



# Hard Work Pays Off

## Students and Campuses Shine With Success

During some of the most challenging times we have faced as educators this century, the students and staff of the ACN campuses continue to rise to the occasion. Despite many obstacles, the commitment and dedication of these teams has remained steadfast.

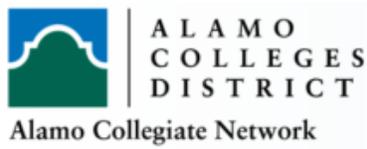
While navigating fluctuating on-campus instruction levels, increasing social and emotional needs of students and staff, and implementing heightened safety protocols associated with the pandemic including facilitating weekly COVID-19 testing and contact tracing at their campuses, the ACN principals and their staff remain determined to meet every challenge and continue to create great opportunities for their students.

Students have taken full advantage of the opportunities laid in front of them during the first semester at ACN campuses. Students are earning scholarships and highlighting their talents as they move towards graduation. In this issue we highlight just a few of the remarkable students making their mark as soon to be graduates.

## Together But Different

The Alamo College Network encompasses three high schools working with two Alamo Colleges. Each campus, and their partner college, develop a unique culture, mission, and goals as they work together to educate students.

Partnered together within ACN, these high schools now have the opportunity to learn and grow together, benefit from varying expertise, and pool resources to create even greater opportunities for students. While they stand together in their desire to make a difference in the lives of students, each campus holds unique qualities that sets them apart.



In this month's issue we are also celebrating something special about each of the three ACN campuses that makes them unique and exceptional.

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### Special points of interest

- ACN students continue to show create determination and are bringing home some of the best scholarships in the Nation.
- ACN students showcase talents in the arts, language, and writing.
- Fox Tech commits to Alamo Promise for all seniors.
- Travis students succeed in SAC Honors program.
- St. Philip's ECHS sets sights on implementing AVID to lead to greater student success.



# Student Accomplishments

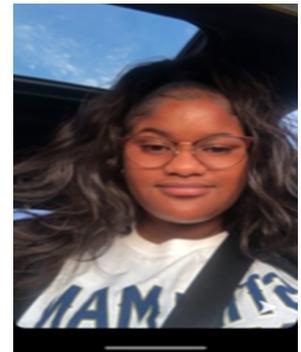


## Samuel Torres—Travis ECHS Senior

Samuel was matched with Princeton University as a recipient of The QuestBridge National College Match program. QuestBridge is a college and scholarship application process that helps outstanding low-income student seniors gain admission and full, four-year scholarships to the nation's most selective colleges. Only 3 percent of high school seniors nationwide are considered for the esteemed scholarship. We should also note that Samuel's accomplishments also landed him as a finalist for the Gates Scholarship, the only SAISD student to make the short list for both of these prestigious honors.

## Chyna Smith—St. Philip's ECHS Senior

Chyna is one of six SAISD students named as Phase 1 Scholars for the Gates Scholarships. The Gates Scholarship is a highly selective, last-dollar scholarship for outstanding, minority, high school seniors from low-income households. Three hundred students win this prize each year with the intent of helping these young scholars realize their maximum potential. Chyna was also named a recipient of the Alamo Bowl scholarship. Chyna's involvement in student government at St. Philip's ECHS, participation in Upward Bound, and recognitions through Girl Scouts of America undoubtedly support her success and deservedness of these awards. She plans on attending the University of Houston to pursue a degree in biology with intentions to become a physician assistant.



## Jose Villalba Gutierrez—St. Philip's ECHS Senior

## Cithaly Cerna—Fox Tech Senior

Two ACN students placed in the annual literary competition hosted by the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) San Antonio in celebration of the Day of the Dead. St. Philip's Early College High School student José Villalba Gutiérrez placed first and Fox Tech High School student Cithaly Cerna placed third. They each read their work during a UNAM live broadcast.



