

## Meet the Reclaiming Futures El Paso Fellows



**Roger Martinez**

Roger Martinez serves as the **Justice Fellow** for Reclaiming Futures El Paso. He began his career in Juvenile Justice in 1992 at the El Paso County Juvenile Probation Department, where he served as a Juvenile Probation Officer until 1994 when he became the department's Title IV-E Coordinator and was the first recipient of the "Cinda Barz Memorial Award." He was promoted to Director of Probation Services where he served for a period of five years.

In 2000, Roger was transferred to the Border Children's Mental Health Collaborative (BCMHC) at the request of the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer and El Paso County Judge. There he was responsible for facilitating successful collaborative processes with multiple agencies and implementing BCMHC objectives throughout El Paso County.

Under BCMHC, Roger performed consultative and technical work in the planning and implementation of strategies for highly effective, culturally competent mental health service delivery to youth in the juvenile justice, child welfare and MH/MR systems.

Roger is currently the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for the Judge Enrique H. Peña Juvenile Justice Center, County of El Paso.



## *The El Paso County Juvenile Justice Center Prepares for Upcoming Additions*

The spirit of the holidays arrived early this season when the El Paso County Juvenile Justice Center officially broke ground on a two-story, 22,500 -square-foot addition on Thursday, December 9, 2010.

The new wing will be located east of the existing facility and will boast two new court rooms, a training unit, office space, and a parking lot expansion. The addition will enhance rehabilitation efforts through community outreach, as well as support existing operations and related programs.

National Colors were presented by The Samuel F. Santana Challenge Academy Color Guard and speakers included the Honorable Judge Yahara Lisa Gutierrez, 65<sup>th</sup> District Court, and Roger Martinez, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer. Golden shovels and balloons signified the beginning of the highly anticipated construction process.

The design of the new facility is being led by architecture firm, Wright & Dalbin Architects, Inc. and F.T. James Construction is the builder for the project. Information on the project is available on the County's website, [www.epcounty.com](http://www.epcounty.com), under "Renovation and Expansion". The project completion date is scheduled for October 2011.

### Reclaiming Futures El Paso Fellows

#### *Judicial Fellow*

**The Honorable  
Yahara Lisa Gutierrez**  
65th District Court

#### *Justice Fellow*

**Roger Martinez**  
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

#### *Program Director*

**Paula Wharton**  
El Paso Juvenile Justice Center

#### *Community Fellow*

**Mary Ellen Hernandez**  
Director  
Rio Grande  
Safe Communities Coalition

#### *Treatment Fellow*

**Armando Salas**  
Program Manager  
University Medical Center of El Paso

## In Their Own Words

*Delta Academy recently hosted its third annual poetry contest. Students were given the option of writing prose or poetry on topics of their choice, and teachers and Challenge staff coached the students on how to present their writings in front of their classmates.*

*This was the first experience with public speaking for most of the students, and many found it quite nerve wracking. However, with coaching and lots of practice, all students did an excellent job presenting their writings.*

*Delta Academy would like to thank all those who collaborated in making this event a success. Most of all, we would like to thank the students who participated for making this year's event unforgettable.*

*Showcased here are works of L.J., first place winner of the poetry contest, and of R.V., first place winner of the prose contest.*



**RECLAIMING FUTURES**

Communities helping teens  
overcome drugs, alcohol and crime

## MONSTER — by L.J.

We lie like day and night,  
A wave caressing the shore  
One day I blinked, and she was gone,  
Like a star who flirted with a black hole  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

The world gave way, beneath my feet;  
The day her heart ceased to beat  
Reality  
Reality is a foreign country,  
And I can live without my passport  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

The lion, the lamb, the fox, the hound  
Relationships detrimental  
From conception  
If this is the way of nature  
Who is to blame for the bloodshed?  
She was innocent my passion too strong,  
I gave her my world  
Knowing she'd never belong  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

I was possessed by obsession  
A madman with thirst;  
Only she could have quenched  
Therefore I constructed a plan  
Days and days I wracked my mind;  
Prevailing a path through the labyrinth  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

Attempting to clear my mind  
I stepped outside  
Alas! What is my luck, a cruel twist of fate?  
I saw her traversing alone  
Although I had plans; they were not set in stone  
Yet I could not contain my delirious joy  
I stepped into the night  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

