Naturaleza de una semilla & Nurture from the Soil I Grew In

By: Christina Stoll

A new seed was created
From the love of an American in a foreign land
El encontró su flor exótica pura de Honduras
De su amor crearon una semilla completamente nueva

I’m a tree of diversity
Standing tall and proud of where my roots come from
No tengo solo un lugar de origen
Tengo dos que son enteramente diferentes

Cuando los raíces de un árbol se reúnan con la tierra
The impact the soil has on the tree is irreversible
La tierra de mi árbol es una mezcla
The mixing of soil is what makes me unique

Sometimes my two cultures conflict
Me empuja a tener una mentalidad más abierta
I have learned two ways of communication
Con dos lenguajes diferentes
That nurture my limbs to reach distances twice as long

Tennis Starts with Love

By: Macy O’Rourke

Tennis by far is my sport to play. Now watching, on the other hand, is boring in my opinion. I played all four spring seasons in high school and was fortunate to make it to state with my team. I always played on a doubles team because you can celebrate with your partner. Here at college I am not part of a team, but I still like to play whenever possible. Personally, I got a tan almost every game, as well as, stayed well exercised. It’s such a healthy sport because you use leg and arm muscles. In this sport you develop strategies, and more importantly, make handfuls of friends. Even if you developed some enemies among other teams we still had sportsmanship. Our small team of 20 from Paonia, Colorado, 11 being varsity, sometimes had family dinners or movie nights. Together we craved the challenge of the sport and forever built a family, like most sports teams do. It was very important to my high school career, even if we didn’t get much recognition. You could say that tennis is one of my passions. Wearing a skirt that you could play in, was the cherry on top. I encourage others to get out there and try it for the many reasons I just listed! It definitely one of the easy but most hard sports to play for all walks of life.

Macy having a blast playing tennis.
"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

By: Breanna Dixon

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question that many students are asked from the time they enter kindergarten to when they graduate high school. It's a question that I've been asked countless times from teachers, employers, friends, aunts, parents, and siblings. It's a question that I have often asked of myself. "What do I want to be when I grow up?" Each time the answer has changed. In kindergarten, I wanted to be President. In third grade, I was fascinated with space and decided I would become an astronaut. Many, many years and existential crises (ironically caused by the realization of how big the universe is compared to how little I was) later, I realized that I actually wanted to become the last thing I ever thought I would be: a teacher. Although it was not a childhood dream of mine, I came to this realization in my high school's daycare center. I realized that I enjoyed working with children and watching them learn. It was actually fun and it makes me smile when I remember the look on the kids' faces when they did something for the first time. My favorite time of the day was spending those two hours as an intern at the daycare. I also realized, although a little later, that I was passionate about teaching literacy. Reading has always been my favorite hobby. My parent's favorite story to tell is of ninth-grader Breanna begging to go to the library each week and walking out with a grocery bag full of at least twenty young adult novels. Of course, I would always finish them in at least two days so, by Friday, I would be begging to go back. I have realized that my love of reading is something that I hope to inspire other children to experience. This is what first inspired me to declare my major in Elementary Education.

The past couple of years have been eye-opening, hard, but most of all fun. Spending time in different classrooms has taught me many things about lesson planning, classroom management, interacting with students in different grades (transitioning from working with first grade to fourth grade means transitioning from hugs to high-fives, in case you didn't know), and most of all I have learned about myself. I entered this program with perhaps, not the most realistic view of teaching, but I say that it is still what I want to be when I grow up.

Which brings me to this year, 2018. This year, I am excited for many things. It is going to be a time of transition for me as I, for the first time, shift from the role of a student to the role of a teacher. (It's also the year the new Han Solo movie comes out so I'm stoked for that!) I also know that I begin student teaching soon which, honestly, is a little scary. I know that I am a great student (teacher's pets know what I mean) but I wonder if I'll be a great teacher. I hope I will. I am excited for many things this year, but mostly excited that I'll now be the teacher asking, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

New Mexican Green Chile Chicken Enchiladas

By: Veronica Flores

Ingredients: Makes a full 9 x 13-inch pan

1/2 Cups Roasted, Chopped, and Peeled New Mexico Green Chiles
2 1/2 Cups shredded cooked Chicken Seasoned with Onion, Garlic, Cumin, & Paprika (to taste)
2 tbsp. Vegetable Oil
1 can Cream of Chicken Soup
1 Cup water
Corn tortillas (white or yellow)
1LB Shredded Jack or Mexican Blend Cheese

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375'
Lightly oil baking pan for a no-stick surface
In a large skillet or deep pot, heat 2 tbsp. of oil, and sauté shredded chicken, green chile, and cream of chicken soup.
Layer corn tortillas so they evenly cover the base of the pan
Layer a few spoons full of chicken mixture over the tortillas in an even layer
Layer an even amount of shredded cheese
Layer corn tortillas
Repeat until the chicken mix is finished
Bake for 10 minutes or until the cheese bubbles on the top.
For over thirteen years of my life, my world has revolved around softball and only softball. I started off playing t-ball in first grade and soon after in fourth grade I landed myself on my first competitive team. I’ve played every position on the field but found my calling behind the plate. I’ve experienced highs—winning the World Series and meeting some of my best friends—as well as lows—two blown out knees and four concussions—throughout my time on the diamond. However, I’m not here to give you my softball life story; instead, I’m here to tell you about how my life didn’t even begin until I stopped playing softball.

Beginning in late elementary school all the way through high school, softball has defined my life; having practices at least two times a week plus tournaments on the weekends doesn’t exactly leave time for much else. I’ve missed more birthday parties than I can count, I’ve almost missed proms because games have run later than expected, and most of my friendships begin on the diamond. This is why when I decided I didn’t want to play college ball (though that was always the plan) I had to undergo a major change in my life. Though I miss being the athlete I once was, I love who I have become even more.

