

Catch the Next-Puente- College Success Program

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Crossing Bridges, Catching Dreams Newsletter

January 2015- Volume 3. No. 8

Reflections on The First Semester in College By Puente Students Special



Palo Alto College Puente Students. Debra McBeath's Cohort quoted below:

"My first semester of Puente was wonderful. Having a family on the first day breaks the ice of meeting new friends. The field trip was my favorite event this semester. Seeing Texas State opened up my mind to see how different it is at an university."-
Isai deHoyos

"What I learned about being a writer is that it takes time and grit.....My strength is knowing my weaknesses and asking for help when I need it."-**Isai deHoyos**

"When I needed help with something, I knew there was always someone I could count on. I enjoyed making my poster, and I enjoyed doing something that was going to help me grow." -**Valerie Trejo**

"I learned that I am a great writer, but I still have a lot of improvements to show. I have a good mind, with good thoughts."-
Valerie Trejo

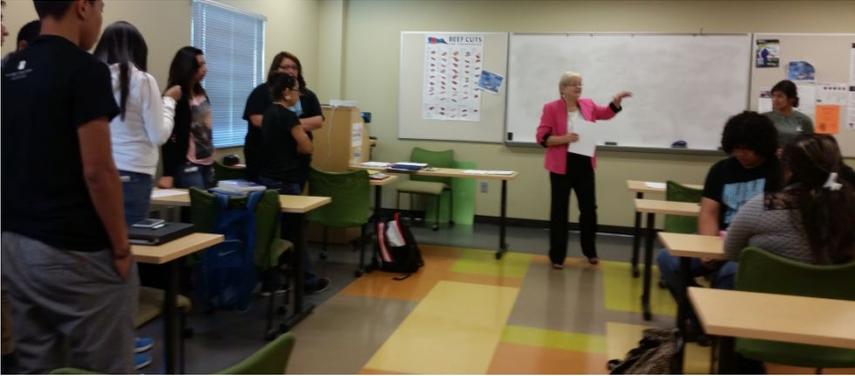
"What I enjoyed the most were the readings of Hispanic stories. I'm very in tune with my heritage and love learning new things about it."-**Annette Ortiz**

"The one essay that we did that made me realize a lot about myself was the value essay. We had to write what we valued most, and I picked religion. I never thought I would pick a topic like that, but once I started writing, it came natural to me. It was then that I realized that I'm closer to my religion that I thought."-**Annette Ortiz**

"My first semester in Puente was great. There is no better feeling that coming to a new campus and knowing that you have been selected to be in an organization. Puente's idea of family groups was a great way to help students learn about one another. The events were fantastic because you could socialize with others in a nice setting outside of the classroom."-**Jesus Gamaz**

"What I learned about being a writer is to follow the steps. Before I did not know the steps of writing. Now I know the steps to write essays."-**Sergio Alvarez**

Puente Student Reflections



"Working in groups was a good experience because it improved my communication with other people. -**Sergio Alvarez**

"The essay that I really loved and enjoyed doing was the definition essay about family. I really enjoyed that one because it made me realize what I had. It took me back to when I was younger and how things have changed."-**Alejandrina Castillo**

"My first semester in Puente was a big learning experience. I like the whole "family" theme. It made making friends a lot easier. Working in groups was a good idea. It made the work better by having everyone take charge and also seeing everybody's creative side. The trips with the club were fun, and the events were even better. It was a chance for my mom to see what I was doing and what I was a part of at Noche de Familia."-**Courtney Watson**

"I feel my first semester in Puente was a success. The idea of being in families shows us how we can count on each other to help with class assignments or things outside of class. The events we had like meeting our mentor shows us that there are people out there who can lend a helping hand to a person who is starting a new chapter in life."-**Ryan Cardenas**

"When I first heard that I was involved in Puente, I thought it was a waste of time. All I wanted to do was just to go to class and leave-not having to be involved in anything else. Now that the semester is over, I like being involved. The family groups were a fun way to get to know my classmates."-**Albert Rabogo**

"As I look back to where I started, I feel like I have become a better writer and a better person. I have the idea that when you write, you put emotions into it and it makes you feel better."-**Dan Zapata**

