



¡ÉXITO! Noticias

Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training

Increasing Latino Participation in Solving Cancer Health Disparities

A purse can make a fashion statement. But for Diana Aguirre, her “Yo Quiero Colombia” purse is a reminder of her roots and a reminder of her strong dedication to changing people’s lives for the better. She’s got a great start thanks to her enrollment in an MPH program, work on an obesity prevention project and coordinating a *promotora* health education program.

She wants to do more.

That’s why Aguirre—and about other master’s-level students or health professionals—joined the *Éxito!* Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training program.

Éxito! encourages participants to pursue a doctoral degree and a career in Latino cancer research.

“The summer institute gave me more confidence in my ability to apply and get accepted in a doctoral program,” said Aguirre, part of the 2015 *Éxito!* class.

Éxito! (English: Success!), led by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio and funded by the National Cancer Institute, annually recruits 25 master’s students and

health professionals to build the field of those working to reduce Latino cancer health disparities.

Participants attend a five-day *Éxito!* summer institute that enhances understanding of: the power of research to affect change; research methods, theory and interventions; cancer control; and networking and skills to successfully apply to a doctoral program.

Participants also are eligible to apply for paid internships.

“Training ne Latino researchers will increase the number of Latinos in cancer control research, which will increase work being done to reduce Latino cancer,” said Dr. Amelie Ramirez, director of *Éxito!* and the IHPR.

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



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A Message from *Éxito!* Principal Investigator

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez

We're excited to announce that the *Éxito!* program is a SUCCESS!

The National Cancer Institute has approved our program for a second grant cycle (2016-2020) after our first grant took us from 2010-2015. This new funding cycle will allow us to increase the number of *Éxito!* participants (25) and internships (10) that we can offer each year!

Éxito! now will continue to increase the field of Latino "insider" doctors and researchers, a critical need given the continuing rise of the Latino population and the continuation of cancer health disparities.

The number of our *Éxito!* participants already accepted into doctoral programs continues to increase:

- 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, University of Texas 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, University of Texas Health Science Center at 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

It is individuals like these—and like you!—who will pursue a doctoral degree and perhaps help stop cancer—from the inside, embracing culture as a vital piece to cancer control and prevention. Contact me [here](#).



A Message from *Éxito!* Co-Principal Investigator

Dr. Rena J. Pasick

This message brings my warmest wishes to you and your families for a healthy, happy, and successful 2016!

I'm thrilled to be writing you as part of *Éxito!*'s SECOND GRANT cycle! Dr. Ramirez, Kip Gallion and the whole *Éxito!* team deserve enormous credit for this stupendous accomplishment. They are wonderful role models for you in reaffirming one of my favorite statements: Persistence Pays! But of course it takes more than persistence to be funded and re-funded by the NIH. It takes passion, creativity,

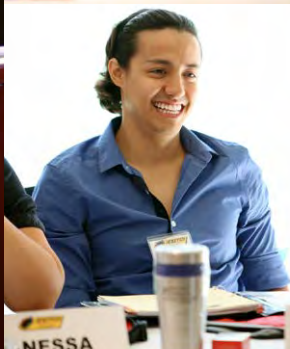
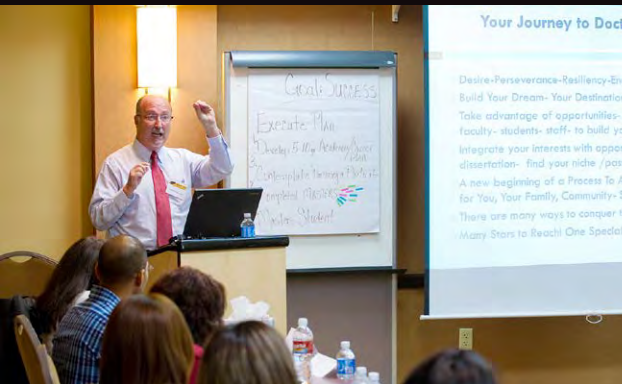
and excellence – all strong qualities of this team – and the program's participants!

The mother ship MTPCCR is also thriving... currently funded through what will be its 20th year! We have just launched our latest alumni survey and expect to soon be able to name our 200th doctoral program enrollee and our 100th doctoral program graduate!

Our dreams are coming true, and we are confident that yours will as well!

All the best for the coming year and beyond.





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 2016. 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 6, 2016

Decisions will be announced in late March 2016

Share the Experience:

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

We are currently accepting applications for our 6th *Éxito!* Summer Institute. We encourage you to have your qualified friends and colleagues apply!

The application form can be downloaded from our website at www.exitotraining.org.

Deadline for applications is March 6, 2016

The *Éxito!* Summer Institute will take place June 6-10, 2016

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 some of these resources, please e-mail us at exito@uthscsa.edu.

News from the IHPR

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at 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:

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.

Using Best Practices to Promote HPV Vaccination in Rural Primary Care Settings

Conduct formative assessments to identify and understand factors that influence HPV vaccine practices of health care providers and HPV vaccine coverage in six South Texas Rural Health Services clinics that serve residents from four medically underserved rural counties.

