

OPPORTUNITY

NEWS



2 News from
Your College

3 Santa's Christmas
Magic

5 Steering Students
to Success

NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

State of the College highlights San Jac's impact

San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer delivered her annual State of the College address Oct. 30, highlighting the resilience, innovation, support, and excellence — or RISE — that marked the past year.

Attendees included more than 350 elected officials, donors, industry partners, and College employees.

“At San Jacinto College, we rise to meet the needs of our students and community so that our region remains economically strong and our students are prepared for their next steps after graduation,” Hellyer said during her presentation. “Our impact is seen and felt throughout this institution, our local communities, the region, and the state.”

Hellyer shared about new programs meeting workforce needs, including the new bachelor's degrees in education and cybersecurity.

She also recognized trailblazers like English department chair Dr. Celucien Joseph, San Jac's Minnie Stevens Piper Award nominee. Among his achievements, Joseph has created a new mentoring program at the College and redesigned a technical writing course.

In addition, the Chancellor celebrated alumni like Yakob Zumlot and Ted Tolley. Zumlot, who immigrated to the U.S. in 2014, considers San Jac his steppingstone to success and is now attending medical school. The oldest graduate at spring commencement, Tolley finished his longtime degree goal thanks to his wife's encouragement and plenty of support at San Jac.

To learn more about San Jac's RISE efforts, scan the QR code.



San Jac celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

San Jacinto College observed Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15) at each campus with events and activities for students, faculty, and staff. This year's theme was “Unidos,” or united.

“We chose Unidos’ because we wanted to focus on making the events something that will bring the whole College together,” said Nicole Burgin, Hispanic Heritage Committee co-chair.

With a Hispanic student population of more than 60%, San Jac is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, making it even more significant to celebrate.

New this year was the College-wide El Homecoming dance at the North Campus, featuring salsa lessons, snacks, and entertainment by Calle Swing.

Combined, San Jac's Hispanic Heritage Month events saw more than 700 attendees, celebrating the contributions of Hispanic people.

The committee received Student Success Initiative grants to help fund these events, as well as essay and art contest prizes.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

Art contest winners included Johanna Fraga (first place), Joseph Mosquera (second place), and David Morales (third place). The essay contest winners were Luis Salazar (first place), Drashti Desai (second place), and Marina Lopez Campos (third place).



Scan the QR code to see more photos.

Holiday recipe from culinary arts

Culinary arts instructor Melissa Menendez shares this tasty dessert: **Chocoflan** (Serves 10)

Bottom of pan:

- Softened butter
- 1/4 cup cajeta or caramel sauce (pre-made is fine)

Cake:

- 10 tablespoons butter, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon coffee extract or instant coffee powder

Flan:

- 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 4 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon Liquor 43 (optional)

Garnish:

- 1/4 cup cajeta or caramel sauce
- 1/4 cup chopped toasted pecans

Directions:

1. Put oven rack in middle of oven. Preheat to 350 degrees. Coat 12-cup bundt pan with butter, then coat bottom with 1/4 cup cajeta. Put bundt pan inside large roasting pan.
2. **For cake:** Add butter and sugar to bowl. Using electric hand mixer or stand mixer, beat until light and fluffy, then beat in egg. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and cocoa in medium bowl. Beat 1/3 of flour mixture and 1/2 of buttermilk into egg mixture. Repeat, ending with flour mixture. Add coffee extract. Blend until well incorporated. Pour into bundt pan, spreading evenly.
3. **For flan:** In blender, combine both milks, cream cheese, eggs, Liquor 43, and vanilla. Blend on high for 30 seconds. Slowly pour flan mixture over cake batter. Cover loosely with foil and add about one inch of hot water to roasting pan. Carefully slide pan into oven. Bake one hour, until cake's surface is firm or toothpick comes out clean.
4. When cake is done, remove from water bath and cool to room temperature, about one hour, leaving foil on top. Invert large, rimmed serving platter over bundt pan, grasp tightly together, jiggle slightly, and flip over. Remove pan and scrape remaining cajeta from pan onto cake. Garnish with extra cajeta and pecans. Serve!



Photo by Melissa Menendez, San Jacinto College

'SANTA'S CHRISTMAS MAGIC': A CENTRAL CAMPUS TRADITION

By Melissa Trevizo
San Jacinto College

The San Jacinto College Central Campus Theatre marks its 23rd anniversary with this year's production of "Santa's Christmas Magic: The Musical."

