

The Luna Light Graduation Edition 2019

The latest news from Luna Community College

Second Volume 2, Issue 9

May 11, 2019



Congrats, Class of 2019!

- ▶ Luna student earns NSF scholarship
- ▶ A Wolves Den repeat
- ▶ Cosmetology, nursing, education and more!

Luna's Saige Martinez earns prestigious NSF scholarship

For many, mathematics is a tough subject – intimidating, even.

Not for Saige Martinez.

“Math has always been therapeutic for me,” he said. “The structure and the discipline required provided a good outlet for me.”

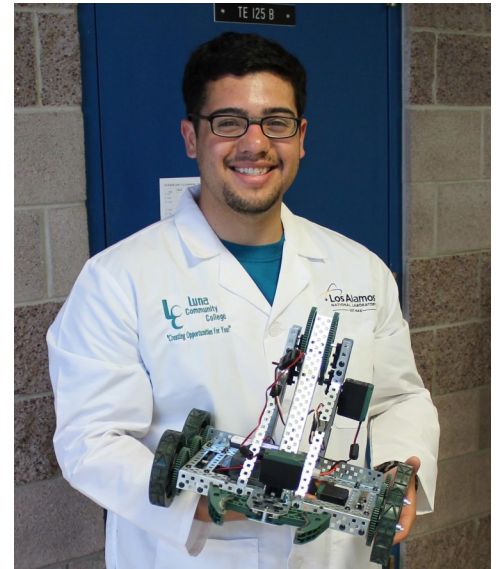
Martinez, who'll graduate from Luna Community College in May with an associate degree in math before finishing his undergraduate degree studies at nearby New Mexico Highlands University, recently learned he is the recipient of a National Science Foundation STEM

scholarship worth \$10,000 a year for up to three years.

It's a major award that will help him achieve the next step in his education, which he hopes to continue on to the graduate school level.

The NSF's S-STEM Scholarship II program “aims to prepare students to enter careers or graduate programs with a focus on developing interdisciplinary skills that integrate data science with their chosen STEM fields,” according to the program announcement.

Continued on page 3



Saige Martinez



Pecos dual credit student Faith Flores displays her appreciation for the new Luna game room during its grand opening April 25. The game room is located in Room 12 of the Learning Resource Center. Among the items that students can use are foosball tables, ping pong tables, a pool table and several board and card games. The Luna game room is sponsored through Student Senate and Campus Life. The game room is scheduled to be open for the summer semester. For more photos, see page 17.

Martinez...

Continued from page 2

Overall grade point average in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) coursework, financial need and full-time enrollment in an approved undergraduate program are all required for the scholarship, which is awarded by a committee of STEM faculty emeriti. Martinez applied for the scholarship at the urging of an adviser at NMHU.

Martinez, the son of Richard Martinez and Skye Ugarte, is a Las Vegas native and a graduate of Robertson High School. While he was proficient at math since early on, he detoured for a time from school to join the Army National Guard. It was while he was in basic training, he recalled, that he learned a valuable lesson.

"In the Army, you meet so many people from different backgrounds," he said. "You learn that stereotypes aren't always right. All kinds of people (have something to offer), no matter where they come from."

With that in mind, he chose to disregard a stereotype he'd once heard about how one's grades tend to limit choices in postsecondary education. He decided to give Luna a try as he began his collegiate studies. What he discovered, he said, is that the community college in his own hometown had plenty to offer.

"Luna has definitely helped me to gain a strong foundation in math. Luna has helped me gain that foundation in what education is supposed to look like."

Saige Martinez

"Luna has turned out to be a lot better (than some other, larger colleges)," he said. "Luna has teachers who can teach. Teaching isn't just about putting things on a blackboard and saying 'here you go.' It's about conveying your knowledge and really helping students learn."

