



THE *Diamond* NEWS

PROUDLY HIGHLIGHTING LA JOYA ISD'S ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 1983!

La Joya ISD Parents Earn the State Board of Education *Heroes for Children* Award for The 4th Consecutive Year!



2020 Karla Vallejan (La Joya ISD – SBOE District 3) Juarez-Lincoln HS



2020 Isabel Ortiz (La Joya ISD – SBOE District 2) JD Salinas MS

The State Board of Education established the Heroes for Children award program in 1994. The award is designed to recognize excellence in advocacy for education and to highlight the many outstanding volunteers whose efforts represent significant contributions to public school education in Texas.

Since its beginning, the award has provided a means to recognize Texas residents who render selfless acts of service by offering their time, effort, and support to public schools and students. The award honors volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to student learning or who have demonstrated sustained periods of involvement and support of public education. Each year, the 15-member Board recognizes one Hero from each of their districts. La Joya ISD is proud to have earned the award for 4 years in a row, and we are proud of the parents from our district who were selected and recognized from many other contenders from throughout the entire Rio Grande Valley!

Congratulations to our 2020 Heroes for Children award recipients!

Message

FROM THE

SUPERINTENDENT



Dear La Joya ISD Family,

The start of the holiday season is here, bringing yet another milestone in what has been an unprecedented year. As we continue to navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, our priority continues to be the safety and security of our students, teachers, and staff. I am proud to say that we have remained resilient and determined in ensuring whether together or apart, we continue to Shine Bright at La Joya ISD!

Our students have continued to excel in the classroom. Together with our administration team and school board, we have been working around the clock to make sure that our La Joya ISD students and families have the necessary resources to succeed both at home and in the classroom. While we continue to offer synchronous and asynchronous options for our students, we remain dedicated to each student's personal success and achievement.

With the holidays upon us, I would like to express my gratitude for our outstanding team of teachers, staff, administrators, and school board who have the best interest of our students in mind and go above and beyond in providing a safe, nurturing, and encouraging environment for our students to succeed. I would also like to especially thank our wonderful La Joya ISD parents who work alongside us to ensure academic excellence. The transitions we have all experienced over the past few months have not been easy, but we have worked through it, and I am thankful that our parents have kept the trust and confidence in us.

This holiday season we are taking extra precautionary measures as we strive to keep our students and entire La Joya ISD community safe. Throughout the holiday season, we ask that you keep reinforcing the same safety measures we are using inside of our district to help stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes keeping gatherings small, social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing your hands frequently.

On behalf of our La Joya ISD community, I would like to wish all of you and your families a healthy, safe and happy holiday season!

With great pride,

Dr. Gisela Saenz

LA JOYA ISD SUPERINTENDENT

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Message

FROM THE
SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear La Joya ISD families:

It is with great honor and humility that I began my third term this month as your School Board Trustee, and I am proud to have been selected by my colleagues on the board to serve you once again as School Board President. As such, I pledge to work in coordination with the school board members, with Superintendent Dr. Saenz and her administration, with all

employees, and of course with our students and families to ensure that EVERY child is getting the best education possible and supported in every way as we continue navigating our current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of you has played a critical role in ensuring that our students continue excelling and receiving optimal learning, while also meeting their physical and emotional needs. Your support is immeasurable, and we thank and recognize you. As we approach the holiday season, please continue to stay safe and healthy, and God bless!

Oscar "Coach" Salinas
School Board President

Estimadas familias de La Joya ISD:

Es con gran honor y humildad que comencé mi tercer mandato este mes como su representante de la Junta Escolar, y estoy orgulloso de haber sido seleccionado por mis colegas en la junta para servirle una vez más como presidente de la Junta Escolar. Como tal, me comprometo a trabajar en coordinación con los miembros de la junta escolar, con la Superintendente Dra. Saenz y su administración, con todos los empleados y, por supuesto, con nuestros estudiantes y familias para asegurar que TODOS los niños reciban la mejor educación posible y reciban apoyo en todos los sentidos mientras continuamos navegando por nuestra situación actual con la pandemia de COVID-19. Cada uno de ustedes ha jugado un esfuerzo fundamental para asegurar que nuestros estudiantes continúen sobresaliendo y recibiendo un aprendizaje óptimo, al mismo tiempo que satisfacen sus necesidades físicas y emocionales. Su apoyo es inmensurable y agradecemos y reconocemos a cada uno de ustedes. A medida que nos acercamos a la temporada navideña, continúen manteniéndose seguros y saludables, ¡y Dios los bendiga!

Oscar "Coach" Salinas
Presidente de la Junta Escolar

DISTRICT NEWS

Border Patrol awards JLHS Noel Guerra with "Head of the Class" Award



Juarez-Lincoln High School would like to congratulate Senior, Noel Guerra for his achievement in earning the Rio Grande Valley Sector (RGV) Border Patrol "Head of the Class" Award for this 2020-2021 school year.

