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MSJC hosts Special Olympics for first time

By Eric Rodriguez

On April 16th, MSJC hosted the Special Olympics for first time. Beaumont, San Jacinto, Banning, and the Yucaipa-Calimesa joint school districts' children with intellectual disabilities ranging from elementary to high school had a chance to participate in a wide variety of track and field events.

With more than 330 Special Olympic athletes filling up Carl Quandt Stadium, talented individuals were ready to display skills that truly deemed them as one of the best in the world. While empowering these strong students, these games encourages youth participation and teaches kids leadership in local schools.

"This is the third year our San Jacinto High students are participating in the games and second year for our middle schools to join in," said Diane Perez, superintendent of San Jacinto Unified School District. "I know our students train hard and work hard to be competitive and show their track and field skills. I know that the smiles on the students' faces as they cross



MSJC hosts Special Olympics for the first time. It was held at SJC at the football field.

Photo by Shelby Walker

the finish line and receive a medal will be priceless."

It was nothing but smiles on the faces of not just the

participants, but the audiences as well. Not only did the event cause everyone to have fun, but it

gave the Special Olympians more confidence to strive toward their goals and to let absolutely noth-

ing stand in their way.

One of the coordinators of the event was Dr. Roger Schultz, Superin-

tendent and President of Mt. San Jacinto College. He explained the event in three words: emotional, inspiring, and awesome.

When asked why it was decided to hold a wonderful event at MSJC, Schultz replied, "The event brought much joy to these students and it inspired everyone that participated or watched. It was really a celebration of everyone and to see the communities come together for so many great kids and families...was a way to give back to our community and make new friends."

Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities with 4.4 million athletes in 170 countries

"By hosting events like this, we hope to dispel that perception and make them feel comfortable and even empowering them to go to college and hopefully MSJC," Schultz said.

When asked about how he felt about competing, Special Olympics athlete Nicolas Ruiz De La Torre

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'Send silence packing' suicide awareness event



MVC hosts 'Send Silence Packing' suicide awareness event.

Photo Courtesy of MSJC Public Information

By Alyse Deatherage

On April 23, Mt. San Jacinto College participated in an event that has been taking local colleges by storm.

Send Silence Packing is an event to make students and locals aware of just how serious an issue suicide is for college students and non-college students alike.

The event was held on the Menifee Valley campus and extended from the 300 Building to the 600 Building and was displayed through the grass and seating areas. The event was put on by a non-profit organization known as Ac-

tive Minds, whose goal is to make people more aware in order to open up conversations about difficult subjects like suicide.

"Send Silence Packing is an event meant to really show people just how many students and their families are affected by suicide every year," said a volunteer for the event, Jonquil Hardgrove. "There were around 1,100 backpacks. Each was donated by the family or friends of someone who lost their life to suicide and many of the backpacks had the individual stories of the people lost."

The event uses back-

packs to demonstrate the reality of suicide. Each backpack has a story attached to it given by a friend or family member about the student who lost their life to suicide.

Some backpacks contained the belongings of that individual as well, including but not limited to college key chains, sports jerseys, and classroom supplies.

A few of the backpacks were also donated by various colleges that wanted to support this event and help raise suicide awareness.

"I hope that events like this can bring to light

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MSJC Foundation's 11th annual Gala held at Pechanga

By Melissa Castro

MSJC held its 11th annual Foundation Gala April 6 at Pechanga Resort and Casino with guests, community members and sponsors attending to show their support for funding that aids students and programs at the college.

Rebecca Orlauski, the Foundation Operations Supervisor, said that the Gala is the largest fundraiser of the year for the district as "it brings in people from all over the community to support scholarships and support services on campus."

"It's an opportunity for the Foundation to recognize

individuals and community members who have made a difference to either the college or the Foundation and recognizing a few people who worked here on campus. We'll also be recognizing corporations that have given money or supported the district," Orlauski said.

This year's theme for the Gala was based on James Bond because of the measure AA Bond that was passed five years ago. Guests this year included campus administrators, MSJC's sponsors, individuals from the city, and community members. The Champions of Tomor-

row, which are local companies and organizations that have sponsored the event, supported the Gala.

This year's Honorees for Eagle Excellence were Micah Orloff and Julie Venable. 2019's Outstanding Alumni was awarded to Craig Davis. The San Jacinto Valley Women's Conference was awarded 2019's Outstanding Community Group, Outstanding Community Business was awarded to CR&R Environmental Business, and Outstanding Corporate Partner was presented to Balfour Beatty Construction.

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Dr. Roger Schultz, President and Dr. John Colson, VP of Student Services at Gala.
Photo Courtesy of MSJC Public Information

CalWORKs Department

The CalWORKs Department strives to help students succeed at MSJC.

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Graduation Highlight

Find out about MSJC's largest walking class in school history.

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Eagle Day

Local high school seniors visit MSJC to see everything that it offers.

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SJC holds spring speech competition

By Jesus Alcala

On April 12th, students participated in a speech tournament hosted at the San Jacinto Campus of Mt. San Jacinto College.

The tournament began in the theater with an opening speech by Director Base-meh Rihan, who gave a speech to alleviate the nervousness of the students. Rihan framed nervousness as a good thing because it means that the person cares about the outcome.

Rihan then introduced San Jacinto City Council Member and former mayor, Crystal Ruiz. She gave a speech detailing her struggles from homelessness to election, to inspire students to overcome their own challenges.

Ruiz echoed Rihan's description of nervousness as meaning that one cares. Ruiz described situations in which she was very nervous, such as when running for office, meeting President Bush, and meeting President Trump.

After the opening speeches, the students went to the cafeteria, where they found postings that told them what room they were supposed to compete in.

Professor Ron Newman oversaw the judges and tab room. Students competed in two categories, informative or persuasive speeches. The students were then divided into groups of about five students per room.

Contestants were expected to give a four-minute speech with at least four sources presented verbally. The judges were comprised of students in the Forensics Speech and Debate Team as well as members of the Communications Club.

The tournament was originally planned to have a third round with the top five students from each category. Newman shortened the tournament be-



Winners, judges (forensic team), and faculty gather together after SJC speech competition.

Photo by Shelby Walker

cause the judges had a clear consensus of the winners and the contestant pool was smaller than expected.

The top three from each category were presented with a trophy and prize money. First place received \$75, second place earned \$50, and third place won \$25. The money was provided by the MSJC Foundation.

The first-place winner of the persuasive division was Courtney Nuestro. She competed with a speech advocating for organ donation.

Nuestro has senior Loken syndrome, which degrades the kidneys and the eyes. Because of the syndrome, Nuestro received a kidney donation in 2018.

Since then, Nuestro has been advocating for organ donation awareness.

Nuestro's speech was originally created for Professor Suzanne Uhl's class. Uhl offered extra credit for competing in the speech tournament, and Nuestro realized that her speech could be modified for the speech tournament.

Nuestro said that she had been practicing the

speech daily since April 8. The night before the tournament, Nuestro said that she stayed up until 2 a.m. practicing her speech.

Nuestro said that she was very nervous to compete and did not expect to win, as she expected competitors with experience in speech tournaments and was running on four hours of sleep.

Shelby Walker was one of the judges during Nuestro's speech. According to Walker, Nuestro was the top speaker because she did not use note cards, maintained eye contact with the audience, and had a passionate speech that created an emotional connection with the audience.

Nuestro has experience in public speaking. As an organ transplant recipient, Nuestro has been asked to advocate as a patient on behalf of hospitals. She has also won a speech competition for a grant as a representative for Rady Children's Hospital.

Nuestro plans to continue being an organ donation advocate and has submitted an audition to talk at MSJC's upcoming Tedx.

Nuestro said that she had been practicing the

"I greatly appreciate the opportunity to spread my message of organ-transplant awareness and enjoyed the speech tournament," said Nuestro.

The first-place winner of the informative division was Chris Perales. Perales gave a speech on roses. As a landscaper, Perales said that the rose was one of the most popular choices from customers, so he gave a speech that went into the history and symbolism of the rose.

Perales said that he did not expect to win and was very nervous.

Perales' speech was originally created for Professor Mike Fleming's public-speaking class. Perales said that he practiced about 50 times before the tournament.

Jesus Alcala Avalos was one of the judges during Perales' speech. According to Alcala, Perales was the top performer because he did not look at notes, maintained eye contact with the audience, panned the room, and kept a steady pace of words.

Perales plans to

compete in the next MSJC tournament.

"Be like the mighty rose, continue to evolve and better yourself," said Perales.

According to Newman, he established the MSJC speech tournaments in 2014. Rihan would become director of tournaments in Spring 2015, while Newman became judge coordinator.

Newman established the tournaments to promote the communications department, showcase student talent, and recruit for the speech and debate team.

"The thing that I like most about the speech tournaments is that I get students that I haven't met telling me how much they loved the speech tournament," said Newman.

According to Newman, the school was supportive of the idea. Dr. Roger Schultz, Dr. Jeremy Brown, and Sherrie Guerrero were the main supporters of the first tournament. The challenges have been getting student participation, getting enough rooms reserved for the competitors, and

getting sponsors for prizes.

