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# There's No I in Team

by: Todd Breland

Shortage of employees? Juggling skeleton crews' vacation schedules? Searching for qualified team members?

Everyone is dealing with staffing concerns. Most companies, big and small, are experiencing the same challenges. These are unprecedented times of organizations and businesses not being fully staffed add to ownership and management stress. Seeking to fill position vacancies, interviewing, hiring and training can raise the blood pressure.

These challenges became universal issues about 18 months ago, and as we are near 2023 all signs point to this trend continuing. How do businesses cope, survive and prosper?

The bright side is leadership skills to put the best team members in position for the entire organization to excel have sharpened, maybe by force but nonetheless sharpened. Rio Grande Valley companies

and organizations are obviously balancing production and employee schedules while maintaining positive morale at the workplace.

Passionate and determined leaders throughout our four counties are cutting the mustard. That's an old phrase my elementary teachers used way back in the day. It means "the job is getting done."

Tough times teach valuable lessons when we are humble enough to listen and learn new tricks. Achieving new levels of professional development is the goal for all of us. That's what we are called to do, and Rio Grande Valley leadership is rising to the occasion -- aiming high and winning big.

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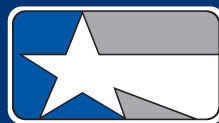
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# TSC Making Investments, Growing Enrollment

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The headlines and buzz in recent years when it comes to higher education has been focused on the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and South Texas College.

In Brownsville, the oldest college in the Valley has been quietly and steadily building momentum of its own. Texas Southmost College was established in 1926. Some of its programs and offices are based out of historic Fort Brown buildings that date back to the 1880s.

It isn't just about history on the Brownsville campus. Administrators report that enrollment has increased by 85 percent as TSC has strengthened its programs to match graduates to growing job sectors. The graduation rate has

improved. Since 2016, TSC has increased its graduation rate by 25 percent, surpassing the state average by 3.4 percent.

The college has rebranded itself in recent years with the emphasis on being local and close to home. The hometown connection when coupled with the bolstering of training and job-ready programs is making a difference. It's a go-local campaign that was launched in a difficult year when higher education institutions pivoted to remote operations.

"The Study Local campaign resonates with students," said Dr. Jesus Roberto Rodriguez, president of TSC since 2017. "It was launched in the summer of 2020. Texas Southmost College was one of only nine percent of

community colleges that experienced an enrollment increase during the fall semester."

## Connected To Growing Sectors

The college has keyed in on industries that are growing locally as well as in Texas and national markets.

Healthcare professions, especially nursing, are always in demand. The TSC school of nursing has geared up for those opportunities in a demanding and essential field. The emergence of SpaceX in Brownsville is known for the hiring of engineers. The aerospace manufacturer also needs welders of the type TSC can produce from its programs. Rodriguez pointed out that three years ago welders were making about \$12



*Dr. Jesus Roberto Rodriguez has overseen \$23 million in capital improvements during his tenure as TSC president. (Courtesy)*



an hour locally.

“Welders in the local aerospace industry today can earn starting salaries of \$35 to \$40 an hour,” Rodriguez said.

Other growth industries mentioned by Rodriguez include law enforcement, cybersecurity, accounting technology, and the trade fields of plumbing, electrical and commercial roofing.

“Five years ago, the number of new industries moving into the region was minimal,” said Rodriguez, an Eagle Pass native. “Businesses are realizing the value of relocating to Brownsville, which provides a good quality of life and an affordable cost of living.”

### Making Investments

Rodriguez has overseen more than \$23 million in capital improvements during his tenure.

The president’s goal has been to create a high-tech learning environment. In 2021, TSC marked its 95th anniversary. For Rodriguez, it was an occasion to celebrate the many years of service and “maintaining an environment that is welcoming and provides a sense of belonging to all.”



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# SpaceX's Reach Goes Beyond Rocket Launches

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Elon Musk and SpaceX recently declared they were “one step closer to the first orbital flight test of Starship.”

The reference was to the nearly 400-foot-tall rocket that's perched at Starbase on Boca Chica Beach near Brownsville. The Federal Aviation Administration announced in June after a two year-study that SpaceX could expand its footprint on Boca Chica. The FAA, however, did not grant a rocket launch license. It cited 75 actions SpaceX needs to take to mitigate environmental concerns.