"When I first heard about Puente, I was excited. I was nervous, scared, and didn't know a thing about being a college student. Puente helped me transition from being in high school to being a college student. At first when I heard the idea of this program being a familia, I couldn't wrap my head around it, but now after spending this semester with Puente, I completely understand. Puente is familia. Puente professors provide an environment that proves it. They are there for you, supporting you and pushing you just like a family." -**Crystal Tijerina**

"As a first time college student, I found the Puente program to be very helpful and fun. The Puente program helps students stay in school because with the idea of familias, it allows the student to get to know everyone that is in your class and make new friends. All the Puente trips we went on were very informative."-**Arturo Espin**

CTN Salutes our Mentors During National Mentoring Month

President Barack Obama joined the efforts of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR), the Harvard School of Public Health and the Highland Street Foundation by declaring January 2015 National Mentoring Month through a [presidential proclamation](#). In 2014, President Obama highlighted the critical role mentoring can play in shaping and strengthening communities through the [My Brother's Keeper](#) initiative. President Obama was quoted in his proclamation as saying, "In a Nation of limitless possibility, every child deserves the chance to unlock his or her potential. When young Americans have the support they need to make the most of themselves, they can achieve their dreams and strengthen our country, which has always moved forward by extending ladders of opportunity to the next generation. Every day, mentors play a vital role in this national mission by helping to broaden the horizons for our daughters and sons. This month, we celebrate these individuals who make it their cause to bring out the best in our young people, and we salute their spirit of service"

Student Reflections on Mentors

"Once I became a part of Puente, I felt like it was a great opportunity to stretch my thinking and improve my writing skills. I was introduced to my familia and we became close, almost like family. I was assigned a mentor and we hung out together outside of school. I learned new things from her. She told me all sorts of things about her freshman year and how she pulled through. Meeting my mentor at Noche de Familia was my favorite part of the program." -**Danielle Coulter**

....getting to go to Texas State University was a cool trip. I really enjoyed it and had an amazing adventure. I've never visited a university so that's why I say it was a very cool experience. Meeting my mentor was even better. Knowing that there is someone out there to help is just a great feeling." -**Gabriella Mendez**

"The family groups helped me to get to know and meet new people and has also helped me to open up more knowing that I'm shy. I also love the mentor part. I might not speak to her as often due to life and work, but I've never been treated any better." -**Daphani Garcia**

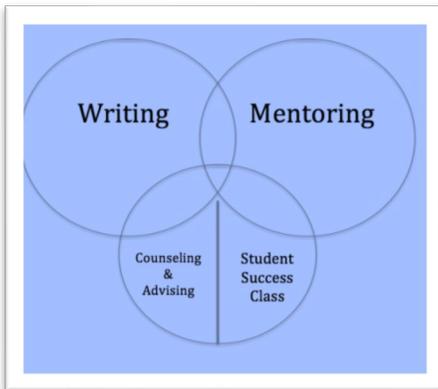
"I liked to be in the Puente program because in here we are like familia. We had to sit in familia groups in each class and we changed familias like three times. This gave us the chance to speak with different persons each time. We shared opinions, and sometimes they were not the same. I liked to have a mentor and the night I met her was great. Cynthia, my mentor, sat with me and we had conversation. That night everyone looked very happy because we were having dinner like a familia." -**Mariel Villarreal**

"My first semester in Puente was full of helpful teachers who helped me through the process of my first few months in college. They persuaded me to examine my career and also myself. The idea of the family groups made the class a little more comfortable. The reason being is that when doing group projects, everyone had a part to do. The Puente trips were an insight into our future goals, opening up more possibilities. Having mentors was also a good experience." -**Joe Gonzalez**

"My mentor is so amazing. I feel her passion for helping others and wanting to do everything possible to help. I might join her next time when she talks to young girls at her church." -**Karolina Martinez**

"My first semester in Puente was an amazing learning experience. Puente was very helpful to me because they gave me a mentor. My mentor is an amazing woman who gives amazing advice. She pushes me to do better." -**Mistyblu Pacheco**

Mentoring key to Puente Framework



The Puente Project is a national-award winning program that for over 30 years has improved the college-going rate of tens of thousands of California's educationally disadvantaged students.

