

# FAAamilia

National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees



NATIONAL  
**HISPANIC**  
HERITAGE MONTH

2020





# NHCFAE Annual Training Conference Indianapolis: July 26-28, 2021



## National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees “Con Orgullo en Nuestra Hispanidad”

NHCFAE  
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Washington, DC 20026-3276  
www.nhcfae.org

### Mission

The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees is a professional, diverse organization that focuses on advocating career placement and advancement through support, education and alliances.

### History

Established in 1978 in an effort to provide a network for Hispanic employees of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Aviation Industry. It became a national organization in 1983. Today, the Coalition is the chief advocate

for issues affecting Hispanics in the FAA. The Coalition derives its support from membership dues, corporate sponsorships and private donations.

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We're proud to support the the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees and their mission, during Open Season November 9 - December 14. Since 1960, we've been committed to providing federal employees with more health benefits, smart online tools and rewarding incentives.



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# Message from the NHCFAE President



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## *¡Hola FAamilia!*

A little over ten years ago, I decided to go to a National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees Annual Training Conference and it changed my life. At the time, I was not a member of the Coalition, but my manager allowed me to go TDY for the training they were having. In the three days I was there, I became motivated to try and do more to help. First, I signed up to become a member. About a month and a half later, Erik Salazar asked me if I would consider running for the Regional/Center Director (RCD) position at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center Chapter.

From there it kept building, from RCD to Constitution and By-Laws Chair, Deputy RCD, Legislative Chair, Capital RCD, National Vice President and finally to be elected the President of the Coalition last year.

In every position I have held, in every meeting, each Training Conference, it is, and will always be, about the people. ¡Mi familia! Each meeting or conference to say “good-bye” was always sad for me, until I

could be with my family again. I have loved every minute of it!

I have advised the Executive Board, the Executive Committee and now I am advising you, that I will not be seeking reelection as NHCFAE President this year.

I plan to stay active with the NHCFAE after my term and there is still so much I want to be able to help our organization do, but I feel it is time for some younger blood. I would be excited to see others step up. It is kind of strange, I turned 61 this year, and it finally dawned on me that I am not that 17-year-old kid who joined the Air Force so long ago.

In ten years, it seems like I have done so much, and in other terms it never seems like enough. I would like to challenge each of you to step up and see what you could do. I know that you have great ideas and the NHCFAE can give you the opportunity to become a leader and expand your horizons. That is one of the fundamental building blocks of this organization, giving members the opportunity to step into

leadership roles. Each RCD right now has open positions on their chapter board that they would like to fill, why not you?

Getting involved in the NHCFAE can lead to bigger and better things. It has given me the opportunity to meet and talk with our current FAA Administrator, the former Acting Administrator and our former Administrator. I got to meet the Secretary of Transportation. I have had the opportunity to meet and talk to the FAA Chief Operating Officer, several Associate Administrators and work with a couple of Assistant Administrators. The NHCFAE gave me that opportunity and it can give you that opportunity as well.

I know each of you has great ideas! You could be the key to helping your chapter, the Coalition, the Agency, your community. Step up! You could be the key, you and your ideas. All it takes is taking that first step and there will be other opportunities, other positions both locally and nationally. And you could be that person!

*Continued...*

# President's Message Continued...

The NHCFAE was founded over 40 years ago by a couple of people who were simply looking for ways to help themselves and other Hispanics in the FAA and in our communities. Our organization has grown, but the basic principle is the same, to help Hispanics, our communities and each other. It is not much more complicated than that. You could be the key to helping someone else and someone else might be the key to helping you. In the meantime, you could build relationships that will last a lifetime.

We have been working hard to expand outreach to Hispanics in our communities. Our Vice President, Oscar Torres, is working on an initiative to reach out to Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) nationwide. Volunteer to help Oscar and become a local representative to an HSI in your area. This is not hard, and with a little work, we could help move worlds.

We want to reach out to our HSIs and pass on information regarding opportunities in the FAA and aviation. Let them know when the Minority Serving Institution (MSI) internship program will be accepting applications for the three seasonal internship seasons. Advise your managers that the NHCFAE has been instrumental in getting centralized funding for the MSI internship program so your manager will not have to pay the \$15,000 for the intern anymore and they can give an opportunity to one of these MSI interns.

Outreach could be as simple as going with a couple of other members to a college or university to talk to about the important work that you do to keep aviation flying in your country. Each of you has an important part in our mission, and you could have the opportunity to tell a young person how you serve your country by keeping our skies safe, and you can maybe help them find a career they could be proud of too.

Maybe you have your own ideas of how you could make a difference. How you can help our organization improve. Bring your ideas. Even if you don't have ideas, getting involved might help spark those ideas. Slowly we are finding ways to reach out, right now it is virtually, but soon we will be able to get more involved. We'll be able to sponsor and participate in Aviation Career Education (ACE) camps and teach young people about aviation. Opening eyes and providing a spark that could change a person's life. You could be a part of that! Get involved!

Thank you for your support!

Bill Fernandez  
NHCFAE President



# Editor's Message

Hola FAAmilia!

It's Fall! To some of us, the best time of the year is fast approaching. For those like me, I'm wondering how we got here so fast! It feels like just yesterday we were looking forward to summer. Either way, we will keep enjoying the season.

At this point, we have all adapted to the COVID life. I hope you and your familias are all staying healthy. My condolences to those that have lost someone during this tough year; mil abrazos. Please reach out to your FAAmilia if you need someone to talk to! I am always available to be an ear to listen or just chit-chat. On another note, kudos to all those parents who have been forced to wear all the hats: teleworking, assisting with distance learning and being head chef in the kitchen. What a challenge! And to everyone that voted, thank you by letting your voices be heard by voting, volunteering, or posting on social media.

Are you ready for the holidays? Ready or not, they are fast approaching. Here in California, we are still hyped up celebrating our two National Championships. Congrats to the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Dodgers. As a Cali girl, I am ecstatic and proud to celebrate these championship wins. We did it! We remember Kobe Bryant, we know his "Mamba Mentality" pushed all of our players to give more this year. I cannot wait for our celebration parade!

Thank you to everyone who took the time to contribute to this edition. Remember, this magazine is a collaborative effort and together we compile information for our membership. As Director of Public Affairs, I gather, proof-read your articles, and work to get the final product published, BUT it is with you, and for you that it gets completed. This is my favorite part of my position, and I am always eager to publish it.

Congratulations to our new member of the Executive Board, Pete Rosa. He ran unopposed for the National Director of Resources (DOR) position. Thanks, Dolores Spriggs, for all you did for us as the previous DOR!

I know while most everyone teleworks, it's hard for our Regional/Center Directors to host events, but I want you to know that our RCDs have been working hard, and as we get our daily work done, they have also been



busy collaborating and communicating their needs to our Executive Board. Please feel free to reach out to them with any ideas. We are here for you. We are in it together.

Enjoy reading Volume 4 of FAAmilia magazine. As always you will find great articles. Our cover page for this volume is the 2020 Hispanic Heritage Month theme: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future. A very fitting theme for us all to live by.

Please feel free to share any of your family/work stories with us. I always look forward to reading them. In addition, if you want to learn more about my position, or any of the Executive positions, RCDs or Committee Chairs, please contact us.

With that said, I am wishing you all a very healthy and joyful holidays! Felices Fiestas! Cheers to Hope in 2021!

Stay safe, Abrazos!

Susie Diaz  
National Director of Public Affairs





## Top 10 Reasons to Visit Indy!

By: Kristan Villegas, Conference Coordinator Co-Chair

- 1) Only in Indy can you experience all 4 seasons in one day.
- 2) It is the only way to find out what a “hoosier” is.
- 3) Where else can you warsh (wash) your hands???
- 4) It is the closest you will get to the North Pole...Santa Claus, IN!
- 5) There are over 94,000 farmers in the state of Indiana!
- 6) The nation’s first Union Station was built here in Indy.
- 7) Indy is home to the nation’s oldest magazine, the Saturday Evening Post.
- 8) Garfield the cat lives here!
- 9) Cow tipping is permitted, if you dare.
- 10) If you are not from here, it is an experience that will surprise you!

BONUS: Indianapolis is home to the Indy 500, the most famous race in motorsports!



## 2021 Annual Training Conference Contest

By: Kristan Villegas, Conference Coordinator Co-Chair

The NHCFAE Annual Training Conference will be held in Indy this year. We have had some extra time to plan. We hope you are looking forward to this as much as we are. If you are planning to attend, keep reading for an opportunity!

We are interested in your stories from previous NHCFAE Training Conferences. Do you have a funny or enlightening account from an NHCFAE conference you have attended? We are looking for stories of any experiences from past conferences. We would like to have a small competition and pay for the registration for your 2021 Conference. Write a story and submit it to [dopa@nhcfae.org](mailto:dopa@nhcfae.org) for consideration in the contest! The E-Board will review and choose the winners from the submissions received!



# NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

## NHCFAE Hollywood Squares

By: Maritza Miranda, Eastern/New England Regional/Center Director

Hello FAAmilia, I hope that during these difficult times you are staying safe.

This year during Hispanic Heritage Month, due to COVID, it was challenging in coming up with an idea for an event for 2020. We knew it needed to be virtual, so on October 7th the AEA/ANE Chapter hosted a “NHCFAE HOLLYWOOD SQUARES with the Executive Board/Committee”.

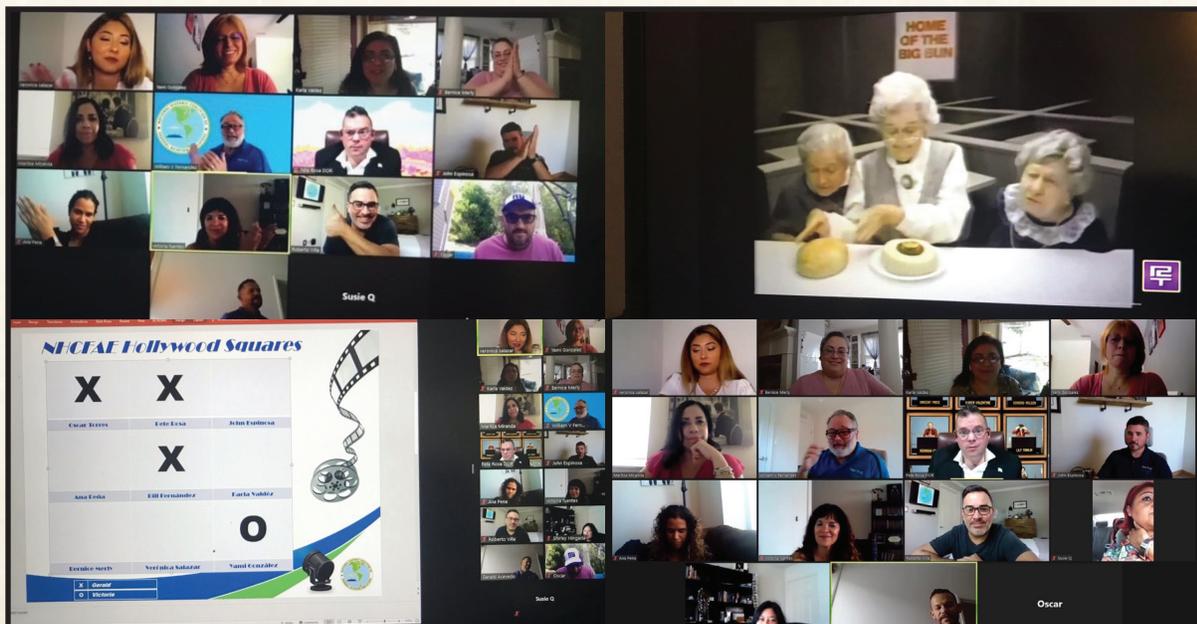
Do you guys remember the game show ‘Hollywood Squares’? We recreated the game show with our Executive Board and Committee testing their knowledge on Hispanic history tidbits. It was so much fun.

