Dear Alumni and Supporters,

We've talked a lot this year about the 40th anniversary of NHI, basking a bit in the significance of this milestone, and taking a look back at how much we've grown and how much has changed. And although it was Ernesto Nieto's great vision combined with Gloria de Leon's background in social work and keen business acumen that set this great experiment in motion, it's important to remember that they didn't do it alone. That's why we've chosen this special year's Celebración to honor a number of those who made critical contributions to NHI in its adolescence. The First Families, as we're calling them, recognized the importance of developing Latino leadership at the high school level, and gave time, energy, and corazon to the effort. You can read about their contributions here, and there will be more remembrances coming out of this Cele to add to our collective history.

Of course, on this 40th anniversary, we must acknowledge Ernesto and Gloria's immense contributions to the organization and the nearly 100,000 alumni who have graduated from NHI programs to principled community leadership. While Ernesto and Gloria are still working to make NHI better, and even as they are anticipating the transition to the next generation of NHI leaders, they took time to do an interview earlier this year to share their memories of the organization's beginnings. The “Joyful Journey,” as they've called it, is remarkable to look back on—reading it made me newly aware of their perseverance and their unwavering belief in NHI’s mission.

As much as this year's Cele is about looking back and marveling at all we've done, it's also about looking to the next 40 years. We're looking forward to hearing from our students about their vision for NHI's next steps, in a city with such a rich tradition of Latino leaders. We're also looking forward to the students who will join us; in the last few years especially, we've been amazed at how they've stepped up to the challenges we've presented them. They have access to technology we couldn't have imagined existing 40 years ago, yet they've utilized it to extend the ideas and beliefs that have been with us all along.

We're also excited to honor the sponsors whose support has been vital to NHI's ongoing work: DishLATINO, the Roy G. Kerr Foundation, and State Farm. In 2018-2019, we cannot thank Winston & Strawn LLP enough, for dedicating hundreds of hours to our work in corporate governance. We proudly continue to partner with these organizations to make leadership development available to students from throughout the Americas.

Along the way, of course, many of our students choose one of our NHI College Register members for continuing their education, and we're grateful to all of those members for partnering with us to make leadership part of the lives of youth. While the work that NHI alumni do to develop extends beyond college, it's an important stage in their development, and it remains an important focus of our ever-evolving Collegiate World Series program.

Finally, I'd like to take this moment to express NHI's gratitude and memorialize our beloved Rev. John Minogue, who served on the NHI Board of Directors for more than a quarter-century, helped NHI gain a foothold in the midwestern U.S., and invested thousands of hours of time, resources, and energy to our cause in different roles. He was a great believer in what NHI offers, and we'll be forever appreciative of how he's helped us grow and evolve into the organization we've become.

With loving gratitude,

K. Nicole Nieto
Executive Vice President
2019 CELEBRACIÓN STUDENT SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019
12:00 PM - 4:30 PM STUDENT REGISTRATION 2ND FLOOR FOYER
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM FOUNDERS RECEPTION EXECUTIVE SALON 2
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM DINNER TEXAS BALLROOM
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM GREAT DEBATE ORIENTATION EXECUTIVE SALON 1 (ES-1)
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM LBZ ORIENTATION SAN ANTONIO BALLROOM (SAB)
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM CWS ORIENTATION EXECUTIVE SALON 4 (ES-4)
8:00 PM - 10:00 PM STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING ES-1, ES-2, SAB
10:00 PM - 12:00 AM REFLECTION & REVIEW ES-1, ES-2, SAB
12:00 AM CURFEW & LIGHTS OUT WYNDHAM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019
7:00 AM - 8:30 AM BREAKFAST TEXAS BALLROOM
7:30 AM - 9:30 AM STUDENT ROLL CALL ES-1, ES-2, SAB
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING ES-1, ES-2, SAB
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM LUNCH TEXAS BALLROOM
1:30 PM - 5:00 PM STUDENT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TS-1, TS-2, SAB
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM DINNER TEXAS BALLROOM
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM BEST OF NOCHE TS-1, TS-2, SAB
9:00 PM - 11:00 PM REFLECTION & REVIEW ES-1, ES-2, SAB
11:00 PM CURFEW & LIGHTS OUT WYNDHAM

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019
7:00 AM - 8:30 AM BREAKFAST TEXAS BALLROOM
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM COLLEGE WORKSHOPS TS-1, TS-2, SAB
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM COLLEGE PANELS TS-1, TS-2, SAB
10:15 AM - 12:00 PM COLLEGE FAIR/CHALLENGE PREP 3RD FLOOR FOYER
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM LUNCH TEXAS BALLROOM
1:30 PM - 5:00 PM FINAL PROJECT PREP & PRESENTATIONS ES-1, ES-2, SAB
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM DINNER TEXAS BALLROOM
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM PROJECT COMPETITION FINALS TS-1, TS-2, SAB
9:00 PM - 12:00 AM STUDENT SOCIAL & DANCE TS-1, TS-2, SAB
12:00 AM CURFEW & LIGHTS OUT WYNDHAM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019
5:00 AM - 7:00 AM AIRPORT SHUTTLE FOR EARLY DEPARTURES TS-1, TS-2, SAB
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM BREAKFAST TS-1, TS-2, SAB
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM CLOSING CEREMONY TS-1, TS-2, SAB
10:00 AM - 12:00 AM AIRPORT SHUTTLES TS-1, TS-2, SAB

CELEBRACIÓN VOLUNTEERS

GABRIELLE ACEVES, The University of Texas at Austin
JOCELINE ACOSTA, Harper College
ANA LISAGA ARGUETEO, Boston University
CHRIS AVALOS, Brigham Young University
ELIZABETH BARRAZA, SureScore, Inc.
ADAM BRENNAN, Texas A&M University
EDGAR CASTILLO, University of Houston-Clear Lake
SAUL CESAR, University of Houston-Downtown
NATALIA CHAPA-MILLS, University of Texas at Austin
GEORGE CORTEZ, Cabrini University
JULIAN GARCIA-MENDEZ, University of Texas at El Paso
JULISSA GARCIA, Brown University
REILLY GARCIA, Texas State University
ANALCO GONZALEZ, OCI, Inc.
JAMES HERRING, University of Texas at Arlington
XAVIER LOGAN, Mercy College
ESTI MATULEWICZ, Princeton University
MARIO MORALES, Illinois State University
JESSICA MARANJO, Texas State University
JENNIFER OLGIN, LDZ Alumni Volunteer
DIEGO PARÁS, University of Monterrey
FRANCISCO VIELMA, Wesleyan University
ANDREA YARITTU, University of Texas at Austin
BRIANA ZAVALA, Texas AM University

NHI MAGAZINE 2019
At no time in my life have I ever witnessed a greater need to have an organized, results-oriented entity in Latino community life that makes preparing future youth leadership training a critical part of their development.

Small and large towns, civic and political organizations, church organizations, school boards, health entities, and grassroots groups are in constant need to resupply their leadership. In many respects we, as a community, have either accepted or were not considered worthy candidates to fill certain leadership roles in the communities where we resided. We used to determine which Anglos had our real sentiments in mind by how friendly they appeared, whether they had Latinos in higher-up positions under their leadership, or if they appeared at our celebrations to eat our tacos and sing “Volver” along with us.

Before that, we were essentially ignored. Circumstances have since changed. Latinos experience a much different and competitive modern-day era than before. But what has not changed is the lack of organized structures at community levels that specifically make youth leadership training a critical part of their development.

Today, NHI continues to be the only nationally and internationally-oriented entity in Latino community life that makes preparing future community leaders its core mission and purpose.

People who have emerged from our alumni base, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Xochitl Torres Small, who were both elected to Congress in 2018, are examples of our work. Some took off from work to be volunteers. No one asked them to help. They wanted to help the campaign to support one of their own.

This has all the way back to the early 1980s, when seeds were planted to grow NHI. We now have a harvest of community talent, more visible than ever, with 100,000 alumni in various stages of their careers.

This is, indeed, just the initial evidence of what NHI can do, engaging young people in learning experiences that are aspirational in their impact and produce energy.

When my mother and father were asked how they managed to do their work with barrio girls and boys in Houston, how they accomplished so much with so little, Mom would often respond by pointing upwardly to signify her firm and unwavering belief in God, saying, “On a wing and a prayer.”

Gloria and I often said something similar. We had our own “wing and a prayer” - often known as P.O.O.F. (proceed only on faith) when we launched NHI as an experiment to establish a means to train future community leaders. We knew all along this would be an effort that continuously needed iteration, and constant processing.

We also knew that the effort had to come from within our community. We couldn’t rely on government grants and foundation grants like the majority of community-based groups. In the world we were creating, we had to have an undeniable and unshakable faith in our community to respond through volunteerism, their investment of time, and sharing of their expertise.

And now, future generations will take the mantle from Gloria and me, and face the next forty years.

How did NHI make a difference for these leaders? When you join NHI as a high school student, you’re given numerous platforms to build your skills, receive insight into your potential, and experience validation from your peers and yourself. NHI programs make taking risks more realistic and more achievable, and they bond you with a community that understands that.

When AOC first announced her plans to run for Congress, there were numbers of NHIers who showed up to help. Others sponsored fundraising events to bolster her campaign. Some took off from work to be volunteers. No one asked them to help. They wanted to join the campaign to support one of their own.

This goes all the way back to the early 1980s, when seeds were planted to grow NHI. We now have a harvest of community talent, more visible than ever, with 100,000 alumni in various stages of their careers.

This is, indeed, just the initial evidence of what NHI can do, engaging young people in learning experiences that are aspirational in their impact and produce energy.

When my mother and father were asked how they managed to do their work with barrio girls and boys in Houston, how they accomplished so much with so little, Mom would often respond by pointing upwardly to signify her firm and unwavering belief in God, saying, “On a wing and a prayer.”

Gloria and I often said something similar. We had our own “wing and a prayer” - often known as P.O.O.F. (proceed only on faith) when we launched NHI as an experiment to establish a means to train future community leaders. We knew all along this would be an effort that continuously needed iteration, and constant processing.