One thing I have experienced that I wouldn’t be able to do if I was still playing softball is travel. Anytime I’ve traveled has always been for softball. Tulsa, OK; Kansas City, MO; San Diego, CA; Las Vegas, NV; etc. If I went somewhere, I went because I had a tournament. I had the opportunity to go to Rome a few years back... to be an ambassador for softball. Now don’t get me wrong, I’m not discounting any of the experiences that I’ve had while traveling for softball, but being able to travel for the experience of traveling is a completely different experience. Within the past year or so of me not playing softball I’ve traveled to Haiti twice for mission trips, studied abroad in Costa Rica for six weeks, and visited Washington, D.C. I’ve been able to immerse myself in different cultures; I’ve visited the places that make that city or country so unique, instead of just the softball fields. I’ve developed a new love for traveling and I plan to do a lot more of it throughout my college years as well as after. In fact, I plan on doing my student teaching in Costa Rica as well as traveling to Barcelona, Spain to partake in a four-week long intensive teacher training course through TELF Iberia.

Another thing that I have really been able to do is grow in is my faith. Pre-softball days I was really involved in my church. I participated in everything from Sunday school skits to being one of the lead roles in the Christmas plays. However, when I started playing softball, my Sunday’s quickly filled up and I wasn’t able to attend church anymore, let alone be as involved in it as I was. I knew this was something I wanted to change after I stopped playing. Now, I attend church “almost” every Sunday, I go to Rooted every Thursday and I have a pretty big leadership role with Rooted. By being a part of the leadership team with Rooted, I attend a leadership academy every Monday morning, I participate in all of the Rooted events from retreats to 80s bowling Night to international mission trips. This semester, I am doing some one-on-one discipleships as well as co-leading a women’s bible study. I am able to help others grow in their faith while also growing in mine.

The last thing that I have experienced outside of softball is being part of the work force. I didn’t get my first job until my first semester of college! I tried to get a job before but no employer wants an employee who can only work two days out of the week and not at all on the weekends—at least none of the employers had I tried to get a job with. If I was playing varsity softball here on scholarship, I still wouldn’t have a job! As part of the NCAA rules, if an athlete is attending school on scholarship, that is their job and they can’t have another. But I love working. I like paychecks; but more so, I like looking at a paycheck and knowing that I earned whatever money I made for those weeks. I’ve had jobs that I love as well as jobs that I haven’t. But even so, all of these jobs are only getting me ready for the “real world” and I am forever grateful for that.

Do I miss playing softball? Absolutely! I miss everything about it: my teammates, the bruises, the dirt embedded in every thread of my clothing, the smell of fresh cut grass; the unforgettable plays. But do I regret that chapter of my life being over? Absolutely not. I’ve learned countless lessons from playing softball, all of which I continue to carry with me; however, it’s time for me to learn some new lessons, and while I’m a little timid about leaving such a big part of me behind, I couldn’t be more excited.

This photo is from Jenny’s days behind home plate.

If you would like to play intramural or watch the games, please use the links below:

**Schedule for Intramural Sports**
https://www.fortlewis.edu/Portals/63/Intramural%20Event%20Calendar%202017-2018.jpg

**Registration for Intramural Sports**
https://www.imleagues.com/spa/account/registration?schoolId=530865c514d0a68d7d00068ydoc
The Difficulty of Staying Focused

By: Anita Briody– Pavlik

I am an easily distracted person and I know I am not the only one who can get distracted by pretty much anything. After looking at maybe a dozen websites, I decided to write a little self-help article. It is fully up to you to continue or even use this little form of self-help.

Find a place that has no distractions
If loud noise or even the passing of people throughout a certain room or place distracts you then move away from that room to a less visited room in order to get work done.

Get rid of pop-up notifications/ Put phone on silence
I know for my generation, we are all about our phones and as soon as we get a notification we need to look at it right away. There are two things you could do, get rid of all pop-up notifications or to put your phone on silent and put it away from your view. “Out of sight, out of mind”

Create a clear schedule
This is something I have been unable to do myself (mainly because I always forget). If you are able to remember will help line up all the activities you’ll be doing the day.

If you are on a Laptop “going full screen” is supposed to be very helpful
Full screen helps you stay focused on one page at a time on your laptop. The only downfall for this is if you are on a website with multiple ads.

Keep distractions away
According to one of my sources, if you are unable to stop getting distracted have a “procrastination pad” or at least a place where you can quickly write about the distractions and then come back to them later.

Break down everything you do
Sometimes procrastination comes hand in hand with distraction. What you could do to avoid both is to break up a project or homework into pieces. This makes it so you can do homework for at least 30 min and then go watch a video for 15 minutes.

Schedule what is going to be happening throughout the day/week
Although I myself can never keep a journal or agenda due to forgetfulness, this is highly recommended by the experts.

Of course these are only a few of the many things you could do to limit distractions. If you are interested in reading more about these distractions the websites I used was:

Check out www.lifehacker.com

My Final Semester

By: Mariela Castillo

When I first came to Durango, I would have never imagined meeting such amazing people. I didn’t really have anyone except my cousin Iris to hang out with and talk to. It was hard for me to make friends when I came to Fort Lewis because I was a shy person. When I went to my orientation, I had no idea what I was doing or where I was going, it was truly terrifying for me. As classes began, I started to get to know people but didn’t hang out with anybody outside of class. Near the beginning of the school year, I went to El Centro to thank the coordinator for granting me the El Centro Book Scholarship. I met an amazing woman, Shirena, who has helped me become a better person these past few semesters. Shirena encouraged me to join Club del Centro and at first I was hesitant, but it turned out to be the best decision I’ve ever made. I luckily got work study this year and have had the amazing opportunity to work in El Centro de Muchos Colores.