Here’s how the game went down for those who are not familiar with the game concept. I was the moderator, Roberto Villa (AEA/ANE Chapter DOR) was my co-host and producer, and our EBoard and EComm were the celebrity squares. There were 2 contestants (it’s a TIC-TAC-TOE concept) picked from the audience. The contestants would pick a celebrity square. I would then ask the celebrity square a question, they would choose to give the right answer or a bogus/wrong answer, but convincingly (to throw off the contestant), and the contestant would have to agree or disagree with their answer to earn the square.

This game ran from 1966 through 2004, so in addition to the game, we also presented commercials dating back towards the early days of the show’s conception in between different segments of the game.

It was truly a lot of fun. We had hoped for more participation and we are definitely planning to have a repeat event of Hollywood Squares soon. So stay tuned.

Sending you all lots of love and well wishes to you and yours.



# Hispanic Heritage Month with Frida Kahlo

By: Susie Diaz, National Director of Public Affairs

I am very proud of my Mexican-American heritage. Now that I am a mom to a beautiful 5-year-old, I know that I am hugely responsible for teaching her about her heritage, culture and traditions. Emma is American, and her heritage comes from a mix of Salvadorian, Belizean and Mexican. I love arts and crafts, and throughout this pandemic, and maybe as a coping mechanism, I have been doing a lot more fun and creative activities with my daughter, nieces and nephews. I had to think of activities that we could do to teach them about Hispanic Heritage Month.



We own a few Spanish/English children books that highlight famous Hispanics. In preparation for Hispanic Heritage Month, I asked her to choose one of the books to read and to do an activity. She chose to read about Frida Kahlo. She also did a video, watched different YouTube videos of her and then we watched a movie about her life. She also knew about her because her school has a mural of Frida. It was great to see her connect the dots. After we were done with all the fun learning activities, it was time to dress up. On the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month, my daughter and I decided to dress up as some of our favorites. I asked her to go to the closet, be creative and choose something to wear to represent Frida. We also did the same for Selena, Cantinflas and Celia Cruz.

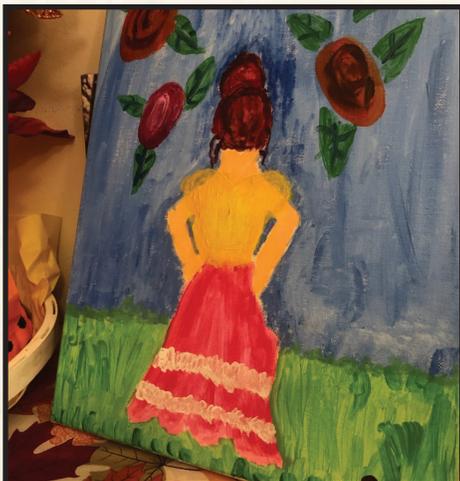


For me it is very important to teach our little ones about our heritage and traditions. I remember as a little girl my father would teach us Spanish music while playing his guitar. Now as an adult, I will talk to my siblings and reminisce about those great memories. I would love to hear Emma as an adult, reminiscing about these moments just like I do.

# Western-Pacific Chapter Virtual Paint Night

By: Susie Diaz, National Director of Public Affairs

On October 16th, the Western-Pacific chapter hosted a virtual paint night with the professional assistance of a local artist, who owns a paint 'n pour business. She guided us while painting our own Hispanic painting. It was a FUN Friday night. Our chapter usually has a get together for Hispanic Heritage month, so I was missing many friends and co-workers. I was excited and glad to see a few familiar faces. We talked and laughed during our painting event. At the end of the night, it was great to be able to see everyone's painting because we all have talent, and our creativity shows during these types of events. We were all able to show each other our paintings. Now we can keep it as a memory and treasure it for many years. I hope our chapter enjoyed this event and I look forward to more nights like this. A big thank you to everyone who participated.





# Member Spotlight

*During National Hispanic Heritage Month, Focus FAA highlighted the contributions of members of the NHCFAE and their heritage stories. Below are several of the stories that were featured this year.*

## **My Hispanic Heritage Story: Lizbeth Alvarado**

By: Focus FAA

**Lizbeth Alvarado**

Made for ATC

### **Current Position**

Air Traffic Controller, O'Hare International Airport

### **Favorite Aircraft**

B1 Lancer. It's a heavy aircraft that maneuvers like a fighter plane!

### **Favorite Quote**

"Life doesn't always turn out like we expect it, and that's OK!"

### **Fun Fact**

I work in a tower, even though I'm afraid of heights.



You never forget the conversations that change your life and put you on a track towards success. I remember being a young mom, out of high school, and figuring out my next move in life. I was working full-time, trying to continue my education, and struggling to support my adorable son, Einar (pronounced Ay-Nar). His smile and joy were compelling me to do more, be more, and of course, support him well. His name was of Viking origin and meant "leader of warriors". I wanted to give him a life that allowed him to develop the strength and fearlessness that his name gave him.

One day my two cousins told me they were planning on joining the Air Force. One wanted to be a pilot and the other one wanted to become a doctor. The more they talked about it, the more I started to consider military service too. Joining the military would give me a place in life, a well-paying, steady job, and best of all, the chance to attend college after service was up.

### **Military Trailblazer**

I had no role model for military service. None of my immediate family had ever served. However, my upbringing definitely influenced me in making the decision. I was taught that hard work, along with education, was the key to success. I was also taught responsibility, professionalism, and to have a strong work ethic, which I still carry with me to this day. So, I started talking to a recruiter about my options and before I knew it, I had enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. My family was surprised, but very proud that I had made the decision to serve my country. In the end, both of my cousins ended up not enlisting and took different paths to fulfill their dreams. I did, and it was a move that led me to a career in aviation that suits me perfectly!

I was twenty when I joined the U.S. Air Force, with the idea that service would be a means to an end. My plan was to get some military experience, then attend college after discharge where I would find my lifetime career. The Air Force gave me an aptitude test to see how I could best serve them. When I got the results, I didn't know what to expect, since I was open

## Member Spotlight

to almost anything. I was so surprised and intrigued when one of the job recommendations turned out to be “air traffic controller” (ATC). I decided to give it a try.

I completed basic training in San Antonio, Texas and then a vocational school in Biloxi, Mississippi to learn the basics of air traffic control. I was then assigned to Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas, where I continued my ATC training. I worked and served in the Air Force for four years.

The aptitude test was right! I really enjoyed the work of air traffic controlling. I see it as a game of chess. Pieces in motion, trying to get to a specific spot with different variables creating a different puzzle to solve with each new move. I loved the variety of military aircraft and their requirements as they came through the base. No two days were the same and it was a job that kept you on your toes.

I also have to say that the job fit my personality very well. While you’ll find many different types of personalities among air traffic controllers (ATCs), they do share many qualities and personality characteristics. For example, I think ninety-nine percent of ATCs have a type A personality. They are also great multi-taskers and very detail-oriented individuals. In your busiest moments as an ATC, you don’t always have to multi-task, but you do have to think and solve problems quickly. You also have to be adaptable. You have to solve any issues and move on. Through my work, I developed confidence and the skill to make fast decisions and pivot when the situation calls for it.

I believe it takes a village to raise a child, and the military was part of the village that helped me raise Einar. They were surprisingly family friendly. I always had daycare available, right on the base, and was even able to leave work hours early to attend school functions, as long as it did not compromise the mission.

After my service was up, I returned home to Chicago. I had really missed it and I wanted Einar to grow up near family. I also figured I would take advantage of my veteran’s benefits and attend school. I thought about my options and decided to try something different—nursing.

### Finding My Career

I was in college for about a year when I started to miss the excitement of aviation and using those skills I had worked so hard to build in the Air Force. I thought long and hard about my decision. I had decided on nursing to build a career for myself, but my longing for aviation made me realize I already had a career—air traffic control. In the military, I had not just received job experience, I had found my lifelong career.

*Continued...*

## PASS MEMBERS STAY THE COURSE

While air travel plummeted at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, PASS members in both ATO and AVS remained on the job (many remotely) to protect the safety and integrity of the NAS. Because of their dedication to the FAA’s mission, they ensured that vital equipment, supplies and medical personnel reached their final destinations in order to combat the virus. And PASS never stopped protecting the employees it represents, to keep them and their families safe and healthy.

Since 1977, the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO has brought first-class union representation to thousands of FAA employees. Join us!

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People had told me that if you were looking for a job as an air traffic controller, chances are that you will not find one near home. I was still determined to try, because at this point in life, I knew I didn't want to move and uproot Einar again. In the summer of 2007, I saw that the FAA was hiring. I applied and was hired! Even better, I was given the "Holy Grail" of assignments. I was placed in the air traffic control tower at Midway Airport in Chicago.

Although smaller than O'Hare, Midway airport is still ranked among the top thirty busiest airports in the country. The first few days were a little nerve-wracking, but I persevered. Eventually, the job got easier, even though I was still challenged on a day-to-day basis. Commercial operations were much more involved than the military ones I was used to back at Dyess. There, we flew about 200 daily operations out of the military base. Midway had more than four times that amount, at about 800 operations a day. At Midway, the traffic was very different from the military too. At Dyess, we would do our training and then work with one or two aircraft at a time, usually a cargo or bomber aircraft. In the commercial world, things are much more fast-paced.

