



  
**VIDA**  
Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

## 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

IMPACTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE REGION...ONE VIDA AT A TIME

## A Message from the Chairman of the Board

I have witnessed firsthand the Valley's unprecedented growth. As in business, explosive growth creates both opportunity and a unique set of challenges. Unless we are unwavering in our commitment to education and skills development, our region will have an impressive population growth, but the opportunities will vanish.

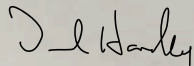
The Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) provides the four county area (Hidalgo, Cameron, Starr and Willacy) with a proven model of success. The program combines financial assistance with wrap around support services for our underserved, adult population to access and successfully complete programs of post secondary education and training needed to fuel our region's growth. A skilled workforce has a direct and far reaching effect on our ability to recruit new industry and expand existing businesses, large and small.

The report of the activities, partnerships, projects and performance during fiscal year 2009-2010 is of particular satisfaction to VIDA. Seven hundred and one individuals living at or below national poverty, on public assistance, or unemployed were provided with financial assistance and guidance/counseling to change their lives. 701 individuals who committed to full time enrollment; to attendance and grades; to weekly counseling sessions; during which, soft skills, financial literacy, and employment transition techniques were introduced by VIDA's capable and committed case managers. More than two hundred individuals graduated this year from various programs of study throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Some will continue with their educational journey and of those reporting wages, the average is in excess of \$40,000 per year!

The University of Texas-Pan American recently conducted an Economic Impact Study on VIDA's model and the results were impressive: *for every one dollar invested in the program, there is a return of \$6.89 to the communities we serve.* This economic impact is due primarily to our graduates' abilities to secure high paying jobs in demand occupations. Employment allows them disposable income that is infused in every aspect of our local economy and stimulates the economic growth of our region.

VIDA's Board of Directors and staff are very proud of the partnerships we have forged with community leaders, employers, colleges and universities and the impact we have made towards sustainable economic growth in our region. As partners, our challenge is to do more. To train more, to assist more individuals in their quest for self sufficiency. That is our challenge. Steadfast focus and collaborative effort is our commitment.

Sincerely,



David Handley  
Chairman of the Board



### OUR MISSION

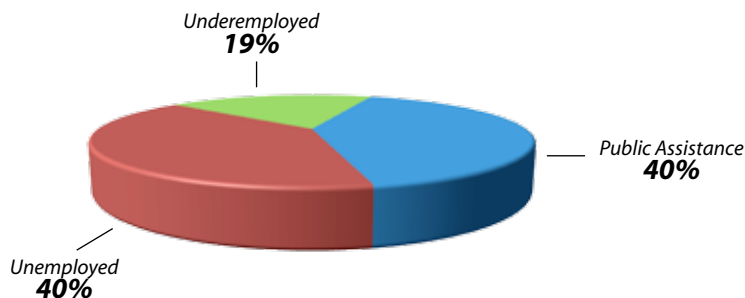
*To formulate new institutional relationships in the Rio Grande Valley that simultaneously address employers' needs for skilled workers and link the area's unemployed and underemployed with high skilled, high wage demand jobs identified in the region. The program provides job training services to economically disadvantaged, unemployed and underemployed adults with family responsibilities.*

# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT YEAR AT A GLANCE

**701 VALLEY RESIDENTS  
WERE SERVED BY VIDA DURING  
2009-2010 FISCAL YEAR**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME UPON GRADUATION:  
\$40,102.40 PER YEAR PLUS BENEFITS**

## FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY



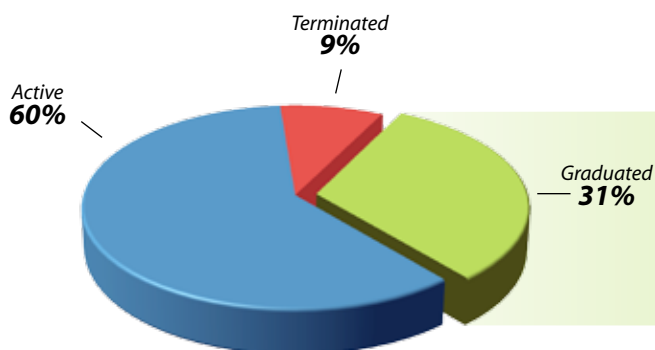
- ▶ **73%** *Between the Ages of 25 and 60 Years old*
- ▶ **27%** *25 years old or less*
- ▶ **56%** *26 to 40 years old*
- ▶ **17%** *41-65 years old*

▶ **56%** *First Time in College* ▶ **68%** *Female* ▶ **32%** *Male*

**For every one dollar invested in the program,  
there is a return of \$6.89 to the communities we serve.**

*Economic Impact Study 2010 - Conducted by the University of Texas-Pan American, Data & Information Systems Center (DISC)*

## PERSISTENCE RATE



- 54%** *Associates Degree*
- 32%** *College Certificate*
- 3%** *Bachelors Degree*
- 6%** *Developmental Education*
- 4%** *Marketable Skills Certificate*

**INDIVIDUAL STUDENT  
TRACKING FALL TO FALL**

	FALL 2009	FALL 2010
PERSISTENCE	88%	84%
GRADUATION	48%	64%



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY

### PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is very simple: A well trained, well educated population will not only be ready for tomorrow's jobs, but will also be able to live a more prosperous, healthy and happy lifestyle. The ultimate goal is job retention, not just job placement, which will develop strong citizens who are self-sufficient taxpayers that provide a clear return on investment of federal, state, local and private funding.