I made such amazing friends through Club del Centro and El Centro, who have turned into family. Everyone in the club and in El Centro accepts me for who I am. The club and El Centro are my home away from home, and it feels like I am always with family. I can express my culture in the club without being judged and I get to hear about and see everyone else’s culture. El Centro and the club have helped shape me into a better person. It has taught me how to be open to everyone’s cultures and backgrounds. They have taught me not to judge a book by its cover and that we should always be accepting. After I graduate, Club del Centro and El Centro will be what I miss the most. I am sad that I will be leaving my family soon, but I will never forget them and everything they have taught me. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to attend Fort Lewis College. I have made so many great memories and have had such amazing experiences here. Fort Lewis has truly helped me to be a more open minded and understanding person.

Being a psychology major has really helped me understand why so many people act the way they do, and that we shouldn’t judge based on first encounters. I have taken so many amazing classes that have shaped who I am. I will miss my professors and all they have taught me these past few years. This will be my last semester as an undergraduate student and I am very proud of what I have accomplished here. I want to go to grad school to be a school counselor but I want to take a year off to take a break from the stress of school. I will be moving to Denver which will be a very different experience than what I am used to, but taking a year off will really help me adjust to this new life. I am really scared of what life will bring, but I am very excited to continue this new chapter in my life. I am sad that I will be leaving Fort Lewis and saying goodbye soon, but I am very excited to graduate and accomplish my goal.

The center of this beautiful campus surrounded by mountains and a gorgeous sunset.
Madeleine Roberts, a Spanish student and tutor in El Centro, wanted to share her joys of Spanish crosswords. It helps her practice Spanish when she’s trying to learn new words or phrases.

My Calling for Counseling

By: Dominic Whitesinger

From an early age, my friends and family would come to me for advice about their troubling situations but often their problems were beyond my experience but that did not stop me from analyzing and assisting their situation. One of my natural qualities is having empathy for those around me and all living things that are non-human. Because I loved animals, I had originally wanted to become a veterinarian as a child but as I grew up, I noticed that I could connect well with humans too. I understood that there were individuals at school and home that need guidance; although they often seek help from outside sources, treatment had little success partly because of the lack of access to therapists. For many individuals, therapy on the reservation is often a time-consuming road trip to the border towns. So, I wanted to become a therapist/counselor to these individuals and help my community heal.

Being a Native American has also been a major factor in why I think continuing with higher education is important as knowing the culture you were born into. Native Americans had a rough history with the U.S government, as a result reservations were made and soon the people became oppressed. The oppression created from the lack of jobs and cultural values left many people depressed and hopeless. Although, there are people who were not affected by this major change who believe that by helping a few individuals the rate of suicides will decrease slowly.

In my family, I had several role models that continue to help others in need. Most notably to me is my older sister and mother. My sister works with children with disabilities within the public schools on the reservation. She teaches the children basic skills needed to survive in society. I had seen her work day and night planning educational guides for individual children. She learned American sign language to connect better with her deaf students. My mother who often takes the role of a caregiver has encouraged philanthropy, sharing, and charity despite her humble background. She cooked meals for children and elders who were homeless and often took them in for short periods of time.

Personally, as young adult, I had trouble coping with the death of my father. I was without direction but after high school made the choice to leave my hometown and go to a college seven hours away. There I found out who I was as a person on my own with the help of my friends I made along the way. I chose my major as nursing; in the beginning I loved it until clinicals from this experience I found I was good with talking to patients, but I did not enjoy clinicals as much as I thought I would. I then got out of that major and started volunteering at the local boys and girls club here I meet many individuals who needed help with school and socialization. Although I have a shy personality, I learned a variety of skills working with the other volunteers, paid workers, and the children. As time passed I grew more interested in psychology, even reading books about the different types of mental disorders and self-care. With this knowledge I hope to return to my hometown and work as a local therapist. I imagine this will be challenging, but in end it will be worth it.
How a program called “Radical Possibilities” helped solidify my career path

By: RaeLee Medina

Throughout my years of being in college, I’ve had many opportunities to work with children and do different community programs. One of my favorites was a diversity dialogue that my midterm group held in El Centro de Muchos Colores. This one, specifically, hit home to me because I was the only Person of Color in my group; the others in my group did not know what El Centro was, so I shared a piece of me with them. At that point, I did not believe that another project or class would compare to how I felt during this one event. I was wrong. The work and amazing opportunity that I was blessed with this year made me positive that the work I was going into was the right fit for me.

Radical Possibilities is a program stemming from La Plata Youth Services of Durango. It also branches off from a bigger program started in the Denver area. The program was started to help youth from adverse backgrounds, youth with physical or mental disabilities, or families that need the help. This internship literally fell into my lap, thanks to the collaboration between La Plata Youth Services, Fort Lewis College, and the Sociology Department I was able to make a class that fit into my schedule. I was going to be a mentor. In the beginning I did not know what being a mentor entailed; I was afraid to fail, both myself and my student. I did not think that I would be able to support this student since I am still figuring out life myself. With the help of wonderful mentors and trainings, I was able to gain the confidence needed for this job.

We, mentors, did not receive the names of our students until October; we were involved in weekly trainings until then. Along with the trainings, the mentors had to pick out a quote that described what we wanted to accomplish as well as describing ourselves. My quote was: “It’s ok if you fall down and lose your spark. Just make sure that when you get back up, you rise as the whole damn fire.” – Colette Werden

One training that stuck out to me was trauma-informed training. We needed to know what to do and how to handle situations surrounding trauma. There have been instances where children who come from traumatic backgrounds try to hurt themselves, or others in the presence of their mentor. We needed to be able to know how to handle that, if no one was around. It was a very heavy time around RP because so many things were being pulled from the depths of, not only my mind, but the minds of the other mentors.