We also knew that the effort had to come from within our community. We couldn’t rely on government grants and foundation grants like the majority of community-based groups. In the world we were creating, we had to have an undeniable and unshakable faith in our community to respond through volunteerism, their investment of time, and sharing of their expertise.

And now, future generations will take the mantle from Gloria and me, and face the next forty years.

As we celebrate 40 years as an organization, we should collectively realize that our moment in history has arrived. Our moment in the sun has come. It’s right in front of our eyes. Today NHI employs a full-time professional staff. The organization owns its offices and 46 acres of land for future development. It enjoys a national and international network of affiliate members that are actively in contact with hundreds of schools that generate thousands of student prospects every year.

NHI has also successfully developed and tested an entire ecosystem of youth and community-based leadership programs and curricula that can be applied from 8th grade all the way through college and into adulthood. NHI has a research capacity that constantly revises and critically examines changing trends in Latino youth-thinking that spans the U.S. and also includes regional views. And finally, NHI is now represented in different countries that provide the organization with a means of further expanding its constituency base into Latin America.

Whether the Latino community in general has an organized, structured, and especially a sustainable means of supplying the Latino community with its future leaders, the answer is clearly an affirmative. Forty years of effort and substantial financial resources have been invested in establishing the structures for this purpose.

The next logical questions are what’s next, what vision should drive the next forty years, and how will the continuation of the NHI effort be secured as the Latino community continues to be a significant and integral part of American life?

These critical questions will have to be answered by NHIers who realize the critical importance of the previous forty years, and accept the challenge that “temples are not built by wishes.”

If we expect to have a significant voice in determining our future, we either give it up for others to respond, or we make a place for ourselves at the table to make the decisions. Either way, we must always recognize that time takes its toll and that the security of tomorrow not only relies on you, but who you invest in to prepare to take your place.
ON NHI’S BEGINNINGS

GDL: I’m surprised about how quickly 40 years have gone by. It seems like just yesterday. At the start, there were a lot of conversations and a lot of buzz, a lot of excitement about all the things that were possible to do. There wasn’t necessarily a clear direction that we were going to do leadership development from the very beginning. It wasn’t that way at all. It was about the excitement that this was something that was going to be our own making.

We weren’t looking to the side or behind us or up the hierarchical ladder to get approval for something that we instinctively knew we wanted to do, that we were capable of doing. We kept saying, we were the experts. And so that was, I think, a very significant part of the joy and the liberation we felt. There was a constant sense of excitement.

EN: I personally witnessed the decline of leadership after the 1960s. To me, that was very significant, because we were used to a lot of activity in the neighborhood, and a lot of the nonprofit organizations doing that just shut their doors almost overnight. They were tired from the Civil Rights Movement, emotionally and physically.

One of the things I didn’t want to do was go back and deal with at-risk populations. We started by working with young professionals, from 23 to 35, called the Executive Management Program, but we found that once they were 25 or 26, they were frustrated with their environment. You could tell they were really getting into realizing their opinions counted. It’s the fact that you can discuss ideas freely and share ideas freely, and to have that reinforced by counselors who were in college, supporting them, back up, and encouraging them. It was a lot of testing ideas, we weren’t so much as interested in what they were saying as we were in how they were repositioning themselves as competent, intelligent leaders. A lot of them were from small Texas towns ... and hadn’t thought of themselves as leaders.

ON RECRUITING IN THE EARLY YEARS (BACK WHEN PEOPLE DIDN’T KNOW WHAT NHI WAS AND WHEN THERE WERE FEW ALUMNI TO SERVE AS AMBASSADORS).

GDL: We did send out brochures to statewide high schools. And from the very beginning, we got them torn up, scribbled on, tossed back in our faces, even people asked us, “Where’s the National White Institute?” We didn’t know how to approach the schools.

I remember being at Mission High School, just going on a cold call, sitting outside. School had started, everybody was running around, and this gentleman went by, and he said, “Has someone helped you?” I explained who I was, he said, “Come on in,” I sat there and explained to him what we’re trying to do, and he said, “Okay.” I mean, that’s basically the type of response that we got in the Rio Grande Valley. Just about every single school district had Hispanics as counselors, principals, attorneys, maybe some superintendents. I always say they, they’re the ones who took a chance on an unproven product.

We had nothing to show yet, but the schools in the Valley were sending us kids. And not just one kid, but 10, 12, 15 par school, from the very beginning, with NHI and with the LDZ, half the kids were from the Valley.

It was the fact that you can discuss ideas freely and share ideas freely, and to have that reinforced by counselors who were in college, supporting them, back up, and encouraging them. It was a lot of testing ideas, we weren’t so much as interested in what they were saying as we were in how they were repositioning themselves as competent, intelligent leaders. A lot of them were from small Texas towns ... and hadn’t thought of themselves as leaders.

ON STARTING THE LDZ

Note: The Lawrence de Zavala Youth Legislative Session started as a two-day demonstration at the Texas State Capitol at the end of the existing Young Leaders Conference. Though some concepts of the LDZ followed similar lessons of democracy of the Boys State and Girls State programs, it was a distinctly NHI program from its inception.

GDL: I looked at my cousin Edward’s Boys State booklet [after he went to the conference], and noticed that out of the 600 young men who went to Boys State that year, 12 had Spanish surnames. That’s when we decided we needed to do our own.

It was after that [initial demo] event in 82 that the kids said this was awesome, but it would have been better if it was longer; they had just met each other, it’d be better if we’d stayed in the dorms. So that’s when Ernie said to me, “Do that.” And I said, “Yes, okay,” and so I expanded it into the eight-day program.

I think that what we realized more than anything else is that they’d had enough of school, of sitting and listening to lectures. They were moving around the Capitol, they were collaborating, they were getting on the microphone, everything. They were active – they were active learners. And I was sitting in the gallery, I remember just how they felt about hearing their own voices over that microphone, in that environment. You could tell they were really getting into realizing their opinions counted.

EN: We’ve talked about it for years, but the magic continues even today. It puts you outside of your routine experience of home – school – home – school – football – cheerleading. It puts you in a position of realizing a little bit of self-importance, learning about yourself.
worked and what didn’t. We would drop sections of the program we didn’t think worked. We were constantly evaluating and constantly fine-tuning.

ON NH TRANSFORMING STUDENTS, AND GROWING AS A RESULT

GDL: For me, just from a personal level, the thrill was that we started feeling confident about what we could do. There’s no doubt that as soon as students went through the programs, they went back and reported to the counselors. I mean, they saw the kids were different, were completely different.

The kids themselves reported, “I went back and I ran for student body president” or “I decided to go for cheerleader.” I mean, they themselves were reporting this breakout, were saying I can do this. There were some good things and sad things, like one of our alumni from Floresville got elected the Floresville Peanut Queen for the first time in the history of the town … and was the recipient of all this racism and comments. So what good things were happening to the kids, and they were breaking out, they also started feeling the backlash of being those early kids that were doing great things, you know, not just good things, but doing outstanding, great things.

I remember one year, I think it was 1987, we got a lot of great coverage. We came out in the Christian Science Monitor, we were written up in the New York Times, there was an article that came out in the Chronicle of Higher Education. There was a woman at Southwestern University who was part of the PR team, who had contacts. So we had write ups.

And I remember that we just didn’t know how to handle it at the time, because there were a lot of people who called and said, “We want to know more.” It was just Ernie and I, we didn’t have the capacity to do anything. We did get invited to the University of New Mexico that way, we got a call from Alex Sanchez, who was the VP over there, and said, “I’m interested in this, come and see me.” So Ernie and I travel there, and he says, “Let’s do this” … and that next summer, we’re going to be replicated all over the United States. And here we are in 16 states, and it’s gotten to be international. That’s momentum. And now, I’m in my late seventies, watching the staff do it on their own.

You’re still worried about all the things you’re worrying about. The kids themselves reported, “I went back and I ran for student body president” or “I decided to go for cheerleader.” I mean, they saw the kids were different, they also started feeling the backlash. We were invited to the kids, and they were breaking out, they also started feeling the backlash of being those early kids that were doing great things, you know, not just good things, but doing outstanding, great things.

The kids themselves reported, “I went back and I ran for student body president” or “I decided to go for cheerleader.” I mean, they saw the kids were different, were completely different.

And the same thing happened everywhere we went. We were invited by the University of Iowa to expand the program there. Universities were encouraging us because they saw it as a way of targeting bringing in the qualified “diversity” that they wanted for their schools.

ON WHAT IMPRESSES THEM ABOUT THE KIDS IN NH

GDL: Ernie and I have had this conversation a lot about when the light bulb goes off for a kid in NHI — to be in a social experiment, to be in a role that you’ve never been in before, and to do something, and to all of a sudden realize you’re really good at this, that you know what you’re doing. You have, in Español, we call it saliva. You have the ability to orchestrate and put together and string together thoughts and ideas, you can speak passionately about something, you can convince other people that what you believe is important and significant enough to support. To have intellectual conversations about anything that transcends, it’s not just, you know, how did you do on your math test? And do to that without judgment? To not feel like there’s somebody sitting right next to you saying, “Oh, there she goes again.”

There’s a sense of being free to do, to confirm what you’ve always known you could do, but you never had the stage to do it. And to know you were you surrounded by like-minded peers? Who wanted the same thing?

So what it did was change the chemistry of the environment. The expectation was, first of all, that Ernie and I expected them to do anything to the very best they could. We always would say to them, you’re not going to teach these students. You come in with this, you have this. So the opportunity is for them to just demonstrate it.

And then the other thing, the one thing that I think was very beautiful about any [NHI] experience overall is that you couldn’t make a mistake. So if you win up and lose an election at LDZ, you go on. It’s this idea of just keep doing, keep going, you don’t define yourself by the preliminary failure or defeat or whatever … The great thing about the LDZ is that once the kids were elected, it was the first challenge, basically the marker goes down to day one, again, with the three days of the legislative session, because the awards are all going to be decided, based on what they do those last three days.

