



THE DAILY DATELINE

Student-run since Volume One

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The University of Houston-Downtown

New UHD CUAS garden yields its first harvests

By Indira Zaldivar

The Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability's new garden beds alongside the Science and Technology Building have thrived and delivered a variety of produce to the UHD community. Faculty, staff, students and Gators' families now count with another functioning garden showcasing a sustainable food production system to learn from and enjoy.

Harvests from the spring season included an array of vegetables: three kinds of tomatoes, four kinds of peppers, sweet corn, green beans and chives. The aromatic herbs (oregano, basil, rosemary, bee balm) are still a snap away and make a flavorful addition to any dish. One of the smaller plants in the garden, strawberry, delivered juicy fruits and a beautiful white flower from time to time.

Food production at the STB beds began in March through a garden project directed by UHD's Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability. In late fall, CUAS Director Lisa Morano, Ph.D., professor of biology; Vasilios Tzouanas, Ph.D., professor of computer science and engineering; and Juan Martinez, coordinator of sustainability, selected the team of 10 students that managed the newest garden. The STB beds' first harvests has many proud.

"It is exciting to see the new garden beds along the new Science and Technology Building

deliver their first crop," Morano said. "We know this is just the beginning of UHD students using the beds to perfect their gardening skills and to run valuable experiments in plant biology."

Diana Ambrosio, criminal justice student at UHD, was one of the 10 students who worked the garden beds in the spring. Ambrosio would bring her family along to clean up the garden and "enjoy the beauty of what had been grown and built."

"It is amazing seeing all of the produce that all of our work had given," Ambrosio said. "It is an exciting feeling that one gets when they see their work pay off and enjoy the delicious produce. When given the chance people should give a shot at growing something even if they feel like they don't have a green thumb."

Lack of gardening experience should not deter any Gators from participating because according to Ambrosio, there's a lot to learn. She said she tended to the garden at her own pace and learned about sustainability in urban food production systems. For instance, a 6,000-gallon cistern filled by the flow of air conditioning condensation and rainwater provides water for the beds.

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Gator Diana Ambrosio and her father, Hector Ambrosio, hold tomatoes, green onions and other harvests from the new Science and Technology Building beds after spending the morning tending to the garden on May 10. Photo courtesy of Indira Zaldivar.



Sweet corn harvest before the downtown Houston skyline in spring. Photo courtesy of Indira Zaldivar.



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THE DATELINE

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Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com.

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UHD welcomes more Gators back to campus

By Indira Zaldivar

On June 1, UHD moved to Step-3 YELLOW in the COVID-19 response matrix.

UHD celebrated this big step by welcoming more UHD faculty, staff and students with five in-person events offering free tasty food, school spirit merch, and prizes from June 1 through June 4.

Jaida Doll, English student at UHD, attended President Loren Blanchard’s “amazing” barbecue on June 2.

Her lunch bag contained a winning ticket, so Doll received an “awesome” Amazon gift card and a “cute” gift bag including a Gator pen she really liked.

“The celebration was a really fun way to welcome students back to campus,” Doll said. “It was so exciting to see people face-to-face again and interact on our campus.”

Prior to the weeklong in-person celebration, Blanchard said in a welcoming video shared by University Relations via email that campus is “safe, clean and ready for you.”

For example, sanitation stations have been enhanced as some have been upgraded to include a foot pedal. Hand sani-



Elisabeth Montes of Advancement & External Relations and Monica Valencia of Event and Conferences pose with the official return-to-UHD t-shirt on June 2 during the president’s barbecue lunch. “We’re in this together,” the t-shirt reads. Photo courtesy of Indira Zaldivar.

tizers are available at common areas such as entrance doors to campus, elevators, stairs, and restrooms.

Health and safety mechanisms against COVID-19 have been available to the community free of charge prior to the big step.

UHD hosted a series of COVID-19 information forums with health experts virtually throughout the last academic year. COVID-19 vaccines first became available to the UHD community on April 1 through UHD’s ongoing partnership with UTHealth.

UHD also hosted one off-campus vaccination event and one on-campus vaccination event.

Participants of the on-campus vaccination event are set to become fully vaccinated during their scheduled appointment to receive their second dose on July 7.

A COVID-19 testing kiosk has been operating on campus since May 26, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. outside of the Student Life Center.

Two separate virtual town halls scheduled for July 8 at 2 p.m. will address questions about this transition.

The “return to campus” town hall is tailored for students, while “return to work” is targeted at faculty and staff.

The first week of June signaled a firm step towards the new normal that lays ahead beginning July 12 when UHD officially moves to the final step in the UHD COVID-19 response matrix.

To register for any of the town halls on how to return to UHD safely, perform a search query on your Gatormail inbox by typing in “return to campus town hall” (for students) and “return to work” (for faculty and staff).

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Crystal
Guillory

By Indira Zaldivar

Assistant Dean Crystal Guillory of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences works closely with students facing academic probation/suspension to help them get back on track, succeed, and exploit the various support mechanisms in place at UHD.

As a proud UHD alumna, she knows firsthand “how powerful our institution is when it comes to transforming students’ lives.”

A Beaumont native, Guillory moved to Houston to pursue a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies after transferring from Southwestern University. After receiving a master’s degree in African American studies from Temple University, she came back to UHD as an adjunct instructor of English in the fall of 2010. In two and a half years, Guillory escalated to the position she has now, serving since Jan. 14, 2013. Her whole belief as an educator is to create agents of change.

Change and progress, she said, derive from unity.

“If people come together with others like they’ve done in any movement in America or...

across the world, you can make change happen.”

Guillory loves to create opportunities for dialogue and put those conference organizing skills she is known for to good use. For instance, at UHD, she has served as the chief organizer since Fall 2013 of the Gender Studies Conference, a rich, research-based discussion on gender gaps and more; and of the Black History Month at UHD since 2011. Outside of UHD, she led an international conference for three days in March 2021 as the president of the Humanities Education and Research Association. While she stays busy involved in activism work and education with various organizations, she practices a student-centered philosophy by always making time for students.

“I am that 40-year-old woman with some wisdom, and I am here for students,” Guillory said. “I could be doing other things, but student advocacy work just drives me.”

Her advocacy didn’t take a break this summer. Her recurring “Let’s Talk About it” series returned on June 17. The first event in

the three-part series was a presentation led by former UHD President Bill Flores, Ph.D., and UHD Assistant Professor Jonathan Chism, Ph.D. Guillory along with the notable presenters brought attention to the efforts from the 87th Texas Legislature to suppress voting rights. Students, including The Deadline’s Varah Thornton, along with faculty and staff shared their experiences and their own advocacy efforts within their communities.

