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SUMMER 2023



EMPTY BOWLS

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CHARITY
TO TACKLE
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NAVY VETERAN FINDS NEW PURPOSE AT SAN JAC





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CONTENTS



Questions about San Jacinto College programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Contact Center at 281-998-6150. Comments or questions about the publication can be directed to the San Jacinto College External Relations Department at 281-998-6152.

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About San Jacinto College

Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top five community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute, and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College, call 281-998-6150, visit sanjac.edu, or join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

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2 News & notes

3 Traslaviña uses training to launch careers in music and technology

4 Empty Bowls: Combining art and charity to tackle hunger

5 Navy veteran finds new purpose at San Jac

6 Understanding long-term care

8 Keep your eyes sharp through your senior years

NEWS & NOTES

from around the College

New certificate, degree programs rolling out this fall

San Jacinto College is rolling out new programs to meet the needs of the growing workforce in Houston and along the Gulf Coast.

New programs include...

- Autonomous vehicle repair (certificate)
- Biotechnology (certificate and associate degree)
- Engineering technology (associate degree)
- Heavy equipment and crane repair (certificate and associate degree)
- Medical laboratory technician (certificate)
- Plumbing (certificate)

The College will also launch its second bachelor's degree, a Bachelor of Applied Science in education with an emphasis on early childhood. This degree, which will focus on early childhood through third grade, is ideal for current para-educators.

Most of the new programs will be available beginning fall 2023. The bachelor's degree will roll out in spring 2024, and the biotechnology program in fall 2024.

With these new programs, students will have the opportunity to gain the skills to enter the evolving job market with confidence.

- ▶ For more information on these new programs, visit sanjac.edu.



Grow your business with Center for Entrepreneurship

Wanting to start your own business or grow the one you already have?

The Center for Entrepreneurship at San Jacinto College's Generation Park Campus in northeast Houston provides non-credit workshops and events to support community entrepreneurs and future small business owners.

Topics range from developing, planning, financing, and marketing your business to team building, leadership coaching, problem solving, navigating conflict, managing time, and more.

In late fall and early spring, the resource-based center hosted seven evening workshops for its Small Business Workshop Academy. The academy's nine students graduated during National Entrepreneurship Week in February, with a ceremony that included guest speakers Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Precinct 1, and U.S. Rep. Sylvia Garcia, 29th District.

Thanks to a generous donation from Commissioner Ellis' Precinct 1 office, each graduate — along with National Entrepreneurship Week participants — received Chromebooks to attend a national entrepreneurship workshop. Academy graduates also enjoyed three months of free Nimble Workspace thanks to Generation Park developer McCord.

The center is currently planning its third Small Business Workshop Academy. To register or learn more, contact centerforentrepreneurship@sjcd.edu.

"We are here for anyone interested in how to start, manage, and grow a business or in understanding the competencies of an entrepreneurial mindset," said Sheila Simon, director of business operations, supply chain, and entrepreneurship for continuing and professional development.

The Generation Park Campus is at 13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044.

- ▶ For one-on-one help, you may also consult the College's Small Business Development Center at sbdc@sjcd.edu.



San Jac announces new College mascot

The wait is over! San Jacinto College introduces the community to its new mascot — the Raven.

In 2022, San Jac recognized the time to unify the College with one mascot representing its diverse students, employees, and alumni.

More than 1,300 community members submitted ideas, with Ravens and Jaguars standing out as the two top contenders.

Last fall, the San Jac community voted. For one month, the lead mascot switched back and forth, showing how strong each contender was. Eventually, the Raven soared to the top.

San Jac welcomes the new Raven era and the traditions and memories ahead as a unified College, while remembering its storied past with different campus mascots.

TRASLAVIÑA USES TRAINING TO LAUNCH CAREERS IN MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY

■ By Melissa Trevizo

An established musician and computer science engineer, San Jacinto College alumnus Juan Traslaviña splits his time between his passion for music and evolving technology.

“I came to San Jac because there was a scholarship opportunity in music,” Traslaviña said. “I wouldn’t have been able to go if it wasn’t for that scholarship. My mom was a single parent, and we didn’t have money set aside for college.”

While investing in his classes, Traslaviña traveled with the jazz band and music director Dr. Shelton Berg to various jazz festivals across the U.S. and the renowned Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

“As a student, it was an unbelievable experience,” he said. “I tried to soak in every moment.”

In 1985, Traslaviña graduated from San Jac with an associate degree in music. Then he earned his bachelor’s in computer science and master’s in software engineering from the University of Houston–Clear Lake.

“I’m a huge advocate for supporting your alma mater,” he said. “My education at San Jac and UHCL gave me a knowledge base that helped launch my career.”

