

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

COVERING NOVEMBER 2015



## President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

As we head into the winter holidays, we are reminded to be thankful for all that we have received and encouraged to give to those whose needs go unmet. Those twin ideals exemplified many of our activities across the campus in November, efforts that continue into December.

First, we took time to thank and remember our veterans, those courageous men and women who have sacrificed on our behalf. As Rio Hondo, veterans are an integral part of our daily community, and it is quite

moving to see how that community rallies to show them how much we care on Veterans Day.

Our campus community is also stepping up to benefit the neighborhoods where we live, with efforts to donate food and toys to our neediest residents led by our Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC).

A suitcase and backpack drive to help foster children and youths is also being led by our new Guardian Scholars program.

We are also spreading the message of hope and success through our outreach programs. Computer Science Professor Shin Liu and her team of students are sparking a fascination in coding through a series of camps conducted at area schools that are keyed to popular movies and teen interests.

The Rio Hondo Dance Collective is making similar inroads by inviting students from an array of local schools to participate in its adaptation of "The Nutcracker" this December.

Finally, our Discover Rio Day brought hundreds of middle school students to our campus for a day of higher-education exploration supported by scores of faculty and students.

Together, these efforts are an impressive presentation of the strengths of our College and the compassion we have to change and impact lives.

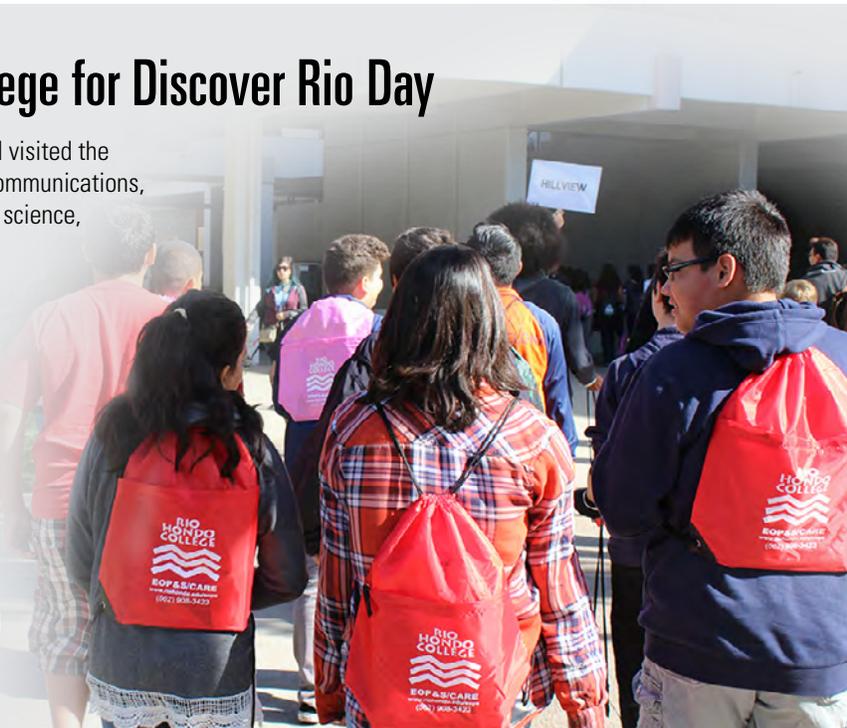
## 500 public school students visit College for Discover Rio Day

Five hundred students from nine middle schools and one elementary school visited the College on Nov. 18 to explore our health sciences, nursing, public safety, communications, Pathway to Law School Initiative, career technical programs and studies in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects.

The program was part of the College's Adopt-A-School Initiative, which spans eight local districts, and included tours, classroom visits and laboratory experiences.

Students hailed from North Park Academy of the Arts, Dean Shively Middle School, Walter Dexter Middle School, Kranz Middle School, Columbia School, STEAM Academy at Burke Middle School, Graves Middle School, Los Nietos Middle School, Scott Avenue Elementary School, and Hillview Middle School.

