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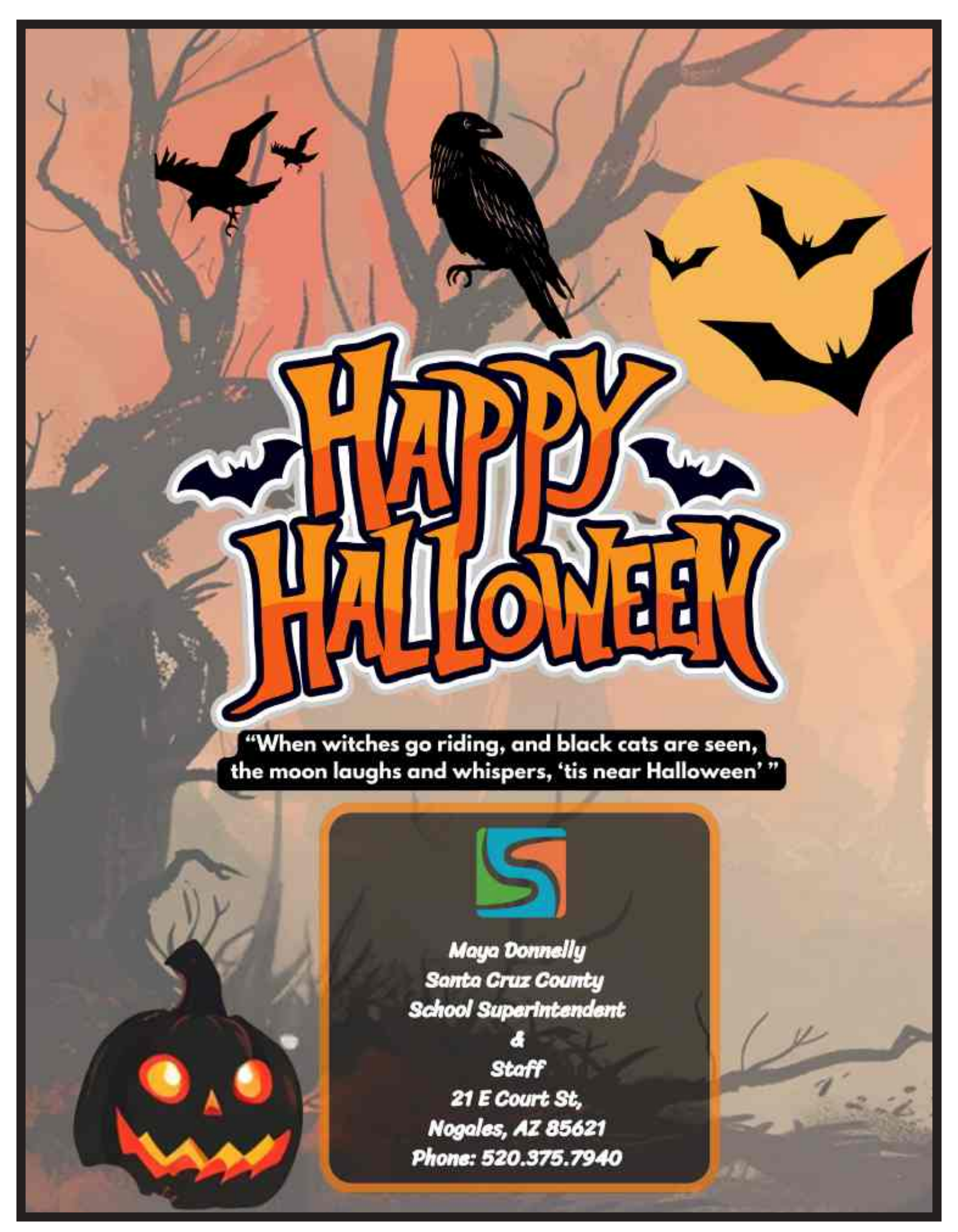
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HAPPY HALLOWEEN

"When witches go riding, and black cats are seen,
the moon laughs and whispers, 'tis near Halloween' "



Maya Donnelly
Santa Cruz County
School Superintendent
&
Staff

21 E Court St,
Nogales, AZ 85621
Phone: 520.375.7940



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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EARLY VOTING 2026 GENERAL ELECTION OCTOBER 7TH - OCTOBER 30TH 2150 N. CONGRESS DR. STE. 114

Last day to register to vote
Early voting begins / Early ballots are mailed
Last day to request a mail ballot
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Election Day (drop off your early ballot by 7:00 p.m.)

