

# OPPORTUNITY

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE<sup>SM</sup>

# NEWS

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## NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

### New year, new goals: Register today!

Make your education goals come true in the new year! San Jacinto College's spring 2022 semester starts Jan. 18, and we've got a seat waiting for you.

San Jac offers in-person and online classes to fit your schedule and learning style. No matter which method of learning you choose, you have access to a variety of student services and resources. Services include online tutoring and advising, on-campus document drop-off, and virtual appointments for admissions, career services, dual credit, financial aid, testing, veteran services, and more.

Visit [sanjac.edu/registration](https://sanjac.edu/registration) to learn more and to register.

### Chancellor delivers annual State of the College address

San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer delivered the annual



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

State of the College address on Friday, Nov. 12, at the College's LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology on the Central Campus.

Audience members included elected officials, industry partners, and the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff.

The State of the College address reflected on the 60th anniversary celebration that kicked off this fall. Dr. Hellyer also spoke about the many exciting projects, facilities, and initiatives the College has on the horizon.

### Support our students with year-end giving

Celebrate the season of giving by

supporting your San Jacinto College community through a year-end donation to the San Jacinto College Foundation!

Funds raised will support the Harris County Promise @ San Jac Program, which provides last-dollar funding and scholarships for in-district high school graduates, allowing them to attend the College with tuition and books covered.

The San Jacinto College Foundation helps remove financial barriers that keep students from completing their associate degrees or technical certificates, and you can help! Education is one of the most life-changing gifts a student can receive.

To donate or to learn more about the Foundation's year-end fundraising efforts, visit [sanjac.edu/year-end-giving](https://sanjac.edu/year-end-giving).

# SAVE YOUR GINGERBREAD HOUSE FROM HO-HO-HO-HUM

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Want to make memories with your kids or grandkids during the holidays? No judgment if you dropped that gingerbread house kit into your grocery cart.

You don't have to make everything from scratch, says Chef Andrea Huerta, San Jacinto College culinary arts program director. (In fact, don't try Huerta's gingerbread sheet recipe unless your KitchenAid mixer can handle 1 gallon of molasses and 14 pounds of flour.)



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

Each year, San Jac quantity baking and cake decorating students construct a massive gingerbread village to display at the North Campus Cosmetology and Culinary Center.

Students will put the final touches on this year's project Dec. 1, and the village will be on display at the North Campus until Dec. 8. Afterward, it will go to the MD Anderson Hospital for The Child Life Project fundraiser. Students will recreate the village in the hospital lobby alongside other donated gingerbread creations from Houston businesses.

You might not be constructing a gingerbread village, but you can take your gingerbread house kit to the next level. For starters, ditch the icing packet. "The icing that comes with these kits is not stiff enough, and often the houses come crashing down," Huerta said.

She shares her royal icing recipe to keep your small-scale project from collapsing and these tips to make it rise above the ho-ho-ho-hum. Happy decorating!

#### Royal Icing

Makes enough to fill 18-inch pastry bag

#### Ingredients:

- 2-pound bag of powdered sugar, plus more if needed
- 6 egg whites from pasteurized eggs

#### Instructions:

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer or by hand with a whisk, blend the egg whites into the sugar. Icing should be very stiff but not dry, resemble buttercream icing, and hold its shape without flooding back together.
2. To adjust the consistency, add more powdered sugar (1/2 cup at a time) to make stiffer or add egg whites or water (1 teaspoon at a time) to make looser.

#### Pro Tips:

- When you assemble the gingerbread house, join the walls together with the royal icing and wait 15 minutes



Photo courtesy of Andrea Huerta, San Jacinto College

for the icing to set. Then put on the roof and also allow it to dry about 15 minutes. This will stabilize the structure so it can bear the weight of candy and decorations.

- Let kids pick out extra candy for decorating. There can never be enough.
- We live in a very humid environment, so keep hard candies like peppermints, Jolly Ranchers, and lollipops wrapped. These candies tend to melt on the house and get sticky if left on display.