Our graduates have not only helped the families they support and the businesses that now employ them, their ability to successfully rise from the ranks of low-income has helped us all. Their increased earnings have enhanced their contributions to our tax system and reduced their dependence on public assistance. VIDA has demonstrated a model for success by graduating participants into high demand occupations that normally were jobs unfilled or filled at a very high cost by people from outside of our community.

### HISTORY AND SERVICES

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) is a community based, non-profit 501 (c) 3 agency. Created in 1995, VIDA was the result of a local effort led by community leaders of Valley Interfaith (VIF) and private industry business leaders. The impetus was the need to empower the underserved residents of the region with the tools – education and training – to become self sufficient and in tandem, fuel the growth of the existing employers and increase the recruitment of new investment to the area by developing a highly skilled workforce.

Since its inception, the mission of VIDA has remained constant:  
*to formulate new institutional relationships in the Rio Grande Valley that simultaneously address employers' needs for skilled workers and link the area's unemployed and underemployed with high skilled, high wage jobs identified in the region.*

VIDA works closely with the business sector, training providers, and community-based organizations with the mission of developing a skilled workforce to meet the demands of employers in the Rio Grande Valley.



"I know that the struggles that I have overcome will enrich my ability to teach; to connect with students who have the ability and the drive to turn the corner and reroute their future...and I can't wait to get started. Thank you VIDA!"

Delia Zarate, VIDA Alumni from TSTC with an Associate's Degree in Education and Training.



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## VIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. David Handley  
Chairman  
CEO, Valley Regional Medical Center

Mr. Eduardo Anaya  
Vice Chairman  
Law Office of Eduardo Anaya

Ms. Linda Resendez  
Secretary  
CEO, Edinburg Regional Medical Center

Mr. Tony Aguirre  
Owner, T. Aguirre Consulting

Father Heberto M. Diaz, Jr.  
Saint Luke's Catholic Church

Ms. Estela-Soza Garza  
Department of Social Work  
The University of Texas-Pan American

Pastor Javier Leyva  
El Divino Redentor United Methodist Church

Mr. David Oliveira  
Law Offices of Roerig, Oliveira & Fisher

Mr. Jesse Salinas  
CEO, TEDSI Infrastructure Group

Ms. Rosalie Tristan  
Department of Health and Human Services

## COMMUNITY LIAISON

Ms. Elizabeth Valdez  
Lead Organizer, Valley Interfaith

## VIDA STAFF

Myra Caridad García  
Executive Director

Irma García  
Compliance Officer

Daniel Mena  
Director of Finance

Elizabeth Gutierrez  
Sr. Career Counselor/Project Mgr

Bernie Saenz  
Manager of Community Outreach

Edward Cardenas  
IT & Research Coordinator

Raymundo Castillo  
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Ruben García  
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Denise Reyna  
Case Manager-HPRP

Christina Sedeno  
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Amanda Cantu  
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Leevana Jilpas  
Case Aide

Isela Gaytan  
Case Aide

Savannah Valdez  
Intake Coordinator-HPRP

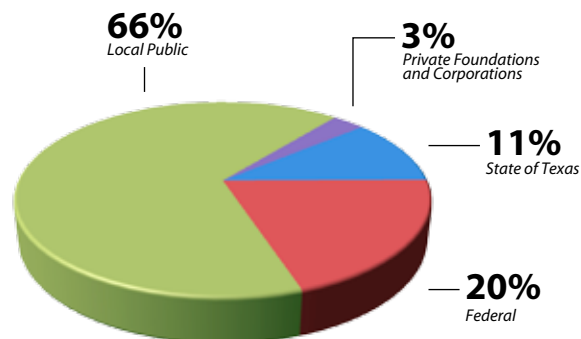
Belinda García  
Accounting Support Specialist

Joanna Delgado  
Accounting Clerk

Cruz Villarreal  
Executive Secretary

Martha Morales  
Receptionist

## FUNDING PARTNERS



## PRIVATE FUNDING PARTNERS

AEP Texas Central Company  
Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation  
Capital One Bank  
Earl C. Sams Foundation, Inc.  
Jobs For The Future  
JP Morgan Chase  
The Meadows Foundation  
The TJX Foundation  
The Raul Tijerina, Jr. Foundation  
The Southwest Border Nonprofit Resource Center  
The Trull Foundation

