

## OPINION

# Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

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### CUIDANDO LO NUESTRO

## Volunteers power nonprofits, vital services

April is widely recognized for National Volunteer Awareness Month. In honor of National Volunteer Month, I would like to highlight the importance of volunteers. In the non-profit world, "volunteers make the world go around." Without volunteers, nothing can get done.

Even though many charities have staff, without the volunteer board members and officers an organization cannot operate. The board of directors governs the agency. They make decisions, set policies and procedures and are responsible for the organization. They are the stewards to ensure that the agency follows its mission and is accountable to the community.

As a part of the United Way family, I have been blessed to work with some amazing people and non-profit organizations. My focus this week is on a few that are 100% volunteer operated. Last week, I shared about the Kidney Foundation of Laredo that falls into that category. The Laredo HSDA HIV/AIDS Service Consortia is another agency that falls into that bracket. The Consortia is 100% volunteer driven.

Maria Elena Montemayor is the agency's president of the board.

"The volunteer board of directors is multidisciplinary with members that are in the medical field, religious field, active HIV/AIDS client, and other disciplines interested in assisting HIV/AIDS clients," Montemayor said. "The Laredo HSDA HIV/AIDS Service Consortia has been in operation since 1991. The Consortia initially began as a partnership with the City of Laredo Health Department. We had a Memorandum of Understanding with them to help

administer the state grant funds and oversee the service provided to HIV/AIDS clients. With the support of the Consortia, we were able to fill in the gaps where state funding could not help clients.

"The Consortia assists with supplemental services such as food, gas, prescriptions, supplies and specialized doctor's appointments. The eligibility criteria are that you have a confirmed diagnosis of HIV/AIDS and that you live in the Webb or Zapata County area. There are no fees charged to clients nor are they required to donate anything.

"Over the years, the life expectancy for a patient diagnosed with HIV/AIDS has changed due to earlier detection, intervention, education and improved regime treatments. While this is a positive factor for those affected with HIV/AIDS, it greatly increases the cost of treating clients over their lifetimes. The majority of active cases live at or below the current Federal Poverty Level guidelines."

The Consortia recently lost a few of its board members, the late Dr. Henry Carranza, Vernette Carranza (his wife) and the late George Donovan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the organizations as they continue to help clients in need.

The last Dr. Carranza was also part of the creation of another 100% volunteer organization. Laredo Organized Volunteers for the Elderly and Disadvantaged, better known as "LOVED". Their mission is to help the elderly or disadvantaged with the emergency distribution of clothing and blankets during inclement weather, Schools supplies for homeless or disadvantaged families and Thanksgiving meals for

the homebound elderly in our community. For more information on the Consortia or the LOVED organization email montemayor@stx.rr.com.

As you know, most charities exist because of volunteers. For some reason a person feels called to action for a cause that has touched their life. Many times, it is because of a difficult situation in their life that a person dedicates their time and energy to help others in need ... such is the case for The Laredo Cancer Society (LCS).

They were formed in 2015 out of the need of one person, Nancy Santos. Ms. Santos was diagnosed with breast cancer at 29 years of age. Soon after, she was informed that the disease had metastasized to other parts of her body. As she followed the path for routine treatments, she would often ask how she could access services for cancer patients. Unfortunately, she found that there was a void of services for this patient population, especially in the area of emotional support services. Out of this need, Ms. Santos began hosting Cancer Friends. This idea prompted Nancy to wonder what other needs cancer patients struggled with. Through her work with Cancer Friends, she learned about needs of people diagnosed with cancer. That's when she nonchalantly said, "I will start a non-profit to help cancer patients." With the help of Veronica Urabazo and Dr. Mahani, the Laredo Cancer Society opened its doors to help individuals diagnosed with cancer.

Sylvia Flores is the volunteer Treasurer for agency. She said, "the LCS vision is to provide direct financial and emotional support to cancer patients and their fami-

lies in the Laredo and surrounding areas (as they go through treatments). Because the organization is 100% volunteer based, 100% of the funds raised go directly to help patients. We assist with medical costs, utility expenses, travel for doctor's visits, mortgage/rent and other needs. In many cases, we fill a void by helping to coordinate and support breast cancer patients with their breast prosthetic needs."

For more information on the Laredo Cancer Society or how you can help make a difference, visit their website at [wecare@laredocancersociety.org](mailto:wecare@laredocancersociety.org) or call them at 956.615.4297.

Laredo HSDA HIV/AIDS Consortia and the Laredo Cancer Society are two agencies that I have worked with through United Way of Laredo. If you would like to share information on a 501(c)(3) organization or its services, please send me an email at [956cuidandolonuestro@gmail.com](mailto:956cuidandolonuestro@gmail.com). Thank you!

**Mark your calendars**  
**R.B. COWL REHABILITATION CENTER: CHILDREN'S ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC**

Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center will be hosting their monthly Children's Orthopedic Clinic on Tuesday, April 14. Registration is required. To schedule an appointment, call 956.722.2431.

**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](http://www.vitalaredo.org).

**LAREDO LITTLE THEATRE: ROCK OF AGES MUSICAL PRODUCTION**

The show will run April 16-26. Visit their website for times and ticket information at [www.laredolittletheatre.org](http://www.laredolittletheatre.org).

**SMILES FROM HEAVEN: YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME GALA**

Because every child fighting cancer deserves a friend like you. Friday, April 17 at 7 p.m. at The Barn at Los Patios. For more information call 956.337.8967.