October 5th
October 7th
October 23rd
October 27th
October 30th
November 3rd

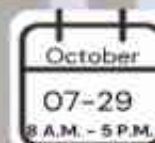


OFFICIAL BALLOT DROP BOX LOCATIONS



EARLY VOTING SCHEDULE

CALENDARIO DE VOTACIÓN ANTICIPADA



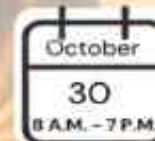
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SATURDAY 8 AM TO 12 PM
SONOMA LIBRARY/COUNTY COMPLEX
BUILDING 3147 HIGHWAY 83
SATURDAY 2 PM TO 5 PM
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Anita Moreno
Santa Cruz County Recorder
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Nogales, Arizona 85621
(520) 375-7990
voter@santacruzcountyz.gov

Nogales Taekwondo Students Return Home With 19 Gold Medals and Plenty of Pride

Winning a medal is exciting. Coming home knowing every one of your teammates earned one makes the celebration even sweeter. That was the accomplishment of the International Taekwondo Academy on September 12, when 24 competitors traveled to Nogales, Sonora, for the Torneo Fronterizo.

Competing among approximately 600 athletes from Arizona and Sonora, the academy brought home 19 gold medals and five silver medals. For the students, those medals represented the satisfaction of putting their training to the test. The techniques they had practiced, the corrections they had worked through, and the determination to keep improving had led to a moment they could celebrate with their teammates and families. Their instructor, Rodrigo Valenzuela, had good reason to share that pride. Helping students prepare for competition means teaching them to manage frustration, accept feedback, and trust what they have learned. Seeing every competitor return with a medal gave him an opportunity to celebrate how far they had come.

For young athletes, stepping into a tournament takes courage. There is the anticipation of facing someone unfamiliar, the pressure to remember their training, and the desire to do well for the people cheering them on. Earning a place on the podium brings its own reward: the confidence that comes from taking on a challenge and discovering that one can meet it.

The academy's youth competitors included Evelyn Villascusa, Hector Etzoglou, Miguel Romero, Mateo Mendoza, Gael Enriquez, Emanuel Morales, Ethan Garcia, Amado Manriquez, Lucas Cabin, Romina Santacruz, Victoria Parra, Mario Parra, Emilia Escobar, Gerardo Gil, Emiliano Gil, Santiago Gil, Eidan Amaya, Ashley Amaya, Gabriel Zamorano, and Marcia Corte.

Adult competitors Angelica Parra, Natalie Jimenez, and Maria Valdez also represented the academy. Their participation set an example for younger students, showing adults making time to train, challenge themselves, and compete alongside them. They shared in the work that brought the team to the tournament and in the celebration that followed.

The event also brought together athletes from two communities with close family and cultural ties. Representing Nogales, Arizona, across the border in Nogales, Sonora, gave the academy a chance to take part in that shared sporting community while making its hometown proud.

At the academy, respect, self-control, and perseverance are part of the lessons students carry into competition. Those values matter when a match becomes difficult, when an athlete receives a correction, and when it is time to show respect to an opponent. This time, every academy competitor had a medal to bring home. For Valenzuela and his students, the next practice would begin with something worth celebrating together: a team accomplishment earned one performance at a time.



Celebrating America 250

Red, white, and blue took on a whole new meaning at the 2026 Santa Cruz County Fair, held September 18th –20th at the Sonoita Fairgrounds. In honor of “America 250,” students brought our nation’s 250th anniversary to life through their creativity, imagination, and unique artistic perspectives.

The Santa Cruz County School Superintendent, Maya Donnelly, and her office proudly coordinated the student artwork exhibit, with the support of Coordinator Adrienne Villanez. Hundreds of entries from public, private, and charter schools across Santa Cruz County filled the exhibit with student talent and inspiration.

Community judges, including school administrators and county officials, thoughtfully reviewed each piece, recognizing the creativity, effort, and talent of our young artists. Students received ribbons for first-, second-, and third-place finishes, along with “Best in Show” recognition in various categories, including paint, mixed media, creative writing, and science.

Trophies were also awarded to outstanding students in four grade divisions: K-2, 3rd-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th-12th, as well as to children with special needs.

Visitors were amazed by the talent on display, and many left the hall with a renewed sense of pride in the students of Santa Cruz County. Their work served as a reminder that while we celebrate our nation’s history, we are also celebrating the creativity, imagination, and potential of the next generation.

