

# Local student graduates from Luna and West Las Vegas High School

**P**reciosa America Chavez did what so few do — earn a diploma for being a high school graduate and earn a certificate for being a college graduate, all in the same month.

Chavez graduated from West Las Vegas High School on May 25. Fourteen days earlier she did the same at Luna Community College. At Luna, Chavez earned a general education certificate.

“When I first took classes at Luna, I was really scared; I am really close to my mom, but I grew up quickly and did things myself,” said Chavez. “The instructors assisted me in whatever I needed. They are really good instructors; I learned a lot.”

**Continued on page 3**



**Preciosa America Chavez graduated from West Las Vegas High School and Luna Community College this past May. (Photos by Ashley Arellanes, Ashley Ann Photography)**

## Luna sends 22 to diversity summit

Nearly two dozen Luna Community College employees joined counterparts from postsecondary institutions across New Mexico in a statewide summit on promoting, developing and nurturing diversity in higher education.

New Mexico Highlands University hosted the 2019 Diversity Summit, which carried the theme “Envisioning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion In Higher Education” May 21-22 at the Student Union Building.

Panelists and speakers, who included professors, administrators and others, discussed efforts and strategies for making their college campuses places where diversity is embraced and treated as a strength – thus making them more welcoming destinations for students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity and other factors.

**Continued on page 4**

# Four Luna School of Business students inducted into Kappa Beta Delta Society



**Congratulations to Luna School of Business students Hannah Lee Maldonado, Emily Ulibarri, Sunshine Zamora and Dominick Quintana, who were inducted into the Kappa Beta Delta Society. It is the highest national recognition an associate degree candidate in business can earn. The candidates were honored at a recent banquet, which several Luna administration, faculty, staff, and family members attended.**

# Luna and WLV graduate...

**Continued from page 1**

Chavez said she met a lot of great people at Luna and wants to give a special thank you to employees Francisco Apodaca, Betsy Sanchez, Billie Mathews, Sara Vigil, Kenneth Bachicha, Erniessa Romero, Cindy Branch, Joe Baca, Janice Medrano and Dr. Anita Roybal.

While at Luna, Chavez finished the core classes required for a bachelor's degree. Chavez' next stop is to earn a bachelor of science in bio-chemistry from New Mexico Highlands University. She intends to take additional classes at Luna while attending NMHU. She then wants to go to medical school and eventually become a pediatrician. She has earned several scholarships to continue her education.

"I would like to come back to Las Vegas and give back to the community," said Chavez.

Chavez said she was raised by her mom, Angel Gutierrez, but didn't let coming from a single-parent home hold any obstacles for her.

"I know how it is without a father," said Chavez. "I see my mom struggle, and it taught me to work hard. She always told me to give everything I have in anything I do."

Chavez must have. Not only did she earn a diploma and a certificate, she helped West Las Vegas capture a

state championship in cheer, and she played soccer, volleyball and basketball for the Lady Dons. In 2018, Chavez worked as a summer physics intern at Los Alamos National Lab.

"My mom always told me to do the best that I can," said Chavez. "My mom and my grandma Margie Seay-Maez are my inspirations. They are the strongest women

I know. I don't how to put it into words. They are my rocks. They are the first people I knew. They believe in me."

Although she is fond of Luna, Chavez said West Las Vegas is home.

"I excelled there; West Las Vegas prepared me well," said Chavez. Her mom Angel, a special education teacher at West Las Vegas High, said her daughter is self-motivated.

"I'm super proud of her," said Angel. "She has always been very driven. People ask me, 'How do you get your kid to do what she does?' This has

been all on her.. She studies two or three hours a day. I'm grateful to Luna and West Las Vegas; they prepared her well for her next steps in life. "

As busy as Chavez was this year while taking both high school and college classes, she was also voted homecoming queen at West Las Vegas as a senior.

Her advice to other students? "Study and work hard for what you want," said Chavez.

"My mom and my grandma ... are my inspirations. They are the strongest women I know. I don't how to put it into words. They are my rocks."