Some media outlets saw the FAA's action as a setback for SpaceX. It did fall short of receiving a launch license. A significant takeaway, however, may have been missed. The FAA allowed SpaceX to continue expanding operations without requiring it to conduct a wider environmental impact study. The latter is crucial because it removed a lengthy process that would have

pushed Boca Chica rocket launches well into the future.

The development comes as welcome news for a Brownsville-area economy that continues to see SpaceX's influence grow. The Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation describes an aerospace manufacturer that is ramping up the local economy's technological and tourism possibilities.

“The excitement around SpaceX in Brownsville has been a great marketing component for businesses looking to enter the U.S. market,” said Nathan Burkhardt, the director of business development for the BCIC. “We're seeing an emerging market of tech and energy companies moving to the area from Latin America.”

## 'Residual Impact Of SpaceX'

The strands of the SpaceX influence are widespread in the Brownsville-area

economy.

The first came in food and beverage services and the hospitality industry in 2015 and 2016, the early construction years of SpaceX. Operations at Boca Chica began to ramp up in 2019 going into 2020. Hotel occupancies surged and Airbnb reservations flourished, Burkhardt said. Caterers were contracted to provide food to SpaceX and many of those local eateries expanded their operations, he said.

Support companies and services attracted by SpaceX began arriving in Brownsville. One was the Space Channel, which bases its global news headquarters in Brownsville in covering stories impacting the industry. It's what Burkhardt calls the “residual impact” of businesses moving to Brownsville and providing support services to the aerospace industry.

Local talent is being built around SpaceX, Burkhardt said. City officials say SpaceX

*SpaceX is now Brownsville's largest private employer and its economic impact is touching numerous sectors of the local economy. (Courtesy)*



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has more than 1,600 employees and is now Brownsville's largest private employer.

### Building An Ecosystem

SpaceX has accelerated the development of an "ecosystem of entrepreneurship" in Brownsville and the Rio Grande Valley, Burkhart said.

The BCIC is seeking to capitalize on the SpaceX-fed momentum by improving its resources, incentives and networks. One of its most important partnerships is with UTRGV's Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center. The two organizations worked together to gain a "soft landing" designation from the International Business Innovation Association.

The designation helps companies with various services as they seek to enter the U.S. market. In Brownsville's case, it has been tech and energy companies from Mexico and Latin America entering the local economy because of the allure SpaceX brings, Burkhart said. It's but one example of SpaceX's local reach that goes beyond

the shorter-term goal of the aerospace manufacturer getting FAA approval for rocket launches.

"It's a combination of an innovative aerospace company moving to a region

that has less barriers to entry, with the resources more established cities have, but with a more affordable cost of living as we develop the ecosystem of entrepreneurship in this region," Burkhart said.



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# Tourney Features RGV Boxers & Boosts Harlingen

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, Content Editor

Omar Juarez started boxing at age 8 under a father's watchful eye at gyms in Brownsville.

Rudy Juarez was an amateur boxer as a youth in Matamoros before family responsibilities obligated him to work and give up the sport. The elder Juarez wanted something different for Omar. Rudy then began taking young Omar to tournaments and other boxing-related activities where the youngster could sharpen his skills.

Some of those treks to tournaments were long ones, however Omar kept at it. He would be ranked top 10 nationally by USA Boxing. Omar built up more than 120 amateur fights en route to both state and national tournament wins. Turning pro, the 23-year-old Rio Grande Valley boxer today has a 14-1 record and is also the World Boxing Council's International Americas Welterweight Champion.

Additionally, Juarez enjoys being a motivational speaker. In late August, some younger boxers from Brownsville who look up to the professional boxer accompanied him to a press conference in Harlingen. A major amateur boxing event was coming

soon to the city. The Sugar Bert Boxing WBC Green Belt Tournament will take place Oct. 6-9 at the Harlingen Convention Center.

## Making Harlingen The Main Event

"This will be huge for Valley boxers," Juarez said. "They won't have to travel hundreds of miles away to get to a big event. It will be close to home, right here, in Harlingen."

Four rings will be set up at the convention center with each having 50 bouts throughout the course of the tournament. Organizers expect more than 400 amateur boxers from Harlingen and all over the United States, as well as other countries. It's what Bert Wells of Atlanta envisioned when he started his Sugar Bert tournaments in 2016. He wanted to bring WBC-supported amateur boxing tournaments to cities large and small.

"My goal is to take tournaments to where the boxers are," Wells said. "The Valley has a lot of young boxing talent. Look at what Omar has done. There are more like him coming up. This kind of event brings a lot

for local boxers, and for the communities that host a Sugar Bert tournament."

