



## *The latest news from Luna Community College*

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Close your eyes. Imagine for a moment that when you opened them again, you could not talk. Imagine that you could not walk – or even move one side of your body.

Imagine not knowing if you'd ever be the same again.

In early April 2020, Luna Community College alumnus Santiago Gallegos – then just 20 years old -- faced this very situation when he suffered two strokes within days of each other. Gallegos, a Robertson High graduate known for his prowess as a lineman for a powerhouse Cardinal football program, was working as a welder at the time. He was getting ready for a day of work when it happened.

“I went to get up, and I just fell,” he recalled.

“He couldn't get up,” said his mother, Gail Rains. “The way he was talking, I couldn't understand him. He was very pale, and sweat was just dripping. And then the left side of his face ... fell.”

Initially, Santiago's younger brother Rico picked him up. Rains saw the ominous symptoms and called 911. Gallegos said he refused to be carried to the ambulance that came and managed to amble to it, dragging a leg that had suddenly lost much of its sensation.

A couple days later, it happened again. This time there would be no stubborn ambling or dragging.

“The second one hit me worse,”



## ‘He never gave up’

*Luna CDL grad  
Santiago Gallegos  
comes back from  
stroke, defies odds*

he said. “From the top of my head to my foot on the left side. I was getting ready for work, got off the couch and I just fell to the floor ... Everything felt like a dream.”

Gallegos found himself being airlifted to the University of New

Mexico Hospital. He was unaccompanied, as the hospital had recently instituted strict protocols due to the surging COVID-19 pandemic.

Back home, Rains struggled to cope with the evolving situation, forcibly separated from a young son who'd just suffered a massive stroke, his fate very much up in the air.

“Everything in your mind starts spinning,” she said. “My dad had suffered a heart attack the year

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## Saluting a career of service to education

Luna Humanities Director Dr. Anita Roybal was recognized for her 41 years in education during a retirement celebration Monday, Sept. 27, at the college. During her career, Dr. Roybal taught kindergarten through 12th grade as well as at the college level. She was also a principal and superintendent and has been Luna’s humanities director for the past six years. Pictured from left are Rick Baca, humanities instructor; Kimberly Baca, humanities instructor; Roybal; and Dr. Edward Martinez, Luna president.

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before. How do you tell them?”

Once medical personnel at UNMH steered Gallegos through the dicey stages and stabilized his condition, a new, sobering reality began to dawn. Though his life had been saved, the prognosis was grim.

“I was told I wasn’t supposed to walk again,” he said.

A torrent of conflicting emotions and thoughts followed this.

“I was kind of angry,” he said. “I felt like my body had let me down ... I was more disappointed in myself. I felt useless, like I was no good.

(And) everything had been going good. I was 20 years old, cruising around in a brand-new pickup. A kid my age, all I wanted to do was party. And work. I just didn’t feel myself. Before, I felt immortal.”

A long period of rehab at an Albuquerque facility lay ahead, and

“I just fell to the floor ... everything felt like a dream.”

**Santiago Gallegos**  
Luna CDL, welding alumnus  
on the stroke he suffered

he’d have to make do without family or friends physically there to support him – again, due to COVID precautions. Rains said she sensed he was becoming depressed and started to send him “Tom & Jerry” cartoon videos to cheer him up.

“Thank goodness for FaceTime,” she said. “We’d do group chat as a family. It was important for him to see us. And for us to see him.”

“I prayed all day every day,” Rains said. “There were times I’d be overwhelmed. I’d leave work and

just come home and cry. And then I’d have to pull myself together.”

“I never said to him ‘If you get better ...’,” she noted. “I said ‘When you get better ...’.”

“My whole mindset was (I’ve got to get stronger) and do what I gotta do,” Gallegos said. “I told myself I can’t be (weak) about it. There was some sadness but mostly anger – but there wasn’t doubt.”

“I was in a wheelchair, going to rehab. The first day I stood up, my doctor said he’d seen people who’d had strokes that weren’t as bad as mine who’d never walked again. I sat there and told him, ‘You don’t know who (...) I am.’”

