

AUGUST 2024

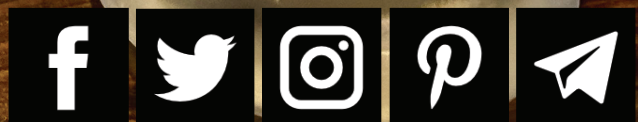
# VBR

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# Forging Forward Together

By Todd Breland

Wow. How we've all changed, grown and endured the last 15 years. While it seems only a few days ago, many chapters have evolved since our team rolled out the first edition.

VBR's September edition will be our 15th year anniversary publication.

Since this journey began, a VBR co-founder and managing editor suddenly passed, I married way above my league, our sons are seventh and third graders, and I lost my mother and father. There have been some very rough days and some exceptionally fun days -- all with memorable and forever friendships since day one.

Along the ride, our team of writers, graphic designers, online staff and advertising specialists have consistently produced high quality content in print and online supported by Rio Grande Valley advertisers. Personally speaking, I am

so thankful to you for allowing Valley Business Report to be my life.

Our team loves connecting regional business and community leaders with positive news about local entrepreneurs. Since we began, we have pursued excellence in multimedia journalism and design. VBR's content focuses on the Valley's unified efforts to strengthen our local economy.

Positive news on our printed and online pages encourages additional prosperity for businesses, institutions and organizations throughout our four counties. We are excited about future articles sponsored by pro-RGV companies and entities, making all of this possible.

The VBR team thanks each of you. As we embark upon our 15-year anniversary next month, please know we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to do what we love. Together, we are the Rio Grande Valley.



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# The Deep End Features Family Fun

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The space now taken by The Deep End restaurant and entertainment center has lived many lives over the years on the west side of Harlingen.

The spacious Business 83 location has been a dance hall, a honky-tonk and sports bar, among other variations. Under new ownership, there is a fresh concept with investments in facilities that have reimagined dance floors and traditional bar setups into a place suited for family fun. Arcades and pool tables attract plenty of attention as do simulated golf games and dart boards that keep scores electronically.

There's a spacious outdoor patio to cool off in summer evenings with good food and an array of big television screens that are among the 60 broadcasting all manner of sports. A beer wall featuring 36 varieties of alcoholic beverages with taps are lined up near The Deep End's entrance. Put it all together and it's an ambiance of friendliness and fun that puts customers at ease.

"We've changed the outlook of this location," said Luis Gonzalez, a bar manager and one of the four supervisors who run daily operations at the restaurant. "We want to be a place where after a long day at work or school, customers can come here with their families and feel fun and safe."

## 'Getting Better Everyday'

The Deep End is owned by Harlingen businessman Juan Ramirez and the general manager is Peter Salazar, who owns the popular El Gallito restaurant in San Benito.

It's at El Gallito where a 17-year-old Gonzalez began his career in the restaurant business, working as a busboy at Salazar's San Benito restaurant. He went from there to working at Texas Roadhouse and Cheddar's and getting further experience in the industry. He kept in touch with Salazar. When word came of the restart project at The Deep End, Gonzalez took the offer to be part of a new restaurant with a different concept and an opportunity to sharpen his business bonafides.

"I'm entrepreneurially driven," said the 23-year-old Gonzalez. "I've enjoyed the challenges of helping to get a new restaurant started. We pride ourselves on

the quality of product we send out. I feel like we're getting better everyday."

The Deep End opened in April 2024 after about two years of preparation and investments. The time spent to get it right was worth the wait. On a recent early Friday afternoon, family groups enjoyed the games and fun offered at the restaurant,

from the simulated golf games to shooting pool. Other groups of customers enjoyed the bone-in chicken wings, pizzas and appetizers from The Deep End's full-service kitchen.

The ease and comfort felt by diners and games enthusiasts is what the restaurant sought when opening last spring.



