

# OPPORTUNITY

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE<sup>SM</sup>

# NEWS

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## NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

### Gyawali nominated for Minnie Piper Professor Award

Dr. Madhu Gyawali, San Jacinto College South Campus physics professor, is the College's 2021-2022 Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Award nominee. Gyawali has been teaching at San Jac for six years but has more than 20 years' experience at the collegiate level.

"Dr. Gyawali has consistently demonstrated a student focus, excellence in the classroom, innovative thinking, and an unwavering willingness to donate his time and talents to make those around him better, especially his students," said Dr. Christopher Wild, South Campus dean of health and natural sciences.

Since 1958, the non-profit, charitable Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation has recognized outstanding professors from two- and four-year Texas colleges and universities, both public and private. One of its biggest initiatives is the Piper Professor Program.

Annually, it gives 10 awards of \$5,000 to college professors for superior

teaching based on submissions by each college or university.

### Record-breaking number of students selected for All-State music

Seventeen San Jacinto College students have been selected for All-State choir, jazz band, and symphonic band — the highest level community college music students can achieve.

"These students represent the very best among community college musicians in Texas," said Lynne Brandt, department chair, music and audio engineering. "This is the largest group of students we've ever had make these honor ensembles, and we are incredibly proud of them."

Sponsored by the Texas Two-Year College Choral Directors Association and the Texas Community College Band Directors Association, the annual competition required students to audition to be selected. Once selected, they performed concerts during the



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

Texas Music Educators Convention in San Antonio in February and attended clinics and workshops by nationally recognized clinicians.

#### All-State Choir Ensemble:

- Logan DeLaFuente
- Jorge Gonzalez Jr.
- Hannah Hopkins
- Ayanna Nguyen Echeverry
- Alan Phan
- Mariana Vazquez
- Lorna Watson

#### All-State Jazz Band:

- Alex Benitez
- Terrance Teagle

#### All-State Symphonic Band:

- Jordy Cabrera
- Emily Cuevas
- Vicente DelAngel
- Juan Garcia
- Liliana Lopez
- John Mokarzel
- Shawn Niles
- Steven Villanueva

## KIDS LEARN SCIENCE VIA CYBERSPACE

For the second year in a row, local elementary and intermediate students learned hands-on science through cyberspace.

San Jacinto College and Communities In Schools of Southeast Harris and Brazoria County partnered once again for a virtual STEM expo via Zoom Feb. 17. Focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math, the 45-minute expo included pre-recorded presentations by San Jac students, two CIS-ACE campuses, and NASA.

About 400 CIS-ACE Program students and parents logged on from Alvin, Columbia-Brazoria, Galena Park, La Porte, Pasadena, and Pearland independent

school districts.

In their videos, San Jac faculty and students showed how to make shrinky dinks, create decorations with crystal borax, and combine luminol and bleach for liquid light. Expo participants also virtually toured the South Campus observatory deck, watched a professor open her beehives, and tasted the sweet side of science with 10-minute ice cream, rock candy, and solar oven s'mores.

San Jac video creators included Dr. Phuong Doan's honors chemistry students, vocational nursing professor James Chiles and students, and geology professors Dr. Liana Boop and Heather Dalton.

CIS students and staff and NASA also

shared videos, showing how to make elephant toothpaste, how to crush a can, and how astronauts use their five senses in space.

Although the expo will eventually return to face-to-face, the online format kept kids engaged.

"This was the best virtual event so far," said Cheryl Sellers, director of community relations for CIS of Southeast Harris and Brazoria County. "I loved how students facilitated the experiments from the San Jac and Communities In Schools side. San Jac once again did a phenomenal job creating opportunities for children and their families to be exposed to STEM."

San Jac's natural sciences and other

departments created 300 supply kits with promotional College items for students who registered for the event. NASA, another big partner, donated the bags, calendars, and posters.



Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## BARNHILL LEAPS INTO A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH PROCESS TECHNOLOGY DEGREE

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

In 2018, with her first child on the way, Summer Barnhill felt inspired to complete her GED in hopes of forging a better future for her daughter. Now the San Jacinto College student is looking forward to graduation this May.

“I had worked in industrial settings since I was 18 as a fire watch, in scaffolding, industrial painting, and pipefitting,” Barnhill said. “I knew that a job in operations was the way to go.”

Living in La Porte at the time, Barnhill drove by the construction site of the Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology at the Central Campus each day.

“I knew what the facility was going to be, and I saw the glycol unit going up and thought, ‘I really want to go there,’” she said.