"This accomplishment means a lot to me," says Guerra, "because through all the struggles and tribulations I faced, it helped me realize that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel."

The Head of the Class Program is an award to

recognize high achieving scholars from over 30 school districts from the RGV. This award is also designed to honor high school seniors who demonstrate exemplary character and determination to succeed.

Noel Guerra is a senior at Juarez-Lincoln High School where he is also a member of the National Honor Society and Husky Baseball team. Noel has since been accepted to The University of Texas at Austin where he wants to major in business.

DISTRICT VISION: Educational Excellence: The Right of Every Student

DISTRICT MISSION:

La Joya Independent School District is committed to providing Educational Excellence through rigor, relevance, relationships and personal responsibility. We are the integral part of learning where students become successful and productive contributors to our global society. We embrace, with passion, the commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration and accountability that will allow our students to imprint the world.

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY:

La Joya Independent School District is dedicated to the belief that in order for all students to attain mastery of the instructional goals, there must be a district-wide commitment to constant renewal according to the most effective practices and procedures in the most current research findings. In order to operationalize this philosophy in the most comprehensive and organized manner, the district has adopted The Quality District Model. The district's Mission Statement, Foundation Beliefs and Desired Exit Behaviors: Student Learner Outcomes, exemplify this philosophy.

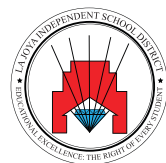
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Armin Garza, Vice-President
Dr. Alda T. Benavides, Secretary
Dr. Nereyda Cantu, Member
Alejandro "Alex" Cantu, Member
Mary T. Hernandez, Member
Esperanza "Espie" Ochoa, Member



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Ricardo Villarreal, Asst. Supt. for Operations
Magda Villarreal, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instr.
Martin Muñoz, Asst. Supt. for Human Resources
Jose Luis Morin, Asst. Supt. for Student Services