The production is a tradition for many families, whether audience members or performers. For years, actors of all ages have returned to appear in the holiday favorite.

Dr. Jerry Ivins, artistic director for theatre and film, "didn't know it would be continuing this long" when the play debuted in 2001.

"It's a high-energy musical that includes acting, singing, and dancing," Ivins said. "This will be our 29th year to present a Christmas show and 23rd year for 'Santa's Christmas Magic.' Nearly every performance has sold out since we introduced the production."

The play originated in 2001 when the script and music that San Jac students were set to perform were backordered.

"We didn't have time to get rights to another play, and I told the students, 'We may not be able to do a Christmas show,'" Ivins said. "They were visibly upset. I charged them to write their own play. It was our only option."

The students returned the next day with a rough draft titled "Santa vs. The Grinch."

"The original script was a bit rough and only 10 pages long. It was a good start, but it needed finessing," Ivins said.

Local playwright R.J. Snivi reworked the script, and "Santa's Christmas Magic: The Musical" was born.

"It was a basic script, but audiences loved it. Each year, we tweak the content just a bit based on who is in the play, what their abilities are, and a

bit of pop culture influence," said Ivins.

The play is a fantasy about a sinister plot to steal Santa's magic. Highlights of the show include toys that come alive to dance and sing, a children's elf chorus, and a fast-paced chase. The production boasts more than 40 adult roles and a children's elf chorus with 50 singers.

"The running time for the show is about 90 minutes, but the curtain doesn't rise on Act 2 until everyone who wants to meet Santa has done so," Ivins said.

Meanwhile, as audience members return to their seats, the children's chorus entertains the crowd with holiday tunes.

"It always tickles me because we perform Pulitzer Prize-winning plays, but the one the students are most excited about is the Christmas show," said Ivins. "They fight harder for this show than anything else."

"Santa's Christmas Magic: The Musical"

When:

- Dec. 5-7 and 12-14, 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 8 and 15, 2:30 p.m.

Where:

San Jacinto College Central Campus
Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
8060 Spencer Highway,
Pasadena, TX 77505

Tickets:

- \$15 general admission
- \$13 if purchased and picked up by Dec. 4

The box office is open Monday through Friday from 1:30 to 5 p.m., beginning Monday, Dec. 2. For more information, call 281-542-2039 or scan the QR code.



San Jacinto College theatre student Joshua Pitts as Santa Claus in "Santa's Christmas Magic: The Musical" at the Central Campus.
Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

SINGLE MOM FORGES PATH FROM CHILD CARE TO COURTROOM

By **Courtney Morris**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Most child care employees would sport a T-shirt and comfy jeans. Madison Beal wasn't most people.

Bouncing from receptionist desk to kitchen and classroom at San Jacinto College's Central Campus lab school, Beal changed diapers and scrubbed dishes in a blazer and slacks. She was "dressing the way I want to see my career go."

Pursuing an associate degree 10 years after high school, the single mom knew the road ahead would be challenging. To succeed, she needed a commitment just as tough.

Making a U-turn

Despite a stable childhood, Beal couldn't find her place in high school. Bullied, she swung from public and private schools to a home-school program. When she graduated, she wasn't sure what to do next.

"That was my slip-up: I never thought for myself," she said. "I let my mom make my decisions."

Shortly after Beal earned an esthetician license, her parents divorced. World rocked, she pursued two dead-end relationships — a brief marriage and an abusive relationship that led to two children.

"I started seeing I was in a lifestyle I hadn't grown up in," she said. "I wanted better for my kids."

Finally mustering courage to leave her boyfriend, Beal moved in with her mom across from the Central Campus. Carless and jobless, she saw the lab school, put her kids on the waiting list, and applied to work at San Jac.

The dominos started falling. Child care spots opened, along with a job at the lab school. Beal also got financial aid and enrolled, with a grant covering the child care expenses.

"Something I never thought would be imaginable became imaginable," she said.

Beating self-doubt

Returning to school in fall 2022 presented challenges, starting with logistics. For more than a year, Beal buckled her children in a stroller and pushed them home after work and classes.

"Walking gave me time to think, to process the day," she said. "It also taught me to appreciate and value things."

But Beal's biggest challenge was self-doubt. Could she do this? Beyond working, she juggled full-time classes, homework, and two toddlers.

