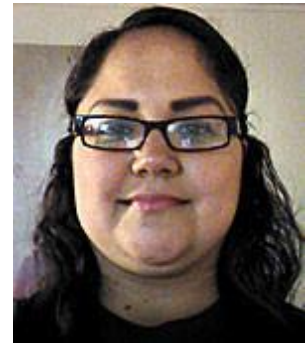


UTPA Students named Nancy Larson Foundation Scholars Both scholarships awarded for studying elementary education

Posted: Friday, February 6, 2015 6:23 pm

EDINBURG – Two students from the University of Texas Pan American (UTPA) were awarded \$1000 scholarships from the Nancy Larson Foundation for their outstanding Academic record and community service.

San Juan native Lucia Hernandez, a junior at the University of Texas Pan-American majoring in bilingual elementary education, was raised in a family of eight children. After high school, she hoped to continue her education and attend college. A couple of weeks after graduation from high school, she began waitressing to help save for college. A year later she got married and then had two children. In the summer of 2011, with her husband's support, she enrolled at South Texas College to pursue her dream and graduated in 2014 with her Associates of Arts in Teaching. This past fall she began pursuing her bachelor's degree in education.



Lucia Hernandez

Inspired by children's author David Rice who visited her literature class, Hernandez remembers one of his phrases. "Teachers have a lot of power over their students; they can help a good student become successful, or they can destroy one," he said. "Those words gave me the motivation to become a successful teacher," Hernandez said. "I want to have the power to help my students become successful teachers, engineers, attorneys or whatever it is they want to become."

Edith Ovalle is studying bilingual education and was motivated to pursue her career after struggling herself as a bilingual student. She was inspired by a fourth-grade teacher who taught her to always remind herself in times of struggle that "Education is the key to success!" "My teacher was my role model, and she will always be in my heart," said Ovalle. "Her words made me realize that education was the only way I was going to be successful in life."

She has maintained a 3.8 GPA; is active in community service and several school clubs, including Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society; and graduated in the top 10% of her class. In the classroom she is known for her patience with students and for encouraging each of them to achieve their very best.

"Edith really impressed us with her personal story about her experiences as a bilingual student and how that inspired her to want to become a teacher to help other bilingual students. We know it is very important to have more bilingual teachers who understand the experiences of bilingual students," said Nancy Larson.



Edith Ovalle

The Nancy Larson Foundation proudly supports students across the country majoring in elementary education by awarding scholarships to deserving students each year.

Larson, a former teacher and curriculum director, has dedicated her life to advancing elementary education. Her original Saxon Math K-4 program was developed because teachers needed a classroom-tested math program that would prepare children for advanced math classes. In recent years, Larson has used the same approach to develop Nancy Larson Science for kindergarten through fourth-grade students. The program was written to provide in-depth science content in an easy-to-teach format.