

Alumni journalist talks shop with students

ALUMNI CONVERSATIONS



ERICK GALINDO '09

LA Times and New York Times Contributor,
Author, and Award Winning Journalist,
Essayist for NPR Station KPCC

Thursday, February 25

COURTESY OF CERRITOS COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Award Winning Journalist: Cerritos College alumnus and award-winning journalist, Erick Galindo '09, was the latest guest on 'Alumni Conversations', a monthly virtual series which highlights the careers of former Cerritos College students. Galindo talked about his motivation for his NYT article, 'The Mexican Beverly Hills' and discussed some of the pushback he received, on February 25, 2021.

Mirella Vargas
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Cerritos College alumnus, LA Times and New York Times contributor and award-winning journalist Erick Galindo was the latest guest on 'Alumni Conversations', where he talked about his buzz-worthy NYT article, 'The Mexican Beverly Hills,' and shared some advice for students considering journalism as a career. Cerritos College Alumnus and award-winning journalist, Erick Galindo '09, was the latest guest on the college's new monthly virtual series 'Alumni Conversations' which highlights the "interesting career paths Cerritos College alumni have taken," on Feb. 25.

Galindo, who is also a LA Times and New York Times contributor, author, and essayist for NPR Station KPCC, discussed his buzz-worthy NYT article 'The Mexican

Beverly Hills,' a story about identity and living in Downey, a town which most Latinos in South East Los Angeles consider to be an indicator of success in attaining the American Dream.

"I wanted to write a piece about Latinos," says Galindo, "They're not victims, they're hard-working people. There's so many layers to Latinidad that I wanted to peel off a little bit of the onion for them."

Galindo says he was motivated to write this article to show a side of the Latino community that the mainstream media historically doesn't show.

Not all Latinos are struggling and many are living a life of success and wealth in this country "without having to give up ties to their respective and diverse Latin American cultures."

Galindo said he received a lot of criticism, mainly from people who took offense to the name of the article itself.

Some didn't like how it labeled all

Latinos as Mexicans. Others thought that by calling it Beverly Hills, it dismisses the real life struggles Downey residents experience.

The Cerritos College Alumni said he purposely chose the name as satire -- of course, not all Latinos living in Downey are Mexican -- and is also aware that calling it 'Beverly Hills' only centers success through a white lens.

During his time as a student at Cerritos College, Galindo remembers his journalism professor and former department chair, Rich Cameron, telling him "For every hate mail, there are usually five people who love it." He added that he copes with hate mail through laughter.

Galindo also gave advice to students who are either thinking about or working on their career in journalism, emphasizing the importance of being adaptable as a journalist, in an industry that is ever-evolving thanks to the internet and social

media.

"You need to be strong with storytelling and learn where storytelling fits in these new tools. Like how to tell a story in a 15-second TikTok or in a Twitter thread."

He likened the profession of journalism to a business where one must have a strategy, learn to pitch and sell their ideas and make network connections. "Just be friendly with people," he added.

Galindo also spoke about his experiences throughout his journalism career and what it's like being a Latino in a white-dominated industry.

He described how racial discrimination has shifted from blatant racist comments in the workplace, to a more subtle form of racial discrimination, or micro-aggressions.

"White editors won't trust a quote I have from Latino or Black sources..."

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)



Community page 3: LA PPL vs BLM



A & E page 8: Cerritos Alumni Art Gallery



Sports page 12: Kinesology major for a career

Cerritos ranks ninth for hispanic students

Based on enrollment numbers and degrees granted, Cerritos is considered top rate for hispanic students in the US.

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In this year's Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine, Cerritos College was number nine out of the top 25 community colleges across the United States for highest number of Hispanics students. It ranked 19th for total of Associates of Arts degrees granted.

With Texas running as number one, California was ranked 2nd across the states with the highest number of Latin students enrolled and a total number of AA degrees granted.

"It has been a huge accomplishment for the school to be recognized for all of their hard work, students and faculty both have had the same goal to do better and accomplish an academic dream and they are," said Dr. Jose Fierro, President and Superintendent of Cerritos College.

According to Dr. Fierro, students at Cerritos College



TALON MARKS ARCHIVES

Top Ten: Cerritos College ranked 9th for colleges with Hispanic students. President Jose Fierro hopes to increase this ranking and number of AA degrees granted, as of March 23, 2021..

come here to open new doors for themselves.

Whether by completing their next step in their academic career to transfer to a 4-year university or by beginning a technical career, Cerritos College offers many options for them.

"I expect in the years to come to be in the top five of this category, to rank a little higher as I know the school can," Fierro

said.

"It's not only about the ranking but I know there is more room to grow, to have progress in completion in rates of graduates and closing achievement gaps.

To change those student needs and translate those needs to graduation rates and job opportunities for our students," he said.

Dr. Fierro also mentioned that

what this means for the college itself is that it is finally receiving the recognition and validation of all of the students and faculty's hard work, when more and more students are graduating.

An award like this might demonstrate a tangible example for upcoming students at Cerritos that the school can make a difference if they are considering attending the college.

Learning that the college you plan to go to to further your academic career has a ranking like this might encourage you to attend the college and add to that percentage of graduates.

Cerritos College has a massive variety of careers you can pursue and also offers all of their students the needed services, aid and help to do so.

Evelyn Gonzalez, a third semester student, said "Attending Cerritos College has allowed me to further pursue my education while still being close to home and guiding me towards the academic goal I am aiming for."

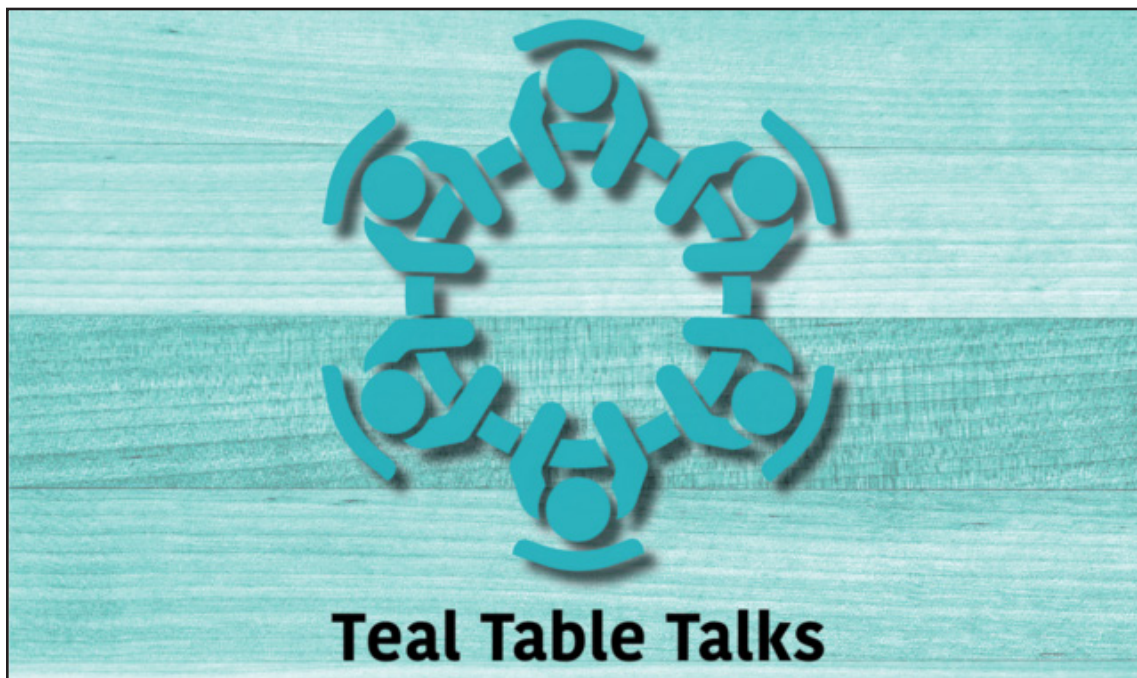
"Cerritos has allowed me to meet people that are on the same path as me and encourage each other to push ourselves and get to the finish line, which is graduating," Gonzalez said

Cerritos College is ranked number 9 because of the positive and encouraging atmosphere it provides to its students and will continue to get higher on this list as the graduation percentage keeps rising in the years to come.

For the full list of rankings and other related news, visit www.hispanicoutlook.com.

For further information about Cerritos College and its programs go to the Cerritos College website, www.cerritos.edu.

Teal Table Talks sex trafficking



COURTESY OF CERRITOS COLLEGE

Self-care: Teal Table Talks is a virtual monthly gathering for self-care or personal awareness through participation in a guided group activity or discussion. There is a different topic/activity every month on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Jacqueline Cochran
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Cerritos Colleges' Falcon Safe, in conjunction with YWCA of Greater Los Angeles, sponsored a Teal Table Talks on Feb. 25. Teal Table Talks are monthly virtual gatherings to promote self-care and personal awareness through participation in a guided group activity or discussion.

The guided discussion was on substance abuse and its role in Human Sex Trafficking. Stephany Ramos, the guest speaker, is a

Human Trafficking Coordinator for the YMCA of Greater Los Angeles.

She discussed how traffickers use drugs as recruitment measures. They may go after those that are already known drug users. They also use drugs as a way to control the victim and keep them trapped in the trafficking situation.

Drugs are also used as a coping mechanism. "Many of the victims are being forced to have sex with anywhere from 25 to 35 men per day. The drugs are given to help them keep up with the demand

or sometimes as a punishment," Ramos said.

The traffickers may also ask for drugs in exchange for their victims and, in some cases, force victims to sell drugs for them as well as being sexually exploited.

The sad reality is that trafficking of illegal drugs and human trafficking quite often operate in tandem. Victims smuggle drugs across borders and are used as bait to recruit more people to continue this work.

Many victims use alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism for their feelings about being sexually

assaulted. Post-traumatic stress disorder often plagues victims, and drugs mitigate the symptoms of the disorder.

