



## Free issue! CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA



**BRAIN INJURY** AWAR



**RRHS** Principal **Hector Estrada Named** Administrator of the Year



National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness

14 **Mayor's Corner** 



15

Sheriff's Round-Up

# $\begin{array}{c} 2023 \\ \text{Early Childhood Education} \\ \text{Award of Excellence Recipients} \end{array}$

The month of February has been designated by the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office in partnership with First Things First, Mariposa Community Health Center, University of Arizona Family Resource Centers (Nogales, Patagonia and Rio Rico), Child and Family Resources, Inc., Child Care Resource and Referral, Nogales Santa Cruz County Libraries, Santa Cruz County, City of Nogales, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Nogales Unified School District #1, Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District #35, Patagonia Public Schools Districts #6 and #20, Sonoita Elementary District #25, Santa Cruz Elementary District #28, Charter Schools, Private Schools, Child Parent Centers Inc. (Nogales, Challenger, Western, and Rio Rico Head Start Centers), Preschools and Childcare. This initiative is in its seventh year of bringing attention to the importance of Early Childhood Education in Santa Cruz County. It also recognizes and celebrates the work of the medical profession, local agencies, educational leaders and institutions, preschool administrators, and teachers that provide the necessary services to nurture and enrich the lives of our young children and their families. During this time, we take the opportunity to honor and recognize those individuals whose contributions have had an

extraordinary influence on our early childhood population and their families throughout the County. Therefore, the Santa Cruz County Early Childhood Education Award of Excellence was created to acknowledge and highlight the work of these individuals whose exemplary leadership, commitment, dedication, and passion has tremendously impacted and left an imprint in this early phase of a child's life. On behalf of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velasquez and partners it is an honor to announce this year's recipients of the 2023 Santa Cruz County Early Childhood Education Award of Excellence.



Dr. Lucina Romero



Gloria Pliego



Chris Ciruli



Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez



Dr. Tanya Henry



Narda Ibarra Magee



## **Border Eco Updates**

### Border Eco Mission

Our goal at Border Eco is to continue reporting on the great people, organizations, and services in our community, and to change the public's perception of our border town. We want to highlight the positive aspects of our community that make it unique, and to thank our customers for their continued support. We believe that it is never too late to bring in change and make the world a better and safer place for all of us. This year, help us make history by introducing new ideas to improve Santa Cruz County and make it a beautiful, vibrant, and culturally rich place to live.

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support we have received from our customers. We want to take this opportunity to thank our customers for their support and dedication to our mission. Our mission is to change public perception of our border town and to make it a better and safer place for all of us.

### Help Wanted!!

Are you looking for an exciting opportunity to work with a great team? If so, we are always recruiting talented people to join our team. We offer a supportive and collaborative environment, where you can develop your skills and be part of something special. Come and be a part of our team and make a real difference. Call us at (520)461-4880 or email us your resume: contact@borderecocom

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Border Eco Magazine now offers TV advertisement. Contact us for rates and channels to help promote your business in Santa Cruz County. Our office is located on : 1071 N. Grand Ave. Ste. #122, Nogales, Arizona 85621 (520) 461-4880 Email: contact@bordereco.com

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

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Santa Cruz County Attorney





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## PEOPLE WHO "ECHO" ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ

For the month of March, Border Eco Magazine selected Alejandra Martinez. Executive Director of Crossroads Nogales Mission, for their people who "echo" section in Santa Cruz County. Alejandra first started with the organization as a volunteer, and has since shown how dedication and an interest to help the homeless can pay off. Her hard work and dedication to the organization has earned her the position of Executive Director, and she is a great example of how dedication and passion can turn into success.

Alejandra Martinez is a highly qualified individual. She has earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Arizona. I majored in psychology and minored in Spanish at the University of Arizona. In addition, I got a medical assistant certification and a real estate appraiser license at Pima Medical and Hogan.