## Economic Impact

For Harlingen, it will mean an economic impact comparable to what the yearly Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival brings to the city.

About 5,000 boxing fans are expected to attend the Sugar Bert Tournament in Harlingen later this month. It's the first time Wells has held one of his tournaments in Texas. At the press conference, he praised Harlingen city leaders for the welcome given. Likewise, Wells hopes to make the tournament a yearly event in Harlingen.

"It's going to be an economic generator for the city," said Gabriel Gonzalez, the Harlingen city manager. "It's a major event when you look at hotel stays and money spent at our restaurants and stores."

Harlingen Mayor Norma Sepulveda was enthusiastic as she took photos with Juarez and other young boxers at the press conference.

"I'm really excited," the mayor said. "This event is going to bring people to



Omar Juarez of Brownsville is a WBC champion and an inspiration to local boxers who will participate in an upcoming amateur tournament in Harlingen. (VBR)



Bert Wells is bringing his Green Belt Tournament to Harlingen this month and expects up to 500 boxers to participate. (VBR)



Harlingen Mayor Norma Sepulveda is looking forward to the economic impact that the WBC Green Belt Tournament will bring to Harlingen this month. (VBR)



Wells reaffirmed those expectations based on his years of hosting amateur boxing tournaments.

“Boxers will travel to get to events like this one,” he said. “It’s a great experience for the kids involved. They get to box against competition from all over the United States. We also attract boxers from lots of other places like the Virgin Islands, the Philippines, so these local boxers get a great experience and lots of exposure.”

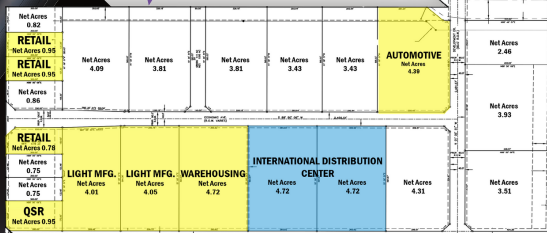
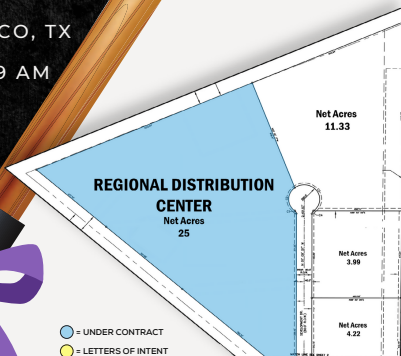
USA Boxing and the Texas Local Boxing Commission are sanctioning the Green Belt tournament in Harlingen. It is being sponsored by Sugar Bert Boxing, USA Boxing, World Boxing Council Cares and the South Texas Amateur Boxing Association. There is a \$15-to-\$25 fee to attend the tournament. Visit [www.sugarbertboxing.com](http://www.sugarbertboxing.com) for registration and ticket information.



*Omar Juarez displayed his International Welterweight Champion's belt at a recent press conference in Harlingen. (VBR)*

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# SPI Checks Boxes For Artist's Startup

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The overcast summer morning was putting Malia Quinn's artistic assessment of South Padre Island to the test.

Gray skies had moved over from the Gulf of Mexico to replace the usual August Island sunshine. Even then, the shades of coastal grays validated Quinn's belief in the Island.

"There's something special about the lighting here," the artist said looking out the windows of her gallery on Padre Boulevard. "I don't know what it is, or how to describe it, but even the gray days here are beautiful."

Those are high words of praise coming from a realism artist who specializes in landscapes. Quinn describes her work as going beyond literal representations of what she sees when painting. She seeks to create art that "transcends into something more interesting."

"Her goal is to create loose and striking paintings that avoid unnecessary detail and instead focus on the abstract qualities of light, form, and space," says a description of one of her paintings at the gallery.

South Padre Island, Quinn said, "checks all of the boxes" as a place to live and work in pursuing her artistic interests. The Hawaiian native came to the Island via Colorado. Mountains were exchanged for coastal life in standing behind her easels. The former commercial graphic designer has found a home and a niche on South Padre. Her recent business startup – Quinn Gallery – fits right into the Island's growing arts community.

## Meeting The Artist

Quinn's gallery is located next door to the Art Business Incubator South Padre Island in what has emerged as a focal point for the arts by the beach.