**TOGETHER OR APART,
WE SHINE BRIGHT**
AT LA JOYA ISD!

La Joya Independent School District
(956) 323-2545 | www.lajoyaisd.com

PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFF

Blanca E. Cantú, Public Relations & Comm. Coordinator
Tony Salas, Multimedia Specialist
Homero Amador, Videographer & Social Media Specialist
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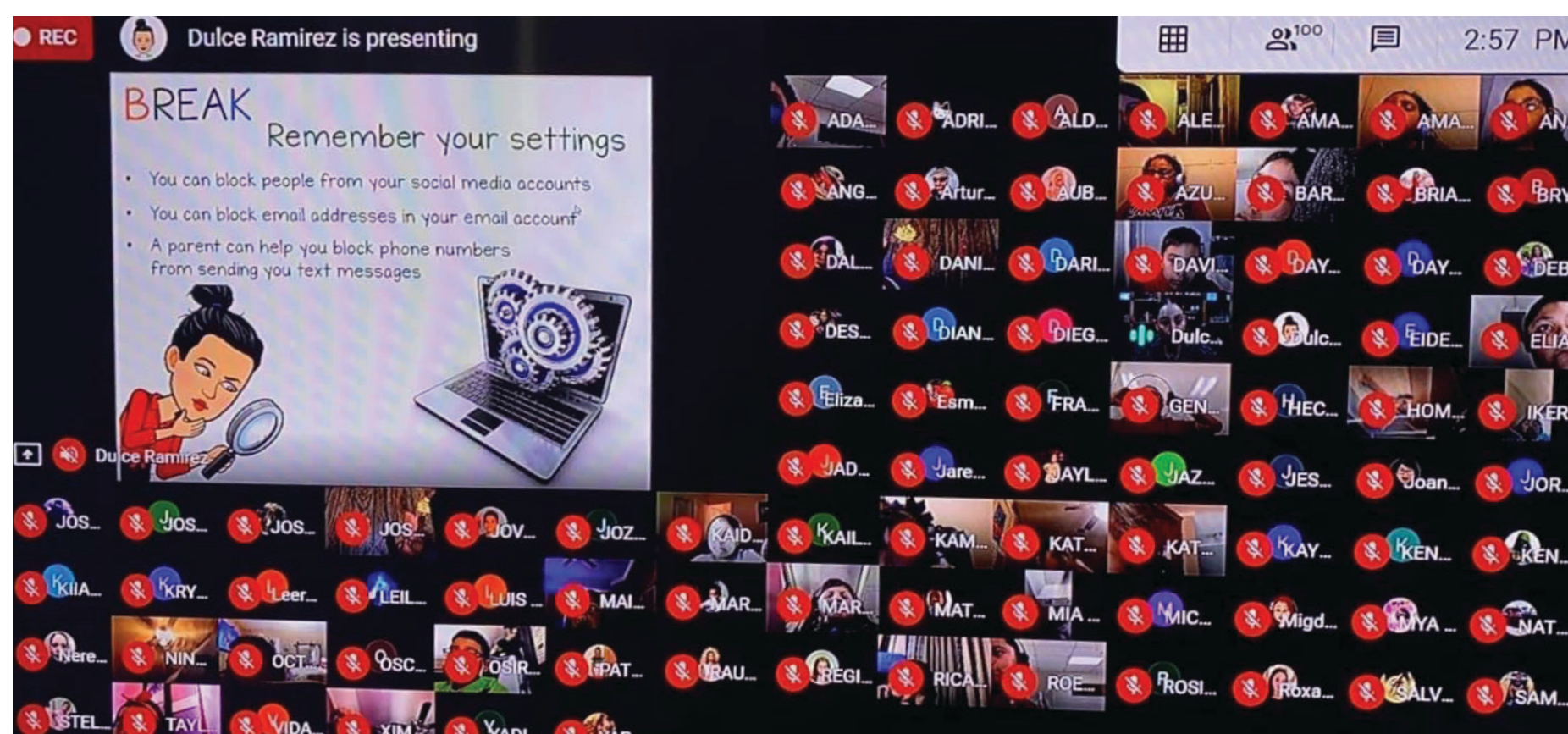
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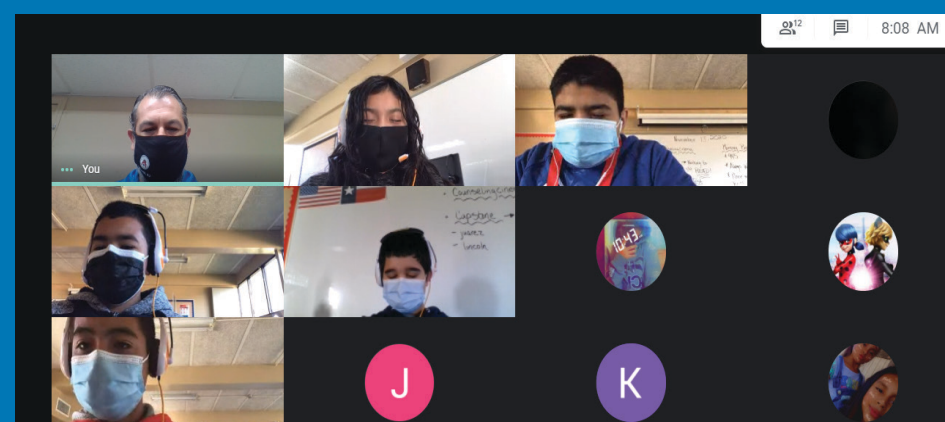
Bully *Prevention* Week

VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY



Sam Fordyce Elementary students enjoyed a week of awesome activities as they celebrated National Bullying Prevention Week. Students dressed up in the day's attire which included western, blue, superhero, etc. and submitted their photos to their teachers which were then uploaded to the school's Facebook page. On Monday, October 12, 2020, students logged in to their first ever Virtual Assembly hosted by Mrs. Dulce Ramirez, School Counselor. The virtual assembly consisted of a PowerPoint Presentation, informational videos presented by the different ACE Clubs and a special presentation by Mrs. Connie Gonzalez, a teacher at our school, as well as an Investigator with the Starr County Attorney's Office. She spoke to students about David's Law. Students showed excitement to be part of such a huge group. Overall, it was a great success!

LJISD *Mentor* Alumni Program



La Joya is proud to implement a new Mentorship program, for our 6th grade students. With the help of La Joya Alumni, we are providing information to our students about different career paths. They explain to the students how they were able to achieve success in their careers. Mentors also speak about the importance of college and education in their lives.

With alumni mentors with careers in nursing, teaching, engineering, and even business owners, we have so much real-world experience for our students to hear and learn from. This program will serve as a bridge for our incoming middle schools students and help them prepare for high school and beyond.



Principals of the MONTH

OCTOBER 2020

NOVEMBER 2020



CLARITA FAJUTAG

Corina Peña
Elementary



LEANN HERRERA

Academy of Health
Science Professions

ACADEMICS

SHINE BRIGHT LIKE A *Diamond!*

Roselyn Samaniego



Adrian Tovar

Congratulations are in order for two DIAMONDS at Cavazos Elementary. Roselyn Samaniego (5th grader) was the first Diamond Reader at our campus, while Adrian Tovar (3rd Grader) was the second. To earn this distinction, each has read over 1,000,000 words. Additionally, Roselyn recently reached the 2,000,000 word count mark, which makes her a double millionaire. These two students have proven that there are no limits nor obstacles when goals are set. Both of these students have reached "Diamond Level Reader" status in Reading Renaissance. They surely exemplify the meaning of the quote, "Shine Bright Like A Diamond!"

