

¡ÉXITO! Noticias

Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training

Latinos Step Up to Solve Cancer Health Disparities

If something doesn't work, Sebastian Garcia-Medina finds an alternative way to make it work.

It's this kind of resourcefulness that he learned from his father, who helped his family leave behind violence in Bogota, Columbia, and move to the U.S. in search of higher education.

In Wisconsin, as a first-generation immigrant, Garcia-Medina found his passion in the medical sciences and aiding the underserved populations.

After taking a year to work at the Mayo Clinic, Garcia-Medina is now continuing his path toward medicine and science by pursuing a master's degree in Cleveland, Ohio.

To further his experience and education, Garcia-Medina applied for the **Éxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training program.**

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

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 and optional internships 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.

"I am grateful for the incredible opportunity to learn from great speakers and peers at the [*Éxito!*] summer institute," said Garcia-Medina. "By providing experienced speakers and like-minded peers, *Éxito!* has encouraged me to follow my dreams and pursue a doctoral degree."

He urged Latinos to apply to participate in the program.

"*Éxito!*, in a short time of a week, provides you with inspiration to continue your educational goals. It will also provide you with the tools to better prepare you for the transition into a doctoral program."



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A Message from *Éxito!* Principal Investigator

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez

The continuing rise of Latino cancer and cancer-causing health conditions means we need increasingly more Latino cancer researchers, physicians, public health policy leaders.

Éxito! exists to create such a pipeline of researchers and leaders.

That's why we are so proud of our *Éxito!* participants! Of 175 *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 (or have graduated)!

The list of those accepted into or graduated from programs grows each year:

- **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
- **Aleli 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

It is individuals like these—and like you!—who will take their doctoral degree and work to stop cancer while embracing culture as a vital piece to cancer control and prevention.

Learn more or contact me [here](#).



A Message from *Éxito!* Co-Principal Investigator

Dr. Rena J. Pasick

Dear *Éxito!* Alumni,
This message brings my warmest wishes to you and your families for a healthy, happy, and successful 2019!

It was wonderful seeing so many of you at our alumni gathering at APHA in San Diego where we had around 50

2 *Éxito!* and Minority Training Program in Cancer Control Research (MTPCCR) alums! We look forward to continuing this tradition, always the Sunday

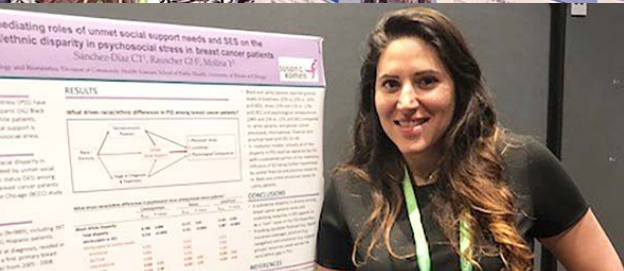
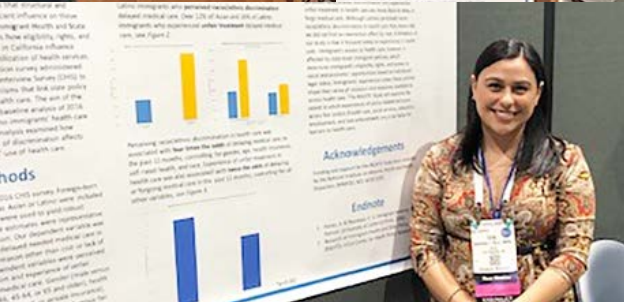
evening of the APHA annual conference, wherever it is!

It was my great pleasure this past year to produce four webinars for you on grant-writing. If you missed them, they are archived on the [Éxito! website](#). Please feel free to share them with your friends and colleagues.

As always, your success is what's most important to all of us at *Éxito!* and MTPCCR.

Go forth and prosper!





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 2019. 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 4, 2019

Decisions will be announced in late March, 2019.

Share the Experience

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

We are currently accepting applications for our 9th *Éxito!* Summer Institute on June 10–14, 2019, in San Antonio.

Apply at www.exitotraining.org by March 4, 2019.

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:

Salud America!

Salud America! is a national Latino health equity-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 and all children and families can equitably live, learn, work, and play. *Salud America!*'s award-winning multimedia communications help our social and online network—more than 200,000 moms and dads, providers, and community and school leaders—push for healthy changes in the areas of Healthy Families and Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods and Communities, and Healthy and Cohesive Cultures. *Salud America!* is led by health disparities researcher Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez and supported by a passionate team of communicators at the IHPR UT Health San Antonio, thanks to funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Quitxt

Quitxt is an evidence-based, culturally tailored, bilingual text-message service to help young adult smokers quit the habit. To expand Quitxt, the IHPR is developing a Facebook Messenger version of the program, and launching another program to enable doctors and oncologists to refer patients to the service.

Redes En Acción

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.

The 2nd Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos Conference

The conference is set for Feb. 26-28, 2020, in San Antonio, Texas. The first conference, conducted by the IHPR at UT Health San Antonio and Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson on Feb. 21-23, 2018, brought together more than 225 cancer experts from 23 states and Puerto Rico to tackle Latino cancer.



Latino Cancer News & Articles

[U.S. Cancer Death Rates Decline, But Less for Those in Poverty](#)

The overall U.S. cancer death rate fell 27% from 1991 to 2016, according to a recent study by the American Cancer Society. Good news, right? Not so fast. The report revealed a disturbing trend: a growing gap in cancer death rates based on wealth.

[Work-Related Exposures May Increase Latinos' Risk for Heart Disease](#)

Latinos exposed to heavy metals at work are twice as likely to have cardiovascular disease as those who aren't, according to a recent publication. Such exposures can have dire consequences both in the short and long term.

[The Scary Reason Latino Men Don't Get the Best Prostate Cancer Treatment](#)

All of us have unconscious or involuntary stereotypes that affect our feelings and actions about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. This is called "implicit bias." Implicit bias can harm relationships, policies, and even health. In fact, implicit bias is a big reason why Latino men are much less likely to receive optimal treatment for high-risk prostate cancer than White men, according to a new study.

[Latinos Underestimate their Own Contributions in the United States](#)

A new study from the We All Are Human foundation analyzed more than 2,500 Latinos ages 14 and older about their political, business, and educational views. Participants shared thoughts on 16 positive Latino accomplishments, such as launching more new business and achieving higher levels of education. More than 77% of participants expressed disbelief around six of these significant Latino achievements.

