



CATCH THE NEXT



NEWSLETTER

November
Volume 12, No. 3

Happy Thanksgiving from CTN



In this season of gratitude, we want to express our deepest thanks to each member of our CTN Familia. Your collective efforts contribute to the transformative power of education, making a lasting impact on individuals and, by extension, our society. Together, we are not just an organization; we are a family united by a common purpose – to ignite the flame of knowledge and illuminate the path to a brighter future.

As we pause to reflect on the spirit of Thanksgiving, our heart swells with gratitude for the remarkable individuals who make up our dedicated community. To the Catch The Next Staff Members, whose tireless efforts behind the scenes ensure the seamless operation of our organization, thank you. Your commitment and hard work lay the foundation for our success, and your passion for our mission is evident in every task you undertake.

A heartfelt appreciation extends to the esteemed Board Members, institutional partner colleges, their staff, and administrators who contribute their time, wisdom, and expertise to steer us towards excellence. Your strategic vision, leap of faith to be part of our community of practice and leadership inspire confidence, driving Catch The Next to new heights. Your belief in the power of education as a force for positive change is a beacon guiding us forward.

A genuine thank you to our Peer Mentors, a distinguished group comprising scholars, authors, and community leaders, whose unwavering commitment has played an instrumental role in guiding CTN to new heights. Their wisdom, expertise, and passion have not only enriched CTN's endeavors but have also served as a beacon of inspiration for all. Additionally, we express our sincere appreciation to our CTN Leadership Fellows for their

dedication and vision. We are immensely grateful to our esteemed funders, the Meadows Foundation, The Communities Foundation of Texas, and the Anne Kleberg Foundation, whose generous support has been the cornerstone of our achievements. Your belief in our mission has empowered us to make a lasting impact, and for that, we are truly thankful.

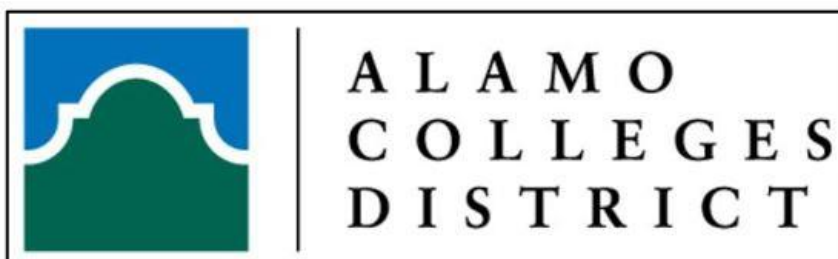
To the Ascender Faculty, the heartbeat of our academic endeavors, thank you for imparting knowledge, fostering critical thinking, and instilling a love for learning in our students. Your dedication goes beyond the curriculum; it shapes the minds of the next generation, empowering them to face the challenges of the future with resilience and intelligence.

Last but certainly not least, a resounding thank you to the Ascender Staff members who work tirelessly to create an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. Your support, whether administrative or emotional, is the backbone of our educational community. Your kindness and efficiency create a nurturing space where both faculty and students can flourish.

We hope this Thanksgiving was a time of reflection, joy, and connection with loved ones. As we celebrated this giving season, let us also celebrate the abundance of dedication, passion, and talent within our CTN Familia. Here's to you, and the incredible work we continue to achieve together.

**Thank you to all the
CTN *Lead the Change* Sponsors
who make it possible for students to transform their lives.**

With your generous donations during our gala totaling \$8,225, CTN will be able to provide paid internships to our Ascender students.



Gold Sponsor

Alamo Colleges District (ACD) is the largest provider of higher education in South Texas. Its five independent colleges (including Palo Alto College and San Antonio College which offer the CTN Ascender program) provide two-year degrees that focus on preparing students to transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions and workforce development programs that help build new careers and meet the needs of business; ten education and training centers that offer a wide range of education and training for the community and military; and three district support operations centers.



Silver Sponsor

Special thanks to Dr. Ruth Reinhart, ACC Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Support Services, who sponsored the gala

Austin Community College is a nationally recognized college serving Central Texas as the primary gateway to higher education and technical training opportunities. Their mission is to provide open-door access to an affordable college education for students who want to earn a degree, learn a marketable skill, or advance their careers.

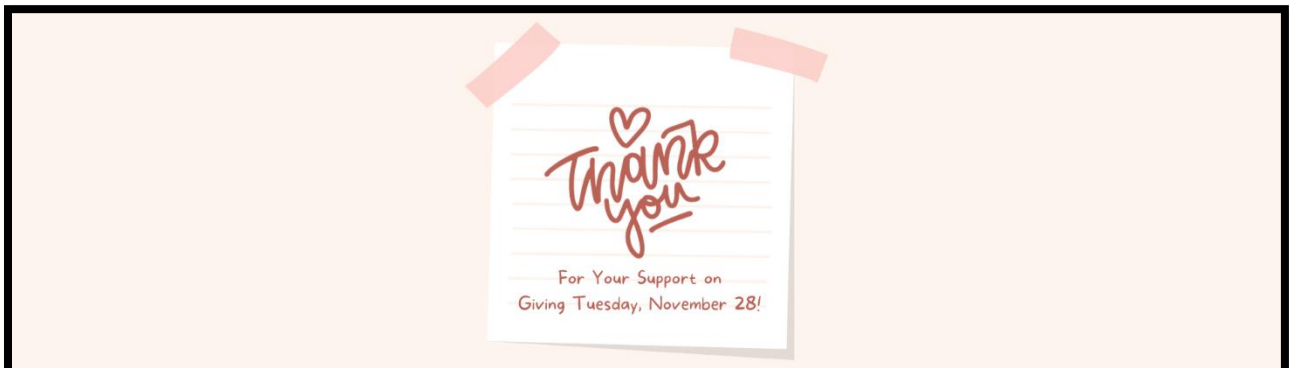
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- Jonathan Bell
- Anna Alaniz
- Yvette Regalado
- Maria Chavez

Donations are still being accepted and are welcomed here: <https://catchthenext.networkforgood.com/even-ts/47544-ascender-catching-dreams-tenth-anniversary-reception>

Catch the Next Thanks You on Participating on GivingTuesday

On November 28, 2023, people all around the world came together to tap into the power of human connection and strengthen communities and change our world. A heartfelt thank you to all the generous souls who made Giving Tuesday a resounding success yesterday! Your selflessness and compassion have truly made a difference. Your contributions will have a positive impact at Catch The Next, helping to uplift and empower students. The spirit of giving that you embody is a beacon of hope, reminding us of the collective power we possess to create positive change. Your kindness has not only touched lives but has also inspired others to join in the spirit of generosity. Thank you for being the catalysts for positive transformation and for embodying the true meaning of the season. Your support is a shining example of the beauty that can emerge when we come together to make the world a better place.



College News

ascender
CATCH THE NEXT



STC Starr Campus Hosts Noche de Familia

By Intern Aly Ceballos



Ascender students from the Starr County Campus hosted Noche de Familia on the night of Thursday, November 9. It was an event to thank parents for supporting and encouraging their children to attend college and was created through the fundraiser the Ascender club did for the fall. Parents learned more information about the program, and what it provides for their children.