And there’s so much symbolism, so much recognition, so much cultural familiarity, there are just all those things built into the environment that, honestly, unless you grew up in the Rio Grande Valley, and you lived it and breathe it every day, and you felt comfortable speaking in Spanish … most kids today never experience that. I realized years later that that’s what I was doing. I was recreating that childhood experience that made me feel like I was never a minority, there wasn’t anything that could hold me back. And if we could just give that taste and experience to a child for at least a week — and now there are multiple experiences, but back then, it was only LDZ — they could go through that, and that was going to stay with them the rest of their lives.

ON LEADING NH TOGETHER

EN: Therein lies the opportunity and the threat. It’s a threat in that [teaching NH] is a CEO concept. Once they reach goals for recruiting Latino students to their campuses, they don’t have that commitment to. They sense that …

GDL: … they can do it on their own. We would always sand information to Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and they would be like, “We don’t need to go to your college fair. Our cup runneth over with applicants. When you achieve critical mass, or you think you’re getting recruits on your own … that’s when they’re like, “Why do we need to host LDZ?”

EN: I think that all our programs are now designed to give people a lot of agency without criticism, license and essentially expected accomplishments. But I think the real untold story of NH, not what has happened, what went into what continues to go into yesterday, when we were thinking of building a pavilion. We just going to roll the dice with that, that’s been our attitude. We didn’t need an architect or a person in the construction industry, we could pick that up on our own, and mobilize and evaluate. The idea is are you willing to make those big financial decisions, ones that could blow up in your face? Are you willing to have a backup plan? It’s the same psychology when we first did this — is this going to work? Will it work in New Mexico, Colorado, the Midwest? What we found is let’s go ahead and risk it. Let’s continue. Let’s do the authentic part of the program. And the kids responded.

The light bulb going off for me was at the 1983 LDZ at Concordia, or in New Mexico, I remember Gloria and I embracing that we had replicated the program.

EN: And by 1987, when we had the huge group together every day (for Texas LDZ), we knew that it was not only going to work, but was going to be replicated all over the United States. And here we are in 16 states, and it’s gotten to be international. That’s momentum. And now, I’m in my late seventies, watching the staff do it on their own.

And a lot of stuff has happened. There were a lot of discouragers along the way. People making accusations, or naysayers, or people wanting to see it on a racial level. And, you know, not understanding the commitment that we needed to create, to evolve to where we are now.

EN: I think that as a couple, I think we’re probably the only ones in history that has ever had that daily, to this day, that daily dialogue, discussion analysis, and, and using everything that we’ve learned today to influence the next step … Even to this day, the question is, “Are you awake?” Because we’re in bed, and there will be something that we need to discuss, something that needs to be dissected, and we’ll get up every morning, have, coffee, and talk about it. The joy for me has been to have to be part of that partnership, and to do it with my husband.

We’ve gone through this success and failure for over the years. There were times when Ernie, it’s not that he doubted it — he knew it could be done, but he doubted whether the reaction was going to be what’s going to come that we wanted. We did the trigger, but was what was going to be the response?

EN: And a lot of stuff has happened. There were a lot of discouragers along the way. People making accusations, or naysayers, or people wanting to see it on a racial level. And, you know, not understanding the commitment that we needed to create, to evolve to where we are now.

We did do the balancing act. In the times when I went either through tragedy or whatever, when I could not function, Ernie was able to pick it up, and when he could not function, I was able to thrive. And so, doing it as a team worked very well. That’s contributed to the longevity, the survival, just the fact that NH is still around.
At a Place Called Home
ERIKA AGUIRRE AND ANALCO GONZÁLEZ REMEMBER LEADING THE LDZ

By Olivia Traviézo

Illich the summer of 2001, I attended the National Hispanic Institute's Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session at Southwestern University. I had never attended an NHI program before, and I remember being blown away by the visuals, the music, the emotions, and most of all, the possibility of making it all happen. More than a decade after that Texas LDZ, I would have the opportunity to continue my ongoing work with NHI as an Educational Director for the California LDZ at the University of San Diego. I feel honored to be among the select NHI alumni who have served in this capacity.

While NHI has had tremendous leaders emerge from its alumni throughout the country and internationally, few have played pivotal roles in shaping NHI’s flagship program, the LDZ, as Erika Aguirre and Analco González. In the summer of 2000, Erika and Analco became the first alumni to officially assume the role of LDZ Educational Directors, succeeding NHI co-founders Dr. Ernesto Nieto and Dr. Gloria de Leon, paving the way for the program’s continued evolution.

To help commemorate NHI’s 40th Anniversary this year, I spoke with them both to learn more about their remarkable experience.

Oliveia Traviézo (OT): It is so important that we continue to tell the stories of the people who shaped NHI over the past decades—the NHI lore that is sometimes forgotten but provides such valuable insight to our current leaders, NHI alumni, and future leaders.

Erika Aguirre (EA): I remember Analco and I being overwhelmed with the idea that anybody could serve in the role of ED aside from Ernie and Gloria. We didn’t think we could do it without them, but Ernie would say, you have to because that is what NHI was created to do, we need leadership in action and make it possible for the youth to step into big leadership roles. In any other organization, people would look at us and say you’re too young, but I am telling you that you can do it because I believe in you.

We knew no one could do the LDZ like Ernie and Gloria, but we had to have the faith in ourselves that they had in us. They told us, we will always be here, but if we don’t let young people take over, they will never be able to see themselves in your shoes. They are looking at you because they see themselves through you and believe they can do it too. We were the EDs for that LDZ program that summer and we were so tried by the end, but it was phenomenal.

Analco González (AG): It was a huge responsibility, and we took it very seriously because we understood the historical significance to NHI since it was the first time that someone other than Ernesto and Gloria would be up on that stage. Erika and I would constantly talk with Ernesto, Gloria, and other folks like JFLs, the LDZ staff, and colleagues that had been in those shoes to guide us and help me grow into the new role. That’s why I believe it is so important for the youth that have been here both before and after, and that you both will be there, whether it is 10, 15, or even 20 years later, we can always connect with and learn from past experiences. With that said, do you have a favorite memory or story you can share?

EA: I have so many, but one of the greatest memories was being at the end of the awards ceremony in California, and as I looked around at our team I thought, we really did it! This was the first program ever that Ernie and Gloria had not been there at the end. And we set up the Circle of Love the next day, I couldn’t wait to call Gloria and Garza, and the many JFLs and NHI alumni that would come by. We had the freedom and open-mindedness to give everyone a chance to participate. It was a huge responsibility, and we had to be fearless and give it everything you’ve got. I had the courage to say yes that summer, and it was life changing.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and to embrace this experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There is so much advice that I can share with you. One piece of advice I would give you is to never be afraid to say yes, especially if you believe in what you’re doing. I’m just glad you both had the courage to be fearless and give it everything you’ve got.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and our own style as EDs. Ernesto and Gloria were always telling Erika and I to loosen up, to free ourselves of mental inhibitions, and to embrace the experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There are certain formulas and ingredients to the magic of the LDZ. It’s a formula that wasn’t one specific way to create that magic. Once we were able to tap into our unique strengths, which came from an early level of our staff, from the Junior Counselors to the Onsite Directors, it taught us not only about what we were capable of, but about the assets within our community because everything comes together when you look within.

EA: For me, one of the greatest challenges was learning how to be a true Educational Director and delegating out responsibilities, like program logistics, to others. Ernesto and Gloria instilled in us that we were there to ensure that the program succeed and we were truly doing everything we could to make it happen. For us, the LDZ was never just a staff member’s job. It was designed to let it go forward and never die. This will be our legacy and a part of NHI that will always be shared. In some ways, the experiences of Erika and Analco is the experience that all LDZ alumni will hopefully have.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and our own style as EDs. Ernesto and Gloria were always telling Erika and I to loosen up, to free ourselves of mental inhibitions, and to embrace the experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There are certain formulas and ingredients to the magic of the LDZ. It’s a formula that wasn’t one specific way to create that magic. Once we were able to tap into our unique strengths, which came from an early level of our staff, from the Junior Counselors to the Onsite Directors, it taught us not only about what we were capable of, but about the assets within our community because everything comes together when you look within.

EA: For me, one of the greatest challenges was learning how to be a true Educational Director and delegating out responsibilities, like program logistics, to others. Ernesto and Gloria instilled in us that we were there to ensure that the program succeed and we were truly doing everything we could to make it happen. For us, the LDZ was never just a staff member’s job. It was designed to let it go forward and never die. This will be our legacy and a part of NHI that will always be shared. In some ways, the experiences of Erika and Analco is the experience that all LDZ alumni will hopefully have.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and our own style as EDs. Ernesto and Gloria were always telling Erika and I to loosen up, to free ourselves of mental inhibitions, and to embrace the experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There are certain formulas and ingredients to the magic of the LDZ. It’s a formula that wasn’t one specific way to create that magic. Once we were able to tap into our unique strengths, which came from an early level of our staff, from the Junior Counselors to the Onsite Directors, it taught us not only about what we were capable of, but about the assets within our community because everything comes together when you look within.

EA: For me, one of the greatest challenges was learning how to be a true Educational Director and delegating out responsibilities, like program logistics, to others. Ernesto and Gloria instilled in us that we were there to ensure that the program succeed and we were truly doing everything we could to make it happen. For us, the LDZ was never just a staff member’s job. It was designed to let it go forward and never die. This will be our legacy and a part of NHI that will always be shared. In some ways, the experiences of Erika and Analco is the experience that all LDZ alumni will hopefully have.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and our own style as EDs. Ernesto and Gloria were always telling Erika and I to loosen up, to free ourselves of mental inhibitions, and to embrace the experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There are certain formulas and ingredients to the magic of the LDZ. It’s a formula that wasn’t one specific way to create that magic. Once we were able to tap into our unique strengths, which came from an early level of our staff, from the Junior Counselors to the Onsite Directors, it taught us not only about what we were capable of, but about the assets within our community because everything comes together when you look within.