*A little  
progress each  
day adds up  
to big results*



**Marco Campos—  
Fox Tech Senior**

Mario rounds out the trio of ACN students named Phase 1 Scholars for the Gates Scholarship. Along with 7 other SAISD students (including 1 from each ACN campus), Marco earned this remarkable distinction as one of the nation’s most elite high school scholars. Additionally, Marco earned a scholarship from the Valero Alamo Bowl. Marco plans to attend the University of Texas to pursue Mechanical Engineering.

**Allison Herrera—  
St. Philip’s ECHS Junior**

**Layla Monreal—  
St. Philip’s ECHS Junior**

Allison and Layla are among the first group of St. Philip’s ECHS nursing students, in the Certified Nursing Assistants Program, who completed the requirements for their Level One Certificate and will be testing this spring for licensure. They began their Phlebotomy Level One Certification in January.

**Gabriella Villasana—  
Fox Tech Sophomore**  
*singing Cuando El Destino*

Fox Tech’s very own Gabriela Villasana was selected out of hundreds of video submissions as a vocal finalist at this year’s Mariachi Vargas National Vocal Competition. Due to COVID-19, the competition was broadcast live on YouTube, on December 5th.



**THE ROOTS OF TRUE  
ACHIEVEMENT LIE IN THE  
WILL TO BECOME THE BEST  
THAT YOU CAN BE.**

- - -

**HAROLD TAYLOR**

## Fox Tech Sets High Bar for Alamo Promise

Fox Tech High School houses a law magnet and health magnet programs as well as a brand new H-TECH giving students many avenues of study in preparing for their future. But their commitment to student success extends beyond the academic offerings as they are determined to help students access every avenue available to them to reach their dreams.

A part of that commitment was defined this year as ensuring that 100% of their seniors reserved their seat as part of Alamo Promise. It didn't matter that many of the Fox Tech seniors have been learning remotely the entire year and campus staff haven't been able to see them face-to-face since last March. Principal Jennifer Benavides set a goal and she and her staff made calls, held one-one-one zoom meetings with students and families, and have completed countless home visits



to ensure that no child missed this opportunity because of the challenging circumstances of the pandemic.

As of March 1, 2021, Fox Tech can say, "Mission Accomplished". All 90 seniors set to graduate in June have completed their pledge and reserved their seat with Alamo Promise.

## St. Philip's ECHS Prepares to Begin AVID

St. Philip's ECHS remains focused on creating opportunities for their students that support their efforts to become college ready and obtain a college degree. This means continual review and revision of their practices to ensure that the best research-based practices to support these goals are part of the SPC ECHS experience.

Dr. Thomas and his team at SPC ECHS are planning to implement AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) during the 2021-2022 school year. AVID has a proven formula for success leading low socioeconomic and underrepresented students to college performance levels exceeding their peers.



With a focus on academic rigor, organization, note-taking and other skill development coupled with a dedicated curriculum supporting the college ready, college acceptance, and college success efforts of educators, the implementation of AVID at SPC ECHS will enhance the current efforts of campus staff and create even greater levels of students success. Dr. Thomas and some of his team begin their implementation training this month and many staff members will participate in the training for classroom implementation in early summer. Exciting things ahead for students and staff at SPC ECHS!

## Travis ECHS Tackles SAC Honors Program

Only 7 high school students in the greater San Antonio area are participating in college level Honors programs and all 7 of those are Travis ECHS sophomores. These students were selected to be part of a unique pilot for the San Antonio College Honors Academy.

Based on evidence of quality academic work and staff recommendations, these 7 students were accepted and have successfully completed their first semester in the SAC Honors Program. The SAC Honors Program seeks to help students develop their skills in articulation of ideas, engagement and self-reflections, collaboration, evaluating ideas through a cultural lens, and analyzing sources at a critical level.



As groundbreakers, the success of these 7 students opens doors for their peers to follow as both SAC and Travis ECHS look forward to growing the participating in the SAC Honors Program each year.

To read more about the Travis students making headlines in this program you can visit <https://www.saisd.net/page/article/554>.