“It’s best to create more safe spaces for them so they can talk about some heavy [stuff] in an environment with some experts.”

A display of books on voting suppression is currently available at the W. I. Dykes Library thanks to a favor requested by Guillory and fulfilled by library staff.

An Africana studies scholar, Guillory immersed into the experiences of African Americans on college campuses as a sophomore at Southwestern University in 2000.

“There’s so many stories out there of people of color that no one ever tells that are powerful.” She has written numerous research papers and

published since then and published a book review on “Invisible Jim Crow: Contemporary Ideological Threats to the Internal Security of African Americans” by Michael Tillotson, Ph.D. Unsurprisingly, her research extends to producing documentaries too.

She is currently in pre-production of three documentaries. One is in honor of George Floyd, the native Houstonian and father, who was killed by former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. Of the verdict that found Chauvin guilty on all counts for Floyd’s murder, she shared: “We never had justice like this... I hope it puts the fear of



Assistant Dean Crystal Guillory and her six-year-old daughter Nyla enjoy a vacation in Galveston, Texas. Photo courtesy of Crystal Guillory.

the justice system in them.”

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A scientist with Little Beakers, Nyla, tests out her experiment. Photo courtesy of Crystal Guillory.

'Let's Talk About It' discusses voting restrictions

By Indira Zaldivar

To address the challenges ahead of the GOP-led 87th Texas Legislature, Assistant Dean Guillory co-hosted an empowering presentation and panel discussion with the Center for Cultural Enrichment and W. I. Dykes Library on June 17.

The first part of the three-part series "Let's Talk About It" honored Juneteenth. Former UHD President Bill Flores, Ph.D., and UHD Assistant Professor Jonathan Chism, Ph.D., reviewed the history of voter suppression nationwide and statewide, and identified ways to promote voting accessibility in one's communities.

The presenters examined the contentious SB 7, a bill slammed by various activist groups and Guillory as "Jim Crow 2.0." SB 7, according to Texas Republicans, aims to "secure election integrity" despite lack of evidence of widespread election fraud.

SB 7 would ban drive-through voting and 24-hour voting which was used by 140,000 Harris County voters in 2020.

It would prohibit election officials from sending absentee ballots to all voters, even if requested; place further restrictions on who is eligible for absentee ballots; ban setting up voting

sites in mobile units, tents, garages or temporary structures; reduce polling sites and voting equipment in large counties which tend to be Democratic; prohibit groups from sending out applications or collecting ballots; give Secretary of State power to purge voters based on questions of their citizenship; add new ID requirements for vote by mail; and provide greater access and autonomy for partisan poll watchers and fines for elected officials who interfere with poll watchers.

"We are reliving Jim Crow," Guillory said. "I cannot believe that this is happening in my lifetime. I thought we were done with this, but we are not, so become an agent of change."

Even though SB 7 failed to pass due to a lack of quorum as Texas Democrats walked out of the state House floor on May 30, Gov. Greg Abbott said he will call a special legislative session to pass the bill.

Flores said Texas will likely pass a version of SB 7. If passed, Texas would become the fifth state to enact restrictive voting laws this year.

"Your vote must count and must be important," Chism said. If not, "why are they making so many efforts for you not to be able to vote. Why

is it that throughout the history of America there's always been a system to suppress minorities and poor people?"

Data from the 2021 Census showed that Texas grew in population, particularly non-whites. Texas demographics are changing. By 2022, Latinos are projected to be the largest racial/ethnic group in Texas. They are expected to fall short of accounting for the majority of the voting population.

As the segments of the population that usually vote Republican are decreasing, while those who usually vote for Democrats is growing, Flores said Republicans are "using every political maneuver possible to stay in power."

Texas carries a history of violating the constitution for gerrymandering. Texas is still one of the few states in the U.S. to use its own custom software for redistricting.

According to Jeff Archer, executive director of the Texas Legislative Council, a non-partisan research agency that helps lawmakers in redistricting, the software can draw maps that, makes "it more or less likely that Republicans or Democrats — or any particular demographic group you can think of — can elect a representative that reflects their interests."

Flores recounted how the Supreme Court appealed the last drawing of Texas districts and found that these districts under-represented Latinos, the population driving the growth. While the the Supreme Court recognizes that racial gerrymandering violates the Constitution, they upheld that "partisan redistricting is a political issue," not one to be ruled on by federal courts.

On the contrary to restrictive voting laws, HR 1, also known as For the People Act and the John Lewis Act are the bills supported by activist groups and recommended by the notable speakers. Sponsored by Democratic Rep. John Sarbanes of Maryland, HR 1 would require each chief election officer to establish an automatic voter registration system with data from state and federal agencies, same day voter registration either at early-voting sites or at precincts on Election Day. It would require each state to allow 15 days of early voting (for at least 10 hours a day), each state to use independent, non-partisan redistricting commissions, and more.

The John Lewis Act would create a pathway for citizens or the federal government to challenge new voter laws in the courts,

particularly if parties can show the new law infringes on minority voting rights; require public notice for any changes made to voting laws in a state or political subdivision, and more.

"The best way to maintain democracy is to practice it, not just by voting but by making certain that you have your voice heard," Flores said.

The Date-line's Varah Thornton, is an example of engaging in political action at the local level. In October 2019, Thornton, now a 29-year-old graduate student at UHD, became the youngest person in her area to be appointed as Harris

County presiding judge in October 2019. She encouraged attendees to ensure they are registered to vote, work the polls, and recruit voters.

"Democracy... takes organization and patience and it's a long fight but don't give up," Flores said. "People earned it. Take advantage of it. Don't stop there."

"You have to be actively engaged, dialogue is very important," Chism said. "The history of this country is very important. This dialogue today is very important. But what do you do as an individual after this Zoom is over. That's what's important."

Ways to participate in democracy

Register to vote at the time you apply to get your driver's license



Check your voter registration status at votetexas.gov

Apply to become a poll worker at harrisvotes.com or local county website.



Illustration courtesy of Indira Zaldivar

'Queers on wheels' ride to Market Square Park

By Indira Zaldivar

UHD's Sexuality and Gender Alliance and Trans reunited for the first time since the pandemic on campus to ride all sorts of wheels to Market Square Park on June 16.