"I started being real with myself," she said. "My kids are looking up to me. If I fail, what am I teaching them? Once I saw failure wasn't an option, I kept pushing myself."

She learned to gulp down pride and accept help, with the biggest help coming from God. The "everyday battle" became smoother once she relied on her faith.

"This has been nothing but God," she said. "There's a plan and purpose for everything."

Finding the future

In 2023, Beal was still sorting out her career goals. After landing a full-time position as a senior administrative assistant in child development, she started taking honors classes. An honors government class ignited her interest in law.

She decided to finish her general studies associate degree, pursue psychology and women's studies at the University of Houston, and attend law school.

Beal sees all her experiences blending to help women who need legal help. From facing abuse herself to traveling with the honors program to Spain, she has strong compassion for others and a desire to understand other cultures.

"I want to fully help women I encounter, not just representing them for the money but getting justice for them," she said. "That's where my heart is."

Choosing success

After an abusive relationship,

Beal determined never to settle for "toxic, unhealthy" comfort again.

Sometimes the biggest step is taking a step.


"You choose to get out of bed, to put on your shoes," she said. "Sometimes you don't want to. But if you don't choose it, you're going to fail."

This December, Beal will accept her diploma at commencement. But her San Jac journey doesn't end there. She'll continue to work at the College while pursuing her bachelor's degree. One day, she may return as a professor.

"San Jac gave so much to me," she said. "You set my feet on a strong foundation not just academically. My professors prepared me — gave me a strong foundation for the position I'm in. I want to give back to the students too."




Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College




HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from **SAN JACINTO COLLEGE**

*Your support made a difference in 2024.
Celebrate with us by scanning the QR code
for a special holiday message.*





MURRAY STEERS MARITIME STUDENTS TOWARD SUCCESS

By Neesha Hosein

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Krissy Murray, a proud Stephen F. Austin State University alumna, credits her own college experience as her inspiration for wanting to help others navigate their college experience.

After earning her bachelor's degree in psychology, Murray knew she wanted to do something in the realm of behavioral science — higher education was just the place.

Collaboration on and off campus

Murray has been with San Jacinto College for 15 years and is currently the coordinator for education and workforce at the Maritime Campus.

“As the primary point of contact for the maritime transportation credit program, I serve as a crucial liaison for current and prospective students as well as local independent school district staff,” Murray said. “I coordinate and host program information sessions for prospective students throughout the year and an annual counselor connection workshop where local ISD staff and counselors come get hands-on training at our facility so they're better equipped to spread the word to their students about our program.”

Murray coordinates biannual career fairs and collaborates with various student services departments and faculty to organize workshops and advising sessions for current maritime students.

To garner interest in maritime programs, Murray facilitates internal workshops and events and oversees maritime summer camps for middle and high school students every year.

“I regularly attend and participate in community events and college fairs at the middle and high school levels to inform and educate our community about this amazing industry right in our backyards,” she said. “I also enjoy getting to go out on different vessels and boats while visiting our industry partners to see what their operations

look like and what is out there for our students. Whatever is needed for our students, I do it!”

Why is maritime important?

Murray believes maritime transportation is essential because life in the U.S. is completely centered around trade, commerce, and the importing and exporting of goods.

“People don't realize that our inland waterways and river systems are how all the products, petroleum, vehicles, electronics, medicine, and food we need and consume get to us,” she said. “Before these items arrive in stores, gas stations, and hospitals, they arrive here on ships and get transported to various docks via boats manned by mariners. Without mariners working on these vessels, these products would not make it to the trucks to be

delivered to stores, etc.”

According to Murray, many mariners are reaching retirement age, and it is time for a new wave of mariners. Deckhands are the most in-demand jobs in the industry with many entry-level positions available — a valuable opportunity for students eager to start their maritime careers.

Focusing on student success

Murray considers creating and building relationships with the students on all levels the best part of her job. For example, serving as a designated school official for F-1 students (international students on a non-immigrant visa granted for full-time study) brings her a deep sense of pride and accomplishment.

“Being able to advise and help people come to the U.S. to study is

just gratifying on a different level,” she said. “Seeing our students cross the finish line and get the job after all the time and hard work they put into classes is the best.”

Murray appreciates the chance to wear different hats within the College that all, in some way, center around being a valuable resource to students.

