



El Camino College Puente Newsletter



Fall 2009

Welcome to the New Faces of Puente!

We Proudly Present

Puente Class #24

Ashley Arous
Marisol Arranaga
Erika Barrera
Jennifer Carbajal
Pamela Carrillo
Andrea Cervantes
Sergio Cervantes
Jesse Cisneros
Stephanie del Castillo
Marisol Duran
Fatima Fuentes
Rocelin Gamez
Karla Gantes
Israel Garcia
Irving Garrido
Claudia Gutierrez
Linda Hernandez
Carlos Ibarra
Yesenia Jimenez
Julianne Lopez
Berenize Magallon
Miguel Martinez
Daniela Messarina
Michael Morales
Cathy Moreno
Briseida Noriega
Gema Ortiz
Mel Palacios
Christian Perez
Martha Quezada
Augusto Ramirez
Erick Reina
Raquel Rodriguez
Lizbeth Romero
Rosivette Ruiz
Juan Santana
Lupe Serna
Cindy Torres
Monica Valdez
Alba Villatoro



Accomplishments are already accumulating for ECC's Puente 24!

El Camino College's 24th Puente class is full of high achievers and lively personalities. The students have been working with intense focus and devotion to meet both the academic and community demands of the program.

In the English A Puente class, the students have already composed eight essays and read three cultural literary pieces: Milcha Sanchez-Scott's play, *The Cuban Swimmer*; excerpts of Sandra Cisneros's novel, *The House on Mango Street*; and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story, "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World."

In Human Development 8 Puente class, the students have been exploring, through extensive journal writing, personal reflections on family, culture, self-motivation and four-year university

transfer aspirations. Also the students are sharpening their study skills and awareness of campus resources, most recently by touring the college Library.

Outside the classes, Puente 24 swiftly formed its club. The students voted Christian Perez as president, Martha Quezada as external VP, Rosivette Ruiz as internal VP, Erika Barrera as treasurer, Sergio Cervantes as secretary and Cathy Moreno as ICC representative. The club then held its first fundraiser by hosting a successful day of meals at Chili's Restaurant in Torrance.

Finally, already presenting themselves as El Camino College representatives, the students attended the Puente Regional Motivational Conference on November 15 at UC Riverside, wearing self-designed T-shirts and Puente pride.

The Puente Program Announces its New Counselor and Instructor Team

Maribel Hernandez is the new Puente counselor. Maribel began her studies at UC Santa Cruz and majored in Latin American & Latino studies, minor in education. She completed a master's in counseling at Cal State University Long Beach. In 2005, Maribel began counseling at ECC and gained experience in student services such as High School Outreach & School Relations, EOP&S, Transfer Center, Matriculation and co-coordinating New Student Welcome Day. Having written her thesis, "Chicanas Transition from Undergraduate to Graduate School," Maribel applies her findings to her teaching and counseling, guiding Puente 24 students to success.

Loretta Ramirez is the new Puente English instructor. Loretta began her higher education studying international relations at Oxford University, England. She later earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology at Stanford and a master's in English at Loyola Marymount University. Fall 2000, Loretta began teaching composition and reading at ECC. Still fascinated by anthropology, in 2007 Loretta merged her two academic interests by joining the faculty at Cal State University Long Beach, where she teaches composition with a Latino twist. Loretta is excited to use a similar cultural composition method with Puente 24

Puente 24 is Now Accepting Mentor Applications

A major goal of the Puente Program is to match each of our students with a mentor. For this reason, Puente is currently accepting applications from former and new potential mentors.

The goal of the mentor component of the program is to offer students individual encouragement from a role model who is willing to share personal stories of academic or career success.

Puente has found that mentors are crucial to the program because of their ability to inspire students to continue pursuing their college goals, ideally to transfer to a four-year university.

Due to financial considerations this academic year, the Puente Program is asking mentors to commit themselves for a limited period of only one semester, beginning February 2010 and ending June 2010.

In February, Puente will host its Mentor Training Session and Student Mixer events. Soon after, all mentors will be invited to attend a cultural field-trip with their students. Finally, in late May, Puente will celebrate the students'

accomplishments at the End of the Year Celebration, and mentors are warmly welcomed at this event.

In addition to scheduled events, mentors should keep in regular contact with their students. In the past, many mentors have continued to work with their students unofficially beyond the agreed commitment, but this is not a requirement. However, many mentors may discover that they have formed bonds with the students that, in the end, are just as inspirational to the mentors as they are to the students—and thus mentors enter the Puente family.

Family is a major theme in Puente. For this reason, we invite all potential mentors to not only apply to our mentorship program, but also to join us on Familia Night, December 3, to meet our students prior to the official start of the Mentor Component part of the spring program.

For details, contact Loretta Ramirez at Lramirez@elcamino.edu or Maribel Hernandez at 310-660-3593, x3683, or Mhernandez@elcamino.edu.

Students, their Family,
Mentors and all Friends
of Puente are Invited!



**ECC Puente Project
Invites you to Attend
Puente 24's**

Family Night Pot Luck

Please join us for an evening
of fun and food!

When: Thurs., December 3
Time: 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Where: ECC's Counseling Center
Student Services Bldg. Room 106
16007 Crenshaw Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90506

For more information, please contact:
Maribel Hernandez or Loretta Ramirez
at 310-660-3593, x3683

Some ask: What is Puente?

The Puente Project is a rigorous program that students commit to for a year of academic and community achievement.

The program consists of English instruction (English A & 84 for Fall, and 1A in Spring), counseling and mentorship.

The English instruction focuses on writing strategies and includes Latino and multicultural readings. The aim is to help students advance from basic narrative writing to advanced critical analysis research composition, while introducing them to multicultural topics and literature. The counseling element guides students into becoming successful college scholars through heightening their awareness of college resources and study skills. Finally, the mentoring component supports and motivates students along their academic journeys, providing inspirational stories of success.

The English instructor and counselor work closely together, inside and outside the classroom, to create a support network of two different divisions for the students.

The end goal of all this combined effort is for students to transfer to a four-year university.

Students Learn to Transfer

The primary goal of Puente is to lead students to transfer to a four-year university. This is the mission of the Puente Statewide Project.

Pursuing this goal, the Puente team has informed the students of ECC's active and well-connected Transfer Center and also recently introduced students to the benefits of the Honors Transfer Program, a program that the Puente team will continue to encourage students to learn more about.

In the meantime, students are urged to attend all transfer events, posted regularly in Puente e-mails and Transfer Center fliers.

Puente Team Gives Heartfelt Words of Gratitude

Maribel Hernandez and Loretta Ramirez, the Puente team, have been gifted by the kindness of countless ECC staff, faculty, administrators and students. We sincerely thank all for their guidance and support as we step into this great program as its team leaders.

Special thanks must be given to our deans, Regina Smith and Tom Lew, and to our respective division staff for providing the tools we need to successfully run this program. We also thank the Puente state office for its constant encouragement.

Additional acknowledgement is due to the entire Counseling Department for assisting with Puente recruitment. Thank you to Susan Bachmann and Melinda Barth for donating copies of their wonderful textbook, *Between Worlds*, which students will have the good fortune to read in English 1A Puente. We are grateful to all who supported the Puente Club's fundraising efforts at Chili's. To Claudia Striepe in the library, thank you for giving students the invaluable gift of research skills. We are all grateful for the Writing Center's Leah Weed who has tutored Puente 24, sharpening the students' writing skills. Finally, thank you to Tom Fonte for helping Instructor Ramirez remember her Spanish!