In scooters, bikes, skates, and boards, they navigated gracefully the streets of the Historic Market Square to later indulge in the Greek food trailer, Niko Niko's, located in the park.

To some, this

was the first time meeting in person the fellow Gators who they formed strong bonds through a screen on Zoom.

The Deadline's news editor Gean Garcia joined SAGA & Trans in the spring semester during his first semester at UHD. The ride meant to Garcia, a "chance to see UHD in person and meet some like-minded people."

"It was great meeting Gators!" Garcia said.

UHD's next move to the final step in the COVID-19 response matrix on July 12 has many, just like Garcia, thrilled.

"UHD is so nice! I can't wait until I have to ride the elevator up to get to my classes. I'm ready to experience campus life as an English major."

SAGA & Trans UHD has persisted since 2015. To stay up-to-date with upcoming events, follow their Instagram account @sagauhd.



Gean Garcia takes selfie of riders upon arrival at Market Square Park on June 16. Photo credit: Gean Garcia.

New UHD garden continued

"The garden being sustainable is even better than I could imagine because we are trying our best to grow produce and reduce our carbon footprint while doing it."

With the new summer season comes a transition of crops. What used to be the bed of corn is now growing okra. So, each season provides Gators a new opportunity to learn about a different crop.

All majors are welcome to join as Morano fundamentally believes that the future of sustainability is cross-disciplinary.

"The goal of the STB gardens is to give UHD students the knowledge and skills to become leaders of change," Morano said.

"When students work together in teams setting up garden beds and growing food, they become part of the future solution to a number of our systemic food inequities."

Ambrosio said she encourages everyone to pass by and pick up some crops and leave suggestions of what they would like to see in the garden in the future. Her personal wish is to participate in a community planting party at the new garden.

"I think this community garden is the beginning of something special."

To keep up with the harvests of both food gardens at UHD and to stay tuned to resources and job opportunities, follow @uhd_cuas on Instagram.

Faculty spotlight continued

The documentary with the prospected title "The Black Man You Don't Know" will feature Black men from various diverse backgrounds as fathers, professionals in STEM, and more.

Through her documentary, she aims to humanize Black men and change the "insidious culture" of white police officers seeing Black people through degrading stereotypes instead of their humanity. "Thinking of Black people as a homogenous group is...dangerous."

Her two other documentaries in the work focus on "racial battle fatigue" and "disrupting rape culture." On top of documentaries, she has outlined chapters of a book she plans to title "Real Talk from

a Dean: Valuable Life Tips for Successfully Navigating Your Undergraduate Degree as an Adult." In her book, she plans to share tips for students working full-time, single parenting, or returning to school after many years.

She advises Gators to be sensitive and respectful to one's energy and time. While she said that networking and building relationships are important, "be very careful when it comes to the people you allow in your circle."

"If you allow yourself to be around people that drag you down and tell you 'you can't do something,' sometimes people believe that," she said. "I leave the haters in the background...outside the door. I do not allow

them to come into my space and poison my well."

She is thankful for support from Interim Provost Akif Uzman, Ph.D.; Associate Vice President for Faculty, Research & Sponsored Programs Jerry Johnson, Ph.D.; and new UHD president Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.

When Guillory could not think of herself as a scholar because she was an assistant dean and single mother, her special friend and colleague, incoming Faculty Senate President Edmund Cueva, Ph.D., encouraged her to not give up. "Just because you don't have to, it doesn't mean you shouldn't," with those words, Cueva inspired her to co-edit a special topics journal issue for the Journal of Interdisciplinary Humanities on "Resisting White Supremacy in the African Diaspora: Moving Towards

Liberation and Decolonization," which will be published in their Spring 2022 issue.

Off business hours, Guillory loves spending time with her daughter Nyla. Six-year-old Nyla is talented like her mother: a member of Little Beakers, a successful artist (sold her first painting), and a fan of Bluey and dance parties.

Guillory is an early riser. While she doesn't have a TV in the house "on purpose," to replenish herself she occasionally enjoys "The Kominsky Method" and comedians like Dave Chapelle.

Like many Gators, Assistant Dean Guillory is a first-generation college graduate. She has come a long way. She reiterated that if Gators are looking for her, she is here. "Do not be silent," she said. "Do not stay in the background. Your voice matters."

Cryptocurrency takes over marketing scene

By Shaheryar Khan

With the rise of Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Dogecoin, cryptocurrency has become an overnight sensation.

On Aug. 18, 2008 someone going by the alias of Satoshi Nakamoto registered the domain bitcoin.org. The following year, Nakamoto made the first Bitcoin transaction by sending Hal Finney, a computer programmer, 10 bitcoins.

There is a specific way Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are made, and that process is referred to as mining. Mining is not a literal term, but it got its name from the California Gold Rush. Mining is the process of confirming a transaction between a specific coin, for example, Bitcoin or

Litecoin.

The background of cryptocurrency is very intricate, but many investors have been drawn towards the flattering profits that some people have made by investing in these cryptocurrencies.

In 2010, the price of one bitcoin was \$0.0008. But in 2021, it jumped to a staggering \$63,725 at its peak, earlier this year.

Professor of Finance and the University of Houston-Downtown, Ohaness Paskelian, PhD explains the process as a “distributed database available digitally, and where anyone can access, view the balance and add transactions to it anytime, without being controlled by any

government entity.”

A lot of questions have emerged whether cryptocurrency is good or bad for the economy and Paskelian says “there is no easy answer.”

He says that the rise in cryptocurrency can be compared to the rise of the internet in the ‘90s, as it created businesses and industries that were not available before.

In those regards, Paskelian believes that cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin have similar potential, however, there is controversy.

“There are already several different cryptocurrencies and still there is not wide acceptance and usage of those cryptocurrencies by businesses, but on the other hand there is already usage

of cryptocurrencies for illegal activities.”

With the rise in popularity, cryptocurrency attracted many people around the globe, including famous tech billionaire, Tesla and Space X CEO Elon Musk.

He has impacted the market prices of some of these cryptocurrencies through his candid interactions with his 46 million followers on Twitter.

On Jan. 29, Musk wrote “#bitcoin” in his Twitter bio, which lead to a 14% spike in the market value.

In May, Musk started to back the relatively newer cryptocurrency called Dogecoin, stating on Twitter that “Dogecoin is the people’s crypto,” which boosted the market value, similarly to how

Bitcoin had its surge.

Controversy surrounds cryptocurrency for its harmful effects on the environment. According to the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Alternative Finance in England, the assessed consumption of electricity by the Bitcoin network is 149.6 terawatt hours and growing.