Gallegos endured seven days a week of three types of therapy – speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy – as he learned to reacquire basic skills

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most people take for granted. How to swallow. How to walk. How to talk. Pushing persistently to regain movement and control of one body part at a time. Even the most grueling late-summer two-a-days in football season had nothing on this regimen.

“Every day I’d wake up, somebody would help me get up, put on my socks, get dressed,” he said. “Nurses and techs, they were maybe five or six years older than me – they’d help me do everything. It’s hard not to be motivated, wanting to make yourself better. Every day I pushed.”

“My family were a big help. My family, my brothers at work too. They put in 50, 60 hour weeks. I thought about them a lot. I thought about my friends and getting back to being myself.”

One day, Gail Rains’ phone rang. “Santi called me and said, ‘Mom, I walked today.’”

“Okay, I told him,’ she continued. “I said, ‘Tomorrow you’re going to walk farther. You’re going to take a few more steps.’ I told him, ‘Never let anybody tell you you’re not going to do something.’”

**“I told him, ‘Never let anybody tell you you’re not going to do something.’”**

**Gail Rains**  
Mother of Santi Gallegos



• • •

On Sept. 7, some 522 days since Gallegos’ first stroke, he passed his state commercial driver’s license exam after completing training through Luna Community College.

It was a day of particular pride for most of his inner circle. For Gallegos himself, it meant a chance to keep working, taking on a new career path after having started as a welder.

“Life changes,” he said. “You’ve got change with it. I can still weld, but slower ... I wanted to stay with the same company I was working for, so I went and got my CDL.”

Gallegos, who’d also earned his welding credentials after attending Luna out of high school, said the college helped him regain his footing as the hard-working individual he’d been.

“I liked Luna,” he said. “I took welding. I took auto body. I got my CDL. All the teachers were cool. I learned a lot there, especially in auto body. I’ve got a couple friends going there now. In CDL, my teacher (Florencio Garcia) worked with me, and we worked around my disability.”

Now his brother Rico is also

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**Santiago Gallegos**  
Luna CDL, welding alumnus

enjoying the Luna experience, enrolling in welding courses. Like his big brother, he’s pursuing a career in vocational trades. Together, they frequently work on projects, just as they have since they first started earning money as kids, shoveling snow or doing yardwork for neighbors.

“Rico’s doing amazing up there (at Luna),” Rains said. “Luna’s been really good for my family. I went to Luna, and other members of my family have too. It’s smaller. It’s more comfortable than having to battle with a (larger) college. It’s affordable. Rico loves the classes up there.”

“I’ve liked it so far,” Rico said. “I’m always getting to learn new things, both in welding and auto body.” He said Santiago taught him much of the basics of welding, and he’s become particularly interested in artistic types of welding.

Rains said her boys have grown increasingly close over the past couple years, and Rico has been glad to help Santiago adapt. “I love that guy,” Gallegos said. “I’d do anything for him. He’s literally picked me up

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## Brushing up on their dental assisting techniques



Luna dental assisting students Ryan Trujillo and Jacqueline Sena practice radiology techniques for the New Mexico State Board Exam. In a recent report by Dental Assistant Life, surveyed dental assistants reported that the most rewarding aspects of their jobs were making a difference in patients' lives, helping patients improve their oral health, and patient relationships and gratitude. For more information on the program, please contact program administrator Gloria Pacheco at 505-454-2528 or [gpacheco@luna.edu](mailto:gpacheco@luna.edu).

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off the floor. He always tries. That's one solid dude."

As for Santiago himself, the road back to normalcy continues. The daily routine includes multiple accommodations to help him move and complete basic activities, though he's moved on from using a cane to walk. There are certain things he can't do, at least not yet. Therapy continues, though less frequent. Regular MRIs are on the schedule, and medications are part of life.

"He's come a long way compared to where he started,"

Rico Gallegos said of his brother. "At first he couldn't walk 15 feet."

But there's been tremendous progress. And there's hope.