EA: For me, one of the greatest challenges was learning how to be a true Educational Director and delegating out responsibilities, like program logistics, to others. Ernesto and Gloria instilled in us that we were there to ensure that the program succeed and we were truly doing everything we could to make it happen. For us, the LDZ was never just a staff member’s job. It was designed to let it go forward and never die. This will be our legacy and a part of NHI that will always be shared. In some ways, the experiences of Erika and Analco is the experience that all LDZ alumni will hopefully have.

AG: The toughest challenge was finding our own voice and our own style as EDs. Ernesto and Gloria were always telling Erika and I to loosen up, to free ourselves of mental inhibitions, and to embrace the experience. It was extremely difficult, but once we were able to do that, it was a lot more fun and rewarding.

OT: There are certain formulas and ingredients to the magic of the LDZ. It’s a formula that wasn’t one specific way to create that magic. Once we were able to tap into our unique strengths, which came from an early level of our staff, from the Junior Counselors to the Onsite Directors, it taught us not only about what we were capable of, but about the assets within our community because everything comes together when you look within.

EA: For me, one of the greatest challenges was learning how to be a true Educational Director and delegating out responsibilities, like program logistics, to others. Ernesto and Gloria instilled in us that we were there to ensure that the program succeed and we were truly doing everything we could to make it happen. For us, the LDZ was never just a staff member’s job. It was designed to let it go forward and never die. This will be our legacy and a part of NHI that will always be shared. In some ways, the experiences of Erika and Analco is the experience that all LDZ alumni will hopefully have.
The National Hispanic Institute utilized the 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend to conduct its annual Project Administrator training, readying those who are working to make the summer program experience possible for students across the nation and throughout Latin America. The training was also the official launch of NHI’s 25 Fundamentals, which encapsulates ideas of the heart of NHI’s mission, philosophy, and code of conduct into one document.

Though the fundamentals fit on one small, folded card (as shown in the picture accompanying this article) and are anchored in short statements, they contain principles that not only inform the NHI experience, but can also serve as a code of conduct for NHiers no matter where they find themselves.

At the National Hispanic Institute we develop leaders. In this commitment we not only contribute skills and talent, we also create, inspire and serve. Our promise is demonstrated by 25 fundamental behaviors that are core to our success. These principles define how we relate to ourselves, each other and our community. We continuously learn, teach and practice them in order to foster a space of imagination and new possibility for community advancement.

**FUNDAMENTAL #1: ACT WITH INTEGRITY.**
Be ethical. Demonstrate an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing in every action you take and in every decision you make, especially when no one’s looking. Tell the truth and settle matters respectfully and courteously, directly at the source. If you make a mistake, own up to it and make it right.

**FUNDAMENTAL #2: TREASURE, PROTECT & PROMOTE OUR LEGACY.**
As NHI members, we are recognized for and benefit from our proud leadership legacy. Consider how your actions affect our collective reputation. Represent our community well and be a proud leadership legacy. Consider how your actions affect our community and history. Invest your time and talent in advancing our unique heritage with pride and gratitude. Build upon our community and history for the next generation. Be an example for others, and honor those before us.

**FUNDAMENTAL #3: CELEBRATE & CHERISH OUR LATINO CULTURE.**
In the NHI environment, we are deeply proud of and benefit from the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives that define our Latino culture. Our cultural identity is one of our most valuable assets. While our passion for excellence is real, keep the perspective that the world has bigger problems than our daily challenges. You have the power to choose your attitude and have fun. Spread joy, optimism, and enthusiasm. Don’t take things personally or take yourself too seriously. Laugh every day.

**FUNDAMENTAL #4: HONOR COMMITMENTS.**
Practice bringing deep respect to your word when you give it. Identify your priorities and plan actions that realistically fulfill them. Manage obstacles that impact your commitments. Do what you say you’re going to do, when you say you’re going to do it, the right way. If a commitment can’t be fulfilled, let others know in advance and do what you can to make it right.

**FUNDAMENTAL #5: ENGAGE WITH ENTHUSIASM & RIGOR.**
Have a passion for what we do and be fully engaged. Make the most of each day by approaching every task with energy, purpose, and enthusiasm. Work with a sense of rigor to get things done.

**FUNDAMENTAL #6: HAVE FUN & BE POSITIVE.**
While our passion for excellence is real, keep the perspective that the world has bigger problems than our daily challenges. You have the power to choose your attitude and have fun. Spread joy, optimism, and enthusiasm. Don’t take things personally or take yourself too seriously. Laugh every day.

**FUNDAMENTAL #7: BEHAVE LIKE A STAKEHOLDER.**
Demonstrate a passion for excellence and take pride in your work. Have a healthy disdain for mediocrity. Be a fanatic about accuracy and precision. Work to get things right, not simply get them done. Good is not good enough. Always ask yourself, “Is this my best work?” Take responsibility for the outcomes.

**FUNDAMENTAL #8: APPRECIATE & ACKNOWLEDGE.**
Regularly extend meaningful acknowledgment and appreciation in all directions throughout NHI. Celebrate progress as much as victory. Seek out the best in others and praise often. Allow yourself and others to learn, improve, and grow. Make corrections respectfully and in an encouraging manner.

**FUNDAMENTAL #9: PROCEED ONLY ON FAITH.**
(POOF) YOU have the power to imagine possibilities and only YOU can allow yourself to dream. Have faith in yourself and your community. Do good work, don’t cut corners, have faith in others, and they will have faith in you.

**FUNDAMENTAL #10: CREATE & SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.**
Create clarity and avoid misunderstandings by discussing expectations up front. Set expectations for others and when you’re not clear on what is expected of you, ask questions. End all meetings with clarity about action items, responsibilities, and calendars for completion.

**FUNDAMENTAL #11: FORECAST & ANTICIPATE.**
Address possible problems before they develop by anticipating future issues, planning for contingencies, and designing projects that create harmony and reduce conflict. Work with appropriate lead times. Preventing issues is always better than fixing them.

**FUNDAMENTAL #12: REFLECT, ADAPT & EXECUTE.**
When presented with a challenge, be flexible and curious to better understand the underlying issues. Use unbiased inquiry to discover possible areas of conflict. Gather diverse points of view to review the situation and find common ground. Get agreement on the intended outcome, and re-align your actions to get there.

**FUNDAMENTAL #13: INITIATE PLANS & DELIVER RESULTS.**
Take personal responsibility for making things happen. Respond to every situation by looking for how we can do it, rather than explaining why it can’t be done. While we appreciate effort, we reward and celebrate results. Set big goals, measure your progress, and hold yourself accountable for achieving those results.

**FUNDAMENTAL #14: TREAT PEOPLE LIKE FAMILY.**
Approach everyone with respect, dignity and as a valuable asset with a contribution to make. Be inclusive and follow the Golden Rule – treat others as you want to be treated. Whether it’s a kind word during a tough stretch, a friendly smile each morning, or a helping hand in stressful times, treat others like family.
FUNDAMENTAL #15: FREE YOUR MIND TO CREATE.
Innovation, improvement, and success don’t come from routine custom and practice. They come from unbridling your mind to reach its full potential. Ask profound questions. Test out possible scenarios and outcomes before launching projects. Be thoughtful and willing to try the unconventional.

FUNDAMENTAL #16: CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.
Know and practice our safety procedures for everyone’s well-being. Always secure areas that involve you and your teammates. Have contingency plans in case of emergencies. Don’t take shortcuts that compromise the safety of you and those around you.

FUNDAMENTAL #17: IF IT’S MEANT TO BE, IT’S UP TO ME.
We have the capacity to design and initiate plans that give us advantages in life. Invest time in learning, reflecting, improving and sharing best practices. Feeling uncomfortable at times means you’re in a growth mode. A new mindset means new results. Find ways to get things done better, faster, and more creatively. There are more opportunities than problems, if you believe in yourself!

FUNDAMENTAL #18: PRACTICE BLAMELESS PROBLEM SOLVING.
When problems arise, focus on resolutions and avoid fault-finding. Remember your larger purpose and accept your role in helping make things right. Apply your creativity, spirit and enthusiasm to solutions. Lessons learned from shortcomings improve future performance and warn us to potential mistakes before they happen.

FUNDAMENTAL #19: LISTEN GENEROUSLY.
Listening is more than simply “not speaking.” Give others your undivided attention. Be present and engaged. Suspend judgment, the need to disagree, the need to interrupt with your opinion, and be careful about assumptions and jumping to conclusions. Strong and attentive listeners help others feel secure and understood. Generous listening allows a space for others to express their ideas and thoughts, free from fear or judgment.

FUNDAMENTAL #20: RECIPROCATE SUPPORT.
When people invest in you, show gratitude and endeavor to help them in return. Whether it be a kind thank you note, your time and effort on one of their projects, or publicly recognizing their contributions, work to cultivate your relationships. We serve our community as it serves us. Being a community that reciprocates support is a quality we can all benefit from and pass on to future generations.

FUNDAMENTAL #21: LEAD BY SERVING & INSPIRING OTHERS.
Be a model leader who inspires people and serves the community. Initiate by offering help and encouragement to others, and be willing to step into different roles if that’s what it takes to be successful. Create opportunities for the growth and development of people.

FUNDAMENTAL #22: SEEK COMMON GROUND.
Work from the assumption that there is common ground between you and others. Be open to learning from people, no matter what role they have, and regardless of their age, industry, experience, or tenure. Set aside your own judgments and preconceived notions. Give others the benefit of the doubt that we are all doing our best to make a difference, each in our own way.

FUNDAMENTAL #23: HEALTHY BODY/HEALTHY MIND.
Take care of your physical and mental well-being. Make healthy choices for your body, mind, and spirit. Notice when you’re “off” mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually. Seek out help and set aside time for yourself. The more you take care of yourself, the more prosperous and generous you can be.

FUNDAMENTAL #24: CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY.
Be the leader who envisions new opportunities that inspire and engage others to get involved. Communicate the positive outcomes and benefits to be derived from community endeavors. Share and celebrate success when opportunities materialize into real, sustainable projects.

