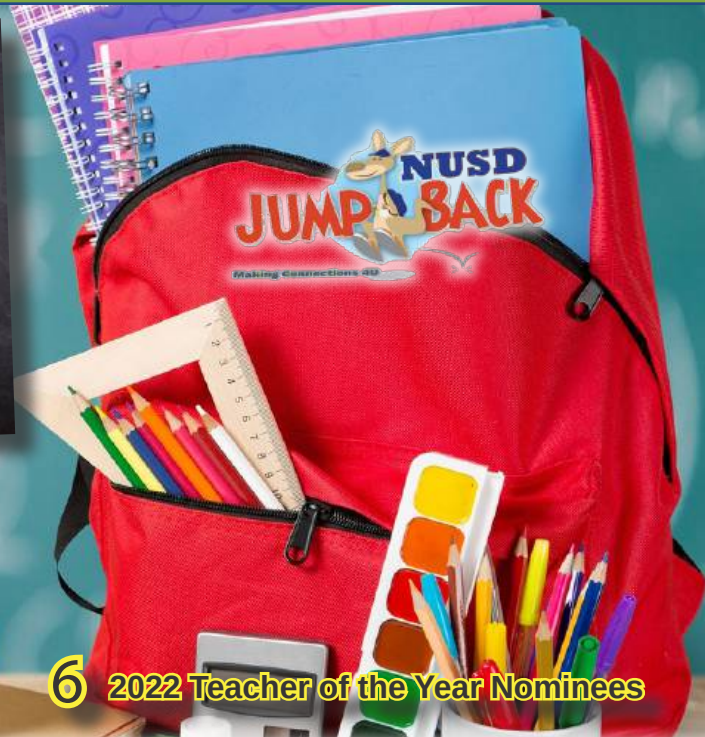




4 Giving Santa Cruz County HOPE

## CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA



6 2022 Teacher of the Year Nominees

## National Immunization Awareness



10 10th Annual  
Jump Back 2 School



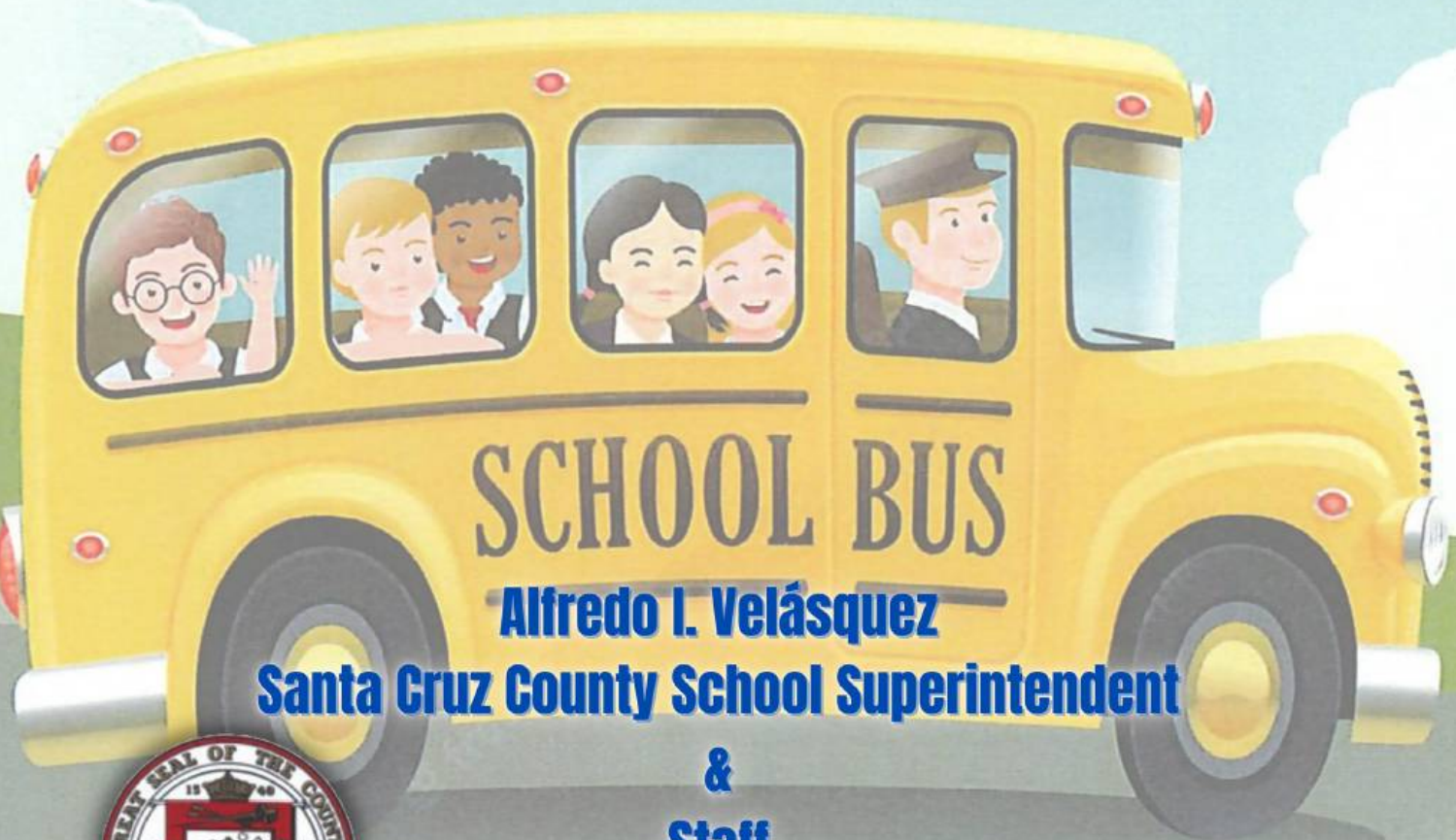
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# Back to **SCHOOL!**



