

The LatinEd Connection

An LNE SC Quarterly Publication



Dear students, families, and friends,

As Pablo Neruda once wrote, "*Podrán cortar todas las flores, pero no podrán detener la primavera*," which in English signifies "You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot keep spring from coming." The hum of spring is a relentless reminder of the beauty and transience of life and of embracing old into new. It can also be a metaphor for milestones embedded for many students in the coming months. This spring, some students may be walking across a grand stage for their graduation, while others may be preparing themselves for their careers through internships and volunteer opportunities.

Throughout the metamorphosis of the seasons, we hope that the start of spring will bring our focus back to being outside, getting together with friends in a safe manner, and enjoying nature's rebirth and beauty. As nature undergoes this change, we should also be mindful of the ongoing transitions in health and safety related to COVID and the shift back into life as it was before the pandemic. Furthermore, even though our communities were sheltered and socially distanced for the past two years due to COVID, it is important to remember that our aspirations and dreams were not dormant. The endless work of parents, teachers, and students is what reaps the increase in safer social activities and the colorful springtime spirit of learning and discovery.

As many U.S. cities and states are relaxing COVID guidelines and transitioning to in-person social activities, there is the blossoming hope that we will return to our pre-pandemic lifestyles. This is considered good news, so please be sure to practice due diligence when it comes to your health and well-being. Our efforts right now are focused on our students, faculty, and staff, and we are committed to prioritizing their health and safety and ensuring their continued ability to thrive.

In this Spring issue of The LatinEd Connection, we share resources for graduating seniors that are preparing for summer and help them put their best foot forward as they begin to consider their future academic and professional journeys. We will also share updates on ongoing programs at LNE SC in our In the Field section and hope that our *Lideres in Action* field inspires you to stay attuned to your passions!

Summer is also on the horizon, and it is important to plan accordingly and take advantage of all the internships and fellowship opportunities available. There are many remote opportunities for students of all ages, and they are bound to help you not only gain professional experience, but provide you with the skills necessary to thrive in all facets of life. We hope that this issue enriches the newness of the emerging *primavera* and LNE SC hopes that you stay safe in your communities, continue contributing to your community the best that you can, and be well!

Warm Regards,

LNE SC National Office

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Que Pasa: Updates and Happenings at LNE SC

Macy's Emergency Scholarship Fund

The Macy's Emergency Scholarship Fund is a joint partnership between LNE SC & Macy's. This program provides financial resources to full-time undergraduate or graduate students in Puerto Rico facing economic hardship and immediate monetary need that, if not met, could result in an inability to complete classes or a degree program. Students who are interested in applying should visit the Macy's Emergency Scholarship page on the LNE SC website for more details.

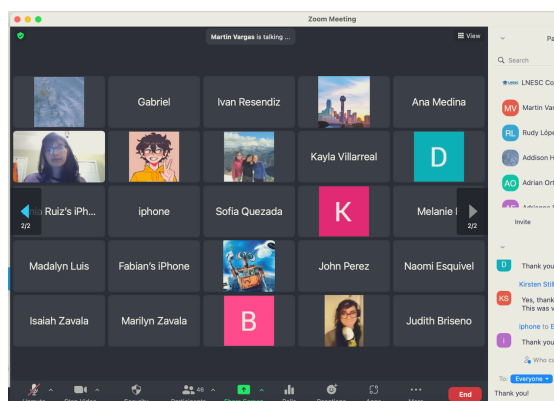


For additional non-LNE SC scholarship resources, [click here](#).



Caminos to College and Career Highlights

Education and Leadership Workshop Series



LNE SC was privileged to have Mr. Rudy Lopez share his rich leadership and public speaking skills with our students. Mr. Lopez currently works for the Office of Professional Development at the California Department of Justice and was able to lead the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People workshop on how to build leadership potential. We are excited to note that students from across the United States were able to join us, ranging from Texas, Massachusetts, California, Ohio, Florida, and more! We had students from all four years of high school and college. The students were not only actively engaging with a high level of intellectual curiosity with our speaker, but also asked thoughtful questions throughout the event. LNE SC wants to thank Mr. Lopez for his time and service and the students who took time out of their day to be part of this incredibly informative workshop. Based on the feedback we received, students noted that they were provided with information and inspiration to increase the quality of not just their professional life, but also their personal life. We look forward to seeing students at our next Caminos workshop!

