The theme for this year’s Migrant Voice was “Community Support: How We Come Together When There Is a Need.” Through the pandemic we have turned to our communities and schools to support students, instruction, and safety. In collaboration with our teachers and staff, our students from the Journalism [Writing] Program were encouraged to look within their communities to seek leaders and agencies. This prompted them to learn about how their presence has impacted our communities in Tulare County. I am so proud of all of the migratory students who participated in the interviewing and writing process through our extended-day program.

Earlimart School District: Earlimart Elementary
Eddie Valero: A Voice for Change

By Sandra Avila, Miriam Avila, Cindy Murillo, Yaretzi Soto, Jasmine Barrios, Julieth Barrios

On November 29, 2021, the migratory students in Earlimart Elementary School interviewed Tulare County Supervisor Eddie Valero, through Zoom, to learn more about how he helps communities.

Mr. Valero is from a city in California called Orosi. While in high school he worked hard in order to be successful. Mr. Valero went to Cornell University and graduated. He was inspired by his town of Orosi to come back and make a difference in the community.

Mr. Valero wanted to become a voice for the communities. He wanted to see change across the county. Mr. Valero now oversees about $1.6 billion and represents the northern part of the county. He is one of five county supervisors who helps his community. Mr. Valero runs for office every four years and must knock on doors to get people’s support.

Mr. Valero helps to make sure that communities get the support they need. One of Mr. Valero’s many jobs is making sure that special projects get done. He helps to bring different businesses to an area. An example of what Mr. Valero has created is an inside water park called the Wolf Lodge. Mr. Valero also wants to create more water projects. For example, he told us that he helps bring clean water to communities that don’t have clean drinking water. He told us that he loves to help his community.

Mr. Valero taught us how we can bring special projects to our community. One way we could start to help people is to be vocal. We learned that there will be water projects here in Earlimart to help our community continue to grow. He also shared how to contact our area supervisor so that we can bring more resources to our community of Earlimart.

Mr. Valero is a great role model to follow because he helps make a difference in our county.
A Student Becomes a Farmersville Leader

By Heriberto Lopez Ortiz

Should community leaders be called superheroes? On January 20, 2022 the fourth-grade journalism class at Freedom Elementary had the privilege of interviewing a former migrant student, Maria Carbajal. We learned how she became a leader for the community of Farmersville, and also, how she helped in bringing many programs to our community.

Ms. Carbajal never intended to become a community leader, but somehow a counselor at Freedom Elementary felt she would benefit from attending the program "Leaders for Change." This program aims to teach parents how to make a change within their community. She realized the community had a huge need and the community members could benefit from change.

One of the needs she felt her community needed and would benefit from was bailoterapia. She was introduced to bailoterapia while working with a nonprofit group which had a group of parents who came together once a week and were asked, “What would you like to see for our community?” Several parents mentioned that they would love to have a Zumba group. It all began by putting Zumba videos on a projector and projecting them on a wall. Lupe Flores, the Family HealthCare Network supervisor, became aware of Zumba videos and offered at no cost to certify people to be bailoterapia instructors. So Ms. Carbajal took advantage of the certification and started her community classes.

The classes are held at the Boys & Girls Club center in Farmersville from Monday to Thursday at 6:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend. Currently, 15 to 25 of the participants are women. Baile Terapia is a music exercise that helps with mental health and weight loss that can bring family and friends together. Despite the pandemic, she continued with the classes outside. It helped her and the community deal with anxiety and depression.

She is grateful for Vision y Compromiso, a nonprofit organization, and Family HealthCare Network that helped fund bailoterapia and other classes. These classes include nutritional and finance classes that our community needs. Ms. Carbajal, in the near future, hopes to bring mental health classes.

Ms. Carbajal’s greatest inspiration is her community. She had the privilege to have a great mentor, Bille Shaw. She helped her lead the classes. Ms. Shaw believed in her and saw how they could improve the community. According to Ms. Shaw, “We live in a wonderful community! Everyone is kind and so willing. When you have a community like that, you bring the resources to them, they will absorb them.”

The Rotary Club in Earlimart

By Cindy Murillo, Yaretzi Soto, Ulises Quintero, Isiah Chacón

On January 13, 2022, the Journalism Club of Earlimart Elementary, interviewed Mrs. Imelda Ureno to learn how the Rotary Club helps the community of Earlimart.

Rotary is a big organization that helps locally, nationally, and globally. In the Earlimart Rotary Club, we have teachers, district workers, and even community members that are members of the club. The Rotary Club is a big family that helps to make a difference in somebody’s life. Rotary is always looking for volunteers to help accomplish its goals.

Rotary Club is a big organization that helps the community. For example, in Earlimart, the Rotary Club cleans streets, removes junk from houses, and paints over graffiti. According to Mrs. Ureno (current Rotary Club member), they are making a new baseball field. They also help by donating food once a month to the community. In addition, the Rotary Club raises money by selling chocolates, selling tickets to events and even car washes. So, whenever we see a Rotary Club selling chocolates or tickets, we should definitely support them. As Mrs. Ureno said, we should continue to support the Rotary Club because they support the community here in Earlimart.

According to Mrs. Ureno, everyone is welcome to join the Rotary Club. Mrs. Ureno also said that you can join the Rotary Club and volunteer for their events. There is a fee to pay every month, but the club can help you pay the fee if you are unable to pay. Community members need to get involved to continue to help the Earlimart group.

At the end of our interview, we learned how strong the presence of the Rotary Club is in our community.
On December 7, 2021, we also interviewed Ms. Marquez about the Mini-Corp Program. Ms. Marquez is the program coordinator. She works for the Mini-Corp Program supervising tutors who want to become teachers. The tutors work with migrant students in the classroom. They sit with students during class and help explain things. The tutors also help after school during journalism. Ms. Marquez’s main job is to provide training for students to become better teachers.

From talking with Ms. Marquez, we learned that being in the Migrant Program is great. We also learned we can one day be successful – thanks to the Migrant Program – just like Ms. Marquez.
Acknowledgments

It takes a huge effort to implement new educational projects such as the Journalism Writing Project. We couldn’t have done it without the support of Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools; Earlimart School District, Farmersville Unified School District, Pixley Union School District; resilient teachers, patient and understanding interviewees, parents, and other dynamic support staff. This project was invaluable to migratory children and we believe that it was a success. Our migratory children thank all of you and appreciate you taking the time to lend a helping hand. As a result of everyone’s efforts, we may see these students as future journalists.