“My goal in life and in my career is always to give people hope and faith in themselves,” Murray said. “To be the cheerleader in their corner, empowering and reminding them that they can achieve whatever they want to achieve.”

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac's maritime programs.



Photo by Neesha Hosein, San Jacinto College

BAIAZITOV EXEMPLIFIES CAREER CRESCENDO

By **Neesha Hosein**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Dr. Ruslan Baiazitov wanted to be a music teacher since childhood. He has accomplished that and much more, including releasing a new CD.

Baiazitov joined San Jacinto College's music department at the Central Campus in January 2022. He teaches classical piano, private piano lessons, music appreciation, fundamentals of music, sight singing and ear training, and theory and has directed the string ensemble.

Q: Tell us about your education and background.

A: I began my musical studies in my native Kazakhstan. I am a graduate of Kazan State Conservatory in Russia. I was invited to continue my education at Musik und Kunst Privat Universität der Stadt Wien in Austria, where I received my master's degree in 2015.

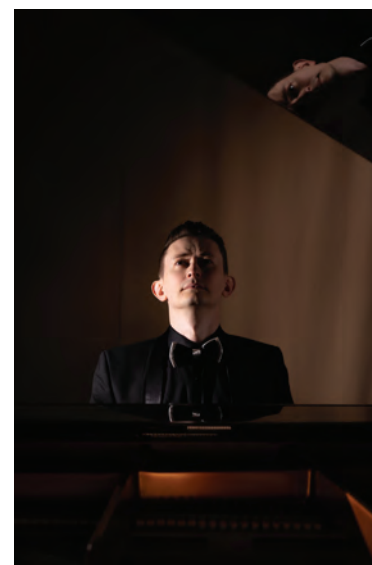
I completed my postgraduate studies at the prestigious Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna.

I continued my education in the U.S. at Baylor University as a piano and composition major with Krassimira Jordan and Dr. Scott McAllister. In 2022, I

completed my Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance and symphonic conducting at the University of Houston Moores School of Music. At UH, I studied with Tali Morgulis, Timothy Hester, and Franz Anton Krager.

Q: What inspired you to choose this career path?

A: My grandmother, who taught high school math for around 33 years, has greatly influenced my life. While mathematics and music might appear unrelated, they have a deep and interconnected relationship that spans centuries. This link is not accidental. Mathematics is integral to music,



influencing everything from the structure of musical scales to the physics behind an instrument's sound.

Q: Share about your new CD and what makes it unique.

A: During my years of education, I had the privilege of meeting great professionals who had recorded large collections of musical works by a single composer. These encounters served as a profound source of inspiration.

When I began practicing Frédéric Chopin's 24 Etudes, Op. 10 and Op. 25, I became intrigued by the idea of exploring piano techniques, which would enhance my teaching skills. After dedicating time to practice, I ventured into performing several recitals featuring Chopin's etudes. Eventually, I recorded a CD.

Interestingly, I hadn't initially contemplated performing these etudes publicly or recording them. Lynne Brandt, department chair of music and audio engineering at the Central Campus, supported my CD project by organizing a recital at San Jac. It's so important to have professionals like Professor Brandt in my life who can appreciate challenges of the artistic process. Additionally, Amanda Watson, a representative

from Steinway, along with Steinway Piano Gallery Houston, supported my project by offering a superb venue and a grand piano for the final recording.

The 24 Etudes proved to be the most challenging program I've ever undertaken. Practicing such a demanding repertoire requires immense energy and robust health. To meet these challenges head-on, I incorporated regular gym sessions and worked with a personal coach. Engaging in exercises not only benefited me physically but also mentally, aiding me in tackling the demands of this program.

Q: Is this your first CD, and how did it feel to release it?

A: This is my second CD. I recorded my first CD in Vienna, Austria. Additionally, I have produced an album featuring my own compositions, available on Spotify, Amazon, YouTube,

and many others. Releasing this CD was a moment of happiness. While it involved a lot of work, the results were worth it.

Q: What else have you been working on?

A: During a recent trip to New York, I was honored to be invited to visit the Steinway & Sons factory on Oct. 22-23 as part of a special program, Doretta Steinway Experience, for 25 selected piano teachers from Texas. It was an incredible experience to see firsthand the craftsmanship behind the world-renowned Steinway pianos. Our trip also included a memorable visit to Carnegie Hall, making this an inspiring experience for any music enthusiast.

