EASTMONT STUDENT SHINES AT MARIACHI FESTIVAL

Normally reserved, Issac Barriga comes out of his shell with a vihuela in hand

By Nhan Pham

EJHS - Issac Barriga tells stories through his music.

This ninth grader from Eastmont Junior High School loves to showcase his musical passion as a member of the mariachi program at Eastmont Junior High School. Barriga detailed why mariachi was important to him with an essay as part of the 2018 Mariachi Festival Essay Contest.

At the Mariachi Northwest Festival held at the Town Toyota Center on March 23, they announced Barriga and another student from a different school as winners.

“I was just so surprised when they called my name,” he said. “It was just so crazy to think that my essay was picked out of hundreds of other kids.”

Writing a winning essay also allowed Barriga to receive a brand-new instrument as a prize: the choice between a guitar and a vihuela (another stringed instrument).

Naturally, Barriga said he opted for a vihuela because it is the instrument he normally plays in mariachi. In addition, the vihuela is more reflective of his Latino culture.

Originally, Barriga dabbled with guitar. His first real stint with organized music started at Clovis Point Intermediate School as a seventh grader. Eventually, thanks to encouragement from another student, Barriga realized the vihuela fit his personality more and has played one ever since.

That day when he won that vihuela, Barriga was so thrilled to tell his parents about winning such a special prize. He was eager for his dad to come pick him up from school so they could show his mom the new vihuela.

“They were so happy and proud,” he said. “I (play in mariachi) because my parents are really into the music.”

Megan Cleary, a music teacher and mariachi instructor, said

Eastmont School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district’s coordinators for Title IX/RCW 28A.642, Section 504, or the ADA. The District does not tolerate sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Report this conduct to principals, administrators, or Vicki Trainor.

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By Nhan Pham

Maintaining educational facilities that serve thousands of students a year is not easy feat. No single person can do the job alone. It takes a team of dedicated members to make sure every light turns on, every drinking fountain has running water, and every alarm is in good working order.

Two Eastmont alumni who bring their respective expertise and experience to the table are Lee Everhart, a certified plumber, and Chad Taffar, a certified electrician.

Everhart took up a plumbing apprenticeship after graduating from EHS in 2002. From there he spent years learning the in-and-outs of plumbing. Taffar spent more than 8,000 hours earning his commercial license as an electrician.

Both traveled around when necessary to learn what they needed to learn. It was not always easy, but they both went where the work was while honing their skills.

Both Everhart and Taffar knew each other for years before eventually being hired by Eastmont School District in December 2015.

Of course, keeping schools shipshape means more than just keeping the pipes running or making sure the circuits work correctly. Maintenance staff members pitch in wherever they are needed around the district. One day they may be patching up some wiring – another they may be spraying lines on a field for a game. There is a lot more to it than people realize, and each school has a different mix of old and new facilities to maintain and repair. We sat down with Everhart and Taffar to learn more about what they do.

What is something you like about working for the ESD?

Everhart: “Every day is not the same. I really enjoy working for Eastmont. It’s steady work. It keeps you busy.”

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Everhart: “The kids certainly make it interesting.”

Taffar: “A lot can go wrong at schools. There are light replacements, panels, switches, fire alarms, repairs, (general) maintenance...”

What is the worst plumbing thing that has happened to you working for the district?

Everhart: “Well, one time, the pipes in the high school got pulled up. It turns out they got the wrong kind of toilet paper that wasn’t breaking down in the pipes. We had to go in and replace all of the toilet paper in the school.”

Have there been any real electrical mishaps at the ESD?

Taffar: “Squirrels have bitten through power lines before and would shut off some parts of the power grid that disrupts the whole building. I make sure the circuits work. Sometimes, the labeling isn’t correct. Not everything is typical. (For example), there are a lot of electric doors at the newer schools to work the bugs out of the system. You learn a lot on the job.”

What would you say to students about considering a career in the trades?

Taffar: “We actually don’t get enough people (in the electrician field) here. I always get calls asking for more people to fill up spots. It’s not easy getting a commercial license, but there are lots of opportunities to be an electrician.”