When people board a commercial airliner, very few realize how many air traffic controllers (ATCs) are involved in their flight. There is one ATC assigned to help get the pilot from the gate to the runway, another for departure, and then several more throughout the flight as the pilot enters different airspaces, states, altitudes, and distances from and to the destination. It's a constant relay of information between the pilot and the ATCs. People also think of ATCs as the people in the towers, but there are whole ATC facilities elsewhere that passengers never see. The ATCs in the radar environment use only radar to direct the traffic and are just as essential as the ATCs who work in the towers.

I worked at Midway for six years when a job opened up at O'Hare Tower. Einar was now a teenager so I thought this would be a good time to apply. I was selected and transferred to O'Hare two years later. O'Hare is one of the world's busiest airports that does an average of 2,800 operations a day. ATCs are known as having high stress jobs, and airports like O'Hare are one of the reasons why! The sheer volume of aircraft that moves through the field is challenging in and of itself. Sometimes I feel like we cannot talk fast enough to move all the planes! Yet working as a team we move them all, day after day, bringing passengers safely home or off to exciting visits and vacations. Today, I'm in the tower at O'Hare, enjoying the nonstop action and keeping air travel safe.

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## My Hispanic Heritage Story: William "Bear" Velazquez

By: Focus FAA

### William Velazquez

Aviation Safety Technician

Flight Standards District Office, San Antonio, Texas

### William "Bear" Velazquez – What important job do you do for the National Airspace System?

I have served the FAA since 2010, and currently serve as an Aviation Safety Technician (AST) for the San Antonio Flight Standards District Office (SAT-FSDO). My position has important aviation safety related work items such as pilot certification and conducting investigations on UAS events. My background education is actually in information technology and my experience in project management during this pandemic have greatly helped our office navigate the virtual world.

### William "Bear" Velazquez – How did you help your office in this virtual world?

Two years ago, a now retired frontline manager and I consulted with the great Lubbock FSDO to get advice on how to best transition our work into a digital foundation. With my background in IT and project management, we created a digital environment where employees were trained on how to complete work assigned digitally, saving the agency money and, most importantly, the time to complete any particular project. Although we were not preparing for a pandemic, we were ready for one, as the past two years gave us the experience and expertise to be able to continue working efficiently and effectively ensuring the flying public were served. We continue this service today, even adding features we did not have before, such as



*Continued...*

# Member Spotlight

creating Digital Cards for all events using PowerPoint and Adobe, creating a page on our SP site to complete correspondence and memorandums more quickly, and an ability to track all COVID related items with internal and external customers.

## William “Bear” Velazquez – What is your Hispanic Heritage Story? What is your family’s American story?

My Hispanic Heritage and American Story would be titled: “Coronavirus Separated Me from My Family – But Then I Found My Biological One.” I grew up in San Antonio, Texas and currently have an adopted family that I have known for many years. Growing up though, it was just my mom and me and I never knew my father. We constantly moved from place to place, living at each location for about a year or two until we finally found a home. This house is where my mom would live the rest of her days until 2009. I have always known my mother to be a tireless, dedicated, and extremely hardworking human being. She was someone who gave so much of herself towards my wellbeing, and this is something



I continue to emulate for my daughter and others today. However, what I did not know until April of this year, was that I actually have three brothers and one sister from Mexico. After going through an old box of photos my mother had, I came across one in particular that indicated the names of two little girls that were labeled in Spanish as “your nieces”. After some social media research, I was able to track these people down and they are now my newfound twin cousins.

I was astonished to learn about the brothers and sister mentioned above, but there was more. I learned that I have five aunts and four uncles too. Of course, hearing about all this after thinking my entire life it was just my mom and me, it was overwhelming to say the least. However, finding out that my mom endured years of abuse from her then husband, including two murder attempts, was a lot to take in.

Back in the old Mexico days, some women had very few rights as spouses, let alone as human beings, and endured many trials and tribulations living in Mexico with their spouses. My grandfather, my mother’s father, told my mom that if she continued to stay, that her husband would kill her. So, they came up with a plan for her to leave Mexico, go to Texas, and come back for the kids when things settled down. However, when my mom tried to get her kids back, the husband had taken the kids, my siblings, and scattered them across various areas of Mexico, including California and Arizona. He did this so that she and her family could not find them, and unfortunately, she was never able to track them all down. Much time had passed, and my siblings were led to believe my mom left because she hated them, which was far from the truth. However, the truth is here, and together we are all living with a renewed sense of purpose and are excited to create new beginnings.



I will never know the real reason why my mom never told me about my siblings or my blood relatives, and I can’t even imagine the emotional toll it had on her by not doing so. But what I do know is that my mom had enormous strength to raise me like nothing ever happened to her. This is what I feel is the embodiment of the “American Story.” Immigrants (all-not just Hispanic) who have endured so much, looking for a better life, and finding it through hard work and determination, which she absolutely did for us both. If not for my mother, I would not know my daughter, I would have never been able to serve my country as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, or continue to serve my country as an AST for my SAT-FSDO. I believe strongly that my mom was looking out for my safety then and did not want anyone hurting me. I also feel my mom was guiding me spiritually to find that photo so that she could help me find the family I never knew I had and connect us all. To this day, I speak every week to my older brother and sister in California and various relatives via social media. My daughter and I are still in shock over this amazing revelation, but look forward to the day when the pandemic is over so we can all finally meet the family we never knew we had!

## **My Hispanic Heritage Story: Jonathan Eagle**

By: Focus FAA

### **Jonathan Eagle**

Air Traffic Control Specialist

Van Nuys Tower

### **What important job do you do for the National Airspace System?**

I am an Air Traffic Control Specialist (ATCS). I ensure the safety of aircraft coming out of a busy Class Delta airspace in Van Nuys, CA. Van Nuys airport has a rich history. Formerly a location where there was a lot of military aircraft testing/production, it is now the home to many student pilots, and a flying group of T-6 aircraft called the Condor Squadron, as well as the private jet set to the rich and famous. Daily operations usually include a mix of large aircraft, such as Boeing business jets, and small aircraft, such as a Gyrocopter. We are the base of operations for most media, police, and firefighting helicopters, including Superscoopers and large firefighting aircraft.



### **How did you get involved in air traffic?**

From high school graduation at 17 to 25 years old I worked multiple jobs (26 if I remember correctly). I received an email from my uncle who was working at Fort Lauderdale Airport as a Public Relations person and advised me that the FAA was looking for air traffic controllers with no prior experience necessary. My extent of knowledge of air traffic was limited to the movie Top Gun, so after completing the process and being hired, I had no clue what a center controller did. I started at Oakland center and moved on to North Las Vegas tower and now Van Nuys tower. I've been happily employed for 11 plus years and volunteer throughout the year trying to educate students about a career that never occurred as a possibility to me until my mid-20s.

### **What is your Hispanic Heritage Story? What is your family's American story?**

My grandparents on my mother's side are both from Nicaragua. For those unfamiliar, Nicaragua is in Central America, resting between Honduras and Costa Rica. My mother spent the first 17 years of her life growing up there. Nicaragua faced many difficulties during my mother's upbringing. She is the youngest of her sisters and fifth youngest of six. My mother faced a severe earthquake and revolutions of the government in her youth. When my grandmother came to make a better life for her family, my mother left everything behind to try as well. My mother served in the United States Air Force where she met my father and had me. I am proud of the sacrifices my parents made, but especially my mother, and I am proud to say I am a first generation Nicaraguense-American. My Nicaraguan heritage may be lost on some since my last name is Eagle (from my father's side), but I am very proud of it. I love my gallopinto (a traditional Nica dish) and recommend anyone who has never tried our food to give it a try.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my story during Hispanic Heritage Month. God bless the United States y que Viva

## **My Hispanic Heritage Story: Teresa Metcalf**

By: Focus FAA

### **Teresa B. Metcalf**

Branch Manager, Radar Technical Program Support Team

Technical Operations, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

### **What is your Hispanic Heritage Story? What is your family's American story?**

My heritage is Mexican American. My father worked so hard to provide for us and make sure we had a home, food and a safe environment. He worked hard every day going to work early and always helping others. He never gave up and always strived for a better life. He showed me to work hard every day and always lead with your heart and soul. He told me to be thankful for every day. The words of wisdom he has provided will be long lasting. His faith is so strong, and I know he prays for his family every day.



*Continued...*

## **Name someone that inspires you or that you admire in the FAA or outside.**

Mother Teresa of Calcutta – she gave so much to others, she was kind, loving, and her mission was helping others. She never thought about herself just continued to give. She said, “Spread love wherever you go; let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.”

## **Describe the importance of being a mentor.**

It is my mission to see others succeed and reach their full potential. I love to help others and to provide my coworkers and friends with guidance and examples of how to become all they can be. I review resumes, provide input on KSAs, and help on interview techniques. I help build their confidence. Most importantly, I listen, and they know I care about their future. It brings me so much joy when someone I have mentored reaches their new position and is able to achieve their goals. It brings me joy to see people happy.

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## **My Hispanic Heritage Story: Maritza Miranda**

By: Focus FAA

### **Maritza Miranda**

District Technical Advisor, New York (TENY) District

### **What important job do you do for the National Airspace System?**

As a Technical Advisor, my job is to provide strategic counsel to senior management within TENY District. This is an increasingly critical component in supporting a successful leadership team. The day-to-day responsibility for projects and tasks help to create and maintain cross-departmental relationships that will help enable leadership success in their set goals and objectives.

### **How did you get involved in your role as Technical Advisor?**

After college, I applied for an entry-level position for the FAA. I took the Civil Service test and was selected as an administrative assistant for the Airway Facilities Division, now known as Technical Operations. My aspiration to grow, learn new things and volunteer to participate in various work groups prepared me to acquire the skills that qualified me to obtain different jobs within Technical Operations, Engineering Services and the Air Traffic Organization. These experiences within the various lines of businesses helped me to qualify to participate in the Program for Emerging Leaders (PEL). I graduated in June 2019.



### **What is your Hispanic Heritage Story?**

Family has always been our number one priority. My parents came to the US from the Dominican Republic in 1960. They met, fell in love and got married in 1962. They lived in Manhattan in a studio apartment for 5 years. When they had me in 1968, they moved to the Bronx into a one-bedroom apartment, my brother followed 2 years later. After 7 years of living in the “Boogie Down” (nickname for the Bronx), my parents saved up enough money to put a down payment on a home in Queens, NY. We were a hardworking middle-class family, who lived moderately and spent the weekends with our extended family. My parents taught my brother and I that hard work pays off.

The early years in the Bronx were the most vivid memories of my childhood. Many of my parents’ family immigrated to New York City and some depended on my parents’ support to help make their American dream come true. Our couch was a temporary bed for those family members who arrived in search of the American dream. My parents provided an opportunity for them to stay with us until they were able to get a steady job, obtain a room or apartment of their own, so that they can send money back home. We were raised to extend that olive branch, and I guess that is why giving back (outreach) is such an important part of my life.