Puente's mission is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees and return to the community as mentors and leaders to future generations.

Puente's interdisciplinary approach combines accelerated writing instruction, intensive academic counseling, and mentoring by members of the professional community to provide a focused, sustained, and engaging learning environment for students. Professional Development is at the core of Puente's for change. This

multifaceted model provides students with individual, culturally sensitive, academic and career counseling designed to help the student transfer to a four-year institution.

Improving Mentoring Perceptions and Outcomes

Palo Alto College's mentoring process is ongoing. At this time the current Mentoring Coordinator Stacy Ybarra Evans is looking for mentors at a company called Rackspace. Rackspace is a managed cloud

computer company based in Windcrest, Texas and is a suburb of San Antonio, Texas. Last year the Palo Alto College Puente program found many of its mentors through a bank called Jefferson bank. Some great practices to finding good mentors is reaching out to company Human Resource office's. Many companies require their employees to give back to their community through the form of mentorship. A great book to check out about mentoring is called "Good Mentoring, Fostering Excellent Practice in Higher Education". This book discusses how mentors can transmit knowledge, skills and guiding values that support good work that is excellent in quality, socially responsible and meaningful to practitioners.

<http://www.thegoodproject.org/publications/books/good-mentoring-fostering-excellent-practice-in-higher-education/>

More Than a Program, More Than a Class: Creating Social Change Puente Mentoring Presentation- TX State Student Success Symposium

January six, Lee College Puente Team Members: Victoria Marron, Treva Brown-Askey, Orlando Lara and student Irene Pena, presented at the TX State Student Success Symposium on the Puente Project Mentoring Program. "Through a Hispanic Serving Institutions STEM grant, easier transitions have been created. Puente inspires critical thinking skills for creative solutions to global and societal problems."

Victoria Marron, Lee Puente and STEM leader Irene was also able to have a private tour of TX State University thanks to their Title V Grant Director. She will hopefully transfer there Fall 2015.

Thank you Puente Student Mentors in Texas

CTN-Puente Mentors are just like our students. Many of them are first generation college graduates and like our students, they encountered some of the same barriers adjusting and succeeding in college. Their stories are inspiring and for national mentoring month, we wanted to highlight a few of their stories selected from: *Catching Dreams: A Collection of Inspiring Puente Mentor Stories* by Diane N. Lerma from Palo Alto College and edited by Rafael Castillo. The Foreword was written by Maria Chavez. Please go to Page 9 to read these moving stories. For an electronic version of the book contact: Dlerma@alamo.edu

Catch the Next wants to thank student mentors for their leadership and service to our Initiative. We also want to thank our Peer Mentors: Scholars, Authors and Community Leaders for their service.

CTN Peer Mentoring Program An Interdisciplinary Community of Theory and Practice

Whether one is a student, a beginning faculty member or administrator, one is advised to seek a mentor. Catch the Next, Inc., agrees with this notion and feels that in addition to mentoring students, faculty and administrators participating in the CTN-Puente Initiative could also benefit from participating in a peer mentoring program. Through a mentor, Faculty can develop as leaders through the receipt of professional and institutional information: support, sponsorship, and stimulation; advice, assistance, and guidance and feedback and direction toward goals. Faculty involved in mentoring are more likely to have opportunities to develop not only professionally (career orientating but also personally (psycho-social-cultural needs) over the span of their careers.

“Not only does mentoring develop the professions; by not mentoring, we are wasting talent. We educate, and train, but don’t nurture.”¹

CTN peer mentors are leaders within and outside of academia that serve as role models to our students and serve as a resource to our Initiative. Peer Mentors fall in four categories:

1. Scholar Mentors.

Scholar Mentors are distinguished faculty committed to Latino education, and or are academics in the disciplines associated with the Puente framework which are the language arts and educational psychology and counseling, and research and evaluation.

2. Author Mentors.

Author Mentors are published writers outside of academia who have distinguished themselves in the literary world, and often write about the Latino community.

