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Climbing the Mountain

by: Todd Breland

The road is never easy, but we keep pushing. Objects get in the way, skies get cloudy, the inclines become steep but we press on. No mountain is too high for the Rio Grande Valley.

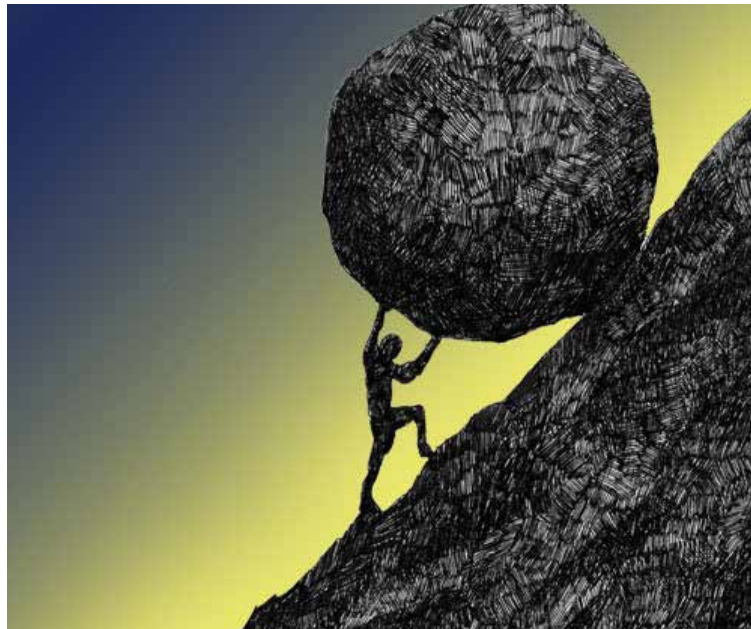
We all know 2020 has been a very rocky highway, but the fall brings promise of hope, a renewed spirit and progress. As a unified region, we fight the battles together. The Valley's greatest strength is US: Unified Synergy.

Neighboring counties, cities and towns pitching in to build one another up is the only way we'll reach the top of the mountain. When our businesses don't offer a particular product or service that customers are seeking, let's refer them to a neighboring company or organization who does. The law of return pays dividends for all.

You, VBR readers and advertisers, continue to use, share and forward content from our publication and site to colleagues, customers and other associates who could benefit from VBR's positive news. And that is the very reason we celebrate our 11 year anniversary this month. Our team sincerely appreciates your commitment to participating as we collectively report and publish RGV victories.

Pressing forward, our work continues to feature and profile local entrepreneurs and small businesses making positive strides throughout the Rio Grande Valley. VBR's mission continues to serve as a catalyst for regional economic development. And with your help, all four counties keep building, employing and prospering even when roadblocks come our way.

Let's all improve our peripheral vision. This helps us see obstacles early and revise our road map to success, for ourselves and for neighbors. We are one. We are the Rio Grande Valley



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Using Art To Boost SPI Economy

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The usual formula to fuel economic development focuses on manufacturing, transportation and distribution.

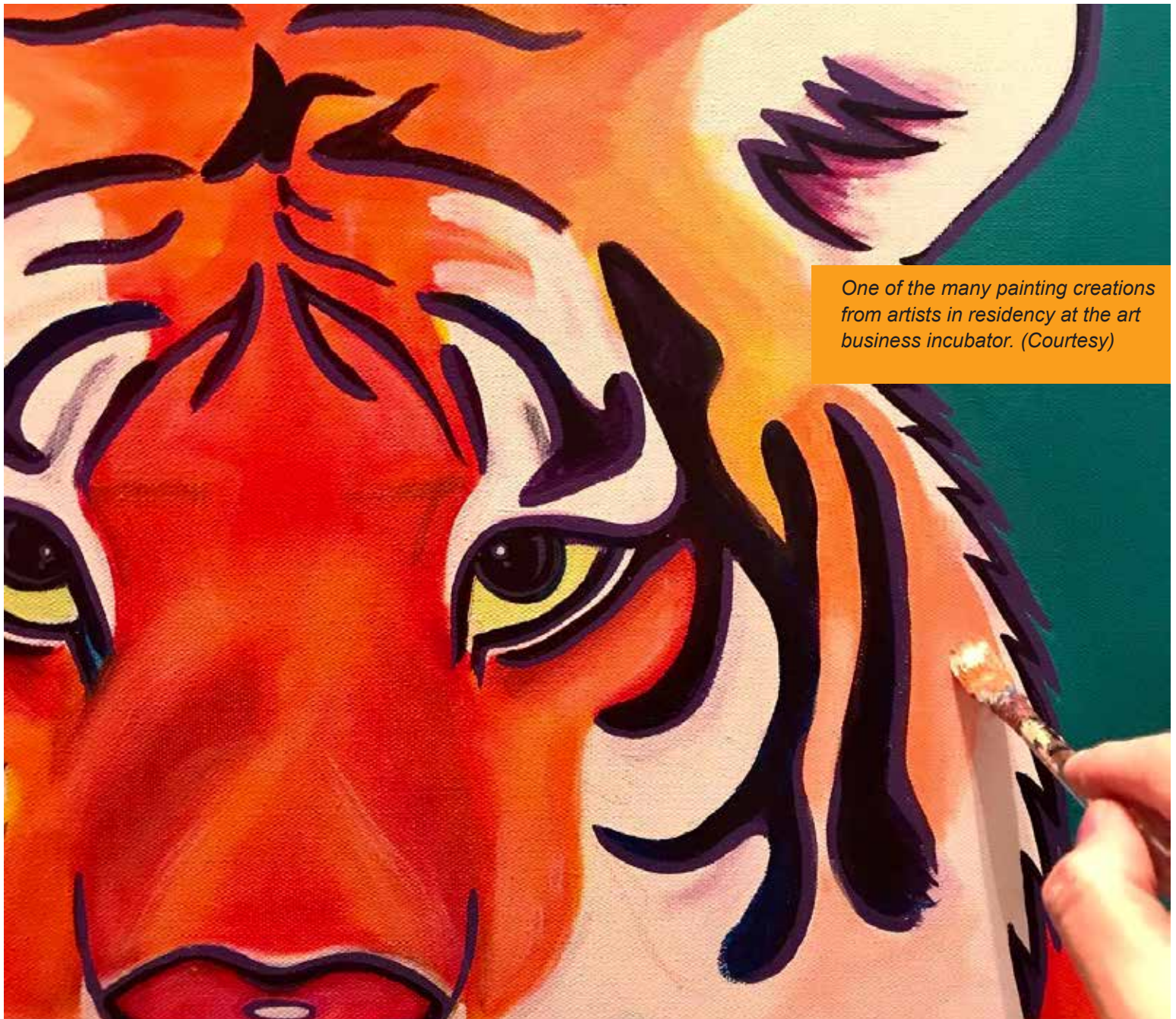
At South Padre Island, the path to boosting the economy has branched out to include art and how creative endeavors can lead to growth.

