

By Kernan Turner

September 14, 2015 8:29PM

Second Guanajuato student enrolls at Ashland High



Guanajuato exchange student Priscilla Rojas Romero Hicks joins members of the Van Ausdall family outside their residence in Ashland. They are, from left, sophomore classmate Solana Van Ausdall, Rojas Romero Hicks, Sean Van Ausdall and daughter Celeste. Photo by Kernan Turner

A second exchange student from Guanajuato is studying this year at Ashland High School. She is sophomore Priscilla Rojas Romero Hicks, daughter of Patricia Romero Hicks and Gastón Rojas Rivas. Her mother is the sister of two outstanding graduates of Southern Oregon University, Juan Carlos and José Luis Romero Hicks, who were early participants in the Amistad student exchange program between SOU and the University of Guanajuato.

She joins 17-year-old Luis Pablo Domínguez Vázquez, also from Guanajuato, who has enrolled this year as a senior at the high school. Vázquez, the son of Bricio Domínguez and Ruth Vázquez, is living in Ashland this year with Amigo Club members Richard and Suzanne Haveman. He will join his father, a restaurant owner and chef who is coming to Ashland to prepare a full-course dinner at the Amigo Club's Guanajuato Nights scholarship fund-raiser on Nov. 14 at the Elks Lodge.

Priscilla, 15, the eldest of six children in her family, arrived in Ashland two weeks ago with her mother and grandmother, Joan Hicks de Romero. Priscilla is staying in Ashland with Amigo Club members Sean and Catherine Van Ausdall and their two daughters, Solana and Celeste.

Priscilla has already found her way to the YMCA swimming pool. She is a Guanajuato State champion in her category (15-18 years old) in synchronized swimming and placed eighth in a national meet in Guadalajara this summer.

University of Guanajuato gets new rector (president)

The University of Guanajuato has named Luis Felipe Guerrero Agripino as its new rector (president). He'll assume the post on Sept. 27 for a four-year period ending in 2019.

Guerrero Agripino replaces Sixto José Manuel Cabrera, who has been the general dean and rector of the Guanajuato campus for four years.

"I'm excited, but I also feel a great responsibility, the responsibility of representing this institution that I love so much and I have given almost all my life to," Guerrero Agripino said after the university announced his appointment.

The University of Guanajuato dates back to a religious institution founded in 1732 that came under government control 100 years later. It became the National College of Guanajuato in 1867 and gained university status in 1945. Today it has nearly 34,000 students, ranging from high school to doctorate level, with more than 17,000 studying for undergraduate, masters and doctorate degrees. The main campus is in the city of Guanajuato, with branches in 14 cities throughout the state of Guanajuato.

The university and Southern Oregon University have maintained their Amistad student exchange program for 46 years.

Proposal to send Ashland police to Guanajuato shelved

Mayor John Stromberg has turned down — for now — a request for Ashland police to train their Sister City counterparts in Guanajuato in arrest and custody procedures. In a letter sent to Stromberg in July, Guanajuato Mayor Luis Fernando Gutiérrez Márquez said citizen safety would be enriched by learning how “the honorable profession is performed in our Sister City.”

Stromberg responded that Ashland cannot free any police officers to offer training in Guanajuato this fall, as Gutiérrez Márquez proposed, but Ashland could reconsider it at another time.

“We’re sorry to miss this opportunity and sorry also to have to decline your kind overture in the spirit of our long-standing Sister City relationship,” Stromberg said in an email forwarded to Gutiérrez Márquez.

Under the plan, two Ashland police officers would go Guanajuato to offer training and to stay at the homes of their counterparts. Their experience in Guanajuato “could enhance our officers’ abilities to interact in a positive and resourceful way with Hispanic citizens in Ashland and the Rogue Valley,” Stromberg said in an email to the Amigo Club.

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.