## PUBLIC FUNDING PARTNERS

Greater Brownsville Incentives Corporation  
Town of Combes  
City of Weslaco  
Edinburg Economic Development Corporation  
Harlingen Economic Development Corporation  
Hidalgo County  
La Feria Economic Development Corporation  
McAllen Economic Development Corporation  
Mercedes Economic Development Corporation  
Mission Economic Development Authority  
Pharr Economic Development Corporation  
Port Isabel Economic Development Corporation  
Weslaco Economic Development Corporation  
Willacy County

## STATE & FEDERAL FUNDING PARTNERS

State of Texas Jobs & Education for Texans Program (JET)  
U.S. Department of Labor: Community Adjustment and Investment Program (CAIP)  
Housing & Urban Development: Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

# 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## 15th YEAR ANNIVERSARY



This past year, Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) celebrated its 15th year anniversary. In 1995, VIDA was created as a result of local efforts led by Valley Interfaith, community leaders and private business leaders of the Rio Grande Valley to assist the underserved adult population attain high-wage jobs in order to sustain their family households. Celebrating this event were VIDA staff, participants and a delegation of dignitaries including U.S. Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, District 20 State Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa, District 39 State Representative Armando Martinez, District 41 State Representative Veronica Gonzales and City of Edinburg Mayor Richard García. Father Alfonso Guevara and Mrs. Mary Rose Cardenas were recognized

as members of VIDA’s first Board of Directors. Congressman Hinojosa presented VIDA Executive Director Myra C. García and Chairman of the Board, David Handley with a proclamation recognizing the efforts of VIDA over the past 15 years in the assistance and counseling services to over 5,000 Valley residents, enabling them to get an education and secure high-wage, high-skilled jobs here in the Valley.

## CURRENT LABOR CONDITIONS

VIDA’s objective is to assist the under-served and unemployed adult population of the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley by providing financial assistance and career counseling in their quest to obtain an Associate’s degree, college certificate or marketable skills certificate for demand occupations. By removing financial and social barriers to training and education, our participants are able to secure high wage, skilled positions. VIDA’s efforts are helping to lower unemployment, one VIDA at a time.

Job training and education is the key to having a qualified workforce. It is no longer enough to have a young population. In today’s market, we must have an abundant, enthusiastic, skilled work force with the highest work ethic. This often times includes support through GED preparation and/or our College Prep Academy and then, transition into a postsecondary occupational training program.

This past fiscal year, the Rio Grande Valley averaged an alarming unemployment rate of 11.41%, according to employment numbers from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. This staggering statistic emphasizes the urgent need to continue to invest in our human capital through education and training.

## DIRECT EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT

MARCH	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	HS DIPLOMA GED	% CHANGE	ASSOCIATES	% CHANGE	SPREAD
2000	4.1%	6.9%	3.5%	3.4%	2.6%	0.9%	4.3%
2005	5.1%	7.7%	4.5%	3.2%	3.8%	0.7%	3.9%
2010	9.6%	14.9%	10.8%	4.1%	8.3%	2.5%	6.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics *Monthly Labor Review* February 2001, 2006 - National Statistics  
U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics *Employment & Earnings* January 2011.

## VIDA GRANT PROGRESS REPORT\*



THE JOBS AND EDUCATION FOR  
TEXANS (JET) FUND  
[www.everychanceeverytexas.org](http://www.everychanceeverytexas.org)

	CAMERON COUNTY	LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY
BENCHMARK	80	105
TOTAL SERVED (YTD)	85	116
GRADUATED	43	61
AVG. WAGE	\$18.02	\$18.39

\*Data as of June 15, 2011

# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## SUCCESS STORIES



### NOELIA BENAVIDEZ

a McAllen resident, was working at Wal-Mart earning \$12,000 per year when she came to VIDA. Benavidez had limited job options since she did not have a high school education. With help from VIDA's dedicated career counselors, Benavidez obtained her GED and successfully completed her college entrance exam, which allowed her to enroll in college without having to take remedial courses. She was a single parent with English as her second language, so she struggled throughout her education. Despite all obstacles, Noelia graduated and earned her certificate as a Licensed Vocational Nurse. VIDA provided her with financial and career counseling, which enabled her to realize her dream of becoming a nurse. Benavidez is now working at Doctor's Renaissance Hospital earning \$60,000 per year.



### ARTHUR RIOS

of Edinburg, worked every day of his life. Rios was enjoying his retirement with his wife when his son was diagnosed with cancer. His son didn't have the money to pay the medical bills. Rios and his wife did all they could do but as their retirement savings evaporated due to the medical bills, so did their dream of retirement. Rios no longer had the money to pay his son's medical bills. He knew he needed to find a job and quick. At age 65, finding a job would be challenging and after mulling over his options he decided to contact trucking companies since they hire drivers regardless of their age. In order to get hired by a trucking company, he knew he needed to get a commercial driver's license (CDL) but found out the cost of the training was \$4,000 and he didn't have the money. Rios applied for and was approved to receive assistance from VIDA and quickly enrolled at South Texas College to earn his CDL. Rios completed his training and is now employed as a commercial truck driver for Swift Trucking earning \$16.25 an hour.