# CENTRAL THEATRE MARKS 20 YEARS OF 'SANTA'S CHRISTMAS MAGIC'

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

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

The production is a tradition for many families, whether audience members or performers. For years, players young and old have returned to appear in the holiday favorite.

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

"It's a high-energy musical that includes acting, singing, and dancing," Ivins said. "This will be our 26th year to present a Christmas show and 20th year for 'Santa's Christmas Magic.' Nearly every performance has sold out since we introduced the production."

The play originated at San Jac when the script and music students were set to



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

perform in 2001 were backordered.

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

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

"The original script was a bit rough and only 10 pages long. It was a good

start, but it needed finessing," Ivins said.

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

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

The play is a fantasy about a sinister plot to steal Santa's magic. Highlights of the show include toys that come alive to dance and sing, a children's elf chorus, and a fast-paced chase. Young viewers can also visit with Santa Claus at intermission.

## Family traditions

One family impacted by the Christmas show tradition are Anthony and Michelle Gutierrez. The high school sweethearts started attending the Central Campus theatre program in fall 2004 as an actor and theatre technician.

"We actually found out about the program because my mom played the Christmas mouse in one of the productions," Michelle said. "Anthony and I were both involved in theatre in high school, and after meeting Doc [Ivins], it seemed like a good fit."

In their first semester, Anthony played the pivotal role of the menacing Grinch, and Michelle helped build and paint sets. The following year, the couple welcomed their first daughter.

"We have photos of her on my lap with me in costume as Santa on set," said Anthony. "The cast and Doc became like family. Some of my fellow classmates were the first to hold my daughter after she was born."

Now a high school junior, the Gutierrezes' eldest daughter and her younger sisters have been in the annual production every year since they were four.

"Last year with the play cancelled because of COVID, our girls were a bit lost at Christmas," said Michelle. "Our Christmases have always revolved around



Photo courtesy of Michelle Gutierrez, San Jacinto College

rehearsals and learning the music while hanging decorations. They are very excited to get back to it this year."

The production boasts more than 40 adult roles and a children's elf chorus with 50 singers.

"It always tickles me because we do Shakespeare, Molière, and Arthur Miller—Pulitzer Prize-winning shows. But the one the students are most excited about is the Christmas show," said Ivins. "They fight harder for this show than anything else."

This year performances are set for Dec. 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m., with a matinee Dec. 12 at 2:30 p.m. at the San Jacinto College Central Campus fine arts building (C13). For more information, call 281-542-2039 or visit [www.sanjac.edu/theatre-central](http://www.sanjac.edu/theatre-central).



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

# EMS PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH CDC FOR INFECTION CONTROL EDUCATION

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The San Jacinto College Emergency Medical Services Program joins the front lines of infection control education through CDC’s new Project Firstline.

Beginning in June 2021, San Jac numbered among 16 technical and community colleges nationwide to join the pilot initiative, a partnership among CDC, the American Hospital Association, and the League for Innovation in the Community College.

According to CDC, COVID-19 has “underscored gaps in infection control knowledge and practice” nationwide. The initiative will give future nurses and other medical workers infection control knowledge so they and their patients stay safe in health care settings.

“We look forward to creating a community of practice for infection control, where faculty and practitioners



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

work together on innovations in infection control education,” said Sylvia Gallegos, EMS program director.

EMS faculty completed a seven-week summer intensive, meeting virtually three times a week to collaborate with everyone else involved in Project Firstline. They added more infection control content to current curriculum and planned hands-on learning opportunities in the classroom and at clinical sites.

Typically, EMS students learn about basic pathophysiology, epidemiology, and safety. This fall and next spring, they are also expanding their understanding of the basic virus science, source control, PPE, and environmental cleaning and disinfection.

The EMS program will share the resources with other San Jac health science programs and clinical affiliates, where students get real-world experience.

EMS student Troy Petmecky always felt a pull toward the medical field. In fall 2020, he enrolled in the North Campus program, looking for a change and a new goal to reach.