Enlace: A Promotora-Led Physical Activity Intervention for Latinas in Texas

This project aims to increase physical activity levels of Latinas in South Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley. Trained community health workers, also known as *promotoras* in Latino communities, will lead culturally appropriate group education and exercise sessions for Latinas in community resource centers in the region. These sessions, along with newsletters and telephone counseling, will help Latinas overcome barriers to physical activity and make lifestyle changes to benefit their health.

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.

Choices: Increasing Access of Latinas into Breast Cancer Clinical Trials

Choices, a theory-based educational intervention aims to empower Latinas to make informed decisions about breast cancer clinical trials (BCCTs) by enhancing their knowledge, attitudes, skills and self-efficacy required to support discussion of BCCTs as a treatment option with doctors and family members.

Genetic Testing for Latina Breast Cancer Risk

This study aims to understand Latinas' decisions whether to get genetic testing for breast cancer risk, which may facilitate better-informed decisions regarding cancer prevention, risk reduction, more effective early detection, and better determination of risk for family members.



Latino Cancer News & Articles

Fewer Childhood Cancer Survivors Dying From 'Late Effects'

Fewer childhood cancer survivors are dying years later from lingering effects of the treatment that conquered their cancer, a new study finds. Experts called the report in the New England Journal of Medicine "very good news." Among U.S. children who survived cancer back in the 1970s and '80s, 18 percent died within the next 25 years. Survivors have a 50% chance of developing a "significant medical condition" by age 50.

AAMC Urges Swift Passage of Omnibus Spending Bill

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently issued a statement in support of the omnibus spending bill. The AAMC commended the House and Senate negotiators for including the \$32 billion spending package for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), \$334 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and increasing funding for VA research. NIH-funded research offers hope for millions of American families affected by illnesses such as cancer and diabetes

Driving New Approaches to Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

A new report in the journal Cancer Prevention Research highlights the "new era" that the world is entering regarding the prevention and early detection of cancer. Recent studies, outlined in the report, have demonstrated the potential of using genomic classifier to identify early lung cancer. Precision medicine approaches can also reduce cancer risks for those at elevated risk. The new Consortium for Molecular Characterization of Screen-Detected Lesions will help address the need for determining the risk of progression of early cancers detected by screenings.

El Libro de la Mama

Dr. Susan Love of the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation has released a Spanish translation of her book, Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book, entitled El Libro de la Mama. The English version was released September 2015; the book is considered a standard reference on all aspects of breast care. This is the first time the Spanish version has been available.

Join Our Networks and Stay Connected to All Things Latino Health

Find us online and join our networks



Redes En Acción research network for Latino cancer

Salud America! research network for Latino childhood obesity



Have you
seen our
Éxito! video?

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



Éxito! Alumni 2011



Éxito! Alumni 2012



Éxito! Alumni 2013



Éxito! Alumni 2014



Éxito! Alumni 2015

Nicolas Lopez-Galvez

Éxito! Alumni 2013

Nicolas Lopez-Galvez began his doctoral program in Environmental Health Sciences at the University of Arizona in August 2014. Nicolas' research interests include exposure science, environmental epidemiology, and migrant workers' exposure to contaminants. Nicolas is a graduate research assistant for Tucson Traffic air pollution and is the principal investigator of research for exposure to agrochemicals and heat stress on migrant farm workers of Hermosillo, Mexico. Nicolas states that *Éxito!* helped him see what other Latino peers were working on, and how they were having similar struggles on their programs, thus making him feel that he was not alone on this journey. He also says that the *Éxito!* experience definitely motivated him to apply to a PhD program. Since attending the *Éxito!* summer institute, Nicolas has received the Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD) fellowship, funded by NIH. He also received best doctoral student poster 2015 award for the Air and Waste Management conference and a NIOSH grant to conduct research related to occupation health on migrant farmworkers in Mexico.

Nicolas' top career goals:

1. Obtain doctoral degree.
2. Conduct research related to environmental exposures and development of chronic diseases.
3. Work for CDC or NIEHS.

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

Don't wait until the last minute, apply early! Contact professors at the universities you want to apply. You need to really like research!

To his fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in doctoral programs,

Nicolas says: "Always maintain a good support group. Don't give up. Take time for yourself and stay healthy!"



Nicolas Lopez-Galvez

Fun Facts

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

Hard core socialist...left wing view...hate D. Trump!

Best de-stressor?

Playing volleyball and racquetball.

Best study tip?

Going to Mexico in general is just awesome every time.

Favorite study snack?

Hummus, chips and salsa.

Favorite class so far?

Applied biostatistics.

Aixa Perez-Caraballo

Éxito! Alumni 2013

Aixa Perez-Caraballo became a PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in August 2014. Her current research interests include cancer health disparities and women's health, specifically epigenetic markers of breast cancer risk. Aixa is currently the research assistant and first author of an ongoing R15 project on white blood cell DNA methylation and risk of breast cancer using the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal, Ovarian (PLCO) Screening Trial. Aixa states that *Éxito!* provided her with the confidence, motivation and is the sole reason for her decision to apply to a PhD program. She says that *Éxito!* proved it could be done. Aixa has also had few first author publications since attending the summer institute.