McGraw-Hill and Oxford University Press have been frequent sponsors of the speech tournaments, providing food and prize money for the students.

The first tournament in 2014 had about 20 contestants. The Fall 2018 tournament had about 80 contestants.

The first tournament was very important for the speech and debate team, as the tournament inspired Dr. Patrick Schwerdtfeger to create a recurring fund for the team.

Newman said that most tournaments operated without much issue. Newman described one early tournament that had issues. Newman switched to an online program to create the competing groups. Just before the tournament was set to start, the campus internet failed and Newman lost access to the program. There was then a delay to the tournament as Newman had to manually create the postings.

Newman now uses offline spreadsheets to manage the competition. Newman also backs up the spreadsheet across multiple computers and USB drives.

Although tournaments are open to all MSJC students, they had all been on the Menifee campus. The Spring 2019 tournament was the first one on the San Jacinto campus.

Newman wanted to go to a tournament on the San Jacinto campus to provide another opportunity for students to compete.

For the Spring 2019 tournament, 30 students competed. Newman expects that number to increase for future tournaments.

The next MSJC speech tournament will be on the San Jacinto campus in Fall 2019. The Menifee speech tournament will be in Spring 2020.



Council woman Ruiz gives keynote speech. Winners from the SJC speech tournament gather with faculty after speech tournament.



Photos by Shelby Walker

OpEd: The importance of vaccination

By Tawny Day

Vaccines! Yes, they are safe. Why are we so scared of them?

According to cdc.gov, in 2019 so far, there have been 555 cases of Measles in the U.S., 21 of them in California. Most schools now have a mandatory vaccination policy.

Stephine Weiss, the Special Programs Assistant III of the MSJC Child Development and Education Center, was asked: Do children have to be vaccinated in order to enroll in the Child Development Center?

"Yes, unless they gave a doctor's note stating it would cause death or serious harm," she said.

Some believe vaccination is a personal choice that only affects themselves. It is imperative all healthy people be vaccinated to prevent the spreading of diseases to people who cannot be vaccinated.

Examples are cancer patients, newborn babies, or those with certain genetic diseases. Scientists

call this "herd immunity."

Weiss was asked if she encounters parents who are opposed to vaccination.

"Yes, all the time," she said "Some of them choose not to enroll their children at our center."

When we understand vaccines a little more, they will seem less scary. Here is how vaccines work:

A small amount of the virus is injected into your body. This virus has been grown in a lab by scientists and specifically contains no DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid), also known as, "the codes for life." This means it cannot make someone sick, because the virus has no information to share with the body's cells; it is basically only a shell.

Instead of getting sick, the body is essentially tricked into building antibodies for a disease that was never encountered.

Vaccinations have created a scare among communities. But, why? What is the cause of this scare? On February 28, 1998, a study was published in a

medical journal with the leading physician being Dr AJ Wakefield. The paper suggested that the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccinations are linked to autism.

Upon further investigation, it was discovered that proper scientific methodology was not followed. The formally published paper was retracted, and Wakefield was stripped of his credentials. Before the paper was retracted, however, it had already made noise across the world.

The scientific community was enraged, because parents everywhere are electing not to vaccinate their children, unaware that the study was never valid to begin with.

Now it is the responsibility of the scientific community to attempt to undo the harm done by Wakefield, and educate parents on the consequences to themselves and the consequences to society of not vaccinating.



Tawny Day with Professors Newman and Rihan after winning 3rd in speech competition.

Photo by Shelby Walker

Thompson gets ready to start new chapter

By Eric Rodriguez

Becoming the 36th player in MSJC history to be chosen for the All-State CCCMBCA basketball team, sophomore point guard for the Eagles David Thompson said, "It was a dream come true."

"Having such a great season and the way that it ended up... It was really nice to get to know the guys on the team and to be chosen for All-State is an absolute honor," he said.

This season, Thompson averaged 17.9 points a game while shooting at a remarkable 51.5 percent rate on the floor. During conference games, he averaged close to 21 points as well as 5.5 assists per game.

His outstanding skills along with an amazing positive energy on the court led him to be named co-player of the year in the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference North Division in 2019.

How did this young accomplished superstar find himself at our campus?

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Thompson found his passion for basketball at such a young age, about

3 to 4 years old. It actually was not until middle school that he found himself pushing his game more and more, turning any weaknesses into strengths.

According to Thompson, his cousins Will Schmidt and Stephen Brown, both talented athletes, were his true inspiration to keep getting better.

"What made me fall in love with basketball was playing with my family in the backyard on a little basketball hoop," said Thompson.

While attending Whitefish Bay High School in Wisconsin, he was offered the opportunity to come to MSJC.

Thanking coach Springer for the opportunity, Thompson had the chance to do what he does best.

His determination, his dedication and his consistency clearly shows that Thompson is the team's MVP, but Thompson doesn't see it that way. While he's definitely blessed with God-given talents, Thompson believes that his role on the team is not to overshadow other players,



Thompson signs with University of Santa Clara.

Photo Courtesy of MSJC Athletics

but instead empower others to reach their full potential.

"Making my teammates feel comfortable on the court is my job 110 percent of the time," he said. "My mentality every single second of the game is what can I do for them."

By playing unselfish basketball, Thompson loves to work his tail off to be able to share the spot-

light with his teammates.

Appearing to look calm, cool, and collected on the court, Thompson shared that even after playing for so many years, he still finds himself getting the pregame butterflies.

"It takes about 2-3 minutes every game for the nerves to chill, but honestly I just play and eventually they disap-

pear," he said, chuckling.

It's his hard work on the court that earned him a spot on All-State, but it's his hard work in the classroom that earned him a Communications Degree at MSJC.

"I'm so excited to graduate; it's been two long years...I treat the mentality of my grades as a student just like my goal as a basketball player. I want

to study just like I practice basketball. I have to do what I have to do to best the absolute best," Thompson explained.

"If I'm that blessed, I would love to play for the NBA...Would be a dream come true," he said. Thompson will be transferring to University of Santa Clara in the fall.

MSJC class of 2019 athletes prepare to transfer



Athletes getting ready for transfer gather together one last time before their journeys at MSJC come to an end.

Photo by Shelby Walker



Lady Eagles volleyball players gather with Coach Eason before transferring.

Photo by Shelby Walker



Men's and Women's sophomore basketball players get ready to graduate and transfer.

Photo by Shelby Walker



Sophomores of the baseball team with Ernie the Eagle.

Photo by Shelby Walker



Some of the football players getting ready for transfer.

Photo by Shelby Walker

#MSJCATHLETICS

Celebrating diverse cultures through music event

By Cindy Lopez

On April 26, the Diversity Committee held its first ever Celebrating Diverse Cultures through Music at the Menifee Campus. This event was opened to the public.

The event originated from Professor Son Soohyun, current professor of Intro/Appreciation of Music, Beginning and Intermediate Piano. She has been a member of the Diversity Committee for three years. She thought about combining music and diversity for a year. The goal, in mind, was to broaden the audience's identities.

"I really want to promote the beauty of diversity," said Son.

"Music is a way people think, live, and feel," said Son.

The event began with the "Star Spangled Banner," in which the audience stood up during the anthem.

After the anthem, the North American piece—"Hoe Down"—by Aaron Copland was played. The composer had an affinity to folk melody and implemented it in his work. Therefore, this piece is representative of American classical music.

In the representation of South American music, "Por Una Cabeza" by Gardel Carlos and arranged by Irina Lazaryeva was selected. This piece is a tango, which represents Argentinian culture.

For Asia, there were four pieces to represent Philippines, China, Japan, and South Korea. The pieces were the following: "Rondino," "A Horse Herd's Mountain Song,"



Diversity Committee holds first ever Celebrating Diverse Cultures through Music event at MVC.

Photo by Cindy Lopez

"Sakura," and "Arirang."

"Rondino" by Antonio Butenaventura is a Philippine song. The title, "Rondino," refers to a small rondo, which is a musical form. The rhythm and melody represent Philippine folk music; therefore, the song embodies Philippine culture.

"A Horse Herd's Mountain Song" by Rhett Jaramillo is a Chinese folk song.

"Sakura" by Keiko Yamada is a popular Japanese folk melody, which is why it was chosen to represent Japanese music.

"It was a great opportunity to promote composition in an academic setting," said Son. "Arirang" was com-

posed by Professor Son. "Arirang" represented South Korea because it is the most known folk song to Koreans. This piece is representative of Korean culture. This song is played at important events. There are different versions of "Arirang."

"Arirang" tells of a non-gender specific love story, in which the lover leaves and how to overcome this sadness. The story, itself, is sad but the rhythm does not display (this sadness). There are four sections in which the first section is festive and bright. While the third section is dark. The version played was selected

because it is the most popular and easiest to listen.

After an intermission, "Bibi" was played to represent Africa, because of the use of the blues, a characteristic of African music. This song was composed by Alexander Acevedo, current MSJC student, who won the student composition contest. This composition took Acevedo months to complete.

"Bibi" in Swahili is a title of respect and, sometimes, refers to a grandmother. Acevedo's grandmother inspired him to pursue music, so he wanted to capture his grandmother's lively spirit.