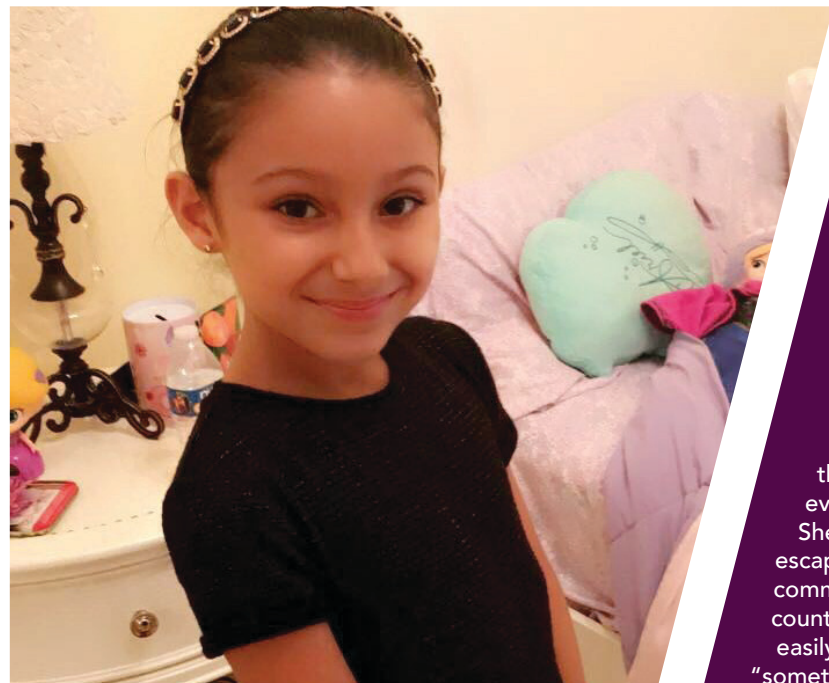
2020 - 2021

DIAMOND
READER

2020 - 2021

DIAMOND
READERZapata Elementary's First *Master Star Reader*

Emiliano Zapata Elementary wants to congratulate Mia Martinez in third grade. She has accomplished the goal of becoming a Master Star Reader! As Mrs. Lumbreras, our campus librarian, promotes reading through our school Class Dojo, and provides teachers with our district's resources, students continue to have the opportunity to excel in reading. Mia has read 1,009,809 words. She is our first Master Star Reader to surpass 1 million words. She read more than 2 million words as a 1st, and as a 2nd grade student. She has received the District's O.S.C.A.R.S. Award for having read the most words in her grade level for two consecutive years. She is an excellent reader and student. We are proud to have her as a student in our campus. Thank you to parents for supporting your child's love for reading.

Mia Martinez, 3rd Grade at Emiliano Zapata Elementary
First MASTER STAR READERMASTER READER
ANDREA AGUILAR2,000,000
Words ReadGarza Elementary *Top Reader*

Evangelina Garza Elementary is celebrating in honor of 4th grade student, Andrea Aguilar, and her major accomplishment in reading! Andrea has already read a bit over 2,000,000 words the first semester of this school year. We are very proud and excited to have her be part of our campus and as a student that represents all that La Joya ISD students can accomplish. Like many other avid readers, Andrea has become a true fan of the Harry Potter series. She shares that reading for her has become so important, and that every time she reads a book she feels like the "protagonist and like she's in that world too." She says that reading has helped her forget about her own life for a little and it allows her to escape into a different world where she never knows what else is going to happen. Andrea also comments that she loves reading and would like to be a school librarian in the future! Her word count goal this year is to read 3,000,000 words and we know that this is something that she can easily achieve through her passion for reading. Her favorite author, J.K. Rowling, believes that "something magical can happen when you read a good book." We couldn't agree more! We know that Andrea's zest for reading and good books will lead her to unique and magical places.

La Joya Early College HS *Honor Roll*

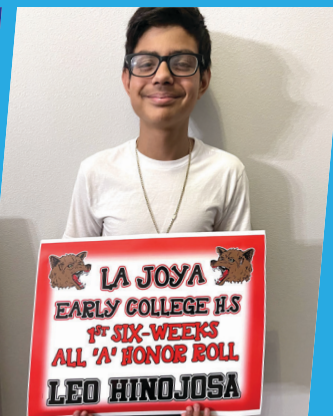
Forty-nine students at La Joya Early College High School made the All-A Honor Roll for the First Six Weeks of Fall 2020. In total, 133 students, almost a third of those enrolled, earned A&B Honor Roll distinction.

"Students are striving to do well in their classes despite the challenges of remote learning," said Mrs. Elva Campos, LJECHS counselor. "I want to also thank all teachers for their continued devotion to our students. As they teach from home, some of them also monitor their own children with remote learning. This is not an easy task. In the meantime, they continue to guide our students through a very uncertain time, to inspire them and set them on the path to a bright future."