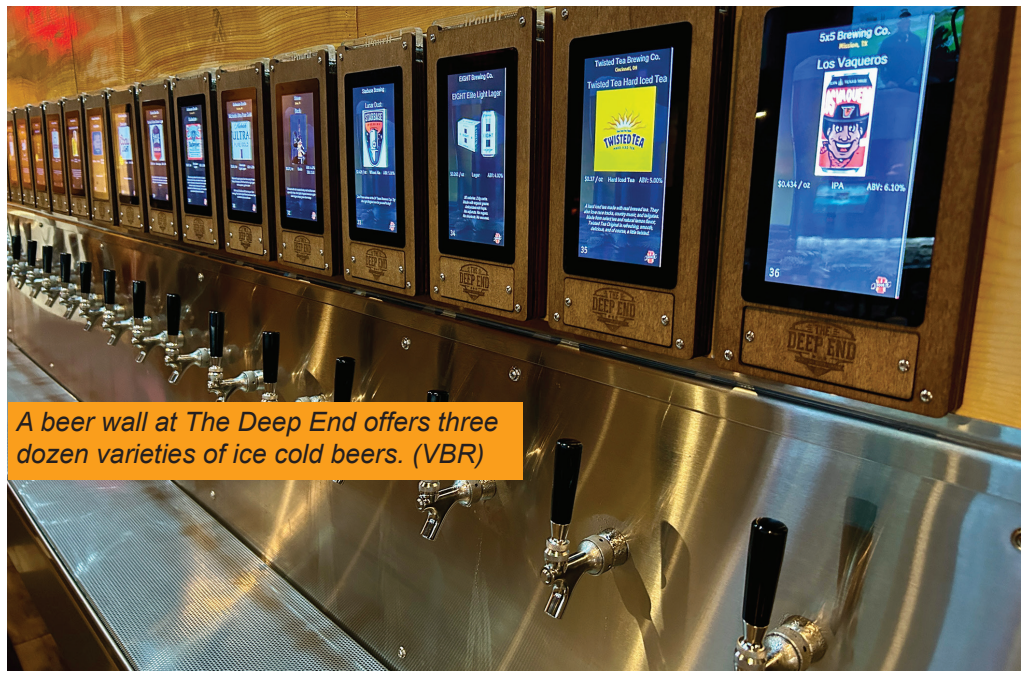
*Luis Gonzalez is a young entrepreneur and a manager at The Deep End. (VBR)*

“We’re not a sports bar,” Gonzalez said. “Our vision has always been a family entertainment place where families can have confidence in coming to a safe environment.”

**‘Controlled Chaos’**

The Deep End is gearing up for the start of football season.

A preview of what’s to come occurred when the Texas A&M men’s baseball team reached the championship round of the College World Series. Aggie alumni and supporters filled up the restaurant in what Gonzalez called “controlled chaos,” in enjoying the buzz and fun of seeing your team vie for a national championship. It’s easy to see how Dallas Cowboy or San Antonio Spurs fans could spend hours watching their teams on the big screens while enjoying wings, pizzas and tasty



*A beer wall at The Deep End offers three dozen varieties of ice cold beers. (VBR)*



*Bone-in chicken wings are among the headliners at The Deep End. (Courtesy)*



*Pool tables and simulated golf games attract customers to The Deep End. (Courtesy)*

appetizers, not to mention beer served from the taps at a frosty 28 degrees.

Gonzalez says The Deep End strictly follows all state laws regarding alcohol consumption with 100 percent adherence to mandated rules in ensuring there is no underage drinking at the restaurant. The restaurant is more than roomy. It seats 300 customers indoors and outdoors combined. More games and entertainment space are being added and The Deep End owners hope to open a McAllen/Edinburg location in the next few years.

The restaurant with its formal name being The Deep End, Fun, Physical, Family Entertainment, is open 11 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week, and is located at 3811 U.S. Business 83 in Harlingen. Go to [thedeependrgv.com](http://thedeependrgv.com) for more information.



*It's roomy and spacious at The Deep End in Harlingen. (VBR)*

*Customers enjoy the simulated golf games at The Deep End in Harlingen. (Courtesy)*



# Elsa Becoming New Crossroads

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Elsa was once a city off the Rio Grande Valley's beaten path.

Tucked away from the region's vehicle-heavy corridor – Expressway 83 – Elsa's location along state Highway 107 formerly made it appear as if nothing of significance could happen here. Times change, however, as do growth patterns and emerging traffic routes where commuters seek new ways to get to work.

Elsa has become one of those places where remoteness has morphed into a city becoming something of a crossroads. Weslaco is less than eight miles to the south and its growth is edging toward Elsa. Edinburg's fast-developing Monte Cristo area is even closer – less than three miles away – and 107 in Elsa is known as Edinburg Avenue.

