Being My Own Best Friend

By: Kate Suazo

The path to self-compassion is a rough one in today’s world. We are taught to put others before ourselves and we believe that someone always has it worse. This idea that our pain is somehow less than another person’s is ludicrous. Think about your best friend in the whole world. Really take a moment and think about them. If they came to you and confided in you about something that is causing them pain, would you tell them to suck it up and get over themselves? Probably not.

This is the idea behind self-compassion, having an unconditional friendship with oneself. This may seem silly or ridiculous, but it is the best way to find peace with ourselves and with the world around us. Once we can treat ourselves with respect and kindness, only then can we truly treat others with the same kindness. It is a human experience to feel pain, but it is a personal choice to suffer. We ruminate over our struggles and failures causing negative thoughts to become negative beliefs towards our own selves. This vicious cycle can’t stay contained in our own minds, it slowly leaks out to the people around us, causing our compassion toward others to become stained with our disappointment in ourselves.

We each have the power to stop this. By treating your heart with love, by giving your judgement the space to grow into wisdom, and by allowing your mind to be present in each moment, the joy of becoming self-compassionate can be yours. Self-compassion does not make you selfish nor does it allow for self-pity, but, because it is a learned skill, it allows for continued growth into a
better self and a better friend to society. The ten tips outlined below are not a one size fits all type of lesson. The journey to self-compassion is very personal. Therefore take these tips and shift them to fit the person you wish to be. Mold them into an outline that you can change any time you need to.

Ten Tips to Self-Compassion

1. Do not ignore the suffering, recognize it.
2. Respond to your suffering with care.
3. Treat yourself how you would treat your best friend.
4. Support yourself - even when you fail.
5. Reframe the way you see your own imperfections.
6. Make your own well-being a top priority.
7. Remember you are part of a team - Team Human.
8. Self-Criticism is not a useful tool but Self-Care is.
9. Be honest with yourself without being mean.
10. Self-Compassion can be learned, you are never done practicing.

How Can Coloring Mandalas Help You?

By: Samantha Garcia

It seems that everyone has started coloring to relieve stress or to relax these days! Why is it that all of these "adult" coloring books are popping up in stores more frequently than ever? Many people have become obsessed with coloring wonderful circular shapes called mandalas as well as secret gardens. What is it that fascinates us so much with filling in the blank spaces between black outlines? Well I hope that today I can give you a few answers to the many questions about the healing powers of mandalas and why coloring them can help you feel a little less stressed.

So, what exactly is a mandala? They are actually an ancient symbol which are used universally to promote healing and other positive states of being. Believe it or not, the mandala is actually featured in many large religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Christianity. The mandala is a geometric shape that has no beginning or end. The circular shape promotes relaxation, enhances your creativity, and balances the body's energies. In both eastern and western cultures, the mandala has come to symbolize many things that overall promote the wellbeing of an individual. There are three main ways an individual can use a mandala for healing. One: Mandala meditation, which is when you choose a meaningful mandala and take time to set and intention and focus on that while observing the mandala. Two: Creating your own mandala, which can be very healing because there is no real rhyme or reason to how to make a mandala. You can use natural substances like rocks or flowers, you can use pens and paint, or even sand, like Tibetan monks do for weeks at a time. Three: Through coloring a mandala, which is what you will be learning a bit more about today. It includes setting an intention and choosing a mandala accordingly, but then you allow yourself to use your colors to guide how the mandala will end up looking. Once again, there is no right or wrong way to color a mandala, because it is all about your intuition guiding you to color.

What's up with all of these coloring books? Well one of the easiest and most effective ways to experience the healing power of the mandala is by using mandala coloring pages. Coloring is fun, relaxing, and it's a great way to express your creativity. The best part about coloring these beautiful mandalas is that there is no wrong way to do this! You can color anywhere, it brings you back to being a child, and it's also a fun experience to share with groups or do alone. So break out your colored pencils, brew a nice cup of tea, and take some time to relax and meditate on your mandala.

Here is a mandala for you to color, courtesy of http://photo.prima.fr/coloriage-anti-stress-et-mandala-gratuits-pour-adulte-6863
Reducing Carbon Footprints, One Step at a Time

By: Catie Welch

The earth is a place that fosters the human race, animals and plants. It gives these things the nourishment they require to stay alive. So if the earth provides so much for us, why wouldn’t we protect it? To start this protection process, individuals must focus on what they can do themselves to decrease their carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by an organization, event, or an individual. Greenhouse gases are hurting the earth with consequences of that. When you look at most streets there is usually a plethora of cars continuously coming and going. We should think about the driving a car. While it is easy to fall into the convenience of using a car everywhere you go, we should think about the consequences of that. When you look at most streets there is usually a plethora of cars continuously coming and going. That means a constant flow of carbon being infused into the earth.

Energy efficiency can include a lot of different aspects, but the biggest thing to focus on is turning off and limiting sources of energy as much as possible (lights, heat, water usage etc.).

Two: Explain with tremendous love who your parents are to your dude or dudette. Are they interested to know more? You can tell if they ask you more questions about your family (don’t forget the siblings are usually included in these interactions), or if they tell you about their own families. You are learning more about each other. Cutie if they have expressed interest to learn more, they probably will not balk at the invitation to meet the folks.

