



BORDER



# eco



4 Local organizations work together to bring smiles to elders



## CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Event of the Year



Person of the Year



Rising Star of the Year

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**"Celebrate endings—for they precede new beginnings."-**

**Jonathan Huie**



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

**happy new year!**

**2020**

# Border Eco Updates

Dear customers:

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to all of our customers this holiday season as you are incredibly important to us.

Our commitment to you has not wavered over the years, so we would like to thank you for your loyalty.

With the end of the year approaching, we wish our customers and their loved ones a happy holiday season, and hope that they are able to rediscover the magic of the season. As we look to the future, we would like to thank our customers for their continued support.

Happy New Year! Wishing you good health and happiness in the year ahead! Your continued support is greatly appreciated. We would like to thank our customers for their support. Our goal is to serve our community for a long time to come.

You can always bring about the changes you want to see around you. In the New Year, let's introduce new ideas and concepts to make the world a better and safer place for all of us."

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## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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# Delivering Smiles 2022

On Wednesday, December 21, 2022, Croppers, Nogales Housing Authority, Borderlands Food Bank, CSL Plasma, Making Connections 4U, Walmart, and Safeway distributed 120 “care boxes” to the elderly across Santa Cruz County. The Nogales Housing Authority assisted in identifying those elders who would benefit from the program.

We thank all the local organizations that contributed to this project as well as caring individuals who took time out of their busy schedules to think about our elders this holiday season, commented Robert Thompson-Nogales Housing Program Director.

Staff from the Nogales Housing Authority and Croppers packaged and distributed the “care boxes.” Knit gloves, hats, scarves, and socks were included in the boxes. Food edibles were donated by Borderlands Food Bank, Safeway donated cookies, and Walmart donated bags. Those care boxes were distributed by Croppers to Bowman Senior Residence residents. There were also boxes distributed at the Housing Authority in the senior community.

“It was our pleasure. The team and I all had a good time and really felt a sense of satisfaction helping the community,” said Carl Krause Cropper’s Nogales Auto Center Vice President.

We would not have been able to accomplish this project without the support of many caring members of our community. We know firsthand how difficult it is for these people to make ends meet. Due to the excessive cost of basic goods, it is difficult to maintain a living on a fixed budget. “Every year, we hope to bring smiles to people in need. We hope to increase the number of boxes we give out,” Thompson said. If you would like to be a part of this cause, please contact us at [scommunitycoalition@gmail.com](mailto:scommunitycoalition@gmail.com) or call us at (520) 216-5058.



## Santa Cruz County Recovery Court Produces First Program Graduate

In 2020, Justice of the Peace, Emilio G. Velasquez implemented a Recovery Court program in Santa Cruz County. The grant-funded program, in collaboration with local organizations, provides a restorative justice approach to treat individuals who have committed nonviolent crimes related to substance abuse. The recovery court treatment suspends charges until defendants have completed the program successfully in an attempt to address underlying substance abuse.

In December of 2022, the program exited the first Recovery Court graduate. J.T., identified only by initials to protect his privacy, stood before Judge Velasquez for the last time. “It’s amazing that a whole year has gone by,” said Velasquez.

Judge Velasquez congratulated the defendant for all of his hard work in the program over the past year. The program not only requires a lot of self-reflection and hard work but good time management skills as well. Participants are required to attend a number of meetings each week for peer support and substance abuse, as well as submit to regular drug testing and counseling.

“I had to attend and actively participate in weekly meetings at the Circles of Peace. I had to find a sponsor to help me get and stay sober. I had to attend multiple AA meetings every week. I had to undergo random drug tests on a weekly basis. What a nuisance! What misery! What a disaster,” said J.T. Judge Velasquez read aloud in court a letter submitted by the graduate titled, “How Recovery Court has helped my recovery and changed my life.”

As the words from his letter echoed back to him, J.T. showed genuine emotion, particularly when the Judge read about the defendant’s experience with Circles of Peace. “I met the wonderful people at Circles of Peace who showed genuine care for me. I felt understood, safe, and among my peers. It was there and then that I decided to turn my life around for good.” From the very first meeting, our group leaders made it clear that their goal was not to judge me but to help me stay sober and succeed.”