FUNDAMENTAL #25: APPROACH PEOPLE WITH HUMILITY AND COURAGE.
Approach others with respect, humility, and a healthy courage to make good things happen. Remember your higher purpose, and that nobody is under any obligation to help you. Win people over with your positive intention to do good. Inspire rather than obligate. Make it attractive for people to get involved in achieving larger goals.
Many of those families became involved with one family member intrigued by an NHI program — and in turn, the parents became so intrigued that they involved themselves, siblings, relatives, and other community members. We gathered the stories of ten of the honorees who will attend this year’s Celebración en San Antonio to be recognized for their exemplary contributions to growing NHI in their communities.

Look to NHIMagazine.com for coverage at the event and after the event.

VIRGINIA GARCIA

Virginia Garcia was instrumental in NHI’s earliest efforts to grow in New Mexico. As she remembers, she was teaching at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces in 1991, was called into Principal Robert Ogas’ office, and given a mission. Mayfield students had attended the New Mexico LDZ in Albuquerque during the previous summer, loved it, and were trying to get additional students to sign on for the subsequent year — so many, in fact, that Principal Ogas felt they needed a sponsor, which is where Virginia came in.

She wanted to see it for herself first. “Needless to say, I was intrigued by an NHI program — and in turn, the parents became so involved or didn’t even want to talk. And then, all of a sudden, you’d see this complete change in them.”

Reflecting on his and his wife Grace’s involvement, he feels they’ve helped many Hispanic students start the program as very shy individuals with not much confidence or self-esteem. “I saw these same students flourish to become great orators and speakers. I saw that extra push. I saw that they each became very good accomplished speakers and that has helped them in their chosen careers.”

As she remembers, she wanted to teach the culture as well as the language, incorporating the history of the Southwest.

But she continued to learn lessons about the racism in New Mexico which made NHI all the more integral for her. “What I did and do notice is that the further north you go, the less you hear the language, and that was one of the things I wanted to change. But I was very guilty of not being proud of who I was. I did not teach my own children how to speak Spanish because I did not want them to be discriminated against. Involving myself with NHI, I worked with the youth stressing for them not to be embarrassed about who they were and to speak the language. I wanted my people to be recognized and accepted for their potential and who they were and where they were going would make a difference.”

LOUIS DE LA GARZA

Louis de la Garza wanted to help other Latino students aspiring to become engineers. “It was a large part, because he was a first-generation college student who came from self-described modest beginnings to graduate in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. He’d become involved as a mentor with organizations like AMPS (Association for Minority Participation in Science), TAME (Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering) and SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers). But then his son, then a high school freshman, told him about NHI — and he was intrigued, given that it was a program that focused on leadership.

As he remembers it, “I was very impressed at how easily these students would get up and talk about their experience in such an articulate manner.” He got to know some of the parents involved, including professionals working with the Texas State Legislature and the City of Austin, and was impressed by the parents as well as the students. He determined it was the right place for his son, Louis Jr., and his daughters Cristina and Andrea.

They all went on to have roles in NHI over the years. Louis became President of the NHI Austin Community Council Program, and then became president of the NHI National Community Leadership Council organization, when there was a move to bring parents together across the country. Both Louis Jr. and Cristina, meanwhile, took on coaching roles with Austin’s Great Debaters, and Cristina even worked for NHI as the Director of the Great Debate.

“I think NHI had a great impact on my community,” he reflects. “I saw many Hispanic students start the program as very shy individuals with not much confidence or self-esteem. I saw these same students flourish to become great orators and speakers. I saw the shyness fade away and much more confident individuals emerge. I saw this time and time again throughout my tenure with NHI. Even though I always encourage my own kids to be vocal and stand out, they too needed that extra push. I saw that they each became very good accomplished speakers and that has helped them in their chosen careers.”

“Getting students to join the programs was the challenging part of the process,” he remembers. “Once I selected the qualifying students, parental approval had to be achieved. Parents are the backbone of the process,” he remembers. “Once I selected the qualifying students, parental approval had to be achieved. Parents are the backbone of the program,” he remembers. “Once I selected the qualifying students, parental approval had to be achieved. Parents are the backbone of the program.”

Looking to NHIMagazine.com for coverage at the event and after the event.

SILVIA AND DANIEL GARCIA

Silvia and Daniel Garcia are educators with 80 years of experience between them in their long and storied careers. In fact, Silvia was finishing a doctorate degree in education from Texas A&M University-Kingsville while in the final years of serving as a Parent Administrator (PA) for the Brownsville region.

Brownsville was just starting up as an NHI region when the Garcias became involved with NHI. At that time, their eldest child, Daniel Alonso, was starting at Paris High School; and their two daughters, Marisilda and Lizbeth, would also go through NHI programs as they progressed through high school. “While my kids were already confident in themselves, NHI strengthened their confidence and helped them affirm their beliefs as they became more focused toward their future,” she recalls. “They became a bit more assertive and were able to stand on their own.”

“I saw a lot of growth, not only with my kids, but in the students who participated in NHI,” she adds. “Although many of the students would start the program being rather shy, some didn’t want to get involved or didn’t even want to talk. And then, all of a sudden, you’d see this complete change in them.”

She notes that giving students ownership of the program was key to the Brownsville region’s success. “My job was to be there for them, helping as needed, and ensuring that things were organized and worked well. If they needed anything, I was there. But I gave the kids the chance to take a leadership role in everything they did. And I believe that that really helped them to get organized, to be on the ball, and to react to problems.”

"I think NHI had a great impact on my community," he reflects. “I saw many Hispanic students start the program as very shy individuals with not much confidence or self-esteem. I saw these same students flourish to become great orators and speakers. I saw the shyness fade away and much more confident individuals emerge. I saw this time and time again throughout my tenure with NHI. Even though I always encourage my own kids to be vocal and stand out, they too needed that extra push. I saw that they each became very good accomplished speakers and that has helped them in their chosen careers.”

Reflecting on his and his wife Grace’s involvement, he feels they’ve contributed to NHI’s overall success. As he notes, “I personally remember many meetings with Ermesto, Gloria and other NHI staff to discuss NHI’s direction. We gave input based on how our kids were developing and the kids of our community. We always supported NHI and did what we could to continue the work. It’s very rewarding to see NHI has flourished over the years and we are very happy to see and be a part of the 40th anniversary.”
HECTOR AND MARY HELEN GONZALEZ

The initial enthusiasm a high school student has for NHI can bring his or her parents into the NHI community, and that happened for Hector and Mary Helen Gonzalez when their son Alanco learned about NHI in 1995. For them, it’s been a lifelong commitment in keeping one of NHI’s most energized regions — San Antonio — fully engaged and active.

As Mary Helen recalls, Alanco’s enthusiasm was instrumental to them becoming engaged in NHI’s work — he returned from LDZ with six new friends from San Antonio, and they all created a club to help recruit more students. “They returned energized, all telling the story about how their families, including ours, had shared with them about our political and community involvement. It came full circle and took on meaning with their LDZ experience regarding family, community involvement and the importance that we all play a role in it.” They contacted with Ernesto Nieto to ask how they could help, and started a Community Leadership Council and a Young Leaders Conference (now Great Debate) team — which became the foundation for what is now known as NHI@SA.

NHI@SA now works with as many as 200 students a year committing to all levels of NHI leadership programs, including an estimated 100 a year who participate as Great Debaters. “We have worn many hats,” she notes, adding that students have graduated into trainers and PAs, contributing to what she calls a legacy. “Everyone has different roles in leadership to keep making it a better, evolving community, to keep it alive for future communities and generations yet to come.” Their own children are among those students who are, as Mary Helen puts it, “in sync with the belief of community.” Ilichal was the first NHI@SA PA, Alanco served as a trainer, and Luis has been involved in various roles along the way — and the three of them now work together at OCI Group, a San Antonio-based consulting group with other partners including Anita Fernandez and Olivia Travieso remaining highly involved in NHI@SA.

Mary Helen characterizes her and her husband’s continuing work as “contributing to a unified effort to build a true leadership Latino paradigm, building a new generation of young Latinos, using a Latino-based community lens to lead our community locally and globally.”

“Personally,” she notes, “we have had a great opportunity to see youth being challenged on issues that impact our Latino community, and propose actions to truly transform our community to a level of fairness and equity. We constantly remind the youth that they don’t have to wait to shape and change the world after they graduate; they have the power for intellectual change. We give them the example of these six young kids back in the 1990s who came back from an NHI program and went to San Antonio’s Central Library to propose a Mexican-American section and it was approved with much deliberation. Now the community has a place to go and see themselves with pride.” She sees that effort as evidence that today’s NHIers have the potential to become community leaders, adding, “That is what takes on the meaning of ‘I am NHI!’”

MINERVA HERNANDEZ

Minerva Hernandez remembers when her daughter, Reyna, wanted to attend her first NHI program as a high school student. She and her husband thought it sounded terrific, but worried about their first-born daughter being away from home for the first time. She was freshly reassured enough by staffs, who even gave her permission to make a brief visit onto the DePaul University campus where the program was taking place.

She took them up on the offer, and found that trip life-changing, noting, “The pride I felt when I witnessed so many Hispanic students together in one location, speaking up and supporting each other was inspiring. I immediately felt that I needed to be an advocate, to assure that NHI continued, and that not only my daughter benefited from this experience, but that it be offered to more students. I knew the need in our community for our kids to be exposed to Latinos who are excelling in the mainstream society.”

She volunteered to become Project Administrator for Waukegan, Illinois, and served in that role for nine years, coordinating with longtime NHI associate Chris Pluta, to build the Chicago area into one of the most active regions for NHI participation. It wasn’t always that way, though; Minerva recalls, “Ernesto Nieto would tell me over the years, ‘I love that this woman will attend with a group every year, if she was right of center I would have to stop her.’” She has been a speaker at DePaul University’s Latino Leadership Conference, a DePaul University alumna, and has served on the board of the Chicago NHI program. She spent a brief visit onto the DePaul University campus where the program was taking place.