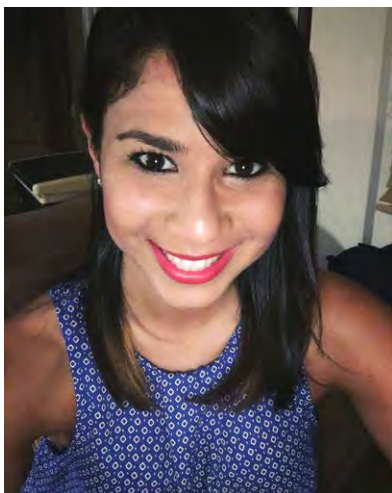
Aixa's top career goals:

1. Focus on cancer health disparities epidemiological studies in women, specifically in Puerto Rico.
2. Conduct studies on epigenetic markers to assess cancer risk in women, including breast and cervical cancer.
3. Create awareness of potential epigenetic markers through educational programs targeting population of women at high risk for cancer.

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

Just do it. It will be challenging, at times it will seem impossible, and you will most likely fail more than once, but the beauty resides in never giving up and rising after we fall. Just do it. I promise you it will be worth it.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in doctoral programs, Aixa says: "There is a light at the end of the tunnel and even though half of the time you won't be able to see it, it is there. Hang on and keep going. It doesn't matter how much time it takes you as long as you finish and never give up."



Aixa Perez-Caraballo

Fun Facts

Best de-stressor?

Johanna Basford coloring books. Even though they're stressful to finish, they allow me to shift focus on something else besides my computer.

Best study tip?

Make time for yourself. Whenever you find yourself in a hole, take a step back.

Favorite study snack?

GoBerry yogurt.

Favorite class so far?

Cancer biology.



Vanessa Torres

Fun Facts

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

I really enjoy going on beautiful hikes and travelling during my free time.

Best de-stressor?

Exercising outdoors, cooking, catching up with friends and family, and taking naps.

Best study tip?

Time management! Have a strategic plan for each term. Make realistic goals and break your work up into small chunks; this helps me not feel so overwhelmed.

Favorite study snack?

Carrots and edamame humus.

Favorite class so far?

Social determinants of population health and health disparities.



Vanessa Torres Éxito! Alumni 2013

Vanessa Torres is currently at the University of Washington working on her PhD in Health Services with an emphasis in Health behavior and Social determinants of health. Vanessa is a research assistant working with Dr. Inida Ornelas on an NIH-funded R34, an intervention to reduce unhealthy drinking among Latino immigrant men. Vanessa was also the recipient of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Diversity Supplement Award for 2015-2017. As part the diversity supplement, she is conducting qualitative interviews to determine best practices for recruitment and retention of Latino immigrant men for future health services research. Vanessa states that *Éxito!* was a very empowering experience and motivated her to apply to a PhD program. She left the program feeling very confident and encouraged by all the guest speakers. She credits *Éxito!* for giving her the tools and the confidence to pursue her career goals. Vanessa states that for the first time, she saw herself as a researcher and understood the importance and value of having more Latinos conducting research.

Vanessa's top career goals:

1. Complete her doctoral program.
2. Pursue a tenure-track position in academia.
3. Conduct research and implement interventions with a CBPR approach to promote healthy lifestyles among underserved Latino communities.

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

I would recommend starting the application process as soon as possible. Make sure you thoroughly research the programs you are interested in applying to; talk to former students and current professors and ask a lot of questions. Most importantly do not let anyone intimidate or discourage you from applying. The process is long and tedious, so be patient and very persistent. You are the only way that can get in the way of achieving your goals.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral programs

Vanessa says: "When times get hard, think of why you decided to pursue your PhD in the first place. Most importantly, be KIND to yourself; we are students and we are here to learn and it's OK if we struggle. Enjoy your breaks and do things that will nourish you physically, spiritually and emotionally. Also, very importantly, make sure to surround yourself with positive people that will support and encourage you, especially during times of doubt and distress. Lastly, do not forget to celebrate all your accomplishments."



Sanae El Ibrahimy

Fun Facts

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

Now that I am at the dissertation phase, I find I have a bit more flexible time and I am able to spend a bit more time with my family.

Best de-stressor?

Listen to music you like and even dance if you are up to it.

Best study tip?

Organize citations/references because many times you will be using them again and again.

Favorite study snack?

Nuts.

Favorite class so far?

Research methods from my master's.

Sanae El Ibrahimy Éxito! Alumni 2013

Sanae El Ibrahimy applied and was accepted to the doctoral program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in January 2015. Sanae's current research interest is cancer epidemiology and cancer disparities. She is currently a Healthcare Analyst and is working on her dissertation project as principal researcher on assessing whether diabetes is a risk factor for colorectal cancer in elderly population. Sanae has also been the recipient of several awards and scholarships, including May 2014 Outstanding Thesis Award for the School of Community Health Science, UNLV, and was also the first recipient of the Mary Guinan & Shawn Gerstenberger Public Health Scholarship for dissertation project, School of Community Health Science, UNLV. She was also selected as Outstanding Graduate Fall 2013 Commencement by UNLV President Neal Smatresk in November 2013. Sane strongly believes that participating in the *Éxito!* Summer Institute and internship gave her the ability to distinguish herself among other PhD applicants.