# My Hispanic Heritage Story: Melissa Rivera

By: Focus FAA

## Melissa Rivera

Management and Program Analyst  
Mission Support Operations Support Group, Eastern Service Center

### What important job do you do for the National Airspace System?

I am a Group Integrator in the Operations Support Group (OSG), Eastern Service Center, Mission Support Services. I assist the five teams within the OSG with providing operational and procedural oversight and support of ATO programs that promote effectiveness and efficiency of the NAS. I also help facilitate special activities for ATO Service Units, field ATC facilities and Service Area Regional Administrators.



### How did you get involved in the FAA?

My passion for aviation and business began as an air traffic controller in the Air Force. This is where I learned about airspace management, instrument flight procedures, air traffic control and military aviation business. After 12 years of active duty, I transitioned to the private sector and to the Air National Guard, where I became a commissioned officer and where I still serve today as a Space Operations Officer. In the private sector, I worked for General Electric Aviation as a Deputy Director for the Flight Efficiency & Performance-based Navigation Services, Flight Path Design, and at Jeppesen as a Senior Airspace Specialist. In these capacities, I supported airline carriers and Air Navigation Service Providers on every continent with public and tailored instrument flight procedure design and airspace optimization. My experience in instrument flight procedures led me to a position as an Airspace and Flight Procedures Evaluation Program Specialist in the Eastern Service Center four years ago.

### What is your Hispanic Heritage Story? What is your family’s American story?

My paternal and maternal grandparents came to the US from Mexico in the 1950s and settled in Southern California. My mother was born in Mexico. My paternal grandfather was a successful construction and demolition business owner for many years while I was growing up, even though he had no formal education, and his English was not very good. Many of my father’s extended family worked for the business.

My mother raised my sister and me alone. Even though my mother had no formal education, and she didn’t speak English until her teens, she set an example of hard work and grit, and encouraged my sister and me not to place limitations on what we could achieve. I went to the military and was able to earn an MBA. My sister went into nursing and she earned a Doctorate. We were the first in our families to earn degrees.



Even though he is no longer with us, my grandfather continues to inspire me, and I hope to run my own successful business one day because there are no limits for my girls and me. My oldest daughter has followed my example and joined the GA Air National Guard as an Intel Analyst. This is a photo of her saluting me.

## My FAAmilia

By: Focus FAA

*William “Bill” Fernandez was elected president of the NHCFAE in 2019. He served in the Air Force before starting his career at the FAA in Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPs). As the head of one of the agency’s largest employee associations, he discusses the NHCFAE’s challenges and goals for the future within the FAA and surrounding communities.*

### How did you get involved in aviation?

I joined the U.S. Air Force at 17 after graduating early from high school. The first time I flew on an airplane was that trip to Basic Training. I never had an “A-Ha” moment where I said I wanted to work in aviation; I just ended up in it. I was offered Air Traffic Control training and thought it would be interesting — it was. I spent 17 years as an Air Traffic Controller in the Air Force, by the time I left the Air Force, I was too old to be a controller in the FAA.

But the Air Force had provided a lot of other opportunities for me as well. The Air Force sent me to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) to study Spanish so I could become a controller in Spain. They trained me in Terminal Instrument Procedures, what we like to call “TERPs”. They also afforded me the opportunity to attain my undergraduate degree, and later a master’s degree. When I left the Air Force, I originally sought to be able to do something based on my education, so I became a high school Spanish teacher and football coach in Georgia. I was a teacher for six years and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



### How did you begin your career at the FAA?

Unfortunately, what they say about teachers’ salaries is true, and as my sons started getting closer to high school, I felt I needed to make a change so I could afford to send them to college. Several of my Air Force friends had joined the FAA as TERPsters, but at that time, I was not interested in moving to Oklahoma City.

But the financial situation encouraged me to do it, and it was a great decision. I moved to Oklahoma City and learned more about TERPs in a month than I had learned in the Air Force in four years. Within three years, my teaching background helped me become an instructor of TERPs. I wasn’t the smartest person around, but I had learned how to explain some complex concepts and it served me well. I taught Performance Based Navigation (PBN) Procedure Design for seven years, eventually moving to the PBN office at Headquarters in D.C.

### Are there any FAAers who have mentored you or influenced your career?

There are many, so it is hard to say. I think my favorite manager was Lin Modestino. She was tough on us, but she worked hard for the people she led. She was a lawyer and former Army Colonel. I really liked it when people had concerns about a course, I could always say, “Talk to my lawyer!”

I would also have to call out Erik Salazar and Don Espinosa who got me involved with the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). They helped me find my FAAmilia!

### What’s the best advice you’ve received at the FAA?

Tony Lawson was my first trainer on the floor, and he told me when I first got into TERPs “Always look for the source”. And what he meant was to do your research and find out where information comes from. TERPs is complex, there are a lot of rules and even more exceptions. Tony told me you have to find the source of information to know what is the real answer, and not a prevailing opinion. There is a big difference. It worked in TERPs and it works in the rest of life as well. There is a lot of bad information out there — look for the source of the right information.

### Why did you run for president of the NHCFAE?

I wanted to serve my National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE) FAAmilia! Since I joined the NHCFAE, I have looked for opportunities to help, by taking on more responsibility within the organization. The Hispanic

Coalition has become my FAamilia and I wanted to share that experience. Our Annual Training Conferences are amazing opportunities to learn about the agency and build relationships. The Hispanic Coalition, like other Employee Associations, strives to serve both the agency and our communities. I have been serving my country for over 40 years, first in the Air Force, then as a teacher, and now in the FAA, and the NHCFAE is just another way to serve.

### **What experiences or insight have you gleaned from your FAA career that you can apply to your leadership role with the NHCFAE?**

First, that what EACH of us do in the FAA is important! We are serving our country. We ensure that the people in our country have the best transportation system possible. It is the safest, most complex system in the world and each of us does our part to make sure that it is. It is really easy to be jaded and take our jobs for granted, but what each of us does makes our country better.

I like to think that I have become more patient through my FAA career. As a teacher, you have to be patient because not everyone learns at the same pace and a good teacher has to be ready for that. TERPs did not come easy for me, so I think that it actually helped me become a better

TERPs instructor. When dealing with many personalities, you have to be patient, and it is not always easy. Some of the strongest disagreements I have had have been with family, but patience will help you see common ground to move forward.



### **What are some of the main issues facing the NHCFAE today?**

Improving Hispanic representation in the FAA. In the FY 2017 Annual EEO Program Status Report, the Office of Civil Rights identified that Hispanics make up 7.88 percent of the FAA's employees. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics identified that there were 162,075,000 people in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) and 28,336,000 were Hispanic, which is 17.48%. To me, diversity means having a workforce that looks like our country.

The NHCFAE has to help Hispanic communities understand that there are great opportunities in aviation and get young Hispanics interested in a career in aviation. When I was in Oklahoma, I met with a community college guidance counselor who specialized in Hispanic students. She identified that many Hispanic students she saw were not aware of different career choices. She said that they don't know about these careers, and "They can't be what they can't see!" So, we need to be seen. Former FAA Administrator Michael Huerta tells the story of being a boy in Riverside, Calif., and his paper route would take him by the airport, and he would sit there and watch the airplanes come in and land. When a reporter asked him, "Is that when you decided you wanted to go into aviation?" he answered, "No, as a young Mexican boy I could not fathom that aviation could be a part of my life". I think we need to be able to go out to those young Michael Huertas of today and let them know that they can serve their country and community working in aviation!

### **Have you established any personal or professional milestones or goals for your term? What are your goals for the NHCFAE?**

I have not set any personal goals or milestones for my term, the goals and milestones are for the NHCFAE, it is not about me. For our FAamilia, I would like to see us expand outreach to our local communities. I think we were on our way to making great strides before COVID-19, so now we have to make sure we do not lose that momentum. We need to get our members out in front of the Hispanic community, and the community in general, to let them know that aviation is a growth industry and there will be opportunities for young people in aviation. We are doing cool things in the FAA and the future will only get more interesting.

I would like to see us expand our NHCFAE FAamilia. We are always looking for good people who would like to do outreach and be a part of improving our agency. Any FAA employee can serve our agency, our Coalition, our communities, and our country.

We would like to expand our educational opportunities for our members and the community. Each year the NHCFAE gives over \$30,000 towards scholarships and tuition reimbursement, I would like to see us expand that. I would like to see our FAamilia continue to help the agency improve its diversity goals, through recruiting, outreach, internships, training, education, or whatever other methods move the needle!



## 2020 NHCFAE Scholarship Program

### NHCFAE FAamilia Foundation Scholarship Recipients



**Andrew Metcalf**

First of all, I would like to thank the Hispanic Coalition for the scholarship they so graciously provided to further my education. The money will no doubt help me and take the financial pressure off me and my family. This will also allow me to focus more on school and less on money. Since I was little, I have always talked about going to college, and now my time has come to pursue this dream. In college, I plan to major in Construction Science with a minor in Finance and pursue a career in the United States Air Force. I have recently joined the Air Force ROTC. My passion has always been to become a Drone Pilot. I will be able to take ROTC as a course in college, as well as my full college course schedule. I am currently enrolled in 17 hours of college courses. I will also be required to attend ROTC curriculum and Physical Training. I have always had a desire to learn more about aviation and flying drones. Since my mother works for FAA and my dad is retired Air Force, they both have shared so many great stories about their

federal and military careers. I have so many plans, dreams and desires, and this scholarship is going to help me reach my final goals in obtaining a college degree, as well as serving my country in the United States Air Force. I feel very fortunate and blessed to be able to attend college and pursue higher education. Thank you again Coalition members.

**Matthew Metcalf**

I would love to thank the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees for graciously granting me this scholarship. It will undoubtedly be of unbelievable help throughout my college experience as it will somewhat eliminate financial pressure and worry on myself and on my family. This will provide me with more time, clarity, and ultimately opportunity to pursue my education, success in organizations, and passions. My education at the University of Oklahoma will include a minor in Architecture and Major in an undecided field of Engineering. Organizations I will participate in include OU Baptist Community Ministries (OUBCM), OU Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and many others I have yet to discover. The combination of a full college course schedule, ROTC leadership labs and events, OUBCM charity events, and the pursuit of other passions and interests, will prove for a challenging yet rewarding college experience. Thanks to the NHCFAE scholarship, this experience will be much less stressful, and help me reach my full potential throughout these next four years.