Three: Pick a casual time in the not-too-distant future for introductions to be made. If your parents come to visit you here in Durango, include your gal or guy for one of your meals and a hangout, but be sure to have quality alone time with your parents too. If you are going for a weekend visit for an occasion that is not too private, bring him or her along! An example: sister-in-law’s baby shower: too private. Plus the pressure! Your family’s annual ice-fishing: that sounds like fun! Just make sure it’s not an event where everyone watches you two all over each other, and that you’re able to display what a mature-and-adors young couple you are by allowing them the space to chat with your parents. If you live far away from our beloved Durango and can only introduce them over an extended break, make sure you follow the previous pointers of giving yourself quality alone time with mom and pop, and your partner the time and space to know them too.

Four: It would be nice for your siblings to be included in the picture. That is, if they are mature enough to handle it and make you look good (no 11-year old brother going around showing off your mortifying pubescent photos, or a sister striking for an ideal revenge – it happens). If your siblings like your guy or gal, that’s practically a shoo-in invitation to invite them to other events: birthday parties, graduation, sibling-meet-ups, grandma’s bingo party, etc. Plus, your siblings always have your back (ideally)!

Extra friendly tips: Tell your parents not to push any larger commitments onto you two. Your focus should be your education!

Tell your partner of some not-too-subtle annoyances your parents or siblings have. They are human after all, and your gal or guy could use a heads-up about some things.

Dad likes to smoke inside the house. Mom likes extra-long hugs. Your brother has stinky feet that he can’t smell. Your darling sister uses very colorful language. All good things to know. Some with telling your family about your pal? Maybe they chew their nails incessantly, or say um/like/I dunno at the beginning of every sentence.

Try not to correct your loved ones in front of one another unless it’s a major no-no (dehumanizing women? NO! Racist remarks? NO! Kicking the homeless kitten? NO NO NO!). Everyone’s families, and everyone will hopefully learn smoother communicative skills, including yourself. Keep an open heart with Love.

The earth is a place that fosters the human race, animals and plants. It gives these things the nourishment they require to stay alive. So if the earth provides so much for us, why wouldn’t we protect it? To start this protection process, individuals must focus on what they can do themselves to decrease their carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by an organization, event, or an individual. Greenhouse gases are hurting the earth with consequences of that. When you look at most streets there is usually a plethora of cars continuously coming and going. That means a constant flow of carbon being infused into the earth.

Energy efficiency can include a lot of different aspects, but the biggest thing to focus on is turning off and limiting sources of energy as much as possible (lights, heat, water usage etc.). Seeing someone*, and start dropping a line here or there in every other phone conversation major, just let mom or dad know someone is around you. Also, since we are serious undergrads, explain how they enhance your journey of learning here at FLR rather than how they take time away from it (by the way, don’t be with a time-sucker!). Your partner should care about your education and commitment to it as you should. Schedule a weekly study date or two with them, but not all of your study hours.... else you’ll never get much work done, *wink*.

Two: Explain with tremendous love who your parents are to your dude or dudette. Are they interested to know more? You can tell if they ask you more questions about your family (don’t forget the siblings are usually included in these interactions), or if they tell you about their own families. You are learning more about each other. Cutie if they have expressed interest to learn more, they probably will not balk at the invitation to meet the folks.

Three: Pick a casual time in the not-too-distant future for introductions to be made. If your parents come to visit you here in Durango, include your gal or guy for one of your meals and a hangout, but be sure to have quality alone time with your parents too. If you are going for a weekend visit for an occasion that is not too private, bring him or her along! An example: sister-in-law’s baby shower: too private. Plus the pressure! Your family’s annual ice-fishing: that sounds like fun! Just make sure it’s not an event where everyone watches you two all over each other, and that you’re able to display what a mature-and-adors young couple you are by allowing them the space to chat with your parents. If you live far away from our beloved Durango and can only introduce them over an extended break, make sure you follow the previous pointers of giving yourself quality alone time with mom and pop, and your partner the time and space to know them too.

Four: It would be nice for your siblings to be included in the picture. That is, if they are mature enough to handle it and make you look good (no 11-year old brother going around showing off your mortifying pubescent photos, or a sister striking for an ideal revenge – it happens). If your siblings like your guy or gal, that’s practically a shoo-in invitation to invite them to other events: birthday parties, graduation, sibling-meet-ups, grandma’s bingo party, etc. Plus, your siblings always have your back (ideally)!

Extra friendly tips: Tell your parents not to push any larger commitments onto you two. Your focus should be your education!

Tell your partner of some not-too-subtle annoyances your parents or siblings have. They are human after all, and your gal or guy could use a heads-up about some things.

Dad likes to smoke inside the house. Mom likes extra-long hugs. Your brother has stinky feet that he can’t smell. Your darling sister uses very colorful language. All good things to know. Some with telling your family about your pal? Maybe they chew their nails incessantly, or say um/like/I dunno at the beginning of every sentence.

Try not to correct your loved ones in front of one another unless it’s a major no-no (dehumanizing women? NO! Racist remarks? NO! Kicking the homeless kitten? NO NO NO!). Everyone’s families, and everyone will hopefully learn smoother communicative skills, including yourself. Keep an open heart with Love.