### MARIA GALVAN

a single parent from Port Isabel, was working as a teacher's aide for 11 years, earning minimum wage before contacting VIDA. One day the principal from the school where she worked told her she should be teaching and from that point on she began dreaming of the possibility. She decided to look into it and enrolled at the University of Texas at Brownsville shortly thereafter. Galvan admitted she thought about giving up on her dream of becoming a teacher often during her drive each night to and from Brownsville, but she knew a degree would be the key to a better life for her and her daughter. Today, with degree in hand, she is employed at Port Isabel Junior High School as a reading teacher and coach earning \$50,000 per year.



### JACQUELINE NUÑEZ

of Harlingen was a University of Texas at Brownsville student in the Associates Nursing Program. Nuñez was a dedicated student but her financial hardships threatened her ability to continue in school full time as required by the curriculum. Nuñez was unemployed and although she received public assistance her struggle to make ends meet during her first year really made her question her ability to fulfill her dream of becoming a registered nurse...until she turned to VIDA! In the Spring of 2010, Nuñez's dream came true! Nuñez is currently employed as a Registered Nurse at a BRM Home Health in Harlingen earning \$54,000 per year with full benefits.



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## SUCCESS STORIES



### CHARLES CUVILLIER

a single parent from Brownsville, knew he needed to turn his life around. After many trials and tribulations, Cuvillier made the life altering decision to pursue a college education; a decision he made as much for himself as he did for his son. Financially, this commitment meant that he and his son move in with his sister and six other family members. In spite of the family support, Cuvillier was not able to stay the course without additional resources. "If it wasn't for the financial assistance and guidance from my career counselor, I would not have been able to walk across the stage and receive my associate's degree in Emergency Medical Science" commented Mr. Cuvillier at VIDA's 15 year anniversary celebration this past October. "I will continue to be a part of VIDA as an Alumnus and do my part to help others who want to help themselves". Today Cuvillier works as a paramedic for the City of Port Isabel and as a clinical instructor and lab assistant at UTB/TSC earning \$21.00 per hour.



### JUAN VALLE

a McAllen resident, graduated from South Texas College as a registered nurse in 2005. Prior to contacting VIDA, he was in public housing and receiving public assistance. He worked as a waiter, at a call center, and part-time at a hospital as a clerk. During that time he never earned more than \$10,000 per year. Valle struggled financially trying to support his wife and son while attending college. VIDA assisted Valle with tuition, books, uniforms, gas money and career counseling. He is now working as a registered nurse at Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance Behavioral Center earning \$80,000 per year. In time, his wife enrolled at UTPA, graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing and is now employed at Rio Grande Regional Hospital as a registered nurse earning \$52,000 per year. Valle is proud to say *he* was able to pay for his wife's education.



### KEITH SCHWEIKERT

of McAllen was trying to make a better life for himself. Schweikert had worked in the manufacturing business in Mississippi and Wisconsin, but due to plant closures and buy-outs, he moved to McAllen to work as a die cast manager but a little more than a year later, the plant closed down as well. After thinking about his options, he knew he wanted to work with his hands and since he was living in the Valley, the Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning program was the perfect choice. He enrolled at South Texas College and began working towards earning an associate's degree. His educational trek was a difficult one as he was on unemployment and his vehicle was constantly in need of repair. If not for the case manager's support and financial assistance VIDA provided, Schweikert stated he wouldn't have been able to graduate. Today at age 49, Schweikert is working for Regal Beloit in McAllen, as group leader earning \$38,000 per year with full benefits.



### MELISSA ORTIZ

Ortiz is the eldest of four children raised by her mom who widowed very young. The family's sole source of income was social security survivor benefits and the money her mother made from garage sales. Ortiz was conflicted by the need to work to help support the family or pursuing her dream of being a nurse. During her last semester, an emotional Ortiz thanked Brownsville City Commissioners and said "I want to help my mom. I want to be the real life example for my younger brother and sisters that things will be different if they get an education and work hard". Now she can. Pending her board exams, Ortiz plans to work at a Brownsville hospital where she volunteered during high school and will make \$45,760 per year with benefits. Ortiz is not done yet as she intends to someday return to school to obtain her bachelor's degree in Nursing. Her long term goal is to be a nurse practitioner, a goal that she will no doubt accomplish!



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## TRUE HOMELESS PREVENTION

**72%** of the individuals served with HPRP funds either entered or were able to continue with their education because of the HPRP assistance.

**29%** of these individuals GRADUATED from a program of study.

**46%** of the individuals that graduated, transitioned to the next level of education *(i.e., graduated from a College Certificate Program and continued to an Associate's Degree)*

**Average wage of the individuals that graduated and entered the workforce is \$13.64 an hour...**  
**\$28,371 per year**

The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and is funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The intent is to assist individuals who are either homeless or face the imminent threat of homelessness.

VIDA is a sub-grantee to both the City of McAllen CDBG, as well as Hidalgo County - Urban County Office.

Committed to the notion that the only true, long term prevention strategy to homelessness is to break the cycle of poverty, VIDA partnered with McAllen and Hidalgo County and leveraged training dollars to achieve that goal. By empowering individuals with the tools, *education and training*, to successfully compete for good paying, demand occupations, we are able to address and remove the threat of homelessness.

