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**2013 FABULOUS HOLIDAY BRUNCH
GED SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER**

Benefiting the Alamo Colleges Foundation GED Fund

**December 14, 2013
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Omni Hotel at the Colonnade**

Dear Friends,

“Folks with only high school diplomas are more apt to be unemployed — two times more likely — and will earn smaller paychecks than those who have a college degree. Their weekly pay will average 60.5 percent less. Now, imagine having no high school diploma at all.” (O. Ricardo Pimentel, *Express News*, 12/1/12). And that is exactly why the dynamic women leading the Annual Fabulous Holiday Brunch GED Scholarship Fundraiser came together... to make a difference in the lives of these students, their families and our community.

It may seem early to plan for the holidays, but it is NEVER too early to make a difference in someone's life. Please make plans now to join us on **Saturday, December 14, 2013**, as over 600 local leaders gather to celebrate the Sixth Annual **Fabulous Holiday Brunch - GED Scholarship Fundraiser** to raise funds to end the devastating cycle of under-educated adults in San Antonio. The proceeds from this event will fund test vouchers, scholarships and program support to help women and non-traditional students complete the General Education Diploma (GED) through the San Antonio College Women's Center's GED to College Transition Program. Education is the only gift you can give yourself that no one can ever take away from you.

Many individuals are struggling personally and financially and cannot afford the cost to take the GED exam and obtain a certificate. The San Antonio College Women's Center, through the Alamo Colleges Foundation, has agreed to be the fiduciary administrator of the scholarship funds raised for this purpose. Now beginning its fourth year of operation, the SAC GED to College Transition Program has already helped over 250 women and non-traditional students such as the ones featured on our “Dreams within Reach” attachment, not only obtain their GED, but more importantly to realize their potential and achieve their goals of enrolling in college and continuing their dream of a higher education.

We are asking you to please join other community-minded corporations, businesses, and organizations that have helped in the past such as Valero, Citi Global, VIA, San Antonio Housing Authority, Nu Star, Bexar County Communication Workers of America and many others to support this very worthwhile cause. ***By becoming a 2013 event sponsor, you will be supporting an effort that is one of a kind in our community.***

With this letter, we are asking for your support! Many people in our community are no longer underemployed and many are continuing their dream of a higher education and pursuing college degrees. This program is an economic generator for San Antonio and Bexar County. Individuals who earn a GED and/or graduate from college, make better wages and become more productive citizens in our community.

We hope we can count on your support at the 2013 Fabulous Holiday Brunch. Together we can help change lives, impact families, and make a better San Antonio community. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss the enclosed sponsorship levels and to share with you the many successful stories of our students. I will contact you in the next couple of weeks to follow-up.

With deepest appreciation,

Martha Tijerina

Attachments: 2013 Sponsorship Levels
Fact Sheet
Dreams Within Reach- Student Highlights

Raising Funds to Assist the Non-traditional Student to Complete their GED



**2013 FABULOUS HOLIDAY BRUNCH
GED SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER**

Benefiting the Alamo Colleges Foundation GED Fund

**December 14, 2013
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Omni Hotel at the Colonnade**

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

Platinum Level - \$5000.00

*Premium VIP Seating for 10
Signage at the event
One page advertisement in the event program*
Name & Logo on the SAC SWANS website for 12 months
Invitations to special events throughout year*

Gold Level - \$2500.00

*Preferred VIP Seating for 10
Signage at the event
Logo & Recognition in the event program**

Silver Level - \$1500.00

*Reserved Table for 10
Signage at the event
Recognition in the event program**

Bronze Level - \$1000.00

*Reserved Table for 10
Recognition in the event program**

**Sponsorship information must be received prior to November 1, 2013 to be printed in event program*

Company Name: _____

Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Please circle Sponsorship level: Platinum Gold Silver Bronze

If you are unable to attend or assist at any of the above levels, please consider the following:

____ Our company would like to make a donation directly to the GED fund in the amount of: \$ _____

____ Our company would like to sponsor ____ (# of students at \$60.00 each) totaling \$ _____ to attend the Brunch

*All donations (excluding the cost of the meal) are tax deductible and will be donated to the
Alamo College Foundation/SAC Women's Center's GED Fund.*

Checks are payable to: **Alamo Colleges Foundation-2013 GED Brunch**

Please mail check to: **Alamo Colleges Foundation
Office of Institutional Advancement
201 W. Sheridan, Suite C-3
San Antonio, TX 78204-1429**

For alternate payment options please contact the Alamo Colleges Foundation at (210)485-0042.

Alamo Colleges Foundation Phone: (210) 485-0042
The Alamo Colleges Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) Organization



Fabulous Holiday Brunch Fact Sheet

History:

The Fabulous Holiday Brunch arose from very “humble beginnings,” beginning with Martha Tijerina, founding chair and a group of friends known as the Fabulous Holiday Brunch Leadership Committee. This grassroots committee worked collectively to provide resources for non-traditional students, (individuals over the age of 25 or single parents), who were taking GED classes and did not have money to pay for their GED test/certificate. The first annual Fabulous Holiday Brunch was held in December 2008 and was attended by over 200 people. Each year the Brunch grows in attendance.

