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## SCVi graduates first class

Both students and teachers realize years of dreaming as they say goodbye to 29

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In an achievement that's been years in the making, 29 students at Santa Clarita Valley International Charter School became the first in the school's history to receive their diplomas Friday.

Friday's ceremony marked not only the realization of the promise of those students, but the dreams of the school's founders.

"It's been quite fulfilling watching our dream come true," said Amber Raskin, a school founder and executive director of business development and operations. "We are so proud of these graduates and can't wait to see what they do in the world."

Santa Clarita Valley International, or SCVi, provides "project-based K-12 curriculum and student-led assessment with global and culturally diverse influences," according to its website.

The school launched in the fall of 2008.

"Rather than rote memorization, we have many hands-on, project-style learning periods," reads information on the SCVi website. "Research shows that when students discover the answer for themselves, they remember it for the long term, rather than a short period for the test.

"SCVi employs an inquiry-based approach," the post continues. "This means the teacher poses a question to the students, and they do their own investigation and research to get the answer, rather than having it fed to them."

Students in the school's inaugural class are heading off to a variety of schools after graduating, including Chapman University, California State University Northridge, and several University of California branches — including Berkeley, Davis, Riverside, Santa Barbara and San Diego.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to watch these kids through their journey becoming adults," said Dawn Evenson, a school founder and executive director of education. "We are pleased to have watched our learners become leaders and are excited to see them carry their leadership skills into the world and make a positive impact."

Evenson said one of the things that stands out to her about the class is the personal connection she's been able to have with students.

"That personal connection is a double-edged sword for me, because I will miss them so much," she said.

Natasha Mackinnon, the upper-school director at SCVi, said she looks forward to seeing what the future holds for this year's class.

"We are delighted and grateful to have been with them all these years and look forward to seeing them succeed," she said. "Because of the active guidance at SCVi we know that they will do great things.

"Individually, I have enjoyed learning about all of their dreams for the future," she said.

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