## Carisma Leyva

I am currently entering my third year of my undergraduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Since my arrival to the university, I have been extremely interested in psychology. Through these interests, I have become involved in numerous research projects which I hope to continue with in the future before graduating in the spring of 2022. This scholarship provides a concrete way for me to continue my studies, especially considering financial difficulties that have arisen because of the current COVID-19 pandemic. I am beyond grateful to have been selected for this opportunity. The support of Hispanics who have established themselves as professionals in their given fields inspires me to do more and be better every day. I no longer am just working for myself but for everyone who has supported me on my journey!

## Stephan Deluna

I am very excited to be receiving a scholarship from the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees. To me, being accepted for a scholarship means that I have outside support, other than family, pushing to help me achieve my goals. Having that support is honestly the best motivator and confidence pusher that anyone could ask for. The reason I initially applied for the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees is because my dad has always praised them for helping him get into the FAA. My dad credits the NHCFAE for giving him the support that he needed to get to where he is. He's always said, you can have all the drive in the world, but it really helps to have someone who believes and supports you. That's what NHCFAE does for all Latinos. And I'm proud to represent my Mexican ancestry as I go out and try to make a difference in this world. I am very excited to begin my college career and feel that my high school prepared me academically, faithfully, and morally for the years ahead. I had many options in high school to pursue my interests. I studied advanced levels for computers, sciences, and math. I was also expected to participate in the school science fair every year. This is where I learned a lot of my research and speaking techniques, and where I honed my skills as a computer enthusiast. I was able to tinker with different ideas regarding computers and artificial intelligence and test various theories, all while submitting my work for other to hear and see. I've always advanced to the Texas State Science Fair, which proved to me that my ideas were something that I needed to continue to explore. After college graduation, it is my dream to enhance the world technologically. I know some people feel that too much technology can be bad. But I always look at the upside and think about all the good that computers can do for us. I honestly believe that we can use computers to make the world a better place, which could possibly give us the chance to allow everyone (regardless of social, financial or ethnic status) to enjoy life. More automaton could mean more family time, more faith time, more volunteer time, more meditation time, more relax time, more "me" time. And to me, that's what life is about. I am very blessed that my hobby is what I'm studying to make my career. Not everyone has that same blessing. So, my goal is to find a way to use technology to allow others enjoy what they do in everyday life as well.



## Christopher May



My name is Christopher May. I was born in Hawaii while my parents were both working for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). My mother was a Senior Planner on a contract and my father was a National Airspace Program Manager for the Hawaii Pacific Systems Management Office. We moved back to California for a few years, then to Fairfax, Virginia, where I started school. We returned to California, where I attended grade school in Redondo Beach, California, then moved to Friendly Hills, Whittier, where I completed my grade school, middle and high school. I graduated from La Serna High School as a Distinguished Scholar with Honors this past July, where I also received my AP Medal and was acknowledged for time served as a mentor to many students. I am currently a freshman at Cal State University Fullerton (CSUF) in Southern California. I am working on completing the first semester with some mandatory general education courses, as well as some courses focused on my Business Management major.

When I complete my Bachelor's Degree, I plan to continue my education and achieve my Masters in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. I aspire to put my education experiences to work in the future, where I will share new ideas, and

provide a significant contribution to the success and growth of these ventures. I am very grateful to the NHCFAE Charitable Foundation for this scholarship award and thank them for the opportunity that this provides me towards the success of my education and career in the future.

### **Taylor Espinosa**



My name is Taylor Espinosa, and I am a sophomore at Oklahoma City University. I am a member of the Oklahoma City University STUNT team and I'm currently in my first year of nursing school in the Kramer School of Nursing. After I graduate I hope to pursue a nursing career in the neonatal intensive care unit. This scholarship will be a huge blessing to me. My education has always been a huge priority to my family and I. Ever since junior year of high school we have been seeking out ways to get me ahead in order to graduate and become a health care professional as soon as possible. My parents have supported me through it all and sacrificed many things in order to allow me to get ahead in my academics. Because of them I will be able to graduate a whole year earlier than planned and this scholarship allows me to take some of the weight off of their shoulders when it comes to paying for my education. Any small thing I can do to repay them for all they have done for me means so much to me. I so honored to have received this scholarship.

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## **Danny Gutierrez Scholarship Recipient**

### **Brian Pham**

Brian is a recent graduate of North High School in Torrance, California. He graduated with a 4.7 cumulative GPA and ranked fifth in his class. During his time in high school, Brian participated in activities such as marching band, National Honor Society, Academic Decathlon, and Drum Corps International. He is now an incoming freshman at Stanford University. As a prominent member of the marching band, Brian spent his final two years at North High School as the Drum Major, playing a key leadership role at rehearsals, sporting events, and competitions. In the classroom, he took many AP courses, which earned him the National AP Scholar award. The classes included Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Calculus. Brian is also a recipient of the Questbridge National College Match to Stanford University; he was selected as one of the 1,127 Finalists who were matched that year. He was recently admitted into the Stanford Summer Engineering Academy, where he joined a cohort of 65 other incoming freshmen on a month-long engineering bootcamp. At Stanford, Brian plans to study in the School of Engineering, hoping to earn a B.S. and subsequently attend graduate school. His interests include Space Exploration and electronics, and aspires to work at a related company such as JPL or Raytheon.



# Rene Matos Scholarship Recipients



## **Antoinette Gonzalez-Ramirez**

My name is Antoinette Gonzalez-Ramirez and I am a first-year graduate student in the School of Psychology program at California State University, Long Beach. I am a proud first-generation Latina scholar from a low socio-economic, single-parent household. I grew up in Santa Maria, California, where our local economy thrives predominantly on agriculture. I attended UC Berkeley from 2009 to 2013 for my undergraduate studies, where I completed a dual degree: a B.S. in Society and Environment and a B.A. in Chicano Studies. During my time at UC Berkeley, I was significantly involved with the Latinx student community and served in several leadership roles as Coordinator for the Chicano Latino Student Development Office, the Academic Chair for Hermanas Unidas, and the Retention Coordinator for the Raza Recruitment Center. Since I graduated from UC Berkeley, I continue to be actively involved with local non-profit social justice organizations, and working with students and marginalized families.

My current academic goals are to work with students with disabilities and their families to provide access to appropriate educational support and interventions in order to break down barriers that impede students from thriving in our educational system. I am grateful and honored to be a recipient of the Rene Matos Scholarship.

## **Brian Friess**

I am a 40-year-old father of four girls. My wife and I together have had a small household and window cleaning business for over 12 years. Over the past decade, I have made steps to go back to school to complete a degree and pursue teaching as a career to help students have strong math and science skills. This has been a very difficult decision, since it involves a great risk on our part. I have spent close to two decades teaching in various roles and positions, which will serve as a solid background for making teaching a career. All of this helps to encourage my interest in seeking to become a teacher. I served several summers as a camp counselor, using fun, interactive tools to teach valuable life lessons to young people. I also spent a couple seasons as a ski instructor on Blacktail Mountain, which gave me insight into approaching practical, kinesthetic learning. I taught a handful of students through private music instruction. While living in Korea in 2007, I taught English as a second language, and even developed a curriculum to help instruct our students to learn English. As a by-product of this, as well as teaching our own children, I published a book that serves as a tool for learning how to read. I have also gained valuable teaching experience through mentoring, public speaking and preaching. I have spent roughly 14 years in substitute (guest) teaching in the local public-school districts in Northwest Montana. All of these have helped provide me with practical, hands-on experience in the field of teaching, even before making it a full-time career. It has helped me gain valuable insight into human interaction and learning styles and personalities. The international, cultural experience has been invaluable, allowing me to meet people with a wide range of lifestyles, economic levels and cultural perspective. Now I am on one of the most significant steps of my educational journey – my student teaching! I previously gained academic experience in Israel, which was not recognized in the United States, but was in Europe and Asia. I, however, value my experiences and learning there, even though it is not acknowledged by some educational authorities. In spite of this, I went back to school 5 years ago to complete another regionally accredited degree in the United States with the hopes of meeting this requirement to enter a teaching certification program. Additionally, I obtained roughly another year's worth of prerequisite coursework to enter a Master's program at Western Governors University. I have been placed as a student teacher this fall in a local school in Northwest Montana. I am excited to meet my students and journey forward in becoming a better teacher. Completing this teaching certification degree allows me to build my knowledge and passion for learning and extend the scope of imparting knowledge to the next generation. I feel truly blessed and honored to be the recipient of the 2020 Rene Matos Scholarship from The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). Thank you so much!



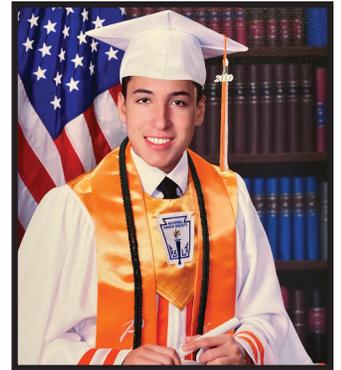


## Colleen O'Neil

One of my educational accomplishments was getting my Bachelor of Fine Arts with minors in art history and business at Florida States University. I completed two thesis projects during my time at Florida State and did a summer study abroad program in France and Italy during my time at the University of South Florida. These unique experiences broadened my scope in the arts and exposed me to many different exhibitions and styles of art. Through my intensive studies, I developed my own practice as an artist, and after graduation I moved to Istanbul, Turkey, where I continued my art projects and I began teaching Spanish and English. In 2018, I was accepted into their Design Biennial School, where as groups we discussed the role design has in sustainability practices. In one of these groups, Algea Lab, we studied ancient glass particular to Turkish, Greek and Roman history. From our studies, we created 3D-printed algae vessels and exhibited them in the Alter Gallery during the 2-month exhibition period. Afterwards, our project traveled to Italy, Brussels and England. It's currently housed in the Academy of Fine Arts in London, England. Then I began to explore and develop my own art project, Trash and its Creative Potential at my local non-profit in Istanbul. With my participants, we focused on the process of art making, rather than the final result, with the use of trash as our material. I highly valued this project for its cross-cultural experiences and for the conversations that came when we analyzed our art pieces. From this yearlong project, I came to understand my interest in the arts and education. After some more time I finally decided to pursue my Master's in Visual Arts Administration in New York University.