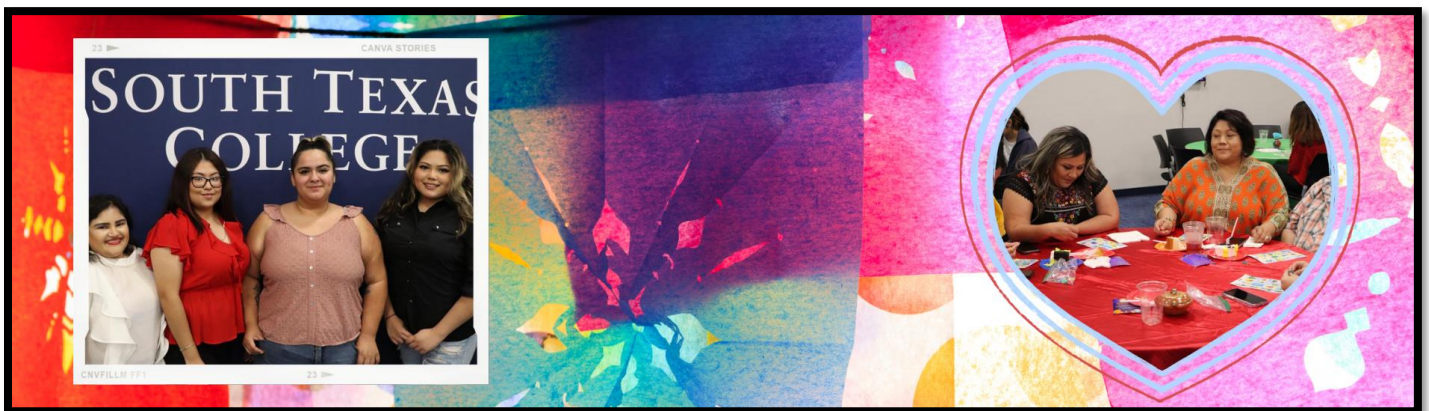


Dr. Cindy Y. Marroquin- Garza shared her story with the guests. She reminded students to never give up, no matter how hard things might get, and to always reach for their goals. Dr. Anna A. Alaniz thanked parents for their constant encouragement of their children and for giving up their day to celebrate Noche de Familia. Parents

received guidance from her about the significance of encouraging and supporting their children to always give it their all. Some parents wanted to set up a meeting with Dr. Alaniz to have more information about what's best for their sons/daughters' future.



While parents and students were being served, there was a performance by the South Texas College Music Club. The food was served by Tia Lola's Restaurant from Alamo. Mrs. Remigio was the sponsor of the cake for the night.



Before the night was over, parents and students played Loteria Mexicana. Every round was intense, and everyone wanted to win. There were many laughs and giggles from parents, students, and professors.



STC Ascender Club Helps with Christmas Gift Drive

By Intern Aly Ceballos

This Christmas, South Texas College staff, instructors, and students will be contributing gifts to the Starr County Child Welfare Board. The Board, in cooperation with the Starr County Student Accessibility Office and Counseling, has been carrying out this custom for the past six years. Gift donations are accepted for minors between the ages of three months and eighteen. Clubs, groups, and students at South Texas College have all actively participated by giving presents, encouraging others to participate, and volunteering their time.

This year, the Ascender Club has been very active. Ascender Club Vice President, Jazmin Lozano, has made it her goal to make sure every child gets an extra gift this year. With a budget of \$15- \$20, every child should receive three gifts. Alejandra Lopez, STC Starr County Counselor, will be collecting gifts on behalf of the participating clubs and organizations, which include the Tabletop Club, Psychology Club, Criminal Justice Club, Student Government Association, and Student Leadership Association.



Ross Guerra with her donation

STC STARR County Campus – Girls Discovering Math

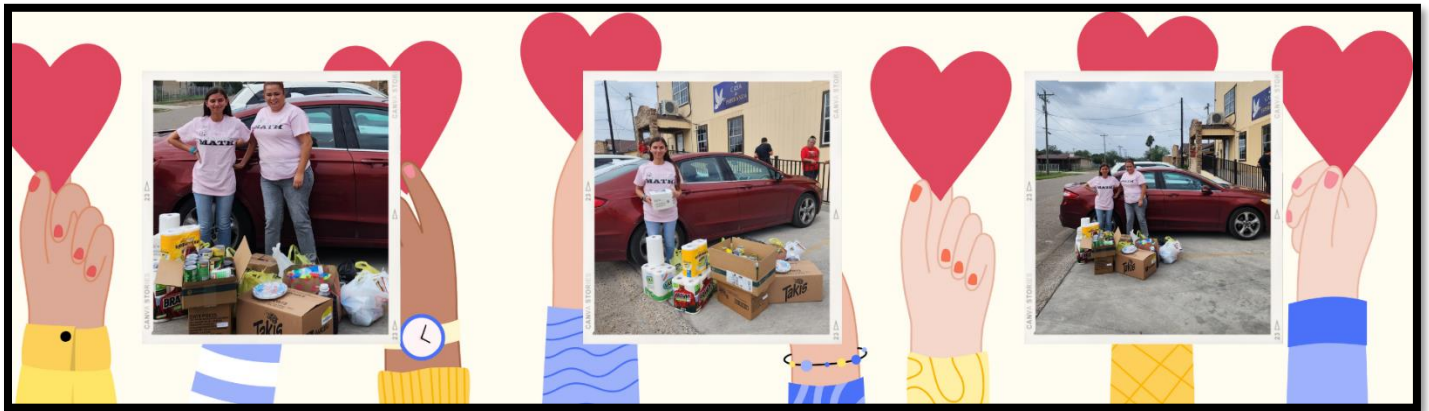
By Rosa E. Gutierrez, STC - Mathematics Instructor



FOOD DONATION

During the month of November, the Girls Discovering Math Club had a Food Drive to benefit Rio Grande City soup kitchen, Casa Esperanza. With the kindness and selfless donations from students and STC staff, the club had an amazing turnout. Not only were canned goods donated, but items such as: paper towels, detergent, and paper plates were collected. Donations were taken to Casa Esperanza on November 20 under the leadership of club advisor Rosa Gutierrez and club Vice President, Desiree Castillo. Special thanks to members Jose Lopez and Stephanie Dominguez who helped load the items and drop them off at Casa Esperanza.

This month the club would like to highlight our newest club advisor Lazaro Garcia-Castilla and our newest vice-president Desiree Castillo. They are our newest additions to the Club Offices.



Girls Discovering Math Plans

By Rosa E. Gutierrez, STC - Mathematics Instructor



Girls Discovering Math History

Girls Discovering Math started as an idea to promote math and create a community for our female students to build the confidence and motivation to achieve their educational goals.

Our mission statement: To support and inspire minority women's interest in the STEM fields by promoting STEM associate degree, create a community where students can socialize, share interests, and support each other to meet their education goals.

Promotion of the club began in our Academic Division with Deans and Department Chairs in Fall 2022.

Girls Discovering Math Club was officially launched in late Spring 2023 semester at South Texas College. We started with an introductory meeting of the advisors and the purpose of the club. The first meetings served as team building for our members and to find our first officer position, our Club President. In each meeting we had a team building activity, a discussion about the advisor's journey in Math, and advisement on the upcoming semesters. Our biggest achievement that semester was that some of our members attended the Catch the Next Transfer Motivational Conference in Austin, Texas. The club closed for the summer with 18 members.

