

OPINION

Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

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SCAN leads recovery services in Webb County

In our area there are hundreds of non-profits that provide programs or services to people in need. Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN), I believe, is the organization that offers the largest array services in Webb County and the surrounding areas. Ms. Isela Dabdou is the Chief Executive Officer of this non-profit organization. With her amazing and professional staff, they manage a \$15 million budget.

Their mission is Creating Stronger Communities by Empowering People. The organization's purpose is to provide individuals with access to a variety of evidence-based prevention, intervention, and treatment services that are delivered by highly trained and caring staff members. SCAN has over 40 programs and provides series in 17 different countries. On their website, they classify their programs under the categories of Treatment, Recovery, Intervention, Prevention, Mental Health, Trauma and other.

Since they offer so many programs, we will focus on the Treatment, Recovery and Intervention programs. Their Treatment services support people to stay clean from alcohol and other

drugs, and focus on helping them develop to their full potential. It helps them to move forward and embrace recovery.

These programs include:

- Residential Treatment Services are live-in facilities for individuals who need a safe and controlled environment to embrace recovery. Serenidad Men's Recovery Home, Serenidad Women's Recovery Home and the Youth Recovery Homes are several of the residential treatment centers listed on their website.

- Outpatient Treatment care is available to those dealing with mild or moderate needs. Scan has Adult Outpatient Treatment that provides outpatient drug treatment for adults 18 years and older. The Youth Outpatient program provides substance use disorder treatment services for male and female youth ages 13-17. Their Familias Unidas Program provides outpatient drug treatment to youth and young adults ages 12-25. SCAN offers a Specialized Female Outpatient Program to provide trauma-informed, gender specific services for adult women who are parenting or pregnant (18 years or older). They also have a DWI Outpatient

Program that provides court supervised drug treatment to people referred by County Court & Law II.

- COPSD Treatment is for Co-occurring psychiatric and substance abuse disorders. It offers case management to individuals who have mental health and drug use disorders.

- MAT Treatment is Medication-Assisted Treatment and it is a comprehensive treatment plan that uses FDA-approved medication to help individuals struggling with opioid addiction.

SCAN's Recovery support services are designed to increase the occurrence of long-term recovery from substance use disorders among youth and adults. Recovery support services may precede treatment, accompany treatment, follow treatment or be delivered separately from treatment. SCAN has a Youth Recovery Community Service. It has peer-to-peer recovery support services for individuals between the ages of 13-21 with a history of substance use disorders. It also has the Todo Es Posible recovery support program, which provides support services for adults 18 and older. It emphasizes the importance of self-care and

cultural diversity.

Intervention services provide both youth and adults the opportunity to participate in a variety of evidence-based and informed programs that are designed to effectively intervene once behavioral problems have been identified. For the youth, SCAN offers an Emergency Youth Shelter that provides temporary residential service for children and adolescents. FAYS Program is designed to build resilience and strengthen families in order to keep children safe and families connected. It offers crisis intervention, counseling and short-term respite care for families. Rural Border Intervention (RBI) is a substance intervention program for youth and adults living in region 8.

SCAN offers a multitude of program and services for youth, adolescents, adults and families in need. For more information on their services please visit their website at www.scan-inc.org. You can also contact them by calling 956.724.3177 or emailing them at info@scan-inc.org.

Mark your calendars Area Health Education Center (AHEC): Managing Chronic Pain: The Mental

Health Connection (Virtual Seminar)

This virtual seminar is scheduled for Friday, March 6th from 1:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Arielle Guilod, M.A. from UT Health San Antonio will be the guest speaker for the seminar. For more information, email hmedelin@mrgbahec.org or contact AHEC at 956-712-0037.

Imaginarium Of South Texas: Aep Light Up The Night

Join us for the AEP Light up the Night on Friday, March 6th from 6-9 p.m. at the Imaginarium located the main campus of Laredo College (West End Washington Street) Building P-149. For more information, please call 956-728-0404.

Laredo Main Street: Farmers Market

The next Farmers Market will be happening on Saturday, March 14th, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at The Outlet Shoppes at Laredo! Each month features a unique theme, seasonal activities and exciting workshops. Every visit is a new and memorable experience. Whether you're shopping for fresh ingredients, supporting local artisans, or enjoying live entertainment, the Farmers

Market is the place to be. For more information email: lmsevents01@gmail.com.

Laredo Animal Protective Society (LAPS): Dog & Puppy Supplies

LAPS is requesting assistance with food, pet items and cleaning supplies for their shelter. Items include Heavy-duty trash bags, paper towels, adult & puppy canned food, vinegar, degreaser, dog treats, sharpie pens and more. Donations can be dropped off from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday at 2500 Gonzalez St.

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.

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 956cuidandolouestro@gmail.com.

Peggy M. Duncan United Way of Laredo

GUEST EDITORIAL DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Killing of 'El Mencho' signals renewal in U.S.-Mexico ties

The killing of a powerful drug lord in Mexico could be an inflection point for President Claudia Sheinbaum and her bilateral relationship with the United States. The operation wherein Nemesio Rubén "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes, the boss of the powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel, was killed relied heavily on U.S. intelligence.

This is proof of increasing cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico, something that was severely damaged when Sheinbaum's predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, was in charge. It also demonstrates that López Obrador's appeasement strategy was a huge mistake, allowing cartels to become more powerful.

Credit to Sheinbaum, who has managed her relationship with President Donald Trump with deft pragmatism. She has navigated repeated threats to use U.S. military force against cartels on Mexican soil; she has avoided the full impact of tariffs with swift negotiations; and, most recently, she chose Mexico over Cuba, suspending oil shipments to the island under pressure

from the Trump administration.