3. Community Leadership Mentors.

Community Leadership Mentors are leaders within and outside of academia that have distinguished themselves professionally and continue to serve the Latino Community.

4. Community college personnel.

Faculty and administrators involved in the implementation and or evaluation of the CTN-Puente framework.

Peer Mentors visit colleges at their convenience and serve as guest speakers within and outside of the classroom. In addition, Peer Mentors could be asked to be a guest speaker at College event, class, or at professional development activities at the college level. In some cases when a Peer Mentor resides in a community where one of our Colleges is located, the Peer Mentor could provide opportunities for the participation of students in leadership and community activities. Peer mentors are available to address questions online, and can also be engaged through: CTN’s knowledge development working group and through our CTN-Puente Professional Development Institutes. Peer Mentors support CTN-Puente’s mission of encouraging students to contribute to their community as leaders and mentors.

CTN- Puente Colleges and Staff in the News

Lee College: Treva Brown Askey Promoted to Division Chair

¹ Wright, C.A., and Wright, S.D. 1987, p.207. “Young Professionals.” Family Relations 36(2): 204-8. Cited by Luna, Gayle-Cullen, and Deborah L.

I've had a great school year. Teaching within the Puente Program was so life enriching in so many ways. I've never had the opportunity to share my story with you and so let's just say it felt like home for me. I experienced so much growth from working with the students and being able to share with them. I started the year with presenting the Puente Program with Victoria at a Conference at Texas State. It was awesome and the attendees asked so many questions about the program. Last week, I was honored with being named the new Division Chair for Developmental Education. I'm honored and see this as an opportunity to help effect change at our college. Looking forward to seeing everyone in March. Treva Brown-Askey, Education 1300 Puente Faculty.

Lee College Finalist for Excellence Award by American Association of Community Colleges

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) recently announced their finalists for seven Excellence Awards categories. I am pleased to report to you that Lee College is a finalist in two categories: (1) Exemplary CEO/Board, and (2) Student Success. The winners will be announced at the AACC Conference in San Antonio on the evening of April 20th. This is exciting news. Whether we win the awards or not, just being selected as a finalist is a reward in itself. Only three other Texas community colleges were among the 28 finalists. I will send more information as it becomes available. The announcement of the finalists is attached. Dr. Dennis Brown President [Lee College](#)

Scholar Mentor Linda Hagerdon Meets with Puentistas



January 15, Dr. Hagerdon had a Teleconference with our Puente Program staff. To hear her presentation go to:

<http://ctnext.pbworks.com/w/browse/#view=ViewFolder¶m=January%202015-%20Linda%20Hagedorn>

Hagerdon is Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, Student Services, Diversity and Equity, and Community Program at Iowa State University. Hagerdon has been the recipient of several awards including the Senior Scholar Award from the Council for the Study of Community Colleges and *Mujeres de Excelencia* Award from the Institute of Hispanic-Latino Cultures. Her recent published works include; *Looking in the Rearview Mirror: Factors Affecting Transfer for Urban Community College Students*; *An investigation of critical mass: The role of Latino representation in the success of urban community college students* and *Serving Latinos: The history and growth of Hispanic-serving institutions*.

Upcoming Events/ Save the Date January 29-31

Palo Alto to Present on their Mentoring Program

Palo Alto College Mentor Coordinator, Stacy Ybarra will Present at TX STEM Program Conference – January 29-31, 2015 – Marriott North Austin Hotel. Presenter: Stacy Ybarra

Abstract

Many students in Puente at Palo Alto Collge are STEM majors who are matched with a STEM mentor. The workshop will address best practices that have been extracted from the three Puente components: English, counseling and mentoring.