[Report: Junk Food Advertised More to Latino, Black Kids](#)

Disparities in advertising for unhealthy food continue to target Latino and Black youth, according to a new report from Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut, the Council on Black Health at Drexel University, and *Salud America!* at the IHPR at UT Health San Antonio.

[Study: Latino Health Suffers Due to Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric](#)

With the current political climate of inflammatory rhetoric, parental separation, and tear-gassing of migrants along the border, many Latinos feel the burden of an anti-immigrant climate, according to a research report. "Current discourse about immigrants and immigration tends to be dehumanizing," said the study leader, Dr. R. Gabriela Barajas-Gonzalez of NYU. "Dehumanization is never healthy."

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 2018



Éxito! Alumni 2017



Éxito! Alumni 2016



Éxito! Alumni 2015



Éxito! Alumni 2014



Éxito! Alumni 2013



Éxito! Alumni 2012



Éxito! Alumni 2011



Congratulations

Sanae El Ibrahimy **Éxito!** Alumni 2013



Sanae El Ibrahimy graduated with her PhD from the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Currently, Sanae works as a healthcare analyst. Her dissertation project focused on prognosis disparities among Latinos with diabetes and colorectal cancer. Her top career goals are to publish more papers, obtain a faculty position, and have flexible time to balance work and her personal life. Sanae is a Delta Omega Public Health Honor Society member, Delta Theta Chapter at UNLV (2017).

Mary V. Diaz Santana **Éxito!** Alumni 2011



Mary V. Diaz Santana graduated with her PhD in epidemiology at the University of Massachusetts' Graduate School of Public Health. Mary is currently doing a Postdoctoral at the National Institutes of Health/ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH/NIEHS).

Laura Rubacalva **Éxito!** Alumni 2011



Laura Rubacalva graduated with her PhD in clinical psychology from George Washington University, D.C. Laura's dissertation focused on health psychology research where she examined the emotional maturity in gastric bypass surgery patients. Laura's next steps are to find a job and take her licensing board exam in June 2019. Laura would like to continue working with people who suffer from eating disorders.

Benjamin Aceves **Éxito!** Alumni 2014



Benjamin Aceves, a graduate research assistant the University of Arizona focused on disease prevention, received a **diversity supplement grant** from the National Institutes of Health through Arizona's Zuckerman College of Public Health. The study focuses on the prevention of cardiovascular disease and its complications among adults with diabetes in Northern Mexico. Benjamin's top goals are to receive more NIH funding, join an R1 institution and graduate. Benjamin was also the recipient of the Community Advisory Board Award Scholarship and the Graduate Public Health Fellowship.

Mayra Serrano

Éxito! Alumni 2013

Mayra Serrano is a programs manager for cancer research and health education and prevention. She is currently a doctoral student in the DrPh public health leadership program in Chapel Hill. Mayra is doing research and manages programs in breast cancer and the environment, diabetes risk reduction, minority accrual to clinical trials, and youth tobacco prevention. Mayra had three poster presentations at the APHA conference in 2018 and one poster at the 2018 AACR Health Disparities conference. Mayra states that *Éxito!* motivated her to pursue her doctorate and allowed her to make connections and friendships with others pursuing similar goals.

Mayra's top career goals:

1. Become director of her department.
2. Develop a system within the institution to increase minority accrual to clinical trials.
3. Develop a prevention and screening program at her institution.

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

Getting your doctorate will open a lot of doors for you, so do it.

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

Find support from family, friends, colleagues. No one can do it alone.



Mayra Serrano

Fun Facts

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

Excited to be in a doctoral program this year. Having a choice between two schools/programs is nice.

Best de-stressor?

Her dog.

Best study tip?

Find a place you enjoy and can feel relaxed to study in.

Favorite study snack?

Almonds.



Janet Sanchez

Éxito! Alumni 2013

Janet Sanchez is currently working on her PhD in health services at the University of Washington. Janet's dissertation research is focused on assessing racial/ethnic disparities in colorectal cancer postoperative-related care. Janet states that *Éxito!* helped her gain confidence in herself and empower her to take action and apply to PhD programs. Janet has had several publications and presentations, as well as two pre-doctoral fellowships and two graduate fellowships.

Janet's top career goals:

1. *Become an independent cancer researcher.*
2. *Conduct research that addresses cancer health disparities.*
3. *Bridge cancer research to policy.*

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

Just do it! There will always be barriers and fears, but you can overcome them. There are resources available to you, take advantage of them!



Janet Sanchez



Fun Facts

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

I received my PhD Candidacy!

Best de-stressor?

I enjoy going on hikes with my Saint Bernard, especially when I'm extremely stressed.

Best study tip?

I recommend finding a place that makes you be in your "study zone" and always make sure you try to stay a little ahead by not procrastinating.

Favorite study snack?

Dried mango (chips)

Favorite classes so far?

Survival analysis



Aleli M. Ayala Marin

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). She is currently collaborating with the Growth, Exercise, Nutrition and Development (GENUD) research group from the University of Zaragoza in the implementation and the health educational activities of a multi-center European evidence-based program designed to prevent Type 2 diabetes (Feel4Diabetes study). Aleli states that *Éxito!* restored her desire to obtain a PhD. Before her experience with *Éxito!* she had applied at some universities without any success. Thanks to *Éxito!*, Aleli felt she could achieve her dreams. Aleli received a full-scholarship from the Meléndez Pelayo International University to complete the 2017 summer course titled: XVIII School of Nutrition “Francisco Grande Covián” in Santander, Spain.

Aleli's top career goals:

1. Finish her PhD.
2. Become a behavioral researcher and an evidence-based program developer with a focus on obesity prevention.

Fun Facts

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

I got married last year. Dr. Luis A. Moreno, group leader of the Growth, Exercise, Nutrition and Development (GENUD) research group, would like to establish collaboration with future doctoral students and researchers. If you are interested, please write him an email (lmoreno@unizar.es).

Best de-stressor?

I sing and cook. I belong to a professional choir and church choir that help me relax and have a little fun. I've been more productive in my thesis work since I started singing again. And when I cook Puerto Rican food, I feel close to my country and my family.

Best study tip?

I focus better listening to music while studying.

Favorite study snack?

Plain yogurt with cashews and honey.

Favorite class so far?

The role of community participation in health, a course organized by the University of Zaragoza and Medicus Mundi, a non-profit organization that works in the field of international health cooperation.

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

You need to have the *Éxito!* experience! You are going to be a stronger candidate and you will have a better chance getting into a doctoral program.

