

OPINION

Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

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CAC conference focuses on child safety

Everyone is invited to attend this year's Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) awareness conference because, "Everyone is responsible to keep our children safe." Whether you are a teacher, parent, health care provider, professional, law enforcement, attorney, student or community member, we all play a role in the safety and wellbeing of our children. I truly believe, "It takes a village!"

The 26th Annual Conference "It Takes a Team to Protect a Child" is scheduled for Thursday, April 2 at the Texas A&M International University, Student Center Ballroom. As child abuse continues to be a critical issue in communities nationwide, this conference aims to break the cycle of abuse through education, collaboration, and awareness. The conference serves as a platform for professionals, advocates, law enforcement, educators, healthcare providers, and community members to gain valuable knowledge and resources to help protect children from abuse and neglect.

Save your spot, don't wait to register! The cost is \$75 a person and \$25 for students with a valid identification. The fee includes lunch and unit hours for continuing education. On-site registration and check in will begin at 7:30 a.m. You will be greeted by the festive music of the Zapata High School Mariachi Halcon.

The program kicks-off with opening remarks from the CAC Board President, Chief Cordelia Perez and Executive Director, Dr. Severita Sanchez. The lineup of topics and speakers for

the conference are always exceptional. United States District Judge Diana Saldana, Southern District of Texas in Laredo is the Keynote speaker. Her session will be moderated by KGNS Anchor, Mindy Trust Casso.

Judge Saldana's session is entitled, "This is Me: My Journey from Childhood Trauma to Community Partner" in it she will share her journey from childhood trauma to community partner working to engage, inspire, educate and empower youth.

I first met the Honorable Judge Saldana through her involvement, leadership and support of our local Combined Federal Campaign. For years, she worked with Judge George Kazen to support programs that provide, food, clothing and shelter for families in need. Since Judge Kazen's passing, she has played an instrumental role continuing his legacy in the support for individuals coming out of the prison system trying to integrate back into the community. She is an incredible and inspirational lady. You won't want to miss her presentation!

Assistant District Attorney for the 49th Judicial District of Texas, Mr. Rogelio Soto is next up on the agenda. He will cover CAC 101: Why We Should Care. He is followed by Laredo Police Department Chief of Police, Miguel A. Rodriguez, Jr. His topic is "Protecting the Voiceless: A Law Enforcement Blueprint for Child-Centered Justice".

Right after lunch, Attorney, Juan J. Cruz will present "New Legal Re-

porting Requirements Affecting Public Education Entities." Mr. Cruz is the Managing Partner at JCA Law, P.L.L.C. He is respected and well known in our community for his exceptional work. He has held several prestigious positions throughout his career, including being the first Hispanic chair of the State Bar of Texas School Law Section. He is also a former chair for the Texas Association of School Board Council of School Attorneys.

Mr. Cruz is dedicated to providing a "gold standard" legal service. His presentation is sure to be extremely informative. Thank you, Mr. Cruz for everything you do to support our community. I am extremely grateful for everything you do to support the Children's Advocacy Center and their mission of helping families in need. The knowledge, experience and leadership you provide to our school districts and government offices is priceless. I have been blessed to see the great work Mr. Cruz has done as a board member for the CAC and with United Independent School District. Mr. Cruz has been defending Texas educational entities for years.

Dr. Juan Gerardo Galvan-Rodriguez, Psychotherapist and Clinical Director at Holy Family Psychotherapy Training Institute, will be the last speaker of the day. His topic be on the "Shared Responsibility: Psychological Insights and Multidisciplinary Strategies to Prevent Suicide in At-Risk Children."

In additions to the Annual Conference, CAC

cordially invites the community to join them on Friday, April 24th for the 3rd Annual Warrior Walk. It is a free event open to the public. It will be at the Bartlett Park off Thomas Ave. It will start at 9:30am. Everyone is encouraged to wear BLUE attire. Remember, "Every step counts in the fight against child abuse." For additional details contact 956.712.1840 or email officemanager@caclaredo.org.

Mark your calendars LAREDO PHILHARMONIC CHORALE: THE 7 WORDS OF CHRIST

Come experience this evocative and spiritual masterpiece brought to life by the voices of the Laredo Philharmonic Choral. The event will be on Sunday, March 29 at 3 p.m. at the TAMU Fine and Performing Arts Center. Admission cost is \$30 & Students with ID can enter for free. For tickets call 956.763.9960

LAREDO ANIMAL PROTECTIVE SOCIETY; EASTER EGG HUNT

Bring the whole family out to LAPS for a fun-filled day with games, food and drinks. There will be raffles, adoptions and Easter Bunny pictures on Friday, April 3 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 2500 Gonzalez St. For more information call 956.724.8364.

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER (AHEC): BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The AHEC Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, April 4 from noon to 3:30 p.m. at Jett Bowl North. For more information, contact

AHEC at 956.712.0037.

IMAGINARIUM OF SOUTH TEXAS: AEP LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Join us for the AEP Free Family Night on Friday, April 10 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 PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP: UNDERSTANDING PARKINSON'S

Everyone is invited to come learn more about Parkinson's. The workshop will be held on Saturday, April 11 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the TAMU Western Hemispheric Trade Center, Room III. The event will feature three keynote speakers. Kristen Martulis, DNP, APRN, AGNC-C, Depart. Of Neurology UT Health Science Center in San Antonio will present A New Frontier vs Deep Brain Stimulation. Leila Saadatpour, MD and Assistant Professor of Neurology UT Health Science Center in San Antonio will present Non-Motor Symptoms in Parkinson's. Pablo Coss, MD and Assistant Professor of Neurology UT Health Science Center in San Antonio will present Parkinson's Therapies and update on Laredo Clinics. For more information or to register for the event call 956.942.5511.