<http://www.txstem.org/images/files/TxSTEM-Program-AsOf2014-Dec18.pdf>

Upcoming Events/ Save the Date, February 11- 14

Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education 40th Annual Conference

The Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education will hold its conference February 11-14, 2015 Camino Real Historic Hotel, El Paso. Mauricio Rodriguez, TACHE President elect and Puente Faculty Member, is serving as Chair for the event. For more information go to:

<http://www.tache.org/Conference/RegisterforConference.aspx>

Upcoming Events/ Save the Date February 19



Scholar Mentor, Dr. Ramon Antonio Martinez will be the gues speaker at the CTN conference call for Lessons Learned, Promising Practices is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, at 5pm EST; 4pm CST; 3pm MST and 2pm PST. To access the call please dial: [\(302\) 202-1110](tel:3022021110) Code: Code: 519698

Dr. Ramón Antonio Martínez is an assistant professor in Language and Literacy Studies and a faculty affiliate with Bilingual/Bicultural Education and the Center for Mexican American Studies. His research examines how the everyday language practices of Chicana/Chicano and Latina/Latino students overlap with the forms of academic language and literacy privileged in school settings. In addition, Dr. Martínez explores how competing ideologies inform language policy and classroom practice in urban schools, and how students and teachers in those schools articulate, embody, and challenge such ideologies in their everyday interactions. Before earning his doctorate from the Division of Urban Schooling at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Dr. Martínez worked as an elementary school teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District. He will be discussing research on exploring the awareness of Spanish-English Code-Switching and ways on how to better connect Puente students by connecting translating experiences to academic writing.

Save the Date- February 26

Lee College Students to Present at the TX FOCO Conference Feb. 26.

Some of our Lee College students, as well as Victoria Marron, Puente Leader will be presenting in February for the TX FOCO at Lone Star- North Harris Community College. The students will be part of a panel titled: Our First Year College Experience as a First Gen Student. This panel will allow attendees to hear directly from a group of 5 college freshman whom are first generation college students. Attendees of this session will hear how these young students are and have navigated the transition of high school to college. "Registration information can be found at:www.TejasFoco2015.org<<http://www.TejasFoco2015.org>><<http://www.tejasfoco2015.org/>>

Save the Date March 12

American Association Hispanics in Higher Education
Latino Student Success Institute
Leveraging Latino Student Assets and High Impact Practices to
Foster Equity and Student Success

Maria Chavez CTN Chief Education Officer and Texas Puente Director was invited by Scholar Mentor Laura Rendon to be part of a panel titled: Fostering Student Success in Community Colleges. Dr. Chavez will be joined by Alfred Herrera, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Partnerships & Director, UCLA Center for Community College Partnerships. The event will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel & Convention Center, Frisco, Texas

Save the Date March 25-27



*Catch the Next-Puente
Spring Institute:
Celebrating the Power of Puente*

Casa De Las Palmas Hotel
101 N, Main Street
McAllen, Texas

For more information contact:
Mariamarthachavez@catchthenext.org

Save the Date March 26

Global LEAD Summit is designed to bring attention and discussion to critical issues in Latino education worldwide. This year's Global LEAD will focus on engaging dialogue in order to help create bridges between Latino Education in Latin America and the U.S. Representatives from different countries will

form part of each panel ensuring that different sectors of the world will be able to discuss some of the initiatives within those research fields. Location, University of Texas at San Antonio. RSVP at <http://tinyurl.com/UTSAGlobalLead>

Catching Dreams Selected Stories

Mentors Make A Difference by Rosie Castro

(Mother of Julian and Joaquin Castro, HUD secretary and Congressman.)

I grew up liking school and doing well at school. I went to a small catholic school, Little Flower, from first through 12th grade. I was the valedictorian of my class and received a scholarship to Our Lady of the Lake. I wanted to be an English teacher but was discouraged by advisors because I was Mexican American and though I spoke perfect English I was counseled to make Spanish my major. Despite my limited ability to speak Spanish, I majored in Spanish and minored in English with a secondary teaching certificate.

When I took psychology my freshman year, I found an extraordinary mentor named Dr. Margaret Kramer. She was a superb teacher who took me under her wing and introduced me to all the elected officials in San Antonio. She helped me find confidence in myself and abilities I never knew I had. I took all the classes I could with her. I started a Young Democrats Club and she became our sponsor. She urged me to testify before a state legislative committee in Texas on the right to vote at 18. I went on to become the President of the Young Democrats at OLL followed by Bexar county chair and finally Vice President of the state Young Democrats. My life took an exciting turn. Dr. Kramer and I remain friends to this day.