On the intersection of Highway 107 and

FM 88 – the thoroughfares coming from Edinburg and Weslaco, respectively – nearly 15,000 vehicles a day cross that center-point on an average daily basis. More commuters have discovered Elsa in recent years as a preferred west-to-east corridor in avoiding the never ending construction on the expressway.

"It's giving us more visibility," said Daniel Rivera, the executive director of the Elsa Economic Development Corporation, of the changing driving patterns. "More people are driving here instead of the expressway."

That's one piece of explaining how a city with 6,000 residents can have a Wal-Mart Supercenter that attracts two million customer visits a year.

"We're a microcosm of the Valley," Rivera said of his city's fit in a region of rapid

development. "There's something happening here from a more rural aspect than what you see in McAllen or Weslaco."

## New Destination

Rivera looks at what he calls a "heat map" on a computer screen in his office.

It's an overlay of what the Elsa EDC identifies as being the "Wal-Mart Corridor." The superstore is on FM 88, the highway connecting the Delta Area of Edcouch-Elsa to Weslaco and the Mid-Valley. The heat map shows Elsa's Wal-Mart attracting customers from a wide radius beyond the Delta Area. Shoppers are driving into Elsa from the eastern side of Edinburg, Monte Alto, La Villa, Santa Rosa in Cameron County and even Raymondville in Willacy County, which lost its Wal-Mart 10 years ago.



*Daniel Rivera, the executive director of Elsa's EDC, says changes in traffic patterns and commuter routes are benefitting his city. (VBR)*

There's even a smattering of shoppers coming from the north side of Weslaco as that city grows toward Elsa on 88.

"They find it easier and smoother to drive here to shop than getting on the expressway or going through a bunch of traffic lights to get to Weslaco or McAllen," Rivera said.

FM 88 is indeed a smooth ride with an expanded and improved roadway leading from Weslaco to the Delta Area. Shoppers from the nearby communities have more than the Wal-Mart to frequent in visiting Elsa.

The city also has a large H-E-B store, a CVS Pharmacy and a new Sonic Drive-In along 88 and adjacent to the Wal-Mart. Shipley's Donuts and a Scooter's coffee shop have each opened locations over the last year. Taco Bell has also recently announced plans to build a new restaurant in Elsa.

"We're seeing growth," Rivera said. "Our challenge is to sustain that growth and build up from it."

### Improving Quality Of Life

One segment of the community that Elsa needs to upgrade is its healthcare systems, Rivera said.

The city lacks an urgent care facility of the sort commonly found in many Valley communities. There is also a need for a night clinic and a nursing home in Elsa, Rivera said. Local residents at the present time need to travel to Weslaco and upper Valley communities to receive those types of medical services, he said.

One aspect where Elsa has seen major improvements is in its parks systems. Rivera has helped to secure regional and state grants to go with local funding to build a hike-and-bike trail linking Elsa and Edcouch on what was once a Union Pacific railroad line. It's why the linear park is called the Pacific Trails and it includes a food truck park and outdoor entertainment area. The city is building further parks improvements, including a

splash pad, a rock garden, and outdoor facilities to play pickleball and volleyball.

In the midst of those improvements, Rivera and the EDC are working to help small business owners in Elsa. There are well-done one-minute videos on the EDC's YouTube channel that are entitled "From Elsa With Love," and feature local businesses with a narrator telling their stories.

The EDC has helped these businesses boost their social media presence along with providing insights on how to improve their positioning on Google searches. Training and information has been provided to Elsa's small businesses via the UTRGV's office of workforce and economic development.

"We want to provide more economic opportunities here," Rivera said. "If you do get a job in a nearby city, we want to be a community where you can still live here and have access to the sort of things found in bigger cities."



A new Sonic Drive-In and Wal-Mart Supercenter in Elsa are among the ingredients attracting shoppers and diners to the city. (VBR)



The Garden At Pacific is one of the quality-of-life improvements made in Elsa in recent years. (VBR)



Elsa's parks systems are seeing new improvements and added features. (VBR)



An old rail line that went through Elsa has been transformed into a hike-and-bike trail. (VBR)

# RGV Goes To D.C. As 'One Force'

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Highlighting Daniel Silva's two-year tenure as the chief executive officer of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership is his organization's "one region, one voice" message.

