The Importance of Getting Involved

By: Maram Ashe

Nowadays, so often are we barraged with news about local, national, and international issues about problematic circumstances that keep us feeling weary with confusion and heart pains. Rather than feel the usual “but I’m one person, what can I do? What difference can I really make?” I like to remember a Rumi quote: “You are not a drop within an ocean. You are the entire ocean within a drop.” Me, an entire ocean? What the heck were you thinking Rumi? At least that’s what I used to think. But since coming to Fort Lewis College, I am grateful to tell you that indeed, I have surfed, swam, sailed, and repeatedly drowned and saved myself all within myself.

During my first semester at FLC, Nancy Stoffer – Diversity programing coordinator – came into my Peace 101 class and reached out for student involvement for Real History of America. I was intrigued, because I had institutionalized to only learn and celebrate Columbus Day. RHOA is a day to reclaim the untold stories. So a few of my classmates and I put on a first person presentation of people who spoke out against the violence against indigenous peoples during colonization. The idea was to broaden people’s understanding of history, it wasn’t all one-sided as we thought. I chose Silas Soule, from Colorado’s own history, a man who defied his commander’s orders and prohibited his company from engaging in the Sand Creek Massacre. Turns out, I liked being on stage! And performing arts is such a creative way to deliver a message to a broader audience.

My Azorean Ancestry

By: Noah Garcia

Icy Atlantic waters crash into the hull of a worn, scarred ship. With spires of death clutched strongly in their aching hands, the hooded, drenched figures patiently suffer for their livelihood. With nothing but the black stormy sky for a blanket and the explosive lightning as their light the endless search for the elusive whale continues. Finally, the sea erupts and a massive, sleek form emerges from the expansive ocean. The men aboard the ship spring into action and the years of training are put to the test. The deadly spikes are launched with le-
Fascinated that I could do more than just a performance piece, I took the Common Ground facilitator training. Through all of the workshops I have helped facilitate since then, I slowly gained leadership skills and engaged in anti-bias awareness. I got to build connections with fellow students, faculty members, people around town and even staff across campus! Still, I wanted even more. The best thing about getting involved now, as an undergraduate, is building connections and skills. These are elements I can’t quite build in my classes. Sure, we all work in group projects and everyone has responsibility, and yes, we make friends with our fellow peers in class...but we don’t get much interaction with peers from other departments, nor do we usually take on large projects that we don’t get graded for.

Personally, I keep finding spiritual nourishment with all of these side projects I engage in; whether it’s being directly involved in my Registered Student Organizations (RSO) groups, or indirectly by helping brainstorm with others. I find it in the side conversations I have with my friends from departments where we share what we’ve been learning about, and making it an effort to have a campus and town event to broaden everyone else’s knowledge base or just meeting over some local brews.

If these reasons aren’t enough for you, just think about what a resume builder you would have! Getting involved not only feels great and gives you a support base outside of class, but you also get to figure out where your best strengths play out, and where you can increase the lesser weaker strengths. Future employers or internships managers will be looking to see how you made the effort to connect with others and be a team member within an interdisciplinary group. Ultimately, for those who wish to pursue grad school, consider all of the investment with undergrad involvement as an upper advantage learning how to manage and coordinate with others in the “big bad world”.

And lastly, the time to get involved to make a difference shouldn’t wait until you think you are “better.” The time to make a difference is now, and to do a little more than you usually do. Despair not that you are a drop, for in the end, “what is an ocean but a multitude of drops?” All my love, Maram Ashe.

For more information on how to get involved, pick up the latest Independent publication "RSO." Also, contact Nancy Stoffer at stoffer_n@fortlewis.edu for information about the FREE Common Ground facilitator training.

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“We Want Them to Conquer the World”:
The Journey Through our Heritage Program

By Katherine Montoya

Rita Salazar, a Fort Lewis College graduate, (Bachelor of Arts in Sociology: Ethnic Studies, 2015) is breathing new life into the Journey through our Heritage program after its disappearance. The program lost funding several years ago when the community organization who sponsored it, the Durango Latino Education Coalition, was dissolved.

The Journey through our Heritage program is a mentorship program between college and high school students that encourages students to go to college and highlights the value of culturally relevant education. This year, the theme is Colorado Stories: Your story, my story: a retrospective of who we are and where we came from.

The goal is to engage students in a yearlong program that enhances the public school system’s curriculum in the areas of African American, Native American, Chicano, Chicana, Mexicano, Mexicana, Mexican American and Latino, Latina Studies. Meetings are twice a week, once with college students and another day for the college students to meet with high schoolers.

Rita wishes “to give them the tools and the confidence to go to college and to succeed as well. All students of every color should learn about their own as well as one another’s heritage. It is the basis for compassion and understanding.” Rita is trying to establish a grass roots organization called Todos Juntos Todos Unidos, which is the bigger goal in trying to provide more cultural enrichment-type programs for youth in the area.

For more information about the Journey through our Heritage program you can go to their website at www.msudenver.edu/journey. If you would like to get involved, you can send an email to todos.juntos.todos.unidos15@gmail.com

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Recovery: The Animas River Spill

By: Alex Blocker

The Animas River Spill made national headlines, so as I returned to Durango from my summer in Chicago, I already had an idea of what was to come. I returned to find the community efforts in full swing to combat the damage done by the river spill. This article is a written salute to the town of Durango for being quick to act regarding this issue. Through simply living in the community we have the opportunity to make an ecological difference. Local jam band Liver Down The River were some of the early responders. With a benefit they threw in conjunction with The Animas City Theatre, they brought awareness and collected funds for the community.

As a local musician myself, I was invited to a water benefit through the Indigenous Feminism group that meets on...
that accuracy but a whale of this size has had years of evading such relentless assaults. One finally pierces the heavy skin of the colossal animal but as it dives and lurches yet again. This time the ship follows suit, barking precariously under the seemingly infinite strength of this giant of the sea. Fear strikes like lightning in the hearts of the trained hunters as the single spear fails to hinder this unyielding goliath. Thunder roars and the whale makes one last desperate dive into the depths that are its home and the hunters worst nightmares are born to reality as the ship threatens to crack in half from the sheer force of this act of desperation by the whale. Their only chance for survival means cutting the cord that connects them to their formidable prey. As the rope whips and disappears into the sea the defeated men tenaciously trek on into the endless Atlantic. The hunters coil their ropes and sharpen their tools looking hopefully to the horizon as the sun rises behind the breaking storm.