That rate is higher than the energy consumed in countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, and Sweden, according to ABC.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told CNBC earlier this year Bitcoin was “extremely inefficient.”

While Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has criticized crypto as using “more electricity per trans-

action than any other method known to mankind.

According to Citibank CEO Sunil Garg, the future of cryptocurrency is very uncertain, but on the verge of being accepted globally.

Professor Paskelian elaborates on the environmental impact by emphasizing that it is “another difficult question to answer,” as cryptocurrency utilizes energy on a continuous basis.

Paskelian adds that “since cryptocurrencies are still relatively new, and their impact on the environment is not fully studied and understood, but there are studies that show that cryptocurrencies use energy, and the amount of energy they need.”

Now hiring!

The Dateline is now hiring for the fall semester!

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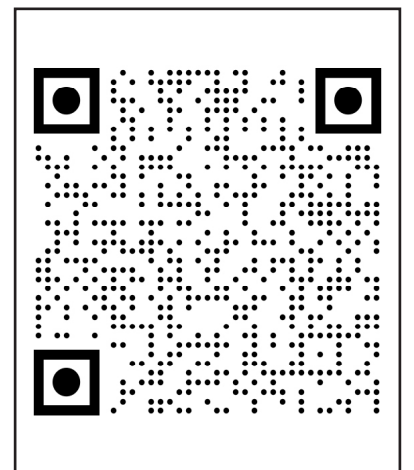
Student Run Since Volume One

Students can also earn course credit with TCOM/ENG 4360 and can even make a little extra cash.

Students are encouraged to submit as many pieces as desired for each issue, however no commitment or experience is necessary.

We welcome students of all majors, and we are excited to see what you can bring to the team. We are currently hiring for positions including journalists, photographers, illustrators, cartoonists, and graphic designers.

To submit pieces or for inquiries about joining The Dateline, email editor Indira Zaldivar at editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com. Scan the QR code to the right to submit required paperwork.



Scan QR CODE to join!

Houston's Gandhi District brings a cultural dream to life

By Aansa Usmani

Houston's Mahatma Gandhi District, located on Hillcroft Avenue, near Southwest Freeway, has become a go-to hub for South Asian cuisine, clothing, and grocery shopping. From Afghanis to Bengalis, Sri Lankans to Nepalis, The Mahatma Gandhi District welcomes all Desis, and non-native individuals.

But almost forty years ago, a cultural avenue would have been non-exis-

tent had it not been for entrepreneurial efforts made by many immigrants' families, such as the Gahunia family

The Gahunia family decided to change that fact by opening Raja's Sweets, Texas's oldest Indian restaurant, which provides catering for South Asian foods and desserts. After Sharan Gahunia's father's passing in 2001, she took over, and it is still family-run today.

"If my father could see us now, he

would be so proud of how far we've come. This business has come a really long way. I mean, we grew up on Hillcroft, nobody thought that, wow, one day we would be running Hillcroft."

Seeing the success of Raja Sweets, Aku Patel and his wife opened Karat 22, a South Asian-based jewelry store located in the neighboring block from the Gahunia's store.

Patel's children now run the business, hoping

to integrate today's technology and global connections for future successes, according to ABC13.

From there, other businesses began to appear, from clothing stores, such as Sari Sapne, Sari Dreams in English, and Roop Sari Palace to Patel Brothers, Keemat, "Discounted," grocers, and franchise-owned chain grocery stores.

Today, most of these family-owned and operated businesses continue to serve Houston,

showcasing the city's diversity and cultural awareness.



Eleven years after it was renamed, Mahatma Gandhi District continues to be the home of a diverse array of Indian businesses. Photo courtesy of Authentic Texas.

Texas lifts mask mandate

By Sergio Presa

On May 18, Gov. Greg Abbott signed an executive order that prohibited government entities in Texas from mandating the use of face masks.

The executive order includes school districts, counties, cities, and public health authorities.

Public schools can keep their masking rules in place until June 4. After June 4, school districts are not allowed to require students, staff, or visitors to wear masks.

The executive order comes after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that it is acceptable for fully vaccinated people to not wear masks indoors.

The CDC considers a person fully vaccinated two

weeks after they have had their second shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or two weeks after receiving the Johnson and Johnson shot.

Any local governments or government officials that attempt to mandate masks despite the Governor's order could face a fine of up to \$1,000.

"Removing statewide mandates does not end personal responsibility, it's just now that state mandates are no longer needed," Governor Abbott said.

Public data indicates that around 37% of Texans are fully vaccinated. Certain government entities are exempt from Governor Abbott's order, and they include government-owned hospi-

tals, Texas Department of Criminal Justice facilities, Texas Juvenile Justice Department facilities, living centers supported by the state, and jails.

"The Lone Star State continues to defeat COVID-19 through the use of widely available vaccines, antibody therapeutic drugs, and safe practices utilized by Texans in our communities, we can continue to mitigate COVID-19 while defending Texans' liberty to choose whether or not they mask up," Abbott said.



Spain allows Americans

By Gean Garcia

Since May 24, Spain allowed vacationing visitors from foreign countries, such as Australia, China, New Zealand, Israel, and Japan, to enter its borders without undergoing a COVID-19 test.

On June 24, the United States got cleared status and is no longer excluded from this list.

Prior to the announcement, Americans were forbidden from entering Spain unless they gained special permission from the Spanish government.

"Spain has suffered greatly from COVID-19, with a high number of cases and deaths. After one of Europe's strictest lockdowns in spring 2020, it reopened to visitors over the summer, but in November

entered a state of emergency that ran until May 9, 2021," CNN reported.

With its sunny climate and beautiful beaches, Spain offers a romantic vacation spot to many countries.

But for some countries, such as neighboring Portugal, citizens must still provide a negative PCR test to enter Spain.

Anyone arriving from India must undergo a ten-day quarantine upon arrival. Per Spanish law, all travelers must submit themselves to a temperature check at the airport and wear a mask in all public places regardless of where they come from.

"The country [i.e., Spain] has seen over 3.6 million

infections and over 79,600 deaths as of May 24...over 24 million people have had their first vaccination, and 16.71% of the population has been fully vaccinated..." CNN reported on the number of Spanish casualties and vaccinations so far.





Ariana Grande album: 'Positions'

By Gean Garcia

On Oct. 20, 2020, Ariana Grande, in tandem with Republic Records, released her latest album, "Positions," which marks an evident change in her music style.