While Martinez has long been good at math, the instruction and support he encountered at Luna helped nurture his growth as a student. Luna math instructor Rita Surdi and others in the college's STEM department proved especially helpful to Martinez as he immersed himself in his favorite subject. He has since begun work on his bachelor's degree (at NMHU) and plans to apply for grad school at the University of New Mexico.

He remains grateful to Luna for helping him get started, and he gives back as a tutor in the college's Academic Center of Excellence.

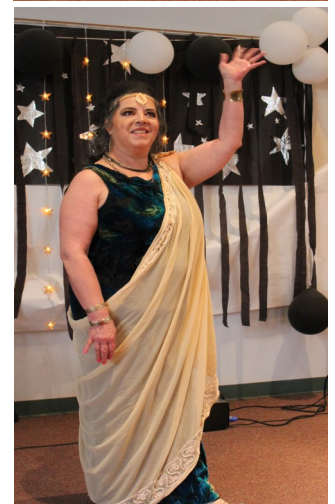
"Luna has definitely helped me to gain a strong foundation in math," Martinez said. "Luna has helped me gain that foundation in what education is supposed to look like."

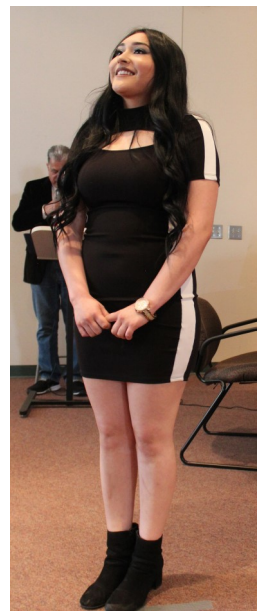
"It's still hard work," he said of math. "It takes dedication and commitment. But I don't give up at it."



Luna summer registration is ongoing, and the last day to add courses is Friday, June 7. Fall registration is also ongoing.

Luna cosmetology, barbering students display talents at Hair Show





Renowned author Dr. Irene Blea speaks at Luna graduation

Irene Isabel Blea, a New Mexico native with a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Colorado-Boulder, was honored with selection as guest speaker at the Luna Community College graduation on May 11.

Dr. Blea retired as a tenured, full professor and chairperson of Mexican American Studies at California

State University-Los Angeles. She is the author of seven sociology textbooks, more than 30 articles, four poetry chapbooks, one play and four novels.

Dr. Blea's work has been adopted for university classroom use in the social and behavioral sciences as well in American literature. Two of her textbooks, "Toward a Chicano Social Science" and "La Chicana" (Greenwood Press), are designated classics in the field of race and gender studies.

Dr. Blea was the first female chairperson of the National Association of Chicano Studies in the 1980s



Dr. Irene Blea

and a regional representative to that organization for several years from the state of Colorado.

Dr. Blea's "Suzanna" is a trilogy rooted in the people and stories of northern New Mexico. In 2015 her book, "Daughters of the West Mesa," based on the discovery of 11 women and an unborn fetus found buried west of Albuquerque, was selected Best of Albuquerque (by ABQ the Magazine) and has been instrumental in keeping the unsolved serial killing in the public eye.

Dr. Blea was listed as one of the Top 10 Latino authors in the United States in 2014. She now researches the area of sex trafficking, writes daily, maintains a strong online presence via her blog and on Facebook, and serves as a featured speaker at conferences, universities and annual meetings.

She is a New Mexico Humanities Council Scholar who also enjoys working in her yard, growing a large collection of iris, lilies, succulents and cacti.

Her next book in progress is titled "Eeré with Spirit" and is about her life story, which originated in northern New Mexico.

Dr. Blea has presented her work in Mexico, Costa Rica, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, China, and Israel. She also has readers in, England, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain and the Philippines.



Luna Community College

2019 Commencement

Saturday, May 11

10 a.m. (student check-in begins 8:30 a.m.)

