



PANAMERICANA



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Desiree Gutierrez, Editor

LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH LONGTIME 4-H PROGRAM

Senior Andres Rivera has never worked with livestock animals before, that is, until he came to Presbyterian Pan American School.

“When I joined 4-H, I thought it was going to be fun,” he said. “I knew I would have to take care of my animal. And it has been a nice experience working with my animal and seeing it grow.”

Along with Andres, nine members of the Eagles 4-H Club participated and placed in the 57th Annual Kleberg-Kenedy Junior Livestock Show February 2 at J.K. Northway Exposition Center in Kingsville.

Members who showed steers include Andres with second place in the exotic breed category; Senior Natalia Ancira with second in American; Daniel Villarreal, junior, with third in exotic; Jehu Avila, junior, with fourth and Senior Nisse Fonseca with fourth both in the exotic category. Junior Jose Guerrero and Senior Alejandro Nunez both placed fourth with their steers in exotic.

Junior Luis Gallardo placed first with his lamb, Edgar Gonzalez, sopho-



more, placed second and Roberto Garza, sophomore, placed third.

Each animal, or project, as 4-H calls them, is entered into competition against others, with judges awarding prizes to the most outstanding projects. All projects are then sold at public auction, where winning bids reflect an animal's weight and breed standards. Students typically apply the proceeds of their sales toward the costs of attending college.

“I felt nervous at the show because my steer was nervous,” Andres said. “It moved a lot. It was also tiring but it was worth it. I felt happy because all the work I put into my steer was awarded.”

For Natalia she was also happy with results.

“I did well and I felt

good,” she said. “Even though everybody thought my steer was the ugliest.”

Natalia's steer, Concho, was black and short. And to Natalia, he was pretty.

“It was wonderful. I like animals and I never thought that I would show a steer,” she said.

Andres, who first met his animal, whom he named Bumblebee, in the fall of 2007 was in his second year in 4-H.

He spent two hours daily, walking, bathing and training Bumblebee. But for the 19-year-old, his hard work definitely paid off and he will graduate with a lesson learned from Pan Am's long time 4-H program.

“I have to do my best,” he said. “I learned that to get the best results, I have to try my best and not give up.”

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

~DR. JAMES MATTHEWS

Pan Am, as most of us fondly know it, has been around for a long time; in fact, we will be celebrating our centennial in three years. It has been one hundred years since the daughter of a Presbyterian missionary carved out a portion of the King Ranch for the church to build a school for Mexican boys. Fifty years ago since another Presbyterian, ordained son of missionaries himself, merged that boys vocational institute with a similar school for girls nearby to form an international co-educational college preparatory school to prepare young men and women from the Americas and beyond for lives of Christian leadership.

Pan Am today is thriving... the dining hall is nearly full, dorms are actually over capacity thanks to the addition of bunk beds, and scheduling classrooms is a challenge. Kids from Asia (Korea, Taiwan, Thailand) from Africa (Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda) along with kids from Latin American (Mexico, of course, but

also Guatemala and Ecuador) worship and learn together. And because every student works on campus (dining hall, grounds, ranch, janitorial, etc) they discover new capabilities together. In order to continue to accomplish this worthy mission for another century, we are in the midst of a campaign to rebuild the campus... new dorms and classroom buildings capable of holding 300 students... larger dining hall as well as new assembly hall, gymnasium and campus center. The future is upon us and we envision more young men and women graduating from Pan Am to take their place in board rooms and hospitals, in corporate offices and pulpits, here in this country and back in their home countries.

The vision is the mission and the mission is the kids...like a young man from Mexico who as I write this is mourning the death of his mother, a brave woman who sent her son to Pan Am and saw him go on to a university, serve on the staff of a U.S. Senator

and then launch a successful career in finance. His story is not unlike that of many others...the missionary's son now a U.S. Ambassador...the girl from Mexico now an assistant to the Secretary General of the U.N.... the boy from Romania now finishing his doctorate in biomedical engineering...the girl from Texas now an attorney who has remained an elder in a small Hispanic church and has served on GAC committees... the boy from Guatemala who became a physician and now leads a medical missionary organization in Central America.

The stories are many but with God's help they will multiply in the century ahead as this racial/ethnic mission of the PCUSA continues to be faithful to the high calling in Christ, making an impact one life at a time. The vision is the mission and the mission is the kids and the kids are the hope for tomorrow.

** A slightly different version of this letter appeared in the Presbyterian News Service in February.*
Dr. James Matthews, President

SCHOLARSHIP PROFILE

~ROLANDO GARCIA



As soccer captain with a state championship under his belt, 18-year-old Rolando, Garcia stays humble

on and off the field.