We shifted our views from asking a common question, when we as a society finds something wrong with a person, “what is wrong with this person?” to “what happened to this person?” The shift in question opened a portal to so many truths, both internally and externally. By changing one simple question, it opens up a place for every person deserves as a human right. I genuinely believe that this training was the most important out of all the trainings we’ve had so far.

Finally, after all the trainings and learning how to conduct ourselves, October roth rolled around. This was the first day that we would be able to meet our students. At that point, there were more mentors than students. Every mentor, except one, would get a student. This known fact gave me crippling anxiety. What if I didn’t get a student? That night, we also found out that we would not be choosing our student, rather they would be choosing us. Once again, panic set in and I was able to voice my concern about not being picked and coming up empty.

The dinner began at four o’clock and we began to meet all the parents and their kids. From an outside perspective, all you saw were kids misbehaving and thinking “I’d never let my kids act this way in public.” Although my first instinct was to think this, I remembered the whole reason that these kids were in the program to begin with. I, along with the mentors, seemed to be coming to terms about what this program was actually about. Soon enough, the kids and mentors were split from their parents and we got to have one-on-one time with them. We played this game; it was similar to those “dating” games, we got 5 minutes with each student. Following that game, they picked who they wanted for the rest of the year. I was lucky enough to be paired with a 13-year-old boy. Due to confidentiality rules, I am not allowed to state his name; his initials are N.H. (which is how I will be referring to him).

The past four months, I’ve spent many hours with this sweet boy. He is smart and kind, and for the longest time I didn’t understand why he was in this program. I realized a while back, that N.H. and I were more similar than we were different. Growing up, I was quiet and in my own world; N.H. is in the same way. He doesn’t like to associate with people who aren’t worth his time and who aren’t his close friends. Within the first night, he gave me some insight to his world. I’ve never been more thankful than that. He was hiding so much under the surface, and I knew it would be a challenge to pull him out of his shell. I sat back and let him come to me, soon enough he did. Tragedy struck his life, horribly. He didn’t know what to do and closed everyone out, including me. I checked on him to make sure he was okay, gave him the option to leave and find a safe place where he would feel better. After sitting in a comfortable silence for a really long time, he opened up; he told me how he was feeling, what he needed/wanted, and I was able to help. That was the first time I felt like I was making a difference, the type of difference I had been wanting to make for months.

Over the course of the year, I’ve learned plenty from the coordinators of Radical Possibilities and the mentors, but I’ve learned so much more from N.H. He has made this year one of the best throughout my college career. He has taught me to be consistent and patient, while also never giving up on learning the information I need to learn in order to help him and other people. Most of all, he has taught me strength. I believed that I was strong, as long as I was smiling and walking around like nothing was bothering me, I was strong. He proved me wrong. N.H. showed me that strength is being able to break down and ask for help; I learned that “saving face” doesn’t get me to the healing process. If anything, N.H. has helped me more than I’ve helped him. I believe that is the reason behind Radical Possibilities and why I will continue to do the work I’ve been blessed with doing this year and for as long as possible.

The house that LPYS moved into earlier this year, this is where RP meets every week!
By: Shirena Trujillo Long

Coordinators Corner

There are so many amazing stories to tell this month from the Coordinator’s Corner of El Centro that I’m choosing to share some of the details below in a format I rarely use: Bullet points. I rarely use bullet points to tell stories because I believe all good stories have a beginning, middle and end and a bullet point simply doesn’t give you enough room to let a story tell itself. But when the stories are so plentiful like this month, I’ll dive into this bullet-like, quick delivery because I simply don’t want to miss our readers to miss out on the “news of our students from the little Corner of El Centro.”

- Spring is a season of births and new beginnings, and for any college or university, it is also graduation season. I always start off this column recognizing the amazing contributions of our soon-to-be graduates of FLC. This year, El Centro student employees RaeLee Medina, Mariela Castillo, and Christina Stoll, Veronica Flores, and Israel Aragon will be graduating along with Club del Centro members Mercedes Romero and DIONNA VIGIL as well as long-time Durango local Emilio Hernandez. Because of their dedication of at least one year of service to El Centro or one of our clubs, all of these students will be awarded a colorful Serape Stole with the words “El Centro de Muchos Colores” embroidered on it for to wear at their graduation ceremony April 21. Many thanks to each of you for enriching our Center with your presence—you each bring such unique gifts to El Centro and your stories will always be part of our shared “historia.”

- Graduation from College is one of our “end goals” at El Centro because “recruitment and retention” of Hispanic and multicultural students is our center’s purpose. This year, El Centro invited past FLC graduates back to our dining room table to share their “educational journey” stories during our luncheon chit-chat events we call “Charlas.” Last semester, we shared Augustin Caraza’s story from football player at FLC to his first full-time professional job as an advisor for students at FLC. This year, we’ve invited back December graduate STACY JOHN, who will share her story 12:1 p.m. Feb. 26. And in April, we’ll hear from Therese Rodriguez, an FLC alumna, former work-study student manager at El Centro who is currently the Registrar of our College. Hearing alumni stories if one tool for retention because students need to see people like themselves with similar stories of success.

- Telling our stories is a theme at El Centro in our gallery display because each year we unveil new student photos and profiles of students involved in El Centro or Club del Centro. This year, student employee Zane Goodell is working this semester to replace the student stories in the gallery with new images and people who will be featured in the gallery. The unveiling of the new gallery display will be held at our end-of-year fiesta, Thursday, April 19 from 4:–6 p.m.