I have been living in Santa Cruz County for my entire life, except for the four years I spent as an undergraduate. During that time, I was attending college in a different city. However, 1 am now back in Santa Cruz County and have been here ever since. I am the youngest of three siblings, including two sisters and a brother, and both of my parents are retired.

Since 2015, she has been with Crossroads Nogales Mission, serving as the Executive Director for the past six months. Besides volunteering for the summer program, she has also helped with Thanksgiving and Christmas events at Crossroad Nogales Mission.

In 1995, Ben and Bert Wenke founded Crossroads Nogales Mission. "We strive to help the homeless and hurting individuals transition from unstable and dangerous situations to productive and secure lives through the power of the Gospel."

"We hope to create and maintain successful partnerships between government organizations and local organizations, which will lead to increased community involvement and collaboration. This will make services more accessible and tailored to the specific needs and goals of our clients," said Alejandra.



According to the executive director Alejandra Martinez, Crossroads Nogales Mission has a goal of becoming a onestop shelter for all of their clients' needs. The mission is thankful for the support of the staff, donors, partners, and clients, as without them, it would be impossible to carry out the operations.

There are six employees in our organization, including the executive director. Alma Jackson is a part-time office assistant Part-time House Manager, Raul Almanza Director of operations, Jason Gonzales Part-time host, Lupita Valencia Part-time thrift shop worker Guadalupe Martinez Part-time cook Sara Mayorga.



Alejandra Martinez-Executive Director

## **Grossroads** Nogales Mission

Jason is the director of operations and handles the men's shelter and all other aspects of the mission. Sara is the cook, Lupita Valencia is the hostess, Raul Almanza is the house manager, and Guadalupe Martinez is in charge of the thrift store. Through community involvement, Crossroads Nogales Mission hopes to facilitate meaningful life changes for those in need.

Ms. Martinez credits her mother as a source of inspiration in both her personal and professional life. Her mother has always been a hard worker, dedicating her life to helping those who are less fortunate. This has motivated Alejandra to strive for the same level of accomplishment, and to make a positive difference to her local community. Through her involvement with the community, Alejandra has gained knowledge of the real issues that need to be addressed, and she is determined to make a difference.



Jason Gonzalez-Director of Operations

Crossroads Nogales Mission transforms the lives of individuals and families who suffer from addiction, homelessness, and abuse. It was founded in 1995 by Ben Wenke and Bert Wenke. As a Christcentered organization, the Crossroads Nogales Mission is committed to serving the local area. A non-profit shelter community that provides help, hope, compassionate care and recovery to disadvantaged men, women and families who are homeless, addicted or involved in domestic violence.

The shelter provides housing, food, resources, and recovery programs for those in need. As the only homeless shelter and recovery center in South Central Arizona, Crossroads Mission is unique. As part of its mission and commitment, Crossroads Nogales Mission provides a wide variety of services, including food and shelter, addiction recovery, shelter from domestic violence, spiritual teachings, job placement instruction, and housing assistance.

"Our mission at Crossroads Nogales Mission is to help homeless and hurting individuals achieve productive and stable lives through transformation through the Gospel. We strive to transform people from homelessness and addiction to productive, meaningful lives," said Alejandra Martinez Executive Director for the Crossroads Nogales Mission.



Crossroads Nogales Mission provides housing for women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Shelter, food, and care are provided along with healing counseling and legal assistance, with the ultimate goal of guiding the families toward self-sufficiency through employment.

In 2022, the Crossroads Nogales Mission provided a tremendous service to their community. They provided 3,127 nights of lodging for those in need, and served over 26,598 meals to hungry men, women, and children. Additionally, they gave out 11,899 food baskets to families, and provided referrals to other agencies as needed. It is clear that the Crossroads Nogales Mission is dedicated to helping those in need in their community.

With your help, we can continue to provide guidance and support from our faithful Lord to help these individuals and families become self-sustaining and productive members of society. We strive to ensure that all of our clients have access to the resources and assistance they need to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. Your support is essential in helping us to continue our mission and make a lasting impact on our community, said Ms Martinez.