Individuals that meet the very stringent HPRP eligibility criteria can receive rent and utilities for up to eighteen months. However, VIDA only assists individuals with HPRP funds if: (1) they are willing to enter into a program of study/training; (2) they are currently in a program of study and are faced with the threat of homelessness. VIDA leverages its resources to assist with the cost of training (tuition, books, uniforms, etc.) with an individual assessment of need.

The message is very clear. If there is an individual that truly wants to make a change in her/his quality of life, VIDA, the City of McAllen, and Hidalgo County will make that investment and provide the financial assistance, career counseling, and support services; the other half of the success is provided by the individual's desire and commitment.

We are very proud to report that this program has had the success demonstrated below:

	Did not Enter Training		Existing VIDA		New VIDA		Student Non-VIDA		Total Served	Graduated	Transition Continuing Education	Average Wage
McALLEN CDBG	3	9%	15	43%	8	23%	9	26%	35	10	6	\$ 12.86
HIDALGO CO.	30	37%	18	22%	5	6%	28	35%	81	14	5	\$ 14.27
TOTAL	33	28%	33	28%	13	11%	37	32%	116	24	11	\$ 13.64

SAVE THE DATE  
**OCTOBER 15th**

GRADUATION CELEBRATION & ALUMNI RECOGNITION

For more information, please visit our website at: [www.vidacareers.org](http://www.vidacareers.org)  
 or call our office at: 1-800-478-1770

# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## COLLEGE PREP ACADEMY

VIDA's College Prep Academy was created in partnership with South Texas College and has proven to be highly successful. Many new VIDA Participants are academically unprepared for college. A statewide study in 2007 showed only 25% of those who took Texas' required college entrance exam passed the math section on the first attempt and enrolled in college-level classes. Community colleges enroll those who cannot pass the exam in remedial classes, but this model is not working well.



After VIDA participants attend our intensive five days per week, six hours per day College Prep Academy, 82% of participants are college ready as they passed at least two of three sections of the college entrance exams. Of that 82%, **64% passed all three of the sections with no further developmental education required.** Additionally, 70% of the total served passed the math section of the college entrance exams in just one semester. This compares with the same 2007 group statewide mentioned above that required remediation—only 15.1% passed the math section of the exam one year later.

Number of College Prep Academy Sessions	Cumulative Enrollment	Completed College Prep Academy	Met Math Standards on the College Entrance Exam	Satisfied College Entrance Requirements	Satisfied College Entrance Requirements and Started College Courses	Graduated	Persistence Rate: Graduated or Continuing Training
12	199	96%	70%	82%	70%	44%	73%*

\* 73% Persistence Rate in College (44% graduated and 29% still actively enrolled in college coursework)



### EUSEBIO AGUIRRE

was working as a health care provider earning \$6.50 an hour when he applied at VIDA. With the help of VIDA he enrolled in Pharr's Region One Adult Learning Center and obtained his GED in Spring 2007. He then enrolled in VIDA's College Prep Academy and passed his college entrance exam. He still had doubts about enrolling in college due to his limited English speaking skills. He remembered his case manager telling him that if nurses whose first language was not English were working in the U.S., then why would he be any different? He said that motivated him to pursue the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) Program at South Texas College (STC). He enrolled in Fall 2007. He was accepted in the LVN Program at STC in Fall 2008 and graduated in Fall 2009. He passed the Texas Board of Nursing in February 2010 and is now employed at an adult day care earning \$41,600 per year with benefits.

[www.vidacareers.org](http://www.vidacareers.org)

Visit our website for the most up to date news and information relative to our organization and community developments pertaining to postsecondary education.

Employers can navigate to the Employment Page to view VIDA Alumni resumes or post job openings.

Visit VIDA's Calendar for the next orientation dates and locations and register online.

**1-800-478-1770**



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## SUCCESS STORIES



### RAUL LEOS

a resident of McAllen, married father of three children on public assistance, was determined to make a better life for his family. Leos had started work towards an associate's degree in Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD). Despite working full time with night schedules earning \$5.15 per hour, Leos struggled daily to support his family and still keep his dream of a better life through education alive. His ability to stay the course of his program of study was compromised. Thanks to the financial assistance, career guidance and soft skills training received from VIDA coupled with Leos' determination to make a positive change in his life; he proudly walked across the stage at STC and accepted his degree with his children watching proudly. Today Leos works for the City of McAllen as Graphic Information Systems (GIS) Technician earning \$35,000 a year with full benefits.



### JOSE SALINAS

a married man with two children, had worked fulltime for an oilfield company, when after seven years on the job, he was laid off. Salinas used the money he received from his unemployment benefits along with other public assistance to support his family but he still struggled to make ends meet. He wanted to make a change in his life to provide for his family and knew that education and skills development of a specialized trade was the plan. With VIDA's financial assistance and counseling, Salinas completed his program of study and received a college certificate from STC in Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC). While Salinas worked for the oil field company he earned \$34,000 a year; today with his HVAC license, Jose earns \$40,000 a year with full benefits.



