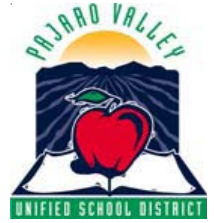


Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



The only accurate charge I ever had made against me was the time I got arrested [at a mine strike] in 1934. They said I was "getting information and going back and teaching it." That's exactly what I was doing. - Myles Horton, Highlander School of Adult Education



Vol. 6 No. 6

The Delivering Success Issue

Oct. 3, 2006

Mariza Rivas Receives Statewide Honor

Mariza Rivas, our most recent student selected to be honored for *the Adult Education Students Succeed* award of the State Office of Adult Ed, was recognized in Sacramento at the ACSA conference on Friday, September 29. Mariza was among only 11 honorees (of 143) selected to be the subject of a 4-minute video. Mariza's inspiring story of her journey, starting with her large, loving, poor single-parent family in Tijuana; her marriage to Antonio, now mayor of Watsonville; her determined perseverance in learning English in the United States and passing the GED in English; the accomplishment of her RN degree from Cabrillo College; and her work for health, education and social justice at Watsonville Community Hospital all speak clearly to the reason why she was selected for this recognition. Mariza says, "Adult Education gave me the confidence and the tools to build a strong foundation to pursue and to overcome the many obstacles presented to me while getting my Associate Degree in Nursing. I continue to encourage others to do the same to better their lives and to be a great example for their children, and their community. The process of learning is an ongoing thing, and I know that Adult Ed is always open, always has the doors open for anyone. And I know...that I will come back again, because that's me. I'm never going to stop learning! I am honored to be nominated, and I offer many thanks to all my instructors who believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my dream."

At the event where Mariza's video was shown, and she spoke in response to this recognition, the keynote speaker was Cheryl Keenan, Director of the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy. Mariza's husband, Antonio Rivas, our Mayor, was on hand to ask Ms. Keenan, who had spoken eloquently about the need for adult education, if there was a movement in Washington to attribute adequate funds to adult education. Ms. Keenan suggested that those of us outside the Beltway must do a better job of advocacy. - AV Coyle



Bob, AV, Mariza, Antonio, and Cynthia in Sacramento.

Mariza Rivas's Story - from the state's website, adulthoodlearners.org

Born in the state of Sinaloa, Mexico, Mariza Rivas and her 8 siblings moved with their newly single mother to Tijuana where the family made a converted bus their new home. The family was very, very poor, recalls Mariza, with no electricity and cooking done on an outside open fire. As the 4th from youngest child the responsibility to care for her 3 younger siblings in the mornings fell to her while their mother worked cleaning houses. When her mother returned home Mariza went to school in the afternoons, and then found whatever work she could, often selling treats on the street and polishing shoes in order to bring home some cash to help her mother and family. Through these hard times Mariza credits her mother with instilling values, discipline and a love of education in the large family, every weekend renting 3 taxi-vans to bring all 9 children to the public library to read. When she was 13 years old Mariza earned and saved enough money to buy her mother a beautiful blue battery powered radio, and together the family would listen to novelas. "Our imagination grew!" exclaims Mariza.

At the age of 19, Mariza married her husband Antonio, and the young couple moved to San Diego where Antonio was studying at San Diego State University for his Bachelor Degree in Education. Mariza enrolled in Adult Education, taking ESL classes, where, she says, "The Webster's Dictionary became my Bible." After some months she registered for a class in Dress Design at San Diego Community College, wanting to test her newly acquired English proficiency. Not only did she discover that she could understand and even speak, but she also learned a new skill that enabled her to sew clothes for the family, which now included their first son. Moving next to Escondido and then finally to Watsonville, where Mariza and Antonio now live, she continued to attend Adult Education ESL classes. As Mariza's proficiency in English grew she got a job in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District as a bilingual teaching assistant and served as an informal tutor for her classmates in Adult Ed Advanced ESL classes. "I ALWAYS attended Adult Ed," says Mariza of these years. Mariza became a US citizen, and the family grew to include 4 children, one, sadly, now deceased. Antonio, a teacher and school administrator, and today mayor of the City of Watsonville, has remained Mariza's ally and staunchest supporter through their journey together.

At Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education Mariza, who says that "by then I had bigger plans for myself," enrolled in GED preparation classes. Her natural interest in the world around her was fueled by teacher Frank Bardacke, who had his students read the newspaper daily, including the obituaries. Frank told the students, "If you ever want to know history, to know what's going on, read the obituaries!" Mariza remembers growing in confidence when math teacher Ann Veronica Coyle often said to her, "You know, Mariza, you know more than you give yourself credit for." Mariza grew to enjoy math and when she enrolled in Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, she found that the Pre Algebra she had studied in her GED classes prepared her well for the more advanced math and science classes that she took in preparation for her nursing degree.

Mariza earned her GED in 1985, and immediately began studies at Cabrillo College to become a nurse, her lifelong dream. Knowing that she wanted to work at Watsonville Community Hospital, Mariza took a job as Nurse's Aide there and earned the esteem and respect of her colleagues, some of whom became her mentors. And she became the "school mom," always finding time to be in her children's classrooms, tutoring and helping especially the children who were learning English. She remains close friends to this day with several of her children's teachers.