"He never gave up," Rains marveled. "He's always been stubborn. But his biggest weakness became his biggest strength."

"He's a stubborn guy," Rico agreed. "He never likes to ask for help either. We only help him when he really needs it."

"There's so many people going through worse," Santiago Gallegos said. "We all go through hardships. We all go through speed bumps. It's the way you get over them that shows who you are."

"We all go through hardships. We all go through speed bumps. It's the way you get over them that shows who you are."

**Santiago Gallegos**  
Luna CDL, welding alumnus  
and stroke survivor

# Nursing continues aid

*Students, faculty contributing to fight against COVID*



**Luna Community College nursing student Amanda Baca administers a COVID-19 vaccination this past semester.**

Luna Community College first-year nursing students are gaining practical experience and at the same time helping the community.

On Thursday, Oct. 14, eight Luna level-one nursing students are scheduled to administer COVID-19 vaccinations at the old Memorial Middle School campus in Las Vegas. A Luna instructor will be onsite to provide guidance to the students. Luna is working with the San Miguel County Public Health Office on this endeavor.

On Thursday, Oct. 21, nursing students will be providing health

screening to senior citizens, also in Las Vegas. In addition, Luna students will give short COVID-19 educational seminars based on scientific facts.

“I’m so proud of our faculty and students for participating in the front lines of COVID-19,” said Luna Nursing Director Maxine Hughes. “We are grateful for the experience our students are getting and grateful that our students are helping our community.”

According to Luna nursing instructor Joy Shrum, they expect to administer 200 to 300 vaccinations. Luna nursing students assisted with

COVID-19 vaccinations last year as well.

Shrum said Luna students expect to participate in 11 COVID-19 vaccination clinics during the fall semester.

“These are opportunities for our students to have real-life scenarios with real-life patients,” said Shrum.

Shrum says Luna offers nursing students advantages they may not have at bigger institutions.

“Our classes are smaller than at larger universities,” says Shrum. “They get one-on-one attention here.”

Luna’s nursing program accepts 24 students per year, and there are four levels -- one level per semester. Once students graduate, they become eligible to take their NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) boards and become licensed registered nurses.

“We have an experienced, dedicated faculty and staff, and we are accredited by ACEN (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing) and approved by the New Mexico Board of Nursing,” says Hughes. “Our NCLEX has been above 80 percent the last six years.”

For more information on Luna’s nursing program, please contact Allied Health Sciences advisor Vanessa Torres at 505-454-2527 or [vatorres@luna.edu](mailto:vatorres@luna.edu).

# Luna softball takes lead role in CROP Walk



**Luna Community College softball players and coach Steve Wallace stand atop the Luna hill as they participate in the 2020 CROP Walk to fight hunger and help in disaster relief. The team plans to walk again in October.**

**T**he Luna Community College softball team is leading a Luna contingent for the second straight year for Las Vegas' CROP Hunger Walk.

The Lady Rough Riders, along with their head coach Steve Wallace, will have their fundraising walk at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 20, starting in front of the Maria H. Paiz Administration Building.

CROP Hunger Walks are community-based walk events held in cities and towns across the nation, raising funds to support the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization that responds to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster around the world.

Locally, 25 percent of all donations will go to support local entities: Comedor de San Pascual Soup Kitchen, Las Vegas Community Soup Kitchen and the

Samaritan House.

"It's important to have our student-athletes active in the community," said Luna softball coach Steve Wallace. "This is for a great cause, and it also builds team unity."

Luna is one of several entities from around the community that have joined the worthy cause. This is the 21st Las Vegas CROP Hunger Walk, and during this time, \$177,000 has been raised, including \$14,000 last year.

The CROP Project was organized in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops in post-World War II Europe and Asia. In 1969, the first walk events were organized in Bismarck, N.D., and York, Pa., to raise money. Since then, CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in communities all over the United States, raising millions of dollars in an effort to

eradicate hunger and poverty.

The fundraising goal for this year's Crop Walk is \$15,000. COVID-19 precautions will take place during the walk.