The earth is a place that fosters the human race, animals and plants. It gives these things the nourishment they require to stay alive. So if the earth provides so much for us, why wouldn’t we protect it? To start this protection process, individuals must focus on what they can do themselves to decrease their carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by an organization, event, or an individual. Greenhouse gases are hurting the earth with consequences of that. When you look at most streets there is usually a plethora of cars continuously coming and going. That means a constant flow of carbon being infused into the earth.

Energy efficiency can include a lot of different aspects, but the biggest thing to focus on is turning off and limiting sources of energy as much as possible (lights, heat, water usage etc.).
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, 2016

By: Alex Blocker

Martin Luther King Day celebration on the Fort Lewis College campus continues to progress toward bigger and better things progressing into 2016. We had the pleasure of welcoming Shamell Bell of the Black Lives Matters (BLM) LA. Chapter, as well as Keno Evol, writer from the Twin Cities, and others to lead three days of workshops and seminars on the continued efforts of activists today. FLC continues the tradition of the march across campus accompanied by the Concert choir, The BLM representatives, members of the newly formed Black Student Union, as well as various members of the student body, faculty, and Durango community.

This was the second year that I had the pleasure of leading the MLK day open mic. This gives the attendees a chance to speak their minds, share their crafts, and hear from their peers regarding the impact that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has had on our lives. Like most open mics, it took a few speakers to break the ice, but before long there was a seamless flow of eager participants, sharing everything from personal accounts of progressing past racial angst, breathtaking spoken word, and pleas for peace and respect for police, just to scratch the surface.

The subject of race relations is touchy, and even uncomfortable for many. The motto of “Black Lives Matter” was swiftly countered with “All Lives Matter,” but many see this as an avoidance of the issues BLM is trying to bring to the forefront. I would agree with Ms. Bell when she made the statement “…we need to focus on why a movement like Black Lives Matters even needed to be created in the first place.”

I tried to keep my own speaking to a minimum, but in moments where I did provide my perspective, I stressed that the movement is not a black vs. white campaign. Instead, the movement seeks to draw attention to issues of inequity in the minority community. The movement was first and foremost sparked by the uncovering of multiple stories in the last few years of young black males being slain by police with no explanation, and little justice when foul play was discovered.

We wanted to make January 18th a day of honoring a man’s dream of people of different walks of life living and working in harmony towards a better tomorrow. If Dr. King had been in attendance that day, I think the Durango community would have been an impressive sight, as it was bursting with diversity and ideas on this past MLK day!

More Than a Number

By: Bryan Dalla-Cundiff

When it comes to the subject of college, there are many things one takes into consideration. What study to focus on? Where’s the best school and location? Is it worth the investment? Am I doing this for me or for expectation? These are just some among the many questions we have all pondered before setting out on this journey. If I had to give advice to those on the fence of this quarrel, or to the young ones that will soon set foot down this path, I would say...wait. Being a 28 year-old junior, the most valuable piece of advice I have learned through my experience is to be wild and go crazy while you’re young.

It is very rewarding to get all of the adolescent madness out of one’s system before moving onto the course of higher education and career development. It is apparent that I have a greater sense of clarity, focus, and understanding than I did in my early twenties. Within this discovery I have personally found the best process by which to learn content more fluidly, rather than constant drilling in order to regurgitate it back for a test. Constantly benefiting from the many different perceptions we all have, without seeking emotional confirmation, helps to form an even greater and more concise understanding.

To be honest, I am more interested in my peers and professors insight than “where’s the party at?” Not that I’m above having a good time by any means, but I’m rather content in my past experiences. Life at 21 is driven by fun, social developments, and being able to indulge in legal adulthood while still having a relative teenage mentality. It is no wonder why many see college as high school with more liberty. To not, would be to suppress one’s natural curiosity and essential contentment by going against the grain or going insane. Yet the majority of college students are expected to build their deeper academic foundation, crucial to their career path, during this period.

Of course there are expectations to every rule, but this simple principle seems to be the most evident for hindering students success. In Europe, the average age of college students are 27-30. I feel it is very important to explore these normal adjustments to young adulthood, and figure out life in the real world, to better shape the interests, goals, and expectations of what one wants to do with their time on the planet. I’ve got to admit though, it always makes me smile to see others so adamant and convinced of their opinions with minimal knowledge on the issues. Ahh, to be young...
**Mi Rio (My River)**

By: Noah Garcia

I will always remember growing up near the Rio Grande, its murky waters mixing into my life and soul. The magic of the river has always amazed me and always will. The way it seems to capture perfect moments framing them in your mind for eternity has continually baffled me. This magic brings me to the first day I felt the power of the river. The power I felt and the magic that I shared my spirit with seemed to emanate from not only the river itself but from the area encompassing the river and all of its power.

It was a hot sunny day, but near the river it was cool and fresh. My stoic father took my two brothers and I down to the river to walk and explore the sacred land. We traversed our normal path that skirted around the dense, deep cottonwood forest that separated us from our beloved river. When we came upon it, we stood and tossed stones into the water, as we always did. There they would splash, wobble and sink into the dark depths below. When we had finished playing, our pockets heavy with the findings of the day, my father said, "Let’s go, changos," and we all eagerly followed, almost always compliant to my gentle but firm father. He told us, "Today we are going a different way." We were excited and confused, so we followed.

