



¡ÉXITO! Noticias

Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training

Increasing Latino Participation In Solving Cancer Health Disparities

Just like her three-legged, good-luck Chilean pig that perhaps “gave up one of its legs to help others,” Julissa Marin is always looking to lend a hand wherever she goes.

That includes lending a hand to improve healthcare systems.

Marin, a full-time healthcare administration student in the Executive Program at California State University, Long Beach, wants to address inconsistencies in data information and review healthcare redesign.

She also works full-time in the business officer of the Clinical and Pathology Laboratories at University of California, Los Angeles, where she rectified over \$16 million by stabilizing the influx of lab charge errors in hospital billing work queues.

Apply Now!
Encourage friends and colleagues to apply for *Éxito!* training and internships [here](#).

To further her experience and education, Marin applied for the *Éxito!* Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training program.

The *Éxito!* program, led by Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez at UT Health San Antonio with support from the National Cancer Institute, recruits 25 master’s-level students and professionals each year for a five-day summer institute, optional internships, and ongoing

networking and support to promote doctoral degrees and careers in Latino cancer. A recent study found significant increases in summer institute participants’ confidence to apply to a doctoral program and academic self-efficacy.

“[*Éxito!*] reaffirmed “that I am capable of pursuing a doctorate and there is a Latinx community in which is or will be on the same journey and has similar experiences in academia and life,” Marin said.

For those considering applying for *Éxito!* next year, Marin has this advice:

“Keep an open-mind because at the end of the week [your] path may completely change.”



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A Message from Éxito! Principal Investigator

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez



The Latino cancer burden is expected to rise 142% by 2030. That's why our *Éxito!* program is so important.

Of 200 *Éxito!* grads since 2011, I'm excited to report that more than 35% have applied to doctoral programs and more than 20% are now enrolled in a doctoral program!

The list of those accepted into or graduated from programs is growing:

- Maria Brietzke – PhD in Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Roger Figueroa – Illinois Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention PhD/MPH Program, University of Illinois
- Marivelisse Soto-Salgado – DrPH in Social Determinants of Health, University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health
- Mary Vanellys Diaz-Santana – PhD in Epidemiology, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Lizette Rangel – DrPH in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, UT School of Public Health, Houston
- Laura Rubalcava – PhD in Clinical Psychology, George Washington University, DC
- Donaji Stelzig – DrPH in Health Promotion and Community Health Sciences, Texas A&M Health Science Center, School of Rural Public Health
- Becky Adeigbe – PhD in Applied Demography, University of Texas at San Antonio, School of Public Policy
- Mariana Arevalo – PhD in Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences, University of Houston, School of Public Health
- Lizbeth Del-Toro – PhD in Community Health Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, School of Public Health
- Martha Garcia – PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology, University of Texas Medical Branch, School of Biomedical Sciences
- Melawhy Garcia – PhD in Health Behavior, University of California San Diego/San Diego State University
- Loida Tamayo – PhD in Health Services, Texas A&M Health Science Center, School of Rural Public Health
- Aditi Wahi – PhD in Health Behavior, University of California San Diego/San Diego State University
- Cindy Wittenburg – DrPH in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, University of Texas School of Public Health, El Paso.
- Rosalie Aguilar – PhD in Translational Science, UT Health San Antonio
- Nicolas Lopez-Galvez – PhD in Environmental Health Sciences, University of Arizona
- Aixa Perez-Caraballo – PhD in Public Health-Epidemiology, University Mass Amherst
- Vanessa Torres – PhD in Health Services, University of Washington
- Sanae El Ibrahim – PhD University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Beatriz Sosa-Prado – PhD in Public Health, University of California
- Alicia Nunez – PhD in Clinical Psychology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Angela Gutierrez – PhD in Community Health sciences, University of California, Los Angeles
- Natalicio Serrano – PhD in Public Health Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis
- Benjamin Aceves – PhD in Health Behavior and Health Promotion, University of Arizona
- Carola Sanchez Diaz – PhD in Epidemiology, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Jasmin Berrios – PhD in Educational Technology Leadership, Morehead State University
- Eduardo Zamora – PhD in Health Promotion and Education, University of Utah
- Nancy Vargas – PhD in Health Promotion and Health Behavior, Oregon State University
- Hena Din – PhD in Health Behavior, University of California San Diego/San Diego State University
- Alyssa De Santiago-Colunga, DrPh, Claremont Graduate University
- Shayda Dioun, PhD in Behavioral Science, UT School of Public Health, Houston
- Angie Poggi-Burke, PhD in Health Science, Nova Southeastern University
- Janet Sanchez, PhD in Health Services, University of Washington
- Alelí Ayala, PhD in health and sports sciences, University of Zaragoza (Spain)
- Eduardo J. Santiago-Rodríguez, PhD in Epidemiology and Translational Science, University of California, San Francisco
- Lizeth Tamayo, PhD in Epidemiology, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Monica Montano, TBD
- Erica Santos, PhD in Health Services at the University of Washington
- Mayra Serrano, DrPh public health leaderships, Chapel Hill
- Iris Guzman, PhD in community health sciences, University of California, Los Angeles
- Maria Rincon, PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences at Temple University
- Adrianna Acevedo Fontanez, PhD in Epidemiology University of Pittsburgh
- Jacquelin Cordero, DrPH program in Health Promotion Behavioral at The University of Texas at El Paso
- Cristina Valdovinos, MD, Charles R. Drew University/ University of California Los Angeles Medical Education Program
- Alejandra Mendez, MD at Indiana University School of Medicine
- Rosmary Marquez, Indiana University School of Public Health
- Emanuelle Dias, UT Health Science Center at Houston—School of Public Health
- Andrea Cruz, PhD in Cellular and Molecular Pathology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

As our current five-year grant for *Éxito!* draws to a close, we are exploring unique avenues to continue funding, given the monumental success of our amazing participants, which exceeded our highest expectations.

We think many more students and professionals can benefit from the *Éxito!* experience, and we are dedicated to making that happen!

Contact me [here](#).

A Message from Éxito! Co-Principal Investigator

Dr. Rena J. Pasick



Dear *Éxito!* Alumni,

I am writing today with a sense of urgency regarding the challenges that are before us, but also with optimism that we can continue our forward progress – both in our small world of *Éxito!* and MTPCCR, and for our country and our planet.

Éxito! is entering its final grant year, and we cannot say what the future will hold. However, *Éxito!* was the catalyst for the newly funded Cancer Prevention and Control Research Training Program (CAPAC) in Puerto Rico! So that is a

bright star on the horizon; and MTPCCR is continuing at UCLA for two years through philanthropic funds. Both demonstrate new and creative ways we can continue to grow our incredible pipeline of dedicated health disparities researchers and practitioners.

Please know that we will not give up on *Éxito!* or MTPCCR...and we CANNOT give up on our country and our planet! What we can accomplish for the former will also benefit the latter. I look forward to working with you in 2020 and beyond to make this world a better and healthier place for all!



Training Opportunities

Apply for a \$3,250 *Éxito!* Internship

Éxito! alumni not currently enrolled in doctoral programs are eligible to apply for an *Éxito!* internship. Internships are designed to help *Éxito!* alumni improve their research skills. Those considering applying for an internship are required to select a mentor from their home institution or cancer research center near them and create a 6-month internship work plan. Internships will take place between June–November 2020. We encourage all of our alumni to apply!

Find out more about our internships and complete the application from our website at www.exitotraining.org.

Deadline for applying for one of our \$3,250 *Éxito!* Internships is March 2, 2020

Decisions will be announced in late March, 2020.

Share the Experience

Encourage your friends and colleagues to apply to *Éxito!*

We are currently accepting applications for our 10th *Éxito!* Summer Institute on June 1–5, 2020, in San Antonio.

Apply at www.exitotraining.org by March 2, 2020.

We encourage you to have your qualified friends and colleagues apply!

We have [program flyers](#) available on our website or in hard copies if you would like to distribute them or place them in your work and university settings.

If you would like these or other resources, e-mail us at exito@uthscsa.edu.

News from the IHPR

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at UT Health San Antonio, the team behind *Éxito!*, continues to investigate the causes and solutions to cancer and chronic disease disparities to improve Latino health in San Antonio, South Texas and the nation.

Here are a few IHPR cancer prevention initiatives currently underway:

Dr. Amelie Ramirez Starts New Latino Health Equity Podcast!

The “*Salud Talks*” podcast, the newest project from the Dr. Amelie Ramirez’s *Salud America!* Latino health team at UT Health San Antonio, is now live. Each week, listeners will hear from health equity experts—from grassroots movements to national organizations—on topics ranging from cultural representation, climate change, childhood trauma, mental health, and more. Episodes of “*Salud Talks*” are released every Wednesday morning and are available wherever fine podcasts are downloaded, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and SoundCloud.