Upon earning her nursing degree in 1991, Mariza was hired immediately as a nurse at Watsonville Community Hospital, even before knowing whether she had passed her board exams. When she exclaimed, "But what if I didn't pass?" administrators replied, "We know you're going to pass." And

here Mariza began to fulfill her vision of nursing not only as caring for her patients' health, but also being an educator and advocate. In 1991 there were only 4 Latina nurses at the hospital, which for many years has served a large number of Hispanic patients. Mariza has been a leader in working not only for patient rights, but also for the rights of her sister and brother Latino nurses, sometimes speaking out and acting assertively, engaging in bargaining as a union member, and earning the respect of the hospital community. She has worked tirelessly to assure that non-English speaking patients understand what is happening to them and what they should do when they return home. For years, on her own, she has translated hospital documents, instructions and directories into Spanish, and in March of 2006 realized her dream of seeing her bilingual hospital directory posted at the reception area. She serves as a mentor for Cabrillo College students interested in health careers and as a preceptor for nursing students in their last year of clinical studies. She encourages Latino youth, female and male, to become nurses. Mariza has traveled to poor areas of Peru with the Peruvian Project, ministering to patients there who have little or no access to health care. And through all this, Mariza continues to provide high quality care to the many patients she has served in maternity, medical and surgical, same day surgery, pediatrics (her specialty), oncology, diabetes education and now special procedures. As a bicultural and bilingual nurse, she is able to inspire comfort and confidence in her patients from differing backgrounds. When asked what drew her to the healing profession, Mariza responds that her mother is a curandera, a healer, whose ability to minister to people using insight and natural remedies can be integrated with Western medicine even today. It was natural for her to use the same gifts that were given to her mother, who still lives independently in Tijuana at the age of 88.

In addition to her nursing, education and advocacy, Mariza finds time to meet regularly with a group of Latina women in a safe place, counseling them as they grapple with family relations and cultural issues in a new country. She is in training to earn her credential to teach CPR in Spanish at local companies that have a majority of Spanish speaking employees. She is involved politically, supporting her husband's campaigns and his work for social justice for the people of Watsonville, especially the poor, is active in the Democratic Party and supports candidates whose values mirror hers. Recently she traveled with Antonio to Washington DC for a meeting of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and was called upon to help a plane passenger who became seriously ill. Always the educator and empowering person, Mariza called upon a young Emergency Medical Technician student on board to take the required notes of every procedure and the patient's responses as she stabilized him through warming, intravenous hydration and administration of medication from the plane's emergency supply kit. As the patient was being transferred to an ambulance on the ground, the EMT student rewarded Mariza with his enthusiastic, "Now I REALLY want to become an EMT!"

While acknowledging the importance of her role as a teacher, Mariza recognizes that she is a lifelong learner, too. Last year she returned to Adult Ed to take computer classes, and will continue as time in her busy schedule permits. Mariza says, "I am encouraging others to do the same to better their lives and to be a great example for their children, and their community."

Reflecting on the role of Adult Education in her life, Mariza concludes, "Adult Education gave me the confidence and the tools to build a strong foundation to pursue and to overcome the many obstacles presented to me while getting my Associate Degree in Nursing. I am honored to be nominated, and I offer many thanks to all my instructors who believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my dream."



Mariza and John Fleischman in Sacramento ACSA conference.



WAAE Calendar

Planning Meeting for CCAE Adult Student Conference

Monday October 9, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Career Center, 18 West Beach St., Computer Lab
831.763.8700 ext.5837

Our FOUR Student Councils, Morning and Evening

Please encourage your class to have representation, our students' participation in decision-making is more important than ever.

GV: Oct. 16, Porter: Oct. 17

GV: Nov. 27, Porter: Nov. 28

School Councils

ALL are welcome. Tell your chair your concerns and have them put things on the agenda.

Oct. 11, 4:00-6:00, Porter

Agenda: Plan for site block grant, naming the new building.

Nov. 8, 4:00-6:00, GV

Dec. 13, 4:00-6:00, GV

Note the New Date:

Watsonville-Aptos Community Advisory Council

10:30am – noon, November 1, 2006

Green Valley

CCAЕ Adult Student Conference

Saturday, November 4,

Veteran's Day (no classes)

Friday, November 12

ESL Recognition Ceremony and All School Holiday Dance

Thursday, Dec. 14, 7:00pm

CalPro Workshops Fall 2006

October, Enhancing Learner Persistence - Santa Cruz Adult School

November, Cooperative Learning III - Monterey Adult School



As the WAAE World Turns:

... Charles DeWald, out for several weeks in post-op recovery, may return within the next week automatic payroll deposit is finally available for our teachers after many years of trying... last Saturday our program supported over 50 parents and school site staff learning about school site councils and school governance... after the workshops on immigration rights this week, AV Coyle is organizing an "Abre Sus Ojos" presentation on HIV awareness, contact her, Humberto or Marina.... notice in the showcase at Green Valley the spectacular and artful "balloons" made by Helena Fox's class