**Alfredo I. Velásquez**  
**Santa Cruz County School Superintendent**

**&  
Staff**

**2150 N. Congress Dr. #107**

**Nogales, AZ 85621**

**Phone: 520.375.7940**

**Intelligence plus character — that is the true goal of education.—Martin Luther King Jr.**

# Border Eco Updates

We want to thank our readers and customers for their continued support. Your support helps us report on the great people, events, and organizations who make a difference in our community.

Our goal is to help connect Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County is a unique bordertown rich in culture, and traditions. We are here to support our community. Please send us any information on any upcoming community events, meetings, or conferences. Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, YouTube or Twitter for the latest events, people, and organizations who make a difference in Santa Cruz County.

We are always looking for new talent. If you have an interest in sales, journalism, or photography send us your resume at [contact@bordereco.com](mailto:contact@bordereco.com)



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Information is correct at press time.  
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# Giving Santa Cruz County HOPE

HOPE (Helping Ourselves Pursue Enrichment), Inc. is a nonprofit organization devoted to behavioral health. As a consumer-operated organization (also known as a peer-run organization), HOPE, Inc. is founded and managed by peers who have personal experience with mental health and/or substance abuse recovery. During our personal recovery journeys, we draw on this lived experience to support and guide others.

As part of its expansion plans, HOPE Inc. merged the services of Wellness Connections, a company well-established in Southeastern Arizona. A grass-roots movement called Hope began in Tucson to help community members navigate the mental health system. Our peer-run program has been operating in Southern Arizona for over thirty years.

Individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders can receive services from HOPE. People living without housing, members of the criminal justice system, and those seeking support for recovery and reintegration into our communities are among the underserved/underrepresented populations who might not otherwise have access to care.

In addition to collaborating with other organizations, HOPE provides communication and support to the community, works toward reducing stigma related to mental health and substance abuse, and distributes life-saving kits, such as Narcan/Naloxone kits. Reintegration and reentry into society make a significant difference for individuals, but also for society as a whole; unemployment rates improve, homelessness rates decline, and we have the potential to end overdose deaths through extended outreach. By implementing these measures, Southern Arizona will be healthier and more vibrant for everyone.

Over 100 health care professionals work for HOPE in Cochise, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yuma Counties. We are 100% peer-run and family-run, which makes us different from peer support organizations. As a result of our lived-experience-based philosophy of care, all of our employees have a deeper understanding of mental illness and/or substance abuse. We do not have large caseloads, so members who need support can receive it quickly.

Individuals in need are our focus, and we work diligently to connect them with the care they need. In order to accomplish this, we collaborate with community providers and reach out to community members. The tagline "We're in it together" emphasizes the diversity of support we provide to our members.

If you or someone you know needs help with mental health or substance abuse disorders, you can contact the HOPE Center closest to you and schedule an intake to determine how to proceed.

Members of our communities can support our cause by connecting with their local HOPE Center. As HOPE serves populations in need, we are always in need of resources to support our Members, so your donations are greatly appreciated. Together with community organizations, we raise awareness, amplify services for community members, and combine resources to support our communities.



