

# OPPORTUNITY

# NEWS



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# NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

## Gala to support Promise Scholars

The San Jacinto College and LyondellBasell Hollywood Nights Gala presented by the Sinor Family will take place Friday, May 17, 2024, at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology at the Central Campus.

Hosted by the San Jacinto College Foundation, this black-tie affair will celebrate students and their ability to reach for the stars and achieve their educational goals. All event proceeds will go to the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship, an opportunity for any high school graduating senior who lives in the College’s taxing district to earn a certificate or associate degree debt-free.

“We look forward to a glamorous night of celebrating our San Jac stars — our amazing students — while raising money

for the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship,” said Dr. Brenda Hellyer, San Jacinto College Chancellor.

The Hollywood Nights Gala will feature a cocktail and networking hour at 6 p.m., where guests can interact with students, bid on silent auction items, take part in a gift card punch wall, and sample delicious appetizers and drinks. Afterward, guests will enjoy a three-course dinner with desserts created by San Jacinto College culinary arts students, followed by the presentation of the Legacy Award and remarks from Promise Scholars and College leaders.

Learn more at [sanjac.edu/gala](https://sanjac.edu/gala).

## Community invited to ‘Flock to the Block’

San Jacinto College is hosting the anticipated “Flock to the Block”

April 20. The entire community is welcome to join us:

- **Date:** Saturday, April 20
- **Time:** 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Location:** Central Campus, 8060 Spencer Highway (in parking lot facing Spencer)

This free event promises fun for all ages — from delicious food and challenging carnival games to lively bounce houses.

“Flock to the Block” isn’t just about entertainment. It’s also an opportunity to learn more about San Jac resources. Whether you’re a prospective student, a community member interested in educational opportunities, or someone just looking for family-friendly fun, this event is for you.

From interactive exhibits to informative booths, attendees can engage with the College community, ask questions, and enjoy the campus in a lively and welcoming atmosphere.

Don’t miss out on this fantastic event! Whether you’re a student, a parent, or a local resident, join us at “Flock to the Block” for a memorable day of entertainment, learning, and community spirit.



## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Through April 9	Art Exhibit: “Jamie Robertson: All Things to Your Remembrance”	Varies	Free   Central Campus Gallery (C21.163)
Through April 11	Guest Artist: Neil Jody	Varies	Free   Grant Fine Arts Center, North Campus Gallery (N1.106)   Contact <a href="mailto:joe.clark@sjcd.edu">joe.clark@sjcd.edu</a>
Through May 2	Student Art and Design Show	Varies	Free   South Campus Gallery (S15.143)
April 7	“The Boys Next Door” (Matinee)	2:30 p.m.	\$10 general admission   Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
April 10	Guest Artist: Roberta Rust	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 15	Woodwind Studio Recital	3:30 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 18	Orpheus Concert	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 19	String Ensemble Concert	3 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 20	Flock to the Block	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Free   Carnival games, food, and more   Central Campus parking lot off Spencer Highway
April 23	Guitar Ensemble Concert	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 25	Joint Central and North Campus Choir Concert	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 26	Piano Area Recital	3 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
April 26	Dance Performance: “The Final Push”	7 p.m.	Free   South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Building (S15)
April 30	Jazz Ensemble Concert	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
May 3	Piano Area Recital	3:30 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Blue Music Building, Corbin Hall (C5.151)
May 3	“Dancing on Steel”	7 p.m.	Free   Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C13)
May 4	“Dancing on Steel”	8:15 p.m.	Free   Miller Outdoor Theatre

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu/calendar](https://sanjac.edu/calendar).

# THRIVING WITH TUITION-FREE EDUCATION: HUYNH TRIUMPHS, GROWS AS PROMISE SCHOLAR

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
San Jacinto College

The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship has been changing students' lives through debt-free education since 2021.

One of those students, Lara Huynh, recently completed her first year at San Jacinto College as a Promise Scholar and is grateful for the opportunity.

"When my parents and I first heard about Promise, we thought it might be too good to be true," she said. "After we learned more, it was like we struck gold. My parents were so excited that my tuition would be free."

During the Promise pledge process, even though Huynh felt a bit overwhelmed, San Jac staff like former Promise coordinator Roberto Mendez were there to help.

"There were a lot of steps to enroll in Promise, but I thought, 'This is free college — do what you need to do,'" Huynh said. "Mr. Mendez was a huge help anytime I'd run into a problem with paperwork. I couldn't imagine missing out on this opportunity because I gave up."