For the last 28 years, Traslaviña has served as principal engineer for local aerospace contractor Science Applications International Corporation, providing software engineering skills to NASA’s International Space Station program, Commercial Crew Program, and the Gateway Program.

“I’ve been fortunate to lead the SpaceX software assurance team, something I never would have dreamed of,” he said. “My experience working with NASA has been amazing. Every day there is something I learned at San Jac that I apply to my work.”

Traslaviña has won several awards for his engineering work at NASA, including Group Achievement Award from Johnson Space



Juan and Rosalyn Traslaviña attend Step Brightly into the Future, San Jacinto College’s 60th anniversary gala.

Center, Achievement Award for Excellence in Program Performance, two Bravo Awards, and four Kudos Awards. He also hosts a monthly Technical Speaker Forum that brings together industry and academic professionals to share their experience and lessons learned on various topics with the NASA community.

“I have a mindset — shared by my first music teacher, Mr. Harris — that you should always be around people who are better than you at something because that’s how you learn and grow,” he said. “I have been honored and privileged to work with so many smart people throughout my career.”

In 2012, Traslaviña received UHCL’s Distinguished Alumni Award.

“I felt very honored and humbled to be in the company of great leaders and innovators who have come before me,” he said. “The award helped me remember with appreciation all the people who invested their time, love, and wisdom and continue to support my personal and my professional activities.”

In his music career, Traslaviña has performed throughout Houston, Europe, and the Bahamas

“I’m a huge advocate for supporting your alma mater. My education at San Jac and UHCL gave me a knowledge base that helped launch my career.”

Juan Traslaviña,
San Jacinto College alumnus

under the name Juan Manuel. Seven of his 12 CDs contain original music. In 2001, he was invited back to the Montreux Jazz Festival to promote his CD “Liberation,” which was considered for Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations and was taken on two Space Shuttle flights.

“It’s been great staying connected with friends from college and an honor to apply what I learned at San Jac not only in my career in technology but also in music,” he said. “What the staff and faculty do at San Jac makes a difference for students, families, and communities every day.”



EMPTY BOWLS

COMBINING ART AND CHARITY TO TACKLE HUNGER

By Melissa Trevizo



Alongside Empty Bowls Houston, the San Jacinto College Central Campus invited students, staff, and the public to get creative to tackle hunger with a pottery bowl-a-thon Feb. 18.

Art students and families put their creativity to the test with a mound of clay. The College provided the needed supplies, and no experience was necessary.

“In total we made 85 bowls to contribute to the event,” said Michael Unger, San Jac ceramics instructor. “We offered guidance and assisted where needed, but most people created a bowl on their own.”

San Jac has participated in Empty Bowls each year the event has occurred since 2005.

Unger and students glaze and fire the bowls, which then go to Empty Bowls Houston for sale.



This year’s sale will be Saturday, May 20, at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.

“Potters across the Houston area donate bowls, and when they are sold, 100% of the proceeds go to the Houston Food Bank,” said Unger.

For a minimum \$25 donation, attendees can choose from hundreds of handcrafted bowls, then receive to-go soup prepared by the



Houston Food Bank’s 535 Catering. The event will also feature pottery and woodturning demonstrations and live music.

► To learn more about Empty Bowls Houston, visit houstonfoodbank.com/emptybowls. View San Jac Empty Bowls photos at bit.ly/SanJacEmptyBowls.

NAVY VETERAN FINDS NEW PURPOSE AT SAN JAC

■ By Courtney Morris



Depressed. Homeless. Aimless. That was Tony Gamage's story 10 years ago.

Today, the 70-year-old tells a different story. Not only did Gamage graduate from San Jacinto College in 2022, but he's continuing his education in social work to help others rebuild their lives.

Joining the Navy

The oldest of seven, Gamage grew up in Maine during the Vietnam War. When Gamage graduated high school in 1970, he enlisted in the Navy.

Gamage worked as an intercommunications fireman on a destroyer escort that sailed the Caribbean and Mediterranean. After his service ended in 1974, he spent 30 years as a missionary in Greece, India, Turkey, and Mexico.

Taking road back to school

Gamage and his family spent a few years in Texas before returning overseas. When his wife separated from him, he returned to Texas alone. Depression followed, so the VA hospital referred him to individual and group therapy.

While therapy revealed triggers from childhood issues, it also revealed other veterans' needs.

"In the waiting room, we would talk, and everything seemed cool," he said. "When we went inside, something would trigger people, and they would start telling what they were going through."

From PTSD to traumatic brain injuries, veterans coped through isolation, self-medication, and alcohol.