Everhart: “If you are willing to work hard, put in the time to be great, you can end up with a good job so you can take care of your family. You can learn a trade (without the debt from traditional college education).”

As Eastmont alumni, what is it like knowing you have your own kids now going through the ESD?

Taffar: “Home is just minutes away from work. I’ve worked jobs where I would have to commute far every day. Here, I can be out working at a school and see my son at recess, and he can say hi to me. As a parent, I’m glad I can be around.”

Everhart: “Having children who are going to go through the Eastmont School District is exciting. Knowing that my kids are going to school here, and seeing how I turned out, I know they are in good hands.”

Superintendent’s Message:

Rising to meet gold-collar needs

As this school year draws to a close, we will have another 400+ of our students smile as they graduate and walk across the stage into the next chapter of their lives. We are proud of our young people and wish them all the best in achieving their dreams, hopes, and navigating the adult world. At the other end of our system, we will have 400+ excited kindergarten students enter this 13-year journey we call K-12 public schools. Along the way, they will learn basic skills, yet also get exposed to career and technical fields and activities that didn’t exist when most of us graduated from high school. Robotics, coding, and the constantly growing world of data, social media, and gold-collar occupations continue to expand. Gold-collar jobs are highly skilled knowledge workers with wages starting in the $30,000 to $90,000 range. To work combines understanding of manufacturing, mechanics, and tool applications, yet also integrates those with advanced technology, robotics, computer apps, etc.

An example would be the robotic demolition machine used in the remodel of our high school. The machine looked like an armored robot on tracks. The operator had to know how to maneuver heavy equipment, wear 3-D goggles, and use a remote control that basically was a computer game control.

I share this example, because we are working to prepare our students for the highly technological world they are entering. Eastmont also believes it is important to know how things go together and come apart – regardless if it is a bicycle, hydro dam, 40-story building, or a bridge. To support this, we are placing tubs of Legos, Lincoln Logs, and Erector Sets in elementary classrooms so that students can continue to learn simple machines, gears, pulleys, etc.

This basic knowledge is fundamental to careers in agriculture, housing, transportation, energy, basic services for communities, as well as engineering, armed services, and other occupations of all types. If you have any of these items in your attic or garage and feel they are not being used, please consider dropping them off at the District Office at 800 Eastmont Avenue and we will see they get put to good use.

We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer and will be ready when our students return for the first day of the 2018-19 school year on Aug. 29.
she encouraged Barriga to take part in the essay contest because he is an outstanding student.

She described Barriga as someone who is normally shy, but he immediately opens up when he plays music. He becomes really expressive through his playing. In fact, Barriga helps other students in his sections whenever they are practicing different chords and patterns.

“Issac is the leader in his section,” she said. “He plays very steadily and is very assertive. He leads by example.”

As part of the essay contest, Cleary outlined why Barriga has lots of potential to be great.

For Barriga, playing music is a way to embrace and honor his culture. When it comes to playing in mariachi, it is a nice way to enjoy the company of others who like the same music as him and his family.

Barriga plans on continuing to play in mariachi in high school and perhaps even beyond. Until then, playing music is the perfect way for him to express himself to others. As he describes music, it is like talking, and he has plenty of stories to tell.

“I can be myself,” he said.

Issac has been in mariachi for two years, and he is the rock in the rhythm section. He is steady and assured in his playing - and he really keeps everyone together!

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– Mrs. Megan Cleary

In his own words:

Why I love mariachi

Ever since I was a little kid, I would listen to all mariachi songs that would be playing on the radio and I would always try to sing along. Ever since then, I would always wonder how it would feel to be one of those singers, guitar players, vihuela players, violin players, guitarrón players or any other instrument players in a mariachi group.

Later on in, when I was in 7th grade, the Eastmont Junior High class gave me the opportunity of joining a mariachi group. I was surprised to know that I could be a member of a group that embraces my own culture, and it makes me feel good about myself, my race and my ethnicity. I say especially my culture because many in this era of kids aren’t really willing to learn, or be part of their own culture.