“She eventually found herself in the role of reassuring parents, unsure of sending their kids to NHI, that the program would be worth it. ‘NHI offered a door to empower our youth to another world,’ she recalls, ‘empowering them, teaching them to use their voice and to share their opinions.’ While all four of her children were influenced by NHI and its teachings, Reyna has followed most closely in her mother’s footsteps as an NHI organizer, now serving on NHI’s Board of Directors.

Barbara and Tony Hinojos started their commitment to NHI in 1991, when their daughter Amy became interested in going to a program, and like many parents at that time, went to a meeting to hear what Ernesto Nieto had to say. They were on board, even though they were living in the Baytown area and were commuting to Houston to participate.

They were attracted, in particular, to NHI’s message about self-esteem and self-advocacy, and encouraging high school students to do that “like adults.” As Barbara remembers, “Ernesto’s initial message to us really struck home in our hearts.”

As Amy returned from the LDZ inspired, Barbara reports that it “definitely energized her to try to reach out to other students” throughout the Baytown area, and she stayed involved even beyond high school in a mentoring and counseling role. Barbara’s son Anthony became involved when he was old enough. But it was Amy’s energy, combined with the distance from Baytown to Houston, that inspired them to become parent leaders in Baytown and start recruiting there.

Though NHI wasn’t as well-known in the Baytown in the early ’90s as it was in other Texas cities with a head start, they found themselves able to reach out and sell parents on the NHI concept. “As you talk to people and you make the parents understand, then the kids get enthusiastic,” she explains. “Then, once the kids get enthusiastic, it’s not hard for us, as the parent leaders, to just want to embrace them and say, ‘Okay, let’s help them learn everything they possibly can.’”

The Hinojoso’s stayed involved while both Amy and Anthony were in high school, but Barbara recently stepped back into the role of talking to parents and children, in part because a local community center near her house is part of the network in Baytown that’s keeping NHI active.

“Im excited that NHI is still going strong,” she says, recalling that when they were building up NHI in Baytown, they had to do a lot of educating the schools on NHI, but now the schools are “100 percent educating the schools on NHI’s presence in Brownsville — thanks in large part to Tino Villanás, who succeeded the Garcías — but it was under the Garcías’ leadership (and, of course, the leadership of the students working with her) that the school became a home for NHI. “One of the challenges at the time was that we didn’t have a regular place to meet and prepare for the Great Debates,” she recalls, remembering that on numerous occasions they utilized the public library and several churches before locking in Saint Joseph Academy as a meeting site.

The Garcías are particularly buoyed in seeing how NHI has helped many Brownsville and surrounding area students throughout the Tip of Texas region, as those students have grown and developed, graduated from high school, and college or university, and have their professional careers.

“Throughout the years, I have seen a lot of my former NHI students with degrees and professional jobs, and that makes me feel very proud of them,” she notes, adding that NHI provided students a platform to learn confidence, organization and speaking skills. “In many cases, some of the students who went through NHI, may not have had the financial means to go to a four-year college or university, and now they are attorneys, CPAs, and schoolteachers. And to me, that’s the greatest accomplishment.”

Barbara and Tony Hinojosa started their commitment to NHI in 1991, when their daughter Amy became interested in going to a program, and like many parents at that time, went to a meeting to hear what Ernesto Nieto had to say. They were on board, even though they were living in the Baytown area and were commuting to Houston to participate.

They were attracted, in particular, to NHI’s message about self-esteem and self-advocacy, and encouraging high school students to do that “like adults.” As Barbara remembers, “Ernesto’s initial message to us really struck home in our hearts.”

As Amy returned from the LDZ inspired, Barbara reports that it “definitely energized her to try to reach out to other students” throughout the Baytown area, and she stayed involved even beyond high school in a mentoring and counseling role. Barbara’s son Anthony became involved when he was old enough. But it was Amy’s energy, combined with the distance from Baytown to Houston, that inspired them to become parent leaders in Baytown and start recruiting there.

Though NHI wasn’t as well-known in the Baytown in the early ‘90s as it was in other Texas cities with a head start, they found themselves able to reach out and sell parents on the NHI concept. “As you talk to people and you make the parents understand, then the kids get enthusiastic,” she explains. “Then, once the kids get enthusiastic, it’s not hard for us, as the parent leaders, to just want to embrace them and say, ‘Okay, let’s help them learn everything they possibly can.’”

The Hinojos stayed involved while both Amy and Anthony were in high school, but Barbara recently stepped back into the role of talking to parents and children, in part because a local community center near her house is part of the network in Baytown that’s keeping NHI active.

“Im excited that NHI is still going strong,” she says, recalling that when they were building up NHI in Baytown, they had to do a lot of educating the schools on NHI, but now the schools are “100 percent
behind NHI,” contributing greatly to recruiting and taking some of the pressure off the organizers. “It really, really makes me feel good that it’s continued.”

Saying that, “I consider all the NHI kids my kids,” Barbara’s proud of the professional gains she’s seen Baytown alumni make, and is perhaps even more proud of the community involvement she’s seeing from them. “You see them all grown up,” she gushes, “and it’s just so overwhelming to see how successful they’ve all been.”

DORIS AND RICHARD LUCERO

Doris and Richard Lucero’s journey with NHI started in 1989 with Doris’ mother, Hilda Gallegos, who was working as a counselor at Central High School in Pueblo, Colorado. Ernesto Nieto reached out to Hilda to explain the LDZ program that had just started at Colorado State University. As Doris recalled, “He had to convince my mother that the program was worthwhile for students. She didn’t just talk to me about it, she committed to ensuring that programs helped students reach their goals during and after high school.”

Not only did Ernie get Hilda on board, but she also got Doris and Richard interested. The next year, their oldest daughter, Sara (who was attending Central High School), became part of the 1990 class of Colorado LDZ students. Upon her return, as Richard observed, “She was excited when she came home. She talked about how good the program was for the students.” He noted that there wasn’t much of an emphasis on civics in the school district’s curriculum, and LDZ helped Sara with that missing part of her education. Similarly, the program gave her an awareness of her identity as a Latina. Doris notes that Sara also attended Colorado Girls’ State and discovered her impressive aptitude for debate. “That’s something that Gloria de Leon had noticed as well, and that observation was crucial to the launch of the LDZ. As Mayo-Moreno observed, “The NHI concept was brilliant and I was totally in, especially when my middle daughter, who was painfully shy, participated in the Great Debate.”

Saying that, “It was a very rewarding time for both of us,” Irene recalls of her and her husband’s time with NHI. She notes that they worked with “bright, energetic Hispanic youth who were being given the encouragement and the tools to be leaders in their schools and communities.” They could see their enthusiasm increasing and even very shy students would proudly tell us that they were running for office at their high school because of the NHI influence.

That’s Ernesto Nieto’s program!”

As she recalls, “The early years of investing our personal time toward making NHI a reality has been well worth it. Ernie and Gloria stayed with it and made it a national model. NHI has impacted the lives of so many young Latinos in such a positive way. To my knowledge, there is no other program like NHI and I hope the legacy lives on.”

THE MENTORSHIP OF THE TITAN

“We’re proud that all three of our children were active participants in NHI programs,” Irene recalls. “It was Sara’s NHI experience that inspired Doris and Richard to work with NHI in forming the Southern Colorado Community Leadership Council and serving as project administrators for the region for the next decade. They worked on recruiting, noting that fundraising was a challenge because many students couldn’t afford tuition on their own. If students advocated for themselves, community members were more willing to assist. However, teaching students to be active participants in their own fundraising was one of those biggest challenges. Doris recalls the SCCCLC constantly explaining to the students, ‘You’ve got to present yourself. You have to let them [potential donors] know who you are and why this is important to you … and it got easier over time.’”

Doris was impressed with a curriculum that emphasized “personal organization, research methods, creative writing and public speaking,” while Richard was impressed with the focus on Latino leadership. “We can’t lead from behind,” Richard observed. “We’ve got to lead from the front. That’s imperative, especially now, with the growth in the Hispanic population.”

Working with NHI enabled the Luceros to see that the Hispanic population in Southern Colorado was connected to a whole network of people throughout the country invested in Latino leadership. And, as they’re particularly proud about, they’re getting to see students they worked with come back and take on leadership roles — including in Pueblo, where they still make their home.

“It was amazing watching these kids grow,” Doris recalls. “We got kids that were quiet and we encourage them to come out of their shells.”

GLORIA MAYO-MORENO

Gloria Mayo-Moreno knew Ernesto Nieto even before NHI was born; she worked in the Governor’s office with him, and when they were laid off, she and her husband decided to help Nieto launch NHI — back when it was geared toward young adult professionals — before they began resuming their careers.

A decade later, in the late ’80s she reconnected with Nieto while working as a Chief of Staff for a member of the Texas House of Representatives. As she recalls, “Every year, I would see Boyd and Girls’ State Conventions held at the State Capitol, and there were very, very few Latinos involved. Participation was very limited and selective.”

That’s something that Gloria de Leon had noticed as well, and that observation was crucial to the launch of the LDZ. As Mayo-Moreno observed, “The NHI concept was brilliant and I was totally in, especially when my middle daughter, who was painfully shy, participated in the Great Debate.”

She became more than an NHI parent, becoming a program director between 1991 and 1997 for the Great Debate program (then known as the Young Leaders Conference), and later becoming an NHI board member.

As she recalls, “The early years of investing our personal time toward making NHI a reality has been well worth it. Ernie and Gloria stayed with it and made it a national model. NHI has impacted the lives of so many young Latinos in such a positive way. To my knowledge, there is no other program like NHI and I hope the legacy lives on.”

She’s seen the program positively impact a great number of students she came in contact with over the years, and has found that especially true for her own children.

“I’m most reward to myself to take photos of my students I am living out, socially and personally and I am living with one woman who does not want to go back to the community,” she reflected. “Their experiences with NHI had a lot to do with their personal growth. They met many young, intelligent youths with similar goals as theirs. They made life-long friends.”