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BordereEcho*





## People who "echo" in behavioral health



# HOPE Incorporated

Rosa E. Lopez-Merino is the site director for HOPE. Rosa began working for SEABHS 13 years ago as a driver and a Family Support Specialist. For two years, she worked as the area coordinator for MIKID in Nogales, Arizona. She then worked for Corazon Behavioral Health for 5 years as an adult case manager and provided peer support and family support services. Rosa went on to work as a program manager at Wellness Connections for 4 years which allowed them to eventually merge with HOPE, Incorporated on March 2nd, 2020. Rosa has been the site director at the HOPE Nogales site for the past 2 years and is certified as a Recovery Support Specialist, a Forensic Peer Support Specialist, and a Family Support Specialist.



## People who "echo" in behavioral health



Being a part of the community's growth and change is what Rosa enjoys most about being a site director at HOPE, Inc. She enjoys providing a safe place for individuals to share their experiences and work towards meaningful goals. Her goal is to empower members to navigate the system on their own and improve their quality of life. Rosa believes that developing a supportive environment for her staff is also important, since it promotes a collaborative atmosphere where every member of HOPE can do his or her best.





# 2022 TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Dear County Residents,

Once again, it is the honor of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez, South 32, Santa Cruz Community Foundation and the Nogales Rotary Club to introduce the 2022-2023 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year Nominees.

Now more than ever, we are grateful for the dedicated educators we have here within our community. It is said, that Education is the passport to our future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who plan for it today. The tireless nominees for this year's Teacher of the Year Award in Santa Cruz County exemplify the meaning of dedication.

Teachers from each of the schools represented selected their Teacher of the Year Nominee. Subsequently, a selection committee of five volunteers, from different areas of Santa Cruz County, interviewed all the Nominees and amongst them selected the 2022-2023 Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year and runner-up. Certainly a long and difficult undertaking for the selection committee. We thank you for volunteering your entire day to them and undertaking this immense responsibility.

To the twenty-one Nominees, Thank you for your devotion and concern for the education of the children of Santa Cruz County and congratulations from all of us.

Sincerely,  
Santa Cruz County  
School Superintendent  
Alfredo I. Velásquez



Ms. Teresa A. Montano  
(Nogales High School)



Ms. Randi Trantham  
(Patagonia Elem. School)



Ms. Karina Lopez  
(Lourdes Catholic School)



Ms. Debbie Condes  
(Desert Shadows Middle School)



Ms. Callie Mattus  
(Elgin School)





Ms. Maritza Mayer-Vallencia  
(Lourdes Catholic High School)



Ms. Liliana Montenegro  
(San Cayetano Elem. School)



Ms. Margereta Thomas  
(Lincoln Elem. School)



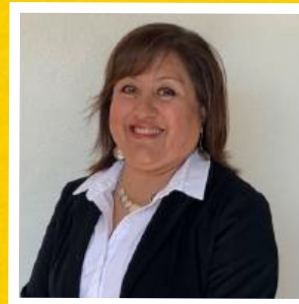
Ms. Kimberly Franklin  
(Little Red School)



Ms. Lizyvette Lopez  
(Mary L. Wely Elem. School)



Ms. Mary Taft  
(Coatimundi Middle School)



Ms. Lorena Villa  
(Mountain View Elem. School)



Ms. Kerrie D. Durazo  
(Wade Carpenter Middle School)

# 2022 TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Ms. Rosa Maria Mendez  
(Coronado Elem. School)



Ms. Nora Patricia Mendez  
(Pierson High School)



Mr. Jeff Gudenkauf  
(Patagonia Union High School)



Mr. Rogelio C. Nobleza Jr.  
(Robert Bracker Elem. School)



Ms. Gaby Baldenegro  
(A.J. Mitchell Elem. School)



Ms. Alexandra Hix  
(Rio Rico High School)



Ms. Alejandra Garcia  
(Calabasas School)



Ms. Isela Teran  
(Challenger Elem. School)



# BACK TO

# SCHOOL



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# 10th Annual Jump Back 2 School



For several months, local organizations in Santa Cruz County met regularly to help plan for the Jump Back 2 School event. It is an opportunity for local organizations and community leaders to work together to help local families struggling to make ends meet. Many families today can't afford to purchase the basic school supplies.