This grisly image represents an ancestry that is etched deep in my history despite my far removal from it. I have always dreamed of one day visiting the remote Islands almost 950 miles off the coast of Portugal. Once belonging to a nation that was the forerunner in seafaring voyages during times of colonialism, the Azores are now primarily a tourist destination. Like my ancestors of old, up until it’s banning in 1984, there were men who still practiced the ancient custom of whaling, using the same techniques for harpoon making, boat positioning and reeling (news.nationalgeographic.com). My great grandfather's grandfather practiced this ancient tradition but due to the dangerous nature of an Atlantic sea voyage and battling with such an enormous creature, the

(Continued from page 1: “My Azorean Ancestry”)
My Experiences at FLC: What I’ve Learned Outside the Classroom

By: Catie Welch

When I chose to attend Fort Lewis College last year, it was probably my best decision yet. I was torn deciding between Fort Lewis College and a small college in Washington State. I decided to take a leap and go to the school that was far away from home, which is Bellingham Washington, and completely different from where I was at. Although I made the right decision, my first week of college last fall was not an easy one. I didn’t know a single person and felt incredibly homesick.

As the semester rolled on, I started to meet a lot of people by wandering around campus and not staying in my dorm room, and I felt much more comfortable. I started attending events on campus such as Fiesta on the Mesa, Skyfest, barbecues, and more. I joined intramural sports teams and got involved with as many things as I could to meet new people. I then got a job with the intramural and club sports department on campus and it introduced me to a fun and friendly environment. Along with getting involved with things on campus, I began to explore the town of Durango and all that it has to offer. I went on hikes and trail runs with new friends and this is when I realized how awesome it was that I was here. The beauty of Durango alone felt comforting. Moving away from my hometown was necessary for me to start fresh and to figure out who I wanted to be.

This year as a sophomore is much different. I am settled in and am now taking further steps in my education. Not only am I exploring different courses, but also new activities outside the classroom. Working at El Centro has been a great learning experience. Being surrounded with different cultures is very important and is becoming a growing experience for me. It is refreshing to affiliate with new people and to be around a different language is incredible. This is why El Centro has been more than just a job. I am very grateful for all the opportunities that I have had here at Fort Lewis College and I am excited for what is to come!
Tina Zungia and Danielle Lucero, I began to feel at ease. They showed me what it was like being a president and how it was just like being in a family. And that is what it has always been to me, a family. I am grateful to have amazing officers to be by my side and who have already helped me start this year off right.

Every year we strive for the same goal. That is to bring people together through food, social and educational events. We want people to know that being Latino is not a requirement to be a part of the club. It is a family environment open for everyone and anyone wanting to have a great time and to learn about culture.

So far we have had a family dinner in El Centro de Muchos Colores with club officers with previous and new members alike. Similar to many of our events, we enjoyed music, hung out and ate delicious food that was prepared by our Culinary Chair (now Vice President) Abigail Lopez. We also have several more events coming up such as a Burrito Sale, Dia de los Muertos, “A trip around the World” and a Biscochito and Tamale workshop.

We are always looking for and welcoming in new members to club. Our weekly meetings are on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm in El Centro. If you want more information about the meetings, events or how to get involved please email me at jgonzales@fortlewis.edu.

Club del Centro Fall Semester Events
October 20- Frida Movie Night @ 6pm
October 28- 1st Burrito Sale 6:30am to 12pm
October 30- Dia de los Muertos 11am to 3:30pm
November 11- Trip Around the World @6pm
December 2- Tamales & Biscochitos Workshop @ 6pm

Club Meetings Every Wednesdays at 5:30pm in El Centro

Deeply and Truly: Steps to Self-Love
By: Allie Wolf

Be kind to yourself. There is too much beauty within you to spend any time focusing on the parts that you think are not. What have you ever gained from focusing on the way your nose is slightly skewed to the left? At best you end up with a renewed and displaced sense of inferiority. Today, look in the mirror and find something you like. Whether it’s as seemingly insignificant as a single freckle or as trivial as the color of your hair, let yourself recognize your own beauty.

Do what makes you happy. It’s easier said than done, but seeking the things that bring you joy is the most beautiful and necessary form of self-indulgence.

Remind yourself that your emotions are valid. What you’re feeling- positive or negative- is real, and telling yourself you shouldn’t be feeling that way only adds unnecessary guilt onto what you are already experiencing. Whether your fears are based in reality or comprised entirely of the happenings of your subconscious, they are real to you. And that is sufficient evidence for feeling the way you do.

That being said, let yourself feel as you do but do your best not to let it become a consistent feeling. Indulge in your emotions. Pout and cry and take pity on yourself if you need to, but once you have, know that you have felt what your soul demanded and be done with it. What can you gain from dwelling on the misfortunes of yesterday? Find comfort in the fact that you accepted your unpleasant emotions as they authentically were, and acknowledged them without empowering them. Let yourself feel sadness, but do what you can not to let sadness become a feeling. This is all so temporary, don’t let your brain trick you into believing otherwise.

Today, let yourself be inspired by the beautiful acts that have occurred because of you. We find our true selves one kind gesture at a time, so take pride in the time you held a door open for a stranger or went out of your way to help someone. Know that you’ve made a difference in so many people’s lives, and admire yourself for all that you do to make the world a better place.

In that sense, admire yourself for simply being. Some days that is enough.

Creating a happier version of yourself is a beautifully dangerous task. It takes time. In fact, it takes your entire life. It never stops, which is perhaps the most striking part of it. Every up, every down, every experience is all part of the journey to see the beauty that is you. To understand that you deserve your own love more than anyone else is to understand that you are love. So don’t worry when you feel that you’ve lost love. Don’t ever fret over a relationship that has ended because love is still inside of you, it’s a part of you and therefore it can’t be lost. That love you feel belongs deeply to you, just as you belong deeply and truly to yourself.