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

Balance studies with social life. The doctoral program is like running a marathon. Enjoy your running! Be wise and do not get exhausted. Take advantage of your free time and get to know the city better, take time to be with friends and stay in touch with your family, etc. This will improve your energies and your productivity.





Eduardo Santiago-Rodriguez

Eduardo Santiago-Rodriguez

Éxito! Alumni 2014

Eduardo Santiago-Rodriguez is working on his PhD in epidemiology and translational science at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Eduardo is currently working as a biostatistician at Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine and the Puerto Rico Clinical and Translational Research Consortium. His role as biostatistician is to provide support to researchers and medical students in the areas of study design, data analysis and database creation. He's working in many projects, two of them related to cancer: one is evaluating the immunization rates of a group of pediatric cancer patients, and the other one is aimed to assess cancer incidence and survival in a cohort of HIV Hispanics living in the island. Eduardo states that *Éxito!* motivated him to apply and gave him the tools to do it. Eduardo is also the recipient of a predoctoral training grant (research on aging and chronic disease epidemiology) at the UCSF Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Eduardo's top career goals:

After obtaining a PhD and a postdoc, come back to Puerto Rico and contribute with his expertise and research agenda to reduce cancer health disparities, while maintaining research collaborations in United States.

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

Assuming they went to *Éxito!* already: If you don't have a "real excuse" for not applying next cycle, do not postpone your career anymore and do it. You have everything you need to apply and succeed!

For those who have not had the *Éxito!* experience: Apply next year, make a list with all your questions and ask them, and start working on your application as soon as you get back home.

To his fellow *Éxito!* classmates enrolled in a doctoral program, Eduardo says:

At this moment I am preparing for my first semester as a PhD student, so I am not in a position to provide an advice based on my experience yet, but I will do next year!





Lizeth I. Tamayo

Lizeth I. Tamayo Éxito! Alumni 2017

Lizeth Tamayo is working on her PhD in Epidemiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Lizeth is currently a research assistant involved in projects focusing on breast cancer. Lizeth states that *Éxito!* helped give her the motivation and last push she needed to apply to PhD programs. Before *Éxito!*, she had been thinking about applying but had not made up her mind, it was definitely during the program that she decided she would apply. Lizeth received the Cancer Disparities Research Network Travel Scholarship and Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award for the American Association for Cancer Research Conference. Lizeth also had her first lead author publication, "Breast cancer subtype and survival among Indigenous American women in Peru," in the journal *PLoS ONE*.

Lizeth's top career goals:

1. Obtain a PhD in epidemiology.
2. Become a tenured professor.
3. Have her own lab.

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

Applications will take time, try and make sure that you purposely set time aside in your schedule to work on it. Also, do not be scared to ask for help from your mentors, if it had not been for many of my mentors I do not believe I would have had as strong of an application.

Fun Facts

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

After recently getting my genetic data genotyped I found out that I am 82% Native American, while I am not too surprised since I am Peruvian, I still thought it was pretty cool to see.

Best de-stressor?

Reading, watching a movie or going out to eat with friends.

Best study tip?

Allow yourself to have study breaks, you can only be truly productive for so long.

Favorite study snack?

Trail-mix, honey-nut cheerios and pretzels.

Favorite class so far?

Cancer epidemiology and social epidemiology.





Jasmin Berrios

Jasmin Berrios **Éxito! Alumni 2015**

Jasmin Berrios is working on her PhD in educational technology leadership at Morehead State University. Jasmin also works as a program manager and is currently working on educational research. Jasmin states that *Éxito!* showed her the different careers available in cancer research. Jasmin had a presentation, “Thriving as an Academic Healthcare Institution: An Inter-Professionally Developed Educators Professional Development Curriculum.”

Jasmin’s top career goals:

Develop instruction that will help clinical healthcare professional be better clinical educators, to increase better patient care/satisfaction

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

Go for it! It’s well worth it.



Sandra Garcia Camacho
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Sandra Garcia Camacho is finishing her MPH in epidemiology at the University of Puerto Rico—Medical Sciences Campus. During her *Éxito!* internship, Sandra focused on anal cancer screening among Hispanic women with lower genital tract neoplasia in Puerto Rico. Before the *Éxito!* internship, Sandra states she had several doubts in her qualities but after all the experiences she was exposed to, she is more secure and confident. Sandra also states that she has all the necessary tools to apply to a doctoral degree and complete it successfully. The *Éxito!* internship also opened several doors for Sandra as it allowed her to continue in the area of cancer. The biggest benefit was her development as a scientist and future researcher. As a result of her performance during her internship, Sandra was provided the opportunity to be the coordinator of a study that was approved by the NIH related to the Impact of Hurricane Maria in the treatment of gynecological cancer.



Ileana Cepeda
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Ileana Cepeda graduated with her MPH from Kansas State University in 2017. For her *Éxito!* internship, Ileana focused on a study to explore and better understand access to early cancer detection screening and cancer treatment for the Latino immigrant community in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The study utilized a multi-method design, including a survey about cancer screening behaviors with healthy individuals and a focus group with cancer patients and their caregivers to understand barriers to treatment. Ileana is passionate about continuing her work in the Latino community and looks forward to sharing her work with others. Ileana states that during her internship, she realized the need for more diverse researchers. As a Latina, she understands the culture and can relate to needs of her community. With the *Éxito!* internship, Ileana was also able to become involved with the Migration Policy Institute and was recently added to a new department within KUMC.



Paloma Suarez
Éxito! Alumni 2016

Paloma Suarez graduated with her MPH from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Paloma is a senior nutritionist and breastfeeding coordinator for a WIC program. For her *Éxito!* internship, Paloma conducted an integrative review on Latino fathers' HPV knowledge awareness, beliefs, attitudes and vaccine acceptability. Paloma states that cancer is a topic very dear to her because she has had family members diagnosed with cancer. She also states that the *Éxito!* internship reminded her of the work that still needs to be done within her community. Participating in her *Éxito!* internship reaffirmed her interest in research. Paloma states that having a mentor who advocates and roots for you throughout every step of the way has been priceless. Paloma's top career goals are to be accepted to a PhD program, become a professor, become a registered dietitian and work for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



Jacquelin Cordero
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Jacquelin Cordero achieved a graduate certificate of public health and a master of social work at the University of Texas at El Paso. As part of her *Éxito!* internship, Jacquelin worked on a community-engaged research project focused on human papillomavirus (HPV) associated cancer prevention initiatives in the region of El Paso, Texas. Jacquelin states that during her *Éxito!* internship she made the decision to apply to a doctoral program for the next admission deadline. Due to the support and experience she received because of her involvement in the *Éxito!* training and internship, she felt better prepared to apply for and be accepted into the program of her choice. Jacquelin is confident that she will pursue a career in cancer research associated with HPV prevention and a research focus of the optimal functioning and health of those with substance use disorders. The *Éxito!* internship also gave Jacquelin the opportunity to become the part-time project coordinator for the research she was involved in.