**Preciosa America Chavez**



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

# Diversity summit...

**Continued from page 1**

Luna had one of the largest contingents of any school at the two-day conference, which also drew participants from the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, Eastern New Mexico University, Santa Fe Community College and Northern New Mexico, United World College and New Mexico Military Institute in addition to host NMHU.

LCC President Rolando Rael encouraged the college's employees to take part in the event. Six academic and vocational departments were represented, and several staff members from student success center, admissions and recruitment, veterans resource center, area health education center, human resources and public relations also attended.

"It is important that we do whatever we can to ensure Luna Community College is truly a place where diversity is celebrated," said Rael. "Diversity not only of backgrounds and origins but of ideas and perspectives will only make us a more vibrant campus – and a stronger institution. Higher education isn't just about what takes place in the classroom; it also involves learning about other people and learning to appreciate differences."

"On behalf of the Luna community, we thank NMHU for inviting us to this important summit," said Jesse Gallegos, public relations coordinator. "Highlands was a gracious host and did an excellent job putting this event together. The discussions were thought-provoking, with ideas that will help us strengthen our commitment to diversity."

Keynote speakers included Nancy "Rusty" Barcelo,

Josephine DeLeon and Eric Nixon. Barcelo, a former president at Northern New Mexico College, is currently special assistant to the chancellor on behalf of equity and diversity at the University of Illinois. DeLeon, the first vice president for equity and inclusion at UNM, has worked for state government as well as both of the

state's two largest universities. Nixon is a human rights activist involved in the NAACP and the Restorative Justice Initiative.

"Diversity needs to be framed differently," Barcelo told the crowd. "Not as a problem to be solved, but as an asset to be cultivated." She urged summit

participants to work to become agents of change on their home campuses, getting away from what she called "simplistic, binary thinking" that leads to labeling and division. But she also called on participants to continually "re-examine our own biases ... we all have our fear of differences."

Panelists tackled an array of topics ranging from ensuring proper representation for all groups in the 2020 census to responding to those who bring hate speech into campus dialogues. Edward Martinez, a Highlands administrator, noted that a college's commitment to diversity and inclusion requires looking inward at policies, programs and institutional support from administration to faculty and staff to students.

Others called for change in the educational process itself, giving greater recognition to the perspectives students bring with them. "We forget to tap into the students' wealth they already bring with them into the classroom," said Jose Azul Cortes of UNM.

**Continued on Page 9**



**Luna employees listen to panelists during a statewide diversity summit held May 21-22 at Highlands University. Pictured are Francisco Apodaca, Nichole Collins, Sarah Cantu, Cindy Branch, Renee Maestas, Sierra Fernandez and Nathan Baker.**

# Area students invited to STEM-Reading Camp at Luna

A summer camp that allows students ages 10-15 to explore fun concepts in sciences, math and reading is coming to Luna Community College.

The Luna Summer Youth STEM-Reading Camp will take place from July 8 to August 9 on campus. It is designed for students entering fifth through ninth grades this coming fall. Sessions will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. The registration cost of \$100 per student will include a mid-morning snack and a sack lunch each day.

Each week of the five-week camp will focus on a different STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) module, exposing students to different subject matter. The first week's module is on GPS (global positioning system) and GIS (geographical information system) and map-making. On week two, it's water, including biology and chemistry components. On week three, it's robotics and computer programming. On week four, it's fun with math. On week five, it's geology.

"It will be fun stuff," promised Francisco Apodaca, director of Luna's STEM department. "No class work or homework. We're going to have fun with math and reading. We want to develop students at whatever level they're at."

The daily sessions are structured in such a way that missing a day will not disrupt the overall experience. The approach would thus accommodate those who may



**Students from area high schools learn some computer programming basics as part of the Luna Community College STEM Robot Rodeo in fall 2018. Programming and robotics is one component of what figures to be a fun and educational LCC Summer Youth STEM-Reading Camp being held this July on campus.**

have other engagements such as vacation trips, etc., during the month. Registration is limited to the first 50 students who sign up. Pre-registration packets are available at the LCC administration building reception desk, the STEM office and the registrar's office. Pre-registration is being accepted through July 8 or until the registration limit is reached, whichever comes first. Payment will be accepted July 1-8 at the LCC cashier's window in the registrar's office; acceptable

forms of payment include cash, check, money order and credit card.