## Diego Lazarranga

My educational accomplishments came with many challenges and obstacles that I needed to face, which allowed me to grow an ability to self-motivate, which assisted me in becoming a leader in and outside of school. I was able to become the class treasurer all four years of my high school life and became captain for my varsity swim team. With both of these titles, I was given the opportunity to influence and guide others to grow. I worked hard every single day, giving my work 110% and with my hard work, the A's were earned. Because of my dedication to my hard work and my will to always help others, I was also selected among seven other individuals of my district by the American Legion to participate at the Texas Boys State program. During my senior year I was selected to participate in numerous internships, conferences and extracurricular activities, such as the district student advisory board, which only a few students are selected for. While having numerous educational accomplishments in high school, I never forgot to give back to my community from teaching young kids how to swim, to volunteering in places such as Sister Cities, Sacred Heart Children's Home, Relay for Life and food banks. None of my educational accomplishments would be possible if it was not for my mom always supporting me and pushing me to become the best possible version of myself.



## Geraldine Spiegle

My educational achievements have surprised me within the past year of being a full-time student at Saint Leo University. With the support of my husband, relatives, and close friends, I have continued to give my educational endeavors my full attention and commitment. Since I am the mother of a two-year-old girl, I had not expected to have achievements beyond that of an average student. So far, I have made it onto the Dean's List twice. The first time I was on the Dean's List was during the spring term 2020, and the second time was during the summer term 2020. Another academic achievement is my growing overall GPA of about 3.7 out of 4. My highest accomplishment, however, has been being awarded the Rene Matos Scholarship. This scholarship lets me demonstrate to my younger cousins that it is possible to achieve greatness in our education. It is possible to be of Hispanic-immigrant descent and make a name for ourselves. I feel that often we think that achievements and educational successes are out of an immigrant's reach. This award has demonstrated to me that anything is possible with determination and support. Just like Rene Matos, I am proud of my Peruvian heritage. I am incredibly proud of my maternal grandfather and maternal grandmother immigrating from Ventanilla, Peru, all the way to Connecticut. My dreams sprouted from their sacrifices and watered by their tears as they took on every challenging day while learning English. The never-ending loving embrace my grandparents and mother alike always provide me harvested my achievements. Although I may have only scratched a few achievements for some, these achievements to me show that "Si se Puede".



## Jesus Gaeta

I was the first amongst my ten Mexican siblings to be born in the United States. I used the privilege of American citizenship to access education and all of the opportunities it provides. I earned my Bachelor of Arts in International Studies at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and my Master of Public Health from San Francisco State University (SFSU). Next, I will begin nursing school in order to become a clinician that specializes in HIV treatment & prevention in the communities that are most in need of providers.

## Joahana Segundo

As a sophomore in college, I presided over my university's Psychology Club chapter and joined a social and cognitive development research lab. As president, I had the opportunity to serve fellow students and network with professionals in the field. Our organization successfully reached our \$2,500 goal to fund an academic trip to the Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA) convention, where members presented their research and attended various presentations and workshops. As a research assistant, I produced my first independent research project that explored how the mentor-mentee relationship impacts student mentors from programs held at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), a Hispanic-serving institution. This research project was funded by UTRGV's Office of Engaged Scholarship & Learning. Most recently, I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Psychology and Health at the University of Houston, where I will be exploring health-related behaviors and disparities in romantic relationships.



## Katherine Morales

I have made the most of this opportunity when I am in college. With so much to offer, I have been able to make accomplishments in so little time. I have constantly been on the Dean's List since the summer of 2019. I have kept my GPA between 3.5 and 4.0, which is necessary to my major. I have been selected for an honor society, which I am now part of. I am a member in many organizations (eg. cultural, nursing) and have been a tour guide for many individuals who are college searching. Even though I am a commuter, I still take the chance to also volunteer on campus: being in LIS (Leaders in Service) and going on volunteer field trips nearby (eg. nursing home, daycare). With all that I do on campus, I recently won an award for my hard work: Outstanding Leadership by a First-Year Student. Being a nursing major with a Spanish minor, and the Spanish for Health Care and Human Services Certificate, I know it is a lot on my plate, but I very much like the challenges I am facing with the small rewards I receive.

## Marissa Sanchez

I was born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I graduated High School in 2016 from Santa Fe Preparatory School. I am a first-generation college graduate of St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. I obtained my Bachelor's degree in social work with a minor in psychology. During the time at St. Edward's University, I was heavily involved in on-campus advocacy with the student led organization "It's On Us", where I served as the communications coordinator throughout my four years at St. Edward's University. In addition, I was a chair member of the St. Edward's Title IX team. I was also a member of both the national honor society of social work (Phi Alpha) and psychology (Psi Chi). Throughout my undergraduate career, I received recognition on the Dean's List several times. I was the recipient of several academic and social justice accolades, such as the JTR Marianita Garcia Memorial Scholarship, Charity & Faith in Action Award, Fellowship & Honors Award, and the Anti Remi Award. I am currently attending Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, where I will be obtaining my Master's degree in social work. Since the beginning of my studies at TCU, I received the JTR



*Continued...*

# Rene Matos Scholarship

scholarship for the second year in a row, along with the MANA Del Norte and Rene Matos Scholarship. Upon graduation from Texas Christian University, I will work in either New Mexico or Texas doing clinical social work using art modalities. After gaining some years of experience, I hope to start my own private practice.



## Ana Paola Cisneros

I am 21 years old. I was born and raised in Mexico City. I came to the United States five years ago when I was 16 years old, and during this time, I graduated from high school. I completed my A.A. in Business and Arts, transferred to CSUF, and I created my own baby shoes business. My high school experience was unique since I mostly studied in Mexico City and one year here in the U.S. I was scared to go to school because I did not know any English and had no idea how people would treat me. In order to do better, I always stayed after classes to practice my English. I met excellent people who helped me learn the language. I put in much effort that year that I learned English in 6 months. I also graduated with a 3.4 GPA. I spent three years at Mt. San Antonio Community College, where I received my A.A. in Business and Arts. I decided that my first semester was going to be dedicated only to taking English classes. This helped me overcome my fear of talking in English, and I felt more confident about speaking English. I met

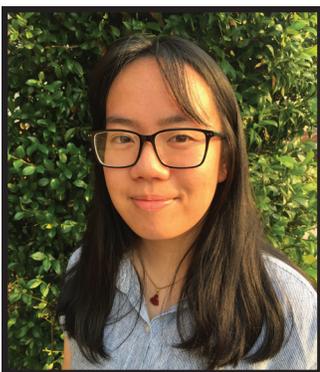
inspirational people that encouraged me to succeed in college and helped me choose my major. Currently, I'm in my first semester at Cal State University Fullerton, and because of COVID-19, everything has changed. Doing my classes online is a big challenge for me, however, I know that I will overcome this and finish my last two years of university.

## Stephane Monterosso

Throughout my 13 years of public education, I am proud to say that I did it! I not only graduated with honors, but also in the top 15 percent of my class. I always worked hard and pushed myself in school. In each one of my classes, I succeeded. I did all of the work in class, and extra work outside of class. I did my very best not to fail and not to get a grade lower than a B+. From the 6th grade until I graduated, I made Honor Roll. I also lettered in academics twice during my high school career. Which means that my grade point average was above the average student. In addition, because of where my grade point average was, I was eligible to apply for the National Honors Society, where I accepted and received an amazing role as one of the officers. I graduated Cum Laude, which put me in the group of students with a grade point average above a 3.5. I also finished my school's medical pathway, where I passed my CNA state board. I put my all into my schoolwork. It was very important for me to graduate, and graduate in the top of my class. I wanted to make not only my family proud, but also myself.



## Thuy Tien-Nguyen



Hello! I am from the rainy northwest, specifically Salem, Oregon, and I recently graduated from McKay High School. As someone who comes from a minority group, I've been taught of how valuable education is and how it can make a person powerful. My parents came to this country as refugees with little to their name, and they have always put education as a priority for me and my sister. They are my driving force in everything that I do and are why I do my best in school. As a student, I've taken many different advanced classes, such as Advanced Placement and honors, and I enjoy being in these challenging classes with peers that are similar to myself. Taking high level courses can be tough sometimes, and I can definitely say that there have been times where I did not do as well as I hoped, but I take those as a learning lesson to reflect upon myself to do better in the future. Although I take my education seriously, I also believe in having a balance between learning and doing the things I enjoy, like participating in

clubs after school! I was a part of several volunteer clubs like Teen Action Team, where I was able to participate in different school events and projects to help the community, and Community 101, which is a service club dedicated to providing grants to local nonprofits that are beneficial to teens in the community. I am proud to say that I was a member of these clubs for all four years of high school and was eventually a co-chair of Community 101 my senior year, helping lead a group of students in the process of grantmaking. It is my passion to help those in need, and that is why I have decided to dedicate myself to pursuing a career in healthcare! I hope that in the years to come, I will continue to develop more skills and obtain

more knowledge about the world so that I can fulfill my dream to serve others. In addition, with this scholarship, I will be one-step closer to achieving that goal. Thank you, NHCFAE!

## William Rios

I recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Radiation Therapy with Highest Distinction from the Indiana University School of Medicine. Originally from Mexico, my mother brought me to the United States at the age of three. It is here that I learned to speak English, went to school as a child, and completed high school. My mother, being a single immigrant parent with low English skills, worked hard to provide for my siblings and me, all the while instilling in us the importance of an education. Attending a university to complete a degree is something I always dreamed of and worked hard towards during my high school years. Unfortunately, I was unable to pursue a higher education and attend a university due to my immigration status at the time. In the years after, I was able to adjust my immigration and am now a U.S citizen. Having never given up on my aspirations to complete my education, I decided to return to school. This involved leaving a stable job, my extended family and my home, to move with my family to attend a university. It has always been clear to me that nothing worthwhile is ever easy and I knew it was going to take a lot of sacrifice and work to reach my goals. With this in mind, I applied and was accepted to very competitive radiation therapy program for which the admission process consisted of clinical observations, completion of prerequisite classes, and selection for an admission interview based on GPA. All the obstacles I had to overcome served to motivate me and I went on to complete the program and finish my degree in radiation therapy with honors graduating with a 3.93/4.0 GPA. I am now a certified radiation therapist. Now that I have accomplished that goal, I have decided to continue my education and pursue a Master's Degree in Medical Dosimetry. I am presently studying as a graduate student with an expected graduation date of August 2021. I am very excited and determined to learn as much as I can to achieve and to be the best professional I can be. Thank you.



## Yaritza Salgado

My educational accomplishments in my past 12 years of school so far have been beyond amazing, at least I would say. I walked into high school thinking, "This is going to be like high school musical" (The Disney movie), yet I realized this was not a movie and should not be thinking about this. This is reality, meaning I only have four years in order to keep my grades up, have a strong GPA, play sports, join clubs, become a TA, decide a career, decide the college I want to attend, etc. My accomplishments have been outstanding. I always did my work way ahead of time because I did not want to have work overload. I always attended office hours whenever I needed help with anything. I feel like at first, I use to think it was not that important to attend office hours. I then realized it was helpful and a way to at least see what it is I need help understanding and to also be able to get that one-on-one time with the teacher. I was able to maintain a GPA of 3.50+.