When it was my first day of mariachi class, I had a feeling that I could be something or that I could change something. Eventually, I got better and better at playing leading my section. At first, I was playing the guitar and then later on switch to vihuela because it felt like it was a higher pitched and more important part of the rhythm section. And I felt like I could teach my peers how to play really well.

Soon, I became the leader of my section, and I’m proud of myself. It has helped me in life because, if I would not be in the mood to do anything, I always knew that I could always go to a guitar and play something just to calm me down - especially if I was having a bad day.

I really want to show other kids how successful you could be by doing something you love doing. I think this will help me in my future because I will be able to look back at these achievements as one of my biggest school successes.

Some specific song that I really like is “Por tu Maldito Amor” by Vicente Fernandez and “Adios Amor” by Christian Nodal. Both of those are songs I like a lot because they have a true story to tell, and they say how hard life can be, but they tell those stories in a way that people want to hear. In my opinion, singing a story is better than telling a story.

The first time I performed on a stage with the mariachis, I hesitated a few times and messed up. I’m in my second year of mariachi now, and now when I’m on stage, I don’t get as nervous. If I mess up or hesitate, I pretend that nothing happened and then I find the beat. I’m good at hearing the chords change, and I can find my place pretty easily. After I’m done, I try to remember where I got lost, and then I practice until I don’t forget again.

My teacher says that I’m a good leader because I’m always on the beat. When my peers get lost or confused, I can help them find where they are by showing them my hands. I’ve been helping a particular friend because she also chose to play the vihuela. Her hands are small, and the guitar didn’t work for her. I show her the chords and positions and help her keep the beat.

I want to keep getting better and better and join more mariachi groups, both in high school near year and outside of school. Next year, I’ll be in the 10th grade at Eastmont High School. I’ll be in an older mariachi group, which will help me open up more doors with my music and how I play. Therefore, I think that this mariachi scholarship will help me a lot in my future. Thank you for considering me for this.

– Issac Barriga

By Issac Barriga
Clovis GEARs UP with after-school program

By Nhan Pham

Clovis Point – Having a safe place for students to go, somewhere where they can be productive and supervised after the last bell, was something Clovis Point Intermediate School wanted to address. Thanks to the GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) and Eastmont’s Migrant and Bilingual programs, Clovis students could do just that.

“I think there was a high need for the program,” said Brian Holt, the GEAR UP Graduation Specialist at Clovis. Holt said the after-school program launched in November 2017. It would take place usually on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Students who took part began by receiving a snack, and then students would alternate sessions based on their grade level. One session has free time, such as hanging out and playing board games in the cafeteria. The other group works on schoolwork in the library or a classroom.

Teachers and other volunteers are there to play with and supervise students, or assist them with homework. When the weather is nice, they also do activities outside with smaller groups, Holt said.

Christine Santiago, a paraeducator at Clovis, said students were excited about the after-school program’s concept when they were asked if they would be interested. She said many students were eager to receive tutoring or homework help. Plus, they love to play games with their classmates.

“A lot of them want the extra help and to get involved with their peers,” she said. Initially, the program saw dozens of students show up after school. For some particularly high-volume sessions, more than 100 students would be there to take part. The numbers went down when spring sports began. But creating a positive environment for students is a key aspect of the program no matter what the numbers are.

Assistant Principal Erin Coyle said the after-school sessions have been a wonderful way of getting to know students through interactions with games and their studies.

“It was such a nice way to break the ice with students,” she said.

For some students, parents may not be finished with work immediately after school and this gives them a supervised, safe place to hang out and study. This is all made possible by the generosity of GEAR UP and the Migrant and Bilingual programs. Coyle said there are even buses that take students home after the sessions are over. She is grateful for the support that has made the program possible.

“It’s been a real team effort,” she said. “It makes me feel good to know kids have somewhere to go after school.”

The Clovis Point after-school program is made possible through the generosity of GEAR UP and the Migrant and Bilingual programs.

