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A Message from the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent

"Teachers are a vital piece to education"



*Santa Cruz County School Superintendent
&
Staff*



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Nogales, AZ 85621
Phone: 520.375.7940

$$E=mc^2$$



Border Eco Updates

Thank you to our readers and supporters for your continued loyalty. Your support enables us to share stories of the people, events, and organizations making a positive impact in our community.

Our goal is to connect and support the Santa Cruz County community. As a unique border town rich in culture and traditions, we want to highlight the people, events, and organizations that make a difference.

Share your upcoming community events, meetings, and conferences with us! Stay up-to-date with the latest news and stories by following us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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Please send us information on any upcoming events, meetings, or programs to share with our readers.

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September 23, 2025 - Special General Election: Congressional District 7

Important Dates for Early Voting:

Ballots mailed to Uniformed and Overseas Voters: August 8, 2025

Last day to register to vote & update voter registration: August 25, 2025

Early voting begins / Early ballots are mailed: August 27, 2025

Early voting at Sonoita Library 9am to 12pm: September 6, 2025

Early voting at Patagonia Cady Hall 2pm to 5pm: September 6, 2025

Last day to request a mail ballot: September 9, 2025

Early voting at Tubac Community Center 9am to 12pm: September 13, 2025

Early voting at Gabilondo-Zehentner Center 2pm to 5pm: September 13, 2025

Recommended deadline to mail back your ballot: September 16, 2025

Last day to vote early in person: September 19, 2025 at 7pm

Election Day (Vote in person or drop off your early ballot): September 23, 2025

Register to Vote at: <https://azmvdnow.gov>

Check your registration status at: <https://my.arizona.vote>

Santa Cruz County Voter Information:

<https://www.santacruzcountyz.gov/986/Voter-Information>

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Anita Moreno
Santa Cruz County Recorder
2150 N Congress Drive Suite 101
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A Life of Love and Laughter: A Tribute to Ramiro F. Molina Jr.

“Laughter, Love & Legacy

Ramiro F. Molina Jr. known affectionately as “Ram,” “Ramirito,” or simply “Pa” lived life with a mischievous grin, a toolbox in hand, and a heart so big it could turn strangers into lifelong friends. When he passed away on June 12, 2025, at 55, he left behind a community that still hears his contagious laugh in the rustle of wind chimes and the stories shared over repurposed jars of sweet tea.

The Man Who Made Every Moment Shine

Ramiro’s daughters Cristina, Rebecca, and Camilla remember their father as a “professional fun-maker.” Whether he was pretending to lose fingers to make them giggle, dancing with them atop his shoes (“Look, Pa’s my big guy!”), or spinning tall tales about teaching Michael Jackson to moonwalk, his joy was infectious. “He didn’t have a mean bone in his body,” says Camilla. “Even when wronged, he’d respond with firm kindness, never cruelty.”

His wife, Patricia, fell for that charm in high school when he slipped her bubble gum with love notes. On their first date, he declared, “I’m going to marry you.” She laughed but 39 years together (29 married) proved him right. “He made everyone feel like they’d known him forever,” she says.

Lessons in Coffee, Car Rides & Second Chances

Ramiro’s love language was action. Mornings began with him kneeling beside his daughters’ beds, spoon-feeding them tiny cups of coffee (“mostly milk and sugar”) to ease them into the day a ritual he extended to their boyfriends in adulthood. He turned chores into adventures: “Kiko the Hair Stylist” styled bedhead before school; late-night drives for fries became “truck swaying” lessons in his manual-transmission Ford.

A master of repurposing, he taught his family to see potential in everything: old jeans became purses, jars became tool organizers, and a failed fishing trip in Sedona (“We used a stick and string!”) became a legendary story. “He believed every problem had a solution,” says Rebecca. “Even if it involved duct tape and creativity.”

Community Roots & Produce Aisles

Ramiro’s 30-year career in the produce industry began humbly scrubbing toilets at TA-DE Distributing but his work ethic and charisma made him a legend. Colleagues from California to Cleveland still swap stories about “the best inspector Dave Westendorf Produce ever had.” Beyond work, he volunteered with Girl Scouts, supported the Nogales Woman’s Club, and cheered Patricia’s community projects. “Wherever we went, someone stopped us to say, ‘You’re Ramirito’s family!’” laughs Cristina.

