

Laredo Chamber Announces School Bell Award Winners and “Spirit of Laredo” Scholarship Winners

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The Laredo Chamber of Commerce Education Committee today announced the winners of this year’s School Bell Awards. Annually, the Laredo Chamber takes time to recognize outstanding educators. A special recognition – the School Bell Award – is presented to those educators that are selected by their peers for their performance in and out of the classroom.

This year the Laredo Chamber will honor twelve outstanding educators representative of the elementary through the university level. Winners for each of twelve categories were selected from a pool of applicants by members of the Chamber’s Education Committee. States Committee Chairman Michael Gonzalez, “The task of selecting one application over another is not easy. Truly, each of the applicants is well-deserving of recognition for their dedication and commitment to the profession. I applaud each of the applicants and all of our teachers that day in and day out dedicate their time and resources to prepare the future leaders and workforce of our community and beyond. On behalf of the committee, I sincerely congratulate each and every one of them, and I look forward to honoring them at our upcoming School Bell Awards Ceremony”. Trent Stricker, General Manager, Sames Laredo Chevrolet added: “We congratulate each of the student candidates! Supporting education has always been a cornerstone of our organization’s initiatives. We are proud to be a part of the School Bell Awards.”

The School Bell Award winners for 2022 in the various categories are:

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Annabel Palacios	Don Jose Gallego Elementary School	LISD
Maria de Lourdes James	Colonel Santos Benavides School	UISD
Brenda Magaña	United Day School	PRIVATE
Venissa Gallardo	Harmony School of Innovation	CHARTER

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Nancy Bernal	Memorial Middle School	LISD
Diana Medina-Rendón	Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle School	UISD

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Lorena D. Madriaga	Hector J. Garcia Early College High School	LISD
Elizabeth Arciniega	United High School	UISD
Sandra Webb	St. Augustine High School	PRIVATE
Maria Erendira Martinez	Harmony School of Excellence	CHARTER

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LAREDO COLLEGE

Orlando M. Patricio

Laredo College, Professor of Physics

TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Dr. Charlene K. Summers

Texas A&M Int. University, College of Arts and Sciences

Recipients of the School Bell Award will also receive a special gift from Sames Laredo Chevrolet and Killam Development, Ltd. Both business organizations have supported the event wholeheartedly and are committed to making sure that the selected educators realize that the business community firmly supports them. Laredo College is pleased to host this year's School Bell Awards ceremony at their Executive Conference Center, an event which they are proud to have hosted for two consecutive years.

The Laredo Chamber of Commerce is also announcing the winners of the Spirit of Laredo Scholarship Competition. The winners of the competition are as follows: 1st Place, Joseph Flores, a senior at Dr. Dennis D. Cantu Early College High School, winner of a \$2,000 scholarship; 2nd Place, Dulce Rojas, a student at Cigarroa High School, winner of a \$1,000 scholarship; 3rd Place, Alexis Rico, Martin High School student, winner of a \$500 scholarship.

The Spirit of Laredo Competition has been sponsored in part by Killam Development, a Chamber member and benefactor, and firm supporter of education at all levels. The Killam organization joined the Spirit of Laredo program from its inception offering to match the committee's funds and strengthen the level of the scholarships offered. States Cliffe Killam, principal partner at Killam Development, "The Killam Family and our organization are proud to call Laredo our hometown. We deeply appreciate the support and trust of the community, and we are committed to investing in Laredo. We cannot afford to lose bright minds from our community to other places because of complacency and lack of investment. We see the Spirit of Laredo as an opportunity for young Laredo minds to imagine and inspire a different and better future for all." Criteria used in judging the various entries included adherence to theme, originality, clarity of message, creativity and overall impression. The winning videos will soon be posted on Laredo Chamber's social media channels and released to the school districts for inclusion in their instructional TV channels. The winners of the competition will be recognized formally and presented with their scholarships at a date to be announced soon.

Over the years, the Laredo Chamber has made education one of its priorities - the leadership of the Chamber being cognizant that a trained workforce is key to economic development. Aside from the annual recognition event for teachers, throughout the year the Chamber fosters leadership skills training for young adults through programs such as the Youth Leadership Laredo and other opportunities.

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Founded in 1915, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is Laredo's and Webb County's longest running business organization. It represents over 600 businesses of the local community and surrounding areas. The Laredo Chamber of Commerce is accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with five stars. Only 3 percent of approximately 7,000 chambers in the United States are accredited.