Campos said the current COVID-19 school closures are just a bump on the road. "Before you know it, we will be back at school face to face."



Audrey Moreno



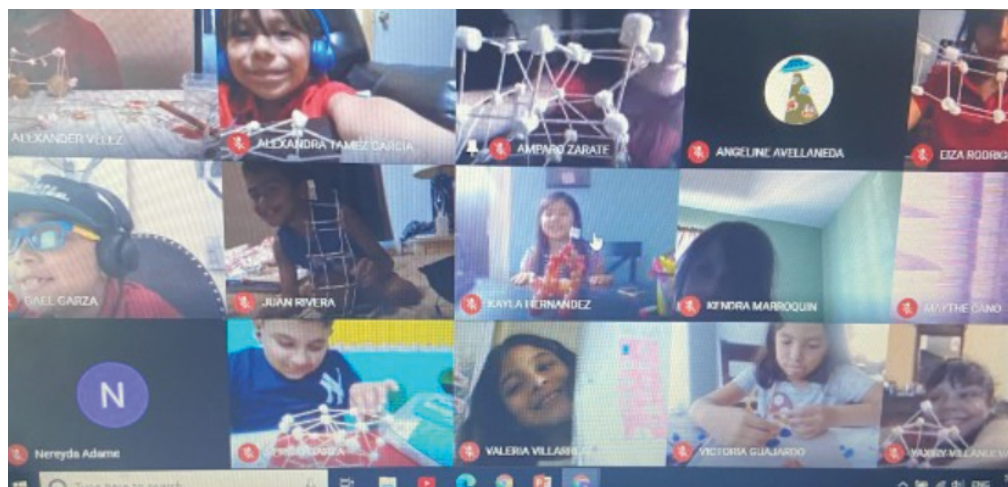
Improvising and Staying Engaged!

at Elodia R. Chapa Elementary

Isaias Benavides, Laysha Perez and Frank Marie Maldonado from Chapa Elementary show their enthusiasm during virtual learning as they improvised working with manipulatives made from home with objects that were recycled. Isaias used beans to create his ten rods and Laysha used colored beads and beans to compose the number 47. Frank Marie also created 10 rods with beads to help her count by tens. She is able to compose numbers using rods and single beads to show her answer. The goal is to create an engaging atmosphere of learning and encouragement. Students are encouraged to show their work and be proud of being able to master the content skill of counting tens and ones. Great job!



1st Grade students improvised their manipulatives during their Virtual Class. Students left to right: Isaias Benavides, Laysha Perez and Frank Marie Maldonado



Left: Students from Ms. N. Adame's 2nd Grade Class engage in an engineering activity for National STEM day.

Right: Adam Gonzalez from Mr. E. Hernandez's 3rd Grade Class demonstrates his findings during a science activity for National STEM Day.

Tabasco Marks National STEM Day

It's a different time, with different educational settings, but the importance of STEM in students' lives has not been forgotten at Tabasco Elementary.

On Monday, Nov. 9, Tabasco Elementary celebrated National STEM Day with activities related to science, technology, engineering, or math. Students

participated in these activities with their teacher virtually during remote learning. Students in all grade levels participated, and teachers ensured ahead of time that students would have the materials and information they needed for the synchronous learning activity.

Some students tested did activity experiments

involving citrus fruit, others focused on constellations. And yet others participated in activities that dealt with engineering challenges. Even though Tabasco and the rest of La Joya ISD are experiencing continued digital learning, that doesn't mean some time can't be dedicated to exploration and participation in the STEM areas.

Distance Doesn't Stop Memorial Middle School from Celebrating "Diamond Readers"

Students across the district look forward to reaching One Million Words read in the Renaissance reading program. The celebrations for reaching this coveted milestone are well known – student names are blasted on the intercom across the campus and broadcasted across the community in social media. Students know as soon as they read and test one million words, librarians will celebrate their accomplishment of becoming a "Diamond Reader."

Although this school year celebrations are a bit more challenging, distance did not stop Memorial Middle School from making it happen. Campus librarian, Nancy Garza, organized a curbside event in which each student received a virtual movie kit. Movie kits included popcorn, candy, a drink, and a pickle and their "Diamond Reader" shirt. Preparing for the technical glitches, students also received a copy of the movie *Holes* and the book *Holes*, By Louis Sachar.

Students joined a Google Meet with Mrs. Garza for a Virtual Movie Night where they enjoyed popcorn and pickles as they watched the movie together. Michael Osornio, 6th grade said, "Ms., I really enjoyed it; hopefully we can do this again." There was certainly nothing virtual about the fun they had celebrating their accomplishment together.



Michael Osornio watches *Holes* with his fellow Diamond Readers.