Redes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Research Network

Redes En Acción is a national collective of researchers and advocates fighting Latino cancer by promoting Latino training opportunities, generating research, and supporting cancer awareness.

SMS Cessation Service for Young Adult Smokers in South Texas (Quitxt)

Quitxt is an evidence-based, culturally tailored Spanish and English SMS cessation service for young adult Latinos living in the San Antonio and Web media markets. This program will carry out an intensive radio, social and mobile media promotional campaign to recruit young adult cigarette smokers to this service.

Entre Familia: Educating Hispanic Adolescents and their Families on Cervical Cancer and HPV Vaccination

Promotoras delivered *Entre Familia* (EF), a cervical cancer prevention, education, and outreach program to Hispanic families. Eligible program participants were Hispanic adults with boys and/or girls ages 11-17 years old who lived in Hidalgo County.

Health4Kids

The Health4Kids Intervention Trial is a randomized controlled trial to improve children’s body composition by testing a comprehensive, culturally and linguistically relevant, family-oriented intervention for overweight/obese Hispanic children (ages 6-11) in three pediatric clinics in San Antonio, Texas.

South Texas Health Status Review: 2018

Cancer is a significant public health issue in South Texas, with various disparities and rates that differ from the rest of Texas and nation, according to the 2018 Cancer Chapter update of the South Texas Health Status Review, an online report of the latest cancer data led by Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, chair and professor of Population Health Sciences, director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR), and leader of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Mays Cancer Center, all at UT Health San Antonio.



Latino Cancer News & Articles

[New Research Review: “The State of Latino Housing, Transit, and Green Spaces.”](#)

This new review by Dr. Amelie Ramirez’s *Salud America!* health equity program at UT Health San Antonio found that U.S. Latinos face lower-quality, unaffordable housing, as well as high risk for eviction and displacement, which contributes to health inequities. The review also identifies certain policies and strategies are emerging to improve health equity in housing, including efforts to keep renters in their homes, repair and maintain existing affordable housing, acquire and repair vacant and abandoned homes, and rehabilitate mixed-income properties; as well as strategic land purchases for affordable housing developers; inclusionary zoning and fee waivers; and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), development incentives, and housing trust funds to ease developer maintenance and expansion of affordable housing units.

[Get a “Health Equity Report Card” for Your Area!](#)

Select your county name and get a customized Health Equity Report Card by Dr. Amelie Ramirez’s *Salud America!* program at UT Health San Antonio to see how your area stacks up in housing, transit, poverty, health care, healthy food, and other health equity issues compared to the rest of your state and nation. The Health Equity Report Card auto-generates local data with interactive maps and comparative gauges, which can help you visualize health inequities. You can email your Health Equity Report Card, share it on social media, and use it to make the case for community change to boost health equity, where everyone has a fair, just opportunity to live their healthiest. Try it now!

[Start ‘Handle With Care’ So Police Notify Schools if Kids Exposed to Trauma!](#)

60% of U.S. children have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse. These kids still have to go to class, carrying a burden of trauma that can interfere with their behavior and grades in schools that don’t know there’s an issue. Download the free *Salud America!* “Handle With Care Action Pack” to start a Handle With Care program, in which police notify schools when they encounter children at a traumatic scene, so schools can provide support right away. 65+ cities have started Handle With Care. The Action Pack contains materials and technical assistance to help school and police leaders everywhere start a conversation and plans for their own Handle With Care program!

Find Dr. Ramirez and the IHPR online!



[The Institute for Health Promotion Research](#) targets Latino health solutions.

[Redes En Acción](#) is a research network for Latino cancer.

[Salud America!](#) is a national Latino-focused organization that creates culturally relevant and research-based stories, videos, and tools to inspire people to start and support healthy changes to policies, systems, and environments where Latino children and families can equitably live, learn, work, and play.



Have you seen our Éxito! video?

See what alumni are saying about their experience during the Éxito! Summer Institute.



Éxito! Alumni 2019



Éxito! Alumni 2017



Éxito! Alumni 2018



Éxito! Alumni 2016



Éxito! Alumni 2015



Éxito! Alumni 2014



Éxito! Alumni 2013



Éxito! Alumni 2012



Éxito! Alumni 2011



Congratulations

Janet Sanchez *Éxito!* Alumni 2013

Janet Sanchez graduated with her PhD in health services from the University of Washington. Janet's dissertation focused on assessing racial/ethnic disparities in colorectal cancer postoperative-related care. Janet has had several publications and presentations, as well as two pre-doctoral fellowships and two graduate fellowships.



Vanessa Torres *Éxito!* Alumni 2013

Vanessa Torres graduated with her PhD in health services from the University of Washington. Vanessa was a pre-doctoral fellow/trainee from the Biobehavioral Cancer Prevention Training and Control Program (2T32CA092408-16) at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Vanessa was also the recipient of the Outstanding Student Paper Award at APHA.



Donaji Stelzig *Éxito!* Alumni 2011

Donaji Stelzig graduated with her DrPh in health promotion and community health sciences from the Texas A&M School of Public Health. Donaji's research focuses on cancer prevention and underserved population health issues. Donaji will be starting a position at the University of Houston, where she will develop her own original program to train community health workers to successfully assist residents in disadvantaged communities throughout Houston.



Cristina Valdovinos

Éxito! Alumni 2012

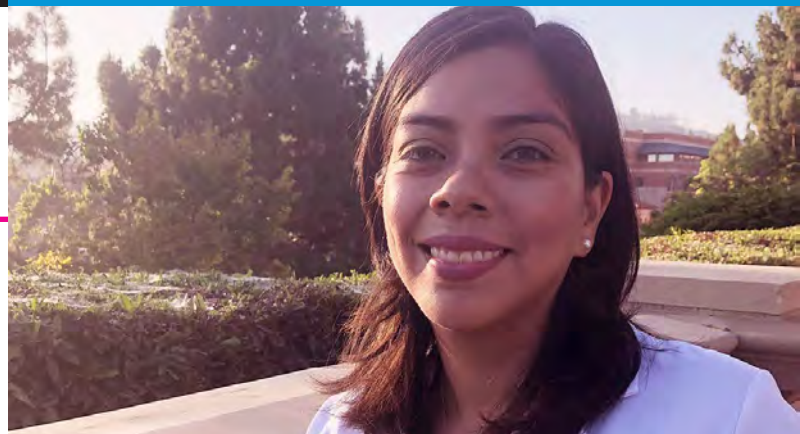
Maristina Valdovinos is a medical student at Charles R. Drew University/University of California Los Angeles Medical Education Program. After medical school, Cristina hopes to enter residency training in an underserved community. She is still unsure of what specialty she would like to focus on, but she is interested in pursuing a career in academic medicine where she can both provide clinical care to patients and pursue research on issues that affect medically underserved communities. Cristina is currently searching for opportunities in health disparities research and plans to apply to the American Society for Radiation Oncology Summer Research Program and the Medical Student Summer Research in Aging. Cristina said that *Éxito!* was an incredibly formative experience where she felt empowered to pursue a doctorate, giving her the knowledge to turn her goal into a reality. Specifically, the internship opportunity gave her the tools to work with a senior researcher on what would eventually result in a publication. She looks forward to using the skills she developed in her future career as an academic physician. Cristina was also the recipient of three scholarships and had two poster presentations in 2019.

Cristina's top career goals:

1. To provide compassionate care as a physician in an underserved community.
2. To utilize her public health and research training to lead a research program with a focus on addressing health disparities.
3. To serve as a mentor for first-generation, underrepresented students interested in public health and/or a career in medicine.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Cristina has this advice:

I would advise future applicants to really take the time to reflect on their experiences to date to identify what is most valuable to them in a doctoral program. I have spent my college and graduate careers invested in service work and research in underserved communities, work which I continued after my MPH. Therefore, I knew that I wanted to apply to programs committed to the mission of providing care to the underserved and to training physician leaders that advocate for social justice and health equity. This reflection will also serve applicants well when it comes to composing the important personal statement. I would also advise future applicants to build strong relationships with several mentors that are at different phases of their careers. I benefitted from the support of both current and recent medical students as well as more senior physicians. I would also recommend adequate preparation for any entrance exams that might be required for admission. Do your research and know what to expect from the exams and talk to students who have taken the exam recently to get tips on strategies to ensure your success.



Cristina
Valdovinos

Fun Facts

Anything new, fun and – most importantly – important to you that you would like to share?

I traveled to Europe for the first time ever this year and had an absolute blast exploring London, Amsterdam, and Paris. Currently searching for travel buddies as I hope to visit Spain next year!

Best de-stressor?

Spending time with my family, especially my baby niece!

Best study tip?

Time management is so essential in doctoral programs. Avoid procrastination; make a schedule and stick to it.

Favorite study snack?

Chocolate-covered pretzels

Favorite class so far?