A natural science major, Huynh found the transition from high school to college a bit rocky, forcing her to develop new study habits.

"I didn't have to study much in high school," Huynh said. "I got by without it. College has shown me that I can't do

that anymore. I learned that the hard way, especially with anatomy and physiology."

After Huynh's first semester, she developed her own path to success.

"In college, each day is a different chapter. It's fast-paced," she said. "I have to make sure I'm asking questions as soon as I have them. Also, finding a study group is key."

Huynh has also found getting involved in the San Jac community significant to her time in college.

"There are so many student clubs and not just for academics," she said. "There is a K-pop club and a self-defense club. If you have an interest, you can find other students who are into the same things. Finding those people has helped boost my confidence and helped me to make new friends."

In the future, Huynh hopes to pursue a bachelor's degree and a career in the medical field.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities the Promise program has afforded me," she said.

## Promise @ San Jac Scholarship by the Numbers:

- In-district High Schools: 16
- Estimated Savings to Students Since Fall 2022: \$3,850,000
- Current Promise Scholars: 4,538



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

# TURN IMPOSSIBLE TO 'I'M POSSIBLE' AT SAN JAC

By **Courtney Morris**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

What's next for you?

Like many high school seniors, Gary Cooper cringed at that question. He had just moved to Texas, and each day held enough challenges.

Cooper wasn't even considering college until San Jacinto College representatives shared about a debt-free degree with his senior class. The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship not only sparked his interest but gave him a path.

"Two years ago, I had no idea what I wanted to do in life or how I was going to pursue a career," said Cooper, who graduates this May with an associate degree in fine arts. "Now I have a full plan to succeed and am on pace to achieve all my goals."

San Jac changes impossible to "I'm possible" every day for students. April is Community College Month, celebrating high-quality education within reach. With endless options and personal support, San Jac can put you — like Cooper — on the path to success.

## Transfer pathways

San Jac offers more than 200 degrees and certificates. Some paths lead to a solid career, while others transfer to a four-year institution for a higher degree.

Your assigned program advisor will answer questions about different majors, classes, careers, and university transfer options — and keep you in the loop about deadlines, scholarships, and internships.

"Your advisor can also help you learn about universities with strong programs in your major or unique experiences like study abroad or summer camps," Crystal Ramirez Moreno, transfer pathway coordinator, said. "Your advisor is a great advocate to have on your side!"

Not sure which major to choose? That's normal with hundreds of possible careers and transfer universities.

"Remember, your decision isn't

permanent," Moreno said. "You can change later if you need to."

If a bachelor's degree is your goal, your advisor will help make the transfer process as smooth as possible. Moreno recommends attending transfer fairs and touring universities as early as your first semester, when classes are less challenging.

## Student success

Beyond having his tuition and textbooks covered 100% through the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship, Cooper has "benefited a lot from making the decision to attend San Jac."

"Even if you're unsure which career path you want to pursue, San Jac provides a lot of resources that will help you make a smart decision," he said. "Career and academic advisors and professors give a lot of advice and real-world experience that will help you progress."

After graduating this spring, Cooper will study graphic design at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. One day he hopes to design promo materials for an NBA team or music artists.

Also graduating this spring is computer science major Dior Muankaew, a future software engineer/data scientist.

Like Cooper, Muankaew has leveraged San Jac's support network to prepare for transfer. She recommends getting help from the College's academic advisors, mental health counselors, and tutoring center.

Finishing high school at 16, Muankaew found San Jac to be the perfect launchpad.

"I felt like attending a four-year university wasn't feasible for me at that age," she said. "I would have accrued a lot of debt, and I wasn't mature enough to be on my own just yet. So I enrolled at San Jacinto College for the affordability, time to mature, and an introduction to higher education."

## Solid careers

Are you ready to take the first step toward a brighter future? A San Jac associate degree can link you to a high-paying\* career like ...

- Information security analyst: \$110,512
- Refinery operator: \$81,305
- Respiratory therapist: \$76,660
- Drafter: \$57,408

"Don't be scared to take the risk [of college] — it will take you farther than you expect," Cooper said.

Take your first step today with a degree or certificate from San Jac.

Scan the QR code to learn about careers that pay.