- Ending the academic year with El Centro’s “End of Year fiesta” has been a tradition at El Centro for more than a decade because it allows the center to honor students and their successes at the end of their semester. Staff and students, and soon-to-be graduates are recognized, the gallery displays are unveiled, and the food, fun and friends are always plentiful. This year marks the first for our end-of-year party to be a collaborative event between the new Diversity Collaborative—which includes El Centro, the Native American Center and the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center. We are working with NAC and the “G” centers to create an outdoor patio event that will celebrate all of our students and their much intersectionality’s, and we want to invite you all to come celebrate the successes of all of our students.

- In other news at El Centro, we are excited to announce a late Spring release of a new webpage resource guide for immigrant students that will be located on the El Centro website. This tab will include resources such as our College President’s stance on welcoming and protecting undocumented students while studying on our campus; links to local resource centers for immigrant rights; and details about how to enroll at FLC if you are undocumented. The goal is to disseminate information and to also state publicly that these students are welcome at our College as they have always been. With uncertainly looming for many young and undocumented students, we want to make sure our current and prospective students know that at El Centro and FLC, we are...
I started the year 2018 with a brand new pup. Her name is Luna and she is currently growing every week. Growing up, I never really had to take care of pets or really own any. Becoming a pup mom made me think about what it would be like to be an actual parent. It’s frightening.

Having to buy the bed, crates, dog food, treats, collar, leash, name tag, and I can’t forget their vaccinations. Those are just the “starter” pack to having a pup come into your life. The second week of January, I was going to be back in school with a full workload. It worried me of how I would take care of Luna, and still keep up good grades while working. I say communication is key, talking to supervisors and professors will take the load off. We both got into a routine when I would leave for class, come home take her for a walk/run, play for about an hour, then do homework when she sleeps (which is very often after runs).

A couple of my friends, volunteered to help with Luna on days I couldn’t give her the attention she needed. Currently, we are becoming best friends even though she is in a stage of what I call “terrible twos.” I see us growing together in the future and continue to build our bond.

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Strangled Venezuela, a story about a country struggling to provide for its youth

By: Zane Goodell (& Isabel Bonilla)

This article and this topic is very dear to my heart. Isabel Bonilla has been one of my best friends for many years, despite the distance between us. We’ve never met in real life, and it’s all thanks to our mutual interest in a musician named Savant that we know each other. In becoming friends, I’ve somewhat familiarized myself with the Venezuelan economic and political crisis. I knew I had to inform the world of this human rights crisis that is frequently ignored in favor of politics in the United States. I figured it would be best to let you hear from the source itself. As a friend and an ally to all Venezuelans, I am pleased to introduce Isabel’s heart-wrenching perspective on the struggles in Venezuela.

Hello, my name is Isabel Bonilla and I’m here to talk about a few things, principally about my country’s situation. I live in Venezuela, a beautiful place, this country has everything. I’m in love with my country, the people, the food, the culture, everything that characterizes Venezuela except the socialism, it ruined the country and it’s almost impossible to live here. It’s totally hard, sad and full of anger. That’s the reason of why thousands of Venezuelans emigrate every day, your closest friends, your family, doctors, teachers, engineers, people that make a country grow. I’ll try to say everything in the best way, but mostly I’ll talk about how we feel and how we try to deal with this complicated situation that hurts.

There are so many things to say that I don’t know where to start, I really want to make you feel or think a little bit about my country. First, I think I need to say that we, the Venezuelans, love our country a lot, just like Americans do. We can give our lives for our country, but Venezuela is a divided country. Since President Chavez, Venezuela has had two types of people, the Chavistas and the opposition. It’s incredible how it has all changed. I believe that this division is more powerful than the division between Trump and Hillary supporters, but I’m not as familiar with American politics. Everything started with that division, Chavez made up this whole idea of socialism and people started having a false hope of getting what they’ve always wanted; things like a nice house, food, good education, etc.
Unfortunately, all of that was just a dream and everything is ruined now. The only “benefits” of Chavismo is that the people who bought US dollars when it was allowed, buy houses, cars, and luxury goods are living in a “good way” now. They can sell those dollars and have money to buy food and do other things that the rest of us cannot do that. Not only did the chavistas or enchufados did this, a lot of opposite people did it too, when having private companies was allowed, they took advantage. The enchufados are people who get up and join the government to take advantage of the goods that this can generate and at the same time avoid reaching the real needy. The chavistas (Enchufados) are all involved in shady organizations, it is all dirty money. I easily can tell that we are run by “El cartel de los soles.” They are the narco. I live in a country where the jailed men are more powerful than police. They are called Harmas, and they can do anything. It’s like they rule, they make up all this the insecurity, going out is dangerous, even staying at home is dangerous, people have to be low-key. They are thieves, just like the people of the government, but we have all the types of thieves. I have friends that go to Caracas, the capital city, and they arrive home naked because some guy in a motorcycle robbed them. It’s even dangerous to walk down the street with a bag of food.

I’m going to talk about the economy, well I’m going to try. I don’t know that much, but I’m sure I can give you the big idea. Maybe you already know that the Bolivar our currency is amazingly devalued, and we don’t earn a lot of money. Our hyperinflation is the highest worldwide. I’m talking about 415% according to Steve Hanke, professor of applied economics at John Hopkins University. The Venezuelan Central Bank says that our minimum wage is Bs. 177,507 and with Bs. 279,000 for the alimentation bonus (this is illegal but the government does this). They deposit more money on a debit card just for food they do not generate any social benefits or utilities at the end of the year the total is Bs. 456,507. That’s a really low amount of money compared to the high price of food. It’s hard to eat, it’s almost impossible to buy something other than food. Of course, there are people who have money, gold, properties, business, etc. They sell stuff and they have money, but that is a really small group of people. Today (January 25th, 2018) one United States Dollar (USD) is worth around Bs. 263,803.29, but it changes literally every day. The price of the USD never goes down and some people think about the economy based on that. Prices aren’t high, it’s just that we can’t afford it, because we don’t earn enough money to survive.

