

FOCUS ON RÍO

August 2021

President's Message



Teresa Dreyfuss

The best time to start preparing for the future is now. At Río Hondo College, we believe that every one of our students is here because they are preparing themselves for success in a fulfilling career.

Río Hondo College is a place where students from all walks of life can discover and explore their passions on the road to success. Our faculty, administrators and staff are all willing to bolster the efforts of

our students, giving them the guidance to become the best versions of themselves.

In this issue of *Focus on Río*, we explore how our students are preparing for their bright futures and how they will someday soon be contributing to the betterment of our communities.

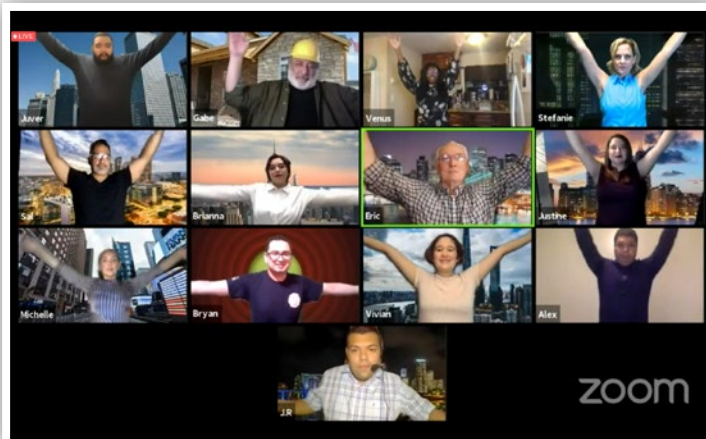
Spirited Performances Highlight Río Hondo College Online Production of Broadway Musical "Working"

Live theater returned to Río Hondo College, with two rousing performances of the Broadway musical "Working," which were livestreamed via Zoom on Aug. 6 and 7. The online production was highlighted by spirited and emotional performances, allowing audiences to enjoy live theater in their own home.

Based on a book written by oral historian Studs Terkel, "Working" is a series of vignettes that tell the stories of everyday Americans in their own words, with songs written by Stephen Schwartz, James Taylor, and Lin-Manuel Miranda. Professions range from long-haul truckers to restaurant servers, call center workers and flight attendants.

"We did it!" William Korf, Río Hondo College theater professor and "Working" director, said. "When the show was over the cast was ecstatic, clapping and cheering for each other, because most of us had not done anything like this before. There was a lot of stress involved, but also a lot of trust. Anything can happen in theater, and I am very proud of their effort and performances."

For the livestream, cast members had to convert their living spaces into tiny theaters, singing and performing in front of a web camera instead of a live audience. The actors also had to serve as their own stage tech, cueing up prerecorded music prior to each song, changing their Zoom background for each scene, arranging their own lighting, and blocking out background noises.



For Río Hondo College theater student Andrea Lopez, "Working" represents her final Río Hondo College production before transferring to California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, where she will study general theater. Lopez served as stage manager and played a supporting role as a millworker.

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RÍO HONDO COLLEGE

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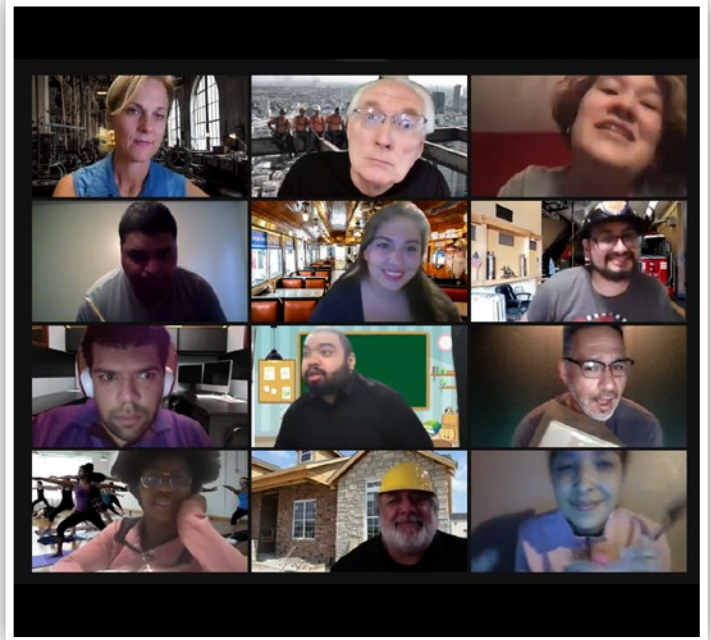
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“This was definitely my biggest challenge. There was no crew, it was just me by myself,” Lopez said. “I would give this experience a ‘10’ out of ‘10’. What I love about Río Hondo College theater is that we rise above adversity. I appreciate so much that Mr. Korf wanted to stage a live production. Nothing beats the thrill of being live, for the actors and the audience.”

During the online production, Lopez worked behind the scenes supporting the cast – making sure they had the correct background, that their cameras were pointed in the right direction and keeping them online if they encountered a Wi-Fi issue. Lopez also served as an offscreen narrator and appeared in costume during the ensemble performance of “The Millworker.”

Discovering a love for stagecraft at Río Hondo College, Lopez has embraced the camaraderie and teamwork that develops over the course of a production. Her love for theater took her to Scotland as part of the Río Hondo College cast and crew of “Hollywood Summer Christmas Show,” which was staged at the 2019 Fringe Festival in Edinburgh.



For its next production, the Río Hondo College drama department will stage a radio play adaptation of Alfred Hitchcock’s thriller “The 39 Steps.”



RÍO IN THE NEWS:
Read more from the [Whittier Daily News](#).