“The semester passed, and I was hooked,” he said. “I realized that this field of work was exactly what I wanted.”

Petmecky remembers discussing infection prevention and protective measures early on, but the expanded curriculum has taken that to the next

level. Students practice bodily substance isolation during medical simulations and other specific techniques for the medical field. They also cover everyday disinfection and handwashing.

“Project Firstline explores infection control more in depth than our standard education, which helps us be more prepared for fringe situations,” he said. “Additionally, it gives us a more in-depth knowledge base to relay to other folks that haven’t had our same education.”

Michelle Katemauswa, who holds a bachelor’s degree in global health and psychology, joined the EMS program to gain medical field experience before pursuing a physician assistant program.

Katemauswa isn’t surprised EMS training focuses more on the consequences of infections rather than causes and prevention, but the pandemic has shown the need for change.

“Most of the written resources we’re learning from haven’t been updated to reflect what EMS looks like now during the pandemic, which can cause a bit of a disconnect between knowledge and practice,” she said. “Project Firstline helps fill in some of those gaps by providing us with the resources to understand COVID-19 as a disease, SARS-CoV-2 as a virus, and important infection control measures to keep us, our crew, and our patients safe.”

Besides giving San Jac instructors



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

and students a valuable toolkit, Project Firstline has given them a voice to shape the future of infection control processes and education.

“I believe health care as a whole has learned some very valuable lessons from the pandemic,” Gallegos said. “COVID-19 has brought to light cracks within our healthcare system that we must address. As educators, choosing a proactive way of preparing our students for the future and their role in healthcare is a big part of that.”

Learn more about Project Firstline at [www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline](http://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline).

## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Dec. 8	Gingerbread display ends		North Campus, Cosmetology & Culinary Center
Dec. 9-10	Santa’s Christmas Magic: The Musical	7:30 p.m.	Central Campus, Fine Arts Building
Dec. 10	Fall 2021 classes end		All campuses and online
Dec. 10	Don’t Call It a Comeback ends		South Campus, Fine Arts Building
Dec. 12	Santa’s Christmas Magic: The Musical	2:30 p.m.	Central Campus, Fine Arts Building
Dec. 13	Winter mini term begins		All campuses and online
Dec. 22-31	Administrative offices closed		All campuses and online

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



# GAME DESIGN GRAD SNAGS INTERNSHIP WITH LEAGUE OF LEGENDS DEVELOPER

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Even future game designers might fall for the stereotype. Tyler Nguyen did.

Pursuing San Jacinto College's computer simulation and game design program, Nguyen expected game design to be silo work — wearing headphones and guzzling soda while programming levels.

The reality was far different.

"There was a lot more communication than I expected when I went in," he said. "That's the one thing people will be surprised at. People who are in computer science or game design in general might be introverts ... but you really do have to talk a lot."

Thanks to building communication and teamwork skills at San Jac, the recent graduate landed a summer internship with top video game developer Riot Games.

## High school techie

Nguyen dates his tech fascination back to high school computer science classes. Around his sophomore year, he and a friend started building PCs for other friends and family members.

"Whenever you buy a computer from Walmart or anywhere, you're limited to what they give you..." he said. "Building your own, you have leeway on what parts you like and what money you're going to spend."

Nguyen enjoyed the trial and error,

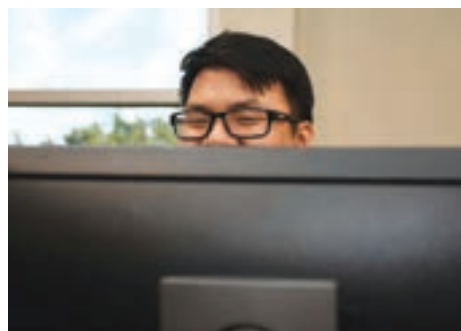


Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

Tyler Nguyen learned to break out of his shell in the simulation and game design program.

building about 10 computers, including his own. Starting the computer science program at the South Campus in 2017, he eyed a programming career. A professor later encouraged him to switch to the new game design program instead.