It's in the 2500 plaza which includes the art-friendly Karma Coffee & Books, a custom jewelry business, and the ABI, the cradle of artistic expression on the Island. Quinn progressed through a one-year residency at the art business incubator. It included collaborating with and learning from fellow artists while learning the aspects of running and owning her own business.

Perhaps most importantly, the residency gave Quinn a connection to meet customers directly and not go through a third party selling her art. She was accustomed to the latter in Colorado. At the Island, there is that instant feedback and communication in seeing

the impressions of customers.

"There's more of an impact when you meet the artist," Quinn said. "It takes a risk to be an artist because you'll experience rejection. Not everyone will get what you do, but there will be those who do. You have to wait for them to show up."

Quinn found sufficient customer acceptance at the ABI to go with her inclination to paint

water and ocean. It's what drew her to the Island to begin with in leaving Colorado.

"I decided if I got in the program and did well, I'd stay," she said of ABI. "Being in the program taught me a lot about what people expect and want to buy. I saw the potential if I could produce enough art, especially the bigger pieces that people want for their homes."



*Malia Quinn's gallery on Padre Boulevard is a recent addition to South Padre Island's growing arts community. (VBR)*



## A New Experience

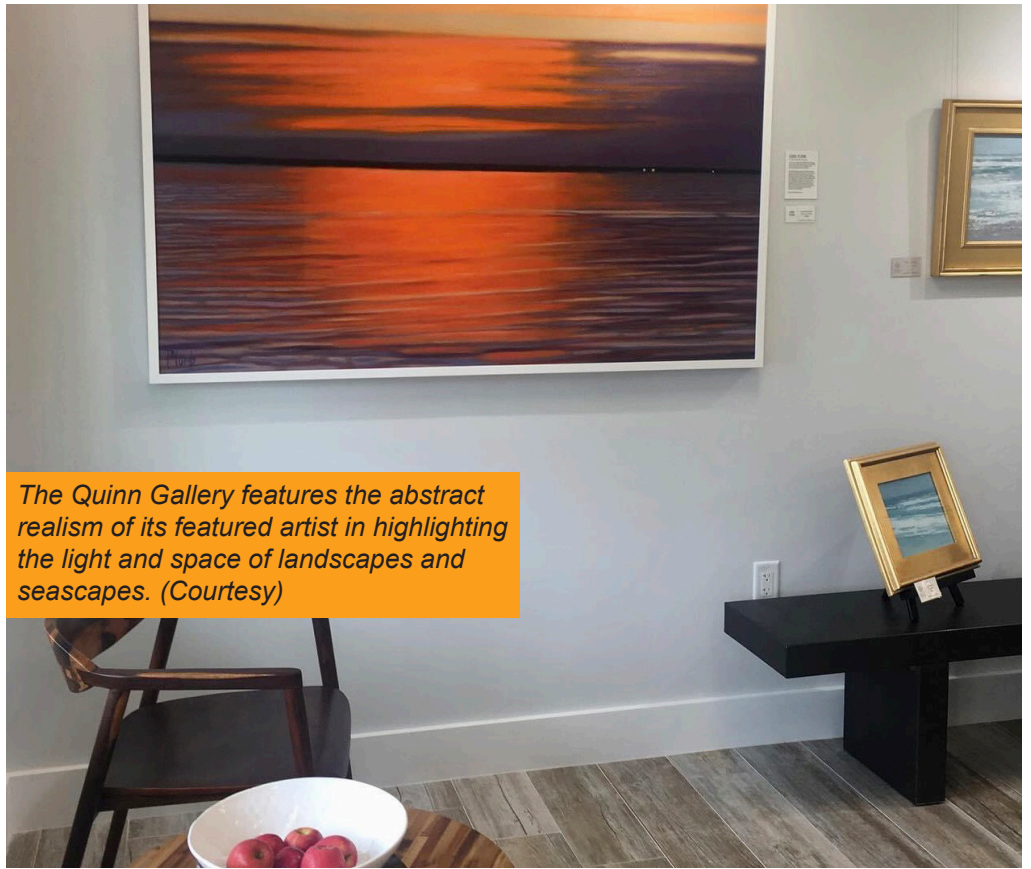
A recent walk into the Quinn Gallery found the artist drawing a live portrait.

A wife and daughter looked on excitedly as Quinn painted the father and husband of the family. He was smiling as his loved ones were commenting on the emerging likeness they saw taking shape on Quinn's easel. The artist relishes such interactions and the reactions of tourists who come for the beach and discover art just a short walk away.

"I enjoy being an artist in a tourist location," Quinn said. "I like the energy of the people who visit. They're out of their element. They're so much more in the moment here."