Río Hondo College Mandates Vaccinations for all Students, Faculty and Staff

Río Hondo College has mandated vaccinations for all students and employees to slow the spread of COVID-19 and its variants.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the requirement during a meeting on Aug. 18, in time for the start of 2021 fall semester.

Flex Day

Río Hondo College leaders affirmed their commitment to promoting achievement and providing support for all students during FLEX Day, an annual welcome back and staff development day that jumpstarted the fall semester.

Held on Aug. 20, FLEX Day introduced new administrators and staff members, including Dr. Don Miller as the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Eric Dixon-Peters as the Vice President of Student Services, Cindy O’Neill as the Director of the Child Development Center, Dr. Jessica Perea as the Interim Project Manager of Basic Needs and Tam Contreras as the Interim Grant Manager of Outreach and Concurrent/Dual Enrollment.

FLEX Day was also a time to recognize the achievements of the College, such as awarding \$41 million in financial aid to students, a 21% single-year increase in transfers to four-year universities at UCs and CSUs, and signed articulation and transfer agreements with the California Institute of the Arts.

The event also celebrated new scholarships, a new Ethnic, Gender and Sexuality Studies program and construction updates for the Wray Theater and L Tower Seismic Renovation.





Río Hondo College Celebrates Police Academy Class 211

Río Hondo College celebrated the graduation of 43 police academy cadets in Class 211 on Aug. 11, praising each graduate's courage, commitment and determination in completing the College's rigorous training program.

The celebration noted that each cadet had completed more than 950 hours of training over the course of 27 weeks in 42 different learning domains, including constitutional law, domestic violence, human trafficking, mental health issues, firearms training and de-escalation training. The 43 cadets will serve 15 communities in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

In addition to the friends and families of the graduates, the ceremony

hosted the Los Angeles Police Emerald Society Pipe and Drums Corps, the Whittier Police Department Honor Guard, Covina Police Department Chaplain Ron Butler, LAPD Police Officer Rosalyn Curry and Río Hondo College's Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss and Board of Trustees.

"As you recall, on your very first day of your academy session, you all stood together on a thin blue line of the gym floor of the academy. Today, you are now that thin blue line, standing between good and evil," Río Hondo Police Academy Director Walter Allen III said. "You are the new guardians of this great republic charged with tremendous responsibility and authority to enforce the law."

CADETS

San Gabriel Police Department
Class President and Guidon, Officer Kevin Watson

Bell Gardens Police Department
Officer Joshua Cheng, Officer Alexander Hernandez, Officer Maricell Valenzuela

Beverly Hills Police Department
Officer Claudia Perez, Police Recruit Charles Almejo Cosko

Buena Park Police Department
Officer Christina Beltran, Officer Rene Cortez

Burbank Police Department
Officer Victor Canizalez, Officer Edgar Ibanez-Ortega, Officer Nicholas Munn, Police Recruit Raul Becerra

Hermosa Beach Police Department
Officer Keaton Dadigan, Officer Stephanie De Andrade, Officer Kevin Jones, Officer Ryan McBride

Huntington Park Police Department
Officer Terrence Willie-Johnson, Police Recruit Brennen De La Cruz

La Verne Police Department
Officer Allison Geller, Officer Daniel Salamanca, Police Recruit Ismael Gonzalez-Huizar

Monterey Police Department
Officer Peter Cienfuegos, Officer Connor Crabtree, Police Recruit Christopher Jenks

San Fernando Police Department
Officer Nicholas Murillo, Officer Vivian Raygoza, Police Recruit Timothy King, Police Recruit Brice Knight

Signal Hill Police Department
Officer Fabian Reyes, Officer Ivan Reyes, Police Recruit Humberto Lozano

Sierra Madre Police Department
Officer Divonte Beale, Police Recruit Mark Malone, Police Recruit Michael Patarino

South Gate Police Department
Officer Nancy Elizarraras, Police Recruit Jason Sweener, Police Recruit Mario Valdez

Whittier Police Department
Officer Eugene Bedolla, Officer Launa Houpt, Officer Jesse Rico, Police Recruit Ryan Wurmsdobler

Westminster Police Department
Officer Evan Bruzzi, Officer Khoa Nguyen

CLASS 211 AWARDS:

Lifetime Fitness Achievement:
Officer Kevin Watson

Nike Hill Challenge:
Officer Eugene Bedolla

Scenario Testing Recognition:
Officer Fabian Reyes

Top Marksmanship:
Police Recruit Michael Patarino

Academic Achievement:
Officer Nicholas Murrillo

Most Inspirational Cadet:
Police Recruit Michael Patarino

Honor Cadet:
Officer Nicholas Murrillo

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Río Hondo College Grads Become Tesla Employees

Río Hondo College is proud to announce the graduating class of Cohort 10 from the College's Tesla START program. All students are now actively employed by Tesla as service technicians in California.

This semester's graduates are Jesus Antonio, Mz Zarekani, Esneider Vallanueva, Mpho Macheke, Juan Quezada, Steven Corona, Burst Windwalker, Zac Zelinsky, Isaak Solis, Gilbert Jong and Steven Montero.

Río Hondo College is only one of eight Tesla START partnership colleges, with others located in Florida, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Washington.

Serving the communities of

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

and portions of:

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

*Unincorporated communities within our District

Mission Statement

Río Hondo College is an educational and community partner committed to advancing social justice and equity as an antiracist institution that collectively invests in all students' academic and career pathways that lead to attainment of degree, certificate, transfer, and lifelong-learning goals.



Save the Date

Wednesday, September 22:

Board of Trustees meeting

Saturday, August 21 -

Saturday, December 11:

Full term dates for Fall 2021 semester

Saturday, August 21 - Friday, October 15:

First half dates for Fall 2021 semester

Saturday, October 16 -

Saturday, December 11:

Second half dates for Fall 2021 semester