The Art Business Incubator South Padre Island seeks to give both new and existing art businesses support to establish a presence in the local economy. Its program

director Alexa Ocean Ray is a Laguna Vista native and Port Isabel High School graduate. The University of Texas at Austin graduate came back home to support efforts using art as an economic engine.

"It's really cool to come back home and see this kind of support for art," Ray said. "We're nurturing and growing new art business and encouraging our community through workshops, studio tours, events and festivals."

The art business incubator is funded by South Padre Island Economic Development Corporation and a private donor. It selects five artists a year and provides them ongoing support with a monthly stipend, free studio space, mentoring and business courses provided by the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. The incubator also helps the artists with online sales in featuring their work on the organization's Facebook page.



One of the many painting creations from artists in residency at the art business incubator. (Courtesy)

Developing Product That Can Sell

The artists can come from anywhere although a goal of the art business incubator is to develop and uncover local and area artists. They are free to cultivate their style of art, be it ceramics, photography, painting or sculpturing. In turn, they need to be open to recommendations from the art business incubator on what style of art can sell locally and beyond in the online world.

“We encourage having product that people will want,” Ray said. “Use your style to make something sellable in our market.”

Ray herself knows the importance of marketing and selling your product and services. She worked as a fashion, music and portrait photographer in Austin before returning home in 2019 to help start the incubator. Ray found a viable arts community at the Island. The art business incubator, she said, will raise its profile and presence.

“There are a lot more art galleries here than people realize,” Ray said. “What we’re trying to do is make people aware of the

value of art and the opportunity to grow art business on the Island.”

Creating a Presence

Building that SPI art community is a key component of the incubator. The artists in the program are expected to stay in the SPI/Port Isabel area and establish an arts-related business.

“We want it all to lead to making South Padre Island more of an arts destination,” Ray said.

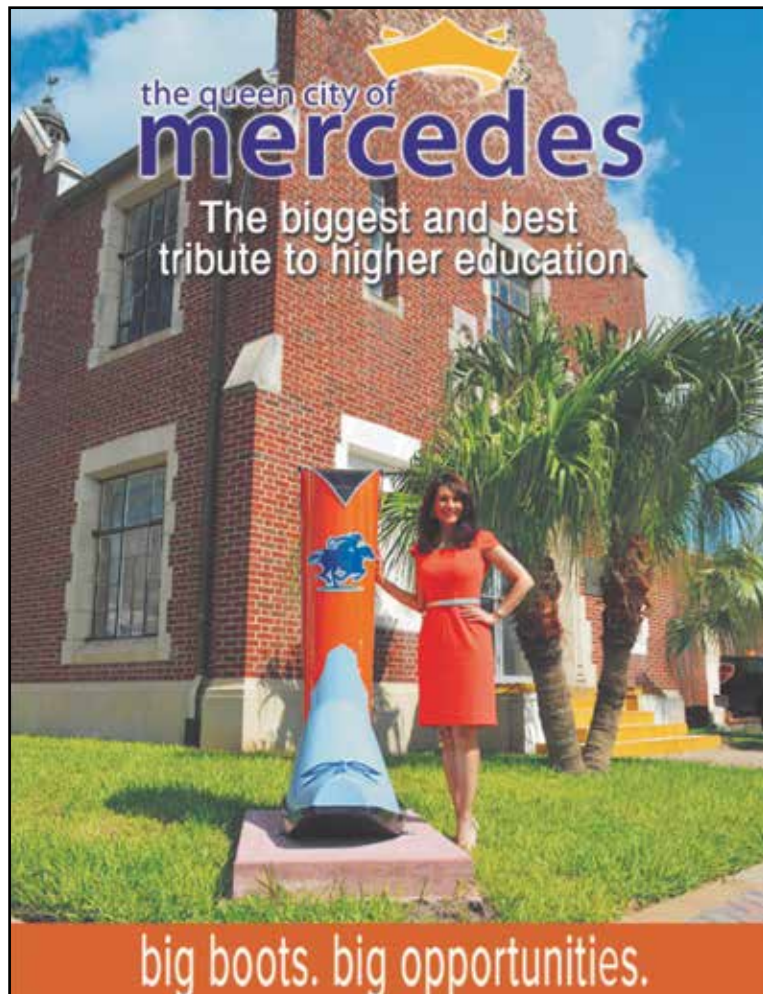
Building a year-round arts presence on the Island is reflected in the festivals, events and workshops the art business incubator sponsors and organizes. The organization’s Facebook page features promotion of a recent workshop on sculpturing. There were also events to meet the artists in residence at the incubator.