"Rape victims are 3.4 times more likely to use marijuana, 5.3 times more likely to use prescription drugs for non-medical purposes, 6.4 times more likely to use cocaine and 10 times more likely to use hard drugs other than cocaine," Ramos said.

According to Ramos, human trafficking affects every demographic and culture. The traffickers exploit vulnerabilities to acquire more victims and it is this ability that is paramount regardless of socioeconomic background, race or gender.

"College students are vulnerable and at risk. Traffickers have switched to online recruitment using social media platforms to reach a whole new audience of victims.

Other risk factors include history of childhood abuse, prior involvement in the child welfare system, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, family background strife with violence, abuse and conflict, a need to be loved, immigration status and lack of a strong support system.

At the end of the discussion Gray offered an opportunity for attendees to participate in an activity to help with losses of loved ones. "With the pandemic a lot of people are having to face losing someone. It has been hard for some to face. There have been so many people affected and it's difficult to deal with," Gray said.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WHAT TO KNOW

Trafficking involves transporting someone into a situation of exploitation. This can include forced labor, marriage, prostitution and organ removal. It is also known as trafficking of persons or modern slavery.

It is estimated that internationally there are between 20 million and 40 million people in modern slavery today. Many cases go unreported, this number may be higher.

Reports indicate that a large number of child sex trafficking survivors in the use were at one time in the foster care system.

Human Trafficking earns global profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers.

dosomething.org

Created by Jacqueline Cochran

JACQUELINE COCHRAN/TM

Statistics: *Dosomething.org* estimates about 50,000 people are trafficked into the US each year, most often from Mexico and the Philippines.

LA PPL responds to BLM's demands

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The Los Angeles Police Protective League responded to Black Lives Matter's demands on March 10. The movement held its third weekly protest outside the league's headquarters in Downtown Los Angeles where they called for abolishing the LAPD and removing the PPL from the House of Labor.

The PPL represents close to 10,000 LAPD officers and provides them with benefits such as administrative aid and legal defense.

"Their proposal is incredibly reckless," said Dustin DeRollo, the league's public relations representative. "That would be literally catastrophic for the people of Los Angeles and for the safety of LA residents. You'd be talking about no ability to protect folks from sexual assault, from the incredible increase in killings and shooting we've seen over the last year here in Los Angeles."

"You would literally have a city of chaos," he said.

Some members of BLM have instead called for the defunding of the police. Supporters say that the 54% of the LA city budget they receive is too much, and



VINCENT N. MEDINA/TM

BLM co-founder: BLM organizer Tabatha Jones Jolivet speaks during a protest on March 8, 2021. She said BLM does not negotiate with any organization that represents "police power."

their funding should be a fraction of what it is now.

"It's actually not 54%, that's a budget in terms of art that they are using. The current funding for the LAPD keeps us at bare-bones staffing," said the PR representative. "We've had to close specialized units such as detectives, gang-enforcement details, detectives working on robbery-homicide. Further cuts to the budget only do things like make it necessary to cut back further on those types of actions and investigations."

DeRollo estimates that LAPD actually receives about 40% of the city budget.

Despite BLM's growing number of supporters, the LAPD and the PPL have not reached

out to them to negotiate on their demands.

"They're not an organization we would negotiate with," DeRollo stated. "There is not a request to talk with us. There has never been a solution provided at all. That's a fact."

"We want to create solutions. To the extent that any group continues to focus on divisiveness, promoting unworkable ideas, is not going to do anything to improve police and community relationships," he concluded.

The representative also refused to provide contact information for other league organizers and directors for further questions.

DeRollo stated that BLM has

every right to protest in front of the league and is exercising the First Amendment.

The Black Lives Matter movement's organizers and leaders responded to DeRollo's statements at Wednesday's protest, where supporters gathered in large numbers despite heavy rain.

Dr. Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of Black Lives Matter, responded directly to DeRollo's statement that the league would not negotiate with the movement.

"We wouldn't negotiate with them either. We don't negotiate with terrorists," Abdulla said.

The co-founder also said only a police apologist or policing member would agree with the

PPL describing BLM's demands as reckless and chaotic.

"The police associations only advocate for their own very narrow self-interest, and that has brought on the murders of our people," she said.

Long-time BLM activist Baba Akili passionately mirrored BLM's disinterest in negotiating with police or any police organizations.

"They have extorted. They have bullied people. And every year the budget has gone up because of that. We don't have anything to say to them," Akili continued, "and I suspect they don't have very much to say to us."

Akili's response to the PPL's claims the police budget is closer to 40% rather than 54% was that they are lying and hiding where the money is spent.

"They are one of the few departments that don't submit a binder for their budget," Akili claimed.

BLM supporter Faith Northern said it's "heartbreaking" that the PPL has no plans to negotiate with the movement.

"People are working hard to make their voices heard, and it's sad the police won't hear out the people they swore to protect," Northern said.

"I don't understand how police prevent crime. I feel that they punish crime more than they prevent it," said supporter Molly McLean.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Anti-Asian hate protests in SoCal

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End Asian hate demonstrations were held across LA County on March 20 in response to the recent hate crimes toward Asian-Americans.

A "Skate to End Hate" protest was held at OC Great Park in Irvine, where demonstrators rode through the park to advocate for an end to Asian hate crimes. They also rode to support the families of the people who died in the allegedly Asian-targeted massacre in Atlanta, GA, on March 16.

That evening a "Stop the Asian Hate" vigil for the victims was held in Alhambra, where hundreds of supporters paid their respects with candles, flowers and moving speeches about Asian discrimination.

Kaila Karns organized the protest at OC Great Park after learning of similar demonstrations in Northern California.

"Everyone is just pissed right now. There's a lot of hurt



VINCENT N. MEDINA/TM

Ending Asian Hate: Dozens attended the protest in Irvine on March 20, 2021. Supporters marched and carried banners with messages of unity.

feelings," said Karns. "There's a lot of frustration that nobody is taking this seriously."

The 23-year-old model was deeply heartbroken over the Asian-targeted massacre in Atlanta. Karns recognized that one of the victims could have been her mother, who also works in a salon.

"My mom is Korean. She's an immigrant. What happened to these victims, in particular Hyun Jung Grant, that could have been my mom," Karns said. "This has to stop. We can't do this anymore."

The Korean activist led dozens of supporters around

the park, chanting and waving signs with messages of peace such as "Love is a Vaccine" and "Stop Asian Hate." A majority of protesters rode skates, bikes and skateboards, while other demonstrators marched behind them.

"It's time to take a stand against this. It's time for us to stand together and stop everything that is going on," said Talia Lostphy, one of the first demonstrators to arrive.

Lostphy cited white supremacy and racist remarks.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Protests at Echo Park Lake

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LAPD erected a fence around Echo Park Lake's perimeter after an evening of confrontations between police and protestors resisting the city's attempt to evict unhoused people from the park on March 24.

According to the Twitter account Recon Source LA, hundreds of supporters attempted to block the police from the park by joining hands and blocking the street. Law enforcement in riot gear responded by blocking exit routes and forming a scrimmage line.

At 11 p.m., LAPD tear-gassed peaceful protesters and broke a protester's arm during the encounter. Law enforcement also placed a chain-link fence around the park to keep people out, but the fence was also trapping the unhoused persons inside.

At midnight police arrested one protester then announced the unhoused could spend the rest of the night in the park. Protesters vowed to return later that evening to protect the rest of the unhoused

camp in the park.

By the morning of March 25, the LAPD blocked every intersection leading to the park, barring advocates and press from entering Echo Park Lake or surrounding streets. Police only allowed the unhoused to exit through one opening to be boarded on busses and taken to a hotel for temporary housing.

It is unclear how the LAPD planned to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 while relocating and removing people experiencing homelessness.

LAPD Officer Valasquez stated the unhoused were being moved for renovations to the park.

"It's dangerous having them around the machinery. It's a safety hazard," the officer stated. "I know they are moving them to hotel rooms in the meantime. I know they have resources like rehab centers and job resources. It's pretty cool the stuff they have, and it's easily accessible."

Two men sitting on the curb of Park Avenue and Glendale Boulevard expressed concerns about their shelters and the property within them, which they had to leave behind while exiting the park. They said that they opted out of the temporary housing.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

LBUSD reopens in-person learning

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The Long Beach Unified School District approved the COVID-19 Pandemic School Opening and Safety Plan to allow elementary, middle and high schools to return to campus.

Elementary schools will return for in-person learning on March 29.

Middle school students will go back to campus on April 20. High school seniors will go back on April 19 and freshman, sophomores and juniors will go back on April 26.

The Long Beach Health Department approved the district's reopening plan on March 8.

According to the LBUSD website, elementary students will take a survey and decide whether they want to go back to in-person learning or stay home and do their courses online.

They announced that middle and high school students would

get the same choice.

Masks will be enforced at all times for students and faculty on campus.

Teachers will be socially distanced while in the classroom and the district stated that the Coronavirus vaccine is optional for instructors.

Long Beach Polytechnic High School teacher Danielle Sawyer explained the new protocols.

"What are the COVID-19 vaccination protocols? There is none," she explained.

"It's optional at this time because it was an emergency approval by the FDA. So when it was an emergency approval like that, it can not be made mandatory in regards to a connection for employment. So at this point, Long Beach offers all their teachers a vaccine if they want it, but only teachers who want to get it can sign up to get it. Teachers must go to campus on April 12, so they can be prepared for their students when they return to school."

"Every single teacher's temperature has to be taken and survey questions have to be asked before they're allowed on campus," Sawyer says. "We have to maintain a certain amount of cleanliness in our own room during the day. Responsibilities in order to meet certain requirements like wiping down computer keyboards, tables, desks, high traffic areas like doorknobs and other places that the kids might touch. So we have to take on those roles in between each period."

Sawyer also explained the struggle instructors are facing to teach students in-person and at home.