I feel very proud. I was able to maintain good grades while playing sports, and that shows a lot. Because of all my accomplishments, I was accepted to 8 out of the 10 colleges I applied to. Luckily, I was also given scholarships for my academic work. I would have to say I am beyond proud of all my accomplishments. Now entering Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois as a freshman majoring in Middle Level Education, all I could think about and tell myself is "You can do it, this is just starting over again. Finish strong like you did in high school. You got this girl! The sky is the limit." Here I am sitting in class feeling lucky and blessed enough to have these opportunities.



# Tuition Reimbursement Recipients



**Ana Peña**

I would like to thank my FAAMILIA for being part of my success story. On December 21, 2019, I received my Master's Degree for Data and Business Analytics. As a first-generation college student, this one of my greatest accomplishments. I want to thank my NHCFAE FAAMILIA for supporting me in completing my Masters. I am genuinely grateful for being part of the Member Tuition Reimbursement Program. A few months ago I was able to obtain a permanent position at the FAA as a statistician. I can say it has been a journey from where I started as an intern. I am looking forward for what the future holds for me. Thank you, FAAMILIA!

**Antonio Altamirano**

I have always been a firm believer in lifelong learning. As cliché as it may sound, when you really think about it, life is a series of experiences, where the only constant is change. Whether we know it or not, we are constantly learning new things, either at work or in our personal lives. I am nearly halfway through my master's program in Commercial Aviation and I will utilize the reimbursement award from the Coalition to continue charging towards my degree completion. It is great to be a recipient of the continued educational support you provide to the NHCFAE family.



**Dolores Spriggs**

I have been a member of the Coalition for almost ten years and this is the first year that I was able to benefit from this wonderful program that the Coalition offers its members. Having this financial support has enabled me to further my education in general pre-law classes. The goal is to complete all required courses to complete a management certificate in pre-law. It is not easy to juggle working full time and attending school part time, but it is very doable. I highly encourage any member who is considering personal development education to apply for this amazing benefit available to all members!

**Rhonda Frazier**

Being the first generation in my family to attend and complete some aspect of college, it is a great honor to be one of the recipients of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees Membership Tuition Reimbursement program. Academically, I have accomplished many of my goals. I have a Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Louisville; a Master's in Human Resources from Wayland Baptist University; and now I am attempting to finish my Master of Science in Legal Studies from Purdue Global, where I hope this degree will help me move up in my current position, while helping me understand laws and regulations better. I started my pursuit for legal studies degree while working on my dissertation for my Doctoral degree in Business Administration (which I am currently taking a sabbatical while I finish my legal studies degree). I have accomplished these goals while being a single parent and working full time. I aspire to show my daughters that anything is possible as long as you put your mind to it.





## Minority Serving Institutions

By: McAllister & Quinn

In October, NHCFAE President, Bill Fernandez, NHCFAE Vice President, Oscar Torres and NHCFAE Legislative Consultant, Andy Quinn, held a round of meetings with the staff of U.S. Senators who sit on the FAA's funding subcommittee. The meetings, which were very well received, were organized to discuss the FAA's Minority Serving Institution's (MSI) Internship Program.

In January, the NHCFAE held similar meetings with Members of the House of Representatives. These meetings led to a bipartisan group letter to the House Appropriations Committee from over 40 Members of Congress asking for \$7.5 million in funding for the MSI program. This is in addition to the at least \$3.5 million that was allocated to the MSI program last year.

The reason this initiative is so important is that in 2010 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) identified that the number one impediment to hiring more Hispanics into the federal government was the narrow recruitment methods that the federal government typically utilizes. These narrow recruitment methods, such only conducting on campus interviewing at a small number of universities, disproportionately negatively impacts Hispanics and Latinos.

One effective tool to increase the recruitment of minority students into the FAA is the MSI program. This is because it gives the agency a pipeline of minority students from which it can recruit and dramatically increases the visibility of the FAA on college campuses. The MSI program allows minority students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Tribal Colleges, and students with the disabilities the chance to work at the FAA. There are over 500 colleges and universities with the HSI designation. In order to be considered an HSI, a college must have at least 25% of their student population be Hispanic.

Interested students must have above a 3.0 grade point average to participate in the program, which has sessions in the fall, spring and summer. The internship is paid, which again removes an impediment to many young Hispanics who are struggling the pay for college.

The funding that the NHCFAE is requesting is critically important. Prior to our funding request last year, the financial burden of hosting an MSI student fell to the facility. With the funding Congress is providing, the cost will be borne by human resources, and facilities can host a MSI student at no cost.

If the full \$7.5 million we have requested is included in the final appropriations bill, the FAA will be able to support over 500 interns in 2021. That is a massive increase in the current program that typically has hosted less than 100 interns.

The FAA is currently operating under a continuing resolution until December 11th. Our hope is that Congress, post-election, can finalize the FAA's funding bill in the next few weeks.

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Tony Y., member since 1999

# NAMI Walk

By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest RCD

The virtual National Alliance of Mental Illnesses (NAMI) Walk was held on October 10, 2020. Our chapter has been participating and supporting with a small donation for over 5 years now. Ralph Escobedo and wife, Jerri, participated. Due to COVID-19, the fear of trying to maintain social distancing, confined spaces and limiting exposure to others, the walk was limited to a small group of family members only. This year they were not able to meet the established goal from last year of \$100,000. However, thanks to the cooperation and support of several individual sponsorships they were able to raise over \$40,000. The funds will pay for mental health care training for family peers, provide training for new teachers to support the community and help those individuals with mental illness. This organization has been wonderful to our community and has done great work. In honor of NAMI and staff, we want to thank the NHCFAE again for their monetary support for 2020.

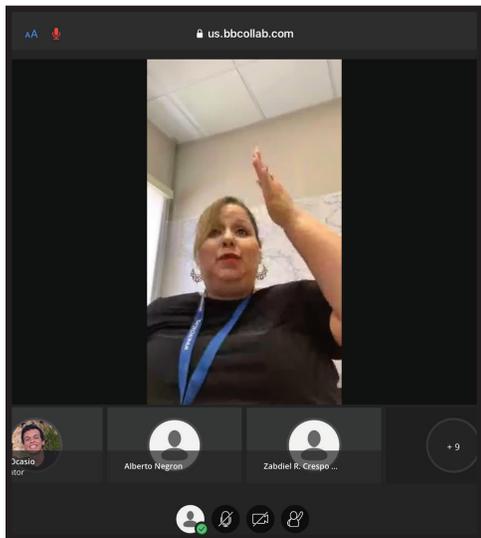


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## Women in Aviation Week and Impostor Syndrome

By: Tamara Sabalier, Puerto Rico Chapter Member

The Aviation Student Association (ASA) at InterAmerican University celebrated their first Women in Aviation Week. They hosted different speakers that talked about their achievements and challenges in our aviation industry. On September 24, 2020, I was invited by the ASA to speak about Impostor Syndrome. The Impostor Syndrome is the feeling humans get when you think that the job you achieved was received out of luck. The “fish out of water” feeling or the questioning of yourself that we are not ready or that we are not prepared, even though we might have all the requirements. This does not mean that we are mentally ill or sick, more like a phenomenon in the human life. The first studies of the Impostor Syndrome occurred in the 1970s and the case studies were college women. Currently, it is most likely to happen to minorities, meaning women, Hispanics and African Americans. Since this phenomenon occurs within us and we usually don’t talk about it, we walk among peers maybe having the same situation. It is impressive how our minds can be the one of the challenges towards our goals.



In order to understand the Impostor Syndrome, you have to acknowledge this feeling. Some psychology experts invite us to name our own fears. As an example, you can name it Mr. Fear or Dr. Wacko. Acknowledging gives you the opportunity to decide if the fear is real, or if it just a fear. Creating a critical thinking process of your feelings helps you minimize the Impostor Syndrome. Another way to fight the Impostor Syndrome is to create a superhero of your own. I have to be honest and tell you mine is CHAPULIN COLORADO. Chapulin has stepped up many times to overcome these feelings or fears, including the fear of writing this article!



## Get to Know Great Lakes Chapter Member: Chris Kerrigan

By: Kristan Villegas, Corporate Relations Chair

I think we have a habit of working with people and never knowing anything about them, besides working. I recently discovered a member of the Great Lakes NHCFAE family has an exciting hobby. Chris was a supervisor of mine during his climb up the management ladder. I never knew of his spare time activities before now. I wanted to let you learn about him and his recreation. I can tell you that I am now a follower!

### *How long have you worked for the FAA?*

I came to the FAA 17 years ago after serving in the Navy for 8 years.

### *What is your job title, and what do you do in the FAA as part of that job?*

I am an operations manager at Indy Center. A big part of my job is making sure supervisors have what they need to be successful in their role, so that the controllers can be successful in theirs.

### *How did you get your start in the aviation career field?*

When I decided to enlist in the Navy, I was presented with two options. One was a sonar technician on a submarine, and the other was an air traffic controller. I was not exactly sure what an air traffic controller did, but I knew it did not involve being in a metal tube beneath the ocean. Being that I am extremely claustrophobic, the choice was very clear. It turned out to be the best-uninformed decision I have ever made!

### *Is it true that you have a hobby of cooking food in your spare time?*

Yes, I spend a lot of time in the kitchen.

### *How did you get involved in that hobby?*

I started cooking around 10 or 11 years old. I have many great memories cooking with my mom growing up. As I got older, my love for food continued to grow, both cooking and eating. When I got out of the Navy, I had planned on going to a culinary arts school, but ultimately chose to continue with air traffic control. My passion for cooking and food led me to start my own YouTube channel, where I attempt to show quick “how-to” videos on cooking: [www.youtube.com/c/makingitwithchris](http://www.youtube.com/c/makingitwithchris). The kitchen is truly my “happy place.”

### *What is your favorite thing to cook and why?*

That is a tough one. I would have to say a reverse seared steak with a board dressing, a mix of garlic, herbs, and olive oil. There is something very satisfying about a perfectly cooked steak and serving it with a board dressing really takes it to the next level.

### *What is the dish most requested when cooking for others?*

That is probably a tie between crab cakes and steak.

### *Do you have any other hobbies that you do in your spare time?*

My wife and I spend a lot of time watching our daughter, Madi, play basketball year-round. We have been doing it for years, and it has been a great experience watching her grow as a player as well as a beautiful young adult. The time has certainly flown by. I cannot believe we have only one more year before she is off to college.