Silva's predecessors also preached regional unity when it came to the Valley's nearly 50 cities working more collaboratively when marketing and promoting the region. He has tried to intensify those efforts by having the many economic development corporations in the Valley band together under one regional flag at trade and industry shows as they promote their individual cities.

He and his staff have worked on regional marketing packages and data that can be shared and accessed by any EDC in the area. The spirit of "one region, one voice" was enhanced recently when Silva and the Partnership led a 60-member delegation of RGV leaders to Washington, D.C. The goal was to get in front of members of Congress representing the Valley as well other leaders in Washington who are unfamiliar with the region.

Silva emphasized the mid-June trip was not "a show-and-tell" type of trip where generalities were presented. Delegation members also met with various federal agencies involving trade and commerce, water issues, and immigration and border law enforcement.

"It wasn't cookie cutter," he said of the delegation's trip. "We got direct interaction about all of our issues. We left information that will help them better understand us and hopefully lead them in a direction that benefits us."

## Top Issues

Silva said the delegation's trip to Washington focused on these issues:

- Water and environmental resources
- Infrastructure improvements
- Education and workforce development
- Healthcare access and quality
- Border security and immigration reform
- Economic development and job creation

Brownsville Mayor John Cowen was among the RGV leaders who were part of the delegation traveling to Washington. He ranks water as the region's most important issue given the historic low levels of storage at Falcon and Amistad lakes. Cowen said a preeminent issue like water requires a regional approach to

pursue funding to develop alternate sources and improve current systems to boost sustainability.

Another aspect of trips to Washington also involves debunking negative perceptions of border regions like the Valley.

"A lot of people get their information from the media as to what's going on in the Rio Grande Valley," Cowen said at a press conference in Weslaco available on YouTube. "What they see and hear doesn't always tell the story. It's important to get in front of our leaders and inform them on what's going on from our perspective."

Orlando Campos, the chief executive officer of the Harlingen Economic Development Corporation, was another member of the delegation to Washington. He is a Brownsville native who spent many years away from the Valley as an economic development specialist in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. North Texas, he said, has over 100 cities that have some degree of collaboration in pursuing economic development and business growth.

"I've seen firsthand what happens when regions work together," Campos said. "We can be more economically competitive with larger



*Daniel Silva, the chief executive officer of the RGV Partnership, led a delegation of Valley leaders on a recent trip to Washington, D.C. (Courtesy)*

metros if we come together and work to get our fair share.”