This album is Grande's sixth work, and it makes a sharp contrast with her previous album, "thank u, next."

Following the tragic death of her ex Mac Miller, Grande decided to make her new album about her renewed lease on life. Indeed, "Positions" is a testament to love, life, and sexiness.

"How you be

spending your time? How you be using your time? You be so worried about mine, can't even get yourself none. You know you sound so dumb? Maybe you should just shut up," Grande sings in her first track. "Shut up."

"You might think I'm crazy, the way I've been craving. If I put it quite plainly, just give me them babies! I've been drinking coffee; I've been eating healthy; you know I keep it squeaky, saving up my energy," Grande chants as she pivots to a flirtier track, "34+35."

This shift in tone represents Grande's renewed personality: active, happy, and flirtatious. Grande seems to say that even though death occurs in life, so does pleasure, love, and happiness.

Doja Cat and Megan Thee Stallion also make appearances on the album. Both female rappers helped Grande remix her "34+35" song into an even sexier version. The shared sense of empowerment is contagious.

"Tell me why I get the feeling that you really

wanna turn me on?," Grande sings in another flirtier track, "motive."

"Cause you got your candy on your arm, no need to sugarcoat a lie," Doja Cat joins in a mid-song rap. "Say what you want; I needed a real bonafide. Can you promise me that you'll bring it all tonight?"

And Gators, "motive," much like the other songs, hints at flirtation, making the song an excellent workout track!

"Boy, I'm trying to meet your mama on a Monday, then make our love on a Monday . . . Cause

I be switching up positions for you . . . I'm in the Olympics, the way I'm jumping through hoops," Grande sings in her name-track title, "Positions." One word: Banger!

However, Grande's album is not entirely sexual. A few songs, such as "six thirty" and "pov," highlight the more substantial, long-term side of romance instead of the sexual side of romance.

Take "six thirty," for instance: "Whatcha gonna do when I'm bored and I wanna play video games at two

a.m.? What if I need a friend? Will you ride with me 'til the end?"

And in "pov," Grande switches positions to emphasize long-term love instead: "I wanna love me, the way that you love me. For all of my pretty and all of my ugly, too, I'd love to see me from your point of view."

So, if you haven't had a chance to listen to "Positions" yet, make sure to check it out the next time you need a confidence boost.

It is currently available on Spotify, Apple Music, and Pandora.

Disney film 'Cruella' unveils mismatched villain

By Varah Thornton

Disney's newest blockbuster is a twist on a classic villain.

"Cruella" attempts to tell the story of the Avant Garde designer obsessed with making a dalmatian coat from real dogs. Despite the amount of publicity given to the film, it is not quite what it seems.

"Cruella" tells the story of how the main character got her famous moniker, developed her style, and earned her reputation in 1970s London at the height of the punk scene.

Despite the attempt at painting an all-out villain it falls flat when attempting to deliver empathetic moments.

There are clever twists on original themes from the first three films and the heists hinted at in trailers are cleverly thought out and serve to push the plot forward.

But the film falls flat when it attempts to explain the convoluted reasoning behind Cruella's ultimate heist which is not introduced until a little over

half-way through the film.

This is less an origin story and more of a reimagining of who Cruella could be.

Everything from her hair to her design skills are weaved in as new plot devices that serve to build an interesting character.

The problem becomes that as the film rolls on, it strays further and further away from what the trailers told us to expect. Had this been any other film, it would have been a great introduction for an original villain

in the vein of Cruella de Vill.

Instead, Disney appears to have decided to ret-con an entire character without labeling it as a franchise relaunch.

Overall, the film is fun. The gags pay off, the antagonist is just cartoonish enough to be believable and there are enough needle drops to make your head spin. The casting could have used some work. Despite Emma Thompson and Emma Stone playing off each other spectacularly,

the casting left some audience viewers wanting when it came to certain rolls.

The castings of Kirby Howell-Baptiste as Anita Darling and Kayvan Novak as Roger raised the most criticism.

Though their performances were well executed, the characters themselves were given very little to work with. When you factor in the disparity of race portrayed on screen, you see a very white-washed fashion industry typical of Anna Win-

tour's Conde Nast and a lack of diverse faces.

"Cruella" should not be mistaken for a fun family outing with punk overtones. The plot is thick with twists, turns, and an abundance of unironic bodily harm.

The original high fashions of Academy Award-winning costume designer Jenny Beavan elevate every scene with each costume serving its purpose to full effect and more.

Tennis star Naomi Osaka quits French Open

By Varah Thornton

Naomi Osaka, Japanese-born tennis star made headlines after tweeting on May 26 that she would not be participating in the press junkets during the Roland-Garros Tournament, known as The French Open, due to concerns for her mental health.

“I’m not going to do any press during Roland Garros. I’ve often felt that people have no regard for athlete mental health and this rings very true whenever I see a press conference or partake in one.

“We’re often sat there and asked questions ... that bring doubt into our minds and I’m just not going to subject myself to people that doubt me.”

Osaka mentioned that her wariness around press is nothing new and something she has stated since she emerged in the spotlight.

“Me not doing press is nothing personal to the tournament.”

She concluded with the sentiment that the fines she would pay would go towards a mental health charity. She tweeted out a picture of her arrival on May 30, the first day of the tournament.

Later that day she tweeted, “anger is a lack of understanding. change makes people uncomfortable.”

Roland-Garros responded by issuing a statement on behalf of the Australian Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

“To check on her well-being and offer support, underline their commitment to all athletes’ well-being and suggest dialog on the issues. She was also reminded of her obligations, the consequences of not meeting them and that rules should equally apply to all players.”

The French Open fined Osaka \$15,000, adding in their statement: “The mental health of players competing in our tournaments and on the Tours is of the

utmost importance to the Grand Slams. We individually and collectively have significant resources dedicated to player well-being.

“In order to continue to improve however, we need engagement from the players to understand their perspective and find ways to improve their experiences.

“We have advised Naomi Osaka that should she continue to ignore her media obligations during the tournament, she would be exposing herself to possible further Code of Conduct infringement consequences.

“As might be expected, repeat violations attract tougher sanctions including default from the tournament ... and the trigger of a major offence investigation that could lead to more substantial fines and future Grand Slam suspensions.”

The Roland-Garros official Twitter account tweeted, then deleted a picture of athletes at

the press conference.

“They knew the assignment resulting in immediate backlash,” the caption reads.

The statement was deemed irresponsible and tone-deaf across social media and by mental health experts.