"We will be asking school employees for donations," said Wallace. "We will provide more information through our college Facebook page and The Luna Light."

According to Crop Walk Coordinator Karyl Lyne, all three of the Las Vegas agencies have reported an increase of people in need of food.

Checks or money orders may be made to CWS/CROP. You can also send checks or money orders to CROP Treasurer, c/o First United Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 37, Las Vegas, NM 87701. You can also donate online at [crophungerwalk.org/lasvegasnm](http://crophungerwalk.org/lasvegasnm).



## Learning about criminal justice

**Salina Rae Chavez from the Albuquerque Metropolitan Detention Center and State Police Officer Gene Gonzales speak with Luna criminal justice students about career opportunities in their field on Monday, Sept. 27. As part of their presentations, both Chavez and Gonzales provided brochures and contact information to students. Luna criminal justice instructor Kimberly Baca organized the event. For more information on the Luna criminal justice program and other studies, please visit [LUNA.edu](https://luna.edu). Baca can be reached at [kbaca@luna.edu](mailto:kbaca@luna.edu).**

# Luna students, employees invited to participate in parade, Matanza on Oct. 23

Luna Community College students and employees are invited to participate in the City of Las Vegas' Community Celebration Walking Parade that will take place at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 23, starting at Carnegie Library, located at 500 National Ave. The parade will culminate at Melody Park on the campus of New Mexico Highlands University. HU will be hosting a Matanza, Back Together, All Together event at Cultural Park across the street from Melody Park on Oct. 23.

Each of the first 100 Luna students and employees who show up to the parade will get a ticket to eat at the Matanza. A Matanza is a Hispanic cultural event that typically is scheduled during the harvest or fall season. Often, the event



**HU's Cultural Park.**

centers around a slow roast of pork in an underground pit. Other food items, such as tamales, posole, beans and beef, will also be served. Tickets will not be sold at the event.

The food at the Matanza will be served from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in a staggered manner.

Volunteer help is needed. Luna employees who would like to volunteer to help at the Matanza are asked to call Josephine Sena at 454-3411.

Luna is part of Vecinos Juntos, an educational partnership group led by Las Vegas Mayor Louie Trujillo and consisting of Luna, NMHU, West Las Vegas and Las Vegas City Schools and the United World College. For more information, please call Jesse Gallegos at 454-5367.

# LANL scholarship available

Luna Community College students are encouraged to apply for a Career Pathways Scholarship, sponsored by the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The scholarship award of up to \$3,000 is for students earning an associate degree or certificate or pursuing a trade.

According to LANL, many scholarship recipients are non-traditional students returning to or entering higher education for the first time. Some are adults returning to school to make a career change, and others needing financial support to complete a semester or two before earning their associate degree.

There is no minimum grade point average requirement, and full-time enrollment is not required. Since 2011, this scholarship has been offered twice per year (fall and spring). Beginning this year, the Career Pathways Scholarship will only be open in the spring, with funding available for the following fall. The scholarship will open Jan. 3 and close April 18.

For more information about our scholarship program, please visit [www.lanlfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.lanlfoundation.org/scholarships). You may also contact scholarship program manager Mike Ammerman at 505-795-3778.

## College Scorecard:

The U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard has the most reliable data on college costs, graduation and post-college earnings. Visit [collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://collegescorecard.ed.gov)

*The Luna Light is a publication of the Luna Community College Office of Public Relations. To submit story ideas or items for consideration, please e-mail Jesse Gallegos, [jgallegos@luna.edu](mailto:jgallegos@luna.edu), and Dave Kavanaugh, [dkavanaugh@luna.edu](mailto:dkavanaugh@luna.edu).*

## New IT and IER director at work



**Greg Salazar gets to work in his new position, the dual role of director of information technology and institutional effectiveness and research at Luna Community College. Salazar brings decades of IT experience in state and county government and is a longtime area resident.**





# ***Covid-19 Guidelines*** Phase 4

In accordance with guidelines issued by the New Mexico Governor's Office, the NM Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), compliance with the following guidelines are required of all individuals on the Luna Community College (LCC) campus. This protocol is implemented to ensure the safety of the LCC campus community. If you do not comply with this safety protocol, entry into offices and classrooms may be refused.