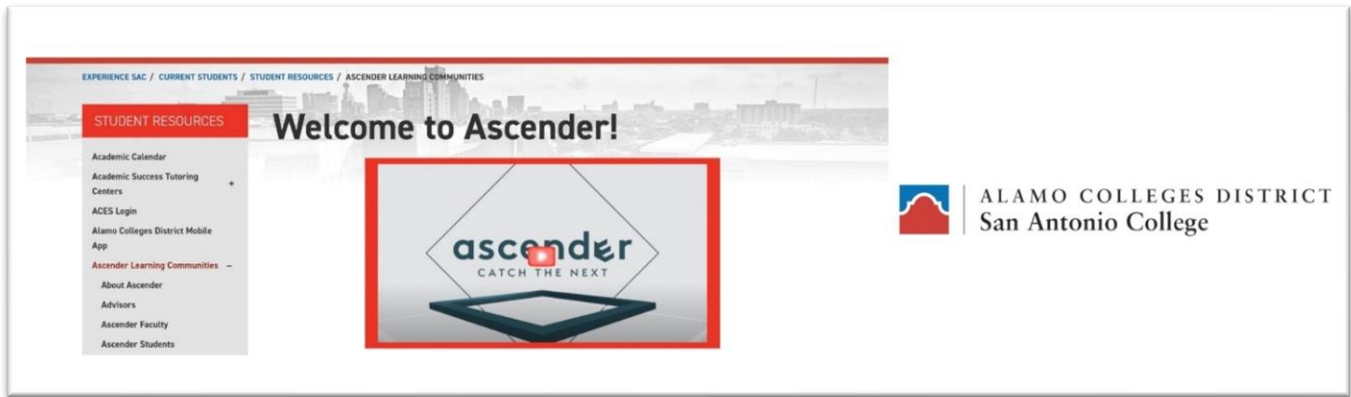
Today

Fall 2023 has been the most successful semester yet. The club group chat has 35 members with about 15 active members that attend most meetings. The club has added more officers to the rankings: they have three social media managers, a Vice President and a new advisor. The club has a Facebook page and a very active Instagram account (@girlsdiscoveringmath_stc). The club has conducted some major events this semester including a movie day, where they showed the movie Hidden Figures and discussed the true story it was based on. They also had their first installment in a series titled "Journeys in STEM" where they featured different professionals and how they became STEM majors. The first presenter was Matea Vazquez, South Texas College Math Faculty and electrical engineer. Her inspiring story coming from parents who didn't know how to read, to becoming an electrical engineer and later math faculty was the motivation a lot of the students need. The members have just completed a successful Food Drive to benefit the local soup kitchen in Rio Grande City, Casa Esperanza. In the coming weeks, they will be having an event titled "Study Date" where they will meet to study for upcoming final exams. They will work with the advisors and Center for Learning Excellence tutors to aid students.

Future Plans

For next semester, the plan is to continue with the series "Journeys in STEM" and expand on the "Study Date" event to have one each month. The club has learned that it can help to expose club members to math opportunities, but also, serves as a resource to help students through their math struggles. The generosity of club members has also inspired the club to explore more donation drive opportunities for the coming semester.

The original plan was to have a club in each of the three campuses of South Texas College. For next semester, the hope is to start the expansion and have a club in another campus.



PAC Ascender Students Volunteer for Thanksgiving Pop-Up Market

By Intern Dakota Rodriguez

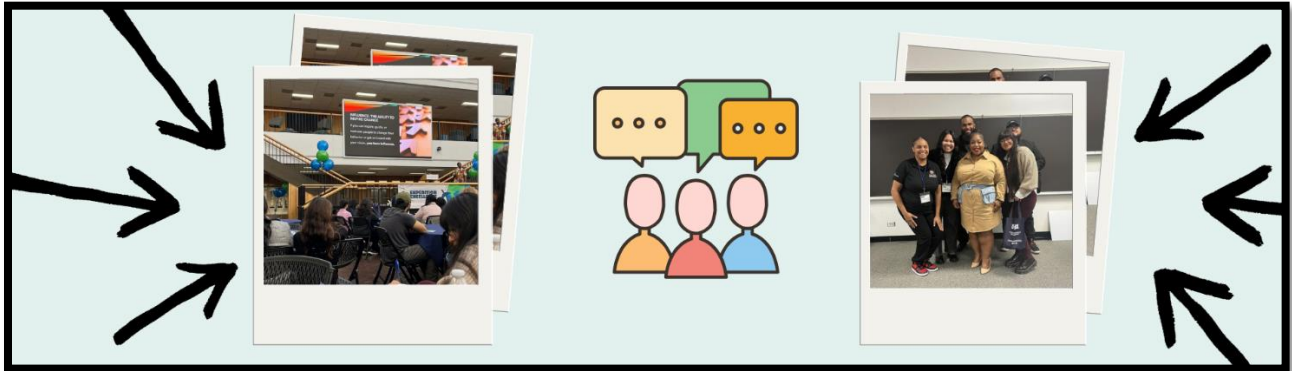


Palo Alto College Ascender students volunteered for a thanksgiving pop-up market on Friday, November 17th. The students partnered with the San Antonio food bank to give back to the community. There were no requirements to receive any food from the pop-up market; anyone could attend. Students passed out turkeys, fruit, vegetables, and sweets to over 200 people.

Career and Leadership Developmental Conference at the University of Houston Clear Lake




CTN students recently had an invaluable opportunity to attend the Career and Leadership Developmental Conference at the University of Houston Clear Lake. This experience allowed them to immerse themselves in an environment of learning and networking, where they not only honed their leadership skills but also had the chance to craft a thoughtful career plan. The guidance and insights gained from interactions with seasoned professionals are sure to shape their future endeavors. A special thank you goes out to Palo Alto College Ascender professors for their unwavering support and investment in students. Palo Alto College Ascender's commitment to student's educational journey is instrumental in empowering them to thrive in their chosen paths. Together, we are building a foundation for success and growth.




Friendsgiving



CTN had a Friendsgiving to appreciate every student and CTN representatives. PAC-CTN is beyond thankful that they get to guide students.




ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
San Antonio College

**In search for a MATH Professor,
who would like to start a
Girls Discovering Math Club as a
pathway to the STEM program.**



Ascender



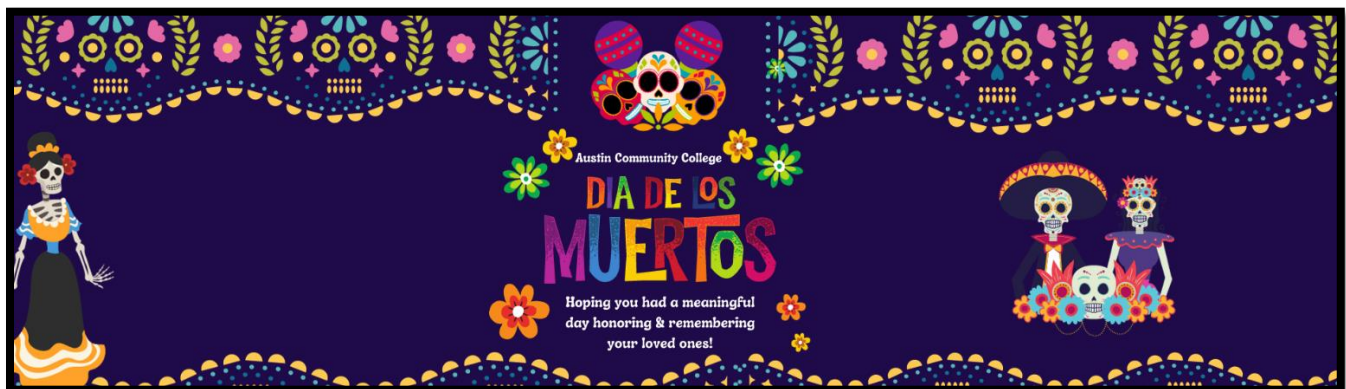
Women Empowerment



Two of Ascenders were part of the Dress for Success models runway for the 13th Annual Women's Health, Motivation, & Empowerment Conference! Ale was at the right place and at the right time and was invited to participate as well!

