

# The Cougar Chronicle



September 2017

Judith Fuentes, Editor

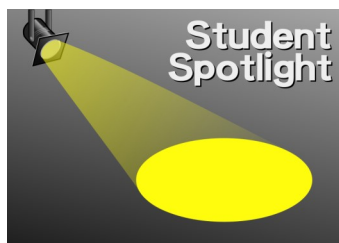
## Monsignor Barrera Blesses OLSS Bus

By Zaragoza Contreras  
Staff Writer

Our Lady of Sorrows pastor, Monsignor Barrera, blessed the campus school bus with holy water on September 6, 2017, and prayed for the vehicle to always provide protection and safe travels for our students and staff. Monsignor was accompanied by Mrs.

Nevanen's 8th grade ELA class to participate in the blessing. "I think it's very nice and special because it is blessed, and we will always know that God is present with us," said Eric Rodriguez, an 8th-grade student who was present during the blessing.

The students and staff appreciate Monsignor's help in blessing our school bus and we look forward to more buses being blessed in the future!



## Olivia Gonzalez

By Arturo Gracia, Staff Writer

The Cougar Chronicle student spotlight for September is Olivia Gonzalez, an 8th grader attending Our Lady of Sorrows School. She is a straight "A" student and dedicates a lot of time towards studying and homework. She participates in theater, NJHS, Worship Committee, Student Council, altar server, and camera crew. Her mom, Rina Gonzalez, is helping organize the 8th grade lock-in, which makes Olivia extra enthusiastic. "I think it would be a fun experience for the 8th graders. I look forward to it."

Olivia gets along well with her brother and sisters. When asked what she felt about them she said, "My sisters and brother are a big part of my life, and I love them to death."

Mrs. Rina is a sixth-grade literature and grammar teacher, and she's the junior high counselor. "Olivia is so good around the house, always being positive and bringing positivity to our house. Her smile is contagious and she lifts us up when we're feeling down."

Olivia's favorite after school activity is theater. She has performed in Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, and Hairspray, and she earned the lead role of Elle in this year's production of *Legally Blonde, Jr.*



Olivia wakes up everyday planning her day out. After asking her what she thought about her academics, she answered, "I pray everyday, thanking God for my good health, family, school, friends, and a lot more. I owe everything to God and my mentors here at OLS. They made me the young adult I am today."



## SPOTLIGHT ON THEATRE

By Ben Karam and Mark Chessom, Staff Writers

"I love the fact that actors are able to play a different character, and it's never the same...it's always something different," says Mr. Jose Luis Gomez, the director of OLSS's theater production program.

Mr. Gomez has been working with theater arts ever since he was a student at McAllen High School. After high school, Mr. Gomez attended the University of Texas – Pan American, where he studied biology and chemistry for four years. After graduating, Mr. Gomez came to Our Lady of Sorrows School.

Why is the science teacher also the drama director? He has a passion for theater, plain and simple. "It brings 7th and 8th graders and their families together," he explains. "What I love is seeing the production come together and working with the students."

The challenges of theater production include the

students' lack of understanding and the self discipline that theater requires. However, Mr. Gomez says, "Patience and my trust in their talent get me through each rehearsal."

Mr. Gomez has been doing theater since high school, and this will be his 5th year directing theater at OLSS. "My favorite aspect of directing is seeing the show come to life!" exclaimed Mr. Gomez. He also says that the reason he started theatre at Our Lady of Sorrows was because one of his ex-students, Valeria Arguelles, had a unique way of public speaking in a short 6th-grade presentation, which put the idea in his head!

How does he teach and help with theater production? "I manage my time between teaching science and directing theatre by organization, time management and as much sleep as possible so I can be fresh by the next rehearsal," says Mr.

Gomez.

"I do not have a favorite show," says Mr. Gomez. "I like them equally. Every year our performances sell out. It is an exciting experience and extremely humbling," he added.

Mr. Gomez is looking forward to selling out more shows, having fun, and taking each day like it is the last one. This year, the OLSS theater production will be *Legally Blonde, Jr.* The try outs were in August 2017, and the production is scheduled for some time during the second semester.