The Uno King & His Lasting Light

Family game nights revealed Ramiro’s playful stubbornness. “He never grasped Uno rules,” Patricia recalls. “He’d slam down a +4 card, then pout when we corrected him but that was the only time he ever got annoyed.” His resilience shone brighter in tough times. When car troubles arose, he’d soothe tears with, “What matters is you’re safe. Now let’s fix it.”

A Legacy of Love

Ramiro’s pride was his family: Patricia, his “best friend”; his daughters’ accomplishments; and his vintage 1978 Ford F150 and 1951 Willy’s Jeep (which he dreamed of restoring). Today, cardinal sightings and mysterious wind chimes remind them he’s near. “He’d say, ‘Don’t cry, everything will be okay,’” whispers Patricia. “And it is, because he loved us enough to last lifetimes.”

Ramiro Molina’s legacy isn’t just about the stories he shared or the objects he saved; it’s about the way he taught others to live in joy every day. As his family says: “We can do anything because he loved us.” And that, Ramirito would agree, is the greatest repurposing project of all.

A Final Farewell, But Never Goodbye

As family and friends gathered to honor Ramiro on June 20, they’ll carry forward his lessons: to laugh often, to fix rather than discard, and to love fiercely. Patricia finds comfort in the signs he leaves behind, a cardinal’s visit, a wind chime’s melody. “He’d tell us, ‘Don’t cry. Everything will be okay.’ And it will be,” she says. “Because he loved us enough to last a lifetime.”

In a world that often feels heavy,

Ramiro F. Molina Jr. reminded us to lighten up. His story doesn’t end here it lives on in every shared joke, every repurposed treasure, and every heart he warmed. As his daughters say, “We can do anything because he loved us.” And that, perhaps, is his greatest gift of all.

**“Ya no llores, todo va estar bien.”
(Don’t cry, everything will be okay.)**

Ramiro’s enduring wisdom.



Empowering Futures: Santa Cruz County Summer Program Delivers Excellence to Over

This summer, learning didn't stop when school let out. Thanks to a collaborative effort between educators, sponsors, and local organizations, nearly 700 students from kindergarten through community college (grades K-14) dove into hands-on learning, creativity, and adventure across 21 free summer camps hosted at locations throughout Santa Cruz County.

From fire stations to historic landmarks, classrooms to bike trails, the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office (SCCSSO) transformed the county into a vibrant summer learning hub all at no cost to families.

A Camp for Every Curiosity

With sessions held everywhere from Wade Carpenter Middle School to the 1904 Historic Courthouse, students explored subjects ranging from STEM and wellness to outdoor skills and arts. The camps weren't just educational; they were a testament to the power of community partnerships.

"We couldn't have done this without our incredible instructors, volunteers, and sponsors," said a SCCSSO representative. "When schools, businesses, and local agencies come together, we create opportunities that change lives."

Fueling Minds and Bodies

Beyond academics, the camps ensured students stayed nourished, with free summer meals provided by Sodexo. Health partners like Carondelet and El Rio Health also supported wellness initiatives, reinforcing the program's holistic approach to youth development.

Gratitude for a Community That Cares

Key funding from GEAR UP, Los Padres, Wellness Connection, and the South 32 Hermosa Project made these camps possible, proving that investment in education pays dividends far beyond the classroom.

"This wasn't just about keeping kids busy, it was about inspiring them," said one camp instructor. "We saw students light up when they built robots, painted murals, or learned fire safety from real firefighters. These experiences stick with them."

Looking Ahead to Summer 2026

With this year's overwhelming success, plans are already underway to expand next year's offerings. Families are encouraged to stay tuned for registration details next spring.

To the students, parents, instructors, and sponsors who made 2025 unforgettable: Thank you! Together, Santa Cruz County is proving that when communities unite, every child gets the chance to learn, grow, and shine no matter the season.

Want to get involved next year? Follow the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office for updates on 2026 summer programs!