IRENE AND JOHN ROSALES

John Rosales first learned about NHI while working at the Johnson Space Center; he attended a talk Ernesto Nieto gave in Houston about “paying it forward” to help Latino youth succeed, and liked what he heard. He liked it so much, in fact, that he arranged for Nieto to come and speak to his NASA colleagues.

At that time, his wife Irene was a teacher; several months after the NASA talk, a student came up to her and talked about how he was inspired by NHI and wanted to get more involved in school activities as a result. When Irene shared the story with John, and let him know she’d like her own children to get involved with NHI, he exclaimed, “That’s Ernesto Nieto’s program!”

Their sons Victor and David did and ended up going to NHI programs, and Irene and John both became involved in helping NHI, starting by chaperoning and otherwise volunteering to help with programs in Houston. They eventually extending their commitment to the Board of Directors, with John serving as a member for some of its first years.

“It was a very rewarding time for both of us,” Irene recalls of her and her husband’s time with NHI. She notes that they worked with “bright, energetic Hispanic youth who were being given the encouragement and the tools to be leaders in their schools and communities.” They could see their enthusiasm increasing and even very shy students would proudly tell us that they were running for office at their high school because of the NHI influence.

John, along with Victor (who is now a physician in San Antonio) and David (now a computer engineer in San Francisco), even contributed their time to Houston students to help them prepare for the SAT, hoping to impact those students’ futures.

“NHI has obviously played a very effective role in Hispanic communities, inspiring kids to be all they can be, including our own two sons,” Irene observes, adding they are hoping for their first grandchild to become involved in NHI once eligible. “We believe parents are the first and most important educators,” she adds, “but we also believe it does take a village, and NHI has been a great part of that village for families over the last 40 years.”

TITA YANAR

Tita Yanar, best known to NHIers as the Project Administrator for NHI during its formative years, first became aware of NHI when the first class of El Paso YLC students were being trained in 1989 by Dr. Roberto Villareal and his wife Norma. Their daughter, Ethel, was best friends with Tita’s daughter, Soraya. When it came time to appoint a PA to prepare the 1990 YLCers for the Texas Great Debate, Norma surprised Tita by volunteering her at a parents’ meeting. Although initially intimidated by the prospect, she accepted. Her daughter, Soraya, participated in the YLC Cross Examination team team in 1990 and discovered her impressive aptitude for debate.

Tita became completely invested in NHI and its mission. “I would talk with Ernie for hours in an effort to better understand and learn about the organization and its methodologies,” she recalls. “This was different from everything I had learned in my university training as an educator. It was truly learning by doing.”

When Soraya went off to college, Tita was ready to pass the mantle to someone else. But her son Omar, who was entering the ninth grade, had become fascinated by the NHI experience and declared that it was “this turn.” Even after he went off to college in 1997, Tita continued to serve as PA for three more years, guiding her El Paso NHIers through a dominant stretch of Texas and New Mexico Great Debate championships.

Tita is particularly proud that her two children, like so many El Paso NHI alumni, took what they learned from NHI into their lives as professionals and community leaders. Soraya is now a lawyer practicing in El Paso. Omar is an educator. He founded a college prep charter middle school, the El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA). EPLA has distinguished itself academically and is at the forefront of implementing character and leadership development curriculum based on NHI principles.

Tita is extremely proud of the students she had the privilege to serve. She firmly believes that El Paso’s NHI success was due to their intellect, skills and capacity for hard work, as well as pride in their community, heritage and biculturalism. It is also her belief that there’s something special about El Paso that NHI helped the rest of the world discover. She notes, “Ernie says that you can always tell someone from El Paso by the positive attitude and confidence they project.”

FIRST FAMILIES IN ABSINTIA

Gloria Mayo-Moreno and Arturo Moreno, Austin, Texas

Dr. Rene and Veronica Vela, Corpus Christi, Texas

Dr. Todd Thorson of Winston & Strawn, LLP

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. John Minogue, NHI Board Chair

Mr. Alberto Nieto, Houston First Family

CITATION OF MERIT AWARD

Glória Mayo-Moreno and Arturo Moreno, Austin, Texas

Todd Thorson of Winston & Strawn, LLP

NHI Magazine 2019
Board of Trustees

ERNESTO NIETO
President
National Hispanic Institute
Maxwell, TX

P. RAFAEL OLMOS
Priest
Parroquia Sagrada Familia
David, Panamá

M. RAFAEL OLMOS
Priest
Parroquia Sagrada Familia
David, Panamá

MELISSA GARCIA
Realtor
JBGoodwin Realtors
Austin, TX

LONNIE LIMON
Managing Director
Dieste, Inc.
Austin, TX

LAURA TORRES
Statewide CTE Coordinator
Texas Education Agency
Austin, TX

ADRIEL LARES
CFO
Fastly
San Francisco, CA

FRANK DE LA PORTILLA
Enrollment Services - Veterans Affairs
Houston Community College
Houston, TX

MICHELLE LAREDO-TORRES
Principal and Owner
NY Nena Productions, LLC
New York, NY

REYNA HERNANDEZ
Project Manager
National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSC)
Chicago, IL

LIA CARPIO
Director
San Luis Valley Bridging Borders
Alamosa, CO

GEORGE RODRIGUEZ
Managing Partner
Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates, PC
Dallas, TX

MICHICHE SAENZ-RODRIGUEZ (NHI BOARD CHAIR)
Senior Partner
Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates, PC
Dallas, TX

GEORGE RODRIGUEZ
Managing Partner
Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates, PC
Dallas, TX

KRISTINA TUSINI
Associate Professor of Sociology
Lone Star College-University Park
Houston, TX

CELESTINO VILLARREAL
Athletic Director
Saint Joseph Academy
Brownsville, TX

DR. JOSEPH VILLESCAS
Director, Curriculum/InSTRUCTION
El Paso Academy
El Paso, TX