She especially enjoys her visits with Island visitors from other communities in the Rio Grande Valley. In many cases, she said, walking into her gallery may be the first time a local resident has experienced such a visual artistic experience.

"It's wonderful just to see the looks on their faces when they see the paintings," Quinn said. "It's really exciting to be part of it."



*The Quinn Gallery features the abstract realism of its featured artist in highlighting the light and space of landscapes and seascapes. (Courtesy)*

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# Weslaco Company Reaches Global Market

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

A tour of the Clever Foods & Supplements operating facility shows shiny white floors and gleaming silver equipment that's intertwined and can churn out over 30 million vitamin gummies a month.

The Clever facility is a new addition to the Mid Valley Industrial Park in Weslaco. Three executives with deep experience in manufacturing and sales are its owners and operators. They see the Mid-Valley city as an ideal location to make and ship out thousands of gummy-filled jars and packages every month. Clever's clients are some of the biggest vitamin and supplement companies in the United States and Mexico.

The launch of Clever in Weslaco early this year reflects how cities work with manufacturers and other companies in their startup operations. The Weslaco Economic Development Corporation typically offers up to 10 percent of a company's capital investment as an incentive to select the city for their expansion plans. The EDC also offers an additional incentive of up to \$1,500 per job as long as the company pays above \$12 an hour.

## Right People

The results of such a collaboration are apparent in the Clever operations at Weslaco's industrial park. The company is already employing 30 full time employees at its 26,000-square-foot facility. It has plans to add a second manufacturing line in the next few years. At the same time, plans are to bulk up its workforce to over 50 employees. Clever is tapping into a roughly \$6-billion gummy vitamins global market. Looking ahead, there is an expectation for the market to exceed \$9 billion by 2026.

Weslaco is where they've set up to establish their presence in this sprawling marketplace.

"We appreciate the city's support," said Ricardo Villarreal, the chief executive officer and co-founder of Clever Foods. "This is a community with a good working culture. It's close to the border and it's not in a saturated area. We're in a sector that's innovative and is growing."

## Right Products

One of Clever's specialties is manufacturing apple cider vinegar, or ACV, gummies.

These types of gummies have rapidly gained shelf space and public prominence in recent

years. Celebrities like Jennifer Lopez endorse ACV gummies in trying to make the nutritious but bitter-tasting supplement more palatable to consumers. Gummies are often the form many choose to consume ACV.

## Right Equipment

There's a multistep process Clever uses to make the gummies through a highly automated and computerized system. The equipment at the Weslaco facility is from Europe. The process involves starting with raw materials like colors, flavors, vinegar and corn syrup. They then transform them into a jelly-like substance. Clients request ingredient formulas and Clever mixes them to exact specifications.

High heating temperatures turn the jelly substances hot and liquidity. The jellies are then poured into molds and trays of tiny suction cups. Once poured, they dry in large freezing equipment as the process continues. The colder temperatures allow the gummies to solidify into their shapes. On the day of the tour in Weslaco,

observers saw thousands of dome-shaped, cherry red apple cider vinegar gummies going into huge containers for eventual packaging and delivery.

"It's state of the art equipment," Villarreal said. "We have the right equipment, the right people, and the right tools to operate successfully in the healthy food and snack industry."

## Meeting The Grade

Villarreal was educated at Tecnológico de Monterrey, with undergraduate and master's degrees. He then attended Harvard Business School, earning an executive MBA.

Before helping to found and lead Clever, Villarreal had extensive experience in management operations of companies specializing in home improvements and supply fixtures. His co-owners and fellow executives of Clever are Fernando Zepeda and Sergio Zepeda. They run an efficient and tech-savvy lean operation that focuses on safety, quality



*Ricardo Villarreal and Fernando Zepeda are two of the three executives who run and own Clever Foods & Supplements in Weslaco. (VBR)*



and developing their employees.

The Weslaco plant has been visited multiple times by quality audit teams of large vitamin and supplement companies that sell their products to large retailers like Wal-Mart and Target. The ACV gummies at these stores may be from Weslaco, although nondisclosure agreements do not allow Clever management to publicly confirm who their clients are.

"We manufacture for other brands," Villarreal said. "We can provide multiple formulations that include probiotics, minerals and electrolytes. The supplements market is growing tremendously. Within that market, gummies are the fastest growing product because they appeal to people across all age groups."