"Witnessing that broke me," Gamage said. "Their spouses didn't understand. They suffered in silence."

Broke and unemployed, Gamage filed for Social Security. In 2019, he got approved for disability for hearing loss stemming from his time in the Navy. This also qualified him for vocational rehabilitation services and higher education.

"I had asked the Lord, 'What's my purpose to be here?' It was only a month or two later the school thing opened, and I saw my reason," Gamage said.

Starting college at 68

In spring 2020, Gamage pursued a social and behavioral science associate degree at San Jac.

At 68, he could have been most classmates' grandfather, but thanks to his Navy background, he modeled focus and discipline to younger students.

"What an older person can recognize is you have something to give others," he said. "You've been through a school of experiences, so you have a wealth to offer."

In May 2022, decked in cords and stole, boasting a 3.72 GPA, Gamage accepted his diploma as the most senior graduate in San Jac's commencement ceremony.

Finding, giving hope

Now at University of Houston-Clear Lake, Gamage is pursuing an advanced bachelor's

“If you haven't been through something, you can't understand. But you can understand an emotion like feeling lost, betrayed, sad. That gives the other person freedom to talk.”

Tony Gamage,
San Jacinto College alumnus

degree program in social work and eyeing a one-year master's program.

He volunteers for Texas Advocates for Justice, which helps incarcerated people, including veterans, navigate court and transition back to society. Eventually, he will dedicate himself to that mission.

Gamage understands both despair and hope and still attends monthly group therapy.

"I'm not afraid to tell people I have depression and anxiety," he said. "Once you've had a serious case, it doesn't go away, but you learn to manage it."

Would he change his story? Looking back, he calls every detail "orchestrated."

"Anything good is only God," he said. "The ups and downs have all been designed. God has a perfect plan for all of us."



UNDERSTANDING

LONG-TERM CARE

■ By Neesha Hosein

As the population ages, the need for long-term care becomes more prominent. Caring for a loved one who is elderly or physically or mentally ill is a big responsibility. A long-term care facility might be a solution, providing a safe living space and round-the-clock care.

Learning the process can help ease planning. Steve Kelley, adjunct faculty in long-term care administration at the San Jacinto College Central Campus, shares his insight.

Q: What are some key resources for getting started?

A: Start with Health and Human Services Commission, Department of Aging and Disability Services, and licensed administrators working in the field.

Q: What are some tips for searching and selecting the best place?

A: Research and look at reviews. Keep in mind, no facility is perfect. Meet with key leaders in the facility to answer questions and resolve concerns.

Q: After selecting a facility, what is the next step?

A: I ask prospective residents/family members to do three things:

- Tour the facility during business hours and weekends.
- Review ratings at [NursingHomeCompare.gov](https://www.nursinghomecompare.gov).
- While in the facility, look, listen, and smell.

Q: Trust is important when placing a loved one in a long-term care facility. What are ways to build trust and ease concerns?

A: News stories paint the worst-case scenarios of nursing facilities, but most facilities truly attempt to be the best possible home for their residents. Be accessible and communicate often with the staff.

The facility should make sure the resident's physical, social, and psychosocial needs are being met. The entire staff should make the resident, family members, and guests feel welcome.

Q: Is long-term care costly, and does insurance help?

A: For residents to live in a nursing facility, room and board can be anywhere from \$200 to \$300 per day or \$6,000-\$7,000 per month. Most residents, namely seniors, rely upon Medicare (A and B) for hospitalization and rehab services in a skilled nursing center. Medicaid provides funds for most, if not all, costs for long-term care living.

Social Security income or retirement funds represent the applied income the resident contributes for their care. There are individuals who are full vendors, meaning they do not have or are not required to provide any



financial support for their care. Medicare Advantage/managed plans (Medicare C) are plans such as United Health Care, Humana, Cigna, etc., that may act similar to Medicare. The insurance company will require the facility to provide clinical updates to retain the resident on services. There are also Medicare Drug Coverage (Medicare D) and private pay.

Q: How involved should family or caregivers be to ensure top care?

A: Involvement has no limit other than no family is allowed to stay overnight with a resident. They should come often. They should be engaged in their loved one's care and should get to know the leadership and staff, primarily the administrator and director of nursing. Work with the leadership in any nursing home to ensure the resident is getting the best care.

Q: How much can a resident bring when moving in?

A: Most residents will share a room. Room sizes vary, but they are not large. Minimum requirement for private room is 100 square feet (10x10 bedroom in a home). Minimum requirement for a semi-private space is 80 square feet per resident or 160 total square feet. Closets are small.

