

## OPINION

## Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

William B. Green  
PUBLISHERAdriana Devally  
GENERAL MANAGERZach Davis  
MANAGING EDITOR

## CUIDANDO LO NUESTRO

## Virtual open house connects community groups

Happy Sunday! I received an invitation to attend a virtual event from the Texas Health and Human Services Community Partner Program (CPP). I shared the invitation with our United Way of Laredo family of agencies. Today, I would like to share it with everyone else in the community. I feel it's important because many times people are not sure where to turn for state resources.

The Texas Health and Human Service (HHSC) Community Partner Program (CPP) connects the Texas Health and Human Services with organizations across the state to help Texans access food, cash assistance, and health care. Community partners assist individuals with applying for, renewing, and managing benefits through [www.YourTexasBenefits.com](http://www.YourTexasBenefits.com) and the Your Texas Benefits mobile app, promoting self-service and self-sufficiency through trusted local support.

CPP will be having a virtual open house on Thursday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to noon. The event is designed to provide nonprofit agencies and community-based organizations the opportunity to learn more about the CPP program, connect with local partners, and discover how collaborations can help more Texans access essential resources.

The invitations for the event note, "Who can become a Community Partner? A wide range of community-based and government organiza-

tions, such as faith-based organizations, health centers, clinics, food banks, educational institutions, libraries, health departments and local mental health centers fit the bill. By becoming a Partner with CPP, you can help pave the way for positive change in communities across Texas.

"Partners gain access to a dynamic network of groups, with a range of benefits including: Community Engagement, Resource Sharing, Expanded Impact, Visibility & Recognition, Access to Funding Opportunities, Professional Development, and Advocacy & Influence."

- **Community engagement:** offers a platform to actively engage with communities across Texas, fostering meaningful connections and understanding;

- **Resource sharing:** allows you to benefit from shared resources, expertise and best practices, empowering your organization to address community challenges more effectively;

- **Expand impact:** allows you to collaborate on initiatives that leverage the collective strengths of partners, potentially expanding the reach and impact of your programs and services;

- **Visibility and recognition:** helps you to gain exposure and recognition for your organization's commitment to community engagement through CPP's promotional channels and events;

- **Access to funding opportunities:** You can tap into funding streams and grant opportunities available exclusively to CPP partners, supporting your organizations sustainability and growth;

- **Professional development:** You can participate in training workshops, seminars, and networking events designed to enhance your team's skills and capacity for community-driven initiatives;

- **Advocacy and influence:** You can join with CPP to advocate for policies and initiatives that help Texas communities.

For more information visit them at [www.TexasCommunityPartnerProgram.com](http://www.TexasCommunityPartnerProgram.com) or email them at [CPP@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:CPP@hhs.texas.gov).

#### Mark your calendar 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).

#### 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

#### STYLE34TH ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS' DAY LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW

The event will be 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.

#### LAREDO CRIME STOPPERS: DINE TO SUPPORT — EVERY THURSDAY IN APRIL

Enjoy a delicious meal while giving back! Every Thursday in April, 10% of your check will go to support the Laredo Crime Stoppers at P.F. Chang's located at 2608 NE Bob Bullock Loop from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Present the flyer to support the cause whether you dine in or pick up. To get a copy of the flyer find Laredo Crime Stoppers on Facebook, Instagram or visit their website.

#### 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 p.m. to 1 a.m. 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. 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.

#### IMAGINARIUM OF SOUTH TEXAS: HEB FREE FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Join us for the H-E-B Free Family Fun Night on Friday, April 24, 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.

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

Join us on Saturday, April 25, at Jett Bowl North from 12 p.m.-3 p.m. for our 3rd annual Bowling Tournament. Registration for teams of five is \$300; for a team and lane sponsorship, \$500. Trophies will be awarded for first to third place and for best and worst bowlers. For more information, call 956-723-9113.

#### KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF LAREDO: BE A HERO FOR KIDNEY HEALTH

May 5, Jett Bowl North from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, visit their website, [www.helpkfol.com](http://www.helpkfol.com) or follow them on Facebook.