“We’re proud to support the local economy through this creative mode,” Ray said.

“We want to help to make it more of a (arts) community rather than sporadic galleries.”



A participant in a community workshop tries her hand at some art work. (Courtesy)



The art business incubator at SPI offers community workshops where local residents can learn more about sculpturing. (Courtesy)

Overdue: Specialist Seeing Patients in McAllen

By Chris Ardis

The MS community in the Rio Grande Valley is abuzz with the news of a new doctor in town.

Multiple sclerosis is an immune-mediated disease of the central nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord. It causes the immune system to attack the myelin, or protective sheath, around nerve fibers. This makes it difficult for the brain to properly communicate with the rest of the body. As nerves receive damage, lesions (scars) form within the central nervous system. The term MS refers to multiple scars.

Experiences Lead to the Valley

In late July, R. Alejandro Cruz, MD, moved to the Valley to work at DHR Health Neurology Institute, thus becoming the first and only fellowship-trained neuro-immunologist and MS specialist in the region.

Cruz earned his medical degree from Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas in Tampico, Mexico. He then completed a three-year neuro-ophthalmology clinical-research fellowship at the University of Houston's College of Optometry under Rosa Tang, MD, MPH. Following was his neurology residency and

internal-medicine internship at Louisiana State University Health Science Center in New Orleans.

In the fourth year of this residency, Cruz was named neurology chief resident. From there, Cruz headed to Austin to complete a second fellowship. This one was in neuroim-



Dr. Alejandro Cruz and the staff at DHR Health Neurology Institute.

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munology and multiple sclerosis at University of Texas at Austin under Elliott Frohman, MD, and Teresa Frohman, PA. Then this summer, Cruz moved to the Valley.

“My family is four hours away in Monterey, and my wife’s family is in Monterey and Houston,” Cruz said. “For us, it is important for our two children to know their Mexican/Latino culture. I wanted to be with my community and to treat them.”

Cruz added that being fluent in both English and Spanish is important for his patients in the RGV.

“This is long overdue,” said Hidalgo County Assistant District Attorney Joe Garcia, who received his diagnosis in April of 2010.

Garcia traveled to Houston for treatment with Flavia Nelson, MD, until she moved out of state, and he then travelled to San Antonio for treatment. Cruz moving to the area is welcome news, not only because his expertise in the field is crucial but also because of the impact it will have on the entire medical community.

“I definitely see the potential for Dr. Cruz to educate family doctors so they will recognize early warning signs of MS,” Garcia said.

Filling A Need

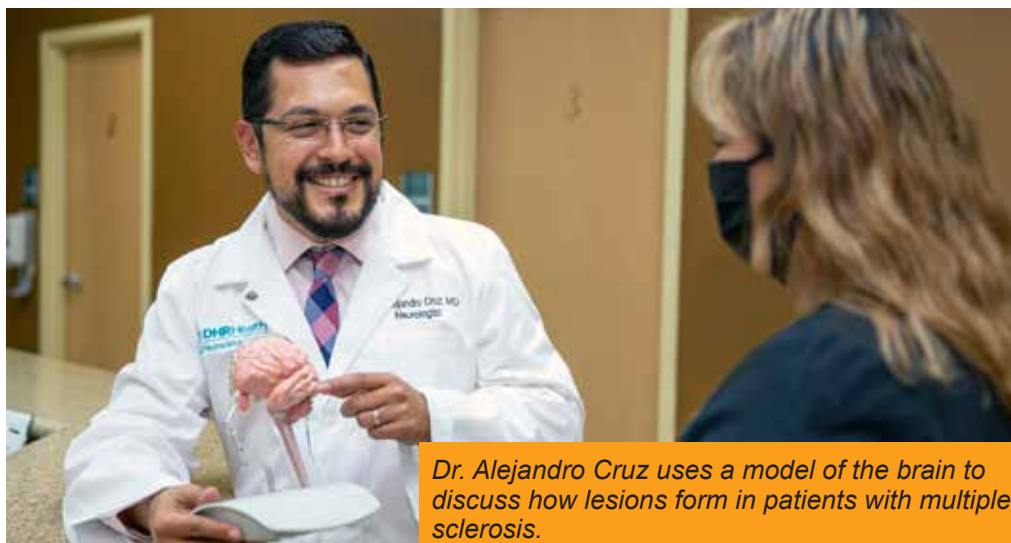
Lucia Rivera, president of the South Texas Multiple Sclerosis Council, says there is an undeniable need for this type of education. Her daughter, Lorena Pena, noticed distinct changes in her voice and speech seven years ago as she prepared to start her freshman year at Baylor University.