**LAREDO MAIN STREET: FARMERS MARKET**

The next Farmer's Market will be happening on Saturday, April 18, 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: [lmseventso1@gmail.com](mailto:lmseventso1@gmail.com).

**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.

**AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY (ACS): RELAY FOR LIFE**

The ACS is registering teams for its annual event to raise funds for cancer research, programs and services. The event takes place on Friday, April 24 at the UISD Student Activity Center 6 pm to 1 am. Schools, community clubs, organizations, agencies and families are invited to join. To register a team, visit [www.relayforlife.org/webbtx](http://www.relayforlife.org/webbtx) or call Laura Nanez at 956.286.6955.

**AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER (AHEC): GENETICS CONFERENCE**

All parents and families are welcome to attend this resource fair for children with disabilities and autism. The event will be held Friday, April 24 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Laredo Public Health office located at 2600 Cedar Ave. For more information, call 956.712.0037.

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

The event will be held Saturday, April 25 at Jett Bowl North from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. For more information call 956.723.9113.

*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 [956cuidandolonuestro@gmail.com](mailto:956cuidandolonuestro@gmail.com).*

*Peggy M. Duncan is the United Way of Laredo executive director.*

### YOUR OPINION

## Insanity personified

It has become painfully obvious that the current president, who is at times at the White House and most of the time golfing at his Mar-A-Lago mansion, has shown he is mentally unfit to remain in office.

Last Sunday's social media post, in which he uses an obscenity for the entire world to read, threatens the country he invaded without cause. He demands that the vital Strait of Hormuz be opened immediately so that 20% of the World's oil can be shipped without impediment. It was open to the world before he began his illegal war.

He willingly took Israel's suggestion that they both attack without provocation. The consequences of that action will be felt for many

years. He praises Allah like the good Christian he professes to be. He threatened to wipe out an entire civilization which has existed and flourished for over 2500 years if they disobey his orders.

His deadline came and went, and he changed his mind and reset the deadline for 2 more weeks. He's been using his favorite deadline since he first mentioned it over nine years ago. The most openly ignorant president in the past two hundred years, is also the most historically challenged. He promises to bomb Iran back to the Stone "Ages." Historians usually refer to the Stone Age which ended hundreds of thousands of years ago. His promises to bomb infrastructure

and energy and desalination plants are considered war crimes.

No one in his administration dares to go against his maniacal wishes, fearing for their jobs. This malignant narcissist must be removed immediately before it is too late. The House must start impeachment proceedings this month. The Senate must convict and remove him from office, before he decides to use our country's nuclear capability. A friend in government has suggested that every Republican would vote against impeachment, fearful for their jobs. If he were to be impeached, he told me that the Republican Senators would not convict for the same reason. The *Almaraz continues on A5*

### YOUR OPINION

## Enough already!

For humanity's sake, Donald Trump must be stopped from ruining our nation's economy, harming United States citizens, alienating allied nations and starting an unjustifiable war based on nothing but his mentally detached whim. Trump ordered bombing of Iran without warning, notification or Congressional approval. The Constitution means nothing to Trump. He cares nothing about committing war crimes. Only Congress can declare war, but he hypocritically circumvents the issue, calling it "a military excursion."

His deranged ego impels malevolent decisions, turning a blind eye to consequences from what historians, economists, law professors, political scientists, respected military leaders, and sane human beings construe as genocidal crimes. He was impeached twice but was not "dethroned" because an effeminate Congressional Republican majority and dastardly billionaire oligarchs need Trump, their easily manipulated Orwellian useful idiot.

One circulating opinion is that Trump and his tongue-bathing White House appointees be tried by international tribunal

for wanton destruction of a sovereign nation's infrastructure and the slaughter of innocent civilians. Trump's MAGA cult hangers on are as lemmings running rampant, credulously following his hate-filled falsehoods, not caring about fellow humans. Trump's thoughtless disparagement of allies is deeply disturbing to American and world citizenry.

Enlisting in the Air Force in 1967, one sensed the military draft was grounded on lies of the Lyndon Johnson administration. Media sensationalized the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident; deceptively convincing Americans they were obligated to stop the spread of communism. Friends were drafted or volunteered. 58,281 American GIs, 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers, nearly 3.5 million North Vietnamese soldiers, Viet Cong, and civilians died in that war.

In 2003, the G.W. Bush administration lied to Americans about Saddam Hussein's "Weapons of Mass Destruction", saying Iraqis were involved in the mass deaths by hijacked airliners crashing into American buildings. This

propaganda led to a week of bombing before invading Iraq. The Lancet, a highly respected British medical journal, published research estimating 100,000 Iraqi civilians died in Baghdad from allied bombing.

Now Donald Trump, the non-stop liar, uses media propaganda to cruelly rain death and destruction. He belittles North American Treaty Organization (NATO) allies. He is mentally incapable of realizing NATO is a defensive organization; if one member is attacked, member nations provide defensive military measures. Trump and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu started this war with Iran in Asia, nowhere near NATO countries. He insolently derides NATO, calling them "paper tigers"; this from a coward who got five deferments to avoid military duty in the 1960s. Only an idiotic bully would start a war, belittle allies, then expect them to join his unwarranted war.

In the recently published The Much More Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 50 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Warn Anew, world-

*Valle continues on A7*

### 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](mailto: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.