LCC Media Arts Auditorium



Luna Community College preschoolers participated in a community give back Trike-A-Thon for St. Jude's Children's Hospital on Thursday, April 25. The preschoolers raised over \$1,100.

Preschoolers in the spotlight

Students from the ECME 123 Intro to Reading & Literacy Development class (taught by adjunct instructor Sandra Crespin) present Easter-related puppet stories to the delight of the LCC preschoolers.



**15TH ANNUAL
LCC CUSTOM
CAR SHOW**
JUNE 8, 2019
NMHU'S MELODY PARK

Set up: 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
Show: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Registration Fee: \$25
First 100 to register a
vehicle will receive
a commemorative T-shirt

Live Entertainment
Special Guests
Icon Award
Sponsored Trophies Door Prizes
Food Vendors

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

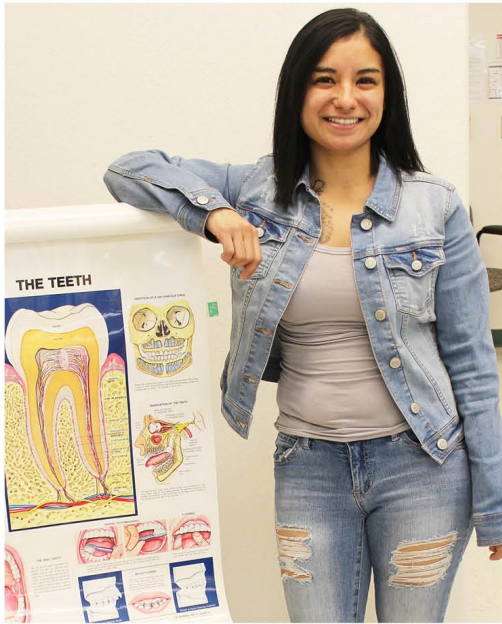
Pre-registration & Cruise Night
June 7, 2019
NMHU Student Union Building
800 National Ave., Las Vegas, NM
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

For more information call
Anthony Baca 505-429-0425
or
Dave Montaño 505-718-9560

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Luna Community College
HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

Briana Montaño-Baca of Luna's Small Business Development Center demonstrates acceptable job interview attire as part of a free job-search skills workshop April 10 at the Media Education Center. Similar presentations are planned for the future.





Culinary Arts Club gets high marks

Editor's note: The following review on the Luna Culinary Arts Club was written by the STEM Club.

Recently, the Luna STEM Club held a giveback for the department's faculty and staff. After careful consideration the STEM Club decided the Culinary Arts Club (CAC) here at Luna would be the absolute best pick to take on this event.

After planning the menu and agreeing on the price, the dedicated team directed by Chef Tiffany and Chef Stormi started immediately. With only a month to prepare and execute, the CAC provided service so excellent that the STEM Club never worried a single day about how the event would turn out. Even when the STEM Club found out another group booked the same dining area at the same day and time, the CAC went out of their way to set us up a new dining area the week of with no extra charge or complaints.

The service and food, however, were not only exceptional but extraordinary! The work of Sergio Valdez (president of CAC), Robert Crisostomo (VP), Fabien Lucero (secretary), William Covelli (treasurer) and Andre Luna far exceeded the expectations of the STEM Club. Theo Curry, the secretary of the STEM Club, said during the event, "This is better than most places in town," while another member stated, "Darn, that was good."

During our meeting the following week, the STEM Club could not come up with one criticism on the CAC's provided services. From the attention to ingredients and planning the entire event, the CAC went above and beyond what we hoped to receive.

Luna's dental assistants ... making the world a brighter place One smile at a time

Learn how to begin your exciting journey to becoming a dental assistant. For more information about the Luna Community College dental assistant program and starting your career in dental health, visit www.luna.edu or call Gloria Pacheco at 505-454-2528 today.