"We also have to teach two different classes at the same time. We teach the kids who have chosen to stay home and finish up the semester online and we teach the kids in the classroom," the instructor said. "We can not interact with kids. Like if there are kids that have chosen to come back to campus we can't hand them supplies, give them



COURTESY OF LBUSD

School opening: LBUSD reopened elementary schools for in-person learning on March 29, 2021. Middle and high schools will return to campus by April.

handouts, sit next to them, we can't help through an assignment, we have to keep away from them at least six-feet."

"We can't meet any of our colleagues, we have stay isolated in our rooms, and if we are experiencing any possible COVID-19 symptoms we have to call the school and then we have to quarantine ourselves until we

get a test and it shows negative, and if it shows positive, we have to stay home 14 days without pay."

The Long Beach Unified School District did not return calls for a comment on their reopening plan.

For more information on the district's reopening plan, go to www.lbschools.net

NLMUSD reopens in-person learning for K-5 grades



COURTESY OF NLMUSD

In-person learning: NLMUSD sent students in grades K-2 back to in-person learning on March 29, 2021. Grades 3-5 will return on April 12.

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The Norwalk-La Mirada School district plans to send elementary students back to school for in-person learning after the NLMUSD School Board voted to reopen campuses. The plan is for preschool and grades K-2 to return on March 29.

Head Start and grades 3-5 will come back on April 12.

Superintendent John Lopez said, "Class sizes will fluctuate, ranging somewhere around six to

12 students per class."

According to Lopez, the class sizes could possibly reach 16 students depending on how many choose to return.

Parents and guardians can choose whether they want their child to return to in-person classes or to continue remote learning.

According to the district website, the students who return to in-person classes will be put in two separate groups by the district. Group A will attend in-person classes Monday and Tuesday while Group B will

attend in-person classes Thursday through Friday.

To minimize the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safest environment for students, the NLMUSD is requiring everyone returning to campus to wear a mask at all times.

The website also emphasized that all safety and health protocols in each school's COVID-19 plan must be followed. Temperature checks will be mandatory before entering campus as well as daily self-screening at home.

Read more at Talonmarks.com

Downey Unified reopens in-person learning for everyone

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Downey Unified School District reopened in-person learning for K-5 graders on March 29.

Dr. John Garcia, superintendent of DUSD posted on the district website that he and the school board are still working on a reopening plan to send secondary schools back to campus.

Dr. Garcia and California School Board Association member Dr. Mark Morris led a town hall on March 3 to discuss the district's reopening plan.

Morris began the meeting by addressing the questions that parents had about reopening in-person learning.

According to Dr. Garcia, 83% of 5th grade families responded to the district's plan to reopen.

Garcia said 55% of the parents wanted

their kids to actually return to campus, while the other 45% of the parents wanted their kids to continue remote-learning.

Dr. Garcia explained that the plan to send 12th graders back to campus is on hold because Coronavirus cases are spiking.

He discussed how the Los Angeles County of Public Health will not allow more students to return to campus.

Garcia says Downey is in the purple tier, which means the virus is still widespread.

Garcia discussed the class of 2021, saying, "Seniors, don't think for one minute that I have forgotten about you guys, we will continue to work to get you back on campus."

When Downey is in the "Red tier" students may come back on campus, however, it is not guaranteed that all students will return to campus by the end of the school year.

Sports were a main topic of

question during the meeting, with parents and students concerned if sports would be cancelled for the rest of the year.

Garcia announced that boys and girls basketball practice and games will continue.

Dr. Garcia noted that he appreciates the support from the Board of Education, Downey Unified School District, and the parents of the community for being so cooperative during this time of need.

"Everyone understands why this is difficult because no one expected this pandemic to go on like this," Garcia says.

The superintendent wants things to go back to normal as they were, but the virus has to be under control.

Morris closes out the meeting by saying, "What makes Downey great is that we are a family and we love each other to give the best education for our children as possible."



COURTESY OF DUSD

Schools reopen: DUSD reopened in-person learning for grades K-12 on March 29, 2021. The district gave prizes to in-person students.

He very much agrees with Garcia and the message of their reopening plan on March 29.

For more information on

reopening guidelines and health measures go to www.web.dusd.net or call (562) 469-6500.

Challenges and lessons of teaching online

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"I didn't know what was going to happen. I didn't know how to teach online. I was confused, they were confused — it was just a mess," Brittany Hampton remembers thinking when schools shut down in March 2020.

Hampton is an English high school teacher who works for a charter school serving students from the Compton and Paramount Unified School Districts. Like most teachers, she is currently teaching all of her classes online.

It's been a year since schools in Los Angeles county shut down and classes shifted to online learning. In that year, there've been many unprecedented challenges which teachers, students and parents have been facing.

"I would say that a lot of my students have just declined in motivation. Motivated to learn, to even do school just a little bit. We already work with a vulnerable population of students who drop out of Compton, Centennial or Paramount High School. This school is like a second chance for them," said Hampton.

The English teacher, who often substituted at Paramount High School pre-pandemic,

emphasized how important it is for her to be in a classroom, face-to-face with her students and build connections with them.

"Building a rapport and connections with my students is really hard right now. I'm such an interactive teacher and like, I really like to know my students for who they are."

She isn't the only one who feels this way, and many teachers who are teaching their classes via Zoom have been struggling to keep students engaged and even struggle to have them keep their cameras on.

Hampton says she is lucky in the sense that since she works for a charter school, she can require students to turn their cameras on during class.

Many of her teacher friends who work at public schools have told her they cannot make their students turn their cameras on and must continue teaching their lessons to black screens.

"It's so admirable of the teachers who are literally killing it, teaching online to black screens. I don't know how they're doing it — I have no idea. But a lot of teachers that I know who are doing it are losing motivation themselves, they hate it."

Despite the multitude of obstacles teachers have encountered, there has also been



SHARON MCCUTCHEON /UNSPLASH.COM

One year in: High school student and elementary student using laptop computers to attend school remotely from home. With many school districts in LA county set to reopen in March 2021, the topic of resuming in-person learning has become a controversial one amongst teachers, parents and lawmakers.

plenty of positive lessons and outcomes from teaching online.

"My time management has gotten a lot better, I feel like I'm more organized, I'm more prepared. Just because I'm not right in front of them. I can easily go to another screen and find something and bring it up and it's ready for them. It's not the

whole hustle and bustle of being a teacher in a classroom," said Hampton.

"We've learned what type of learners that students are, and I think that it has also given me time to perfect my craft in technology," said Hampton. "We've learned that teaching is not so linear," she added.

She says that her students have been doing better lately and have gotten accustomed to the new normal, since there is no other choice. "Me teaching now... my kids have a routine, my kids are on time, their cameras are on. They're doing their work while we're talking, they're more..."

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

Following a dream: Taymon Lawson wants to model success



@JJERABANO/INSTAGRAM

LA Native: A still from a photoshoot in Downtown LA's Little Tokyo district. To Lawson, the Los Angeles lifestyle is something that's key to making him who he is.

Rafael Magana

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Entering the world of fashion modeling is a daunting task. To take that first step and begin to delve into that world isn't easy.

For Taymon Lawson, an aspiring model, the fashion industry wasn't a path that he initially saw himself following.

The idea was one that came to

him after high school.

"My whole life, I always dressed nice. My grandma always said, 'You should be a model!' and I always kind of shrugged it off, usually due to my confidence — I struggled with it. After I graduated, a couple of girls told me that too... so I told myself that I was gonna try this," said Lawson.

His first experience with a proper fashion show was in the LA Fashion Week show he

participated in in 2019.

"When I had found out about it, it was because my friend sent me the link on Instagram. I had signed up and realized that it was in Downtown LA [LA Fashion Week] as I was signing up," said Lawson.

Lawson experienced some nerves when first dipping his feet into the world of modeling.

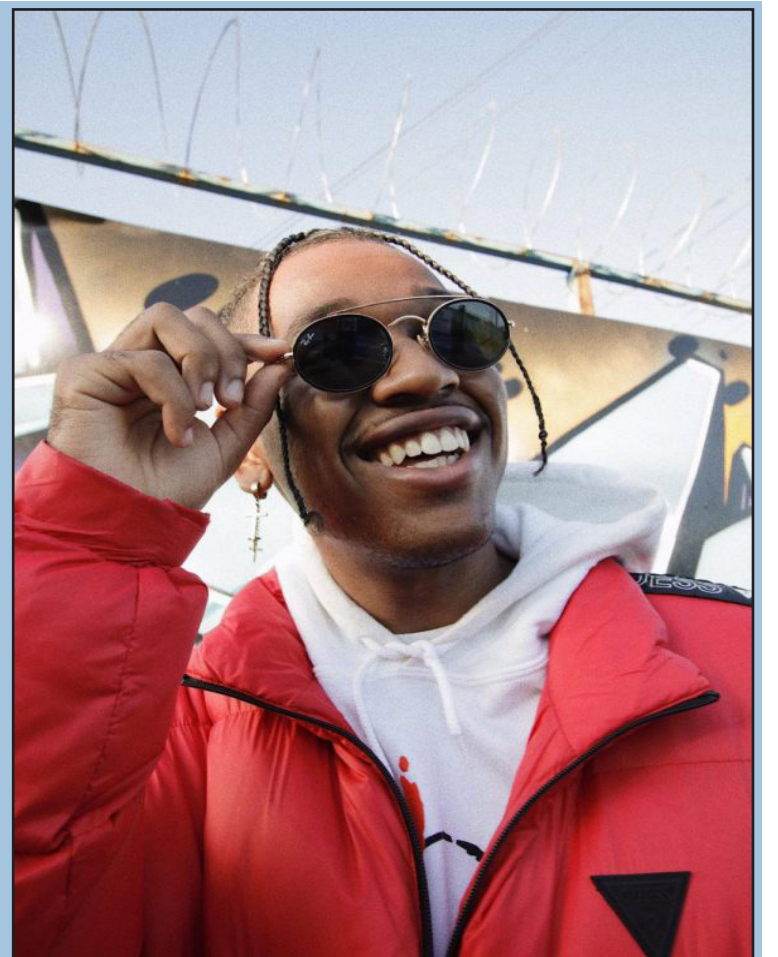
He said he found comfort in knowing that he had friends and family in the crowd, who had purchased tickets to show support.