Health care here is incredibly bad. Friends of mine have died because of diseases that could have been cured. Diseases that were already eradicated like diphtheria, malaria, etc., are prevalent here. They are diseases that you are supposed to acquire by going to a place like the Amazon but now you do not even need to travel to get them. There are no medicines, and if there are they are extremely unattainable. People prefer buying food rather than going to a doctor or buying medicine. That’s why a lot of people die here. There isn’t even anesthesia in hospitals. If you need or want surgery, you need to look for the necessary materials, such as anesthesia, gauze, medicine, gloves, etc. so it’s really stressful when you even get flu or something. Women give birth in the hospital’s chairs, then the baby goes into a carton box. There are no incubators, the hospitals are super dirty and they have no supplies. People cannot afford insurance. Maduro, the president, said that if doctors accept humanitarian help from other countries or organizations outside the country they’ll go to jail. When I was living outside of Venezuela, a group of people and I used to send medicine to my mom, a registered doctor. Because of this, she was able to help many people.

Talking about security, I already mentioned the Hampas, they are like narco but they manipulate and extort people hand in hand with police forces. There are good cops but the majority of them are bad. The military and the police are aligned with the government and the gangs they get food from the government, and from the gangs (hampas) they get something like an association. They extort, they rob, and they kidnap because of agreements they have, and of course, the police forces give firearms to the gangs. Hampas and other cops have a twisted mind. When novice cops enter the system, they treat them in a horrifying way. They torture and kill them just for fun in indescribable ways. If you have a construction plan, the gangs find you and ask you for money for “taking care” of your construction. It’s extortion. While driving a car, motorcycle, truck, etc. they ask you for money just because they want to buy a soda, and we don’t even have money to buy soda because that’s a luxury here. Maybe they’ll extort you with the law.

There are still good schools here, but as everything goes down, schools do too. There are schools where professors don’t go to classes because they prefer being in a line to buy food. It doesn’t matter if you are a good student, many professors will also extort you. They ask you for food in exchange for the grade that you deserve. If you don’t comply, they fail you. The opposite is also true, if you are a bad student and you give them food they pass you.

Continued to next page

Photo credit : https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/styles/16x9-large/s3/venezuela-16dec16.jpg?itok=dv8R32r7
Continued from “Strangled Venezuela”

Talking about customs, Venezuela is full anarchy. There are no rules. Gangs and cops rule hand in hand with the government, people are just out of their minds. Not everyone, but many good people are inside their homes scared of the situation, or losing their lives while they work and earn 20 cents daily or less. This is absurd, this is painful for everyone.

I need to say Venezuelans are extremely cool, we talk a lot, we have big hearts and we have a really good sense of humor in spite of it all. But of course, this is not living.

The government knows how to manipulate masses of ignorant people with lack of manners and weak minds. They used to give away houses, cars, money, food, etc. They planned education missions (I need to say that they are really bad, because they don’t even know how to write). They promise to girls that if they get pregnant they’ll pay 200k per baby monthly. That’s insane. Girls of 13 years onwards getting pregnant, it is not a good idea. They can’t afford a baby, and they are still children themselves. Every month, the government promises a box full of food, but that’s a promise but they never keep. It’s been six months since I returned to Venezuela, and I haven’t even gotten one. This is outrageous, this is embarrassing.

It’s sad every time we go to the super markets, there are empty aisles, and the little food that is in there it’s extremely unaffordable. We don’t get to choose brands. When we get in a line to buy something sometimes we don’t even get the chance make the line inside the market, a soldier waits for your turn (you need to write your number on your arm) so he gives you two or three regulated articles (food, hygiene items, medicines, etc.). One year ago, you didn’t get the chance to buy for the next ten days.

I think we would improve if people leave aside ignorance, and begin to realize a world outside the marginal. They know that conformism is bad and they know how to identify when it is manipulated, when people stop selling a country for a bag of food then we will change. People need to stop being lazy, we let this happen, because the lack of knowledge, I say “we” because I’m Venezuelan too. To finish this article, I need to thank the people who gave me this opportunity, especially to Zane Goodell, who has been one of my best friends for years and gave me this opportunity to share my Venezuelan story with you.

Passions

By: Deandra Redsteer

While writing this article, I noticed I kept talking and thinking about acting. I noticed this is the one thing I truly desire. Through my experience, I want to share my insights on following your truest passions regardless of what people say or what your situation is.

From the beginning of middle school, I wanted to be a marine biologist, taking after my mom’s dream. I imagined it would be great to travel around the world, scuba dive under the water. I imagined myself in a wetsuit and having fun on-the-job. But, reality hit. I thought I would be doing fun things like swimming with the dolphins—like a vacation. But, I realized marine biologist had requirements such as science and math backgrounds, lab research, data analysis, and all other research that seemed a bit too much for me. I soon dropped this passion and went to look for another job that I could still be passionate about.

As I moved to high school, I felt a mixture of feelings and developed interests toward the arts and creativity. Since I can recall, as a young child I would watch movies and be awed about how a kid can act at such a young age. After watching the movie, I would look in the ‘special features’ for games or how the movie was made. I realized that making movies was fun and the actors have a blast being in them, plus I knew they make big bucks for it. I have always been passionate about acting, but it seemed like an unreached dream. I felt it was only meant for people that are born into it or who have lots of money.