### Looking Ahead

Clever hopes to someday produce and sell their own brands. Tour participants were given some ACV gummies manufactured at Clever with the company's label on them. It could be a hint of things to come. For now, the focus for Villarreal and his co-owners are adding manufacturing lines and equipment while growing their presence in a fast-growing global market.



Apple cider vinegar gummies are among the fastest-growing vitamins and supplements in national and global markets. (VBR)



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# McAllen Lauded For Boosting Wi-Fi Access

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Javier Villalobos set out clear priorities when elected McAllen's new mayor in mid-2021.

"Water, sewer, public safety and the police department," he said, recalling some of the key issues of his campaign.

What Villalobos didn't figure is that education would emerge early on as a pressing issue in his tenure. More than 20,000 students in the McAllen school district were suddenly put into remote learning situations. Public health concerns in 2020 and 2021 resulted in school districts across the country closing schools and requiring students to stay home.

## Stepping In & Stepping Up

Connecting teachers to homebound students via the Internet became essential. In McAllen, that was a problem. Many parts of the city lacked Wi-Fi hotspots for students to connect with teachers. The McAllen school district initially tried to deal with the issue by purchasing Wi-Fi hotspots for homes without connectivity. It proved to be an inadequate solution.

McAllen's city government stepped in to offer assistance. The city invested over \$4 million to install Wi-Fi equipment on over 700 light poles in reaching over 40 neighborhoods. The city acted quickly in connecting students with teachers. For its community-friendly efforts, the city received the Digital Equity Project of the Year from the National Association of Telecommunication Officers and Advisors.

The association lauded McAllen for "implementing no-cost-use, high-speed Internet access to close the digital divide in their region ... and make progress in eliminating the regional digital divide."

The NATOA is a professional membership organization that offers local governments support and insights in dealing with federal laws and judicial rulings involving technological issues. Mayor Villalobos said the award acknowledges the efforts of city staff in partnering with the school district to help students in a time of need.

"It's nice to be appreciated," Villalobos said. "The award recognizes our staff for their hard work and efforts in stepping up to help kids in our community."



*McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos is an advocate for expanding digital access in his city. (Courtesy)*



## Exposing A Need

The byproduct of McAllen acting to help students is a city that's more connected.

Villalobos said that's especially true in many central and south side McAllen neighborhoods. School districts like the one in McAllen had to deal with sudden campus closures in 2020 that extended into 2021. The situation exposed the city's overall lack of Internet connectivity.

"We found out pretty quickly that a lot of our kids didn't have access to Wi-Fi," the mayor said. "We looked at it and fortunately we were able to activate it quickly."

The biggest gains in connectivity have come in neighborhoods south of Pecan Boulevard and Expressway 83, the mayor said, along with the city's core downtown area and its nearby neighborhoods.

"We had updated fiber optics and broadband," Villalobos said. "In being reactive to the COVID situation, we moved to improve Wi-Fi accessibility in the city. The situation showed that our educational systems need kids to have access to Wi-Fi beyond going to libraries to get connected."



*McAllen closed the digital divide in its city by installing WiFi equipment on existing light poles in the city. (Courtesy)*

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# Educator Works To Curb Cyberbullying

By Chris Ardis

Lou Ann Sarachene was already well-versed on David's Law.

It was passed by the Texas legislature in 2017 to strengthen the penalties for cyberbullying while teaching ways to combat all forms of bullying.

Sarachene reached out earlier this year to Maurine Molak, the co-founder (along with husband Matt and sons Cliff and Chris) of David's Legacy Foundation. Sarachene is the former principal of Ruben Hinojosa Elementary School in Sharyland. She was also the school district's director of counseling.

"Cyberbullying, bullying overall, is the number-one issue in our schools today," said Sarachene, who worked in Sharyland to educate students, employees and parents about David's Law.

Bullying goes beyond silly disagreements, it can also deeply affect a student's mental health. It has grown significantly through social media.

"We need to teach students how to maintain

their digital safety and avoid bullying and cyberbullying," Sarachene said.

She left public education at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to focus on topics she identified during her 35-year public-education career. Sarachene's career began in maintenance and custodial. She then went on to become a teacher's assistant, teacher, coach, counselor, principal and district administrator.

Preventing bullying is one of Sarachene's top priorities. She has seen the impact it can have on a student's success and mental wellbeing. She talked to Molak about offering training on David's Law to schools, parent organizations, law enforcement and other community groups in the Region One Education Service Center. The region covered by the service center covers eight South Texas counties, including all public school districts in the Rio Grande Valley.