U.S. Census Bureau interested in hiring Luna students this summer

Editor's note: U.S. Census Bureau recruiter Maria Ramirez recently met with Luna Public Relations Coordinator Jesse Gallegos to discuss job opportunities for Luna students. The following is information provided by Ramirez.

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to hire 480,000 (individuals) nationwide this year, and that's including approximately 3,000 in New Mexico.

Most of the work for enumerators will be in their own neighborhoods and extended rural areas. The pay is \$14.50 to \$15 an hour for census takers in San Miguel County. Job seekers are eligible to apply if they are U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old, and have valid Social Security numbers and valid e-mail addresses.

Most jobs require employees to have access to a vehicle, unless public transportation is readily available, and a computer with internet access. A criminal background check and fingerprinting will be conducted at no cost to the individual offered a job. This work is full-time or part-time temporary. Applicants may log on to the Census Bureau website, create a profile, complete an application and take an assessment. This usually takes 30-40 minutes. For help with the process, one may call 855-JOB-2020 or 855-562-2020.

The following are job descriptions for several jobs that will be available.

Clerks: Clerks handle incoming telephone calls to the office; refer applicants to the recruiting website, www.2020Census.gov/jobs, to apply for Census jobs; make applicants aware of locations in the community with public internet access where they can apply online; assist applicants with completing their online job application, if possible; or refer applicants to the technical help

desk; assist in making paper job application packages available to applicants; review paper job applications packages before forwarding them to administrative staff for processing; ship recruiting supplies to RAs; ensure recruiting supplies inventory is stocked in the office; maintain the list of paper job application packages; make outgoing calls to applicants to follow up on their questions or invite them to finish their incomplete applications. A Clerk can be classified as Recruiting Clerk, Supply Clerk or Receptionist.

Office Operation Supervisors (OOSs): Office Operations Supervisors train and supervise clerks; create work schedules for the clerical staff; monitor call volumes; make staffing adjustments based on workload; determine whether to request additional clerks on a shift or whether to reassign clerks or send clerks home to ensure appropriate coverage; set up, manage and monitor the clerks answering calls from applicants; ensure that clerks maintain the list of community locations with public internet access; oversee incoming supply requests from RAs and ensure supplies are shipped; oversee the receipt, review and tracking of paper job application packages; ensure supporting documentation and paper job application packages submitted by applicants are promptly forwarded to the administrative area for processing.

Recruiting Assistants (RAs): Recruiting Assistants will promote census jobs throughout the community that offer public internet access where applicants can go apply, secure free space for training, distribute recruiting materials to local community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide to their member/

clients/customers and other limited circumstances.

Census Field Supervisors: The Field Supervisor (FS) serves as the first-level supervisor for a group of approximately six to 15 Field Representatives and is responsible for data collection in a geography that may include some hard-to-count areas. The FS is responsible for ensuring the group's performance meets the standards and expectations set forth by the bureau and survey sponsors. As a first-level supervisor, the FS is responsible for evaluating and reviewing assignments of subordinates. The FS monitors staff performance that includes on-the-job observations and monitoring of various performance metrics. The FS may assist with training of employees. The FS reviews and approves payroll and leave submissions for their staff. The FS may assist with the recruiting of Field Representatives.

Enumerators: Interviews respondents to collect survey or census data as required for current, ongoing surveys, one-time surveys and/or special censuses. The incumbent is responsible for communicating with respondents, supervisors and other persons as appropriate. Reads survey materials and conducts door-to-door surveys. Explains the purpose of the survey, asks questions as worded on the questionnaire or survey instrument and enters accurate and complete information into a laptop computer or onto survey forms. The incumbent may occasionally be required to lift boxes of survey materials or laptops weighing up to 30 pounds and maintain personal payroll records that reflect hours worked, miles driven and reimbursements for travel and communications claimed.

JOIN THE 2020 CENSUS TEAM

APPLY ONLINE!