The San Antonio College **GED to College Transition Program** offers the following services. Services designated with an asterisk are funded by proceeds from the Fabulous Holiday Brunch:

- **Free GED Official Practice Test (OPT)**
 - As a community service, Official GED Practice tests are offered weekly at the Empowerment Center
- **One-on-One Advisement**
 - All participants meet with an advisor to discuss test-readiness or need for remediation
 - Referrals for remediation include: free in-house classes or free classes in the community
 - After completing remediation, a participant can return for re-testing
- **Free In-House GED Classes**
 - Partnership with San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD)
 - SAISD conducts GED instruction / SAC conducts College Preparation component
 - 16 weeks (Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00-2:00) in duration
 - 99 individuals have enrolled through 2012
 - Students who successfully complete the program can earn up to four hours of college credit
- **The Seguir Adelante GED Voucher***
 - First voucher issued January 2009
 - Voucher amounts range from \$90 - \$110 depending on test center
 - 266 participants have been issued vouchers through 2012
 - Demographics: 76% female, 76% single parents, 59% age 25 or older, 75% Hispanic
- **College Advisement & Enrollment Assistance**
 - Upon successful completion of the GED test, the participant is encouraged to meet with an academic advisor to begin the enrollment process for college.
 - Services include: Assistance applying for financial aid, completing the admissions application, placement testing, degree plan development, and registration. Participants can also attend career workshops and are offered ongoing college preparation services and follow-up.
 - As of the Fall 2012 semester, 141 voucher recipients have enrolled in college
- **The Rising Star Scholarship***
 - SAC GED to College Transition Program participants who complete the in-house GED Program are eligible to apply for this scholarship during their first or second semester in college.
 - 84 scholarships have been awarded
 - Award in the amount of \$250 to \$500 per semester depending on hours enrolled

The SAC Women’s Center through the Alamo Colleges Foundation is the fiduciary administrator of the scholarship funds raised by the Fabulous Holiday Brunch.

Dreams Within Reach

Stories of Students Who Have Benefitted from the GED Brunch Fundraiser



Daniel Escalera

I believe everything happens for a reason, nothing is by chance or coincidence. In my life I have learned that you must hit rock bottom before you can climb to the top. In your deepest despair, I believe you can come to your greatest joy. I am so humbled and thankful for all the opportunities I have had in my life. It is because of these experiences that I am the man I am today.

My greatest inspiration in life has been my mother. Since I can remember she instilled in me the value of achieving my dream, the value of hard work, dedication and sacrifice. She was a single parent with very little education and limited resources. She worked countless hours cleaning houses, endured back breaking work at local factories, earned very little income, but was never discouraged. Growing up in poverty was difficult and I faced many challenges that many young people would never understand. At the age of 17, I had to make the decision to drop out of high school to help my mother financially. We were in jeopardy of losing our home so I knew my obligation was to my family. I will never regret that decision; however I do regret not having the opportunity to walk the stage at graduation. I continued to work but began hanging with the wrong crowds. I started doing things that I knew were wrong but I did them anyway. My life started spiraling in the wrong direction and drugs and alcohol became part of my daily life. Five years and many poor choices later, I knew I needed to get my life together. It was time to take action! Although I knew one of the biggest challenges I would face was starting the journey toward earning my GED, I decided it was time. When I found the program at SAC and the opportunities it offered, I knew that it would change my life.

I was among the first in my class to earn my GED. I could not have done that without the voucher that I received to pay for the test. The program provided me with confidence and a foundation to build my future. I immediately enrolled in college classes to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice. It is my hope to one day run for public office so that I can have a platform to help others like me. The GED to College Transition Program at the SAC Empowerment Center has been the greatest blessing in my life. The program has empowered me to take the right direction towards my future. It will also enable me to live one of my dreams... In June, I will be participating in the SAISD GED graduation ceremony. My family will be so proud to see me walk across the stage in a cap & gown and receive my diploma. I am proof that you should never let go of your dreams because they can come true!



Sandra Ramos

Life has always been a struggle for me. A lot of hardships have been brought on by me, others just tagged along in the process. I went to school for 12 years, and even crossed the stage with my class in 1990. I was short a few credits and thought I'd go to summer school and finish what I needed. Well my plans changed when, at 18, I ended up pregnant and the next thing you know I was married and living in Germany. As life went on it wasn't hard for me to find a job. Seven years and three children later, life once again was turned upside down. My husband wanted a divorce AND my children. I didn't have any family support or money so I felt I had no choice but to accept my fate and give in to him. I now found myself completely alone. I lost hope and for a long time... nothing really mattered to me.

Five years later, even though I was still suffering the loss of my three boys, I ended up pregnant again. In 2005, all would change yet again. I had an accident that I should not have survived. Although I did survive it, I had bleeding in the brain, which would cause long term issues. Having no one to depend on and a child to take care of, I had to move on. I had wasted too much time already on my pity party. Difficult but do-able, I had to get up and move. I thought, "How do I make this work for us? How do I make life better for my son?" I started going back to church and for me that was a turning point. My life started to have meaning again and getting back on track actually started to make sense.

I re-married in November of that year. Again another challenge...my husband had been diagnosed with MG, a neurological nerve disorder. This limited him from working. I decided I had to go back to school and make life better for my family. I found this wonderful program at the SAC Empowerment Center. Although I was scared I knew I found a place that would support me in my journey. They had excellent GED instructors, a staff that was always encouraging, and they brought in many motivational speakers including previous GED students who are now in college. They also provided the financial assistance I so desperately needed.

I am proud to say, although it was not easy and my brain injury caused me to have to work much harder, I successfully earned my GED and am now in my second semester at SAC. I have also proven myself as a successful college student and have been awarded a Rising Star Scholarship. I can honestly say that I am proud of myself. I am setting an example for my son and showing him that education is the key to a successful life.