

OPINION

Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

William B. Green
PUBLISHER

Adriana Devally
GENERAL MANAGER

Zach Davis
MANAGING EDITOR

CUIDANDO LO NUESTRO

VITA volunteers step up for Laredo families

It's tax season and VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) volunteers are ready to help you! I have to give the VITA volunteers a great big shout out. ... *Thank you!* They do so much to help our community.

Last year, Catholic Charities and United Way of Laredo partnered to provide VITA assistance. I got to meet Luis and Aldo who are amazing. Luis has been volunteering to help with tax returns for over 20 years. He did a week's worth of training for our volunteers and made it seem so simple. Luis is IRS certified in Volunteer Standards of Conduct, Intake/Interview & Quality Review, Site Coordinator, Basic Returns, Advanced Returns, Military and International Returns. Aldo works at Catholic Charities and has been assisting families with tax returns for four years. He is also IRS Certified in several areas. They are my go-to when I have a question.

For this season, our partnership trained 16 volunteers. I have five serving their second year...Liz, Freddy, Carlo, Rodo and myself. Our newcomers are Rosario, Linda, Paddy and Armando. Armando is a university student and a member of the TAMIU Phiotas with Carlo, Rodo and Freddy. My dynamic trio of ladies, Rosario, Linda and Paddy are all retired. On their first day, Rosario and Linda completed about 15 tax returns. They were both moved by the families they helped. They assisted veterans, disabled individuals, mothers caring for disabled children, single parents and retired individuals...just to mention a few. They shared that it felt good to be able to make a difference for these families and individuals.

Last year was also an eye opener for me, as well. I was so touched by the people that came to our office seeking tax assistance. I was moved

by the elderly widows that came for help, not knowing what to do. They had not filed taxes in years. With their husband's death and the benefits, they received, they had received a letter from the IRS informing them that they had to file a return. In several cases, they were already a year late in filing their returns.

Don't wait! Go to your nearest VITA site. They can help you with several years of returns (2021-2025). There are actually several other VITA sites in Laredo ready to help! Rafael Torres from the Azteca Economic Development group has headed up the VITA Laredo group for several years. VITA Laredo is a coalition of agencies working together to provide VITA/TCE volunteer assistance. For more information on them, you can visit their website at www.vitalaredo.org. You can see the times and locations for the various groups. They include the

Azteca Economic Development Center, Laredo College (Fort McIntosh & South Campus), the City of Laredo Public Library, the Mexican Consulate, NeighborWorks Laredo, Workforce Solutions, Manor Apartments, Cigarroa High School, Nixon High School, Martin High School and Webb County Community Action Agency.

Mark your calendars! Catholic Charities and United Way of Laredo will be having a "Super Saturday" on Saturday and March 28. It will be at the United Way of Laredo office located at 1815 E. Hillside Road. The hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reserve your spot by scheduling an appointment, please call Catholic Charities at 956.722.2443.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
L.I.F.E: WEBB COUNTY FAIR-GROUNDS

Monday - Saturday.
For more information on

their schedule of events visit their website at www.laredofair.com.

SOUTH TEXAS BLOOD & TISSUE: BLOOD DRIVE

The South Texas Blood & Tissue organization has a blood drive scheduled at Laredo College (Fort McIntosh) Lewis Energy Group Academic Center on Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Celeste Elizondo at 956.721.5151.

IMAGINARIUM OF SOUTH TEXAS: FREE FAMILY FUN NIGHTS

Join us for the Free Family Fun Night Sponsored by H-E-B on Friday from 6-9 p.m. at the Imaginarium located on the main campus of Laredo College (West End Washington Street) Building P-149. For more information, please call 956.728.0404.

LAREDO VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Free tax help is here! The Laredo VITA program has IRS Certified

Preparers ready to help you. Don't stress about your taxes - let a qualified volunteer handle it for you. Call 956.307.8138 or visit www.vitalaredo.org

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER (AHEC): MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN: THE MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION (VIRTUAL SEMINAR)

This virtual seminar is scheduled for March 6 from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Arielle Guillod, M.A. from UT Health San Antonio will be the guest speaker for the seminar. For more information, email hmedellin@mrgbahec.org or contact AHEC at 956.712.0037.

If you have an upcoming community event or information on a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization you would like to share, email me at 956cuidandolonues-tro@gmail.com.

Peggy M. Duncan United Way of Laredo