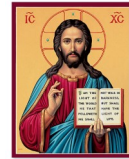
*Don't forget to turn in your box tops to you homeroom teacher. You can earn incentives while helping your school!*





## Religious Education: Mr. Delarosa

By Patrick Moss, Staff Writer



Have you ever wondered who organizes our school masses and fundraisers? Well, Mr. Hugo De la Rosa (Mr. D) is our own Our Lady of Sorrows school campus minister. He helps direct school events such as PSIA, Walkathon, Mass, Gala, Octoberfest, and many more.

Mr. D has been working at Our Lady of Sorrows for 19 years. This year he is the sixth-grade religion teacher. "This is my favorite part of teaching. I like to explain and see their light bulb moments." He never actually wanted to work at a school. "I was just interested in working with something religious," he said. Mr. D has a degree in religion, and he also studied

youth ministry, which means he can give his students extra information about our religion.

"What I like about our faith is that it is universal, and that no matter where you go in the world you will find the Catholic faith being practiced," said Mr. D in a recent interview with the Cougar Chronicle.

When asked if there was anything he would change about his job, Mr. D said, "No grading." He would also like to see some changes in the future for our school. "We should build a dome around the entire campus so no matter where we walk, we could have air conditioning, and I'd love to see new laptops for the teachers!"

Our students and faculty are blessed to have Mr. D as our new assistant principal. He will help Mrs. Deleon lead our school into a bright and happy future.



## Library News

by Krystal Guerra and Amy Ubias, Staff Writers



Books, books, books!!!

The OLSS Library is off to a great start this year! Our amazing librarian, Mrs. Tijerina, is ready to kick off the 2017-2018 school year. "We are getting a lot of new books," exclaimed Mrs. T, "and I can't wait for this year's book fair, coming in September 25-29. Don't miss it!"

"My goal for this year,

is to get as many millionaires as possible. I also hope to encourage our kids to become great readers. I enjoy teaching kinder because they just have so much to learn and I love reading to them," she declared.

Ever want to go somewhere quiet and relaxing? The OLSS library is always open for students to read or check



out a new book: from fantasy and comedy to horror and mystery. Students are invited to be inundated in the world of books and determine how the adventure will end!



## Mr. O Goes Green

By Benjamin Anzaldúa and Jorge Martinez , Staff Writers

Did you know Mr. Ocanas, also known as Mr. O, gardens during his spare time? He grows many types of plants here at the church, the school, and at home.

Mr. O started gardening because of his mother. "She wanted ten rosebushes for her daughters and in her memory I planted five outside my house, and after that it became a hobby," he said. "It brings me peace and it's a great connection with nature," said Mr. O. The one thing he thinks is difficult about gardening is the weather. "Since I am a diabetic, the heat can really affect me, so I use a special hat to protect myself from the sun," he said.

Mr. O's interest in gardening increased because he wanted to find out about healthy plants. "I do eat the plants that I garden, especially



moringa, the leaves, flowers, and seeds," he chuckled. Mr. O grows oregano, mangos, lemons, figs, nopales, and avocados at the OLS Church. He is taking agriculture classes with a friend, and it might turn into a club.

Since he started eating the food he grows, he finds himself healthier. He says he has lost weight and feels more energetic. He likes how it is organic, and he doesn't like food that has GMOs (genetically modified organisms), because they are not 100% natural.

What a surprise to discover that our own Mr. O is interested in gardening and organic living. His commitment to his health is an inspiration to us all!



## Congratulations to the NJHS Inductees

Congratulations go out to our 7th & 8th grade NJHS inductees! This organization is part of the National Honor Society, the oldest and most respected organization for recognizing the academic accomplishments of young scholars in America. Up to twenty (20) students are chosen each year, and those students are responsible for organizing several community service projects throughout the year. Faculty Advisers Mrs.

Cindy Arnold, Mr. Jose Gomez, & Mrs. Rina Gonzalez helped organize and lead the induction ceremony.



## THE PRINCIPAL'S PLACE

By Judith Fuentes and Christian Lopez, Staff Writers

With slick, shiny wooden doors and stiff straight-backed chairs, the office seems to be a scary place. Truthfully, it isn't. Beyond the prim, pristine blue-painted walls, there lives a caring, competent, intelligent leader.



