



PHOTO BY: DENNY CRISTALES /TM

Place to be: The Leche Cafe and Bookstore, located in Norwalk, is looking to become a place where people can not only share talent but to read and broaden literary horizons as well.

Cafe looks to be next literary hangout

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"A place for talent, a place for literacy;" this is the motto of the Leche Cafe and Bookstore. And Jesse Pelayo's ambitions for a welcoming, the-spot-to-be location is coming to fruition "little by little."

Pelayo is a teacher and the owner of Leche Cafe, a venue in Norwalk that regularly hosts comedy shows, open-mic nights and musical guests.

Holistic contribution of talent

Thought to have been a roadblock, finding talent to entertain the customers of Leche Cafe on a regular basis is not a challenge for the cafe owner.

Pelayo said, "The amount of talent college students and just professionals; it's incredible. People just start coming in. And every day we get about three or four people coming in and saying 'hey, I want to perform here. I want to play here.' So we haven't had the lack of interest in performing."

On a monthly basis, attendees can consistently find entertainment at the cafe, with improv groups, musical guests, among others, regularly performing for customers.

Want to perform, yourself? You can contact the event and talent coordinator at (714) 225-7305, per lechecafe.com.

Behind the Leche

Playing both parts of teacher and cafe owner is exhausting for Pelayo, but he found a pleasant surprise through the willingness of others to contribute and help where needed.

"To juggle both responsibilities has been hectic to say the least. But I'm getting some support. I didn't realize people were so willing to give their time. People willing to give has helped out tremendously."

Suejin Kim, program director for ASES Prep, an after school program targeted at elementary students, for the Nor-

walk and La Mirada school district, is among the contributors.

"We try to bring as much business as we can," she said. "We (Jesse and I) are both fans of one another. I'm a huge advocate of the work he's doing in trying to get reading and literature accessible to people of the community."

Pelayo went on to call Kim "pivotal since the beginning," as she was one of the first teachers to consistently attend the venue.

"She's been coming in religiously. And (ASES members) come and have their staff development here on Wednesday nights. So that helps tremendously," Pelayo said.

Kim said, "This is sort of the perfect environment for not only our educators, but for our students."

A yearning for literary development

A promotion of literacy is a common goal for Pelayo and Kim, and the recent emergence of Leche Cafe and Bookstore is the platform that they needed in order to promote such an initiative.

An overlooked part of Leche Cafe is the "Bookstore." Pelayo really wants to push the promotion of literacy among not only students and kids, but have it widespread among the community.

The cafe has one and two dollar promotions on books, a discounted marketing attempt to push literacy in people.

He said, "I didn't read for pleasure until I was about 18. So it immediately clicked in my head, the importance of books. People don't understand how important it is. I have not had it before, so when I started reading for pleasure it was a huge impact. So much so that I actually became a teacher by the impact reading had on me."

Being a teacher, Pelayo only naturally found a partnership with Kim.

She said, "If we as a school district or a district entity program can support literacy and all of the businesses that are about literacy development, then I think we're working together to promote that in the community."

Kim mentioned how a local like Leche Cafe and its book offerings are merely "one step" in the big scheme of things.

"Intrinsically motivating people, whether they are students in the program, out of the program, in the community, to be invested in and see the value in reading. That's going to take more time. So it's more than just the presence of the bookstore. It takes cultivation over time of the culture of reading."

Although there is an apparent negligence in terms of the book portion of Leche Cafe, the initiatives and the promotion of literacy is a step in the right direction, according to Pelayo. Like Kim said, it takes time.

'Little by little'

There are two challenges for the cafe, attracting the customers and overcoming its seemingly hidden location.

"What I've learned is that people from Norwalk don't typically go to Norwalk for coffee ... People in Norwalk are not used to coming here for that sort of thing," Pelayo said. It's sort of a challenge. And the other challenge is that it's sort of hidden ... there's no visibility, so if you're not looking for it, it's very difficult to see it.

In its early stages, the cafe is not necessarily making steady revenue, but Pelayo is optimistic about the prospect of the business sustaining itself, as right now, his wife and two sons are the ones running it in a family-type occupation.

"The idea is that within two to three months to be able to have enough business to not have to live here, basically."

Pelayo wants the cafe to be more than just walking in, buying a drink and leaving. He wants people to stay here and utilize the resources available.

It's a true love of his job.

"I love doing this. I enjoy this very much. I think when you start planning for a new business, for me in particular, I had a vision as to how I wanted it to look like. And this place, little by little, is looking like how I envisioned."

Leche Cafe and Bookstore is located at 11723 Firestone Blvd, Norwalk, CA 90650

Practice makes perfect for students in next concert



PHOTO BY: CARLOS HOLGUIN /TM

Musical stylings: John Eric Santamaria plays guitar to prepare for the Scott Henderson Memorial Concert. The concert will take place on Friday.