"At first, during practice I was scared. When the show started though, I wasn't scared anymore. I knew if I was going to do this in life, there's going to be way more eyes on me. I had friends and family in the crowd who showed me love, and its good support to have," said Lawson.

There were other fresh faces in the show as well. Lawson found that many of the models in the show were first timers as well.

"It was a feeling of relief, knowing that I didn't have to impress somebody. It was more comfortable knowing that we were all in it together," said Lawson.

Following the fashion show, Lawson began to build a brand for himself, using Instagram as his primary platform. On his



@WRONGKEV/INSTAGRAM

A still from a photoshoot taken in Whittier. Lawson often collaborates with two photographers in the majority of his photoshoots, Kevin (@wrongkev) and Jeremiah (@jjerabano). This one in particular is taken by Kevin.

page, he posts photos from his photoshoots and considers it to be the first step in beginning to build a name for himself.

By utilizing Instagram as a platform, he hopes to get the attention from any brands that may stumble upon his page. His efforts ended up gaining the attention of a notable brand.

"Young and Reckless ended up DMing [direct message] me on Instagram. I went out to their studio in West LA, but after that I never really heard anything," said Lawson.

Lawson attributes that experience to his brand and image he's built for himself on...

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

'Falcon and the Winter Soldier': A brand new Captain America

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After the first episode of "Falcon and the Winter Soldier" we get introduced to John Walker aka the new Captain America, and in this episode we see more of his character and how he feels up taking the mantle.

The episode shows us not only the views of each character for the shield but also a perspective on life and how everything isn't what it seems to be.

The episode starts off with John Walker being interviewed by Good Morning America and seeing his desire to take up the mantle and making sure that he would try to be the best Captain America that he could be.

Meanwhile Sam and Bucky meet up and head to Munich to confront the Flag Smashers with Bucky asking why Sam gave up the shield.

It was great to see the two heroes finally meet up after the interaction between them in

episode one, 'New World Order', was nonexistent.

The two get to Munich and see a couple of members smuggling medicine with both heroes detecting a person in the cargo, possibly a hostage.

However, the hostage was actually the groups leader Karli Morgenthau. They struggle while on a moving truck until Walker and his partner Lemar Hoskins join to assist them.

They discovered that some if not all the members are all super soldiers being able to take on Bucky in the same level.

The Flag Smashers get away and Walker asks Bucky and Sam to join them on finding the group but they refused.

Bucky and Sam head to Baltimore to talk to someone about the super soldier program, the person is Isaiah Bradley a former super soldier that fought Bucky in the Korean War when he was the Winter Soldier.

He refuses to talk since he was arrested and experimented by the government and Hydra for being



JULIE VRABELOVA, MARVEL STUDIOS, WALT DISNEY COMPANY

Teaming up: (Center L-R): Lemar Hoskins (Cle Bennett), John Walker (Wyatt Russell), Falcon/Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) and Winter Soldier/Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) in Marvel Studios' *THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER* exclusively on Disney+. Photo by Julie Vrabelova. ©Marvel Studios 2021. All Rights Reserved.

in the program.

After that Bucky gets arrested for missing his therapy appointment leading to the two of them having a funny/serious conversation with each other.

Later on, John Walker (the new Captain America) meets with them to try to get them to join them. The two of them get denied, with Walker saying to the two of them to "stay out of my way".

It ends with the two of them heading to Berlin to confront Zemo about the Flag Smasher.

The second episode's story was great as it gave more in depth look at John Walker showing more of him, many thought that he was going to be the hated character but it's good to see character perspectives and it'll be great to see more of it.

Bucky and Sam's chemistry together is both funny and serious as it was great to hear the conversation on why Sam gave up the shield and the title.

Both Sebastian Stan and Anthony Mackie still kills it as Falcon and Winter Soldier

but here its better to have them fleshed out and know more about them that the movies couldn't do.

Action and cinematography was very clean and on point. It was viewable; no shakey cameras, and just smooth action scenes.

It will be exciting to see what the story will progress to as we continue to follow the pair.

Overall the episode show's a lot of good character development and exciting scenes

"The Star Spangled Man" gets a four out of five, a great second episode.

'Crash Bandicoot 4 (Switch): A good collectathon on the go

Oscar Torres
Co-A & E Editor
@talonmarks

Even though many were upset that Crash 4 wasn't released on Switch a year ago, Activision decided to finally release it alongside the PS5 and Series X version.

What we got is a platformer that not only looks good on a portable console but plays just as good too.

Crash 4 takes place years after the events of the third game with the defeat of Dr. Cortex and N. Tropy. They break out of time prison and enact a plan to rule time and space.

Meanwhile, Crash heads to a temple and meets a time mask name Lani-Lol. Realizing that the multiverse is in trouble, he asks Crash and Coco to help him find his siblings and restore the Multiverse before Cortex and N. Tropy changes and rules all of time and space.

Along the way, they'll meet the Multiverse versions of Tana and Dingodile who'll assist them in stopping the two evil scientists.

Without spoiling it, the story is both charming and great, with a callback to the original games being cute. The jokes are well done and sparked a few chuckles.

The gameplay is just like normal Crash Bandicoot where you run and jump in different levels breaking boxes and collecting Wumpa fruits in order

to get a gem at the end. You play as Crash and Coco, both play the same, so choose your favorite.

There are two options: Modern or Retro. Modern is unlimited lives, while retro has limited lives. Lose them all and players have to restart the level. Thankfully lives are easy to get so retro is a safe choice as well.

Players can also play as Cortex, Dingodile and Tana. All three play differently so there is a lot of variety that people can choose from.

This time there are six gems in a level requiring the player to not only break every box in the stage but to do it while collecting enough fruits for three gems, making it to the end without

dying more than three times and finding a hidden gem.

This is good cause you can either do it in one go or get a specific gem the first time and come back to get the remaining gems. Players don't have to do it in one go.

However N.sane perfect relics require players to break every box without dying, which adds to the difficulty but can be fun and rewarding to some players.

The masks are a brand new mechanic, with four different masks doing something unique, one example being phasing objects in and out of existence.

A few levels have tapes to can collect that unlock levels that take place before the events of the

first game. Players have to get it without dying.

The difficulty of this game is getting 100% but it's fun to try to get, and with each death, you learn from the mistakes and try again so there isn't any rage moments from it.

The visuals are good, though not as beautiful looking as PS5 or PS4 Pro versions, it still impressive that it looks as good as them on a portable console. They made the visuals more like how a cartoon would look and it fits the visuals since Crash does look like one.

Framerate is 30 frames as opposed to 60 fps for PS5. While this might seem like a bad decision the game still works and plays well in 30 considering the N.Sane Trilogy was also 30 frames per second.

Overall the game is impressive on Switch with the gameplay, Crash and visuals looking impressive and fun to play all the time.



OSCAR TORRES/TM

Full Completion: One of the more difficult collectibles that the game has is the N. sane perfect relics, which you get for beating the level without dying. Be prepared to restart alot cause it's required for 106% completion.

'Zack Snyder's Justice League': An impressive improvement

Lola Ajetunmobi
Social Media Editor
@talonmarks

Zack Snyder's "Justice League" is a masterpiece in the DC Universe. Zack did an amazing job by giving this movie an epic feel full of surprises that will shock the audience.

Zack Snyder's vision for "Justice League" is complete with new and deleted scenes that weren't in the original film.

The story was on point and it was broken down into parts with different stories coming together, forming a plot that keeps the audience tuned in.

The actors had strong performance playing the superhero characters. Gal Gadot did an amazing performance as Wonder Women. She dominates this movie in my opinion. She brings that fierce, strong-willed feminist character that is also the inspiration for a female audience.

There was a bit of humor that brings the lighter side of the movie, with jokes kept from the original added in to ease tension.

The costume design was well done. It was the best decision for Superman's costume to be black in the final battle because even though his original colors were blue, red and yellow, the black costume made Superman, played by Henry Cavill, stand out.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://talonmarks.com)

Working in Theme Parks: Knott's Berry Farm

Oscar Torres
Co-A & E Editor
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It was a year ago that theme parks closed their doors, leaving customers to spend their time watching videos of rides.

But the people that have been most affected by this pandemic are none other than theme park employees, the very workers that help operate the park and makes sure everything runs and functions.

At Buena Park's Knott's Berry Farm, the employees have more experience with cuisine and restaurants due to the fact that boysenberries have been popular in the park.

Maricarmen Tinoco, a biology major at Cerritos College, has worked at Knott's for three years, specializing in the park's restaurants. She said she would go back in a moments notice.

She works at foods in the gourmet coffee hut near the Johnny Rocket's restaurant in the park.

She and the employees make sure that everything is cleaned, meaning nothing in the restaurants are subject to cross contamination and if anything goes bad they let other employees know about it.

Melissa Vasquez, who majors in Spanish linguistics, has been working at Knott's for three and a half years. She also works at the food department in a restaurant. The restaurant is like a fast-food joint with lots of customers

Before the store opens and closes, employees must make sure that everything gets thrown out and the foods are good for the week. Knott's is very strict about food quality.

Making food is the most important thing that Knott's has to have all the time besides rides and attractions. Everyone has a job to work together to make sure newcomers get it right.

"Everyone is friendly, they want to make sure they know what you're doing before they send you out, and obviously there is the orientation, there's the training. You get paired up with someone who has some experience there so it's pretty good," Tinoco said.

On the first day, it can be nerve-racking for some employees, but for Tinoco the process was easy, saying that everyone wants newcomers to learn and are helpful before they send people out on their own.