She started taking courses in spring 2020 just as the College began altered operations due to COVID-19. Suddenly, her hands-on labs moved online.

“The hybrid learning was hard because the CPET facility has so many awesome hands-on training platforms that we had limited access to,” Barnhill said. “It was tough, but we made the most of the time we had during our lab hours.”

In October 2021, Barnhill joined the CPET PTAC Club, which helps process technology students find jobs, scholarships, and support. By December, she ran for office and stepped up as club president in January 2022.

“When I took over, there were only about 40 members of our club, and now we have about 200,” she said. “I wanted to take a hard look at the work we were trying to accomplish. We needed officers who could build up their fellow students, help with promotions, and create events that would truly help to better our student experience.”

With only weeks left before graduation, Barnhill already has a job lined up as an operator at LyondellBasell.

“LyondellBasell was my No. 1 pick,” she said. “I put all of my eggs in one basket with that one, and it paid off. I knew I

wanted to work there after meeting David Gosnay at a job fair last year. Hearing him speak about the industry was inspiring.”

Barnhill’s current employer couldn’t be prouder of her accomplishments.

“We pride ourselves on being a company that sets our employees up for their future,” said V. Giovanna Hutchinson, CEO, Inouii Alloy Fabrication. “Summer has worked hard every day to achieve this accomplishment, and we know she deserves to be part of the LyondellBasell team. She is an example of perseverance for everyone at Inouii Alloy.”

Barnhill’s future looks bright as she and her wife, Skylar Airhart, will both graduate this May — Barnhill with an Associate of Applied Science degree in



process technology and Airhart with her barber conversion occupational certificate to add to her AAS degree in cosmetology. The couple have a 3-year-old daughter and a son due at the end of May.

“Through my training at San Jac and with this new job, I’m preparing for my family’s future,” Barnhill said. “I grew up in poverty, and I’d like to ensure my children’s futures look different. Breaking generational barriers and setting up opportunities for them that I never had is priceless.”



Photos courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

From left: Allatia Harris, vice chancellor, strategic initiatives, San Jacinto College; Van A. Wigginton, provost, Central Campus; Dr. Brenda Hellyer, Chancellor, San Jacinto College; Summer Barnhill; Garrett Headrick, CPET student; Congressman Brian Babin; and CPET students Hunter Parham and David Davalos.



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INTO THE  
FUTURE**

**SAN JACINTO COLLEGE  
60TH ANNIVERSARY  
GALA**

**MAY 20, 2022**



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# 'A WISH FOR HOPE' PREMIERES AT SOUTH CAMPUS

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The San Jacinto College South Campus Theatre and Film Program will present an original work, "A Wish for Hope," inspired by the experiences and positive spirit of refugees.

Partnering with YMCA International Services, a unique resettlement center of the YMCA of Greater Houston, students interviewed refugee clients from around the globe.

"Their stories are at times heartbreaking and hard to listen to, but with each person we interviewed, we discovered something inspiring," said Frank Vela, program director, theatre and film.

## Giving them a voice

Through networking, Vela met Susie Ventura, YMCA mentoring program director for refugee youth, and they began brainstorming how to connect the two institutions.

"I was interested in telling their stories and supporting them as they venture into a new community as refugees," he said. "Working with Susie has been a great fit for both programs."

Vela and Laura Grayson, the play's director, sat down with six of Ventura's clients, ages 17 to 24, to capture their experiences.

"We didn't direct them on what to tell us," Grayson said. "We just listened. We wanted to give them a public voice in a theatre production that would reflect who they are."

After the interviews, Vela contacted playwright Gabriela Anez to craft a unique story inspired by these refugees. Anez, an American-Venezuelan screenwriter, director, producer, and actress, has placed as a quarterfinalist and semifinalist in international screenwriting competitions.

San Jacinto College South Campus Theatre and Film Program has partnered with Silabam Houston Indian Classical Arts to perform in its ArtStream concert on Saturday, April 9. To watch the concert, visit [silambamhouston.org/artstream](http://silambamhouston.org/artstream).

"I wanted to tell a story about humanity and empathy and connecting on that level," she said. "The subjects have such life, and there is more to them than being a refugee. I wanted to touch on the reasons they left their homes and the unique struggles they have. The characters are relatable. They are real life."

## Creating a better future

Ventura, a San Jac graduate with an associate degree in theatre and film, loved the idea of connecting her refugee clients with an institution she knew had a "great reputation and one they could thrive in, given the opportunity."