## Bullying's Impact Is Real

David Molak lived for basketball.

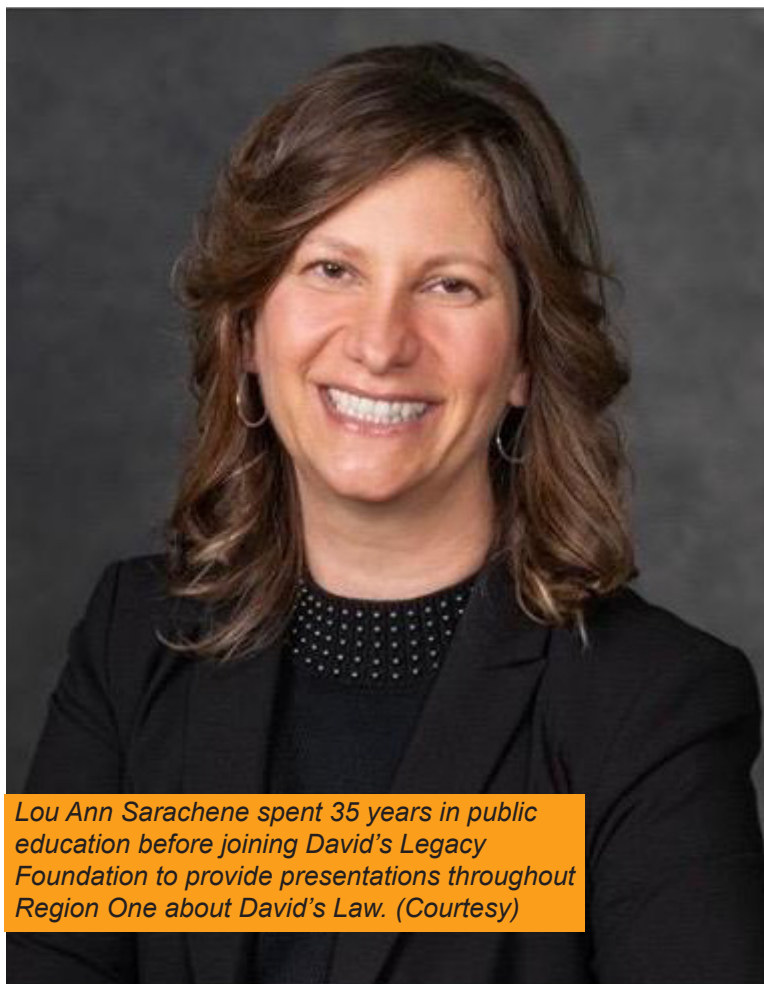
"Basketball was his identity," Maurine Molak said of her teenage son.

David suffered an injury before his eighth-grade season and was unable to reach his previous level of play by his freshman year. David turned to video games. As he withdrew, other students began tormenting him with hurtful cyber messages about his looks.

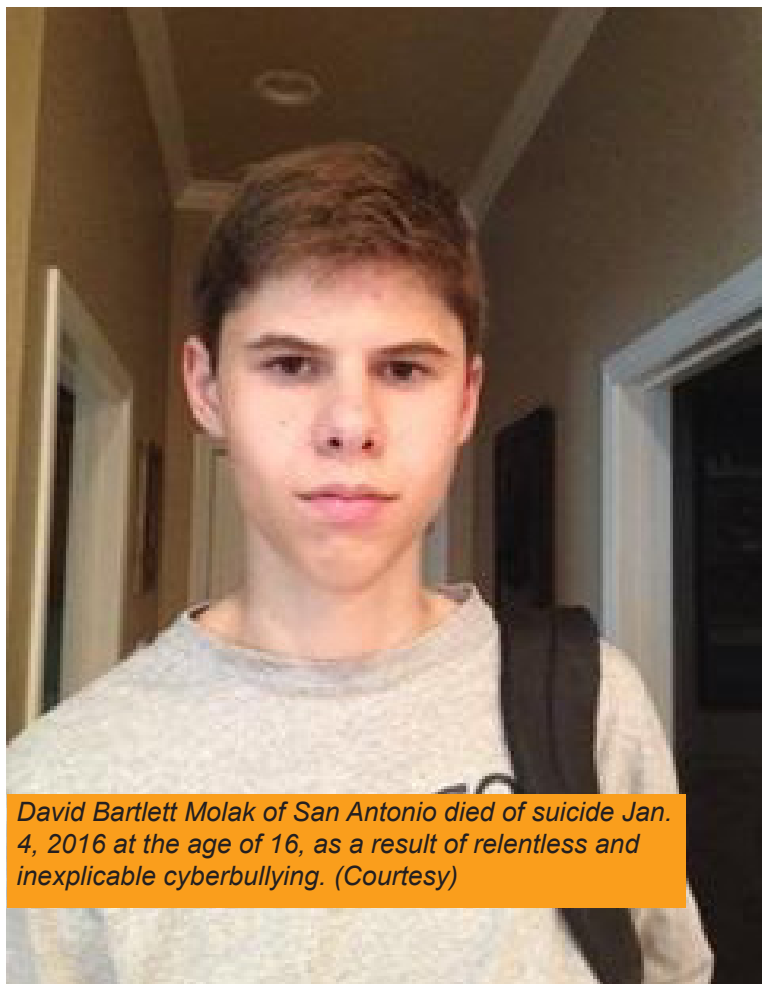
"I felt like I was in the middle of a tornado but moving in slow motion," Maurine Molak said.