CAMP NAMES

Robo-Ed Robo Kids
Robo-Ed Coding Story
Robo-Ed RoboMaster
Future Firefighters in Training
SK8
Kinder Readiness
Youth Empowerment Program
The Art of Storytelling
Writer's Institute
Rocket Academy
Drones

4-H Livestock Day
Draw Anything
Murals on Morley
Healthcare Careers
College Admissions Bootcamp
Adulting 101
Youth Techie (AZ Strut)
AzCyber Beginner
AzCyber Intermediate
0s3 Bike Camp



Empowering Futures: Santa Cruz County Summer Program Delivers Excellence to Over



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Back to School, Together: Community Comes Alive for Jump Back 2 School Event

The buzz was not about the approaching first bell, but about investing in our community's future as the crucial Jump Back 2 School event got underway this morning. For countless families across Nogales, the start of the school year brings financial strain, and obtaining the essential supplies of backpacks, notebooks, pencils, and calculators can be an enormous challenge. Regardless of their economic background, every Nogales Unified School District student will be ready to learn on day one thanks to this event. This is about more than just giving out materials; it's about boosting confidence, leveling the playing field, and conveying a powerful message that education matters deeply to our youth. With the right tools, students are engaged, feel supported, and are positioned for a stronger start to the school year.

Jump Back 2 School would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of its sponsors, whose dedication has been the foundation for 13 consecutive years. In addition to being a donation, their generosity is a profound, long-term investment in Nogales students and our community. As a result, these sponsors can provide thousands of critical supplies to students, directly alleviating financial pressure on families and ensuring the focus of our classrooms is on learning, not the problems they face. Making Connections 4U exemplifies the spirit of community partnership with its pivotal role in facilitating this support.

Thanks to all the sponsors for believing in and committing to the success of Nogales' children. Your support for the past 13 years has been fundamental to building a stronger, more educated Nogales. The impact of the Jump Back 2 School event extends far beyond the immediate provision of supplies. By alleviating financial burdens, families can focus more on their children's educational needs and aspirations, fostering a positive learning environment at home. Over time, this support helps to cultivate a culture of academic achievement and empowerment within the community, paving the way for future opportunities and success for the students of Nogales.





Special thanks to the following organizations for their continued support:

Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office
 Making Connections 4U
 Community Food Bank Southern AZ Nogales
 Odyssey Services Corp
 City of Nogales
 Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
 Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
 Children's Advocacy Center
 Santa Cruz Cardinals
 Alignment Health Plan
 JCPenney
 SEARHC
 Nogales Woman's Club
 Intermountain Centers/Pinal Hispanic Council
 NY Creations
 Public Safety Global Alliance
 Cricket Wireless
 University of Arizona Cooperative Extension of Santa Cruz County-4H Club
 Lawyers Title
 Border Patrol Explorers
 Unisource
 SODEXO
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 South32 Hermosa Project
 Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz County
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 Tubac Fire District
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 Mariposa Community Health Center
 Constructing Circles of Peace
 Consulado de México
 Santa Cruz Council on Aging
 ARIZONA@WORK - Santa Cruz County
 Santa Cruz County Health Services
 Santa Cruz County Justice of the Peace
 HOPE Inc
 Stewart Title
 University of Arizona Cooperative Extension of Santa Cruz County
 Santa Cruz County Emergency Management
 Santa Cruz County Justice Project
 Rio Rico Chevron
 PPEP/National Farmworker Jobs Program
 Hogales Santa Cruz Public Library



Rio Rico Insights

2025 Annual Back-to-School Rio Rico BLiTZ - Supporting Our Kids and Families

"We are excited to announce the success of the 16th Annual Back-to-School BLiTZ, a community-driven event held this past weekend. It brought together hundreds of families, educators, and local organizations to support our students," said Mrs. Angelica Lopez, the BLiTZ Coordinator.

The purpose of this event is to provide essential resources all in one place to help students and families prepare for the new school year. During the event, students received free school supplies, backpacks, spirit shirts, vision screenings, haircut vouchers, lunch, and more, ensuring they had confidence and support to start the new school year.

The Back-to-School BLiTZ inspires collaboration across our community, which is what makes it truly special. Several local organizations participated, including health care providers, afterschool programs, and support agencies, to provide information and services to families. In addition to their presence and generosity, they demonstrated a strong community commitment to the success of our youth.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to the community partners, parent liaisons, volunteers, school principals, food service and custodial staff who made this event a success. We are able to positively impact the lives of so many students and their families because of your dedication.