Allie in the San Juan National Forest. Photo courtesy of: Thalia Tovar
Ballet Folklorico De Durango

By: Sandra Chihuahua

Ballet Folklorico de Durango is a dance group that embraces Hispanic culture through dancing traditional Mexican Folkloric. We want to provide opportunities for students to learn how to dance and perform these traditional dances both on- and off-campus. We also want to provide opportunities for students to travel around the United States and Mexico to learn different styles of Folkloric dancing from different regions of Mexico through workshops. All students can join regardless of ethnicity or skill.

This year we have two new instructors: Melisa Smith and Veronica Flores. Melisa Smith is local to Durango, graduating from Durango High School in 2007 and Fort Lewis College in 2012. She lives and works in Durango, applying her Bachelor’s degrees in International Business and Spanish. She has been involved with Ballet Folklorico from a young age, getting her start under DLC and later Del Alma, and studying under instructor Jennifer Cossey. Melisa brought the dance group to Fort Lewis College in 2007 and it flourished under leadership from her younger sister Kathy Smith and instructor Jennifer Cossey. Melisa’s teaching style is hands on, she believes it is necessary to know the background and culture of the dances while maintaining a high level of fun. Dance shouldn’t feel like just any another class, it should lift the spirits and be enjoyable not only for the audience but for the dancers as well. I believe that when the dancers are having fun, it shows!

Veronica Flores is from Albuquerque, New Mexico, a 2014 high school graduate of West Mesa High School. She is nineteen years old and currently a student at Fort Lewis College working on a bachelor’s degree in Forensic Psychology. She would like to welcome those of you returning, and those of you who are looking to join our Ballet Folklorico program here at FLC! She will be one of the new instructors coming in as a first-year participant working with El Centro, and she is very excited to see what lies ahead in assisting with the teaching skills, choreography, and history behind the bailes. Dance has always played a valuable part of her life and character. Throughout her childhood as well as “pre-teen years,” she took pride in participating in many programs that varied between styles in the world of dance – one of them being Ballet Folklorico. She had the most fun with Folklorico and enjoyed every aspect of the traditional dance, including the costumes and music. In becoming a part of this team as an instructor, she hopes to influence others to enjoy the dance as she does and continues to do so. Her goal is to make sure that everyone participates and has an exciting, fun and memorable experience in learning new things. She can say she is grateful to start her new journey this group.

Ballet Folklorico Fall 2015 calendar of events

Friday, October 09, 2015 1:00-1:30
Bayfield Elementary

Saturday, October 10, 2015 12:00-TBD,
Animas Museum Annual Wood Market

Monday, October 12, 2015 5:00-6:00
FLC Ballroom Real History of the Americas

This dance group is a non-profit organization and keeps its sustainability through donations and dance performances. To donate to Ballet Folklorico de Durango, or for more information about the dance program, please visit the El Centro website: www.fortlewis.edu/elcentro or call (970) 247-7290.

Hispanic & Italian: Cultures of Passion

By: Bryan Dalla

Although I’m of Italian descent, being born and growing-up in the Southwest of the US has given me a pretty good understanding of Hispanic cultures. Throughout my experiences of both cultures I have come to understand that there are many similarities they share. One is passion. Hispanics are very passionate about life, their perceptions of the world, how they communicate with others, as well as how they act and carry themselves. This is no different with Italians. Both are driven heavily by emotion. Given this, both are very devoted to music, art, appearance, food, and spirituality. Considering the concept of spirituality, both Hispanics and Italians make up the majority of Roman Catholic followers. Catholicism is a denomination of Christianity, with rigidly structured beliefs, and this somehow resonates predominantly within these two cultures. Both Spanish and Italian languages are derived from Latin and share many of the same words and meanings, with a difference in enunciation.

Another interesting aspect is how both cultures have been, and continue to be compared. In the US, Hispanics are regarded as the largest group of immigrants making the biggest impact. (Before Hispanics, the description was used for Italians.) Both have shared the irrational shaming, disregard, and even classified as secondary citizens for arriving and striving by starting at the bottom of the social structure to work their way up. All of our ancestors arrived from elsewhere to find their place here. We all know this, yet some feel that others shouldn’t be allowed to share the same right their relatives once did.

The final comparison of Hispanic & Italian cultures deals with both being very family centered. They both find family to be an unwavering support system. I find that these
What Soccer Means to Me

By: Israel Aragon

I've been playing soccer ever since I was five. I remember playing with sneakers that didn’t fit and when I ran they would fall off. I didn’t know all the rules and sometimes I would pass the ball to the other team but I was five years old and I had the best time of my life simply because I absolutely loved playing. As the years went by I continued playing and somehow managed to earn a spot on the varsity team my freshman year of high school. Four years of high school soccer passed and as my senior year approached I hoped I would be selected as captain. I didn’t think I had a realistic chance of being captain but when the team took a vote and my name was read I was completely shocked and overjoyed.

The season went on just like the three before it - spent playing and having fun with my friends. Soccer has always been more than a game to me. It was my favorite thing to do, I felt on top of the world. As I aged nothing changed, playing soccer was my way to get away from the world for a couple of hours. After high school soccer I was fortunate enough to play two years in collegiate soccer. I made some amazing friends during my time playing in college but on the field it was the worst two years of my soccer playing career. It was so bad that it made me temporarily despise the one thing I was truly in love with.

I stopped playing soccer after seventeen years and all of a sudden I had no idea what to do with myself. I didn’t want anything to do with soccer anymore. I thought I would never be interested in soccer ever again but luckily, I was wrong. My love for the game came back after just a few weeks away from it. It's been two years since I decided to hang up the boots but my passion for the game has only grown. In these past two years I’ve been fortunate enough to watch the game more and attend a professional game in Europe, which I recommend to anyone who has the chance to travel to Europe.

Soccer has given me some really good times and a couple of bad ones, but at the end of the day it's still my way to get away from everything and just relax.