ACC Students Create Votive Candles for Day of the Dead Celebration

Submitted by Izaac Mikael M. Alba, ACC, CTN Intern



ACC instructor, Miss Tina Buck, gave her English Composition I class the assignment of creating a votive candle for someone close to them who had passed away. Students were to give a short summary of this person's life and achievements and paste it on a votive candle. Prior to this, students made a mind map of information about their chosen person to help give a better idea of how to summarize his/her life properly and respectfully. Instructor Buck planned to showcase the candles on the ACC Highlands campus in room HLC1000 on November 3, as a part of the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) event hosted by Ascender. This event also included their first-ever Cantos Y Calacas (Day of Poetry) and Día de los Muertos Artistry Event as an opportunity for students to honor and celebrate the rich cultural tradition of the Dia de los Muertos. ACC as well had three Altares and Ofrendas Workshops where students, faculty, and staff would help build a Day of the Dead Altar in their home campus.



ACC Mentor Invites Mentee to Participate in Turkey Distribution

by Izaac Mikael M. Alba, ACC, CTN Intern



As the autumn leaves begin to fall and as pumpkin spice fills the air, Thanksgiving arrives, and with it comes a celebration full of smiles and togetherness with loved ones, great food, and the feeling of gratitude. Thanksgiving, however, while embodying all those things also embodies the spirit of giving, which is why ACC holds an annual Turkey Distribution.

This year, I was invited by my ASCENDER Mentor Barbara Jorge, to take part in this annual donation drive where students, teachers, and other ACC staff help in distributing turkeys to those who are in need. This took place on November 17 at the ACC Hays campus, where the event coordinators led us to sort out the supplies, plan out the route for picking up the turkeys, and overall make the drive feel open and friendly. I, along with Barbara, was tasked with directing people who wanted to pick up turkeys by giving them directions. I also got to wear a turkey suit which was funny to Barbara.

At the end of the event, they were able to serve 375 households with the turkeys they needed to properly celebrate this wonderful holiday. This experience is one I am thankful for because seeing the amount of people we were able to help made me even more excited for Thanksgiving Day to arrive. Best believe I'll be there next year for ACC's 5th annual distribution.

2023 Cantos y Calacas

By Gustavo Deveze Castellanos, ACC, Ascender Student Employee



ACC celebrated a day of poetry and art with over 100 students, faculty, and staff in attendance, kicking off what is hoped to become a beloved tradition at their college. The event featured a wide range of performances and activities that brought together the ACC community. Juan Ortiz's song performance gave the event an unforgettable musical dimension. Professors A.R. Rogers and David Rice's poetry and short story readings inspired and captivated the audience, and the heartfelt poems by Liliana Evangelista and Crystal Charles. Both Ascender students, beautifully embodied the spirit of Dia De Los Muertos, touching the hearts of all in attendance. Tusuy Sonqo-Per's Peruvian folklorico performance captivated the audience, providing a one-of-a-kind cultural experience. The event was a resounding success, showcasing our community's artistic talents and cultural richness.

2023 Book Fest

By Gustavo Deveze Castellanos, ACC, Ascender Student Employee



On Saturday, November 11th, Ascender students, mentors, advisors, and professors were given the chance to attend the Texas Book Festival Real Reads Author Event. Participants at this event had the opportunity to speak directly with Héctor Tobar the author of “Our Migrant Souls” who answered their questions regarding the stories and provided them with insights into the writing process. Even though attendance was voluntary, those who did so were treated to a one-of-a-kind and illuminating adventure that served to forge a link between the audience and the imaginative mind that lay behind the stories.

Know Your Rights

By Gustavo Deveze Castellanos, ACC, Ascender Student Employee



In a one-hour session on Saturday, November 18 from 10 am – 12 pm via Zoom, Ascender at the Austin Community College collaborated with an American Gateways representative to inform our community of immigrant rights and safety planning for situations involving the police or immigration officers. Everyone was welcome, with a request for respectful participation during the presentation. Encouraging questions, participants

could submit them anonymously, providing students, faculty, and staff with an opportunity to learn in a friendly and inclusive environment.

Austin Community College CTN's YouTube Channel



The Ascender's YouTube channel serves as an engaging platform that caters to the community affiliated with Austin Community College (ACC). Hosting a variety of content, Ascender's channel provides valuable resources and information for students. Whether it's informative videos, campus updates, or event coverage, the channel fosters a sense of connection and community within the ACC network. Check out ACC CTN's YouTube at: <https://students.austincc.edu/ascender/ascender-on-acctv/>

ACC Hosts Traditional Posada for Mentors and Students

By Intern Izaac Mikael M. Alba



Time flies. As the fall semester comes to a close and students begin their final hoo-rah for their classes, bombarded with projects and exams alike, the team behind ASCENDER did not forget to congratulate their students for coming so far in the school year. Ms. Alejandra Polcik, along with Diana Gorostieta Martinez and the rest of the

ASCENDER team, scheduled an ACC-wide Posada to celebrate the closing semester on November 30, at the ACC Eastview campus.



A Posada is a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration that reenacts the journey of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter in Bethlehem and for ASCENDER mentors and mentees, ACC Eastview was their inn. The event began with a BINGO game where mentors and mentees would network with other ASCENDER members to try and fill out their BINGO by matching a person with one of the prompts given on the card. This was followed by a 10-minute reflection for the students and their mentors- looking back at the goals they achieved, skills they learned and things they were grateful for this fall semester. Getting into the holiday spirit, ASCENDER threw a White Elephant hosted by Ms. Flowers where students and mentors brought gifts for each other and were given the option to stick with the gift they chose or to steal another person's gift.



As the event came to a close, a raffle along with some final words of inspiration to the students and mentors were given to leave them with inspiration to finish this semester strong and to look forward to future semesters at ACC knowing ASCENDER will be there to back them up.

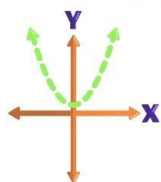


Dallas College – Girls Discovering Math

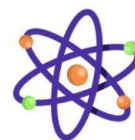
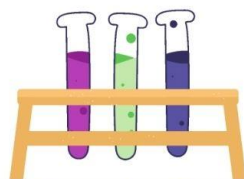
By Dr. Maria Martha Chavez, CTN CEO

DALLAS COLLEGE - NORTH CAMPUS

GIRLS IN MATH



$$x = \sqrt{a}$$



Leader: Teresita Ramirez-Rosas

Ms. Ramirez will serve as a leader of the Catch the Next- Ascender Girls In Math Initiative at Dallas College North Campus, being sponsored by Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation. She will provide leadership to other Dallas College campuses, and will collaborate with other Ascender faculty across the state wanting to engage their students in a statewide Girls Math Movement. She will work with campus advisors, as well as student intern(s) and tutor(s) that will help promote the skill development necessary for students to fulfill their educational requirements and to consider Mathematics as the entryway to careers in STEM.



CATCH THE NEXT

Thinking About Your 2023 Tax Deductible Gift

Consider giving to Catch the Next so we can continue to fulfill our mission of empowering faculty, staff, and institutions to increase the educational attainment of Latinos and other underserved communities in order to close higher education equity and opportunity gaps.

Send donations to

Catch the Next
18756 Stone Oak Pkwy, Ste. 200
San Antonio, TX 78258

To sign up as a monthly donor,
Call 203-508-3129 or email maria.chavez@catchthenext.org
Visit <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1217887>
to make an online donation

New to CTN

Have you
met

our new
CTN Community
Leadership Mentors?

Antoinette Titus



Antoinette is the visionary, Chief Executive Officer, and a board member of In the Spirit Entertainment, and In the Spirit Entertainment foundation. She is also an entrepreneur and an advocate for the Arts with a passion to inspire change for greater possibilities for all humankind. She is laughing all the time, loving a lot, and living a lot with hard work.