Emanuelle Dias
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Emanuelle Dias is currently working on her MPH in public health education at the University of South Florida. For her *Éxito!* internship, Emanuelle worked under the mentorship of Dr. Dinorah Martinez-Tyson on a research project exploring the work experiences of male cancer survivors who were working at the time of cancer diagnosis. This project has worked to expand the knowledge of work-related decisions and challenges among racially and ethnically diverse male workers, including Latino men living in the U.S. By connecting with a mentor at her university, Emanuelle was able to successfully narrow her research interests and develop important research skills through mentorship and project completion. Emanuelle states that the *Éxito!* internship widened her research interests and confirmed her decision to complete a doctoral degree. Emanuelle has already submitted one application to a doctoral program. Emanuelle states that the greatest benefit of her *Éxito!* internship was forcing her to be outside her comfort zone. It continuously pushed her to connect to her mentor/colleagues, to explore new things, and to learn about all aspects of research. As a result of the *Éxito!* internship, Emanuelle is also submitting abstracts to conferences.



Diana Ballesteros-Gonzalez
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Diana Ballesteros-Gonzalez is a first-year student at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences with a certificate in epidemiology of chronic disease. For her *Éxito!* internship, Diana's research was to better understand exposure to dietary carcinogens and dietary risk factors that can contribute to cancer disparities among Latino populations. The primary focus of the research project was to examine the relationship between dietary consumption, education, and living conditions among immigrant women from Mexico living in challenging inner-city settings throughout New York City. The *Éxito!* internship and the guidance of her mentor allowed Diana to develop her research skills in an academic public health setting. Diana states that the greatest benefit of participating in the *Éxito!* internship was the ability to work Mexican immigrant communities in New York City. As a result of this experience, Diana has become much more interested in data analysis, disparities, and epidemiology research.



Fernando Juarez ***Éxito!* Alumni 2018**

Fernando Juarez is working on his master's degree in health and kinesiology at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Fernando's *Éxito!* internship was to profile the cancer risk based on modifiable lifestyle behaviors (obesity, physical activity, diet, and alcohol consumption) in a sample of mostly Hispanic elderly people in San Antonio, Texas. To conduct this study, participants' height and weight, time spent in different physical activity levels, amount of fruit and vegetable servings, and alcohol consumed were measured. The data was extracted from a senior health study that used a cross-sectional observation approach. Fernando gained much needed research experience by participating in the *Éxito!* internship. He states that this lack of research experience was the source of doubt for applying to PhD programs; but now he is more confident that he can accomplish this. Fernando would like to conduct an intervention using daily activities, exercise programs, and a vegan diet in an elderly population. The literature review he conducted supported the idea that these behaviors could lower the risk of cancer.



Rossmary Marquez ***Éxito!* Alumni 2018**

Rossmary achieved her MPH from Texas A&M. For her *Éxito!* internship, Rossmary conducted a literature review that was focused on using the CDC's Inside Knowledge Campaign (IKC) materials as part of a public health intervention to increase women and healthcare provider's knowledge about one or more gynecologic cancers. IKC is a multiyear, multimedia campaign to raise awareness among women and healthcare providers about the signs and symptoms, risk factors, and prevention strategies related to gynecologic cancers (cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar). Rossmary states her mentor was caring and supportive so it was important for both to have good interpersonal skills to make the internship work. This was the first time Rossmary went through the systematic process of collecting articles and analyzing the content, so it was a good learning opportunity. The *Éxito!* internship reassured Rossmary that research is something she would like to continue doing and that getting a PhD is the next step in her career. The greatest benefit of her *Éxito!* internship was getting a second-author publication and a potential first-author publication.



Alejandra Ochoa ***Éxito!* Alumni 2018**

Alejandra Ochoa graduated with her MPH from the University of Arizona in 2017. For her *Éxito!* internship, Alejandra conducted a literature review on stress being a direct carcinogen and utilized a holistic approach as a mediator and prevention tool. Alejandra states that *Éxito!* provided the tools that explained and broke down the process of applying to a PhD. The *Éxito!* internship made her more inclined to pursue a career in cancer research, especially in areas where there is a lack of research/protective factors. One of the most beneficial outcomes of her internship was gaining more knowledge and getting closer to deciding to apply to a PhD. Alejandra is very grateful she found a mentor who guided and motivated her. Because of her *Éxito!* internship, Alejandra will continue to work with her mentor in a manuscript publication.



Joe Padilla
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Joe Padilla is working on an MPH with a concentration in community health education at New Mexico State University. Joe's *Éxito!* internship examined individual characteristics, colorectal cancer knowledge types, and behavioral beliefs as correlates and predictors of screening outcomes in Hispanics of screening age in Doña Ana, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. Overall, Joe really enjoyed the challenges and experience he gained through this process. It has helped him to critically analyze his projects and really try to address the root of the problems. Joe would like to apply to a doctorate program in the near future. Joe also states that he has been exposed to many underserved and hard to reach communities (low socioeconomic status, and Hispanic men) diagnosed at advanced cancer stages. This opportunity has been an eye-opening experience that motivates him to speak for those who need a voice. The *Éxito!* internship strengthened his passion to work on cancer research and make him a strong candidate for cancer-specific jobs and programs. One of the greatest benefits of participating in the *Éxito!* internship was being able to collaborate with his mentor. By working with Dr. Palacios, Joe learned the steps taken to conduct a study, and how to improve on his writing skills.



Genesis Rios
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Genesis Rios is currently studying to receive her MPH in community health sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her *Éxito!* internship focused on an ongoing trial that compares a risk-based educational intervention to an empowerment-based intervention. During her *Éxito!* internship, Genesis examined: 1) differences in perceived support and social interactions as related to diet and physical activity between participants in the two groups; and 2) if perceived support or social interactions related to diet and physical activity are associated with current diet and physical activity behaviors among women undergoing the risk-based educational intervention. Because of the *Éxito!* internship, Genesis is much more motivated to work in cancer health disparities and more confident that she will apply to a doctoral program in the next five years. Genesis states that the greatest benefit in participating in the *Éxito!* internship was building relationships with her mentor, research assistants, research participants, and the community organization. The relationships she made are what ultimately motivated her to pursue this career, because she wants to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of other Latinos.