On camp days, students may be dropped off as early as 8 a.m. but must be picked up promptly at 1 p.m.

Luna is hosting the camp in part to help develop and strengthen STEM knowledge and reading ability in the area's elementary, middle school and high school students. It is the latest of a number of educational outreach efforts sponsored by the college. In conjunction with the Los Alamos National Labs, the STEM department has successfully hosted an annual Robot Rodeo, giving participants a chance to learn basic programming and robotics.

Luna's STEM and Humanities departments are collaborating to conduct the camp, with faculty from both departments providing the instruction.

For more information, call Apodaca at 454-2510 or via e-mail at [fapodaca@luna.edu](mailto:fapodaca@luna.edu).

# Jaramillo, Gonzales join Luna board, will represent District 5 and District 6

Julian Jaramillo and Martin Gonzales are the two newest members of the Luna Board of Trustees.

The Luna Board of Trustees voted in favor of Jaramillo and Gonzales in its regular meeting held May 14. Jaramillo takes over representation of District 5 and replaces Abelino

Montoya Jr., who resigned earlier this year. Gonzales replaces David Gutierrez, who also resigned earlier this year, and will represent District 6. Both Jaramillo and Gonzales shall serve until the next community college board election in November 2019, at which time they may file for election to fill the positions. In District 6, whoever is elected would then serve the remainder of the unexpired term, which is two years. In District 5, whoever is elected would serve the full term of six years. (Gutierrez had two years left in his post. Montoya was in the last year of his term.)

“I’m very honored to serve on the Luna Board of Trustees; I’m very happy I was chosen,” said Jaramillo. “I would like to see more veterans attend Luna Community College. We need to provide an incentive to bring them and keep them here. In addition, I would like to see this college serve more students. I want to make sure that any student that is interested in attending Luna has the opportunity, regardless of their financial or social situation. It’s important for us to accommodate anyone that wants to better their lives by earning a college education. I want to see students complete their education; we need to make sure we are doing everything we can for them.”

Jaramillo graduated in 2006 from West Las Vegas High School and attended Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology in Tulsa, Okla., where he earned an associate degree in quality control and non-destructive testing. Jaramillo joined the military in



**Julian Jaramillo**



**Martin Gonzales**

2010 and served two tours, one in Iraq and one in Kuwait. He was honorably discharged in 2014. After this, Jaramillo worked in an oil refinery in El Paso. Jaramillo moved back to Las Vegas in 2015 and worked for a concrete testing company.

Jaramillo, 31, is a disabled veteran and is currently taking care of his parents. He

is a member of the New Mexico Free Masons, Chapman Lodge No. 2; one of the organization’s goals is to provide scholarships to deserving local high school graduates from West Las Vegas, Robertson, Mora and Pecos high schools. He has one son and one daughter.

“It’s a great pleasure to serve on the Luna Board of Trustees,” said Gonzales. “Luna is very important to northern New Mexico and to rural New Mexico. To me, Luna is a much-needed institution of higher learning. Not all students attend a four-year university, and Luna offers a variety of degrees and certificates in both the vocational and academic side. We need to continue to work diligently to make sure we keep our accreditation; it’s very important and dear to our students, faculty and staff.”

Gonzales, 49, is a Villanueva native and a 1987 graduate of West Las Vegas. He worked at the New Mexico Department of Transportation for 22 years and the City of Las Vegas for two years. Gonzales, who is retired, is a volunteer coach for Little League and has coached baseball and football at the high school level. He has been married for 22 years and has three children, one grandchild and another grandchild on the way.

“I look forward to representing District 6 and working with the board of trustees,” said Gonzales.

District 5 is in San Miguel County. District 6 includes parts of Colfax, Mora and San Miguel counties.