### JOSE QUINTERO AND JAVIER ROCHA

Friends Jose Quintero (left) and Javier Rocha (right), both recent graduates from the Respiratory Technician program (average entry level wage of \$33,000), pose with their Associate's degrees from at South Texas College (STC). Quintero, a married father of four, knew he needed to return to school after being laid off as a loan officer at a small finance company. Rocha who was also laid off, struggled daily to support himself and his two children. Education was the only plan that made sense. With limited resources and as heads of household, Quintero and Rocha were challenged to commit to the rigorous, full time program of study without the financial help and counseling received from VIDA. Today both Quintero and Rocha are preparing for their state certification exams and are anxious to begin their new careers...and their new lives!



### EDWARD CARDENAS

pictured with his parents, Edward shares a proud moment as his wife, Areli, receives her Associates Degree in Nursing. Cardenas and his wife are both VIDA Alumni. Edward received an Associates Degree in Computer Networking and is pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Computer Programming from STC. Areli intends to register at the University of Texas at Brownsville's School of Nursing. Edward is still a part of VIDA, not only as an Alumni but also as the Information Technology and Research Coordinator for the Agency.



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## FUNDING PARTNERS

### The Meadows Foundation

This past year, VIDA was awarded \$80,000 by the Meadows Foundation for its continuous success in assisting the underserved adult population of the Rio Grande Valley. The Foundation is among the most recognized private foundations in the country. It seeks out programs and services, such as VIDA, that employ imaginative, innovative ways to solve community problems. The Meadows Foundation was established by Algur H. and Virginia S. Meadows from wealth accumulated by Mr. Meadows through the creation of General American Oil Company, at one time among the largest private oil and gas companies in the United States. The Meadows Foundation exists to assist people and institutions of Texas improve the quality and circumstances of life for themselves and future generations. Since its inception through 2007, they have awarded over \$660 million in grants to Texas institutions and agencies.

*"I have seen over and over again the profound transformations that this Project has made... As a pastor, I believe these are resurrection stories – not from life to death, but from the dead ends of minimum wage jobs and poverty to the new life of tax payers, home owners, and role models of college graduation for their children."*

**Rev. Wayne Kendrick**

Board Member, Project ARRIBA (VIDA's sister organization in El Paso, Texas)

### THE RAUL TIJERINA, Jr. FOUNDATION

As a rancher, banker, businessman and community leader, Raul Tijerina, Jr. touched many lives across the Rio Grande Valley. In life, he directed his resources and his efforts to the development and expansion of public causes and services, and to the enrichment of his fellow citizens with quality, accessible education. In working with community organizations, he came to realize that the greatest resources in any community are the people and nonprofit organizations who volunteer their knowledge, skills, time and good-will in service to their friends and neighbors. It was his dream to someday create an organization that would carry on beyond his lifetime, the encouragement and support of these volunteers and public organizations who work unselfishly to strengthen and enhance the people and communities of South Texas. As a result, Tijerina founded the Raul Tijerina, Jr. Foundation, which provides financial support for nonprofit groups, such as VIDA, operating in and directly benefiting the people of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy counties. Areas of primary interest to the Foundation include youth, education, health, human services, community development, cultural, arts and humanities programs. Because of VIDA's proven results in the four county area of the Valley, VIDA was awarded a generous grant to continue its efforts to assist the underserved adult population of the Valley. It is with the help of such foundations that VIDA is impacting sustainable economic growth in the region, one VIDA at a time.



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## FUNDING PARTNERS

### EARL C. SAMS FOUNDATION

The Earl C. Sams Foundation, Inc. is a charitable private family foundation created by Earl C. Sams in New York in 1946. The original assets of the Foundation consisted of 40,000 shares of common stock of J. C. Penney Company. The administration of the Foundation was originally conducted in New York, but after the death of Earl C. Sams in 1950, the administration was moved to Texas. Since its inception in 1946, the Foundation has given out over \$37 million in grants. The Foundation awards grants to a wide array of non-profits and charities, primarily in the South Texas area, for many projects in various educational, medical, social, religious and environmental fields. And, as with the case of other grants, VIDA was awarded a generous grant that helped 113 individuals in the Valley break the cycle of poverty.