2020census.gov/jobs

2020 Census jobs provide:

- ✓ Great pay
- ✓ Flexible hours
- ✓ Weekly pay
- ✓ Paid training

For more information or help applying, please call **1-855-JOB-2020**

Federal Relay Service:
1-800-877-8339 TTY/ASCII | www.gsa.gov/fedrelay
The U.S. Census Bureau is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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APPLY ONLINE!
2020census.gov/jobs

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Equal Opportunity Employer.

Lt. Gov. Morales visits Luna



New Mexico Lt. Gov. Howie Morales visited Luna on Monday, April 29. Pictured (left photo) are Lt. Gov. Morales, STEM Instructor Nichole Sanchez and student Jessica Webber. In the right photo, Lt. Gov. Morales meets with Luna President Dr. Rolando Rael.

Lt. Gov. Howie Morales was in Las Vegas on Monday, April 29, visiting Luna Community College as part of his outreach efforts across New Mexico.

Morales met with Luna President Rolando Rael and several others from the college's faculty, staff and administration. Rael shared his thoughts about Luna's role in the region, including initiatives the college plans to develop in the months ahead. Morales spoke with members of Luna student government and stopped into a few classrooms, talking with students and instructors.

The lieutenant governor was tentatively scheduled to



New Mexico Lt. Gov. Howie Morales talks with student senate officers Briana Thomas and Jake Taylor.

return to the Meadow City for a panel discussion about public education issues. Details on that gathering were to be announced. Morales took part in a roundtable event with American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and other educational leaders on April 18 in Washington, D.C., addressing such issues as widespread teacher shortages and funding shortfalls.

Earlier in the month,

Morales launched a tour focused on public education, engaging educators in a panel discussion at Deming High School. Among the lieutenant governor's other recent stops: Atrisco Heritage Academy and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Luna's Cummings-Lani earns WJCAC honor

Luna Community College's Dyani Cummings-Lani has been named Pitcher of the Week for April 7-13 by the Western Junior College Athletic Conference. The WJCAC announced the award on its national website April 16. She is the only Luna student-athlete to earn this honor in 2019.

"This award means a lot to me," said Cummings-Lani. "Softball is my life. I want to thank my mom, family and hometown. They have given me support for me to accomplish things. They are the reason I got this award."

Cummings-Lani allowed just one earned run on two hits and one walk with two strikeouts over five complete innings

in earning a pitching win over Frank Phillips College (Texas); Luna won that game 12-2. She also played two games at second base and hit .555 with four doubles, four runs batted in and six runs scored as the Rough Riders swept a four-game series with Frank Phillips.

"I love all my teammates; it's the best team I've ever been with," said Cummings-Lani. "I also love this college. Luna is perfect for me."

Cummings-Lani is a freshman from Waimanalo, Hawaii, and a graduate of Kailua High School. She is majoring in early childhood education.

Luna is coached by Mark Mattox and Chris Abrego.



Dyani Cummings-Lani

Luna's White signs with Our Lady of the Lake

Luna Community College's Brittany White is taking her talents to San Antonio, Texas.

White, a sophomore from Bernalillo, N.M., has signed a national letter of intent to continue her education and softball career with Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio next school year.

White has been a major contributor to the Rough Rider softball team over the past two years, playing primarily at first base and also at third. She will graduate with a certificate in early childhood education on May 11, and she plans to continue studies in the field as an undergraduate, majoring in early childhood education and

specializing in special education.

White hit .400 with a slugging percentage of .650, both among the top three on the team this season. She amassed 48 total hits, five home runs and 15 doubles, 27 runs scored and 29 runs batted in. Defensively, she helped turn five double plays this spring.

White hit .400 as a freshman.

Our Lady of the Lake is a private institution that offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. It is affiliated with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Red River Athletic Conference.



Brittany White

Luna's Jake Taylor wins Wolves Den competition

First-place comes with \$5,000

Luna's Jake Taylor went against the best in New Mexico at the Wolves Den competition at New Mexico Tech in Socorro recently — and won.