A Look Into An Anxious Mind

A Poem by Kate Suazo

The Anxious Mind is one that is battling itself for freedom
It needs friends and it needs people
But those people probably hate you and pity you
It needs love and hugs
But love is false and it will lie
It needs faith and serenity
But life is a myth and nothing matters
It needs to be busy and work hard

But it can't even get out of bed
It needs peace and meditation
But that peace falters and meditation won't solve anything
The Anxious Mind needs things that will inspire it to smile
But the Anxious Mind refuses to love or be loved for fear of pain and loneliness
The Anxious Mind lives its life separate of the body it inhabits
It defies logic and truth and help
It isolates itself and it cowers from change;
Fear Not
The Anxious Mind is not something to suffer from
The Anxious Mind is something to live with
The Anxious Mind is something to grow with
It is not the end of all happiness, it is the beginning of growth
It needs friends and it needs people
So it loves deeply and helps all
It needs love and hugs
So it never gives up and it never falters

It needs faith and serenity
So it never stops trying and it never lets go
It needs to be busy and work hard
So its work is true and honest
It needs peace and meditation
So it finds the beauty in all and celebrates the small victories
The battle for freedom can be won

One Community, One Familia, One Strength
By: Allie Wolfe

Coming to terms with who we are, much less embracing it, is a challenging task. It takes humility, an insatiable desire for knowledge, and a good sense of humor—all of which radiated from El Centro’s recent charla guest, Levi Romero. A bilingual, ‘manito’ poet from New Mexico who has won numerous awards for his writing, Romero spent a few hours in El Centro this past September reading and discussing his breathtaking poetry.

The genuine passion that Levi Romero has for writing was immediately evidenced through the way he discussed his writing process. He continually emphasized how “getting back to the essence of your inspiration” is undeniably powerful and even remarked that being in a place where you become so engulled in a progressing piece that you lose track of time is, to him, “the most beautiful place to reside.” The key, Romero said, is to “submit to the story in front of you” and avoid writing for success, because that is when the relationship between you and your writing starts to appear inauthentic to you.

Authenticity is freely and consistently illustrated in Romero’s poetry, even regarding points in his life when being true to his genuine self was a difficult task. Growing up in the Embudo Valley of New Mexico provided Romero with many obstacles in the development and acceptance of his cultural identity—something that was a consistent topic of discussion during the Charla. Levi Romero currently identifies as “manito”—a slang originating from the Spanish word “hermano,” or brother. In this sense, Romero says, we are all brothers. We are “one community, one familia, one strength.”

The captivating sense of authenticity that is expressed through all of Levi Romero’s writings certainly permeates into the interactions he has with others. He effortlessly connects in a way that leaves one feeling humble, entertained, and deeply inspired. His sense of humor is unwavering, as demonstrated by him remarking that “the babe always goes in the middle” when posing for a photo with Fort Lewis College President Dene Kay Thomas, El Centro’s Coordinator Shirena Trujillo Long, and his wife Gina and daughter Mercedes, an FLC junior and employee at El Centro.

Additionally, Romero found a way to respond to the challenging and unavoidably introspective questions that were asked near the end of the charla with a sense of connectedness. When asked what the most influential moment in his life was, Levi Romero eloquently and effortlessly responded, “Life doesn’t work for me in a way that there’s a single important event. It isn’t defined by one moment, but by many moments and experiences. Each is as life giving, valid and exciting as the next. Treat it as a whole, and celebrate it completely rather than focusing on reliving the feel of a past moment” - a quote that radiates wisdom and true compassion for others.

To experience the beauty of Levi Romero’s writing for yourself, please come by El Centro to read from one of the books which he signed during our Charla.
A dream of mine since I can remember has always been to travel internationally sola. Since I was a young girl, I’ve always had a curious mind and a love for different cultures and languages. I speak my native languages, Dihe and Lakota and yearn to learn as many languages as I can. Two years ago I decided to take on the Spanish language.

Back in May, I decided I wanted to travel to Colombia to experience a different culture, advance my language skills and do volunteer work. I got permission from the Sociology department to complete my community service practicum for my block program in Colombia. In May, I began the process of getting my passport and saved up for my travel expenses. The feeling I had when I received my passport and purchased my plane ticket was surreal. I was so excited and nervous.

On July 12th, I left for Colombia. The dialect went from English to Spanish as soon as we left Miami. I remember feeling overwhelmed when I was handed a customs form in Spanish, I thought “Goodness I don’t understand half of this form! What am I getting into?” Yeah, great thinking before getting into the country right? Fortunately I met a generous young man on my flight who helped me get through customs at the airport in Bogotá and helped me find my terminal. Actually a lot of my help came from generous strangers, I am so grateful for those people who helped me in my time of need.

My layover in Bogotá, Colombia was long but gave me time to make sure I learned the currency exchange from U.S. dollars to Colombian pesos. I arrived in Santa Marta, Colombia the morning of July 13th and started on my way to my final destination in Playa Koralia. I was in the Magdalena region of Colombia, on the Caribbean coast of the country. Another thing I did not know was that the people in this region spoke Costaño (coastal dialect), which is like a rapid version of Spanish.

Despite calling my bank and putting in an international travel notice before I left, my account was frozen immediately after my initial attempt to get cash out; and despite me setting up an international plan with my cellular provider I had no service. I spent the day trying to get around Santa Marta to find an Internet cafe with phones to call my bank and cellular provider. All this while carrying a 40-pound north face pack and purse in 90 degree and humid weather. (By the way these two items were the only items I traveled with the entire time). When I finally found a cafe I made my calls and situated everything, but while on the phone, a sense of frustration came over me and I had a mini meltdown in a glass phone booth. The owner of the cafe offered to help me and called a friend who runs a tourist business. He was able to help me figure out how to get to Koralia, which was by bus and moto taxi; by that time it was late in the day and I decided to stay the night in Taganga, Colombia which was ten minutes from Santa Marta.

The next day I found the bus I was supposed to get on to Koralia. It was nothing fancy, just a basic bus with open windows. On my bus ride from Santa Marta to Koralia I saw vendors of all kinds (fruit, coffee, candy, hot food, water, accessories, clothing and jewelry) in the medians of the busy streets of Santa Marta to the roadsides on the outskirts of the city. I learned right away there was no air conditioning in this region where it reached the high 90’s daily and was humid. On the bus ride to Koralia there were three small pueblos with nothing more than several tiny stores and houses, very rural but gorgeous region! I rode the bus for two hours and was dropped off at a dirt road, I only knew it was the right stop for Koralia because there was a sign with a little map of how to get there. I began to walk when a motor taxi driver came and offered a ride there for 3,000 pesos, equivalent to one U.S. dollar; I definitely chose that over lugging my pack for a mile.