Connecting Community to Education: *LNE SC in the Field*

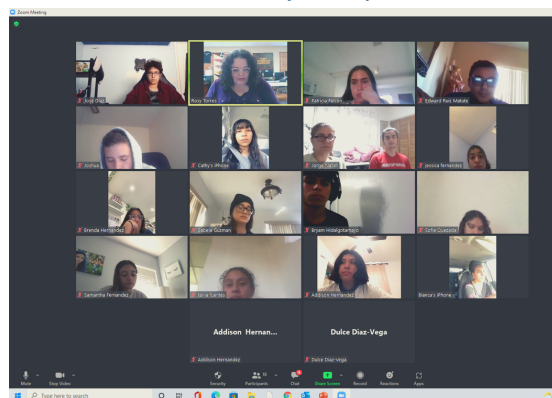
LNE SC Miami

LNE SC Miami has continued to provide Upward Bound students with uninterrupted program services and activities to prepare them for high school graduation, college entry and beyond. The program is funded by the Department of Education and is assisting 58 + eligible students to pursue academic success for the (current) 2021-2022 school year. Program participants attend daily after-school tutoring and instruction for math, English, and other subject areas. In addition, students receive assistance in completing projects, class and home learning assignments, and test prep enrichment and reviews. Students and parents also participate in monthly workshops, which provide essential information, resources and guidance on college readiness/how to prepare for college, financial aid awareness, financial literacy, career awareness, and personal development activities/workshops that provide important information on various college degrees, career paths and their educational requirements, leadership initiatives, and mental health. Our future graduates, the Class of 2022, have been busy applying to colleges and receiving individual assistance. They have also received support and specialized assistance in completing their FAFSA forms, scholarship applications, taking exams, and completing community volunteer hours.

In order to best address the ongoing health challenges from the onset of this academic school year, August 2021 to the present, all Upward Bound services have been accessible via virtual/online platforms, available to all students and families. Despite lingering COVID health concerns, restrictions are improving, and the Miami Center looks forward to our upcoming 2022 Upward Bound summer component/transitioning into in-person services!



LNE SC Miami Upward Bound in Action:
Afterschool tutoring sessions (Above)
Financial Literacy Workshop (Below)



Connecting Community to Education: *LNESC in the Field*

LNESC Austin

Dr. Maria Elena Cruz is the former Director at LNESC Oxnard in California. It is an exciting time in her journey with LNESC, as she is making a transition from being a Director at our sunny Southern California center in Oxnard to our other sun-drenched center in Austin, Texas. As such, we decided it would be fitting to capture this wonderful transition that will positively shape and impact LNESC history, programs, and the students we serve.

Dr. Cruz is inspired throughout her life's work by her parents' hard work and resilience. She continues to live by their consejo and legacy. She is specifically inspired by the large transition immigrant parents take in leaving their homeland to a place with different laws, languages, and cultures. She embraces that her leadership as a Director holds a great responsibility to learners, children, and her community. She believes that she must keep her parent's legacy alive and lead students to exhaust all possible avenues for achieving academic success.

Due to Dr. Cruz's rich background, we decided to ask some thought-provoking questions to shine a light on not only her experiences transitioning at LNESC, but providing educational services during COVID.



What do you see as one of the greatest barriers facing minority students in education today?

Covid has changed everything. All the natural and progressive steps toward learning in a collaborative, physical space were dissolved, and its impact was imminent for high school students. The consequences of creating a positive learning space is hard, as the current incoming cohort is reporting difficulty in concentrating, a mental foggy, feelings of instability, a general feeling of a lack of belonging, and countless other emotions. Socialization is different. Learning is different. Give and take are different. Zoom has created a third space in the realm of learning, as students are not limited to their homes for homework and physical classrooms for learning, but are also required to attend digital classes. Also, on a programmatic level, the training and familiarity with high school culture can create what is commonly called a digital divide, as Zoom burnout can cause higher tardiness rates and drops in attendance.

What is the most rewarding part of being a Director at LNESC?

Opportunity! I enjoy being intimately immersed in the lives of parents and students. I have the chance to witness students blossom every year and even see the larger transformation throughout the most formative years of young adulthood, which are high school and college. I witness the students grow amidst the up and downs. I support them in realizing the importance of focusing on their ambitions, in order to lead them to have a fulfilling future. I also make sure the right 'gears' are set so that they experience no bumps on the road—academic stability and continuity is a quality that must be reinforced. Most notably, I am humbled to listen to their dreams and ground them in realizing the boundlessness of their aspirations.

As a Director at LNESC, my role in providing high-quality educational services and leadership allows students to trust me with their educational journeys. I feel that I am peering into their future. I am moved by the light and ambition of a generation that seeks my wisdom and hopes that they carry the mentorship forward to inspire those beyond my lifetime.

What are you most excited about bringing to the Austin community?