The Wolves Den, modeled after the television show Shark Tank, is an inventors and entrepreneurs competition and open to New Mexico college students, both on the four-year university and two-year community college level.

Taylor, a sophomore majoring in pre-engineering and computer science, brought home \$5,000 for winning first-place.

"I still can't believe it," said Taylor. "I really can't believe that I won; there were a lot of good presentations there and I was super nervous."

Taylor, along with five other competitors, did a five-minute PowerPoint presentation pitching their invention ideas to several patent attorneys and investors from all over the country. Taylor's idea was how to cut down a prep time for a soil test.

"This says a lot about Luna," said Taylor. "Luna is one of the most valuable resources this community has."

Luna was represented by Taylor, a native of Denver, and Robert Kelly, who is from Mora.

Kelly's presentation was on how to decrease the cost on space flight.

"I'm much honored to be an instructor of all my students here at Luna," said Luna geology and pre-engineering instructor Geno Castillo, who serves as a Wolves Den mentor. "It's rewarding to see our students be successful. I want to thank STEM Director Francisco Apodaca, President Dr. Rolando Rael, Vice President Dr. Sharon Lalla and the faculty and staff for their support."

This is the second year in a row that a Luna student has won the Wolves Den. Jessica Webber won the competition last year.

"Jake carries himself well and is very humble to others," said Castillo. "He is a go-getter and wants to be



Luna's Jake Taylor (center) is pictured with New Mexico Tech President Dr. Stephen Wells and event organizer Larry Udell. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Tech)

successful. The persistence, hard work and determination showed in both Jake and Robert. Competing against one of the best research institutions in the nation shows a lot about our students and instructors here at Luna Community College."

"Dr. Stephen Wells, president of New Mexico Tech, told me that the level of competitors has improved and he is very proud of Luna students," said Luna STEM Director Francisco Apodaca. "We can compete with the best and I think as we develop competitors, we're doing a better job of preparing our students. The level of presentation by both Jake and Robert was excellent."

The Wolves Den was the culmination of the two-day inventors and entrepreneurs workshop. Students and mentors participated in seminars and networking with marketing experts, patent attorneys and investors from throughout the country.

T.J. Cook from ABQid tutored Luna students throughout the process.

Software training helps students



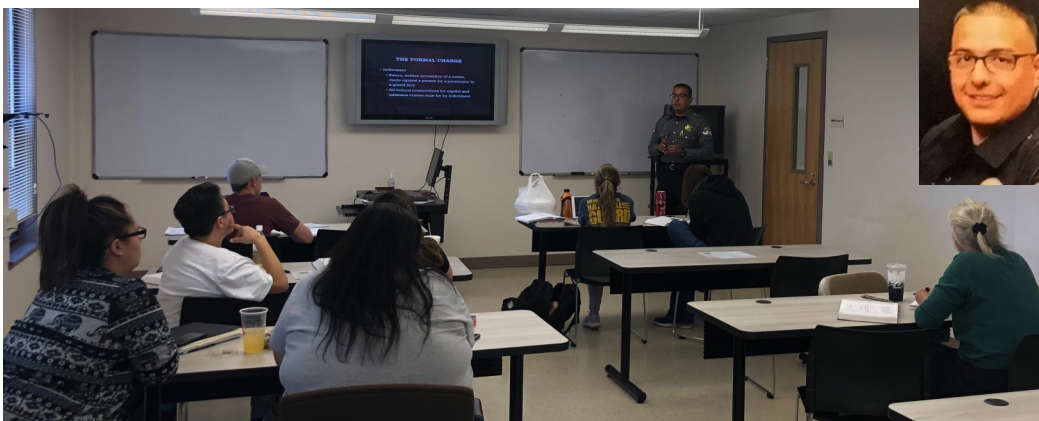
Luna students (pictured clockwise from immediate left) Kyler Duggins, Jeremy Baca and Brianna Sanchez (far right, pictured with her mother Angel) recently earned their certification with TestOut Desktop Pro. TestOut Desktop Pro is an all-in-one online learning solution containing everything a student needs to learn on the basics of computers and Microsoft Office 2016 Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Students who take the computer software application class learn several skills as the virtual hands-on labs are designed to develop proficiency in Microsoft Office. The course is designed to improve student confidence, resulting in higher test scores and academic and career success. Other students who have earned their certificates recently are Shaylynn Jones and Eliseo Arreola. For more information on computer information software application classes, you can call Luna STEM Director Francisco Apodaca at 505-454-2510.