Runaway inflation is cutting deeper and deeper into the incomes of people who work minimum wage jobs, seniors who have fixed incomes, and those who were already struggling.

Today there are more people working than ever before, but their wages are often insufficient to support a family. Before the pandemic, 55 percent of Arizona households had trouble paying their bills.

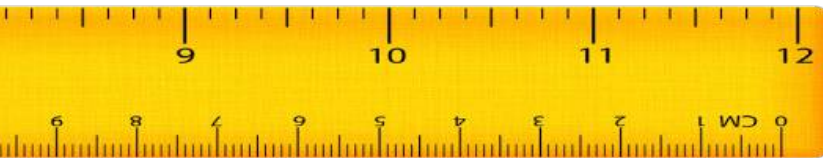
Living costs continue to rise, making it difficult for local families to purchase school supplies for their children. Local caring organizations work together to help families in need. Giving back to the community is a social responsibility for local organizations. Back to school supplies cost the average family \$600.00, but not all families can afford such an expense, especially if they have more than one child. Santa Cruz County has an estimated median income of \$ 29,710 for a family of four.

This year marked the 10th anniversary of Jump Back 2 School. In an effort to enhance support for local families, Safeway and other non-profits originally came up with this idea for a back-to-school event. Over the years, NUSD and local organizations have continued to host Jump Back 2 School. Organizing and coordinating this event in person with organizations and families was a special experience for the JBTS committee this year.

The day began early for several families and students on Saturday, July 23rd, in anticipation of Jump Back 2 School. Families and students waited patiently outside the cafeteria as early as 7:00 a.m. Meanwhile, inside the gymnasium local organizations were setting up their tables and school supplies. The cafeteria doors opened at 9:00 a.m. NUSD staff let families know they would start calling out students by school. The school principals from the elementary school greeted their students. Each of the school principals helped to register students, so they could participate in the back to school event. Students who participated in the event received school supplies, uniforms, and a bag of lunch on their way out. The ultimate goal of this event is to help prepare students for a successful school year.







***The Jump Back 2 School Planning Committee would like to thank the following local organizations for their continued support:***

*Nogales Unified School District  
Santa Cruz County Office of Superintendent  
Making Connections 4U  
NUSD Title 1  
Safeway  
South 32  
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona  
Carondelet  
Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona  
Nationwide Vision  
Starbucks  
Nogales Fire Department  
The City of Nogales  
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors  
Los Padres  
Women's Foundation  
Peter Piper Pizza  
Jeong Lizardi PC  
Women's Club  
HOPE, Inc.  
Arizonas Children Association  
Southern Arizona for Youth & Families SAYF Council  
Santa Cruz Council on Aging  
VIP Tires  
Croppers  
Nogales U.S. Customs Brokers Association  
O'Reilly Auto Parts  
Border Eco Magazine  
SODEXO  
CSL Plasma  
First Things First  
U of A Cooperative Extension  
U of A 4H Club  
Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College  
Community Health Associates  
Arizona@Work  
Mariposa Community Health Center  
Circles Of Peace  
Boys and Girls Club  
Hall of Fame  
Nogales Public Library  
International Taekwondo Academy*

# Let's Talk Health

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)

This annual observance highlights the efforts of Mariposa Community Health Center to protect patients of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases through on-time vaccination.

This year, NIAM serves as an important reminder to catch up on routine visits and vaccinations that may have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, we encourage you to schedule appointments to ensure you and your family are up to date on annual exams and recommended vaccines.

For those patients who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, you play a critical role in helping vaccine recipients understand the importance of vaccination and that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

Please call to schedule your routine annual physical exam, whether you are 3 months old or 90, we are happy to see you, check that all your vaccines are up to date, and answer any questions about all vaccines you may have.

Call and schedule your appointment today by calling (520) 281-1550 or for Covid specific vaccines or boosters, call (520) 223-4337.