Sanae's top career goals:

1. Participate in research that makes a difference.
2. Become a social entrepreneur.
3. Educate upcoming researchers.

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

DO IT! It's so worth the effort you will put into it.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral programs Sanae says: "I was scared of the comprehensive exams, it turned out to be not so scary as I thought."

Beatriz Sosa-Prado

Éxito! Alumni 2014

Seatriz Sosa-Prado began her doctoral program August 2015 at the University of California in Public Health. Beatriz's current research focuses include Latino Health, health disparities, chronic disease prevention, and nutrition/dietary intake. Beatriz states that she was already motivated to pursue a PhD, but had doubts about her abilities; however, after participating in *Éxito!* she realized that she had what it takes. She states that the *Éxito!* team was amazing and made her feel that they truly cared about her, inspiring her to pursue a PhD.

Beatriz's top career goals:

1. Become a faculty in the California State University system.
2. Conduct community-based participatory research.
3. Start a Latina/o Health & Culture research and community center at her institution.
4. Replicate *Éxito!* for grad students!

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

You have what it takes, don't doubt yourself! Research public health topics you are curious or passionate about and identify research question/questions about it—in a sense become that "in-training" expert. Identify faculty in institutions you are interested in applying and read their work. Contact them, meet with them, ask about the program and talk about your research background and what you can contribute to the program. Don't be intimidated; be confident. Because of our culture, students of color tend to be too humble; however, finding our place in academia (initially) we cannot be (sadly), so we have to be assertive. Stay focused and find mentors who believe in you and will give you opportunities to do research and/or improve your work! The best way to identify a mentor is to ask yourself these questions: 1) does this person make time for me; 2) do I feel that this person truly believes in me or are they just "being nice"?; 3) do we have chemistry?; and 4) do they advise me in the direction of my PhD goals? Go to conferences, meet people—don't be shy and network! Take an interest in people, be polite with everyone (you never know who they are!), be professional (stay away from your phone!). After meeting someone, follow up with an email. If you click with other doctorates, maintain that relationship and strengthen it. These friends/mentors will help you during hard times and good. They will advise you best because they were once in your place. I met some of my best friends in conferences! They have helped me stay on track and focused, and have given me so much advice and encouragement.



Beatriz Sosa-Prado

Fun Facts

Best de-stressor?

Exercise! Meditate daily, even if it's for 5 minutes to start.

Best study tip?

If you get easily distracted like me, wear earplugs when you study. I always use a large white board to connect theories and information I have learned.

Favorite study snack?

Water! Tea. Fruit. Have a fruit bowl in your lab!

Favorite class so far?

None so far!

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral programs Beatriz says: "Stay focused and motivated. Seek inspiration from people you admire. If you have an idea of what you want to do, begin with the end in mind (plan backwards). Talk to your advisor and be clear about your goals upon graduation. Talk to other faculty in and outside your department and learn about their work. Be part of the community: participate in professional/social events (for grad students or your department); show up. Build a good image. Prove you are a serious student. Seek counseling services!!! You just need to talk to someone. Your well-being is a priority: 1) Eat healthily. Don't starve yourself. Eat whole foods, real food. Pack meals/snacks. If you don't fuel your engine, how do you expect to be your best? Don't say you don't have time, yes you do. 2) Sleep! Your brain needs it to consolidate what you've learned. You will have sufficient energy to get by your day without falling asleep in class or while you study. If you don't sleep well, you will crave sweet, salty and fatty food. 3) Exercise. Make time for it. Get some blood flow in your brain. Do exercise that is FUN to you and you will stick with it."

Alicia Nunez

Éxito! Alumni 2014

Alicia Nunez is a full-time graduate student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Alicia began her doctoral program in clinical psychology in August 2015. Alicia is interested in studying the intersection of stress and resources adjusting to adverse life events and illness, with the intent to promote well-being among underrepresented communities. She is also interested in identifying sociocultural pathways to resilience, coping, health disparities, and intervention development. Alicia is currently conducting research on Latino family caregivers' perspectives on emotional and spiritual support provided by hospice services. She is leading the qualitative data coding and performing in-depth analyses using RQDA (an R package for qualitative data analyses) and collaborating with manuscript development based on these findings. Alicia states that *Éxito!* provided her with the opportunity to learn more about the PhD application process and increase her self-confidence.

Alicia's top career goals:

1. Complete her PhD.
2. Become a licensed clinical psychologist.
3. Develop psychoeducational programs addressing the emotional well-being needs of underserved populations.

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

List reasons to go to graduate school versus not going. Create a spreadsheet listing the types of programs and schools you are interesting in applying to.

To her fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in doctoral programs, Alicia says: "Maintaining an organized study space may take some effort but it is worth it!"