Tours will allow the family to get a feel of the downsizing needed before the move-in date. We occasionally have hoarders, which can become a safety issue with such limited space.

Q: What else should people know about admission and acceptance?

A: It is a two-way street. A facility will look to admit residents for whom they are equipped to serve the needs, are good community citizens, and have a source of payment. Facilities aim to provide a nice, comfortable, home-like environment.

Potential residents must understand what is happening. Not every facility can handle all aspects of care for residents such as those who need breathing tubes, ventilators, wound care, and IVs. Facilities may be noisy at times because of the number of residents on the hall or in the facility.

Q: What should the resident/family member expect?

A: Transparent and honest communication. Access to leadership, especially the administrator and director of nursing. Returning of calls when seeking information, which may take a day if the call was made at night. Visitation hours might be different in each facility. Family and visitors must follow the facility's COVID and other safety protocols. Lastly, give the facility an opportunity to correct any grievances. Too often, people complain to the state when issues can and should be resolved in house. Try to be pleasant even in difficult situations.

► Learn more about San Jac's long-term care administration program at [sanjac.edu/program/long-term-care-administration](https://www.sanjac.edu/program/long-term-care-administration).

KEEP YOUR EYES SHARP THROUGH YOUR SENIOR YEARS

■ By Melissa Trevizo



As we age, our eyes go through changes that can impact our vision and overall eye health. However, you can take steps to maintain healthy vision and protect your eyes.

May is Healthy Vision Month, and San Jacinto College's Debra Clarke, eye care technology program director, offers helpful tips to maintaining healthy eyesight.

The most common eye conditions that increase with aging are cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy.

Cataracts, a clouding of the eye's normally clear lens, make it seem as if you are looking through a frosty or fogged-up window. Cataracts affect most people as our eyes age, and surgery is required to correct the issue.

Age-related macular degeneration affects the central vision. Although it doesn't cause complete blindness, it can make it harder to perform everyday tasks. Depending on the stage and type of the condition, you may pursue different treatments. Your doctor could

HEALTHY VISION RESOURCES

foundation.houstoneye.com

ophthalmologyfoundation.org

texaseyes.org

texas.preventblindness.org

prescribe medication or perform injections in your eye.

Glaucoma, a group of eye diseases, causes vision loss and blindness by damaging the optic nerve. Many people don't have any symptoms until they start to lose their vision, and people may not notice vision loss right away. Treatment options include prescription eye drops, oral medicines, laser treatment, surgery, or a combination of approaches.

Diabetic retinopathy is caused by diabetes and affects the retina. Mild cases may be treated with careful diabetes management, while

advanced cases may require laser treatment or surgery.

What can you do to help prevent these conditions?

Get regular eye exams One of the most important things you can do to protect your eyes is to get regular eye exams with an ophthalmologist. Even if you haven't noticed any changes in your vision, it's important to get a comprehensive eye exam at least once every two years or once a year for those with diabetes.

Many eye conditions develop slowly and may not cause noticeable symptoms until they have already progressed significantly.

"Consistent eye exams can tell us a lot about not only the health of your eyes but other areas as well," Clarke said. "The eyes are the windows to the body. We can see signs of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and more."

Lifestyle changes Smoking and drinking alcohol can damage eye health and increase the risk of cataracts, macular degeneration, and other eye conditions. If you smoke, you should consider quitting as soon as possible to protect your eyes and overall health.

"Smokers are three to four times more likely to develop age-related macular degeneration than nonsmokers," Clarke said. "It can also increase the likelihood of early onset cataracts, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy."

Stay active Physical activity can boost eye health. Exercise can improve blood flow to the eyes, which helps prevent age-related macular degeneration. You should aim to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.

Don't be afraid of surgery According to Clarke, "Medical technology for surgery has developed a lot in the last 10 years."

Cataracts surgery used to take months of recovery. Now, the surgery lasts about one hour and is almost painless.

With these tips, you can help prevent age-related eye conditions and enjoy good vision well into your golden years.

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS



May 1

Joint Central and North Campus Choir Concert

7 p.m.

North Campus Recital Hall (N1)

May 3

Central Campus Steel Band World Premiere

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Slocomb
Auditorium (C12)

May 4

Wind Ensemble Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Monte Blue Music
Building, Corbin Hall (C5)

May 5-6

Kaleidoscope Spring Dance Concert

7 p.m.

South Campus, Building 15 (S15.101)

May 19

Spring Commencement

NRG Stadium

May 29

Memorial Day

Closed

All campuses, online

June 19

Juneteenth National Independence Day

Closed

All campuses, online

July 4

Independence Day

Closed

All campuses, online



Aug. 28

Fall 2023 Semester Begins



All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar.

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