Sheinbaum has correctly weighed the costs of deeper cooperation and managed the political capital not only with her constituents but with the Trump administration. This is a delicate balance, and she has proved adept.

Sheinbaum has turned over dozens of cartel members to U.S. justice and deployed Mexican troops to the border for immigration enforcement. But she has also been under pressure to allow joint operations between Mexican and U.S. military forces. She has so far resisted going that far, opting instead for greater information sharing and allowing the U.S. to play an enhanced role. The CIA is already carrying out secret drone flights over Mexico to identify possible locations of fentanyl labs. But getting U.S. troops involved is a line she would not cross.

Sheinbaum is showing the Trump administration that she is serious about taking down cartel drug lords, even with the consequences. After El Mencho's death, gang members unleashed violence, with cars torched and

blocked roads in at least 20 Mexican states, forcing people to shelter in place.

This is evidence of the cartel's power but also of its vulnerability. The killing of its leader brings uncertainty. Observers have noted that this organization is prone to fragmentation, which risks further violence. This is the practical problem with the approach known as the kingpin strategy. New leaders stand ready to take their place and reap the rewards with the risks.

With the help of the U.S., Sheinbaum needs to go further, sustaining a fight against cartel networks while rooting out corruption. Granted, this goes both ways: The U.S. has a responsibility as the primary consumer of drugs and the main supplier of weapons.

An effective strategy requires a multinational approach. Trump was right to push Sheinbaum to take action, something U.S. administrations have failed too often to do.

The killing of El Mencho could mark a new era in the U.S.-Mexico strategic partnership. Time will tell where this will lead, but this step was necessary.

YOUR OPINION

Public schools should be your first choice

By Thelma Martinez
UISD DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS

I am Thelma Martinez, and I have dedicated 39 years to the field of public education. In 1987, I joined the United Independent School District, where I have worked as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, and principal. For the past four years, I have proudly served as the Director of Admissions, Attendance, Dropout Prevention, and Planning. This role allows me to apply the decades of experience I gained working at the campus level to serve not only the schools but the entire UISD community.

School Choice has been widely discussed. Without a doubt, here at United ISD, we believe we should be your first choice. We offer a top-notch education and services for students who might not otherwise have a voice. UISD also provides an outstanding array of academic opportunities and extracurricular activities from Athletics to Fine Arts. Did you know we even have hundreds of clubs including BBQ, Robotics, Gaming, Art and Gardening?

Above all, public schools have heart.

Having worked in public schools my entire career, I can attest that teachers and staff are some of the most dedicated, hardworking, and selfless individuals I have ever known. With the many choices parents have now in educating their children...why public schools, you might ask? The answer is simple: public schools educate the whole child and do not turn children away re-

gardless of special needs or socioeconomic backgrounds.

Let me share a story:

As a principal in south Laredo years ago, I learned that a parent was devastated after their children were taken solely because poverty prevented them from providing a safe home. Without hesitation, the staff rallied to help the family make their home livable. Teachers and staff worked after school to paint, repair, and make curtains, and they collected money to cover a few months' rent so the family could get back on their feet. A coach even accompanied the parents to court to retrieve their children. I am immensely proud every time I see those children, now successful UISD high school students, because their flourishing is a permanent reminder of that experience.

As you can see, the entire school community consistently unites to support its members and provide every possible assistance. Our schools champion children and their individual needs, ensuring that all students have the chance to succeed. Public education provides essential programs like Special Education, Section 504, Dyslexia, Speech, and Counseling. We commit to guiding students, alongside their parents, to ensure every child receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education.

Public schools are fundamentally responsible for teaching students and are the unique providers of invaluable learning opportunities, offering strong curricula, hands-on experiences, and ac-

cess to technology. Public schools also offer a wide range of pathways to student success, including Early Colleges, Magnet Schools, top-of-the-line athletic programs, UIL competitive opportunities, and top-notch extracurricular activities. Recently, UISD has added new programs such as virtual learning, Veterinarian and CDL certifications, preparing students for both college and immediate entry into the workforce.

I am immensely proud to be a part of the Public School System, serving my community with loyalty and pride. As an alumna, a parent, and a grandparent within this great system, it is gratifying to know it is providing my family with the wealth of opportunities needed to mold them into successful, productive members of our society. Witnessing the success of my former students—now teachers, lawyers, parents, and community leaders—is the greatest reward and a testament to the fact that Public Schools are the place to be.

United Independent School District remains fully committed to serving our public school community, as children deserve nothing less than our absolute best.

I invite you to explore all the programs available at the United Independent School District by visiting the links below.

- sites.google.com/uisd.net/echsprogramms.
- uisd.net/programs-of-study.
- uisd.net/60247.4.

You can also enroll today at: uisd.net/64673.4, or by calling your neighborhood school or our attendance department at 956-473-6349.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Laredo Morning Times does not publish anonymous letters. Letters must include the writer's first and last names as well as a phone number to verify identity. The phone number is not published; it is used solely to verify identity and to clarify content, if necessary.

When responding to another's letter, writers should focus on the topic and not on the original writer themselves. No name-calling or gratuitous abuse is allowed. Letters are edited for style, grammar, length and civility. Also, letters longer than 1,000 words will not be accepted.

Please send letters to editorial@lmtonline.com attached in a word document or in the email itself. If you cannot send an email, mail to Letters to the Editor, 5711 McPherson Rd Suite 203A, Laredo, TX 78041.