Osaka promptly withdrew from the tournament altogether shortly afterward, tweeting a screenshot of her statement.

“I never wanted to be a distraction and I accept that my timing was not ideal, and my message could have been clearer. More importantly I would never trivialize mental health or use the term lightly.

“Anyone that knows me knows I’m introverted...I am not a natural public speaker and get huge waves of anxiety before I speak to the world’s media.”

Osaka concluded her statement mentioning that she had privately written to the tournament apologizing and that

she would be more than happy to speak with them after it was concluded.

Her comments and actions highlighted the issues surrounding the treatment of athletes’ mental health and concerns.

Many stars spoke in support of Osaka such as tennis legend, Venus Williams.

“I know every single person asking me a question can’t play as well as I can and never will. So, no matter what you say or write, you’ll never light a candle to me. So, that’s how I deal with it, but each person deals with it differently.”

When asked for comment, her sister, Serena Williams replied, “Venus said it best.” One of the biggest responses came from Calm, a mental health app.

“To support Naomi Osaka’s decision to prioritize her mental health, Calm is donating \$15,000 to @LaureusSport in France, an

organization doing incredible work in the mental health space to transform the lives of young people through the power of sport.

“In addition, Calm will also pay the fine for players opting out of 2021 Grand Slam media appearances for mental health reasons, and we will match the fine with a \$15,000 donation to @LaureusSport.”

Osaka also made the decision to withdraw from Wimbledon, one of the only major events that famously had pandemic insurance when COVID-19 began to spread in 2020.

Her agent Stuart Duguid stated, “Naomi won’t be playing Wimbledon this year. She is taking some personal time with friends and family. She will be ready for the Olympics and is excited to play in front of her home fans.”

Duke and Duchess of Sussex welcome baby girl Lily

By Savannah Mims

On June 4, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex welcomed a baby girl in Santa Barbara, California, the city where the couple relocated since stepping down as senior royals.

The baby is the eleventh great-grandchild of Queen Elizabeth II. It is the first to be born outside of the United

Kingdom.

Prince Harry and Meghan pay tribute to the current monarch and the late Diana, Princess of Wales by naming the baby Lilibet “Lili” Diana Mountbatten-Windsor.

The name Lilibet originates from the Queen’s grandfather, King George V, who interpreted

his granddaughter’s attempts to say “Elizabeth” as “Lilibet.”

It is also a tribute to the Queen’s late husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who endearingly used the term in a letter to the Queen Mother after the two were married.

“Lilibet is the only ‘thing’ in the world which is abso-

lutely real to me.”

Like her older brother, Archie Mountbatten-Windsor, Lilibet currently does not have a royal title, but she will attain one when their grandfather, Charles, the Prince of Wales ascends to the throne.

Congratulatory statements were issued from Buckingham Palace

stating, “The Queen, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, and The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have been informed and are delighted with the news of the birth of a daughter for The Duke and Duchess of Sussex.”

The couple thanked well-wishers by issuing a state-

ment on their website, Archwell Foundation.

“She is more than we could have ever imagined, and we remain grateful for the love and prayers we’ve felt from across the globe. Thank you for your continued kindness and support during this very special time for our family.”

Disorganized commencement disappoints graduates

By Sheryl Sellers

There are many things to be proud of at UHD, and granted many things are accomplished properly. But one especially important, long awaited, non-reproducible event produced disappointment that was palatable and will be remembered for an exceptionally long time by the spring 2021 graduates and their families.

That is the virtual graduation ceremony on May 15. The disordered, slipshod presentation garnered not celebration and shouts of joy, but a barrage of frustrated comments from students via You Tube and GroupMe.

I can attest to the bitterness of graduation day. Like all graduates, I worked hard for this day, beginning my studies in 2013 while working a full-time corporate position followed by full-time studies in 2018.

I am a first-generation, non-traditional student who was initially filled with self-satisfaction and self-pride. Dressed in my regalia, I waited anxiously with my eldest daughter to view the commencement and my slide which offered thank you's to my children and friends for their encouragement.

I enjoyed the initial messages from UHS Chancellor Renu Khator, Ph.D., UHD President Loren

J. Blanchard, Ph.D., and the two guest speakers.

But from there, the event did not slip, but plummeted into an obscure, careless and haphazard presentation complete with unrecognizable and poor combinations of names and pictures and omitted information. Mine included.

Graduates, many surrounded by their families and friends, poised for a celebration of their accomplishments, and parties set up in their honor with all the festive embellishments their recognition deserved, suffered the embarrassment and a defeatist feeling from the event.

Resentment from many graduates continues. It is mind-boggling how a university with technical expertise at their very fingertips found it necessary to outsource the project.

And the office responsible, headed by Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management Daniel Villanueva, has been down the road of virtual commencement exercises in the past.

For the video, graduates were to send their photo, their name, a quote if desired to the third-party vendor. Check.

There was no feedback from the third-party indicating that the information

had been received. This student phoned the Registrar's office to inquire about a confirmation, and was assured that the question would be asked, and the Registrar's office would communicate the response to me by May 14. I did not receive the promised response. Sigh.

Even though Villanueva said during the orientation that the ceremony would be ordered by college, it was not.

As the commencement video continued, I and many graduates communicating online, surmised that the presentation was being delivered in order of Latin honors. No. In order of last name? No. In order of first name? No.

Ok, maybe the slides were thrown in the air and placed in a pile, something akin to the game "52 card pickup" taught to me by my comical father. This suggestion came closest.

The 1,400+ graduate slides were displayed in the order that the third-party vendor received the slides from the graduates. For goodness' sake! Or, in the words of my younger friends, "smh." (I am leaving out the four-letter words.)

So, spring 2021 graduates shout "WHAT HAPPENED!?" Did no one at UHD view the presentation before it went live on

May 15? Was there no follow-up with the third-party vendor to clarify that they understood their mission and order of delivery? Was a written outline not provided to the third-party? Midway through, someone at UHD recognized the mess, possibly noticed the comments on social media and apologized – placing the blame on the vendor (what!) and indicating that the video would be corrected and emailed to the graduates. Unacceptable.

If I have learned anything in leadership, communication, and management, it is that placing blame is objectionable. Graduates had no relationship with the third-party vendor. Our relationship is with the university. It was the university's responsibility to ensure that the presentation was accomplished correctly.

While, yes, the vendor corrupted the information, we look to UHD to accept responsibility and I am aghast, appalled, stunned that UHD shoved the blame off themselves.