"It was a strange experience [to hear his com-

position played to an audience because he previously heard his composition in a composition program] and hearing it played by musicians was an honor," said Acevedo.

For Europe, there were four pieces selected. There were two pieces from Germany, one from Norway, and the last from Finland. The pieces were Concerto for 2 Violins 3rd Movement, "Andante Festivo," "Sinfonia," and "Holberg Suite" Prelude.

Concerto for 2 Violins 3rd Movement by Johan Sebastian Bach, Baroque era composer, was selected to represent classical Western music. "Sinfonia" by Felix

Mendelssohn, Romantic era composer, also embodies classical era music.

"Andante Festivo" by Jean Sibelius, and "Holberg Suite" Prelude by Edvard Grieg, Norwegian, were both Romantic era composers whose nationalistic pride was illustrated in their respective compositions. Thus, their use of folk melody to

After the scheduled music, there was an encore performance of "Hoe down." Liam Price said, "It was really good. I never saw an orchestra. My favorite part was the encore performance."

"I hope to have [this event] annually," said Son.



The annual student art exhibit on display at the MSJC art gallery.



Photos courtesy of MSJC Marketing

Correia-Jordan brings life lessons from Venezuela

By Marissa Corr

When Elizabeth Correia-Jordan moved from Venezuela to the United States at 19 years old, she spoke very little English. Now in her 20th year of teaching Spanish at MSJC, she brings much of her own experience into the classroom.

"I know Spanish first-hand," she says. "I lived the culture."

She comes from a very large and tight-knit family, which made moving to the United States difficult, but she says she's used teaching as a way to get back in touch with the sense of community she misses.

"I didn't know what it's like to be in an empty space," she says. "I had to recreate the sounds, because I was in a family that was so large. There were

always sounds. And it's not just the language. It's the rhythm of the language. When we cook, when a child was born, when someone got married, when you dated for the first time. Anything was celebrated."

Correia-Jordan comes from a very educated family, in which several of her relatives are educators, and she has a dynamic linguistic background. Her father was from Portugal and her mother's background is from the French islands. In her family her elders spoke French, Creole, English, Spanish and Patois, an English-based creole language with West African influences.

"I have captured and kept my culture," Correia-Jordan says, "and one of the things that makes a difference is I try to incorporate the African vestiges of the

Spanish culture into my teaching, because I don't think enough is done to do that. People say they travel and they do these things, but in reality that is nothing if you don't incorporate that into your teaching."

She says she doesn't believe a textbook is the major key for a course. She wants the students to feel the Spanish language in their hearts and minds and find their own voice within the language.

"Once you partake of that, once it is digested into your being and you realize that language is something you can create, then it becomes real," she says, "and then the barriers begin to fall because they're one in the same. What you say is you."

In class she shares with her students not only pieces of Venezuelan culture, but

also what her relatives are experiencing in Venezuela during its fifth year of deep economic recession. Food scarcity, lack of access to medical care, unemployment and political corruption are commonplace in the country, where 94 percent of its people live in poverty, according to a United Nations report by Reuters.

"I've had the privilege

to support many who are in exile today," she says, "either by buying tickets for them to leave the country or helping get things that they're not able to."

She says the hurdles she's overcome as an immigrant compel her to tie larger concepts into her teaching. In class she talks to her students about things like determination, overcoming fear and the importance of being tolerant.

"Yes, I teach Spanish,"

Correia-Jordan says, "but I recognize that I'm also a learner. The privilege that I have as a teacher is that as I walk into the classroom, I too am walking into 35 different worlds. It's the world of the student. And if I can connect with those students then I'm able to create things. Because every semester we're creating language."

MSJC student Lorena Pardo says she loves that Correia-Jordan gives advice and encouragement during her lessons.

"It brings all elements of different aspects that you go through, not just as a student but in life as well," Pardo says. "It's very positive, very motivating."

Kass Munoz, MSJC clerical assistant, has known Correia-Jordan for 16 years. Munoz describes her as a passionate teach-

er who's always willing to go the extra mile for her students. She says Correia-Jordan is especially good at picking up on when a student is struggling.

"More than just at the front of the classroom instructing," Munoz says, "I think she really gets involved with them and has a commitment to the students."

MSJC student Alejandro Ganeeda says Correia-Jordan is very enthusiastic about her work and really connects with the students. "She's fun. She's teaching us, but at the same time she's having a good time teaching us and the students as well are having a good time," he says. "It doesn't make it seem like it's a chore."

CalWORKs department strives for student success

By Enrique Perez

The CalWORKs program at MSJC is a program specifically designed to provide educational and career opportunities for students and their families. Established in 1998, the CalWORKs program has since worked hard to provide high quality support services for students in the program to help them reach their educational goals, find meaningful employment, and break them into the workforce successfully.

A student can be eligible for the benefits and services the CalWORKs program provides if they are receiving public financial assistance individually and if they are parents to at least one child. Some of the educational services that the CalWORKs program provides for students include priority registration, career and personal counseling, child care, school supplies, and a laptop loaner program.

When it comes to employment services, the program provides work study opportunities for students enrolled in at least 6 units and who have a minimum of a 2.0 GPA. They work with different departments at MSJC and some businesses off campus to help students find the best opportunity.

The director of the CalWORKs program at MSJC, Lisa Campbell says, "I want our CalWORKs students to feel supported, cared for and have a sense of belonging while attending MSJC."

Campbell became the director of the CalWORKs



CalWORKs' 2019 graduation banquet at Soboba Country Club.

Photo Courtesy of MSJC Marketing

program at MSJC in April of 2017. Since then, she has worked hard to direct the program into the right path for the success of students within the program.

"I oversee the entire program for the district," said Campbell. "I supervise two part-time counselors, one clerical staff member, and administrative associate and a job developer. I often meet with students, provide counseling, and attend various meetings on and off campus,

"Our program works closely with Riverside County Department of Social Services (DPSS), and each year I complete presentation at the vari-

ous DPSS offices about our program and its services. As the director, it is my job to ensure our program is providing the needs for student success."

Campbell was asked what she attributes the success of the department to.

"I attribute the success of our program to our small, but mighty staff of six. All of the CalWORKs staff has a passion for serving students and assisting student with meeting their educational goals! As for myself, I have worked for over 25 years with CalWORKs students in various capacities," said Campbell.

"During my career, I have been blessed to be a part of many students' educational journeys, and have seen students overcome many obstacles on their road to obtaining their educational and personal goals. I guess you could say it is my passion to work with students, and it is my joy to see them succeed."

As for the future of the CalWORKs program, Campbell hopes the program will not only continue in its mission in assisting students with achieving their educational and career goals, but also to expand in program and students.

There are a total of 36 students graduating within the CalWORKs program this year. One of those students is Deidre Reyes, a Public Policy major and a member and Officer of the Chapter Historian of MSJCs Phi Theta Kappa. She is part of the EOPS/Care advisory committee and is also on the Food 4 Thought Board.

"I joined CalWORKs in the spring of 2017, which was a great choice because the tools which I lacked were finally right there," said Reyes.

"MSJCs CalWORKs provided me the additional support I was missing, which included having my books completely paid for through their collaboration with Gains WTF program, a backpack filled

with school supplies, a monthly gas card, and a meal card for nourishment.

"I also received the support of an in office DPSS worker and continued employment through their comprehensive job connect program, which collaboratively change my overall trajectory and catapulted me to the next level. CalWORKs aided me, carried me, and has directly contributed to my success here at MSJC, and for that I am immensely grateful."

Other opportunities the CalWORKs program provided for Reyes outside of education were teaching two workshops. She traveled to New Orleans for an NCORE Conference last summer and spent an educational week with Campbell. She then joined the CalWORKs team as a student worker in the Fall 2018.

Reyes said she would recommend the CalWORKs program to all qualifying parents.

Reyes has been accepted to three colleges and has already committed to UC Riverside to pursue public policy and advocacy to make difference for others like herself.

"Once there I hope to make a difference in the lives of others through advocacy work for immigrants, because I am one" she said, "As well as advocate for disabled college students, like myself, and lastly to find a remedy and/or solve the problem of students and their food insecurities."



CalWORKs student Tyler Koharik speaking at CalWORKs banquet.
Photo Courtesy of MSJC Marketing



Driedre Reyes speaking at CalWORKs banquet.
Photo Courtesy of MSJC Marketing

Plotkin helps students through science

By Cindy Lopez

Professor Michael Plotkin has been at MSJC for over a decade. He is the Department Chair of Biology, Environmental Studies, Nutrition and Health Science at the San Jacinto Campus. He serves as director for MERLOT, a curated collection of online materials. Every Tuesday, he commutes from Davis in order to pursue his passion: teaching.

This semester, Plotkin had a busy schedule; he taught online, on-campus, and Honor courses. The courses were Topics in Biology, General Biology, History of Science, and Honors Seminar. The last two courses—History of Science and Honors Seminar—were co-taught with Professor Yamanaka.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Plotkin has always been involved in nature and thus grew curious about biology. As he got older, he appreciated field guides, taxonomic keys, and looking at ecology and evolution as instruments to view nature. He was attracted to the idea of understanding nature through observation.