#### R.B. COWL REHABILITATION CENTER: MOTHER'S DAY TO BLOOM

Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center (RBC) will be offering respite services for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities ages 5-11 on Saturday, May 2, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is required. To ensure each participant receives full attention and enjoys a meaningful experience, space will be limited. Parents and caregivers interested in the respite care camp may register their child or children at our open house registration to be held on Wednesday, April 22, at RBC, located at 1220 N. Malinche, between 3:30 and 5 p.m. For more information, call RBC at 956-722-2431.

#### JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF LAREDO: 2026 BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

This year's Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame laureates are Joe Arciniaga-Community Leaders; Oscar Omar Lopez-Tejas Financial Advisors; Primo, Rick, Elizabeth and Kandy Walker-S E Legacy Development. The event will be on Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at the Laredo Country Club. For more information, please contact Oralia Bernal at 956-725-3464 or at [obernal@jast.org](mailto:obernal@jast.org).

*If you have an upcoming community event or information on a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization you would like to share, email me at [956cuidandolonues-tro@gmail.com](mailto:956cuidandolonues-tro@gmail.com). Peggy M. Duncan United Way of Laredo*

## GUEST OPINION

## Texas' immigration policies are hurting our economy

By Dan Hooper

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Two recent changes to Texas immigration policy are harmful for the already thin Texas workforce and our state's economy. This is happening despite increasing support of Americans — in several surveys — to grant long-term and trusted undocumented immigrants permission to work and stay in the country. We are already seeing the effects of these decisions.

Unfortunately, Texas is moving in the wrong direction.

First, by siding with the federal government, state officials allowed the 2001 Texas Dream Act, passed by then-Gov. Rick Perry and our Republican-led state legislature, to be struck down. Since then, undocumented college students have lost access to in-state tuition and eligibility for state financial aid. This decision has already affected up to 57,000 students, according to advocates' estimates.

At ScholarShot, a Dal-

las-based nonprofit helping first-generation college students earn career-ready degrees, we had to move several of our undocumented scholars from now-unaffordable Texas universities to community college. One young man, a junior at the University of Texas at Dallas, had a 4.0 as a pre-med student and is now at Dallas College earning a radiology credential.

We put these kids through our K-12 schools. That means, as taxpayers, we are investing \$150,000 in each diploma these kids earn. That's not a small investment and we should expect a return for that. Without in-state tuition and the TEXAS Grant, we are relegating these students to low employability or a poverty-level high school wage when we should be providing them with a pathway to work, to earn a livable wage, pay taxes and contribute to the Texas economy.

Consider also that these kids are the top performers in our high schools, something we



Elias Valverde II/Dallas Morning News

Texas was the first state to extend in-state tuition to undocumented students when former Gov. Rick Perry signed the bipartisan measure into law in 2001. Shown is the campus of the University of North Texas.

witness at ScholarShot. The young man noted above, who left UTD, scored 1260 on the SAT. ScholarShot's first-generation college graduates, who are working legally under the federal De-

ferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, have starting salaries of \$55,000-\$75,000 per year, triple a high school-level wage. That is over a \$1 million increase in lifetime earnings for each DACA employee.

After a 2025 ruling, future renewals of work permits to DACA recipients in Texas are at risk, something they can still get in other states. DACA recipients in our state have an estimated spending power of \$3.7 billion, according to Every Texan. We don't want to flush that money away.

A second change in policy occurred on Jan. 26, when the Texas De-

partment of Licensing and Regulation announced that it will require proof of lawful presence in the United States to issue a new or renewed vocational license. As hard as it is to get a professional plumber, HVAC technician or electrician to your home today, imagine if a significant portion of them had to leave our state?

You may argue that undocumented immigrants take jobs away from American taxpayers. This argument does not hold water, according to a January report in Forbes. The unemployment rate for U.S.-born workers grew from 3.7% to 4.1%

during the 2025 Trump immigration crackdown.

Texas has many good things working in its favor, many of which are a result of Gov. Greg Abbott's pro-business policies. However, these two changes in our immigration policy hurt our state, our people and our economy.

*Dan Hooper is the executive director of ScholarShot, a Texas-based nonprofit helping first-generation students earn postsecondary workforce credentials and degrees. He is also the author of "Fleece U — How American Universities Are Robbing Our Kids and Our Future."*

## 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.