Pamela Sanchez
Éxito! Alumni 2018

Pamela Sanchez is currently in an MPH program with a specialization in epidemiology at the University of Florida. For her *Éxito!* internship, Pamela conducted a systematically review to identify the gaps in the research of MetS and its components in Hispanics and their associations with breast cancer risk. The *Éxito!* internship gave her the ability to work and grow a relationship with her mentor which helped her gain confidence in research and applying for doctoral programs. After working as a research assistant and with her mentor, Pamela found a passion she didn't know she had in breast cancer research. The gaps she discovered in her literature among the Hispanic community are what also keep her motivated to change that. The greatest benefit from the *Éxito!* internship was developing the relationship with her mentor, Dr. Cheng. Pamela also fostered her research interest in cardiometabolic disorders and how it affects breast cancer progression. She has learned a great deal in what goes into a quality literature review and will provide the foundation for her research proposal in, hopefully, her doctoral program.



Rosalie Aguilar ***Éxito!* Alumni 2011**

Rosalie Aguilar is currently a doctoral student at UT Health San Antonio and project coordinator for the *Salud America!* program at the Institute for Health Promotion Research. Her career goals are to effectively translate obesity and cancer prevention policy and programs into Latino communities; develop evidence-based research, tools, and technology that would be widely used and disseminated widely among Latino and all populations; and become an applied biomedical/ translational researcher working to develop and deliver effective treatments and prevention services to cancer patients. She is currently working on exploratory research to understand health communication strategies used by advocacy minded communication networks to disseminate information on Latino health and childhood obesity prevention. Rosalie states that *Éxito!* showed her the many opportunities available in public health and the innovative thinking required for being successful in this field. *Éxito!* also helped her overcome feelings of self-doubt and helped her realize her lifelong dream of becoming a scientist.



Mariana Arevalo ***Éxito!* Alumni 2011**

Mariana Arevalo is in the process of completing her PhD. Mariana's current goals are to complete her PhD degree, get a post-doc position in her area of interest and work at an academic institution (preferably affiliated with a cancer center) where she can do research and teach. Mariana states that *Éxito!* influenced her career goals and over the years it has provided support from faculty and peers, as well as opportunities for professional growth. Mariana was a recipient of the Susan G. Komen Pre-doctoral Fellowship and a Travel Scholarship from Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology.



Marivelisse Soto-Salgado ***Éxito!* Alumni 2011**

Marivelisse Soto-Salgado graduated from her doctoral program at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus, Graduate School of Public Health. Her goals are to further develop a career as an independent investigator and focus her research on cancer health disparities and social determinants of health, with an interest on better understanding social and structural factors that potentially influence the access to cancer care (e.g., preventive services and treatment) among persons living with HIV/AIDS. Marivelisse is currently working as an epidemiologist and research coordinator at the UPR/MDACC Partnership where she supports investigators in research design and statistical analysis to multiple cancer research projects in different areas such as clinical and population sciences. In addition, she has taken an active role in supporting the researchers in their proposal submission to NIH, manuscript writing and presentations in national and international scientific meetings. Recently, she submitted a proposal for a small award. Marivelisse was selected to attend the NCI Summer Curriculum in Prevention, the Principles and Practice of Cancer Prevention and Control Course from July to August 2018 in Maryland.



Diana Santiago **Éxito! Alumni 2011**

Diana Santiago is currently working as a nurse in a prison setting. Diana also supervises and teaches inmates tasks to assist other nursing staff. Her future career goal is to obtain a post-master's in nursing informatics. Diana was named nurse of the quarter.



Roger Figueroa **Éxito! Alumni 2012**

Roger Figueroa graduated with his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Roger is currently a research team member in Communities for Healthy Living (CHL), a program on childhood obesity prevention in Head Start centers across the greater Boston area. He serves in various roles as a postdoc in the project, but currently, is in the process of developing a research agenda focusing on Latino families and their health outcomes in the context of CHL. Roger's future career goals are to secure a faculty position; successfully bond with, mentor, and support minorities in academia; and make meaningful contributions to health equity and social justice through his research and advocacy efforts. Roger is the recipient of the National Research Service Award (NRSA), NIH T32 Training Grant in Academic Nutrition at T. H. Chan School of Public Health, and the Judge Travel Award, 2017 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS).



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. Her future career goals are conduct independent research focused on Latino health disparities and continue to mentor students in research and career paths. Melawhy is currently working on a population science study, "Biopsychosocial and ecological correlates of sedentary behavior among Latina Women in San Diego." Melawhy was the recipient of the 2018 Travel Award, NIDDK Network of Minority Health Research Investigators, April 2018 and the 2017-2018 Population Science Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, University of California San Diego.



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. Lizbeth's goals are to return to her native Puerto Rico to help reduce health disparities, especially in rural communities, by building community-based partnerships and using her experience as a researcher to find funding and resources for those communities in need; to help organize and empower Latino and other minority communities living in the United States, so that they can have a better quality of life, including social justice and relevant health outcomes; and work as a professor and researcher. In August 2015, Lizbeth was awarded a 2-year minority supplement through NIDA to conduct pre-dissertation research as part of an ongoing R01 parent study focused on injection risk networks in rural Puerto Rico. She spent six months in Puerto Rico doing fieldwork, including constructing micro-ethnographic assays focused on drug injection networks, with ethnographic field notes written while spending time with women drug injectors from four rural towns in Puerto Rico. She is currently conducting quantitative and qualitative data analysis to explore stories of these female drug injectors, in order to identify the underlying social conditions that lead to substance use in the first place; and that might also serve as barriers to treatment and recovery.



Aditi Wahi

Éxito! Alumni 2012

Aditi Wahi is finishing her Master of Social Work (MSW) program and hopes to work as an oncology clinical social worker. Her current research focuses on trauma where she is the lead graduate student on the project. Aditi was awarded the Dean's Leadership Scholar and she's also a West Coast Project Stipend Recipient. Aditi also presented at the Institute of Violence, Abuse and Trauma.



Ramon L. Concepcion Torres

Éxito! Alumni 2012

Ramon L. Concepcion Torres is a research associate at IRIS Educational Media and a research assistant at both the University of Oregon and Influent Innovations. Ramon's future goals are to find a stable job in research or social services, obtain financial stability, help his family, and education.



Alyssa Colunga
Éxito! Alumni 2013

Alyssa Colunga started her doctorate in public health at Claremont Graduate University. Alyssa is currently an administrative analyst in human services.