## **Guidelines for Luna Community College**

- Masks are required indoors for all persons on campus.
- Employees may remove masks while alone in a closed office.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly.
- Practice Respiratory Etiquette.
- Utilize sanitizing stations.
- Socially distance a minimum of six (6) feet in indoor setting and three (3) feet in classrooms
- Masks are not required outdoors.



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## **Instructor Guidelines for Classroom Activity**

- All students are required to sign in before each class and must include their current phone number.
- Individuals shall sanitize their hands upon entering the classroom (supplies are provided).
- Students shall wear masks while in the classroom.
- Should a student refuse to wear a mask while in the classroom, the student will be asked to leave.
- The instructor shall wear a mask at all times.
- All individuals in the classroom shall socially distance a minimum of 3 feet in all directions.
- Instructors will ensure all high touch surfaces shall be sanitized after use (such as desktops, chairs, doorknobs, door facings, handrails, etc., supplies are provided).



## Welcome to the Rough Riders

Luna softball coach Steve Wallace (center) gives a campus tour to recruit Alexandra Cook (second from left). Cook, who plays first base and pitcher, is from Fort Stockton, Texas. Also pictured, from left: Izrael Ontiveros, Angelique Cook and Kat Garza.

Join our team and help us serve our communities!

# Employment opportunities

Positions available at Luna Community College

### FULL-TIME

- Humanities and School of Business director ... opened Sept. 3, 2021
- Office manager, Athletics ... opened Sept. 3, 2021
- Financial aid director ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- Technical electrician ... opened July 14, 2021

### TEMPORARY PART-TIME

- College & Career Readiness Institute math and language arts instructors (2) ... opened Aug. 19, 2021
- ACE tutor (6) ... opened Aug. 16, 2021
- Wellness Center technician ... opened July 2, 2021
- Preschool substitute teacher/ caretaker ... opened June 29, 2021

### ADJUNCT (per course)

- CTE furniture and cabinet making instructor, Santa Rosa ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE furniture and cabinet making instructor, Springer ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE furniture and cabinet making instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE commercial drivers license theory instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE commercial drivers license driving instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE welding instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE department welding instructor, Springer ... opened Aug. 26, 2021

- CTE auto technology instructor, Springer ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE auto technology instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021
- CTE department collision repair instructor, main campus ... opened Aug. 26, 2021

Most recent postings listed first. All positions open until filled unless otherwise noted. For more information on each position, please log on to [www.luna.edu/jobs](http://www.luna.edu/jobs)

## Luna Community College

# College and Career Readiness Institute

## Adult Education Program

### We offer ...

- Adult education for learners 16 years and older
- Preparation for High School Equivalency, better known as the GED or HiSET exam
- Exploration of college and career pathways
- A pipeline to Luna Community College certificate and degree programs
- Classes to improve reading, writing and math skills for high school graduates
- Classes in foundational computer skills as well as English language reading, writing and speaking skills
- Proven methods to improve life and employment

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How much does it cost?**

A: Nothing!

**Q: How do I register for classes?**

A: Registration is ongoing and completed at <https://forms.gle/WiNER9hS7inzgT9h6> or you can come in to one of our sites and complete the registration in person.

**Q: Where are you located?**

A: We have sites in Las Vegas, Mora, Raton and Santa Rosa.

**Q: What type of classes are being offered?**

A: Reading, writing and math, digital literacy and job skills classes. We offer face-to-face, online and distance learning.

**Q: When do classes start?**

A: We follow the LCC academic calendar with both eight-week face-to-face and online classes starting Aug. 23, Oct. 18, 2021, and Jan. 17 and March 21, 2022.

### For more information:

505-454-2564

lbentson@luna.edu

## Achieve a better future ... one step at a time.

