

## Hidden Wings announces full-time Santa Ynez Valley vocational program

**LISA ANDRÉ**  
Lifestyle Editor

Hidden Wings, a Solvang-based non-profit that aims to teach job-related and independent living skills to young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities, has announced its fall course schedule.

Now serving more students than ever with a new full-time vocational and community integration program, Hidden Wings will begin its fall classes Monday, Aug. 27, said co-founder Rev. Jim Billington.

"Due to popular demand, we have expanded to a full-time program. Our student population will include young adults with a variety of special needs who would also benefit from the same social and job skills training as those on the spectrum," said Billington.

Founded in 2009 by Billington and his wife, Julia, a local physician, Hidden Wings began helping young adults with autism and other special needs to find the right job -- and a good friend, said Billington. Students learn to focus on their gifts, not their deficits, which empowers them to lead a full and productive life in society.



STAFF FILE

Hidden Wings student, Andrew Lenner participates in a day-long Cachuma Lake kayaking adventure.

Students will have the opportunity to work or intern at commercial businesses in the Santa Ynez Valley, he said. They will learn job-specific skills and participate in specialized music therapy and physical education to build teamwork, fitness, and social skills.

The courses offered will also focus on helping students to develop independent living skills as well as showing them how to become active community members, said Billington.

Hidden Wings' courses are open to high school graduates with developmental disabilities enrolled

at the Tri Counties Regional Center, added Billington. Those not enrolled can pay privately.

Activities will take place in Solvang and various resource centers throughout the Santa Ynez Valley. Transportation will be available on a limited basis, provided to and from Hidden Wings headquarters at 517 Atterdag Road in Solvang. Classes run from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with occasional Saturdays.

Contact Jim Billington for more information, at 805-705-3918, or [jim@hiddenwings.org](mailto:jim@hiddenwings.org)