Rock Island Catches A Case of Kindness

By Mrs. Brown, Principal

Rock Island Elementary – Feb. 26 through March 2 was Kindness Week at Rock Island Elementary. Everyday teachers would provide short lessons about kindness and what it looks like and sounds like. Students were encouraged to take notice of others and how they were showing kindness. At the end of the day, teachers gave the students time to submit tickets noting other students’ kind acts, and the next morning the ticket and a chocolate kiss was delivered to students that had been recognized as kind. Many classrooms even taped a bingo card with Random Acts of Kindness on their desks encouraging students to color in the box as they performed these acts of kindness throughout the week. On Monday, the 5th, the whole school had an assembly to celebrate. Clarissa Fulkerson, the organizer of Kindness Week, randomly drew Kindness tickets for prizes. The grand prize was a new bike supplied by the Eastmont School District, that went to Daneyda, one of our 3rd-grade students.

Sometimes, we start getting tired in March as we push toward Spring Break. Kindness Week came at the perfect time to remind us all that we need to be the best version of ourselves every day.

Rock Island 3rd grader Daneyda was the lucky winner of a brand-new bike!
EASTMONT EDUCATORS EARN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

EJHS – On April 24, six recipients from Eastmont School District were honored for their outstanding contributions to our schools, at the Douglas County Excellence Awards Banquet at Eastmont Junior High Auditorium. Staff being recognized were:

Certificated:
- Runelle Davis - Clovis Point Intermediate School
- Lisa Murphy - Lee Elementary School
- Monica Tun - Cascade Elementary School

Classified:
- Becky Hickman - Dispatcher, Transportation Department
- Petra Mathena - Intervention Paraeducator, Eastmont Junior High School
- Ken Shores - Paraeducator, Clovis Point Intermediate School

The award honors extraordinary educators and is sponsored each year by the North Central Educational Service District along with Waterville, Mansfield and Orondo School Districts.

The recipients were nominated by fellow employees. Please join us in congratulating these six staff members as they are honored for their excellent service and commitment to our students and staff.

Watch:
Senior Citizen Day at Kenroy

Recently, Kenroy Elementary invited senior citizens for lunch so they could spend more time together. Watch the video on our YouTube channel, or the Eastmont School Districts’ Facebook page.

Facilities Report: Repairs, Transportation current focus

By Garn Christensen

Our upcoming projects to add 20 classrooms, four cafeterias, repair a roof at Clovis Point and replace the EHS baseball field concession building and restrooms are in the planning stages. These projects will go out to bid during the 2018-19 school year. Ideally, we will break ground early 2019 and be completed by August 2020. Our new transportation facility at the corner of Grant Road and Perry continues through the permitting process and still needs final confirmation of grant funds before we proceed any further.

The Maintenance Department is happy to report the land for the New Transportation Department on the corner of Grant Road and N. Perry has been cleared of trees.

Five New National Board Teachers Named

A National Board Certification is a voluntary, advanced teaching credential that goes beyond state licensure. The National Board certifies teachers who successfully complete its rigorous certification process. These Eastmont educators have earned National Board Certifications recently:

Kathleen Moore - Cascade 1st Grade - Early Childhood/Generalist
Mark Baxter - EJHS Math - Early Adolescent/Math
Michelle Sadewasser - Sterling 1st Grade - Early Childhood/Generalist
Christopher Rime - EHS Math - Adolescent-Young Adult/Math
Faith Webb - Rock Island Resource Room - Early Childhood-Young Adolescent/Literature

Scan the code with your smartphone to watch a video featuring Faith Webb of Rock Island Elementary.
Grant Students Learn Leadership Lessons

Grant Elementary – This year, teachers and staff at Grant Elementary School have been teaching third and fourth graders how to become student leaders. As part of a new program called the Student Leadership Club, interested students apply to be part of the group.

“It helps give students a voice with what happens at school,” said Orion Royster, a school counselor at both Grant and Kenroy Elementary.

The goal is to find students who have tendencies and traits of natural leadership, he said. Of course, an important aspect is also emphasizing that not every leader is the same. There are many types of leaders with various ideal traits, like compassion and the ability to communicate effectively with others.

There are two levels students can qualify for: Classroom Representative and Executive Members. To qualify for either level, students must complete an extensive application process that includes an interview portion.