Before providing the defendant with a certificate of completion and a congratulatory cupcake, Judge Velasquez read aloud the defendant’s final expression of gratitude for the program.

“Last but certainly not least, I want to sincerely thank Judge Velasquez and his Recovery Court. His passion for the program and his strict compassion for the defendants is obvious and plain to see for all. The simple fact that he helped change the name Drug Court into Recovery Court says it all. He believes we are all flawed human beings who make mistakes but that with the right treatment we deserve a second chance. I, for one, have gratefully taken that chance with both hands and am set on paying it back to our community.”

Story & Photo Credit  
Shannon Enciso, Communications Specialist



# Happy New Year 2023



A message from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff & Staff  
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**Happy New Year!**

**2023**

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# Year in Review

## Person of the Year

For this year's person of the year in Santa Cruz County who echos, we selected Noemi Elizalde. Mrs. Elizalde is passionate about helping domestic violence survivors. Over the years, her passion for public service has been noted. Trauma survivors and their families are still in need of help, so she continues to provide them with services to help them recover.

It was in 2021 that she accepted a position with the Children's Advocacy Center as Coordinator of the Mobile Advocacy Program. The position enabled her to continue the collaboration with Santa Cruz County and provide services to rural communities. In addition to providing her with opportunities to grow, the experience also allowed her to serve the community. As part of her role, she facilitates the provision of services for victims and witnesses, as well as identifying funding opportunities and training opportunities.

"Working with the community, and in particular with our partners, has been an incredible experience. Each partner has contributed to the success of the Family Safety Center. Mariposa Community Health Center gave me the opportunity to begin this advocacy journey in 2013. My growth in this field would not have been possible without their constant support throughout the years," said Noemi Elizalde, coordinator of the Children's Advocacy Center.

As a victim advocate, Elizade is passionate about helping her community. Bringing services to Santa Cruz County has always been her goal. Her strength has always been networking. We appreciate your commitment to public service and your collaboration with different agencies that can fill in any gaps in our community.



Noemi Elizalde  
Coordinator

## Organization of the Year

**Pimeria Alta is the historical society and museum operated by the board of trustees. For over 122 years, it has been an important part of our community. The PAHS was founded in 1948 by twenty-eight concerned citizens to preserve the culture and history of Ambos Nogales. It is with much pleasure that we announce Pimeria Alta as this year's organization of the year. We have continued to benefit from your presence in our community.**

Despite its age, the Museum is still open five days a week. Many visitors come from Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, but also from other states. Tourists from around the world also visit.

**Pimeria Alta Historical Society President Christine Courtland states, "Non-profit organizations face daunting challenges, but I hope to use my communication and organizational skills to stimulate community interest and participation."**

We benefit from Pimeria Alta's efforts to preserve Ambos Nogales' culture and history. Among the functions of this organization are research, collection, conservation, interpretation, and exposition. Keeping the museum open to the public, accessible, and inclusive encourages diversity and sustainability. In addition to preserving our culture, Pimeria Alta is also an educational institution.

Although challenges arose during the pandemic, the museum held its first exhibit, "Historic Salute to Nogales Buffalo Soldiers," in January 2022. This exhibit featured WWI uniforms worn by Buffalo Soldiers and a collage of early gravestones. A historic salute to the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers was held by the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association. Besides keeping our community connected to its heritage, the Pimeria Alta Museum has served as a source of information for our community.

**Congratulations! Your dedication to preserving our cultural heritage speaks volumes about your commitment to our community. You have served our community for many years and we cannot express our gratitude enough. There are so many things to discover at Pimeria Alta Historical**

Christine Courtland  
President





# Year in Review

## Event of the Year

The Santa Cruz County Mental Health Awareness Summit was selected as the event of the year by the Border Eco team. The summit was held at the Santa Cruz County Complex as part of the ongoing substance abuse and mental health programs spearheaded by Judge Emilio Velasquez. Congratulations to the Justice of the Peace for leading the way to a new era of judicial oversight. In addition to being known for his kindness, fairness, and restorative justice approach, Honorable Judge Emilio Velasquez has brought together community systems to establish the only drug court in Arizona's lower courts, as well as his "Behavioral Empowerment Court," which addresses mental health and substance abuse issues for his defendants and families. A compassionate, fair, and supportive court has served the community well by providing treatment, community programming, and equitable support to defendants and their families.