Clinical Skills/Doctoring where we learn the art of taking a patient history and physical exam.

Adrianna Acevedo-Fontanez

Éxito! Alumni 2017

Adrianna Acevedo-Fontanez is currently working on her PhD in Epidemiology at Pittsburg Public Health. Adrianna is also a pre-doctoral research assistant. Her current research focuses on anal cancer in HIV-Serodiscordant MSM. Adrianna said *Éxito!* reaffirmed her passion for cancer research and gave her the confidence to pursue her doctoral degree. Adrianna was also awarded a diversity supplement.

Adrianna's top career goals:

1. Complete PhD.
2. Complete a Fellowship.
3. Become a Faculty Member.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Adrianna has this advice:

Do it! You are capable and will be successful in this journey.



Adrianna Acevedo-Fontanez

Fun Facts

Best de-stressor?

Exercise; try new classes at the gym

Best study tip?

Coffee

Favorite study snack?

Hershey's Kisses





Iris Guzman

Iris Guzman **Éxito! Alumni 2017**

Iris Guzman is currently completing her PhD in community health sciences at UCLA. Iris is also working as a project coordinator on the RIGHTS project. This study is designed to understand the experiences that Latino and Asian immigrants who live in California have encountered in the areas of health care, social services, employment, education, and law enforcement, and how these experiences have impacted their health and access to health care. Iris said *Éxito!* encouraged her to apply and attend a doctoral program. Iris received the University Fellowship and presented a poster at the 2018 APHA Conference on “Latino and Asian immigrants’ experiences accessing health care under state-level immigrant policies: RIGHTS Study Baseline Findings.”

Iris’ top career goals:

1. *Researcher.*
2. *Professor.*
2. *Community advocate.*

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Iris has this advice:

Find good mentors and build relationships with people who are invested in your well-being.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Iris says:

Build a community with your peers, chances are that they are also encountering the same challenges as you. You can become very isolated in a PhD program, so it is important to build a sense of community.

Fun Facts

Best de-stressor?
Exercise!

Best study tip?
Form study groups



Alejandra Mendez

Alejandra Mendez Éxito! Alumni 2017

Alejandra Mendez is currently working on her MD at Indiana University School of Medicine. Alejandra hopes to become a physician so that she may help improve the lives of Latino and underserved populations. Alejandra was accepted to an oncology fellowship this summer at Indiana University School of Medicine. The CUPID program originated at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and is aimed to help cultivate an interest in cancer treatment, research, and health disparities among medical students. Alejandra was also the recipient of the Professional Women of St. Tammany Scholarship.

Maria Rincon Éxito! Alumni 2017

Maria Rincon is currently working on her PhD in social and behavioral sciences at Temple University College of Public Health. She is also a research fellow. Currently, she is focusing on health communication, instrument measurement. Maria said *Éxito!* allowed her the opportunity to meet and network with like-minded Latino scientists. Maria also received the Future Faculty Fellowship Award (100% academic funding for 5 years).



Maria Rincon

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Maria has this advice:

Do a lot of research to find the program that fits you the best.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Maria says:

Find multiple mentors that complement your education and skills.

Fun Facts

Anything new, fun and – most importantly – important to you that you would like to share?

Very busy first year :)

Best de-stressor? *Playing with my dogs*

Best study tip?

Time plan everything

Favorite study snack?

Plantain chips

Favorite class so far?

Behavioral measurement



Erica Santos

Fun Facts

Anything new, fun and – most importantly – important to you that you would like to share?

I got funding from my training grant to go to a conference in Denmark this upcoming summer! I'm super excited for the opportunity!

Best de-stressor?

Running outside! Or any form of exercise, I make it a priority especially when I'm swamped with work.

Best study tip?

Take breaks, bring some yummy snacks, and drink a lot of water! Also, plan ahead and make mini goals for yourself (e.g., this evening I want to complete two readings and one lecture). It always makes me feel better to cross things off my to-do list!

Favorite study snack?

Does coffee count as a study snack? I love coffee. Hmm for food, I like sliced apples and cheddar cheese sticks.

Favorite class so far?

So far I really loved my epidemiology courses. Best professors I have had thus far in my doctoral program. They are so passionate and care a lot about teaching, but they also do great research!

Erica Santos

Éxito! Alumni 2017

Erica Santos is working on her PhD in health services at the University of Washington. Erica is also a research analyst at Washington State Labor & Industries, working on a study to find ways to address factors contributing to high injury rates among janitors. Erica helps support the study by conducting and coordinating focus groups and individual interviews with janitors and other key stakeholders. Erica said *Éxito!* helped her prepare and apply to doctoral programs. *Éxito!* not only provided very tangible advice and skills, but also encouragement and support. With *Éxito!*, Erica said she gained a support network. Erica was also the recipient of Training Grant number T420H008433, funded by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Erica's top career goals:

1. A career where the research she does can inform policy and greater structural changes.
2. Dedicate her work to working with underserved communities and communities of color toward sustainable and equitable changes to improve health, specifically in addressing the social determinants of health.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Erica has this advice:

Make sure you look at the doctoral programs curriculum and the types of skills you want to gain/need so you can figure out whether you can do that at that program. Also, as much as you're applying and showcasing yourself through the application process, remember that you are also interviewing them, too, and you are worthy of going to a program that is equipped to support you and make sure you succeed while you are there.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Erica says:

I hope current doctoral students are genuinely taking time for themselves. Doctoral programs are exhausting and sometimes there's a lot of ups and downs. We need to make sure we can talk about the ups and the downs so that those that come after us don't think it's a walk in a park, we need to talk about the downs so that those that come after us won't feel like they are alone in the struggle. On the other hand, it'll help more students understand that yes, we struggled, but we still did it!



Jacquelin Cordero

Jacquelin Cordero

Éxito! Alumni 2018

Jacquelin Cordero is working on her DrPH in health promotion behavioral sciences at UTHealth School of Public Health – El Paso Regional Campus. Jacquelin is preparing a research training grant proposal to conduct health disparities research surrounding substance use/miss use and the reduction of adverse health outcomes employing community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods. Jacquelin said when she first applied and was accepted into the *Éxito!* program, she only imagined possibly one day applying for a doctoral program; however, she did not believe she would be accepted into a public health specific program given the lack of research and publishing experience. After *Éxito!*, Jacquelin felt motivated to apply to a program and demonstrate her dedication and focus surrounding substance use research and allow the admission committee an opportunity to evaluate her readiness to become a public health doctoral student.

Jacquelin's top career goals:

1. Engage in research surrounding the prevention and reduction of leading causes of infectious, chronic, and injury related morbidity and mortality as it relates to substance use/misuse.
2. Contribute to the development of a Peer Recovery Support Specialist (Texas) vocational rehabilitation program.
2. Influence of health policy changes through cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis research.

Fun Facts

Anything new, fun and – most importantly – important to you that you would like to share?

I am a newly appointed volunteer 501(c)3 Board Member for Voices United, El Paso's Child Assault Prevention (CAP) program.

Best de-stressor?

I enjoy being outdoors and being around animals. Slowing down for just 5 minutes without distractions (i.e., phone or computer) with my dogs after a long day or when hitting a writer's block helps me de-stress

Best study tip?

I can be an avid procrastinator. Therefore, I try to create a study plan/schedule that allows me to be a productive procrastinator (i.e., 2 hours of cleaning followed by 1 hour of studying or creating a study outline, then 1 hour of cleaning followed by 2 hours of studying/research/writing).

Favorite study snack?

Pistachios and hot tea

Favorite class so far?

I am taking a free online CE course "Reinvent yourself: Unleash your creativity" on edX.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Jacquelin has this advice:

Be realistic and creative given your current environment and situation – forecast possible restraints on your financial resources and time, then budget accordingly; make an application timeline (stick to it as much as possible) and continuously seek funding opportunities/possibilities given your research interest. Be specific but also adaptable when choosing schools and programs. Be persistent; keep yourself motivated by setting SMART goals and recognizing the small accomplishments. Be patient with yourself and enjoy the process by avoiding negative self-talk or hindering self-doubt; continuously seek guidance from your mentors and identified supports (most important!).

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Jacquelin says:

I've been told various times from current doctoral students to not become discouraged if my grant proposal is not awarded; most are not awarded the first time around and to continuously look for other funding possibilities more specific to my research focus/topic.

Emanuelle Dias Éxito! Alumni 2018

Emanuelle Dias is currently enrolled in her PhD at UT Health Science Center at Houston—School of Public Health. Emanuelle is doing research on work experiences of cancer survivors, where she does project management, data collection, organization, and other writing tasks. Emanuelle said *Éxito!* gave her the confidence to apply to a doctoral program. She knew she wanted to apply but she never believed in herself. Emanuelle also had several presentations and co-authored in several publications. Emanuelle was recipient of the 2019 Basil L. King Health Sciences Scholarship and the UTHealth School of Public Health Outstanding New Doctoral Student Scholarship. Emanuelle is currently working with her advisor, Dr. Maria E. Fernandez, on a project focused on organizational readiness. This is an implementation science related project, which focuses on the context of FQHCs for successful implementation of colorectal cancer screening initiatives. Emanuelle helps with recruitment, guide development, data collection, and dissemination efforts.