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**701 economically disadvantaged Valley residents were served by VIDA in FY 2010, earning an average salary of \$40,102 upon graduation**

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### PARTNERS FOR POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS - UNITED WAY OF BROWNSVILLE

For generations of Americans, the high school diploma delivered on the value of an education. It gave you a ticket to the American Dream. That meant a steady job to support your family and a chance to launch a career. But now, a high school diploma is no longer enough. The median wage for workers with no college is now close to the poverty line for a family of four. That leaves only one path out of poverty; education, a college education. Whether it comes as a Certificate, an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree, a postsecondary credential is the best bridge between poor adults and good jobs. College enrollment has grown nearly 35 percent since 1970. More young people are enrolling in college than ever before. But the payoff doesn't come with enrolling in college; the payoff comes when students get a postsecondary degree that helps them get a job with a wage that enables them to support themselves and/or their family, and that doesn't happen nearly enough. The college completion rate has faltered dramatically since the 1970's. The United States was once first in the world in postsecondary completion rates, we now rank tenth. The Partners for Postsecondary Success, a MDC Initiative, funded by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, recognizes the seriousness of this issue and has allocated funds to various organizations to address the problem of young people enrolling in college but failing to get a certificate or degree. If funded, the team led by **United Way of Brownsville** and including BISD, UTB-TSC, private sector and VIDA; will implement an aggressive plan to increase post-secondary completion for disadvantaged families in Brownsville, Texas.



# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## FUNDING PARTNERS



South Texas College (STC), Workforce Solutions LRGV and VIDA partnered in 2009 on a pilot project funded by *Jobs for the Future*. This Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) Career Pathway has allowed 24 individuals the opportunity to prepare concurrently for a GED and a Certified Nursing Assistant license. A seamless progression is built into a concurrent curriculum for Patient Care Assistant Certificate and a hybrid of the College Prep Academy to prepare for the college entrance exam. Once completed, this accelerated program design will lead participants directly to the LVN program.

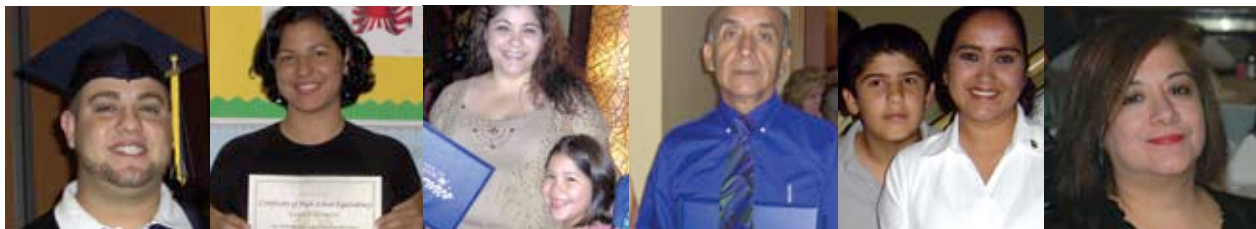
The average age of the participants in this pilot is 36 years old and 75% are first generation immigrants from Mexico. This unique program allows individuals, who are not English proficient, the chance to start with a GED and propel forward with a career pathway towards a LVN license. We are proud to report that nearly two years into the partnership, there is a 92% retention rate. *Jobs for the Future* identifies, develops and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states and the nation compete in a global economy. *Jobs for the Future* improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers.



The Southwest Border Nonprofit Resource Center's (SBNRC) mission is to facilitate the sustainable development and growth of the nonprofit community of the Southwest border region by providing leadership in nonprofit leadership development, training and management, leveraging partnerships and networks, conducting nonprofit research, educating UTPA students as resources for the nonprofit community, providing consulting services where needed, and serving as a technical resource. In September 2010 SBNRC awarded funding to update VIDA's technology infrastructure in order strengthen our ability to serve our clients. It was awarded under the Stronger Together Initiative, a program funded by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), designed to build capacity of local nonprofits to address the pressing issues in the South Texas region: academic attrition, high unemployment and poverty, low educational levels, poor housing, lack of adult education and job training programs, and access to basic public services.

### JPMorganChase

In 2010, JPMorgan Chase and its Foundation gave more than \$150 million through grants and sponsorships to thousands of not-for-profit organizations. Working with best-in-class community-based partners such as VIDA that addresses workforce development, JPMorgan Chase's goal is to help stabilize families living in high-poverty neighborhoods and to make that stability echo through a neighborhood in a manner that improves educational and job opportunities and dramatically raises the quality of life for their residents. VIDA has received funding from JP Morgan Chase for six years and looks forward continuing their partnership for years to come.





# VIDA 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## FUNDING PARTNERS



Capital One and VIDA partnered to help educate VIDA participants on the basics of money management and its importance. Capital One provides training to the counselors who, in turn, teach participants. A financial literacy course, consisting of six modules, including Understanding Credit, Money Management, Banking Basics, Rebuilding Credit, Identity Theft and Saving to Building Wealth, is presented to VIDA participants during their counseling sessions. We are grateful for Capital One's generous grant.

### Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation

The Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation is a Bexar County Private Foundation that makes grants to qualified nonprofit organizations serving 50 specific counties in south and central Texas. The Foundation awards grants for arts/culture, charitable, education, literary, medical, and scientific purposes. The Foundation was created by Alice Kleberg Reynolds Meyer who was a member of the legendary King Ranch family and was a renowned arts patron whose generous donations and gifts of time touched many important cultural institutions in Austin, San Antonio and South Texas.