"My role is to walk alongside our clients on their journey to becoming productive American citizens," said Ventura. "We help them to learn, lead, and thrive with the support of trained volunteer mentors and through community partners that are willing to develop, explore, and create opportunities that are culturally

sensitive and light-hearted. San Jac answered that call." Many of Ventura's clients had just begun or were almost finishing their higher education journeys when they left their home countries.

"Unfortunately, when they arrive in America, they are often forced to start over not only in education but in every aspect," said Ventura. "But research shows that it can take just one person who cares — in this case, a mentor — to restore hope, build stability, create opportunity, and change futures."

The play focuses on six refugees who planned a workday for Harrison Recovery, a company that employs refugees to clean up a local, run-down park. However, a storm halts their efforts. Rather than burying their thoughts, they choose to share their heartwarming and encouraging stories, discovering the value of empathy and togetherness in the face of challenges.

"A Wish for Hope" opens Thursday, April 21, 7:30 p.m., at the Marie Spence Flickinger Fine Arts Center in the Black

Box Theatre (\$15.135). All performances are free and open to the public. For a complete list of performances, visit [sanjac.edu/theatre-south](http://sanjac.edu/theatre-south).

**A Wish for Hope**  
In Partnership with YMCA International

**Performances**  
April 21 - 23  
April 27\*  
April 28 - 30  
\*Understudy performance

**All performance begin at 7:30pm**

Black Box Theatre (\$15.135)  
Marie Spence Flickinger Fine Arts Center  
Coyote Blvd., Houston TX 77089

San Jacinto College is an Equal Opportunity Institution. All programs, services, and facilities are open to all students, faculty, and staff. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Support Services, 1000 San Jacinto Blvd., Houston, TX 77089. Phone: 281.283.3333. TDD: 281.283.3333. Fax: 281.283.3333.

**SAN JACINTO COLLEGE**  
HOUSTON, TEXAS



Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College



# NO BOOKS, NO PROBLEM, SAYS GEN PARK LIBRARIAN

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

If you didn't know Dr. Jennifer Crispin's job, you could guess from the 1.5-inch-long "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" volumes dangling from her ears.

It's no surprise the bookworm earned a master's degree in library science and doctorate in information and science learning technologies. What's surprising is she landed in a library without books.

In October 2021, Crispin became the first librarian at San Jacinto College's newest campus, Generation Park.

Just off the lobby, this library contains cabinets, round tables, offices, two study rooms, and a lab with 16 desktop computers. The only thing missing? Open stacks where students can comb spines and pages.

"It automatically doesn't look like what people think of as a library," Crispin said.

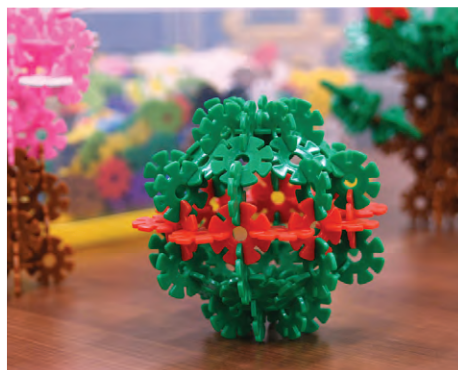
This isn't to say libraries are ditching books. The master-planned campus in northeast Houston comprises one instructional building now. As the campus grows, the library will move to a larger permanent home, and bookshelves will follow.

## More than books

Crispin welcomed the chance to get the Generation Park library off the ground.

"When campuses get really large, the different services can get siloed," she said. "They don't have as many opportunities to communicate with each other."

According to Crispin, Executive Director Dr. Destry Dokes has picked faculty and staff who collaborate well



outside their realm of responsibilities. Together, they navigate providing on-campus and online support since many classes still follow a hybrid-flex model of in-person and streamed learning.

"Being online is not an easy thing — not something we're born knowing how to do," she said. "There are multiple layers of complication."

Crispin should know since she focused on information access during her doctoral program. Before San Jac, she worked as a public service librarian at Houston Community College's Alief Hayes Campus. For now, a library without books has been no problem.

"My work previously was not dependent on books," she said. "It was helping people find articles for assignments and learn how to cite sources, format papers, and evaluate whether they could trust information."

Crispin wants to remove any barrier that prevents students from accessing information, whether that's lack of technology, time, or research know-how. She visits classes to share how to find peer-reviewed academic journals for projects and keeps an eye out for lost students.

## Something for everyone

What does the Generation Park library currently offer?

It houses the same scholarly databases as other campus libraries while containing reserve materials like biology and engineering textbooks.

Students may request interlibrary loans from the North Campus and return any College library book to the



Generation Park library. In the study rooms or at the computers, tutors meet with students.