My skills and knowledge. I believe that transitioning to Austin is within the stream of LNESC history! It may sound easy but make no mistake about it—this is heavy-duty. We are entrusted with student lives and their livelihood. Our goal is to make sure they have options and funding to fulfill their academic dreams. My goal in Austin, albeit unique in its needs compared to the Oxnard community, is parallel in its goal to dramatically improve educational outcomes. In Austin, I want to continue to inspire lifelong learners who become rising leaders and innovators in their respective communities. I am excited to provide the mentorship and leadership necessary to lead students in the Austin community to success!

Favorite quote?

"The day you give up— it's over." William Gonzalez, my father.



*"I am moved
by the light and
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Lideres in Action: Rising Stars of LNEESC

Jessica Gomez, Digital Marketing Senior Specialist – Defend Our Future

Jessica Gomez joined LNEESC in 2017 as an Administrative Assistant and later transitioned to becoming an exemplary Program & Communications Coordinator by the time she ended her journey in 2021. Jessica recalls her time at LNEESC with great fondness. In fact, she commends LNEESC for shaping her into the young professional that she is today, as the job was her first first-time obligation out of university. During her time at LNEESC's National Office, she became involved with LNEESC's various centers and delved into the world of program management, accounting, and digital media curation. In the position, she was able to enrich her leadership skills, and teamwork, and notes that it was a space that was open to innovation. She credits LNEESC with being able to allow her to become the young professional that she is today. She was able to meet her greatest inspirations during her time at the office, which includes Danny Trejo, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Dolores Huerta.

Jessica had excellent rapport with various sites throughout the U.S. Despite being based at the National Office, she was able to connect with high school students from around the country and has fond memories of chaperoning students at the annual Washington Youth Leadership Seminar. She notes that LNEESC provided her with a strong support system and followed its legacy of supporting students through their educational journeys. During her time at LNEESC, she was able to complete her B.A. in International Affairs and Political Science from Trinity Washington University and an M.A. in Human Rights from American University.

Jessica is currently working at the renowned, D.C based Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), where she serves as their Digital Marketing Senior Specialist for Defend Our Future. She now provides applies her digital expertise and supports a program that focuses on empowering young people nationwide to advance environmental justice and climate solutions. She recalls her days being colorful, as sometimes she is spearheading an Instagram Reel about climate influencers, and the next, she will be speaking in front of the Environmental Protection Agency about methane regulations.

Jessica notes that her life-long passion is to continue helping the youth to make sure they have the tools to be successful and keep making a change in the world. She is grateful for the plethora of rich knowledge and wisdom she received on this matter from LNEESC. Jessica's professional ambition is to bring Latinos into the environmental movement and capture a collective realization of the fact that combating climate change is crucial for minority communities. She plans to make the amplification of the Latino community's voices her life's work and hopes to inspire the change in climate solutions on a systemic level.

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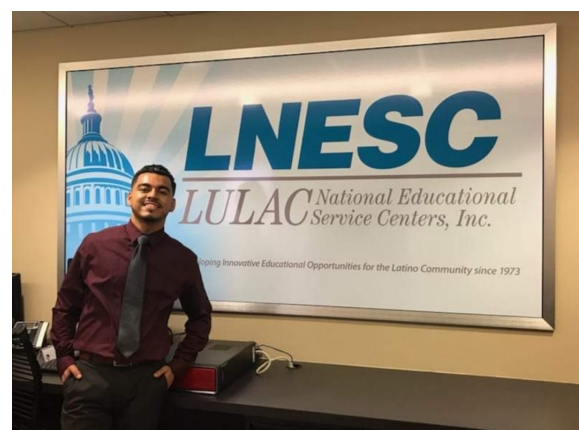
Francisco "Panchito" Ramirez Rueda, Founder & Executive Director – Dreamers Soccer Clinic & Beyond Excellence

Francisco "Panchito" Ramirez Rueda joined LNEESC as a Summer Intern in 2018. In his role, he embraced professional and intellectual growth by openly asking questions, making connections, and learning new skills that were out of his comfort zone. He has fond memories of his time at the National Office in Washington D.C. He also notes that the staff at the National Office were collaborative and supportive in not only helping him ease into his role but throughout his time in D.C.

During his time in college, he was a student-athlete for the Men's soccer program at the University of California, Riverside. After graduation, he pursued a Master's degree in Education Leadership and Policy from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Today, Panchito is the Founder and Executive Director of the Dreamers Soccer Clinic, a volunteer-based non-profit that focuses on motivating youth to dream big. The goal of the organization is to also support youth in pursuing their highest potential, which includes supporting them in their path to higher education, achieving their athletic aspirations, and giving back to their communities. It is the first program of its kind in Palmdale, California, which is Panchito's humble hometown.