The TJX Foundation has a primary mission of contributing to programs that provide basic-need services to disadvantaged women, children and families in communities in which they do business. TJX supported VIDA through its efforts to provide academic and vocational opportunities for the disadvantaged-including early-intervention, mentoring, tutoring, GED, and college coursework as well as programs that teach people to speak, read and write English. In 2010, The TJX Foundation alone supported more than 1,300 nonprofit organizations in the United States.

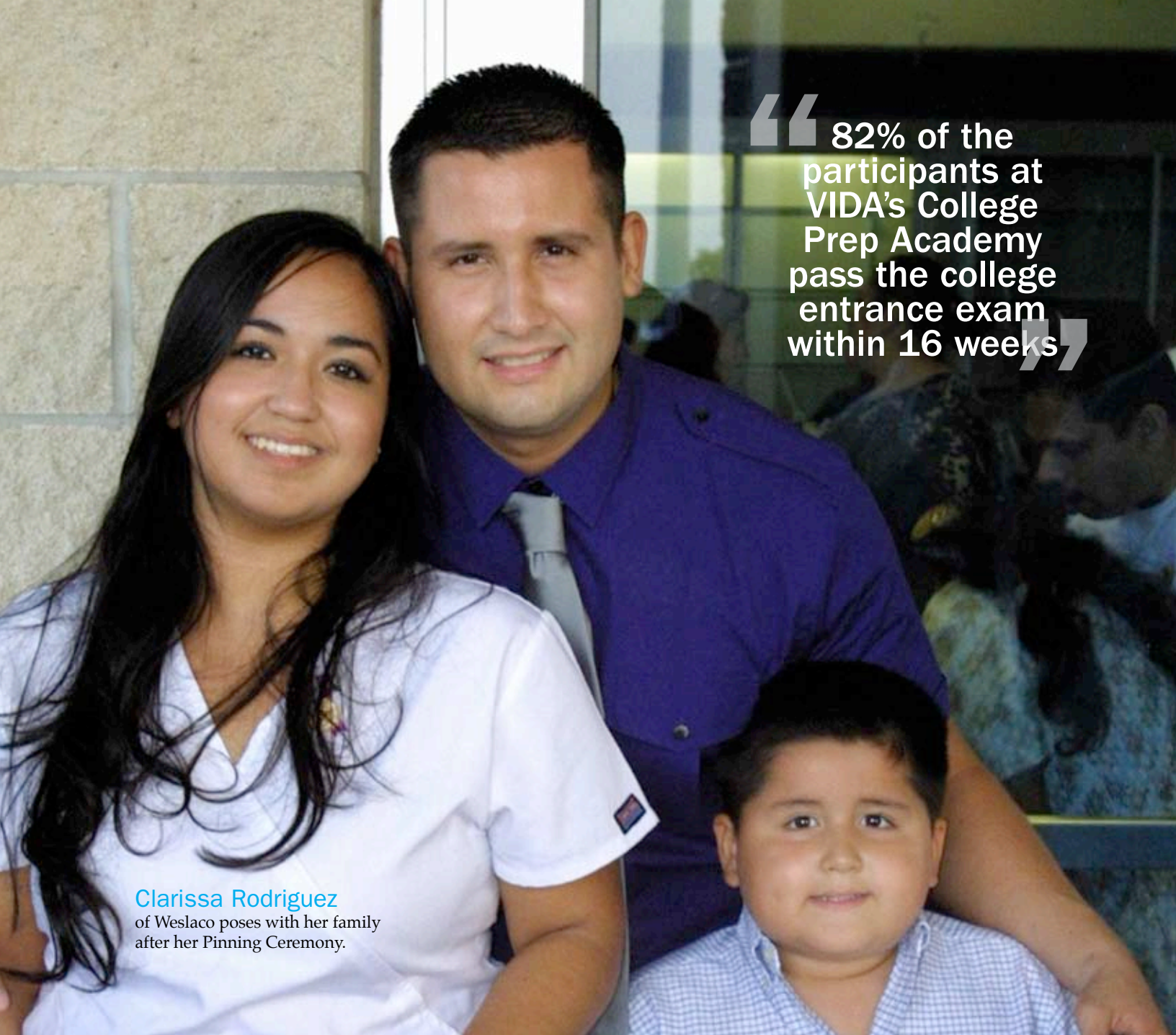
### The Trull Foundation

For over sixty years the Trull Foundation have been actively interested in various educational, religious, cultural and social programs, the majority of which have been in the State of Texas. The Trull Foundation continues to be concerned with people, with improving the quality of life, especially for those living in poor or oppressed conditions. One of their giving priorities is to direct and channel lives away from child abuse, neglect from hunger, and poverty.



American Electric Power has a strong tradition of leadership, service and contributions to the communities they serve. AEP is a financial supporter of non-profit organizations like VIDA whose focus is improving the quality of life. AEP's giving is meant to help non-profit organizations address and positively impact community life.





“ 82% of the participants at VIDA's College Prep Academy pass the college entrance exam within 16 weeks ”

**Clarissa Rodriguez**  
of Weslaco poses with her family  
after her Pinning Ceremony.



Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

**1.800.478.1770**

[www.vidacareers.org](http://www.vidacareers.org)