# Father-daughter mechanic duo graduate together

When she was 8 years old, Jasmine Gallegos was her dad Gary's designated go-fer, handing him wrenches and other tools while he worked on cars.

Later, she followed him into full-time mechanic work and then into work as volunteer firefighters.

On May 11, they shared another experience — walking the line as they graduated from Luna Community College.

Jasmine is finishing her certificate program in automotive technology; Gary Gallegos is concluding his associate of applied science in vocational education, specializing in automotive collision repair technology.

Jasmine said her father has always been a role model and they've remained close over the years, although she acknowledges a rough patch that they have since overcome. Following her dad around as a kid, she acquired first the skills and then the love for being a mechanic.

"At first I didn't think I was going to like it," she said of working on vehicles. "But I found that I have a passion for it. When I was a little kid I'd watch my dad work. I'd help him by getting tools for him. Sometimes I'd get the wrong tool. I started really helping him when I was about 18."

When she first began her college journey, Jasmine planned to study criminal justice or fire science. But



Gary and Jasmine Gallegos both graduated from Luna on May 11. Gary is Jasmine's father.

she soon recognized that her heart was in working with her hands, doing what she'd been doing for a while already.

"I came across a drag racing video," she recalled. "Ever since then, I've wanted to be a mechanic. I wanted to see how these machines work. I like how you have to be tough. I like getting dirty; when I was a kid, I was a tomboy, playing in the dirt and playing football and stuff. And I like that (mechanics) is like a big puzzle. I like all of it."

While Jasmine had no shortage of enthusiasm working in auto shops, she did encounter skepticism.

"In shops I worked in, I'd get a

lot of people doubting," she said. "At first, they'd look me up and down. They'd be 'Oh, so you work at the desk?' or 'Are you the cleaning lady?' Until they get five minutes of talking with me, and then they see I know my stuff."

Working in a traditionally male-dominated field and being, in her own words, "smaller, young and female," may challenge the norms and bring out the doubters. But, she said, "If you're a good mechanic, you're a good mechanic."

And then there's her handshake.

"I have a very strong grip," she said. "I can crush your hand."

The doubters only made her work harder. "It made me have more drive," she said. "I knew I had to know what I was doing."

Whatever skepticism from customers Jasmine met in the shops, she had no such issues in classes at Luna: "I've always gotten along with my classmates."

"Luna helped me get my foot in the door (in terms of a career)," she said. "It has helped me keep my head straight. My instructors Gene and Paul believed in me — even if they gave me a nickname, 'Dory,' because I am forgetful. They helped me to always be doing the right things and continue my education, no matter how rough things have gotten."

**Continued on page 8**

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

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

**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

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

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

HOSTED BY  
Luna Community College  
HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

## Father-daughter duo...

Continued from page 7

“They took the time to work with me. They do care about me and helping me with my career.”

As graduation day approached, Jasmine is especially excited to share the experience with her dad.

“It feels great,” she said. “I’m a little him. We do a lot of things together; we are both firefighters as well. We’ve had our troubles in the past. It feels great to overcome the struggles we’ve had.”

Jasmine’s mom Candice also helped Gary with some

mechanic work along the way, and she is able to perform basic maintenance like changing tires or motor oil.

“I’m sure she expected me to go into mechanics,” Jasmine said. “I always followed my dad.”

Although Jasmine is considering the possibility of acquiring additional training in welding or collision repair, she said she is currently employed with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and – together with her dad – is looking into obtaining business licensure to provide roadside assistance to motorists.

“I’m pretty hopeful,” she said. “Things are going well. I’m doing well and doing what I love. Every day is like a vacation if you love what you do.”