Panchito is also the founder of Beyond Excellence, a platform dedicated to personal growth and empowering non-conformists to live up to their full potential. Furthermore, he is also currently the College Program Manager for the Michigan Hispanic Collaborative (MiHC). MiHC is the first college access program in the state of Michigan that support students to help students in their college admissions process but also through the college itself.

Panchito's professional ambition right now is to grow in all areas of his life. He believes that to be a true leader, you must see being an exemplary leader as a verb, and not a noun. He believes that there is an endless amount to learn when it comes to self-growth. As such, he deeply values self-development. Throughout his life experiences, he has to the compounded understanding that when he prioritizes himself and his goals (serving his community and the world), everything else falls into sync and into its place. Ultimately, he's learned that by embracing self-authenticity, he's learned to not only enjoy, but trust the process.



College Cues: Tips for Student Readiness



The school year is nearly over, yet for a lot of students, there is still work left to do. Wrapping up one's academic responsibilities whilst juggling potential internships and professional opportunities can be one of the most difficult parts of the school year. For students throughout all years of school, there are also finals being around the corner, for some, the finals also signify their last set up finals for the entirety of their high school careers. It can be a lot to manage without the right resources, reflections, and support systems. However, there are a variety of things that you can do to better prepare yourself.

Finals

Finals week is definitely not everyone's favorite time. It's dotted with deadlines for each subject and bears a lot of stress. Here are some things that you can do to make this process a lot less stressful.

Avoid Procrastination

In many cases, educators tend to give out written finals, with the prompt available in the syllabus at the start of the year. The same sentiment applies to professors and teachers that provide comprehensive study guides well in advance of exams. It is essential to realize that you are only one human and can only absorb so much information at the same time. In this sense, it is not only good for your grades, but good for your mental health to not procrastinate.

Students tend to procrastinate because they are perfectionists, have unclear goals, and generally lack motivation because they already feel like they've fallen too far behind. How can we combat these all-too-common rationalizations for procrastination? It is absolutely essential to set reasonable deadlines and have organized long-term goals for your study sessions. Most importantly, one must supplement their well-organized study sessions or research papers by taking well-deserved breaks and rewarding yourself as necessary!



Cross Out Any All-Nighters

Students have the common notion that they can study the night before the final and be able to do well. However, that is far from the truth, as having the proper amount of sleep can make this experience less stressful. There are numerous studies conducted by sleep experts that have researched the effect of sleep on the brain. The research revealed that having the proper amount of sleep can help the brain concentrate and fortify long-term memories that are necessary to ace that exam!

Find A Good Physical/Mental Space

It is a good idea to find the right physical space to study, as studying at home can bear a plethora of distractions- varying from the fridge to your phone. If you take the time to curate the right space where you feel comfortable studying, the peace created by the space itself can give you the energy and 'flow space' to truly focus on your studies. Finding the right space means something different to each person, for some it can be a busy local coffee shop, while for others it can be the campus library. For example, libraries are quiet and designed to help you focus, while also come with the incentive of having books on-site that you might need for your research. Here are a few more tips for creating the right physical and mental space to study:

1. It is paramount that the biggest distractions are removed. Of course, this sheds light on the elephant in the room- your phone! Distractions such as message notifications, and social media alerts, are often major distractions while studying. Studies show that even being near a phone can stop people from studying efficiently. It can be tough to go more than a few minutes without looking at your phone, however, putting it away for a few hours by either turning off your phone, putting it on silent, or on airplane mode can get rid of that constant urge to look at your phone screen.
2. Music helps a lot with studying, if you are conducting heavy research, it might be easier to find a playlist that does not have any lyrics and is entirely instrumental. Lo-fi is a great style of music that is extremely relaxing. Spotify has a great variety of [lo-fi playlists](#).
3. For more information [click here](#).



Parent Forum: Strategies for Student Success

As students get prepared to wrap up the school year, it is easy to forget that it is also a challenging time for parents. Parents play a very crucial role in supporting their children to fulfil their educational and professional goals. This is more compounded by the consequences of COVID and hosting a fulfilling educational journey in a digital environment (i.e., endless Zoom classes!) and transitioning into finding their first summer internships. For some, wrapping up the year is a much bigger milestone - graduation season. Graduation season may conjure up memories of walking across the stage or celebrating with family. Due to this, wrapping up the year is also a space to meaningfully mark commencement, as families this year will be privileged to gather on campus to honor their graduates.