"My interest slowly shifted from just programming to more," he said. "I wanted to design and create something with my own ideas."

## San Jac standout

Nguyen made the right choice with game design. Not only did he get more hands-on training and business savvy instead of theory, but he also learned how to express his ideas and opinions during team projects.

James Isaacks, adjunct computer information technology instructor, linked students to an internship creating a virtual environment to train plant operators in error reduction. Nguyen's leadership and communication skills grew throughout the project.

"He helped keep the team on task while solving some of the harder programming problems to make the simulation work," Isaacks said. "He was willing to start communication in the team and displayed enough patience to wait until the rest of his team began to communicate."

Nguyen also stepped up as president of the campus Esports Club, forcing himself outside his comfort zone at every opportunity.

"I made a habit to go to the student center and push my limits," he said. "I would talk to people whether I wanted to or not. I've developed this hybrid introvert/extrovert personality."

## Riot intern

Early into his game design training, Nguyen set a goal to intern at Riot Games. The company earned more than \$1.75 billion last year thanks to its League of Legends game for PC gamers and esports competitors.

"I was really into their design



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

Tyler Nguyen (standing) collaborates on a virtual reality project in the classroom.

philosophy... it resonated with me," he said.

Although students worldwide compete for these internships, Nguyen relied on the confidence and team-building skills he had developed to apply. In early 2021, Riot interviewed him by phone for two hours. After one more call, he had landed the two-month internship.

This summer, Riot flew him to Los Angeles, where he experienced the workplace culture and project design alongside about 30 other interns.

While Nguyen found interviewing stressful, the work environment itself was laid-back. Each day kicked off with a casual group meeting to brainstorm and discuss progress. Nguyen contributed to several projects, though he can't share details because of industry privacy.

What he saw mirrored what he had experienced in the classroom — communication.

"I think people perceive you'd be at a desk eight hours a day," he said. "But there's a lot of talking involved — brainstorming, team-building, working

on your discipline, programming occasionally."

## Future entrepreneur

What's next for Nguyen? In spring 2022, he starts his bachelor's program in game design at the University of Texas at Dallas. Then he'll try for a paid internship with Riot next summer.

Beyond that: "I would hope to have my own company in game design or be working for some company making some kind of game," he said.

Nguyen says San Jac's simulation and game design program laid a solid foundation with skills that translate to many careers.

"People might look at it and think that's a really specific niche," he said. "But you're not exactly limited to IT simulation and game design. You also get hands-on and business experience."

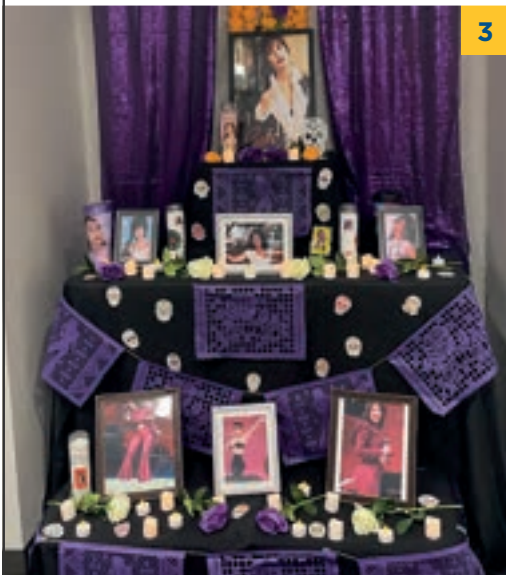
Nguyen circles back to communication. If anything, he's learned game design revolves around collaboration.

"You really do have to talk a lot," he said. "At some point, you'll probably break out of your shell."



1 The art galleries at South and Central Campuses opened new exhibitions, "Don't Call It a Comeback!" and "The Way Things Used (Ought) To Be."