"I'm a good leader but I have my team to thank for that," he said.

The Galeana, Nuevo Leon native started playing soccer for Pan Am two years ago when he first enrolled.

"I came here to learn English," said Rolando, senior. "And when I came, I also made friends."

Another tradition Rolando contributed to was Pan Am's soccer program.

In November, the team beat San Antonio Christian School, 3-0, for the Division I state championship at Baylor University in Waco.

Rolando, who played mid-fielder, was named first team all-state for Division I and all-tournament.

I have my coach and teammates to thank for allowing me to play and be recognized for those awards, he said.

Coach Jimmy Grant has been at Pan Am for 33 years and has taken the school to the state finals 11 times.

"Coach Grant helped me improve my soccer skills and always made sure the team was doing well in school," he said. "He is the reason that Pan Am has made a name for itself through

soccer. He is a great coach."

For Rolando, competition does not end with soccer. He was one of 16 students inducted into National Honor Society and is class secretary.

"I am happy and proud that I was accepted into NHS and I like helping my class. These activities taught me to be more responsible and helpful."

Attending Pan Am, this once in a lifetime opportunity, as Rolando says, is only possible through financial aid.

"If I didn't receive assistance to come here, I wouldn't have let my personality shine like I have here," he said. "I want to thank those who donate so that we can receive an education in the U.S. and better our lives."

He plans to study international business in the U.S. after graduation.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT ~OLIVIA MALDONADO

After 48 years of cooking, managing and mentoring, Olivia Maldonado, better known as Oli, of Kingsville has retired from Presbyterian Pan American School.

“I am a little sad to retire and I was happy being at Pan Am but it was time to step down and let someone else get the opportunity to do the wonderful work I had the chance to do,” Oli said.

Oli, who is married with three children, ten grandchildren and two great-grand children, is now spending more time with her family.

“I wanted to help my children with my grandchildren. I take my grandchildren to school and pick them up,” she said.

“I stay active in church. I’m getting accustomed to being home again because I had worked for so long. I started working at a very young age.”

Before becoming part of the Pan Am Staff, Oli worked at Spot Knot Café in downtown Kingsville making donuts and at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, then A&I.

“Students from Pan Am would come into the restaurant and they looked so bright,” she said.

“I would make small talk with them. They were interesting and polite. It made me want to work there.”

Oli began looking at newspapers and came across a job opening at Pan Am.

She applied and the next day she was hired in the dining hall.

“I had never been on campus. When I arrived the Morris Chapel

was barely getting constructed. And I started out in the old dining hall. The dining hall we have now was not constructed yet,” Oli said.



“I really didn’t know if I was going to stay for a long time, I was young.”

But Oli’s first day as a cook at 20 years old is still fresh in her mind.

“My first day was scary. I was so nervous,” she said.

“But when I saw students that I had seen at the café, I wasn’t nervous anymore. I felt good...I remember. And I felt comfortable.”

Oli began as assistant cook since she had background experience and after 10 years, she was promoted to main cook and managed the dining hall.

During her time spent at Pan Am’s dining hall, Oli contributed several of her own recipes and countless pies and other baked goods.

Baking is her passion, she said.

While employed at Pan Am, Oli was also in charge of the student work program in the dining hall.

“The best experience was getting to know the students,” Oli said.

“I was really involved with them. I taught students to put effort into everything they do. I treated all students equally and each one was important to me. I interacted and connected with them. I would treat them with respect and patience, which comes natural to me and I was never afraid to roll up my sleeves and get in wherever I was needed.”

Oli recommends Pan Am as a place for anyone who wants to excel.

“Pan Am is one of a kind. You become one big family and I give thanks for having the chance to work there,” she said.

“It’s been very rewarding and meaningful to me. The school really nurtured me as much as I nurtured a lot of students. I grew up. I grew up with the kids and I learned as I was teaching like in most cases because when you teach, you learn.”

For Oli, what she will miss most about Pan Am sums it up in one word—students.

“I will miss getting to know the students—talking to them, giving advice and my opinions,” she said.

“Pan Am is a unique place. It is family oriented. It is a beautiful place. You get to know your friends there like they are your own family and you never forget them. I feel Pan Am changed me. It made me a better person, I grew spiritually and I matured. I learned to listen. I’m glad that people at Pan Am saw something in me. And I would do it all over again.”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

~BENJAMIN MANZANO

Since age seven, Benjamin Manzano's mother, Patricia, had been preparing him to study in the U.S.