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## **New Amado Youth Center Groundbreaking**

**Saturday, August 13, 2022**

*Groundbreaking, 9 am – 10:30 am*

*Free Family Fun, 11 am – 1 pm*

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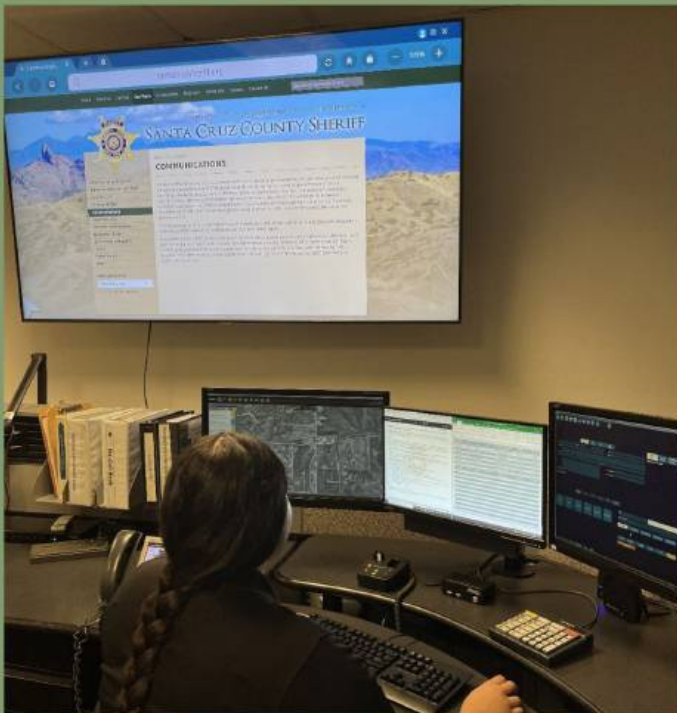
**To donate, please visit [AmadoChiliCookoff.org](https://AmadoChiliCookoff.org), scroll down  
and click on: **Support the Amado Youth Center Building Fund****



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# Mayor's Corner



Dear Friends,

Here are the plans for Teyechea Park that I would like to share with the community. In addition to being wheelchair accessible for children and adults with disabilities, this design is fully adaptive and inclusive. Currently, what are we working on?

The new facility includes a brand new all-purpose grass field, a play area, a walking track, new lighting, a basketball court, picnic areas, and restrooms.

Please be patient with us as this project will take some time to complete. It is certainly worth the wait to see the end result. We have posted concept drawings of our plans on the website of the City of Nogales.

In order to bring this dream to life, we have collected over \$800,000 in grants, city funds, and personal donations. This is just the first phase.

Phase 2 of the park complex will add an amphitheater, new parking, and a west entrance to the park complex.

There is still a lot of exploration to be done with this concept, so it might change as time goes on.

Nogales, "We are Ready!" We are ready for this huge project and many more to come.

There was a visit by Mexican delegations to the City of Nogales to discuss border issues. The group met with representatives from the office of Congressman Raul Grijalva, American and Mexican consulates, City Representatives, and Council Member Saulo Bonilla Jr. The group took a tour of the international border, starting in the Kino Springs neighborhood and heading westward.

Joining tenants living at Casitas Santa Cruz for breakfast is always a pleasure. We have an interactive meeting where they can ask questions about the local government process, current projects, and community resources. The needs of seniors and the disabled community are far too often overlooked. I advocate for their rights.

Thanks to everyone who attended the 4th of July festivities "Together Again". It doesn't matter what the weather is like, I am always available to the community and its needs. Come see me at City Hall if you need me!





# Sheriff's Round-Up



*This past month, the Sheriff's Office took part in a number of trainings to help improve their skills in better serving the community. Thanks to a grant provided by the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety, several of our employees are obtaining their HGN certifications as well as their phlebotomy certifications. This makes it much easier for us to test impaired drivers clearly and efficiently, ensuring the safety of our community and the roadways.*

*A Fourth of July potluck was held at the office this past month. Everyone had a great time munching on tasty hamburgers and hot dogs to celebrate Independence Day, and it went off with a blast!*

*The last month has been extremely windy and stormy, but it goes without saying that it has been much needed to cool down from the scorching Arizona heat. Just remember to look out for those flood warning signs on the road, and if you witness flash floods, avoid becoming stuck in a flood zone with your car by taking an alternate route.*

*This past month, as students prepared to return to school, our School Resource Officers were preparing to service the schools to maintain safety and security. We hope students are excited and ready to come back to school, as they are the future of our community. Parents, make sure you talk to your children about how to be safe when using the internet for school. Make sure to also remind them of how kindness and respect online and in person helps promote a happy learning environment in schools.*

*Our Law Enforcement Assistant Officers have been out and about patrolling our beautiful county, including areas such as Patagonia and Rio Rico! We thank them for volunteering their time to help serve Santa Cruz County. That's it for us folks. We hope you enjoy the rest of the summer and remember to stay safe.*

Your Sheriff, David Hathaway



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# A Message from the Santa Cruz County Attorney



**BE COOL!**  
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