LAREDO VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Just a friendly reminder, April 15 is right around the corner. 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

SCAN: PLAY DAY

You are invited to join SCAN for an afternoon of fun with activities, arts & crafts, music and more. Families of all ages are welcome to this free event on Wednesday, April 22 from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Peg Energy Stadium. For more information call 956.608.3852

VOLUNTEER SERVICE COUNCIL FOR BORDER REGION: ALL WE NEED IS LOVE & A DASH OF STYLE 34TH ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW

The event will be held on Wednesday, April 22 at the Laredo Country Club \$100 per seat or \$1,000 a table.

For more information contact Claudia Arredondo at 956.612.4664 or Juanita Zepeda at 956.235.3599.

UNITED WAY OF LAREDO; THAT'S HOW WE ROLL: BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Saturday, April 25 at Jett Bowl North from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. For more information call 956.723.9913.

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

OP-ED

Palm Sunday invites reflection on our lives

As we gather for Palm Sunday, we stand at the threshold of the most sacred time in our Christian faith, Holy Week. It is a moment not only to remember, but to enter deeply into the mystery of our salvation, the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On Palm Sunday, we begin with joy. We carry palms in our hands and proclaim, "Hosanna," just as the people of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus. Yet, we

know that this same journey leads us to the cross. Palm Sunday invites us to reflect on our own lives, moments of faith and moments of weakness, and to walk with Christ through it all.

Brothers and sisters, Holy Week is an invitation. An invitation to accompany Jesus during these most sacred days as we pray, reflect, and renew our love for Jesus, who offers us unwavering love in His suffering,

death, and resurrection.

During this sacred week, we celebrate powerful moments that speak to the heart of who we are as sons and daughters of God. For Catholics on Tuesday of Holy Week, at the Chrism Mass at 7 p.m. at San Agustin Cathedral, we witness the unity of the priests of the Diocese of Laredo who, with the bishop, renew their service to the people of God. During the Chrism Mass, the Oil of the Sick, the Oil

of Catechumens, and the Oil of Holy Chrism are blessed to be distributed for Baptisms, Confirmations, and the Anointing of the Sick throughout the parishes of the Diocese of Laredo.

On Holy Thursday, we remember the gift of the Holy Eucharist, the real presence of Christ among us. On Good Friday, walk the Stations of the Cross and gather at the foot of the cross, recognizing the depth of Christ's love

offered for the forgiveness of our sins. He died for each one of us so that we might know forgiveness and new life.

Then Saturday, in the darkness of the Easter Vigil, a fire is lit. Jesus, the light of the world, conquers the darkness of sin and death. The tomb is empty! He lives! Jesus is risen from the dead!

Please do not let this Holy Week pass as just another week. Take time to attend these sacred

ceremonies in your parish church. Spend time in prayer. Bring your family and invite others to join you.

We are a community of families called to live in God's love.

As we begin this Holy Week on Palm Sunday, may we open our hearts to all that God desires to give us! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Most Rev. James A. Tamayo
Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo

GUEST EDITORIAL DALLAS MORNING NEWS

After measles outbreak, why are feds keeping us in the dark?

For the second time in two years, Texas is experiencing a significant measles outbreak. But unlike last year's outbreak in the South Plains, there's little information available about the new surge because it erupted at a privately operated federal detention center — and

company officials aren't talking.

What has blunted the effect of this outbreak is that the West Texas Detention Facility is in Hudspeth County. That expansive county is even more sparsely populated than Gaines County, where last year's outbreak was cen-

tered. Still, there are already dozens of cases at the detention center in Sierra Blanca, the seat of Hudspeth County. Related infections have turned up in El Paso, the closest big city, according to The Texas Tribune.

The Tribune's reporting solves a mystery: Why did

federal officials report many more cases of measles in Texas than the Department of State Health Services did? At the time, the state tallied 18 infections while the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 93.

News stories showed there had been scattered cases at Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities in Dilley and at Camp East Montana near El Paso. But dozens of cases were unaccounted for, and neither ICE nor the CDC explained them.

Now we know: Most of those mystery cases were affiliated with a third federal facility, the one in Sierra Blanca, which is operated by Louisiana-

based LaSalle Corrections for the U.S. Marshals Service.

It's a serious outbreak. As of Wednesday, Hudspeth County had 130 confirmed cases of measles in a county of only 3,500 residents. That's more cases than the whole state had between 2015 and 2024. Yet The Tribune reported that facility managers declined to provide El Paso public health officials with information about detainees' vaccination history or their close contacts at the facility, which hampered tracking the disease.

Imagine if ICE had been able to buy that enormous warehouse in Hutchins it had wanted to use as a detention center. A mea-

sles outbreak there would have spread almost immediately to the surrounding population, and hundreds of local residents could have caught the virus before the facility's operators alerted Dallas County public health workers or medical facilities.

As measles vaccination rates have declined, local communities are even more vulnerable to the disease. Public health officials need time to prepare.

The job of the state's top political leaders is to protect Texans' interests. That means pressing federal officials to quickly and consistently provide the information public health workers need to keep Texans safe.

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.