and literature. Programming ranges from scholarly to game nights and is open to members. They regularly call and check in on the well being of their members. They offer help where needed, as well as a good lineup of entertainment. "They can come in anytime, we welcome anyone with our podcast with our tutoring sessions. They do not necessarily need to be a Tumaini member, but our focus is on our community and student success," said Jones, who works outreach and is also a full-time communications student.

Club members must commit to at least five hours of volunteering in the community. Jones also works with the Promise Students Program, which offers free college for high school seniors who are required to provide volunteer hours. They walk students through a slide show of important resources, including financial management workshops. He said the focus is on student success. "We try to share as many resources as we can because basically, we're all in it together, especially the Black and Brown community who always seem to have that stigma on them, but there's no failure in this camp."

Despite the obstacles of Covid-19, he said online classes at SBVC are up to par. In some cases, for his classes, he feels the rigor of the curriculum may even be a little more intense. "In my own experience, my teachers have not slacked. They are still continuing the curriculum as normal, just that everything is online now," he said.

Adding zoom to Tumaini's outreach efforts has been a great tool to lift the student's spirits and provide the tutoring they need. Beyond the academics, he said they decided to step up their zoom club access because students also need social affirmation and to visually see each other. "We can come and talk and learn from each other. It was more important than just talking over the phone. We need to see each other smile, and that we're okay," he said.





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