Special guests deliver insights



Luna’s Early Childhood Education Department recently hosted guest speakers Sonya Romero (“Kindness Matters”) and Dr. Cecilia Hernandez (Educators Rising). Pictured at left are Luna adviser Tycie Jackson, Romero, Hernandez and Education Department director Brenda Ortega. Above, Romero speaks to Luna students about the importance of caring for students and people.

Dr. Hernandez addressed New Mexico’s statewide teacher shortage – currently estimated at approximately 750 – and discussed how Educators Rising can prepare students at the high school and college levels to become our future educators. Romero, a longtime kindergarten teacher at Low Wallace Elementary in Albuquerque, delivered a message of hope and encouragement, “Kindness Matters,” as a keynote speech. Over the course of her career, Romero has worked to ensure her students and others have food and clothing. She has even taken on the role of foster parent to a pair of former students. Romero has been the subject of national media coverage for her approaches. She has been featured on CNN and the Ellen DeGeneres Show and was a White House guest of President Obama.



Mora County Undersheriff and current Luna student Americk Padilla (also pictured in inset) speaks to criminal justice students about how officers enforce the law and discusses the value of accurate and detailed reports.

New game room opens on campus



Luna students enjoy the recent grand opening of the game room sponsored by LCC Student Senate and the Office of Campus Life. Pictured clockwise from top left: Nathan Perea, Angelina Chavez and Jesus Gonzales; Angelique Roybal, Josh Montoya and Cesar Saenz; and Antonio Gorman, Ashlea Lujan, Shanaya Pacheco and Omar Dominguez.



Luna instructor Anthony Baca, left, accompanies Car-O-Liner's Bob Hefty as Hefty installs a new software upgrade for use in the college's automotive collision repair technology program. "The updates Car-O-Liner software and equipment is an integral part of the Automotive Collision Repair Technology Structural Analysis course," said Jessica McGee, director of Luna's Vocational Education department. She said students will take training this fall to enable them to become certified in the use of the analysis software and equipment. Baca helped land the upgrade while attending the 2018 Specialty Equipment Market Association convention last fall.



Sara Villa, Ayliah Chavez, Tristen Price, Megan Romero, Gabriela Pina, Lucia Lopez, Ashley Lovato, Ross Gonzales and (not pictured) Taylor Bustamante represent Luna at a health fair in Wagon Mound.



Cynthia Campos and Laura Salazar teach fourth graders at Tony Serna Jr. Elementary about the importance of staying physically active. Other Luna student nurses who presented: Alyssa Ortiz, Emma Peoble, Jimmy Rodriguez, Kristen Rogers, Sarah Sanchez and Amberlynn Torres.

Student nurses share skills, knowledge with community

Outreach effort part of program

Nursing students from Luna Community College recently visited two area schools for health fairs to inform and enlighten participants.

Ayliah Chavez, Ross Gonzales, Lucia Lopez, Ashley Lovato, Gabriela Pina, Tristen Price, Megan Romero, Taylor Bustamante and Sara Villa – made a trip to Wagon Mound for a health fair in early April.

They provided blood pressure checks, blood glucose checks and measured vital signs. They also provided participants with Luna syringe-shaped pens and candy. Luna’s Joy Shrum joined the students for the

health fair.