I volunteered for five weeks at my site through the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms organization. WWOOF is a program where you work in exchange for accommodation, food and opportunities to learn about sustainable practices and organic farming, through this program you’re able to travel to any farm you would like.

I worked with some amazing people whom I keep in contact with. They were all very welcoming and taught me their work. My duties ranged from picking ripe mangoes for the kitchen, raking leaves for the whole establishment, gathering the bad mangoes and dumping them, helping in the kitchen when someone was off or there was a big event, peeling coconut and occasionally even cooking.
because of how rapid the dialect was. I am so grateful my friends were patient with me and tried to communicate the best they could that first week. After about a week I was able to make out the dialect and it became easier for me to communicate.

The staff at the site I worked at mostly came from lower socioeconomic statuses. Some lived in surrounding pueblos, main staff from further regions of Colombia had rooms on the site, and during the high season, additional workers were brought in from as far as Bogotá, Colombia. Living and eating with these people daily made it easier to create relationships and friendships. I got along with everyone and loved the positive attitudes and humor.

I finished my time with WWOOF with about a week and a half to spare in Colombia, so I was able to travel in the Magdalena region. I spent three days in Santa Marta to complete my research project and write my paper. (Santa Marta was the nearest place they had decent wifi access). Upon completion of my paper I traveled to Parque Tayrona, which was back toward Koralia, and spent two days walking, exploring, camping and enjoying the secluded beaches. In the park alone there are nine beaches, including indigenous ruins which I hiked to as well. There was no cell service there so it was amazing to simply enjoy you, nature and other peoples company. There, I also rode a horse and slept in a hammock for the first time. I cannot put into words how amazingly beautiful Parque Tayrona is.

After visiting Parque Tayrona I travelled further up along the shore to a place called Palomino. There I spent six days with a friend who I met at Koralia. I enjoyed floating down the river on tubes, eating at local places in the pueblo, buying my first hand woven mochila, the beach of course, swimming in the river and ocean, and sleeping in hammocks along the beach. While in Colombia I met amazing people I am proud to call my friends. I experienced so many new things that gave me a sense of new appreciation.

When travelling, we as Americans consider third world countries as an eye opener. My experience, although amazing, also illustrated for me the many things that are often taken for granted in the United States that different countries do without. Some things that were rare in the region were: air conditioning, easy access to ATM machines (the closest ATM to my location was two hours), access to Wi-Fi stores, personal automobiles, supermarkets, and monetary change for bigger bills. Things that were the norm where I was: transportation was solely by bus, bike or motor taxis (yes simply put, a dirt bike), power outages for days (if there’s a power outage expect to be without electricity for a day or two), no dryers for laundry, hand washing clothes in the rivers, water sold in plastic bags, vendors of all types everywhere and close living quarters so you’re practically living in your neighbors backyard.

My time there taught me a lot not only about Colombia, but also about myself. Travelling internationally solo for the first time this summer was a life changer for me. I’ve learned things don’t always go as planned but to make the best of your situation and to be open minded to differences in culture and every day life in foreign countries. Travelling to a new place can be scary but I believe it is good because you learn so much about your abilities, character and it builds your confidence as a person. I’m glad I did this and hope my experience inspires you to venture out of your comfort zone.

Me extraño a Colombia y mis amigos, yo regresaré a Colombia pronto. Me siento muy agradecida por esta experiencia.

Sweet & Savory

By: Josephine Bachelder

I believe that microwaves are the best invention for the everyday college kid. I mean it’s the leftover resuscitor. But usually there is nothing close to homemade or even on the verge of healthy coming out of it. As someone who loves cooking and baking, I know that college life doesn’t usually provide one with many opportunities to actually do so. I’m not saying that baking this muffin in a microwave will even come close to the comfort of a home cooked meal, but it’s a start. I tried this recipe myself, and while it might not be the same as the fresh baked blueberry muffins your grandmother makes, it definitely is better than an instant cup of mac and cheese. I tried this recipe with a coworker of mine and we loved it! It’s a fun and quick meal I would recommend trying at home!

Blueberry Muffin in a cup

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp spelt flour (30g) (or ww pastry, white, or Bob’s gluten-free)
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- heaping 1/16 tsp salt
- 1-2 tbsp blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp coconut or veg oil (You can use applesauce if you don’t mind the taste of fat-free baked goods)
- 1 tbsp plus 1 tsp milk of choice (Use less if using liquid sweetener)
- pinch uncut stevia OR 1 tbsp sugar or liquid sweetener

(Continued on page 11)
Instructions:
1. Grease and spray a little dish
2. Pour batter in
3. Heat for 90-ish seconds
4. Enjoy!!!


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No Experience Required.

El Centro de Muchos Colores Fiesta on the Mesa was featured on Fort Fuel Report. Student employee Deanna Atkins works for both El Centro and the Independent and Fort Fuel. She created a piece on Fiesta on the Mesa and is using this advertisement to recruit new students to the Fort Fuel Production team.

She is majoring in Mass Communication with an anticipated graduation of May 2016.
Tough Transitions
By: Amanda Riddick

College life is really here, and it has been here for about four weeks now. It is still weird to think about how I don’t see my parents day to day like I used to. Though I do talk to them almost every night, not living with them has been a rough transition. I can honestly say that I still can’t believe I’m here as a first generation student. I’m learning these new experiences with the help and support of my family.

Taking college classes through my high school was nothing compared to actually being here. It is a very different but enlightening experience actually being on campus rather than just taking the classes, as I learn better in a college classroom setting than in a high school setting.

I’ve traveled away from home before, so it wasn’t that difficult to say goodbye. Though, I think it’s easier due to the fact that I’m still within the United States of America and more specifically the State of Colorado. My stay here still doesn’t feel real yet, maybe because I’m still here in Colorado. I do miss my family and friends a lot, I am very grateful that I have a phone to communicate with as it has made my transition much easier.