Today this passion, to be an actress, is still in my mind and I pray that somehow, with some help, I can make that dream come true. Throughout the years, I feel as if some people shut down my dreams and force me to think realistically. To some extent, they were right. In high school, I became so desperate to be an actress that I started researching on how I can be one, getting an agent, and making a portfolio. But “reality” hit and I noticed that I couldn’t accomplish most of the things that were required since I lived in a humble household. My family relied on tax returns, and I had to think about my other siblings’ problems. I had also responsibilities at home and school, and because of this I wasn’t able to follow through with my passion for acting. I had some downs and ups that proved I can be an actress. One day, after seeing a movie in the theaters, I was so passionate about wanting to act, so I casually talked about it with my family but my step-dad said otherwise— “You have to be really outgoing and you’re not that outgoing.” Ouch! That stung a bit, and I didn’t want to ever tell him my passions again. So, because I wanted to prove him and others wrong, I kept practicing my passion for acting. When spending time with my brothers and sisters I would act on my own, speak in accents, and do little funny impersonations. I was the entertainer, and I still am practicing that passion today.

Journeying into college now, I have flourished finding new people, finding groups, clubs, and organizations that I feel will change and help me grow. Last year, I knew I was testing the waters on which clubs I would want to stay committed to. But this year I realized I should listen to my passions. I joined the activities that for me, are fun and self-developing, and I am choosing wisely about how I manage my time in each of them while working on my core classes. In the year of 2018, I have decided to follow my passions more and see where they will lead me. I know and feel that I have more resources and support that I can rely on to give me feedback in my personal progress and work ethics. This year, I am telling myself and others that passions are what we should follow because if we don’t pursue what we really want, then we may be dismayed.

Deandra also does El Centro’s radio show every week called “Centrovision” Tune in every Thursday at 7 pm and Saturday at 5:50 pm when it airs!
Events in El Centro this Semester

Club del Centro makes and sells burritos every semester for five dollars! Check out the event calendar on the back page to see when the upcoming burrito sales are!

As a way of stress relief, Coltny Ansera came to facilitate a Zumba class! It was a fun way to forget all the stress of classes.

El Club de Español meets Thursdays at 1:00 pm in El Centro de Muchos Colores. El Club de Español gathers around Spanish culture and language. Everyone is welcome!

Cooking Matters is a class that teaches students how to cook on a budget and in a healthy manner! Cooking Matters meets on Tuesdays at 5:30-7:30 pm in El Centro de Muchos Colores. These classes are held every semester! Preregister for next semester with an email to Emma Salazar: ebsalazar@fortlewis.edu

One of the many burrito sales
Stand for what you believe in

What is DACA?
DACA, also referred to as “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals,” was an executive order passed by President Obama in 2012. It allows for certain people who came to the U.S. illegally as minors to be protected from immediate deportation. Nearly 800,000 youth are affected by this.

When the Trump administration took office, they dismantled DACA by September of 2017. Fort Lewis College stands with DACA and continues to rally and students defend it, through student senate and administrative support.

WE STAND WITH THE DREAMERS!

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was on January 15th this year. It is held around King’s birthday every year. Fort Lewis College holds a rally, workshops and an annual march of solidarity in Martin Luther King’s honor. Dr. King was an activist for African American rights.

Pictured are two students who are a part of the Black Student Union at Fort Lewis College leading the march around campus on January 15.

Photo taken at ASFLC meeting in January which senators unanimously approved a statement in support of DACA students to be forwarded to FLC President Dene Thomas.
Hello! My name is **RaeLee Airiel Medina**! I am 20 years young and currently in my last semester! This is my third year here at the Fort though! I began working at El Centro last year, and am now the student staff manager! I was born in Tucson, Arizona but grew up in a tiny little town called Las Animas, Colorado. I currently have a 4-year-old terrier named Stitch, after my favorite Disney movie, and he definitely lives up to the name! I want to pursue a career in social work, specializing with foster children and their families.

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Hello, my name is **Valerie Jade Calabaza**, I come from the Pueblo of Santo Domingo and the Navajo Nation. I grew up in the state of New Mexico, on the Santo Domingo Pueblo reservation where I learned the importance of tradition and culture. This is my second year involved with El Centro, as a student manager. I am currently a junior at Fort Lewis College, studying exercise science physiology.

When I have free time I like to run, and workout. I am a first generation college student. I have one younger sibling, and we are about ten years apart. I have a passion for making Native American jewelry, which I learned from my grandparents.

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Hi! My name is **Zane Goodell**.
I’m a sophomore here at Fort Lewis College and I live in Mancos, Colorado. I was born in Albuquerque New Mexico. I was an orientation leader for Fall 2017 and I am involved with Dance Co-Motion and Young Americans for Liberty. I chose to work at El Centro to regain the Hispanic culture of New Mexico that influenced my childhood and to represent Hispanic people with lighter skin and more European features. I love skiing, watching anime, practicing judo and dancing!

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Hello, my name is **Dominic Whitesinger**, but I like to be called Dom. I am a 23 years old non-tradition transfer student from Chinle, Az. I am a junior studying psychology and a common ground facilitator. Before I declared psychology as my major, I studied information technology and then I went into studying nursing. I am friendly and helpful person. I like to go hiking in the mountains and walk along the animas river here in Durango. My hobbies include cooking, baking, wilderness exploration and meditating.