Students and their school chaperones were welcomed by President Teresa Dreyfuss, Vice President of Student Services Henry Gee, Associated Students of Rio Hondo College President William Ashby and even Rex the Mascot.



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Dean of Counseling and Student Services Dr. Mike Muñoz served as emcee for the welcome and general session, which included dynamic performances by the Dance Collective and Forensics Speech and Debate Team.

Nursing Instructor Patricia Luna provided students with a "You Too Can Save Lives/CPR" workshop, in which students practiced techniques on adult and infant mannequins. All students were given a CPR/choking packet of information to "refer" to in case of an emergency.

"I had such a great time teaching the middle school students how to do basic CPR and help a choking victim if needed," Luna said.

Students participated in a campus tour led by current students, staff and administrators. For many of the students, Discover Rio Day marked the first time they stepped on a college campus. As one student said: "I really want to come here when I'm older!"

All the students received a Rio Hondo College drawstring bag and school supplies. One student was so excited, he immediately replaced his old backpack with the Rio Hondo drawstring bag.



## Board Update

### Rio Hondo Nearly Doubles Equity Funds for Helping Students Succeed

Rio Hondo College's funding for student equity programs has nearly doubled for 2015-16, swelling by \$758,270 to reach \$1.6 million – funding that has become a permanent line item in the governor's annual budget, the Board of Trustees learned in November.

The money will go to help students who need assistance with specific challenges, such as access, course and degree completion, basic skills and English mastery, and transfers. Specific student target populations differ for each group, but include Hispanics, foster children, veterans and students with disabilities.

California student equity programs have existed since 1992, but deep funding cuts were handed down during the recent recession. In 2014, the governor and legislature pumped \$70 million into the program, a figure that grew to \$137.5 million in 2015-16.

In 2014-15, Rio Hondo College adopted its first student equity plan, and officials are now working to revise that plan to ensure programs target the state's updated list of target student groups. A new equity plan is expected to be filed by the end of January.

The funding is in addition to the five-year, \$2.6 million U.S. Department of Education grant received by the College to expand its capacity for helping Hispanic and low-income students succeed. The grant is one of about 87 grants awarded under Title V to colleges and universities where enrollment is at least 25 percent Hispanic. . More than 70 percent of Rio Hondo students are Hispanic.

## Veterans Day Marked in College Ceremonies, Events

Rio Hondo College commemorated Veterans Day with a host of community-oriented activities, starting with the Veterans Club's annual comedy show and concluding with a Veterans Day ceremony featuring the Wall of Heroes.

"Rio Hondo College is passionate about the service we have received from our veterans and about the role we play in helping them take the next step in their educational journeys," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "I was moved by how our community came together – as it always does – to honor these individuals for their service."

The annual Comedy Show, held Nov. 4, filled the Wray Theater with laughter as Benny Mena and his entourage of comedians took to the stage. The event helped raise funds for Los Amigos and VWF Post 10218, which will be providing turkey baskets to veterans and their families.

The Marine Corps took center stage next when, on Nov. 10, the Veterans Club celebrated the institution's 240 anniversary with a flag salute and birthday cake.

Events continued on Nov. 11 – Veterans Day – when members of the Rio Hondo community placed pictures of themselves and loved ones who have served in the military on a Wall of Heroes. The National Anthem was sung by Jess Hernandez.

The day's events also included a special look at the sacrifices and dedication of women in the U.S. armed forces during "Women and War," a one-act play performed at the Campus Inn Theater.



# Computer Science Club Inspires STEM Learning during Coding Camps

Rio Hondo College's Computer Science Club is inspiring K-12 students at schools across the region to explore the world of computer coding during a series of special camps.