Volunteers are needed since we are a small staff running the daily operations. If you are interested in volunteering or making a donation, please contact us at: (520)287-5828 Crossroads Nogales Mission Attn: Alejandra Martinez, Director 338 North Morley Avenue

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MS is a chronic illness involving the central nervous system. The immune system attacks myelin, which is the protective layer around nerve fibers. This causes inflammation and scar tissue, or lesions.



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On Friday, February 10th, the VFW Post 2006 in Nogales, Arizona hosted the Santa Cruz County Spelling Bee, where **26 contestants from Santa Cruz County Elementary and Middle Schools competed for the top prize. This year, 7th grader Miguel Valenzuela from Wade Carpenter Middle School won the competition, with 7th grader Alexis Simon from Santa Cruz Elementary School District (Little Red) taking the runner up spot. As the winner, Miguel Valenzuela will be representing Santa Cruz County in the State competition on March 18, 2023 at Madison Center for the Arts in Phoenix.** The three judges of the event were Santa Cruz County Justice of the Peace Honorable Judge Emilio G. Velasquez, Ms. Jovanna Lopez from State Farm Insurance, and Santa Cruz County Treasurer Ms. Elizabeth Gutfahr. The event was hosted by Santa Cruz County School Superintendent Alfredo I. Velásquez and his office with the support of the Rio Rico Rotary Club, and the coordinators from the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office were Marisol Chiquete and Julie Ulrich. Finally, Mr. Larry Frederick from the Nogales Unified School District was the Spelling Bee pronouncer.



# Volunteering makes a difference





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# Let's Talk Health

#### Is Colorectal Cancer Screening Important - YES

Many colorectal cancers can be prevented through regular screening. Screening can find abnormal growths in the colon or rectum, so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer, and this should begin at age 45 regardless if you are male or female.

Early detection is the best prevention as is said about other cancers. Screening is important because when found early, colorectal cancer is highly treatable. Early stages of colorectal cancer usually present no symptoms. Symptoms tend to appear as the cancer progresses. What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer, also known as bowel cancer or colon cancer, is a type of cancer that starts in the colon or rectum. It is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, and it is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Colorectal cancer occurs when the cells in the lining of the colon or rectum grow uncontrollably and form a tumor. Over time, the tumor can grow and spread to other parts of the body if not treated.

Risk factors associated with colorectal cancer

There are several risk factors associated with colorectal cancer. Age is a significant risk factor, as the disease is more common in people over the age of 45. Other risk factors include:

- a family history of colorectal cancer
- a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- a diet high in red meat and processed foods
- smoking
- a sedentary lifestyle

People who have these risk factors should talk to their doctor about getting screened for colorectal cancer.

Symptoms of colorectal cancer

Symptoms of colorectal cancer can vary depending on the location and size of the tumor. Some common symptoms include:

common symptoms menue.

- changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation
- blood in the stool
- abdominal pain or cramping
- unintended weight loss

However, some people with colorectal cancer may not experience any symptoms until the

disease has advanced. This is why regular screening is so important, as it can detect the disease in its early stages when treatment is more effective.

Treatment for colorectal cancer

You Tube

Treatment for colorectal cancer typically involves surgery to remove the tumor, and may also include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or a combination of these treatments. The type of treatment used will depend on the stage of the cancer and other individual factors.

With early detection and treatment, the outlook for people with colorectal cancer is generally good. However, it is important to maintain regular screening and follow-up care to detect any recurrence of the disease.

You can join Mariposa for a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Health Fair on Friday March 3, 2023 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the main campus on 1852 N. Mastick Way. Completely Free. If you are a patient of Mariposa Community Health Center, you can call (520)281 -1550 and ask about getting screened or speak with your provider at your next wellness visit. You can also contact your favorite clinical pharmacist at Mariposa at 520 377-5417 for more information.