Elyzza Rivera enjoying popcorn during virtual movie night



DYNAMIC SUPER-READERS



PIC•COLLAGE

At Juan N. Seguin Elementary we are building excitement and passion for reading through our weekly Dynamic-Readers and Imagine Learning Weekly Raffles. Every student receives one ticket entered in the raffle for every five books they read and tested on through Reading Renaissance. Students who complete their weekly time in Imagine Learning are also entered in a raffle. Principal Dr. Sandra Cerda draws the names of the winners each Tuesday and the video is posted on our campus webpage and Facebook page. There is one winner per grade level and they each receive a goody bag. Students love the raffles and most importantly they love reading!

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Poppin' Portraits

La Joya High School Students in Ms. B. Cerda's Art 3 and 4 classes explored the Pop Art Movement through the creation of their own self-portrait. By studying the characteristics of this iconic movement and creating their own self-portrait, the project was an effective way for students to apply the concepts of pop art and to reflect and express themselves in meaningful ways. The students were inspired by famous art work from Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.



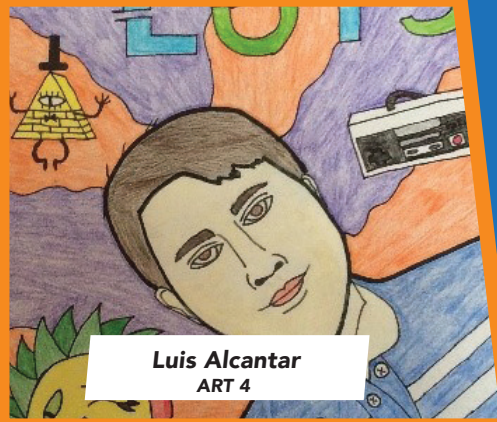
Ashley Reyna
ART 4



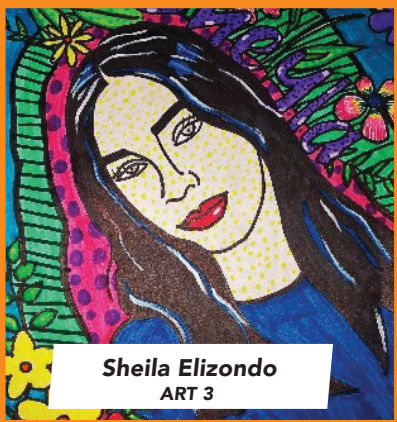
Brianna Alaniz
ART 3



Elias Garcia
ART 4



Luis Alcantar
ART 4

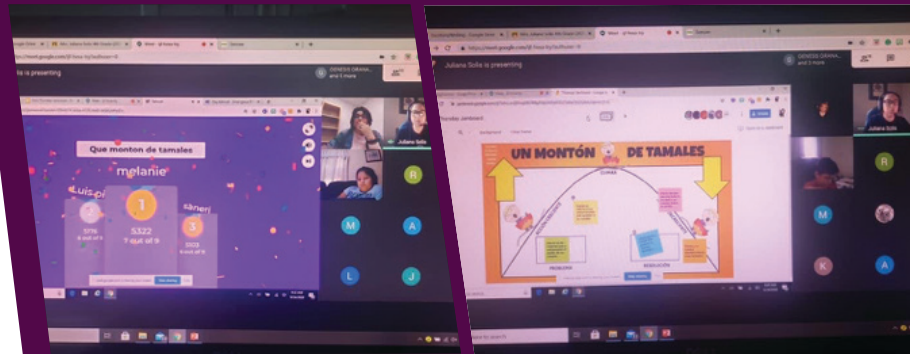


Sheila Elizondo
ART 3



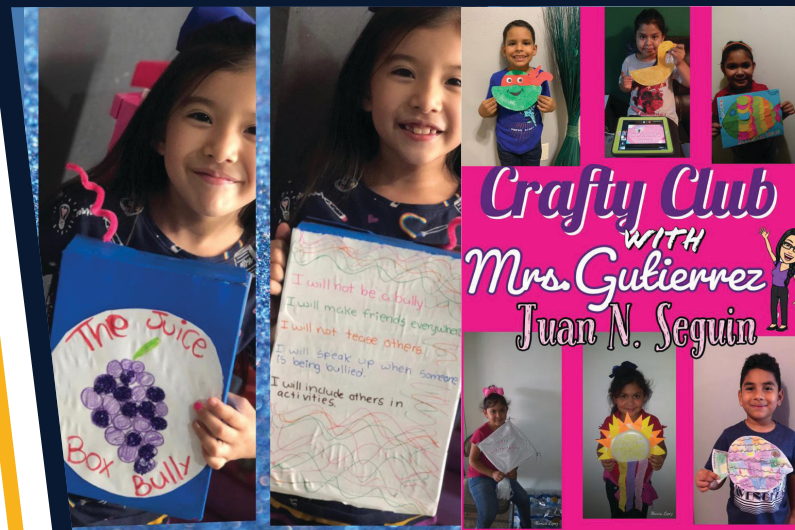
Jennifer Gutierrez
ART 4

Engagement at its Best at Elodia R. Chapa Elementary



Though it is tough to engage students when they are at home, 4th grade Elodia R. Chapa Elementary teachers have managed to do so. Fourth graders, at Chapa Elementary, are benefiting from the La Joya ISD, school district initiative in digital training. Teachers collaborate with one another to find formats on how to keep their students actively engaged while checking for understanding. Students enjoy using Pear Deck, Jamboard, Flipgrid, Padlet and other accessible student friendly feedback tools to engage learners in their daily lessons. "Mom class was cool today" were the words Deyvid said today to his mom as he logged off of his fourth week of online learning. In addition students have become tech savvy as teachers implement more online learning tools. Students engage in conversations to help each other solve technology problems. 21st Century learning skills are being applied and learned on a daily basis at Chapa Elementary. Let's Keep it positive and keep the learning going! Together we can create 21st century learners!

ACE Virtual Program



Our ACE Virtual Program at Juan N. Seguin Elementary is filled with fun and surprises. Our students had the opportunity to express the importance of standing up for one another during Anti-Bullying Week after reading the book, "The Juice Box Bully". Students also enjoy their afterschool sessions with Mrs. Erica Gutierrez in her Crafty Club. Students read and listen to stories then they participate in an arts and crafts activity tied to the lesson of the story. This allows the students to use their creativity and share with others. Shout out to all of the ACE members and coaches for continuing to participate in these educational activities after school hours.