We walked along the edge of the forest. We passed the sea of mystical stones where we would spend long hours at a time scouring the ground for the most precious ones we could find. We passed the home of the fairies, which appeared as a log that would glow mysteriously and magically in the night. Then finally we came to a point in the tree line where the forest broke in the form of a small passage before forming again, creating an almost impenetrable wall. My father beckoned us to enter the small opening, and we did, almost reluctantly. As we entered the cryptic tunnel that led to great unknowns, we were swallowed by darkness, but it was a darkness accompanied by a cool, relaxing breeze. We continued along the strange path in silence, as was our unspoken custom. This way any wild life that chose to present itself would be silently welcomed.

Soon we came upon a place where it was necessary to crawl. I dropped to my hands and knees and felt my heavy pockets weighing me down, the contents seeking the earth from my mind. Then finally we came to a point in the dark depths below. When we had finished playing, our pockets heavy with the findings of the day, my father said, "Let’s go, changos," and we all eagerly followed, almost always compliant to my gentle but firm father. He told us, "Today we are going a different way." We were excited and confused, so we followed.

We passed the sea of mystical stones where we would spend long hours at a time scouring the ground for the most precious ones we could find. The wall that I would later realize belonged to my cousin. It recently appeared, and soon we happened upon a stone wall. My father beckoned us to enter the small opening, and we did, almost reluctantly. As we entered the cryptic tunnel that led to great unknowns, we were swallowed by darkness, but it was a darkness accompanied by a cool, relaxing breeze. We continued along the strange path in silence, as was our unspoken custom. This way any wild life that chose to present itself would be silently welcomed.

Soon we came upon a place where it was necessary to crawl. I dropped to my hands and knees and felt my heavy pockets weighing me down, the contents seeking the earth from my mind. Then finally we came to a point in the dark depths below. When we had finished playing, our pockets heavy with the findings of the day, my father said, "Let’s go, changos," and we all eagerly followed, almost always compliant to my gentle but firm father. He told us, "Today we are going a different way." We were excited and confused, so we followed.

We passed the sea of mystical stones where we would spend long hours at a time scouring the ground for the most precious ones we could find. We passed the home of the fairies, which appeared as a log that would glow mysteriously and magically in the night. Then finally we came to a point in the tree line where the forest broke in the form of a small passage before forming again, creating an almost impenetrable wall. My father beckoned us to enter the small opening, and we did, almost reluctantly. As we entered the cryptic tunnel that led to great unknowns, we were swallowed by darkness, but it was a darkness accompanied by a cool, relaxing breeze. We continued along the strange path in silence, as was our unspoken custom. This way any wild life that chose to present itself would be silently welcomed.

Soon we came upon a place where it was necessary to crawl. I dropped to my hands and knees and felt my heavy pockets weighing me down, the contents seeking the earth from which they came. We crawled along the soft grass that had recently appeared, and soon we happened upon a stone wall. The wall that I would later realize belonged to my cousin. It seemed mystifying and foreign to me. We navigated the wall single file, its flat top acting as an adventurous cliff edge. Then, to my utter amazement, we were back at my house, and so we did, almost reluctantly. As we entered the cryptic tunnel that led to great unknowns, we were swallowed by darkness, but it was a darkness accompanied by a cool, relaxing breeze. We continued along the strange path in silence, as was our unspoken custom. This way any wild life that chose to present itself would be silently welcomed.

Soon we came upon a place where it was necessary to crawl. I dropped to my hands and knees and felt my heavy pockets weighing me down, the contents seeking the earth from which they came. We crawled along the soft grass that had recently appeared, and soon we happened upon a stone wall. The wall that I would later realize belonged to my cousin. It seemed mystifying and foreign to me. We navigated the wall single file, its flat top acting as an adventurous cliff edge. Then, to my utter amazement, we were back at my house, and I could see the red roof peeling over the many rows of apple trees. I could smell the sweet scent of the apples as they were beginning to ripen. Soon it would be time to harvest the succulent apples and the sweet cherries, all the while living alongside us. The river would continue its existence exerting power and essence, feeding our souls for the many years to come; souls that are together as a family living and thriving off of each other as is our custom and culture.
Indigenous People’s Day

By: Israel Aragon

Every year on the second Monday of October, most Americans get a day off from work or school in honor of Christopher Columbus’ discovery of America in 1492. The holiday has always been a controversial subject, as the discovery of the Americas led to European colonization and ultimately the extinction of most of the native cultures. However, more and more cities around the country are deciding to reverse the holiday and celebrate it as Indigenous People’s Day, and honor the indigenous groups’ contributions to the country and their history. For years, Native Americans have pressured local governments to acknowledge the mass atrocities committed by the European colonization.

Before 2015 only California and South Dakota, with a few cities around the country, were the places that had abolished Columbus Day and observed Indigenous People’s Day. In the past year nine other cities around the country have now either abolished Columbus Day altogether or have decided to celebrate Indigenous People’s Day simultaneously. These cities include Albuquerque, Portland, St. Paul, and Olympia. While the celebration of Indigenous People’s Day gains momentum around the country, it marks a significant victory.

Back to My (Routes)

By: Magaly Torres

This past February I made the decision to leave the country for the first time. So I saved up every extra penny I could, and did it. I spent a total of three and a half weeks outside of the country — two of which were spent in my family’s homeland, México, and 10 were spent in the beautiful island of Cuba. This is the story of my first trip to San Pancho in Jalisco, Mexico.