For his undergraduate education, he attended the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA. He majored in Environmental Studies and later returned to obtain his Master's in Environmental Science. He taught in Vermont and was the first instructor/coordinator for an Environmental Technology training program at Vermont State Colleges. This program was innovative for the late 90's; the courses were taught on three sites using a video system.

Plotkin's career in academia began with his research on birds in south Florida, through the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville. He observed wading birds—herons, egrets, spoonbills, and other exotic wading birds.

"I like that they are so simple in appearance, but so complex in their life cycles, genetics, ecology, and evolution," says Plotkin.

At UC Davis, Plotkin found his other passion—teaching. He applied for a fellowship because he thought he would enjoy teaching. He was awarded a fellowship from the Teaching Resource Center—a center which assisted faculty, teaching assistants, and graduate students to improve their teaching.

Plotkin's continued presence at MSJC comes from

his curiosity about their identity and purpose. When he was younger, he was out in the woods in New England where he came across a plant and noticed a little, fleshy root (on this plant) which tasted like cucumber. He found a field guide and discovered this was an edible Indian cucumber root.

"I realized it was cool to know the plants that are in your vicinity," said Plotkin.

Plotkin's interest also arose from their aesthetic qualities. He was involved in garden design and he co-taught Landscape Architecture at UC Davis and Garden Design at Sacramento. These experiences furthered his passion for plants.

"I like that they are so simple in appearance, but so complex in their life cycles, genetics, ecology, and evolution," says Plotkin.

When Plotkin was looking for teaching opportunities, he was interested in community colleges, because of the diverse student body and emphasis on teaching. He received a job offer from a university, but felt it was not the right fit.

Plotkin also dedicates his time to writing. He occasionally writes a column for a Natural History journal in the Sacramento area and he has written textbook content for Plant Biology and non-major Biology. He collaborates with publishers in regards to materials, lately digital, involving reviewing, editing, and creating.

Plotkin's continued presence at MSJC comes from



Photo Courtesy of Michael Plotkin

the community of people, involvement in the Honors Program as well as other programs, and its great atmosphere. Other factors include the location of the campus—near the San Jacinto Mountains—and the opportunity to pursue other activities such as

the Art/Biology gallery.

With STEM, he was able

to have Summer Bridge

programs.

He encourages

his students to participate

in the Honors Conference.

There are plans to get

interpretive signs and more

plant diversity on campus.

MSJC hosts Special Olympics cont.

from page 1

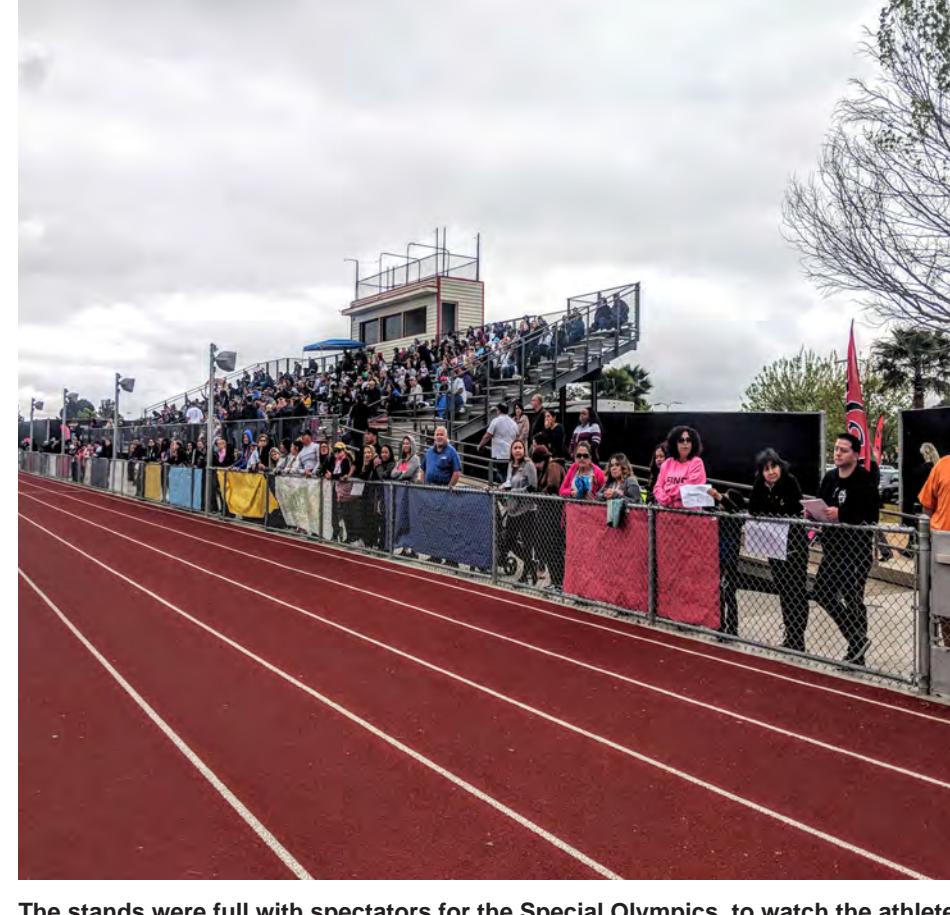
from Beaumont High said he was super excited that he would get a chance to participate. Appearing in various events, Ruiz De La Torre said that his favorite was the meter races and actually showed that passion by winning the gold medal in the 50 meter and bronze in the 100 meter.

MSJC student Rosa Amezcua shared the experience she and her Olympian son Angel Elizalde had on that day.

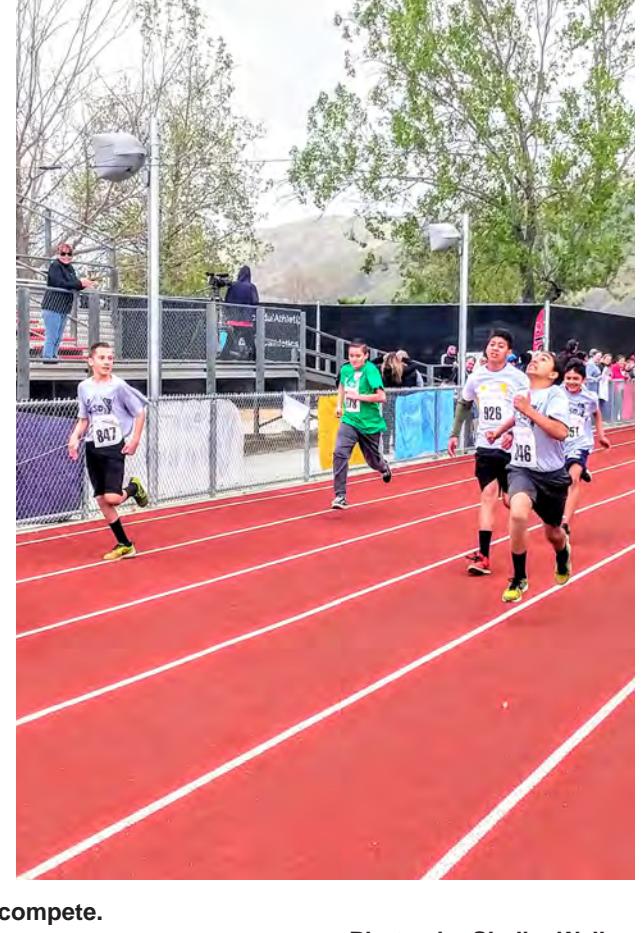
"This event meant so much to my son and my family as well as other participants and their families...Having a child with disabilities really changes your perception on life," she said.

Rosa and her 5th grade son from Megan Cope Elementary School stressed that they were both very proud and excited that MSJC would hold such an event and were more happy that it was held in the Inland Empire instead of faraway places. Winning multiple achievements, Angel displayed his talents in various events but out of all the events he chose the ball throw as his favorite event. A lover of sports, Angel really likes to play baseball and with a strong arm like his there is no doubt that he has the potential to win the Cy Young award in Major League Baseball.

"My son has been through so much...It was great to see him, along with others, enjoying themselves," Rosa said. She continued explaining the true meaning of an event like this by sharing that her son has been through many surgeries, including open heart.



The stands were full with spectators for the Special Olympics, to watch the athletes compete.



Photos by Shelby Walker



Athletes excited to receive their medals in the winners circle.

Photo by Shelby Walker

Send silence packing awareness event cont.

MSJC Foundation's 11th annual gala cont.



Guests gather in the ballroom of Pechanga for the 11th annual MSJC Foundation gala.

Photo courtesy of MSJC Marketing

from page 1

The Gala also showcased MSJC's student gaming program, where guests were able to play at gambling tables for fun, practicing their gambling and winning MSJC swag. After the awards ceremony, guests were then treated to a performance by a Journey Tribute band.

A silent auction was also held during the event, with all funds raised going to support the Gala. Besides honoring guests and sponsors, the Gala brings happenings around MSJC into the spotlight. It was also the perfect opportunity to discuss the latest expansions the district has been undertaking.