Culinary Students Get Back to Basics

Under the direction of Mrs. Montalvo at La Joya High School, culinary students are cooking together on video conferencing to perfect knife skills, cooking methods and baking techniques. Recently, Culinary Arts students learned a variety of quick bread recipes such as muffins, pancakes, biscuits, and crepes. "The great thing about cooking is the positive reinforcement and sense of accomplishment students feel when they learn a new skill or create something delicious." Said Montalvo. "That hasn't changed during remote learning and has been especially valuable while staying at home."



MUFFINS
America Gonzalez
11TH GRADE



PANCAKES
Brisa Quijano
10TH GRADE



BISCUITS
Kathlyn Alanis
12TH GRADE



CREPES
Ivelin Martinez
11TH GRADE

Treats & Books Event



Sam Fordyce Elementary held a Drive-Thru Treats & Books Event on Friday, October 30, 2020. Over 200 treat bags and books were handed out. Students dressed as their favorite story book character and drove through the front of the school to receive their treats. Students not only got to pick up treats, books and popcorn but they also got to see some of their teachers. Teachers volunteered their time after school to help out with this event. Along with this event, a Library Raffle was held where the names of the top AR Readers in each class were entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three prizes. Despite the pandemic and the county's cancellation of all door-to-door trick-or-treating, students still had the opportunity to wear their costumes and safely have fun!

LOVE & SACRIFICE, is what defines our Veterans of America. It is with great gratitude and appreciation that Emiliano Zapata Elementary, Fine Arts Campus, comes together virtually and in spirit to recognize the brave and courageous souls of men and women who have fought and still fight today to protect our land and freedom in the United States of America. The Emiliano Zapata Elementary Choir is directed under our Music Teacher, Mr. J. Pepito. As we take time to revisit the history of how we live free today, let us understand the meaning of this very special day.

It originally was named Armistice Day, a day the Germans called truce, remembering the end of World War I. However, the actual fighting did not cease until the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, in 1918. It wasn't until 1938, that Congress officially recognized Armistice Day, as a holiday, and set this day aside to honor the heroes of World War I. Following World War II and the Korean War, in 1954, the name Armistice was changed to Veteran's Day, to honor ALL American veterans of all wars. Not only do U.S. citizens celebrate the history and patriotism of America on Veteran's Day, November 11th, but other countries around the world also recognize this day with great significance, as it was and is today, they are allies.

Let us remember Veteran's Day, a day to honor all the men and women who have served in the armed forces of our great country. It is with great pleasure that Emiliano Zapata Elementary enthusiastically celebrates this day with patriotism and respect for all veterans of the United States of America.