Most recently, club members visited Mill School and Technology Academy and Scott Avenue Elementary in Whittier, guiding more than 300 students in recreating the magic of a "Frozen" wonderland. The effort was led by Computer Science Professor Dr. Shin Liu and Club Adviser Sam Stokes of Microsoft.

The club has more than 30 members, who worked with groups of two and three students, using [code.org](#) to help them design snowflakes and patterns for a winter scene based on the Disney movie "Frozen." The game-based approach and familiar movie setting help encourage students to tackle what might otherwise appear to be tough tasks, Liu said.

"Professor Liu and her team are helping to communicate the joy of creation through their coding camps while teaching students critical skills," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "It's a great example of the support Rio Hondo College provides throughout the community."

Liu also has held camps at Montebello, Artesia and Cerritos schools to showcase science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) topics critical to preparation for college and careers. The recent program, known as a "Frozen Code Party," is one of several camps Liu organizes. Others include a "Star Wars" camp for elementary school students, a combat-style camp for middle schoolers and a code hunt for high school students.



**RIO IN THE NEWS!** Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College's Computer Science Club in the *Whittier Daily News*.

# Student Government Leads Record-Breaking Drives to Benefit Local Community



The Associated Students of Rio Hondo College (ASRHC) is on a roll this fall, topping all previous records with its annual canned food drive and preparing for new records as it launches its holiday toy drive.

More than 800 cans of food were donated by members of the campus community during the November drive, handily topping the 599 collected in 2014. That total itself nearly doubled the achievement of 2013.

The group launched its annual toy drive on Nov. 23, with plans to collect 150 toys or other gifts for area children – a 50 percent boost over last year's achievement.

In each case, students are being motivated by a push to help the community and a little strategy from ASRHC: The group is offering a \$150 prize to the club that generates the most donations in each drive, funds that can be used to support activities, buy T-shirts or even send students to conferences.

ASRHC President William Ashby said the student government is partnering this year with Whittier Interfaith Food Center. The center collected canned-food donations on Nov. 25 for distribution to needy families throughout the holidays. It will also distribute toys collected by the campus community.

Ashby said the club is seeking new, unwrapped toys, gift cards and even clothing, with an emphasis on the need for children ages 9 and older. Donations can be dropped off at the Rio Hondo College Student Union.

"This is a chance for us to make a child's holidays truly special," Ashby said. "So many children in our community go without, and this is a chance to change that."



**RIO IN THE NEWS!** Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College's Toy Drive in the *Whittier Daily News*.

# College Collaborates with Local Adult Schools

Rio Hondo College has worked with six local adult schools for two years to plan activities and events intended to address regional adult education needs, Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss told attendees of a Workforce Development Conference held at the College campus on Nov. 13.

Dreyfuss gave the opening remarks for the event, which brought together area adult schools and partners to discuss the role of trades in job development. A related Trades Night event followed.

Rio Hondo educators work to highlight career pathways that include career technical education and trades that can lead to high-paying, high-demand jobs.

A keynote address was given at the event by Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, the former U.S. Secretary of Labor and a one-time Rio Hondo College trustee.



## New Guardian Scholars Program Launches College's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Case of Hope Drive

A new program serving foster youths at Rio Hondo College has partnered with campus and community groups to collect new and lightly used suitcases and backpacks for children and youths in foster care or who are transitioning from the system.

The Guardian Scholars Program, formed earlier this year, is conducting the College's second annual Case of Hope suitcase/backpack drive. Leaders hope to gather between 100 and 150 bags.

Foster youths often shift homes without suitable bags for their possessions. The same need exists when they leave the system. Many must use trash bags or leave items behind.

"Our Rio Hondo College students, faculty and staff are committed to helping those in need in our community throughout the year," said Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss. "At this time of the year, they really kick it into overdrive. It's truly impressive."

Rio Hondo College enrolls about 110 students in foster care or in transition – a number that grows annually. Since the College began providing specialized services, nearly 300 foster youths or former foster youths have received assistance.