On June 12th my older sister and I were welcomed into the open arms of our Tía, Tío, hermana, hermano, papa, and a handful of other family members — some of which we had never met. I was overjoyed, yet slightly flustered. Flustered at the fact that the Spanish I had spoken for 21 years was, in their eyes, the most broken-up, basic Spanish ever, which made some communication difficult. (Try explaining the word “weird” to a person from Mexico who has never spoken a word of English in their life, you’ll understand.) From the moment we left the airport my adventure began. It quickly became clear how different Mexico is from the United States.

The drive out of Guadalajara to San Pancho was about an hour long but it sure felt longer. The truck we rode in had one long back seat with no seatbelts, a sarape to cover the seat, and empty beer cans covering the ground. I saw maybe one speed limit sign the entire way, not that we or any other car followed it. We ignored the handful of no passing zone signs as we would pass cars on the curvy mountainous roads, with scooters and motorcycles driving between semis and cars. There seemed to be no rules at all on the roads. We would even pass policías along the way and my dad would say, “Those aren’t the traffic police, don’t worry.” After that one ride I decided no one would ever catch me driving a car in México.

Trying to explain how I felt when we got into San Pancho is hard for me, I was overjoyed and excited yet discouraged with seeing some of the poverty. Overall though I was grateful that I finally arrived and was able to be with my parents who were began to show me around. We stayed at my agües house which was colored pink on the outside, with two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, a living and dining room, a flower room, and even had a tree de Lima in the back and a Nopal out in front.

The main attraction was as the center of the pueblo, La Plaza. There was a huge church and a park where most, if not all of the town would gather at in the evenings and on weekends. Fridays and Saturdays were interesting to say the least. During the day most of the town was out and about walking or sitting at the plaza, and when evening arrived, all of the young men drove around the plaza in their cars, trucks, and motorcycles blasting music as if to “woo” the women at the plaza. My sister and I could not get enough. The ladies at the plaza would dress up and simply watch while enjoying their ice cream as all these men would drive around them. I guess that’s one way to find your love.

Sundays were always the best days. Most of the town would (Continued on page 7)
go to the church and hang out at the plaza for most of the day. On this particular day of the week none of the men would ride around because the streets were closed off (so no “wooing”). But this was the day they sold bionicos! What is a bionico? It is cut up fresh fruit, doused in some sort of yogurt or crema and topped with coconut, granola, and raisins—basically anything sweet you can think of. It is amazing, especially when you love sweets as much as I do!

Which leads me to the food. I always heard that the food from Mexico did not compare to the food in the U.S. but as I had never gone, I didn’t really believe it. But man is it true. Like Coca-Cola? Better in Mexico. Chicken? Better in Mexico. Mangoes? Better. Salsa? Better. You know that Taco at that one place that you wish you could have once more because it was SO good? Yup, you guessed it, it would be better in Mexico. Even the beans. It is all fresher and all tastes superior than it does in the U.S. Every morning we would hear a cow mooing and my parents would say, “It looks like they brought in the meat for tomorrow.” Whatever it is they put in, or should I say don’t put in like the U.S. does, makes the food the most delicious ever and I definitely could not get enough of it.

One of the coolest things while being in San Pancho was going to el rancho that my Dad owns. It is a couple acres with lots of trees and some Mescal growing on it. The view from up there was unbelievable, it actually reminded me of Colorado; a sea of mountains everywhere I looked. I learned the hard way that you shouldn’t touch the mescal plants, those suckers feel as if you are getting cut by a thousand needles and then some. Even though my dad said, “cuidado, duelo bien feo,” I guess I didn’t take the memo too well. Learned. The best part about being out there was learning everything we have. After the land was passed on to my dad, there have been over fifty trees planted! All of them are fruit trees ranging from limas, aguacates, and so many more. They were too young to bear fruit but you can count on my going back and picking off a fresh aguacate to make a toarta in a couple of years.

My last couple of days were spent with my older sister, Great Tia and Great Tio up in the city of Guadalajara. My uncle’s house was smaller than my Agües but more “up to date” with technology. They had a small yard made of cement and one solo mango tree. The house was on a slant and the view was not of mountains but of endless homes and buildings. Very different from my parents pueblo but still very beautiful in its own way.

My great Aunt and Unde took us everywhere from downtown- even to Lake Chapala to watch Los Indios Voladores. The places, people, and food were all unbelievable! Every morning we woke up and ate then headed out the door to our next adventure. Whether it was going to Tobolandia where my sister and I had the entire water park to ourselves, eating fresh fish from Lake Chapala, shoe shopping at the hundreds of shoe stores, drinking limonda out of a baggie or just enjoying an ice cream cone on a bench, we enjoyed every moment.

Meeting family members I had never met, visiting old family members, and getting to know where my family and roots are from, made me feel rejuvenated and empowered. By the time I left my Spanish was much better and my appreciation towards my roots grew a lot more than I would have ever imagined. Those two weeks were some of the best days of my life and I cannot wait to go back.