The Mt. San Jacinto College Foundation is the

non-profit 501 c3 of the district and an important part of it. Donations and money raised through fundraisers all go through the Foundation, and the Gala is considered the largest event of the year for raising funds. The funds from the Foundation are used to support services on campus and MSJC students with scholarships.

"The way that the scholarships work for the Gala is that they are generally for continuing students," Orlauski said. "Because the funding comes in through MSJC, our continuing students are always awarded in the Fall for that academic year. A portion comes through directly from the proceeds from the event and then we have other scholarships that are des-

ignated by our sponsors. Last year in the Fall we awarded about 25 students and are expected to have a similar amount this year."

The President's Club is also a part of the Foundation that meets the needs of both campuses. It covers what student funds can't cover.

According to Orlauski, it "was created to give an account of undesignated funding to the President of the College so that he can support endeavors that he cannot use state funds for."

This includes funds to bring in guest speakers on campus and if there is something else needed for commencement that cannot be purchased with state funds or if there is something that a program needs.

There are several ways

to give to the Foundation, either by going online to MSJC's website, mailing a check to the Foundation or by dropping off the do-

nation in person. For more information about the Foundation or to donate, contact Rebecca Orlauski at rorlauski@msjc.edu.



Guests enjoy the James Bond theme of the gala.

Photo courtesy of MSJC Marketing

from page 1

that mental health is HEALTH and not just people being sad or drama queens," says Hardgrove. "You hear the numbers and statistics but they don't really connect. Seeing all those backpacks, reading the stories, and even the few people who thanked me for being involved and told me their stories, really brings the scope of the problem into focus."

Sasha Wellbrock, a volunteer and student attending the event, was touched by the experience.

"Honestly, when I first got there it was a lot to take in," she said. "I read a few of the stories and I felt nervous when I thought about approaching people. It was sad and a little uncomfortable but I really appreciate that I got to have that experience. I saw how suicide impacts people for years, and sometimes they never get over it."

Send Silence Packing tours schools all over the United States.



Guests enjoy the James Bond theme of the gala.

Photo courtesy of MSJC Marketing

Congratulations MSJC class of 2019

#MSJCEaglesRise



Photo courtesy of MSJC Public Information

By Pablo Ramos

Mark your calendars because graduation is rapidly approaching at MSJC. The moment many students have been working for day and night, week by week, hour by hour is almost here.

The class of 2019 will be the largest walking class MSJC has ever had. There will be more than 1,750 graduates and more than 3,400 associate degrees and certificates awarded.

"The most exciting part of graduation for me is to see the true joy on the faces of our students as

we hand them their diplomas," said Dr. Roger Schultz, President of MSJC. "This is their time to shine. They have worked hard and they deserve this day of recognition."

Schultz feels that he learns from each of the students during their time at MSJC.

"Our students are smart, goal oriented and diverse. I really appreciate those qualities," said Schultz. "This year was a great experience for us as a community college. We rallied around all student groups, faculty, and classified staff to form a real unified supportive learning environment."

Due to how large the walking class is, there will be two commencements held on May 23 at the Pechanga Resort & Casino.

Ceremony one will begin at 10 a.m. and the other will begin at 3 p.m. and the ceremonies will last two hours. Due to limited space, graduates and their families are asked to arrive on time. Doors will open two hours prior to commencement beginning. So please arrive on time.

Students of all walks of life with different stories and journeys prepare to make the next steps in their lives, whether that

be transferring or stepping into the work field. MSJC was just the first step to start their futures.

"I have worked so hard for this and never thought I would make it here," one student said. "I truly never would have made it through this journey without the amazing people at MSJC. I feel prepared and ready to go into the world. It also feels amazing that I can say I am a college graduate."

Students are welcome to have as many people as they want to attend the graduation, as there are no tickets, but they must also keep in mind that once the venue

fills, guests will be asked to go to the overflow room.

Students must also have their student I.D. or state issued I.D. or license for check-in at the booth at the Pechanga Resort and Casino Ballroom. Once inside,

make sure that guests silence their cell phones once the ceremony has begun.

Photography is allowed, but make sure to use the hashtag #MSJCEaglesRise on photos that are uploaded on social media. In addition, professional photography will be at the ceremony to provide students with quality photos for purchase.

For families or friends

that cannot make it to the ceremony, there is an option to view the ceremony through a live stream on Vimeo, or you can go to the MSJC website and find a link titled "Live Streaming".

"My advice to students who are graduating is to always set their goals high and then push the bar even higher," said Schultz. "That is when you will achieve real personal growth. You will surprise yourself with what you can do if you push yourself just beyond the initial goal. See yourself as a leader and treat others as you wish to be treated."



Photos courtesy of MSJC Marketing

#MSJCEaglesRise

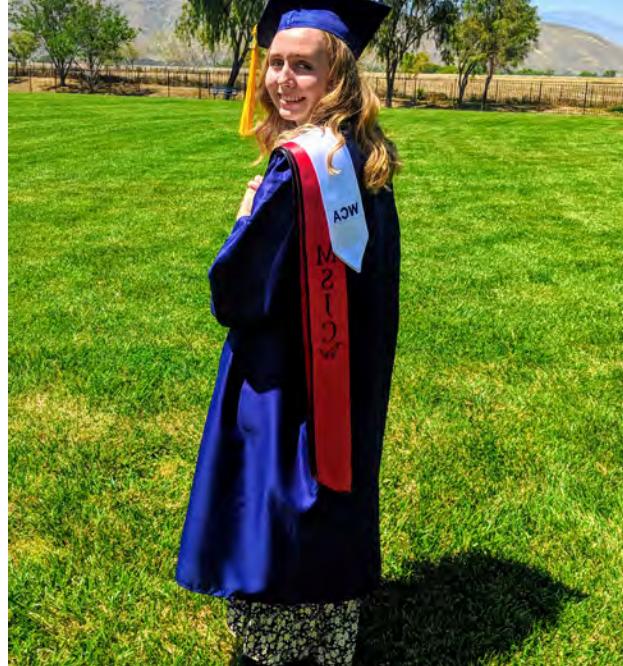
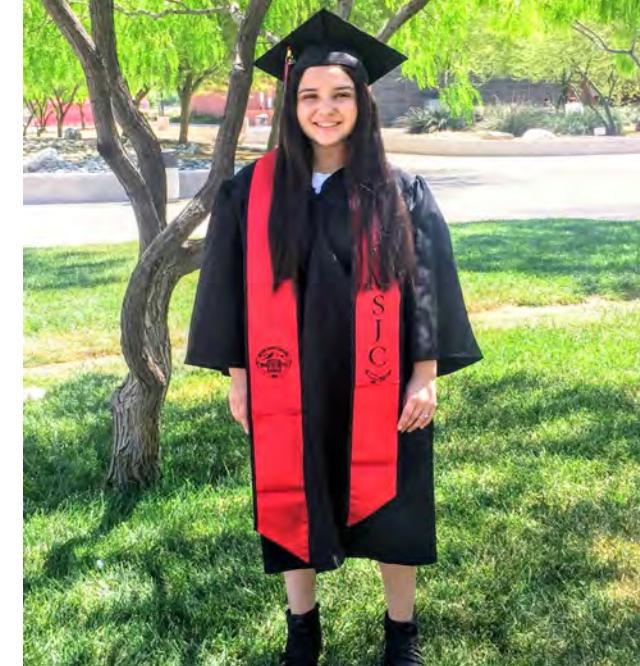


Photo by Shelby Walker



Photos by Olivia Snyder

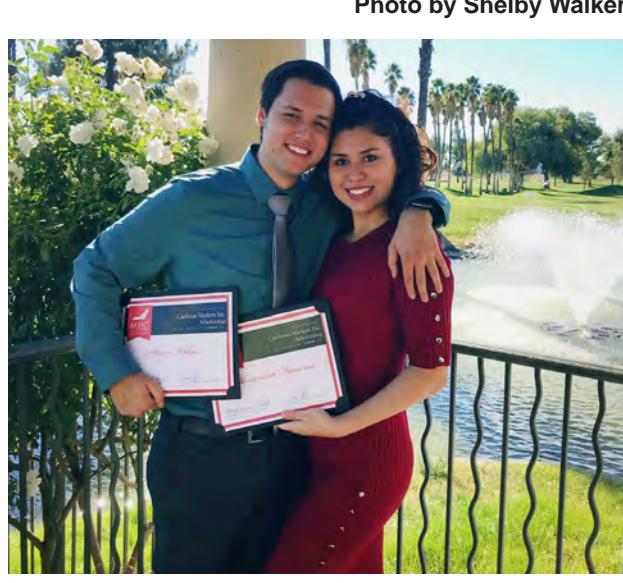


Photo by Mahak Tiwari



Photo courtesy of MSJC Marketing

Class of 2019 SGA officers say goodbye to MSJC

By Olivia Snyder

Several members of the Student Government Association are among Mt. San Jacinto College's graduating students. Those include Aaron Perez, President of the Student Government Association; Debbie Gelista, the Senator of College Activities; Miguel Zacarias, the Interim Commissioner of Financial Affairs; and Victor Heredia, the Commissioner of Public Relations.