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Love

Your Colon

# **RRHS** Principal Hector Estrada named Administrator of the Year for the Arizona Association of Student Councils

Rio Rico High School Principal Hector Estrada was named the Administrator of the Year for the Arizona Association of Student Councils (AASC) at the January 2023 AASC State Convention hosted by Mohave High School in Bullhead City, Arizona.

The AASC State Convention is an annual event that recognizes the accomplishments of student councils, students, advisors, and administrators. The administrator of the year is selected based on their encouragement of the democratic process, citizenship service, idea exchange, and problem-solving among their student body.

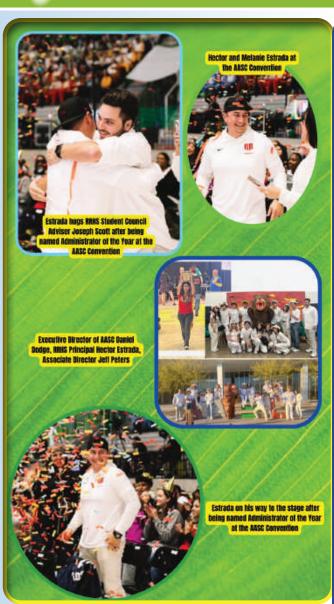
RRHS senior Kazandra Navarro nominated Principal Estrada for the award. "Throughout his time here at RRHS, he has cultivated a student-oriented atmosphere. He always says 'This is your school, I just work here'. This goes to show that he is building a culture at RRHS that empowers its students," she explained in her nomination letter.

She also listed Estrada's addition of a student senate as an effective tool for giving students a voice. She said RRHS is, "a place where people amongst different groups on campus meet to discuss improvements for the school. This is a place for students to make their voices heard. We try to find solutions to issues, and we implement new ideas."

Estrada's pursuit of student equity was also listed as a major reason for her nomination. "He is huge on equity at our school. He understands that not every student has the same access to resources and opportunities outside of school; therefore, he is striving to create an equitable environment." Navarro wrote.

RRHS All Student Body President Paulette Ledezman also wrote a letter of nomination for Principal Estrada. In her letter, she wrote about the impact the principal has had on the school, and particularly her own school career while at RRHS. She wrote Estrada "is such a kind and caring administrator and goes the extra mile for each individual student and always being the "Estrella" lighting up the room."

Assistant Superintendent Melisa Lunderville supported the student nominations by saying. "I have yet to work with a more student-centered and hardworking Principal than Mr. Estrada. He clearly understands the importance of developing relationships and the impacts that those relationships can have on the culture of your school."



In addition to Estrada's award, the Rio Rico High School Student Council was also named Outstanding Council with Distinction which is the highest honor received by Arizona student councils.

Hector Estrada joined Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District No. 35 (SCV35) in 2019 as principal of Rio Rico High School.-Shannon Enciso Communications Specialist



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## RRHS Student Council Receives High Honors

Rio Rico High School Student Council received the Outstanding Council with Distinction at the January 2023 Arizona Association of Student Councils State Convention hosted by Mohave High School in Bullhead City, Arizona.

"The award was created as a standard for what an exceptional council should be doing on campus and for their community," said Joseph Scott, Rio Rico High School teacher, and Student Council advisor.

Student councils must submit a digital scrapbook or video of their work in their school including accomplishments and budget information. The applications submitted are reviewed by the AASC Board which consists of 9 adults and 4 students from across the state.

Some of the things the council believes make them an outstanding council include their display of leadership, community service, and activities that emphasize the inclusion of marginalized groups.

Some of their examples of these accomplishments include the addition of the Campus Cabinet which is comprised of presidents from all the school's clubs to improve communication, the RRHS Homecoming activities involving students and families from across all district school sites, and creating thank you posters signed and delivered to teachers during teacher appreciation week. The focus of inclusion across campus and within the community certainly stood out.