Emanuelle's top career goals:

1. Be involved in the community.
2. Become a tenured researcher and professor.
3. Be financially stable and happy in her career.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Emanuelle has this advice:

Do it! You have nothing to lose. Let your story drive you and invest in a career that allows you to do independent research in your area.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Emanuelle says:

Keep going! It will be so worth it. Do not isolate yourself; make an effort to connect with mentors, colleagues, and friends. Having support and work/life balance is what has taken me through my first semester.



Emanuelle Dias

Fun Facts

Anything new, fun and – most importantly – important to you that you would like to share?

I'm going to Costa Rica in May to celebrate graduation! I am going to Brasil this year for the first time in 9 years! I am excited to reconnect with most of my family that still lives there and adventure to new places.

Best de-stressor?

Workout classes!

Best study tip?

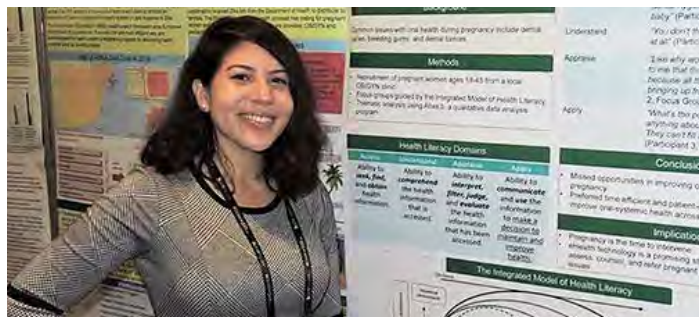
Get out of the house! Visit a new library, coffee house, etc. Sometimes a change of scenery is all you need to keep going!

Favorite study snack?

Popcorn!

Favorite class so far?

Health Promotion Theories for Individuals and Groups



Rossmary Marquez

Éxito! Alumni 2018

Rossmary Marquez is working on her PhD at Indiana University School of Public Health. Rossmary works as a health communications specialist at the CDC. Even though her work has a strong focus on communication, some of the work she is involved with doing is qualitative data analysis of the media. Rossmary said *Éxito!* provided her with a support system and a network that she would like to keep from now on. Rossmary also co-authored two publications.

Rossmary's top career goals:

1. Increase the number of qualitative research work that is conducted in Spanish from the start to the end.
2. Publish research that matters and would change conversation in the field.
3. Work as a health scientist at the CDC and conduct a great variety of research projects across the agency.
4. Increase diversity in the workforce.

To those considering applying to a doctoral program, Rossmary has this advice:

If research is something you want to do, you need to pursue a PhD to be more fulfill in your career.



Rossmary Marquez

Fun Facts

Best de-stressor?

Yoga. lot of it!

Favorite study snack?

Coffee (for me is a snack)

Favorite class so far?

Qualitative inquiry





Nick Acuna

Éxito! Alumni 2019

Nick Acuna completed his MPH in epidemiology at Rutgers. He is currently involved in research to increase abstinent smoking rates among correctional populations. During his *Éxito!* internship, Nick worked in a study that examined the eligibility and receipt of ODx testing among Hispanic/Latinas in New Jersey diagnosed with breast cancer from 2008 to 2013, and assessing factors associated with ODx test receipt. Data was retrieved from the New Jersey State Cancer Registry. Nick also had the opportunity to present his preliminary findings at the 2019 AACR Health Disparities conference. Nick is in the process of applying to doctoral programs in molecular epidemiology.



Cristian Garcia Alcaraz

Éxito! Alumni 2019

Cristian Garcia Alcaraz immigrated to Oxnard, California from Michoacán, Mexico. Cristian is currently working on his MA degree in psychology at San Diego State University. During his *Éxito!* internship, Cristian conducted the first systematic review of the literature on intervention that aimed to increase breast, colorectal, cervical, and lung cancer screening among Latino farm workers. Cristian said the *Éxito!* internship provided the opportunity to expand his knowledge, especially in conducting a systematic literature review. Cristian is certain that this unique experience will make him a stronger PhD candidate.



Rosa Cobian Aguilar

Éxito! Alumni 2019

Rosa Cobian is working on her master's in psychology at San Diego State University. During her *Éxito!* internship, Rosa worked to translate and refine colorectal cancer screening measures in English and Spanish. Rosa said the internship forced her to experience the research process first-hand. The internship allowed Rosa to feel like an independent researcher and exposed her to the joys and obstacles that can come across. Rosa's greatest benefit by participating in the *Éxito!* internship was knowing that she developed something that will help aid colorectal cancer disparities research projects in the future. Rosa aspires to continue working in health disparities research and assure research findings reach underserved communities.



Crystal Costa
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Cystal Costa earned her Master of Public Health from the University of Texas at El Paso. For her *Éxito!* internship, Crystal worked on a project that characterized the population at risk for cancer and identified key variables relevant to cancer outcomes for the Hispanics of El Paso Cancer Risk, Screening Behavior and Outcomes cohort (HELP-CC) study. Crystal said the internship gave her more confidence in applying to a doctoral program because it helped her gain additional hands on experience in conducting research and challenged her in areas of data management and statistical analysis. Crystal also said the internship provided the opportunity to create and present her first poster presentation, expanded her network opportunities with other experts in the cancer research field, and gave her the opportunity for a potential publication. Crystal wishes to continue her research and interests in Latino cancer health disparities.



Hilmaris Centeno Girona
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Hilmaris Centeno Girona received her master's in science in epidemiology from the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus. For her *Éxito!* internship, Hilmaris worked on a study to determine the frequency and spectrum of germline mutations that cause cancer susceptibility among adults younger than 60, using prospective data of patients from the Puerto Rico Familial Colorectal Cancer Registry (PURIFICAR). Hilmaris said the internship reconfirmed the need to keep her focus on cancer research. The internship has also given Hilmaris the opportunity to publish her results as a first author. Hilmaris wishes to continue her research in health disparities, cancer research, and social and behavioral sciences.



Claudia Lozano
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Claudia Lozano completed her MPH from the University of Texas at El Paso. During her *Éxito!* internship, Claudia worked on a project that focused on strategies to improve HPV vaccination rates among adolescents in El Paso, Texas. Claudia was very motivated to pursue a doctoral degree after the *Éxito!* summer institute that during her internship, she felt more confident and felt the extra support to take the first step and apply. Claudia is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Texas Tech University. Claudia said the internship also provided her with the tools and courage to understand her abilities of conducting an entry-level study and it expanded her development of personal skills and knowledge. Claudia wishes to pursue a career that will allow her to make a difference and provide insight regarding strategies on improving HPV vaccine and cervical cancer screening.



Julissa Marin
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Julissa Marin is currently a full-time student in the executive program at California State University, Long Beach, for her master's in science in health care administration. For her *Éxito!* internship, Julissa conducted research by analyzing peer-reviewed journals and literature to provide evidence of how effect of stress is a direct carcinogen. Julissa said the internship broadened her scope on the importance of evidence-based research, and she also learned that you could do research holistic approaches for cancer survivors. Julissa also said the program helped her understand that she can influence her community and the people who do not know what affects their health. Julissa plans to apply for a doctoral program next year and, because of the *Éxito!* internship, she now knows what direction she would like to go.



Sophia Rodriguez
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Sophia Rodriguez is working on her MPH in health promotion and behavioral science at San Diego State University. During her *Éxito!* internship, Sophia worked on a study that examined organizational readiness for change (ORC) factors (change valence, change efficacy and contextual factors) using the CFIR Framework domains-inner and outer setting to assess levels of readiness to implement the JUNTOS program in San Diego. The objective was to identify factors affecting the ORC determinants in order to outline strategies for effective JUNTOS (promotor-led group education workshop) implementation. Sophia said the internship allowed her to gain qualitative skills including analysis of qualitative data. She also learned about D&I concepts in the research setting. In addition, Sophia conducted qualitative research and interviewed key informants as part of the formative research for her lab.



Nelybeth Santiago Yance
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Nelybeth Santiago Yance received her master's degree in science with specialization in health evaluation research at the University of Puerto Rico's Graduate School of Public Health (UPR-GSPH). Her thesis topic raised interest in topics such as health disparities in HPV vaccination, knowledge and awareness of HPV and cancer research. During her *Éxito!* internship, Nelybeth analyzed data from the 2018 Health Information National Trends Survey to examine racial/ethnic differences in knowledge of HPV and HPV vaccine awareness among a U.S. national sample of women. Nelybeth said that after completing the internship, she feels much more confident in applying to a doctoral program. In addition, she was also able to increase her knowledge and skills on data management and statistical analysis. She credits the *Éxito!* internship for giving her the opportunity to grow in the research area next to her mentor. This experience also gave her the ability to learn and explore different areas of study. Nelybeth feels more secure and prepared for her future at an academic and professional level.



