

12 Days of Christmas Recipient Thanks United Way of South Texas

On Saturday May 14, 2011 I became the first person to graduate from college in my family. I graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelors of Business Administration in Information and Operations Management. But I couldn't have gotten to this day without the help and support of the United Way of South Texas.



My family was featured in the "12 Days of Christmas Project" back in December of 2006. My mother had been diagnosed with Guillian Barre, a rare respiratory illness and was bed ridden. My father and I struggled to make ends meet as money was very scarce. I was a senior in high school and cared for my mother and eight smaller siblings. As my high school graduation neared, I knew I had to make a decision about staying here in Edinburg or pursuing a college education outside the Rio Grande Valley. I had worked hard throughout all my school years to get good grades to be accepted into top schools. My mother was by my side all my life guiding me and supporting me. She always encouraged me and pushed me to be the best I could be, and always go above and beyond if the chance permitted. When the time came to decide on what college I would be attending my mother said to me "Mija, you have worked so hard all these years to get good grades and you deserve to continue pursuing your goals and dreams, don't you dare stop here because of me". My mother knew that I had my heart set on Texas A&M University and when I got accepted she encouraged me and supported my decision on attending the university.

The first semester away from home was terrible. I felt guilty for leaving my family and my mother. I felt my hands tied being so far away from home and not being able to provide for my family. As the first semester came to an end, I decided to come back home. I couldn't bare the fact that my family was still living in very poor conditions. I knew that I didn't have a choice but to drop out of college and come back and start working. I wanted to be able to work and try to give my family better living conditions; because I knew that the house we lived in depressed my mother greatly thereby affecting her condition.

When I informed my mother of my decision to come back home, she immediately disagreed and said that there would be a way to work out this situation. She said to me, "I will get us a new home, I may not be able to do much bound to this bed, but I will get us a home". So my mother wrote a letter to the United Way explaining our situation and the United Way came through once again, and gave our family a new home! This home not only aided my mother's health, but it gave me the chance to be able to continue my education. The United Way staff worked with many generous individuals that made monetary contributions (above their normal annual donations) totaling to \$9500 for the purchase of a refurbished mobile home. There were numerous "in kind" donations by others including: moving and setting up the mobile home, construction, home goods, furniture and appliances and labor to assemble beds, chests of drawers, etc. My Mother was able to enjoy at least two years of living in a comfortable home surrounded by my Father, Brothers and Sisters.

Today, words cannot express how thankful I am and will always be to the United Way of South Texas and the community of the Rio Grande Valley for giving my family a new home and providing me with the opportunity to pursue my college education. Even though my mother did not have the opportunity to see me graduate, I know that wherever she is, she is very proud of me. I will never forget this kind gesture, and I hope to one day be able to give back to the community and work with the United Way in helping other families. Thank you, "to our people and our community", this is how we LIVE UNITED, the United Way of South Texas.
~Ana Rosa Maldonado



United Way of South Texas

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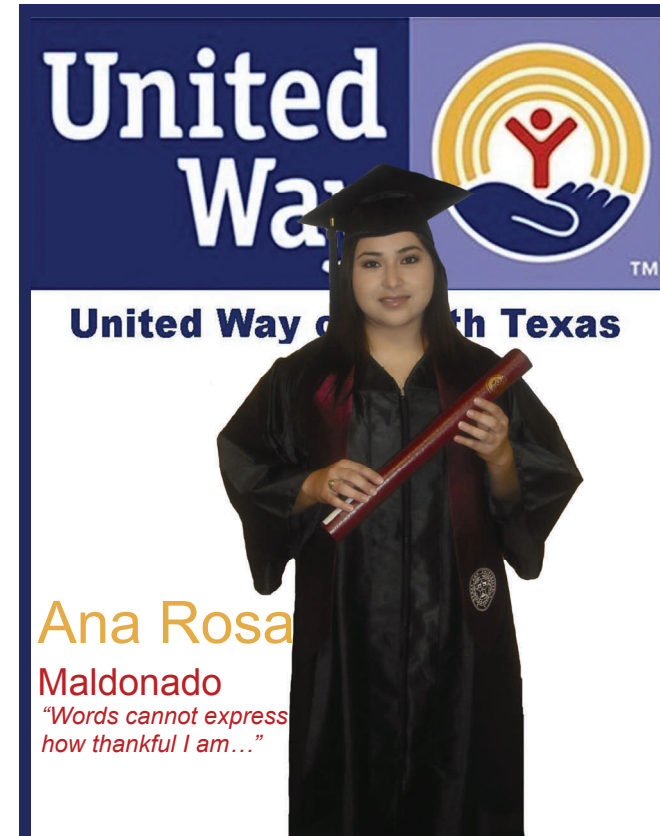
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NEWSLETTER