Antoinette attended Terrell ISD schools in Terrell, Texas, where she received a solid foundation of education that was significant as a youth and her creativity that allowed her to explore beyond. Antoinette had a desire to tap into the Arts and attended Greiner exploratory Arts of Dallas, Texas where she learned the love of Arts. She auditioned for one of the top schools in the nation and was accepted and became a graduate of Booker T. Washington Performing and Visual Arts School of Dallas, where she studied all aspects of drama, dance, and music. Antoinette also attended Dallas Baptist University, American Intercontinental University, and Cedar Valley Community College where she majored in both Arts and Business Administration.

Antoinette has worked in law enforcement for over 20 plus years, a community project leader with many certifications double degrees which has given the foundation of a multitude of duties.

In 1999, Antoinette assisted in creating the Black Chamber of Commerce in Irving, Texas where she is an original board member. In 2004, she assisted Chief CW Burruss in creating the Cedar Hill ISD Police Department for the Cedar Hill ISD that reduced the crime rate to an all-time low in the district. Her department was touted as one of the safest school districts and best-managed police departments in the State of Texas. In 2016, she became a credentialed Top Secret/SSI contract Special investigator, for the United States Department of Homeland Security, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Customs and Border Patrol and a Reservist for Federal Emergency Management Agency. In 2022, as an Executive Top Secret/SSI for National Reconnaissance Office, where she is committed to protecting the security of the United States, its citizens, and its allies through unparalleled capabilities in space-based intelligence, working at the Aerospace office in Los Angeles, California. Antoinette also received a license as an Insurance adjuster for the State of Texas and the State of Michigan.

Entrepreneur: In 1990, Founder and CEO of Atitusco Janitorial and Cleaning Company, 3C's Maid and Janitorial Service in Irving Texas, she was the first minority female cleaning company to win multiple contracts with the Dallas Cowboys Club, Dallas Cowboys Stadium Association, and City of Irving along with a HUB certification in DFW area. Antoinette is also the CEO of Atituco Management Company that specializes in offering services to strategic clients and areas. In 2017 this received certified MWE (Minority Business Enterprise) and certification MBE (Minority Business Enterprise) with double business Janitorial & product services and Administrative Notary Services. Antoinette has been awarded multiple contracts with the City of Arlington in the State of Texas. Antoinette also sub-contracts to other business owners to assist with revenue and contracts.

In 2011, she was the Founder and visionary of In the Spirit Entertainment LLC and In the Spirit Entertainment Foundation that is trademarked in the USA. ITSE (In the Spirit Entertainment) has concentration areas in each region of the USA,

(Georgia, California, Dallas, Michigan, and international team in Accra Ghana. ITSEGH). Creator along with a team of dreamers, Black Kingz and Black Queenz, Speed Star Cartoon, WE Woke play, Dallas Lit event, and Love & Sip events and Road to Hollywood around the United States and Ghana. In 2018, Antoinette landed a position with the VOICE NBC reality Television show as a secret talent scout for the producers of the show bringing undiscovered talent that goes head to head to be the next superstar voice. In the Spirit Entertainment Team, assisted in this search. Talents from all genres, professionals and beginners are in connection with In the Spirit Entertainment to advance careers and work with their talents and work with the company's platforms.

Community Service: Antoinette was a 1982 debutante of the Jack and Jill Society of Dallas and a 2008 member of Alpha Chi Phi Omega Fraternity and Sorority with a current Epistolean position. She is also a 15-year advocate member of NAACP, member of the Potter's House Church (Bishop TD Jakes) and serves on the professional ministry team. From 2006-present, as well as bringing the In the Spirit Team to work several Megafest, Woman Art Loosed events in red-carpet, and dynamic interviews. She served as project leader on multiple projects for the Concord Church of Dallas (also a member) and lead the vision for the "Baby Shower Project" that partnered with DISD, OCBF Church, and affiliates, which grew to be one of the largest baby shower projects in Texas in assisting and benefiting a plethora of multicultural families. Currently attends the West Angeles Church, Los Angeles, California. Antoinette Titus was inducted into the Who's Who in Black Dallas Texas, an achievement of excellence as the visionary of In the Spirit Entertainment, in the year 2019 and the Dallas Community 2018. Bringing talent to the National Harambee festival, City Men Cook, Established In the Spirit Entertainment Ghana, Accra Ghana, making a difference in the lives of youth. Best Talent Agency Award 2017, 2018 and 2019 in Dallas Texas. Talent Scout for The Voice NBC 2018 to 2020. Built a platform in the company to assisting artist in all genres for their needs as a talent. 2022 establishing groundbreaking productions and events in Hollywood, California that are set for 2023. 2022, recognized as the Superb Woman, Texas Metro News, 2022, recognized OWR Awards Finalist for the Best Christian influencer of the year in Nashville, TX, 2021 Soul and Salsa Magazine meet writeup, Dallas, Texas, 2021 Voyage Dallas Magazine.

Antoinette's first love is always putting family first. She became a divorced parent of three children in 1990, implementing high standards for herself and family. Her daughter, Crystal Manning, is a current USA Olympic athlete, Her son, Carly Titus is a current entrepreneur with a credit company, Scout for In the Spirit Entertainment. Her other son, Chad Manning is a current entrepreneur, License insurance adjuster and COO of In the Spirit Entertainment.

Matt Flores



Matt Flores has been a communications professional for 37 years, including 20 as a journalist for the San Antonio Express-News and the Dallas Times Herald. He also has worked in higher education as a media relations supervisor, public information officer, magazine editor and speechwriter. Currently, he serves as assistant vice president for communication at Texas Woman's University. He has held similar positions at Texas State University and the University of Texas System. He earned his bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin.

Lavinia Masters



While being presented the Justice Department's Crime Victims Special Courage Award in 2020, Asst. Attorney General Sullivan recognized Lavinia as "a powerful example of how someone can survive a horrific crime and use her experience to bring about justice for others." An Inspirational Keynote Speaker, Lavinia Masters works with individuals and various organizations to empower, educate and enlighten them about trauma and how to overcome it with purposeful living. She believes in mentoring with compassion, guiding her champions to trust the processes of discovering their full purpose beyond their past pain so that they too can empower, educate, and enlighten their communities on how to promote healing and seek justice for victims while remaining trauma-informed and survivor-centered.

Lavinia's honors include **Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy in Humanitarian, Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award**, TREC Dreamers, Doers and Unsung Her Award, SSO Trailblazer Award, Family Place Texas Trailblazer "Real Life Hero Award," George HW Bush Points of Light Award, Justice Department's "Special Courage Award," Edith Surgan "Victim Activist Honorary Awardee," In the Spirit Entertainment, 2023 Woman of Excellence," Inductee Texas Women's Hall of Fame 2023 and the proud namesake of **HEB: The Lavinia Masters Act of Texas**.

Naphtali Bryant



Naphtali Bryant is the United Way Childcare Scholarship Coordinator and Founder of Spark-Ed University. Naphtali decided to return to school after a thirteen-year gap between college coursework. He chose to attend the Alamo Colleges in San Antonio, Texas, to switch from retail into business. His decision would take him on a journey of high achievement, multiple degrees and scholarships, and the birth of his entrepreneurial pursuit. Naphtali was interested in the concept of using higher education to advance his career and get paid while he was studying. He developed a system that helped him earn multiple national scholarships and speaking engagements, including speaking at the state capitol in Austin, Texas, and studying abroad in both Taiwan and China in 2015. In 2017, Naphtali developed Spark-Ed University. Spark-ED's mission is to bridge the gap between education and career success. The vision is to help students find a career that best expresses their unique purpose, find ways to fund their education with

little to no debt, and Make it possible for students to work in their career of choice. Spark-Ed has developed a course for student success that will help students navigate the minefield of education and gives "insider information." Mr. Bryant currently works at United Way of San Antonio. He works as the Childcare Scholarship Coordinator, where he engages scholars daily. Mr. Bryant named one of the Top 100 Leaders in Education by the Global Forum for Education & Learning in 2020, Selected to participate in the Emerging Leaders Program at St. Philip's College in 2021. Naphtali was selected to participate in the Alamo Colleges Alamo College Leadership Academy for Success (ALAS) in 2022 and was voted as one of the Leader of Leaders for 2022. He earned the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) 2022 Excellence Award. His work is international as well. Naphtali was nominated to the 2022 Hall of Fame by the Editorial Board of Passion Vista and Unified Brainz Group in association with the Confederation of International Accreditation Commission in India and was a guest speaker for the BA Talk Club at the University of Tolima in Tolima Colombia and was recently awarded the 2023 Outstanding Intrapreneur Award in the Not-For-Profit Sector by the Global Intrapreneurs Institute.