Gelista specifically wished to graduate in two years, despite the uncertainty about her major and future schools. She said she was able to determine this by the end of her first semester, which allowed her to achieve her goal of transferring within a two-year span.

Zacarias set his sights on being able to transfer within a year, which he achieved. Additionally, he wished to be an active participant in one of MSJC's clubs. He achieved this by being a part of the Student Government Association.

Heredia's original goal when coming to MSJC was to transfer in order to finish his bachelor's degree in Architecture. Since then, he has found Electrical Engineering to be his calling. He credits MSJC in helping him find his passion for math and physics.

Heredia says he was able to accomplish more than he originally anticipated



SGA officers gather with Ernie the Eagle.

Photo by Olivia Snyder

during his time here. Some of these accomplishments include being a tutor at the Learning Resources Center; entering a go-kart derby via the STEM+ club, which is also where he gave his first public address; winning second place in one of the Mu Alpha Theta's Math competitions; and participating in the campus's Paranormal Society.

During their busy academic careers, they all made lasting memories. Gelista's most enjoyable memory of her time at MSJC was when she was elected president of the Puente Club.

"It was thanks to the

Puente Club and Program that opened many doors for me at MSJC. It also allowed me to meet many people who have inspired me through my journey, like my professor Dr. Ramirez, who was the first Latina women I ever met with a doctoral degree," said Gelista.

She also credits her Puente Counselor, Ms. Amezua, for helping with her education plan, and her Mentor Rebecca Coleman for being a supportive figure.

In regards to the overall impact of the club, Gelista said, "When I was

elected president of the Puente Club, I knew I would have the privilege of guiding the next group of students throughout their college experience."

One of Zacarias' favorite memories is not necessarily associated with a single club. It was when he was a volunteer for the Menifee Fall Festival, which took place during the fall semester of 2018.

"It was wonderful to see the student body come together to host an event for the public," Zacarias fondly recalls.

Heredia's most enjoyable memory happens

to be a basketball game that took place one Friday afternoon with his friends from the Student Government Association.

"It was memorable because it happened by pure chance: none of us had planned to play that day, usually ending our SGA meetings and going our separate ways, but a friend from STEM+ Club happened to come to the meeting and suggested we play," said Heredia.

These graduating students are looking forward to their future academic careers. They all have great expectations com-

ing up on the horizon.

And all aim to attain a bachelor's degree.

"My future goals after graduation are to transfer to the University of Saint Mary's in Kansas, where I wish to obtain my bachelor's in psychology, and eventually my Masters," says Gelista.

"A few of my goals for after graduation include getting my bachelor's degree, competing collegiality in cross country and track for the university I transfer to, and creating new networks among others," said Zacarias.

"My ultimate goal has always been to find a way to make a living off of something that I feel is worthwhile," said Heredia. "But I don't want to just get a job for the sake of having one, I want to create things. I want to work on something that I can be proud of, something that makes me feel like I am making the most of my abilities. I am excited to finding out what the future has in store."

"I'm grateful for the people I've met along this journey, professors, counselors, and friends, without whom I wouldn't be the person I am today. I cannot put a price on what this school has taught me, about myself, and the world around me.

As my Physics professor would tell me: 'But what's important is that you learned something.'

SJC Eagle Day welcomes high school seniors

By Rita Douangpannha

With the Spring 2019 semester drawing to an end, the last thing on any students' mind is "anything more to do with school." However, for seniors of six local high schools, "more school" was into an eventful rendezvous on Friday, April 19 at the Mt. San Jacinto campus.

Hosting its annual SJC Eagle Day, San Jacinto Campus welcomed high school seniors to a campus tour, faculty and counselor Q&A, student club representatives promoting campus life, campus tour and lunch. Students were given Eagle student tote bags with financial aid, matriculation, and enrollment packets the essentials to introducing interested students to the benefits of a community college.

As some visiting seniors are first-generation college bound students, MSJC's Eagle Day offers the students the opportunity to see college courses being conducted. Visiting students began their tour at the campus gymnasium and worked their way through the Arts & Humanities, Music, Science, and Business buildings.

Tours were conduct-



High school seniors enjoy breakfast as Eagle Day kicks off with various speakers.

Photo by Shelby Walker

ed by volunteering MSJC students, who also got to share their experiences on campus and discuss campus life and activities.

Students were also given a history of the campus and told about its establishment in the late 1960s, with its first class enrolling for the fall of 1963. Serving the Pass Area communities of Banning, Beaumont, Hemet and San Jacinto, MSJC has continued growing and now encompasses the Menifee and Temecula communities.

MSJC has increased in its student population to over 15,000. With an increasing number of students, the campus has also received more funding for its extracurricular activities and now offers sports programs for Football (M), Baseball, Softball, Tennis (MW), Volleyball (W), Soccer (W), Golf (MW), and Basketball (MW).

Known for its excellence in helping students with opportunities towards sports scholarships and transferring

MSJC offers routes for students to be successful. Transfer programs with California Universities has also helped students be more fiscally responsible by taking advantage of lower cost tuition.

As the opening ceremony was held by MSJC academic and financial aid counselors, the high school seniors were welcomed to the matriculation process and eased into the process of enrolling into MSJC beginning this summer.

Counselors explained that

students interested in enrollment could begin the process online and depending on course availability, could begin a course in the summer as well. Taking advantage of this opportunity, students could begin taking their transferable General Education (GE) courses.

Doing so would free up the student's schedule during the Fall and/or Spring semesters to take courses for their major.

MSJC student volunteers also shared their experiences with the high school seniors

on the importance of engaging in student extra curricular for an enhanced campus life experience. Such opportunities included the Phi Theta Kappa, journalism internships with the school paper "The Talon," and math & engineering activities with the STEM club.

"It was a really enjoyable day and I found out a lot I did not know about MSJC. I am glad I am looking into coming here," said one senior.



High school seniors take tour of MSJC with various staff, faculty, and student guides.



Photos by Shelby Walker

MSJC nursing program partners with Ohio University

By Jennifer Vargas

Although community colleges offer two-year associate degree programs, Mt. San Jacinto College has just created a pathway to a four-year bachelor's degree.

Through a partnership with Ohio University, the two-year Registered Nursing program allows students to take online classes and sit for the NCLEX (the nationwide examination for the licensing of nurses), which will then allow them to become Registered Nurses. The two-year program also earns graduates an Associates of Science in Nursing degree (ASN).

Although the nursing program takes two years of nursing courses, it requires that all prerequisites be completed before applying. That means it might take up to four years to complete the nursing program at the associate degree level.

Nursing is a rigorous program and after taking four years of classes, it might seem tiring to continue education. However, the nursing world is becoming more and more competitive and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BSN) is even required for certain jobs.

"The partnership between the MSJC School of Nursing and Ohio University is one of many that our School of Nursing has established as a means to facilitate the transition of our graduates towards higher education and the opportunity to earn their Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing."



Photo Courtesy of MSJC Public Information

said Dr. Peter Zografos, MSJC's Nursing Director.

"We are very honored to share that at least 70 percent of our students do move on towards their undergraduate degree since they realize the value and importance that the higher degree will have on opportunities for career advancement within the nursing profession."

MSJC's partnership with Ohio University is the university's first in Southern California, which has been developed according to Dr. Zografos "because of the excellent reputation of the MSJC Nursing Program and because of

the outstanding nursing graduates of our program."

Through the partnership, MSJC nursing graduates will be able to enroll in Ohio University through the online RN to BSN program. The dean of the College of Health Sciences and Professions at Ohio University, Randy Leite, praised the MSJC program.

"We are proud to have Mt. San Jacinto College as a partner," he said. "They do a wonderful job in preparing registered nurses and we are happy to be able to bring the next level of nursing education to their graduates."

Since nursing programs require such dedication and time, an online program will make furthering a student's nursing career that much easier. Nursing programs require hundreds of hours of clinicals (on site rotations in numerous settings for hands on patient care) along with many hours of studying each week. An online program will give new graduates the flexibility to begin their career while having time to complete online classes.

MSJC Nursing Student Christal Ruiz revealed her excitement for the partnership.

"I am extremely excited to pursue my BSN and have already enrolled with Ohio University," she said. "Their online option is a perfect fit for my family and lifestyle. As a soon to be new grad, I will be seeking a start to my career as a nurse. Ohio's BSN program is not only affordable but also flexible, and will allow me to work and gain experience, all the while furthering my education."

Ohio's School of Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and their RN to BSN program is ranked first in Ohio

and seventh in the nation in terms of affordability. Those seeking interest should set up a meeting with a school counselor.

Zografos says he is "proud that most of our graduates stay within the community and are able to give back. In fact, many of our current SON faculty received their start from MSJC and went on towards earning their graduate level degrees. All of

our full-time faculty either possess a doctorate degree or are currently enrolled in a doctoral program."

Hernandez overcomes life obstacles

By Jackie Cespedes

Mario Hernandez began attending MSJC in the spring 2018 in pursuit of a counseling career. He is a musician looking to expand his horizons while still doing what he loves, playing music. However, his plans took a halt after a tragic accident took place, causing him to lose his sight. Hernandez had to start from scratch.