Pictured: Zapata Elementary Choir Singing "We Are Proud Of Our Veterans"

ZAPATA ELEMENTARY STUDENTS LEARN THAT *Democracy* Prevails Virtually Honored Veterans

Zapata Elem Veteran's Program



After School Activities Continue for DJSMS Students

Although not on campus, due to Covid, students are able to continue participating in after school activities, virtually. Students are able to relax after regular school day classes and have social interaction with their peers, while having fun during these classes. Classes currently being offered are Zumba with Ms. Gonzalez, Painting with Mrs. Zuniga, Skincare Class with Ms. De La Garza, Soccer with Coach Gomez, Basketball with Coach Montalvo, Minecraft/Roblox with Mr. Pena, Arts and Crafts with Ms. Rodriguez. Supplies are distributed to each student in order to make their class more "hands on" and fun. Classes are available to all DJSMS students from Monday-Friday. Our teachers are also available to assist students with tutoring/homework, in order to make sure each student at DJSMS excels. Students are loving their activities and we look forward to more exciting classes in the Spring! ACE... United while staying safe apart!

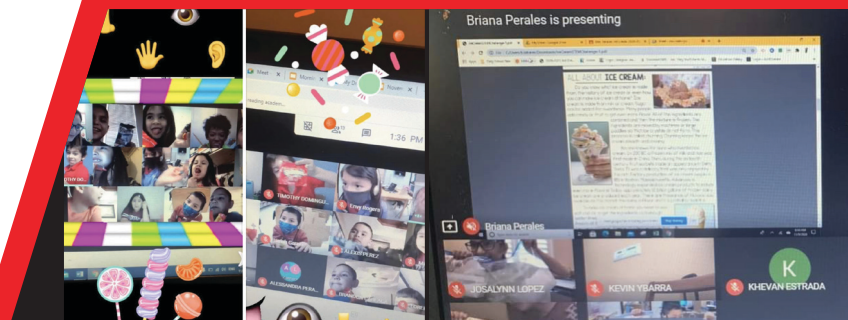
Pictured: (left to right): Anayeli Herrera and Mr. Gomez, Yahir Moreno, Uriel Moreno.



Ms. Valenzuela and Ms. McBride pass out materials needed for the activity.

Learning Together Even When We Are Apart

Amazing things happen when schools and communities come together. Memorial Middle School Health Science Professions Academy (MMS HSPA) students are able to partake in hands-on learning experiences from their very homes. MMS held a curbside event for students to pick up learning materials and completed hands-on investigations with the guidance of their teachers through Google Meet sessions. 7th grade students learned about the major components of the blood and presented their models through Flipgrid videos. 6th grade students learned about the three layers of skin by creating delicious models made of Jell-O, marshmallows, Twizzlers and Fruit Roll Ups. Before eating up their models, 6th grade also shined bright in their Flipgrid presentations. Making engaging, authentic, and memorable experiences has been a blast!



STEM Day at Jose de Escandon STEM Elementary

National STEM Day was full of exciting STEM lessons at Jose de Escandon STEM Elementary. All the grade levels participated in some sort of science, technology engineering, and mathematics activity. During a traditional year, we would be able to see the students doing all sorts of experiments in the hallways and outdoor areas; however, due to the current pandemic situation, we were still able to see the excitement in our students' faces via Google Meets lessons. Teachers led the way in the development of innovative virtual experiments. The students participated hands-on and they were still able to create, taste, visualize, and meet the same objectives as they would have in the traditional classroom. Whether virtual or in-house, our teachers and students still learn. Some of the students' experiments included making ice cream, preserving fruit, creating and testing electric circuitry, and creating marble mazes. Students and teachers improvised together to solve real-world problems. National STEM Day took place on November 8, 2020.

AROUND OUR TOWN

Honoring Our Veterans!



On Wednesday, November 11th (Veterans Day), students and staff at Cavazos Elementary honored veterans for their service with a drive by parade. On that eventful day, students and staff could be seen lined up in front of the school wearing red, white and blue attire and waving flags as vehicles with veterans paraded in front of the school. Our guests were also presented with a small token of appreciation.

"Thank You" veterans for all of the sacrifices and services you have rendered to our country.



The Spook-Tacular Trunk or Treat Event For Kika de la Garza!

On October 29, 2020, the Kika de la Garza Staff pulled together an evening the whole family could enjoy: and what an awesome experience it turned out to be! It was a drive-by event to grab your treats for Red Ribbon Week, Reading, Perfect Attendance and Honor Roll. In order to keep everyone safe, participants drove thru the parking lot from the safety of their vehicles to view our display of trunks and characters. Some Staff members came dressed as M&M's while others were witches, goblins and ghouls. The staff handed out a bag of candy and other goodies from a safe physical distance. The students also had fun dressing up in their costumes for the drive thru. We saw Super heroes, Princesses, and The infamous Adam's Family including Wednesday herself!

While the staff decorated their trunks, dressed up and played Halloween tunes, parents and students appreciated the event while they drove by each station to enjoy the scenery and of course the goodies given! It was a productive event!

At the end, judged by the Alton Fire Department, one of the trunks was rewarded best-decorated trunk of the night! Congratulations 5th Grade team for going all out!



TOGETHER OR APART,
WE **SHINE** BRIGHT
AT LA JOYA ISD!