The Cougar Chronicle staff interviewed the principal of the school, Mrs. Luisa DeLeon and discovered some interesting information. Many students are curious about the challenges and difficulties about Mrs. DeLeon's work, and our news crew unearthed the fact that keeping us safe and sound is her highest and toughest priority. Her least favorite task is doing paperwork.

Unsurprisingly, Mrs. DeLeon adores seeing her students each day. "Every day is something different [and] everyday something interesting happens." In her earlier years she would've never imagined she would become a principal because she loved teaching so much and wanted to just teach. But the Lord took her life in a different direction and now she is our lead campus administrator. Monsignor Barrera asked Mrs. DeLeon to become our principal after twenty-five years in the classroom and after receiving a Master's Degree in Instructional Leadership.

Mrs. DeLeon most looks forward to going to Mass every Friday and praising God. She enjoys seeing the students and participating in all school events. Her favorite fundraiser from all the past years has been the fishing tournament.

We are blessed to have such a dedicated and hard-working person at the helm of our ship, and we look forward to many more years of Mrs. DeLeon's leadership.

## OLSS Reminders

Please note that all students are encouraged to donate \$1 for the privilege of wearing jeans on most Thursdays of the year. When jeans are worn, the shirt / blouse should be either their normal OLS uniform, their PE shirt, or another OLS approved shirt (Fishing Tournament, club shirt, red field trip shirt, etc.). Their shoes should also be their normal uniform shoes.

All OLSS parents can log into the ParentsWeb portion of RenWeb to see homework, classwork, grades and announcements from all teachers at OLSS. Instructions for setting up your account can be found on our website, and the front office can help you if you've forgotten your login information from last year.



## Father Sam by Lexxie Fabela, Staff Writer

Our beloved Father Sam left Our Lady of Sorrows Church on August 31, 2017. He is now going to help out at San Juan Retirement Center, and he will also assist at the Basilica. He is very excited for this new opportunity in his life. "I am going where the Lord takes me," he cheerfully said.

Father Sam says he fell in love with the Holy Spirit around the age of four because his mother and grandmother would take him to mass. He fell off God's path for a few years in his teens, but returned to the Lord in his early adulthood.

Father Sam was ordained on Saturday, November 28, 1997. Since then, he has looked at many saints as role models, including Saint Teresa, Saint Ignatius, and even though he is not a saint, Father Sam thinks of Pope Fran-



During mass, Father Sam says he gets swept away during the consecration. He said, "I just love weekend masses because I get to see all the people [of the church]." I think we all have noticed that during the Homilies Father Sam expresses a sincere and genuine love of the Lord. He said that he writes his homilies in advance of the mass and does his research. Father's favorite place to pray during the Mass is in the Presider's chair because he feels close to God.

"I will miss seeing all the children during Mass," said Father Sam. We will definitely miss him, as well, and we hope that he is happy with this blessed new role in his life.

## THE SPORTS PAGE

By Eric Rodriguez and Lindsay Williamson, Staff Writers



The echo of children's voices resonated in the gym. A whistle blew and everyone stood at attention, staring at Coach Luis Abraham, a long-admired teacher at O.L.S.S.

Coach Abraham has been at OLSS since 1984 and has encouraged many students to strive for excellence. "We are here for a reason, it's God's will. He puts us here so we pray and trust in him to guide us, and protect us always," says Coach Abraham before and after every game. His words of wisdom affect students to do their best in school and in life.

When asked what inspired him to remain at OLSS, Coach Abraham said, "Through my father's belief that I should stay, and God's will, I stayed for the faith, the sharing, and the caring of the school families."

Along with his teaching responsibilities, Coach is also a member of the Texas Association of Sports Officials, coaches numerous city leagues, works for The State of Texas teaching DWI classes, and counsels repeat chemical dependency offenders.

When Coach Abraham was asked how he keeps his team constantly great, he says, "Hard work, dedication, and commitment helps the students get better at sports, and physical education." He is a great leader at our school, and we appreciate his time and efforts that inspire us every day.