April Monterrosa



April Monterrosa is an author, speaker, business mentor, media personality, and community advocate based in San Antonio, Texas. She is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Live From The Southside Magazine, the first Latina-owned publication in Southside San Antonio. She serves on multiple boards, including Brooks Gives Back, The Boardroom Project, San Antonio Water System's Community Experience Committee, the Palo Alto College Cosmetology Committee, and the VIDA Arts Council.

She is the chairwoman for Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. She is also a business mentor for the City of San Antonio and Alamo Colleges Mentor Protégé Program and the host of The April Monterrosa Show radio on KLMO 98.9 FM, where she highlights unique Tejanos from Texas who are making a difference in entertainment, business, music, and their communities. April's impressive achievements have earned her recognition as an influential Latina in San Antonio by KSAT12 News. Her publication, Live from the Southside, has partnered with

KSAT12 and the local TV show SA Live to elevate community voices and news coverage of her Southside community. The publication is also partnered with KLMO 98.9 FM to form collaborative, impactful storytelling within the San Antonio community and to provide exceptional opportunities for Latin music artists, labels, and advertising clients to create genuine engagement with their audiences. April was also honored by the 87th Texas Legislature for her achievements as a civic leader and community advocate.



Dr. Christopher Carmona



Christopher Carmona is a Visiting Associate Professor at Our Lady of the Lake University. He is a member of the national award-winning organization, Refusing To Forget, which researches and promotes the history of violence against Mexican Americans and Latinos in the early 20th Century and beyond. In 2021, he received the Organization of American Historians Friend of History Award as part of this organization. He served as the Chair of the NACCS Tejas Foco Committee on Implementing MAS in PreK-12 Education in Texas for seven years. He was a leader in getting the TEKS based Mexican American Studies High School Course approved by the Texas State Board of Education, which is the only State Board approved Mexican American Studies course in the United States to date.

He served on Responsible Ethnic Studies Textbook committee that was awarded the *"float like a butterfly, sting like a bee"* award for excellence in educational leadership from the Mexican American School Board Association (MASBA). He has published three books of poetry, co-edited two anthologies, and co-authored a scholarly conversation book, called *Nuev@s Voces Poeticas: A Conversation about new Chican@ Identities*. He has a chapter in *Reverberations of Racial Violence: Critical Reflections on Borderlands History* discussing intergenerational trauma for Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley. Carmona is the author of *El Rinche: The Ghost Ranger of the Rio Grande*, which was a finalist for the 2019 Best Young Adult Novel for the Texas Institute of Letters. Currently, he is working

on finishing this series of YA novels reimagining the “Lone Ranger” story as a Chicana superhero fighting Texas Rangers in the Rio Grande Valley from 1905-1920. Book Two is out now. Finally his short story collection, *The Road to Llorona Park*, won the 2016 NACCS Tejas Best Fiction Award and was listed as one of the top 8 Latinx books in 2016 by NBC News.



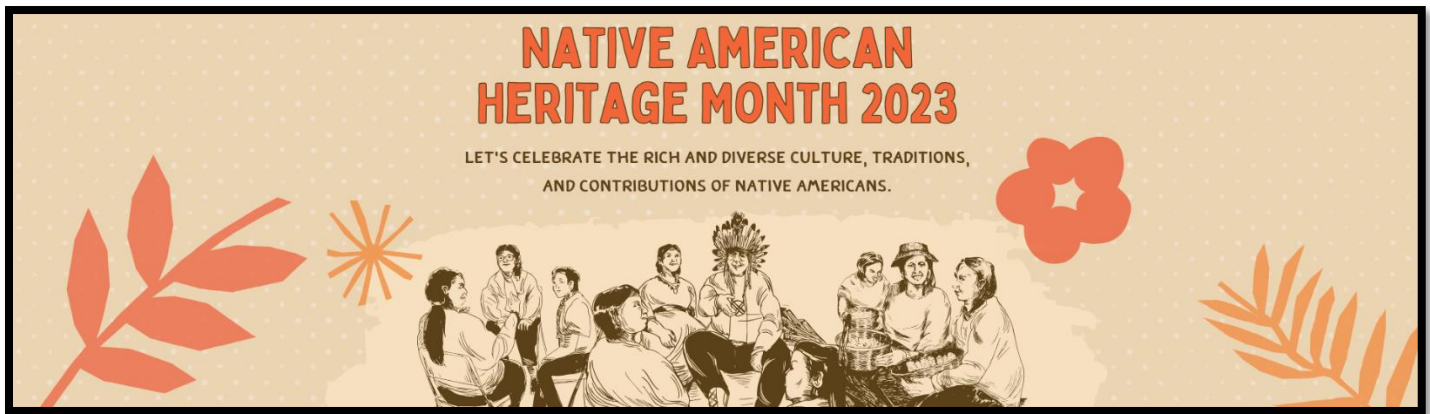
Meet CTN John Sicheloff Journalism Intern, Dakota Rodriguez



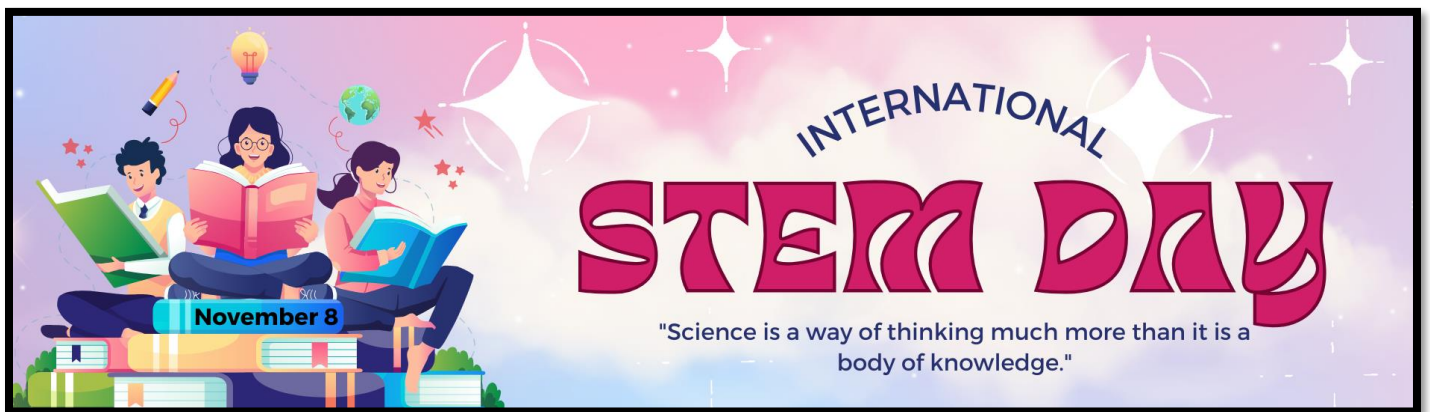
Dakota Rodriguez is 19 years old. She was born in Corpus Christi and is a graduate from South San High School in San Antonio. She’s a published writer; her college essay “A Ticket” was published in “Live from the Southside” magazine her senior year.