Although he has courtroom experience, Judge Velasquez is most recognized for his work off the bench. He founded and leads a coalition to solve local problems. The honorable Emilio Velasquez, Justice of the Peace of Santa Cruz County, was honored by David's Hope, an Arizona Mental Health Criminal Justice Coalition for his outstanding accomplishments in Mental Health Criminal Justice Collaboration.

As a result of their dedication, we recognize the Santa Cruz County Justice Peace for their work in raising mental health awareness. Through their hard work and dedication, they have led the discussion in our community about the importance of providing treatment and collaborating with community partners to support those struggling with substance abuse and mental illness.

**As a member of our community, you proved to us what a valuable asset you are!**



Honorable Emilio Velasquez,  
Justice of the Peace of Santa Cruz County



# The Santa Cruzer Mobile Library

*Santa Cruz County Superintendent Alfredo Velasquez and his team are actively developing new programs with the \$6 million Invest in Our Youth ESSER grant awarded to them last spring to expand education programs in Santa Cruz County. Funding comes from the Arizona Department of Education.*

*Most recently, Mr. Velasquez's team has developed the Santa Cruzer Mobile Library, in collaboration with the Nogales-Santa Cruz County Public Library. Together with Library Director Danitza Lopez and her amazing team, they have made it possible for students to utilize library resources (including signing up for a library card) anywhere in the County.*

*The Santa Cruzer would not exist without the contributions of Maritza Lynn Higuera, a local bilingual children's book author, whose passion is inspiring. She and her staff worked tirelessly to stock the bus with the most appropriate and engaging books available. They also collaborated with local artist, Gustavo Santana, and local middle and high school students to paint and decorate the Santa Cruzer.*

*Our new mobile library was debuted at the City of Nogales Christmas Lights Parade on December 3. It will be displayed in front of the Nogales Library throughout the month of January to commemorate the Nogales-Santa Cruz County Public Library Centennial. In the spring, the Santa Cruzer will begin traveling to different neighborhoods and events across the County—and you can request the Santa Cruzer at your neighborhood or community event!*

**Email questions or event requests to [rседgwick@santacruzcountyaz.gov](mailto:rседgwick@santacruzcountyaz.gov).**



**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**



# Happy New Year!



# 2023

Margaret Felix Chief Deputy Recorder

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Angel Aguilar -Recorder/Voter Clerk

Monica Gutierrez-Recorder/Voter Clerk

Alejandro Martinez-Recorder/Voter Clerk

Luis Fierro as Recorder/Voter Clerk

Victoria Padilla-Recorder/Voter Clerk

Rosa Anna Fajardo – Recorder/Voter Clerk

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Any new beginning is forged from the shards of the past, not from the abandonment of the past.-Lounsbrough

# Happy New Year!

# 2023

*We want to wish the residents of Nogales, city staff and their families a joyous and peaceful holiday. May the season bring tranquility, joy, and thankfulness for the blessings we have received, and bring hopefulness and promise for our days ahead.*

*Happy New Year  
Mayor Arturo Garino &  
Nogales City Council*



# Let's Talk Health

Welcome to January 2023, National Family Fit Lifestyle Month!

Do you ever feel intimidated by the idea of becoming physically fit? Don't be! Physical activity is defined as any movement of the body done by your muscles that increases your energy output beyond its baseline. So almost any kind of extra movement, whether it's running a marathon or simply walking to get your mail, can increase your level of physical fitness! When it comes to physical activity, more is more, but any is better than none. A study by Dunstan, Kingwell, and Larsen in 2012 showed that overweight and obese adults who got up for a 2 minute walk every 20 minutes decreased their blood sugar and insulin levels. Also, though some of these adults walked at a moderate pace and some at a light pace, they both gained the same benefits. (Dunstan D.W., Kingwell B.A., Larsen R., et al. Breaking up prolonged sitting reduces postprandial glucose and insulin responses. *Diabetes Care*. 2012;35(5):976-983.)