Beyond research and tutoring, Crispin ensures the space is mingle-friendly — from sprinkling puzzles and Brain Flakes construction discs across tables to scribbling a question of the week on an interactive whiteboard: "What's the most interesting thing you've learned this year?" "What's your best study tip?"

"We're trying to accommodate students as much as we can before we have physical books," she said.

As demand grows, books will follow. Crispin points to a wall that borders tables with laptop plugs — a space

perfect for tall shelves. She imagines some paperbacks there before the library moves.

## Help wanted

Despite this digital age, Crispin still recommends visiting a brick-and-mortar library. Not only do staff have the training to help, but they want to help you — whatever your need, academic or personal.

"One of the things that makes me saddest is hearing someone has searched for days to find an article about something," she said. "I could have helped them, and they could have all this free time back."

It's why Crispin also jumps on the College-wide library chat to answer students' questions. Whether helping students online or in person, she loves directing them to the information they need and learning they got a good grade.

"I get so proud—like I'm their big sister," she said.

The Generation Park library is open Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Learn more about Generation Park at [sanjac.edu/generation-park-campus](http://sanjac.edu/generation-park-campus).



Photos courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

## Off the Bookshelf

National Library Week is April 3-9. Visit your local library to celebrate reading and/or check out Librarian Jennifer Crispin's recent favorite fiction:

- "Only a Monster" by Vanessa Len
- "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennet
- "The Woman in the Library" by Sulari Gentill (Crispin snagged an advance copy of this "amazing and weird" May 2022 release)

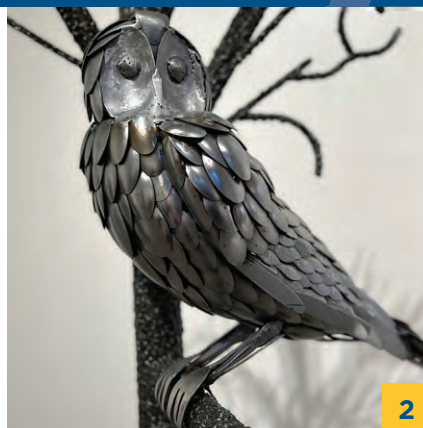


SAN JACINTO  
COLLEGE

# THIS MONTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA



1



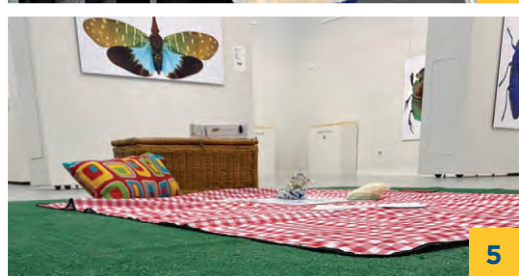
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**1** The San Jacinto College, Deer Park, La Porte, Morgan's Point, and Pasadena police departments conducted an honorary "swearing-in" of Devarjaye (D.J.) Daniel, a 10-year-old boy who has battled brain and spine cancer for four years. Daniel has joined more than 100 law enforcement agencies in the past few months.

**2** In collaboration with the welding program, the North Campus gallery hosted "Reigning Fire," a metal fabrication art exhibition.

**3** Current Promise scholars shared their appreciation for the scholarship and encouraged others to take the pledge.

**4** Student Engagement & Activities spread awareness about the Coat Rack during Weeks of Welcome events.

**5** The South Campus gallery opened its latest exhibition, "Small Wonders: Insects in Focus." By using cutting-edge technology and custom methods, artist Bob Sober created an exhibition that allows viewers to see this hidden world like they've never seen it before.

**6** San Jac announced a lease agreement with Bezos Academy, which will bring a tuition-free, Montessori-inspired preschool to the College's North Campus.

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# MOSAIC FAMILY NIGHT CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

By **Neesha Hosein**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The San Jacinto College Mosaic Program supports African American and Black-identifying students. Its mentoring and bridge program connects students with faculty and staff who have relatable life and educational experiences to share.

Mosaic Family Night, a cross-campus event on Feb. 17, welcomed faculty, staff, students, and their families to celebrate African American culture. Attendees came together for an evening of food, games, raffle prizes, arts and crafts, presentations, and entertainment centering around Black History Month.

“Word search and networking activities were such a hit,” said Angie Sprowl, South Campus sociology professor. “The word search activity demonstrated the importance of Black History Month by identifying, recognizing, and celebrating people and events that pertain to Black history. The networking activity demonstrated the importance of this skill by providing an opportunity to understand



Photo courtesy of Neesha Hosein, San Jacinto College

what it feels like to network.”