Vasquez still works at the park and would be coming back to work on time for the Boysenberry Festival.

When they got the message that the park might be closing... suffice to say that workers got nervous.

Tinoco said that "We all got worried, we were all scared about our jobs and how we were going to manage after."

The managers and supervisors let them know the day before that all employees will be staying home and would still be paid.

Vasquez said, "I started asking my managers and everything I



JEREMEY THOMPSON/FICKR

Back in business: With Knott's closure last year many employees have been wondering what would happen to them. Now with the Boysenberry festival coming Knott's has been preparing their employees to stay clean and make the park clean.

was like, 'Hey, should we start worrying about this?' And as of now, they still didn't know, if it was gonna hit the US as hard as it was like you hit us. I believe in like beginning like end of February beginning March, we just start implementing a new rule where everyone now had to start wearing gloves."

Employees were paid for the first month after lockdown and then went up for unemployment. Fortunately, there are still employees in the park, with more coming back home to work in the Boysenberry Festival.

Due to the Orange County stay-at-home order being lifted, this means all employees who have been working at home could go back to work.

Tinoco mentioned safety

precautions that the park put in place so that it'll make their jobs easier, like putting stickers on the floor for lines, and also for wearing masks at all times and not eating or drinking while walking.

She isn't at all worried about her job, considering that Knott's knows that their supervisors would pick out the best employees or ones that stick out the most and keep them which is a good few of them.

Vasquez mentions the precautions with also having everything being cleaned every time people finishing their meal or drink.

Vasquez also notes that employees had to refill cups for customers, clean tables, and washing surfaces thoroughly every 20-30 seconds. It was a

process that sounded tedious to do but it worked out in their favor as everyone was staying healthy and caring for other peoples well being.

March 14 was their last day for customers. However, employees still stayed to clean up the rides and restaurants, making sure everything was cleaned before employees left to work from home.

Employees still got paid even though their staying at home. However, Vasquez said that "Sadly, we only got paid the last two weeks. And then most of the associates were messaging me and asking me for help with the regular unemployment."

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

What Lola Likes: Spicy Shrimp Pasta



LOLA AJETUNMOBI

Looking good: Spicy shrimp pasta waiting to be devoured. The pasta is both heavenly and hot with a multitude of flavors..

Lola Ajetunmobi
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Hi, everyone! Welcome back to another edition of Talon Mark's food newest column; What Lola Likes. I, Lola Ajetunmobi, will be making one of my favorite pasta dishes, spicy shrimp pasta.

I love food, and certainly one of my favorite dishes to make (and then eat of course) is pasta. Usually, I would stick to the

classic spaghetti with my special marinara sauce and ground beef, but this pandemic has allowed me to explore different things.

I took the idea of adding red pepper flakes in mine from the TikTok trend of people making copycat versions of Bella Hadid spicy vodka pasta. From there, I just added what I had at home to make my own pasta dish.

This is a creamy, fulfilling, lip-smacking, mouth-slurping dish with a little heat and lemon to

mellow it out.

Did You know: Pasta originated from China, then was brought to Italy by Marco Polo, where the ingredients used in Chinese noodles gained popularity in certain parts of Italy during the 13th century.

Now I am not going to bore you anymore with a background story because I know we all just skip right to the recipe. So let's get started y'all with the steps to make the perfect spicy shrimp pasta.

- 2-3 servings
- Ingredients:
- Favorite pasta noodle
- 12 pieces of Shrimp
- ½ cup of parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 cup of heavy or whipping cream
- 2 whole tomatoes
- Half a lemon
- 2 teaspoon of minced garlic
- Salt
- 3 teaspoons of Red pepper flakes
- Smoked paprika
- Black pepper
- garlic powder
- Onion powder
- Rosemary
- 2 tablespoons of oils

We are going to start by prepping certain things. This will make it easier to add ingredients instead of running around, making it harder on yourself. I recommend bringing out all of the ingredients that you need for the dish and setting them on your counter.

Put water on the stove and set it to medium or high heat, depending on how hungry you are. Wait 10 minutes for the water to completely bubble.

Make sure your shrimp is clean and deveined (the poop sack

is out). If you are using frozen shrimp like I did, make sure to take it out 15 minutes prior, then put it in a bowl with warm water.

Dice your tomatoes into small cubes on a cutting board or plate.

After your water has finished boiling, add some salt to taste and put either a third of the box or a whole box of your favorite pasta in there. Wait for it to completely settle in the water and stir it around a bit so the pasta does not stick together.

Wait five minutes before making your shrimp and sauce because that is not going to take long. We also do not want to risk our noodles being undercooked when we put it in the sauce.

Get a frying pan and set it on medium heat. Then add your oil, let that heat up, then add your shrimp and season them. Cook for three minutes on each side.

Remove the shrimp and add your butter, garlic and red pepper flakes. Let that heat up for 45 seconds. Then add your cream and stir that in.

Wait until the cream is smooth and thicker than before, then add a squeeze of lemon juice and your parmesan cheese. Let that thicken up and add your shrimp and diced tomatoes. Wait 45 seconds before adding your pasta.

Your pasta should be done! Hope you enjoy the shrimps..

An emotional catharsis: Aydinaneth Ortiz's art



PHOTO COURTESY OF AYDINANETH ORTIZ

Generations: Pictured above is one of Ortiz's projects, *Hija de tu Madre*. The three pictures form the collection known as '*Hijas de Ana*', taken in 2017. Ortiz includes the place and date that they emigrated from. For '*Hijas de Ana*', Ortiz captioned it as the following: bp. Arenales, San Pedro Sula, Cortes, Honduras | 1983 migrated to the United States.

Rafael Magana
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In California, immigrants are a driving force in our culture and economy. Immigrants are key to what makes California what it is. Yet, a negative stigma remains of many of the immigrants that inhabit not only our state but the country as a whole.

Aydinaneth Ortiz is a photographer whose series, *Hija de tu Madre*, focuses on migrant mothers and their daughters.

An alumna of Cerritos College, Ortiz's series is currently being displayed at the Cerritos Alumni Art Exhibition. She's also currently a professor at Cerritos as well, teaching photography.

Regarding the origins of the series, Ortiz said, "It really started with myself and with my mother

and sister. I was really thinking about how we were represented in the media during that time. We had Trump as our president, and he had all these negative things to say about immigrants. This is a way of combating that and showing that we're actually strong and viable."

Traditionally, the phrase "hija de tu madre" has a negative connotation. When Ortiz decided to name her series that, she noted that it was an intentional decision.

"It's a way of embracing that we are like our mothers, whether we like it or not, with the good and the bad. There was a bit of humor with that title and thought... It's more about saying 'We're not from here, but we are an important part of the country now.' Our mothers made us who we are. That's where it stems from," said Ortiz.

Hija de tu Madre is only one

of her projects. Ortiz has a wide array of projects that are deeply personal to her and revolve around many of her personal traumas and experiences.

For Ortiz, these projects allowed her to feel a catharsis that was much needed.

Much of the work that Ortiz has done has extended to other mediums, such as artist books or installations in a gallery.

La Condicion de la Familia was one of the projects that helped her work through these feelings. It's an artist's book revolving around her family and the experiences that Ortiz felt after her brother passed away.

In an exhibition catalogue for the artist's book written by the director of the Pomona College's Museum of Art, Kathleen Stewart Howe, Howe describes the work as "a photography of intimate

connections casually rendered, to explore and mediate a family tragedy".

"La Condicion de la Familia helped me realize that I wasn't alone with the feeling of loss. I wasn't alone with having a family member with a mental health condition. I didn't know that until I put myself out there. There was some comfort in knowing that it wasn't just me," said Ortiz.

Not Alone was another project that Ortiz worked on following her brother's passing. The project consisted of a series of beautiful landscapes. Upon close inspection, one can notice a silhouette in each of the landscapes.

According to Ortiz, these silhouettes were meant to represent her deceased brother.

"*Not Alone*' was made when my brother passed away... I just

kept hearing people say 'Siempre Va Estar Contigo'; he's always going to be with you and at the time when you're feeling that loss, it's almost not enough. So, I thought 'What if I bring him with me?'. It was my way of putting him in there, and having him present with me," said Ortiz.

Many of her projects also revolve around her neighborhood and the culture that surrounded her as she grew up, and shows the diversity of her work.

A Portrait of my Neighborhood is a look into Ortiz's life as a resident of Long Beach. She had this to say on the project.

"I wanted to document what I felt was an impactful and strong place to live... Some of these images show places that no longer exist..." said Ortiz.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

A musical city of Jones, Part One: Calvin Cujo

Keanu Ruffo
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For 21-year-old music artist Calvin Jones, also known by his stage name "Calvin Cujo," 2020 was a year of quiet success behind the scenes in the studio.

Jones took quarantine as an opportunity to perfect his craft and network with other local artists. With so much time on his hands, he put it to good use, using the time to make songs or listen to them.

"Throughout the whole period of COVID-19, I've just been working on music, being in the studio, working on albums, and most importantly, improving as an artist."

Being stuck at home works out pretty well as it gives more time for Cujo to stay safe and work on music and keep a good rhythm, at a quick pace.

Spending time in the studio

helped Jones not only learn about himself but also gain interest in producing and learning more behind-the-scenes studio work.

"I want to do everything right in the studio so I've used all this time during quarantine to improve on my work," Jones said.

Growing up in Compton and Cerritos, Jones mentions how much the city has shaped and impacted his music, explaining that those cities help inspire him to make the music that he makes and listens to today.

"Cerritos has had a great impact on who I am as an artist. My whole life up until high school, I was going to school in Compton and the Crenshaw area, and I was only used to being around a certain type of people."

"When I started going to Gahr High School, I got exposed to a bunch of different cultures, ethnicities and personalities of people."

What was at first a massive

culture shock later on helped the local artist become more open-minded and to stretch his musical boundaries.