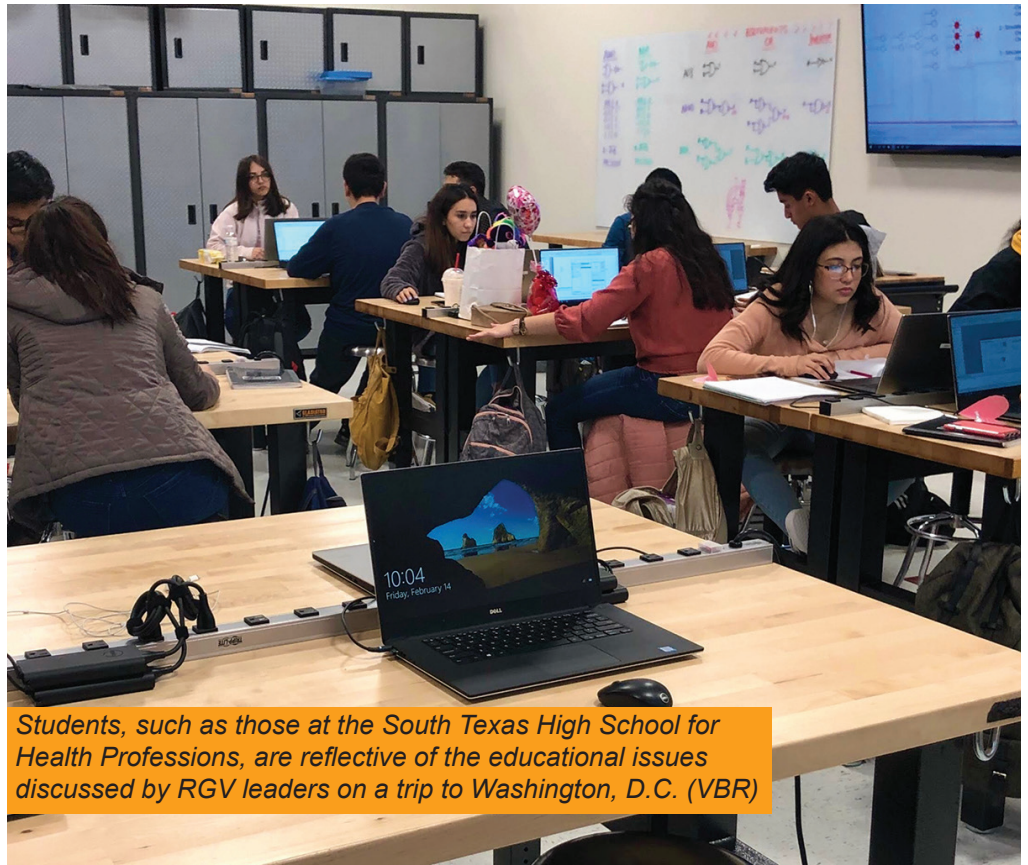
**Next Steps**

The next steps, Silva said, are continuing to work on marketing materials and data that all of the cities in the Valley can use.

“The ‘One Region, One Voice’ is designed to make sure we can collectively carry the needs of our region,” he said.

The whole topic of regional cooperation continues to be an ongoing issue among RGV leaders. Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez and a contingent of private sector business leaders have held recent meetings on the subject. Their recommendation is to market the Valley along with Reynosa and Matamoros as “RioPlex,” to reflect the binational aspect of doing business along the border. How such a branding would co-exist with the Partnership and area EDCs is undefined but there’s little disagreement that there is strength in numbers.

“Going as one force has an impact,” said Pepe Cabeza de Vaca, a McAllen city commissioner who was part of the recent trip to Washington. “It resonates with them when we go as one.”



*Students, such as those at the South Texas High School for Health Professions, are reflective of the educational issues discussed by RGV leaders on a trip to Washington, D.C. (VBR)*



*Workforce development, such as that at Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, was among the topics of discussion from RGV leaders during a recent trip to Washington, D.C. (VBR)*

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# Grant Aims To Make McAllen Green

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

McAllen's ongoing efforts to grow more trees within its urban landscape got a significant boost recently with the Texas A&M Forest Service awarding the local school district a \$2.7 million grant.

The grant will benefit seven elementary schools that are part of the McAllen Independent School District. Each campus will receive \$390,000 to purchase and plant trees over the next three years from the \$2,730,000 grant. A key goal at each campus is to grow the percentage of tree canopies at the seven elementary schools – which are Alvarez, Fields, Jackson, Roosevelt, Sam Houston, Seguin and Wilson.

Currently, the average McAllen elementary school has trees covering 10 percent or less of campus grounds. With the trees to be

provided by the Texas A&M grant, the goal is to have the seven McAllen schools grow their percentage of tree canopies to 30 percent on their individual campuses.

"It's vitally important that we plant thousands of trees every year as we work toward encouraging children to be good stewards of our land," said Collen Hook, the executive director of McAllen's Quinta Mazatlan, an urban and wildlife center. "We knew forestation had to be a top priority in helping to cool our cities."

## Leveraging Learning

The early July announcement of the Texas A&M grant was announced at Quinta Mazatlan to highlight partnerships between the city and school district on projects

connected to parks and environmental education.

The event was attended by principals of the seven McAllen elementary schools along with students from Sam Houston. Jessica Lowe, the principal of Sam Houston, spoke of "leveraging student observations" by turning the shaded canopies of the new trees into outdoor classrooms. Lowe believes getting outside of traditional classrooms can boost the learning of the sciences, agriculture, history and conservation.

"A student can learn from a textbook," Lowe said. "Adding the schoolyard forests will enable us to incorporate that learning into hands-on experience for our students."

The active sort of outdoors learning as described by Lowe and other educators was



*Jessica Lowe, the principal at Sam Houston Elementary in McAllen, believes that teaching outdoors promotes active learning. (Courtesy)*

amplified by students attending the early July event.

“Having outdoor learning spaces sounds like so much fun,” said Abigail Pena, a Sam Houston Elementary student. “I’m excited to help grow a tiny forest. We can all become junior scientists in working to help the environment for everyone.”

**Adding to ‘Urban Forest’**

The trees to be planted at the McAllen schools add to the city’s urban forest efforts of recent years.