Of course preparing for college was stressful and there were many things to do before we finally left. It felt as if we got everything at last minute. However, that was not the case as we did really well with the time we had. My home life was very hard to leave behind. I was so accustomed to seeing my friends and family every day that not having that opportunity was a bit of a shock.

When I got here, everything seemed fine and to be going pretty well. The transition of putting everything into my room and making this new room my own was simple. However, when it was time for my parents to leave for quite some time it took a toll on me. It was saddening to see them leave.

At first, I was a very shy person with little to no friends but as I started to work at El Centro, I have made friends. Since El Centro, I have been outside of my dorm room more than if I didn’t have a job and participate in community events.

Because of El Centro, I have met the friends who I think will last a very long time. College has thus far provided me with a well needed opportunity to become more independent. I now feel more confident in my decision making skills as well as more confident in who I am as a human being.

I Have No Time to Manage my Time:
Tips for time management

By: Katherine Montoya

I was a professional, first class procrastinator when I came to Fort Lewis College in 2014. I had the skill to put off a four page paper till the morning it was due and instead scheduled time to zone out into my favorite series on Netflix. It was not until I became an RA (Resident Assistant) with a job at El Centro de Muchos Colores and 16 credit hours that I was convinced I needed to get rid of my nasty habit of avoiding the unavoidable and become a pro in managing my time (ew).

The most important thing about time management is to not overwhelm yourself. Do not look at everything you have to do all at once or else you will be paralyzed by the fear and not get any of it done. Schedule a certain day that you will accomplish specific things and save the rest for another day. Personally, I write down the things I have to do in my planner and check them off as I finish them (I feel more accomplished that way).

Remind yourself to take small breaks in between tasks if you are starting to feel overwhelmed and always think in terms of “I can” and “I will” get this done. Positive results come from positive thoughts!

College can be difficult at times but it is also a lot of fun, especially here at the Fort, and if you successfully manage your time you will have more time to get involved and make lasting memories.

Zip Lining:
An Unforgettable Experience

By: Andrea Dalla

I never expected zip lining to be a possibility for me personally. I thought of barely-adult kids dressed in the hottest new adventure gear swinging from steel cables and back flipping as they go. But that all changed when a friend told me that zip-lining was an item on her bucket list, and she invited me to join her. She suggested a 500+ mile road trip from Durango to one (or two) New Mexico zip line adventure courses. One touted faster speeds and tandem runs, the other over two miles of continuous soaring. Look out, I was about to join the zip flippers.

But our plans changed when I serendipitously discovered a bright orange brochure card advertising “Soaring Durango” in the hotel lobby. Just like most Durango residents, I was unaware of this world-class zip-lining experience less than 20 miles away.
The price varied and specials were offered starting from $299. A little steep for most budgets, but, after weighing the cost and length of travel to New Mexico against the convenience of parking at my house in town and catching the train a couple blocks away made shopping locally an easy decision.

We made our reservation. There was plenty of great info on their website to prepare ourselves for the day. What to bring, what to wear, what to expect. The best part of their website was the video on the home page: a go-pro view of soaring — enough to give me a rush just watching the video. A flutter of anxiety passed through my body. But a continual theme of emphasized safety kept me moving through the process — along with knowing that this was a once in a lifetime type of experience. They boast this is for people from age 4 to 94!

The first lines of the course were installed in 2003 with all of the current 27 spans completed in 2006. The owner of Soaring Colorado hands picks his Ranger teams of academically-focused healthy young adults. Each Sky Ranger and every Eco-Ranger is 100% team-oriented and hospitality-minded.

The D&SNGR is an adventure in itself. Clacking through the old growth forests in a narrow mountain canyon, passengers are lulled up and down 4,000 feet in elevation, arriving at the sleepy little mining town of Silverton. Soaring Durango guests are carried in custom designed rail cars only a portion of the canyon ride, arriving at 180 acres of privately-owned wilderness, surrounded on all sides by hundreds of thousands of acres of national forest.

Finally they encouraged all of us to take advantage of their private and exclusive outdoor patio areas on their cars. No stopping between cars is permitted for regular passengers from Durango to Silverton. A few minutes of cruising the rails in the comfortable seating and viewing the vastness of the canyon walls and far-reaching sky from those outdoor patios and I knew I was headed to a first-class adventure.

That platform is an amazing space — hearing the clack-clack of the fasteners linking as the glide across the rails. My urge was reduced to that of a canine, stretching my neck out to inhale the scent of the train cinders, pine needles and pasture grass. Grist Colorado breezes brushed my cheeks and puffy white clouds lingered in the deep baby blue skies above.

Dramatic drop-offs and narrow rock walls alternate along the route to the zip line experience. Every moment of the train ride is as captivating as the zip lining idea and as soon to be over. I detoured at the Soaring “station” looking forward to our day of adventure.

Quickly they ushered us to the harnessing tent, the lockers, and the bathrooms. Then our first guide, walking backward up a small hill and talking to us the entire time led us up to our first landing. Along the way we learned about the history of the modern-day 3 generation homestead. The lower portion was home to Ah Wilderness, a 5-star wilderness resort in the 1960’s. The upper acreage was home to another 5-star resort named Tall Timbers. The owner raised his son on the property and his son is now raising his own children there as well. Their love of this land is obvious.

Sky Rangers keep you safe throughout the day. They are there to cable you in the start of each span. They are there at the end of each span to catch you and securely un-cable you and clasp your safely line to the tree’s cable system.

There are also Eco-Rangers, dressed in easily-identified green shirts ready and excited to share their knowledge. Excited science nerds everywhere, disguised as young outdoor enthusiasts on a college break internship or cool summer job.

They are along the trails and in the trees teaching how to read the forest. One points out a 300 year old ponderosa. Another shares the beauty of an old growth white pine and the benefits of eating their needles. Others talk about how blue beetles have waited all year for their favorite tree fungus to bloom. That day is today, and before we all run up to the next landing, we think about the importance of this day to smaller creatures. We all slow down enough to think about all that is happening in this forest around us as we run on the excitement of soaring.