Words of Wisdom: Find a mentor early in your college career. The synergy between mentor and mentee is incredible and invaluable.

Rosie Castro received her Bachelor's of Arts degree in Spanish from Our Lady of the Lady University. Rosie is presently employed at Palo Alto College as the Director for the Center of Academic Transition.

The Lunch Box by Abel Gonzales

In my senior year in high school, I was rounding up the last few courses before waking the stage feeling confident and on top of the world because I knew a new chapter awaited me. I got called to the counselor's office one day and I knew why. My friends had talked about their meetings and mentioned their college plans. My visit, however, was far different from what I had heard so far. We had our initial introductions and then the dialogue got a bit more serious very quickly.

The Lunch Box Continued:

My counselor asked me what I would be doing after high school, and I replied "I guess I'll go to college!" My counselor looked at me after a brief silence, and re-shuffled my academic file. He sighed and looked me square in the face and said, "Abel, you're not college material son!" I was a little surprised and was literally at a loss for words. He looked at me again and said, "You going to college is a complete waste of your time!" Just like that the confidence was gone. I was a different person after

that meeting and I remember a feeling of emptiness. I felt this pain in the depths of my gut that seemed to intensify with every breath. As I stumbled out of his office, I remember thinking to myself and wondering if he was right about me. I remember looking at his wall of fame that touted diplomas from multiple colleges, and service awards for 5, 10, and 15 years. So I came to the conclusion that he was right, and maybe I had just wasn't college material. After high school, I worked in a warehouse in San Antonio for about two years and I often, would day dream about that meeting with my counselor and came to the conclusion that he was right. I was the guy that loaded large trucks before they went out to stores across the state. It was a difficult job in cold weather or the scorching heat.

It was a depressing two years that seemed like a rerun of the day before. I'd get up and put on the same uniform every day and do the same thing. One morning my father was at the table and he asked me if I had a lunch box. "No", I replied. He looked at me and reached into a drawer and pulled out his old lunch box that he used for the last 10 years before he retired and said, "Here, son. Now this is yours." My father was a hard-working man and held a blue collar position for thirty-two years at Kelly Air Force Base. In some ways I was honored, but a feeling of disbelief came over me that made me ask myself, "Is this what my life will be for the next 25 years and is this my destiny, too?" The lunch box represented to me, the grind.. and the routine of day to day life for what seemed like an eternity. I came to the realization after two years of working in a warehouse that the lunch box, was not for me just yet. In order to change my situation I would have to gain an education and prove to myself—and my counselor—that I could be college material if I wanted it bad enough.

My parent's home was close to Palo Alto College and I would drive by the campus after a long and exhausting day. I remember thinking, "I wonder what it's like to be a student there?" One day on my way to work, I heard an advertisement about testing and registration. With curiosity and nervousness, I called and set an appointment to test and meet with an advisor. I was still asking myself if someone like me could make it at PAC, but after reflecting on the last two years, I knew that something needed to change. I tested and met with an advisor and received a lot of encouragement. After taking one class and achieving success, my self-confidence improved. I earned my Associates degree from PAC, and then transferred to a university. Now I'm working alongside my former professors helping students who have dropped out of high school to get a second chance at their education.

Words of wisdom: Don't accept what other people think is right for you, create your own way and follow your own dreams.

Abel Gonzales earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Texas A&M-Kingsville. Abel is the Director of the Gateway to College program at Palo Alto College.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty by Bridgedette Ynman

I wanted to break the cycle. I am the second child born to an unwed teen mother with only a high school education. We had no child support, no working vehicle, received food stamps and had no furniture to sleep or sit on. Somehow I knew that there had to be better out there in the world, especially when it came to making sure we had electricity to run the water cooler during hot Texas days.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Continued:

I saw my Mom work hard to try and earn enough to provide for our home and even after watching violence happen in our home and around our neighborhood, I was committed to doing better. I gave extra effort in school and received high honors and with that came pride. I was building of a strong sense of self. As an inner-city student, I had a transitional moment in 5th grade. I was caught living out of district, three months before the end of my 5th grade year. The school I was attending was a

predominantly Hispanic lower socioeconomic school and I loved being there every day because I blended in; where I was really supposed to be enrolled was filled with Caucasian students whose parents were either a “Longhorn” or an “Aggie”. These words had no meaning. This was the first time in my life that I was ever told that I was poor. The students at my “new” school questioned why I rode the bus to get to school and why my parents were not dropping me off. They also wanted to know why my shoes didn’t have a “swoosh” on them. Apparently, I was poor, but never knew it.