David moved to another San Antonio school in the fall of his sophomore year. The damaging text messages and social media posts continued and created a quicksand he felt powerless to escape. On Jan. 4, 2016, David, who had recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout, died by suicide.

In 2017, David's Legacy Foundation fought tirelessly to get David's Law passed after spending many hours researching bullying laws and studying the language of laws.



*Lou Ann Sarachene spent 35 years in public education before joining David's Legacy Foundation to provide presentations throughout Region One about David's Law. (Courtesy)*



*David Bartlett Molak of San Antonio died of suicide Jan. 4, 2016 at the age of 16, as a result of relentless and inexplicable cyberbullying. (Courtesy)*



“The most significant impact was giving schools explicit authority to investigate bullying that happens outside of school if it interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, school-sponsored or school-related activity,” Molak said.

Updates passed in 2019 and 2021 have strengthened the law further. The revised law expands who can report anonymously. It requires public school districts to adopt a bullying policy and creates committees to focus on the issue. The law also mandates that districts report bullying and cyberbullying incidents annually to the state.

### Making A Difference

Sarachene has joined the David’s Legacy Foundation team.

She delivers presentations in the Region One area. Sarachene’s presentations are for groups from 25 people to more than 1,000.

“As educators, we need to know what the law is. Kids and parents need to know, too” Sarachene said. “We need to teach kids how to navigate their lives in a safe way.”

Over the summer, Sarachene presented virtually to an East Texas conference that included lawyers, judges and educators. The meeting covered a broad spectrum of educational issues with legal implications.

“I didn’t realize all of the details of David’s Law,” said Marshall Wood, a partner at Norton & Wood in Texarkana. “Lou had excellent materials. She has a bullying checklist and quick go-to references. Everyone was engaged.”



This elementary school poster is available for download on the David’s Legacy Foundation website. It encourages students to take a pledge to be kind and to stop cyberbullying. (Courtesy)

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Sharing David's Law with audiences of all ages brings Sarachene a renewed sense of purpose.

"When working with students, we focus on being an upstander, not a bystander, standing up for what's right," Sarachene said. "Students love the interaction. It really gets adults to think about any child or teen they care about and how aware they are of what is going on with them."

Molack reflects on her son's legacy as more students and adults are educated about David's Law.

"His legacy is that no child should ever feel helpless or hopeless because of being a target of bullying or cyberbullying" she said.



Left: David Molak, even at age 11, clearly fits the description on the David's Legacy Foundation website at [davidlegacy.org](http://davidlegacy.org). (Courtesy)

To request a free presentation by Lou Ann Sarachene in the Region One area about David's Law and the David's Legacy Foundation, visit [davidlegacy.org](http://davidlegacy.org). For more information, contact Sarachene at [lsarachene@yahoo.com](mailto:lsarachene@yahoo.com).





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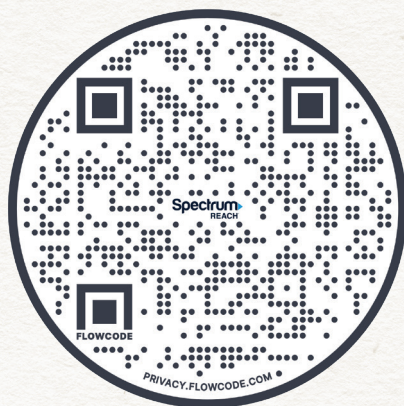


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