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"We have some great talent around here," stated music performance major Jesus Antonio Rodriguez. "There are students our age who are playing pieces beyond their time. Students go on YouTube and see a 40-year-old man playing and say 'wow I wish I could play that.' Well we have people playing like that right now."

Rodriguez is just one of the performers that have been preparing for Friday's Scott Henderson Memorial Concert in the Burnight Center. While he has been practicing the guitar for five years, this is only Rodriguez's second time performing.

Playing a piece called 'La Cathedral' by Agustin Barrios Mangore, a three-movement piece, Rodriguez is worried about having to omit the first piece due to time constraints.

Zineb Fikri, a vocal performance major, sees the concert as a way to better herself while competing with others.

"I have a very competitive nature and I like to try my hardest to be the best I can be whenever I perform," said Fikri

Fikri has been practicing opera in the Applied Music Program for three years, but has been practicing opera for four years. This is her third time performing at the Scott Henderson Memorial Concert and plans on singing 'The Trees on the Mountain' by Carlisle Floyd.

"When I graduated high school, I knew I wanted to be in music. I knew I could sing, and that competitiveness pushed me to try singing opera," said Fikri.

Fikri agreed with Rodriguez on the talent that seems to be amounting in the Applied Music Program.

"We have a bunch of students in this program who are doing their best," stated Fikri.

These students in the Applied Music Program auditioned earlier in March to perform at this concert. Making use of the practice rooms available in the music department, the sound of their practice can be heard immediately. The performances will range from operatic pieces to guitar duets.

Music major John Eric Santamaria is going to be performing a musical duet with his partner Javier Castillo, and has been practicing for the past three weeks. With help from Castillo, Santamaria composed his own piece to perform at the concert.

"I was jamming out with Javier and he said 'Hey, maybe I can put something with this.'"

"It took us five hours to complete the song. Castillo actually has it down on paper, and we plan on selling the piece."

Santamaria and Castillo also perform outside of the college with the bands Midday Knights and Weird Creatures. This includes per-

Performers shine in music recital

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The Applied Music Program held a music recital last Wednesday at the music department.

Dr. Christine Lopez, director of the Applied Music and Piano Studies Program, was really pleased with the progress of her performers.

"We've had these students in the applied program for quite a few semesters and so I've seen their progress and it has been wonderful," said Lopez.

Students have to audition before the start of the fall and spring semester in order to be in the Applied Music Program.

The program offers private lessons on any particular instrument that a student wishes to play.

Janet Cisneros, music major and participant of the Applied Music Program has been playing the since the sixth grade.

"You just have to go for it and play with your best tone and your best intention of the piece, your emotions, and whatever you have to demonstrate for your music."

Cisneros stated that the pieces she played were difficult, because Poulenc was technically demanding with the clarinet.

"Throughout the pieces, I have to make sure that I play with a warm tone. It's a very beautiful movement and very longing, I am glad that I got to perform it," said Cisneros.

Ariel Salazar, psychology major, was another person that performed at the music recital, said that he has been singing ever since he was little, from there on he has been gradually developing his voice.

"I was actually pretty pleased about my performance. I was really nervous about forgetting the lyrics and I actually did but no one knew because I kept on going."

In order to participate in this event needs to be enrolled in Cerritos College. The Applied Music Program offers private lessons in piano, organ, voice, electric and acoustic guitar.

If students who join will get a chance to work with certified instructors who have experience in performing.

performances at Long Beach Community College and Cypress College.

"If you think sports is tough, try playing music," said Rodriguez" sports may be physically demanding, but music is all mental.

"Students should come see us perform. Some of these people they might just be famous."

Students can purchase tickets at the Burnight Center an hour before the concert starts, or for a discounted price online at <http://bit.ly/1kqbm9g>.

Scan to listen to a concert preview



<http://bit.ly/1pKzZik>

Music Department Scott Henderson Memorial Concert

The concert will be at the Burnight Center Theatre Friday at 7p.m.

For guaranteed seating buy tickets online

www.cerritos.edu/music



Music Department Do You Hear What I Hear?

A piano lecture / concert series held at the Music Department in BC-51 Friday April 25 at 11 a.m. at the Burnight Center Building

Free Admission

Music Department 8th Annual Spring Sing Concert

The concert will be held at California Heights United Methodist Church, 3759 Orange Ave., Long Beach, CA 90807 on Sunday, April 27

Free Admission

Theatre Department The Boys From Syracuse a musical comedy

The musical will be held on Burnight Center on May 2,3,8,9,10 @ 8p.m. and May 11 @ 2 p.m.

For guaranteed seating Buy tickets online

www.cerritos.edu/theatre

Music Department Guitar Ensemble Concert

The concert will be held at the Burnight center Building Music Department Rm. BC-51 On Saturday May 10 at 8p.m.

Free Admission