ADRIANA RAMIREZ
Writer
Pittsburgh, PA

ANGELA MASCAI
Human Capital Consultant
Deloitte Consulting LLP
Pittsburgh, PA

NHI MAGAZINE 2019

22

NHI MAGAZINE 2019

23
## 2019 CELEBRATION OF STUDENTS

### 2019 COLLEGIATE WORLD SERIES CELECOHORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine Ramos</td>
<td>Windermere HS</td>
<td>Winter Garden, Florida</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jareth Quintero</td>
<td>Judson Early College Academy</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Provencio</td>
<td>Incarnate Word HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitlyn Padron</td>
<td>Judson Early College Academy</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulina Morales</td>
<td>School for the Talented and Gifted</td>
<td>Dallas, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javiera Magna</td>
<td>James E. Taylor HS</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Lona</td>
<td>Plaza Academy</td>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Janulionis</td>
<td>Christopher Columbus HS</td>
<td>Miami, Florida</td>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiola Jaimes</td>
<td>Southwest HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Arias</td>
<td>All Hallows HS</td>
<td>Bronx, New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Apodaca</td>
<td>Fossil Ridge HS</td>
<td>Fort Collins, Colorado</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio Valdez</td>
<td>Alamo Heights HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Gonzalez</td>
<td>Goose Creek Memorial HS</td>
<td>Baytown, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Guadarrama</td>
<td>International Leadership of Texas</td>
<td>Katy-Westpark HS</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alixena Hernandez</td>
<td>Veterans Memorial HS</td>
<td>Corpus Christi, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiola Jaimes</td>
<td>Cypress Falls HS</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Janulionis</td>
<td>Christopher Columbus HS</td>
<td>Miami, Florida</td>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Luna</td>
<td>Plaza Academy</td>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Magallanes</td>
<td>Catholic HS</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jovana Magana</td>
<td>St. Andrew's Episcopal School</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carina Martinez</td>
<td>Lincoln College Prep</td>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Morales</td>
<td>School for the Talented and Gifted</td>
<td>Dallas, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Olivarri</td>
<td>Incarnate Word HS</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn Padron</td>
<td>Judson Early College Academy</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jareth Quinton</td>
<td>Jackson Early College Academy</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine Ramos</td>
<td>Windermere HS</td>
<td>Winter Garden, Florida</td>
<td>Florida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2019 LORENZO DE ZAVALA YOUTH LEGISLATIVE SESSION CELECOHORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adriana Acosta</td>
<td>Cathedral HS</td>
<td>Brooklyn, New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvana Acosta</td>
<td>Lovett Academy</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lex Tableaux</td>
<td>Round Lake HS</td>
<td>Round Lake Beach, Illinois</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Alomar</td>
<td>Idea Quest Prep</td>
<td>Fort Collins, Colorado</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Apodaca</td>
<td>Fossil Ridge HS</td>
<td>Fort Collins, Colorado</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Arias</td>
<td>Hollins HS</td>
<td>Brown, New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shriya Armstrong</td>
<td>Southwest HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2019 ÁNIMA ÁLVARO SAÍZ, REGENT STUDENTS OF AUSTIN, Austin, Texas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ulvia Kaya-Poulou</td>
<td>Pflugerville ISD</td>
<td>Flinton, New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego Balderrama</td>
<td>Austin ISD</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorena Borrego</td>
<td>Austin ISD</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Sanchez</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexia Díaz</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania García</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2020 CELEBRATION OF STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Connor</td>
<td>Alamo Heights HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Cozzi</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Covalle</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Escobar</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Fitzgerald</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald Graham</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Garza</td>
<td>Coronado HS</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Garza</td>
<td>Coronado HS</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Garcia</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Garcia</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2020 CELEBRATION OF STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shriya Armstrong</td>
<td>Southwest HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulvia Kaya-Poulou</td>
<td>Pflugerville ISD</td>
<td>Flinton, New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego Balderrama</td>
<td>Austin ISD</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorena Borrego</td>
<td>Austin ISD</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Sanchez</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexia Díaz</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania García</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2020 CELEBRATION OF STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Connor</td>
<td>Alamo Heights HS</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Cozzi</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Covalle</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Escobar</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Fitzgerald</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald Graham</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Garza</td>
<td>Coronado HS</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Garza</td>
<td>Coronado HS</td>
<td>El Paso, Texas</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2019 GREAT DEBATE CELEBRITY
Ashley Abrego, IDEA Quest, Edison, Texas
Jared Agar, Highland Park HS, Highland Park, Illinois
Sad Aguiar Trousselot, Colegio La Salle, Ignacio Zaragoza, Suhlisko, Caxhila, Mexico
Isabel Alberdi, Instituto Ignacio Zaragoza, Dallas, Texas
Jacob Barrow, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Margaret Bennett, J.W. Nixon HS, Laredo, Texas
Sophia Bellar, Lenox HS, Malden, New Jersey
Emma Bucardo River, Pontoon Lakes HS, Pontoon Lakes, New Jersey
Ludwig Buschmante, YES Prep White Oak, Houston, Texas
Marina Camacho Pérez, ITESM C5, Ciudad de México, Mexico
Andrea Castaneda, Round Lake HS, Round Lake, Illinois
Amada Chapa, La Joya HS, La Joya, Texas
Natalia Cisneros, Colegio Ignacio Zaragoza, Suhlisko, Mexico
Alexander Cruz, YES Prep West, Houston, Texas
Reagan Davis, TMI-Episcopal, San Antonio, Texas
Isaiah Davis, John Paul II HS, Plano, Texas
Renmo De la Garza, Colegio Ignacio Zaragoza, Suhlisko, Mexico
Feranley de los Rave, Notre Dame School of Manhattan, New York, New York
Diego de la Torre, James B. Conant HS, Schaumburg, Illinois
Marissa Del Bosque, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Catherine Díaz, Energy Institute HS, Houston, Texas
Pablo Diaz, Harmony School of Advancement, Houston, Texas
Jonathan Diaz, Energy Institute HS, Houston, Texas
Kenneth Escobar, International Leadership of Texas Katy-Westpark HS, Houston, Texas
Julian Estrada, Lockhart HS, Lockhart, Texas
Ellas Flores, Cathedral HS, El Paso, Texas
Deelan Flores, Palmer HS, Pueblo, Colorado
Kalista Feng, El Paso High, El Paso, Texas
Sofo Garavito, Instituto Lux, Leon, Mexico
Christiana García, Young Women’s Leadership Acad., San Antonio, Texas
Jocelyn García, Cathedral HS, Cathedral, Texas
Juliette Garza, August, NMI, Pearland, Texas
Robert Garza, UTPA Summer Internship Prep, Arlington, Texas
Florencia Gomez, Raymond y Yara Martin HS, Laredo, Texas
Julian Gomez, Saint Joseph Acad., Brownsville, Texas
María Gómez, Instituto Lux, León, Mexico
Jaxon Gonzales, Liberal Arts and Science Academy, Austin, Texas
Israel González, Melquiades, Mathis, Texas
María José Gonzalez, Escuela Sierra Nevada, Cuajimol, México
Sergio González, Medical Academy, Brownsville, Texas
Diana Granados Guardiola, Colegio Ignacio Zaragoza, Suhlisko, Mexico
Simon Gross, Energy Institute HS, Houston, Texas
Salvador Guadarrama, International Leadership of Texas Katy-Westpark HS, Houston, Texas
Jose María Guajardo, Central Catholic HS, San Antonio, Texas
Valeria Hernandez, John Paul II HS, Plano, Texas
Jazelle Hernandez, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Malaki Hernandez, Judson HS, San Antonio, Texas
Santiago Hernandez, John Paul II HS, Plano, Texas
Fabiola Hijarba, Coronado HS, El Paso, Texas
Sofía Hiron, Texas Southwestern Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas
Isaiah Jaramillo, Academy of American Studies, North Bergen, New Jersey
Isabela Jiménez, Round Lake HS, Round Lake, Illinois
Zachary Joech, Central Catholic HS, San Antonio, Texas
Jake Jilek-Briev, TMI-Episcopal, San Antonio, Texas
Medicine King, Science Academy of South Texas, McAllen, Texas
Olivia Landa-Schram, Catarinazo HS, Catarinazo, Maryland
Andrea Lardizabal, YES Young Women’s Leadership Acad., San Antonio, Texas
Ana Lanza Luna, Exavig Mariano Kaufmann School, Kansas City, Missouri
Angélica Longoria Lopez, Early College HS, Brownsville, Texas
Alex Lucero, Energy Institute HS, Houston, Texas
Isabella MacClennan, John F. Kennedy The American School of Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico
Dakota Marquez, Rio Rancho HS, Rio Rancho, New Mexico
Emily Medrano, Coronado HS, El Paso, Texas
Christopher Medrano, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Raymundo Medrano, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Miguel Mejía, International Leadership of Texas Arlington-Grand Prairie HS, Grand Prairie, Texas
Marcos Molina, Cedar Ridge HS, Round Rock, Texas
Sergio Monarrez, Cathedral HS, El Paso, Texas
Bruno Monarrez, William HS, William, Texas
Faith Monarrez, El Paso HS, El Paso, Texas
Stephanie Montero, Cantu Early College/Martin HS, Laredo, Texas
Vanessa Morales, Lake Forest HS, Lake Forest, Illinois
Hízcar Morales, Round Lake HS, Round Lake, Illinois
Susana Moreno, Coronado HS, El Paso, Texas
Christopher Munoz, Central Catholic, San Antonio, Texas
Aydiel Navarro, Greeley West HS, Greeley, Colorado
José Palacios, Colegio Ignacio Zaragoza, Ramos Arizpe, Mexico
Nicole Parada, Rancho del Oso, Aurora, Colorado
Ariela Pena, IDEA Quest, Edinburg, Texas
Sofía Peraza, Brandeis HS, San Antonio, Texas
Michael Plundo, Cathedral HS, El Paso, Texas
Gabriela Ponce, Instituto Lux, Leon, Mexico
Lucas Rueda, Lodge Hills HS, Lodge, Texas
Dane Ramirez, St. Thomas HS, Houston, Texas
Dado Rangel, Greeley Central HS, Greeley, Colorado
Laura Reilly-Sanchez, Health Careers HS, San Antonio, Texas
Julian Reyna, Gheen East HS, Lombard, Illinois
Jacob Rojero, Coronado HS, El Paso, Texas
Vanessa Rodriguez, Highland Park HS, Highland Park, Illinois
Marco Rodriguez, IDEA Pharr College Prep, Pharr, Texas
Jordi Rojero, Cathedral HS, Cathedral, Texas
Michael Rodriguez, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas

THANKS TO OUR COLLEGIATE SEMINAR GUESTS
The collegiate seminar was developed for NHIers who wish to serve as future NHI board members, N3Os, education directors, onsite directors, and other NHI leadership capacities.

Sofía Hernandez, Wheaton College, Chicago, Illinois
Reilly Garcia, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas
Jessica Narayanan, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas
Carla Rangel, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas
Isabella Sada, Austin College, Sherman, Texas
Analisa Sandoval, Schreiner University, Kerrville, Texas

Elena Rojas, Waushacooche HS, Waushacooche, Texas
Julian Rivero-Moreno, Health Careers HS, San Antonio, Texas
Sophie Rubis, Young Women’s Leadership Academy, San Antonio, Texas
Juan Ruiz-Mena, Institute LEO, Leon, Mexico
Jesus Samaniego, William HS, William, Texas
Gabriela Sandoval, Bishop Dunn Catholic HS, Dallas, Texas
Orianna Sacht, Eastwood Academy, Houston, Texas
Jacqueline Silva, Lockhart HS, Lockhart, Texas
Ryan Simmons, Stone Prep, Round Rock, Texas
G idi Solaro, Central Catholic HS, San Antonio, Texas
Lily Thorsen, University Academy, Dallas, Texas
Nicol Adigun, William HS, Brownsville, Texas
Samuel Treppe, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas
Nannia Trevisan, Harris HS, Brownsville, Texas
Jack Yuni, El Colegio High at University Park, Cypress, Texas
Marisa Valdez, Alamo Heights HS, San Antonio, Texas
Ana Kalttafla Marcus, Colegio Ignacio Zaragoza, Suhlisko, Mexico
Dalia Yasung, Young Women’s Leadership Academy, San Antonio, Texas
Christopher Medrano, Mathis HS, Mathis, Texas

NHI MAGAZINE 2019
Dear Alumni and Supporters,

I cannot express our gratitude for your ongoing support in the community throughout the years, and especially during Celebracion! It’s been a joy to work with NHI board members, community members, and so many individuals who give of their time to make Celebracion possible for our students.

Many may not know this, but Celebracion is an event where every single person serving in staff roles donates their time to be part of it. This means that the college mentors and the professionals acting as Education Directors and trainers are all volunteering their time! Why do they dedicate time to Cele and take time away from their busy lives and families to be with you for four days? One simple reason: They believe in YOU and they want to be part of your success.

We are so happy that that you have chosen to join us for this wonderful and special occasion. This program is a keepsake for each of you. Why? Because it honors our founders, Ernesto Nieto and Gloria de Leon, who have given 40 years of their lives to NHI. Alongside them, we will honor some of the first families who helped NHI in its early years. The individuals you will meet and interact with during Celebracion are legendary!
NHI COLLEGE REGISTER

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY
AMHERST COLLEGE
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS QUERÉTARO
AUGUSTANA COLLEGE
AUSTIN COLLEGE
BATES COLLEGE
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
BENEDICTINE COLLEGE
CABRINI UNIVERSITY
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
COLBY COLLEGE
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - FT. COLLINS
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - PUEBLO
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY TEXAS
EARLHAM COLLEGE
ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
MAKE SCHOOL
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
OBERLIN COLLEGE
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE UNIVERSITY
Purdue University
Rhodes College
SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY
SCHREINER UNIVERSITY
SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
ST. EDWARD’S UNIVERSITY
ST. MARY’S UNIVERSITY
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - CORPUS CHRISTI
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - SAN ANTONIO
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - RIO GRANDE VALLEY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
TRINITY COLLEGE
TRINITY UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
UNIVERSITY OF ST. FRANCIS
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - PARKSIDE
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
VIRGINIA TECH
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
WHEATON COLLEGE