The Parks and Recreation Department has a horticultural supervisor dedicated to overseeing the growth of vegetation and green spaces in the city. McAllen, just through its local efforts, seeks to plant more than 150 trees yearly in its parks,



*City/school partnerships in McAllen are making the city’s urban landscape greener. (Courtesy)*



*School children in McAllen pitch in to plant new trees at the Garza Park at Lark Community Center. (Courtesy)*

near rainwater detention ponds and in close proximity to schools. The new program announced by the school district via the A&M grant augments what the city is already doing.

A local pharmacist and community leader, Danny Vela, says making the city's youth more environmentally aware is the best way to keep projects like the tree planting efforts going into the future.

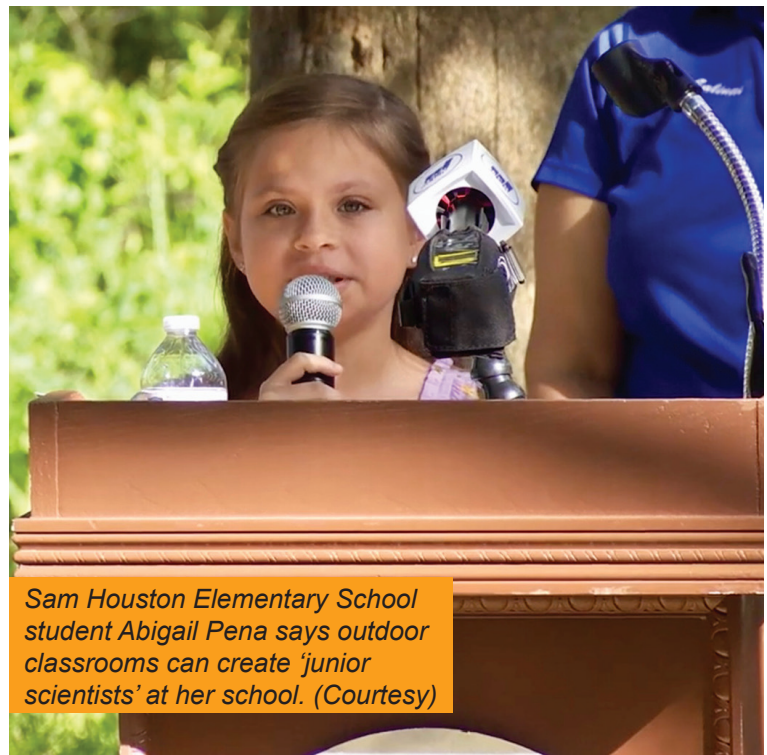
"We need a bench to come in and put projects like this one into place," said Vela, who spoke at the early July event in representing the board that oversees Quinta Mazatlan operations. "We know most of our schools have low canopies, so with this grant we'll address that while teaching our students how to address rising temperatures by showing them there is a solution."



The McAllen school district wants to grow the canopy areas at its schools by planting more trees. (Courtesy)



Quinta Mazatlan Executive Director Collen Hook says planting more trees at McAllen schools is "a top priority" in the city's afforestation efforts. (Courtesy)



Sam Houston Elementary School student Abigail Pena says outdoor classrooms can create 'junior scientists' at her school. (Courtesy)



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# Hospital Launches Residency Program

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Anchu Ann Vincent moved with her family to Harlingen in 2022 to work as a medical records specialist at Harlingen Medical Center.

Vincent, a native of India, received medical training in her country before coming to Chicago in 2019 to continue her education. She is an MD and when coming to Harlingen, she had no idea her hospital was making plans to establish an internal medicine residency program. Such a program came via an announcement in mid-July as the Harlingen hospital introduced its first-ever graduate medical education program along with its first 13 internal medicine residents.

“I feel so grateful,” Vincent said in being part of the inaugural class of residents at Harlingen Medical. “It’s like we’re the face of the program.”

## Building a Community

The first class attracted students from all over the country – and the world. It took years of preparation to gain the necessary state licensures in providing medical education onsite and then establishing a teaching faculty of doctors to oversee the residents. Next came the recruitment of the first class and competing against other medical school-level schools for residents.

With all of those goals accomplished, Wesley Robinson, the regional chief nursing officer for Prime HealthCare, says the new program will add 13 physicians to Harlingen Medical. It could also possibly bring more doctors to the area who will call the Rio Grande Valley home.