*\*Salaries from texaswages.com (2022 wages by workforce development area, median annual salary, Gulf Coast region)*



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

# FROM FIRE TORNADOES TO FOAM GNOMES, YOUTH EXPERIENCE MIND-BLOWING SCIENCE

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Local youth experienced mind-blowing science during San Jacinto College's Mind Trekkers STEM Festival March 7-8.

Held at the Central Campus' LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology, the annual STEM outreach event during the daytime drew approximately 5,300 sixth graders from Pasadena, Deer Park, La Porte, Channelview, Galena Park, Sheldon, and Clear Creek ISDs — as well as First Baptist Christian Academy and The Rhodes School for the Performing Arts. Hundreds of community families attended the free family night on March 7.

Science left college labs, transforming into 100 hands-on demos and activities run by San Jac faculty, staff, and students and community volunteers. From liquid nitrogen ice cream and a fire tornado to burning money and a moment of inertia spinner, experiments engaged the mind — and all five senses.

“Since 2015, this has been one of San Jac’s largest STEM outreach initiatives specifically for sixth graders in our local area and those in greater Houston,” said Dr. Allatia Harris, vice chancellor of strategic initiatives. “Our Mind Trekkers Family Night is also a great chance for community members to bring their families out to this unique STEM experience.”

This year’s Mind Trekkers sponsors included LyondellBasell, PEMEX Deer Park, The Kaneka Foundation, Chevron Refinery Pasadena, Chevron Philips Chemical Company, Arkema,

East Harris County Manufacturers Association, Solugen, INEOS, and Dow.

See the event photo album at [bit.ly/SJC-Mind-Trekkers-2024](https://bit.ly/SJC-Mind-Trekkers-2024).



Photos by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE & LYONDELLBASELL

# HOLLYWOOD

★ NIGHTS GALA ★

PRESENTED BY THE SINOR FAMILY

**MAY 17, 2024**

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS  
NOW ON SALE  
[sanjac.edu/gala](https://sanjac.edu/gala)

**SAN JACINTO COLLEGE**  
An Equal Opportunity Institution

# ART AND INSPIRATION: Q&A WITH PROFESSOR NAOMI LEMUS

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College North Campus professor and program alumna Naomi Lemus is a talented artist and educator. She shares about her journey, which has embodied resilience, determination, and a passion for both art and education:

**Q: Tell me about yourself.**

**A:** I was born and raised in Galena Park. My mom still lives five minutes from the North Campus. Growing up as a first-generation Mexican American forced me to weave through multicultural environments and spaces, and that reflects who I am today.

**Q: What is your San Jac story?**

**A:** I came to San Jac because I didn't know where else to go or my college options. I am a first-generation college student, and all of this was new to me. I started with core classes and instantly became overwhelmed. My mom encouraged me to lessen my course load and look at things I enjoyed doing. That's when I enrolled in painting and drawing classes with Joe Clark, a wonderful mentor. I didn't even know then that being an art major was an option.

**Q: What was life like after San Jac?**

**A:** I enrolled at the University of Houston and earned my bachelor's degree in painting. And then I thought, "What now?"

I applied to several graduate schools and was denied to all but one. Temple University in Philadelphia put me on the waitlist. I didn't know if I would get in, but I remained hopeful.

In May, I got a call that a spot opened. I didn't even think before saying yes.

It was the first time I left home and spread my wings. While at Temple, I learned to stand in my voice. I thought I didn't have the "right words" to talk about art, but my professors reminded me there is no right way to perceive art, and I had something to offer.

I've been fortunate with the professors at San Jac, the University of Houston, and Temple — people who have mentored and guided me through my journey gracefully.

**Q: Why did you become an educator?**

**A:** A few months before my graduate program's end, I sent Joe Clark a message and said, "Hey, I'm ready to come back." Luckily, there was an opening, and in August 2022 I became a full-time faculty member.

I didn't necessarily pursue art education, but it found me. I wanted to give back like many mentors had done for me. This career is perfect for where I am right now. I offer my students a unique point of view because it wasn't long ago that I was in their shoes, feeling self-doubt and questioning if I was good enough to belong. I need to encourage and validate my students' experiences as much as their artistic ability.

**Q: Talk about your artistic journey and what inspires you.**

**A:** My work looks to comprehend generational narratives of trauma through the lens of empathy, acknowledgment, mending, and forward movement.

My search for emotional healing is a personal and artistic

practice that focuses on forms of assemblage installation. These installations pull from family archives, such as handwritten letters, family photos, and personal and borrowed memories. I work alongside family members to recreate memories that have shaped us and our perspective of loved ones.