Alicia Nunez

Fun Facts

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

In 2015, I had my first-author publication.

Best de-stressor?

Listening to music.

Best study tip?

Take a stretch break.

Favorite study snack?

Fruit.

Favorite class so far?

Psychopathology.



Angela Gutierrez

Angela Gutierrez Éxito! Alumni 2014

Angela Gutierrez is currently a doctoral student and researcher. Last summer, Angela began her PhD in community health sciences at the School of Public Health at UCLA. Angela is interested in health disparities among Latinos, the self-management of chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, fibromyalgia), community-based participatory research and *promotoras* and their research empowerment. Before beginning her doctoral program, Angela spent her summer working on a research program that involves a partnership with Los Angeles-based *promotoras*. The purpose of the study is to develop and evaluate a curriculum aimed to increase *promotoras'* research capacity and to empower them to pursue their own research questions, analyze their own data, and disseminate their findings to the communities they serve. Angela's role on this project involved the development of the curriculums, the implementation/teaching of the workshops among the *promotora* participants, and the process and outcome evaluations of the study.

Angela states that *Éxito!* influenced her goals and helped her better understand PhD application and program processes. Because of *Éxito!*, she had more confidence and knowledge when applying to doctoral programs and was successfully able to obtain a full-ride, four-year fellowship in a program that has very limited funding. She also credits *Éxito!* for her knowledge of other funding sources that can help finance her academic journey, so that she may strategically receive funding for progressing her research and dissertation. *Éxito!* also prepared her mentally and emotionally for the rigors involved in the program and reminded her of the incredibly strong support system of Latino scholars as they move forward in this process.

Angela's top career goals:

1. Tenured University Faculty at the CSU system.

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

Do it! It never hurts to try...and you might be pleasantly surprised with the results.



Hena Din
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Hena Din is a Pakistani American who is currently working as a surgical research coordinator. Hena's future career plans include professor, epidemiology or health behavior researcher. Her top career goals include becoming a professor, researcher and a research institution member/founder. Hena also had a manuscript submission accepted to the Journal of Spirituality in Social Work.



Erika Sisneros
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Erika Sisneros graduates in May 2016 from Claremont Graduate University. She would like to work for the next two years and then apply for a PhD program. Erika would like to continue with her current career and utilize the skills that she has obtained in her MPH to eventually hold a management position within the next 5 years. Erika was a recipient of the NHHF scholarship for 2015-2016 and the Randall Lewis Health Policy Fellowship.



Breann De Santiago
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Breann De Santiago is currently a student and a Randall Lewis Health Policy Fellow. Once she completes her Master of Public Health program, Breann plans on working to gain experience in her field. She would like to apply for a DrPH in a couple of years. Her top career goals are to earn her DrPH, be successful and enjoy what she does.



Monica Montano
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Monica Montano is currently a Health Science Lecturer at California State University, Long Beach. In the future, she plans to become a tenure track professor at a university. Her top career goals are to complete a PhD, become tenure and receive an R01 grant. Monica credits the *Éxito!* program for giving her the necessary skills and courage to apply for a PhD program. Monica was asked to present at the Health Science Department on U.S. infectious Disease Surveillance to a visiting delegation from China.



Starla Garcia
Éxito! Alumni 2013

Starla Garcia is finishing her dietetic internship to receive her Registered Dietitian License. She decided to use her *Éxito!* internship scholarship to pay for her dietetic internship's tuition and fees. Once she completes her internship, she plans on starting her own website/blog centered on food and wellness. Her future career goals include educating individuals on how to nourish their bodies and practice self-care in order to prevent future health problems/conditions. She would also like to become a mentor to other Latino students and dietetic students, create a social media platform to help educate and inspire others to nourish their bodies, live well and practice self-care, and start a nutrition consultation/wellness services business in a metropolitan city. Starla was also awarded the Volunteer of the Month for December 2015 through a non-profit organization, Recipe for Success, in Houston, to combat childhood obesity by combining nutrition education, cooking, and gardening classes in local schools.



Aditi Wahi
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Aditi Wahi's current occupation is project director in a health-related quality of life research study among cancer patients. Her future education and career goal is to get an MSW and work as a social worker and counselor.



Sandra Acevedo
Éxito! Alumni 2013

Sandra Acevedo is a health educator for an FQHC and just received her Registered Dietitian Certification. Sandra would like to apply for a doctoral program in public health nutrition/population health. Sandra would like to get a PhD in public health/population health to study health behaviors and promotion among minorities and immigrant populations. She's also interested in research, publishing and implementing evidence based practices to improve the health of minorities.



Monica Aguilar
Éxito! Alumni 2013

Monica Aguilar plans to apply soon to a doctoral program in Public health to start in the Fall 2017. Her future education plans are to get accepted and complete a doctoral program in public health and pursue a career in public health research and evaluation. She would also like to teach at Cal State University, and obtain a position as a health service director. She currently works as a data manager and project coordinator at NCLR/CSULB center for Latino Community Health, Evaluation & Leadership training. Monica is also a lecturer in the health Science department at California State University Long Beach teaching courses in the Graduate Certificate in Latino Health & Nutrition Studies. Her top career goals are to become a research associate, obtain a PhD and establish a non-profit organization focused on health education for minority populations.