“We know statistically when someone practices or does a residency in a certain area, they tend to stay in that area,” said Robinson, an administrator with the parent company of the Harlingen hospital. “We believe this is going to bring numerous physicians to the Valley.”

## ‘My Dream’

The new program at Harlingen Medical adds to similar residency programs at other Valley hospitals.

Many of those are done in conjunction with UTRGV’s burgeoning medical school, which continues to extend its reach across the region. The Harlingen Medical program uses a different model. It was built from

the ground up from a single hospital with no connection to a medical school. The number of residents to launch the program is unusually large and a credit to Harlingen Medical’s recruitment efforts.

“Everyone in the field is looking for residents,” Robinson said of the medical field. “To be able to bring in this many residents into our first program is a huge success.”

Gerardo Davila is one of those 13 residents and his story has a hometown feel. Born in Weslaco, Davila grew up in Monterrey and received his medical training in Mexico.

He says being part of the inaugural class of residents at Harlingen Medical “is my dream” and fulfills a wish to provide medical care in the Valley.

“I’m from here,” Davila said. “I have family in Harlingen. My goal is to help this community.”

Each of the 13 residents has at least six years of medical education in their backgrounds. All also possess Doctor of Medicine degrees. At Harlingen Medical, they will help treat all sorts of conditions and consult with specialists in the different



*Candi Constantine-Castillo, the chief executive officer of Harlingen Medical Center, speaks at a ceremony announcing a new residency program at her hospital. (VBR)*

healthcare fields. Overseeing their rotations will be eight practicing doctors who serve as the faculty staff for the residency program.

**Developing Interests**

The first class of physician residents at Harlingen Medical started their three-year residency in July.

For the residents, it is a time of medical education when they can develop their specialties of interest. Vincent has interests in both cardiology and oncology. Davila has a focus on endocrinology, which is a branch of medicine that treats people with conditions that are caused by problems with glands and hormones. He mentioned diabetes and obesity as areas of particular interest.

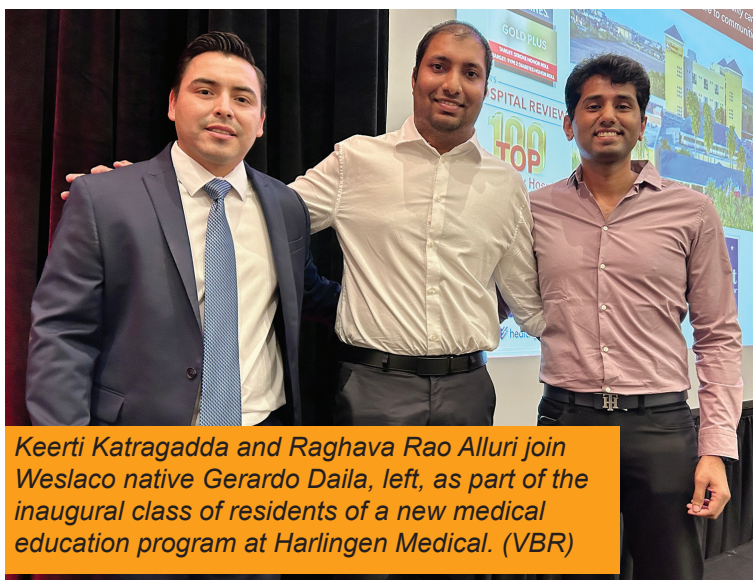
“We have problems in the Valley with those conditions,” Davila said. “So being here, working at a great hospital, I can help to bring a high quality of care to this community.”

For Vincent, gaining admission to the first residency program at Harlingen Medical reinforces the decision she and her husband made to move to the Valley two years ago. Like Davila, she plans to practice in the area when completing the residency program at the hospital.

“The warmth and welcoming nature of the people here really impressed us in coming from Chicago,” Vincent said. “I’ve gotten immense support from the time we got here.”



The new medical education program at Harlingen Medical recruited 13 residents for its first class. (VBR)



Keerti Katragadda and Raghava Rao Alluri join Weslaco native Gerardo Daila, left, as part of the inaugural class of residents of a new medical education program at Harlingen Medical. (VBR)

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# Service Is Golden At Ice Cream Shop

By Chris Ardis

Sonia Marroquin contemplated naming her ice cream shop the Golden Spoon or Golden Scoop.