Delana Gonzales
Éxito! Alumni 2012

Delana Gonzales currently works as a health care/program manager. Delana's future career plans are to go back to school; continue to develop professionally and build on leadership skills; contribute to scientific research through publishing; and establish an effect cancer prevention program. Delana was accepted and completed the Alexander Briseño Leadership Development Program with San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. For her civic engagement project, her team developed a community engagement outreach plan to create a formal policy to involve the community in decision making. The report was given to City of San Antonio's Neighborhood and Housing Services Department. Delana received the 2018 TRIO New Mexico State Alumni Achiever Award and presented at the Community Health workers program on "Addressing Hepatitis C in Baby Boomers." She also had a poster presentation at the 2017 CPRIT Innovations Conference on "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. As CEO, she plans to continue providing cancer patient navigation, health disparity research, and generate diversified revenues. Her goals are to maintain her LCSW and supervise MSWs; teach at SDSU School of Social Work; and continue with Latino Health Disparities research. Helen is currently enjoying time with her husband now that her children have left to school.

Cristina Valdovinos

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Cristina Valdovinos is a research associate. Her main goal is to obtain a medical degree.

Mari Elizenda Benavidez

Éxito! Alumni 2012



Mari Elizenda Benavidez works for the University Health System in the Research and Information Department. She is a senior quality data analyst and works with the projects that the health system is doing for the 1115 Medicaid Waiver. Mari is still working on her Cancer Tumor Registrar Certification. Her top goals are to become certified cancer tumor registrar, nutritionist, or register dietician and would like to work with children in preventing childhood obesity, which can be a precursor for cancer.

Vanessa Torres

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Vanessa Torres is currently working on her PhD in health services at University of Washington. Vanessa is a pre-doctoral fellow/trainee from the Biobehavioral Cancer Prevention Training and Control Program (2T32CA092408-16) at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Sandra Acevedo

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Sandra Acevedo is a registered dietitian/diabetes educator. Sandra's top career goals are to improve the lives of those that are currently dealing with a chronic illness; reduce the number of individuals developing type 2 diabetes; and find effective strategies/methods that can help reduce health disparities among Latinos. Sandra recently moved to a new house closer to her parents.

Lizette Alvarez
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Lizette Alvarez is an academic advisor at a university honors program. Lizette is considering pursuing a PhD or EdD in education to continue in the field to support underrepresented students in their pursuit of higher and post-baccalaureate education. Her top career goals are a directorship; obtain funding to create programming/resources for underrepresented students; and help create a support network for staff/faculty of underrepresented communities.

Johana Bravo
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Johana Bravo is a project coordinator for an HPV urine study in the epidemiology department at the University of North Carolina.

Melissa Nanette Martinez
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Melissa Martinez is currently a senior sales analyst.

Wendy Ramirez
Éxito! Alumni 2013



Wendy Ramirez works as middle-school health teacher. In the next 5 years, Wendy looks forward to applying to a doctoral program. Wendy has two children and states that parenthood has been amazing!

Christina Carmona

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Christina Carmona is an epidemiology program manager, overseeing a team of infectious disease epidemiologists that conduct disease investigations on reportable diseases in Texas and reports of disease outbreaks. They also respond to public health emergency situations as they did with Hurricane Harvey. Her team also performs surveillance interviews to monitor the health situations in shelters as a way to identify any potential disease outbreaks. Her current career

goal is to continue down the path of infectious disease epidemiology with the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. Christina hopes to apply within the next year to an epidemiology doctorate program. Christina's future career goals are to continue to improve and maintain the effectiveness of her communicable disease Investigations team; become a well know face and point of resource for Metro Health; and continue to strive to learn at least one new thing every day.

Alicia Nunez

Éxito! Alumni 2014



Alicia Nunez is currently a PhD student in clinical psychology at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Alicia is a graduate assistant and lecturer. Her top goals are to graduate with her PhD, publish her dissertation and become a clinician/ researcher.

Alicia is currently examining disparities in the neuropsychological assessment of Hispanic children with ADHD. She also had poster presentations in 2017 at the National Academy of Neuropsychology and three publications.

Beatriz Sosa-Prado

Éxito! Alumni 2013



Beatriz Sosa-Prado is a PhD student at University of California.

Brianda Alcazar

Éxito! Alumni 2014



Brianda Alcazar is a social worker and clinical therapist. Her top goals are to obtain a doctoral degree in an area of interest related to her line of work. Brianda also got married last year.



Hena Din
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Hena Din is currently working as a research supervisor. Her top goals are to do research at a hospital, become a professor, and a research director. Hena is working on surgical research in quality of life outcomes for pediatrics and implementing science utilizing a video decision aid to increase colorectal cancer screening.



Christina Olson
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Christina Olson is a health program coordinator with Imperial County Public Health Department in El Centro, Calif. Christina's top goals are to be happy, find balance, and lead by example and mentor others. Christina and her husband are happily settled in Yuma, Ariz., and have grown to love the desert. In the last year, Christina formed an adult women's kickball team. She not only plays on the team, but she also coaches it. She also completed the second half of her training with the California Leadership Academy for the Public's Health (CaLAPH). Christina had one publication and two presentations last year.



Kaylee Rivera
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Kaylee Rivera is a senior professional research assistant. Kaylee plans to explore how the workplace can be more supportive to employees with cancer, as well as promote health and wellness to aid in prevention of cancer. She would also like to make a positive impact in occupational health to ensure employees are healthy, safe and happy. Kaylee's top goals are to continue research in the field of occupational health and safety through collaborating with businesses to improve their culture and provide a healthy work environment, transition into police health and safety, with a focus on chronic disease and cancer prevention and work in public policy to create change round various employments and economic regulations. Kaylee had one presentation at the USE Conference in 2017 on "Social media influence: messaging and marketing total worker health to engage small businesses and their millennials."



Griselda Rubio
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Griselda Rubio is currently a cancer program coordinator. Her top goal is to enroll in a PhD doctoral program in public health in epidemiology or environmental health. Her career goals are to become a cancer epidemiologist, cancer registry director, and academic professor.



Diana Aguirre
Éxito! Alumni 2014

Diana Aguirre is a community health education and outreach specialist. Diana is currently working on receiving her CHES accreditation. Her top goals are to move up to a higher managerial position and secure a teaching opportunity at a community college or university. Her career goals are to become a program director, mentor and create opportunities for other Latino student professionals and continue expanding her expertise through educational opportunities.