2 Students shared favorite photos of their cats for National Cat Day.



3 South Campus celebrated Dia de los Muertos by setting up altars that students created around campus.

4 The College held the official grand opening of its newest campus, Generation Park, after a yearlong delay due to COVID-19.



5 San Jac students who are the first in their families to pursue a degree shared why they are proud to be a first-generation student for First-Gen Day.

6 The LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (CPET) hosted a Community Safety Day and trick or treat event with more than a dozen activities for kids of all ages.



7 The College celebrated another successful Hispanic Heritage Month with a blend of virtual and in-person events.

# STUDENTS GIVE BACK THROUGH CHRISTMAS AT SEA

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

This time of year is often referred to as a season of giving, when the holidays inspire people to share with others.

Students and administrators at the San Jacinto College Maritime Technology and Training Center show this spirit as they volunteer to pack gifts for the Christmas at Sea program for the fourth year.

“Christmas at Sea is completely volunteer driven,” said Joanne Bartosik, Christmas at Sea manager. “Our partnership with San Jac is a match made in heaven.”

Since 1898, the Christmas at Sea program, an extension of The Seamen’s Church Institute, has distributed handmade knit and crocheted gifts to mariners. Last year, the program served 67 companies at 76 locations, providing gifts to 9,600 inland mariners. The program also reaches another 10,000 seafarers on the east coast.

“The hallmark of our program is the personalization,” said Bartosik. “We never purchase knits from the store. Every gift is handmade, and for international seafarers, most arrive in a hand-sewn bag. Knitted gifts to U.S. mariners on boats are delivered in boxes containing handcrafted Christmas cards often created by school children.”

Amy Arrowood, director of maritime credit programs at San Jac, received gifts from Christmas at Sea herself. In 2017, she learned the program needed help packing its handmade gifts and delivering them to maritime companies.

“This was an opportunity for my



Photo courtesy of Christmas at Sea

students to volunteer and give back to a program that brings joy to so many,” Arrowood said.

The College’s maritime students now have the packing process down to a science. Each year, they create an assembly line of boxing the handmade knits and cards and taping them shut. Arrowood also works with a chaplain who serves the Houston Ship Channel to deliver the packed boxes to marine companies.

“Our students have really run with the idea of organizing the packing day,” Arrowood said. “It has turned into a leadership opportunity for our more senior students. They see the process each year and teach the newer students how it’s done.”

Bartosik appreciates San Jac students and knitters worldwide who volunteer their time. Knitters receive detailed patterns to complement the safety gear seafarers and mariners wear on their vessels. The “CAS Angels,” an international group of experienced needleworkers, are also ready to help if anyone encounters a snag with a pattern.

“Without out our network of volunteers, CAS wouldn’t be where it is today. We are so grateful for the time everyone puts into creating knits, making Christmas cards, gathering donations, packing boxes, and so much more that our volunteers do each year,” Bartosik said. “This program is our way of expressing gratitude to those seafarers and mariners who make our way of life possible.”

The experience has come full circle for some San Jac maritime alumni who now



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

San Jac Maritime Technology and Training Center students delivered gifts to NGL Marine for their inland mariners. Left to right: Kris Jacobs, port captain, NGL Marine; Craig LaGrone, vice president, NGL Marine; Glen Norris, operations manager, NGL Marine; Abby Bujan and John Terrell, students, Maritime and Technology Training Center; and Rev. Tom Rhoades, chaplain, The Seaman’s Church Institute.

work full time on the water and have received these gifts themselves.

“No one wants to be away from their family and friends at Christmas. When you are on a boat, it can be especially lonely,” said Arrowood. “Receiving a gift

someone took the time to create for you makes you feel a bit more connected.”

To learn more about Christmas at Sea, visit [www.seamenschurch.org/programs-services/christmas-at-sea/volunteer-opportunities](http://www.seamenschurch.org/programs-services/christmas-at-sea/volunteer-opportunities).



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College



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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](http://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 45,000 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.