The recommended amount of physical activity for those 18 to 64 years of age is 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week. This equates to about 30 minutes of physical activity five days per week. These recommendations are the same for those 65 years and above. If you are unable to meet these guidelines, don't worry--just try to be as physically active as possible.

Most people are safe to participate in physical activity without clearance from their doctor. If you have clinically significant cardiovascular, metabolic or kidney problems, please speak with your primary care provider prior to beginning an exercise program. In general, if you are able to walk without becoming short of breath, it is a good sign that you should be able to participate in at least moderate physical activity.

The benefits of physical activity are many and include increased strength in your bones and muscles, improved weight and improved ability to keep extra weight off once you lose it, improved brain function, improved mood, and a decrease in symptoms of anxiety and depression. Physical activity decreases your risk of heart disease, stroke, and hypertension and can even decrease your risk of getting various cancers including bladder, breast, colon, uterine, esophageal, stomach, kidney, and lung cancer. Those who are more physically active decrease their risk of dementia and have improved quality of life. Pregnant women can decrease their risks of diabetes during pregnancy and postpartum depression by being more physically active. And for those of you 65 years and above, physical activity can decrease your chances of falling and of being seriously hurt if you do fall.

So, how do you start? Don't be intimidated by the idea of "exercise." Keep in mind that physical activity is any movement that makes your muscles contract and increases your body's energy output. This includes various activities such as taking a 2-minute break to walk around the office, going on a walk with a friend, jumping rope with your son or daughter, dancing with your significant other, taking your dog for a walk or playing with your child at the local park. Start with an activity that you enjoy and that is realistic for you to fit into your daily lifestyle. This will help you to make it sustainable. Recruit a family member or a friend to join you and/or help keep you accountable.

**I hope that you will use this National Family Fit Lifestyle Month to jumpstart your own physical fitness journey and to reap all the benefits being physically fit has to offer!**

**—Dr. Tanya Henry, MD, FAAP. Head of Dept. of Pediatrics, Mariposa Community Health Center.**



# Year in Review

## Rising Star of the Year

This year, selecting a candidate for this category proved challenging. At Border Eco, we believe everyone we featured for people who echo in Santa Cruz County is unique and special in their own way. We believe education professionals go above and beyond their profession to help educate our children, youth, and community. As a team, we considered Los Padres Director Georgina Parra to be a rising star in Santa Cruz County.

Georgina Parra comes from a family who has dedicated itself to public service. In addition to her mother being a schoolteacher, her father was involved in politics his entire life. "My parents inspired me to pursue my calling of public service. They taught me to care about my community," said Program Director Georgina Parra.

Her youngest sister, Regina Romero, is the mayor of Tucson, and her older sister Maricruz Ruiz is a program coordinator at Pima Community College. The idea of making a difference by getting involved in the community has always been instilled in me by my parents. Throughout our lives, they have encouraged us to care about our community by doing something that will help make it a better place.

The most important accomplishment of my career has been the opportunity to grow professionally. At Child & Family Resource Center, I began my career as a family child support specialist. Over the past 20 years, I've advanced my career and now hold the position of director. It is impossible to overstate the importance of going to school and completing school. I recently earned an associate's degree in my field of study, which is very important to me.

Working with children and families in the community has always been my passion. I've been doing this for 20 years. My current employer is the Superintendent's office. I work with an organization that helps the community in a number of ways. Our next step for us is to form a father-parent support group.

Los Padres plays an important role in our community. The purpose of our program is to educate parents, especially young parents, about how their child develops. Los Padres son los primeros maestros that is the full name of our program. This encapsulates the main purpose of this program is to help parents learn how to be their child's first teachers by teaching them from the womb and later on learning about all the areas of growth and development helping the child obtain their best potential so they can be ready for the world.

The program aims to teach parents the importance of being involved in their child's development. Families are encouraged to participate in a new home visitation program that focuses on parent-child interaction. Providing parents with resources and strategies for teaching their children through play. Families with newborns to four-year-olds can participate in our program. According to the program director, teens, first-time parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and court-appointed guardians can benefit from the program.