Alexandra Banks
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Alexandra Banks works as a clinical research intern at Los Angeles Center for Women's Health for Dr. Dennis Holmes, breast cancer surgeon and researcher. Alexandra would like to attend medical school and also earn a PhD in public health. Her future career goals include a breast cancer specialist and surgeon, medical oncologist, research director for cancer health disparities, and a surgeon general. She's very grateful to *Éxito!* for helping and encouraging her to pursue her career goals.



Ramon L. Concepcion Torres
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Ramon L. Concepcion Torres works for IRIS Educational Media as a research associate and is primarily in charge of formalizing collaborative relationships with Latino community leaders and both public and private organizations in Oregon. In the future, Ramon would like serve the Latino population and contribute to public policies that benefit Latinos' livelihood and integration in the United States. Ramon would like to be able to contribute with significant Latino research. He also recently became a homeowner and his research studies are going very well, with a new study starting January 2016.



Laura Rubacalva
Éxito! Alumni 2011

Laura Rubacalva is currently doing a neuropsychology externship in San Antonio and is working on submitting her IRB application for her dissertation. She is planning on applying for her final internship and defends her dissertation by August 2016. She plans to graduate by 2017. Laura wants to be a professor or have a private practice in clinical psychology.



Melawhy L. Garcia
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Melawhy L. Garcia is currently enrolled and working on her PhD in health behavior. She's a doctoral student and graduate assistant. She also serves as a lecturer for an undergraduate health course at Health Equity and Health Disparities Research at California State University Long Beach, Department of Health Science. Melawhy passed her qualifying exams in December 2015 and plans on finishing her PhD program and then applying for an assistant professor position at a university. Her future goals are to become a professor, conduct Latino health disparities research, and mentor underrepresented students. She also had an oral and poster presentation at APHA in 2015.



Kaylee Rivera
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Kaylee Rivera will be graduating with her master's degree from California State University Long Beach in May 2016. Currently, she holds a position as research and administrative analyst to the Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Human services and lecturer for the Health, Human Services and Public Policy major. Kaylee wants to earn her PhD and work at the health policy level to create change, and own a business related to public health and nutrition (cooking classes, consulting, delivering workshops). She also moved to Monterrey for a job and is thoroughly excited that she was able to lecture courses at CSULB. Kaylee was also the only recipient for the "Graduate Student Honor Award" from the MPH program at CSULB.



Christina Olson
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Christina Olson graduated from San Diego State University in fall 2015. She is doing consulting work on an as-needs basis with the Institute for Behavioral and Community Health in San Diego, California. Christina and her husband are moving to Yuma, Arizona in 2016. Christina is very excited to live in a border town and is hoping to find a job working with the Latino community. In the meantime, she is also working on a few publications. Christina's top goals are to be happy, work closely with others to tackle public health issues within her community and conduct public health work abroad in a Spanish-speaking country.



Helen Palomino
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Helen Palomino is a medical social worker for a social service agency that serves cancer patients. She just passed her LCSW exam and has submitted her paper work for her licensure. Helen wishes to continue working with the most amazing people, who are also cancer patients. She would also like to become a certified oncology social worker and enroll in a DrPH program. Helen also had a manuscript published September 2015.



Andrea Fernandez **Éxito! Alumni 2015**

Andrea Fernandez is currently a project coordinator. Recently, she submitted applications to six doctoral programs and hopes to hear back by March 2016. Christina was surprised to find that she had so many friends and family that would encourage her to apply. Andrea's future goals include becoming a PI for an NIH-funded cancer research study, program director at a cancer prevention center of a major cancer treatment hospital and community outreach coordinator at a major cancer treatment hospital.



Andrew Jimenez **Éxito! Alumni 2015**

Andrew Jimenez is currently a full-time student and is expecting to graduate in May 2016. He works part time at the YMCA San Gabriel valley as a research and program assistant. In addition, he is also a Randall Lewis Health Policy fellow placed at San Antonio regional hospital (Upland, Calif.). Andrew wants to find a job that he loves pertaining to public health and be successfully in the this field and make and impact on people's lives. Once he gains some experience he would like to go back to school and get his DrPH.



Delana Gonzales **Éxito! Alumni 2012**

Delana Gonzales works as a program manager at the University Health System in San Antonio. Deleana wishes to continue to take classes that enhance her knowledge and take the appropriate steps to advance her career. Her future goals are to develop the skills necessary to be at an advanced level in her career, build on her writing skills, and increase her network.



Melissa Nanette Martinez ***Éxito!* Alumni 2013**

Melissa Martinez is currently working on her second master's degree in business analytics and works as a digital analyst at Zubi advertising services. Melissa's career goals are to write a book, and be a director of an analytics department and a leader.