Congratulations to all our talented student artists! Several of their amazing art pieces will be on display at the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent’s Office, located in the 1904 Historic Courthouse at 21 E. Court St., Nogales. We invite you to stop by and enjoy their wonderful work!

Here’s to celebrating 250 years of America and the bright future our students will help create!



Celebrating America 250



*Celebrating
America 250*



*Celebrating
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NOGALES POLICE

Beyond the Badge-NPD Celebrates New Officer and Honors a Fallen Classmate

It was a day of pride, purpose, and heartfelt remembrance for our local police department as they celebrated the graduation of their newest officer.

In a proud moment captured after the ceremony, Assistant Chief R. Gallegos, Lieutenant B. Angulo, Officer A. Arellano, and Chief C. Jimenez stood alongside newly graduated Officer Ibarra, marking not just the end of the academy, but the beginning of a career in service.

The day was about more than one milestone. During the ceremony, the graduating class gathered for a final class photo with an empty space that was deeply felt. The class paused to honor and remember their fallen classmate, Ramirez. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them was his brother, a DPS Trooper, who joined the tribute. It was a powerful reminder of the brotherhood that extends beyond the badge and the commitment these graduates share to carry his memory forward in their service.

There was also recognition for the leaders who helped get them there. Officer A. Arellano was honored with an award for her service as a class counselor. Her dedication, guidance, and steady support throughout the academy were instrumental to the class's success, a meaningful acknowledgment of her commitment to lifting others as she serves.

In the ceremony's most symbolic moment, Chief C. Jimenez presented Officer Ibarra with his badge. More than a metal badge, the badge represents trust, responsibility, and a promise to the community he has sworn to protect. From celebration to remembrance, the day captured what law enforcement is truly about: service, sacrifice, and standing together.



San Cayetano Cheetahs Celebrate Culture and Community at First Annual Noche de Cultura

The San Cayetano Cheetahs recently held their inaugural Noche de Cultura, a vibrant evening dedicated to celebrating the rich tapestry of culture, community, kindness, and belonging. Families from the school converged to enjoy a feast celebrating their diverse backgrounds, surrounded by the harmonious sounds of music and engaging performances, all while fostering connections within the school community.

The success of the event stemmed from the collaborative efforts of the San Cayetano Booster Club and dedicated school staff, who joined forces to create a memorable evening. Families were immersed in a lively atmosphere where they could engage with one another and revel in the unique cultural identities that enrich the Cheetah community.

Attendees were treated to dynamic performances by the spirited Rio Rico Hawx Dance Team and the talented Coatimundi Middle School Dance Team, whose energy and enthusiasm infused the evening with excitement. Adding to the festivities, the Santa Cruz County Superintendent's Office Mobile Library made a welcoming appearance, offering students and their families a chance to explore valuable educational resources right on-site.

Moreover, students from the RRHS Student Council contributed to the joyful ambiance by offering enchanting face painting throughout the night, allowing younger attendees to express their creativity and add an extra layer of fun.

Among the attendees were SCV35 Board President Lourdes Vasquez and Board Member Brad Beach, who joined the celebration and enthusiastically mingled with families, reinforcing the spirit of unity and pride in the community.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to the San Cayetano Booster Club, the dedicated school staff, the enthusiastic student groups, and our wonderful community partners, as well as everyone who attended. This first-ever Noche de Cultura was a truly special occasion for our Cheetah families, offering a wonderful opportunity to come together, celebrate one another, and strengthen the bonds that enrich our vibrant community.



Rio Rico Insights

Sebastian Castro Makes RRHS History as AASC State President

In an inspiring milestone for Rio Rico High School, Student Body President Sebastian Castro has made history by being selected as one of only three State Presidents during the Arizona Association of Student Councils (AASC) annual conference. This prestigious recognition marks a significant achievement, as Sebastian stands as the first-ever Student Body President from Rio Rico High School to attain such a distinguished statewide leadership position.

The selection process was highly competitive, requiring candidates to submit detailed applications, undergo rigorous interviews, and deliver persuasive speeches before a crowd of thousands at the conference. Through this demanding journey, Sebastian's passion and dedication shone brightly, ultimately earning him the votes of fellow student council members from schools all across Arizona.

To prepare for this pivotal opportunity, Sebastian exhibited extraordinary initiative and commitment. He proactively reached out to former State Presidents and influential student council leaders to draw on their insights and experiences, ensuring he was well-equipped for the responsibilities ahead in his new role.