While I didn’t have the material things in life that others were privileged to have, I had something much more valuable, I was determined and I wanted to be different than what I saw growing up. So as I transitioned in to middle school, I set goals to stay focused on my talent in education, going above and beyond to turn in the best projects, taking time to talk to my teachers, trying sports and joining clubs. All the time while I was excelling in school, my mom was being passed up for promotions since she didn’t have a formal education. She was once given a 25-cent raise and was told to be thankful for receiving that much. She reminded me with those constant words, that no matter the situation, we should always “show our education.”

My second transitional moment came when I found out that my biological father had a \$1 bet going that I would not even make it out of high school without getting pregnant (and I would be just like my Mom). My Mom spoke a second phrase that encouraged me, “it’s not where you start, but where you finish.” The transition to high school came quickly and to prove him wrong, I accepted the challenge of honors courses. I graduated from high school at the top 11% of my class of 600. This is where my third transitional moment happened: my Mom and I both enrolled in college. She said that if she was telling us to go to college that she herself should lead by example. It was long nights of studying and working in our respective jobs, but two years and one semester later, Mother’s Day weekend 2003 we crossed the stage together in our blue cap and gowns to accept our Associate of Arts degrees.

My mom never gave up on our family, herself or her vision to do better for her family. She continued to go to school part time for nine years to complete her Bachelor’s degree in International Business and earned a 3.8 GPA. She will walk the stage in May 2013 with her Master of Business Administration! I, too, have taken that famous phrase of “Show your education” to heart and have broken the cycle of poverty. Each day I am able to help other people who are on their own journey to success and remind them to never give up (no matter who tells them they can’t), because they could be inspiring someone in their family, just like my mom did for me.

Words of Wisdom: Be persistent. There will always be someone out there to tell you that you “can’t.” Never lose sight of what is important to you and fulfilling your dreams. Surround yourself with people who pull you up, not down. Dream big and write it down! Set goals of when you will achieve your dreams, because when you have a plan you will continue to move forward.

Bridgedette Ynman earned her Associates of Arts degree from San Antonio College, Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master’s degree in Public Administration from The University of Texas at San Antonio. Bridgedette is employed at Northeast Lakeview College as the Coordinator of Recruitment.

It’s Never Too Late
by David Lerma

When I was young, I got into trouble for taking my toys apart. I was curious to know how things worked. In school I never felt smart. After graduation, I learned air-condition repair. It was rewarding helping people, but the work was hard, often climbing into hot, dusty attics. I knew that a promotion for an indoor desk job was out of my reach because of my lack of education.

I stayed in the blue-collar field until my present employer offered education benefits. With the encouragement of my family, I made the decision to pursue my education after being out of school for twenty years. Walking into my first class, I felt out of place. However, I had always felt I could be somebody and I stayed focused. I'm glad I did. When I finished seven years later, it was the greatest feeling. My family was so proud of me and I had set a good example for my sons. Today, I finally have my desk job. All the sacrifice of going to class after work and the late night studying was worth it.

Words of wisdom: Don't lose sight of your goals. Stay focused. I am proof that it's never too late to go to college. If you meet someone who says you're too old or not smart enough, don't get upset or discouraged, but do send them an invitation to your graduation ceremony.

David Lerma earned an Associate of Arts degree from Northwest Vista College and a Bachelors of Arts degree in Business Administration from Our Lady of the Lake University. David is employed at Standardaero as a Production Planner.