Born in Mexicali, Baja California, Hernandez came to Los Angeles at the age of 10. He graduated in 1987 from Huntington Park High School and met his future wife a year later. Shortly after getting married, Hernandez and his wife bought a home in Fontana. They started a family and life was turning out just fine.

On Dec. 29, 2013, while driving down the freeway, Hernandez was on the

phone with his brother, discussing breakfast plans with their family before heading to work, when he was involved in a traffic accident.

From what Hernandez can recall, he was spewing up blood and had a "wet" face but could not see anything. The 605 Freeway was backed up for four hours while a helicopter came to fly him to the USC Hospital for immediate care.

He had no memory of the details of the collision or clear understanding of what exactly happened. One thing he was certain of was that his life had just changed forever.

"According to my medical records, I was in the hospital for six months. My memory is very fuzzy. If I could remember what happened to me, I'd probably go crazy," he said.

In June 2004, Hernandez was discharged

from the USC Hospital. The first year of recovery was tough for Hernandez. He was diagnosed with PTSD, depression and had suicidal thoughts.

"I didn't want to wake up. If it weren't for my daughters, I don't know where I'd be," he said.

Hernandez decided it was time to give life another try. After months of lying in bed and refusing to deal with reality, he asked his wife to take him for a haircut and to go out to eat. During his battle with depression, he had to reteach himself to do daily tasks such as walking around his home, playing the guitar, and dressing himself.

He was introduced to a couple organizations to help him with the more difficult duties. The JR Blind of America Association, now known as Wayfinder Family Services, and

Blindness Support Services Riverside were a huge support in his transition.

"I learned to work on computers, navigate through my home and the TV channels, as well as listen to audio-books," he said. "I can do things; I just can't see."

Hernandez had no choice but to move in with his sister.

After constant disagreements, Hernandez was asked to leave and find a new home. With such short notice, Hernandez packed two bags of clothes, his guitar and rented a room in San Jacinto.

Hernandez found his faith and shortly after, found a woman he would soon marry. In October of 2017, Hernandez married Gabriela Vasquez.

"I felt at peace. We created our own happiness," Hernandez says proudly.

About a year later, he

began his studies at MSJC.

"It was difficult at first. I would get lost and was embarrassed to speak to the students. Being asked to get

in groups was tough. The professor would instruct the students to turn around and get in groups but I couldn't look back like the others. However, the students were very friendly and would approach me to join their group."

Hernandez is enrolled in four classes this spring and plans to pursue his studies to fulfill his dream of becoming a counselor.

"I want to get the training I need to help others as

others have helped me," he said. "In college, I believe we're all a team. No one has the answer to everything so why not help each other grow by exchanging knowledge and opinions?"

Hernandez has overcome a lot of obstacles

throughout the last few years. He offered some advice to others who are struggling in college.

"First of all, college is not hard, it's just a lot of work," he said. "What's difficult is making the time to study while also being a parent, working, and having class. You just can't give up. Education is the most important thing. Counselors, professors, and even other students can help provide some guidance and sources. It's important to find interest in what you study; you can never know too much."

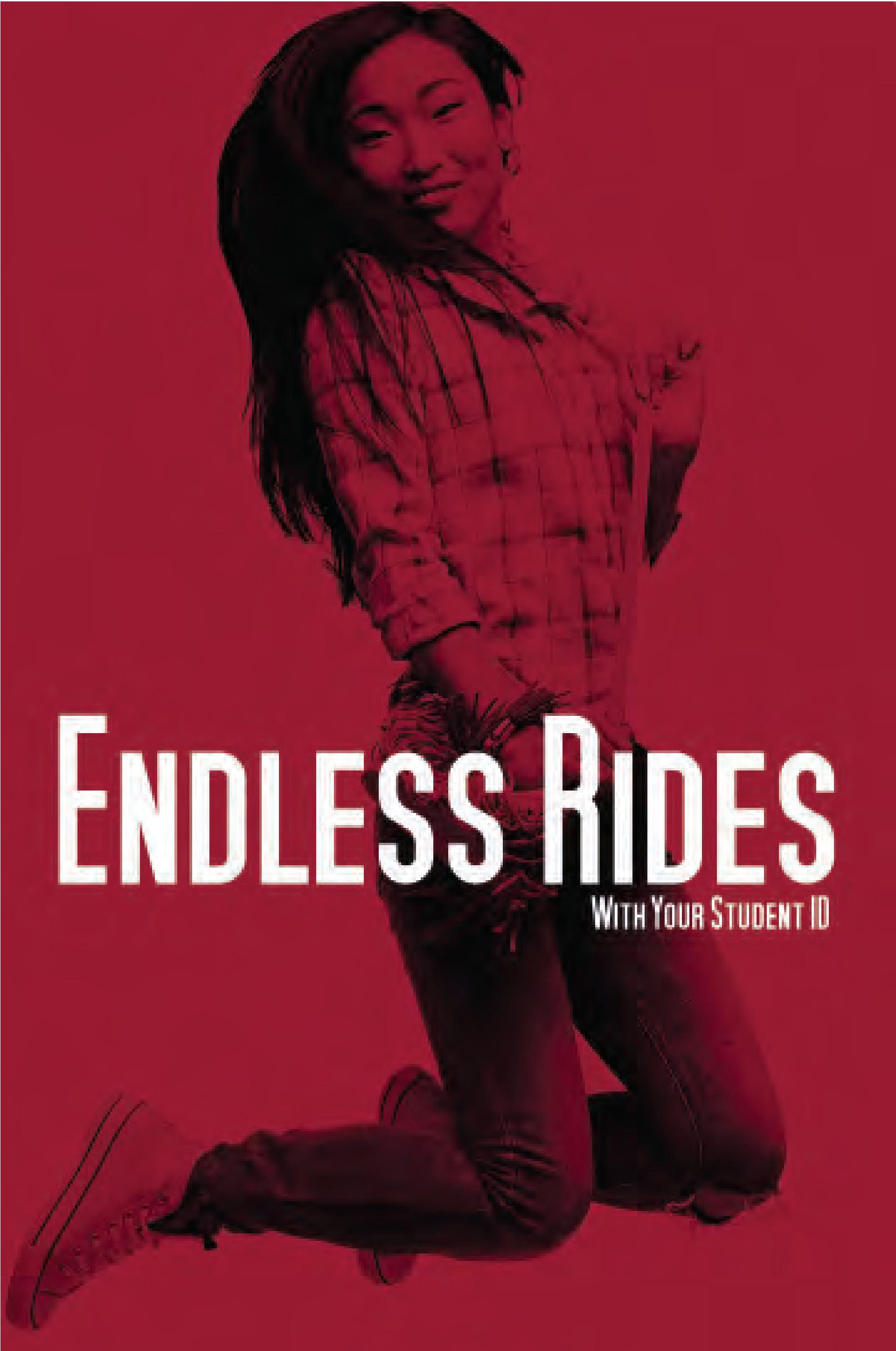
In December of this year, it will be 15 years that Hernandez has lost his sight.

"What you see now, is what I saw before," he said. "What I see now, no one will ever have a chance to experience. It's beautiful."



On April 6 the MSJC Child Development Department along with other sponsors put on the annual Day of the Young Child. It was an event to show families what resources there are in the community for young children. This was a free event and open to the public.

Photos by Shelby Walker



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Class of 2019 Talon graduates say goodbye

By Alyse Deatherage

Here at the Talon we have a wonderful staff, and this month we will say a bittersweet goodbye to five of our graduating members. Jesus Alcala, Shelby Walker, Rebecca Metts, Ashley Acevedo, and Daniel Arreguin have shared some of their favorite memories at Mt. San Jacinto College with us and told us a bit about their future plans.

"Overall, I appreciate having attended college," says Alcala. He says that college was not his original goal, but he is glad that he was able to attend and join clubs like the Talon and Communications Club, which helped expand his possible career choices for the future.

"One of my favorite experiences has been participating in school clubs. I recommend The Talon to anyone that enjoys writing."

Alcala has been reading the Talon since last semester and began writing for the Talon this semester. He plans to take a break from school before returning and earning his bachelor's degree. In the meantime, he plans to delve deeper into multiple fields, including public relations, politics, and journalism, to find an interest for his future career path.

Walker is our current editor-in-chief for the Talon newspaper and she says, "Joining The Talon



Talon graduates participating in their last club rush at MSJC, back in February.

is the best decision I made during my time at MSJC. I was able to find a family away from home and watch my news staff grow. I was also able to learn to network and meet new people. This paper means the world to me and I am so thankful for my amazing team and advisors."

During Walker's time on the newspaper she helped grow The Talon staff from six members to well over 30. She will be attending Azusa Pacific University in the fall to finish her bachelors. She plans to get her Master's degree after finishing her BA because her goal is to return to MSJC to be a professor of journalism.

"Being Vice President of the Communication Club and a writer for The Talon have helped me get out of my comfort zone and meet new people that I wouldn't have had the chance to meet," says Talon writer Metts.