(Continued from page 6, “Back to My Routes”)

De Donde Yo Soy
By: Mercedes Romero

Yo soy de casas hecho de adobe y corriendo afuera
I am laced with the feathers of Urracas que cubren el cielo negro

Yo soy de corridos y oraciones
From jokes with a punch line in Español

Soy de la tierra de Aztlan, y mi tía Precilla’s tortillas
I am from Padilla, Duran, Rodarte, Trujillo, Griego, Romero y mi sangre esta entintado con la rosa de las montañas sandia

And crab apples too high for me to reach
Know Before You Go
By: Amanda Riddick

Traveling can be intimidating if you don’t know what you’re doing. Whether you’re traveling for school or for an adventure, it’s always important to have fun. You’re traveling into the unknown, go into it with an open mind, and stay relaxed but alert. Enjoy the things that you’ve never seen before and may not see again. So here is a tip:

Know where you want to travel (location, location, location!)

Weather: Plan appropriate clothing items based on weather reports.

Currency/Money: Get a Travel X card. (Prepaid card with predetermined currency/currencies on it). Own a credit card? Let the bank know you’re leaving or you’ll be left with a frozen account.

How much are you going to spend?: Take into consideration hotel costs, youth hostel fees, food prices, clothes and laundry costs, souvenirs, etc.

Destinations: How will you get around? Walking, couch surfing, driving, getting a cabbie?

Packing: Know how to pack effectively. Roll up clothes or stick an outfit in a large zip-lock bag and get rid of all the air. Look up ways to pack lighter.

You never know when you’re going to come back, so enjoy it while it lasts, take pictures, live in the moment, and do as much as you can with the time you have!

When traveling out of the U.S., you will have to fill out a little pamphlet stating where you’ll be staying and for how long. Remember to do this or you will be deported back into the U.S. unless it’s filled out!

Look at things with an open mind: The culture is always different, so stay relaxed but alert.

And finally, do it all over again with another location!

Coordinator’s Corner
By: Shirena Trujillo Long

El Centro de Muchos Colores has been a bustling center this academic year 2015-16. In fact, we’ve been so busy that I thought I would use this column to share some of the news of our center by the numbers.

- Our total Hispanic student population for 2016 is nearly 11%.
- El Centro de Muchos Colores has been on campus in some form as a club or center since 1988 – that’s 28 years!
- In January, El Centro was awarded a $20,000 grant from the Salazar Family Foundation, based in Denver. The foundation’s mission is “Encouraging students to achieve their educational dreams!” They do this by supporting organizations that are committed to improving the quality of education and students’ access to it. It was founded in 1999 by V. Robert and Lola Salazar – who focus on education stems from their own experiences. With assistance from the Office of Advancement and President Dene Thomas, the funds were awarded to the college in January and have been earmarked to El Centro for unrestricted use. When I first told student employees at our staff meeting, they were both grateful and confident that they could find many ways to spend the money! We brainstormed, assessed needs we already have, and determined that the funds will be used to assist our Ballet Folklorico dance program, our Scholarships, and student internships and employment program, and to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in grand style this fall 2016. We cannot thank our FLC allies and the Salazar Family Foundation generously supported by the Ballet Folklorico de Durango.
- In February, a private donor awarded our Ballet Folklorico de Durango program with a $3,000 donation. The funds will be used to provide scholarships for student dancers to participate in the k-20 cultural arts program. Ballet Folklorico has been in Durango since 1996 – for 20 years we have celebrated this art in the Four Corners! Thanks to alumni Melisa Smith, and current student Veronica Flores for instructing and keeping our dance program VIVA!
- El Centro currently employs 17 work-study students of various backgrounds, disciplines and interests.
- Eight student employees or 47% of our staff are trained in Common Ground diversity education program, including two attending weekly trainings to become a facilitator this semester.
- Club Ballet Folklorico de Durango sold 22 Candy-grams for a fundraiser over Valentine’s Day and funds will go toward a big celebration in May for the student dancers. Thanks to all FLC friends and supporters who donated.
- More than 33 students pre-registered for the annual Latino College Day event held on campus Friday, Feb. 12—more than any other year since the event’s inception in 2005. Latino College Day is generously supported by the Ballantine Family Fund.
- Six of our El Centro “family members” will graduate from FLC this semester – Magaly Torres, Hope Crespo, Maram “Ashe” Alawi, Dabney Meachum, Deanna Atkins, Amoretta Bringle and Andrea Dalla. They will be awarded their serape stoles for one year of service to either El Centro or one of student-run clubs. Each of you have a special place in El Centro’s history and especially in my heart—thanks for the memories!
Perspectives from a Non-Traditional Student

By: Stacy John

Fall 2013 was my freshman year here at Fort Lewis College. I remember going to student orientation and thinking it was a waste of my time; I already knew how to take care of myself, pay my bills and be on my own, I had been doing so for five years already. What I needed was something maybe titled: “What you should know if you’re an older freshman but know nothing about college.”

I served in the Air Force for five years after high school. Unfortunately I had a job where I worked 16-hour days with a fluctuating schedule, so college classes weren’t an option for me. After I completed my time I took about six months off and decided it was time to start college. I’ve always wanted to go back to college and got bored for doing very little during my time off. I was 23, almost 24, when I started my freshman year of college.