Andrew Jimenez
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Andrew Jimenez is a health education assistant II at Riverside University Health System. Andrew would like to continue gaining experience working with the county and move up the ladder. He would also like to continue learning the best practices in public health, expand his network and have an impact on the communities that he's working with.

Jasmin Martinez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Jasmin Martinez is currently a project coordinator in strategic workforce planning. Jasmin is committed in earning her doctorate degree in the next five years, particularly in social enterprise and organizational effectiveness. Her top career goals are to obtain her PhD, create her own startup/ social enterprise focused on developing and empowering first-generation students interested in STEM careers, and engineer her own foundation that provides scholarships to first-generation students. Jasmin is currently

participating in the Governing Council Member of Southern California Public Health Association, and she mentors through the PUENTE program at Fullerton College. She is also a member of Latinas in STEM and the Latina Researchers Network. In addition, Jasmin also completed the Emerging Latinas Leadership Program through National Latina Business Women’s Association in Los Angeles. Jasmin won 3rd place in the Toastmaster International area contest.

Angedith Poggi-Burke

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Angedith Poggi-Burke is currently a survey statistician. Her top career goals are to finish her DHSc program, work in the Census 2020, or get a promotion at her current job and continue teaching as an adjunct professor. Angedith loves to travel and has been to more than 15 countries in the past three years.

Sigolene Ortega

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Sigolene Ortega is a communications coordinator for a federally qualified health center.

Eva Rodriguez

Éxito! Alumni 2015



Eva Rodriguez is currently a program manager in quality management.



Erika Sisneros
Éxito! Alumni 2015

Erika Sisneros started law school in fall 2018 and is planning to focus on health law. She is currently an executive assistant to Dr. Larry Wolk, executive director and chief medical officer program assistant, state board of health. Her top career goals are find a position related to her field (health law), find a position working for a governmental agency or non-profit, and find work-life balance. Erika also got married in November.



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. His top career goals are to continue working on projects to reduce health disparities in disadvantaged groups, become a professor in the field of public health, and mentor students, especially those with a similar background. Natalicio is participating in a variety of research projects related to evidence-based decision making, physical activity promotion, chronic disease prevention, and policy research. Most recently, he has been working on a multilevel intervention aimed at increasing physical activity and trail use in rural populations. Natalicio is an NHLBI T32 Predoctoral Fellow in Obesity and Cardiovascular Diseases (Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine). He also had three publications and two presentations.



Marisabel Román-Afanador
Éxito! Alumni 2016

Marisabel Román-Afanador is a medical monitoring program data manager. She is currently getting as much field experience as possible before applying to a doctoral program. Marisabel's top career goals are to get into a doctoral program, acquire field experience in a research/academic area related to sexual health and/or mental health research and services and try to do it all in Puerto Rico. Last year, Marisabel presented at the 37th Annual Research and Education Forum MSC two times (poster and oral) about her Capstone Project and research project.

Karen Aguirre
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Karen Aguirre is a research specialist and project coordinator for the University of Illinois Cancer Center. Karen's goals are to get a PhD in health policy or medical sociology with a focus on equitable policy making (breast cancer health disparity) or become a Latina senator. Her future career goals are to advocate for Latino health at the state or federal level, complete her PhD, and teach at a university. Karen helped create a civic engagement curriculum with the

Obama Foundation and met Obama in person. She is also an Aztec dancer. Karen has been the recipient of several awards, including the 35 under 35 - Chicago Scholars Foundation, Set the World on Fire Alumni Award - Loyola University Chicago, Scrimshaw Latino Family Health Scholarship Award - University of Illinois at Chicago, and the 2016 Leadership Challenge Annual Meeting Scholar - American Public Health Association.

Maria Alvarez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Maria Alvarez is a recruiter for research database in cancer clinical research. Maria would like to take more advanced courses. Her top goals are to improve writing statistical analysis reports, advance to a management position, and be happy. Maria's parents celebrated their 50th anniversary with family and a huge celebration.

Gabrielle Castellanos
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Gabrielle is a lease servicing account representative and became a certified health education specialist.

Kendra Cruz
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Kendra Cruz is a clinical research coordinator at the University of Kansas Cancer Center working on hematological cancers.

Blanca Chavez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Blanca Chavez is currently working as a clinic manager.

Jose De Jesus
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jose De Jesus is a community health educator.

Shayda Dioun
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Shayda Dioun is a public health student at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Shayda is currently a graduate research assistant for a cancer survivorship care plan project. Her career goals are to graduate, start a fellowship, and do research. Shayda was the recipient of the Ginni and Richard Mithoff Endowed Scholarship.

Noemi Fernandez
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Noemi Fernandez is a therapist. She plans to continue accumulating her licensure hours and should complete her hours within the next year or so. After completing her hours, she plans on taking her final clinical exam to obtain her clinical social work license. Her top career goals, include obtaining her LCSW, exploring PhD programs, and opening her own private practice. Noemi was also recently hired by the Department of Mental Health where she will be a psychiatric social worker.



Brenda Frutos
Éxito! Alumni 2016

Brenda Frutos is currently a research associate. Brenda is considering going back to school for nursing or hoping to build a career in project management in the public health sector. Her top career goals are to become a registered nurse or nurse practitioner in primary care and manage and oversee a federally funded demonstration project to improve health of the medically underserved and Latinos. Brenda got engaged last New Year's Eve and plans on getting married in May 2019. Brenda had her first conference presentation at APHA in a roundtable discussion.



Angelika Gutierrez
Éxito! Alumni 2016

Angelika Gutierrez is a planning and evaluation analyst for a non-profit called Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) in East Harlem. Angelika's current focus is to build upon the hard quantitative and qualitative research skills she obtained during her MPH in her current role at CUCS. Angelika also plans in getting her doctoral degree. Her career goals are to work with PAHO on health initiatives throughout Latin America and conduct research in Puerto Rico to bring to light the impacts of the political status on the healthcare system of the island as well as the effects of Hurricane Maria. Angelika is also currently working on an interesting case-control study through Rutgers University, which is trying to understand if World Trade Center rescue and respondents are more likely to develop head and neck cancers in comparison to other individuals.



Stephanie McCoy
Éxito! Alumni 2016

Stephanie McCoy is a bilingual prevention specialist for LifeWorks Austin. Her future education/career plans are to apply for a DrPH program by 2018, present at conferences and publish articles on her work with the City of Austin's Public Health Department. Ultimately, she wants to open a clinic specifically tailored for immigrants in her hometown, El Paso, Texas. Stephanie received a registration scholarship for the Latina Researchers Network conference in New York City.