For Patricia, this was her dream — for her children to receive an education in the land of opportunity.

On a sunny day in Mexico City, Patricia's dream came true.

"A person from Kingsville arrived to my school to present Pan Am. I saw Rita Gonzalez, Director of Admissions, and she told me about the opportunities the school offers."

Ecstatic and exhausted after a three mile run home, Benjamin gave his parents the good news.

"My mother started crying and we as a family prayed and gave thanks for God's answers," he said. "... He has plans for me. He sent me here for a purpose."

Over the next two weeks, Benjamin dreamt of his future school.

"With tears, but with excitement and dreams, I said goodbye to my parents," Benjamin said. "Leaving was difficult but I'm still excited to be here because few people get to study in a foreign country."

Benjamin's first day at Pan Am was spent alone during the summer Intensive English Program in 2006. That day he made a pact with God.

"I promised to believe and serve him until my last breath," he said. "I also asked him for wisdom, strength and courage to face this new challenge. I asked him to be with me. The next day I awoke differently. I already knew that it was going to be difficult to succeed because I was in another country, language and culture. But I also knew I was not alone, I had my God and my family supporting me."

18-year-old senior Benjamin misses

his family, but makes a six-hour flight home at Christmas and Spring Break and keeps in contact through phone and email.

"The time passes because I am involved," he said. "I follow study hours and stay busy. I don't have time



to think about home."

Sports, choir, National Honor Society, work and study are activities that he squeezes in his schedule.

Benjamin, a tenor, on the school's Morris Chapel Choir, said he joined with one goal.

"Give thanks to God for all thy blessings," he said. "I enjoy worshipping God in the choir. I was not born with the best voice, but I sing with all my heart knowing that Jesus sees our heart."

As a dual credit student, earning college credit while in high school, Benjamin will begin his first year with 12 hours.

"Being a dual credit student requires daily dedication and effort," Benjamin said.

As part of the school's mission, each student is required to engage in six hours of work per week at various locations on campus as well as attend worship weekly.

Benjamin's work assignment is

cleaning the chapel.

"Working requires service and patience," he said. "But since I was young, my parents taught me that work was a blessing from God. Thanks to my parents, I am able to do my duties at Pan Am."

Worship at Pan Am has also made an impact on Benjamin's life.

"Spiritually I have grown," he said. "In Mexico City, religion was a tradition and when I arrived here religion became a lifestyle."

After graduation in May, he plans to attend dental school in the U.S.

"In the United States people lack medical attention because it is expensive. My plans are to gather doctors from different specialties and open a clinic here in the U.S. for people who cannot afford it," Benjamin said.

"I do not care if I become rich. I just want to help others as other people helped me."

And for Benjamin, gratitude certainly does not go unnoticed.

"I would like to thank the donors who give financial gifts to Pan Am. Me and my family will be grateful to you forever, you gave us the best present a person can receive — education," he said.

"With your donations, I and more than 100 international students are able to study in the U.S. With your support, you help us to build a better future."

"Newton's Law states, 'Each action has an equal and opposite reaction.' The reaction of your support can be found in Matthew 26:45."

"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT ~FLOR NAÑEZ



By Kate
Thompson,
Junior

Flor Nañez, English and Spanish teacher at Pan Am became acquainted with the school when she began substitute teaching about three years ago.

And from there, as she said, she just got hooked.

“The staff and the students were friendly and that enticed me to work here, she said. “I saw how the students and staff were united and thought it would be a great place to work. I felt the warmth and how everyone was working for the same goal.”

Although Flor has taught at Pan Am for two and half years, she has been teaching for 15 years.



Prior to Pan Am, she taught at Agua Dulce for nine years.

Flor, who was born in Robstown but resides in Alice with her husband, said that God has inspired her to teach others and it feels good to know that she will make a difference in students’ lives.

“I think highly of my students. They have a great shot at success if they persevere at their studies,” Flor

said. “And I believe I have put my efforts forward and the results are seen.”

In Flor’s classes, she said she can do so much and challenge her students and herself on a daily basis.

“Students challenge me. We are able to do so many things,” she said. “There is a whole world at our finger tips, but not enough time to experience it.”

My classes are energetic and enthusiastic about learning, she said.

“I feel like I am at home. Pan Am is my big family. Everyone is united and works together,” Flor said.

“Pan American combines academics, religion and moral values. Instilling in students a new and better way of life, which I hope they will carry on through their lives,” Flor said. “I am proud to work here.”