Then on April 26, another group of eight LCC nursing students conducted an informational health fair for fourth graders at Tony Serna Jr. Elementary School in Las Vegas. More than 100 youngsters divided into four groups listened to each of four interactive presentations. Jimmy Rodriguez and Amberlynn Torres discussed personal hygiene. Alyssa Ortiz and Sarah Sanchez talked about Internet safety. Cynthia Campos and Laura Sandoval focused on exercise and physical activity. And Emma Peoble and Kristen Rogers spoke on nutrition.

In addition to the information, Luna’s students presented the fourth graders with backpacks from the college’s recruitment and admis-

sion office along with toothbrushes from the dental program and other items. Luna faculty members Kimberly Sena and Jackie Romero accompanied the Luna contingent.

“The (Luna) students participate in these events as part of their training,” explained Sena, “to build and develop their clinical skills. (They also) provide a benefit to the community through their teaching and service contributions.”

Luna has sent nursing students into elementary classrooms for presentations before, and the college has been an integral part of previous health fair events in the community. Recently, the nursing department joined forces with Samaritan House, providing wellness checks for the local shelter’s clients, free of charge.



At left, Luna nursing student Ray Lemasters meets with recruiters during the inaugural Luna Community College Nursing Career Fair on April 17. The event drew approximately 20 employers and 100 job-seekers, linking them for health care job opportunities.



TEAS Nursing Entrance Exam

May 2019 test dates

**Scheduling for these
dates now**

Thursday, May 2	@ 8:15 a.m.
Friday, May 3	@ 9:00 a.m.
Monday, May 13	@ 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, May 14	@ 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 15	@ 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, May 16	@ 1:30 p.m.
Friday, May 17	@ 9:00 a.m.
Monday, May 20	@ 1:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 21	@ 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday, May 22	@ 1:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 23	@ 9:00 a.m.
Friday, May 24	@ 1:30 p.m.

Contact: Yvonne Piña

505-454-2525

Or visit LCC Nursing Department

You have up to three attempts at taking the test, and the fee for each attempt will be \$58.

Graduates: Have hope and live life

The Luna Way

*By
Jesse Gallegos*

I hope each and every one of you lives a great life full of hope and joy. Earning a college degree or certificate is just part of the puzzle. A degree or certificate's intent is to put graduates in a better position for success.

But that's not what life is all about.

Life and living is such a great thing when we cherish and show gratitude for the little things and bring hope to those around us who need it most. Helping others is what makes the very fabric of society better.

Although this message is meant for our graduates, it's a universal message for the rest of us.

Keep in mind that life is life. Many times it works out just fine, while at other times it doesn't. That's just the way it is. How we react to our best times and worst of times, shapes us. Even during the tough times, it's important to have hope.

As important as earning a higher education is, too few begin and even fewer finish. To those who have earned an education, go on to a four-year university or be the best you can in whatever job or career field you choose. But don't forget to be kind to others and encourage and boost those who yearn for a higher education. Remember, part of learning is teaching. And teaching yourself never to forget about those less fortunate is one of those things you can't learn from a textbook.

Imagine a society where people don't make fun of one another or don't trample over you for their sake. Imagine a place where no one cares

about the color of your skin, or the amount of money you have saved in the bank. Imagine a place where people are good to each other. It starts with each of us. Sure, we can't take care of the entire world, but we can make our own little corner better.

Does anyone recall when you were in the second grade and your teacher or coach would tell you about the importance of having a good attitude? Guess what? As adults, the same rule applies. You're better with a good attitude.

Go out and make your life as good as it can be without forgetting about your neighbor. Wake up every morning, thinking on how you are going to not only brighten your day, but also someone else's.

And when you fall, which we all do, get up again. There's nothing wrong with starting over. And certainly, there's nothing wrong with having hope and living life.



*“Creating
Opportunities
for You!”*