Not only was the commencement corrupted, but UHD displayed cowardice by not taking responsibility, adding to students' resentment.

Graduates recently received an appreciative packet

from UHD which included a printed copy of the 69th commencement, an alumni t-shirt, graduation tassel, and a statuette featuring the university image and logo plus a warm note from President Blanchard. This acknowledgement of achievement was most appreciated.

This week graduates also received an email with the corrected virtual commencement. I have not opened this. I will, but it is not the same as it would have been the afternoon I was looking forward to celebrating.

As was communicated in numerous ways to UHD last spring, our graduation did not need to be virtual. The explanation that UHD does not have an appropriate venue to hold the commencement was also unacceptable. UHS has such venues. I believe, as finally spoken by Villanueva, it was because spring 2020 graduates did not have a traditional ceremony. Times are different. A year has passed. COVID-19 was on a downhill curve. The 2021 ceremony could have lived up to expectations. But sadly, it did not.

I remain a proud alum of the university, but I fear many are not. This is unfortunate. But while I am one who consistently strives to find joy in every situation, finding joy in the commencement

has been difficult.

I do plan to attend the August traditional ceremony; I am sure I will feel joy and accomplishment at that time.

I will miss the camaraderie and interaction with students and faculty and applauding the cafeteria and maintenance staff. UHD exhumes a very welcoming environment, and while I was frustrated with the outcome of the commencement, the university will still remain close to my heart.

But I hope for future graduates experiencing similar circumstances, that processes are now in place to avoid future catastrophes as was the 69th commencement.

*Disclaimer: The opinions and views expressed in this piece belong to the writer and are not to speak for all The Dateline.

"Let's Talk about it Series"
Next two events in July
Community-Based Police Reform
Thursday, July 8 at 6 p.m.

Meeting ID: 970 4067 6387
Passcode: 850934w

George-Floyd Act
Thursday, July 29 at 6 p.m.
Meeting ID: 930 7320 7887
Passcode: 154079

Rainbow capitalism leeches off Pride Month

By Lilly Greene

Marsha P. Johnson said, “no pride for some of us without liberation for all of us.”

Pride advocates happiness about one’s gender identity or sexuality. Buying Pride products during the month of June is a part of that very experience. For companies, the goal is to have access to products that represent solidarity to the LGBTQ community. If capitalism is a form of promotional representation, what are people to them?

Note the rainbow re-label. A bottle of sunscreen ironically advertises to prevent skin cancer on all bodies but the rainbow plastic label for Pride month supposedly allows LGBTQ+ members to

feel seen. The marketing behind “buy me I represent you” represents a small portion of people, more so

Companies profiting off people’s sexuality is not the first offense. It seems that people do not matter, compared to a company’s “supportive” profitable stances. For example, marriage and weddings alone are a 51.2-billion-dollar industry. Wedding décor is essential for the celebration and reception.

Arguably, Pride décor is essential for celebration, but not every celebration is authentically represented by the people who create them. The main argument is how every capitalist opportunity ruins civil matters in

society. The re-make of a label will not inform people about the importance of equality. The advertised product promotes a marketed representation for equality and acceptance—it does not provide people with the history of inequality or unacceptance.

Perhaps there are companies taking the demographics of a place into consideration, for example LGBTQ member Gean Garcia says, “Target is doing it right, but they should expand their PRIDE products outside the big cities. Not all rainbow people live downtown, you know!” This is expected from rural areas of Texas but LGBTQ+ members live everywhere including places with

like and non-like-minded people.

This is interesting because companies can label themselves as allies by promoting Pride or anti-Pride. Garcia explains, “faith-based groups should be careful with Pride because their support can come off as fake. This advice extends to companies with a hateful history, like Chick-Fil-A, too. But again, any representation is usually better than none.”

The relationship between society and the outcast is unaddressed, unlike the one between a company and consumer. Capitalism believes a product is physical stamp of approval of one’s identity. But this attempt is like what minorities or other oppressed

groups experience as constantly having to reclaim themselves or what products were theirs.

Capitalism provides a stage for representation and identity, but not the platform for meaningful change. Being gay or queer is who we are, not just a “personality trait.” The kind of representation we seek is our freedoms and natural rights.

The goal of the LGBTQ+ community is to advocate, not advertise our agenda. The community is a canvas for the abstract painter, welcoming all forms of art, but it cannot be bought. We want to love whom we love legally and have basic livelihood necessities.

Our humanity is not for sale or profit during Pride month.



America’s largest skatepark has Houston stoked

By Gean Louis Garcia

In August 2014, the North Houston Development Corporation opened the North Houston Skatepark to put Houston on the map. With over 77,000 square feet of skating surface, it is the largest skatepark in North America. Although people still perceive skateboarding as a sport exclusive to white men, anyone, regardless of gender, color, sexual orientation, or age can learn to skate.

Tony Hawk, the world-famous skateboarder, spent most of his high school days playing

hooky at the skatepark because his other classmates made fun of him for being thin, weird, and “different.” The nature of skateboarding is inclusive rather than exclusive, so Veteran Houstonite skaters Derrick Hayes and Martin Hogan recently talked about the skatepark and the values it fosters.

“This stuff will build character in a person beyond skateboarding because there is a lot of failure in skateboarding,” said Hayes. “But if you allow fear to control you, you will never accomplish anything in life.”

Many people fear falling off a skateboard. Falling is a part of life, as everybody falls from time to time. However, skaters do not let falling stop them.

“The reason why we fall is so that we can get back up again,” Hogan explained. “And if you’re going to skateboard, you’re going to fall. But if you can remember that once you fall, you’re going to get back up, then you’re a success.”

Comparing skateboarding to other sports, Hayes said that something unique exists in skate-

boarding its solitary nature. Hogan also made this keen observation, stating

“The difference between skating and playing football is that one does not ‘play’ skate; he goes skate.”

People do not need a team to skate, so for marginalized groups often overlooked in sports, such as the LGBT, women, and black people, skateboarding can provide a method of self-expression and individual sportsmanship.

“It [skateboarding] teaches you perseverance, wheth-

er it’s landing a trick or getting through college,” a younger skater, Ty’rae Carter, said at the skatepark.

“Don’t let the stereotype of people saying, ‘Oh, well, black people don’t do that’ stop you. Black people do what black people want to do based on what they desire to do,” said Hayes.