Angedith Poggi-Burke ***Éxito!* Alumni 2015**

Angedith Poggi-Burke is currently working for the U.S. Census Bureau as a sSurvey Statistician GS-11, Department of Commerce. Angedith plans to continue gaining experience and education in survey methodology, leadership and management. In term of education plans, she is thinking of pursuing a doctoral degree in the next five years. Her future goals are to get a promotion in her current job in the next two to three years, and take the appropriate trainings to gain knowledge in survey methodology, as well as exploring new job opportunities in the private and public sectors. Angedith credits the *Éxito!* Program in giving her the confidence she needed to think positively about the doctoral application process. She states that this was a wonderful opportunity to understand that pursuing a higher education degree is important not only for her, but for her community. She's also grateful for meeting incredible peers and colleagues with similar background experiences. Angedith received a recognition award for organizing a successful American Chemical Society (ACS) Presidential Symposium: ACS Scholars Program: Rising Stars in Academia and ACS Scholar Program: Rising Stars in Industry.



Rossybelle Perales ***Éxito!* Alumni 2012**

Rossybelle Perales is a program manager for a Randomized Recruitment Intervention Trial at UT Health-Houston. Rossybelle would like to go back to school to get her PhD in epidemiology. Her future goals include maintaining a career in public health, work in cancer health disparities, and obtain a PhD. She also currently has two publications in progress.



Mariana Arevalo

Éxito! Alumni 2011

Mariana Arevalo is a pre-doctoral fellow in the process of completing her dissertation and other PhD requirements. Mariana submitted her initial first-author publication and is also working on four other manuscripts. Currently, she is also working on ideas for her proposal. After graduation, Mariana wants to find a job in research/academic institution, work at a career center, help reduce cancer health disparities and be a researcher that can help impact people's lives



Christina Carmona

Éxito! Alumni 2013

Christina Carmona is now focusing on infection control at a local San Antonio Hospital. She is currently an Infection control practitioner and is planning on becoming certified in Infection Control by the end of 2016. Christina's future career goals, after becoming certified in Infection Control, is to oversee an IC department and become an epidemiology professor.



Benjamin Aceves

Éxito! Alumni 2014

Benjamin Aceves is finishing a grant-funded year with Fulbright and is waiting on decisions on PhD programs for fall 2016. He is currently a visiting researcher at the Instituto De Salud Publica in Mexico. Benjamin states that he has met amazing people doing important public health research in Mexico and is looking forward to working with them in the future. Benjamin's career goals are to become a professor, conduct funded research, and establish a nonprofit organization. Benjamin also received the Fulbright Public Policy Initiative Award.



Martha Iveth Garcia

Éxito! Alumni 2011

Martha Garcia is currently enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Texas Medical Branch and expects to graduate in spring 2017. Upon graduation, Martha would like to get a position as an assistant professor or in industry. Martha received the Basic Cardiovascular Sciences minority travel grant and got second-place platform presentation at Pathophysiology of the Cell, Cell Biology Graduate program symposium, UTMB. She also received Third place poster presentation at the Annual UTHSC-Houston Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Graduate program retreat.



Eduardo Zamora

Éxito! Alumni 2015

Eduardo Zamora is a data and project manager in the Cancer Control Population Sciences program at Huntsman Cancer Institute, University of Utah. Eduardo is planning to apply for two PhD Programs at the University of Utah for fall 2016. His short-term goals include publishing two manuscripts in 2016. His long-term goals are to complete a PhD program and start a research consulting firm. Eduardo also received the best poster award at Translating Cancer Epidemiology: From Cells to Clinic and Population, Huntsman Cancer Institute, October 23-25, 2015.



Rose A. Trevino-Whitaker

Éxito! Alumni 2015

Rose Trevino-Whitaker moved to Houston and starts a new position in January 2016 as research Manager at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Rose would like to apply to a doctoral program in about a year. She is excited and looking forward to her daughter turning 1 year old in February 2016.



Roger Figueroa
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Roger Figueroa is research assistant in the Health and Family Laboratory at University of Illinois, and an I-TOPP Doctoral Trainee/Fellow. Roger is very passionate about his academic life, for which he would like to pursue as many opportunities as they become available. Roger has many interests, including quantitative/qualitative methods, GIS, public health, race, culture, sports sciences, SciTS, among others. Ultimately, he would like to become a research professor and a public health practitioner. Roger states that *Éxito!* was one of the best things that happened to him, as a person and as a professional. Roger's future goals are to land a post-doctoral traineeship position, become a research professor, and serve as consultant or health provider in the practice sector. He was also the recipient of the I-TOPP Doctoral Research Fellowship (2012-2017) and Teaching Assistantship, Introduction to Human Development (Spring 2015). Roger got engaged to his best friend this past summer.



Mitzy Gonzalez
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Mitzy Gonzalez is an assistant director of undergraduate admissions at UNC Chapel Hill and affirms the important role education plays in the Latino/a community. She graduated with her master's degree in social work last May at age 22. Mitzy has a deep desire to pursue a doctoral degree so other Latino/as can feel empowered to join her on this journey. She is leaning toward pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. Mitzy is excited to see what doors will open for her in the future.