# Taking a Family Vacation During the Pandemic

By: Kristan Villegas, Corporate Relations Chair

Our lives have been completely turned upside down since March of this year (just like most of yours have). We have cancelled 2 out of 3 of our planned vacations due to the pandemic. That alone is not a traumatic event. Our challenge is that we have three small children that are starting to show signs of cabin fever. Our next vacation was a trip to Disney World, and the prospect of cancelling; it was not something I wanted to have to tell the kids.

My husband and I have strategically planned any necessary grocery store visits or errands so that our children did not have to go. We have spent months keeping them from being out in public because we have one child at higher risk for COVID-19. The looming trip was weighing on us, and the goal was to get some professional opinions first, and then do my due diligence to make sure we could make an educated decision about if we would be going on vacation or cancelling the trip.

The pediatrician told us as long as we took all precautions and made sure the kids carried out the mask-wearing and handwashing routines, we should be good on vacation for the next month. I spent countless hours reading blogs and reviews on the reopening at Disney World. I googled “COVID-19 case at Disney World” nearly every day to see if I could find anyone who had gotten sick while at Disney World. I looked up every potential issue I could think of that may affect our ability to take the trip. The outcome was that the trip could be made safely.

All the research I had done and all the assurances from doctors did not settle my worried mind. Our next step in vacation preparations was to make sure the kids could and would follow the guidelines. For all of you moms and dads, you should be well aware that my most frequent daily phrase before the pandemic was “stop touching that.” As silly as it sounded, I wanted to be sure that not all the things in Disney World would be calling out to them to be touched! They needed better instincts to keep their hands to themselves. That was a monumental feat. Children are curious by nature and working to keep children from exploring with their hands is asking them to shun their instincts. My husband and I started taking them on grocery trips, reminding them to keep their hands in their pockets. We worked for weeks to convince them that if they were able to learn to keep their hands to themselves, we would be able to take the vacation.

Our efforts paid off. The kids got to the point where hands went into pockets as soon as we walked into a store. We felt like we had achieved our goal, and the kids understood how critical it was to follow our “rules.” We would be going on a much-needed vacation!

When the day arrived, the airport materialized like a fifth level boss in a video game! I had so many second thoughts—all the talks and preparing melted away into a complete breakdown. I questioned every decision I had made for the previous month. I wondered how I had gotten to the point where I thought this was a good idea. That was the moment that my wonderful husband smiled at me, and I felt reassured. Looking back, I am not sure that was his meaning of the smile, but it did the trick.

We made it through the mostly empty airport. We made everyone visit the bathroom before boarding. Of course, they washed their hands, and I immediately gave them all a healthy squirt of hand sanitizer as a secondary measure. As we walked down the ramp to the aircraft, I loaded each hand with an antibacterial wipe, ready to sanitize before anyone touched a seat. The small measure made me feel more at ease. The rest of the day was the same type of action. I played a real-life video game where my goal was to foresee my kids’ activities and react before they acted.

Our trip was fun. After a couple of days, I did calm down and realized that we could be safe and have fun. I did not have to run around like a mad woman spewing sanitizer at everything that moved in our path. I did continue to wipe down tables, even after watching Disney cast members do the same. The park was as clean as I had ever seen it. It was also relatively empty compared to any other trip we had taken previously. Our most extended wait was about 60 minutes in a line that was socially distanced. Of all of the lines we were in, there was one instance in which a group behind us in a line did not believe in the social distance measures, however we quickly helped them see the light!

We are back home now, and everyone is just as healthy as when we left. I am happy we decided to go. It was a much needed trip for all of us. I won’t be planning another trip for a while. I understand what people mean now when they say they “need a vacation from their vacation.”





## Thankfulness

By: Raquel Ysasi-Huerta

Thankfulness is a feeling of appreciation felt by the recipient of kindness, gifts and other types of generosity.

During your lifetime you will meet people who'll make a lasting impact on you by providing you with direct and honest input. This allows you to grow both professionally and personally, knowing these people genuinely have your best interest in mind.

I am appreciative of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE), which has given me the opportunity to meet many individuals from across the nation, and from various lines of business around the FAA. The relationships garnered have allowed me to help almost anyone I encounter by providing helpful networking opportunities. I could fill a book with all the names of the wonderful individuals that I have met, but since this is an article, I will share a few stories of the people who I am most thankful for meeting and impacting my life.

First and foremost, if it wasn't for Adolfo "Junior" Zavala, I would have never known the impact NHCFAE would have on my life and career. Junior once asked me if I would be interested in becoming a Regional/Center Director (RCD) for the Great Lakes Region, and although I had no clue what an RCD was, I said yes. During my time in the coalition, I've served in numerous positions including: RCD, Deputy RCD, Director of Administration, Director of Education, and Corporate Sponsor Chairperson. Each of these positions not only gave me new skills, but allowed me to be mentored by some really amazing people.

As the RCD of the Great Lakes Chapter I reconnected with my childhood friend Bea Meinke and made new friends including: Marva Taylor (+), Ramon Ortiz, Geraldo Martinez, and Luanne Wills-Merrell, to name a few. At my first Executive Committee Meeting, I met Danny Gutierrez (+), Don Espinosa, Ron Lozano, Sadie Perez, Dina Jimenez Earl, Shirley Hingada, and Bernie Games.

Once I arrived at my first conference in San Antonio, Texas, I met Ignacio Flores. While waiting in an elevator he said to me "Remember to always dress for the job you want and not the job you have". To this day, I always dress to impress my future self.

I would not be standing where I am if it were not for Sandy Lane and Maria Franqui. Both of these wonderful women will always hold a special place in my heart. Sandy taught me that there will be times when people won't appreciate all the hard work you do, or try and take advantage of your kindness. She also taught me that as long as you have done your best, you will be the better for it. Maria showed me how to take chances and opportunities whenever available and also taught me that family doesn't stop at bloodlines. Her door and heart is always open.

*Continued...*





I am thankful that my career has taken me to all corners of the US, including Albuquerque, N.M. It truly is the land of enchantment after knowing the Abeyta Brothers, Ben, Chris, Matt, Marc, and Erica Vasquez. Additionally, the NHCFAE Conferences lead me to meet Administrator Michael Huerta, Roger Trevino, Theresa Metcalf, Cynthia Garcia (+), Carmelo Borges (+), Susie Diaz, Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Little Marie, Erik Salazar, John Espinosa, Nat Perez, Allie McDermott, and Marina Garcia O’Sullivan.

Perhaps the most interesting way that I met someone was via a phone call from Germany. While working in Lansing, MI, I was told I had received a call from Germany. A man named Brendan Villegas had heard about the NHCFAE and reached out to me for more information. Today, Brendan, his wife Kristen, and their kids are like family.

As the corporate sponsor chairperson, I was looking for someone who could help jumpstart my onboarding plan. Low and behold, along came Davey Irizarry, whose financial background helped me exceed my initial target goals. We have since gone from Co-Chairs to family.

In my time in the FAA, I’ve become accustomed to meeting people who’ve had an everlasting impact on my career. Last year at the San Juan conference, I met Bobbie Kahklen and Abigail Smith, who offered me the opportunity of a lifetime. Since meeting these two wonderful ladies I’ve been working a temporary position in AJI-2410 within the Technical Training office. This chance encounter has allowed me to grow professionally in ways I couldn’t imagine.

I cannot end this article without thanking my husband, Raul Huerta Jr. Since the beginning, he has supported me throughout my journey with NHCFAE and the FAA. Raul, my parents, and my grown children have always encouraged me to keep learning and trying new things. They give me the courage to always work hard and my young grandchildren inspire me to do my best.

I am thankful for everyone I have mentioned, and how I wish I could have included so many more people.

I hope that you enjoy the photos that I have included with this article.



## Latinas in Aviation

By: Bill Fernandez, NHCFAE President

“Latinas in Aviation”, a book by Jacqueline S. Ruiz, is a celebration of the rarest women in the industry, told through stories of their triumphs, their falls and their most crowning achievements. Hear from retired veterans, new graduates, pilots, aviation administrators, military and civilians, all with a unique passion for aviation and its impact on our world. Each author inspires, entertains and sets the stage for the next generation of Latinas who look to the sky with a dream.

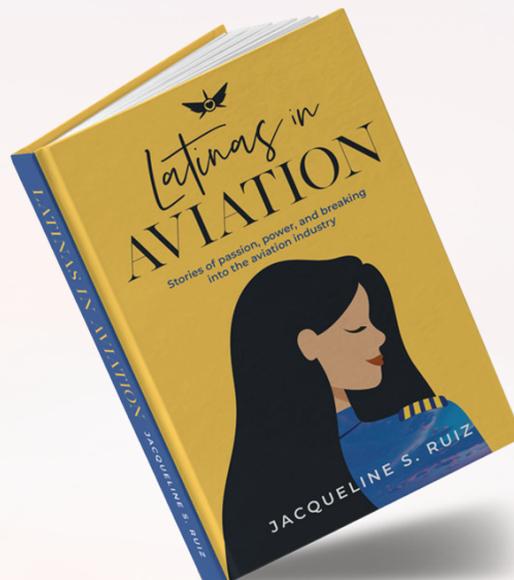
During National Hispanic Heritage Month, we highlighted four excerpts from the book, one each week during the month. The book has 20 stories of powerful women who have found careers in aviation and highlights their struggles and joys in finding careers in aviation.

Included in the book is NHCFAE member and Chicago O’ Hare International Airport controller, Lizbeth Alvarado. Lizbeth has an interesting story about being a single mom, who joined the United States Air Force and became an air traffic controller. She discusses the struggles of balancing career and family. Lizbeth also describes her thoughts of looking at other career options before joining the FAA. It is a wonderful story, and one of many in “Latinas in Aviation”.

The NHCFAE has purchased several copies of “Latinas in Aviation” to be donated to ACE Camps and Hispanic serving high schools and middle schools. This book presents several stories of Hispanic women who have found careers in aviation. We want to share these stories with as many young Hispanics, and specifically young Hispanic females, to ensure they can see that they too can reach for the skies.

The book can be purchased on Amazon.com by searching for: Latinas in Aviation

100% of the book proceeds will benefit the #PILOTINA Scholarship for young Latinas ages 17-24 to support them in their aviation and aerospace careers.





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# CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to former Capital Chapter RCD, Jacqueline Pino-Lint.  
Beautiful baby boy, Atlas Jackson Lint, was born on October 28, 2020  
7 lbs, 14.4 oz.

The Lint family are all healthy and doing well.



# HAPPY holidays

## WINTER THINGS

— crossword puzzle —

1. →

1. ↑

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

ANSWER: 1.Snowflake 1.1Snowman 2.Hat 3.Boot 4.Scarf 5.Tea 6.Cacao 7.Earmuffs 8.Mitten 9.Sweater



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