Both levels are similar, but here are some of the Executive Member responsibilities as an example:

1. Be responsible to complete and turn in any missed class work due to Student Leadership activities and maintain academic progress.
2. Participate in Student Leadership-sponsored activities and events.
3. Show a positive attitude and make responsible choices in and out of the classroom.
4. Support and work with PTO members.
5. Attend all meetings as scheduled.

Above all else, Royster said club members sign up knowing that the program has more expectations for them. Whether it is making sure they keep up with their schoolwork or being punctual to every scheduled meeting (they can be before and after school), these third and fourth graders put more on their plate on purpose. All of which is to help them understand the extra duties required to be a strong leader and role model for their fellow students.

“Some students have really risen to the occasion,” he said. “We really want to see them take these leadership skills with them to (the later grades).”

At their meetings, the students take part in leadership-building activities and get to have a say in aspects at the school such as fundraisers and project ideas. Student leaders receive tasks and assignments to help out whenever they can. They even get to make the morning announcements.

So far, there have already been lots of success stories with some of their student leaders. Some normally shy and introverted students have found new ways to be confident around others thanks to the program.

“Right now, we’re planting the seeds,” he said. “We want to increase student involvement in school.”

EYE ON: COLUMBIA VALLEY COMMUNITY HEALTH AT GRANT

Grant Elementary welcomed Columbia Valley Community Health Dental Screening to its school on March 28 and 29. As part of their community outreach, CVCH offers dental education and screenings to students in elementary schools. With parent permission, students’ teeth are checked, and any issues shared with parents and their dental professionals. The goal is to educate students about proper dental health, share what happens to teeth when they are not cared for, learn the importance of visiting a dental office and alert parents to any dental concerns.
Focus On: The District

May 2018

We need your help!

Sign up with eScrip or register for Fred Meyer Community Rewards and a donation will be made to Eastmont Foundation each time you shop - at no cost to you!

Sign up online. It’s quick and easy!

- Go to www.escrip.com
- Click on “sign-up”
- Follow the instructions to register your grocery cards and your existing credit/debit cards.
- Go to www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards and search for Eastmont Foundation

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- Vaya a www.escrip.com
- Haga clic en “registración”
- Siga las instrucciones para registrar su tarjeta de compras y sus tarjetas de débito o crédito.
- Vaya a www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards y busque donde diga “Eastmont Foundation”

SAFETY

The Eastmont Board of Directors will review recommendations for both immediate and long-range safety improvements at their June 4th regular Board Meeting. As shared before, we know our most important safety prevention strategy is connecting and communicating with our community. Knowing this, we ask that if you hear, read, or observe something that could be a threat to a student or a school, please report this information immediately to a school principal or to the Superintendent’s Office. You can do this in person, phone call, email, or click on the Stop Bullying – Safe School Zone image/link on our website to submit an anonymous report. We will immediately investigate your report and work with law enforcement if needed. Thanks for your help in keeping our schools and community safe.

By Garn Christensen

EASTMONT AT APPLE BLOSSOM

It was another busy Apple Blossom for Eastmont students and staff members. The annual “chief for a day” ceremony kicked things off and what followed was a week of performances, parades and fun in the sun! Check out our Facebook page for more.

Eastmont Summer Library Program 2018
Tuesdays/Wednesday, June 19th - August 9

It is the third year for the Eastmont Summer Library Program. All Eastmont students and families are welcome. This program is available for all ages, from our youngest wee wildcats to our high school students. There is something for everyone. Books for all ages are available at both sites as well as games, art projects, and computer access.

Check out books! Meet new friends! Play board games! Create art! Use computers with internet access!

Each school is staffed with caring adults. Lunches are available through the Small Miracles lunch program. Join us and stay connected this summer!

Clovis Point Summer Library: Tuesdays, noon-2:00 p.m.
Rock Island Summer Library: Wednesdays, noon-2:00 p.m.

Contact Carol Mooney/Carmen Johnson at Clovis Point for more information.
EHS soccer celebrated its seniors recently, as well as the families that support these talented players. Thank you for all your hours of commitment to Eastmont and your sport. You are leaving a wonderful legacy.

The 2018 season has been a big one for the EHS soccer squad. They are ranked fifth in the state, with an overall record of 12-3.