There we were told about the patented system that father-and-son and property owners developed and installed on the property. We learned how the system of steel cables and landing was tree-friendly. They use a patented “block and cable suspension system” so that no tree is ever penetrated by hooks, bolts or screws and the tree’s growth is never impeded. The system is designed to “hug” the tree’s trunk when weighted and relax when unweighted. I was super impressed! We began at the learning center with some basic info and off we went.

Now it was my turn on the first landing. Strapped in, cabled on, my Sky Ranger calmly said, “You’re ready, take two steps down, and one step off. No turning back now.” I took the plunge!

There was barely a moment to feel fear! Immediately it felt like I was flying as I zipped to Tree 2. Then on to Tree 3, and on and on. We zipped 13 spans before lunch. At Tree 5 they have a helicopter hoist that lifts you over a hundred feet up to gain altitude for the next span. At times there were lines next to each other and crossing above and below other zippers. One of the longest and most thrilling spans before lunch was a cruise through appropriately named “Aspen Alley.” Watching others soar through this aspen lined tunnel was exhilarating as gliding through it myself.

And lunch, first of all was delicious. It was so huge that I could have gotten a half size portion of what they offer, and that would have been plenty for me, especially when you count the homemade ice cream sandwich they give you as they remove the empty plate in front of you. The banks of the Animas River offer a tranquil setting for a succulent meal.

Time and time again we zipped on lines that crossed back and forth across the Animas River. At times we barely had time to catch our breath before being sent off on the next span. The final span is 1400+ feet long and we “zippers” can reach speeds of 45 mph! Unreal!! Truly an experience of a lifetime!
Fiesta on the Mesa

By: Kate Suazo and Allie Wolfe

El Centro De Muchos Colores has never been purely about the center, though it has become a home away from home to countless individuals. It has never been about the pictures or the mural on the wall, though it stands as a source of inspiration for many. It has never been just about the food, though it resonates with those who lack the comfort of a home cooked meal or understand the curative powers of food created with soul. El Centro is, and has always been, about the people.

After working at El Centro for a few years, I have been able to attend, assist in the planning of and help create El Centro's biggest event of the year- Fiesta on the Mesa- twice. This event, held at the beginning of September to celebrate the kickoff of Hispanic Heritage Month, exemplifies the heart and soul of El Centro. It is an event full of life, laughter, Hispanic culture and, thanks to the captivating music of this year's band called Grupo Severo, dancing! The positive music and atmosphere fostered an environment in which students, teachers, community members and anyone interested could enjoy the festivities and learn about a beautiful and rich culture while simultaneously learning to appreciate their own.

With over 1,000 individuals in attendance this year, this event served as a catalyst for cultural awareness. This is part of why this event is so central to our campus; the mindfulness and appreciation cultivated during it lasts much longer than the one night event. Not only does the event attract Fort Lewis College students and faculty, but also community members from our surrounding areas. This widespread outreach aides in developing a sense of pride that resonates through our community and campus. However brief, the impact of Fiesta on the Mesa is always lasting.

One night, one fiesta, one event can birth a community that is well informed, celebrated, and happy. And that is what El Centro is all about- taking steps to make that happen, one joyous and fun-filled event at a time.
I am **Israel Aragon**, a junior here at the Fort. I am a psychology major, a common ground facilitator, a student ambassador, and the work-study student manager here at El Centro. Hailing from Bernalillo New Mexico, my favorite food is homemade by grandma tortillas. I love dancing in the rain, meeting new people, and going on adventures. My best friend is my mom, and I am not ashamed because my mom is the coolest. I love working at El Centro because it is my home away from home and the people rock. I hope to graduate next year and change the world.

Hello my name is **Stacy John**; I am a returning staff member to El Centro de Muchos Colores. I am currently a junior, double majoring in Sociology and Spanish. I am originally from Arizona but have resided in Colorado for about seven years. I identify as Diné and Dakota. On my free time I like to hike, enjoy the outdoors and spend time with the people I love.

My name is **Kate Suazo**, a junior here at the Fort. I am a psychology major, a common ground facilitator, a student ambassador, and the work-study student manager here at El Centro. Hailing from Bernalillo New Mexico, my favorite food is homemade by grandma tortillas. I love dancing in the rain, meeting new people, and going on adventures. My best friend is my mom, and I am not ashamed because my mom is the coolest. I love working at El Centro because it is my home away from home and the people rock. I hope to graduate next year and change the world.

Hello my name is **Allie Wolfe** and I am a sophomore double majoring in Psychology and Art here at Fort Lewis, hoping to pursue a career in Art Therapy. This semester has been my 3rd working at El Centro but my first serving as the editor of La Movida! I also work as a barista at Durango Joes. I am a feminist, an animal rights activist, a big band and swing enthusiast, a Common Ground trained Diversity Facilitator and an artist. I am passionate about helping others and I desperately want a pet pig. Although I am far from my home in Bentonville, Arkansas I love Durango with all my heart and I am so excited to see where this year takes me #FeelTheBern #BernBabyBern

My name is **Noah Garcia**. I was born in Northern New Mexico. I am a junior studying Engineering with a Spanish minor. I am highly involved with Village Aid Project-Engineers without Borders and I cherish my time traveling and speaking Spanish while on projects with other FLC students in Nicaragua. I enjoy working as a tutor in El Centro and as a student ambassador with the admissions office.

My name is **Katherine Montoya** and I am from Rio Rancho, New Mexico. I am a sophomore here at the Fort as well as an RA (Resident Assistant) for West Hall and a dedicated member of TRIO. I am majoring in Sociology and Human Services and I am passionate about helping others and educating people about resources on campus. This is my first year working at El Centro and I am extremely excited to meet new people and learn new skills. Latino College Day is the reason why I decided to attend Fort Lewis College. It felt like home to me and everyone was very welcoming and friendly. That is why I am enthusiastic about helping plan Latino College Day this year. I know how important El Centro is to me and I want to make it that much more important to someone else.
Hello my name is Deryk Trujillo. It’s my first year here at El Centro and I love it here! I’m from Pueblo, CO. I’m a graphic design major and love to make art and listen to music! My favorite artist is Andy Goldsworthy and my favorite cereal is Reeses Puffs. I love to go snowboarding and hiking. My favorite color is Green. My favorite band is AER and Atmosphere.