Alexis Smith
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Alexis Smith is currently an MPH student in sociomedical sciences at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. For her *Éxito!* internship, Alexis examined the sustainability of the community-based National Witness Project (NWP) program. Alexis said the *Éxito!* internship helped her better understand the type of program that would be both the best fit and most fulfilling for her. Alexis is very interested in chronic health diseases and interventions related to the prevention, management, and access to care for those diseases. However, as a result of her internship, her awareness of the need for further cancer research and research related to screenings and guidelines has been expanded. Alexis also said the internship increased her confidence in completing a doctoral program and made her aware of the challenges and areas that she still needs to improve. Alexis was also able to learn how to analyze quantitative data.



Maria Rocio Torres
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Maria Rocio Torres completed her MPH with a concentration in global health from the University of Arizona. For her *Éxito!* internship, Rocio worked on a study to determine the prevalence of colorectal cancer screening in the US-Mexico border-states and the effect of geographic predictors and Hispanic background. Prior to the *Éxito!* internship, Rocio was not completely confident in her decision to pursue a doctoral degree, but now said she is sure she will be applying in the next two years. Due to the internship, Rocio learned how to complete the IRB process and was also able to build on her current skills and develop new ones to advance in her research and clinical career approaching cancer disparities. In addition, the internship increased Rocio's interest on policy guidelines related to early screening.



Corina Zamora
Éxito! Alumni 2019

Corina Zamora is completing her master's degree in epidemiology at UT Health School of Public Health. For her *Éxito!* internship, Corina focused on secondary analysis on the effectiveness of a holistic Intervention in Latino versus non-Latino cancer survivors. Corina started her internship confident that she would apply to a PhD program at some point. However, at the conclusion of the internship, Corina said an application within the next year would benefit her just as much if not more. In addition, Corina credits the *Éxito!* internship in connecting her with several brilliant early-career investigators and role models who are willing to help her on her journey. As a result of her internship, Corina was also listed as a co-author on the parent study's protocol and will be presenting an abstract of her research this year.

Edianys Velez
Éxito! Alumni 2011



Edianys is currently a program manager.

Rosalie Aguilar
Éxito! Alumni 2011



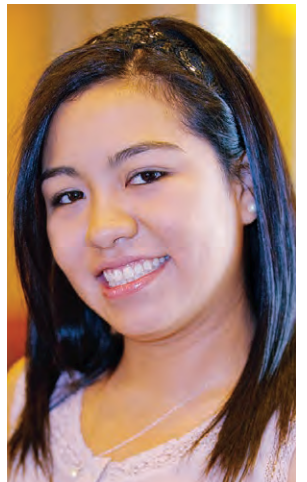
Rosalie Aguilar is currently a doctoral student at UT Health San Antonio. Rosalie defended her proposal in December 2018 and is now focusing on her dissertation research on new media messaging in advocacy for Latino health equity and childhood obesity prevention. Rosalie was also selected for a Presidential Ambassador award that only five students in the entire university get selected for.

Mariana Arevalo
Éxito! Alumni 2011



Mariana Arevalo is in the process of completing her PhD at UT Health Houston. She is currently a graduate research fellow. Her current goals are to help reduce Latino cancer health disparities, work at an NCI designated cancer center and research institute, and be a good mentor.

Martha Garcia
Éxito! Alumni 2011



Martha Garcia is currently a postdoctoral fellow. She is currently working on examining the role E3 ligases and de-ubiquitinating enzymes play in regulating endoplasmic reticulum (ER) associated protein degradation and their contribution to cardiovascular disease, metabolism, and metastasis.

Laura Rubalcava

Éxito! Alumni 2011



Laura Rubalcava received her PhD in clinical psychology and is currently a postdoctoral fellow. Her goals are to become a psychologist, have a private practice, and become a supervisor for externs/interns.

Marivelisse Soto-Salgado

Éxito! Alumni 2011



Marivelisse Soto-Salgado is currently an adjunct professor/epidemiologist. Her goals are to continue with her academic development as an independent investigator, submit a K-award in the areas of cancer health disparities, social determinants of health and infection-related cancers, and obtain a tenure-track faculty position.

Rebecca Jones

Éxito! Alumni 2011



Rebecca Jones graduated with her PhD in applied demography. She currently works alongside Dr. Amelie Ramirez as the Assistant Director for the Institute of Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at UT Health San Antonio.

Carla Rosales

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Carla Rosales is a research epidemiologist at the Louisiana Tumor Registry, LSUHSC School of Public Health. Carla would love to continue to do cancer surveillance and research, as well to improve and facilitate the access of cancer data to researchers for the implementation of cancer control programs and new treatments to benefit cancer patients. Her future goals are to investigate cancer disparities and burden among Latinos in Louisiana and do translation research. In June 2018, Carla was part of a mission trip to Guatemala with her church, providing children with food, dental care, and bump beds. Carla also had four poster presentations and contributed to publication of annual reports of Louisiana Registry: Cancer Incidence in Louisiana by Census Tract -2019 and Cancer in Louisiana, 2011-2015 Volume 33.

Roger Figueroa
Éxito! Alumni 2012



Roger Figueroa is currently a Cornell University Provost's new faculty fellow (2019-2020) and assistant professor (effective July 1, 2020). His top goals are to mentor and collaborate with underrepresented minority students and professionals in public health while making meaningful contributions toward achieving health equity and social justice, learn new skills in a different statistical software package, and successfully win promotion and tenure as a faculty member at his new institution.

Roger is currently developing various manuscripts using primary data from the Communities for Healthy Living (CHL) trial (postdoc project), as well as using secondary datasets.

Lizette Rangel
Éxito! Alumni 2012



Lizette Rangel is currently completing her DrPH in health promotion and behavioral sciences at UT School of Public Health. She is also a program coordinator at MD Anderson Cancer Center for Active Living after Cancer program, a physical activity program for cancer survivors in Houston and El Paso. Her top goals are to finish her doctorate program, obtain a post doctorate position, and continue her work in cancer survivorship.

Melawhy Garcia
Éxito! Alumni 2012



Melawhy Garcia graduated with her PhD in health behavioral research from the University of California San Diego/San Diego State University. Currently, Melawhy is an assistant professor at California State University Long Beach.

Lizbeth Del Toro-Mejias
Éxito! Alumni 2012



Lizbeth Del Toro-Mejias is working on her PhD at Massachusetts-Amherst's School of Public Health and Health Sciences. She is also a teaching assistant for Introduction to Public Health (an undergraduate course for public health majors). Her top goals are to create a nonprofit to address health disparities among Latinos and other minorities in the United States and Puerto Rico, help Puerto Rico communities to overcome structural and social barriers to thrive, and provide community health education to low-income communities and/or those that don't have the resources. Lizbeth is currently conducting data analysis and writing about drug injection in rural Puerto Rico and its relationship with HIV and Hepatitis C. The aim of her research is to address gender and power dynamics among female drug injectors living in rural Puerto Rico.

Jennifer Castillo

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Jennifer Castillo is a program coordinator with the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her top career goals are to obtain her doctoral degree and sit on public health boards.

Delana Gonzales

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Delana Gonzales currently works as an assistant director in the Department of Research and Information Management at University Health System. Her future education plans are to enroll in courses that will enhance her knowledge in mixed methods. Her career plans are to continue to grow as a public health professional and leader. Delana's top goals are to continue to advance within her current organization, improve on leadership and management skills, and teach within student development or public health.

She has been tutoring and mentoring for nine years. She is also working on two additional projects, one focusing on screening and linkage to treatment for Hepatitis C in high-risk populations and a HIV/HCV co-infection screening and treatment program. Delana received Americas Essentials Hospitals Gage Award Promising Program for a previous managed program, Improving Pediatric Asthma through Community Paramedicine. She also presented at the 2019 Texas Public Health Association 95th Annual Education Conference, "Preventing Liver Cancer in Our Booming and Aging Population."

Helen Palomino

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Helen Palomino is CEO at the Cancer Resource Center of the Desert LCSW. Her current goals are to maintain her LCSW and work with cancer patients. Helen also wishes to continue to grow her company and expand provision of Patient Navigation services, continue to expand research opportunities, and increase CRCD sustainability via diversified funding sources so she can help more people. Helen really enjoys her work life and personal life. She said running her nonprofit with an amazing team of social workers has been a great adventure.