I am currently working on a new CD featuring Liszt's 12 Transcendental Etudes, supported by a grant from the Music Teacher National Association.



Photos courtesy of Ruslan Baiazitov, San Jacinto College

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

| DATE | EVENT | TIME | SITE |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Through Dec. 6 | "Solastalgia" | Varies | South Campus Gallery, Flickinger Fine Arts Center (S15.143) |
| Dec. 5 | Winter Art Sale | 9 a.m.-9 p.m. | North Campus, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1.106) |
| Dec. 5 | Wind Ensemble Concert | 7 p.m. | Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5) |
| Dec. 5 | Fall Concert | 7 p.m. | North Campus Fine Arts Theater, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1) |
| Dec. 5-7 & 12-14 | "Santa's Christmas Magic" | 7:30 p.m. | \$15 general admission Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13) |
| Dec. 6-7 | "Evolve" Fall Dance Concert | 7 p.m. | South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center (S15) |
| Dec. 8 & 15 | "Santa's Christmas Magic" Matinees | 2:30 p.m. | \$15 general admission Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13) |
| Dec. 13 | Fall Commencement | 7 p.m. | Minute Maid Park |

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar.

THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram

Today was the annual OTA/PTA Interprofessional Day at South Campus! This event shows students the role of teamwork in our health care professions and gives them valuable experience. Interested in our different health science programs? Visit the San Jac website for more details!
#weareravens #sanjacintocollege #collegelife



277 Likes | 5 Saves | 7,812 Plays | 33 Shares

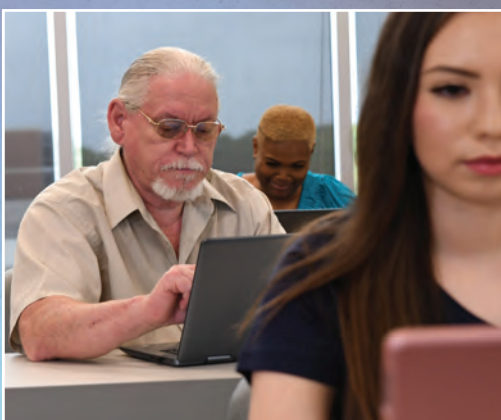


Facebook

Worried how you'll pay for college? The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship has you covered! You can earn an associate degree or a certificate at San Jacinto College debt-free. We'll answer the top five FAQs next Tuesday right here on Facebook. Learn more at sanjac.edu/promise.



47 Reactions | 12 Shares | 181 Post Clicks | 3,723 Impressions



LinkedIn

Completing a degree is hard by itself. But when you also have family and work responsibilities, it can be daunting. Whether you're 25 or 85, here are some helpful tips for when you are ready to complete or earn your degree:
sanjac.edu/about/news/2024/how-succeed-adult-student



27 Reactions | 4 Shares | 3,045 Impressions | 89 Engagements

YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



SAN JACINTO COLLEGESM

NORTH CAMPUS

5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston, TX 77049

CENTRAL CAMPUS

8060 Spencer Hwy., Pasadena, TX 77505

SOUTH CAMPUS

13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, TX 77089

MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

GENERATION PARK CAMPUS

13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044

ONLINE

sanjac.edu/online

Join San Jacinto College in achieving
excellence in higher education.

Find your next career:
sanjac.edu • 281-998-6150

Connect with us on



An Equal Opportunity Institution

VISION & MISSION



Vision — San Jacinto College will advance the social and economic mobility of all members of our community. We will be known for our excellence in teaching and learning, our intentional student-centered support, and our commitment to every student. We will be the preferred workforce and economic development partner in the region and a champion for lifelong learning. San Jacinto College will inspire students to explore opportunities, define their educational and career paths, and achieve their goals and dreams.

Mission — San Jacinto College is focused on student success, academic progress, university transfer, and employment. We are committed to opportunities that enrich the quality of life in the communities we serve.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS



A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow's community leaders. For more than 25 years, the Foundation has helped thousands of students reach their goals. Our former students and graduates have filled vital roles in hospitals, classrooms, executive offices, manufacturing plants, and laboratories across our region and beyond. They have also won the World Series and NBA championships, starred in major motion pictures, and created major theatrical productions. Help our students today with the gift of education. Contact the San Jacinto College Foundation at 281-998-6104 or visit sanjac.edu/foundation.

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's. For more information about San Jacinto College, visit sanjac.edu.