Sprowl believes Mosaic establishes a very important role for mentorship, which allows San Jac students to learn about “diverse disciplines” through an assigned mentor who coaches one-on-one outside regularly scheduled classes.

“Most importantly, they see examples of professional behavior and can then envision themselves as a professional, no matter where their career or work life leads,” Sprowl said. “It is important to help students feel connected and supported along their academic journey.”

She is confident the program will aid student success and support the needs

of this diverse student population on all campuses.

## Student perspectives

Elsie Bura, computer science major, presented at the event and wooed the audience with her heartfelt poem “The Absence of Color.”

“The Mosaic family night was an opportunity to connect with a new part of my San Jac community, and like I said in my poem, I only recently realized that I am Black,” Bura joked. “When interacting with other Black-identifying and African American students, I felt a kinship even though I lived on the other side of the world for 18 years. It was interesting to recognize the parallels between cultures.”

Bura said reciting her poem in front of an audience “was absolutely terrifying,” and her hands trembled from the moment she took the mic.

“But it was also freeing,” Bura said. “I spent part of my childhood feeling inferior because of my dark skin, and in sharing my experience, I reclaimed the power that I had allowed to be taken from

me. For those who saw themselves in my poem, I hope that they also saw the path to self-love.”

Student Crystal Obi-Okoye recited a Maya Angelo poem that held sentimental value to her, and former student Freddy Bitondo chimed in on a Zoom broadcast. He spoke of his own journey after landing at San Jac from abroad, and event participants from all campuses asked him questions about his cultural and educational experiences. Bitondo said his time at San Jac “was amazing” and professors who took the time to mentor him were instrumental in his pathway to success, which he found as a math teacher.

## More to come

Susan Eason, accounting and general business professor, leads the Mosaic Family Night events on South Campus. She was pleased with the turnout and support the event received.

“We received many positive comments from the students, their families, and College faculty and staff who attended,” Eason said. “Our program was impactful and offered information on campus student support services, health, and wellness.”

The next Mosaic Family Night will be in April 2022.

To learn more about Mosaic, visit [sanjac.edu/mosaic](http://sanjac.edu/mosaic).

## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
April	Doin' the Most: 2022 Juried Student Art exhibit	Ongoing	South Campus, Fine Arts Building
April 5	Gators Baseball vs. Blinn	6 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 9	Gators Baseball vs. Blinn	2 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 12	CPD: Conversational Spanish	12-1 p.m.	Register: <a href="mailto:community.engagement@sjcd.edu">community.engagement@sjcd.edu</a> or 281-476-1893
April 13	CPD: Crochet Training	12-1 p.m.	Register: <a href="mailto:community.engagement@sjcd.edu">community.engagement@sjcd.edu</a> or 281-476-1893
April 13	Coyotes Softball vs. Alvin	3 & 5 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field
April 13	Gators Baseball vs. Galveston	6 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 15	Spring holiday (no weekend classes)	Closed	All campuses, online
April 15	Coyotes Softball vs. Trinity Valley	2 & 4 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field
April 19	Gators Baseball vs. Wharton	6 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 19	Orpheus concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall (C5)
April 20	CPD: Safety - Human Threats	12-1 p.m.	Register: <a href="mailto:community.engagement@sjcd.edu">community.engagement@sjcd.edu</a> or 281-476-1893
April 20	String orchestra concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall (C5)
April 21-23	A Wish for Hope: A play featuring refugee stories	7:30 p.m.	South Campus, Blackbox Theatre (S15)
April 23	Gators Baseball vs. Wharton	2 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 23	Coyotes Softball vs. Lamar State-Port Arthur	2 & 4 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field
April 26	Guitar ensemble concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall (C5)
April 27	Coyotes Softball vs. Coastal Bend	3 & 6 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field
April 28	Gators Baseball vs. Alvin	6 p.m.	North Campus, Baseball Field
April 28	College choir concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall (C5)
April 28-30	A Wish for Hope: A play featuring refugee stories	7:30 p.m.	South Campus, Blackbox Theatre (S15)
April 30	Coyotes Softball vs. Galveston	3 & 5 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field
May 1	Coyotes Softball vs. LSU Eunice	1 & 3 p.m.	South Campus, Softball Field

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu](http://sanjac.edu).





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### 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 20 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. San Jacinto College is among the top five community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence in 2021 and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually, and 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. San Jacinto College's impact on the region totals \$1.3 billion in added income, which supports 13,044 jobs. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