There's wasn't much light  
For the moon had wasted away  
But I could sense her footfalls  
I quickened my pace in a silent manner  
(She was not aware of my presence)  
Nevermore will the sun shine for me

[I often contemplate the relationship  
Between Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde;  
And if in fact there was a bridge...  
Did it exist between madness and pride? ]  
For in that moment that I kidnapped her hand  
Sheer ecstasy abducted my heart  
And when she turned  
Her marble face was tainted  
By surprise and unabashed fear  
My dilapidated heart slowed in cadence to time  
(Which I honestly believe had stopped)  
As we coexisted in this distortion of time;  
She opened her mouth to scream  
Her rejection was amazingly tangible  
And her eyes aired her emotion

Beauty had found the beast and  
And truthful to the monster I am  
I gashed open her neck  
**Nevermore will the sun shine for me**

## **“DRUG FREE” —by R.V.**

Do you have the power to be drug free? If so, how can you share that power with those who are not drug free, the reality is you can't share that power. But you can serve as a guide to those lost deep into drugs. Guide them towards improvement, build that ladder to a level where that person. Will have the mental and physical strength to say, “I have the power to be drug free”?

As decades pass, the more I see how drugs are killing people in our communities, I also see how people kill people over drugs. If you really put thought into it, you will figure that drugs are responsible for people's deaths, if its people killing people, or a person dying over the use of drugs. As a young adult growing up in a drug-infested community, I have learned that not everyone has to be a drug abuser. I learned that from a person who spoke out to me, David Collins, a person who cared about me and my future.

In such a community, I could contribute to the environment. I could choose to be part of the problem, or I could be part of the solution. I really want to be part of the solution. I want to represent something positive in my community. Nowadays drugs are big in a lot of communities. It doesn't matter where people live if its high class, middle class, ghetto etc... drugs play a factor in such communities, these communities where innocent children live and go to school, children who have such innocent souls.

If you are a person who does have the power to be drug free, don't hold back, go out to these communities. Speak your heart out. Do it for the children, and the lost souls who have fallen to the drug culture. Help them get back up. Show them that there is more to life, because there is always one in a crowd who will mark your words, there will be one whose life you will change.

In conclusion, if you are someone who has walked that road of drug addiction, if you do find yourself in such a dark pit, try to make your way to the top, because at the top there is light. That light is an end to such a sad lifestyle. Make it to the end, have that power, because life is full of opportunities. When a window closes a door opens. Have that power to be drug free, because in reality people are stronger than drugs.

THE END.



*“I really want  
to be part of  
the solution.*

*I want to  
represent  
something  
positive in my  
community.”*

*—R.V.*



## ***Teaching From the Heart***

Approximately two years ago, December 16, 2008, as a brand new Substitute teacher, I accepted a substitute assignment to work at Delta Academy. During my assignment, I met some of the most intriguing children with some of the most interesting backgrounds. Later that same day, the detainees and I were escorted to the gymnasium for Delta Academy's 1st Annual Poetry Contest. The life experiences the children expressed in their poetry were equally captivating as the stories I heard earlier in the detention units. I felt so privileged for kids that didn't know anything about me (not even my name) to open up to me and show me what life looks like through their eyes.

Although most people thought I was crazy, I always looked forward to El Paso ISD assignments to Delta Academy for opportunities to work with the children in detention in the Challenge Program from that first day. Oftentimes when I went, I would see familiar faces (like the juvenile in Challenge that won the poetry contest); they would always say, "We like you. You should be on staff here!" Well here I am today fulfilling some kid's desire, a graduate student and counseling intern at the Juvenile Probation Department (JPD).

Needless to say, it didn't take me long at all to gravitate to the Challenge Program and detention side of the house. This year at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Poetry Contest, I felt a sense of joy and pride for the children that only tears could express. I really feel that working with this population is my calling which is the driving force behind my aspirations of becoming a LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) and a LCDC (Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor) with a primary emphasis on child and adolescent substance abuse. I want to make a difference in their lives, and I believe that this they best avenue for me.

I truly cherish all the children that I have come in contact with here at the JPD, and I am eternally grateful for to the staff for embracing me and affording me the opportunity of a lifetime! —*Tori-Shannon Cummings*