Rising Star Los Padres Director Georgina Parra

# Mayor's Corner



Hello friends,

There has been a lot of activity and productivity this month. The Sisterhood agreement that was enacted in 2011 between sister cities of Nogales Sonora and Nogales Arizona has been re-signed into effect December 12th of 2022 between the mayor of Nogales, the mayor of Nogales Sonora, the president of Nogales Sonora, the general consulate of Mexico Consul Marco Moreno Baez, and the consulate of the United States in Nogales Sonora Laura Biedebach. We will be sending this important document to Mexico City regarding our agreement to enhance the quality of life of our communities across the border through sports, education, and health workshops.

The General Consulate of Mexico hosted the 200th anniversary celebration at La Linea Art Studio. In the aftermath of the sisterhood agreement being signed, this event took place. Participated in various community events and meetings with local and state government officials from Nogales, Arizona and Nogales Sonora. The future of our sister cities depends on building strong, healthy relationships. We honored our Veterans with the placing of Christmas wreaths on their graves as part of the Wreaths Across America. Thank you to Gold star mother Barbara Sutton from Green Valley and American Legion Post 131 members for bringing Wreaths Across America to Nogales this year. It was great to see so many Veterans and volunteers come out to help. Thank you Parks and Recreation Director Renee Travers for this amazing collaboration !

I would like to thank everyone who attended this year's Christmas Light Parade 2022. There were over 70 entries! It was a safe, fun and enjoyable event. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. This year's winners are:

1st place - AJ Mitchel

2nd place - Fco. Vasquez de Coronado

3rd - Lincoln

Thanks for all your hard work, congratulations to the winners!

Last but not least, I would like to thank our parade judges, who are all county judges: Judge Emilio Velasquez, Judge Thomas Fink, Judge Lilliana Ortega, Judge Vanessa Cartwright, Judge Robert Gilliland.

My sincere thanks go out to all of you for your friendship over these years. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Judge Emilio Velasquez, Judge Thomas Fink, Judge Lilliana Ortega,  
Judge Vanessa Cartwright, Judge Robert Gilliland.



# Sheriff's Round-Up



This past month Chief Mario Morales and Sergeant Huerta at the state-wide Holiday DUI Enforcement kickoff event at the State Capital, along with Alberto Gutier the director of the Governor's Office Safety. He'll be retiring December 31st. after 30 years in office.

Great news keeps coming, Congratulations to Deputy Monreal who just graduated from the South Eastern Training Academy in Douglas, after 20 weeks of rigorous training. Chief Deputy Morales, Commander Castillo and Corporal De La Riva attended the ceremony.

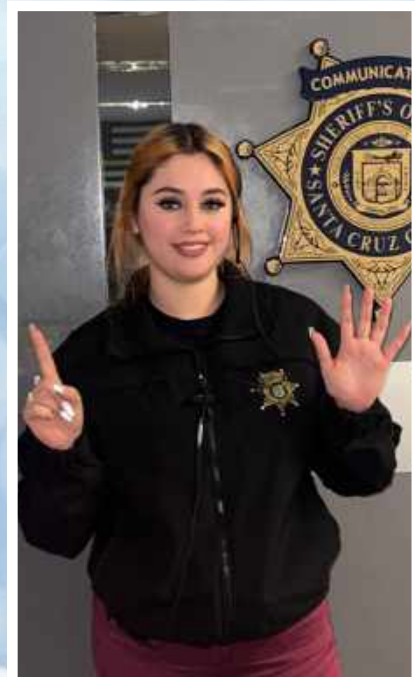
Congratulations Deputy Monreal, we cannot wait to see you out there patrolling in our beautiful county.

And lastly, we had our 12 Days of Holiday Safety, were we provided with some tips and helpful hints for this holiday season. All of these tips were shared by our own staff. Make sure to report anything suspicious.

Holidays are over and a New Year has started! Here at the Sheriff's Office we wish this New year, is filled with new adventures and good fortunes.

Stay Safe,

Your Sheriff David Hathaway



# Happy New Year

The Santa Cruz County Attorney reminds you  
to stay safe this holiday season

## CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY



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