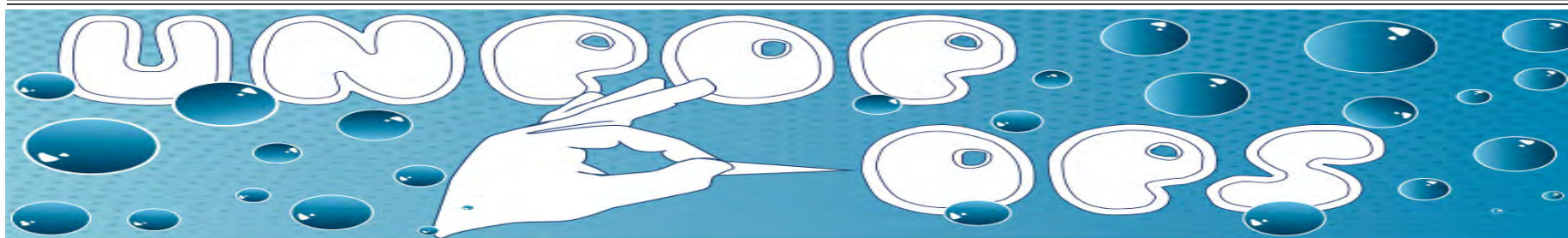
For these reasons, the North Houston Development Corp, created the massive skatepark.

“We decided that if we’re gonna do a skatepark, we wanna do one that’s gonna put Houston on the

map,” said Sally Branford of Greenspoint Development. “We have skaters of younger kids, gentlemen in their forties, girls, and young girls, so it appeals to all different people who enjoy the sport.”

Carter attributes much of his early skateboarding success and style to his mentor, Derrick Hayes, whom Carter affectionately refers to as “the O.G.”

“I spread the love and the joy, and in the skating world, we call that ‘spreading the stoke.’ I wanna show another kid how stoked skateboarding



Skincare line: The Ordinary

By Aansa Usmani

#Skincaretiktok and other similarly worded hashtag is a massive trend on TikTok, showcasing skincare routines and products as better or worse for one's skin type. Additionally, the trend hype products such as CeraVe and The Ordinary, among other dermatologist-approved brands.

These products were promoted as the "base" for creating a skincare regime, promising clear, smooth skin. Many users credited TikTok as the reason

for achieving clear skin and having a better knowledge of skincare thanks to experts such as Hiram, (@skincarebyHiram).

I jumped on the skincare bandwagon in quarantine, hoping to achieve my life goal of having an acne-free face. Personally, I found that CeraVe did wonders for my combination skin, oily and dry, delivering on its promise for smooth, nourished skin.

However, I have a bone to pick with The Ordinary.

For one, it made my skin stickier and more clogged undoing CeraVe's saving graces. The responses drove me nuts seeing the constant price hike across rival websites.

Understandably, we live in a capitalist economy, so competition meant that companies were willing to charge prices that consumers were willing to pay. Wherever I went, the general notion was to purchase other products made by the skincare line, believing that it will

give the best results. When calculating said products, the total came out to over \$50 on Ulta and closer to \$60 on Sephora. (Taxes were included).

Maintaining this regime meant spending 50-60 on skincare every three to four months, and these price points are expensive for college students. Why spend that much on skincare that comes in 1-ounce to 2-ounce bottles? If it does not work, why keep convincing oneself to get more of the products?

This seems that it is merely a ploy to get one to purchase more of their inventory, rather than looking out for one's skin and wallet in the long run. It would be more cost-effective to spend 25-30 dollars on a CeraVe regimen such as their "Daily Moisturizing Lotion" and the "Facial Cleanser." Costing roughly half of The Ordinary's recommended regimen, its products last for over a year and provide more benefits to one's skin.

Aside from

the main products, its line has affordable sunscreen, eye cream, body lotion, and other skin care needs.

Regardless of my input, choose a skincare regimen best suited to your needs. If you find that The Ordinary has done wonders, that's great. I'll stick to my pro-CeraVe views until it either is discontinued or if it negatively impacts my skin.

This piece is not sponsored by The Ordinary and CeraVe.

Illustration credit: Sarah Ramirez



Illustration credit: Sarah Ramirez

By Indira Zaldivar

School and community gardens, urban farming, and the two food gardens at UHD, are not only a beautiful sight, but also help stabilize healthy food choices for people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Creating and supporting initiatives to designate green spaces for food production in schools and neighborhoods and to transform vacant buildings and parking lots, bridges gaps in food and health disparities in growing metropoli-

tans such as Houston. Plus, the victory tastes great from personal experience.

As the world population is expected to increase by more than a third by 2050, food production must also increase by an estimated 70%.

Not only will there be more people to feed, but income growth results in a higher demand for healthier food alternatives such as fresh fruits and veggies, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

However, the distinguishable changing climate of the 21st century makes the production of food in developing nations such as China and India, two of the top three agricultural powerhouses, harder and more costly. In other words, climate change makes growing conditions unpredictable and factors in more expenses as natural disasters and pests become more common.

When these healthy fruits and vegetables get more

expensive, health disparities widen across the globe. This unequal burden puts low-income households the farthest away from attaining healthy fruits and veggies. Cheap junk food shouldn't be the only option for anybody.

Food gardens in k-12 schools, colleges and universities create hands-on opportunities for the youth to learn how to grow food and gives them access to free healthy harvests. For example, the students participating in the spring garden project

by the UHD's Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability just saw the newest garden beds along the Sciences and Technology Building yield its first harvests.

Learning how to grow food and being part of that legacy feels amazing. I am thankful for all the fresh and tasty produce I get to take home and share with my family. If you're looking for a new activity this summer, participate in grow-

ing food at UHD or community gardens. Nonprofits such as Target Hunger and Urban Harvest are always looking for volunteers and offer job opportunities

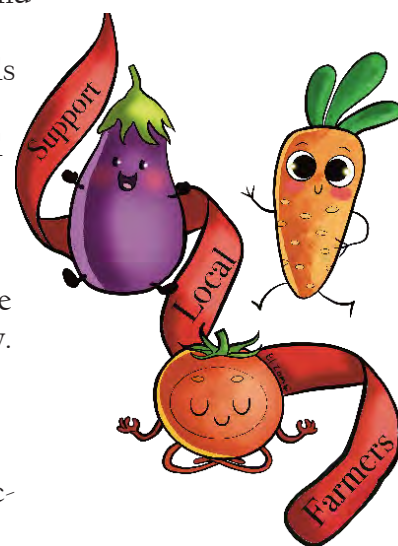


Illustration credit: Gean Garcia