In addition to these two clubs, she continued to say that being a part of the SI program at MSJC helped expand her social crowd and create a home for her on campus. She plans to further her education in Communications and Spanish at Cal State Fullerton.

"One of the largest impacts on my time at MSJC is most likely all the friends I have made on the way and

the events I have attended on campus," says Metts.

"After this past year, I couldn't be more proud or honored to be a part of the MSJC community," says Acevedo. "I feel like I've personally grown so much as an individual, especially with branching out and being part of clubs."

Acevedo has attended more than one college, but expresses her appreciation for the MSJC staff for being "so heavily involved and invested in the well-being of their students, not just academically, but in our personal lives as well."

"I was all over the place until I found communications. To me it was the one

Photo by Shelby Walker

major that tied in to all the things that I felt I was genuinely interested in and could get me into any field in the future," says Acevedo. She is planning to continue her education in communications and will be attending UC San Diego in the fall.

When I returned to school, I found out that the grades I got when I was a teenager were still there, and I was going to have to work extra hard to get past those bad grades. I told my counselor I would earn my associate's degree in two years and transfer to a four-year institution.

That's exactly what I have done. I knew I wanted to be a professor in the future, but it was not until I found Communication Studies that I found my passion in life. I love working with others, doing networking, and pushing others to succeed. Communication Studies has done this for me.

In fall of 2018, I found a new love that has built on my love of Communication, and that's in journalism. I was the student that said I would never go into journalism when I switched to Communication Studies because I thought it was dead. Now I'm the student who can't get enough of it.

In 10 short months I went from barely learning to write for The Talon newspaper to becoming the Editor-in-Chief with a staff of 30. This experience has been very rewarding. I have been able to learn so much. I've also been able to meet many wonderful people, while also expanding outside of my comfort zone to meet people who, if it wasn't for the paper, I never would have met.

I've also been able to experience some amazing things, whether it was going to a press conference, putting on an event, going to a wide range of school/community events, and getting one of the student speaker positions for graduation.

My time here at MSJC has been filled with some of the most amazing memories and I am sad this journey is coming to an end. But I am also excited for what the future holds. I will be transferring in the fall to Azusa Pacific University to pursue my journalism degree -- something that two years ago I never would have thought I would be doing.

If there is any advice I can leave everyone with before I leave MSJC, it is for students to get involved. There is such a wide range of clubs, organizations, and departments to get involved with at MSJC. I truly believe there is something for everyone and you just have to be willing to go out and look. Push past those comfort zones and believe me, in the end it will be worth it.

Thank you to my amazing advisors of The Talon -- Dr. Michele Weber, Professor Ron Newman, and Doug Spoon. Without each of them I never would have found my passion in journalism. Thanks to each of them, my plan is to finish my BA, then get my MA in Mass Communication and eventually return to MSJC to be a professor of journalism.



Goodbye and thanks from the Editor

By Shelby Walker

I returned to college after five years in 2017. I was 23, a mom of two toddlers, and wife. We had not been doing very well. We went from homeless, to on our feet, to my husband being laid off and relying on government aid to survive. I made the decision that this was no way to live and I needed to get my degree.

When I returned to school, I found out that the grades I got when I was a teenager were still there, and I was going to have to work extra hard to get past those bad grades. I told my counselor I would earn my associate's degree in two years and transfer to a four-year institution.

That's exactly what I have done. I knew I wanted to be a professor in the future, but it was not until I found Communication Studies that I found my passion in life. I love working with others, doing networking, and pushing others to succeed. Communication Studies has done this for me.

In fall of 2018, I found a new love that has built on my love of Communication, and that's in journalism. I was the student that said I would never go into journalism when I switched to Communication Studies because I thought it was dead. Now I'm the student who can't get enough of it.

In 10 short months I went from barely learning to write for The Talon newspaper to becoming the Editor-in-Chief with a staff of 30. This experience has been very rewarding. I have been able to learn so much. I've also been able to meet many wonderful people, while also expanding outside of my comfort zone to meet people who, if it wasn't for the paper, I never would have met.

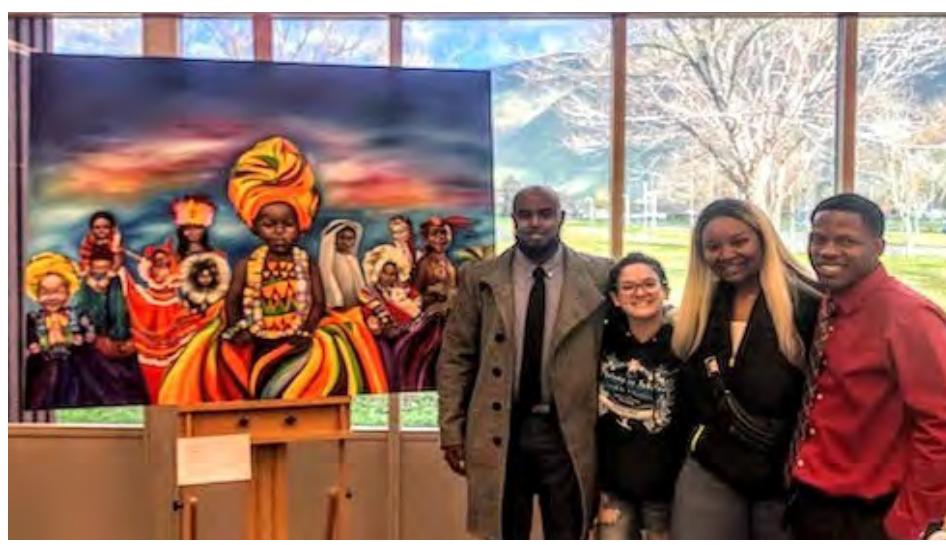
I've also been able to experience some amazing things, whether it was going to a press conference, putting on an event, going to a wide range of school/community events, and getting one of the student speaker positions for graduation.

My time here at MSJC has been filled with some of the most amazing memories and I am sad this journey is coming to an end. But I am also excited for what the future holds. I will be transferring in the fall to Azusa Pacific University to pursue my journalism degree -- something that two years ago I never would have thought I would be doing.

If there is any advice I can leave everyone with before I leave MSJC, it is for students to get involved. There is such a wide range of clubs, organizations, and departments to get involved with at MSJC. I truly believe there is something for everyone and you just have to be willing to go out and look. Push past those comfort zones and believe me, in the end it will be worth it.

Thank you to my amazing advisors of The Talon -- Dr. Michele Weber, Professor Ron Newman, and Doug Spoon. Without each of them I never would have found my passion in journalism. Thanks to each of them, my plan is to finish my BA, then get my MA in Mass Communication and eventually return to MSJC to be a professor of journalism.





Graphic Art by Maria Buchanan

Social Media



@msjctalon



@msjctalon

**Mt. San Jacinto College Talon****msjctalon@gmail.com**

Shelby Walker
Editor-in-Chief & Photographer & Writer & Designer

Alyse Deatherage
SJC Site Editor & Designer

Jose Daniel Arreguin
Vice President & Writer

Jesus Alcala
Secretary & Writer & Designer & Photographer

Melissa Castro
Writer

Jennifer Vargas
Writer & Photographer

Jamee Menez
MVC Site Editor

Cindy Lopez
Writer

Rita Douangpannha
Writer

Marc-Anthony Rosas
Photographer

Gregory Stires
Treasure & Writer

Pablo Ramos
Writer

Rebecca Metts
Writer

Olivia Snyder
Writer

Christopher Soto
Photoagapher & Writer

Rosa Hernandez
Writer

Mahak Tiwari
Writer

Enrique Perez
Writer

Priscilla Perez
Photographer

Jaqueline Cespedes
Writer

Maria Buchanan
Graphic Artist

Tawny Day
Writer

Ashley Acevedo
Writer

Jonathan Ilagan
Writer

Marissa Corr
Writer

Eric Rodriguez
Writer

Brea Pratt
Designer

Dr. Michele Weber
Adviser

Doug Spoon
Journalistic Adviser

Ron Newman
Adviser

Meetings:
Monday
1:30pm-2:30pm
Room 479 MVC
Room 326 SJC



Shelby Walker Editor-in-Chief & Photographer & Writer & Designer	Cindy Lopez Writer	Mahak Tiwari Writer	Eric Rodriguez Writer
Alyse Deatherage SJC Site Editor & Designer	Rita Douangpannha Writer	Enrique Perez Writer	Brea Pratt Designer
Jose Daniel Arreguin Vice President & Writer	Marc-Anthony Rosas Photographer	Priscilla Perez Photographer	Dr. Michele Weber Adviser
Jesus Alcala Secretary & Writer & Designer & Photographer	Gregory Stires Treasure & Writer	Jaqueline Cespedes Writer	Doug Spoon Journalistic Adviser
Melissa Castro Writer	Pablo Ramos Writer	Maria Buchanan Graphic Artist	Ron Newman Adviser
Jennifer Vargas Writer & Photographer	Rebecca Metts Writer	Tawny Day Writer	
Jamee Menez MVC Site Editor	Olivia Snyder Writer	Ashley Acevedo Writer	
	Christopher Soto Photoagapher & Writer	Jonathan Ilagan Writer	
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