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Ya’at’e! Hello! My name is **Breanna Dixon**. I am a 22 year old Navajo woman from the Navajo reservation. I have lived in Montezuma Creek, Utah for most of my life, but I graduated high school in Kayenta, Arizona. I consider both to be my homes. This is my third year at Fort Lewis (but my fourth year in college) and I am studying to be an elementary teacher. So far, my favorite part about living in Durango is being in the mountains. It’s so beautiful! I chose to work at El Centro for many reasons. After taking my Southwest Language Immersion class, I became interested in learning more of the Spanish language and the culture. I am also interested in obtaining office skills and some event planning.
Hello, my name is Anita Briody-Pavlik and I'm a first year student at Fort Lewis. I am originally from Albuquerque but moved to Farmington, New Mexico at an early age. I am currently a History major with a concentration in Medieval and European History. I am Caucasian, Hispanic and Native American. I love to travel and make ethnic and non-ethnic food and desserts.

My name is Mariela Castillo and I was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. I came to the United States with my parents when I was three years old, and have been here ever since. I grew up in a little town in Colorado named Kremmling. After I graduated high school, I went to a community college for two years and received my Associates of Arts in Business in 2016. I then came to Fort Lewis to pursue my dream of psychology. I had always wanted to study psychology, but due to financial reasons I had to go to a community college where that wasn’t an option. I will graduate from Fort Lewis College with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology in April of 2018. I have been a part of Club del Centro for a year now, and am currently the Vice President. Since last year I wanted to work in El Centro, but I didn’t receive work study until this year. I want to work here because I am going to learn so many valuable traits and concepts that I can use in the real world once I graduate. El Centro has always been my home away from home, so I am really excited to work somewhere that means a lot to me.

I'm Macy O’Rourke, a freshman this year. I am from a small town, Paonia Colorado. A few of my hobbies are drawing, painting, hiking, and horseback riding. If you catch me on my free time here I'm probably dancing like a dork, reading like a nerd, or laughing at almost anything. I plan to have a major in teacher education and a minor in psychology. Some of my goals I want to accomplish here include running a half marathon, exploring Durango, make as many friends as my excitement holds, and continue to learn something new each day. I've had my own apartment in Aspen, and traveled by myself to Thailand, but being apart of this Fort Lewis community is beyond compare. I’m determined to bring something to this college as it's bringing new experiences to me.

¡Hola! My name is Madeleine Roberts, and I'm a freshman studying Spanish and Business here at FLC. I'm originally from Bentonville, Arkansas, which will always be one of my homes.

Hi everyone! My name is Jen Tarwater and I'm from Monument, CO. I'm a junior here at the Fort studying Elementary Education, minor in Spanish, and getting a Bilingual Endorsement (meaning I can teach in bilingual schools). This is my first year working at El Centro and I love it! There were a bunch of different reasons I wanted to work at El Centro some of which include improving my Spanish skills, acquiring new on the job skills (like overcoming my fear of talking on the phone), and being more involved on campus. Building off of that, I really wanted to be a part of a group or club where I could hang out and relax, practice some Spanish here and there, and really become part of a family. What better place to find that than at El Centro?
Hi, my name is Deandra Redsteer. As a freshman of FLC, I'm happy with my decision and have come to realize that this place might have picked me. 'Explore!, Explore!' is what is always on my mind and I hope to immerse into any clubs that will help me grow into a NEW person, so that I may also help others. I love learning languages and I'm currently learning Italian and Spanish. I hope to travel worldwide, especially to places in poverty.

Hi, my name is Veronica Flores, a senior working towards graduating from Fort Lewis College with a major degree in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. I am originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico and am a 2nd generation college student. As a Hispanic Pueblo Native American Woman, I have become very grateful for the opportunity to receive an education from an institution that celebrates, and appreciates the diversity of its students. After graduation, I would like to start working for an organization that rehabilitates and advocates for victims of sexual assault and harassment. During this time, I plan to start preparing for the GRE and hope to be admitted into a graduate program at the University of New Mexico in the Spring of 2019. Future goals include earning a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology, moving out of New Mexico, and working in a rehabilitation center or hospital that offers assistance in therapy and counseling especially for women. Outside of my academics, I enjoy music and dance, and love spending time back home in Albuquerque with friends and family whenever I can. I’ve previously taught Ballet Folklorico to kids ranging from age 5 to 18 here on campus at El Centro de Muchos Colores for a year, and am also part of the Fort Lewis College Dance Team. I have a passion for the therapeutic and counseling aspect of psychology, and am excited to get out into the field to gain further knowledge and skills to help me grow as an individual in this area of work.

Answer Key to the Crucigrama on Page 5

ACROSS

2. aplaudir
6. prometer
8. comprar
11. usar
13. cubrir
16. barrer
19. correr
20. vender
21. asistir
22. caminar
24. esconder
27. escuchar
31. escribir
35. andar
36. estudiar
37. comer

DOWN

1. hablar
2. vivir
4. subir
5. beber
7. tomar
9. aprender
10. mirar
12. soprender
14. dividir
15. abrir
17. tocar
18. decidir
23. meter
25. recibir
26. capturar
28. consumir
29. deber
30. enviar
32. cantar
33. romper
34. buscar
La Movida is a student-run publication for El Centro de Muchos Colores published each semester. El Centro is the Fort Lewis College Hispanic Center geared toward promoting Hispanic pride and awareness, increasing Hispano student enrollment and retention rates. La Movida welcomes submissions at any time.

All submissions should be sent to Shirena Trujillo Long at long_s@fortlewis.edu. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of El Centro de Muchos Colores nor of Fort Lewis College. For questions or comments please contact El Centro de Muchos Colores, located room 40 of the Student Union Building or can be reached at: www.fortlewis.edu/elcentro

All events take place at El Centro unless noted, Student Union 40. www.fortlewis.edu/elcentro for details & updates