For this reason, LNEC seeks to provide some tips to ease wrapping up the school year for students in all types of transitions into the next school year. Here are some ways you can support yourself and your child during this time:

Embrace Summer Opportunities

As Summer 2022 approaches, we understand that it is important to stay active in the realm of their academic interests whilst propelling them to make worthwhile career decisions. In the months before summer begins, parents can sit down with their students to mentor them through finding the right summer internship. Parents can support students in setting up appointments with their career counselor at their high school, who can help them brainstorm ways to secure an internship in their field and provide expert advice on how to strengthen their application. Parents can find a great list of the top websites for internship searches [here](#).

The best and most common pathway to assist students to identify and secure internships is to help your student set up a LinkedIn profile and explore the wide array of contacts available online to provide them virtual or in-person mentorship over the summer. Of course, LinkedIn has an excellent 'Jobs' section where students can search for the most up-to-date internships and even directly reach out to the recruiter if they have any questions. In short, it's social media that is curated to find internships and recruiters!

Summer internships are great because it offers students stability in receiving a job offer later in their educational journeys. There is no wrong way to support your child, but simply helping them source opportunities, critique resumes, or even inquire about your student's general professional interests is a great way to support your child without making the experience overwhelming.

Time Capsule Letter Activity

Parents often help their child through the stress of finals in every cycle of 'mid-term season.' They experience the pressure and stress of exams and the social isolation that the period can bring. Of course, the stresses are even more compounded by the fact that it may your child's last semester before college. Graduation can also be a hard transitional time for students, as they realize they are leaving their friends, teachers, and perhaps even family behind as they move to start a more independent life in college. It is important for students to step back and see the bigger picture in their life experiences at all stages of high school. If one does not reflect and take some time to pause amidst the chaos of exams and graduation, they will not grow from their past if they do not understand its happenings. This is a profound reflection of how parents can aid such wisdom and realization.

An excellent way to create an open space for dialogue and strengthen your relationship with your child is to execute a reflection-focused activity. Find some time to sit down with your child for both of you to transparently discuss questions like:

- What aspects of the past year were the most difficult?
- What have you learned about yourself throughout the school years?
- What experiences are you most thankful for?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What are your goals for this summer and your hopes for the future?

The best way to make this experience tangible is to then use the conversation as a space for brainstorming. Incorporate the answers to the discussion into writing a letter to your future self, five years from now. It is not just an activity that you should lead for your student, but also one that you should partake in. It should not only be self-addressed in terms of answering the prompt but also sealed in an envelope and addressed to oneself, to be opened five years from the date it was written! It is great to encourage yourself and your child to realize what they've learned and how they've grown so they can glow in their future feats!



Stay Consistent with End-of-Year Deadlines and Activities

As much as it is important to step back and reflect, it is also important to give the same balance to all the exams and deadlines ahead in the school year. Students have a set routine with extracurricular activities, classes, and even studying for exams that may begin to falter with the oncoming distraction of summer. Again, for some, it may be intertwined with the excitement and stress of graduation and moving away to a new city for college. Due to these drastic shifts, it is essential that parents provide students with the same daily expectations to maneuver the stressors. If a student's routine changes because they have begun to procrastinate or have set skewed priorities, a parent may need to remind them that their responsibilities remain static, even in times of great transition.

In this context, helping your child stay distraction-free and focused may mean having a family calendar, so that students can be held responsible and have a visual aid that helps alleviate their anxieties about upcoming deadlines. The best part is that the calendar can include interesting reflection activities (like the one outlined above) and even some fun end-of-the-year celebrations! Parents can also help their students stay organized by making a classic checklist or to-do list every day. This can aid them in simplifying their daily and unlearning long-term procrastination. You can find a free printable student planner [here](#). Overall, staying consistent will allow parents and students (of all ages) to truly enjoy the end-of-year activities and celebrate the special time for all our graduates who are moving on to bigger feats.



Support LNEESC

Your contributions are what helps us continue with our educational programs and provide scholarships to outstanding Latino/a leaders. Together we can continue making an impact on the Latino/a community.

Consider supporting LNEESC by making a donation.

DONATE NOW

About LNEESC

The LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. (LNEESC) is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit agency whose mission is to provide the highest quality educational opportunities needed for the development of life-long learners and leaders.

As LULAC's education arm, since 1973 LNEESC has provided direct educational services to under-served communities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, serving more than 14,000 students each year. Our educational programs break down the barriers that exist between high-need students and high school diplomas, college degrees, and jobs in highly skilled fields.

Through its network of community-based education centers, LNEESC provides educational counseling, scholarships, mentorship, leadership development, literacy, and technology programs.

For more information go to www.lnesc.org.

For the LNEESC staff directory [click here](#).