Pena spent two weeks in a Valley hospital with no diagnosis. A friend suggested Rivera take her daughter to Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple, where a neurologist quickly diagnosed her with MS. Rivera started the local Council, determined to improve education, treatment and networking for people in the Valley living with MS.

“Now we don’t have to travel out of town to see an MS specialist,” Rivera said.

Trips to see a neurologist in Houston or San Antonio can be costly, she says. This is due to expenses such as gas, hotel and meal expenses.

Cruz is anxious to meet Valley residents living with MS. He wants to share his



Dr. Alejandro Cruz uses a model of the brain to discuss how lesions form in patients with multiple sclerosis.



In August, Dr. Alejandro Cruz began seeing patients with MS at the DHR Health Neurology Institute.

knowledge about what he calls “a wave” of new disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) and to build long-lasting relationships.

“MS typically affects young people in their 20s and 30s,” Cruz said. “That allows their neurologist to develop a relationship with them. You truly become a family. It’s like what doctors used to be a long time ago.”

As for the DMTs available for patients with MS, Cruz said, “It is a great time to be a neuro-immunologist. There is no reason for someone diagnosed with MS in 2020 to be in a wheelchair.”

Cruz, the Artist

“It is like an art to diagnosis,” he said.

“You look at your patients’ MRIs and their bloodwork and you listen to them. You put their tests and their story together to create the correct diagnosis.”

Cruz envisions a comprehensive MS Center in the Valley in a few years, where he will train nurses in the field of MS. It’s where urologists, mental-health professionals, ophthalmologists, and therapists will work together to provide the optimum care for their patients.

Cruz began seeing patients in the Valley the first week of August. Jennifer Niittula was one of them. A former school nurse and field nurse for United Healthcare, Niittula went on long-term disability in late 2019, three years after a MS diagnosis.

For Niittula, blurry vision, weakness in her extremities and balance issues led to her diagnosis. Because of his fellowship at UT, Cruz is well-versed in managing his patients’ symptoms.

Like Garcia and Rivera, Niittula has traveled out of the Valley for treatment. She most recently went to Austin after a friend from high school, who also has MS, told her the Dell Medical School at UT-Austin is top-notch in MS treatment. It was there that Niittula met Cruz in December of 2019. She rejoiced when she heard about his move to the Valley.

After her first appointment at his new McAllen office, Niittula sent a text to her friend, who told her, “I’m glad you like Dr Cruz. We think he’s a special talent and he’s going to be a great addition to the medical community in the RGV.”

Niittula could not agree more.

Producing Health Care Workers In Time Of Need

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The front lines of hospitals and nursing homes are under severe duress – and help isn't coming just from universities and nursing schools.

Employers are in need of nurse assistants, medical assistants and phlebotomists in caring for surging numbers of patients. Career schools with licenses from the Texas Workforce Commission are training and educating these essential workers.

Schools such as Careers Unlimited and South Texas Training Center are working to fill those needs. These schools and other institutions like them are often unsung but vital pieces in the health care field. They prepare medical workers who assist doctors and nurses in the daily operations of healthcare facilities.

Their programs consist of a handful of intensive weeks for nurse assistants training, and also months-long classes and externship work for medical assistant and patient care technician programs. Both rigorous state and national certification tests await students who complete the programs. From there, area hospitals, nursing homes and doctors' offices are ready to hire graduates to fill their staffs.

Addressing the Urgency

The need for medical support workers has perhaps never been more important than it is now. The schools are feeling a sense of urgency to supply the workers needed.

"Hospitals and nursing homes desperately need nursing assistants right now," said Javier Reyes, a registered nurse by training and the director of Careers Unlimited in Mission. "It's an opportunity for our students to take



Students practice skills at a South Texas Training school in early 2020. (Courtesy)



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advantage of the situation and be part of the solution.”

South Texas Training has schools in Pharr, San Benito and Laredo. It has trained certified nursing assistants for more than 20 years. The institution’s tenure of training is being put to the test as health care employers seek fresh graduates.

“We have seen all types of people from janitors, cooks (and) transportation attendants step up to train as nurse assistants at nursing homes that are in great need for help,” said Roman Silva, the chief financial officer for South Texas Training. “We definitely feel a responsibility to provide skilled and trained health care workers to combat the growing COVID crisis in our region.”

Making Adjustments in Instruction

Both schools have gone to hybrid systems of instruction due to COVID. Theory portions of instruction are now online. Hands-on skills portions are all taught at the campuses by appointment to limit numbers gathered at the schools. This includes techniques in phlebotomy, laboratories to simulate patient care and learning how to take blood pressures.

Students at these training schools tend to be visual learners. They learn by watching instructors versus a reliance on book learning. The hybrid system with online instruction thus presents challenges.

“It’s a struggle sometimes to keep their attention,” said Cristina Reyes, an administrator at Careers Unlimited, who with her husband, Javier, owns and operates the school. “It can be difficult to simulate what we teach here, but given the circumstances, the students have to get familiar with the technology part.”

