

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

5/12 - 2nd Annual Spring into Health Fair
5/15 - Element Working Group Meeting
5/21 - SSchool Site Coordinator Meeting
5/28 - Memorial Day Holiday
5/29 - Furlough Day

PICO RIVERA KIDS WANT TO CHANGE ALARMING STATISTICS



More than 400,000 people die every year from tobacco use. It is the leading preventable cause of death in the country today. And local students are waging a battle to turn this grim statistic around by raising awareness of the addictive nature and harmful effects of smoking – most particularly among teens.

Four students who are members of the Pico Rivera Alliance to Keep Youth Tobacco-Free (Pico Rivera AKT) had the recent distinction of going to Sacramento to meet with their peers from all over California to brainstorm solutions to a growing problem among minors. These youthful advocates, Samantha Ruiz and Jesus Avila of El Rancho High School, Ashley Martinez from Ruben Salazar Continuation School, and Thomas Smith of the Southern California Alcohol & Drug Program's youth counseling group, joined hundreds of like-minded young people at last month's 13th Annual Youth Quest in the capitol city to further educate themselves about the toxic impact of tobacco on the environment and human health. The event also included legislative training, a rally, and workshops to learn about tobacco production and smoking. The theme of the Youth Quest conference was Tobacco: Always Mean, Never Green.

Jesus Avila said he learned "10 million acres of land are currently used for growing tobacco plants, and with 25 million pounds of pesticides spraying on growing fields, that land is inhospitable for 3 years on which to grow other

crops." Ashley Martinez noted "when you smoke cigarettes, it takes seven minutes out of your life...and that's a lot of minutes from a lifetime if people smoke one pack each day."

Pico Rivera AKT is an alliance of students, parents, youth organizations, and community members committed to protecting underage youth from the dangerous outcomes of smoking. And the coalition is now partnering with the El Rancho Unified District's Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant initiative to reach the city's most vulnerable citizens. A number of presentations have been held throughout the city including a booth at ERHS depicting a large dummy cigarette containing everyday household products with chemicals known to be found in tobacco smoke. Senior student Lynette Haro showed her classmates toilet cleaner, rat poison, disinfectants, acetone, lighter fluid, and mothballs among other toxic ingredients. Haro remarked that kids were "really surprised and enlightened to find such noxious chemicals in tobacco smoke."

The District is proud of these students who are championing the cessation of smoking, and will continue to encourage their efforts with SS/HS support.

We don't want our kids to be among the 4,000 young people who daily try their first cigarette. That's a statistic we cannot afford.

Hipolito Murillo
Mental Health Liaison

He's a hometown guy who has been with El Rancho Unified School District 17 years. He holds a number of degrees, and he knows kids. He is Hipolito Murillo, a licensed educational psychologist, who is the new mental health liaison for the district's Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant. His job is to see that services are well suited to our youngsters who are struggling with emotional and situational issues in their home and at school. Mr. Murillo will be in charge of referring, developing, and identifying mental health needs to staff, students, parents, and the community at large.

His credentials are impressive. He started out at Cerritos College with an Associate of Arts Degree in social sciences, and then obtained a B.A. in Psychology from UCLA. From California State University, Los Angeles, Mr. Murillo received his M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, an M.S. in Counseling designed for schools, and an M.A. in Educational Administration. That's a lot of learning! On top of that, he is credentialed in Multiple Subject Teaching, Pupil Personnel Services in School Psychology and Child Welfare & Attendance, and Administrative Services. Topping off this extensive educational background is his license as an Education Psychologist, which grants him the ability to practice outside of the K-12 school system.

Hipolito, also called Hip within the district, was an elementary classroom teacher for five years, and he was a school psychologist for nine. The district also employed him for three years as its Coordinator of Special Education/Medi-Cal Billing Coordinator where he took charge of the district's Special Ed programs and ran a kindergarten through age 22 Special Education school site.

An interesting sidelight to Hip's employment history is that for 12 years he was employed by the Los Angeles Dodgers – a batboy for two years and locker room attendant for ten! He says meeting players and being involved personally with the team's day-to-day operations was, indeed, a young man's dream job.

This engaging and very busy man does have another life; Hip loves family time. Disneyland is a favorite destination and when his schedule allows, he loves watching sports, playing softball and running. But he stresses that his kids take priority with their sporting activities – he's a soccer, baseball, and softball dad among other things!

This is a man who has spent his career dealing with the myriad problems children and families face in the area of mental health. His education and experience are huge assets for his work within the district. And the district is so fortunate to have someone with Hipolito Murillo's special skill set; we applaud his past, present, and future work with ERUSD.



(L-R) Kristine Glaze, Pico Rivera Alliance to Keep Youth Tobacco-Free Lorraine Jimenez, SS/HS Evidence-Based Programs Coordinator Yvette Loredo del Toro, After School/Mentoring Liaison Jaime Hernandez, LVN

ERUSD CLASS (Crime Line Assisting School Safety)

Anonymously report criminal activity in and around your school

Email: elranhoclass@yahoo.com

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For questions and additional information contact Dora Delgado, SS/HS Project Coordinator at ddelgado@erusd.k12.ca.us

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