Thank you for supporting the mission of public education and for being a part of something that uplifts and unites our community. Written by Mrs. Angelica Lopez, Back-to-School BLiTZ Coordinator





LET'S TALK HEALTH

Cultivating Tomorrows Leaders: Highlights from the Summer Youth Institute (SYI)

For the past 23 years, Mariposa Community Health Center has hosted its Summer Youth Institute (SYI), a summer program for high school students interested in the healthcare field and community leadership. This program has become a staple in summer activities in our community, giving teens a chance to learn, develop their skills, explore the field, and connect with their peers and professionals across Santa Cruz County.

Participants of the program gain valuable insight on health topics relevant to adolescent issues, such as underage drinking, substance use, healthy relationships, physical and mental health, and much more. Professionals from various organizations, including MCHC, Hope Inc., the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation, the AZ Department of Liquor, and the AZ Attorney General's Office, to name a few. These guest speakers provide participants with knowledge, resources, and connections to their organization's services.

Another part of SYI involves career exploration and college readiness. Participants can visit the University of Arizona's Health Sciences Colleges- including the College of Nursing, Public Health, Pharmacy, Medicine, and even the office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. In this experience, participants are given critical insight into health sciences and the requirements to enroll.

Another part of career exploration includes the MCHC mentorship week. In the final week of SYI, participants are matched with a health professional within MCHC that best matches their career interests. They then shadow a healthcare professional to experience a day in the field and have some time to chat with their mentors about their careers.

Throughout the program, students sharpen their leadership skills, public speaking skills, and social skills through activities and hands-on demonstrations.

During the program's graduation ceremony, students are awarded CPR, Tobacco 101, and Teen Health Facilitator certifications, among others. SYI has seen over 500 students as of 2025, and this year's cohort brings 30 more Teen Health Facilitators into our community, ready to share their knowledge with our community.

If you'd like to learn more about the Summer Youth Institute, please call MCHC's Community Health Services department at 520-375-6050!

Written by Nicolas Reyna, Mariposa Teen Health Facilitator

DELANO ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH



SUMMER YOUTH INSTITUTE
MARIPOSA COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER

LET'S TALK HEALTH



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LET'S TALK HEALTH

SCAN ME





The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office wishes every student a great school year!

Bright Minds, Bright Futures.



welcome
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520-761-7869

Sheriff's Round-Up



Message from Sheriff David Hathaway

Throughout the past month, members of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office proudly participated in various trainings and community events, including:

Nogales & Rio Rico back to school blitz

Boy's & Girl's Club career day presentations

4th of July Parades, Nogales & Patagonia participation

School Resource Officer Conference in Grapevine, Texas

Movie Night, Rio Rico Community Center-Circles of Peace and Sheriff's Office

National 911 conference in Long Beach California

We congratulate Deputy Rafael Lopez who recently graduated as a certified D.A.R.E. Instructor after a dynamic 2-week training in Oklahoma.

Join Our Team

If you're interested in a rewarding career in law enforcement, we are currently accepting applications for the following positions:

Deputy Sheriff

Detention Officer

Dispatcher

We are also seeking Lateral Officers for both Peace Officer and Detention Officer roles. Applications are available for download on the Santa Cruz County website and can be submitted to the Human Resources Office.

On behalf of myself and the entire Sheriff's Office staff, we extend a heartfelt thanks to the residents of our county for the vital role they play in maintaining the safety and security of our communities.

Sincerely,

Sheriff David Hathaway

SHERIFF'S ROUND-UP

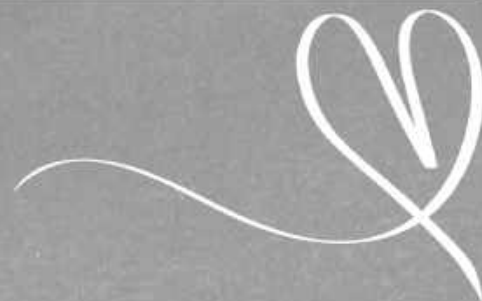
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