A music icon that inspired and influenced Jones to be an artist growing up and still to this day is Kanye West, sharing how much his music was influenced him and made him a big fan of the genres that he sings.

"I've always been a huge Kanye West fan. He's my favorite rapper; he was the artist who introduced me to hip-hop and got my ears listening word for word when I was 13," Jones said.

Along with West, Jones also mentions rap group Odd Future as another inspirational factor to the unorthodox way he raps and the style of music he produces.

"Listening to their music showed me that you don't have to be a certain way to do rap music, which at the time I thought you did. It showed that I can be myself while not having to sugar coat anything or be someone I'm not."

As a young artist trying to separate himself from other



COURTESY OF CALVIN CUJO

Cujo's World: Cerritos artist, Calvin Jones, rehearses lyrics before getting ready to record a song.

rappers, Jones goes into detail and explains the background of his music.

"My music tells people about my life. I try to teach and explain

lessons to my fans along with giving them an escape if they need e to just be themselves and to love who they are as a person.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

Media must stop gaslighting & creating false narratives

EDITORIAL

News media needs to stop gaslighting their stories and creating false narratives to confuse their viewers.

The media plays a large role in how the public perceives information by creating different narratives that align with their viewers' beliefs. They gaslight stories and create harmful narratives that do not accurately represent the truth creating confusion about what is real or "fake news."

Multiple conservative media outlets such as Fox News, One America News Network and News Max play a considerable part in gaslighting their stories to the millions of people that view their platforms. Their coverage of the Trump insurrection on Jan. 6 is evidence of their false narratives and biased reporting.

During and after the attack on the capital, these conservative outlets continued to gaslight the story that the Trump supporters

who stormed the capitol were peaceful protestors or that they were not Trump supporters at all. These false claims distort their viewers' reality and divert themes from the truth.

While other media outlets analyzed what occurred during the insurrection, conservative media outlets focused on other issues. They talked about Trump's "peaceful" transfer of power, Olive garden drama and clips of the protests before it became a full-blown terrorist attack.

When former President Trump unmasked himself as he returned from the hospital, people were furious, but conservative news downplayed his ignorance. However, as soon as Sen. Nancy Pelosi unmasked herself for a hair appointment, she was a hypocrite and abusing her power.

Gaslighting reporters create fear-mongering stories to influence their viewers.

While most media moved on from the removal of several offensive Dr. Seuss books on

March 2, Fox News reporter Tucker Carlson fixated on the issue. He continues to gaslight the books' removal, saying that it results from the radical left's cancel culture.

"If it can happen to Dr. Seuss, it can happen to you, too," Carlson said overdramatically.

In actuality, the decision came from "Dr. Seuss Enterprise" and was not the decision of the Democrats.

While the conservative media are experts in gaslighting, other outlets are guilty of over amplifying issues.

CNN's over-coverage of the Ebola outbreak created a narrative that America was about to be overtaken by the plague. In truth, approximately a dozen people contracted the virus and doctors managed to contain the disease.

People have to start putting pressure on the media and hold journalists who gaslight accountable for their false reporting. The media gaslighting can make it difficult for people



PIXY.ORG

Media: News outlets have a history of gaslighting and creating false narratives. By creating fake news, they confuse their viewers and create distrust in the media.

who are trying to get the truth. It creates aggravation between people who follow the fake news and those who listen to the facts.

H.R. 1 needs to pass the senate, even if it costs Dems the filibuster

EDITORIAL

Since the Civil rights movement in the 1960s, the GOP has chipped away at voting rights, rewriting the rules and lying to hold on to their power. Republicans have made it clear that they will continue their assault on voters and rig future elections, which means Democrats need to stand their ground.

A monumental voting rights bill just passed in the House, and Senate Democrats need to do everything they can to make sure it gets to Biden's desk, even if that means losing the filibuster.

The For The People Act would strengthen the endangered Voting Rights Act of 1965, requiring new national requirements against restrictive state voter ID laws, mandate automatic voter registration, expand early and in-mail voting and restore voting rights to former felons.

The bill, which is supported by President Joe Biden and the Democrats, faces serious opposition in the Senate where it would need 60 votes to avert the filibuster. As of now, the votes are completely divided along party lines.

The For The People Act is an over 800 page document proposing sweeping legislation.

It addresses a broken election system long overdue for repair, first by enabling same day and



ELLIOTT STALLION ON UNSPLASH

Voting: Republicans in the state of Georgia are restricting early voting on weekends in their latest attack on voters rights. They are leading efforts to change election rules in Arizona and Georgia, two swing-states in the 2020 election.

automatic voter registration, expanding popular programs like early voting, absentee ballot drop boxes, voting by mail and restoring the right to vote for people with criminal records.

A major component is an end to partisan gerrymandering, which is redesigning voting districts to benefit a candidate or party. New mapping technology makes it even easier to create an unequal distribution of power among rural and urban voters.

H.R. 1 also includes clauses to increase transparency in campaign finance by seeking to expose dark money contributions

and allowing candidates to boost smaller donations with funds gained from fines and forfeitures.

If the Democrats have any desire to keep their thin majorities in the house and senate, they must pass this bill without bargaining with conservatives and cutting its benefits.

Voter suppression and gerrymandering plagues our elections, hurting communities of color and voters in large urban areas (which typically lean democrat).

Dems have an opportunity to pass a sweeping bill that halts efforts to inhibit our voting rights,

and taking advantage will likely benefit them in the midterm elections.

Republicans lied about widespread voter fraud before and after the 2020 election. When it didn't go their way, they reverted back to changing the rules to benefit themselves, all under the guise of "election security."

The game plan is to attack voting by mail, ballot drop boxes, early voting, voting on weekends and enact voter ID laws. The midterm elections are in danger of massive voter disenfranchisement if action isn't taken.

At a time where fake news

and misinformation campaigns are dominating social media platforms and prime-time airwaves, Dems need to act now and stop further damage to the election process.

The GOP has been busy attempting to suppress the vote by introducing dozens of bills across 33 states since President Joe Biden took office, which studies have shown affect minorities and younger people.

Republicans used the COVID-19 pandemic to limit the number of drop boxes and polling centers in urban areas, causing longer lines to vote among other restrictions.

It is no coincidence that many of these bills have been introduced in states that flipped blue in the last election, including Arizona and Georgia.

In Georgia, Republicans have passed the most restrictive voting laws since Jim Crow.

The new legislation cuts weekend voting days including Sundays — when Black churches typically hold "Souls of the Polls" — restricts the use of mail ballot drop boxes, adds new voter ID requirements for mail-in ballots and even makes it a crime to distribute food and water to people waiting in line to vote.

Two laws in Arizona, one that allows officials to throw out ballots cast at the wrong...

Read more at Talonmarks.com

Get vaccinated so we can finally return to normal

Josselyn Garay
Staff Writer
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With eligibility expanding, more people are fortunate enough to receive one of the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Starting to realize that there is nothing to be afraid of, the vaccine is the nation's first glimpse of hope needed to bring life back to normal after dealing with an unprecedented pandemic for almost a year.

As one of the lucky ones, I received my first dose of the COVID-19 Pfizer shot and it made me feel hopeful. It made me feel like I was doing my part in helping to make things better for everybody.

Despite the many conspiracies surrounding the vaccine, I did not hesitate to get vaccinated.

Bill Gates isn't trying to insert a chip into our body. The vaccine will certainly not alter your DNA.

Also, according to the CDC, none of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick

with the virus it is meant to counter.

With that said, as with most vaccines, it isn't a cure.

It is simply an extra layer of protection that will help lower the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The media has a way of convincing people into believing negative and often incorrect information. It even caused some close people around me to worry about the vaccine.

Fortunately, we all turned out fine.

Of course, like all new vaccines, there are some "side effects." The effects are different and can vary from person to person.

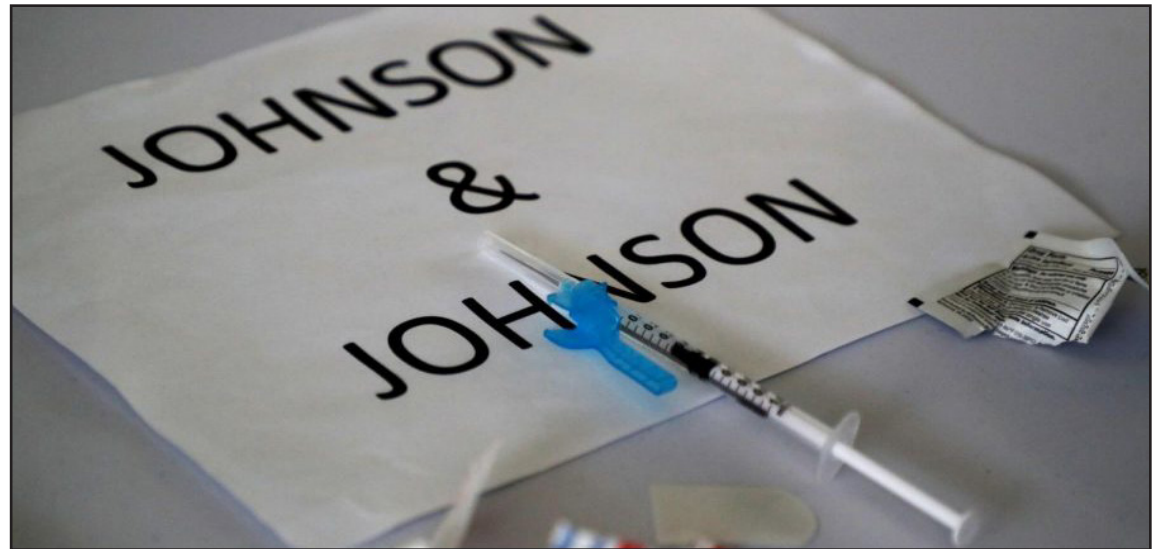
My arm was sore for about two hours after the vaccination, but that was a given.