Mari Elizenda Benavidez

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Mari Elizenda Benavides is currently working on an Epic (EMR) Implementation, which will take up most of her time in the next 18 months. Mari would like to continue her training with Epic and learn more apps. She would also like to work in the UK with Epic. Mari received her Epic certification for Professional Billing Administration and Charge Router.

Mayra Serrano
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Mayra is currently working on her DrPH in health and policy management at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Mayra is also the manager of community engagement at the cancer center. Mayra's top goals are to become an independent researcher, expand the community engagement office, and be promoted to a faculty position. Her research focus is to increase Latino participation in research.

Sanae El Ibrahim
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Sanae El Ibrahim graduated with her PhD in epidemiology and biostatistics from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Sanae is currently a senior healthcare analyst. Her top goals are to increase the number of publications, become a subject matter expert, and advance in her career. Sanae's current research focus is opioid harms, risk factors, and trajectories.

Monica Aguilar
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Monica Aguilar is a health educator. Her future/education career plans are to continue working in the field of health care and reducing disparities in underserved communities. Her current goals are to become a manager within the health care field, a project management professional, and continue to address health disparities in underserved communities.

Johana Bravo
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Johana Bravo is a community education coordinator at the Legal Aid of North Carolina – Farmworker Unit. Johana would like to continue working and advocating for Latinx communities. She recently shifted a little bit outside of cancer prevention research in order to learn more about farmworker rights, but will implement health-related programs. Her current goals are to become a program manager for a Comprehensive Cancer Control program at the state level and start a nonprofit for Latinx community health and the outdoors.

Christina Carmona

Éxito! Alumni 2013

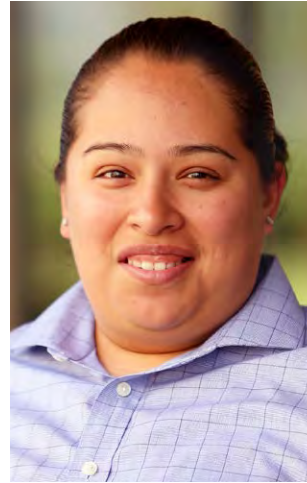


Christina Carmona is an infectious disease epidemiologist/epidemiology program manager. Christina's career plans are to continue in this field for the foreseeable future and pursue a doctorate degree in epidemiology. Christina aims to become a well-respected SME for infectious diseases and would like to teach at the collegiate level to guide and educate aspiring public health professionals. Her current goals are to be an effective team leader that raises her employees to their full potential, complete an

epidemiology doctoral program, and continue to refine her infectious disease investigation and surveillance skills to educate and protect the San Antonio community. Christina had three presentations at the Texas Public Health Association 95th Annual Education Conference.

Wendy Ramirez

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Wendy Ramirez works as a science teacher. Her future education career plans are to apply and be accepted into a PhD program. Her current goals are to continue to explore her teaching career, apply for PhD program, and become a full-time collegiate professor.

Mariana Ramirez

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Mariana Ramirez is director at Juntos Center for Advancing Latino Health. Mariana would like to eventually pursue a doctoral degree. Mariana had an oral presentation at the Heartland Conference on Health Equity & Patient Centered Care in 2018. She was also a co-author in three publications.

Aleli M. Ayala Marin

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Aleli M. Ayala Marin is a PhD student in health and sports sciences at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). Aleli is currently a predoctoral researcher. Her career goals are to finish her PhD and become a behavioral researcher and an evidence-based program developer with a focus on obesity prevention. Currently, she's participating in research related to her doctoral thesis. She is assessing disparities in health, especially the social vulnerability, and its possible moderating effect on the effectiveness and adherence of European programs (IDEFICS and ToyBox) to prevent childhood obesity. She will also be working in two research

studies conducted by the Growth, Exercise, Nutrition and Development (GENUD) research group. Aleli was also awarded with a national competitive pre-doctoral scholarship (I-PFIS) from the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities of Spain and the Institute of Health Carlos III to develop and test a wellness program for their employees and family.

Alicia Nunez
Éxito! Alumni 2014



Alicia Nunez is currently a PhD student in clinical psychology at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Alicia is also graduate assistant. Alicia's top goals are to graduate with a PhD in clinical psychology, address health disparities, and become an expert in clinical health psychology and women's health. Her current research focuses on addressing disparities in cross-cultural neuropsychological assessment. Alicia had a poster presentation at the National Academy of Neuropsychology 38th Annual

Conference and co-authored in one publication. Alicia was also first author in another publication. She was also the recipient of three scholarships: National Academy of Neuropsychology, Diversity Poster Award; Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship Award, UNLV; and Summer Session Scholarship, UNLV.

Benjamin Aceves
Éxito! Alumni 2014



Benjamin Aceves is currently a graduate research associate at the University of Arizona. His current research focuses on a lifestyle intervention within the Mexican universal health care system to prevent health complications among diabetic patients. His top career goals are to obtain a post-doc, publish 10 articles before he graduates, and graduate by May 2020. Benjamin was also the recipient of an NIH Diversity Supplement and presented at the Global Alliance for Chronic Disease; *Congreso de Investigacion de Salud Publica (MEX)*.

Brianda Alcazar
Éxito! Alumni 2014



Brianda Alcazar is a clinical therapist. Her future/ education career plan includes applying to a doctoral program related to education or psychology within the next year or so. As of August 2018, Brianda became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

Hena Din
Éxito! Alumni 2014



Hena Din is currently working as a surgical research supervisor. Her top goals are to work to alleviate health disparities, find a position that allows her to grow and be stable, and obtain a foundation grant to contribute to community improvement. Hena is currently involved in several research projects around patient quality of life outcomes and health information access. She is also starting to work on a study on reproductive outcomes of female adolescent and young adult cancer survivors. Hena is an Inamori Fellow. She will also be presenting as first author at the American Society

of Pediatric Otolaryngology (ASPO) in Austin. She also had a manuscript accepted for publication in the Journal of Medical Internet Research: Profiles of health information seeking and the current digital divide: findings from the 2015- 2016 California Health Interview Survey. Hena also got married last year and will be relocating to the Bay Area, CA.

Kaylee Rivera
Éxito! Alumni 2014



Kaylee Rivera is a project manager of community engagement and research. Her future career goals are to become more involved in CBPR and work alongside community to address health needs. Kaylee's top goals are to create meaningful academic-community partnerships, expand services and resources for underserved populations, and engage community in research. Kaylee got married last year.

Diana Aguirre
Éxito! Alumni 2015



Diana Aguirre is a program manager for a childhood obesity prevention research study among Latinx children ages 6-11.

Alexandra Banks
Éxito! Alumni 2015



Alexandra Banks is a clinical trials research coordinator. Alexandra wishes to attend medical school. Her top career goals are to become a surgical oncologist, PI of an international clinical trial, and work for the World Health Organization. Alexandra was first author in a publication: Breast conserving surgery with targeted intraoperative radiotherapy for the management of ductal carcinoma in situ.

Jasmin Berrios
Éxito! Alumni 2015



Jasmin Berrios is working on her PhD in educational technology leadership at Morehead State University. Jasmin also works as an instructional designer.

Breann De Santiago

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Breann De Santiago is an assistant director of financial aid.

Andrea Fernandez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Andrea Fernandez is transitioning to a new position where she will utilize her new skills in business administration. Based on her impressions with this new field, Andrea hopes to decide as to what kind of PhD program she would like to apply to (public health versus health administration). Andrea had an oral presentation at the SOPHE conference, "Development and beta-testing of a phone app to improve medication adherence among breast cancer patients."

Andrew Jimenez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Andrew Jimenez is a health education assistant II for the Tobacco Control Project at Riverside University Health System – Public Health.

Jasmin Martinez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Jasmin Martinez is currently a manager of Alumni Engagement & Development, Health Career Connection. Jazmin's top career goals are to obtain her PMP, obtain a degree in data science or computer science, and become a chief of strategy for a med or health tech organization. Jazmin currently serves on the Latino Young Professionals committee of APHA Latino Caucus. She is also a chief mentoring officer for MiMentor and she is on the board of *Salud Con Tech*.

Sigolene Ortega

Éxito! Alumni 2015

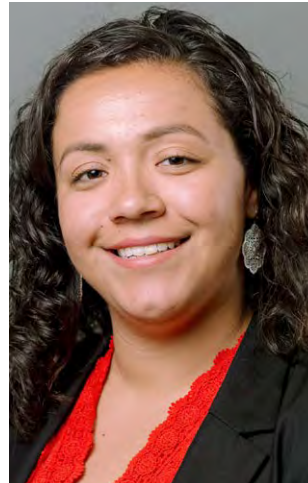


Sigolene Ortega is a public relations and communications manager at a federally qualified health center that is a patient center medical home. In 2017 Sigolene and her husband became first-time parents, which impacted her decision to pursue a PhD for now. In the next three years, Sigolene plans to continue to be of service to her community (low-income Hispanic families) by continuing to advance within her organization. Her clinic also participated in a documentary series on maternal health outcomes by the international nonprofit Every

Mother Counts and Sigolene was happy to assist with the coordination of the project and help with the subtitles. The documentary, Giving Birth in America: California, is available via CNN or through Every Mother Counts website. Sigolene was also first author in a publication.