Jose A. Ramos
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jose Ramos is a program coordinator. His future plans are to get an MD/PhD.

Jackeline Ruiz
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jackeline Ruiz is currently a health educator.

Jacklyn Samano
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Jacklyn Samano is a health systems manager for the American Cancer Society, where she acts as a quality improvement consultant and evidence-based interventions specialist to improve cancer screenings amongst patients being served by federally qualified health clinics and Indian Health clinics. Jacklyn plans to apply to a doctoral program focused on health policy and would like to do a dissertation on Medicaid patients or undocumented patients facing colorectal cancer,

and how the lack of or little health insurance coverage often delays their colon cancer diagnosis and thus delays cancer treatment. Her career goals are to become a director of a cancer research institute or health policy center, an immigration health lawyer, and a professor of health law. Jacklyn has also been busy planning her wedding, studying for the LSAT and deciding between law school or a DrPH program.

Mercedes Watson
Éxito! Alumni 2016



Mercedes Watson is a patient navigator and social worker. She recently applied for her Licensed Clinical Social Work. Her top career goals are to obtain her LCSW, continue to complete cancer related research, and work on cancer-related research and the use/effects of medicinal marijuana. Mercedes' agency was recently invited to partake in two pilot research projects, which she will lead.



Adrianna Acevedo-Fontanez

Éxito! Alumni 2017

Adrianna Acevedo-Fontanez is a community health educator at the University of Puerto Rico/MD Anderson Cancer Center Partnership for Excellence in Cancer Research. Adrianna plans to complete a PhD in epidemiology. Her top career goals are to become a researcher, professor, and mentor for undergraduate and graduate students. Adrianna had her thesis manuscript accepted for publication in the Journal of Lower Genital Tract Disease.



Ashton Balarin

Éxito! Alumni 2017

Ashton Balarin graduated with her master's degree in August 2017 and is currently teaching in a diabetes self-management program with Building a Healthy Temple. Ashton would like to continue to maintain her CHES certification. Her top career goals are to find employment, gain experience, and move up in a company/organization.



Leah Carrillo

Éxito! Alumni 2017

Leah Carrillo is currently working as a program coordinator. Her future plans consist of earning more work experience in the field and later pursuing a doctoral degree. The research she will like to focus on is chronic disease among Latinos. Her top career goals are to earn more work experience in the field, publish manuscripts, and become grant funded to work on doctoral dissertation or earn a fellowship. In December 2017, Leah earned her master's degree in health and kinesiology and earned a full-time position with her organization. Leah had a poster presentation at the Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and an oral presentation at the Nutrition 2018 Conference by American Society for Nutrition in Boston.

Claudia Chavez

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Claudia Chavez is a population health project coordinator. Her top goals are to get an executive role in a hospital, influence health policy/regulations, and apply population health research findings to how hospital system is run.

Sonia Fragoso

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Sonia Fragoso is a medical scribe. After obtaining her master's degree, Sonia plans to apply to Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine programs. In addition, she would like to keep doing cancer disparities research in Latinos. Her top goals are to work with Doctors Without Borders/MSF, obtain a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree, and bridge gaps in Latino cancer disparities through research and community impact. Sonia

presented a workshop at the Student Conference on Latino Affairs (MSC SCOLA). This workshop session showed participants how cultural impact throughout life can guide them into breaking stereotypes that will help them achieve professional success, as well as personal success.

Yuritzzy Gonzalez-Peña

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Yuritzzy Gonzalez-Peña Works is an epidemiologist at Marion County. Yuritzzy would like to obtain a PhD in epidemiology. She would also like to work in a research institution in STI or cancer related.

Araceli Guzman

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Araceli Guzman works at a non-profit as a program assistant in maternal and child health. Araceli plans to gain experience in the public health and apply to a doctoral program in 5 years. Her top career goals are to develop a cancer prevention program for migrant farm workers and make an impact on underserved communities. Araceli would like to help her own community by improving health outcomes.

Elena Martinez

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Elena Martinez is a program coordinator. Elena recently moved to Austin where she will continue with research at UT Austin or work in the public health field. Her top career goals are to become a director of a non-profit, complete her PhD, and start a bakery. After graduation, Elena plans to do a bit of traveling to Mexico, New York, California and Oregon. Elena co-authored two publications.

Geraldine Massuh

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Geraldine Massuh would like to obtain an MBA and a PhD. She would also like to obtain more work experience in a healthcare and have a publication. Geraldine would also like to start her own business/project (be an entrepreneur). Geraldine created a social media project called LatinXHealth, a curated space of health opportunities (programs, scholarships, etc.) for a nationwide audience. She is also now a board

member for the nonprofit National Association of Hispanic Healthcare Executives.

Cynthia Ortiz

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Cynthia Ortiz is a population research project assistant III.

Claudia Sanchez Lucas

Éxito! Alumni 2017



Claudia Sanchez Lucas works as a maternal interviewer and record abstractor. She composes narrative case reports of mothers who have experienced a recent fetal/infant loss. Claudia is working on two doctoral applications for programs in UT Dallas and Baylor. Claudia's top goals are to submit her doctoral applications and engage in a work site where she may grow professionally.



Elidia Tafoya
Éxito! Alumni 2017

Elidia Tafoya is a clinical research coordinator II. Her future goals are to align herself into a better position professionally to gear up for a PhD program. Her top career goals are to increase her earning potential, maintain professional knowledge and increase training, and have new experiences. Elidia had her second child, a boy, in July 2018. She co-authored one publication and has another pending publication for patients with lymphatic malformations and biomarker research



Eliani Uc
Éxito! Alumni 2017

Eliani Uc is a clinical dietitian in pediatrics and neonatology. Her main career goal is to become a Certified Nutrition Support Clinician (CNSC). Eliani would also like to continue working in pediatrics or neonatology and obtain a PhD. She also co-authored a research manuscript that has been accepted for publication and is currently working on a second manuscript for submission. Eliani is also getting married next year.



Oriana Perez
Éxito! Alumni 2017

Oriana Perez is a research coordinator II. Oriana is still exploring and would like to either enroll in a doctoral program in public health, or transition to a non-research field in public health. Her top goals are to continue developing her research and writing skills, decide if she will continue in research or other field, and if she selects research, apply to doctoral degree. Oriana also had her first child.



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About This E-Newsletter

This E-newsletter is produced annually by the *Éxito!* team, which is directed by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR), a part of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine at UT Health San Antonio.

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

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