I had what felt like an internal fever for a couple of hours, but it wasn't painful or anything. It was mainly just annoying.

One minute I was feeling fine and next thing I know; I took a turn for the worse.

I was not fine.

For a split second, I began to worry, because I couldn't recall a



CARLINE JEAN/SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL/TNS

Vaccines: The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was administered at a FEMA COVID-19 vaccination site at Miami Dade College North Campus. Some states are seeing delays in the distribution of the vaccine.

moment in my life where I'd had anything close to a fever. My body was freaking me out a bit but then I remembered I just needed to be patient and let my immune system do its job.

I trusted my body and the vaccine.

I sweat it out by covering myself with lots of blankets overnight, drank lots of water and by the time morning came

around, I was good as new.

I immediately wanted everybody I know to get vaccinated. I wanted the vaccines to become available for everybody as soon as possible.

I am still waiting to receive my second dose, but I would encourage everyone to give it a try and get the vaccine when available to them.

I convinced some of my family

members who were strongly against receiving it and they also had a good experience with it.

While everybody should do their research on the vaccines, it is important for people to realize that if they want a bit of normalcy back, this is one of the few steps we can take towards achieving that.

Everybody should do their part to end this pandemic.

Protect, acknowledge & unite with the Asian American community

EDITORIAL

The violent hate crimes against the Asian American community have exponentially increased during the past year. Asian Americans continue to be targeted by their fellow citizens and it is time to help lift their voices and speak out against the racism that is threatening their community.

The attacks against Asian Americans have again progressed over the past couple of months. Various incidents have occurred like: March 12, when two young Chinese American women were killed and dragged by a car in Lakewood, March 16, when a 21-year-old white man shot and killed eight people, six of whom were Asian-American women in Atlanta, and several other incidents of people purposely attacking Asian elders on the sidewalk.

While it is no shocker that there are those who have a racist bias against another minority group, the racism against the Asian American community has stayed undercover.

According to a New York Times article, there have been 3,800 reports of hate incidents targeting Asian-Americans since last March.

However, these constant violent attacks on the Asian American community are not a new thing. These racially motivated attacks have been going on for years but have not

been documented.

The reason being, according to this NPR article, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders frequently underreport hate incidents because they "feel intimidated by law enforcement or are afraid of being seen as overly sensitive." Those who do report the racially motivated attacks are often filed as generic offenses and tend to not show up in hate crimes national data.

These attacks against the Asian American community have only gotten worse, especially since the pandemic started.

The former cheeto-puff baby and president, Donald J. Trump has been calling the COVID-19 virus the "Chinese Virus." This harmful, racist statement circulated and his cult has not only chanted these words and made merchandise out of them but used them to further hate and place blame on Asian Americans, whether or not they are Chinese.

The "model minority" stereotype was imposed on all Asian Americans in order to uphold the hatred, stereotypes and bigoted remarks against other minorities.

However, Americans tend to forget that this stereotype not only harms other minorities but Asian Americans as well because it disregards their own struggles and the hatred towards their community.

While others tend to forget or ignore the racism against Asian Americans and discredit their



VINCENT MEDINA/TM

Protest: Many gather to protest against the recent attacks on the Asian American community at the OC Great Park in Irvine on March 20, 2021. People hold up "Stop Asian Hate" signs to show their support for the Asian Community.

struggles, others acknowledge and speak out against these recent attacks and respond against them.

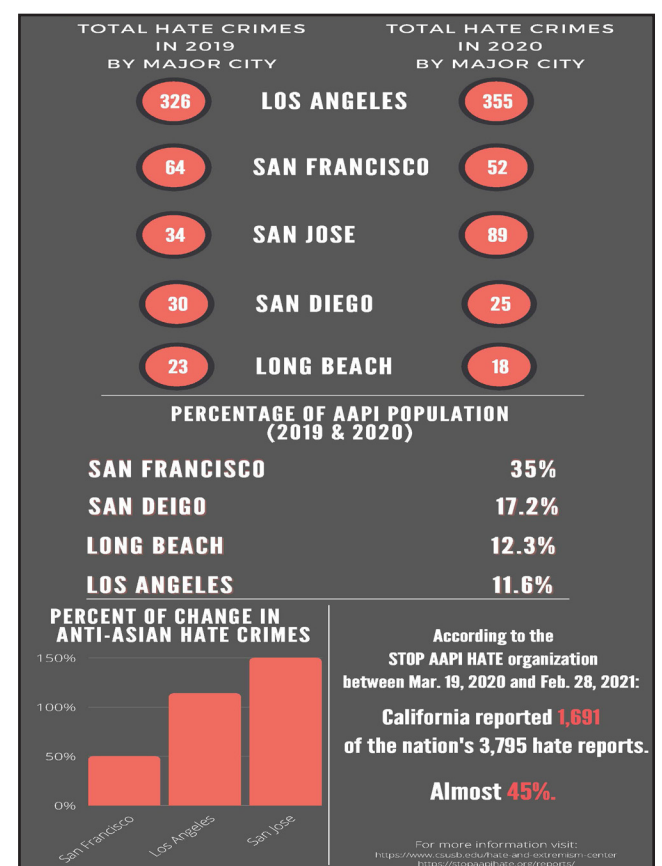
Many people in this country have mourned and continue to mourn the lives that were taken these past several weeks and strive to make things better for the Asian American community.

A change has to be made by all communities. We all have to unite and work closely together to protect one another, especially other minorities.

The Latino, African American and Asian American communities have all suffered from discrimination and racial hate crimes time after time again and it must end.

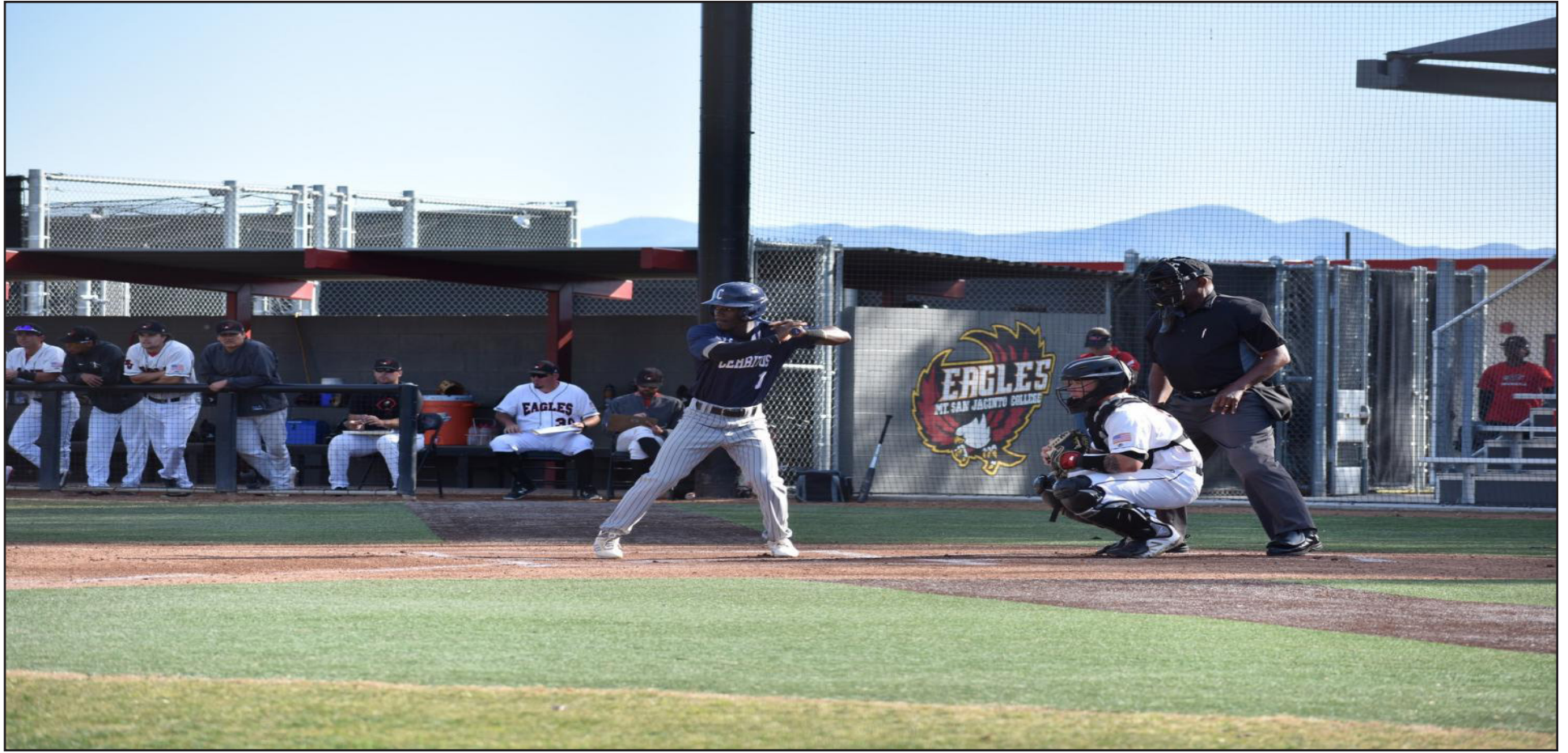
During the last couple of days since these incidents, there have been multiple protests all over the country from Denver, San Francisco and Atlanta. One of the biggest protests was in the Atlanta Korean church congregation.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)



INFOGRAPHIC BY EMILY MELGAR/TM

Cerritos baseball keeps their focus on training



NICK MARTINEZ

Focus: One of the captains, Trent Anderson, gets ready to hit the baseball on August 21, 2020. Cerritos College baseball is preparing to return to campus to continue their training for next season.

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Cerritos College's baseball team haven't played in any games since the pandemic lockdown began but players are trying to maintain top form despite all obstacles thrown at them.

Team captain Trent "Buck" Anderson, who plays center field, has been playing on Cerritos College baseball team for two years. He stated that he has been trying to keep a positive attitude during this pandemic and has adjusted to online classes and his current schedule.