I didn’t meet with an advisor until two weeks before class started, and hadn’t even applied for campus housing. Needless to say, I was waitlisted for all my classes except for one. I walked out of that meeting thinking that I definitely didn’t know how to “college.” I got lucky in the housing department and got a suite in one of the halls, only because my roommate at the time requested to live with someone who was over 21 years old. I also got very lucky and got into all four of my classes. But I wouldn’t recommend waiting like I did, that was pure luck on my end.

My first semester really taught me to get my act together. Even though I was already “adulting,” I didn’t know a darn thing about college. I didn’t know how to go about applying for my GI Bill to go towards my college tuition, I didn’t know anything about FAFSA, I didn’t know how to use FLC’s online Portal. I was a mess! After my first semester, and after passing my classes I told myself to get it together.

Here are a few steps I took to do that:

1. FINANCIAL AID!! I’m sure it has been verbally pounded into your heads to “Get your FAFSA done”, and you’re probably tired of it, but you really should. Although I have my GI benefits to help me with my housing expenses, it does not cover everything. I would recommend applying as soon as the application opens, as we have services on campus where you will get help filling them out. If you need information from your parents for the application make sure to BUG THEM. Also keep in mind, if you do not

(Continued on page 10)
How to Avoid the Freshman Pitfall

By: Deryk Trujillo

A person’s first semester at college, whether at Fort Lewis College or any other college, is such an experience full of ups and downs. But if a person is not careful they could fall into what I call the “freshman pitfall.” This is when their grades were so low their first semester they are unable to return to FLC for the second semester of their freshman year. Being a freshman, I had to battle through the “pitfall” myself. Follow my tips and you’re here during the second semester for even more fun!

Be Proactive

Reading ahead is a small task that can earn you big points with the professor! It shows you are prepared and know what is being discussed within that class. Do the homework the night it is assigned. It will be fresh in your head and it will be the easiest for you. Be timely, showing up late to class looks very bad for your personal image in the professor’s eyes. Especially during a lecture! Don’t do it!

2. Get involved! Whether it be clubs, events, or simply interacting with others. Bulletins around campus do a great job of previewing all kinds of things offered to students. I spent a good amount of time in my room my freshman year and looking back I wish I got out more. We also have centers like El Centro de Muchos Colores, it has helped me tremendously, not only financially, but to branch out to other services here on campus.

3. Here at El Centro we offer a comfortable place to do homework, hang out or relax. We also run events throughout the year; you can pick up a schedule of events in El Centro. El Centro also offers one-on-one tutoring if you are registered in a Modern language course; we also run a Hora de Español two days out of the week which is open to everyone. Remember, your college experience is what you make it.

4. Visit your professors during office hours! I found it is quite lovely to have a good relationship with your professors, especially at a small college like Fort Lewis. Professors offer their time for students, so please take that time and get to know them.

5. Run your degree audit to see what classes you need for your major(s) and minor(s). This really helped me plan for upcoming semesters. It is good to have a good idea what classes you will be taking and it also helps with preparing you for book expenses.

6. Invest in a great planner. It is hard enough being a full-time student and even harder if you also work. Organization is something that helps to keep me on track for upcoming assignments, homework, events, meetings, work schedules, etc. I found that carrying a weekly plan each week instead of a monthly planner helps me not stress so much. I do have a monthly planner but that is kept at home, I like to keep my weekly plan on-hand throughout the week.

7. Remember to make time for you!! It is easy for us to get caught up in the stresses that come along with investing in our education. Unexpected things come up in our lives, so it is super important to take care of yourself mentally, physically and spiritually. Don’t be too hard on yourself.

Be Social

Don’t be afraid to make friends! Everyone is new just like YOU! The more connected you are to Fort Lewis College, its students, and its faculty, the more likely you are to return to enjoy a second, third, and fourth semester! Go out every once in a while! But don’t get behind in your schooling. There are tons of activities all year round downtown, be sure to check them out!

Get involved

With all of the clubs and groups on campus there is something for everyone. If you don’t seem to find anything for you, you can make a group or club yourself and invite your friends! Work-study is a great way to stay involved on campus with the benefits of a monthly paycheck.

Follow these steps and you’ll be an FLC graduate in no time!

(Continued from page 9 “Perspectives”)

Using My Strengths

By: Allie Wolfe

I like too many others, have a tendency to keep my sights focused on avoiding my weaknesses rather than utilizing my strengths. In doing this I missed potential opportunities, and eventually wound up setting myself into a rut where I could only grow so much. After all, one can only organize so many bookshelves, or bake so many Biscochitos.

During my freshman year at Fort Lewis and first year employed at El Centro, I was required to participate in an online assessment determining my strengths, called StrengthsQuest. Being the self-entitled 18 year old I was, I initially felt it wasn’t worth my time. I knew my strengths – I liked writing, was good at communicating with others and always stayed positive. Simple enough, right? Why did I need to spend my time doing something that would tell me what I already knew? After taking the test, a whole new realm of my potential opened up.

StrengthsQuest is an online assessment that is used internationally by the Gallup Poll as a talent measurement system that helps you to identify your strengths based on your patterns of behavior and thought, as well as your core beliefs.

After the 30-minute assessment, you are categorized with five strengths from the possible 34 which range from empa-
thy to activator, each of which fall into one of four categories: executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking.