Interesting Reading

The Condition of Latinos in Education:2015 Factbook

Excelencia in Education is releasing [*"The Condition of Latinos in Education: 2015 Factbook"*](#) with analysis of the entire educational pipeline and the context in which Latino students are learning.

The 2015 Factbook provides timely information about current Latino student educational achievement and establishes a baseline from which to measure performance over time..

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Trending Higher Educational Articles

President Obama Plans to Make Community Colleges Free

<http://m.dailykos.com/story/2015/01/09/1356600/-Obama-plan-would-make-community-college-free?detail=action>

I Owe It All to Community College:

Tom Hanks on His Two Years at Chabot College

[\[https://files.ctctcdn.com/152b95bc001/19155ccc-12df-4a45-98e0-ee7ef3badba8.jpg\]](https://files.ctctcdn.com/152b95bc001/19155ccc-12df-4a45-98e0-ee7ef3badba8.jpg)

Interesting Reading

Raising Ambitions: The Challenge in Teaching at Community Colleges

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/nyregion/raising-ambitions-the-challenge-in-teaching-at-community-colleges.html?_r=1&referrer

Urban Institute: “Children of Immigrants Data Tool”
<http://datatools.urban.org/features/childrenOfImmigrants/chart/coi.html#>

New Chart Comparing The best tools for creating educational posters and infographics

<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/12/infographic-making-tools-for-teachers.html?cid=dlvr.it>

New Year New Approach – The Good Work Toolkit

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/14/12/new-year-new-approach>

Policy Meets Pathways: A State Policy Agenda for Transformational Change

This national report released by Jobs for the Future offers some solutions to address one of the biggest challenges in higher education—college completion. The report urges states and institutions to tackle transformative change by building structured pathways to help community college students who are struggling to succeed in today’s economy.

Trending on Technology

TEDBlog – How do you find stillness

<http://blog.ted.com/2014/12/11/how-do-you-find-stillness-a-poll-of-the-ted-community/>

Why It’s Time To Think About Tech-Life Balance

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/francesbooth/2014/12/08/why-its-time-to-think-about-tech-life-balance/> Purdue

E-Learning Trends To Follow In 2015

<http://www.edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2014/12/10-online-learning-trends-watch-2015-infographic-0>

Top 10 Education Next Blog Entries of 2014

<http://educationnext.org/top-10-education-next-blog-entries-2014/>

Reflection, Conversation and Socratic Spaces

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/reflection-conversation-and-socratic-spaces-chris-davis?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=blog-reflection-conversation-socratic-spaces-quote

Trending Other

Five Business Goals To Achieve In The New Year

<http://stanfordbusiness.tumblr.com/post/105641176494/five-business-goals-to-achieve-in-the-new-year>

University Offers Online Courses for All on edX

https://www.edsurge.com/n/2014-12-29-purdue-university-offers-online-courses-for-all-on-edx?utm_content=buffer5861c&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

What Cloud Computing in Admissions in Analytics, ROI and IT.

<http://www.edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2013/09/what-cloud-computing-admissions-means-analytics-roi-and-it#BEYASDSAvtLPuxW.97>

College Completion Data Map

<http://completecollege.org/college-completion-data/>

11 Alternatives to Round Robin Reading

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/alternatives-to-round-robin-reading-todd-finley?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=blog-alternatives-to-round-robin-reading-link

Professional Opportunities

Lee College is seeking a Dean of Academic Studies. For more information go to: <https://jobs.lee.edu>.

CONTRIBUTING PICTURES/ARTICLES:

Stacy Ybarra, Debra McBeath, Rafael Castillo (editor) Victoria Marron, Treva Brown Askey, Diane Lerma, President Dennis Brown, Mauricio Rodriguez and the Palo Alto Integrated Reading and Writing Students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO SUBMIT STORIES AND PICTURES CONTACT:

Maria Martha Chavez Brumell, Ph.D.
Chief Education Officer/Texas Director
Catch the Next, Inc.
275 Madison Ave., 14th floor
New York, New York 10016.
212-878-6650. Direct: 203-508-3129
MariaMarthaChavez@catchthenext.org

Catch the Next website: www.catchthenext.org
Twitter @catchcollege