Eva Rodriguez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Eva Rodriguez is currently a program manager, quality management for Affinity Health Plan. Her top career goal is to hold a director-level position focusing on reproductive or community health in Texas.

Rose Trevino-Whitaker

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Rose Trevino-Whitaker is a supervisor of clinical studies. Rose also had her second child and obtained her certification as a SOCRA Certified Clinical Research Professional.

Natalicio Serrano

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Natalicio started his PhD in fall 2016 in public health sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. Natalicio is currently a graduate research assistant, instructor. His top career goals are to conduct research in a field he loves with the goal of reducing health disparities in disadvantaged populations, mentoring students like himself who come from disadvantaged backgrounds to increase representation of students of color in doctoral programs/academic positions, and grow as a researcher and a professor. Natalicio is currently participating on a couple of research

projects, primarily to promote rural physical activity. Natalicio received a NHLBI Fellowship and the 2018 APHA PHEHP Section Student Oral Session Award. He was also first author in a publication, "Building the capacity-examining the impact of evidence-based public health trainings in Europe: a mixed methods approach. Global Health Promotion."

Marisabel Román-Afanador
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Marisabel Román-Afanador works in public health education and health promotion as a health educator.

Karen Aguirre
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Karen Aguirre is a program manager at West Side United. Karen's future goals are to pursue an MBA with a focus on strategy and social impact investing. She plans to apply to the University of Chicago in the next few months. Karen's career goals are to become a hospital administrator, continue to receive more responsibilities within her role, and receive admission to an MBA program. Karen was also awarded the UIC Rising Star Alumni Award.

Maria Alvarez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Maria Alvarez is seeking a job in the field of cancer research. Her top goals are to make money, obtain a professional certification and perhaps, complete a second master's degree. Maria also got the opportunity to visit Europe last year.

Jose De Jesus
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jose De Jesus is a community health educator.

Diana Diaz
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Diana Diaz is currently a research coordinator at a comprehensive cancer center. Diana shifted from the department of health outcomes and behavior to the department of epidemiology. She is trying to figure out what area within that department she can be passionate and successful. She wants to decide if she would need a PhD, or another master's degree to pursue that goal. Her top goals are to find an area within cancer research she is passionate about, determine the level of education that will allow her to be successful in that area, and become an expert and contribute significantly to the prevention and cure of cancer.

Shayda Dioun
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Shayda Dioun is a graduate research assistant (50%) and teaching assistant (50%). Shayda's top goals are to finish her doctoral program, get accepted into a fellowship, and have a research position and work on the evaluation of a cancer survivorship care plan project out of MD Anderson. Shayda was also first author of a publication, "Receipt of a survivorship care plan and self-reported health behaviors among cancer survivors." She was also the recipient of The L. Kay Bartholomew Eldredge Family Endowed Scholarship in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences.

Noemi Fernandez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Noemi Fernandez is a psychiatric social worker for the Department of Mental Health in Los Angeles County. Her future career goals are to obtain her clinical licensure. Additionally, she is in the process of becoming certified as a cognitive behavioral therapist, and plans on becoming certified in other evidence-based practices. In the next five years, Noemi will consider private practice and/or a PhD program.

Richard Gamarra
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Richard Gamarra is a senior data analyst. Richard plans to apply to a doctoral program in public health/epidemiology. His top goals are to obtain a doctoral degree, teach public health at a college/university level, and open a public health consulting firm. Richard was the recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (Columbia University, 2017) and the Tow Foundation Public Health Fellowship (8/2016 - 6/2017).

Angelika Gutierrez

Éxito! Alumni 2016



Angelika Gutierrez is a planning and evaluation analyst. Angelika plans on staying in her current position for another year. She would then like to transfer to a position dealing with maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, or cancer.

Stephanie McCoy

Éxito! Alumni 2016



Stephanie McCoy is a teen pregnancy prevention/bilingual prevention specialist. Stephanie would like to apply to a DrPH program in racial health equity and reproductive justice. Her top goals are to obtain a DrPH, continue racial health equity work and organizing, and mentor future Latinx students/professionals. Stephanie also presented a poster on engaging Latino/Latina parents in adolescent sexual health at the Adolescent Health Initiative Conference in Detroit.

Yadira Montoya

Éxito! Alumni 2016



Yadira Montoya is a principal research analyst, which enables her to lead and support research projects related to aging and Latinos. Her top goals are to lead a small research project (PI or Co-PI), apply to a PHD program, and continue to support/sustain La BROCHA, which she co-founded in 2016 to provide art workshops to Latinos ages 60+ who have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease and their caregivers. Yadira also made two presentations at the DePaul University Healthy Disparities & Social Justice Conference.

Jose A. Ramos

Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jose Ramos is a program coordinator. Jose is currently getting ready to apply to MD programs.

Rosie Salazar
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Rosie Salazar is a health educator. Rosie's future goals are to obtain a PhD, become a director for a health education department, continue to be a professor, volunteer in non-profit organizations, and operate her own business. Rosie enjoys serving at her church and feeling more connected to God. She feels more complete and fuller of joy, which has helped her better serve her Latino patients.

Jacklyn Samano
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jacklyn Samano is a health systems manager. Jacklyn wishes to attend law school. Her top career goals are to become a lawyer, CEO of a Public Health Research Institute, and a quality and compliance officer. Jacklyn got married on March 9, 2019. She was also the recipient of the PACE Award (Preparing for a Career of Excellence) and conducted two presentations, one on HPV vaccination for cancer prevention and cervical cancer screening in Latinas.

Paloma Suarez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Paloma Suarez is currently enrolled in a dietetic internship. Paloma plans to apply to graduate school and hopefully get accepted for fall 2020. In the meantime, after concluding her internship, Paloma will take her registered dietitian exam. Furthermore, she will be joining the AmeriCorp for 10 months, working at the South End Community Health Center and getting funding for some of her studies. Paloma's top goals are to pass her RD exam, get accepted into a PhD program 2020, and continue to help and empower Latinos. Through her *Éxito!* internship, Paloma was able to publish an article with her

mentor, "Exploring HPV Knowledge Awareness, Beliefs, Attitudes and Vaccine Acceptability of Latino Fathers Living in the United States: An Integrative Review." Paloma will also be getting married in 2020.

Ashton Balarin
Éxito! Alumni 2017



Ashton Balarin is health educator/health education coordinator. Ashton wishes to gain experience in health education, and possibly explore a PhD program down the road (5 or so years). Her top goals are to develop her skill set, a promotion, and network.

Leah Carrillo
Éxito! Alumni 2017



Leah Carrillo is currently working as a program coordinator.

Claudia Chavez
Éxito! Alumni 2017



Claudia Chavez is a project coordinator. Her future goal is to move to the business/financial side of healthcare. Her career goals are to continue working on abstracts/manuscripts with PIs, move to the business side of healthcare, and move up the corporate ladder. Claudia had two poster presentations.

Sonia Fragoso
Éxito! Alumni 2017



Sonia Fragoso is a research coordinator in the Baylor College of Medicine Department of Neuropsychiatry. Sonia is planning on applying to medical and PhD programs to have a career working in and treating Latino cancer disparities. An important career goal for Sonia is to obtain a doctoral degree (PhD/MD/DO). She would like to make contributions in genetic/oncology clinical research in Latinos. Lastly, Sonia would like to contribute in increasing Latino genome databases.

Yuritzzy Gonzalez-Peña
Éxito! Alumni 2017



Yuritzzy Gonzalez-Peña Works as an epidemiologist for Marion County. Her goals are to develop her skills, apply for a CDC position, get a fellowship/internship abroad, and a PhD. Yuritzzy is a Knight Cancer Ambassador for OHSU.

Araceli Guzman

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Araceli Guzman works as a program coordinator at maternal child nonprofit organization overseeing programs. Her future goals are to become a lactation consultant and develop lactation programs in underserved communities and cancer screening programs. Araceli would also like to conduct her own research and get it published. In addition, she would like to develop health education curriculums for the community.

Arielle Guzman

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Arielle Guzman is a clinical research coordinator. Arielle would like to attend a doctoral program or medical school. Her top career goals are to become an associate professor, oncologist, and program director.

Filiberto Leon

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Filiberto Leon works as a therapist, performing modified rehabilitation therapy on chronic pain and injury patients, as well as helping athletes improve muscular performance and endurance. Filiberto would like to pursue a doctoral degree and work in advancing exercise application for various disease prevention and management, as well as for overall general health and athlete performance. His top goals are to earn a doctoral degree, publish a study, and change how we modify and apply exercise for therapy, performance, management and prevention of certain diseases.