Jenny Castillo
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Jenny Castillo is currently a project coordinator with the University Health System in San Antonio. She is working on an infectious disease project patient experience project. Jenny still wants to pursue a PhD in public health and run her own health programs. Her top goals are to open her own wellness center, teach dance as a form of physical activity and be a director. Jenny participated last year in the Fiesta Noche Del Rio Dance Company. She also got a Pomeranian named Uno.



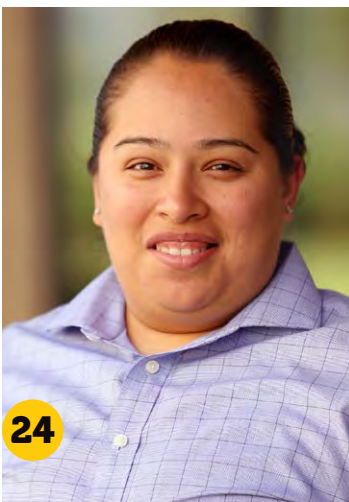
Marina Daldalian
Éxito! Alumni 2011

Marina Daldalian is currently transitioning from the Health Care IT industry to a more holistic health and wellness-focused career. At the moment she's a clinical intelligence researcher. Marina has been living in Chicago for just over two years and is working with a team on the leading edge of population health analytics. She has also been presenting their work at conferences like the Institute for Health Care Improvement. Last year, Marina enjoyed traveling a lot with friends and family – her favorite was Sedona, Arizona. Marina's goals are to impact the health of individuals, families, countries, and the world. She would also like to lead a highly engaged, collaborative team of hard working and insightful people toward new discoveries, implementing large scale change, and disseminating results. Marina wants to be involved in work she believes in, and where she can dedicate her energy, time, and talents to. Marina states that *Éxito!* still remains one of her most treasured life experiences.



Maria Priscila Brietzke
Éxito! Alumni 2011

Maria Brietzke is a PhD student and research assistant. Maria is hoping to apply for post-doctoral fellowships in about a year. Maria's goals are to develop expertise in Latino adolescent health, mental health and stress research, and contribute to translational research and theoretical perspectives in these fields. She would also like to help inform policy and institutional practices that reduce disparities and promote better mental health in the Latino community.



Wendy Ramirez
Éxito! Alumni 2013

Wendy Ramirez works as a health education supervisor at AltaMed and as a part-time professor at California State University of Long Beach. Wendy is working to gain more experience and to support her family but hopes to apply to a PhD program in California in the near future. Wendy would also like to attain an internship and continue teaching at the university.



Jacquelyn Toledo ***Éxito!* Alumni 2014**

Jacquelyn Toledo is a director of leadership development for a small non-profit organization that aims to enhance access to quality health care, promote workforce development, and eliminate health disparities. Her specific role includes co-directing the professional statewide association of community health workers. Jacquelyn is committed to being a life-long learner; hence, her education/career plans have no end. However, now that she has finished her master's program, she will be taking a break, enjoying some free time and raising her three children (ages 13, 14, and 21). Jacquelyn's career goals include pursuing a doctoral degree, and working to acquire additional skills to enhance her professional development. Jacquelyn is grateful for the opportunities made possible by *Éxito!* She says the impact has been long-serving. Jacquelyn also had her first publication as a co-author and was involved in a couple conference presentations. She also received a recognition award for the 2015 Worcester Latino Dollars for Scholars, Graduate of Springfield College, Boston.



Angelina Velazquez ***Éxito!* Alumni 2015**

Angelina Velazquez hopes to obtain a PhD and become a professor and researcher. Her future goals also include working on translational research. In May 2015, Angelina received her certificate in General Pedagogy: Improving Teaching by Assessing Learning.



Claudia Velazquez ***Éxito!* Alumni 2015**

Claudia Velazquez is currently a master's degree student in the Department of Biology at CSU Fresno. She would like to complete her degree and enter a doctoral program. Claudia's future goals are to become a medical scientist, entrepreneur and speaker. Claudia has also had a couple of poster presentations and was awarded the American Society of Biomechanics Diversity Travel Award, Columbus, Ohio, August 5-8, 2015.



Atenia Ruiz
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Atenia Ruiz is currently an MPH student with a concentration in epidemiology and biostatistics. She's working on two pediatric obesity projects and has lost weight and saved money by parking off-campus. Atenia's future education goals are to get a PhD in maternal and child health and to teach at a university with a strong dedication to students. She would also like to focus work on genetic epidemiology research. Atenia was the recipient of the 2015-2016 Nevada access grant.



Diana Flores
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Diana Flores works as a program advisor/pre-med advisor for an academic achievement program at UC Berkeley. Diana's current education and career goals are still in the works, but she is particularly interested in research with an epidemiology component. She's also still considering a PhD. Last November, Diana also had the opportunity to meet up with fellow *Éxito!* Alumni, Melawhy Garcia, in Chicago for the APHA November Conference and then in Seattle with *Éxito!* alumni, Edgar Rodriguez. Last summer, Diana's supervisor and the program she currently works for were recognized by President Obama at the White House. Diana was also awarded a university staff recognition award. She is also a co-author in a manuscript that's currently under review for publication on the project that she worked during her *Éxito!* internship.



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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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