Her hobbies include writing, acting, dancing, reading and listening to music. She is a current student at Palo Alto College, working on getting her associate degree in biology. She is planning on transferring to Corpus Christi A&M to get her bachelor's in marine biology. Despite this being her first semester at Palo Alto College, she has become very involved on campus.

CTN News



Native American Month, observed throughout November, is a time to honor and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of Native American peoples. This month serves as a platform to raise awareness about the challenges and triumphs of Native communities, fostering a deeper understanding of their heritage. It is an opportunity for reflection, education, and appreciation, acknowledging the profound impact Native Americans have had on shaping the cultural tapestry of the United States. Through events, educational programs, and cultural initiatives, Native American Month encourages dialogue, promotes respect, and amplifies the voices of Indigenous peoples. It is a chance for individuals and communities to engage in meaningful conversations, learn from each other, and build bridges of understanding that contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious society.



International STEM Day, was celebrated on November 8th, it was a global initiative dedicated to promoting the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. This day served as a reminder of the critical role STEM disciplines play in driving innovation, solving complex problems, and shaping the future of our world. It was aimed to inspire and engage students, educators, and professionals in STEM-related activities and discussions. International STEM Day provided a platform to highlight the achievements of individuals and organizations in these fields while encouraging the next generation to pursue careers in STEM. Through interactive events, educational programs, and collaborative initiatives, this day fostered a collective commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and technological advancements for the betterment of society. It was a

celebration of curiosity, discovery, and the endless possibilities that STEM fields offer to address global challenges and propel individuals into a more technologically advanced future.



**Parent Partnership: Secretary Cardona and Friends Celebrate National Parent Involvement Day
November 16, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

Dr. Maria Martha Chavez had the honor of being invited to a discussion for Parent Involvement Day by Secretary Cardona's office. During the conversation, Secretary Cardona emphasized the pivotal role parents play in shaping the future of children and expressed that being a parent is one of the most crucial responsibilities. He shared a personal sentiment, highlighting the profound joy he experienced when addressed as "pappy." Drawing a powerful analogy, he likened parents to the roots of a family, and children to the branches. Secretary Cardona spoke passionately about the resilience of Redwood trees, emphasizing that despite their towering height, their strength lies in extensive, interconnected roots. By fostering partnerships and collaboration, he emphasized that, like the remarkable trees, parents can efficiently navigate challenges and capture the support and resources needed for their children to thrive. Together, as a united community, families can grow stronger. For more information on the importance of parent involvement, please visit <https://www.ed.gov/parents/>.



On Friday, November 17, 2023 CTN San Antonio staff members Dr. Stacy Ybarra, Yvette Regalado, Allison Garcia, and Dr. Maria Martha Chavez were notable participants at the recent event celebrating the Nursing Center at Palo Alto. Their presence added a dynamic energy to the occasion, showcasing Catch the Next's commitment to educational excellence and community engagement. President Dr. Robert Garza, a Catch the Next Board Member, played a central role in the celebration, underscoring the organization's dedication to fostering a culture of academic success. The event provided a platform for collaboration and recognition, bringing together key stakeholders in the pursuit of advancing educational opportunities within the nursing center and beyond.

Student Resources

The following are student professional development opportunities, including scholarships, internships, articles to read and student success opportunities.

If you would like to share an opportunity, please email at stacy.ybarra@catchthenext.org

Thank You,
Stacy Ybarra Evans
Catch The Next

External Student Professional Development Opportunities

Student Opportunities

Date	Activity	Activity Description
11/24/2023	Scholarships	Scholarship Opportunity
11/24/2023	Scholarships	NBC Universal Internships
11/24/2023	HACU Scholarships	HACU Scholarships https://www.hacu.net/hacu/Scholarships.asp
11/24/2023	Conference Scholarship	Advancing Women in Science Conference Scholarship

Website Offers Best Scholarships for Latino Students

Scholarships are a great way to pay for college without the obligation to repay funds. Maximizing scholarship potential can be especially useful for Latino students, who on average received less in institutional grants than their white counterparts in 2016, according to a [statistical brief](#) from UnidosUS.

There are hundreds of organizations that recognize this financial gap and offer scholarships specifically for Latino college students with the aim of making a college education more accessible and affordable. Here's where you can start your search and apply for a few of the best scholarships for Latino students:

<https://www.bankrate.com/loans/student-loans/scholarships-for-latino-students/>

Resources Available for Students and Families to Complete FAFSA

The White House Hispanic Prosperity Initiative has a [resources webpage](#) to help students and families complete their FAFSA form. The Department's Federal Student Aid (FSA) office is urging students to file the FAFSA form to help defray, and in some cases completely cover, the costs of their postsecondary education. FSA has made it easier than ever for students and families to access resources at [StudentAid.gov](#) and via the myStudentAid mobile application using a computer, tablet, or mobile phone.

Organization Offers Resources for Financial Literacy

Annuity.org believes when students learn financial literacy at an early age it helps them to make astute decisions about their personal finances, smart financial behavior leads to financially secure lives. Now, more than ever, is a great time for students to hone in on this skill while they are learning from home. Their site covers things

like: Budgeting -Filling out a FAFSA request for college and financially planning for your future and more. Please take a look at our student resource here: www.annuity.org/financial-literacy/stu+dents/

Nonprofit Provides Free Mental Health Support to Children and Teens

[Wonders & Worries](#) is a Texas-based nonprofit that provides free, professional mental health support to children and teens during a parent’s serious, physical illness. Parents dealing with a cancer diagnosis, TBI, stroke, heart condition, neurological condition, or other physical illnesses and traumatic injuries often don’t know how to talk about their diagnosis and its impact on the family.

Wonders & Worries’ free programs ensure children and teens can reach their full potential, despite a parent’s serious illness. They do this by leading children through an evidence-based and copyrighted Six-Session Illness Education and Coping Curriculum led by healthcare professionals.

Services are always free and offered in English and Spanish at [5 Texas locations](#) and virtually in the Greater Austin, Greater San Antonio, and Greater Houston areas. They also operate a national [helpline: 844-WE-WONDER \(1-844-939-6633\)](#) available Monday – Thursday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, where parents can receive a free consultation, from one of our child life specialists, on how to talk with and support kids impacted by adult illness. Additionally, they have several resources available for [professionals](#) and [parents](#) on their website.

Professional Opportunities

The following professional development opportunities highlight Ascender grant and funding opportunities, conference opportunities, and information for theory, research and practice. I encourage you to forward any information that would provide wonderful opportunities to our team or students by emailing me at stacy.ybarra@catchthenext.org.

