

ASHLAND DAILY TIDINGS

ENTRE AMIGOS – MAY 16, 2017

By Kernan Turner Amigo Club

Entre Amigos: Wellness coordinator lauds Sister City ties



The Ashland Amigo Club hosted for breakfast three Guanajuato fire fighters who were in Ashland for fire suppression training sponsored by the Ashland Fire Department. Pictured are Glenda Wood (seated, far left) and Sra. Chela Tapp-Kocks (seated, far right); front row (l-r) Ashland City Councilor Stefani Seffinger, three Guanajuato fire fighters (Lt. Jorge Luis Anguiana Jazzo, 1st Fire Fighter Carlos Martin Ibarra Alvarez, and Cpl. Aldo Ivan Ruiz Lona), Amigo Club President Betzabe "Mina" Turner, former Ashland Mayor John Morrison; back row (l-r) Sean Van Ausdall, Susana Montalvo, Amy Lepon, Kernan Turner, Snow Mountain, and former Talent Mayor Marian Telerski. [Courtesy Photo]

Entre Amigos recently asked for Sister City reflections from two of the most recent Amistad student exchange students from Guanajuato who have settled in the Rogue Valley after earning master's degrees at Southern Oregon University. One of them, Carolina Castañeda del Río, said a visit this year to Ashland by exchange students from the University of Guanajuato's School of Nursing caused her "to reflect on the transcendence of the vision" of those who established Sister City ties with Guanajuato.

The other graduate, Fernanda Krolak, who works for Head Start, said the Amistad program changed her life in ways she could never have imagined when she enrolled at SOU in 2010.

"Little did I know that seven years later I would still be here today, married and enjoying this town that I now call my home," she said.

Castañeda said the nursing exchange students took back to Guanajuato projects that "will have a remarkable health and social impact," including programs for holistic diabetes management, teenage suicide prevention, and health literacy and illness prevention for parents of preschool kids.

"I can only imagine the number of lives they will impact" from what they learned in three weeks in Southern Oregon, she said.

Castañeda is the coordinator of the valley's La Clinica Wellness Program and belongs to the Southern Oregon Health Equity Coalition and the Latino Partnership Program at the Oregon Community Foundation.

She recognized the "dedication and generosity" of OHSU Nursing School professors Julianne Moore and Trish Kohan, organizers of the exchange with the University of Guanajuato.

She said, "the young and curious faces" of the Guanajuato students reminded her of La Clinica Chief Executive Brenda Johnson, who went to Guanajuato as a teenage Amistad exchange student and was inspired to become the leader she is today, "positively impacting the health each year of around 27,000 of the most vulnerable members of our community."

Castañeda said many other SOU Amistad graduates from Guanajuato are working in Southern Oregon, among them Alejandra Moreno, José Luis García, Tatiana

Gallardo, and Yula Mata, all in the mental health sector; and Eric Buenrostro at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

“I celebrate the continued commitment and fraternity” of Ashland’s city government, SOU, the fire department, the OHSU/SOU Nursing Department, and the Amigo Club “in building successful collaborative communities,” she said. Guanajuato fire fighters join fire suppression training

Three Guanajuato “bomberos” joined some 40 other fire fighters in the recent TRENZ fire suppression training in the hills overlooking Ashland.

“We came expecting to fight fires, but found ourselves setting them through controlled burning,” said Lt. Jorge Luis Anguiana Jazzo. He was accompanied by 1st Fire Fighter Carlos Martín Ibarra Álvarez and Cpl. Aldo Iván Ruiz Lona of the Heroic Volunteer Fire Fighters Corps of Guanajuato. They also learned about plague elimination, wildlife conservation, and protecting ecosystems.

All three commented on their warm reception by the fire department, their hosts, and an Amigo Club breakfast. Their extracurricular activities included city tours, an evening of dancing, and building a snowman on Mount Ashland. They said their Ashland visit was “marvelous.”

“We also learned new techniques like plague elimination and wildlife and ecosystem conservation,” Ruiz Lona said. Unlike Ashland, Guanajuato has mostly cedar groves.

Amigo Club reviews scholarship applications

The Amigo Club is reviewing scholarship applications this month from students participating during the 2017-2018 school year in the Amistad student exchange program between SOU and the University of Guanajuato.

SOU recognizes the Amistad Program as the oldest student exchange link among its more than 35 study programs in 20 countries.

The Amigo Club has received more than \$90,000 in donations for its endowed scholarship managed by the SOU Foundation.

Amigo Club's Entre Amigos (Between Friends) column about Ashland ties to its sister city Guanajuato, Mexico, appears on the third Tuesday of each month. Longtime AP reporter and bureau chief Kernan Turner is an Ashland resident and Amigo Club member.