Sebastian's selection is a testament to his unwavering determination, sense of responsibility, and courageous spirit, as well as his profound commitment to fostering student leadership within his community.

A few weeks prior to his selection, Sebastian was honored by the SCVUSD No. 35 Governing Board and recognized by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Melisa Lunderville for his remarkable accomplishment. This achievement not only reflects his hard work but also highlights the extensive support and guidance he has received from dedicated teachers, his counselor, Ms. Kayli Munoz, and RRHS Principal Mr. Dagoberto Lopez.

Congratulations to Sebastian on this historic accomplishment! He will undoubtedly serve as a proud representative of Rio Rico High School at the state level, inspiring others with his leadership and vision.



LET'S TALK HEALTH

Did You Know?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, besides skin cancers. It accounts for about 1 in 3 new cancers diagnosed in women each year.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, after lung cancer. The chance that a woman will die from breast cancer is about 1 in 43 (about 2.3%).

White women are slightly more likely to develop breast cancer than Black women, but Black women have a higher death rate from breast cancer. White, Asian, and Pacific Islander women are more likely to be diagnosed with early-stage (localized) breast cancer than Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska Native women.

Asian and Pacific Islander women have the lowest death rate from breast cancer.

The good news is that there are more than 4 million breast cancer survivors in the United States. This includes women who are currently receiving treatment as well as those who have been diagnosed with breast cancer in the past.

Breast Cancer Risk Factors

Age: Breast cancer mainly occurs in middle-aged and older women. About 1 in 10 women diagnosed with breast cancer are younger than 45.

Sex: Being a woman is the primary risk factor, although men can also develop breast cancer.

Genetics & family history: Inherited changes in genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 can significantly increase the risk of developing breast cancer.

Weight gain: Maintaining a healthy weight may help lower the risk of breast cancer, particularly after menopause.

Lifestyle choices: Healthy lifestyle choices are associated with a lower risk of breast cancer and other health conditions, including heart disease.

A healthy lifestyle includes maintaining a healthy weight, eating a nutritious diet, being physically active, and limiting alcohol.

a. **Limit or avoid alcohol & smoking:** Alcohol consumption is linked to an increased risk of breast cancer.

b. **Limit processed meats and ultra-processed foods:** Choose more whole and minimally processed foods when possible.

c. **Focus on whole foods:** Choose whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats such as fatty fish, olive oil, avocados, nuts, and seeds.

d. **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables:** A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides fiber, vitamins, minerals, and protective plant compounds.

Aim for a variety & colorful fruits and vegetables, including dark green and orange choices such as spinach, kale, carrots, oranges, and melon.

Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts are also nutritious choices.

e. **Stay hydrated:** Choose water as your main beverage and limit sugary drinks.

f. **Be physically active:** Find activities you enjoy and aim for regular physical activity throughout the week. A good goal is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week, such as brisk walking.

Sources: Susan G. Komen, University of Michigan Health, American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR).



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*October
Domestic Violence
Awareness Month*



Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office: Committed to Your Safety



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Nogales, AZ 85621
520-761-7869**

Sheriff's Round-Up



Throughout September, members of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office remained actively engaged with the community. This month's activities included participating in the September 11 remembrance ceremony at San Cayetano Elementary School, where we joined students, staff, and community members in honoring the lives lost and the courage demonstrated on September 11, 2001. Our members also attended the 9/11 Stair Climb Remembrance Ceremony at the Rio Rico Fire Station, joining local first responders and community members. We also congratulate Deputy Avila on successfully completing the Southern Arizona Law Enforcement Training Academy. This accomplishment reflects Deputy Avila's hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving the residents of Santa Cruz County.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform the public that our Sheriff's Office payment system went live this month. We are now set up to receive electronic payments for services such as fingerprinting, copies of law enforcement reports, body-worn camera footage, alarm permits, and Civil Division services. We will have four different payment stations: Two in our Records unit, one in Detention, and one in our Civil Division.

Join Our Outstanding Team

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office is seeking dedicated individuals who are interested in a rewarding career in public service. Applications are currently being accepted for the following positions:

Deputy Sheriff

Dispatcher

Detention Officer

Detention Booking Clerk

Search and Rescue Volunteer

Law Enforcement Assist Team Volunteer

Your service can make a meaningful and lasting difference in the safety and well-being of Santa Cruz County.

On behalf of the entire Sheriff's Office, I extend my sincere appreciation to the residents and community partners who continue to support our mission and work alongside us to promote public safety.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

Sincerely,

Sheriff David Hathaway

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

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