She also seriously considered investing in a franchise. The shop she envisioned had its own vibe so Marroquin decided to go to school instead – the ice cream school. This wasn't Marroquin's first trip to school. She earned her undergraduate degree at The University of Texas at San Antonio before gaining acceptance into the highly competitive occupational therapy master's program at Texas Tech University.

Marroquin was inspired by an uncle who was a quadriplegic. She selected a career that seemed to have chosen her. Since 2009, Marroquin has been self-employed, making house calls to provide occupational therapy.

"It's what my passion has been," Marroquin said, "working with children with

special needs and educating their parents."

These children served as the primary motivation for Marroquin to open a new business. She attended ice cream schools in Idaho and Missouri. She saw the importance of investing in premium machines, perfecting recipes, and learning how to incorporate air into the production of ice cream to reach the optimal texture and flavor.

Marroquin already had a clear vision of her mission: "To make great ice cream, to provide great customer service and to be an example for others by being a disability-friendly employer."

## Being Inclusive

The children she has served over the past 15 years motivated Marroquin to learn how to make handcrafted ice cream, sprinkle

in kindness and create an environment where employees of different abilities work together to create a truly golden experience.

Marroquin dropped "Spoon" and "Scoop" from her potential business names. Instead, she chose "Golden." The west wall of Golden Ice Cream at McAllen's Uptown Plaza reads, "THE GOLDEN RULE" and includes the Matthew 7:12 Bible verse which says: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Golden Ice Cream officially opened June 29. Seven days a week, Marroquin and her Golden Team serve up 16 flavors of ice cream with nine optional toppings along with handcrafted, dipped waffle bowls and cones. Several friends have also helped her perfect her business model. Deborah Tomai, whose son has Down syndrome, told Marroquin, "We want inclusion. We want



Golden Ice Cream owner Sonia M. Marroquin stands with members of her Golden Team — including one of her sons — in front of their 16 flavors of handcrafted ice cream. (Courtesy)

- |                                |                     |             |                  |                |                        |                           |                |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
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| "MILLIS VIBE" PINA COLADA (DP) | VANILLA             | STRAWBERRY  | CHEESECAKE       | VANILLA INSAN  | THE BOY™-DOG™          | BANANA SHAKE              | MILK CHOCOLATE |

our children working with people of all abilities.”

Marroquin also turned to Evelyn Cano and Esmer Leal from the Disability Chamber of Commerce RGV regarding specialized training.

“They told me Workforce (Texas Workforce Commission) provides job coaches who come in and work with employees with disabilities on specific activities,” she said. “It’s a service provided by the state.”

### Giving Is Golden

The Golden Team also teaches each other and Marroquin is learning right along with them.

There are simple things like not everyone holds the scoop the same way and acceptance seems to come naturally to most young people. Customers will likely notice the absence of a tip jar or a tip line on the credit/debit receipt they sign. That, too, is Golden.

“I want to show my team how important it is to be a giver,” Marroquin said. “We have a job because people are coming to us.”

Golden has a “Blessings Bag” for those insistent on leaving a tip. That money is set aside to provide a person, a family or a group with a Golden blessing.

Marroquin is grateful for the support of her husband and three sons in working to start a new business. She is excited to see her business grow and spreading the message that “everyone is capable ... and wants to feel valued and part of a community.”

The scariest thing about opening a business is “just taking the leap,” she said. Marroquin credits her family and friends for helping her get through “those moments of fear.” The best thing about owning a business is having customers who feel safe and comfortable coming to Golden Ice Cream, she said. She especially values families from her occupational therapy practice who are now Golden Ice Cream customers.

Golden Ice Cream hosts special event nights sponsored by other local businesses and caterers. At Golden’s grand opening on July 29, the Disability Chamber recognized Marroquin and her Golden Team for their commitment to a workplace where everyone thrives.

Stay Golden is her store’s branding line. “It’s a reminder to be kind to others and to be true to yourself,” Marroquin said.



*Although the Golden Team does not accept tips, determined customers insist. Their monetary blessings go into the “Blessings Bag” and are used to bless others who need a Golden moment. (Courtesy)*



*The Golden Team makes each waffle bowl and then dips it into pecans or sprinkles. (Courtesy)*

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