

Palo Alto College student receives national award

By Anaiah Liserio
Pulse Staff Reporter

Palo Alto College student Sandra Silva received one of only two national scholarships presented by the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Program.

The NACCTEP's National Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to community college students who are studying to become teachers. Awards were \$1,000 for tuition and books.

"I refuse to give up," said Silva, an Education major. A full-time student, single mother of four and employee for two jobs, Silva, 35, has come to the point of no return, and she will not stop until she succeeds.

Growing up on the South Side of San Antonio, Silva said she remembers how her teachers in elementary school never paid attention to her. She repeatedly visited the principal's office for misbehaving, and she was never once asked what the problem was.

"My parents were divorced, and I was heartbroken," said Silva, who was 5 when her parents split up.

While in grade school, she constantly smart-mouthed her instructors, but she al-

ways knew she wanted to teach.

"I would pretend to have my own class at home, and I was the teacher," said Silva.

While attending South Side High School, Silva had her first child at the age of 18.

"Coming from a community where people drop out, teen pregnancy and drugs were common. I decided I didn't want to be in that system," said Silva.

Many young teens lack guidance and fall between the cracks of the education system. In the 2010-2011 newsletter for National Association of Community College Teacher Education Program (NACCTEP), Silva wrote, "I will be the teacher that I needed by recognizing the problem, redirecting the students and providing concrete support to guide them in the right direction."

Volunteering her time to students is something Silva does to give back to her community. Near her home is a recreational center where she frequently tutors Math. In a dominant Spanish-speaking community, Silva said, "Parents have trouble assisting their kids, and then the kids get frustrated and don't do their work."

With her help, students now know that Ms. Silva will be there waiting for whoever is in need.

When she's not giving back to her commu-

nity, Silva is involved in two honor societies, Chi Alpha Epsilon and Phi Theta Kappa, where she serves as vice president. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above in order to be a member of both organizations.

Silva admitted that when she first applied for the scholarship, she didn't think she had a chance. It was her devoted professor, Dr. Theresa Garfield Dorel, chair of The Education Department, who not only informed her of the opportunity but helped her through the application process. Silva credits Dorel as being the first teacher who has ever supported her.

In the NACCTEP newsletter where Silva was recognized as one of the winners, Dorel wrote, "Sandra has no fear for standing up for what is right for her children. I know this will translate into being a passionate teacher who will undoubtedly become a champion for her future students."

Next semester, Silva will transfer to Texas A&M-San Antonio where she will work toward her bachelor's degree in Education. Eventually, she would like to teach sixth grade Math, but ultimately she wants to become a school principal.

"I want to be the teacher who you want to come back and visit. That's when you know you've done your job," said Silva.

President Clinton visits Palo Alto College

By Mark Gonzales
Special to "The Pulse"

President Bill Clinton rallied voters at Palo Alto College's Performing Arts Center on October 14, 2010.

"The government can't guarantee your outcome, but it ought to give you a chance to live your dreams," Clinton said.

The former president's visit to support Democratic incumbent Ciro Rodriguez, U.S. Representative for District 23, attracted hundreds of attendees.

The event highlighted Palo Alto's growing prominence in the San Antonio community.

Dr. Robert "Bobby" Garza, dean of Student Affairs, said, "The venue brought some notoriety for the institution...there were several media outlets that actually came and witnessed this tremendous event."

The center was filled to capacity with a spill-over crowd who stayed to watch the event on a large video screen outside.

The event was an opportunity for Palo Alto College students to participate in the democratic process.

Rene Diaz, a student at Palo Alto, watched as the former president outlined the importance of going to the polls to vote.

Diaz learned of Clinton's visit in a news story posted online at mysa.com. He waited for more than three hours to hear Clinton's speech.

"I'm glad he came to the South Side of San Antonio...out of all the schools in the city, he came to Palo Alto," he said.

Diaz listened to Clinton's message of patience. This message is especially important in this election cycle since Democrats are expected to lose seats in both houses of Congress.

"Obama needs more time than just the four years to repair the damage that was done during the Bush administration," Diaz said.

Clinton's visit to stump for Rodriguez is a sign of just how important local races are to the Democratic Party.

According to Luis Mercado, director of Public Relations for Palo Alto College, the decision to hold the event on campus came just one day in advance.

"Here are the things that matter in this race: Where are we now? What should we do? Who's more likely to do it?" Clinton said. "This is the greatest chance we'll ever have. Don't blow it."

Early voting began on Oct. 18 and continues through Oct. 29. Election Day is Nov. 2.



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