Thank You,
Stacy Ybarra Evans
Catch The Next

External Professional Development Opportunities

Staff Opportunities

Date	Activity	Activity Description
11/24/2023	Conference	2023 Texas Conference on Higher Education Location: Austin, TX Dates: October 12-14, 2023 Description: The 2023 Texas Conference on Higher Education will bring together educators from across the state to discuss the latest trends and challenges in higher education.
11/24/2023	FREE Webinar	How to use chatgpt for educators: https://www.ascd.org/webinars/chatgpt-webinar

11/24/2023	FREE Webinar	Tell Your Story: Teaching Students to Become World-Changing Thinkers and Writers https://www.ascd.org/webinars/tell-your-story-webinar
11/24/2023	FREE Conference	Global Leadership Impact Summit: https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/attend-2023/leadership-impact-summit/
11/24/2023	FREE Webinar	AI and Higher Education Implications for Learning, Curricula, and Institutions https://www.aacu.org/webinars/ai-and-higher-education

Helpful Information

- [FAFSA Resources](#)
- [FSA ID New Details](#)
- Cooke Foundation Scholarship Program **Deadline:** November 16 [Apply here](#)
- 2024 Summer Cultural Leadership Fellowship Program - Open to undocumented professionals with DACA **Deadline:** November 30, 2023 [Apply Here](#)
- Dell Scholars Program **Deadline:** December 1 [Apply Here](#)
- White House Internship Program **Deadline:** November 10 [Apply Here](#)
- [Scholarships For DACA Recipients & Undocumented Students](#)
- Congressional Internship Program **Experience:** Undergraduate Student & Recent Graduate **Application Deadline:** December 1, 2023 & March 1, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- Public Policy Fellowship Program **Experience:** College Graduate **Program Dates:** August 23, 2023 – May 24, 2024 **Deadline:** December 15, 2023 [Apply Here](#)
- Postgraduate Fellowship Program **Experience:** Masters or JD **Program Dates:** August 21, 2024 - May 23, 2025 **Deadline:** December 15, 2023 [Apply Here](#)
- White House Fellowship Program: Application Opens November 1 Deadline: January 5, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. ET [Apply Here](#)
- International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence **Deadline:** December 15, 2023 (Preconference seminars) **Deadline:** February 9, 2024 (Make-and-Take Workshops, Breakout Sessions, Roundtable Discussions) [Apply Here](#)
- Latino Hill Staff Academy **Deadline:** January 24, 2024 [Apply Here](#)
- Pen America Free Expression Essay Competition **Deadline:** March 8, 2024 [Apply Here](#)

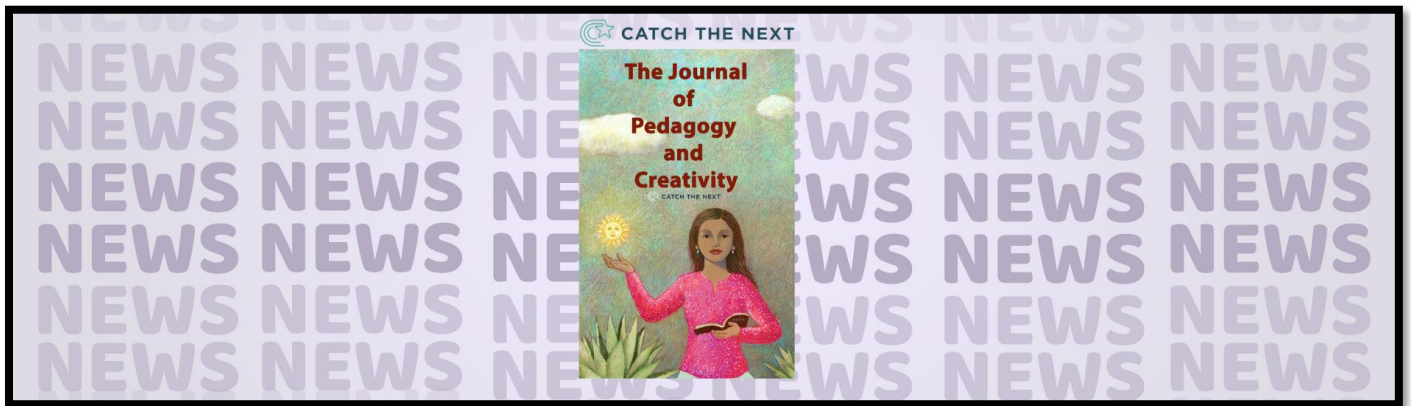
LAUNCH
OF THE 2024-25 FAFSA FORM

There are major changes and improvements coming to the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. This redesigned and streamlined FAFSA form will be available by Dec. 31, 2023.

WWW.STUDENTAID.GOV/H/APPLY-FOR-AID/FAFSA



Journal of Pedagogy and Creativity



We are eager to share our latest journal with you. Please click the following link to explore the content and gain valuable insights: <https://catchthenext.wpengine.com/journal-of-pedagogy-and-creativity/>. Thank you for your interest.

Free Learning Modules Available from Texas OnCourse Academy

The Academy has over 30 learning modules on endorsements, graduation plans, career pathways, entrance exams, college applications, military academies, financial aid, and more. All these free modules are available remotely, and you can review them at your own pace. The Academy is also certified to offer continuing professional education (CPE) credit. Counselors and advisers can earn up to 31 CPE credits by completing badges in the Texas OnCourse Academy.

Explore

NSF Offers Funding Opportunities to HSIs

The National Science Foundation is offering funding to HSIs for three projects:

- **Planning or Pilot Projects (PPP) track:** An eligible institution cannot have more than two active PPP awards. A new PPP proposal can be submitted by an institution with two active PPP awards if at least one of the awards has had its final report submitted before the submission deadline for HSI proposals. Institutions with an active HSI Track 1: Building Capacity award under the previous solicitations 18-524 and 19-540 are not eligible to submit PPP proposals or receive a PPP award until the prior HSI award's final report is submitted.
- **Implementation and Evaluation Projects (IEP) track:** An eligible institution cannot have more than two active IEP awards. A new IEP proposal can be submitted by an institution with two active IEP awards if at least one of the awards has had its final report submitted prior to the HSI proposal submission deadline. A collaborative award counts as an HSI IEP award for all institutions. For institutions with a current Track 1: Building Capacity award under the previous solicitations 18-524 and 19-540, each award is considered an IEP award for the purpose of calculating active awards for this track.
- **Institutional Transformation Projects (ITP) track:** One submission per institution is allowed. Previous ITP awardees are not eligible to submit a proposal in the ITP track.

For information go to: <https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/improving-undergraduate-stem-education-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsi>



Catch the Next, Inc. was founded in 2009 by John Siceloff who sought to identify and scale-up effective models for closing the opportunity gap for Latino students in the United States. His vision is what brought Catch the Next into being, and what continues to motivate us in the valuable work of empowering underrepresented students, in acknowledging that their stories matter and that they can write their future chapters.

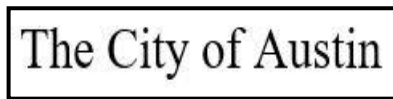
In support of his vision and our mission to empower faculty, staff, and institutions to increase the educational attainment of Latinos and other underserved communities in order to close higher education equity and opportunity gaps, we encourage you to make a commitment of support through a donation.

Donate here: <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1217887>

Or mail your donation to

Catch the Next
18756 Stone Oak Pkwy, Ste. 200
San Antonio, TX 78258

Catch the Next Program Partners; Current and Former Sponsors



Catch the Next Colleges



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
San Antonio College



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT
Palo Alto College



South Texas College, Rio Grande Valley

Mid Valley Campus, Weslaco
Pecan Campus, McAllen
Starr Campus, Rio Grande City

Alamo Colleges, San Antonio

Palo Alto College
San Antonio College

Austin Community College, Austin

Highland Campus
Riverside Campus
Hays Campus
South Campus
Northridge Campus
Round Rock Campus
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Dallas College

Richland Campus, Richardson
Brookhaven Campus, Farmers Branch
Cedar Valley Campus, Lancaster
El Centro Campus, Downtown Dallas
Eastfield Campus, Mesquite
North Lake Campus, Irving
Mountain View Campus, Oak Cliff

About Our Newsletter

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Submissions are welcomed. Please send all information to:

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“The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Greater Texas Foundation, or any director, officer or employee thereof.”

Support CTN by donating to our organization, bringing CTN to your campus or joining us for training. For more information, go to <https://www.catchthenext.org/>