Training students for entry level jobs in the medical field during a pandemic adds an additional obstacle. Some students are undaunted. Others have a boost of confidence knowing they are up to dealing with the situation afoot in their communities.

“There is a small amount of fear that does set in during clinicals, but by all accounts, most students are motivated and feel strongly about finishing training and becoming a part of the ongoing challenge,” said Silva of South Texas Training.

Silva’s schools in the Valley and Laredo offer CNA programs, patient care techni-

cian, medical assistant programs and shorter seminar programs in phlebotomy. In addition to being licensed by the state, South Texas Training is accredited nationally by the Council on Occupational Education. Careers Unlimited offers CNA and patient care technician care programs in addition to electrocardiogram tech courses.

“Vocational training is very useful for many of our Valley youth,” Javier Reyes said. “There’s many opportunities out there for them right now in the healthcare field.”



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Cristina and Javier Reyes at their training school in Mission.

Keto Bakeries Change Lives

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Karla Ugarte and Juan Palma were coming off nine solid months of new business success when they reached for more in opening their second Keto Sweets & Treats.

The husband-and-wife team were building from solid ground with the customer and revenue gains from their Alamo bakery along Expressway 77/83. Moving into the bigger McAllen market with a location near the always busy intersection of 10th Street and Trenton Road looked to be the right move at the right time in their business plans.

It was March 1 when they swung their doors open in McAllen with a splashy ceremony to commemorate the event.

Two weeks later, COVID-19 reached the Rio Grande Valley. Shelter-in-place orders went out from county governments. The Keto Sweets bakeries stayed open as an essential business, but after a promising start in McAllen, the customers stopped coming during those perilous weeks in March and April.



A treat of keto-friendly cupcakes at Keto Sweets & Treats in Alamo.

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“No one saw the virus coming when we were getting ready to open (in McAllen),” Ugarte said. “We had to take on the challenge and keep it going and pay our bills.”

Overcoming Challenges

Ugarte knows about dealing with challenges. Four years ago, her weight was over 300 pounds. She was a diabetic who felt “very tired, very sick and my sugar levels were out of control.”

She recalls a doctor sitting her down and saying, “Karla, you’re a prime candidate to have a heart attack. You need to make a major change.”

She did. The fifth-grade teacher from the Valley View school district near Hidalgo followed the lead of a colleague and tried a ketogenic diet. It’s a low-carb diet that drastically reduces carbohydrate intake. When done properly, the diet can significantly bring down blood sugar and insulin levels.

Keto is high on seafood, meat, eggs, avocados and nuts. The pastries of a keto diet avoid flour in its ingredients and instead, substitute it with almond flour and flax seeds. Avoiding sugar and processed foods are also key to being keto friendly.

The results of going keto were dramatic for Ugarte. She lost nearly 150 pounds. Her health and appearance were transformed. Ugarte’s fellow teachers asked for her secret to weight loss and better health. Keto, she said, and her husband’s cooking.

Growing From Scratch

Palma has a background in the food business. Cooking for his wife’s new diet would lead to making similar meals for his wife’s teacher friends. Cooking keto-friendly meals out of the kitchen of his Hidalgo home proved to be popular. It was 45 customers and

counting when Ugarte told her husband, “we need our own place.”

It all led to a June 2019 opening of Keto Sweets & Treats in Alamo. By then, Palma had taken culinary courses at South Texas College and was further adjusting traditional recipes to the keto style.

“Trial and error,” he said of the process. “With keto, you have to be very precise with calories, carbs, ingredients, because our customers really watch what they eat and measure it.”

The Partnership

At his Alamo bakery recently, Palma highlighted an array of pastries, including keto versions of popular Mexican treats like empanadas and conchas. The freezer up front has keto-friendly pizza and lasagna for sale that Palma bakes in his Alamo kitchen.

“I’m good with numbers and he’s good with food,” Ugarte said of their partnership.

She expects a gradual recovery in business as more local residents seek to stay healthy and lose weight.

“I’m seeing more people who are truly willing to invest in themselves to improve their health,” said Ugarte, who keeps a connection to her customers via texting, videos and a strong Facebook presence with 10,000 followers.

Ugarte has seen COVID-19 reach her own family. She tested negative but had symptoms of the virus. Her husband showed antibodies connected to having COVID but was asymptomatic. Another member of her immediate family tested positive and was going through flu-like symptoms. It has added another challenge to running their business.

“The virus is so real, but we’re on our way,” she said of overcoming the challenges. “We’ve come too far to turn back.”



Above: Karla Ugarte and Juan Palma, center, with their employees at the opening of their McAllen bakery in early March 2020. (Courtesy)

Below: Nuts-based snacks in packages for sale at Keto Sweets & Treats.



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Mid-Valley Pharmacies Offer Down-Home Service

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Hometown pharmacies in Mercedes mean featuring orange-and-white themes and a community's love for high school football.

At Mid-Valley Pharmacy, a Mercedes Tiger football helmet sits up high on a main counter. Around the corner at Coach's Pharmacy on Texas Avenue, the pharmacist is a former football coach. He also wears something orange to work every day.