In addition to the RRHS STUCO rating, Rio Rico High School Principal Hector Estrada was named the Administrator of the Year for the Arizona Association of Student Councils (AASC). Shannon Enciso Communications Specialist



## RRHS FBLA Brings Home Six Medals From Regionals

Rio Rico High School Student Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), a career and technical student organization (CTSO) received six medals at the FBLA Region 1 Conference held at Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher, Arizona on January 26, 2023.

FBLA is a non-profit education association that prepares students for careers in business and related fields. Students are able to practice for their competitive event before the state competition.

Sixteen RRHS students competed in various events. Six students placed at the top of their respective categories which included both individual and team competitions.

### Individual Winners

Lourdes Sarmiento (12th) - Supply Chain Management - 1st Place Daniel Woodburn (9th) - Parliamentary Procedure - 2nd Place

#### Team Winners

Julianna Santa Cruz (9th) and Raquel Carrillo (9th) - Web Design - 1st Place Regina Martinez (11th) and Paula Leon Lopez (11th) - Broadcast Journalism -2nd Place

The teams prepare prior to the competition and then provide proof during role play.

"We are extremely proud of the preparation that goes into this competition by both our students and the CTSO advisor," said Jorge Moreno, RRHS Career and Technical Education Coordinator."

Kit Rendon, the CTSO's FBLA advisor is also a Business teacher at RRHS. "She was instrumental in preparations leading up to the event. Advisors do a tremendous amount of planning for students to practice for the events, make sure students are eligible to participate, get permission and approval, and prepare lessons for their classes while attending events," said Moreno.



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On Saturday, January 28, 2023 we collaborated with the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association to bring the first Anniversary and Historic Salute to the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers. Events held were: A tribute at the Nogales Cemetery with the Veterans' Salute presented by The Fort Color Guard and Calvary, a historical presentation at City Hall and an exhibit at Pimeria Alta Historical Society Museum. Mayor Maldonado addressed the audience commenting about the time he grew up around this area. There was also a reenactment by the Buffalos Soldiers and the Nogales High School performances. We want to thank Donna Jackons -Houston, President and Founder of Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association.

We are proud to announce the formation of a Youth Commission for the City of Nogales. This program is designed to give students the opportunity to interact regularly with the Mayor, Council Members, and City Staff in order to gain an understanding of the inner workings of city government and to participate in community service opportunities. A number of activities and issues will also be explored and developed by the Youth Commission in order to promote positive youth relations within the City of Nogales. This endeavor entails a substantial amount of research into current city issues as well as improving the quality of life in Nogales.

Many projects are in progress, from paving streets to working with ADOT to correct necessary issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time as we continue to do our best to make Nogales a better place to live. Santa Cruz County Schools were honored with a proclamation certificate in recognition of Early Childhood Awareness Month. We are always concerned about the well-being of the children in our community. **From the office of Mayor Jorge Maldonado** 





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Sheriff David Hathaway addressed the Yuma County Board of Supervisors and San Luis City Council while visiting Yuma during an on-site hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee which included multiple members of Congress.

Also, this past month, our Search and Rescue members successfully completed rescues in the area of Madera Canyon. We cannot thank them enough for all they do. Let's keep in mind that our Search and Rescue consists of mostly volunteers who respond in their free time, risking their lives for others.

We would like to congratulate our new graduates from the Correctional Officers Training Academy! We wish you a successful career!

This past month, we were invited to patrol the Tubac Art Festival. We enjoyed interacting with everyone, and patrolling our beautiful county. (Also, the kettle corn was a plus!) Administrative Sergeant Omar Rodriguez addressed Tubac residents reference the Neighborhood Watch program and Sheriff Hathaway addressed the Santa Cruz Valley Citizens Council in Tubac. For additional information on our Neighborhood Watch Program, please contact Sergeant Rodriguez at 520-761-7869

As we can all agree the weather has been unpredictable so we ask all of you to stay safe and warm!

Your Sheriff, David Hathaway