Nolan Brown, also a captain who plays outfield, said "It was tough more so the mental aspect because the schedule was not consistent at first."

Another captain, Andy Hurtado, who is a closing and starting pitcher, discussed his experience adjusting to the new schedules. He described about how he stayed strong during this time even though it felt like the players were "left in the dark" due to the uncertainty of their season.

Since the players are not able to go on campus to workout or practice their baseball out on the fields, they look to different alternatives.

Anderson at times goes to

the park either by himself or with some of his teammates to workout or practice their baseball skills. When he is not at the park, he runs on the beach, does sit ups and lifts weights at home to maintain his fitness.

Hurtado used to workout with his buddy before he moved but now instead trains with some of his teammates from the baseball team.

While there may not be new games scheduled, Hurtado stated how important it is to maintain fitness because soon they will be back on the field.

Brown would get creative with his workouts, such working out with some of the other baseball

players in the park or his outdoor workout set-up.

Brown said "It was harder to workout during the pandemic because [before] I was used to a consistent schedule."

However, being in the pandemic for so long, he recently has become more acquainted with his new routine.

Head Coach Vic Buttler said the recent changes made within the team are difficult but that he tries to help the players through these tough times.

Due to challenges brought on by the impact of COVID-19 and with other opportunities available, some players left Cerritos College. Players such as Nathaniel

joined the U.S. Army in fall of 2020 and David Hayes, an ace pitcher, was recruited to Azusa Pacific University to play on their team.

While some players pursued different opportunities, Buttler does his best to attend to the students here and make them feel hopeful during these times of uncertainty.

"I try to be encouraging and uplifting," Buttler said.

They have classroom discussions on a weekly basis and for support during these tough times, the students keep in contact virtually and at times text each other, said Buttler.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Coach May supports team on and off the court amidst COVID-19

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"Of all the coaching I have done in my years I would never think this would have happened to sports," Cerritos Head basketball Coach Russ May said about the pandemic and lockdown.

May said that he thought this global pandemic would be over quickly, like the Ebola epidemic was in 2014, but he soon realized he was not ready for the series of events soon to take place. He says that he wishes that things were back to the way that they used to be.

As he further explained, moments before the pandemic happened, he got a call from the Dean of Athletics at Cerritos, Rory Natividad, saying that the season was cancelled.

"I was looking forward towards 2020 but my dreams weren't going to happen this year."

May was very adamant about how COVID-19 ruined the teams year since no one can play basketball anymore until further notice. But his attitude has improved and he has a positive outlook on the future now.

May has been teaching online classes during the pandemic, such as weight training for beginning and intermediate courses.

He's also been training his basketball players throughout the pandemic while coaching them by Zoom meeting, getting them in shape to stay prepared for the upcoming season.

May wants his players to stick with the program and to pay close attention on the court and off the court.

Academically, he wishes everyone would have a different mind set in times like this.

Two of May's best players on the team are sophomores Dorian Harris, 20, and Joshua Belvin, 20.

Harris, a small forward,

expressed similar thoughts as Coach May. "This virus is going to get bad before it can get good," Harris says.

He continues to still train and work hard during his time away from Cerritos and hopes that this pandemic will end so he can go back to playing ball with his teammates.

Belvin, a point guard, shared his thoughts on if the pandemic has changed his passion for basketball: "Honestly this pandemic didn't change my mindset, my abilities, I always train with or without the gym," Belvin said.

Belvin trains in Signal Hill, local parks, beaches and anywhere he can run.

"I miss my teammates, I really did think this was our year to shine," Belvin said.

Harris and Belvin mentioned some of the things Coach May has taught them so they be on the path of becoming true champions.



KEANURUFFO/TM

Up and under: Sophomore Point Guard no.2, Joshua Belvin, elevates under the rim to score a hard-worked two points. Cerritos is ready to compete.

He has taught them how to train, study for school and to be thorough in anything that they ever do, and overall wants the best for his players during these troubling times.

May wants his players to never forget the main goal of what he is teaching them.

He wants them to understand to stay precise and to never get discouraged.

Falcon pursues fitness career after near fatal accident

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After surviving a life-changing car accident in 2017, Rafael Ricky Rincon-Alvidrez re-enrolled at Cerritos College and aspires for a career in physical therapy.

Inspired by his battle in a two-month coma and living with a traumatic brain injury (TBI), Rincon believes fitness was key for his mental and physical recovery.

The 31-year-old says he is grateful to still be alive.

"I have a second chance at life," Rincon said, "and through the process of my recovery, I became very motivated about kinesiology, physical fitness and physical aptitude."

Rincon was eager to make progress during his recovery process.

"I remember when I first started [my recovery], I instantaneously wanted to run a mile," he said.

"It was the first thing I asked the nurse," Rincon added.

One week after being released from Rancho Los Amigos, the fitness enthusiast was able to run his first mile since the accident.

Today, he is on his way to graduating from Cerritos College with an Associate Degree in Kinesiology and says if he stays on track, he hopes to transfer to a university in Fall 2022.



EMILY MELGAR / TM

Miracle: The Cerritos College student hopes to transfer in Fall 2022. He is ready for Cerritos College courses to return to campus when the time comes.

"Cerritos College has given me a tremendous amount of support," Rincon explained, "Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at Cerritos has been very accommodating and very helpful when I returned after my accident."

He added that SAS helped with things like priority registration and has also had positive experiences with his professors.

"They have been nothing but helpful, encouraging and motivating," and added that the experience has inspired and helped keep himself leveled with his educational ambitions.

Rincon's long-term goal is

to transfer to California State University, Northridge because he is interested in their Adaptive Fitness Trainer Program.

The future Cerritos graduate says he wants to be an adaptive fitness trainer so that he'll "be able to help and motivate individuals that have mobility issues or that have gone through situations like [his]."

In addition to returning to school, Rincon maintains a strict fitness regimen to keep himself fit.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic closing up most gyms in Southern California, Rincon decided to build his own gym at home.

Rincon first attended Cerritos College from 2007 to 2011 and decided to take a break to pursue comedy and an acting career.

"It was fun, but eventually I realized that education was definitely a priority for me," Rincon said, noting that his decision to go back to school started with his accident.

On Dec. 17, 2017, Rincon was driving on the 91 freeway and tragically fell asleep at the wheel. He was unfortunately not wearing a seatbelt and was thus ejected out of his car's windshield.

As a result, Rincon was in a coma for two months and suffered a TBI. He was admitted

to Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center for his recovery.

"I would like to keep building on myself and bulk up a little more than I currently am," Rincon currently works out six to seven days a week for one to three hours a day.

His routine includes one-hour workouts of High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), followed by two hours of weight-lifting training.

The former cross-country athlete says he has also kept running incorporated in his fitness routine.

In recent weeks, as gyms have begun reopening with the number of COVID-19 cases declining in the state, Rincon has also started working out at Orangetheory Fitness in Long Beach.

The local gym focuses on HIIT-based workouts, one of Rincon's main fitness routines.

"For example, you do 20 pushups and right after you do 20 high-kicks, and after that, you do 20 diamond pushups, and that accounts for one set," he explained.

Rincon also plans to obtain his personal trainer certification soon.

The aspiring fitness trainer says there are times he gets caught up in his routine, and often loses sight of everything he has been through.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Softball: Fast pitching through the ongoing pandemic

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In all her 20 years of coaching, softball coach Kodee Murray had never experienced anything quite like the sport she loved being taken away for a long duration of time.

Around this time last year, all collegiate sports had their seasons postponed due to the outbreak and eventual shut down at the hands of COVID-19.

Fast forward to March 2021, Cerritos College athletics have been cleared to return for on campus social distanced conditioning.

Athletes and staff alike will be excited to return to campus and get one step closer to getting collegiate sports back on track.

Murray says she and her Falcons have been keeping in shape and getting ready for the eventual return of their respected season.

The staff and team met two or three times a week to go over drills and bond with each other throughout quarantine.

Coach Murray gives praise

to her fellow Falcon coaches for helping develop training regimens for her girls to develop themselves physically while they train by themselves.

Murray specifically gave thanks to Cerritos soccer Head Coach Benny Artiaga and football Head Coach Dean Grosfeld, as Artiaga helped develop the endurance regimen and Grosfeld helped develop the strength regimen.

"Sometimes, you feel alone and separated from the other sports," Murray said, "It's nice to know here at Cerritos College that all the coaches are willing to help shape our athletes regardless of sport."

Murray is excited to get back and complete her 20th season with Cerritos once the season is resumed.

Danielle Rivera is an outfielder who plays for the Falcons and is the first baseman for them.

She is also really excited about the return of the sport she has spent her whole life playing.

Rivera has been playing softball for 14 years, while also becoming a track athlete in high school.

She goes on to say that softball



Photo By Daryl Peterson

DARYL PETERSON

Gameplan: Cerritos College softball Head Coach Kodee Murray visits her team on the pitchers mound during a spring season game. Cerritos softball team looks to pick up where they left off as all athletic programs have been allowed on school grounds for socially distanced conditioning.

has been in her family forever as her three older sisters have also played softball.

Rivera has also been doing extra training on top of the recommended regimen by regularly attending CrossFit every week from 5-6 p.m.

"CrossFit is where I get my best training in. On top of my training given out by the coach, I feel like I am in the best shape of my entire softball career," said

Rivera.

She also talks about how her footwork has definitely improved with the soccer workout part of her training.

Rivera described how dedicated Coach Murray is in getting the best out of her and the rest of her fellow Falcons teammates.

"She definitely shows a willingness to get the best out of us and it is an honor to call her my

coach," Danielle said.

Rivera is currently majoring in communications while interning on social media, creating graphics for various colleges.

One day, she hopes to work at ESPN as a career dream.

Upon returning to campus, Murray and her team are ready to get back to campus and start preparing for their return to season.