Geraldine Massuh

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Geraldine Massuh is a research associate working in Pfizer health management. Geraldine wishes to obtain another master's degree or possibly a doctoral degree. Her top goals are to reach a higher management position, expand professional network, and obtain more exposure opportunities (conferences, etc.). Geraldine started working an idea called LatinxHealth, where she wanted to create a website dedicated on health opportunities specifically for the Latinx community. Currently available on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

Sheila Mota

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Sheila Mota works as a population health specialist in program development and data analytics. Sheila plans to work in other countries to determine what direction she'd like to go before she decides on pursuing a doctoral degree. Her top goals are to feel rewarded by her work, know that what she achieves will help further prevention efforts, and still be able to balance a fulfilling career with a family life. In addition, Sheila is planning on teaching in Korea for a while.

Cynthia Ortiz

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Cynthia Ortiz is a senior population research assistant. Currently, she is coordinating a study and working on data cleaning and analysis.

Sylvia Peral

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Sylvia Peral is a program manager of SOM Programs. Her next career step is to apply for an MBA program.

Claudia Sanchez Lucas

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Claudia Sanchez Lucas is a disease intervention specialist. Claudia is currently planning to retake GRE exam in summer and submit applications to PhD programs. Her top goals are to successfully submit applications, continue to learn at her current job as disease intervention specialist, and continue to maintain a certified health educator specialist.

Elidia Tafoya

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Elidia Tafoya is a clinical research manager. Elidia is still considering pursuing a higher degree. She is hoping to navigate what she will picture herself doing, and in what line of work. Currently, Elidia is taking a certificate program in clinical research project management to expand her leadership training. Her career goals are to expand her professional knowledge and training, complete a few more publications in clinical research, and improve her leadership skills to grow as an

individual and provide the best level of expertise in her field. Elidia also had her second baby and purchased her first home with her husband.

Paulina Monteon-Garcia

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Paulina Monteon-Garcia wants to continue working in the community to use her experience/degree to reduce health disparities among Latinos and minorities. Paulina would like to be a project manager to directly work with the community, do research, and implement evidence-based programs. Her top goals are to finish her MPH, make a difference in the community through a job/career that she loves, and eventually get her PhD. Paulina and her husband

bought a house last summer. They are grateful and excited that their son was accepted in a dual-language immersion program as a kindergartener student for 2019-2020.

Oriana Perez

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Oriana Perez is a research coordinator. Oriana would like to continue in research and plans to consider a doctorate in 2 years. Oriana also had her first child.

Natalie Alfaro-Perez

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Natalie Alfaro-Perez is a health educator at a FQHC. Natalie plans to expand her knowledge and expertise outside of chronic illnesses. She would love to get into the field of cancer research. She is currently networking with professionals in that field to hopefully have as mentors. In the next 5 years, Natalie plans to build her CV focused on cancer research. After the five years, she is confident she will apply to a doctoral program. Her top career goals would be to become a researcher in infectious

disease, cancer, or epidemiology. Natalie graduated with her MPH in December 2018.

Diana Ballesteros-Gonzalez

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Diana Ballesteros-Gonzalez graduated with her MPH May 2019 and will be working as a clinical analyst intern at Healthfirst. In addition, Diana will be doing breast cancer prevention research with Dr. Parisa Tehranifer (recommended by another *Éxito!* Alum), and evaluation research with Dr. Dana March.

Diana plans on applying to doctoral programs in California in fall 2019. Diana's top goals are to become a professor, work in healthcare setting doing chronic disease prevention research, and continue to improve

education/training programs for future public health professionals.

Diana was also recipient of the Mailman School of Public Health Leadership Scholarship and 2018-2019.

Ileana Cepeda

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Ileana Cepeda is a research associate at The University of Kansas Cancer Center and JUNTOS Center for Advancing Latino Health. Ileana plans to start applying for schools and hopefully start a PhD program in fall 2020. Her main goal is to go back to school and get her PhD or DrPH. Then she would like to work at a Cancer Center where they do not have an official Center for Cancer Disparities and help establish such needed department. Lastly, Ileana would also like to get involved in global health matters.

Fatima Frausto

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Fatima Frausto would like to work several years in a state or local agency where she would like to apply what she knows about program evaluations, needs assessments, etc. Fatima would like to focus on demography and social policies and how that affects U.S. Latinos. Fatima's top goals are to participate in meaningful work that benefits communities, be an expert in her field be it in sociology or public health, and be able to write, edit, and publish white papers and advocacy materials. Fatima was also the recipient of the Mithoff Endowed Scholarship Recipient for school year 2018-2019.

Sandra Garcia Camacho

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Sandra Garcia Camacho is a coordinator for the study "Impact of hurricane-related stressors and responses on oncology care and health outcomes of women with gynecologic cancers from Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands" in the Comprehensive Cancer Center - UPR. Sandra's top 3 career goals are to focus on epidemiology, biostatistics, and demography. Sandra had one publication and eight poster presentations.

Isela Garcia
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Isela Garcia is a graduate research assistant. Isela defended her master thesis in July 2019. Isela would like to search for a public health or research position while she continues to look at doctoral programs that fit her research interests. Her top goals are to gain experience in qualitative research, gain experience in community-based research, and become a mentor for Latino students. Isela also presented a poster at the NMPHA conference and at the SWIHDR conference.

Sebastian Garcia-Medina
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Sebastian Garcia-Medina is a graduate teaching assistant for the microbiology lab of the School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. Sebastian plans on applying for MD/PhD programs and PhD programs in biostatistics, physiology, and neurobiology.

Fernando Juarez
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Fernando Juarez is graduate research assistant.

Veronica Landa
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Veronica Landa is a senior community program Specialist, quality improvement coordinator to boost the evidence base and data foundation of programs, which aim to support at risk young families as early as possible to prevent poor health outcomes. Veronica plans to continue implementing effective, evidence-based community programs, and continue learning how to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities. She also hopes to improve her leadership

and collaboration skills as she pursues a doctoral degree and advancement in her career. Her project, Incorporating the NCI Screen-to-Save Initiative within a Theater Outreach Program to Engage Medically Underserved Hispanics In Colorectal Cancer Screening, was presented at APHA.

Liliana Martinez

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Liliana Martinez is a graduate research assistant. Her top goals are to complete her MPH, obtain a PhD, and be an epidemiologist (in cancer or women’s health). Liliana gave birth to her baby last August and has been working on two projects related to women’s reproductive health among Latinas in Utah. One is on pelvic floor health postpartum and the other is on trial of labor after C-section.

Keylynne Matos-Cunningham

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Keylynne Matos-Cunningham is a substance abuse prevention educator. Keylynne’s future goal is to obtain her PhD in counseling psychology. Her top career goals are to be a professor, public speaker, and business owner.

Alejandra Ochoa

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Alejandra Ochoa provides parenting education in the community. Her current title is injury prevention specialist.

Joe Padilla

Éxito! Alumni 2018



Joe Padilla is a research associate at Texas Tech El Paso, coordinating the ACCION/SuCCCeS program under Dr. Shokar to reduce the colorectal cancer disparity within the southwest region of Texas.

Genesis Rios
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Genesis Rios is a health education and outreach associate. Her future career plans include working in an organization that focuses on disease prevention in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Genesis also plans on getting a PhD in disease prevention among Latinos. Genesis would like to work with Latino populations, develop programs for disease prevention or help improve existing programs, and support emerging Latino health professionals/students. Genesis also

received a Region V Great Lakes Public Health Training Collaborative Student Award in 2018 for her work through the *Éxito!* internship.

Carmen Rodriguez
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Carmen Rodriguez is a research project manager. Carmen plans on applying to PhD programs in biostatistics to start fall 2020. Her top goals are to get into a PhD program, do more cancer-related research among Latinos, and work as the principal biostatistician in a research study. Carmen is currently working on publishing a first authorship manuscript on Latina health and migration. Carmen also collaborated in three publications in the past

two years and participated in the New York City Epidemiology Forum where she presented results from her research on migration and obesity among Latinas from Caribbean countries.

Pamela Sanchez
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Pamela Sanchez is currently a veterinary technician at Banfield Pet Hospital. Pamela was selected for a summer internship with the NCI for introduction to cancer research. She is also applying for another fellowship with NCI. Pamela would like to build her CV and reapply to doctoral programs. Her top goals are to apply and be selected to a doctoral program, work in cancer health disparities, and collaborate with Latin America.

Edgar Munoz
Éxito! Alumni 2018



Edgar Munoz is a statistician and epidemiologist / statistician (senior). Edgar co-authored seven articles in 2018.



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About This E-Newsletter

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Please send news items or story ideas to exito@uthscsa.edu.

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