The down-home connections are especially pertinent these days. Customers throughout the Mid-Valley depend on these two pharmacies to get them their medications. They also receive informed health care advice and encouragement via social media.

The two Mercedes pharmacies come from a place close to home. Three former H-E-B pharmacists own and run Mid-Valley Pharmacy along Expressway 77/83, just east of Texas. John Hinkle, Robert Zamora and Adrian Cer-

vantes took knowledge and experiences gleaned from working for the grocery company to open three pharmacies in the Rio Grande Valley.

The three pharmacists own the Mercedes pharmacy, and Zamora and Cervantes own pharmacies in Harlingen and Raymondville. The Mercedes pharmacy along the expressway in the heart of the Valley is ideal. It opened in September 2018 with support from the Economic Development Corporation of Mercedes. In person or online, the pharmacy and its staff offer a range of advice and assistance, including tips on best supplements and vitamins to take during the pandemic.

"We try to do the little things when the community says they need something," said Hinkle, a Harlingen native. "Hopefully, we've made this place a little better."

The pharmacy is following in the path of its original owner Roberto Villarreal. His photo

hangs in the main lobby as a tribute to its original location in Mercedes on Business 83. Most of the pharmacy staff is from Mercedes and some worked for and knew Villarreal.

"Most of us are from the area, so keeping the community healthy and providing the care they need to reach their health and wellness goals is our top priority," said Mid-Valley pharmacist Ariel Champion.

Aspiring To Do More For The Community

That same theme of being a community-owned pharmacy is evident when walking into Coach's Pharmacy. Gilbert Gomez grew up a Mercedes Tiger and played football at the old stadium by the livestock show grounds. He went into coaching and teaching after college, saying, "Everyone I knew figured I'd be a coach."

At 34 years of age, though, he wanted more



The staff of Coach's Pharmacy in Mercedes, with its owner Gilbert Gomez, center, in his custom orange. (Courtesy)

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and not just the expectations that had settled over the years. He went to pharmacy school at Texas Southern University, using his savings and retirement to help pay for his education. Gomez came back to the Valley after pharmacy school. His first pharmacist job was in Weslaco. Gomez was ready to set up his own business after a few years, and no place but his hometown would do.

At grocery stores and other public places, Gomez found people still called him “coach,” and so it was a natural fit to go with Coach’s Pharmacy. Mercedes Tigers T-shirts are readily found at the pharmacy along with a pharmacist who was once asked, “Do you wear orange to work every day?”

“I did wear a black shirt to work one day, but my pants were orange,” Gomez said with a smile, staying true to the local high school’s colors.

The community touch at Coach’s is evident on its Facebook page where it offers free masks to customers who are 60-plus years old. A customer sent a message saying she needed a face shield. Assistance came from the pharmacy staff

to help with the order and deliver it to her.

“We know the people and we’ll take the extra step to help them,” Gomez said. “Mercedes is a family place.”

Right: A Mercedes Tigers football helmet on display at Mid-Valley Pharmacy.

Below: Rows of vitamins and supplements at Mid-Valley Pharmacy in Mercedes.



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Pharmacist John Hinkle at his Mid-Valley Pharmacy, pre-COVID, in Mercedes.

Beekeepers Protect While Valuing Role Of Bees

By Tony Vindell

The Rio Grande Valley is facing the double whammy with the 2020 hurricane season and the continuing pandemic as the region heads into the fall months.

Area residents shouldn't let their guard down to other factors that could impact their lives. Bee swarms are an example of that.

These flying insects can appear unexpectedly either ganged up on the limb of one's favorite backyard tree. They can be crawling up and down, or flying in and out of the side of a house or an unnoticed crack or hole.

So who are you going to call whenever you run into such situations? Call R9 Hive & Honey.

The Lyford-based service can take care of bee issues a business or homeowner might have. Their services include either by removal of a hive whenever possible or by eliminating the problem once and for all.

The two-person team is made of Julie Ewing and Brandon Jolley. They have been responding to calls from people worried about the presence of bees whether they be honey bees or the more aggressive Africanized type.

"Things have been kind of slow now but everything else is like that today," Ewing said during a recent bee removal job. "We have been responding to fewer calls now compared to an average of four a month last year."

Recognizing The Importance Of Pollinators

She said R9 Hive & Bee specializes in removing a hive and relocating it to areas away from populated places so the bees can pollinate plants and crops. Their business belongs to the Coastal Bend Beekeepers Association. The Corpus Christi-based organization has more than 800 bee enthusiasts.

Glenn Simpson, a CBBA member, said

bees play a good role in the production of food. Unfortunately, he added, their population has been declining due to urban growth and the use of pesticide.

Simpson said bee removal should be done by people who know about the insects. Most people call their nearest fire department when the job of a firefighter is not meant to fight bees. Simpson said bees can be removed by using a type of air vacuum that sucks up the insects and into a container lined with cells for the bees to go in.

Also, wearing a bee suit is a must as these insects become more aggressive when disturbed. Bees have various ways of communicating such as through pheromones and dances.

Pheromones are mixtures of chemical substances released by bees into a hive or the environment that cause changes in their

Bees coming out of a hole in a home in Primera.



behavior. This can happen whenever bees are attacked or feel threatened. Bees also communicate through dances or by circling or wiggling to determine distance to forage. Simpson said bees usually attack because they feel threatened.