When I initially took the assessment, I felt that only a few of the strengths assigned to me were accurate. I received, in the following order: input, connectedness, empathy, intellection and positivity. Although I knew that positivity and connectedness were strengths of mine, I did not see input as at all relevant. I mean who even enjoys entering information in their free time? As it turns out, I do. Based on my results, my supervisor decided it would be a good idea for me to begin helping with La Movida. Although I initially went into it full of dread, I very quickly realized that input was truly my strength. I would spend hours making sure every detail was perfect, every corner perfectly aligned – all things I’d previously assumed would be boring but I now learned thrilled me. Beginning in the Fall 2015 semester, I became the head editor of La Movida – all of which was started because someone recognized the potential in my strengths.

StrengthsQuest has also helped me to grow as a team player. Each employee in El Centro is required to take it, and based on our results we determine how individuals can potentially work together to improve the center, or what tasks would be best fit for each person. This past January, all of the staff of El Centro held a dinner where we discussed our strengths and how we can utilize them. Consequently, three new members were added to the La Movida editing team!

StrengthsQuest is available for individuals attending Fort Lewis, learning communities, project based groups, faculty and staff teams and community groups to participate in. If you or someone you know is interested in learning about your strengths and how to utilize them, e-mail Patrick Fredricks at ptfredricks@fortlewis.edu.
My name is **Israel Aragon** and I am from Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am a junior studying Engineering. This is my second year at Fort Lewis College as well as working at El Centro. 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 **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 4th working at El Centro and my second semester 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.

Hello my name is **Noah Garcia**. I was born in Northern New Mexico. I am a senior 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.
Hi! I am Maram Ashe Alawi (Marh-rohm Auh-shay ah-lahw-wii) and I am a super senior this year at FLC! It’s my first year as a work-study student at El Centro, but I had often visited in the past and attended numerous events hosted by El Centro. I am actively involved and loosely affiliated with a number of organizations on campus and in town, so it really is me you’re seeing zooming by. Please don’t be shy and ask me how you can get involved! El Centro is a wonderful resource center where we can meet and narrow down your passions. I am looking forward to an awesome year at El Centro and FLC!

Hi! 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.

Hi! My name is Saman-tha Garcia and I am a junior psychology major focusing on counseling here at FLC. I am from Albuquerque, New Mexico but Durango has truly become more of a second home to me. I am very active in El Centro as well as with WellPAC, a group who strives for holistic health on our campus. Since attending FLC I have learned more than I ever anticipated, and I’m not just talking about my textbooks. I encourage everyone to take a drive with friends, sip tea while reading your favorite book, and get a cat. Always have a cat around because they are fantastic creatures.

My name is Samantha Garcia and I am a junior psychology major focusing on counseling here at FLC. I am from Albuquerque, New Mexico but Durango has truly become more of a second home to me. I am very active in El Centro as well as with WellPAC, a group who strives for holistic health on our campus. Since attending FLC I have learned more than I ever anticipated, and I’m not just talking about my textbooks. I encourage everyone to take a drive with friends, sip tea while reading your favorite book, and get a cat. Always have a cat around because they are fantastic creatures.

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.

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 4 Corners TV.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.

My name is Deanna Atkins and I am 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 4 Corners TV.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.

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 Vice 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 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 Advance-ment, as well as El Centro, and I am a good guy.
Alex Blocker is 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 fun 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. This is what made his love of music evolve into a love for education.

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.

Why walk when you can dance? My name is Magaly Torres and I identify as Mexicana. I am currently the Lead Latino College Day Coordinator for El Centro as well as a Zumba instructor for the student life center. This is my last semester of my undergrad career and it feels surreal! Time flew by! I plan on moving back to Chicago this summer and work on my plans of traveling to Brazil in order to practice my Portuguese and learn dance Samba.

Hola! Me llamo 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.
Ballet Folklorico de Durango Dance Classes
Mondays, 4:30-5:30 and 5:30-6:30 pm., all levels are welcome

Free tutoring & drop-in Spanish tutors
Available daily, hours vary, check in at front desk
Hora de Español: Wed. 9:30-10:30 a.m. Fri. 2-3 p.m.

Real History of the Americas 2016 committee meetings
Weekly beginning the week of Jan. 25. If interested, send your name to long_s@fortlewis.edu with your times of availability

Latino College Day for prospective students
Friday, February 12th, 11 a.m.—7 p.m.

Viva Vegetarian
Friday, February 19th, 5 p.m.

Common Ground Workshop: Cultural Evolution
Wednesday, Feb. 24, 12-1:30 p.m.

Breakfast Burrito Sale
Tuesday, March 1st

FLC Spring Break
Monday-Friday, March 7-11

Diversity Dialogue in Durango, 5th Annual
Saturday, March 19, 8:45 a.m.—2 p.m. at Community Rec Center
RSVP: lauren.evaluation@gmail.com

Cascarrones
Friday, March 25th, 11 a.m.—1 p.m.

Cesar Chavez Day
Thursday, March 31st, 11 a.m.—1 p.m.

Latino Youth Leadership Conference
Saturday, April 16th, 8 a.m.—3 p.m. in Ignacio

Spring Graduation Commencement
Saturday, April 30th

Cinco de Mayo Celebrations
Saturday, May 7th at Gazpacho’s, afternoon

All events take place at El Centro unless noted, Student Union 40
Schedule is subject to change, updates at:

---

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 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: (970) 247-7654.