These works draw from the "rasquachismo" art

movement. Chicano curator and author Amalia Mesa-Bains explains that "in its broadest sense, 'rasquachismo' is a combination of resistant and resilient attitudes devised to allow the Chicano to survive and persevere with a sense of dignity." "Domesticana" is a form of feminist "rasquachismo" — to undo the wounds of patriarchy and colonization.

**Q: Additional thoughts?**

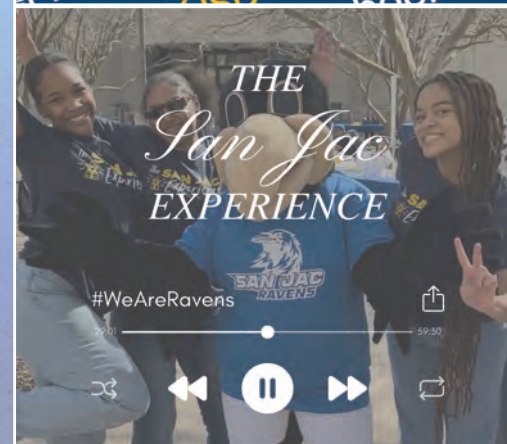
**A:** I am consciously grateful every day for my experiences. I am lucky to be a full-time professor at my age, and I don't take that for granted. I've left myself open to opportunities, and that's been rewarding. I hope to instill that into my students as well.

See Lemus' work with fellow artist Victoria Ravelo at [victoriaravelo.com/work/murmuration](https://victoriaravelo.com/work/murmuration).



Photo by Megan Zecchin, San Jacinto College

# THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



## Facebook

Any high school senior attending one of these schools and graduating between Dec. 1, 2023, and Aug. 15, 2024, qualifies for the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship. Take the pledge today – the deadline is Feb. 22, 2024. If you're graduating from private school, homeschool, or with your GED, you might be eligible too!



679 Reactions | 166 Comments | 422 Shares

## Instagram

The San Jac Experience is a fantastic opportunity to connect with various departments, student organizations, and explore the vibrant campus community. This event features a resource fair showcasing all the incredible resources available on campus, ensuring our students have everything they need to thrive academically and personally. From academic support to extracurricular activities, this is your chance to discover all San Jac offers. Keep an eye out for the next event!



201 Likes | 3 Comments | 20 Shares

## LinkedIn

Last Friday, the College broke ground on a new Center for Biotechnology at the Generation Park Campus. The Center will offer an Associate of Applied Science degree in biomanufacturing technology and shorter credentials for post-graduates to meet workforce needs. Also on Friday, San Jacinto College celebrated the ribbon-cutting for the Biomanufacturing Training Program at South Campus. This program marks the initiation of the College's comprehensive biotechnology offerings, beginning with an onboarding certificate designed to equip new professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to seamlessly enter the field.



198 Reactions | 6 Shares | 3 Comments

# YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



## SAN JACINTO<sup>SM</sup> COLLEGE

### NORTH CAMPUS

5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston, TX 77049

### CENTRAL CAMPUS

8060 Spencer Hwy., Pasadena, TX 77505

### SOUTH CAMPUS

13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, TX 77089

### MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

### GENERATION PARK CAMPUS

13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044

### ONLINE

[sanjac.edu/online](https://sanjac.edu/online)

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## VISION & MISSION



**Vision** — San Jacinto College will advance the social and economic mobility of all members of our community. We will be known for our excellence in teaching and learning, our intentional student-centered support, and our commitment to every student. We will be the preferred workforce and economic development partner in the region and a champion for lifelong learning. San Jacinto College will inspire students to explore opportunities, define their educational and career paths, and achieve their goals and dreams.

**Mission** — San Jacinto College is focused on student success, academic progress, university transfer, and employment. We are committed to opportunities that enrich the quality of life in the communities we serve.

## SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS



A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow's community leaders. For more than 25 years, the Foundation has helped thousands of students reach their goals. Our former students and graduates have filled vital roles in hospitals, classrooms, executive offices, manufacturing plants, and laboratories across our region and beyond. They have also won the World Series and NBA championships, starred in major motion pictures, and created major theatrical productions. Help our students today with the gift of education. Contact the San Jacinto College Foundation at 281-998-6104 or visit [sanjac.edu/foundation](https://sanjac.edu/foundation).

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's. For more information about San Jacinto College, visit [sanjac.edu](https://sanjac.edu).