My name is Catie Welch and I am a sophomore here at Fort Lewis College. As of right now my major is undeclared but I am leaning towards journalism with a minor in art. I am from Bel-lingham, Washington but have now fallen in love with Durango. I feel very fortunate to have spent my time in two wonderfully beautiful places! I love to spend time outdoors, hiking, camping, and gardening, I also love to experiment with art. I am super excited to be a part of El Centro and to see what the year brings.

I am Bryan Dalla-Cundiff, a junior at FLC. I am pursuing a major in Anthropology, and a native of Durango. Some of my favorite activities are camping on top of mountains, white water rafting, and walking my pit-bull. While being of Italian descent, I enjoy learning from different cultures and self-identify as human. I am a lover of music, science, history, philosophy, poetry, and the world. I see things for what they are, regardless of the consensus, and have the bravery and imagination to dream of what could be. I am part of Program for Academic Advancement, as well as El Centro, and I am a good guy to know.
I am Josephine Bachelder, I was born in Boulder, Colorado and raised in a small town called Erie only 20 minutes away from Boulder. I am a Freshman at Fort Lewis College, aspiring to major in Organismal or Micro Biology with a minor in Chemistry, all in four years. While my major and minor are purely science, I love the outdoors and everything that comes with it, though mostly skiing. Along with binge watching Netflix and working at ElCentro, I draw and sculpt when I can get my hands on the materials.

I am Andrea Dalla, a 5th generation Durango native. I am now a senior at FLC and am a dual major in Sociology and Psychology. I hope to be able to counsel juveniles and/or people re-integrating into society after being in prison. I am a single mother of two grown children who are both amazing individuals. I very much enjoy my internship with Judge Martha Minot at La Plata County Court.

Hi! My name is Jasmin Gonzales and I am a junior at FLC. I identify as Native American as I was born and raised in San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM. I am currently majoring in Elementary Education but after I graduate I hope to pursue another degree in Special Education. This semester I am taking on the role of President for Club del Centro and I am very excited to see what this semester has for me. I love music (especially from the 40’s and 50’s) and I enjoy being friends. If you ever see me in El Centro don’t be afraid to say hi!

I am Alex Blocker, I am originally from the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago’s southside. He began studying violin at a young age, and by high school that had led to his participations in open mics, talent shows, orchestra concerts, and music production. He had always been a little different than most of the other kids, so when he was 18, his violin teacher made the recommendation that Alex try a small school called Fort Lewis College. Alex had never been to Colorado, but was so hungry for an adventure and a change of scenery, that he gambled and took the trip to the southwest. The rest is history; since then Blocker has been active in the arts community of Durango.

In recent months has been working with New Mexican DJ/producer Kino Benally aka DJ Beeso on new singles as they learn from one another’s cultures and musical background. Blocker had never been exposed to Native American ways of life, but has enjoyed every second of it since living in the heart of the southwest.

Blocker is hoping to graduate from Fort Lewis College this year with his degree in music education with a focus in violin. Amongst other things, Blocker learned to love the educational process and the many different cultural existences of the world.

My name is Deanna Atkins, a senior majoring in English Communications at Fort Lewis College. I am a news anchor for The Independent News Magazine’s Fort Fuel Video News department and I am a news anchor for 4CornersTV.com as well. Upon graduation, I aspire to be a news anchor and host at a local or regional news agency. I have always loved journalism but I have a specific yearning to be involved with televised news. I am from Cortez, Colorado where I graduated in the class of 2012. I play the flute and have done so for twelve years. I am also a certified snowboard instructor where I have eleven years of experience under my belt. I love reading, baking, dancing and photography.

Hola! My name is Mercedes Romero and I was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the heart of the South Valley. My ancestors were among the first Spanish settlers to cross over to New Mexico from Spain. I have deep-seeded cultural ties to my Hispanic heritage, its history, and its people. I am a Junior this year at The Fort, majoring in Cellular and Molecular Biology. I love going on adventures, bumping music, dancing to Shakira, doing yoga, and meeting new people so holla at your girl.

Hola! My name is Leighton Scott, this is my first year at Fort Lewis and I’m loving every minute of it! I hail from Farmington, New Mexico and love working at El Centro. I am studying to be a biochemistry major. In addition to being part a part of Fort Lewis! Then also secluding myself in my room to watch all my shows.
Ballet Folklorico de Durango Dance Classes
First class begins Monday, Aug. 31, held weekly
Mondays, 5:30-6:30 pm., all levels are welcome

Breakfast Burrito Sale
Wednesday, Oct. 7, 8-10 a.m.

Real History of the Americas
Monday, Oct. 12, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Las Cafeteras Live in Concert
Monday, Oct. 12, 7:30 p.m. Community Concert Hall

Film Screening: When the Mountains Tremble
Wednesday, Oct. 14, 4-6 p.m.

Frida Kahlo Movie Night
Tuesday, Oct. 20, 6:00pm

Breakfast Burrito Sale
Wednesday, Oct. 28 8-10 a.m.

Dia De Los Muertos
Friday, Oct. 30, 11am-3:30pm

Hispanic Youth Conference
Saturday, Nov. 14 in Ignacio

Common Ground Diversity Training
Nov. 5-7, contact: stoffer_n@fortlewis.edu

Trip Around the World Dinner
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 6:00pm

Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 23-28

Tamales & Biscochitos Workshop
Tuesday, Dec. 1, 6:00pm


Cesar Chavez Day
Thursday, March 31, movie screening throughout day:
“Viva la Causa” from Teaching Tolerance, altar up all week.

Cascarones Workshop for Easter
Friday, March 25 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cinco de Mayo at Gazpacho’s Restaurant (*tentative)
Saturday, May 7, TBD

All events take place at El Centro unless noted, Student Union 40
Schedule is subject to change, updates at: www.fortlewis.edu/elcentro

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 Hispanic 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 herein are not necessarily those of El Centro de Muchos Colores or 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: (970) 247-7654.