Guardian Scholars has partnered on the drive with the Rio Hondo College Foster/Kinship Care Education Program, Rio Hondo Associated Students, Student Life & Leadership and the Concept 7 Foster Family Agency.

The drive culminates in a lunch at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 at Rio Hondo College's Rio Café, where the bags will be distributed to foster youths.



# Observatory Announces Spring Viewing Program

Rio Hondo College has announced its spring viewing program for the Gordon D. Crowell Astrophysical Observatory, a series of nights of free star and planet gazing through one of the largest telescopes available to the public through Southern California.

The schedule includes four nights of viewing at 7 p.m. Fridays – Feb. 5, 26, March 4 and 11 – and five nights starting at 8 p.m. – April 8, 15, 29, May 6 and 13.

Guests should arrive 15 to 20 minutes early and park in Lot C, in front of the Child Development Center. The walk to the observatory is about half a mile uphill. Flashlights are not required.

Viewing is contingent on clear weather.

**RIO IN THE NEWS!** Click here to read more about Rio Hondo College's Observatory in the *Whittier Daily News*.

## Connect with Us on Social Media

 **RHCRoadrunners**

 **RioHondo\_College**

 **RioHondoCollege**

 **#iLoveRioHondo**

## Serving the communities of

- El Monte
- Santa Fe Springs
- South El Monte
- Whittier
- Pico Rivera

### and portions of:

- Norwalk
- East Whittier\*
- Downey
- South Whittier\*
- La Mirada
- West Whittier\*
- City of Industry
- Avocado Heights\*
- Los Nietos\*

\*Unincorporated communities within our District

## Mission Statement

Rio Hondo College is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

## Save The Date



**Saturday, Dec. 12:** Fall Semester concludes

**2 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13:** Rio Hondo Dance Collective presents "The Nutcracker"; Wray Theater

**Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 to Monday, Jan. 4, 2016:** Open registration for intersession and spring semester

**Noon to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16:** CARE Holiday Lunch; Rio Café

**Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015 to Friday, Jan. 1, 2016:** College closed for winter break



**Monday, Jan. 4, 2016:** Intersession begins

**Monday, Jan. 4 to Friday, Jan. 29, 2016:** Open registration for Spring Semester 2016

**Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016:** Last day to add Intersession courses

**8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 22, 2016:** Regional High School Counselor Breakfast; Rio Café

# Dance Collective Involves 40 School Children in Holiday Performance

When Rio Hondo College's Dance Collective began planning its annual holiday performance, leaders decided to engage local students at every level of learning – from preschool through high school.

The program's leaders reached out to Pioneer High School, Dean Shively Middle School, the Hadley School and Rio Hondo College's Child Development Center to gather dancers for the holiday classic, "The Nutcracker."

In all, the Collective engaged 40 students from local schools, in addition to its 12 advanced dancers and 10 recruited from Rio Hondo College's ballet and modern dance programs.

Next, the Collective revamped the traditional favorite, streamlining the lengthy program to about one hour to create a more enjoyable experience for parents with small children.

"We're really trying to make it a family friendly event," said Assistant Professor Alyson Cartagena, Rio Hondo College's Director of Dance. "This is a great opportunity for our dancers to hone their skills during a live performance, but also to showcase opportunities in dance for our local community."

The Dance Collective is an ensemble of advanced students in the Rio Hondo Dance Program who are pursuing careers as dancers, choreographers or in another aspect of the field.

The group performs on campus, at area dance festivals and community concerts.

This is the Collective's fifth holiday program, to be performed at 2 and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13 at the Wray Theater, 3600 Workman Mill Road, Whittier.

Ticket sales – \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door, free for children under 5 – will help fund the Collective's participation in the 2016 American College Dance Association, a national program of workshops and performances for U.S. colleges and universities.

The event will include holiday food and gifts for purchase as well as a visit from Santa Claus.