“They do so to protect themselves, their family and their home,” he said. “Wouldn’t you do the same?”

He also says if a person encounters a swarm of bees, he or she should approach them from the side, not up front. People are familiar with bee stings, but they should realize bees are crucial to the production of food humans consume. They pollinate crops from one place to another.

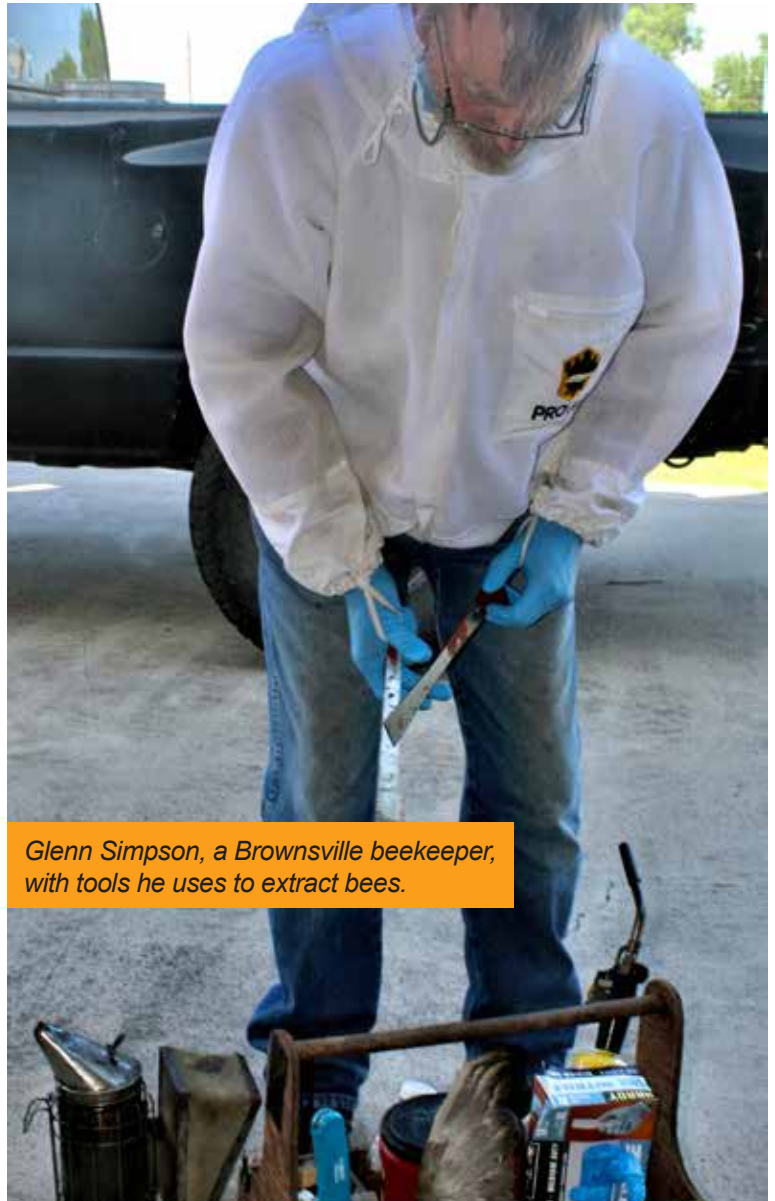
Anyone having any issues with bees can seek assistance from R9 Hive & Honey by contacting them at 956-746-1799 or r9hive-honey@gmail.com.



A bee removal team works to remove a hive at a home in Primera.

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Glenn Simpson, a Brownsville beekeeper, with tools he uses to extract bees.

Making A Buck & Finding A Surplus

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Juan Rosales started out small, buying used books, figurines and old music albums.

He called it “Just Trying To Make A Buck” back then in 2012, declining his wife’s suggestion of “Juan’s Junk” for his nascent surplus business.

“I bought a few things and I got hooked,” said Rosales, a retired manager of the cigarette distribution business.

He then began attending government and school auctions. His purchasing eye fell on filing cabinets, desks, computers and an ever expanding list of categories.

“After a while, I had about anything you can think of,” he said.

Creating a Bargain Warehouse

Rosales went from Trying To Make A Buck to RGV Surplus in 2014. His warehouse quickly became a stop for small business start-ups, schools, medical offices and bargain hunters at large. There is plenty to discover at his Edinburg warehouse on Freddy Gonzalez, just off McAllen’s 10th Street.

Walking into Rosales’ 2400-square-foot warehouse with thousands of inventory items is enough to set a bargain hunter’s heart a flutter.