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Ana Rosa
Maldonado
*"Words cannot express
how thankful I am..."*

2011
Loaned Executive Recruiting

Transportation
VOUCHERS

ETIC
Earned Income Tax Credit

16th Annual
Back to School "In Style" Shopping Spree

LIVE UNITED™

**Ismael Moran
2011 Board Chair**



Thank you for your lasting support of the United Way of South Texas. We are looking forward to seeing our Pacesetter companies pave the road for our 2011 Campaign.

Conveying our message will need to be stronger than ever and I know that our Board of Directors, Loaned Executives, Agencies and United Way will stand together to send our message to our community on Education, Health, Income and Safety Net. I know that with your support, we can and will reach our goal this year. Our 2011 Campaign Kick-off will be tied together with our Day of Caring/Project Fresh Start. I look forward to seeing everyone at the United Way Kick-off in July and to the 2011 Campaign.

**Dennis Wade
2011 Campaign Chair**



We are well on our way to launching the 2011 campaign and we fully expect to make our goal of \$3,000,000. The board is actively involved in reaching out to companies in our community. We really are in this together, but the majority of the enormous effort is going to come from you.

The United Way of South Texas is blessed to have dedicated volunteers whose efforts make a difference and strengthen the foundation. Every effort, no matter how small it may seem, makes a big difference. The wonderful people of this dynamic area prove over and over again that they are extremely generous when the issue is helping our neighbors, friends and relatives that are in need.

We need your help to continue to do the wonderful work of The United Way of South Texas. With your help we will, LIVE UNITED.

Loaned Executive Training Dates



Robert Palomin, Director of H.E.B. Regional Operations for the Rio Grande Valley, will conduct the 2011 Loaned Executive Training. This is the 7th consecutive year that he has dedicated personal time to this endeavor. Mr. Palomin's executive

and community involvement experiences allow him to provide dynamic team building training sessions. He will lead our 2011 Loaned Executive team in several management educational and leadership sessions on **August 7th – August 9th**. His contribution has directly impacted the success of the annual campaign.

Day of Caring



Two-hundred and Sixty Community volunteers participated in our 2010 Day of Caring. The Day of Caring/Project Fresh Start will begin June 29th in Rio Grande City where 1,000

Freshmen will be given school supplies. On July 16th, Day of Caring/Project Fresh Start will culminate at the Salvation Army where supplies for 2,000 Freshmen will be sorted for distribution to pre-selected students.

Back to School "In Style" Shopping Spree



Thanks to Target and AEP, 120 students from various school districts will be receiving a Target gift card of \$150 to purchase school supplies, clothing and personal hygiene items for the new school year. School Districts in Hidalgo and Starr Counties will receive more shopping slots than ever before.

United Way of South Texas will also coordinate haircuts for students and Target will provide each student back-packs and school supplies. Volunteers from several Companies will serve as "Shopping Buddies" who will assist the students with their purchases.

**(EITC) Earned Income Tax Credit -
(VITA) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance**



With funding from United Way of South Texas, Children's Defense Fund has provided direct services with Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to families in our areas. With the help of volunteers trained by IRS, families get free tax preparation and have additional income. United Way will expand this service in 2012.

Transportation Vouchers



Transportation Vouchers are distributed by 28 agencies throughout Hidalgo and Starr Counties. Over 7,000 vouchers have been given to participating agencies to assist individuals to keep medical appointments and job interviews.

With this assistance, individuals are able to remain independent and self-sufficient. The City of McAllen secured a \$79,000 grant from the Freedom Act, this increased the number of residents being served in Hidalgo County.

In Starr County, United Way of South Texas has worked directly with Rainbow Transportation. With this partnership, over 1800 vouchers have been distributed to residents in Starr County.

LatinaHope



LatinaHope 2011 program is designed to promote entrepreneurship amongst Hispanic women in Hidalgo County. These individuals need to have an interest in starting a small business, attend training sessions, and generate a business plan to apply for a grant and or loan consideration.

The LatinaHope is open to community members who are working on new business ideas.