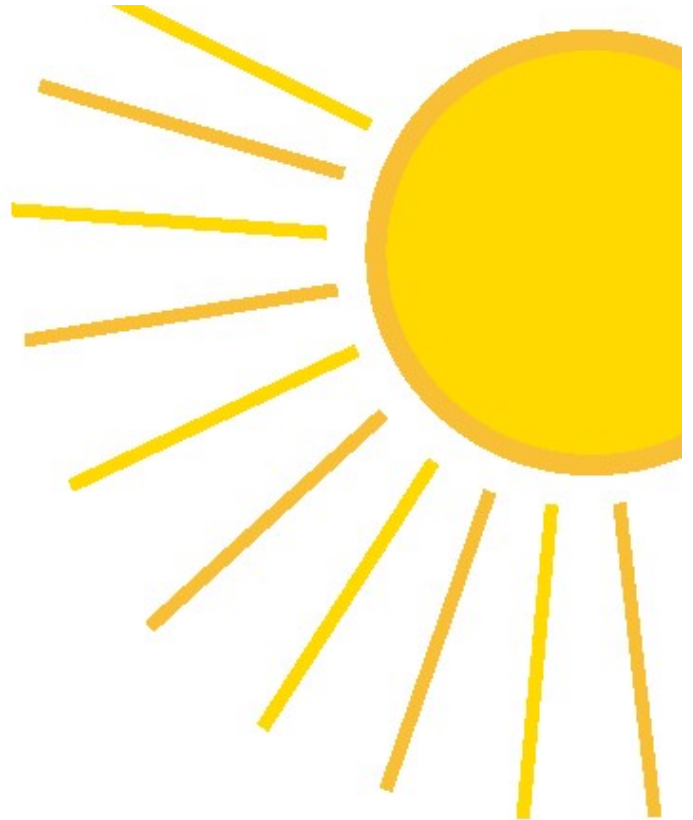


# This summer, work on your dreams, not just your tan.

Whether you're actively pursuing a degree or certificate, looking to acquire new knowledge or skills, or just want to take a class for the fun of it, Luna Community College offers an array of summer courses that suit you.

Check out our Summer 2019 class schedule online at [luna.edu](http://luna.edu). Visit us or call 505-454-2500.

Classes start June 3.  
Last day to register is June 7.



*"Creating Opportunities for You!"*

from **\$38** a credit hour  
**(\$5** for seniors)  
plus fees

## Diversity summit...

Continued from page 4

"We have to humanize it. We have to move away from intellectualizing everything. We have to allow ourselves to feel ... let that drive your instruction."

Stephen DeGiulio of SFCC suggested the rigidity of traditional classroom roles and rules isn't neces-

sarily the best way to ensure real learning takes place.

Kadriye El-Atwani, who works with the New Mexico Public Education Department, said instruction that is more cognizant of cultural and linguistic diversity should be incorporated into everyday coursework, as opposed to being grouped into one additional class specifically on diversity.

A number of presenters shared

some of their own personal experiences. One was NMHU alumnus Gabi Hernandez, who came to the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant from Mexico. At Highlands, she said, she learned not only ways to express herself through art but ways to fight for equity.

"We're going to need every single one of us — every single one of you — to make change happen ... to make a better world," she said.

**Luna Community College faculty members Betsy Sanchez and Nichole Collins were named Outstanding Faculty Service Award winners for the 2018-19 school year. Sanchez teaches pre-engineering and math. Collins teaches computer science.**



**The Luna Community College Montañas del Norte Area Health Education Center recently hosted a New Mexico Allied Council on Tobacco meeting. Public health advocates from around the state are working to reduce the impacts of commercial tobacco use. Elaine Luna is the Luna AHEC director.**

**The Luna Community College Class of 2019 nursing graduates listen to speakers during the annual pinning ceremony. Several hundred relatives and friends joined them for the occasion.**



**Luna vocational education's Karen Wezwick, Gene Sandoval and Germaine Sandoval applaud students from the Class of 2019. Vocations faculty and staff gathered for a recent reception to honor the department's graduates.**

**Melanie Soto-Ramos along with other students and employees recited favorite poetry in the recent "Reading On the Hill," hosted by Luna's Humanities department in late April as part of National Poetry Month.**



**From left, Nicholas Maestas, Hanna Westberg, Kendra Flores and Justin Valdez collect certificates of recognition during the Luna STEM department reception.**