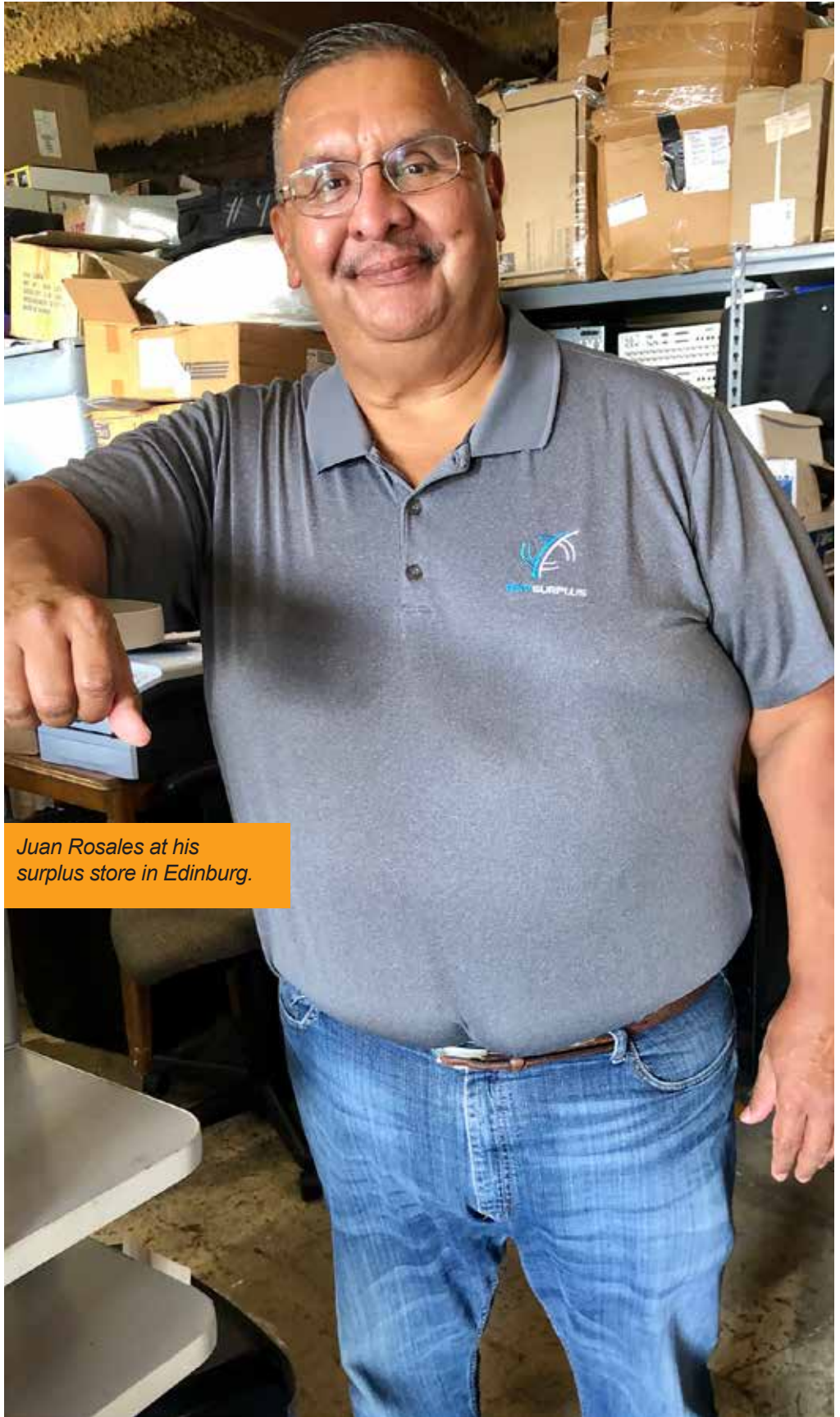
“When they come here, it’s like a candy store,” he said.

Rosales is a bargain hunter in his own right. He delights in finding a good deal, just like his customers. He gains even more satisfaction in helping customers find what they need, be it at his warehouse or helping them find a needed item online.

“I get what their budget is and then I help them get what they’re looking for,” Rosales said. “That’s what I’m here for, to help them out.”

What they need, in the era of COVID-19, is anything and everything that helps his customers work and learn from home. Computers, laptops, MacBooks, chairs and desks, he said, are all “selling like crazy.”

Healthcare-related businesses are also looking for hospital beds, oxygen machines, blood pressure machines and other types of medical equipment. Rosales has big computer screens spread out over his desk. He scans them constantly in going between Amazon, eBay and auction sites in search of items



Juan Rosales at his surplus store in Edinburg.

customers are requesting.

On The Hunt

Rosales thrives on the energy of the business, the hunt for bargains and helping customers who walk in between the computer searches. Home school parents call to see if he has chairs and desks for small children. College students search for refurbished computers as a new school year nears. Small businesses even more pressed to save on expenses during COVID are looking for bargains wherever they can be found.

Chances are Rosales has them – or can get what's needed. His inventory spills out of his warehouse and into his surrounding property. Rosales has been culling down his purchasing in recent years to refocus on inventory that can more reliably be sold. He concedes buying too many items in years past, driving up his storage costs.

Dealing with COVID-19 has further focused his purchasing practices.



Microscopes are among the educational items found at RGV Surplus.

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“Right now, what I’m ordering in some cases is already sold by the time it gets here,” he said.

What began eight years ago as a 100 percent online business is today 58 percent in-warehouse sales and 42 percent online business. Rosales’ entrepreneurship and successes were recognized last year by the Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. His RGV Surplus was also the chamber’s 2019 small business of the year.

“I was always looking for something that I could get what I put into it,” Rosales said of his business. “I wish I had gotten into it earlier.”

Right: Blood pressure machines are among the medical equipment items at RGV Surplus.

Far Right: Chairs that can be used in school settings or home learning are among top sellers at RGV Surplus.



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